THE
Pennsylvania
Magazine
OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

Mathew Carey and "The Olive Branch," 1814-1818

THE first edition of Mathew Carey's *Olive Branch* appeared on November 8, 1814.[1] This work was the most influential piece of political writing published on this side of the Atlantic during the War of 1812. His greatest single sustained literary effort, this book marked the culmination of Carey's campaign to diminish party strife, destroy the spirit of New England separatism, and unify a confused America in its struggle with Great Britain. More copies of *The Olive Branch* were sold than any other political book in the history of the United States before 1820. Its influence was recorded far beyond the crisis of the war years. For the balance of his life, Mathew Carey was referred to as the author of *The Olive Branch.*

The great Philadelphia publisher was born in Dublin in 1760 of upper-middle-class Catholic parents and was trained as a bookseller and printer.[2] During the Volunteer Movement, he edited Ire-

1 Mathew Carey, *The Olive Branch: or Faults on Both Sides, Federal and Democratic, A serious appeal on the necessity of mutual forgiveness & harmony to save our common country from ruin* (Philadelphia, Nov. 8, 1814).

2 For a partial review of Carey's amazing career see: Earl L. Bradsher, *Mathew Carey, Author and Publisher: A Study in American Literary Development* (New York, 1912); Kenneth W. Rowe, *Mathew Carey: A Study in American Economic Development* (Baltimore, 1933); Edward C. Carter, II, "The Political Activities of Mathew Carey, Nationalist, 1760–1814"

land's most radical newspaper which advocated universal toleration, parliamentary reform, and the abolition of the Penal Laws. Such revolutionary views brought Carey continually into conflict with the British authorities and forced him to emigrate to America in 1784 to escape arrest. Even before the foundations of his famous publishing and bookselling business were firmly laid, the young Irishman was embroiled in both national and local politics. Always an intense nationalist, he proved to be an active and highly effective publicist and propagandist, serving first the Federalists and then, after 1794, the Jeffersonian Republicans. Mathew Carey turned aside from politics after the election of 1800 and devoted the next twenty years primarily to business. However, during this period, he did return to the national political scene to defend the First Bank of the United States in the recharter crisis of 1810–1811. Carey was violently attacked for his nationalistic arguments on behalf of the Bank by fellow Republicans and former friends such as William Duane, the editor of the *Aurora*. The nonpartisan approach that he utilized three years later in *The Olive Branch* undoubtedly was partially inspired by this unpleasant experience. When Mathew Carey retired from business in 1822, it was acknowledged that he was the foremost publisher in America. He spent the final seventeen years of his life writing hundreds of nationalistic economic pamphlets and laboring in half a dozen areas of social reform. The goal towards which Carey struggled throughout his American career was the creation of an enlightened and unified nation that would illustrate to the rest of the world the value of democracy.

It is important to realize that the publication of *The Olive Branch* recorded the final phase of a lonely and frustrating battle that Carey had been waging against the forces of disunion and sectional prejudice for nearly six years. Following Madison's election, New England was the scene of inflammatory meetings protesting the continued enforcement of the Embargo. The courts refused to convict those charged with its violation. The Enforcement Act of January, 1809, was denounced by the Massachusetts legislature as a breach of the

(unpublished doctoral dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1962). A lithographed edition of Carey's autobiography composed of a series of letters that had appeared in the *New England Magazine* in 1833–1834, and three letters privately printed in 1837, was published during World War II. See Mathew Carey, *Autobiography* (New York, 1942).

Constitution. Federal property was destroyed by mobs. Civil war did not appear to be far distant.[3] True to his violent nature, William Duane cried treason, and the *Aurora* began to beat the drum in Pennsylvania for the use of federal arms against the New Englanders. Early in 1809, Mathew Carey took up his pen, attacked Duane's propositions, and tried to calm the temper of his state.[4] This was followed in December by "Yankee Tricks" in which Carey strove to correct the prejudiced conception of New Englanders generally held by those Americans residing west of the Hudson. Carey admitted that he also had erred until he visited the Eastern states, "a country of Republican Simplicity" graced with clean dwellings and industrious inhabitants possessing a sense of order, urbanity, good manners, and reserve.[5]

Following the declaration of war in 1812, the radical Federalist press in Massachusetts launched a series of bitter attacks on the administration, singling out the president for special abuse.[6] It was "Mr. Madison's War" that the young men of New England were called on to fight, a war for the interests of France and not for those of America. The individual citizen was urged to refuse to serve if he deemed the conflict to be a violation of the Constitution.

