

Thrice happy the church that has no history, that plods along quietly as bishop succeeds bishop, far removed from the glare of publicity or scandal. Such has not been the fate of the modern diocese of Pennsylvania, which over the past half-century has suffered tumultuous divisions—all treated here fairly and judiciously. In the 1960s and 1970s Bishop Robert DeWitt placed the diocese at the cutting edge of what his supporters would have termed progressive politics and racial justice, but which critics denounced as pandering to radical chic and revolutionary thuggery.

Since the 1970s the diocese, like the wider church, has been profoundly divided over issues of gender and sexuality—the ordination of women in the 1970s, gay clergy in later eras. Vastly complicating these struggles have been the persistent and multifaceted controversies—legal, moral, theological, financial, jurisdictional—that have been so floridly abundant during the past fifteen years. David Contosta's chapter on this ghastly era is titled "The Perfect Storm." *This Far by Faith* reads the title—and, we might ask, how much further can even a burning faith possibly carry a diocese in such straits?

Errors in the book are mercifully few, although the text quoted on page 98 as the church's Nicene Creed is actually the Apostles' Creed. Different readers will presumably have their own opinions about names or topics that should have been covered but are not. I was startled that a book of this nature could possibly have omitted those crucial patrons, the Wanamaker family, who make no appearance in the index.

Carping apart, this is an excellent history. It is critical to our understanding of the Episcopal Church nationally, and in many ways, constitutes a microcosm of American mainline religion.

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Troy Bickham. *The Weight of Vengeance: The United States, the British Empire, and the War of 1812* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Pp. xi, 325, illustrations, index, Cloth, \$34.95.

This military, diplomatic, and journalistic study incisively investigates the complex War of 1812. Topically arranged into eight major chapters, this book accentuates several salient themes: Bickham reveals the military accomplishments and blunders of the British empire during this destructive war

and also describes the state formation policies and activities of the American republic against the British. Finally, Bickham, who teaches at Texas A&M University, well examines the declining roles of Native American empires in America and in Canada. Bickham effectively utilizes newspaper accounts to substantiate his arguments and consequently has written a most persuasive study in comparative trans-Atlantic history.

Bickham treats pertinent trans-Atlantic issues in the book's first part: the first two chapters concentrate on the American and British cases for engaging in war against each other. He maintains that President James Madison and Republican leaders denounced the British for violating neutral and commercial rights of American ships that sailed the Atlantic; after 1802 these vessels encountered trade restrictions in shipping merchandise to European ports. To appease indignant American statesmen and shippers, the British in June of 1812 repealed the Orders in Council and other restrictive commercial laws. An ancillary issue, impressment, enraged American shippers, merchants, and political leaders. Maintaining that many sailors on American merchant and naval ships had not been properly naturalized as American citizens, the British tried to diminish the importance of impressment claims.

Bickham in the third chapter also develops convincing arguments for other major causes. Citing accounts of reporters from both sides of the Atlantic, he asserts that tensions with the Native Americans, the ambitions of expansionists, and the defense of American national sovereignty led Madison to seek congressional consent to take action against the British. On June 18, 1812, with congressional support, the reluctant Madison, who realized that American armed forces were poorly prepared, issued a war declaration against Great Britain. Despite fighting against Napoleonic troops and while realizing that Canada and the West Indies required military protection, Great Britain would develop an expanded tax base to finance wars throughout the world. This empire, whose leaders especially feared the development of a Franco-American alliance, would respond in 1812 against America to defend imperial interests in the Western Hemisphere.

