James Fenimore Cooper's Frontier: The Pioneers as History

Thomas Berson
THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER’S FRONTIER:

THE PIONEERS AS HISTORY

By

THOMAS BERSON

A Thesis Submitted to the
Program In American and Florida Studies
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Degree Awarded:
Summer Semester, 2004
The members of the Committee approve the thesis of Thomas Berson defended on July 1, 2004.

Frederick Davis
Professor Directing Thesis

John Fenstermaker
Committee Member

Ned Stuckey-French
Committee Member

Approved:

John Fenstermaker, Chair, Program in American and Florida Studies

Donald Foss, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

The Office of Graduate Studies has verified and approved the above named committee members.
For My Parents
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to John Fenstermaker, who gave me the opportunity to come back to school and to teach and to Fritz Davis, who helped me find direction in my studies.

Additional thanks to the aforementioned and also to Ned Stuckey-French for taking the time out of their summers to sit on the committee for this paper.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract........................................................................................................................................ vi.
INTRODUCTION .........................................................................................................................1
LITERATURE REVIEW .............................................................................................................6
1. RELIGION.........................................................................................................................15
2. MORALITY AND VIRTUE ..........................................................................................25
3. PRACTICAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION...............................................................36
4. A CHANGING LAND ..................................................................................................47
CONCLUSION.....................................................................................................................62
APPENDICES ..........................................................................................................................66
REFERENCES .........................................................................................................................75
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH ...................................................................................................80
ABSTRACT

This thesis examines aspects of American culture and society in Post-Revolutionary upstate New York through the lens of James Fenimore Cooper’s novel The Pioneers. While scholars have looked to The Pioneers as an object of literary criticism or for overarching American themes such as manners or authority, I examine The Pioneers’ value as a historical document.

Specifically, I examine the clash between a new culture still in its infancy and an existing one in its last days. The frontier settlers in Cooper’s work, as in reality, imposed their religion, science, and land-ownership principles on the remnants of native Americans and pre-revolutionary “squatters” even as their own understandings of those institutions were changing.

In this paper I examine how, although settlers attempted to impose their religion on native Americans, religion did not play as major a role in guiding frontier morality, but that Jeffersonian notions of republican motherhood and innate morality did. At the same time, these notions of morality came into conflict with the new laws that were being enforced while settlers were imposing Christianity onto the indigenous residents of America. These topics are the subject of Chapters One and Two.

Fledging notions of applied science were brought to bear in an attempt to create a sustainable long-term development, but that scientific institutions in America, such as medicine, were notably deficient. These issues are the subject of Chapter Three. Following that, I also discuss how land-ownership issues were complicated by pre-existing claims on the land, by Indians, Loyalist settlers and squatters. Finally, I explore how Cooper presciently staked out proto-environmentalist themes long before modern notions of conservation were developed, and how his portrayal of these themes is valuable to understanding ideas of the Turnerian “frontier.”

The paper examines all these ideas by comparing Cooper’s writing to that of historical scholars and Cooper’s contemporary cultural observers, as well as by utilizing other primary source materials.
INTRODUCTION

In the introduction to The Pioneers, or Sources of the Susquehanna, James Fenimore Cooper acknowledges that the book is meant to provide a “descriptive tale” of the area of upstate New York in which he lived as a boy. However, he wrote,

[T]hey who will take the trouble to read it may be glad to know how much of its contents is literal fact, and how much is intended to represent a general picture. The author is very sensible that, had he confined himself to the latter, always the most effective, as it is the most valuable, mode of conveying knowledge of this nature, he would have made a far better book. But in commencing to describe scenes, and perhaps he may add characters, that were so familiar to his own youth, there was a constant temptation to delineate that which he had known, rather than that which he might have imagined.¹

In other words, The Pioneers is not simply a work of fiction, nor is it pure autobiography. Rather, it is a hybrid of the two, a colorized and perhaps romanticized recollection of Cooperstown, New York in the late 18th century. As such, it offers value not only as a work of literature but also as a primary source for historical analysis. Unlike writers such as James McCullough or Michael or Jeff Shaara, who might create historical fiction from research done a century or more later, or a Frederick Douglass or Sojourner Truth, who offer history through literal accounts of their own experience, Cooper has left us with history through the equivalent of a soft-focus lens: the picture is true, but the outlines are blurred. It is a recollection of a time and place, but it is not autobiography. Real themes and characteristics are explored, but under the liberating style of fiction. The Pioneers is also unique in another way: according to Terence Martin, only 60 to 80 novels were written in America between 1789 and 1820 a figure of less than three per year!² Hence The Pioneers, written in 1823, stands virtually alone in the canon of American literature: contemporary historical fiction for the immediate post-Revolutionary period.

“In order to prevent mistake,” Cooper reminds us, “it may be well to say that the incidents of this tale are purely a fiction. The literal facts are chiefly connected with the natural

and artificial objects and the customs of the inhabitants.” Yet these objects and customs are critical to an understanding of life in the early Republic. In teaching this book as part of an “American History and Literature” class at Florida State University during the five semesters prior to writing this thesis, I was constantly amazed at how rich the text was as an historical vein to be mined for insights into early American science and religion, political and social thought, and culture. It was in the course of teaching this material that I decided to use my thesis to further examine how The Pioneers can be used to interpret and understand American History.

In this paper, I will show how Cooper presents a picture of America struggling in its infancy. Gordon S. Wood describes the period as “a social and cultural transformation as great as any in American history, a transformation marked by the search for an American identity and by the climax and fall of the Enlightenment in America.” On one hand, America was a new nation, still bound in many ways to the old world of Europe. In the midst of the scientific discovery and political experimentation born of the Age of Reason, Americans were trying to discover their own identity and to approach and conquer their new continent in a rational manner. On the other hand, despite their insecurities about being a new nation, Americans also approached their new land with a brash audacity that was later summed up with the term manifest destiny. Americans were not conquering a new land with set ideas and set institutions, but rather were developing new ways of seeing themselves and the world as they were simultaneously imprinting their stamp on a landscape that already had its own history. This notion of a preexisting context for American settlement of North America has often been neglected.

In the 1970s, there was a surge of interest in studying early America in its complete context. In “Whose Indian History?” Daniel Richter recounts how William Fenton in 1957 called for a “marriage of history and anthropology in a new ‘ethnohistory’ of native-European relations.” In 1975, almost two decades later, Francis Jennings published his “paradigm-shattering” The Invasion of America. “Such works promised to revolutionize early American historiography: comfortable assumptions about the peaceful transit of Western Civilization to the Howling Wilderness, it seemed, could no longer be supported…” Nevertheless, he bemoaned,

---

3 Cooper viii.
despite scholarship devoted to establishing the continuum of history in North America, much historical study remains locked in notions of the European “discovery” of America.\(^6\)

James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Pioneers* provides an excellent opportunity to put the ideas of Richter and Jennings into practice using the novel as a primary source tool for viewing America in transition. Specifically, the novel offers a snapshot of American culture in a specific place at a critical time. The frontier of upstate New York was at the same time both typical and anomalous in the American experience and *The Pioneers* is a window into this segment of the American world. Some historians and scholars already have used the novel to explore various general themes about American history, mostly questions about authority. This paper will build and add to that body of work by both exploring parts of the novel that have been left untapped and by reexamining themes that have been previously examined.

A large body of Cooper scholarship also has been in the arena of literary criticism. True, in terms of plot *The Pioneers* lacks much of the intrigue or action of the other “Leatherstocking Tales” and the writing often lends weight to criticism of Cooper’s literary skills, most famously Mark Twain’s acerbic “The Literary Offences of James Fenimore Cooper.” However, Twain’s problem with Cooper’s writing was that he didn’t think it qualified as “art;”\(^7\) he did not address whether it stands as history, which it does. As one contemporary reviewer wrote, “It might, indeed, be called historical; for the historian can scarcely find a more just and vivid delineation of the first settlements of our wilderness.”\(^8\) *The Pioneers* also places the American experience of settling and developing a new nation into a larger context. This was a new nation for many immigrants, but there also was an existing history. The struggles of settlers and developers are located within this continuum of history, rather than at the beginning of one, adding to our understanding of the complex issues of the time.

The overarching theme of this paper is that Americans did not bring established principles to bear on a blank sheet of paper. Their own institutions were changing and evolving even as they sought to establish them in new settlements. They displaced existing cultures, institutions and codes of behavior as they were still growing into their own. Returning to Wood’s


\(^7\) Mark Twain, “Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences” in How to Tell a Story and Other Essays (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1897)

assertion that this period was marked by the climax and fall of the Enlightenment, it is important
to understand what the Enlightenment entailed in America.

According to Wood, the enlightenment was “pushing back the boundaries of darkness
and barbarism and spreading light and knowledge.” This took place on several fronts, Wood
wrote. “Some saw the central struggle taking place in natural science and in the increasing
understanding of nature…others saw it taking place mostly in religion…Still others saw it taking
place in politics- in driving back the forces of tyranny and in the creating of new free
governments…” However, Wood wrote, these were all parts of a larger theme: “the spread of
what came to be called civilization” and that was “not simply a matter of material prosperity…it
was above all a matter of personal and social morality.”

Cooper’s Templeton is a prime example of how “civilization” was being realized in the
new world and this paper considers how that applied to those aforementioned Enlightenment
elements: natural science, nature itself, religion, politics, material prosperity and personal and
social morality. Religion was not the guiding force of morality in Cooper’s Templeton as it was
in the cities, nevertheless, Americans sought to impose Christianity on the indigenous peoples of
America. While long established tenets of Christianity were languishing, Jeffersonian ideals of
“Republican motherhood” and innate morality were taking their place as guiding principles.
However, morality itself was opposed at some turns by new laws that were geared to society
rather than individuals. Scientific progress and rational pragmatism were the order of the day, yet
they were clearly deficient in some respects, sometimes even inferior to “uncivilized” native
practices. These issues are the focus of the first three chapters.

At the core of the novel is the question of land-ownership and land use, both of which are
necessarily interrelated with political theories and practices. The great landed estates were being
dismantled by radicalized post-Revolutionary lawmakers, yet the trappings of privilege of the
American aristocracy were still very evident, especially in upstate New York. Americans, used to
tenant relationships with large landowners, were suddenly set free with a political and religious
imperative to acquire and develop land- land that was already occupied by others. Also
intertwined with issues of land ownership were questions of land use. With ownership came
development or, depending on one’s viewpoint, destruction. Cooper’s none-too-subtle plea for an

---

environmentally conscious approach to the land’s resources is remarkably prescient and worthy of discussion as well. These issues are discussed in Chapter 4.

Although William Cooper is referenced periodically throughout this paper, “Cooper” will generally refer to James Fenimore Cooper. Also, there is much in the writing of Cooper and his contemporaries that I have quoted in which spelling and grammar leave much to be desired. All quotations are verbatim from the texts.

For readers unfamiliar with the novel or who wish their memories to be refreshed, I have included two appendices. Appendix A is a list and brief description of the key characters referenced in this paper. Appendix B is a chapter-by-chapter summary of the novel. Both appendices are courtesy of James Fenimore Cooper Society President Hugh MacDougall’s work in “Reading The Pioneers as History.”

---

There has been a wide range of modern scholarship on James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Pioneers*, beginning in 1882 with Thomas Lounsbury, who described *The Pioneers* as a “vivid and faithful picture of the sights he had seen and the men he had met in the home of his childhood,” in his book, *James Fenimore Cooper*.\(^\text{11}\) The next round of scholarship occurred a half-century later, with Robert Spiller’s *Fenimore Cooper, Critic of His Times*,\(^\text{12}\) Dorothy Waples’ *The Whig Myth Of James Fenimore Cooper*,\(^\text{13}\) Henry Boynton’s *James Fenimore Cooper*\(^\text{14}\) and James Grossman’s *James Fenimore Cooper*,\(^\text{15}\) each of which provided more biography and insight into Cooper himself than any real analysis of his individual works.

More recently, scholars have attempted to analyze the value of the works themselves. Unfortunately, many books about Cooper that discuss *The Pioneers* do so by placing it in context among the other four “Leatherstocking Tales.” The book is chronologically fourth of five in the series, however it was the first one written, and therefore I believe that it must be read within its own context. Whether or not Cooper intended to write the other “Leatherstocking Tales” later is immaterial. At the time it was published, it stood on its own and therefore should be read that way. Still, within these interpretations are a number of valuable perspectives on what Cooper was hoping to achieve with the novel. Many of these interpretations involve discussion of either the role of power and authority in the novel or the various romantic myths about individualism and wilderness that Cooper was either creating or perpetuating in his writings.

The most extensive and valuable of the myriad works involving Cooper’s *The Pioneers* would have to be Alan Taylor’s Pulitzer-prize winning *William Cooper’s Town*.\(^\text{16}\) In this tome, Taylor examines how the life of William Cooper, James Fenimore Cooper’s father and the template for Judge Temple, patriarch of *The Pioneers*, fits into larger national trends in the early republic. Specifically, according to Taylor, Cooper represented a man attempting to gain wealth

---

\(^{11}\) Thomas Lounsbury, *James Fenimore Cooper* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882) 40


\(^{13}\) Dorothy Waples, *The Whig Myth of James Fenimore Cooper* (New Haven: Yale, 1938)

\(^{14}\) Henry Boynton, *James Fenimore Cooper* (New York: Century, 1931)


and power in a new society that had not yet completely cast off its European traditions of hereditary privilege.

Throughout *William Cooper’s Town*, Taylor draws parallels between William Cooper’s life and times, and the fictional town of Templeton created by his son in *The Pioneers*. Taylor’s discussions of power, politics, religion and class as well as the practical efforts Cooper made to obtain wealth make his work an invaluable source of information and background for anyone seeking insight into post-Revolutionary New York, *The Pioneers*, or both.

Natty Bumppo is often thought to be the hero of *The Pioneers* because he is the recurring character in the “Leatherstocking Tales.” However, as Warren Motley argues in his book *The American Abraham* “the literature of frontier settlement is dominated not by the solitary woodsman in the tradition of Natty Bumppo but by the pioneer patriarch – the American Abraham – who leaves the society of his forefathers to establish his family in the wilderness…the American Abraham strikes out for the west, but for him the migration is strategic rather than an essential part of his being.”

17 Natty, by this reasoning, is therefore clearly secondary to Temple under this reading.

The authority of law on the frontier is the subject of Charles Hansford Adams’ *The Guardian of the Law: Authority and Identity in James Fenimore Cooper*, and his interpretation of the law as a new and sometimes detrimental agent in a frontier community is a critical one. Adams argues that Cooper uses *The Pioneers* to show injustices in the law and Temple’s attempts to make up for them when he can. Although bound to the law publicly, Temple is privately guided by his own human morality, according to Adams. At the opposite end of this equation are Natty and his “persistent rejection of Temple’s institutional and historical law in the name of self-government on transcendental principles.” The letter of the law and its application, according to Adams, undermines an unspoken code, a “fraternal community based on values of individual integrity and mutual respect…”

Stephen Railton takes a similar tack on this notion in his *Fenimore Cooper: A Study of His Life and Imagination*. Railton also notes the “conflict between the values of civilization and

---

19 Adams 41
20 Adams 56
21 Adams 59
the freedom of the wilderness”\textsuperscript{22} and sees the clash between Natty and Temple as “the center of \textit{The Pioneers}: at stake is the moral right to possess Templeton.” Railton, for his part, believes Cooper intended to show Natty’s “moral superiority to the judges society,”\textsuperscript{23} but also recognized that “Temple represents the future, Natty the past.”\textsuperscript{24}

George Dekker also saw this conflict in his book \textit{James Fenimore Cooper}.\textsuperscript{25} Like Railton, Dekker placed Natty’s code of morality above Temple’s but, importantly, he also tied it to Natty’s experience with nature. John Kandl, in “Natty and the Judge: The Pictorial Development of an Ambivalent Theme in \textit{The Pioneers},” places their relationship into the context of Cooper’s own internal conflict. Cooper, he wrote, “operates in the throes of two irreconcilable forces, his love for the untamed wilderness -- the ideal of the individual living in harmony with nature: and his love for frontier society -- the ideal of society conquering and taming nature.”\textsuperscript{26} In \textit{New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans Through Whitman}, Cecelia Tichi describes the need for society to tame nature as “central to the survival of America’s historic mission.”\textsuperscript{27}

While these writers were examining the relative merits of each side of this conflict, others have questioned whether the conflict is itself nothing more than a fictional literary construct.

In “The Pioneers, Or the Sources of American Legal History: a Critical Tale,” Brook Thomas argues that \textit{The Pioneers} romanticized individualism in regard to the law and imagined a law based on the “fiction of self-sufficient individualism.”\textsuperscript{28} In \textit{Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization}, Richard Slotkin also places \textit{The Pioneers} within a succession of mythic novels of the American west, arguing that the perpetuation of these myths was used to justify race and class based oppression in all areas of American society.\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Railton 92
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Railton 95
  \item \textsuperscript{25} George Dekker, \textit{The American Historical Romance} (Cambridge: University Press, 1987)
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Cecelia Tichi, \textit{New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans Through Whitman} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979) 174
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Brook Thomas, \textit{The Pioneers, Or the Sources of American Legal History: a Critical Tale,” American Quarterly}, Vol. 36, No. 1. (Spring, 1984): 111
  \item \textsuperscript{29} Richard Slotkin, \textit{The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization} (New York: Atheneum, 1985)
\end{itemize}
Similarly, while Cooper may have been creating a myth of the individual, he also may have been creating a mythic sense of the wilderness. In “A Puritan in the Wilderness: Natty Bumppo's Language & America's Nature Today,” Paul K. Johnston argues that The Pioneers played a key role in creating the romanticized vision of wilderness that William Cronon cautioned against in “The Trouble with Wilderness, or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.”

“Cooper's The Pioneers is a crucial text in American cultural history in that it served to transform the Puritans' Biblical notion of wilderness into the secularized yet nevertheless still sacred notion of wilderness that became increasingly important in American culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,” he wrote.

Others have praised Cooper as an avant garde environmentalist. In “James Fenimore Cooper: Pioneer of the Environmental Movement,” Hugh C. MacDougall wrote that “The Pioneers introduced two of the three fundamental ideas of the environmental movement: the conservation of natural resources for man, and the beauty of nature and the wilderness.” In “James Fenimore Cooper and the Conservation Schism,” Nelson Van Valen contends that “that the first major struggle between utilitarian and preservationist was not that between Pinchot and Muir over California's Yosemite National Park but the almost equally famous, albeit fictional, contest between two equally redoubtable antagonists, Marmaduke Temple and Nathaniel Bumppo, over New York's Lake Otsego wilderness.” In “Cooper's ‘Course of Empire’: Mountains and the Rise and Fall of American Civilization in The Last of the Mohicans, The Spy, and The Pioneers,” Ian Marshall places The Pioneers in a continuum of the “Leatherstocking Tales” that he says mirrors Thomas Cole’s “Course of Empire” paintings, which shows the cycle of man’s conquest of nature followed by nature’s return. The Pioneers, according to Marshall,

---

32 Johnston
is in the stage of consummation, as pastoral gives way to civilization, which ultimately is followed by ruin.