Mathew Carey now commenced a long correspondence with the President in which he advised him to act forcefully against those Federalist leaders whose aim clearly was disunion. Carey's letters grew progressively more bitter as Madison remained passive and the New Englanders grew bolder. Carey proposed a series of steps that

[3] For a description of New England's reaction to the Embargo and Enforcement Acts see Irving Brant, *James Madison: Secretary of State, 1800–1809* (New York, 1953), 476–478; Bradford Perkins, *Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805–1812* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961), 179–180.

[4] Carey's article is referred to in a Matthew Lyon letter. The Congressman from Kentucky damned Duane's actions, claiming that the threat of war against the Eastern States would not "promote the Union," but hasten its destruction. Federal intervention could only create "vassalage," thus the former Vermont radical preferred to allow Massachusetts, "the refractory child," to leave the Union peacefully, being positive that "in time she will return." Lyon was pleased that Carey had agreed with this position in "your excerations against those who would divide the Union." Matthew Lyon to Carey, Feb. 19, 1809, Lea and Febiger Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

[5] [Mathew Carey], "Yankee Tricks," *The Port Folio*, II (December, 1809), 533.

[6] John Lowell, "Mr. Madison's War," July 31–Aug. 10, 1812, Boston *Evening Post*, cited in Irving Brant, *Madison: Commander in Chief, 1812–1816* (New York, 1961), 31.

might be undertaken to bolster the position of the New England unionists; all these Madison politely ignored. Although Carey ranted against the radical press and politicans of the Eastern states, his approach to the president was nonpartisan. Never once did he refer to the sagging fortunes of the northern Republicans, nor did he appeal to Madison to act as a party leader. Throughout the period 1812–1814, Carey's demand remained the same. Madison, the leader of eight million Americans, should employ the powers of his high office to support the cause of the Union in New England by enlisting loyal Republicans and Federalists in a crusade to smash the treasonous few.

Twice in August of 1812, Carey urged upon Madison a plan by which the claims of the Federalist press of Boston might be disproved. "A man of powerful talents, ardent zeal, and pure patriotism might prevent the catastrophe" threatening America by writing a "clear and complete account of the Federalist leaders' actions" of the preceding few years. Such an exposition would convince many honest Federalists and hold wavering Republicans in line. Carey implied that he would publish and distribute such an effort *gratis* if the president would only take a hand in its preparation.[7] Carey also proposed that the president establish "Associations of Unionists" who would communicate among themselves to thwart the plans of those "men of talent . . . who would be officials in a New Confederation." Then, the Philadelphian matched the illiberality of the High Federalists of 1798 by recommending a "sovereign method" of coping with the threat of civil war. A simple law of a few lines declaring it a high crime for any individual or group to advocate the division of the Union should be passed by Congress when it returned to Washington.[8] In fending off Carey's violent suggestion, Madison could only offer hope that "the wicked project of destroying the Union of states is defeating itself."[9]

Six months later, New England legislatures were blocking the administration's war efforts by refusing to allow state militias to cooperate with the federal forces, and by discouraging their citizens

7 Carey to Madison, Aug. 1, 1812, Madison Papers, Library of Congress (LC).

8 Carey to Madison, Aug. 12, 1812, *ibid.*

9 Madison to Carey, Sept. 12, 1812, Madison Papers, New York Public Library, quoted in Brant, *Madison: Commander in Chief*, 32.

from subscribing to national war loans. The clergy followed the lead of the Reverend Jedidiah Morse, an old friend of Mathew Carey, and laid the misfortunes befalling the United States not at the door of Providence but of James Madison.[10] Carey saw these events as an "open rebellion and insurrection against which the government must act in its own defense." Carey had located his "man of powerful talents," Jonathan Russell of Rhode Island, a leading Republican orator and propagandist.[11] Would not Madison send him to Boston to defend the United States and the republican form of government?[12] Madison's silence underlined his previous position.

A former president was not silent on the matter. Writing from his home in Quincy, John Adams declared that his grief and astonishment increased daily when he contrasted the spirit and energy of Revolutionary New England with the torpor "which deadens everything in 1813."[13] Sadly, Carey agreed while gloomily predicting that the national government would fall before the "tremendous combination formed against it by the most wealthy and influential part" of Adams' native state.[14]

By December, 1813, his deadened spirits revived, Carey was busily harassing the president with the Union Society scheme once again.[15] Carey predicted that if "men of high standing" would but propose the establishment of the societies the concept would spread like wildfire, and would provide a standard around which supporters of the government might rally irrespective of their party affiliations. Thus the administration would be provided with a voice in New England where the press of "Boston blinds even the Federalist leaders." Carey guaranteed the president that the Union Societies

10 *Ibid.*, 199–200.

11 Jonathan Russell (1771–1832) was a graduate of Brown who became a leading Jeffersonian in Rhode Island. He served as chargé d'affaires in both Paris and London, 1810–1812, and was the American Minister to Sweden and Norway. In 1814, Russell took part in the negotiations at Ghent and returned to America to represent his state in Congress for one term, 1821–1823. *Dictionary of American Biography*, XVI, 245.

