

THE LOGISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, 1812–1821

---

A Dissertation  
Submitted to  
the Temple University Graduate Board

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

---

by  
Jean-Pierre Beugoms  
December 2018

Examining Committee Members:

Gregory J. W. Urwin, Advisory Chair, History

Jay B. Lockenour, History

Seth C. Bruggeman, History

Samuel J. Watson, External Member, United States Military Academy, History

©  
Copyright  
2018

by

Jean-Pierre Beugoms  
All Rights Reserved

## **ABSTRACT**

The acquisition and transportation of supplies for the U.S. Army proved to be the most intractable military problem of the War of 1812. Logistics became the bane of successive secretaries of war and field commanders, and of the soldiers who fought the British and Canadian troops, and their native allies. Historians have correctly ascribed the failure of American arms to achieve its principal war aim, the conquest of Canada, to the dysfunctional logistical and supply system. The suffering of soldiers who received subpar food and clothing, and experienced a shortage of weapons, ammunition, and fuel, moreover, are a staple of the historical literature on the war. Although this dissertation analyzes the causes and consequences of the breakdown in logistics, it also focuses on the lesser-known story of how the Corps of Quartermasters made logistics work under difficult conditions. It investigates how the military professionals within the officer corps drew lessons from their wartime travails and made common cause with reform-minded civilians in the hope of creating a better logistical system. Their combined efforts led to the postwar reform drive that gave the U.S. Army permanent supply departments, a comprehensive set of regulations, effective measures to enforce accountability, a new system for distributing food to the army, and a construction boom in military roads.

Reformers also transformed the Quartermaster Corps to a greater degree than previously thought. Historians have long argued that the U.S. Army did not have a professionalized officer corps until the end of the nineteenth century. Recently, historians have considered the professional aspects of the antebellum officer corps. This dissertation argues that the origins of military professionalism can be traced back to the

War of 1812. Army quartermasters, in particular, stood in the vanguard of military progress. Quartermaster General Thomas Sidney Jesup emphasized military expertise, education, and training far more than had his predecessors, and quartermasters typified the growing commitment of army officers to a lifetime of service to the nation. Jesup envisioned that his department would become an elite staff of military logisticians. He also wanted that peacetime staff to be large enough to support an army at war. He opposed the practice of appointing businessmen to fill quartermaster vacancies during a war, believing that these men did not have the basic competencies to perform their tasks well. In fact, the performance of civil appointees and career officers improved over the course of the war and a few even proposed logistical reforms that the army would later adopt. The War of 1812 not only provided the catalyst for the postwar reform of logistics and the onset of a professional ethic among quartermasters, but the process of professionalizing logistics actually began during the war.

This study's main findings draw on the private and official correspondence of army officers and secretaries of war, which reside in published government documents and manuscript collections housed in the National Archives, Library of Congress, and various universities and historical societies. Army registers, college registers, local histories, genealogies, and officers' letters facilitated the reconstruction of quartermasters' careers.

For Lindsey

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to my mentors, colleagues, family, and friends for the myriad ways in which they have helped me in this endeavor. First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Gregory J. W. Urwin, for his guidance and unflagging support throughout my graduate education at Temple University. Dr. Urwin demands good work from his students. His constructive criticism has been invaluable in showing me how to think like a historian and how to hone my skills as a writer. He has prepared me well for a career as a historian. For that, I am grateful. Anyone who has had the pleasure of studying under Dr. Urwin's direction also knows that he believes in his students. I have taken heart from his confidence in me, and that is the factor most responsible for spurring me on to the finish line. I am fortunate to have him as an advocate.

I owe a particular debt to the members of my dissertation committee. Dr. Jay Lockenour's influence on my intellectual development and my growth as a teacher is considerable. I am deeply grateful for his feedback and advice through the years, and for his eagerness to write letters of recommendation on my behalf. Dr. Seth Bruggeman steered my dissertation in the right direction at an early stage, and offered interesting ways of approaching this topic. My external reader, Dr. Samuel Watson, was an ideal choice to serve on my committee because of his expertise on the U.S. Army before the Civil War. Conversations with him on the subject were always engaging and his insights introduced me to perspectives and historical problems that I had not considered before.