Class distinctions are another focus of scholarship for some. In his work, *James Fenimore Cooper, Novelist of Manners*, Donald Darnell describes *The Pioneers* as Cooper’s version of de Crevecour’s “Letters of an American Farmer”, albeit without a villainous land baron.³⁶ Instead, he wrote, *The Pioneers* treats class distinctions gently and Temple is “respected by one and all and governs by reason and example.” Interestingly, Darnell argues that Cooper, rather than use religion to show any kind of democratic bent, instead uses it to “index a character’s social status.” Episcopalianism is the religion of the upper class, other Protestant sects make up the majority of the common people, and those that find fault with pastor Grant’s compromise service are the “lower-class characters and villains” of the novel, he argues.³⁷

In “Landownership and Representation of Social Conflict in *The Pioneers*,” Douglas Buccholz presents a Marxist interpretation of *The Pioneers* in which the characters of Temple and Natty (among others) are placed as representatives of classes in the framework of the capitalist owner-worker dichotomy. Natty’s eventual trial, he wrote, “is a result of the nature of the conflict itself -- that between a primeval, subsistence mode of production closely tied to the cycles of abundance and scarcity in the material world, and a ‘secondary’ system of organized and rationalized surplus production, based on class exploitation.”³⁸

In “Resisting Women: ‘Feminist’ Students and Cooper's *The Pioneers*, with a few Thoughts Concerning Pedagogical Approaches to *The Prairie*,”³⁹ Anne L. Bower of The Ohio State University—Marion discusses what she discovered while teaching *The Pioneers* to an all-female class. Modern female readers see that “Elizabeth's "resignation" to death by fire assures the novel's readers that she is full of religious virtue; her inability to think of removing her dress (or at least part of it) assures readers of her modesty,” yet they are unconvinced that a female

---

³⁷ Darnell 46
would not act more assertively under such duress. Rather than pass judgment either way on Cooper’s intentions, Bower simply notes that:

Certain students decided that Cooper is a crypto-feminist, giving enough powers to his lead female character in *The Pioneers* to subvert the norms of "true womanhood." Others found that he was complicit with the norms, allowing Elizabeth certain freedoms of class, but showing that only because she has the protection of strong males can she exercise her freedoms.

A bountiful source of additional scholarship on Cooper is through James Fenimore Cooper Society Website. Many of the papers referenced above are available through the Society’s online archive.

For understanding general social and political trends in America during the Revolutionary period, Gordon S. Wood’s *The Radicalism of The American Revolution* (winner of the Pulitzer Prize), *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, and *The Rising Glory of America, 1760-1820* are all essential. In each, Wood synthesizes different aspects of American culture to show how the Revolution was far more than a political upheaval; it was a changing set of beliefs among Americans that found its voice in the Revolution, which conversely became the defining identity of Americans. In the same vein, another Pulitzer-prize winner, Bernard Bailyn’s *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, also places social trends at center stage of the Revolutionary era.

Political philosophies and their origins in the post-Revolutionary period are best explained in two complementary books, Linda Kerber’s *Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America* and Lance Banning’s *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology*.

---

40 <http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles.html>
45 For a competing interpretation of the American Revolution that relegates social reform movements to the background in favor of conservative political and economic forces, see Charles A. Beard’s *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1935) Other indispensable scholars in American social history for this time period, particularly in terms of examining the notion of an “American Enlightenment: are Daniel Boorstin, Daniel Meyer, Arthur Schlesinger, Henry May, Henry Steele Commager, and too many others to list.
For an understanding of the Revolutionary era in New York State specifically, Edward Countryman’s *A People in Revolution: The American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760-1790*\(^{47}\) applies Bailyn and Wood’s notion of a social revolution to that arena. Sung Bok Kim’s *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York: Manorial Society, 1664-1775*\(^{48}\) offers further study of the landlord-tenant relationships of pre-Revolutionary rural New York.

Religious thought in early America is the subject of numerous books, including Alan Heimert’s *Religion and the American Mind from The Great Awakening to the Revolution,*\(^{49}\) Perry Miller’s *Errand Into the Wilderness,*\(^{50}\) Frank Lambert’s *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America,*\(^{51}\) Nathan O. Hatch’s *The Democratization of American Christianity,*\(^{52}\) Bryan LeBeau’s *Religion In America to 1865.*\(^{53}\) All these, and countless works, place religion at the center of the social upheaval leading to the Revolution and some, notably Heimert and Miller, place religion above politics in the American revolutionary consciousness.

The experience of women in the era is the subject of Linda K. Kerber’s *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America.*\(^{54}\) In this book, Kerber shows how women developed their social and political identity during and after the Revolution, eventually settling into the roles as “republican mothers.” Carol Berkin’s, *First Generations: Women in Colonial America*\(^{55}\) builds upon this and other scholarship to show a wide array of women’s experiences in the new world, incorporating different time periods, races and geographical locations to show how women’s roles and identities changed and evolved.

Nancy Cott’s *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*\(^{56}\) examines how women were both bound together and bound down by their separate domestic sphere. Mary Beth Norton’s *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the*


\(^{52}\) Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989)


As I. Bernard Cohen has written, the role of science as part of the founding principles of America is a topic that has been somewhat neglected. However, Cohen’s Science and the Founding Fathers: Science in the Political Thought of Jefferson, Franklin, Adams and Madison²⁰ does a great deal to change that. John C., Greene’s “American Science Comes of Age, 1780-1820”²¹ and Hyman Kuritz’s “The Popularization of Science in Nineteenth Century America”²² are both good resources on the topic as well.

William Cronon’s Changes In the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England²³ provides an ecological history of New England, before and after the arrival of Europeans. For understanding how Americans’ general notions of wilderness have evolved, Roderick Nash’s Wilderness and the American Mind²⁴ is an excellent study, as is Cronon’s essay “The Trouble With Wilderness, Or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.”²⁵

Richard Slotkin provides several interesting interpretations of the American frontier in Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization,²⁶ in which he argues that the frontier is a mythic construction which either justified or masked a host of racial and social injustices taking place in the name of American expansion. Mary Lawlor examines the

---

western literature that contributed to this myth in Recalling the Wild: Naturalism and the Closing of the American West.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{67} Mary Lawlor, \textit{Recalling the Wild: Naturalism and the Closing of the American West} (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000)
CHAPTER 1: RELIGION

Introduction

It is fitting that first several hundred pages or so of the book span only a day and a half period encompassing Christmas Day, 1793, as The Pioneers provides important insights into the religious fabric of the fringe settlements in the late 18th century.

Bernard Bailyn wrote that while historical interpretations of the Revolutionary period based on religious theories of a “covenant with God” are somewhat limited because by the late 18th century, Puritanism had been “softened in its denominational rigor by many hands until it could be received, with minor variations, by almost the entire spectrum of American Protestantism.” Still, he continues, there was an inherent and shared sense of a divine mission in the minds of the settlers “that the colonization of British America had been an event designed by the hand of God to satisfy his ultimate aims.”

The Pioneers reflects both halves of this equation. On one hand, it shows a backwater of American religion that is often overlooked by historians who tend to focus on the fiery egalitarian ministers and evangelical communities of the day rather than those areas where a minister of any denomination was a luxury and people were willing to overlook differences in religious forms in order to observe their faiths. In areas like Cooper’s Templeton, a common ground had to be reached between denominations, necessitating the dilution of any radical or controversial tenets.

On the other hand, The Pioneers also starkly depicts efforts by white settlers to impose their religious beliefs on indigenous peoples. Chingachgook’s tepid acceptance of Christianity, and his ultimate rejection in favor of his own tenets of faith sheds light on this important tension between settlers and natives.

Between these two seemingly contradictory elements, we see a picture of a society that is attempting to imprint its institutions on a new land and old peoples, even as they have not yet established the changing and evolving meaning of those institutions among themselves.

---

68 Bailyn 32
Diversity

In Cooper’s Templeton, we see a mélange of different denominations, what Bailyn called “almost the entire spectrum of American Protestantism.” For the most part, the townspeople seem to fit into Bryan LeBeau’s definition of New England “liberal Christianity.”

The central doctrinal characteristic of the movement was God’s role as architect and governor of the universe, but without the wrath associated with Him by Calvinist Puritans. Benevolence became the deity’s chief characteristic, and people were no longer consigned to heaven or hell irrespective of their actual beliefs or willful deeds. Man became a free agent. God’s grace continued to be necessary for salvation, but liberals showed much greater confidence in man’s ability to effect his own salvation.⁶⁹

Religion on the frontier was not always the same as that in the cities. Disparate groups seeking new opportunity left established communities with their established churches and their religious ferment. To be sure, Western New York did undergo its fair share of revival efforts in the late 18th and early 19th centuries leading up to Charles Gradison Finney’s efforts in the Second Great Awakening, but for the most part Cooperstown appears to be left out of this phenomenon.⁷⁰

As Taylor notes, William Cooper himself was not an overly religious man.⁷¹ Similarly, one character in The Pioneers describes Temple – who represents William Cooper - as being “over-carelessness about his soul. It’s neither a Methodie, nor a Papish, nor Parsbetyrian, that he is, but just nothing at all; and it’s hard to think that he, ‘who will not fight the good fight, under the banners of a rig’lar church, in this world, will be mustered among the chosen in heaven.’”⁷²

The inhabitants of Cooperstown were themselves apparently not the most religious people either. “[O]n Sunday they either went a hunting or fishing, or else collected in taverns and loitered away the day.”⁷³ Observers from other communities described them as “a Sabbath breaking, irreligious lot.” “Neither the brewery nor the Freemasonic lodge encourage public sobriety or a quiet Sabbath.”⁷⁴ James Fenimore Cooper was more generous with the

---

⁶⁹ LeBeau 85-6
⁷¹ Taylor 27
⁷² Cooper 147
⁷³ William Cooper as cited in Taylor 213
⁷⁴ Taylor 213
townspeople, suggesting – perhaps facetiously - that while Saturday night was “a time kept sacred by a large portion of the settlers,” nor would they execute an arrest warrant on the Sabbath Sunday either and would thus wait 26 hours to act.\textsuperscript{75}

More important than the relative piousness of the settlers is the diversity of sects that the community contained and the effect this had in terms of breaking down church walls. With many different beliefs represented, there is a certain democratization of the church that occurs here. The diversity of religious factions in rural New York is evident from the outset. On the first page Cooper wrote, on the road from New York City to Templeton, “places for the worship of God abound with that frequency which characterizes a moral and reflecting people and with that variety of exterior and canonical government which flows from unfettered liberty of conscience.”\textsuperscript{76} In Templeton, that same diversity exists, but with only one church building to accommodate all the differing faiths. Cooper wrote that “there was certainly a great variety of opinions on the subject of grace and free will among the tenantry of Marmaduke, and, when we take into consideration the variety of the religious instruction which they received, it can easily be seen that it could not well be otherwise.”\textsuperscript{77}

Although Richard and a handful of others are Episcopalians and seek to leave the imprint of their beliefs on the local church gatherings, it is Temple’s liberality on the subject that calms the concerns of the local residents. When Richard attempts to direct the Christmas service toward “the forms of the Protestant Episcopal Church,” the townspeople become annoyed as “this annunciation excited great commotion among the different sectaries.” However, most were “mindful of the liberality, or rather the laxity, of Marmaduke on the subject of sectarianism, [and] thought it most prudent to be silent.”\textsuperscript{78} The service itself exemplifies the trend to a common ground, sometimes quite humorously. The first time Pastor Grant bends his knees to pray, “the congregation so far imitated his example as to resume their seats; whence no succeeding effort of the divine, during the evening, was able to remove them in a body.”\textsuperscript{79} And even though Grant attempts to weave in a little of his own sectarian beliefs, he is deft enough and aware enough of his audience to avoid causing any consternation. It is important at this time to

\begin{thebibliography}{79}
\bibitem{75} Cooper 323
\bibitem{76} Cooper 13
\bibitem{77} Cooper 93-4
\bibitem{78} Cooper 99
\bibitem{79} Cooper 119
\end{thebibliography}
recall that Grant is a new pastor in the town, which previously had received only an occasional itinerant minister.

We have already said that, among the endless variety of religious instructors, the settlers were accustomed to hear every denomination urge its own distinctive precepts, and to have found one indifferent to this interesting subject would have been destructive to his influence. But Mr. Grant so happily blended the universally received opinions of the Christian faith with the dogmas of his own church that, although none were entirely exempt from the influence of his reasons, very few took any alarm at the innovation.  

Donald Darnell argues that Cooper actually uses religion to “index a character’s social status,” equating Episcopalians with the upper class, those who find flaws with Grant’s sermon as the lower class, and everyone else as the common, or middle class. This argument is flawed on several levels. First of all, Temple himself is a Quaker. Second, Darnell dismisses Doolittle as among the lower class although, despite his moral failings, Doolittle remains close with Richard and is elevated to magistrate when Richard becomes sheriff. If anything, Cooper demonstrates the irrelevancy of religion in regard to social status or mobility.

It is also important here to remember that the United States was at the time, despite all the talk of an “errand in the wilderness” or a “city on a hill,” sorely lacking in trained ministers. In 1775, there were only about 1,800 ministers in the entire nation. In 1814, Lyman Beecher announced that there were only about 3,000 “educated ministers of the Gospel.” As Cooper himself explains, the Anglican church itself had suffered in America after the Revolutionary War as Loyalist ministers returned home and native English ministers were hesitant to move overseas to the nation that had just fought theirs. “Before the war of the Revolution, the English Church was supported in the colonies, with much interest, by some of its adherents in the mother country, and a few of the congregations were very amply endowed. But, for the season, after the independence of the States was established, this sect of Christians languished for the want of the

80 Cooper 97
81 Darnell 45-6
82 See Cooper 32
83 Hatch 4
84 Hatch 92
highest order of its priesthood.” However, as tensions thawed between England and America, the Anglican priests, like Grant returned.

Nevertheless, the shortage of ministers, especially on the frontier, was an important factor in creating the melting pot of democratic religion. In a two-month tour of western Pennsylvania during the 1790s, Charles Beatty came across numerous settlements that had no minister of their own. In his journal of the adventure, he wrote of a settlement “desirous of having a minister settled among them as soon as may be…” and another that “purpose joining the Tuskerora settlement, at present, till such time as they shall be able to support a minister themselves.”

One of the key factors to be considered in the discussion of the lack of ministers in many communities on the frontier is the separation of church and state that had been pushed so strongly by some of the Founding Fathers, most notably Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson’s 1779 Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom in Virginia decreed that “[t]hat to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness.” Similarly, in 1782, a court in Massachusetts upheld a suit there by a resident who did not want to pay taxes to support a minister of a different denomination than his own.

Yet the real debate over public financing of religion had its roots not in the 1770s but rather several decades earlier, and not in Massachusetts or Virginia but in New York. As Bailyn noted, “Before the battle was over, [William] Livingston and his collaborators had brought into question the right of any one religious group to claim for itself exclusive privileges of public support, and had advanced for the first time in American history the conception that public institutions, because they were public, should be should be if not secular at least non-denominational.”

---

85 Cooper 98
86 Charles Beatty; The Journal of a Two Months Tour; With a View of Promoting Religion among the Frontier Inhabitants of Pennsylvania and of Introducing Christianity among the Indians To the Westward of the Alegh-geny Mountains (Edinburgh: MacCliesh and Ogle, 1799) 6, 8
87 Peterson 252
88 Bailyn 250
This had its effect on the smaller and poorer villages of the frontier. “In the newer villages of the frontier, churches were slow to organize…” Cooperstown was no different: “Institutionalized religion lagged in Cooperstown behind the development of more worldly associations.” By 1795, some residents had put together a private fund for the establishment of a permanent minister, but “because they espoused diverse Protestant denominations, they bickered over which ministers should receive invitations and money to preach in Cooperstown...” Lack of money took its toll on religious stability, even in established towns like Templeton. In The Pioneers, pastor Grant has come to Cooperstown after years as a poor itinerant preacher. His daughter, Louisa, recalls to Elizabeth that “My father has spent many years as a missionary in the new countries, where his people were poor, and frequently we have been without bread; unable to buy, and ashamed to beg, because we would not disgrace his sacred calling.” Despite the relatively improved circumstances he encounters in Templeton, Grant still is ultimately forced to leave the area for greener pastures rather than have to “toil in the fields.”

Christianizing the “Heathens”

While Americans were themselves members of a diverse group of sects, they were generally united in the belief that the Indians needed to be brought to Christianity. Gordon S. Wood wrote “Missionary, education, tract and Bible societies – some even composed of combinations of the various denominations – spilled out to moralize and tame the barbarians, both in the American west and throughout the world.” In The Pioneers, Cooper uses Indian John to show the effect of missionary Christianity on native peoples.

The opinion of the missionary pastor Grant toward natives is apparent in his mistaken conclusion that Oliver is a native himself. When Oliver reacts passionately to a comment by Grant, he tells his daughter “It is the hereditary violence of a native’s passion, my child...He is mixed with the blood of the Indians, you have heard; and neither the refinements of education...
nor the advantages of our excellent liturgy have been able entirely to eradicate the evil.”

Oliver, however, is actually Christian born and bred, unlike Indian John, who was supposedly converted by the Moravians. This “Christianization” of native Americans was welcomed by some and missionary writers highlighted those successes. John Freeman examined missionary writings and found a “not too surprising similarity.” One girl “was fervent in pleading for her young companions and expressed much gratitude for the mercy of God to her,” one missionary wrote in 1834. Another wrote that a convert told him “only one chief now. Jesus is my great chief.”

Others, however, were not so accepting of a new religion. In one of the more eloquent statements of the time Seneca Chief Red Jacket told white missionaries that:

> You have got our country, but are not satisfied; you want to force your religion upon us…. Brother, you say there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit. If there is but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agreed, as you can all read the Book?…We also have a religion which was given to our forefathers and has been handed down to us, their children. We worship in that way. It teaches us to be thankful for all the favors we receive, to love each other, and to be united. We never quarrel about religion. Brother, we do not wish to destroy your religion or take it from you. We only want to enjoy our own.