12 Carey to Madison, Jan. 25, 1813, Madison Papers, LC.

13 John Adams to Carey, July 8, 1813, John Adams Letter Book, Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS). Quotations from the Adams Papers are from the microfilm edition, by permission of the MHS.

14 Carey to John Adams, July 20, 1813, Adams Papers, MHS.

15 A plan for the Washington Union Society together with its proposed constitution may be found in *The Olive Branch*, 6th ed. (Philadelphia, Sept. 6, 1815), 19–20.

"would shift the Political Picture in Massachusetts and then *all* New England."[16] He conceived of the proposed societies as extraparliamentary bodies whose popularity would prove to the world that the New England legislatures had ceased to represent the people of that section, just as the Volunteers had discredited the authority of the corrupt Irish Parliament more than a quarter of a century before.[17]

James Madison's continued reticence caused Mathew Carey to place his arguments before the public on February 14, 1814, when he published *Prospects on the Banks of the Rubicon*, employing the pseudonym "Cassandra." First, he described the danger of insurrection that existed in the Eastern states, placing the blame equally on the Essex Junto and British agents; then, he proposed those measures that Madison had ignored.[18] The public was no more moved by Carey's supplications than the President had been, but the dogged nationalist refused to admit defeat.

During the last week of August and the first of September, 1814, the White House was burned, portions of Maine were captured with its inhabitants swearing allegiance to the British Crown, and Massachusetts' well-trained militia was officially withdrawn from the service of the United States.[19] These ill tidings so distressed Carey that he destroyed a manuscript, begun on September 8, which was to have been "a candid publication of the numerous errors and follies

16 As with most of his letters to Madison, Carey asked that this one be burned and shown to no one. Carey to Madison, Dec. 15, 1813, Madison Papers, LC.

17 During the American Revolution, the British were forced to remove their troops from Ireland, leaving that country in an undefended state. When France and Spain entered the hostilities, Ireland was open to invasion. Using this situation as a pretext, the Protestant Irish leaders formed military bodies called the Volunteers. Faced with 80,000 armed Irishmen, the British government granted certain reforms in the Irish constitution and avoided an "Irish Revolution." A convention of Volunteers was held and the more radical members claimed that this was the sovereign body which truly represented the people of Ireland. This Association technique of creating extraparliamentary bodies which were more truly representative than the legally constituted legislatures is of interest to present-day political historians. For an excellent study of the movement in England see Eugene Charlton Black, *The Association: British Extraparliamentary Political Organization, 1769–1793* (Cambridge, 1963).

18 "Cassandra" [Mathew Carey], *Prospects on the Banks of the Rubicon* (Philadelphia, Feb. 19, 1814). On the same date, Carey sent to Madison, Monroe, Richard Rush, Jefferson and other prominent Republicans a detailed printed letter describing the plans to establish a northern confederation. Only twenty copies were printed. This was another of Carey's fruitless attempts to bestir the administration. Carey to Madison, Feb. 19, 1814, Madison Papers, LC.

19 Kendric C. Babcock, *The Rise of American Nationality* (New York, 1906), 155.

on both sides [*Federalist and Republican*], . . . to allay the public effervescence and calm the embittered feelings of the parties."[20] Ten days later, encouraged by Lt. Thomas Macdonough's success on Lake Champlain and the twin British defeats at Plattsburg and Baltimore, Carey threw off his despondency and set to work writing his *Olive Branch*.[21]

In later years, Mathew Carey claimed that the publication of *The Olive Branch* was one of the three most important achievements of his entire life.[22] Working sporadically, he completed the book in about six weeks, sending it to the press on November 6, 1814. The first edition consisted of 252 pages, including 80 pages of public documents copied by one of his daughters from Carey's collection. Once he considered abandoning the project a second time when "struck with dismay at the presumption of supposing that a man in private life, . . . unsupported by party . . . , could calm the waves of faction which threatened to shipwreck the vessel of state."[23] Such modesty, however, did not prevent Carey from ordering the captain of that ship to add some powerful Federalists to the crew, nor did it restrain him from blaming the Hartford Convention on Madison's "philosophical tranquility."[24]

In the preface to *The Olive Branch*, Carey stated the reasons for its composition and publication. There was "a conspiracy in New England, among a few of the most wealthy and influential citizens, to effect a dissolution of the Union at every hazard, and to form a separate confederacy." Daily, the strife between America's two political parties was growing more bitter; a civil war threatened that could only benefit Great Britain. The purpose of *The Olive Branch* was to lay bare "the causes that have led to that situation; its object was the restoration of harmony, or at least the allaying of party rage and rancour."[25] *The Olive Branch* considered five major topics: the desperate condition of America and how it might be corrected; the

20 *Autobiography*, 119.