Other scholars have had a direct or indirect influence on this work. Dr. David Waldstreicher stimulated my interest in early American history at the beginning of my

graduate studies. I appreciate his comments during my prospectus defense and his willingness to continue to be of service even after leaving the department. I thank Dr. Andrew Isenberg once again for serving on the advisory committees for my master's thesis and comprehensive examinations. His probing questions pushed me to rethink some of my assumptions of U.S. history. I am grateful to Dr. Kenneth Kusmer for serving on my comps committee and to Dr. Beth Bailey for introducing me to various writing moves and methodological approaches. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. William B. Skelton. His scholarly oeuvre on military professionalism laid the intellectual groundwork for my thinking on this subject. His service as a commenter on a panel that I organized at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History is deeply appreciated. The comments that he delivered on my paper, which later became Chapter 6 of this dissertation, made the final draft stronger than it otherwise would have been.

I could not have completed this journey without the fellowship of my colleagues at Temple University. We endured graduate school together and, in the process, became friends. They are Tyler Bamford, Earl Catagnus, Jr., Martin Clemis, Michael Dolski, Chris Golding, Rich Grippaldi, Eric Klinek, Matt Shannon, Jason Smith, and Josh Wolf. The secretaries of Temple's History Department deserve special mention for making my life a little easier, especially Vangelina Campbell and the late Patricia Williams. My experience working for the Philadelphia Rare Books and Manuscripts Company, where I was a cataloguer of the Americana collection for many years, is one of the main reasons why I became interested in eighteenth and nineteenth century America. David Szewczyk and Cynthia Buffington, the firm's partners, were great bosses. I thank them for their kindness, generosity, and supportiveness.

Grants and awards were critical for completing my graduate education. These include the Temple University Graduate School's Dissertation Completion Grant; the A. Charles and S. Nevada Adams Graduate Research Assistantship; the Society for Military History's ABC-Clio Research Grant; and the History Department's Sergeant Major William F. Berger Endowed Fellowship for War and Society. I also want to express appreciation to the Smith Richardson Foundation for funding my participation in the West Point Summer Seminar in Military History. My two weeks at the United States Military Academy was one of the highlights of my graduate school experience. There I had the opportunity to present my preliminary research findings for the first time, to meet other early career scholars with similar interests, and to develop pedagogical and analytical skills under the tutelage of a fine group of military historians.

My brother Alain Beugoms and my sister-in-law Sarah Cohen Beugoms have been a wellspring of emotional support for me. Above all, I owe a debt of gratitude to my wife Lindsey Keskinen Beugoms for her encouragement and limitless patience. As a Ph.D. herself, she realized that there would be long stretches of time when I would be distracted or simply unavailable. I admire her ability to take it all in stride.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	vi
GLOSSARY .....	x
 CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. THE U.S. ARMY SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS SYSTEM IN PEACE AND WAR .....	12
3. THE BUSINESSMEN IN UNIFORM: A PROSOPOGRAPHY OF THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF QUARTERMASTERS DURING THE WAR OF 1812.....	33
4. THE FAILURE OF U.S. ARMY SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS DURING THE WAR OF 1812 .....	100
5. THE MILITARY CASE FOR INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.....	148
6. THOMAS SIDNEY JESUP AND THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE QUARTERMASTER CORPS IN THE EARLY NATIONAL ERA.....	194
7. THE REFORM OF U.S. ARMY LOGISTICS.....	240
8. CONCLUSION.....	281
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	288

## GLOSSARY

Presidents of the United States, Secretaries of War, and Quartermaster Generals, from  
1789 to 1837

### *Presidents of the United States*

George Washington	April 30, 1789 to March 3, 1797
John Adams	March 4, 1797 to March 3, 1801
Thomas Jefferson	March 4, 1801 to March 3, 1809
James Madison	March 4, 1809 to March 3, 1817
James Monroe	March 4, 1817 to March 3, 1825
John Quincy Adams	March 4, 1825 to March 3, 1829
Andrew Jackson	March 4, 1829 to March 3, 1837

