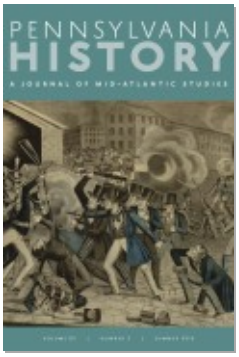
To “Alarm the Publick Mind”: A Reexamination of Pamphlets and Newspapers in Philadelphia and the Early Republic



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TO "ALARM THE PUBLICK MIND"

A REEXAMINATION OF PAMPHLETS AND NEWSPAPERS IN PHILADELPHIA AND THE EARLY REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT: This article compares the role of political pamphlets and newspapers in the early US republic, especially whether pamphlets were intended to appeal to a closed circle of political insiders while the target audience of newspapers was average citizens, a topic seldom discussed by journalism historians for the federal period. Pamphlets, lower priced compared to newspapers (whose publishers generally required a year's subscription in advance), were more within the income range of average citizens. As a case study, pamphleteering activities of US senator John Taylor of Caroline, a Philadelphia resident during early the 1790s, are discussed, as well as those of Benjamin Franklin Bache, Thomas Paine, William L. Smith, William Cobbett, Benjamin Russell, and others involved in the period's print culture. Emphasizing Philadelphia-based publications, and after comparing prices of pamphlets and books with the cost of a one-year subscription to newspapers during the 1790s, the author concludes that political writers viewed pamphlets as a way to reach a wide audience, not merely a restricted cohort of the wealthy or those in positions of political power.

KEYWORDS: Newspapers, pamphlets, political culture, Federalists, Democratic-Republicans

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, an explosion of historical writing on the early republic has examined popular politics' connection with the average citizen's personal and social activities. Scholars have placed particular emphasis on participation in parades, crowds, and various national holiday celebrations that reflected the growth of political parties during the 1790s. Elaborating on

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the maxim that the "personal is political," writers have also investigated the role of local party meetings and leaders, newspapers, and social gatherings in nurturing popular interest in government activities. Political, cultural, social, and journalistic historians have analyzed the early partisan press and the filtration of political ideology to the masses.[1]

Two main formats of print media existed for political disputants during the 1790s: newspapers and pamphlets. Newspapers have gained the most scholarly attention, perhaps because they appeared frequently, often as dailies. Therefore, they furnish an abundance of readily accessible information, not only on political matters but on everyday life. In general, historians assume that newspapers, because of their wider circulation and ostensibly cheaper price, rather than pamphlets, were the most important media by which the masses acquired political information and analysis. Most scholars take for granted that readership of partisan pamphlets was restricted to a better-educated, wealthier, politically prominent minority.[2]

What follows compares the role of political pamphlets and newspapers in the early US republic's political culture. Were pamphlets intended to appeal to a closed circle of political insiders while the target audience of newspapers was average citizens? This is a topic seldom discussed by historians of the first American party system, from the late 1790s to the War of 1812. Questioning previous analyses, this author argues that pamphlets, lower priced than newspapers (whose publishers generally required a year's subscription paid in advance), were more within the income range of average citizens.[3] Implicit in this finding is the conclusion that the average citizen was more involved in political matters than we have appreciated, in that he or she was as likely as political insiders and members of a minority elite to purchase and read political pamphlets that conveyed information and ideologies between their covers.

This essay centers on the Philadelphia area during the 1790s and discusses the pamphleteering activities of diverse individuals in various contexts. Among those examined are philosopher-planter John Taylor of Caroline, who occasionally resided in Philadelphia as US senator from Virginia; noted Philadelphia publisher and newspaper editor Benjamin Franklin Bache; the great Revolutionary pamphleteer Thomas Paine; South Carolina Federalist congressman William L. Smith; British expatriate William Cobbett of Philadelphia and Bostonian Benjamin Russell, both very successful Federalist newspaper editors; and others involved in the period's print culture. Pamphlet and book prices are compared with the cost of a year's subscription

to a newspaper during the 1790s. The essay concludes that political writers considered pamphlets a means to reach a wide audience, not only the wealthy or those in positions of political power.

This article attempts to determine by various methods, including price, a pamphlet's intended audience and the extent of its circulation. It also concentrates, albeit to a lesser extent, on newspapers, which scholars have more thoroughly analyzed. It is impossible to quantify the exact number of people who read newspapers that were passed around in taverns, hotels, post offices, and subscription libraries, as several memoirs of the period recall. It is probable that such public readings and transfers between individuals and families took place with the most popular pamphlets, such as *Common Sense*, as well. Speculation with regard to both media must remain impressionistic rather than precise. Also examined more closely than previous research is the provenance of political pamphlets and other literature during the early decades of the United States. Findings suggest that, rather than being intended for a closed circle of upper-class political insiders, pamphlets were widely distributed among the public. Often consisting of essays originally published in newspapers, pamphlets efficiently conveyed partisan ideologies and attitudes on issues. They were written by, and for, followers as well as leaders.[4]

NEWSPAPERS VERSUS PAMPHLETS IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

As noted, a good part of scholarly discussion of the readership and circulation of pamphlets and newspapers during the 1790s is based on assumption more than research. In *Affairs of Honor* (2001), a study of American political culture during the 1790s, historian Joanne B. Freeman concludes that political pamphlets were party notables' tools of communication. (She calls them "defense pamphlets" because authors wrote them to defend their political positions and private character.) They preferred pamphlets to cheaper and more widely available newspapers because by this means they excluded the masses. This assertion comprises part of Freeman's thesis that, during the republic's youth, a "culture of honor" and aristocratic "friendship" prevailed among Democratic-Republican and Federalist leaders. In terms of their influence and circulation, Freeman asserts, pamphlets were intermediate between politically oriented, "public-minded personal letters" and the more widely circulated broadsides and newspapers. Freeman observes that "political pamphlets aimed at wider circles of elite readers" than personal letters.

They were intended for a well-educated minority, "dignified in tone and lengthy" and "ideal platforms for presenting a detailed argument." By definition, they contained a great deal of information and were not designed for the average person.[5] Stressing the significance of which instrument political writers chose to employ, newspaper or pamphlet, Freemen asserts, "is an idea worth repeating: When politicians chose a medium for their writings, they declared their intended purpose and audience—a useful fact for scholars trying to interpret those writings today."[6]

In the 1960s Donald H. Stewart, an expert on Democratic-Republican journalism during the 1790s, observed, "Since newspapers then were read in taverns as a sort of library service or loaned much more than at present, circulation figures give only a rough estimate of the number of people who read them."[7] After the anti-tax Fries Rebellion broke out among middle-class German farmers and entrepreneurs in eastern Pennsylvania, a Federalist newspaper lamented that one of its causes was that too many people were reading free newspapers in neighborhood taverns.[8] Without making much effort to confirm his assumptions, John L. Brooke, a leading scholar of New York's political culture during this period, observes, "Newspapers must have been in short supply, constantly borrowed or read in the shared quarters of taverns or reading rooms."[9] In New York, by 1800 the third most populous state, most local papers were expected to attract from 200 to 400 subscribers. In 1806 the *Troy* (NY) *Gazette* suggested that 700 was the average circulation of area newspapers. According to a careful study of early nineteenth-century upstate New York newspapers, there were fifty-four newspapers in the entire state: seven were dailies published in New York City; three were semi-weeklies; and three came out three times a week. The rest were weeklies. Its peers admired the success of an upstate New York paper with 400 subscribers, the *Geneva Palladium*.[10] It is likely that only a handful of newspapers had a circulation of more than a few hundred, even those that boasted of being organs of expression for the Federalist and Republican parties and aspired to national prestige.

Detailed information about the extent of newspaper circulation in the late 1790s emerges from an interesting source: New York City Democratic-Republican Presbyterian minister Samuel Miller in his book *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (1803). Miller's account of annual newspaper production concluded that 200 different newspapers circulated throughout the United States, which he estimated at 13 million copies annually. He counted 17 dailies, 7 papers that appeared three times a week,

30 that appeared twice a week, and 146 weeklies. Miller proudly observed that although the population of the United States was less than half of Britain's, its number of newspaper copies in circulation was over two-thirds that of Britain.[11]

In big cities some newspapers were produced in large numbers before the 1790s. In 1774 James Rivington, publisher of the Loyalist *New-York Gazetteer*, claimed that his weekly had a circulation of 3,600. At the same time his competitor, Whig pamphleteer Isaiah Thomas, declared that his *Massachusetts Spy* sold over 3,500 copies in Boston alone.[12] It was already common for coffee houses and taverns to keep files of newspapers from all over the country. John Adams, as a member of the First Continental Congress convening in Philadelphia in 1774, recorded in his diary for August 23: "Went to the Coffee House and saw the Virginia paper." In his standard textbook on journalism history, Frank Luther Mott wrote, "Reading Rooms advertised 'every paper of note, either in Europe or America.'"[13] Another scholar has written specifically about newspapers in New York's Columbia County: "Circulation statistics do not tell the whole story, since every copy of a paper was likely to be read by several persons. Those who could not pay or would not subscribe, were not averse to borrowing."[14] None of these works provide convincing evidence other than one or two anecdotes to back up their assertions.

Although most historians assume that a large number of browsers in taverns, hotels, and even post offices perused newspapers, quantitative evidence of this (which would be extremely difficult to obtain in any case) is lacking. The sources of most of the examples in contemporary memoirs or correspondence describing such crowd-like behavior are somewhat snobbish Europeans, principally English travelers and novelists. Intent on describing Americans' boorish, "uncivilized" conduct, they observed (often-inebriated) men reading newspapers in taverns and hotels with their feet on tables, yelling threats and obscenities at those who disagreed with their political opinions, and acting in a generally offensive manner. The examples usually come from the period during the great expansion of post offices, transportation, and communication networks following the War of 1812, roughly from 1815 to 1860, rather than the 1790s, which constitutes the time period of this article. Tourists' narratives describe Americans (mostly male) reading and sharing newspapers in diverse places of public accommodation. The authors of these accounts more often emphasized the slovenliness, abrasiveness, and drunken condition of newspaper readers than their articulateness and conversancy with public affairs. These travelers were often members of

the British aristocracy or would-be aristocrats hostile to American ideals of liberty, equality, and uncivil behavior.