21 *Ibid.*, 120.

22 The other two accomplishments were: his *Vindiciae Hibernicae: Or Ireland Vindicated* (Philadelphia, 1819) wherein he refuted the English historical interpretation of the 1641 uprising, and his prolonged defense of the Protective System. *Autobiography*, 75.

23 *Ibid*, 120.

24 Carey to Madison, Sept. 30, 1814, Madison Papers, LC.

25 Preface, 1st ed., *Olive Branch*, 7.

role of the parties in creating such an evil situation; the part played by commercial interests in forcing the administration to the edge of war; Great Britain's illegal acts which had brought about actual hostilities; and the reasons for the United States' inability to conduct the war with vigor and success. The basic framework of *The Olive Branch* remained constant, although it doubled its size between the first and tenth editions. Carey refined his arguments, made certain internal changes in his presentation of materials, and added a great many more documents. Nevertheless, the final edition, which appeared on June 1, 1818, and boasted 506 pages, adhered to the basic concept of that of November 8, 1814.

To the modern reader, unversed in Mathew Carey's techniques of editing historical documents for political purposes, *The Olive Branch* today appears to be a rather confused collection of opinion and fact thrown together haphazardly, lacking an internal structure. Actually, it is a highly effective piece of propaganda, subtly conceived, and skillfully executed. Carey's basic strategy was twofold: first, he strove to convince the reader that the author was totally impartial politically and completely objective historically; second, he continually attempted to persuade the reader that national unity was a virtue and party spirit a sin.

Primarily, *The Olive Branch* was aimed at the moderate agrarian New England Federalist. Hence Carey, as always, took pains to place the blame for that section's seditious behavior squarely on the shoulders of a few wealthy mercantile leaders and their hireling newspaper editors.[26] To win the confidence of his audience, Carey first reviewed those political events that had created a chaotic situation which was being exploited by such men as Timothy Pickering, Josiah Quincy, and Governor Caleb Strong of Massachusetts.

[26] Recently, Professor Fischer of Brandeis University has published a persuasive revision of the standard interpretation of the "Essex Junto." See David H. Fischer, "The Myth of the Essex Junto," *William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series*, XXI (1964), 191–235. He argues that the group that Carey damned as seditious traitors had retired, for the most part, from politics after 1796. Fischer sees "New England secessionism" not as a conspiracy but "a popular upheaval, a democratic phenomenon which flourished among the farmers of the Connecticut Valley," against which "the influence of the Essexmen, except Pickering, went into the balance. . . ." *Ibid.*, 235. Carey might not have agreed with this interpretation, but he fully appreciated that the infection of separatism had to be combated among the agrarian classes of New England.

Since 1787, the Republicans had erred. They had blocked the creation of a truly national government at the Constitutional Convention. Some of the party's members had set a precedent for future disunionists by joining "self-created" Democratic Societies, participating in the Whiskey Rebellion, opposing the ratification of Jay's Treaty, resisting the Alien and Sedition Acts, and supporting the states' rights arguments that Madison and Jefferson formulated to undercut those pieces of Federalist legislation.[27] Once in power, the Republicans had further weakened the nation's ability to control internal strife by failing to establish a strong navy, refusing to enforce the Embargo or to recharter the Bank of the United States, and not re-enacting a sedition law to deal with the threatening conspiracy in New England. To some degree, the administration had mismanaged the hostilities with England: preparation for the conflict had been neglected; the army had demonstrated torpor and indecision; Madison had failed to stimulate public support of the war effort, and the Congressional Republicans had refused to vote the funds necessary for the successful execution of military operations. Carey implied that prior to 1800 the Federalists had conducted themselves in a worthy fashion. However, after their fall from power, they had quickly adopted the Republicans' accursed states' rights doctrine, and then attacked the very powers of the national government which Washington and Hamilton had so patiently developed.[28]

Having seemingly proved his impartiality, Carey commenced to chip away at the position of the radical separatists, skillfully employing historical documents and statistics to support his arguments. Carey asked: "Is the war a just one, in defense of the people and their rights . . . , or is it the result of narrow party interest carried on at the expense of a large and injured section of the country?"[29] Citing memorials, he argued that prior to the Embargo the demands of the mercantile community, now so loudly denouncing the war, had forced Jefferson to its very brink. Thus these present protestants had

[27] Carey had defended the Democratic Societies' right of existence so vigorously that he broke with his brother-in-law on the issue, and neither man spoke to the other for five years. He also had been a leading anti-Treaty propagandist. The Alien and Sedition Acts were aimed directly at an organization in which Carey was probably very active, the American Society of United Irishmen.