### *Secretaries of War*

Henry Knox	September 12, 1789 to December 31, 1794
Timothy Pickering	January 2, 1795 to December 10, 1795
James McHenry	January 27, 1796 to May 13, 1800
Samuel Dexter	May 13, 1800 to January 31, 1801
Henry Dearborn	March 5, 1801 to March 7, 1809
William Eustis	March 7, 1809 to January 13, 1813
John Armstrong	January 13, 1813 to September 27, 1814
James Monroe	September 27, 1814 to March 2, 1815

Alexander J. Dallas *	March 2, 1815 to August 1, 1815
William H. Crawford	August 1, 1815 to October 22, 1816
George Graham *	October 22, 1816 to October 8, 1817
John C. Calhoun	October 8, 1817 to March 7, 1825
James Barbour	March 7, 1825 to May 23, 1828
Peter B. Porter	May 26, 1828 to March 9, 1829
John H. Eaton	March 9, 1829 to June 18, 1831
Levi Woodbury *	June 18, 1831, to August 1, 1831
Lewis Cass	August 1, 1831 to October 5, 1836
Benjamin F. Butler *	October 5, 1836 to March 7, 1837
* Acting Secretary of War	

*Quartermaster Generals*

Samuel Hodgdon	March 4, 1791 to April 19, 1792
James O'Hara	April 19, 1792 to May 30, 1796
John Wilkins, Jr.	June 1, 1796 to March 16, 1802
Morgan Lewis	April 4, 1812 to March 2, 1813
Robert Swartwout	March 21, 1813 to April 29, 1816
James R. Mullany	April 29, 1816 to April 4, 1818
George Gibson	April 29, 1816 to April 14, 1818
Thomas Sidney Jesup	May 8, 1818 to June 10, 1860

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of the United States Army Corps of Quartermasters during the early national era. It examines how the Quartermaster Department evolved from an inefficient logistical organization staffed with businessmen-in-uniform who lacked military expertise into a well-oiled bureaucracy staffed by quartermasters with extensive military experience. The logistical failures of the War of 1812 and the postwar consensus on military reform provided the catalyst for this transformation. With the cessation of hostilities, rather than revert to the prewar pattern of placing civilians in charge of supplying the peacetime army, the nation followed the lead of the reformers and reconstructed the system of military supply and logistics. The men who led the reform drive drew important lessons from their wartime experience, as officers or government officials, and implemented many of these lessons during a remarkable six-year period of legislative and administrative activity. They reorganized the supply departments, rationalized logistical procedures, restored military responsibility and accountability, and established standards for entrance into the Quartermaster Corps. The years 1815 to 1821, therefore, constituted a period of proto-professionalism when national leaders changed every aspect of the logistical system and quartermasters began to develop their expertise as logisticians.

The period immediately following the War of 1812 forms a clear dividing line between the era of the military amateur and the professional era of the U.S. Army officer corps. At that time, army officers proposed improvements in the military system,

reflected on the requisite qualifications of the military professional, and discussed standards of conduct and accountability. The wartime correspondence of American officers contains a fair amount of commentary on these topics. It was during the postwar period, however, that the military reformers succeeded in effecting significant change. Although army officers were as prone to dissension as ever, their growing sense of corporateness, mastery of military knowledge, and commitment to lifelong service signaled the emergence of a professional outlook. American logisticians, in particular, exhibited a higher degree of professionalism in the new-look Quartermaster Department than they had in the past. The Quartermaster Corps made great strides because the conditions—a stable organization and an efficient logistical system—were in place to allow that to happen. Quartermasters could now develop the special skills and training required of a logistician. Thomas Sidney Jesup, the head of the new department, was more discerning about the officers he selected than his predecessors had been. He selected subordinates with experience in the line and staff to operate his department, but also considered a military education to be an important criterion for selection. By 1821, the Quartermaster Corps had thus become the professional vanguard of the American officer corps. This dissertation consequently contributes to the growing literature that seeks the antecedents of American military professionalism in the early national and antebellum eras.<sup>1</sup>

The underlying causes of the U.S. Army's logistical failures in the War of 1812 were mostly structural, but the particular failings of the Quartermaster Corps also played a part. The latter category included inferior leadership, incompetence, and corruption.

