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Book Reviews

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Sir William Pepperrell of Colonial New England. By Neil Rolde. (Brunswick, Me.: Harpswell Press, 1982. Pp. xi, 201. Paper. $8.95.)

Neil Rolde has written a brief, enthusiastic account of the life of Sir William Pepperrell that is aimed at a general readership rather than at scholars. The work is based upon a panoply of sources ranging from manuscripts and scholarly secondary accounts to antiquarian works. The exact use made of each source is difficult to determine; Rolde has "tried to avoid the scholar's habit of appealing to other scholars with a barrage of footnotes nailing down the precise origin of every explicit statement." The absence of documentation puts this book beyond the scholarly pale, but that is not to say that it is an inaccurate account. By and large the narrative stays within the parameters of the scholarly body of work on Sir William. The author has not put forth a radically different interpretation of the man or his works, nor has he inflated Pepperrell's importance. As Rolde puts it, Sir William was "an important man in his time – the first half of the eighteenth century – and in his place, primarily the rugged but changing frontier country of the Piscataqua River region between New Hampshire and Maine."

After a prologue chapter on William Pepperrell, Sr., who immigrated to Kittery Point and established varied and successful business interests that ranged from milling to foreign trade, land speculation, and money lending, Rolde devotes the remainder of his book to William Jr. Born in 1696, William Jr., entered his father's business in 1713 and gradually assumed more and more responsibility for its direction. Within ten years of his father's death in 1734, William had largely turned over control to his own son, Andrew.

Despite his many business interests, Pepperrell made time to serve in the Massachusetts government, first as a member of the General Court and later in the Council, where he watched over the interests of his region and his own family. In the 1730s he

avoided serious involvement in the heated political battles that marked the administration of Governor Jonathan Belcher, but he took up a more active role after William Shirley became governor in 1741.

When France and England went to war in 1744, the Massachusetts government authorized an attack by New England forces upon the French fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island. Although appointed to lead the attacking force, Pepperrell had only limited militia experience. His principal strengths consisted of organizational ability, reputation, and wealth. Before the campaign drew to a successful conclusion with the surrender of the fortress, he had to draw upon all of these. As a reward for his victory, Pepperrell was made a baronet by King William, the first native-born American to be so honored. Ironically, the peace negotiators bartered away the great Louisbourg fortress as part of the settlement that ended the war in 1748.

After returning from Louisbourg, Sir William sailed to England, apparently with the hope of being chosen governor of Massachusetts. Unfortunately, he did not push his cause strongly and did not receive the appointment. An audience with King George proved to be the highlight of his visit to the mother country.

With the death of his son, Andrew in 1751, Sir William suffered a severe blow, and he did not resume his governmental activities until 1753. During the French and Indian War, the British government ordered him to reactivate the regiment he had commanded at Louisbourg. Although first promoted to major general and then to lieutenant general in the regular British army, Pepperrell's active military campaigning remained limited. He did not live to see the end of the war, dying in 1759 at the age of sixty-three.

This reviewer, trained as a professional historian, is sympathetic to the idea of history being written for the general audience. The *sine qua non* of such history is that it be well researched and reliable, even if it is not attended with the usual scholarly apparatus. Rolde's work seems to meet these criteria.

But history for the general reader must be well written, or it will not attract a large readership no matter how accurate it may be. Unfortunately, Rolde's book is not very well written. His vigorous enthusiasm for his subject comes through, and that is important, but something more is needed. The narrative should flow, it should sweep the reader along, but often Rolde's does not. At various points, for example, he allows himself to be drawn into discussions involving the accuracy of the sources being used, rather than sticking to the story. He would have better served his readers had he relegated such material to footnotes, if at all worthy of mention. Rolde's overreliance on the passive voice and his frequent failure to make smooth transitions from one topic to another also weaken the narrative.

A similar problem detracts from the good set of illustrations included in the book. For example, views of the exteriors and interiors of the Pepperrell Mansion and Sparhawk Hall are separated from one another by several pages of other illustrations. A portrait of the young William Pepperrell, Jr., is placed after portraits done later in his life and after two illustrations of the Louisbourg campaign, which he led when nearly fifty years of age. A chronological arrangement of the illustrations would have been more effective.