According to Richard R. John's seminal work, post-1818 post office archives reveal that people gathered at post offices to rifle through newspapers that belonged to subscribers who had not yet picked them up. In small towns, isolated corners of taverns and grocery stores often served as post offices where customers skimmed newspapers that arrived in the mail for other people. Indeed, some enterprising postal employees set up reading rooms, in which they charged a monthly fee for browsers (ironically called "subscribers") to read selected newspapers. However, John estimated that only about 3 percent of families actually subscribed to newspapers ca. 1820.[15]

During the period of partisan conflict between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, the semi-weekly Boston *Columbian Centinel* probably had the greatest circulation. It claimed over 4,000 subscribers. Another pro-Federalist newspaper, William Cobbett's Philadelphia daily, *Porcupine's Gazette*, boasted over 2,000 early in 1799. This number was as large as that of any London daily. The leading Democratic-Republican newspaper, Benjamin Franklin Bache's daily, the Philadelphia *General Advertiser: Aurora*, at its height reputedly had about 1,700 subscribers. Of the weekly papers, the Walpole, New Hampshire *Farmer's Weekly Museum*, which claimed about 2,000 subscribers, was probably the most successful.[16]

Just as there was great variety in newspaper circulation, there apparently existed a great disparity in the cost of producing newspapers. The printers of three Boston semiweekly newspapers, the *Columbian Centinel*, the *Massachusetts Mercury*, and the *Commercial Gazette*, which all cost three dollars per year, sustained diverse production costs. In an effort to standardize their expenses, the three journals publicly stated their weekly disbursements in their issues of October 3, 1798. The *Columbian Centinel* was published at a weekly cost of $120, while the *Mercury* expended only $80 and the *Commercial Gazette* as little as $50.[17]

PAMPHLETS AND NEWSPAPERS IN THE 1790S: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

In light of the vicissitudes experienced by newspaper publishers and subscribers, it is possible that pamphlets were more likely than newspapers to reach

a large, carefully defined audience. Amanda Porterfield implied this in her recent synthesis of the religious history of the Early Republic, *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation*. Emphasizing the importance of Thomas Paine's deist work, *The Age of Reason* (1794–95), she writes that it owed its great influence in the United States at least partly to its production as a cheap, affordable pamphlet, which "circulated widely," appearing in eighteen editions. The second American edition cost only twenty cents; she observes that this was about the price of a pound of pork, a pound of raisins, or a pound of tallow. Lyman Beecher, the foremost New England Presbyterian revivalist of the early nineteenth century, recalled that even poor young boys "read Tom Paine and believed him." And Porterfield relates that as far west as Kentucky, Baptists, after reading Paine's *Age of Reason* became religious skeptics, eventually converting to Unitarianism. According to Porterfield, the book's great impact resulted from the lower classes' ability to purchase it because of its price as a cheap, though lengthy pamphlet.[18]

Most pamphlets began life as series of newspaper articles. Shortly after they appeared in newspapers, the essays were stitched together and sold as pamphlets. A good example of this is William L. Smith's diatribe against Thomas Jefferson's presidential candidacy in 1796, *The Pretensions of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency Examined*, published first as a series of newspaper articles, then a few days later as a pamphlet. This pamphlet, in which Smith, with Alexander Hamilton his anonymous coauthor, employed the pseudonym "Phocion," originally appeared in John Fenno's Federalist *Gazette of the United States* in October and November 1796 as an untitled series of articles. The essays merely carried the heading, "For the *Gazette of the United States*." By the end of November, it was available as a pamphlet, with the prolix title, *The Pretensions of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency Examined and the charges against John Adams Refuted; addressed to the Citizens of America in general, and particularly to the Electors of the President*. An example of the cheapness of pamphlets compared to newspapers, "Phocion" was printed as a pamphlet in two parts: part one appeared as early as November 5, 1796, and was sold for the relatively low price of 37½ cents. By comparison, in 1796 a year's subscription to Thomas Greenleaf's Democratic-Republican *New York Daily Argus* cost seven dollars, about twenty times as much. It is likely that average-income New Yorkers would find the pamphlet more within their income than the newspaper.[19]

George Washington's more famous Farewell Address first appeared as a full-page newspaper essay in two Philadelphia papers, the politically impartial

American Daily Advertiser and the Federalist *Gazette of the United States*.[20] In some cases, as with Jefferson's only published book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, a work might first appear as a bound volume (especially if, like *Notes*, it was initially printed abroad). Afterwards, various chapters and sections would intermittently show up in newspapers and the burgeoning magazines of the post-Revolutionary period.[21]

Numerous instances occurred in which essays were published solely as cheap pamphlets. Their authors intended them to reach a wide audience, targeting mainly less-wealthy citizens. This was often the case with radical writers like Thomas Paine, who requested Benjamin Franklin Bache, the leading Republican printer in Philadelphia, to sell his open, derogatory *Letter to George Washington* in 1796 for only twenty-five cents. Paine subsidized its publication so that average-income readers could afford it. Before Bache advertised Paine's *Letter* for sale in December 1796, no extracts from it appeared in the *Aurora* other than a minor instance on October 17, 1796—a single paragraph in which Paine claimed that reliable sources long ago informed him that John Adams favored a hereditary presidency in Washington's male line, starting with his cousin Lund Washington. Paine wrote, "Two persons to whom John Adams said this told me of it. The secretary of Mr. [John] Jay was present when it was told me." Perhaps Bache, in a display of business acumen, thought that by printing a brief extract of the letter, he would titillate potential readers into purchasing the pamphlet when it came out several weeks later. Under the heading "Important," Bache accompanied the brief extract from Paine's *Letter* with a note asserting, "The Editor of the *Aurora* knows T. Paine's hand writing and has seen the original of which the following is a faithful extract."[22]

The one-paragraph extract of the *Letter* from the Philadelphia *Aurora* appeared in many newspapers. It was carried the same day under the byline, "October 17. Extract of a letter from THOMAS PAINE dated Paris, July 30, 1796," in the Federalist Philadelphia *Gazette of the United States*. Two days later, on October 19, 1796, it appeared in the Elizabethtown *New-Jersey Journal*. It was reprinted in the Democratic-Republican *New Jersey Centinel of Freedom* on October 26, 1796. The *Aurora* frequently printed the following advertisement in December 1796: "THIS DAY IS PUBLISHED, at the Office of the *Aurora*, Price 25 Cents. *A Letter from Thomas Paine to George Washington, President of the United States, on affairs public and private.*"[23] Despite being aimed primarily at the masses, Paine's publication was printed only as a pamphlet, not in the newspapers.

Similarly, when Irish American radical William Duane composed his attack on Washington's Farewell Address under the pseudonym "Jasper Dwight of Vermont," it came out only as a cheap pamphlet, never in the newspapers. On December 16, 1796, the Philadelphia *Aurora* advertised, at the price of twenty-five cents (the same cost as Paine's *Letter*) Jasper Dwight's "letter to GEORGE WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES: containing strictures on his Address of the 17th of September 1796, notifying the relinquishment of the Presidential office."[24]

Occasionally, official documents in pamphlet form merely conveyed information, rather than attempting to convince readers to follow the editor's political stance. For example, in 1794 Bache printed the radical democratic, never-implemented 1793 French Constitution. The advertisement in Bache's paper read: "FRENCH CONSTITUTION. A few copies of the French Constitution, carefully translated into English, from an authentic original, to be had at the Office of the General Advertiser. Price 6 Cents." Dated December 7, 1793, the advertisement was printed into January of the following year, probably because the text of the French Constitution was not in great demand among Philadelphians despite its low price.[25]

Although some pamphlets cost more than the average citizen could afford, in some cases, as during the presidential campaigns in 1796 and 1800, clever Democratic-Republican Party strategists like Philadelphia tactician John Beckley ensured that thousands of copies of cheap or free pro-Jefferson pamphlets were distributed to the people. Beckley disseminated at least 1,200 copies of pamphlets in 1796 and 5,000 in 1800 in the Philadelphia area alone.[26]

In many cases, political parties used daily newspapers to appeal to the lower classes. However, if publishers enforced the typical contract with subscribers, which stipulated that a yearly subscription to the newspaper must be paid for a year in advance, this would strain the average citizen's financial means. It is helpful to compare the prices of newspapers and pamphlets to help ascertain which forms of print media might be more within the capacity of an average-income worker to purchase.

JOHN TAYLOR OF CAROLINE: A CASE STUDY OF ARISTOCRAT AS DEMOCRATIC PAMPHLETEER (1793)

The unlikely author of a 1794 cheap political pamphlet, which he was eager for average citizens to purchase, was US Senator (Virginia) John Taylor of

Caroline. As a slaveholder, Taylor believed in blacks' racial inferiority and supported slavery, views he elaborated in his newspaper series *Arator* in 1810. He published the essays as a pamphlet in 1813, regretting that they had originally appeared "in the ephemeral columns of a newspaper." Nonetheless, Taylor favored a broad suffrage for white men. He considered himself the spokesman for small farmers, the silent majority in the republic, whose interests he felt were ignored by the Federalists and the Washington administration.[27] In the forefront of the intellectual leadership of the Democratic-Republican Party, Taylor wrote numerous newspaper articles and pamphlets attacking Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton's financial policies. He claimed the Federalist economic program was designed to harm the small farmer and secure political and economic power in the hands of a wealthy urban oligarchy of financiers, speculators, and merchants, who would eventually transform the US government from a republic into a monarchy.[28]

Taylor had already written newspaper essays. In February and March 1793 he composed a series of articles for Freneau's *National Gazette* under the pseudonym "Franklin." These essays anticipated much of what he wrote later. In these articles Taylor charged that Hamilton and his Federalist supporters set up institutions like the Bank of the United States and manipulated the public debt so that rich city-dwellers and venal congressmen held most of it. Their ultimate intention was to overthrow the US Constitution and the republican form of government and replace them with a British-type monarchy.[29]

Despite his prestigious post in the Senate, Taylor wrote using a pseudonym because it was considered ungentlemanly and self-aggrandizing to engage in public political controversy. Still, he may have expected readers to see through his "Franklin" cognomen.[30] With regard to his lengthier, upcoming project, he wanted his attack on the Washington administration's domestic policy, especially the Bank of the United States, to have extraordinary impact. "The news papers are improper channels through which to make a considerable impression on the public mind," he opined in a letter to James Madison, the Democratic- Republican Party chief, "because they are a species of ephemerae, and because the printers are not orthodox in general as to politicks. Hence a pamphlet appeared most advisable, and I have written, in length sufficient for a pamphlet."[31] Taylor decided that he wanted to influence the "public mind," not a restricted elite.