Although corrupt and incompetent quartermasters did exist, they were not representative of the corps. Quartermasters typically acted in the best interests of the service and the public, and there is scant evidence that they exploited their positions for financial gain to a greater degree than the officer corps as a whole. Moreover, the performance of quartermasters, the secretary of war, and the quartermaster general seems to have improved over time. In spite of this progress, structural factors prevented quartermasters from carrying out their duties effectively. As a result, the logistical system worked only a little better at the conclusion of the war than it had at the beginning.

The structural causes of logistical failure included poor roads, staff shortages, a paucity of qualified applicants, a defective supply system, and the lack of funds. Historians have cited logistical failure as one of the principal reasons for the defeat of American arms during the War of 1812. Accounts describing the consequences of inadequate logistics are an integral part of the literature on the conflict. Narratives abound with descriptions of difficult transportation conditions and contractors failing to deliver on their contracts. They also describe the concomitant suffering of soldiers and the costly delays to the start of military campaigns. By contrast, the story of how the Quartermaster Corps responded to these daunting organizational, infrastructural, and financial challenges in resourceful ways is not so well known. Although the inexperience of army quartermasters was responsible for some hardships, the nation also placed them in an impossible situation. Try as they might, their efforts to remedy the defects in the supply and logistical system could only have a limited impact.

The war had a profound effect on the military and civilian leaders who shaped the postwar military establishment. Army leadership had gone to the young officers who

rose to high rank during the war. Hard experience had forged them into consummate military professionals. These officers had been frustrated by the breakdown of the militia system and the inability of the nation to mobilize its resources and manpower toward the war effort. They had been scandalized by the lackluster leadership of the veterans of the Revolutionary War and the venality of the businessmen charged with supplying the army with rations. After the war, they reflected on the flaws of the American military system as a whole, but reserved their ire for the unscrupulous contractors and the “want of system” in the supply departments. America’s civilian reformers in the postwar period consisted of congressmen and secretaries of war who sought to avoid a repeat of the notorious defeats of the late war with Great Britain. This group was responsible for bringing the recommendations of professional officers to fruition.

Reformist impulses internal and external to the officer corps provided the rare opportunity to overhaul the entire logistical system. The dominant political regime, however, could bring progress to a halt for political, ideological, or economic reasons. While memories of the nation’s lack of preparedness for war were still fresh, reformers operated on favorable political ground. When financial panic hit the populace hard and antimilitarism started to gain some political traction, the window for sweeping change closed. Reformers then had to battle against the forces of retrenchment. The interplay between the attention that military and civilian leaders paid to logistics and the political and economic constraints on military reform drove the development of U.S. Army logistics during the early national era.

There are four distinct phases in the evolution of U.S. Army logistics during the period 1801 to 1826. The level of public demand for a rational logistical system and the

capacity of the Army to satisfy that demand are the distinguishing features of each phase. The civilianization of logistics is the defining characteristic of the first phase, which encompassed the peacetime army during the Jefferson and first Madison administrations (1802–1812). Logistical practices of the second phase, the war years (1812–1815), were *ad hoc* and improvisatory. The drive for reform and the professionalization of the Quartermaster Corps marked the third phase, or the period of reform (1816–1821). The logistical system during the fourth phase, following the 1821 reduction of the army, was relatively effective. Nevertheless, retrenchment was the order of the day and the system was vulnerable to cost-saving measures that could impair its effectiveness.

The Jeffersonian military establishment (1802–1812) was a phase when political and economic concerns overrode military ones. The common assumption was that the nation would go to war with the support of a Quartermaster Department only when it was necessary. Since retrenchment was President Thomas Jefferson's principal aim with respect to the federal bureaucracy, he cut the strength of the army. Economy provided the justification for the abolition of the Quartermaster Department and the transfer of deputy quartermaster duties to civilian "military agents." The civilianization of personnel, the lack of functional specialization, and the near-total absence of military expertise and accountability characterized the logistics of this period. Since the political demand for a better system was low, military and civilian leaders neglected logistical affairs. The nation's political leadership postponed decisions on logistical reorganization until the eve of war. The result of such neglect was a hasty effort to mobilize resources and men, and the consequent failure to supply the army during the first year of the war.