Later, Chief Seattle of Washington’s Suquamish Indians rejected Christianity outright, saying “Your God is not our God! Your God loves your people and hates mine! He folds his strong protecting arms lovingly about the paleface and leads him by the hand as a father leads an infant son. But, He has forsaken His Red children, if they really are His. Our God, the Great Spirit, seems also to have forsaken us.”

Indian John’s “conversion,” which ends in his return to his native beliefs, provides an interesting insight into this disparity. John had supposedly been converted by Moravian ministers several decades earlier, but he seems to be simply trying – unsuccessfully – to assimilate Christianity into an existing belief system. On Christmas Eve, Pastor Grant tells John, “As you have taken up the cross, and become a follower of good and an eschewer of evil, I trust I shall see you before the altar, with a contrite heart and a meek spirit.” But the Indians terse response

---

95 Cooper 136
97 Erik Bruun and Jay Crosby Eds.; Our Nation’s Archive: A History of the United States in Documents (Black Dog and Leventhal, 1999) 108
98 Bruun and Crosby 313
believes the tenuousness of his Christianity: “John will come,” said the Indian, betraying no surprise; though he did not understand all the terms used by the other.\textsuperscript{99}

At times, John seems to accept Christianity as an adjunct to his existing beliefs or, at least (in the vein of Red Jacket), an acceptable form of worship that does not oppose their belief system. For example, he tells Pastor Grant:

Father, I thank you. The words that have been said, since the rising moon, have gone upward, and the Great Spirit is glad. What you have told your children, they will remember, and be good…If Chingachgook lives to travel toward the setting sun, after his tribe, and the Great Spirit carries him over the lakes and mountains with the breath of his body, he will tell his people the good talk he has heard; and they will believe him; for who can say that Mohegan has ever lied?\textsuperscript{100}

This appears to be in keeping with the custom of many northeastern Indians, who saw the introduction of a new God as a transaction of sorts. Once the word of God was given to Indians, they could interpret it according to their existing belief systems and incorporate it therein. In return, they believed they offered valuable insights to the Christians. However, to missionaries “the gift of God was a one-way not reciprocal process…Such isolationism, of course, went against the Indian practice at all levels and there is evidence that allegations of witchcraft against missionaries were largely the result of their violation of norms of cooperation and reciprocity.”\textsuperscript{101}

At other times, John just seems disgusted with the hypocrisy of Christianity. When Elizabeth praises him for accepting God and learning to live in peace, he replies:

Daughter, since John was young, he has seen the white man from Frontinac come down on his white brothers at Albany and fight. Did they fear God? He has seen his English and his American fathers burying their tomahawks in each other’s brains, for this very land. Did they fear God, and live in peace? He has seen the land pass away from the Fire-eater, and his children, and the child of his child, and a new chief set over the country. Did they live in peace who did this? Did they fear God?\textsuperscript{102}

John also seems to equate his Christianization with his own moral and physical self-abasement. After telling Oliver that the white man has won out over his people because of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{99} Cooper 90
\item \textsuperscript{100} Cooper 127
\item \textsuperscript{101} Nicholas Griffiths and Fernando Cervantes, Eds.; \textit{Spiritual Encounters: Interactions Between Christianity and Native Religions in Colonial America} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) 58
\item \textsuperscript{102} Cooper 382
\end{itemize}
alcohol ("rum is his tomahawk," he says), Oliver asks him why he drinks and allows the white man to make him a "beast."

"Beast! is John a beast?" replied the Indian slowly; "yes; you say no lie, child of the Fire-eater! John is a beast…My fathers came from the shores of the salt lake. They fled before rum… But warriors and traders with light eyes followed them. One brought the long knife and one brought rum…The evil spirit was in their jugs, and they let him loose. Yes yes—you say no lie, Young Eagle; John is a Christian beast."[emphasis added]

Ultimately, however, John’s choice is clear. When his life is almost at an end, he rejects Christian beliefs in favor of his heritage. As John is dying, Grant asks Natty, "does he recall the promises of the mediation? And trust his salvation to the Rock of Ages?" But in his death throes, John finally has returned completely to his own beliefs.: "No—no—he trusts only to the Great Spirit of the savages, and to his own good deeds. He thinks, like all his people, that he is to be young agin, and to hunt, and be happy to the end of eternity. It’s pretty much the same with all colors, parson…"[emphasis added]

Natty, for his part, views Christianity as a negative influence on his Indian friends. Commenting on the Christianization of local tribes, he says, "It’s my opinion that, had they been left to themselves, there would be no such doings now about the head-waters of the two rivers, and that these hills mought have been kept as good hunting-ground by their right owner…"[emphasis added]

Still, despite feeling that conversion was a negative thing for John and his people in this world, Natty himself is a Christian who believes in a single benevolent God that will bring them together in the next:

[Natty]"Ye laid the Major’s head to the west, and Mohegan’s to the east, did ye, lad?" [Oliver:]"At your request it was done,"
"It’s so best," said the hunter; "they thought they had to journey different ways, children: though there is One greater than all, who’ll bring the just together, at His own time"[emphasis added]

Conclusion

---

103 Cooper 177
104 Cooper 401
105 Cooper 149
106 Cooper 430
Religion on the frontier, as we have seen, was not necessarily a central or guiding force among settlers, but it was an institution through which they could come together, despite their differences. And although it did not act as the imperative guiding their own morality, that did not keep settlers from trying to impose it on others. Even if they could not agree about Christianity themselves, that would not stop them from spreading it forward among the former tenants of their new home.

Again, the settlers were bringing new institutions into a new land to impose them there, but they also were undergoing a metamorphosis of their own. Americans still had a covenant with God to create a Christian nation, but their own versions of Christianity were being blended or blunted by practical logistics. On the fringe of society, each sect could not maintain a minister or its own church, so different sects learned to come together and to share, so that the more radical versions each was “softened in its denominational rigor,” as Bailyn put it. And, although religion remained an important cultural institution, we have seen how it may have lost some of its moral imperative in frontier communities like Cooperstown/Templeton. So, the question remains, if religion was not the basis for morality, then what was?
CHAPTER 2: VIRTUE and MORALITY

Introduction

When the townspeople attend their Christmas service at the church, “the two sexes were separated by an area in the center of the room.” While this is one of the few times when Cooper demonstrates a physical or even class-system division between the genders, he does convey an insight into the social roles of the sexes in regard to American virtues and morality.

Virtue and morality were considered essential conditions for the republic to flourish. As George Washington said in his farewell address, “it is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.” This notion applied to both men and women. While women were entering a new role as “republican mothers,” political philosophers were looking for men to exercise natural virtues and morality to be good citizens of the new nation. However, as we see in The Pioneers, innate morality could come into conflict with institutions in a nation of laws, especially a nation of new laws in a land with previously established codes of behavior. As Natty tells Temple, “I think one old law is worth two new ones…Your titles and your farms are all new together…but laws should be equal, and not more for one than another.”

Again, the settlers were imposing a new set of institutions and beliefs not onto a blank canvass, but rather onto a land where informal codes and long-standing beliefs already existed.

Republican Motherhood

In addition to her role as the character returning to Templeton through whom Cooper can present the dramatic rate of growth and change in the town, Elizabeth also helps provide solid insight into the place of women in the Post-Revolutionary society. Although she appears only sporadically, she offers an opportunity to examine the role of women both individually and also as a class.

---

107 Cooper 116
108 Bruun and Crosby 191
109 Cooper 153
Elizabeth enters the novel returning from a school – probably a finishing school of sorts - in New York City. At the time, the education of women was becoming a topic of debate in the new republic with one publication declaring that there was “nothing of higher importance to a nation than the education, the habits, the amusements of the Fair Sex.” Early American women were expected to be the moral center for the new nation.

The idea was that women had an important guiding role in the morality of a nation. “But the influence of women in forming the disposition of youth is not the sole reason why their education should be particularly guarded, their influence in controlling the manners of a nation is another powerful reason,” Noah Webster wrote in 1790.

Four decades later, Alexis de Tocqueville echoed this sentiment, writing “No free communities ever existed without morals and…morals are the work of women.” Simply, women “would be named guardians of the virtues essential to the republic and socializing agents of the next generation.”

Several times Elizabeth is presented as the conscience or moral center for the men in the novel. During the Christmas turkey shoot, it is Elizabeth who offers Natty the money needed to enter the contest. Recognizing both his poverty and his need for the bird, she deftly appeals to his gallantry rather than insult him by simply giving him the money as charity. “We are both adventurers and this is my knight…Lead on Sir Leatherstocking,” she says of the arrangement. When there is a dispute about a misfire, Natty says, “I think Miss Elizabeth’s thoughts should be taken. I’ve known the squaws give very good counsel when the Indians had been dumfounded.” This comment is important in that it underscores that while Americans were still developing their ideas of republican motherhood and women’s role in society, Natty and the native cultures he indirectly represents here implicitly recognize the value of women’s “counsel.”

Elizabeth deems him the loser in the dispute, but then offers to underwrite his next attempt. When Natty wins and offers her the bird, she instead allows him to keep it, thanking him for the demonstration of his shooting prowess. Natty appreciates the gestures and later comments.

110 James 102
111 Quoted in Wood, Rising Glory 165
113 Berkin 200
114 Cooper, 179
115 Cooper 188
that "I won't mistrust the gal; she has an eye like a full-grown buck!" Elizabeth has impressed Natty because not only because she has acted impartially, but also because she has done so in an arena unbefitting traditional European notions of a lady ("I admire the taste which would introduce a lady to such scenes," Temple chastises Richard when he discovers Elizabeth at the match). In this scene, Elizabeth has acted as both his benefactor and an arbiter of fairness in the competition, when the men had been on the verge of becoming hostile over the results of the match.

Later, Elizabeth prevails upon her father to go lightly on Natty, who recently saved her life from a panther attack. She then asks Edwards. "Do I appear like one who would permit the man that has just saved her life to linger in a jail for so small a sum as this fine?" Then, she offers calming counsel, telling Oliver that Natty "has friends as well as judges in us. Do not let the old man experience unnecessary uneasiness at this rupture." She goes on to assure Oliver that Natty will be looked after and then wishes Oliver "happiness, and warmer friends," and Oliver responds warmly – "all violence had left him." At a time of heated dispute between Oliver and her own father, Elizabeth has played the role of peacekeeper, reminding Oliver that she is a moral soul and that she will not allow anything bad to happen.

Elizabeth later challenges her own father on whether the law is always just. "Surely, sir," cried the impatient Elizabeth, "those laws that condemn a man like the Leather-Stocking to so severe a punishment, for an offence that even I must think very venial, cannot be perfect in themselves." Although Temple dismisses her, we see later through the characters of Natty and Kirby that Elizabeth is indeed speaking with moral authority.

Elizabeth goes on to help Natty after his escape from jail, and when the fire threatens her life on the mountain she remains strong. In the face of death she declares that Oliver should leave her and save himself. "Indeed, indeed, neither you nor John must be sacrificed to my safety."

It is here that Edwards declares his love for her and Cooper relates it in fitting terms: "I have been driven to the woods in despair, but your society has tamed the lion.
within me. If I have wasted my time in degradation, ‘twas you that charmed me to it. If I have forgotten my name and family, your form supplied the place of memory. If I have forgotten my wrongs, ‘twas you that taught me charity.”

Again, this notion of women taming men and providing the moral center is evident. This is not the first time Oliver’s wild passions have been put into check by Elizabeth.

Nina Baym argues that Elizabeth is an archetype for the subservient female characters in the other “Leatherstocking Tales.” Women, Baym says are objects of transaction among men, especially in terms of marriage and “filial obedience.” “Feminine dependency,” she continues, “is acted out in all the Leatherstocking Tales by the rescue of the female from external dangers.” However, this reading does little justice to Elizabeth. Certainly the latter statement is true, as Elizabeth is rescued several times from external dangers. However, in the most glaring cases – the panther and the fire scenes – she is rescued not by her eventual husband but rather by Natty, who is hardly a suitor.

Rather, Natty and Elizabeth have a decidedly different relationship. Elizabeth chooses to act deferentially to Natty at the turkey shoot in order to see Natty shoot – even as their relative social ranks are quite obvious - and she rewards him with the bird. The only reason she is in the fire in the first place is because Natty enlisted her to buy him gunpowder and bring it to her on the mountain. By agreeing to aid him in his flight from law and to venture back into the woods where she had encountered the panther, Elizabeth exhibits her own independence and strength. Also, these actions are clearly in defiance of her father’s authority, so “filial obedience” does not really apply to her either. Rather than a simple commodity, Elizabeth is a strong woman who provides a moral center for the novel, just as women did for early American society.

However, women also had another, more practical role in early America, that of maintaining the homes of men. When Elizabeth arrives, Remarkable Pettibone, the mistress of Temple’s home, views her as “the lady who was to supplant her in the administration of the domestic economy.” Women in the 18th century were far from obtaining equality, yet they had claimed ownership of their own sphere of influence, that of maintaining the household. The domestic economy, as it was sometimes called, or housewifery, could be a demanding and complicated occupation. According to Catherine Beecher:

122 Cooper 393
[A woman] has constantly changing domestics, with all varieties of temper and habits, whom she must govern, instruct, and direct; she is required to regulate the finances of the domestic state, and constantly to adapt expenditures to the means and to the relative claims of each department. She has direction of the kitchen, where ignorance, forgetfulness, and awkwardness are to be so regulated, that the various operations shall each start at the right time, and shall be in completeness at the same given hour. She has the claims of society to meet, calls to receive and return, and the duties of hospitality to sustain.\footnote{124 Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, \textit{The American Woman's Home}, c. 1841, Project Gutenberg Ebook, December, 2002 <http://www.gutenberg.net/etext04/mrwmh10.txt>}

For the most part, this is a role that women were supposed to accept upon marriage. “In America, the independence of woman is irrevocably lost in the bonds of matrimony…” Alexis de Tocqueville wrote. “[I]n the United States, the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes woman within the narrow circle of domestic interests and duties, and forbids her to step beyond it.”\footnote{125 Heffner 235-236}

Although Elizabeth is unmarried until the end of the novel, Cooper circumvents this problem by posting her in a de facto role of “lady of the house.”

“My daughter has now grown to woman’s estate, and is from this moment mistress of my house,” said the Judge; “it is proper that all who live with me address her as Miss Temple.”

“Do tell!” exclaimed Remarkable, a little aghast; “well, who ever heerd of a young woman’s being called Miss? If the Judge had a wife now, I shouldn’t think of calling her anything but Miss Temple; but—”

“Having nothing but a daughter you will observe that style to her, if you please, in future,” interrupted Marmaduke.\footnote{126 Cooper 101}

Cooper has allowed Elizabeth to assume the role of mistress of the house without yet being married, a device that allows him to demonstrate the role of women domestically without sacrificing her role later in the novel as the future wife of Oliver. Through her character we can therefore view the tangible domestic role of women as well as their moral \textit{domesticating} role in the new republic. This dualistic role of women in early American society was critical in that it allowed women to begin to function as political actors, without yet putting them on the political stage. Linda Kerber, who coined the term “republican mother,” wrote that the concept “altered the female domain in which most women had always lived out their lives…” Women now had a
quasi-political role – as moral influences on men and on their children. “The concept began to fill the gap left by the political theorists of the Enlightenment.”127

**Innate Morality versus the Law**

While domesticity and genteel morality were the domain of women, Cooper also places an innate morality in Natty, Billy Kirby and Ben “Pump” Stubbs. Those three men are the least educated of the men in the book, but despite their differences of opinion and personality clashes with each other, they abide by a basic code of fairness that transcends laws and other societal constructions.

Although Federalist-leaning in his politics, there is a definite hint of Jeffersonian faith in the common man in Cooper’s writings. He reflects Jeffersonian notions that "[t]he practice of morality being necessary for the well-being of society, [our Creator] has taken care to impress its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain."128 Although unschooled, the three characters are guided by notions of fairness and loyalty over any social conventions.

Ironically, it was the innate morality and incorruptibility of men like these that was believed to be the keystone of support for republican conventions and institutions. The Founding Fathers, according to Wood, wanted a society in which individuals would naturally cohere with each other and the state from a sense of benevolence and morality. Morality that depended on outside forces such as divine grace was deficient for their purposes. “All that was needed was to allow human nature ‘fair play’ and it would take care of itself.”129 The interrelationships between Kirby, Natty and Ben all show this theory come to fruition.

For example, Billy and Natty disagree over nature itself. Where Natty is constantly disapproving of “wasty ways,” Billy is the happy-go-lucky logger (Cooper uses the term “good-natured” repeatedly when Kirby’s character appears) who proclaims that “Now, I call no country much improved that is pretty well covered with trees.”130

129 Wood, *Radicalism* 216
130 Cooper 219
Their adversarial natures are evident at the Christmas turkey shoot; “Between him and the Leather-Stocking there had long existed a jealous rivalry on the point of skill with the rifle.” Both are proud men, with little in common, yet when Kirby is enlisted to arrest Natty, Kirby agrees in principle with Natty:

“That for his rifle!” cried Billy; “he’d no more hurt me with his rifle than he’d fly. He’s a harmless creatur’, and I must say that I think he has as good right to kill deer as any man on the Patent. It’s his main support, and this is a free country, where a man is privileged to follow any calling he likes.”

“According to that doctrine,” said Jotham, “anybody may shoot a deer.”

“This is the man’s calling, I tell you,” returned Kirby, “and the law was never made for such as he.”

When things become heated, Kirby does not back down to Natty, and there are tense moments, yet it is obvious neither truly wants to hurt the other. When Natty offers to throw out the panther scalps to cover the fine for shooting the deer out of season, Doolittle does not want to accept it because his true motive is to see what is in Natty’s hut. But to Kirby, this simple transaction makes sense: “Well, that’s fair, squire; he forgives the county his demand, and the county should forgive him the fine; it’s what I call an even trade, and should be concluded on the spot. I like quick dealings, and what’s fair ‘twixt man and man.”

This notion of a “fair” deal “twixt man and man” seems a critical notion to Cooper’s sense of morality, but also to a fundamental conflict between such morality and the letter of the law. As Charles Hansford Adams puts it, Natty’s “ability to guide his acts according to an intuitive knowledge of good is a constant rebuke to settlement civilization, where the law is divorced from man’s nature and defined in opposition to his will.” The letter of the law and its semantic interpretations are flawed. It is in Natty’s departure at the end of the novel that Robert Long explains, “he reveals finally that in being subject only to natural law he will not recognize the imperfection of civil law by which men must live.”