After completing his latest pamphlet in June 1793, *An Enquiry into the Principles and Tendency of Certain Public Measures* (Philadelphia, 1794), which he considered his magnum opus, Taylor submitted it to Jefferson and

Madison for their comments. Explaining to Madison that his only objective was "the publick good," he wanted his essay to receive the most extensive circulation possible, and believed that a cheap pamphlet would be the best format for this purpose. Taylor considered a pamphlet the most suitable means to impress the people with his fears, "and alarm the publick mind into a discussion of principles." In Taylor's assessment, newspapers, even the most important ones, such as Freneau's *National Gazette*, generally did not circulate much beyond their local vicinity. Moreover, he did not want his work buried among the mass of essays, news reports, notices, and advertisements that appeared within the small print of a newspaper's format. Debating whether to publish his essay as a pamphlet or "in the newspapers," he reiterated that "the latter are meer ephemere [mere ephemera], and tho' containing merit, read & forgotten." He considered another drawback to publishing in the newspapers: "the sphere of their circulation is circumscribed."[32]

Observing that "the best political essays" were "often supposed to proceed from the printers in a course of trade" in pamphlet form, this aristocrat-as-democrat styled himself a Pied Piper of the masses. "If the performance is adjudged worthy of being printed in a pamp[h]let, I submit it to you," he humbly suggested to Madison, "whether it ought not to be done in the cheapest stile, for the sake of circulation, for it will hardly have merit enough to circulate itself." He told Madison that he was willing to subsidize publication of the pamphlet himself to enable it to reach the voters.[33] He assumed that Philadelphia, the biggest central city and the nation's capital, would be the best venue to publish it, from which it could be disseminated throughout the country. Taylor hoped voters would appreciate the essay and impress its anti-Hamiltonian recommendations, such as repeal of the Bank of the United States' charter, on their state and congressional representatives. As he explained to Madison, he proposed to "print it in phila., to be distributed either among the state assemblies at their fall meeting, or at the opening of the next Congress. In the latter case, to make a direct impression on the members of Congress; in the first, to subjoin the influence of their constituents," who he hoped would purchase the cheap pamphlet before their state legislatures met and petition them to advocate his ideas.[34]

Three months later, Taylor was displeased to find that portions of his pamphlet had appeared without his permission in Philip Freneau's Democratic-Republican newspaper, the *National Gazette*.[35] Taylor knew that it was common practice for the text of a political pamphlet to appear first in newspaper installments. Although his writing style was often convoluted

and bombastic, Taylor never said that publication in a newspaper degraded his arguments or made them less intellectual. (One need only mention that the ponderous *Federalist Papers*, the greatest classic of American political thought, were initially published in newspapers.). Moreover, Taylor's letters indicated that he wanted a large audience for his work.

It is doubtful that Taylor considered his work somehow degraded by a small portion's previous appearance in the *National Gazette*, an organ of mass opinion allegedly read by less wealthy citizens. Indeed, most people could not afford to purchase Freneau's high-priced paper. The democratic editor Freneau was not the publisher of this paper; Philadelphia entrepreneurs Childs and Swaine were, and they needed to make a profit. The *National Gazette* was published twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, for three dollars a year, "one dollar and a half payable in advance, and future payments at the commencement of every half year." In addition, the "expences of postage, or other conveyance, [were] to be paid by the person subscribing," an unusual stipulation for a newspaper, amounting to an additional dollar or more per year for the subscriber.[36] As already mentioned, newspapers were comparatively more expensive than pamphlets, because an annual subscription, payable in advance, was generally required. The *National Gazette*, at a cost to subscribers of three dollars a year plus postage, was more expensive than most other semiweekly newspapers, possibly because it carried fewer advertisements.[37]

Taylor probably thought that he would gain a greater number of readers if he published his work as a pamphlet than in the high-priced *National Gazette*. The worth of his essay would be devalued and would probably attract fewer purchasers if scraps of it first appeared in a newspaper. As historian Robert E. Shalhope put it, "Freneau's printing of extracts miffed Taylor because he felt that this would weaken the impact of the pamphlet when it finally appeared."[38]

Perhaps another reason for Taylor's annoyance was that, like several of his fellow egotistical republican aristocrats thirsty for fame and the applause of posterity, he preferred that his essay stand alone, apart from the newspaper's microscopic print.[39] At the same time, he wanted to spread his ideas to as great a portion of the literate public as possible, and probably nearly 90 percent of the adult white males could read.[40] His goal was to "make a considerable impression on the public mind."[41] If he succeeded in motivating the people, he might put the brakes on the Hamiltonian fiscal system and help gain passage of amendments to the Constitution restricting the national government's powers.[42]

More interested in propagating his ideas among the literate public as a single cohesive piece than in making money or publishing an essay for the wealthy, Taylor desired to present his work "in the cheapest stile, for the sake of circulation," so that the greatest number of average citizens would purchase and read it. He naturally sought to engage a wider audience than an elite few, and considered a cheap pamphlet the best means to secure the most readers. Determined to produce the *Enquiry* as a stand-alone pamphlet, he pledged at least fifty dollars toward the cost of publication and expected his friends Madison, Jefferson, and James Monroe to "share" the burden.[43] He thus anticipated the mode by which Jefferson financed pamphlet production and dissemination in the late 1790s, including the notorious writings of the radical James Thomson Callender during the crisis produced by the Alien and Sedition Acts and the undeclared "quasi-war" with France.[44]

As Jefferson wrote a former Virginia political leader, current Maryland congressman John Francis Mercer, in December 1792, he was in accord with Taylor in believing that Federalist policies presented "very threatening features to landed & farming men." Extracts from the *Enquiry* appeared anonymously on September 11 and 14, 1793, in the *National Gazette* under the title, "Reflections on Several Subjects." Justifying Taylor's apprehensions, Freneau printed portions of the essay in random order.[45]

Taylor was angry at the prior appearance of portions of the essay in any newspaper, even the firmly Republican *National Gazette*, whose reputation for excessive pro-French Revolutionary radicalism may have embarrassed him.[46] His self-esteem was injured by seeing his essay "ludicrously" implanted, as he put it, in a comparatively nondescript manner, among a sea of other essays, news items, and advertisements. As he wrote Madison, "I observe that Freneau is publishing extracts from it. This is both unwise and indelicate. Unwise, as mutilated anticipations, will weaken its effect, if it should appear as a pamphlet. Indelicate, as in that event, the performance will exhibit the ludicrous aspect, of a compilation from his news papers."[47]

In early 1794 Taylor's work finally appeared in pamphlet form as he desired. On January 27, an advertisement in the Philadelphia *General Advertiser* notified its readers that Thomas Dobson (who had earlier published the first American edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*) was printing it: "JUST PUBLISHED AND to be sold by THOMAS DOBSON, Price three eighths of a dollar, *An Enquiry into the principles and tendency of certain public measures*."[48] The price was relatively cheap, considering that the pamphlet was

ninety-five pages. It was printed by a reputable printer with no discernible party ties. Taylor must have expected it to have many purchasers.

Although unfortunately we lack precise figures for sales of Taylor's work, pamphlets, as Paine's *Common Sense* demonstrated (although Paine may have exaggerated the number sold), generally sold more copies than much more expensive newspapers. One of the few pamphlets of whose sales a contemporary estimate exists, Anglo-Federalist William Cobbett's best-selling, six-cent diatribe against the French Revolution, "Cannibal's Progress," published in Philadelphia in 1798, sold 6,000 copies according to entries in Cobbett's Account Book: ten times more than the average newspaper.[49]

Taylor's point of view, which we have analyzed at length as a case study, makes it apparent that late eighteenth-century pamphleteers and political activists did not consider pamphlets a way to exclude the common people from their deliberations. Even the aristocratic democrat Taylor understood that if a pamphlet were priced cheaply enough it would be more within reach of the average literate citizen than a far more expensive year-long subscription to a newspaper. In this respect the slaveholder John Taylor was akin to nonslaveholding pamphleteers like Benjamin Franklin Bache, Thomas Paine, and others. He also appreciated that, unlike a newspaper with its distracting array of other articles, essays, news reports, and advertisements, a pamphlet would be more likely to occupy the reader's sole attention during the time it was being read.[50] Taylor's choice to have his work appear in a pamphlet instead of a newspaper suggests that, perhaps because such a large percentage of Americans were literate, they were inclined to purchase pamphlets they found interesting, at least in part because their price was low compared to a newspaper subscription. In seeking the additional information about politics that pamphlets provided, late eighteenth-century American readers and writers endorsed the Baconian dictum that "knowledge is power."[51]

FROM NEWSPAPERS TO PAMPHLETS: PHILADELPHIA PRINTER BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BACHE AND THOMAS PAINE

During the 1790s most newspapers, the commercially oriented and the vehemently partisan alike, shared similar characteristics. They were generally only four pages long and advertisements usually filled their front and back pages. News, editorials, and "correspondent" (contributor) commentary were reserved for the second and third pages. For their economic survival, early

party newspapers relied to a great extent on patronage from the state and national governments, such as the printing of laws, other documents, and notices; and on public employment for their editors, such as the position of state printer.[52] With regard to the cost of newspapers to subscribers, one scholar, corroborating part of this article's thesis, explains, newspapers were

> expensive. A paper ordinarily cost the reader six cents an issue at a time when the average daily wage for nonfarm labor was less than eighty-five cents. But a person could not buy one issue at a time except at the printer's office. Newspapers were generally sold only by subscription, and annual subscriptions ranged from eight to ten dollars. Not surprisingly, circulation of newspapers was low, usually just one or two thousand for even the most prominent metropolitan papers.[53]

Newspapers remained beyond the financial reach of most citizens, since in many cases a reader was required to subscribe for a full year in advance, a sum of money difficult for a small farmer or artisan who made less than a dollar a day to pay (and farmers made something more like forty cents a day).[54] With the average daily newspaper in 1798 selling for eight dollars a year, even the most devout Jeffersonian Republican would be hard pressed to subscribe to Benjamin Franklin Bache's flagship Democratic-Republican paper, the daily Philadelphia *General Advertiser: Aurora*.[55] At a cost of eight dollars a year in 1798, an inflationary increase of two dollars (33.33%) from six dollars, its January 1795 price, the *Aurora* was definitely out of reach.[56]

At the outset, Bache probably hoped to sell his newspaper cheaply but profitably, so that it would reach Philadelphia's lower classes and immigrants. Bearing the motto "TRUTH, DECENCY, UTILITY" on its masthead, the *General Advertiser*'s first issue, appearing on October 6, 1790, cost three pence. It was a daily paper, for which subscriptions would cost five dollars annually, as Bache informed his readers in small print at the bottom of the last (fourth) page in the first number. Subscriptions for a year of Tuesday papers would cost ten shillings (around $70 today). All subscriptions were entered "at the Printing-Office; where Advertisements and Articles of Intelligence, in French as well as English, are gratefully received and carefully attended to." Bidding for additional sources of revenue, Bache's notice continued, "Advertisements of one square are One Quarter of a Dollar for the first, and Eleven Pence for every subsequent insertion" in the paper.[57]

Like many newspaper publishers, Bache found it hard to make his journal a money-making enterprise. An increase of such magnitude in price is possibly justified by Bache's desire to increase his income. He had recently become a father. His wife Margaret gave birth to three sons in three years, Franklin (1792), Richard Jr. (1794), and Benjamin (1796). He needed to gain more money from a paper that was losing it, at least partly because of overdue subscription payments.[58]

Bache was undoubtedly aware of the high price of newspapers and knew from personal experience that many subscribers were unable or unwilling to pay up their yearly subscriptions. Beginning in January 1794 a daily Philadelphia *General Advertiser* subscription cost "six dollars per annum, to be paid at the end of the year by City Subscribers, but in advance by those in the Country." In July 1795 he undertook a junket from Philadelphia to Boston selling copies of his pamphlet edition of Jay's Treaty. In this first newspaper "scoop" in US history, he obtained the treaty's text from a Virginia senator before the government made it public. The good-natured Bache, who had granted some subscribers a reprieve in payment, wrote his wife Margaret asking her to mail him a list of delinquent city customers who had not paid their bills, so that he could attempt to collect these debts en route.[59]