The War Years (1812–1815) was a phase characterized by adaptation, when quartermasters implemented stopgap solutions to recurring logistic problems. Quartermasters reported their difficulties to the secretary of war, who then recommended legislative or administrative fixes to the supply and logistical system. Meanwhile, the “want of system” caused considerable difficulties for quartermasters. The national political leadership, in effect, left them to their own devices while they waited for Congress to pass important legislation or appropriate the necessary funds. The reform measures that did pass were ineffective because of lax enforcement and because they simply did not go far enough. The lack of funds also brought logistical operations to a standstill. While the demand for an efficient logistical system was high, the nation and the army lacked the capacity to create such a system in the midst of war. The leadership thus compelled quartermasters to make a defective system work.

The advocates of military preparedness called attention to the flaws of the contract system, the poor state of internal improvements, and the fallacy of creating a staff organization *de novo* a mere three months before the outbreak of war. The nation could not afford to go to war, they argued, without a militarized system for subsisting the army, a network of roads and canals, and a permanent general staff. After the war, the political and economic arguments that delimited the prewar logistical organization waned in influence. During the reform phase (1816–1821), the national political leadership established a radically different system. The army would now supply its soldiers by means of a commissariat and permanent supply agencies. It would publish a comprehensive set of quartermaster and commissary regulations to rationalize the process of procuring and distributing supplies. Finally, it would begin to appoint quartermasters

with military expertise and a military academy education. These reforms led to the creation of a professional Quartermaster Corps and a better way of conducting logistical operations.

While the postwar years were a time of building institutions, the quartermaster general consolidated the gains of the reform phase during the early years of the postwar military establishment (1822–1826). The Panic of 1819 imposed severe economic constraints on the army, ushering in a new phase of retrenchment and ending the spate of administrative and organizational reforms. There was widespread concern within the officer corps that civilian leaders would disband the army and abolish the U.S. Military Academy, at West Point. Their challenge, as they saw it, was to look after army interests by acting as a political pressure group. Quartermaster General Thomas Sidney Jesup and Deputy Quartermaster General Trueman Cross made the case, for example, for retaining the staff at the same strength in peace as in war. The proposal died in Congress, however, along with Secretary of War John C. Calhoun's expansible army plan. After the 1821 reduction of the U.S. Army, Jesup tried to prevent further cuts and backsliding on reforms as much as possible. He focused on normalizing procedures and performance standards within the Quartermaster Corps, and on making incremental improvements to the system. He exhorted the War Department to increase the size of the Quartermaster Corps and limit departmental responsibilities to its core competencies. He also pushed his quartermasters to exercise economy in their transactions. Retrenchment and the first stirrings of the ideologically charged attacks on the military profession that burgeoned during the Jacksonian era left the logistical system and Quartermaster Corps in a vulnerable position.

This dissertation follows a thematic organizational structure. Chapter 2 discusses the system of logistics during the Peace Establishment and the system that Congress and the War Department put in place in 1812. It also explains the basic mechanics of procuring, storing, and distributing supplies. The main purpose of the chapter is to answer the question of why the U.S. Army waged war with such an inefficient system in the first place. Chapter 3 is a prosopography of the U.S. Army Corps of Quartermasters during the war, a group almost completely ignored in the historical literature. The chapter attempts to paint a coherent picture of army quartermasters by comparing their backgrounds, motivations, and performance. Because the Peace Establishment was almost completely devoid of military logisticians, the War Department relied on men appointed directly from civil life who possessed analogous skills. In lieu of expertise in military logistics, the War Department selected merchants, accountants, clerks, military agents, and federal supply contractors, or simply men with a knowledge of mathematics and good handwriting. Realizing the value of military experience for a quartermaster, the secretary of war selected civilians who served in the Revolutionary War or had experience as militia officers. The substitution of true military expertise for analogous civilian skills and militia or Revolutionary War service proved unsatisfactory. Given their lack of military knowledge, however, quartermasters carried out their duties as well as the nation could expect. Nevertheless, General Jesup's observations of the performance of the businessmen-in-uniform prompted him to criticize the notion that quartermaster duties were essentially civilian in nature. His crusade to professionalize the Quartermaster Corps was, in part, a reaction to the faulty composition of that body during the war.