[28] 6th ed., *Olive Branch*, 29–80.

[29] Bradsher, *Mathew Carey*, 59–60.

played an important role in the conflict's inception. Nevertheless, Great Britain's violations of our neutral rights was the basic cause of the New Englanders' complaints. The final outbreak of hostilities was caused by Britain's policy of impressment. Carey paraded documentary evidence of one English injustice after another before his readers' eyes. Never was there a more just war than that against Great Britain.[30]

The war had gone so badly for the American people because, aside from certain sins of the administration, the president was forced to fight two wars—one with Great Britain, the other with a small but powerful faction of Bostonians. These men engaged in smuggling and trading with the enemy, while accusing the Middle and Southern states of starting a war to ruin New England's commerce. Employing statistics, Carey showed that the Southern states paid as much duty on imports as New England, and that the exports of the states south of Connecticut were double those to the North. Thus the war was as damaging commercially to these parts of the nation as it was to New England. Hence, claimed Carey, a small group of evil men, who grew wealthier daily while looking forward to still greater rewards as the rulers of a new confederation, were sacrificing the good of the entire nation for their own ends. The efforts to bankrupt the government, the treasonable intercourse with Canada, the pulpit politics of the Congregational Church, the withdrawal of state militias from national service were all the work of these Jacobins. For to Mathew Carey, all men who trampled down the will of the majority, excited opposition to the laws, sought to dissolve the Union, defended their nation's enemies while degrading their own government, were Jacobins, be they Federalists or Republicans.[31]

To redress these ills, Carey called on all good Americans to eschew partisan politics and unite to win the war. In part, that victory was predicated upon the destruction of the Essex Junto's power. The Philadelphian proposed three measures to accomplish these ends: first, the president should appoint two outstanding Federalists to his cabinet as a symbol of national unity and that party's loyalty to the nation; second, New England unionists from both parties should meet in a convention to offset the one then gathered in Hartford;

[30] 6th ed., *Olive Branch*, 81–236.
[31] *Ibid.*, 237–374.

third, Carey once more advocated the establishment of Washington Union Societies throughout America and particularly in the Eastern States.[32]

It is not difficult to see why *The Olive Branch* was so well received. It treated a subject that everyone in America was concerned with to some degree. The mass of American people were loyal to the Union and probably agreed with Carey's underlying theme. It was clearly written, and certainly, at first blush, did not smack of the distorted statements then flowing from partisan pulpits and political platforms. Perhaps most important, *The Olive Branch* gathered together in one volume for the first time much of the documentary evidence relating to the causes of the War of 1812 and the issues perplexing American society at that moment.[33] Finally, it should be remembered that Carey had at his disposal the nation's most effective and widespread system for the sale and distribution of books. In short, *The Olive Branch* was read, studied, and discussed in every corner of the United States for more than four years.

The popularity of *The Olive Branch* was fantastic. In the fall of 1815, Carey wrote that no political work "ever had an equal degree of success in America" except Paine's *Common Sense*.[34] By 1819, it had gone through ten editions, and more than 10,000 copies had been sold.[35] Carey claimed that this was "a greater sale probably than any

32 Preface, 1st ed., *Olive Branch*, 26–28.

33 Professor Perkins refers to the work as "an impressive contemporary summary of the positions of both parties," *Prologue to War*, 445.

34 Preface, 6th ed., *Olive Branch*, 32. Paine's work may have sold more than 500,000 copies, but it was a pamphlet and cost only a few shillings.

35 1st ed., Phila., Nov. 8, 1814; 2nd ed., Phila., Jan. 9, 1815; 3rd ed., Boston, February, 1815; 4th ed., Phila., April, 1815; 5th ed., Middlebury, Vt., [April–September ?], 1815; 6th ed., Cincinnati, [January–September ?], 1815, and Phila., Sept. 6, 1815; 7th ed., Phila., Dec. 20, 1815, Middlebury, Vt., January, 1816, and Concord, N. H., 1816; 8th ed., Phila., July 4, 1817; 9th ed., Winchester, Va., 1817; and 10th ed., Phila., June 1, 1818. Copies from each edition save one, the Middlebury 5th, are to be found in rare book collections throughout the United States and Europe. Mr. Marcus S. McCorison of the American Antiquarian Society believes that, in fact, there never was a Middlebury 5th edition. I am indebted to him for his assistance in solving this bibliographical problem. As is noted in footnote 47, William Slade was granted permission by Carey to publish a new edition of *The Olive Branch* in Middlebury. The preface of the Philadelphia 6th edition lists the Middlebury 5th edition as published in 1815. Mr. McCorison showed me a January, 1816, notice in a Middlebury newspaper which stated the publication of the subscription edition of *The Olive Branch*, first advertised on June 17, 1815, had been delayed and would take place later in the month. Thus it is possible that the Middlebury 7th edition was the Middlebury 5th that Carey listed in his Philadelphia 6th, believing it already had or would be published shortly.