Books and pamphlets were advertised in great numbers in the small rectangular boxes on the first and fourth pages of newspapers, often in very small print. An examination of newspaper advertisements for political pamphlets in the late 1790s suggests that an average-income person would find the purchase of a pamphlet more within their reach than buying a year-long subscription to a newspaper. In light of the usually accepted assumption that hundreds of thousands of copies of Thomas Paine's 1776 pamphlet, *Common Sense*, were sold, such a conclusion seems plausible.[60]

By briefly examining advertisements in Bache's daily newspaper, and its longer-lived Federalist competitor, Benjamin Russell's semiweekly Boston *Columbian Centinel*, we may ascertain the prices of various pamphlets. It is also possible that we will gain some insight into what it meant to issue a political work in pamphlet form. Bache's radical Democratic-Republican newspaper printed far more advertisements for political pamphlets than did Russell's conservative Federalist newspaper. Both newspapers tended to print advertisements for pamphlets that supported their political persuasion. Therefore, it seems likely that, although Democratic-Republicans controlled fewer newspapers (some historians estimate that the numbers favored the

Federalists in 1800 by a 2-to-1 ratio), their party held the advantage in terms of the number of pamphlets that espoused their cause.[61]

Although Republicans purportedly represented the lower and "middling" classes, Federalist and Republican newspapers usually sold for the same price. In other words, in selling their newspapers, Bache and his Democratic-Republican colleagues did not make a sustained effort to disseminate their journals cheaply in order to gain more subscribers among lower-income groups and propagate their ideology. Sadly, shortly before his death Bache complained that his newspaper had impoverished him, especially after Federalist jingoistic propaganda and the impact of the Sedition Act caused him to lose subscribers. Subscribers also tended to be remiss in paying for their subscriptions, taking advantage of lax credit provisions to avoid paying their full debt.[62]

As a printer and bookseller, Bache, seeking to recoup his newspaper losses, attempted to sell pamphlets and other works by radicals and Democratic-Republicans at a cheap price to facilitate their circulation among the "middling and lower sort." By confining examination of the *General Advertiser* to two different dates, January 2, 1795, and January 2, 1798, the author has restricted research within manageable limits and, because of the numerous advertisements, reached meaningful conclusions.

Several intriguing titles, often concerning the French Revolution, were advertised in the *Aurora* on January 2, 1795. *Slaves in Algiers*, a play by the feminist writer Susannah Rowson, cost only "one quarter of a dollar." Bache's advertisement observed that "all the booksellers in Philadelphia" carried it, attesting to Rowson's great popularity. Other books and pamphlets on sale that day included French revolutionary Jean Bon St. André's *Journal of the Grand Course of the French Fleet*, at eighteen cents; John Omrod's *Life of John Howard*, the British prison reformer, for seventy-five cents; and the French Revolutionary Calendar for the Third Year of the French Republic, at a price of six cents.[63]

Bache advertised numerous pamphlets on specific aspects of the French Revolution grouped together: *Morality of the Sans Culottes* for twenty-cents; Joel Barlow's famous *Advice to the Privileged Orders: Part II*, for the same price; *An Oration from the French, on Public Worship*, for six cents; and even a translation of Maximilien Robespierre's twenty-six-page *Report to the National Convention on Political Morality*, dated February 6, 1794 (two days after the National Convention abolished slavery in the French colonies), for twelve cents. *The Political Progress of Britain, Or an Impartial history of*

the Abuses in the Government of the British Empire, from 1688 to the Present, James T. Callender's influential pamphlet predicting the British monarchy's downfall in a republican revolution, was sold at the *Aurora*'s Office for half a dollar.[64] It is revealing that, as a radical Republican, Bache advertised pamphlets of such inflammatory content, while his conservative Federalist competitors, such as John Fenno's *Gazette of the United States*, did not.

Bache often reprinted radical political tracts that had appeared first in England, ostensibly selling his pirated editions at a far cheaper price. On January 2, 1798, the *Aurora* advertised the anarchist-socialist William Godwin's *Political Justice* (full title: *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*) for the price of two dollars, "neatly bound," claiming that the last English edition sold at the exorbitant price of seven and a half dollars.[65]

Attacks on George Washington, despite his great popularity, constituted a stock in trade for Bache, a choice he may have eventually regretted.[66] One of the pamphlets that denounced Washington as a slaveholder, the now-forgotten *Expostulatory Letter to Geo. Washington, Late President of the United States, On the Subject of his Continuing a Proprietor of Slaves*, by Edward Rushton, "A Citizen of Liverpool," is an example. The pamphlet, only eight pages long, cost one-eighth of a dollar. The *Aurora* advertised it over a long period. The letter was dated July 21, 1797, and the advertisement for it continued from that date through at least January 7, 1798.

This was at the same time as the ongoing sale of Paine's more famous letter to Washington, which appeared as a pamphlet in December 1796 and was never printed in newspapers. Bache printed identically worded advertisements for Paine's *Letter* from December 8, 1796, through January 1798. The advertisement stated, "T. Paine to G. Washington. This day is published, at the office of the *Aurora*, Price 25 Cents. *A Letter from Thomas Paine to George Washington President of the United States, on Affairs Public and Private* (Copyright Secured)." Indicating that Bache may have expected trouble selling a pamphlet from the "atheist" Paine that attacked the revered president, the ad continued, "The usual allowances will be made to booksellers, and Political works of approved merit taken in exchange."[67]

In this angry epistle, Paine charged Washington with betraying their "friendship" and republican principles by failing to secure his liberation from a Paris jail for two years, until James Monroe independently demanded his release as a US citizen. The letter consisted of seventy-six large-print pages, at a relatively modest price of twenty-five cents.[68] Convinced by 1796 that

Washington, who had crushed the Whiskey Rebellion, signed the Jay Treaty, and adopted Hamiltonian fiscal policies, had deserted republicanism, Bache probably printed Paine's vituperative *Letter* more from principle than in expectation of monetary gain.[69]

BACHE, MONROE, PAINE, JEFFERSON, AND OTHERS: NEWSPAPERS AND PAMPHLETS IN THE 1790S

Samuel Johnson's 1785 *Dictionary of the English Language* defines "pamphlet" simply as "a small book, properly a book sold unbound, and only stitched."[70] But if we follow Freeman we may consider a pamphlet any politically motivated contemporary work, irrespective of size, meant to "defend" the reputation of the author or his comrades against the aspersions of the opposition. By this standard, James Monroe's voluminous collection of diplomatic correspondence, mainly between him and secretaries of state Edmund Randolph and Timothy Pickering during his controversial tenure as US minister to France from 1794 to 1796, may fall into the category of a "defense pamphlet." Monroe's objective in publishing his official correspondence, prefaced by a fifty-page introduction that consisted largely of quotations from it, was to refute Federalist charges that he had been inept and even disloyal to the United States and preferred France's interests to those of his own country.

Loyal to his Jeffersonian friends, Bache agreed to publish the book, taking the copyright for it even though he knew it was unlikely to be remunerative. Ironically, Monroe and Bache dithered over the expense of publishing the book. Monroe agreed not to take any royalties, and consented to subsidize the book's publication as Bache requested, provided he was promptly reimbursed. Monroe's *View of the Conduct of the Executive*, as it was called, went on sale in December 1797. Despite the book's great length of 450 pages, Bache, hoping to assist the vindication of a leading Republican, charged only $1.50, with "a very liberal allowance to those who buy to sell again."[71] In any case, the price of this very long "pamphlet" was less than a third of the cost of a year's subscription to a daily newspaper. By encouraging booksellers to purchase the title, Bache hoped to spread Monroe's message among the masses as well as attempt to earn a profit for the undertaking.[72]

In this connection, it is likely that Bache welcomed Connecticut Federalist senator Uriah Tracy's vociferous attack on Monroe as a Jacobin and a traitor, titled *Scipio's Reflections on Monroe's View of the Conduct of the Executive*

on the Foreign Affairs of the United States, Connected with a Mission to the French Republic in the Years 1794, '95, '96. Published serially in the *Gazette of the United States* during January 1798, it appeared almost simultaneously in pamphlet form.[73] Scipio's tirade might attract attention and purchasers to Monroe's tedious work and make Bache some money.

Unfortunately, Monroe's book never made Bache any money, and he died in debt. Monroe tried unsuccessfully to collect the funds due him from Bache's widow, Margaret Markoe, who married her husband's associate, the Irish radical William Duane, over a year after his death. Bache had borrowed $600 from Monroe, and paid him back only $400 of his "claim." Discouraged by the poor sales of his book, Monroe stopped requesting full reimbursement for his subsidy. He was eventually paid in books published by Bache. Monroe's friend, Virginia congressman John Dawson, noted, "On the subject of Mr. Monroe's accounts when in Richmond, in consequence of a conversation with Mrs. Duane, I advised him to take books to the amount of his claim, and rejoice that he has assented." Dawson was a subscriber to the Philadelphia *Aurora*. He wrote Duane, Bache's successor as editor, "Will you be pleased to direct my newspaper to be forwarded to the city of Washington?"[74]

In 1795 Thomas Jefferson, a wealthy Virginia slaveholder residing at his home in Monticello, was among those "country" customers financially capable of paying in advance for a year's subscription to a daily newspaper like Bache's. His letters implied that he understood that this was something of a burden for the average citizen, which he advised Bache to attempt to overcome by printing a cheap triweekly paper in addition to the daily *Aurora*. Jefferson seemed more impressed by Bache's pamphlet crusade against Jay's Treaty than he was with the *Aurora*'s contents. Having obtained copies of the treaty from Virginia senator Stevens T. Mason and Pierre Adet, French minister to the United States, Bache printed its text, virtually complete, in the *Aurora* on June 29, 1795. He sold the treaty in pamphlet form beginning July 1, before the State Department released its contents. Then he went on a tour of the northern states, selling copies of the allegedly ignominious treaty for propaganda purposes.[75]

Around this time, Jefferson made friendly overtures to Bache, promising to deliver him a "Chinese gong" that Bache's grandfather Benjamin Franklin had left with him for safekeeping at the time of his death. He requested Bache to mail him a set of the *General Advertiser* for the entire year 1794, indicating that he had not been a regular subscriber before this time. He also

inquired when Franklin's *Works* would be published, because he wanted to buy a copy.[76]