The next two chapters make an explicit connection between the experience of wartime logistical failure and the postwar drive to reform the logistical system. Chapter 4 analyzes the types of supply and logistical problems that quartermasters faced during the war and the varied ways in which they handled each type of problem. It focuses on four underlying structural causes of logistical failure—staff shortages, administrative defects, the contract system, and war funding. It also discusses the impact that these factors had on the conduct of military operations. The chapter concludes that structural factors alone account for the failure to feed, clothe, equip, and house America’s fighting men. Chapter 5 ties the Quartermaster Corps’ difficulties in transporting men and supplies on bad roads and unnavigable rivers during the war to the postwar effort to establish a national system of roads and canals. The narrative centers on the arguments of the reformers who made the military case for internal improvements and the political constraints (e.g., localism and strict construction) that made enactment of such a program problematic.

The final two chapters cover the reform phase of army logistics from the perspective of its most influential figure, Thomas Sidney Jesup. Chapter 6 examines how Jesup conceived of military professionalism and describes his efforts to turn the Quartermaster Department into an elite department in the general staff. Jesup was explicit in his writings about how his experience of wartime failure influenced his views on how to design the logistical system and how to professionalize the Quartermaster Corps. Few, if any, officers wrote so extensively about the lessons he learned from the War of 1812. Finally, the chapter looks at the evolution of Jesup’s criteria for selecting quartermasters, from 1818 to about 1826. The pattern is clear: within a few years of the

reestablishment of the Quartermaster Department, a military education superseded wartime experience as the chief criterion for selection. Chapter 7 examines Jesup's drive to rationalize the logistical system so that it became more efficient. The means by which he tried to accomplish this goal were the regulations he wrote for the Quartermaster Department, his system of fiscal accountability, and his own version of the cadre plan. Jesup's consistent enforcement of the regulations was the *sine qua non* of logistical reform. His communications with his subordinates, especially his instructions on how to handle public funds and property, provides evidence that the increasing efficiency of the Quartermaster Department was largely due to his active administrative leadership.

---

<sup>1</sup> Several scholars trace the origins of American military professionalism to the War of 1812 generation of army officers. See William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992); Samuel J. Watson, *Jackson's Sword: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1810–1821* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012); and Richard V. Barbuto, *Niagara, 1814: America Invades Canada* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000).

Charles R. Shrader argues that the “Era of Professionalization” in logistics began during the Mexican War and ended with the Spanish-American War. He describes the period before 1846 as the “Era of Creation, in which civilian and military leaders struggled to establish mechanisms for supporting the armed forces just as the nation searched for effective mechanisms of political and social organization.” See Charles R. Shrader, “Logistics,” in *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, ed. John Whiteclay Chambers, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 400. This dissertation argues that much of the progress in logistics that Shrader attributes to the period lasting from 1848 to 1898 was already in place ca. 1821.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE U.S. ARMY SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS SYSTEM IN PEACE AND WAR

The reason why the U.S. Army did not adequately feed, clothe, equip, and house its soldiers during the War of 1812 was that it failed to establish a Quartermaster Department until the very eve of war. Because of the widespread suspicion of standing armies and the federal government's overriding preoccupation with economy, the nation employed two fundamentally different systems to supply its army in peace and war. Civilian leaders eschewed a permanent supply and logistics system, one that could be useful in both peace and war, on the assumption that the nation could reestablish the defunct supply departments when war broke out. The hasty transition from one system to the other, however, caused chaos in the supply departments. Administrative disarray, in turn, caused delays in delivering shipments of essential items to the soldiers. Spoiled food, defective clothing, and inadequate shelter, which were the by-products of such confusion, led to high sickness and death rates. These circumstances also prompted commanders to delay or even abort their campaigns altogether because they had no other means of feeding or clothing their troops.

Civilian leaders were generally ignorant of supply and logistics. They did not recognize that the time it took to reorganize the supply departments far exceeded the time needed to muster and train soldiers. The army could not transition from a wholly civilianized system of supply and logistics to one administered by uniformed professionals on the spur of the moment. The Quartermaster Department, in particular, needed a long lead-time to establish rational procedures, find competent staff, and

stockpile supplies. Congress also did not anticipate the consequences of establishing a new system without having first tested it in peace. Since it created the supply departments only as the nation mobilized for war, any systemic defects that cropped up were bound to be much more costly in lives and money than they otherwise would have been. Moreover, taking corrective measures during a war created its own intractable logistic challenges. Overall, the politicians who took the nation into war demonstrated a remarkable degree of insouciance regarding logistical affairs.