book ever had in this country, except some religious ones."[36] Edwin Wolf, 2nd, Librarian of the Library Company of Philadelphia, agrees that Carey's statements are correct if Bibles, textbooks, and almanacs are excluded from consideration.[37] Nor did Carey limit distribution to full versions of the work; he issued two of its most effective sections as pamphlets.[38] It is impossible to know how many of these were printed. Far more than 10,000 people read *The Olive Branch*, for it passed from hand to hand and was circulated by numerous libraries. There are letters in Carey's correspondence requesting new copies because the old ones have fallen apart from constant use. Not only that, but it was reprinted partially in newspapers all over the United States. Niles promised the readers of his *Weekly Register* "to enrich our numbers by liberal extracts from *The Olive Branch*," as "there is, perhaps, no book extant that . . . contains so great a quantity of momentous political truth."[39]

Many politicians, some formerly deaf to the Philadelphian's warnings, now found time to praise his great effort and even promise future co-operation. Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut, a onetime Federalist leader and the second secretary of the treasury, asked if he might not carry out Washington's instructions to place the nation first over foreign interests at all times by distributing a few *Olive Branches* "in a manner which might be useful."[40] Richard Rush, the United States Attorney General and the son of Carey's old friend Dr. Benjamin Rush, sent Congressional documents for inclusion in future editions.[41] John Adams greatly desired to read the work, but due to its popularity he could not secure a copy in Boston until the spring of 1815. When the former Federalist President finally saw the

36 *Autobiography*, 122.

37 Conversation between Edwin Wolf, 2nd, and myself, Mar. 29, 1962.

38 "A Pennsylvanian" [Mathew Carey], *Examination of the Pretensions of New England to Commercial Pre-Eminence* (Philadelphia, Nov. 8, 1814); and Mathew Carey, *A Calm Address to the People of the Eastern States, . . . on the Hostility to Commerce Ascribed to the Southern States* (Philadelphia, Nov. 28, 1814).

39 Feb. 11, 1815, *Niles' Weekly Register*, 371.

40 Oliver Wolcott to Carey, Dec. 16, 1814, Gardiner Collection, HSP. In 1816, Wolcott was nominated for governor by the Connecticut Republicans, was elected and continually reelected year after year until 1827. The letter cited contains Wolcott's views on the "perversion of the principles of the Federal Party," and is quoted partially in Shaw Livermore, Jr., *The Twilight Federalism: The Distintegration of the Federalist Party, 1815–1830* (Princeton, 1962), 41.

41 Richard Rush, Dec. 29, 1814, Autograph Collection, Harvard College Library.

book, he wrote Carey that "as I believe it will do good, I have subscribed for it."[42] Charles Jared Ingersoll, writing from Congress, informed Carey that *The Olive Branch* had made an excellent impression in Washington, but he was not sure that either party would profit from the "correct and instructive" distribution of blame.[43] One wonders what were Mathew Carey's feelings as he politely acknowledged President James Madison's letter of congratulations.[44] From Thomas Jefferson came high praise. Thanking Carey for a prospectus of a new edition in 1816, the Virginian wrote, "I subscribe to it with pleasure because it has done and it will do much good, in holding up the mirror to both parties, and exhibiting to both their political errors."[45]

That *The Olive Branch* initially was read by the multitude and lauded by the great and powerful is of interest historically. Also, it is interesting to speculate why Carey continued publishing the work after the Treaty of Ghent, how his contemporaries judged the book politically, and what modern scholars believe its long-term effect to have been.

When Mathew Carey first issued the book, he was attempting primarily to foster the spirit of national unity, to weaken party and sectional loyalties among the American people, and thereby facilitate the winning of the war. Ironically, to accomplish his ends, Carey was willing to kindle sectional, economic, and class hatreds within New England to break the hold of the mercantile radicals, whom he thought controlled Federalist policy, so that he might woo the agrarian and moderate groups of that party to his cause. However, there is much in the content and structure of the work that indicates that Carey was looking beyond the cessation of hostilities when he composed *The Olive Branch.* That the book became a destructive weapon in the hands of New England Republicans is certain; Carey's correspondence with William Slade of Middlebury, Vermont,[46] shows

[42] John Adams to Carey, Dec. 20, 1814, and June 21, 1815, John Adams Letter Book, Adams Papers, MHS.

[43] Charles Jared Ingersoll to Carey, Jan. 29, 1815, Gardiner Collection, HSP.

[44] Carey to Madison, Feb. 13, 1815, Madison Papers, LC.