Intending to renew his subscription to the *Aurora*, Jefferson wrote Bache at the end of 1795. Using State Department clerk Sampson Crosby as liaison, he desired to purchase the edition of Bache's newspaper for 1795, seemingly not having subscribed in advance for that year either. (Perhaps he considered the *Aurora* of such significant historical value that he wanted two copies.) "Independent of this I shall be glad to become your subscriber from the 1st day of this month [December] for another set to be forwarded to me by post," he wrote. Apparently, he had decided to become a regular purchaser of Bache's paper. Anticipating postal mishaps, the methodical Jefferson wanted to make sure he had a full run of the paper. "As some of these will miscarry, I shall hope that on forwarding to you at the end of the next year a list of the papers wanting [i.e., missing] you will be so good as to furnish them at the *pro ratâ* price that I may have the whole year bound up here." Perhaps desiring to assist Bache financially, he sent him payment for a second copy of that year's subscription through his agent John Barnes.[77]

Although Jefferson was aware that Bache, as Franklin's grandson, was committed to republicanism, he had several objections to the fledgling *General Advertiser* in the early 1790s. He believed that as a daily it was too expensive and that its numerous advertisements impaired its value in disseminating the republican point of view. By mid-1791 he perceived that John Fenno's *Gazette of the United States* (to which he had earlier, as secretary of state, granted some State Department patronage) was controlled by his foe Hamilton and had become a "paper of pure Toryism." Although it was too expensive for mass circulation, "Bache's is better [than Fenno's]," he advised his son-in-law, Thomas Mann Randolph Jr. "In the mean time Bache's paper, the principles of which were always republican, improves in it's matter," his lukewarm endorsement continued. "If we can persuade him to throw all his advertisements on one leaf, by tearing that off the leaf containing intelligence may be sent without over-charging the post and be generally taken instead of Fenno's. I will continue to send it [the *General Advertiser*] to you, as it may not only amuse yourself, but enable you to oblige your neighbors with the perusal."[78] Thus, Jefferson was aware that Randolph could help the republican cause by lending Bache's paper to his less-wealthy farmer-neighbors. It is likely that only the wealthy and near-wealthy had sufficient funds available to pay the cost of a newspaper subscription to a daily like the *Aurora* a year in advance.

Among these was the rich New York Republican leader Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of Clermont Manor. At the beginning of 1799, a few months after Bache died of yellow fever, Livingston made sure that he paid Bache's widow, who now owned the paper, a year's advance subscription. He wrote his brother, New York City's Congressman Edward Livingston, who resided in Philadelphia, "I enclose you Mrs. Bache's account & money to pay it. I wish you would call upon her to discharge it & requisition to direct her papers to Clermont which they seldom do very irregularly reach being detained as I imagine at the post office at New York," probably by Federalist postmasters trying to impede the paper's distribution. "I hope you will not neglect this little commission as you know the consequence we attach to newspapers here."[79]

Livingston also purchased James Monroe's *View of the Conduct of the Executive*, the overlong "defense pamphlet" whose purpose was to defend Monroe's reputation as US minister to France. Livingston considered Monroe's work worthy of a wide readership. Praising *View* as helpful in "opening the eyes of the people" to Federalist perfidy, he feared that sly Federalists might buy up the few copies available in New York to prevent its being read. He recommended printing it in a cheaper edition "so as to give it an extensive circulation."[80]

The *Aurora* advertised numerous radical pamphlets that were more ideologically oriented than Monroe's narrative of his foreign service. Their authors were often British immigrants like the Scotsman James T. Callender, whose *Sketches of the History of America*, with its revelations about the sexual affair between Alexander Hamilton and Maria Reynolds that occurred six years earlier, cost only one dollar. Although the production of some literary works, like Joel Barlow's epic poem *The Columbiad*, was delayed by a scarcity of subscribers, the *Aurora* advertised them anyway. Mathew Carey, the most prominent publisher and bookseller in Philadelphia, sold for only one dollar a 300-page volume of President Washington's messages, *A Collection of the Speeches of the President of the United States, to Both Houses of Congress*. The book, printed by a Boston firm, included the replies of each house of Congress to Washington's speeches, and contained an appendix with General George Washington's Revolutionary War Circular Letter to the Governors of the States and his farewell orders to the Army in 1783.[81] Individual books like these were certainly cheaper than a year's subscription to any newspaper.

Bache's own composition, a tract titled *Remarks Occasioned by the Late Conduct of Mr. Washington as President of the United States, 1796*, published

in July 1797, cost only thirty-one cents despite its eighty-five pages.[82] That Bache intended lower-income groups to purchase *Remarks* is suggested by the comparatively higher price he charged for the brief pamphlet edition of Jay's Treaty. He probably took for granted that only political activists, interested merchants, and the wealthy elite would desire to purchase it; he priced at twenty-five or fifty cents depending on the paper's quality.[83]

Although Bache perhaps hoped to attain solvency by the sale of pamphlets containing his exclusive "scoop" of the text of Jay Treaty, which he personally peddled from New York City to Philadelphia in the summer of 1795, he printed the pamphlet in two differently priced editions, hoping for its purchase by the middle class as well as the rich. John E. Harwood, a famous Baltimore actor who later married Bache's sister, apparently expected his expedition to garner financial rewards. "You are doubtless returned from your excursion to the North [Boston]," he wrote, "I hope with plenty of that purifier—pecuniary profit."[84] Unfortunately, Bache failed to sell all of his copies of Jay's Treaty (perhaps a dull document to read).

Thomas Paine, in so many things a representative of radical aspects of the early republic's political culture, may help us more accurately discern the role of pamphlets as compared with newspapers. In 1796 he resided in Paris. Freed from the Bastille on the initiative of Minister Monroe, he continued to serve in the French legislature. Despite his travails and political activities, Paine was still amazingly productive as an inflammatory writer. His American publisher, Bache, received from him 5,000 copies of "a small tract," the pamphlet *Dissertation on First Principles of Government*. Unconcerned with profit, he instructed Bache to sell it at the cheap price of twenty cents. "Please to advertise them at not more than 20 Cents each, and by the dozen according to whatever custom is with you," he wrote Bache. "I will settle the account with you hereafter."[85]

Bache printed most of Paine's writings, including part 2 of *The Age of Reason* (1795–96), *Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance* (1796), and *Agrarian Justice* (1797). In 1796 Bache published Paine's *Letter to George Washington*, even though a London publisher reportedly offered Paine £300 for the manuscript. Paine was interested in procuring the greatest number of readers. He did not care about the money. In addition to the 5,000 copies of his *Dissertation on First Principles*, he sent Bache 12,000 copies of *Age of Reason: Part Two*, instructing him to sell them for thirty-three cents a copy with 25 percent discount on wholesale purchases. He also allowed Bache a 25 percent profit on sales. However, Paine wanted Bache to seek copyright

protection from Congress for his work, because pirates were reprinting his books inaccurately and charging high prices for them.[86] Paine assumed that Bache would be able to sell these cheaply produced pamphlets to the general public. He apparently believed that the market for his pamphlets was inexhaustible. "The quantity is intended as a supply for the several States as far as it will answer that purpose," he explained to Bache, "and I shall send you 10,000 more by the next vessel, for the whole of the work is kept standing at the printers."[87]

Paine's primary objective was not only to disseminate his works as widely as possible, but also with his original text intact. Referring to *The Age of Reason*, he wrote Bache, "I request and commission you to enter the work at the proper office, conformably to the Act of Congress, as my property, for I intend to keep the right of publication in my own hands of which I wish you to give notice when you advertise the work." Charging that new editions of the first part of *Age of Reason* were unfaithful to the original, he wrote Bache:

> I see that by frequently reprinting the former part of the *Age of Reason* in the several States I am made to say what I never wrote, as you will see by a note in this work, and besides this it has been sold higher [priced] than I expected or intended, which is partly owing to the number of small Editions that have been made.[88]

For Paine, the political pamphlet stood for freedom and enlightenment for all, not a rarefied, esoteric work designed to be accessible to a few.

Unlike the price of the pamphlets Bache advertised, his newspaper's cost steadily increased. Taking into consideration the proximity of Philadelphia subscribers and the consequently lower postage costs, he offered them comparatively lenient payment terms. As noted earlier, after January 1794, Bache's daily's six-dollar annual price would "be paid at the end of the year by City Subscribers, but in advance by those in the Country." He also noted that he would "gratefully receive" subscriptions, advertisements, and other sources of income "at the Office of the General Advertiser, No. 112, Market-street."[89] Apparently many of his subscribers personally came to his office. They resided in Philadelphia. Many of them failed to pay for their papers at year's end, precipitating Bache's impending bankruptcy at the time of his premature death. However, when he raised the *Aurora*'s price to eight dollars per year in 1798, it was still "payable in advance" only for "country readers."

One of the *Aurora*'s foremost Democratic successor papers, Thomas Ritchie's long-lived *Richmond Enquirer* (1804–51), was published only three times a week. According to the masthead of its first issue dated May 9, 1804, it cost "four dollars per annum, payable in advance." Over time Ritchie pursued several simultaneous courses to safeguard his enterprise's fiscal well-being. By January 1806 he raised the newspaper's price to five dollars annually, "payable in advance." During the 1820s, after two decades of experience, Ritchie curtailed the number of times per week he printed his paper. He published it "twice a week generally" and "three times a week during the sessions of the legislature." The paper's cost remained "five dollars per annum, payable in advance." In addition, "notes (only) of chartered, specie-paying banks will be received in payment." Further evoking the financial risks of newspaper publishing, Ritchie and his partner, Claiborne W. Gooch, asserted the prerogative of canceling the subscriptions of derelict customers. Employing carrot-and-stick tactics, they stated that "Whoever will guarantee the payment of nine papers shall have the tenth GRATIS."[90]

The trend toward payment in advance was evident among both Federalist and Republican newspapers. In 1804 Alexander Hamilton's *New-York Herald*, the title of the semiweekly edition of the daily *New-York Evening Post*, charged four dollars per year, "payable in advance, with the option of paying at the end of the first six months." This was quite expensive for a paper that appeared only twice a week.[91] Thus, newspapers, whether run by Republican "friends of the people" or Federalist "aristocrats," maintained a price that was too high for most citizens.

THE BOSTON *COLUMBIAN CENTINEL'S* PAMPHLET ADVERTISEMENTS

As in the case of Bache's *Aurora*, a random examination of the prices listed for pamphlets in advertisements within a leading Federalist newspaper, such as the Boston *Columbian Centinel* during 1797–99, indicates that pamphlets were intended for a larger audience than a restricted elite. Indeed, it seems likely that pamphlets, with their more modest price and specific content (for those interested in the topic under discussion) found a wider readership than most newspapers. Although the *Columbian Centinel* claimed a circulation of 8,000, more than any other newspaper, it appeared only twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Despite its infrequent publication, it cost three dollars a year. Assuming that 100 issues/numbers were printed per year,

each thin, four-page paper (two pages of them advertisements), cost about three cents, or .8 cents per page. This was more expensive per page than most pamphlets, and much of the material was irrelevant to most readers.