### The System of Military Agents

After the Revolutionary War, Congress reduced the size of the army, disbanded the general staff, and took actions to civilianize the system of supply and logistics. From 1789 to 1812, Congress placed two cabinet secretaries—the secretary of war and the treasury secretary—in charge of transporting, procuring, and storing all military supplies. Congress limited the role of quartermasters general, previously a military position, to that of a civilian agent for transportation. The three men appointed to that office during the peace did not receive a military rank. The civilianization process was one of trial and error. In 1792, Congress transferred responsibility for procurement of clothing, military stores, and subsistence from the War Department to the Treasury Department but maintained the secretary of war's ultimate authority over transportation. In 1795, it decided to divide the day-to-day responsibility for acquiring and distributing supplies between two newly established subordinate agencies. The Office of the Purveyor of Public Supplies contracted for military and naval supplies on behalf of the Treasury Department. The Office of Superintendent of Military Stores, which received,



safeguarded, and distributed those supplies, fell under the purview of the War Department. This scheme ended in 1798 when Congress placed the War Department in charge of the purveyor, which returned the responsibility for purchasing all supplies, except rations, to the secretary of war.<sup>1</sup>

When Thomas Jefferson entered the Presidential Mansion, he civilianized supply and logistics to a greater degree than the Federalist government. In 1802, President Jefferson replaced the office of the quartermaster general and its complement of deputy quartermasters with a system that relied on civilian “military agents” and their assistants. Military agents ran the depots, performing work analogous to that of a deputy quartermaster, while the secretary of war became a *de facto* quartermaster general. Jefferson’s secretary of war, Henry Dearborn, and President James Madison’s first secretary of war, William Eustis, would thus find themselves overwhelmed by their new duties, which Congress imposed on them without any increase in staff or relief from other responsibilities.<sup>2</sup>

Congress enacted the Military Peace Establishment Act on March 16, 1802, which put President Jefferson’s policy into effect. Now the secretary of war, in addition to his present duties, coordinated the activities of the three military agents. Each military agent headed one of the army’s three administrative departments. These military agents and twenty-one assistant military agents handled government property stored at their respective depots, purchased forage and fuel, recorded transactions, arranged for the transportation of nearby units, and hired teamsters who would leave the supplies in the care of the regimental quartermasters who, in turn, distributed the items to the soldiers. On April 27, 1802, Jefferson appointed William Linnard, Peter Gansevoort, and Abraham

D. Abrahams as the first military agents to work under this new system. Jefferson centralized logistical operations in Philadelphia, the nation's premier clothing depot. Here William Linnard, the military agent for the Middle Department, received all the supplies that were purchased by Tench Coxe, the purveyor of public supplies, and stockpiled by the superintendent of public supplies. He then distributed the supplies from Philadelphia to Albany, the principal depot in the Northern Department, and to the Savannah depot in the Southern Department. The military agents at the principal depots then distributed the goods in their care to sub-depots within their own departments. They also directed the assistant military agents stationed at the sub-depots to forward the shipments to the garrisons within their vicinity.<sup>3</sup>

The only consistent practice throughout this period was the federal government's continued use of private contractors to provision soldiers. Contractors supplied soldiers with the standard ration, which consisted of set quantities of bread or flour, beef or pork, and rum, whiskey, or brandy. Congress also required contractors to include a fixed amount of soap, salt, vinegar, and candles along with every shipment of one hundred rations. After a public process of competitive bidding, the War Department let a contract with the lowest bidder, which was either an individual or a firm. The contract specified the price per ration, the number of rations, the intended recipient, and the date and location of deposits. The duration of a contract was usually one year, but the government negotiated six-month contracts, as well. Agents of the contractor then purchased rations and delivered them directly to the soldiers. If the contractor failed to deliver, commanders procured the missing rations at the contractor's expense.<sup>4</sup>