[45] Jefferson to Carey, Oct. 11, 1816, Jefferson Papers, LC.

[46] William Slade (1786–1859) was a lawyer and a leading Republican editor in Vermont. In 1830, he was elected to Congress as a Democrat, but during his twelve years in office he became a Whig. He was an opponent of slavery, an advocate of Carey's tariff policies, and later served as Governor of Vermont, 1844–1846.

that the Philadelphian knew full well that it was being used in the elections of 1815 to defeat the "Hartfordonians."[47] But this was not all that Carey wanted. *The Olive Branch's* continual damnation of the states' rights doctrine and its listing of major Republican sins were not aimed at the nationalist, Madisonian wing of Carey's party, but were rather an attack on the radical, old-line Republicans who, under leaders such as William Duane, had blocked the recharter of the bank and had refused to vote taxes for an enlarged naval establishment. It would seem that Carey desired the destruction of those dissident factions in both parties which could block future nationalist legislation on either sectional or ideological grounds.

Judging from the Republicans' eulogies and the Federalists' painful cries, *The Olive Branch* was politically effective in the state and federal contests of 1815–1816. Slade reprinted a statement from an issue of the *National Intelligencer*, the administration's semi-official organ, which crowed that "He [Carey] has prostrated in the dust the faction of Boston federalism; shown beyond all powers of contradiction its folly, its wickedness, its inconsistencies, its blunders, its stupidity."[48] Naturally, Boston's Federalist newspapers commenced a prolonged attack on Carey and his work, but one of the strongest rebuttals came from an anonymous author who may well have been William Coleman, editor of the *New York Evening Post*.[49] Signing himself "A Federalist," the author set to work rescuing his party's wartime policy from "democratic slander" by exposing for all to see the true and invidious nature of *The Olive Branch*.[50] No honest

47 Carey granted permission to Slade to republish *The Olive Branch*, waiving the usual fee. Slade's reason for requesting the right was that the circulation of *The Olive Branch* would "more than anything . . . tend to remedy the disorders of the body politic, and give a correct tone to the public sentiment—New England ought to be filled with it." Slade to Carey, Apr. 14, 1815, Gardiner Coll. HSP. Later, Slade informed Carey that the Republicans were raising a fund to distribute 400 copies *gratis* throughout the state just before the Congressional elections "to promote a reformation of public sentiment in New England." Slade to Carey, June 3, 1815, Lea & Febiger Coll., HSP. Carey hailed the Republican victory as the "entering wedge of defeat of Hartfordonians throughout New England." Carey to Slade, Sept. 2, 1815, Letter Book, *ibid.*

48 Sept. 13, 1815, *National Standard* (Middlebury, Vt.).

49 An associate and supporter of Alexander Hamilton, Coleman (1766–1829) edited the arch-Federalist journal from 1801 to 1829.

50 "A Federalist," *An Answer to Certain Parts of A Work published by Mathew Carey, entitled "The Olive Branch" or "Faults on Both Sides"* (n.p., but copyright registered Southern Federal District Court of New York, December, 1816), v.

judgments could be expected from the pen of Carey, "by birth & education a foreigner," whose "intellectual & corporeal matter [had been] imported from abroad."[51] "A Federalist" analyzed Carey's general technique, paying careful attention to the manner in which the documents were arranged, and went on to charge that the Philadelphian's attack on the Republicans was weak and insincere as it had been submitted first to Jefferson and Madison for their approval. Able as this *Answer* may have been, it arrived too late on the political scene to bolster the Federalists' sagging fortunes.

Some Federalists blamed Monroe's sweeping victory on the popularity of *The Olive Branch.* As Shaw Livermore, Jr. has noted, the old guard "regarded it as a 'virulent Party Work . . . deadly hostile to every hope of conciliation,' and particularly vicious because of the 'disguise of the title.' It appeared to them that Carey had couched his criticism of Republican shortcomings in terms of apologies whereas those of Federalists were stated as charges."[52] In March, 1817, William Coleman was depressed by the public's continued acceptance of Carey's *Olive Branch* which he denounced as "one of the most insidious publications that has appeared in this country."[53] Mathew Carey, always offended by criticism, ever engaged in controversy, kept the pot boiling in 1821 with a testy response to the bumptious William Tudor's previous attack on his brain child.[54] Three years later, the Irish publisher complained petulantly to Harrison Gray Otis that his new pamphlet only lent credence to Tudor vilification of *The Olive Branch,* which remained "the only work to be found, written by a professed party man, which unqualifiedly reprobated the proceedings of his own party."[55] Slowly the fires of former party animosities grew dim. By 1827, even Timothy Pickering, the leader of those very men whose influence the Philadelphian had attempted to scotch, noted in his journal that *The Olive Branch,* together with Mathew Carey's famed magazine, *The American Museum,* would

51 *Ibid.*, 8.