Perhaps because it was a prominent Federalist paper, the titles and subject matter of the pamphlets advertised for sale in the *Columbian Centinel* differed somewhat from those advertised in Bache's Republican *Aurora*. For example, on Saturday, May 27, 1797, the *Centinel* advertised as a pamphlet what was an official government document in disguise. Considering the uniquely staggered scale of the item's cost, graduated according to a purchaser's alleged income, it was in effect a propaganda document. By encouraging people to buy and read this partisan work, Russell may have also hoped to attract additional subscribers to his journal and new advocates for Federalist policies within the city's middle classes, reputedly Democratic-Republican sympathizers. The advertisement's full text follows:

> AMERICA AND FRANCE. A FULL DISPLAY of the present MISUNDERSTANDING between the United States of America and FRANCE for sale at the *Centinel* office, price from 6 & ¼ cents to 50 cents, as the pecuniary ability of the purchaser may be. The list price is not its value: for it contains 86 close pages, and is written by the Hon. TIMOTHY PICKERING, *Secretary of State of the United States*, on the one part: and Citizen PETER ANTHONY ADET, late Minister of the French Nation, near the United States, on the other. *Every American ought to possess this book*.[92]

Seeking to attract a greater number of readers, the advertisement obscured the character of what was actually an official diplomatic exchange. Russell purported to sell, in the guise of an original work, a series of angry diplomatic notes between Pickering and Adet dating from November 1796 to January 1797, a period during which France recalled Adet to protest the Jay Treaty and began attacking Anglo-American commerce. The booklet's enterprising publisher, apparently Benjamin Russell himself (since no specific publisher was mentioned and the advertisement is the first one on the first page), thus attempted economic distributive justice in a unique manner, allowing each purchaser to contribute what they thought they could afford. Priced at only six cents, this pamphlet was far more affordable to the average person than a year's subscription to a newspaper for eight dollars a year.

Even fine novels in fine bindings were inexpensive compared to newspapers. The *Centinel* advertised British author Fanny Burney's novel *Camilla*,

encompassing three large volumes, at only three dollars. The advertisement read: "CAMILLA—A *new Novel*. This day published, in 3 vols. duodecimo, price 3 dollars neatly bound and lettered *CAMILLA; or a Picture of Youth* . . . Sold by S. Hall, W. Spotswood, J. White, Thomas and Andrews, at their respective Bookstores."[93] The romance totaled 1,000 pages, while a year's worth of the *Centinel* at the same price, and unbound, consisted of merely 400 pages, of which half were advertisements.

Perhaps the most remarkable partisan pamphlet during the early national period was "A Native of Virginia's" calumny of the long-retired ex-president Jefferson in 1821. This was the only instance in which a diatribe against the third president provoked him to a public, signed newspaper reply.[94] This incident, overlooked by scholars, was precipitated by a series of newspaper articles that appeared first in a Baltimore paper, the *Federal Republican*, and were reprinted in several others before being published as a pamphlet in Baltimore, New York City and elsewhere in 1822. The Baltimore *Federal Republican* succeeded the Georgetown *Daily Federal Republican*, and cost ten dollars a year in 1816, a time when the average daily pay for a city worker was a dollar. The newspaper's annual subscription was out of reach for many.[95]

The pamphlet containing the articles appeared under two titles: *Public Defaulters Brought to Light, in a Series of Letters addressed to the People of the United States. By a Native of Virginia* (New York: Bliss and White, 1822), and the less-abrasive moniker *Letters Addressed to the People of the United States on the Subject of Illegal & Improper Disbursements* (Baltimore: F. G. Schaeffer, 1822).[96] It is likely that the publishers regarded pamphlets as the cheapest, most effective means to reach a greater number of readers than its previous publication in a newspaper had done. Along with many others, this example reveals that a political essay's appearance in the newspapers did not preclude its later publication in pamphlet form for purchase by those with incomes too small for a year-long subscription to a newspaper.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE ROLE OF PAMPHLETS VERSUS NEWSPAPERS IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

At first glance, late eighteenth-century pamphlets appear to be an upper-class, elitist mode of communication. However, as this article has suggested, they could potentially expand popular access to a more substantial body of political information and extend the media of political controversy to wider sections of

the early republic's electorate than newspapers. Both Democratic-Republicans and Federalists utilized pamphlets to spread their ideas, often (as in the case of William Cobbett's essays) in their most vituperative form. Pamphlets were not only employed by aristocratic political opinion-makers intent on defending their character and actions before a limited audience of select political allies and peers. They conveyed political activists' views on timely issues and ideologies to a larger number of literate and politically articulate citizens than could be accomplished by resorting to locally circulating newspapers. Moreover, in Philadelphia and elsewhere throughout the country, rank-and-file party members, not only office-holders and -seekers, wrote pamphlets, and hoped that they would have a wide readership.

Political conservatives ostensibly perceived pamphlets as more widely available to the people than newspapers. Consequently, by unduly facilitating public access to events and ideas that would more appropriately be controlled by the few, pamphlets conveyed potential danger. This may have been the purport of ex-president John Adams's complaint that his works were tarnished when converted from newspaper articles to pamphlet format. Concerning the famous series of articles he wrote about his presidency in the *Boston Patriot* newspaper in 1809, Adams later reminisced to a friend, "On April 10, 1809, I commenced in the *Boston Patriot* a series of letters in vindication of my mission to France. These letters were imprudently published as pamphlets."[97] Adams apparently thought that pamphlets indiscriminately disseminated his work to the masses. His articles exposed his disagreements with his High Federalist Cabinet members during the 1799–1800 undeclared war with France. He may have found their publication in pamphlet form objectionable and personally embarrassing, as well as politically injurious to the declining Federalist Party. Evidently, Adams did not perceive pamphlets as a medium that confined his writings to a select, reliable political elite.

Furthermore, the diverse, rather desperate expedients by which nonsubscribers sought the opportunity to read newspapers in the antebellum period suggest that most people could not afford to purchase them, a factor also prevalent in the 1790s, when daily wages were even lower. Historians examining early US press tend to exaggerate the extent to which browsing in taverns, hotels, and other public places increased newspaper readership and supposedly made them more efficient vehicles for communicating political opinion than were pamphlets. More fundamentally, since the essays that comprised pamphlets frequently appeared first in newspapers, the alleged dichotomy that modern scholars posit between pamphlets and newspapers—asserting

that contending elites employed pamphlets as tools in their "paper wars" while newspapers served the masses—lacks force.

The proliferation of pamphlets indicates that Americans during the period of the first party system were more capable of reading dense works and more interested in facilitating their understanding of events than scholars recognize. It suggests that voters were less politically apathetic than their temporary support for measures of political repression during the "XYZ scare" and the undeclared war with France might imply.[98] The comparative role of pamphlets and newspapers in conveying information and ideas to enlighten the American reading public in the late eighteenth century is a topic virtually ignored by historians and deserves more study. Further investigation of this question will expand our knowledge of politics, society, and culture during the era.

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NOTES

1. For example, see Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The "Tyranny of Printers": Newspaper Politics in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001); David Waldstreicher, *"In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes": The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011); Donald H. Stewart, *Opposition Press of the Federalist Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1969); Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation-Building, 1770–1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Andrew Trees, *The Founding Fathers and the Politics of Character* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); John L. Brooke, *Columbia Rising: Civil Life in the Upper Hudson from the Revolution*

to the Age of Jackson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); John R. Howe Jr., *Language and Political Meaning in Revolutionary America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004).

2. The most notable example is Joanne B. Freeman's study, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).
3. For example, despite being excellent works, Pasley, "*Tyranny of Printers*," and Stewart, *Opposition Press of the Federalist Period*, do not attempt to compare the purposes and extent of circulation of newspapers and pamphlets. Trish Loughran's literary study *Republic in Print* makes some attempt to do so, mainly to disprove Thomas Paine's claim that his famous pamphlet, *Common Sense*, sold 250,000 copies. There is no comparison of pamphlet and newspaper sales, or an investigation of their audiences, in the numerous studies of the political culture of the 1790s. These works encompass activities ranging from crowd behavior and holiday celebrations to partisan journalism. In addition to the studies by Waldstreicher, Newman, Pasley, Freeman, Trees, and Stewart already cited, see Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997); Marcus Leonard Daniel, *Scandal and Civility: Journalism and the Birth of American Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Todd Estes, *The Jay Treaty Debate, Public Opinion, and the Evolution of Early American Political Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Brian W. Dotts, *The Political Education of Democratus: Negotiating Civic Virtue During the Early Republic* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012); Jason A. Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*; Andrew Shankman, *Crucible of Democracy: The Struggle to Fuse Egalitarianism and Capitalism in Jeffersonian Pennsylvania* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004). The time frame of these monographs generally extends backward into the American Revolution and forward into the 1820s and beyond. Unfortunately, unlike *Affairs of Honor*, they neglect to compare and contrast pamphlets and newspapers. They concentrate little, if at all, on the question of the diffusion of pamphlets versus newspapers, the topic of this paper. A recent Israeli-British scholarly study, Uriel Heyd, *Reading Newspapers: Press and Public in Eighteenth-Century Britain and America* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, Oxford University Press, 2012), concentrates mainly on England.
4. Interestingly, an essay that legal historian Leonard W. Levy regarded as the first major defense of absolute freedom of the press, George Hay's "Hortensius" articles, first appeared in five installments in a prominent newspaper, the Philadelphia *Aurora*, February 2–11, 1799. Only two days later, on February 13,

it was published as a pamphlet titled *An Essay on the Liberty of the Press; Respectfully Inscribed to the Republican Printers Throughout the United States*. Leonard W. Levy, *Jefferson and Civil Liberties: The Darker Side* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 51–53; Steven H. Hochman, "On the Liberty of the Press in Virginia: From Essay to Bludgeon, 1798–1803," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 4 (1976): 431–45.

5. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 114–19.
6. Ibid, 113 (quotation).
7. Stewart, *Opposition Press of the Federalist Period*, 610–11.
8. [Alexandria] *Columbian Mirror*, February 9, 1799.
9. Brooke, *Columbia Rising*, 126 (quotation).
10. Milton W. Hamilton, *The Country Printer: New York State, 1785–1830*, 2nd ed. (Port Washington, NY: Ira J. Friedman, 1964), 212.
11. Samuel Miller, *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (1803), quoted in Clarence S. Brigham, *Journals and Journeymen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), 3–4.
12. Brigham, *Journals and Journeymen*, 19, 14.
13. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 159. The quotation from Adams's diary, August 23, 1774, appears on 159n. See also Thomas C. Leonard, *News for All: America's Coming-of-Age with the Press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 6–12 (section aptly titled, "Tavern as News Room"); and Leo Bogart, *Press and Public: Who Reads What, When, Where, and Why in American Newspapers* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989).
14. Hamilton, *Country Printer*, 211. See also Robert A. Gross, ed., *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790–1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
15. Leonard, *News for All*, 3–6; Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 154–55, 168.
16. Mott, *American Journalism*, 159.
17. Brigham, *Journals and Journeymen*, 21.
18. Amanda Porterfield, *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 16–17. Bache's printing of Paine's *Age of Reason* in Philadelphia is discussed at greater length below.
19. The first "Phocion" essay, an attack on the pro-Jeffersonian Virginia writer "Hampden," probably a pseudonym for the Democratic-Republican political strategist John Beckley, appeared on page 2 of John Fenno's [Philadelphia] *Gazette of the United States*, October 14, 1796 (online at the Readex database "America's Historical Newspapers"). See also *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 16, ed. J.C.A. Stagg, Thomas A. Mason, Jeanne K. Sisson, and Susan

Holbrook Perdue (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 409–10; Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *John Beckley: Zealous Partisan in a Nation Divided* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973), 146. After appearing in the *Gazette of the United States* during October 1796, "Phocion's" *Pretensions of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency Examined* was printed in the Charleston *South-Carolina State Gazette* beginning November 8, and continuing through issues of November 9, 11–12, 14–17, 19, 21–24, 26, 28, and into December 3, 5–8, 15, 1796. George C. Rogers Jr., *Evolution of a Federalist: William Loughton Smith of Charleston (1758–1812)* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1962), 292. For its price, see advertisement, Philadelphia *Gazette of the United States*, November 5, 1796, "This day is Published," etc.