At the trial, Natty and Kirby break into a personal conversation in which Cooper illustrates the superiority of such interpersonal relations to the law itself:

131 Cooper 182  
132 Cooper 318  
133 Cooper 321  
134 Adams 56  
“Ah! Billy,” said Natty, shaking his head, “‘twas a lucky thought in me to throw out the hide, or there might have been blood spilt; and I’m sure, if it had been your’n, I should have mourned it sorely the little while I have to stay.”

“Well, Leather-Stocking,” returned Billy, facing the prisoner with a freedom and familiarity that utterly disregarded the presence of the court, “as you are on the subject it may be that you’ve no—”

After Temple interrupts them, the two men again break into amicable conversation until Temple again interjects. Kirby’s next comment shows how in his mind all was already settled under the notion of fairness. When Natty’s lawyer asks Kirby if “you settled the matter with Natty amicably on the spot, did you…And you parted friends? and you would never have thought of bringing the business up before a court, hadn’t you been subpoenaed?” Kirby responds that “I don’t think I should; he gi’n the skin, and I didn’t feel a hard thought, though Squire Doolittle got some affronted.

Neither Natty nor Kirby is fazed by the gravity of the proceedings. They see only a simple matter of fairness that they can work out on their own. Notice how quickly they break into a conversation “with a freedom and familiarity that utterly disregarded the presence of the court” or how it never even occurred to Kirby to make a legal issue out of this. Throughout the trial it is evident that Natty doesn’t even understand what he is charged with. When he is acquitted of striking Doolittle, he is completely confused: “No, no, I’ll not deny but that I took him a little roughly by the shoulders,” said Natty, looking about him with great simplicity, “and that I—”

He then pleads not guilty to using the rifle in defiance of the magistrate because he believes that using the weapon only can mean firing it. “Would Billy Kirby be standing there, d’ye think, if I had used the rifle?,” he says. When he is pronounced guilty, he is isn’t even paying attention and when the Judge calls his name to get his attention, he replies “Here.”

While his lack of understanding about the proceedings is humorous and shows powerfully how Natty’s morality stems from an honest simplicity, the verdict and sentence change the mood dramatically. His plea for a chance to be free to hunt and earn the money to pay his fine rather than be incarcerated is a compelling one. “Where should I get the money?” he asks Temple. “No, no—there’s them that says hard things of you, Marmaduke Temple, but you ain’t

---

136 Cooper 351  
137 Cooper 351  
138 Cooper 348  
139 Cooper 349  
140 Cooper 353
so bad as to wish to see an old man die in a prison, because he stood up for the right. Come, friend, let me pass; it’s long sin’ I’ve been used to such crowds, and I crave to be in the woods agin.” The three-pronged appeal — that he can’t get the money otherwise, that he “stood up for the right” and that he is not used to other people — are met with deaf ears. In fact, Temple sentences him not only to a month in jail, but also time in the stocks. This gratuitous humiliation only adds to the sense of Natty’s innate morality as superior to that of the laws.

Later, when Natty is again to be arrested so the posse can enter the cave, Kirby is part of the posse but agrees with Natty’s proposal to simply wait two hours and enter peacefully. “That’s fair and what’s fair is right,” Kirby tells the sheriff. That notion, that “what’s fair is right,” seems logical and moral, but it is not consistent with the law. Laws have their place, but men can also settle things among themselves — in some cases better than the law can. As Adams wrote, the trial demonstrates “the Judge’s law does indeed often ‘trifle’ with ‘empty distinctions’ while more important human tragedies are ignored.”

Natty and Ben have nothing in common either, and at first Ben thinks Natty is actually a savage who should be dealt with harshly: “That Mister Bump-ho has a handy turn with him in taking off a scalp; and there’s them, in this here village, who say he l’arnt the trade by working on Christian men. If so be that there is truth in the saying, and I commanded along shore here, as your honor does, why, d’ye see, I’d bring him to the gangway for it, yet.” However, when Natty rescues Ben from drowning, Ben instantly changes his heart: “Natty Bumppo, give us your fist. There’s them that says you’re an Indian, and a scalper, but you’ve served me a good turn, and you may set me down for a friend…” Ben shows this loyalty several times later, by going into the stocks and then to jail with Natty on two occasions, by accompanying him on the mountain during the fire and by standing with him to defend the cave from the posse, in defiance of his good friend Richard.

Kirby and Ben also have their disagreements, especially since Ben blames Kirby for his almost drowning in the first place. Nevertheless, after Natty and Ben break out of jail, Ben is too drunk to keep quiet or upright. Although his cart has been “borrowed” for the break-out and he is one of the townspeople supposedly guarding against this kind of thing, Kirby simply covers Ben.

141 Cooper 354
142 Cooper 410
143 Adams 57
144 Cooper 107
145 Cooper 262
with hay in the back of the cart and leads the cart off into the woods. Cooper offers little conversation or commentary for this series of events, but perhaps this is intentional - the unspoken sense of fairness and loyalty among honest and honorable men.

These three characters are, if nothing else, consistently true to their own internal moral codes, unencumbered by either education or adherence to any socially constructed codes. On the other hand, there is a level of foolishness or hypocrisy evidenced in most if not all of the educated, professional men. Richard is often buffoonish, Temple is forced to subjugate feelings about what is right to his obligation as judge and landlord and Doolittle is shown as a coward.

**Conclusion**

In early America, there was a division of labor between the sexes, both physically and morally. Women like Elizabeth are the caretakers of the home just as they are the caretakers of republican morality. While men may be able to resolve differences according to innate moral codes, women are also there to insure that these codes are nurtured and put into practice. They tame and educate the men - Kirby, Natty and Ben can sometimes resolve their differences between themselves as men, based on simple fairness or loyalty, but at other times a woman’s voice is needed to arbitrate, as in the case of the turkey shoot, or to counsel, as in when Elizabeth forces her father to consider the rectitude of punishing Natty.

Wood wrote that this idea of separate spheres of influence between men and women “became the dominant line of thinking on women’s issues in the early Republic.”

Women, it was said, possessed the crucially important talents of civilizing their sons and husbands and of teaching the new republican virtues of affection and benevolence. They had a special responsibility in the home as wives and mothers, which the men could not undertake, for cultivating the moral feelings necessary to hold this sprawling commercial American society together.\(^1\)

Cooper’s men were not completely lost without women’s help. He clearly endowed Natty, Kirby and Ben with inherent moral values, recognizing that such innate morality was of paramount importance to a republican society. Even though the notions of the new society were predicated both on innate morality and adherence to laws, Cooper is unafraid to explore how these two concepts can be at odds in a new land. The innate morality of the frontier individualist

\(^1\) Wood, *Rising Glory* 175-176
and the laws of “civilization” clearly were at odds in Cooper’s Templeton. Again, we see the clash of a new and unfinished social order being imposed on existing norms of behavior. Natty could not exist in the framework of the new laws.

While Cooper himself was Federalist-leaning and ultimately resigned to the imposition of new laws and republicanism in America, it seems clear that he also subscribed to the Jeffersonian belief that “morals were too essential to the happiness of man, to be risked on the uncertain combinations of the head. [Nature] laid their foundation, therefore, in sentiment, not in science.”

CHAPTER 3: PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE and EDUCATION

Introduction

Jefferson’s contention that morality lies in sentiment and not in science is an important one, especially since religious beliefs at the time were to an extent intertwined with science. Many of the founding Fathers were deist, believing in a rational order of the universe in which man could continuously improve his lot through understanding nature and the physical world.

As Wood wrote, “most of the founding fathers had not put much stock in religion, even when they were regular churchgoers…they abhorred ‘that gloomy superstition disseminated by ignorant illiberal preachers’ and looked forward to the day when ‘the phantom of darkness will be dispelled by the rays of science...’”148 Cooper even allows Richard to boastfully describe the town’s house of worship as “the most scientific church in the country.”149

It is very important not to underestimate the importance of science, or at least practical reason, in the young republic. Science and reason were needed to understand and tame a new continent in a new political – and economic - system. Alexis de Tocqueville wrote “those who cultivate the sciences amongst a democratic people are always afraid of losing their way in visionary speculation. They mistrust systems; they adhere closely to the facts, and study facts with their own senses.”150

But science was also just coming into its own in America, and then only truly in the cities. For example, Philadelphia would become an important center for the study of “vertebrate paleontology,” but “the institutional developments that would make this possible were still in embryo in 1815,” according to John C. Greene.151 Until roughly the end of the 18th century and early 19th century, Greene wrote, American science was essentially “a branch of British science”

148 Wood, Radicalism 330
149 Cooper 51
150 Heffner 163
that depended on Europe for everything other than “native talent and the raw data provided by nature.”¹⁵²

Yet American science had its own distinct flavor. As I. Bernard Cohen wrote, “the American nation was conceived in a historical period that is generally known as the Enlightenment, or the great Age of Reason, and science was then esteemed as the highest form of human rationality.”¹⁵³ According to de Tocqueville, this American flavor was decidedly practical in nature and “hardly anyone in the United States devotes himself to the essentially theoretical and abstract portion of human knowledge.”¹⁵⁴

Instead, Americans were more enamored with applied science, with putting knowledge into practical effect. In The Pioneers, particularly applied science and knowledge, is the underpinning of Temple’s desire to produce a self-sustaining, profitable and rationally ordered community. Cooper shows us not only the budding reliance on science, reason and education in the new republic to create practical systems, but also the infancy and shortcomings of some of the ventures it supported. Although the systems were imperfect, that did not deter the settlers from trying to apply them to their new home, regardless of what stood in their way.

Scientific Curiosity

Consider Richard, who is usually depicted showing only his boastful and foolish side. However, even he is a son of the Age of Reason, tracking weather patterns and other developments. Cooper makes a point of showing us Richard’s scientific accoutrements: “A Fahrenheit's thermometer in a mahogany case, and with a barometer annexed, was hung against the wall, at some little distance from the stove, which Benjamin consulted, every half hour, with prodigious exactitude.”¹⁵⁵ These are fine instruments, no doubt expensive, and both of which had been invented in the past century and a half.

Also, Cooper wrote, “among the other pursuits of Richard, he had a passion to keep a register of all passing events; and his diary, which was written in the manner of a journal, or log book, embraced not only such circumstances as affected himself, but observations on the

¹⁵² Greene 22
¹⁵³ Cohen 20
¹⁵⁴ Heffner 164
¹⁵⁵ Cooper 59
weather, and all the occurrences of the family, and frequently of the village.” To this end, “Richard invented a kind of hieroglyphical character, which was intended to note all the ordinary occurrences of a day, such as how the wind blew, whether the sun shone, or whether it rained, the hours, etc.” Interestingly, for all his folly, it is Richard who several times prevails upon Temple with an appeal to reason – and to science.

Applied Science and Financial Speculation – The Sugar Maple

As de Tocqueville wrote, Americans’ desire for knowledge was born of desire for tangible outcomes – particularly pecuniary ones: “Amongst a multitude of men you will find a selfish, mercantile and trading taste for discoveries of the mind…A desire to utilize knowledge is one thing, the pure desire to know is another,” he wrote.

Perhaps the most obvious example of trying to apply scientific principles to the new world is in Temple’s ideas about the sugar maple tree. Temple is concerned that this new, potentially lucrative resource will be misused and wasted whereas he hopes to maximize its potential. “How often have I forbidden the use of the sugar maple in my dwelling!” Temple exclaims when he sees a maple log in his fireplace. “If we go on in this way, twenty years hence we shall want fuel.” Although the sugar maple is abundant, Temple is concerned about worried about how long the resource will last. “The first object of my solicitude,” he tells Richard, “is to protect the sources of this great mine of comfort and wealth from the extravagance of the people themselves. After that, he says, “it will be in season to turn our attention to an improvement in the manufacture of the article.”

Richard replies that educated, scientific minds should be brought in to help improve the product. “I would build a sugar house in the village; I would invite learned men to an investigation of the subject—and such are easily to be found, sir; yes, sir, they are not difficult to find—men who unite theory with practice.” Richard also evokes the Linnaean term for the sugar maple –Acer saccharum – and then doesn’t embarrass himself when he explains how to

---

156 Cooper 333
157 Heffner 166
158 Cooper 100
159 Cooper 210
160 Cooper 211
determine the health of a tree. Science, we are to believe, is the answer to making the best product and the most of it.

Temple also chastises Billy Kirby, the woodsman, for his wastefulness in sugar production:

“It grieves me to witness the extravagance that pervades this country,” said the Judge, “where the settlers trifle with the blessings they might enjoy, with the prodigality of successful adventurers. You are not exempt from the censure yourself, Kirby, for you make dreadful wounds in these trees where a small incision would effect the same object. I earnestly beg you will remember that they are the growth of centuries, and when once gone none living will see their loss remedied.”

Kirby, for his part, responds in a fashion Cooper might have found typical of settlers in the region: “Why, I don’t know, Judge,” returned the man he addressed; “it seems to me, if there’s plenty of anything in this mountaynious country, it’s the trees.” Importantly, he also goes on to question Temple about the value and pricing of potash, another product of the maple. “What’s the best news, Judge, consarning ashes? Do pots hold so that a man can live by them still? I s’pose they will, if they keep on fighting across the water.”

Although it seems potash had more value in terms of producing saleable goods than in weaponry, it was nevertheless the most devastating of the maple by-products because it necessitated destroying them. “By turning abundant but bulky hardwoods into a compact and valuable commodity, potash manufacture was ideal for New York’s frontier conditions: the settlers produced bushels of ashes as they cut down and burned off forests…” This was a short-term solution, but at the expense of the long-term yield of other maple products.

If anything, the potash industry would accelerate the metamorphosis from forest to farmland and the expansion of civilization that Natty dreaded. As William Cronon wrote about potash production in New England, “the ‘improved’ and newly fertilized land which resulted from such clearing could itself sold for a profit…destroying the forests thus became an end in itself, and clearing techniques designed to extract quick profits from forest resources encouraged

---

161 Cooper 218
162 Cooper 218
163 Taylor 109
movement onto new lands.”¹⁶⁴ This kind of wanton expansion caused Natty to lament Templeton’s “clearings and betterments.”¹⁶⁵

According to Taylor, William Cooper had hoped to steer maple harvests away from potash and back toward sustainable sap products. He “considered maple sugar the ideal commodity for new settlers because its production required little labor and less capital, settlers could produce maple sugar immediately, without clearing the forest to cultivate new plants.”¹⁶⁶ Although William Cooper’s own description of maples as “diamonds” is reflected in Temple’s description of them as “jewels of the forest,” William Cooper’s interest is not the product of enlightened environmentalism so much as a shrewd and practical financial mind. As Taylor wrote, “Cooper sought to conserve the sugars maples not out of any romantic aesthetic or any ecological sensibility but from a conviction that their long-term value as sugar producers vastly outweighed their immediate value as potash or firewood.”¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Temple values them “not as ornaments… [but] for their usefulness.”¹⁶⁸

William Cooper did indeed attempt to introduce scientific theory to the manufacture of the maple sugar but poor weather for several years forced many settlers to switch back to potash manufacture and he eventually all but abandoned the effort. This had its own detrimental impact on the land. As Taylor wrote, “By transforming trees into minerals with cash value, settlers interrupted the circulation of nutrients and energy on their land…By killing and burning the trees, the settlers wasted much of the biomass degraded into the heat and smoke of the fires.”¹⁶⁹ This, however, was the new orientation of American thinking. In Ecological Revolutions, Carolyn Merchant wrote of a “capitalist ecological revolution” in which “nature was mastered for wealth.”¹⁷⁰ By the early 19th century, she wrote, “ordinary farmers increasingly opened themselves up to the mechanistic world-view articulated by gentleman farmers, improvers and scientists.”¹⁷¹

Reason and practicality geared toward future profit directed much of American development, even the layout of towns, counties and territories. In “Stranger in America,”

¹⁶⁴ Cronon 118
¹⁶⁵ Cooper 20
¹⁶⁶ Taylor 120
¹⁶⁷ Taylor 121
¹⁶⁸ Cooper 219
¹⁶⁹ Taylor 133
¹⁷⁰ Carolyn Merchant, Ecological Revolutions (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1989) 149
¹⁷¹ Merchant 197
Charles William Janson wrote “speculation, the life of the American, embraced the design of the
new city.” Indeed, Templeton is one of those very cities marked by perpendicular streets run
out on plumb lines to the horizon, the kind that the Land Ordinance of 1785 and Northwest
Ordinance of 1787 condemned much of the west to growing by. The Land Ordinance of 1785
proclaimed that surveyors were to “to divide the said territory into townships of 6 miles square,
by lines running due north and south, and others crossing these at right angles, as near as may be,
unless where the boundaries of the late Indian purchases may render the same impracticable, and
then they shall depart from this rule no further than such particular circumstances may
require.”

The ordinance is echoed in Richard’s explanation to Elizabeth: “We must run our streets
by the compass, coz, and disregard trees, hills, ponds, stumps, or, in fact, anything but
posterity.” The system was rational, orderly and practical for long-term development, but it
had no mercy for anything that stood in its way. William D. Pattison called the system “a striking
example of geometry over physical geography.” Nature was simply not part of the equation.
As Donald Meinig wrote, “The Land Ordinance of 1785, defining a system of surveys and sales
of congressional lands, was the first attempt to bring some order to the frenzied scramble among
a welter of avaricious interests, large and small, local, national and international, to reap some
profit out of this vast national domain.”

Seemingly, Americans on the frontier sought to bring their new knowledge to bear solely
on those things that would gain them wealth. Even education in Templeton reflected the
American desire for practical knowledge, yet at the same time the relative infancy of its
institutions. The town of Templeton contains a school of higher education in which both Latin
and English were taught. However, as Cooper wrote, the Latin students were “never very
numerous” and “only one laborer in this temple of Minerva…was known to get so far as to
attempt a translation of Virgil.”

---

172 Wood, Rising Glory 124
173 Online Document <http://www.historicaltextarchive.com>
174 Cooper 174
175 William Pattison, Beginnings of the American Rectangular Land Survey System, 1784-1800, diss. University of
Chicago, 1957 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957) 1
176 Donald W. Meinig, “The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History,” Volume 1,
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) 342
177 Cooper 98
But Latin was not a priority in education in a democratic society. Noah Webster, arguing for a focus back on English (and possibly to boost sales of his dictionary) argued against “a too general attention to the dead languages, with a neglect of our own.”\textsuperscript{178} The dead languages, he continued, “are not necessary for men of business, merchants, mechanics, planters, etc., nor of utility sufficient to indemnify them for the expense of time and money…Indeed it appears to me that what is now called a liberal education disqualifies a man for business.”\textsuperscript{179}

Ironically, it was liberal education that qualified an American for “gentility” in the new class-free republic. John Adams said the requirement for one to be a gentleman in America was to “have received a liberal education, an ordinary degree of erudition in liberal arts and sciences.”\textsuperscript{180} On the frontier of upstate New York, however, gentility still seemed to be wrapped up in land ownership, wealth and social status as evidenced by Oliver, who despite his education is not accepted as a gentleman by anyone other than Elizabeth until it is learned that he is actually an Effingham.