In chapter 4 Bickham in detail reveals the intensity of the conflict between the young republic and the British empire. He suggests that significant military victories by both the Americans and the British did not culminate in bringing an end to this war. Bickham shows that successes and failures characterized American efforts to occupy Upper Canada. After the vacillating General William Hull scored victories in July of 1812 and the next month ceded Detroit to the British and the Canadians, American campaigns in the

West the next year met with success. Bickham assesses the 1813 American accomplishments: the victory of Oliver H. Perry at Put-in-Bay in September enabled America to secure control over Lake Erie. The next month, William Henry Harrison and his armies earned a significant victory at the Battle of the Thames. This battle, moreover, culminated in the death of Tecumseh and in the decline of his powerful Indian confederation. American troops failed, however, to occupy Upper Canada during later stages of the war. Vivid accounts also appear about the victories of the *Constitution* against the British navy and about the successful attacks of American merchant ships against British vessels.

Chapter 5 examines the powerful 1814 British response against America. The British in August did encounter some success in the Chesapeake region, deploying their forces under George Cockburn and Robert Ross to win with vengeance the Battle of Washington and to inflict great damage on the White House and on other buildings in the nation's capital. Having moved their troops to Baltimore, the British were thwarted, failing to capture Fort McHenry in September of 1814 and thereafter retreating from this city. To enhance his treatment of this battle, Bickham frequently refers to critical British newspaper accounts and to laudatory American articles. Moreover, after the victory of the Americans at the Battle of Plattsburgh under Commander Thomas McDonough in September, the British press became extremely negative: British journalists wrote against Sir George Prevost, who was commander of British forces in North America, for his failure to seize control of states in Northeastern America.

Chapters 6 and 7 reveal the opposition to the war that arose on both sides of the Atlantic. Bickham lucidly explains that in America some women and Methodist and Presbyterian ministers spoke out against the war. However, the Federalists became the war's most strident opponents. As Bickham explains, speeches of Federalist leaders during the 1814 Hartford Convention failed to effectuate the secession of the New England states from the Union and led to this party's destruction. Likewise, in Great Britain, political and economic opposition surfaced. Critics in British newspapers denounced the war, maintaining that it was a needless military failure and a wasteful tax burden. Some British merchants suffered from shrinking profits during this war and favored a settlement with America.

The last two chapters concern the war's ending and its winners and losers. There is a solid treatment concerning diplomatic activities that ended the war. The Treasury Secretary and Pennsylvanian Albert Gallatin contributed

to both its financing and diplomacy: Gallatin, who envisioned large debts arising from the war, supported the syndicate of John Jacob Astor, Stephen Girard, and David Parish to purvey bonds in America and in Europe to finance it. Gallatin also became one of the leading commissioners at Ghent: he corresponded and dealt with Viscount Castlereagh, ultimately convincing, after many memos regarding Canada and an Indian buffer state, the British foreign secretary to consent to a treaty with one significant provision. As Bickham explains, the 1814 Treaty of Ghent, which both American and British diplomats would sign on Christmas Eve, embodied the principle of *status quo ante bellum* and later would benefit America in pursuing its expansionist policies during the nineteenth century. He also believes that this war enabled the second British empire to foster its global policies and commercial activities and permitted Canada to consolidate and to push westward. Last, this war resulted in the oppression of the Native Americans.

This study has much to recommend it. Based on extensive investigation of primary sources, this book contains pensive theses and provides much context about the salient trans-Atlantic facets of the forgotten War of 1812. Bickham might have explained how policies of American and British leaders differed from the opinions of journalists in these two states. Nevertheless, this elegantly written book will become a classic in the field. Along with the studies of Donald Hickey, J.C.A. Stagg, Jon Latimer, and Jeremy Black, this imaginative work should be read by both scholars and students.

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Alasdair Roberts. *America's First Great Depression: Economic Crisis and Political Disorder after the Panic of 1837* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012). Pp. 264. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$26.00.

Alasdair Roberts has written a concise and commendably readable book that shows clearly and well just how devastating the Panic of 1837 was for the United States. His study substantiates the claim that the Panic was a great depression, though as we learn more about the catastrophic impact of the American Revolution, it may not come to be viewed as the nation's first. In his introduction and conclusion Roberts also provides a timely discussion of the nation's economic life in a global system in which, going forward,