20. *Gazette of the United States*, September 19, 1796; *Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, September 19, 1796. The date of Washington's Farewell Address was September 17, 1796. Freeman mistakenly asserts that it was published solely as a pamphlet because it was "far too long" for a newspaper to handle. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 117 (quotation). For a recent examination of the intraparty dispute over whether Hamilton or Washington wrote the Farewell Address, see Jeffrey J. Malanson, "'If I Had It in His Hand-Writing I Would Burn It': Federalists and the Authorship Controversy over George Washington's Farewell Address, 1808–1859," *Journal of the Early Republic* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 219–42. For Washington's belief that the *American Daily Advertiser* was nonpartisan, see Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 222–23.
21. See Frank Shuffelton, "Binding Ties: Thomas Jefferson, Francis Hopkinson, and the Representation of *Notes on the State of Virginia*," in *Periodical Literature in Eighteenth-Century America*, ed. Mark L. Kamrath and Sharon M. Harris (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 255–76; and Coolie Verner, "Mr. Jefferson Distributes His *Notes*: A Preliminary Checklist of First Editions," *New York Public Library Bulletin* 56 (1952): 159–86.
22. "Important," Philadelphia *Aurora*, October 17, 1796, 3.
23. For examples of the advertisement, see *Aurora*, December 8 and 27, 1796. The text of Paine's famous *Letter* is printed in *Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Moncure D. Conway (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 3:213–52, and in *Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Philip S. Foner, 2 vols. (New York: The Citadel Press, 1945), 2:689–723. Paine accused Washington of ulterior motives for neglecting to secure his release when he was imprisoned and threatened with the guillotine in Paris in 1794. He went so far as to charge that the president hoped to arouse public clamor for war with France by manipulating American rage at Paine's anticipated execution. At the other extreme, Paine surmised that Washington desired Paine's death because a celebrated foe of Washington's alleged plot to establish monarchy would thus be silenced. Thomas Paine to

James Madison, September 24, 1795, in *Papers of James Madison*, ed. Stagg et al., 16:91–92. See also James Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache and the Philadelphia Aurora* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 124–27, 282–83.

24. Philadelphia *Aurora*, December 16, 1796. The books were put on sale on December 6, but the *Aurora* did not publish on that day because it was a Sunday.
25. Philadelphia *General Advertiser*, January 2, 1794.
26. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 117–18, citing Gerard Gawalt, ed., study of Beckley, *Justifying Jefferson: The Political Writings of John James Beckley* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1995), 69, 86–89, 191–93.
27. On Taylor's political philosophy, see Manning J. Dauer and Hans Hammond, "John Taylor: Democrat or Aristocrat?" *Journal of Politics* 6 (1944): 381–403; Duncan Macleod, "The Political Economy of John Taylor of Caroline," *Journal of American Studies* 14, no. 3 (December 1980): 387–405; and Benjamin F. Wright, "The Philosopher of Jeffersonian Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 22, no. 4 (November 1928): 870–92. For Taylor's argument in favor of slavery and black racial inferiority, see John Taylor, *Arator, Being A Series of Agricultural Essays, Practical & Political: in Sixty-Four Numbers*, 6th ed. (1813; Philadelphia, 1818), 50–60. After conducting meticulous research, historian Robert Shalhope concluded that *Arator* was first published in 1810. Robert E. Shalhope, "The *Arator* Essays and the Fallacy of the Prevalent Proof," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84 (1976): 283–86. Taylor's remarks regarding the "ephemeral columns of a newspaper" appeared in *Arator*'s sixth edition (Petersburg, 1818), 234, quoted in Shalhope, "The *Arator* Essays," 285.
28. On John Taylor's life and political views, see also Robert E. Shalhope, *John Taylor of Caroline: Pastoral Republican* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980).
29. For insights into Taylor's *Enquiry into the Principles and Tendency of Certain Public Measures*, I am indebted to Shalhope, *John Taylor of Caroline*, 79. Jefferson owned a copy of Taylor's *Enquiry* and it was among the 6,500 books he sold to the Library of Congress in 1815. E. Millicent Sowerby, ed., *Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson*, 5 vols. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1952–59), 3:287.
30. There were some personal advantages to writing under a pseudonym, especially in that age of thin-skinned politicians and the *code duello*. Describing newspaper attacks conducted under the protective etiquette of pseudonyms as "ritual duels," Robert H. Wiebe noted that *noms de plume* permitted their formally veiled authors (the "masked gentry") to "experience simultaneously a freedom to indulge in savage personal assaults and an elevation of their cause to the highest realms of patriotic discourse"; *The Opening of American Society: From the Adoption of the Constitution to the Eve of Disunion* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 100–104, quotation at 101. Eran Shalev, "Ancient Masks, American

Fathers: Classical Pseudonyms during the American Revolution and Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (Summer 2003): 151–72, argues that authors chose their pseudonyms carefully and symbolically, as a shorthand for transmitting their ideas.

31. John Taylor to Madison, May 11, 1793, in *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 15, ed. Thomas A. Mason, Robert A. Rutland, and Jeanne K. Sisson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1985), 13–14.
32. John Taylor to James Madison, June 20, 1793, in ibid., 35.
33. Neither Taylor nor most other property-holding political partisans who wrote pamphlets expected to gain any profit from their efforts; indeed, they were happy if the costs of publication did not severely impair their finances.
34. Taylor to Madison, June 20, 1793.
35. Taylor to Madison, September 25, 1793, in *Papers of James Madison*, ed. Mason, Rutland, and Sisson, 15:123. "Reflections on Several Subjects," an extract from Taylor's *Enquiry*, was printed in the *National Gazette*, September 11, 1793.
36. *National Gazette*, August 31, 1793, 319. Under the act establishing the US Post Office, passed February 20, 1793, each newspaper transported by mail would pay one cent in postage if the distance was under one hundred miles, and one and a half cents if the distance was greater. For the text of the act, see *Annals of Congress*, *Vol. 3, 2d Congress, 1791–1793*, 1339.
37. *National Gazette*, masthead, January 30, 1793, 1. Newspaper prices were stable throughout the decade. For example, in 1802 the *Albany Register*, a four-page paper that, like the *National Gazette* appeared only twice a week, sold for three dollars per annum "payable in advance." *Albany Register*, August 17, 1802, masthead.
38. Shalhope, *John Taylor of Caroline*, 82.
39. Historians of the early republic are well aware of the importance of posterity to the Founders. See the classic Trevor Colbourn, ed., *Fame and the Founding Fathers: Essays by Douglass Adair* (New York: Norton, 1973); Gerald Stourzh, *Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970); and Peter S. McNamara, ed., *The Noblest Minds: Fame, Honor, and the American Founding* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).
40. Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West* (New York: Norton, 1974); Leonard, *News for All*, 3–6.
41. John Taylor to Madison, May 11, 1793, in *Papers of James Madison*, ed. Mason, Rutland, and Sisson, 15:13.
42. Taylor to Madison, June 20, 1793, in ibid., 15:35.
43. Ibid.
44. On Jefferson's controversial subsidies to Callender, see Worthington C. Ford, ed., "Thomas Jefferson and James Thomson Callender," *New England*

Historical and Genealogical Register 51 (1896): 321–33, 445–58; 52 (1897): 19–25, 153–58, 323–28; and Michael Durey, *With the Hammer of Truth: James Thomson Callender and America's Early National Heroes* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990), 104–6, 110–13, 119–20.

45. Shalhope, *John Taylor of Caroline*, 82. Jefferson to John Francis Mercer, December 19, 1792, quoted on p. 82.
46. Madison to Taylor, September 20, 1793, 15:121, and Taylor to Madison, September 25, 1793, in *Papers of James Madison*, ed. Mason, Rutland, and Sisson, 15:123. Although Taylor did not say that he found Freneau's recently acquired urban lower-class militancy distasteful, it is possible that this was one of the reasons he objected to the publication of parts of his essay in the *National Gazette*. On Freneau's revolutionary zeal, see Leonard A. Granato, "Freneau, Jefferson and Genet: Independent Journalism in the Partisan Press," in *Newsletters to Newspapers: Eighteenth-Century Journalism Papers Presented at a Bicentennial Symposium, at West Virginia University, Morgantown West Virginia, March 31–April 2, 1976*, ed. Donovan H. Bond (Morgantown: School of Journalism, West Virginia University, 1977), 291–301.
47. Taylor to Madison, September 25, 1793, in *Papers of James Madison*, ed. Mason, Rutland, and Sisson, 15:123. Spelling and punctuation as in the original.
48. Philadelphia *General Advertiser*, January 27, 1794, 4. The advertisement reappeared on February 4, 1794, 4.
49. The full title of Cobbett's tract was "Cannibal's Progress: Or, the Dreadful Horrors of French Invasion, as displayed by the Republican Officers and Soldiers, in their Perfidy, Rapacity Ferociousness, and Brutality, exercised towards the innocent inhabitants of Germany." For the sales of Cobbett's six-cent pamphlet, see Pierce W. Gaines, *William Cobbett and the United States, 1792–1835: A Bibliography with Notes and Extracts* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1971), 235–36; and Gaines, "William Cobbett's Account Book," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 78, pt. 2 (October 1969): 308–9. According to the foremost study, the average major newspaper sold 500 copies daily. Stewart, *Opposition Press of the Federalist Period*, 17, 610–11, 613–14, 654n. For more on Cobbett's "Cannibals" tract, see Arthur Scherr, "Jefferson's 'Cannibals' Revisited: A Closer Look at His Notorious Phrase," *Journal of Southern History* 77 (May 2011): 258–59.
50. What Richard D. Brown says about a reader's choice whether or not to read a certain newspaper article is even more relevant to his/her decision to purchase a pamphlet instead of or in addition to a newspaper. "People expressed their own individuality by choosing to read or ignore the information they contained," since "printing reinforced individuality rather than conformity, and encouraged personal choice instead of communal values." Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge Is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700–1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 279–80.