**Deficiencies in American Science and Education**

Professional education in the new nation also had its drawbacks, as evidenced in the discussions of the town physician, Elnathan Todd. In his dramatis personae for “Reading The Pioneers as History,” Cooper Society president Hugh C. MacDougall describes Todd, as “a young, self-taught doctor from New England; [whose] common sense makes him a better physician than many doctors with more formal educations.”\textsuperscript{181} While MacDougall is one of the leading Cooper authorities, I find this characterization mind-boggling. Instead, I would argue that Todd’s character helps portray the shortcomings in the American system of medicine,
reflective of the country’s youth and immaturity as a nation of institutions, scientific or otherwise.

Consider how Cooper describes Todd’s decision to go into medicine:

Elnathan was cut out for a doctor, [his mother] knew, for he was forever digging for herbs, and tasting all kinds of things that grow’d about the lots. Then again he had a natural love for doctor-stuff, for when she had left the bilious pills out for her man, all nicely covered with maple sugar just ready to take, Nathan had come in and swallowed them for all the world as if they were nothing, while Ichabod (her husband) could never get one down without making such desperate faces that it was awful to look on.182

His school master thought that “the youth had a natural love for doctoring, as he had known him frequently advise the smaller children against eating to much; and, once or twice, when the ignorant little things had persevered in opposition to Elnathan’s advice, he had known her son empty the school-baskets with his own mouth, to prevent the consequences.”183

His medical training is equally suspect:

Another year passed under the superintendence of the same master, during which the young physician had the credit of “ riding with the old doctor,” although they were generally observed to travel different roads. At the end of that period, Dr. Todd attained his legal majority. He then took a jaunt to Boston to purchase medicines, and, as some intimated, to walk the hospital; we know not how the latter might have been, but, if true, he soon walked through it, for he returned within a fortnight, bringing with him a suspicious-looking box, that smelled powerfully of brimstone.184

As were his ethics:

He was naturally humane, but possessed of no small share of moral courage; or, in other words, he was chary of the lives of his patients, and never tried uncertain experiments on such members of society as were considered useful; but, once or twice, when a luckless vagrant had come under his care, he was a little addicted to trying the effects of every phial in his saddle-bags on the strangers constitution.185

Finally, we have the opinions of the townspeople themselves:

In certain cutaneous disorders very prevalent in new settlements, he was considered to be infallible; and there was no woman on the Patent but would as soon think of becoming a mother without a husband as without the assistance of Dr. Todd. In short,
he was rearing, on this foundation of sand a superstructure cemented by practice, though composed of somewhat brittle materials. He however, occasionally renewed his elementary studies, and, with the observation of a shrewd mind, was comfortably applying his practice to his theory.  

While MacDougall perhaps was making a case for Todd as another example of Cooper elevating the “simple” country folk over “sophisticated” city-dwellers, I do not believe that is the case here. Instead, it appears that Cooper is offering an insight into the state of medicine in America overall, especially in the hinterlands.

It is important to remember that medicine was a still nascent academic field in America. Although some Americans were schooled in Europe, the first medical school on this side of the Atlantic Ocean was not founded until 1765. New York did not have its own until two years later. In New York State, medical licensing regulations did not apply outside of New York City until 1797 and even these meager regulations did not extend much past several years of apprenticeship or practice. With licensing so slipshod, it is virtually impossible to know how many “doctors” practiced in New York. Changes in medical thought, from treating individual symptoms versus diagnosing those symptoms in combination also retarded the consolidation of the medical field during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Wrote Kett: “From the colonial times to the beginning of the 20th century, American medicine lagged behind the advances in medical science, experimental research, and medical education that were taking place in Britain, France and Germany…The early practice of medicine could be regarded more as a trade than a profession.” Indeed, many of the licensing laws enacted in the late 18th century were soon repealed. “In 1860 as in 1760 a patient had to rely largely on his own judgment in selecting his physician.”

When Todd’s services are required in the book, to remove a musket ball from Oliver Edward’s arm, he elaborately prepares for surgery only to have Edwards extract it himself by jerking his arm. Rather than allowing Todd to treat the remaining wound, Edwards instead turns to Chingachgook, the old Mohican. During this time, Todd steals some of Chingachgook’s barks and powders, telling Judge Temple “It is not to be denied, Judge Temple, but what the savages

---

186 Cooper 70-71
188 Kett 13
are knowing in small matters of physic…A man should never be above learning, even if it be from an Indian.”

Cooper then goes on to note that:

It was fortunate for Dr. Todd that his principles were so liberal, as, coupled with his practice, they were the means by which he acquired all his knowledge, and by which he was gradually qualifying himself for the duties of his profession. The process to which he subjected the specific differed, however, greatly from the ordinary rules of chemistry; for instead of separating he afterward united the component parts of Mohegan’s remedy, and was thus able to discover the tree whence the Indian had taken it.

It seems clear from all this that Cooper’s intent is not to portray Todd in the flattering light of the frontiersman physician, well-schooled in the arts of the folk and scientific medicine. Rather Todd is an example of the shortcomings of the current American medical system, inferior even to the “primitive” practices of the natives. As such, he serves as a symbol of American hubris. Science and reason may be the best avenues to pursue in developing a new nation, but settlers sometimes placed too much stock in their limited knowledge.

**Conclusion**

Writing of 19th century Americans, Hyman Kuritz concluded that, “[T]he association of knowledge with its applications – its utility – was interwoven with a growing self-conception that the productions of the craftsman and the mechanic made possible a grasp of regularities and order in nature hitherto not even so conceptualized.” As Americans were beginning to conquer the laws of nature and physics, they were entering a different kind of undiscovered country. In this country, they believed, they could build their new nation not only on the pillars of a new social and political order, but also on one of dominion over nature. “The new men of science now raised the possibility that nature could not only be understood but could be altered to meet the needs of man.”

Certainly, Cooper recognized this tendency in the late 18th century in the efforts of his father to apply science and reason to the sugar maple industry, a fact he mirrored in Temple’s

---

189 Cooper 85
190 Cooper 85
191 Kuritz 259
efforts. Americans like William Cooper hoped to apply knowledge to achieve the maximum yield on their investment, whether it was sugar from a tree or the development of an entire city. Again, there was an underlying imperative at work. Gordon Wood wrote that “Political and physical science seemed to be providentially linked, and technology became as important as virtue in achieving America’s realization of itself as a moral republic.”

Although the tools at their disposal – the existing scientific knowledge – may have been lacking, they sallied forth undaunted in an effort to tame the land through reason and science.

But there were also shortcomings to this approach, namely the infancy of their new knowledge and the imperfection of the institutions on which they were based. Cooper demonstrates this non-fatal flaw through the character of Todd, whose medical knowledge is revealed as inferior to Chingachgook’s, but not dangerously so. Nevertheless, as they had done via the religious conversions of the Indians, settlers disregarded existing practices to impose their own, even when they hadn’t nearly perfected those practices.

---

192 Wood, Rising Glory 253
CHAPTER 4: A CHANGING LAND

Introduction

It is almost impossible to separate politics, class and landownership principles in Post-Revolutionary New York; there was a complicated combination of factors was still being sorted out. Indians had been supplanted by European settlers under royal grants, and those grants had subsequently been nullified by the Confiscation Act of 1779, which seized private property of Loyalists as well as any property that “did vest in, or belong, or was, or were due to the crown of Great Britain.” In addition, the rights of squatters also were a factor to be considered in the frontier lands of America.

Land was also inextricably entwined with notions of class and political leanings in Post-Revolutionary New York. The war “violently disordered society and property,” Taylor wrote, opening the door for men like William Cooper to amass land and wealth. Yet putting a republic into practice was a radical step and one that many were hesitant to rush into too strongly. The result was the schism between Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans.

Federalists lacked the boundless faith in human nature that Jeffersonians seemed to possess, and were far more conservative in their approach to leveling class systems. According to Linda Kerber, “All the famous Jeffersonian rhetoric about man’s capacity to construct a better world from new blueprints was so much high-flown nonsense. It was given to man only to remodel his world, not to remake it, and then only with the greatest caution.”

This schism reflects a fundamental identity crisis in early America. This was a period in which new principles were being applied to a new land while vestiges of old orders and old peoples still remained. The conflict between the old and the new is reflected in The Pioneers. Richard Slotkin, meanwhile, argues that Jefferson’s egalitarianism was rather qualified, and that Cooper’s perspective on the classes was actually in keeping with it: “The Cooperian status system thus accords quite well with Jeffersonian theory, which held that while one might find

---

193 The New York Act of Attainder, or Confiscation Act; Chapter XXV of the Laws of the Third Session of the New York Legislature; October, 22, 1779
194 Taylor 57
195 Kerber, Federalists 22
some “natural aristoi’ among the common people, on the whole the existing aristoi would ‘breed true…’”

**American Aristocracy**

‘In any event, despite Bailyn’s assertion that “nowhere in eighteenth century America had the legal attributes of nobility been recognized or perpetuated” there were class hierarchies based on land-ownership, particularly in the rural counties of New York where great estates had been granted to individual families under royal patents. Even on Cooper’s frontier, the notion of the rugged individualist staking out a homestead was often an inflated or mistaken one. Of that breed, only Natty remains by this time in Cooper’s Templeton.

Indeed, the large estates were essentially fiefdoms and for many major landholders in the area. In his afterword to *The Pioneers*, Robert Spiller wrote, “society depended upon property, and family status upon primogeniture, as rigidly as in England or Holland.” Incredibly, it wasn’t until the 1780s that the state legislature “did abrogate all remnants of feudal legal privilege.” The legislation came in a hurry, but it was after years of an entrenched system that would not go away quietly or quickly. “The essence of radical policy, on matters other than royalism, was that citizens’ opportunity should replace gentlemen’s privilege.”

William Cooper himself recognized this, out of either egalitarianism or enlightened self-interest. In either case, he sold rather than rented his land in Otsego. Nevertheless, this neck of rural New York in the 1790s was still a land in transition and the vestiges of privilege were obvious. At the Temple household, we see elegance and a small feast, but soon learn that most people in Templeton, as they were in Cooperstown, were quite poor. In the Christmas church scene, Cooper shows a ragged group primarily dressed in homespun or “a faded silk, that had gone through at least three generations, over coarse, woolen black stockings.” When the townspeople sit, they avoid the front row as that was to be “occupied by the principal personages of the village and its vicinity,” although “[t]his distinction was rather a gratuitous concession.

---

196 Slotkin 103
197 Bailyn 275
198 Cooper 439–440
199 Countryman 243
200 Cooper 117
made by the poorer and less polished part of the population than a right claimed by the favored few.”

Although this is a “concession” Cooper makes clear that there is a clear hierarchy in the town. Writing of the nicer houses in town, he states, “In truth, the occupants of these favored habitations were the nobles of Templeton, as Marmaduke was its king.” Traditional notions of class also persist in the constant questions about whether Oliver is a “gentleman” or if he possesses “nobility” and Temple’s appointment of his boorish cousin Richard as the county sheriff reeks of nepotism and privilege.

In “Landownership and Representation of Social Conflict in The Pioneers,” Douglas Buchholz tries to place issues of class in a Marxist framework and posit them as the central and defining conflict in The Pioneers: “While in socio-historical terms, the Billy Kirby-Judge Temple-Natty Bumppo conflict encapsulates the overall struggle in early American society between subsistence hunters and farmers (Indian and white), that is, the nascent proletariat and the bourgeoisie, it always appears in the novel as a dispute between just these representatives of their classes.”

Rather than view Natty – or even Kirby - as members of a “nascent proletariat,” however, it seems more appropriate to define them otherwise. Natty is not representative of the origin of any class rather than the last vestige of one. He will not remain and change, but rather leave and go west to find comfort in the unsettled wilderness again. Kirby, meanwhile, is too independent to be considered proletariat. “For weeks he would lounge around the taverns of the county, in a state of perfect idleness, or doing small jobs for his liquor and his meals, and cavilling with applicants about the prices of his labor; frequently preferring idleness to an abatement of a little of his independence, or a cent in his wages.” To view the conflict as the emergence of a class representation rather than as part of an ongoing continuum is to miss the point that early Americans lived in a historical context that was American as well as European. Temple and Kirby have entered a land with its own history and peoples. It was for placing the story in that very context – the context that William Cooper ignored - that Taylor praised James Fenimore Cooper.

---

201 Cooper 119
202 Cooper 39
203 Buchholz 2
204 Cooper 181
Still, class distinctions remain, at least in the minds of some who enjoy the trappings of power and privilege. Even Temple’s warmth toward Natty, seemingly paternalistic (and, hence, aristocratic) in nature, invites scorn from Richard: “Well, ‘Duke, I call this democracy, not republicanism; but I say nothing; only let him keep within the law, or I shall show him that the freedom of even this country is under wholesome restraint.”205 At the same time, though, the liberal egalitarian message of the Revolution is coming to be recognized in Templeton. After Temple accidentally shoots Oliver, several of the men discuss the possibility of a lawsuit against Temple, prompting this comment from Doolittle, the attorney:

The law, gentlemen, is no respecter of persons in a free country. It is one of the great blessings that has been handed down to us from our ancestors, that all men are equal in the eye of the laws, as they are by nater. Though some may get property, no one knows how, yet they are not privileged to transgress the laws any more than the poorest citizen in the State.206

Wealth may be unevenly distributed and perpetuated, but it is does not put anyone above the law. (Also, as we find later, wealth and land are not a consideration for who may sit on a jury in the county.) What is interesting about this comment, however, is the statement that “some may get property, no one knows how.”

**Who’s Land? – Ownership**

The question of land-ownership and its origins in the “New World” provides the underpinnings of much of the plotline of *The Pioneers*. Alan Taylor wrote that William Cooper, in his own memoirs “erased all of the land’s previous owners and users.” James Fenimore Cooper, however, changed the historical perspective: “Restoring the Indians, squatters and colonial landlords, as James Fenimore Cooper did in *The Pioneers*, imparts a very different cast to William Cooper’s story, shifting his ownership and development of Otsego from the beginning to the midst of a history and conquest and settlement.”207

The original tenants of the land – Native Americans – are represented in the character of Chingachgook, or Indian John. John, who is Cooper’s “Last of the Mohicans,” is not only aged and heirless in *The Pioneers*, but also a broken man and often drunk. Occasionally, however, his
pride shines through, as when he tells Natty that “I am the Great Snake of the Delawares; I can track the Mingoes like an adder that is stealing on the whip-poor-will’s eggs, and strike them like the rattlesnake dead at a blow. The white man made the tomahawk of Chingachgook bright as the waters of Otsego, when the last sun is shining; but it is red with the blood of the Maquas.” Natty responds by asking him where his pride has gone and why he did those things in the first place: “Was it not to keep these hunting-grounds and lakes to your father’s children? And were they not given in solemn council to the Fire-eater? And does not the blood of a warrior run in the veins of a young chief, who should speak aloud where his voice is now too low to be heard?”  

Even John’s friend Natty despairs for what he has become.

At this point, it is unknown to the reader that the Fire-eater was a Loyalist Englishman, Major Effingham, and that the young chief in question, Oliver, is actually the rightful heir to Effingham. For all intents and purposes, there is no Indian heir or claim to the land because John is the last of his people. The question of any Indian right to the land is further squashed under Cooper’s pen. John tells Oliver that “The land was owned by my people; we gave it to my brother in council—to the Fire-eater; and what the Delawares give lasts as long as the waters run.”  

According to Taylor, the picture of the natives as degraded and irrelevant is pretty accurate. “The story that Indians were wild beings who made no mark on the land had a self-fulfilling quality…The myth justified brutal conquest; defeat rendered the surviving Indians ever closer to the description of them as miserably inconsequential.”  

It is important to note that Taylor considers this “myth” as the key reason for the conquest. “Improving” the land, i.e. developing it somehow, was a critical underpinning of dominant political philosophy of the time.

In his Second Treatise on Government, John Locke wrote:

The earth, and all that is therein, is given to men for the support and comfort of their being. And tho’ all the fruits it naturally produces, and beasts it feeds, belong to mankind in common, as they are produced by the spontaneous hand of nature; and no body has originally a private dominion, exclusive of the rest of mankind, in any of them, as they are thus in their natural state: yet being given for the use of men, there must of necessity be a means to appropriate them some way or other, before they can be of any use, or at all beneficial to any particular man.

---

208 Cooper 158
209 Cooper 278
210 Taylor 39
America certainly must have appeared to have been left in a state of nature, and thus up for grabs when the settlers arrived. It was only for them to remove it from a state of nature and make it their own. Locke continues, “The labour of [one’s] body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. WHATSOEVER then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property.” Still later, he adds: “God gave the world to men in common; but since he gave it them for their benefit, and the greatest conveniencies of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational, (and labour was to be his title to it)…” In other words, it was God’s will for man to make a mark on the land.

Locke’s principles held great weight in the Revolutionary era. As Spiller notes, “Jefferson and his fellows had substituted the words “pursuit of happiness” for property in the Declaration of Independence, and the Federalist Judge Cooper had brought this concept with him as the founding principle of his colony.” Property and happiness had somehow become synonymous. As Wood wrote, “In 1776 Americans had assumed that their society was unique…so different that ‘a provision for the rights of persons was supposed to include of itself those of property.’” However, hard-core Federalists balked at this idea and in places like upstate New York, radicalized anti-Federalists grabbed control and “provided for smaller people to get land directly from the state.” William Cooper’s decision to sell land rather than rent it was prudently in step with the prevailing Jeffersonian mood in Post-Revolutionary New York. In this climate of entitlement to land, based on both Locke’s principles and their application by Jeffersonians, it is unsurprising that settlers jumped at the opportunity to stake their claim to land by legal means and by the underlying mechanism of “improving” it. Cecelia Tichi describes The Pioneers as the “struggle of the gentleman to realize his civilizing vision (and his moral imperative) of wilderness transformation. In Cooper’s scheme of American history it is nothing less than the struggle for the survival of democracy.”