In sum, more careful editing would have made what is basically a good book into a better one. Produced in an attractive format and with easy-to-read type, the book has a good index and a bibliography of sources consulted.

Richard R. Wescott

New England and Foreign Relations, 1789-1850. By Paul A. Varg. (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1983. Pp. ix, 260. Cloth. $20.00.)

The distinguished American diplomatic historian Paul A. Varg has turned his attention from the nation's capital to the particular foreign policy views of the New England region

beginning with the first Congress up to the close of the Mexican War. Largely as a result of party rivalries, New Englanders never spoke with one voice on foreign affairs. But Varg finds important uniformities in New England that set it off from other sections of the country. The common interest in New England in shipping and, after the War of 1812, in manufacturing closely tied the region to the world economy and to London financial markets. For Varg, this induced in New England a "spirit of caution" and preference for peace, especially with Great Britain, as well as a strong opposition to western territorial expansion.

Casting his research net far beyond such familiar New England "great men" as John Quincy Adams and Daniel Webster, Varg finds the sources for the cautious foreign policy perspective of New England in the social fabric of the region. The conservatism of the countinghouses and factories was buttressed by the dominance of the Congregational churches, where clergy not only sought to place a cap on frivolity but promoted the virtues of the state and the business class. The clergy was especially active before and during the War of 1812 when they denounced the Republican administrations and United States participation in a war that would entail an alliance with the French infidel. The dominant political parties of the region, the Federalists up to the War of 1812, and the Whigs after 1834, were also conservative. They approached England with a conciliatory attitude despite numerous British provocations against American interests throughout the period. Varg finds that "the great majority of New Englanders admired and trusted the British. [They] shared the Burke tradition that change must come slowly, and they admired British reverence for law and representative government." More than any other region of the country, New Englanders tied their fortunes to avoidance of conflict with the great power of the globe, Great Britain. Of the twenty-eight representatives to Congress from New England, twenty-two supported the Jay Treaty, with dealt so harshly and sharply with the United States but ended the drift to war with England. More than fifty years later New Eng-

landers were appalled at the way westerners ridiculed the danger of war with England in demanding the annexation of both Texas and Oregon in 1845.

Those seeking an understanding of Maine's part in New England's foreign policy development will be disappointed in Varg's work. As a thinly populated, rural state controlled by the Democrats, Maine people did not share in the perspective of Massachusetts, the economic and political center of the region. This is most evident in Varg's short chapter on "New England and the Maine Boundary Controversy." It focuses primarily on the strong feelings by Whig politicians and the Whig press in Massachusetts against Governor John Fairfield and the Maine legislature for an "unwarranted and dangerous" resort to force in 1839 and subsequent unwillingness to reach a compromise settlement with the British on locating a boundary. How Mainers felt about this crucial issue remains largely a mystery for, surprisingly, not a single Maine newspaper is cited in the notes for this chapter.

Maine's distinctiveness from the rest of New England is also evident in Varg's discussion of response to the "manifest destiny" cries of the 1840s. Representative Hannibal Hamlin, the prominent expansionist Democrat from Bangor, did vote with New England Whigs in 1845 against the proposal to annex Texas by joint resolution of Congress out of fear of the spread of slavery, but he enthusiastically entered the fight for all of Oregon. He denounced British "usurpation and aggression" and contended that a firm stand by President James K. Polk would buy peace. When war with Mexico broke out in 1846, Maine politicians and newspapers, unlike most of New England, endorsed the expansionist goals of the administration. Only on this one issue does Varg use Maine newspapers, the Portland *Eastern Argus* and the *Age* of Augusta, to assess the Maine reaction. To Varg, Maine (and New Hampshire) differed from the rest of the region on expansionism and other foreign policy issues because "where industrialization came much later on a smaller scale, the Whig ideals of protectionism, a sound currency, stability and friendship and economic ties to

England had little appeal compared to the robust demands of frontiersmen for low priced public lands, cheap currency, territorial aggrandizement, and the trumpeting of the virtues of the common man."