51. Leonard, *News for All*, 3–6; Brown, *Knowledge Is Power*, 279–80; Richard D. Brown, *The Strength of a People: The Idea of an Informed Citizenry in America, 1650–1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Richard D. Brown, *Modernization: The Transformation of American Life, 1600–1865* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976); John, *Spreading the News*; Loughran, *Republic in Print*.
52. Stewart, *Opposition Press of the Federalist Period*, 11; Culver H. Smith, *The Press, Politics, and Patronage: The American Government's Use of Newspapers, 1789–1875* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1977), 17, 19; William D. Sloan, "'Purse and Pen': Party-Press Relationships, 1789–1816," *American Journalism* 6 (1989): 103–27; and Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 14–15.
53. Schudson, *Discovering the News*, 15 (quotation). Schudson was referring to the early nineteenth century, but conditions were generally similar in the 1790s, the main time period of this essay.
54. From 1798 to 1829, daily wages for agricultural workers near Philadelphia were forty cents or less for males, and slightly below that for females. Donald R. Adams Jr., "Wage Rates in the Early National Period: Philadelphia, 1785–1830," *Journal of Economic History* 28, no. 3 (September 1968): 404–26, at 420 ("Appendix, Table IV: Daily Wage Rates for Agricultural Workers in the Philadelphia Area, 1798–1829"); Stanley Lebergott, "Wage Trends, 1800–1900," in National Bureau of Economic Research, *Trends in the American Economy in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), 457.
55. The Philadelphia *General Advertiser* added the noun *Aurora* to its title on November 8, 1794, putting that word in the center of the newspaper's heading on the front page, so it became the Philadelphia *General Advertiser: Aurora*.
56. The author has compared the price on the masthead of the Philadelphia *General Advertiser: Aurora* for January 2, 1795, with the price on its masthead for January 1, 1798.
57. Philadelphia *General Advertiser, and Political, Commercial, Agricultural and Literary Journal*, October 6 and 16, 1790. For comparative values of money, see Scott Derks and Tony Smith, *The Value of a Dollar, Colonial Era to the Civil War, 1600–1865* (Millerton, NY: Grey House Publishing, 2005), 191. By July 1793 the cost of a prominent daily Philadelphia paper like *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser* was six pence per issue. *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, July 2, 1793.
58. The information about the increase in the *Aurora*'s price is derived from examining the paper. On Bache's children, see Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache*, 78; Leonard W. Labaree, ed., *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, 38 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959–), 1:lxiii. Bache's financial difficulties as an entrepreneurial printer, bookseller, newspaper publisher, and editor

are described in Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache*, 65–66, 93–109; Jeffery A. Smith, *Franklin and Bache: Envisioning the Enlightened Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 109, 158–59; and Stewart, *Opposition Press of the Federalist Period*, 18, 655n. On unpaid subscriptions and Bache's financial woes, see Peter J. Parker, "The Revival of the *Aurora*: A Letter to Tench Coxe," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 96 (October 1972): 521–25.

59. "From the Editor of the *General Advertiser* TO THE PUBLIC," Philadelphia *General Advertiser*, January 1, 1794. On Bache's Boston excursion, see Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers,"* 94
60. Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 51, claims that Paine's *Common Sense*, which he describes as a soft-covered pamphlet, sold 150,000 copies in its first year. He also notes that a previous best-seller, John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1768), appeared in newspapers before it was published as a pamphlet. A recent work, Loughran's *Republic in Print*, 33–103, argues in exhaustive detail that Paine greatly exaggerated his pamphlet's circulation, for which no reliable statistics exist.
61. See David Hackett Fischer, *Revolution of American Conservatism: The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 130–34; Mott, *American Journalism*, 121–22. Fischer concludes that the Democratic-Republicans were more adept at utilizing pamphlets and handbills than their Federalist opponents. He also argues that after the presidential election of 1800, Federalist newspapers downplayed their partisanship in an effort to attract Jeffersonian customers, who they assumed now comprised the majority.
62. Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers,"* 88–91.
63. Philadelphia *General Advertiser: Aurora*, January 2, 1795, 1.
64. Ibid., pages 1 and 4. Although by 1795 most Americans, even Democratic-Republicans, hated Robespierre and blamed him for the infamous Reign of Terror in France, Bache published Robespierre's *Report*, "translated, printed & sold by Benjamin Franklin Bache, no. 112 Market St." Judging from the *Aurora*'s editorials, Bache's attitude toward Robespierre was ambivalent. The newspaper defended the Terror until Robespierre's downfall, but it condoned "Gracchus," Babeuf's later communist insurrectionary plot in 1796. For examples of its diverse views, see Philadelphia *Aurora*, issues for January 25, 28, June 6, October 10, October 17 ("Fall of Robespierre"), November 29, December 6, 1794 ("Parties in France"); and January 13 and March 25, 1795. For its views on Babeuf's conspiracy, see *Aurora*, November 10, 1796.
65. Philadelphia *General Advertiser: Aurora*, January 2, 1798. For the remainder of this essay, referred to simply as *Aurora*.
66. Advertisers repelled by Bache's criticism of Washington abandoned him, and he received no printing contracts from Federalist-oriented state and national

governments. In retrospect, Philadelphia printer and bookseller Mathew Carey believed that the *Aurora*'s denunciation of Washington caused Bache great financial loss. Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers,"* 88–91; Mathew Carey, *Autobiography* (1833–34; reprint, New York: Brooklyn Research Classics, 1942), 39, quoted in Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers,"* 91.

67. *Aurora*, January 1, 1798. The advertisement first appeared in the *Aurora* on December 8, 1796; it also appeared on December 27, 1796. It was reprinted in the *Aurora* on December 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, and 21, 1797. See also Richard N. Rosenfeld, *American Aurora: A Democratic-Republican Returns* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 33.
68. The Philadelphia *Aurora* first advertised *A Letter from Thomas Paine to G. Washington* for sale December 8, 1796.
69. See Arthur Scherr, "A 'Genuine Republican': Benjamin Franklin Bache's *Remarks* (1797), the Federalists, and Republican Civic Humanism," *Pennsylvania History* 80, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 243–298.
70. Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 6th ed. (London, 1785). Available online at: https://archive.org/stream/dictionaryofengl02johnuoft#page/n271/mode/2up.
71. Advertisement in *Aurora*, January 2, 1798, 1. Bache began advertising Monroe's book on December 21, 1797.
72. Interestingly, the Federalist *Gazette of the United States* carried advertisements for Monroe's *View* consistently during December 1797 and January 1798, including the information that it was for sale at the office of the *Aurora* for $1.50, "[with] a very liberal allowance for those who pay to sell again" and by quantities of the title. *Gazette of the United States*, January 1, 1798. Bache must have been an optimist if he paid for advertisements in the *GUS*, expecting Fenno's anti-Monroe readers to purchase copies of Monroe's book.
73. It was published as a pamphlet by Caleb P. Wayne, editor of the Federalist *Boston Federal Gazette*, and later editor of the Philadelphia *Gazette of the United States*, in 1798.
74. John Dawson to William Duane, November 25, 1800, reel 3 (microfilm), Bache Family Papers, Castle Collection, American Philosophical Society (hereafter Bache Papers).
75. For Bache's activities concerning Jay's Treaty, see Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache*, 246–47, 267 n. 29; and Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers,"* 91–92.
76. Jefferson to Bache, June 2, 1795, in Julian P. Boyd, et al., eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 28 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950–), 377.
77. Jefferson to Bache, December 26, 1795, in *Jefferson Papers*, ed. Boyd et al., 28:560–61. Jefferson's *Memorandum Books*, or Account Books, confirm that he had not previously paid in advance for Bache's papers, hence was not a subscriber until December 1795. By contrast, he paid for Freneau's *National Gazette* in advance during the brief period it existed, from October 1791 to September

1793. James A. Bear and Lucia C. Stanton, eds., *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 1:888, 905; 2: 935, 955–956, 959, 961, 971, 973, 976, 990.

78. Jefferson to Thomas Mann Randolph Jr., May 15, 1791, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd et al., vol. 20 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950–), 416.
79. Robert R. Livingston to Edward Livingston, January 25, 1799, Livingston Family Papers, New-York Historical Society.
80. Robert R. Livingston to Edward Livingston, December 31, 1797, in ibid.
81. Advertisement in *Aurora*, January 2, 1798, 1.
82. Bache published his *Remarks* pamphlet in two editions, one cheaper than the other and on poorer-quality paper, so that the lower classes could more easily afford it. His advertisement for *Remarks* stated: "THIS DAY IS PUBLISHED, At the Office of the *Aurora*, Price 31 Cents, coarse papers, 37 cents, vellum paper, *Remarks Occasioned by the Late Conduct of Mr. Washington, As President of the United States*." Philadelphia *Aurora*, July 7, 1797.
83. On the price of Bache's Jay Treaty pamphlet, see Pasley, *"Tyranny of Printers*," 94–95.
84. John E. Harwood to Bache, August 5, 1795, reel 3 (microfilm), Bache Papers.
85. Thomas Paine to Benjamin Franklin Bache, July 12, 1795, in ibid.
86. Paine to Bache, July 13, September 20, 21, 24, 1795, and August 7, 1796, Bache Papers; Tagg, *Benjamin Franklin Bache*, 126–27.
87. Paine to Bache, September 20, 1795, reel 3 (microfilm), Bache Papers.
88. Ibid.
89. "From the Editor of the *General Advertiser* **TO THE PUBLIC.**" Philadelphia *General Advertiser*, January 1, 1794.
90. *Richmond Enquirer*, May 9, 1804; January 21, 1806; and May 3, 1825 (page 1 in all cases).
91. *New-York Herald*, March 24, 1804, 4 ("Conditions of the *Herald*"). For information on the *New-York Herald*, see Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690–1820*, 2 vols. (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1947), 1:649.
92. [Boston] *Columbian Centinel*, May 27, 1797, 1. Italics in original.
93. Ibid.
94. Jefferson to Ritchie and Gooch, May 13, 1822, and Jefferson to Ritchie and Gooch, June 10, 1822, in *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh, 20 vols. (Washington, DC: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1903), 15:365–70, 374–82; Henry S. Randall, *Life of Thomas Jefferson*, 3 vols. (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1858), 3:658–60.
95. *Georgetown Daily Federal Republican*, January 1, 1816.
96. The diatribes against Jefferson first appeared in August 1821 in the Baltimore *Federal Republican*. The journal was popular with Federalists but had

little influence outside of Baltimore, judging from the newspapers infrequent reprinting of its articles.

97. Adams to James Lloyd, March 29, 1815, in *Works of John Adams*, 10 vols., ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: Little, Brown, 1850–56), 10:148.
98. See Rachel Hope Cleves, *The Reign of Terror in America: Visions of Violence from Anti-Jacobinism to Anti-Slavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Jeremy Engels, *Enemyship: Democracy and Counter-Revolution in the Early Republic* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010).