---

212 Peardon 17  
213 Peardon 20  
214 Cooper 440  
215 Countryman 243  
216 Cecelia Tichi, New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans Through Whitman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979) 174
The Biblical imperative to improve the land was equally manifest. As Roderick Nash wrote, “Transforming the wild into the rural had Scriptural precedents which the New England pioneers knew well. Genesis 1:28, the first commandment of God to man, stated that mankind should increase, conquer the earth, and have dominion over all living things.” Natty addresses this idea in The Pioneers when he tells Temple sarcastically that “I believe there’s some who think there’s no God in a wilderness.” Later, he tells Oliver that “To my judgment, lad, it’s the best piece of work that I’ve met with in the woods; and none know how often the hand of God is seen in the wilderness, but them that rove it for a man’s life.” To Natty, God’s imprint in the “unimproved” wild was already obvious and He did not need man to do His work for him.

But the notion of a divine imperative to improve the land prevailed and that meant development. Billy Kirby sums up the dominant attitude when he says, “I call no country much improved, that is still pretty much covered with trees.” Temple, the shepherd of development in the town, decries an act of lawlessness by asking “Is it for this that I have tamed the wilderness?” Indians, according to the settlers’ perspective, had left the area untamed and unimproved and thus in a state of nature. It was perfectly logical to simply claim land and drive off the Indians.

Whites also took land by deceit and treaty, as well as by force, as Natty reminds John: “They say that there’s new laws in the land, and I’m sartin that there’s new ways in the mountains. One hardly knows the lakes and streams, they’ve altered the country so much. I must say I’m mistrustful of such smooth speakers; for I’ve known the whites talk fair when they wanted the Indian lands most…”

Either way, though, the notion of Indians as people who did not have an impact on the land is a fallacious one. According to William Cronon, “It is tempting to believe that when the Europeans arrived in the New World they confronted Virgin Land, the Forest Primeval, a wilderness which had existed for eons uninfluenced by human hands. Nothing could be further from the truth.” In New England, where the climate dictated, tribes simply migrated seasonally to follow the food. Because of this need for mobility, they did not build structures intended to

---

217 Nash 31
218 Cooper 349
219 Cooper 281
220 Cooper 219
221 Cooper 328
222 Cooper 197

---

53
last for years. They were hunter-gatherers, so they did not “improve” the land in ways the Europeans would have recognized.\(^\text{223}\)

Still, with Indians relegated to the margins, Cooper could focus on the land-ownership issue between original interests under the crown and Post-revolutionary American rights. “The novelist acknowledged that his father’s possession began in a controversial tangle of conflicting property rights rather than in the state of nature.”\(^\text{224}\)

Although the dispute over Loyalist claims to property after the Revolution was an important political issue in Post-Revolutionary New York,\(^\text{225}\) Cooper’s aim seems to be more to illustrate the fact of this conflict than to offer a moral or resolution. As Taylor wrote:

However, by an elaborate and mechanical plot twist, the novelist patched up the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between the Effinghams and Judge Temple, who, it turns out, was holding half of his interest in trust for the eventual return of the Major’s heir. Oliver’s subsequent marriage to the Judge’s daughter and sole heir vests the Otsego estate entirely in the couple, uniting the property claims of the two families and legitimating the enterprise of Marmaduke Temple.\(^\text{226}\)

Instead, Cooper’s moral message seems more directed toward the differences between Judge Temple and Natty. It is Natty’s rights as a squatter that are infringed upon by the advance of civilization. It is therefore appropriate that the book essentially begins with a conflict between the two men over the notion of poaching. In the opening scene, there is uncertainty over who shot a deer on the Judge’s land, the Judge or Natty. Natty tells him that “although I am a poor man I can live without the venison, but I don’t love to give up my lawful dues in a free country. Though, for the matter of that, might often makes right here, as well as in the old country, for what I can see.”\(^\text{227}\)

The Judge, for his part, tries to reconcile the situation, but the conflict is a fundamental one.

“Admit it!” repeated the agitated Judge; “I here give thee a right to shoot deer, or bears, or anything thou pleasest in my woods, forever. Leather-Stocking is the only other man that I have granted the same privilege to; and the time is coming when it will be of value. But I buy your deer—here, this bill will pay thee, both for thy shot and my own.”

\(^\text{223}\) Cronon 12, 38  
\(^\text{224}\) Taylor 54  
\(^\text{225}\) See Countryman 208  
\(^\text{226}\) Taylor 56  
\(^\text{227}\) Cooper 19
The old hunter gathered his tall person up into an air of pride during this dialogue, but he waited until the other had done speaking.

“There’s them living who say that Nathaniel Bumppo's right to shoot on these hills is of older date than Marmaduke Temple’s right to forbid him,” he said. “But if there’s a law about it at all, though who ever heard of a law that a man shouldn’t kill deer where he pleased…”

The question at hand is whether Temple’s ownership rights have or even can somehow supersede Natty’s squatter rights. After all, Cooper later tells us, Natty lived on the land before Temple ever arrived to survey it. Temple recalls to his daughter finding the land “in the sleep of nature” and “uninhabited,” “unimproved and wild.” Yet Natty already lived there, and had for some time. Temple even spent the night at Natty’s hut, a tale Temple later relates to Oliver and others, prompting this exchange with Oliver:

“Said he nothing of the Indian rights, sir? The Leather-Stocking is much given to impeach the justice of the tenure by which the whites hold the country.”
“I remember that he spoke of them, but I did not nearly comprehend him, and may have forgotten what he said; for the Indian title was extinguished so far back as the close of the old war, and if it had not been at all, I hold under the patents of the Royal Governors, confirmed by an act of our own State Legislature, and no court in the country can affect my title.”

Temple’s assertion of his own rights over Indian, crown and competing American interests is clear, yet Natty’s position under Temple’s laws remains ambiguous. As a squatter, Natty remains at the mercy of Temple and the laws of the new settlement. Temple, for his part, seems to want to look after Natty, telling Ben that “You are not to credit the idle tales you hear of Natty; he has a kind of natural right to gain a livelihood in these mountains; and if the idlers in the village take it into their heads to annoy him, as they sometimes do reputed rogues, they shall find him protected by the strong arm of the law.”
Although he recognizes this “natural right,” Temple ultimately is unwilling to protect him when Natty tries to defend his hut from a magistrate serving a warrant. Because Natty has defied the authority of the law, he is declared “an example of rebellion to the laws” and is arrested.233

Ironically, at the heart of the warrant was the suspicion that Natty shot a deer out of season. Just as he had asserted a right to hunt where he pleased in the beginning of the book, his attempt to hunt when he pleased had again brought him into conflict with the new order. Natty is at a loss to understand the laws, and it falls upon another uneducated yet fair-minded man – Billy Kirby - to come to his defense, telling Jotham that “I must say that I think he has as good right to kill deer as any man on the Patent. It’s his main support, and this is a free country, where a man is privileged to follow any calling he likes.” The statement that “this is a free country” resonates as almost childish in the 21st century, but it certainly held much more meaning on the Post-Revolutionary frontier. When Jotham tells Kirby that “according to that doctrine anybody may shoot a deer,” Kirby answers by saying “This is the man’s calling, I tell you and the law was never made for such as he.”234 These critical notions, of a free country and of a man for whom the law wasn’t made poses a fundamental philosophical question: can a man be free in a nation of laws? For Natty, who has lived his life in virtual state of nature, the answer is likely no.

**Cooper’s Proto-Environmentalism**

Also, the conflict between Natty and Temple over the land and the laws also has critical importance in terms of how Americans considered—and now consider - the natural environment. Notions of land ownership and land use certainly go hand in hand (“While ownership is associated with the waste of natural resources, with fraud, with piracy and war, Leatherstocking opts for visionary possession of the land,” wrote George Bagby235), but Cooper’s environmental sense is both keen and prescient.

In an essay entitled “James Fenimore Cooper: Pioneer of the Environmental Movement,” Hugh MacDougall wrote that, in The Pioneers, Cooper heralded the three basic principles of modern environmentalism: the exhaustibility of resources, the intrinsic value of nature and the

---

233 Cooper 339
234 Cooper 318
danger that waste poses to humans. “All three of these environmental concerns were first graphically expressed to the American public almost two centuries ago by James Fenimore Cooper,” he wrote.\textsuperscript{236}

The crux of the debate between Natty and Temple is that Temple’s desire for planned growth is, in Natty’s opinion, simply untenable from the perspective of the natural world. Growth is itself an evil, because it necessitates clearing woods and uprooting nature itself. In several key scenes concerning the environment – particularly the shooting of the passenger pigeons and the seine fishing on the lake, Natty voices his displeasure. In each case, Temple says he agrees with Natty but Natty explains that Temple simply does not understand. For example:

[Natty:] “…God made them for man’s food, and for no other disarnable reason, I call it sinful and wasty to catch more than can be eat.”
“Your reasoning is mine; for once, old hunter, we agree in opinion; and I heartily wish we could make a convert of the sheriff. A net of half the size of this would supply the whole village with fish for a week at one haul.”
The Leather-Stocking did not relish this alliance in sentiment; and he shook his head doubtingly as he answered;
“No, no; we are not much of one mind, Judge, or you’d never turn good hunting-grounds into stumpy pastures. And you fish and hunt out of rule; but, to me, the flesh is sweeter where the creatur’ has some chance for its life…”\textsuperscript{237}

Or, when Temple is moved by Natty’s denouncement of the pigeon slaughter, Temple tells him that “Thou sayest well, Leather-Stocking…and I begin to think it time to put an end to this work of destruction.” But to Natty, Temple is still missing the point and he tells him “Put an ind, Judge, to your clearings. Ain’t the woods His work as well as the pigeons? Use, but don’t waste. Wasn’t the woods made for the beasts and birds to harbor in?”\textsuperscript{238}

The latter scene is especially poignant since it referred to the passenger pigeons that were once the most abundant bird on the planet. Cooper wrote that “the gulls are hovering over the lake already, and the heavens are alive with pigeons. You may look an hour before you can find a hole through which to get a peep at the sun.”\textsuperscript{239} The line is clearly evocative of John Audubon who, marveling over a similar flock, wrote a generation earlier that “the air was literally filled

\textsuperscript{237} Cooper 254
\textsuperscript{238} Cooper 234
\textsuperscript{239} Cooper 232
with Pigeons; the light of noon-day was obscured as by an eclipse.”

Or even John Josselyn, who wrote more than a century earlier of flocks “so thick I could see no Sun.” Nevertheless, the passenger pigeon was wiped off the earth by the early 20th century. Sadly, the picture of wanton killing that Cooper presents was all-too accurate. “[A] Cooperstown newspaper editor effused in 1823 that the pigeon hunt was ‘painted to the life, as we can vouch, having ourselves witnessed similar sport upon the same favoured spot.’”

Interestingly, Cooper’s own concern for animals such as deer, pigeon, lake bass and other small harmless animals did not extend to the predatory carnivores of the day. Natty, our environmental hero, kills both wolves and panthers for bounties in the novel, with little hint of chiding from Cooper. At first, the wolf bounty is dismissed matter-of-factly. Later, after hearing that the wolves have been driven from the town by the lights, Elizabeth is saddened: “The enterprise of Judge Temple is taming the very forests!” exclaimed Elizabeth, throwing off the covering, and partly rising in the bed. “How rapidly is civilization treading on the foot of Nature!”

Elizabeth later learns her lesson though, as she is nearly killed by the panthers for which Natty later collects yet another bounty. Cooper describes the animal as a “monster” and “terrible enemy” who inspires only “horror” in Elizabeth.

Wolves were hunted to near extinction by the 20th century, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Panthers have been believed to be extinct from New York since the late 1800s, although numerous “sightings” in recent years have not been confirmed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Still Cooper’s writings were remarkably ahead of their time. As MacDougall wrote in 1999, “175 years ago he tried to teach his fellow Americans the three principles that generations later have come together to form the environmental movement: that our natural resources are not inexhaustible; that natural beauty, wilderness, and wild creatures and plants must be preserved; and that failure to heed nature's warnings may spell our own destruction.”

---

242 Taylor 86
243 Cooper 202
244 Cooper 294, 295
245 Online fact sheets; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, June 10, 2002
The Course of Empire and the Frontier

If Cooper’s legacy is clear today, he also made an indelible mark on the early naturalists of his time. Two years after The Pioneers was published, according to MacDougall, Thomas Cole visited the Cooperstown area and painted landscapes that included areas Cooper had described. Cole inspired others, who later came to paint the wilderness of upstate New York, leading to the formation of the Hudson River school “whose landscapes depicting the wilderness dominated American art for half a century.”

Interestingly, one Cooper scholar has posited that The Pioneers is part of Cooper’s own literary version of Cole’s “Course of Empire.”

The Pioneers (1823) also traces American civilization's rise from savage state to destruction, but while The Last of the Mohicans focused mainly on the first stage and The Spy mainly on the shift from savage state to pastoral, The Pioneers… introduces those stages as past history and concentrates mostly on the approaching shift from pastoral state to consummation and then destruction. Mt. Vision, rising above the town of Templeton and Lake Otsego, dominates the novel's setting and action. Most of the key events take place on the mountain…It is the essence of the pastoral state brought to fruition…

The notion of the “course of empire” is important because it implies an inevitable cycle in which man tames nature (although nature ultimately bats last). The part of the cycle Cooper seems intrigued by is the conquering of nature by man. Fortunately, Cole recognizes that there are inhabitants of the “savage state” who will be displaced by the arrival of the “empire” and so too does Cooper.

Despite his concern for the environment and celebration of rugged individualists like Natty, Cooper is well aware that growth is inevitable and there will soon be no room for the Nattys of the world. Where then, do they go? In John’s case, they vanish – die off. But for Natty, there is always a frontier to follow. That Natty is ultimately forced to leave Otsego and head westward is sad on one hand, but it also evokes further romantic visions of American pioneering spirit, as well as the notion of the frontier presented by Frederick Jackson Turner.

---

Turner contended that American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line.” Each return to the primitive allows for a “rebirth.” Not only does this allow for “new opportunities,” Turner wrote, but this constant contact with the “simplicity of primitive society [furnishes] the forces dominating American character…In this advance, the frontier is the outer edge of the wave-- the meeting point between savagery and civilization…The most significant thing about the American frontier is, that it lies at the hither edge of free land."249

In Turner’s scheme, Natty is the nexus between those two worlds of savagery and civilization. Drawing a comparison to Sir Walter Scott’s title character in Waverley, George Dekker wrote that Natty “mediates between Old world and New World primitives.”250 If this reading places Natty in an awkward position, at least it doesn’t implicate him as an agent in the expansion of civilization as Donald Ringe does below.

Instead, it is preferable to see Natty as the last representative of the historical New World, fleeing from civilization rather than spreading it. When he is asked what he has seen from the edge of the Catskills, he responds, “Creation…all creation lad.”251 When he decides to ultimately leave Templeton, he tells Oliver, “Why, lad, they tell me that on the big lakes there’s the best of hunting, and a great range without a white man on it unless it may be one like myself. I’m weary of living in clearings, and where the hammer is sounding in my ears from sunrise to sundown. And though I’m much bound to ye both, children—I wouldn’t say it if it was not true—I crave to go into the woods agin—I do.”252 Fittingly, the novel concludes with Natty’s departure and this sentence: “He had gone far toward the setting sun—the foremost in that band of pioneers who are opening the way for the march of the nation across the continent.”253

Conclusion

Donald Ringe wrote “The Pioneers draws its fundamental meaning from the description of the society it portrays and the relation of that society to the natural environment – the American wilderness that must be invaded and conquered if civilization is to spread across the

249 John Mack Farragher; Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994) 32
251 Cooper 279
252 Cooper 433
253 Cooper 436
continent.” Further, he wrote, Natty’s departure is only the first step in the next cycle of invasion and conquest: Natty becomes “the inevitable herald of the civilization he most wants to avoid.” This assumption of an inevitable cycle is true to notions of a course of empire and, even in the most optimistic reading of The Pioneers, an unavoidable one.

The factors that drive the development of Templeton – religious imperative, the breakdown of class barriers and the American “right” to land, the desire to turn the land into something profitable – are not about to disappear. As the population grows, the next logical movement is westward, as Natty’s was. This Turnerian migration would naturally continue as long as America continued to grow in population. On this frontier, however, American values were far from set. Unlike the far west, there were still the remainders of established British land rights and social practices in the original colonies. The same principles of invasion and conquest would apply in the west, but without the underlying history of class and political issues that were underlying factors in the east. In other words, none of the New World was truly new, but parts of it were newer than others.

What Cooper offers readers in The Pioneers is an opportunity to see how these new “republican” principles were applied in a place with a decidedly non-western and non-Republican past. In Templeton, it was a conflict between two entirely different world-views – those who saw the land as a resource for survival and those who saw it as a resource for growth and profit. The settlers’ desire to own and “improve” land in Templeton was born of multiple factors: divine will, a Lockian imperative, economic opportunity, the imminent decline of aristocratic privilege and a rush to the democratic egalitarianism that was its antithesis…All these factors came into play as a new society was just beginning to find itself even as it was already displacing the previous residents of the land.

---

254 Ringe 16
255 Ringe 19
CONCLUSION

In his afterword to The Pioneers, Robert Spiller wrote “This is Cooper’s first, and far from his last, exploration of the conflict between the principles of vested family rights, individual democratic initiative, and a moral imperative; between the laws of man, the laws of nature and the laws of the Deity.” It is only appropriate that Cooper examine these themes as they were the prevalent dilemmas in the American consciousness following the Revolution.

As I have shown in this paper, American religious ideals on the frontier were in flux. A departure from state-sponsored religion, along with the demographic and geographic diffusion of westward expansion had left religious sectarianism in disarray on the frontier. At the same time, however, a divine mandate to Christianize the nation remained. While ministers like pastor Grant were forced to temper their sermons to fit the diversity of their congregations, natives like Chingachgook were left struggling to retain their own religious identities.

The moral imperative of the American frontier community was also in a state of transition. The new republic demanded a nation of laws dependent on the inherent virtue of individuals. Yet that inherent virtue sometimes lent itself better to a state of nature rather than a state of laws. A Natty Bumppo could interact perfectly well with other individuals and, left to his own devices, survive in the wilderness. However, with the encroachment of society and laws, the innate and long-standing practices that had sustained him were no longer viable. Only on the Turnerian frontier could he hope to escape the onslaught of civilization.

The notion of women in the new republic was also taking shape, as their practical and social roles departed from European models. In America, a woman had to be both the guardian of republican virtue as well as the tender of hearth and home. A woman like Elizabeth could be strong enough to step out into “manly” arenas such as the turkey shoot, or defy her father to help Natty in the name of what was fair and right.