52 R. H. Y. Goldsborough to Carey, Jan. 7, 1817, and William Tudor to Carey, Dec. 26, 1820, Gardiner Coll., HSP, cited and quoted in Livermore, *Twilight of Federalism*, 34.

53 Mar. 13, 1817, *New York Evening Post*, quoted in *ibid.*, 61.

54 Mathew Carey, *An Address to William Tudor, Esq. Author of Letters on the Eastern States, Intended to prove the Calumny and Slander of his remarks on The Olive Branch* (Philadelphia, 1821).

55 Carey to Harrison Gray Otis, Dec. 13, 1824, Otis Papers, MHS.

"be useful in forming a correct history of our National Administration and the biography of some public men."[56]

Carey's death in 1839 was reported with respect by the nation's press; the majority of these eulogies praised the moderating role played by *The Olive Branch* and its author in the final months of the War of 1812.[57] The few modern scholars who have studied Carey's activities have been equally uncritical in their judgments. The Philadelphian's major biographer claimed that "the fairness and intensely national spirit of the book were of no little importance in holding the states together . . . , and it certainly acted as an opiate on factionalism after the peace."[58] Recently, however, Bradford Perkins, in the concluding volume of his brilliant study of Anglo-American relations between 1795 and 1823, has attributed a more bellicose influence to the work's continued postwar publication. He believes that the "immensely popular" *Olive Branch* perpetuated a bitter Anglophobia that added to the already difficult problem of reconciling the two nations' outstanding differences. Carey, together with authors of less famous but like works, "in effect warned Americans to keep up their guard" thereby making it easy for his countrymen "to remember the past and to think of the future in similar terms."[59]

In May, 1961, Irving Brant, the biographer of James Madison kindly offered his opinion on the significance of Carey's major work. The old Philadelphian undoubtedly would have been pleased by this judgment for it indicated that the majority of Carey's goals, both public and private, as analyzed above were successfully achieved. Mr. Brant claimed that *The Olive Branch* was easily the most important piece of political writing to appear in America between 1814 and

56 Entry #20. Mathew Carey—his Olive Branch. Notes Written during my [Timothy Pickering's] Journey to New York and Philadelphia in July and August, 1827, Pickering Papers, MHS.

57 Typical were the comments of two Philadelphia journals. One claimed Carey's *Olive Branch* had "won the respect of all parties, and aided in diffusing the spirit of patriotism and party forbearance that was most beneficial to the cause of the nation." Sept. 18, 1839, *Gazette of the United States*. The other stated "In a critical period, this production of his pen did more to pour oil on the troubled waters of party contention than did any other work emanating from the press of this Country." Sept. 18, 1839, *North American*.

58 Rowe, *Mathew Carey*, 59–60.

59 Bradford Perkins, *Castlereagh and Adams: England and the United States, 1812–1823* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1964), 156–158.

1818; everyone of importance read it and was familiar with its ideas. It was tremendously influential throughout the United States, and was a major factor in sealing the fate of the Federalist party. The book was especially effective in New England where it undercut and destroyed the power of the "Preacher Politicians" and the radical Federalist press. Its seeming impartiality won the Republicans many moderate Federalist votes. In proof of *The Olive Branch's* influence as campaign literature, Mr. Brant referred to the four-year attack mounted against Carey and his book by Boston's fading separatist journals. *The Olive Branch's* powerful nationalism rubbed off on the Republicans also, and helped to woo them away from old-line Jeffersonianism and to dampen their intense partisan spirit. Finally, Mr. Brant noted that, although Carey was continually angry at Madison for his toleration of New England, the Philadelphia publisher and his *Olive Branch* were clearly the harbingers of the Era of Good Feelings.[60]

What more can be said of Mathew Carey and his book? It is evident that on occasion he strayed from his avowed course of impartiality in the preparation of his text. Historical errors were included which were not mere oversights. Professing to abhor factionalism, he knowingly allowed the work to be employed in the final onslaught against New England Federalism. Yet *The Olive Branch* was an important document of American nationalism, as awkward and imperfect as the young Republic it sought to preserve. Finally, it may be pointed out that no one has summarized better than William Cobbett the basic lesson which the book and its author attempted to teach the American people. Carey's former foe of the 1790's concluded a letter praising *The Olive Branch* with these words: "Be united; concede a little on both sides amongst yourselves; and you will be not only happy and free but, will make other nations the same."[61]

St. Stephen's School
Rome, Italy EDWARD C. CARTER, II

60 Conversation between Irving Brant and myself, May 2, 1961.

61 William Cobbett to Carey, July 16, 1815, Lea & Febiger Coll., HSP, quoted in Bradsher, *Mathew Carey*, 115–116.