Paul Varg offers a useful and readable survey of New England's views before 1850 on foreign relations that is rooted in extensive research in primary sources. Generally Varg is sympathetic to the conservative perspective of the region he examines. He is also polite in his criticism of those with whom he disagrees. For example, he says of the Federalists, who contemplated secession during the War of 1812, that they "were less than responsible in their party zeal and permitted reason to give way to rancor." But his book breaks no new ground of interpretation. It may be the first study to examine American foreign policy from the point of view of a specific region, but the story is largely a familiar one to those who have read the traditional diplomatic histories for that era.

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The Peace Reform in American History. By Charles DeBenedetti. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1980. Pp. xvii, 245. Cloth. $18.50.)

It is appropriate that a review of *The Peace Reform in American History* appear in the *Maine Historical Society Quarterly.* The numerous Maine natives who have played prominent roles in the perennial struggle for peace include Jesse Appleton, a president of Bowdoin College; William Ladd of Minot, the founder of the American Peace Society; Thomas C. Upham, a Bowdoin professor of metaphysics and mental philosophy and a voluminous writer for the peace movement; Hannah Bailey, a Winthrop Quaker; and Frederick Libby, a founder of the National Council for the Prevention of War and a dominant figure in peace reform during the 1920s and '30s. In this study,

however, the author is not so much concerned with individuals as he is with the religious and secular groups that have waxed and waned in our history.

In colonial days such sects as the Quakers, Mennonites, Moravians, Anabaptists, and Dunkers served as Christ's messengers in spreading the teachings of the Prince of Peace. During the nineteenth century, evangelical Christianity promoted the peace movement, the fountainhead for which was Andover Theological Seminary. With their inherent moral and religious zeal, evangelical Christians sometimes championed reforms that were not always compatible. The coming of the Civil War, for example, focused thought and action on saving the Union and freeing the slaves. Under such conditions, peace reform was forgotten by some and shelved by others.

When President William McKinley successfully mounted a crusade to "liberate" Spanish colonial subjects in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines some thirty years later, the peace movement also proved ineffectual. Opposition did manifest itself, but the war with Spain proved unusually popular in the United States. With the collapse of Filipino resistance in 1902, the anti-imperialists lost much of their clout, but they subsequently regained it by attacking America's Latin American interventions and colonialism everywhere.

Perhaps the most disillusioning experience for peace advocates came with the onset of World War I. After having long proclaimed their firm commitment to pacifism, European socialists and liberals quickly became belligerents, thus proving that nationalism was a mightier force than any yearning for peace. After the United States entered the war in 1917, those socialists who stood by their spiked guns and criticized American participation in the conflict were either denied the use of the mails or were sent to prison. President Wilson permitted this abridgment of civil liberties by signing the Espionage and Sedition Act of 1917 and by later supporting Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer's request for even more stringent legislation.

Although unstated by the author, the United States and its World War II allies were indebted to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and to Hitler's attack on Russia for bringing the Communists and the left-wing pacifists to their support. As a consequence, the United States experienced far less difficulty with dissident groups and with peace activists than during World War I. The wholesale deportation and imprisonment of Japanese-Americans stands as the most serious black mark against the American government during this war. DeBenedetti overlooks the Nisei, but it would be nit-picking to dwell on that. What is particularly disturbing, however, is the treatment afforded those who supported American participation in the Vietnamese War.

In discussing the Southeast Asian morass, DeBenedetti changes from historian to partisan. For example, he writes about "the immorality and political foolhardiness of Johnson's war." Such a statement is both misleading and a gross oversimplification, especially in view of the fact that Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon often spoke of America's solemn pledge to give South Vietnam a chance for survival and a freedom of choice. The first move toward disaster occurred long before Johnson's administration. As early as 1955, the United States had agreed to train the South Vietnamese army.

Those who opposed the war should not forget that nearly all the principal supporters of American intervention also acted without sinister motives. They sincerely viewed American involvement as being in the national interest and as the fulfillment of a commitment. That nearly all of them acted from high moral principles is part of the tragedy.

This study provides us with a well-researched survey of the peace reform groups in our colonial and national history. With the author we can salute the courage of those who have defied public opinion for the sake of their convictions. They have included men of character and of goodwill. It is encouraging to again hear someone say "Blessed are the peacemakers."

In approaching this book, one should be prepared to memorize a long list of acronyms in order to keep separate the var-

ious peace groups. This will challenge one's retentive capabilities.

Richard P. Mallet