In the “New World,” Americans also had to decide how to create their new home. With the rise of science and reason, Americans looked to expand their holdings rationally. Temple’s decision to build his town along the lines of the compass and to employ scientific methods to

---

256 Cooper 440
maximize maple sap returns without sacrificing the trees needed to produce it demonstrates the kind of practical, applied science mindset that de Tocqueville noted in Americans. At the same time, however, the limits of American science are evident in characters like Elnathan Todd, whose medical knowledge is inferior to the aging Indian, Chingachgook.

The notion of vested property rights versus natural rights is ever-present in The Pioneers, just as it was a critical issue in post-Revolutionary America. Who would own the land – the very source of wealth and social standing – in the new republic. In upstate New York, the question was not settled quite so easily. As Spiller notes in his biography of Cooper, “After the Revolution, the state of New York merely continued the feudal methods of land grant and land tenure which had developed under the crown.” That would change soon as more radical factions took control of the legislature, but it represented an important point of contention in the new nation. Cooper’s approach to this issue is intriguing, as he finds way to acknowledge the previous rights of Indians to the land, then dismiss them, to assert a moral squatter’s right, which he then shows to be untenable, and to reconcile competing interests of crown and state land grants through the wedding of Oliver and Elizabeth. That Cooper sidesteps the issue of Temple/William Cooper’s claim to the land above others in the area is unsurprising based on his politics as well as his father’s prudent decision to sell, rather than rent, his land.

Nevertheless, the questions of privilege that come with hereditary wealth are addressed in scenes such as the tavern scene where some ask if the Judge can be sued, in the seating patterns at the church and in several other scenes mentioned in Chapter Five. New ideas about land ownership and usage were being implemented, born of a burgeoning sense of egalitarian republicanism, of the collapse of aristocratic privilege and of newfound economic opportunity. At the same time, egalitarian republicanism was not egalitarian enough to apply to the older residents of the land, vestiges of the aristocratic privilege remained, and economic opportunity often meant devastation and waste. Cooper shows us these themes in the complex conflict between the patriarchal character of Temple and the individualist Natty, in which Natty ultimately must leave to make way for the coming civilization.

Within all these conflicts is the underlying theme of a people imposing new and as yet incomplete systems on a land with pre-existing customs and peoples. While Americans were still deciding their religious character, they were eradicating that of the natives. While they were still

257 Spiller 5
perfecting their science, they were ignoring or pilfering from that of the natives. While they were still developing their laws, they were using them to stamp out the moral codes and basic practices of living that had come before them. In short, Americans had yet to figure out where they were going as a nation philosophically, but they were certain of where they were and where they were going physically. They would, it seems, simply figure out the former as they acted on the latter.

Richard Slotkin wrote that “The Pioneers gives a closer glimpse of the what happens in post-Frontier society: men on the make waste the land, undermine traditional authority and deference, and point society toward the kind of crisis represented by the French Revolution.” I find this to be an extremely pessimistic reading of the novel, and one that greatly misses the point. The Pioneers is not about the crippling of existing Western social orders, but rather the imposition of a new one over the remains of an existing non-Western order. Temple’s land and wealth-based hierarchy is not being undermined, it is being developed and altered. The Temples and Richards will remain, the Nattys and Indian Johns will not. There may be victims in The Pioneers, but the crisis is hardly akin to the French Revolution with its run-away democracy. Here the individualists suffer while the most monarchical figure – Temple – watches his empire establish itself. His rule is not undermined, nor is it ever truly even challenged. The marriage of Elizabeth to Oliver does nothing if not cement the hereditary right of his bloodline to the land.

However, “the day of personal government is also passing,” Spiller wrote in his afterword. The judge realizes “that his way of life is also a phase of frontier development, and that there are larger political and social structures, derived from tradition and moral law, to which he too must give way…” Such is the course of empire, washing away that which came before it in revolutionary and evolutionary steps. In The Pioneers, we are presented with a new society supplanting an old one although it has yet to fully grow into and understand its own institutions and systems. Cooper’s “pioneers” are struggling in the dark to an extent, but they are determined to move forward. If we are to be saddened by the demise of John or the departure of Natty, so to should we be encouraged by the resolve of Temple to build something that will be sustainable, just as if we are to be put off by Kirby’s wastefulness, so too should we be admiring of his innate goodness. If anything, The Pioneers is a valuable look at how a new society

258 Slotkin 106
259 Cooper 444
supplants an old one. Its systems are not set or rigid, its institutions are not developed or
established, its moral center is not even, well, centered, yet the “pioneers” undauntingly seek to
impose their will and these ideals on land and people.

In this essay, we have seen how Cooper used each of the key Enlightenment components
mentioned by Wood in the introduction to this paper - natural science, nature itself, religion,
politics, material prosperity and personal and social morality – to demonstrate the state of flux
that the settlers themselves were in, even as they brought substantial and irrevocable changes to
the land and social orders that had existed in New York before them. The Pioneers is a snapshot
of a place and time in history. Cooper has used his literary license to turn very real trends and
themes into a narrative story. Moreover, he has placed this narrative within a continuum that
recognizes not only the future course of empire toward “consummation,” but also its past in the
savage state. Through the lens of the novel we see a slice of the picture of how a new society,
still in it infancy and trying to find itself, replaced an existing society with its established
practices and mores.

While Slotkin’s reading of The Pioneers is a pessimistic one, others are more accurate,
even if not much less gloomy. In Chapter Five, I wrote that the cycle of invasion and conquest
Ringe suggested seems inevitable even in the most optimistic reading of The Pioneers, and it is
an inevitability Cooper must have realized too. In the first paragraph of the novel, Cooper wrote
that “The expedients of the pioneers who first broke ground in the settlement of this country are
succeeded by the permanent improvements of the yeoman…” Succession leads to
permanence, it seems. In the last sentence of the novel, Cooper tells us that Natty is “the
foremost in that band of pioneers who are opening the way for the march of the nation across the
continent.” If this literary device is not an obvious giveaway, consider this final, poignant fact:
those two sentences are the only occasions in The Pioneers where Cooper ever uses the word
“pioneers.”

260 Cooper 14
261 Cooper 436
APPENDIX A

Key Characters

- **Judge Marmaduke Temple.** Founder and leader of the village of Templeton. The Judge is partially based on Cooper's father, Judge William Cooper of Cooperstown, but he is better educated than the real Judge, and unlike him is not engaged in party politics.
- **Nathaniel Bumppo ("Natty").** An elderly hunter and scout, living on the fringes of Templeton. He resents the inroads of civilization, and guards the secret of his cabin. Perhaps partially based on David Shipman, an old scout who lived in a cabin near Fly Creek.
- **Elizabeth Temple,** his only daughter. Cooper at first welcomed the notion that she was partly based on his beloved elder sister Hannah, but in later years emphasized differences between the two.
- **Remarkable Pettibone.** Judge Temple's New England housekeeper; pious, complacent, and resentful of authority.
- **Ben Pump (Benjamin Stubbs).** Judge Temple's major-domo; a British sailor from Cornwall, who interprets everything in terms of his limited naval experience.
- **Richard Jones ("Dickon").** Cousin, secretary, and business assistant to Judge Temple, who later becomes Sheriff of Otsego County. An ambitious and egotistical know-it-all with an agenda of his own.
- **Rev. Mr. Grant.** Episcopal Clergyman, mild but devout. Perhaps based on Rev. Frederick Tiffany, who was in 1823 the Deacon and effective Rector of Cooperstown's Christ Church. Tiffany later became Chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives.
- **Billy Kirby.** An honest and decent wood-cutter from Vermont, though he cannot understand how anyone could love a tree.
- **Oliver Edwards** (later Edward Oliver Effingham) (called "the Young Eagle" by John Mohegan). A mysterious and morose young man, of good education, with an "attitude," believed by many to be part Indian. Has recently arrived in Templeton to live with Natty Bumppo, but soon becomes Judge Temple's Secretary and moves to the Mansion House.
- **Major Oliver Effingham** (called "Fire-eater" by John Mohegan). Edward's grandfather, who appears only at the end of the story.
- **Indian John** (Chingachgook). An old Delaware Indian Chief, nominally a Christian, living with Natty Bumppo. Now an alcoholic hanger-on, he dreams of his past dignity and glory, and mourns the downfall of his people. Perhaps based on a Mohegan Indian, John Brushell, who in the early 1800s lived near Lake Canadarago.
- **Dr. Elnathan Todd.** A young, self-taught doctor from New England; his common sense makes him a better physician than many doctors with more formal educations.
- **Hiram Doolittle.** New England builder and carpenter, whose ambition exceeds his skill, and whose greed is stronger than his morals. When Richard Jones becomes Sheriff, Doolittle is named as Magistrate.
- **Jotham Riddel.** A New England drifter, moving from place to place, and from occupation to occupation, in search of easy wealth.
- **Louisa Grant.** His devoted daughter and housekeeper; companion and confidant of Elizabeth Temple.
Plot Summary By Chapter

[Part One]: Christmas Eve and Christmas, 1793.

Chapter 1: [Prelude] Lyrical description of the headwaters of the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers, and their present (1823) economic and social prosperity. On Dec. 24, 1793, the widowed Judge Marmaduke Temple is bringing his only daughter Elizabeth home to Templeton (Cooperstown) from boarding school in New York, in a sleigh driven by the slave Agamemnon. As they approach their destination, a deer bounds by and is shot at both by Judge Temple and by Natty Bumppo and Oliver Edwards, who appear out of the woods. Judge Temple claims the deer, but Natty proves that Edwards shot it and that Temple has in fact accidentally wounded Edwards with a buckshot pellet in the shoulder. Temple takes Edwards into the sleigh to seek medical treatment in Templeton.

Chapter 2: [Family history] Marmaduke Temple's Quaker ancestor had emigrated to Pennsylvania, but his sons soon lost the family money. Marmaduke's father, however, had revived the family fortunes and given his son a good education. At school Marmaduke became friends with one Edward Effingham, wealthy son of Major Oliver Effingham of the British Army. Marmaduke entered into successful business, with Edward as his silent partner. When the Revolution broke out, Edward became Colonel of a Loyalist regiment, and turned over his money and papers to Marmaduke for safe keeping; Marmaduke was a patriot but did not join the Continental Army. After the Revolution Marmaduke became wealthy by buying up at low prices the confiscated properties of Loyalists in upstate New York, and then travelled to New York State to settle the properties he had bought. When a new county was formed, he became its first Judge.

Chapter 3: [The View from Mount Vision] As the sleigh approaches Templeton, Oliver Edwards insists that the carcass of the deer belongs to him, and refuses to sell it to Judge Temple. From Mount Vision they look down on the ice-covered Lake Otsego, with the bustling but unkempt new village at its foot. The village is described, as is the ugly roof of the Mansion House, Judge Temple's home, designed and built by Hiram Doolittle and Richard Jones.

Chapter 4: [The Quarry] The party meets another sleigh coming to meet them, driven by Richard Jones and carrying the Rev. Mr. Grant, Monsieur Le Quoi, and Major Fritz Hartmann. The only place to turn this sleigh around is at a quarry. Jones almost runs the sleigh over a precipice, and is rescued by Oliver Edwards. Judge Temple hints to Agamemnon that he should not tell Jones about the unfortunate shooting of the deer (and of Edwards), reminding him that Santa Claus is expected with gifts, but Jones worms the story out of Aggy anyway.

Chapter 5: [The Mansion House] The two sleighs enter Templeton, whose stump-filled streets and rude houses are described, and reach the Mansion House, where they are welcomed by the Judge's servants. The interior is described in detail. Elizabeth admires the stolid Oliver Edwards, who awaits the arrival of a doctor.
Chapter 6: [Medicine in Templeton] Dr. Elnathan Todd's upbringing and practical medical education described. With some interference from Richard Jones, who fancies his own medical skill, the pellet is extracted from Edwards' shoulder. John Mohegan appears.

Chapter 7: [Indian history] Originally Northeastern America was shared by two hostile Indian nations, the Delawares and the Iroquois. Among the Delaware tribes were the Mohicans or Mohegans, living east of the Hudson and in New England. John Mohegan was a Mohegan Chief who had fought with the British, become a Christian, and seen all his family killed; he alone of the Delawares has remained in the Otsego region of his youth. Mohegan has recently appeared in Templeton, and moved into Natty Bumppo's cabin. He now treats Oliver Edwards' wound, while Dr. Todd quietly seeks to learn from his traditional medical lore. Edwards moodily insists on keeping the deer carcass. There is discussion of whether the Judge, as landowner, has a right to all the deer in his woods. Rev. Mr. Grant invites John Mohegan to attend the Christmas service.

Chapter 8: [Some Templeton Inhabitants] Background of Monsieur Le Quoi, the French refugee, and Major Frederick Hartmann, a Palatine German living on the Mohawk. Description of the Academy, Templeton's school and assembly room. The recent arrival of Rev. Dr. Grant, who will preach the first Episcopal Service to be heard in Templeton at the Academy that evening.


Chapter 10: [Progress in Templeton] En route to the Christmas Eve service at the Academy, Elizabeth stops to talk with the Hollisters, proprietors of the Bold Dragoon tavern. Description of the unfinished new church, New St. Paul's, which Temple and Richard Jones plan to complete as an Episcopalian edifice.

Chapter 11: [Christmas Eve service] Description of the Academy, prepared for the Christmas-eve service, and of the frontier families who have come to attend it. Natty Bumppo and John Mohegan arrive. Rev. Mr. Grant gives an Episcopal service, though only his daughter Louisa, Elizabeth Temple, and Oliver Edwards know how to give the responses. He reads a sermon, on the necessity of Faith because not all of God's Truth is revealed to Man.

Chapter 12: [Religion Discussed] As the congregation disperses, Oliver Edwards admits to Rev. Mr. Grant that he was brought up as an Episcopalian. Natty Bumppo insists on returning to his cabin, and expresses doubts about formal religion. John Mohegan asserts that Edwards is "The Young Eagle" with the blood of a Delaware. Edwards walks Louisa Grant home, and learns how her mother and siblings had all died in poverty. He continues to express inexplicable hostility towards Judge Temple.

Chapter 13: [Tavern scene] The Bold Dragoon tavern described, as the townsmen gather to drink after the service. Squire Lippet argues that Oliver Edwards could bring a criminal case against Judge Temple for wounding him. Natty arrives and is welcomed. Natty muses on how John Mohegan has come down in the world since he was a Chief.
Chapter 14: [Tavern Scene Continued] Judge Temple and his party enter, followed by Mohegan, and begin to drink, as Squire Lippet quietly retires. Jotham Riddel describes his tangled business transactions and vague plans for the future. Judge Temple calls for game laws to protect deer and fish; Natty argues that no real hunter would kill them out of season anyway. Richard Jones sings a drinking song. The intoxicated Mohegan sings fiercely in Delaware about past glories; he is soothed by Natty and taken to the barn to sleep it off. Judge Temple and his friends leave for the Mansion House, singing and weaving their way unsteadily through the snow.

Chapter 15: [Conversation among Servants] Back at the Mansion House, Elizabeth Temple retires, and the servants Remarkable Pettibone and Ben Pump speculate whether her arrival will end their household authority. Ben tells anecdotes of his naval service. Judge Temple and his party arrive, and all retire for the night.

Chapter 16: [Christmas Morning] On Christmas morning Elizabeth tells Richard Jones that he has been appointed county Sheriff, and Jones prepares to enjoy his new-found authority. Walking through the grounds, they eavesdrop on Natty, Oliver Edwards, and John Mohegan, who want to take part in a Christmas turkey shoot, though Natty is out of money and Edwards has only one shilling left. Mohegan says he can no longer shoot straight because of age and the white man's liquor. Elizabeth presents herself and offers to pay anyone who will shoot the turkey for her; Natty accepts the shilling, though he recognizes that Billy Kirby may have the best prospects.

Chapter 17: [Turkey shoot] Near the lake Abraham ("Brom") Freeborn has tied up a turkey behind a stump, with only its head showing, as a target to be shot at from 100 yards away, and is collecting entry fees. Billy Kirby, a Vermont woodcutter who clears land for a living, is described. Kirby shoots and misses. Oliver Edwards shoots and misses. Natty shoots, but his gun misses fire, and it is ruled that he has lost his turn. Kirby again misses. Natty shoots again and kills the turkey, which he presents to Elizabeth, who in turn gives it to Edwards. Judge Temple arrives and joins the sport.

Chapter 18: [Edwards Joins the Family] Judge Temple invites Oliver Edwards to become his secretary, since Richard Jones has been named Sheriff, and to move into his house. Urged by Natty and John Mohegan, the reluctant Edwards finally accepts. Despite Richard Jones' objections, Judge Temple insists that Edwards will be considered a gentleman and treated as part of the family. Edwards, returning to Natty's cabin with Mohegan, expresses great distaste at serving Judge Temple. The Temples return to the Mansion House, and a rainstorm ensues.

Chapter 19: [The End of Part One] Ben Pump insists that the night will turn frigid, and preparations are made. The next morning the Lake is covered with black ice, and every branch and twig sparkles with an icy coating. Oliver Edwards takes up residence as Judge Temple's secretary. There is discussion of Edwards' possible Indian blood. Three months pass.

[Part Two: March - July Vignettes of Village Life]
Chapter 20: [Maple Sugaring] At the end of March Richard Jones proposes to Elizabeth, Louisa Grant, Oliver Edwards, Judge Temple, and Monsieur Le Quoi, that they ride to visit a sugar bush where Billy Kirby is making maple sugar, and then go on to see a view of the Lake. There is still snow on the ground, and the riding is rough. Judge Temple argues the need to protect sugar maples, and claims that maple sugar can be refined as white as the cane sugar produced in Monsieur Le Quoi's West Indies. They find Kirby boiling sap and singing a sugaring song to the tune of Yankee Doodle. Details of sugaring described. Kirby tricks Monsieur Le Quoi into drinking boiling sap. Judge Temple bemoans Kirby's harmful methods of tapping trees, and foresees a loss of ancient forests that no one will live to see replaced. Kirby wonders how anyone can like a tree, though he understands that rich men in Europe treasure them. The Judge retorts that he wants to conserve trees for their economic utility, rather than as ornaments; soon there will be laws to protect both trees and game. The party continues on its way.

Chapter 21: [The Founding of Templeton] As they ride, Judge Temple describes the wilderness view from Mount Vision when he first visited Otsego, and recounts the early history of the settlement and its hardships (taken directly from William Cooper). Temple had stayed in Natty Bumppo's cabin, who treated him well but objected to his plans for a settlement. After admiring a view of the lake, the party starts back to Templeton. Suddenly and silently a decayed tree falls, barely missing them. As they approach the village, a spring blizzard begins.

Chapter 22: [Shooting Pigeons] During April the ice on Lake Otsego finally breaks up, and pigeons migrate overhead. Everyone turns out to shoot the huge wheeling flocks of birds, from the village and the surrounding hills, even pressing into service a small swivel cannon abandoned years before by passing troops, and now used for Fourth of July salutes. Natty Bumppo is appalled at the wasteful slaughter, and contents himself with shooting a single bird. Finally the flocks depart, and Judge Temple hires local boys, at sixpence a hundred, to kill the thousands of wounded birds now covering the ground.

Chapter 23: [Fishing] Spring continues, the ice and the ice fishers are gone, and the newly enacted bass season has opened on Lake Otsego. Preparations are made to net the fish at night from a point near the village; Oliver Edwards, Elizabeth Temple, and Louisa Grant walk over to watch it. Around a bonfire, Ben Pump and Richard Jones argue the relative merits of sea and lake. The long net is drawn in to shore and huge piles of fish deposited there; Judge Temple deplores the waste of the Otsego Bass, one of the world's finest fish, which are already becoming scarce. Richard Jones tells the Judge he has just learned an important secret, and invites him on an expedition to visit what he hints may be a mine.

Chapter 24: [Fishing Continued] Louisa Grant tells Elizabeth Temple that Natty Bumppo is hiding some secret in his always-locked cabin, and that he is rumored to be an Indian. A gradually approaching light proves to be Natty Bumppo and John Mohegan in a canoe, with a torch for spear fishing mounted on it. Natty refuses to accept any of the fish piled on shore, and invites Oliver Edwards and Elizabeth to come fishing with them in the canoe. Natty spears a large salmon trout, and they paddle back to watch the other fisherman. Ben Pump and Billy Kirby are setting the net from a rowboat, and Ben falls overboard. Natty rescues him by catching his hair with his spear, and Ben is revived.
Chapter 25: [A Mysterious Letter] Next morning Richard Jones finds Judge Temple drawn and anxious; he has received a mysterious letter from England, apparently reporting someone's death in a shipwreck over a year before. The expedition to visit the mine is forgotten. The Judge calls for his lawyer, Dirck Van der School, to assist him in preparing some papers. Oliver Edwards offers his services, but Elizabeth says that it is a private family matter. When Elizabeth expresses sympathy for John Mohegan, Edwards is pleasantly surprised, and seems to be in love with her. When he leaves the house he encounters Van der School bearing a packet of papers, which the lawyer refuses to discuss. Summer comes on. Richard Jones is often seen in conference with Jotham Riddel, and early in July again suggests to Judge Temple that they make the deferred expedition on the following day.

Chapter 26: [Beauty of the Catskills] Judge Temple and Richard Jones set forth on their expedition. Elizabeth Temple and Louisa Grant decide on a walk in the woods, accompanied by her mastiff "Brave". Oliver Edwards offers to escort them, but is refused; he goes boating instead and rows to Natty Bumppo's cabin (in what is now Fairy Spring Park), where he goes inside. As he leaves the cabin Natty's tied-up hounds are barking, and Edwards sees Hiram Doolittle skulking in the bushes. He returns to his boat and goes fishing; off Point Judith he encounters Natty and John Mohegan canoeing. Natty says Otsego Lake is the finest place he knows, and mourns the old days before settlers came. The only place he ever liked better was in the Catskills, which he had visited during the Revolution; he describes in loving detail an overlook above the Hudson and the nearby Kaaterskill Falls. Natty's hounds are heard chasing an animal; he is surprised because he thought them safely tied up at the cabin. A buck springs into the Lake, followed by the hounds.

Chapter 27: [Natty Kills a Deer] Despite Oliver Edwards' warning that Judge Temple has vowed to prosecute anyone killing deer out of season, Natty, John Mohegan, and Edwards pursue the deer in the water; Edwards catches its antlers in a noose and Natty cuts its throat. The hounds are examined, and it is seen that the thongs with which they were tied up have been cut with a knife on the end of a long stick.

Chapter 28: [Threatened by a Panther] Meanwhile Elizabeth Temple and Louisa Grant ramble through the woods overlooking the east side of the Lake (Prospect Rock) above Natty's cabin. Louisa tells Elizabeth what she has heard about Natty's background, and speculates that he may be Oliver Edwards' father. She also mentions the abject poverty of her own upbringing, when she and her siblings were left hungry at home while her father, too proud to beg, rode off to console others. The two young women encounter the cub of a panther (mountain lion), which is killed by the mastiff Brave, and are then attacked by the cub's mother. Brave dies trying to defend them, Louisa faints, and Elizabeth has given herself up for dead when Natty silently appears and shoots the panther. They return to the village, and Natty returns to his cabin, near which he encounters Hiram Doolittle, who has heard his shot. Doolittle obliquely accuses Natty of illegally shooting deer, and Natty leads him on until they come to the bodies of the dead mastiff and the panthers. Natty claims the bounty on panther scalps, and Hiram persistently but unsuccessfully tries to gain admission to his cabin on pretext of preparing the bounty order. Natty examines Doolittle's knife, making it clear he thinks Doolittle responsible for loosing his hounds, and Doolittle's
discomfiture demonstrates his guilt. Natty warns Doolittle to stay away from his cabin, and Doolittle responds that he knows Natty has broken the law and as Magistrate intends to bring him to justice. Oliver Edwards assures Natty that nobody has entered the cabin.

Chapter 29: [Suspicious Behavior] Meanwhile, Richard Jones and Judge Temple have ridden forth to see Richard's discovery, made, he says, by Hiram Doolittle and Jotham Riddel. It is, he asserts, a silver mine. As evidence, they have seen Natty Bumppo and John Mohegan going up the mountain with picks and shovels, and then carrying things mysteriously to their cabin. On one occasion, Natty went away and returned dragging a sledge with a large burden covered with bear-skins, and since then has let no one enter his cabin. Now Oliver Edwards spends his time digging mysteriously. Jones and Temple arrive at their destination, where Jones shows the Judge a natural cave on the hillside, the interior of which has been recently excavated and enlarged; this evidence makes the Judge suspicious. They return to the village, where they find Elizabeth and Louisa returning from their encounter with the panther, and the Judge for the time forgets his suspicions of Natty in his gratitude for the saving of his daughter.

Chapter 30: [Natty Fights Back] Hiram Doolittle asks Judge Temple for a warrant to search Natty's cabin for the carcass of an illegally killed deer. The Judge reluctantly agrees, but privately assures Elizabeth that if Natty is found guilty she can pay his fine. Unable to find Sheriff Jones, who is away from the village, Hiram Doolittle deputizes a reluctant Billy Kirby as Constable to execute the search warrant, telling Kirby only that the suspect is a powerful wrestler. Accompanied by Jotham Riddel, they set forth. When Kirby realizes that they are heading for Natty's cabin, he rebels, but finally agrees to a peaceful talk with him. Natty, however, adamantly refuses to accept the search warrant, shoves Doolittle into the bushes, and aims his rifle at Billy Kirby to warn him off; Doolittle and Riddel promptly flee. Natty then drops his gun, and amicably turns over the remains of the deer to Kirby.

Chapter 31: [Different Views of Justice] Squire Lippet tells a horrified Oliver Edwards that Judge Temple had issued a warrant to search Natty's cabin, and that Natty was now liable to fine and imprisonment for assaulting a magistrate and threatening a constable with firearms. Edwards goes to see Elizabeth, who assures him that her father would never imprison a man who had just saved her life. However the Judge, who joins them, insists that he cannot allow his personal feelings to impede justice, and that the law must now take its course. An outraged Edwards accuses Judge Temple of having usurped possession of his lands; the Judge defends his title, and dismisses Edwards from his employment. Apologizing to Elizabeth, Oliver Edwards rushes from the Mansion House.

Chapter 32: [Natty Arrested] Returning to the village, Richard Jones arrives at the Mansion House to find the dead mastiff Brave, and to learn in convoluted fashion from Ben Pump of Elizabeth's encounter with the panther, her rescue by Natty, the quarrel between Judge Temple and Oliver Edwards, and eventually of the charges against Natty. He gathers a posse to arrest Natty, but when they reach the cabin they find it burned to the ground by its owner; a sorrowful Natty gives himself up quietly and is carried off to jail.

Chapter 33: [The Trial] It is Court day, and crowds are wending their way to Templeton to attend it as jurors or litigants. Richard Jones leads a procession from the Bold Dragoon to the
courtroom, located over the log jail, and the proceedings begin. Natty Bumppo is brought before the Judge on two indictments. Dirck Van der School, as District Attorney, charges Natty with assault and battery on Hiram Doolittle; Squire Lippet defends him on the grounds that Doolittle, though a Magistrate, was not a Constable, and thus had no right to execute the search warrant. The jury finds Natty not guilty. On the second indictment, for threatening a constable with firearms, the jury finds Natty guilty even though Billy Kirby insists he was never put in fear. The Judge sentences Natty to a fine of one hundred dollars, to be placed in the public stocks for one hour, and to be jailed for a month. Natty asks not to be jailed, since he cannot stand being shut in, and offers to earn the fine money by hunting. Ben Pump offers to pay the fine, but Judge Temple ends the proceedings and orders Natty placed in the stocks.

Chapter 34: [Natty Jailed] Natty is placed in the stocks; Ben Pump insists on joining him there, and seeks to console him. When Hiram Doolittle comes by to gloat, Ben grabs his legs and knocks him down. When the hour is over, both Natty and Ben are locked up in the jail, where Oliver Edwards comes to confer with them through the barred window.

Chapter 35: [A Jail Break] That evening Elizabeth and Judge Temple argue about the justice of Natty's conviction, the Judge insisting that he could not interfere with justice even though Natty had saved his daughter's life, and Elizabeth arguing the inhumanity of the result. The Judge gives Elizabeth two hundred dollars to pay Natty's fine and ease his condition, and she and Louisa set out to visit Natty in jail. Near it they encounter an ox cart driven by Oliver Edwards in disguise. They are admitted to the jail, where Natty refuses the money, but admits that Edwards plans to rescue him through a hole cut in the logs. He asks that Elizabeth buy some gunpowder, and meet him with it at noon the next day on top of Mount Vision. Elizabeth agrees, and helps him and Ben escape. The escape is soon discovered, and a posse formed to search the mountains.

Chapter 36: [Mohegan Mourns] Next morning Elizabeth and Louisa buy gunpowder from Monsieur Le Quoi, and Elizabeth climbs Mount Vision alone. She finds John Mohegan, dressed in Indian costume and bemoaning his lost people. He had given the Otsego lands to the Fire-eater, but Judge Temple had usurped them. Now Mohegan's family are all dead; he has no son but the Young Eagle, who is a white man. A forest fire suddenly springs up, and as Elizabeth and Mohegan turn to flee, Oliver Edwards appears.

Chapter 37: [Forest Fire] Oliver Edwards and Elizabeth seek in vain to escape the spreading flames. John Mohegan resigns himself to death. Elizabeth urges Edwards to save himself, but he vows to die with her. As their situation becomes desperate, Natty appears.

Chapter 38: [Another Rescue] Shortly before, Natty had learned from Louisa of Elizabeth's departure for Mount Vision and rushed off to find her. He picks up the dying John Mohegan and, using his woodcraft skills, leads Elizabeth and Edwards to a place of safety on a terrace above the cave, from which emerges Ben Pump. Rev. Mr. Grant unexpectedly appears; also seeking Elizabeth, he had been led to safety by Natty's hounds. John Mohegan dies, to the horror of Mr. Grant renouncing his Christianity. A heavy rain begins, extinguishing the fire, but Edwards fails to invite Elizabeth into the cave. Instead he leads her back to the village, promising to reveal his secret on the morrow; on their way home they encounter a grateful Judge Temple.
Chapter 39: [The Battle at the Cave] The next day the fire is out, and Jotham Riddel is found dying from burns. As it is rumored that Natty Bumppo had started the forest fire, the Templeton Light Infantry is mustered in by Richard Jones to find him. They surround the cave, but Natty insists they may not enter until two hours before sundown. Captain Hollister leads a charge, but Ben Pump fires the swivel cannon into the air and the troops hastily retreat. Only Hiram Doolittle is wounded, when Natty shoots him in the behind. Judge Temple calls a halt to the battle, just as Oliver Edwards appears surrenders.

Chapter 40: [Explanations and Reconciliations] On the terrace above the cave, is an old and senile man, who gravely welcomes them. Oliver Edwards (now Edward Oliver Effingham) explains that the man is Major Effingham, his grandfather, known to the Indians as Fire-eater, who has been living secretly in Natty's cabin. After the Revolution, Oliver had been left in Nova Scotia while his loyalist father, Colonel Effingham none other than Judge Temple's old silent partner sought compensation from the British government for the loss of his American properties. The Colonel had succeeded, but in 1792 died in a shipwreck of which Judge Temple learned only two years later (Chapter 25). Judge Temple explains to Edwards that he had purchased properties confiscated from the Effinghams because of their loyalty to the crown, but had always held them for the Effinghams as a personal sacred trust. On learning of his father's death Oliver had sought out his old grandfather, but found that he had been taken from Connecticut to Otsego by Natty Bumppo, a faithful family servant. Natty had lived at Otsego for many years, looking after lands that the Delawares had given Major Effingham at the same time that they adopted him and his family as honorary Indians. Oliver had joined them at the cabin shortly before Elizabeth's return to Templeton, and he and Natty continued to keep the Major's presence secret so that no one would know of his poverty and growing senility. Judge Temple and the rest all return to the Mansion House, where Judge Temple shows Oliver the will he has recently executed, leaving half his property to Major Effingham and his descendants, and the other half to his daughter Elizabeth. Now he promises to transfer half his property to Oliver immediately, and surmises that Elizabeth's share will soon become Oliver's as well.

[Part Four: October, 1794. Epilogue]

Chapter 41: [The End of the Story] Between August and October Edward Oliver Effingham and Elizabeth Temple have been married, and Edward's grandfather has died. Natty and Ben Pump had to return to jail, but were soon pardoned by the Governor and freed. Hiram Doolittle, duly compensated for his troubles, has moved on west, and Monsieur Le Quoi has returned to Paris. In mid-October, Oliver asks his bride Elizabeth to walk with him on the east side of the lake. Elizabeth worries about the Grant family, but her husband says Judge Temple has arranged for Rev. Grant to become Minister of a church in the Hudson Valley, where he will be comfortable and Louisa can meet appropriate suitors. They arrive at the site of Natty Bumppo's cabin, where they find two gravestones which Natty is vainly trying to read. Oliver reads them for him: one is that of his grandfather, Major Oliver Effingham, with an inscription saluting the devotion of Nathaniel Bumppo who had cared for him in old age. The other is of John Mohegan, the last of his people. Natty says that since the Indians are now all gone, it is time for him to leave as well; he plans to seek the wilderness of the Great Lakes. He refuses to accept any money, shoulders his rifle, calls his dogs, and departs, "the foremost in that band of Pioneers, who are opening the way for the march of the nation across the continent," and is never seen in Templeton again.
REFERENCES

Works Cited:

Books:


Beatty, Charles, The Journal of a Two Months Tour; With a View of Promoting Religion among the Frontier Inhabitants of Pennsylvania and of Introducing Christianity among the Indians To the Westward of the Aleg-h-geny Mountains, (Edinburgh: MacCliesh and Ogle, 1799)


Boynton, Henry, James Fenimore Cooper (New York: Century, 1931)

Bruun, Erik and Crosby, Jay, eds., Our Nation’s Archive: A History of the United States in Documents (Black Dog and Leventhal, 1999)


Darnell, Donald, *James Fenimore Cooper: Novelist of Manners*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993), 45-6


Griffiths, Nicholas and Cervantes, Fernando, Eds.; *Spiritual Encounters: Interactions Between Christianity and Native Religions in Colonial America* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999)


Hatch, Nathan O.; *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989)


Long, Robert Emmet, James Fenimore Cooper, (New York: Continuum, 1990)

Lounsbury, Thomas, James Fenimore Cooper (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882)


Merchant, Carolyn, Ecological Revolutions (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1989)


Peardon, Thomas P. ed., The Second Treatise on Government, by John Locke (Indianapolis:, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1952)


Ringe, Donald, James Fenimore Cooper, Updated ed. (Boston: Twayne, 1988)


Spiller, Robert, Fenimore Cooper: Critic Of His Times (New York: Milton, Balch and Co., 1931)


Tichi, Cecelia, New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans Through Whitman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979)

Twain, Mark, “Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences” in How to Tell a Story and Other Essays (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1897)


-------- The Radicalism of the American Revolution (New York; Knopf, 1992)

Articles and Miscellanea


Freeman, John F., “The Indian Convert: Theme and Variation,” Ethnohistory, Vol. 12, No. 2. (Spring, 1965)


Richter, Daniel K., “Whose Indian History?” The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., Vol. 50, No. 2 (Apr., 1993)


“The New York Act of Attainder, or Confiscation Act” Chapter XXV of the Laws of the Third Session of the New York Legislature; October, 22, 1779

Bower, Anne L., “Resisting Women: ‘Feminist’ Students and Cooper's The Pioneers, with a few Thoughts Concerning Pedagogical Approaches to The Prairie” Originally published in James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art, Papers from the 2001 Cooper Seminar (No. 13), The State University of New York College at Oneonta <http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/2001suny-bower.html>


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Educational Background:

• Bachelor of Arts, Brown University (Providence, R.I.)
  History (American); Degree Conferred: May, 1995

• Master of Arts Candidate, Florida State University (Tallahassee, FL)
  American and Florida Studies; Expected Completion: Summer, 2004

Alumni Fellow; University of Florida (Gainesville, FL)
Candidate for PhD. in American History; Studies Begin: Fall, 2004

Professional Background

• The Associated Press (Providence, R.I.)
  Covered sports; local and state news

• Rhode Island Monthly (Providence, R.I.)
  Editorial Assistant; 1993
  Contributing Editor (Politics); Columnist, 1994-1995

• Montgomery Journal (Rockville, MD)
  General Assignment Reporter 1995-1997

• News-Journal (Daytona Beach, FL)
  Municipal Reporter 1997-1998
  Health Care Reporter; Enterprise Team, Senior Writer 1998-2001

• Florida State University (Tallahassee, FL)
  Instructor in American and Florida Studies, (Early American History and Literature)
  Undergraduate Level; 2002-2004

• Marx Information Service (Tallahassee, FL)
  Court Record Researcher (Freelance), 2002-2004

Other Professional Experience

• Have written or contributed to national interest stories for publications including The New York Post, Las Vegas Sun, Washington Times’ Insight Magazine
• Won feature writing awards from Maryland-Virginia-District of Columbia Press Association in 1995 and 1996
• Florida Department of Health’s Public Health Reporting Award Winner (regional) in 2001