Fiscal parsimony explains why President Jefferson replaced the Quartermaster Department with the military agency. First, the abolition of the department was part of his broader effort to reduce the number of federal offices in the Executive branch, and the size of War and Navy Department appropriations. Although Jefferson preferred a small national government for ideological reasons, reducing spending would help him achieve his ultimate policy aims of retiring the national debt and eliminating internal taxes. Economy was thus not merely a means to an end, but also an end itself. Second, the Quartermaster Department became a casualty of Republican fears of a classic standing army, which party members believed would pose a threat to liberty. Jefferson's military policy limited the role of the regular army to that of a constabulary force, which was a significant shift away from Alexander Hamilton's expansive military program.<sup>5</sup> The army was scattered in small detachments at frontier outposts, arsenals, and coastal fortifications. It was also small. In December 1801, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn reported to Congress that the total strength of the army was 5,433 officers, cadets, and enlisted men.<sup>6</sup> Soon thereafter, Jefferson began his "chaste reformation"<sup>7</sup> by reducing the authorized strength of the Army to 3,312 officers, cadets, and men, organized into two infantry regiments and one artillery regiment.<sup>8</sup> Since a complex logistical organization was simply not necessary to support a skeletal army, Jefferson had a practical reason to eliminate it. He could not justify maintaining a permanent military supply bureaucracy when more cost-effective means of providing supplies and transportation for the soldiers were presumably available.

The system of military agents proved to be, in fact, more costly and inefficient. Colonel Alexander Parker of the Fifth Infantry Regiment reported to Secretary of War

William Eustis, in November 1809, that there was enough reason to restore the Quartermaster Department solely “on the ground of economy.” He calculated that “more than one hundred thousand dollars have been lost, in the course of a few years, by the abolition of the quartermaster’s department, and the introduction of a system of military agency.”<sup>9</sup> Both Eustis and Parker argued that the root cause of the defects in the system was a lack of military accountability. As civilians, military agents did not enjoy the authority that came with military rank. The assistant military agents, usually officers taken from the line, were only nominally accountable to their superiors. The president appointed them and not the military agents themselves. Secretary Eustis concluded, in his own report on the subject, that the assistant military agents were “not held by a proper responsibility” because the military agents had “no power or influence in their appointment, nor authority to call them to account for mal-practice or neglect of duty.”<sup>10</sup> Military agents also had little control over the brigade and regimental quartermasters, who were appointed by the colonels of regiments and reported only to them. Accountability was virtually nonexistent in the prewar supply and logistics system.<sup>11</sup>

Colonel Parker proposed a solution: restoring the position of quartermaster general would also restore the chain of command since a military man would be able to hold subordinate quartermasters accountable for the property in their care. He outlined a straightforward system of accountability:

[The quartermaster general] is primarily charged with all the articles belonging to his department; on him requisitions are to be made by the division quartermasters for such stores as may be required for their divisions; which stores are to be issued on the returns of the brigade quartermasters, and so to the regimental quartermasters, who are to make and deliver returns of all stores on hands [sic] and delivered once in three

months, to the brigade quartermasters, who will consolidate and transmit them to the division quartermasters who, in like manner, are to consolidate and transmit them to the quartermaster general, who will transmit them to the Secretary of War. Pursuing this principle it can always be ascertained in what division, brigade or regiment, there may be delinquency.<sup>12</sup>

Colonel Parker perceived other problems with the system of military agents. He questioned the competence of some military agents, citing the appointment of “characters” who were “perfectly ignorant of military affairs.” The quartermaster general, by contrast, would be “an officer of great importance” who had attained “high rank” after years of military service.<sup>13</sup>

As the country prepared for war, Congress considered returning control of logistics to the army. In January 1812, Congressman Benjamin Tallmadge of Connecticut asserted that the quartermaster general “ought to be a military character” because he needed to be privy to the details of a military campaign in order to perform his duties properly. “Every movement of the Army is first communicated to him,” he observed. Therefore, it was “his duty to receive and deliver out the necessary supplies for the Army, and to attend to its movements.” He then counseled his colleagues to grant the quartermaster general a rank befitting his position as military adviser to the president. “[He should be] a highly respectable and confidential officer,” Tallmadge declared, “[since] he is next in consequence to the Commander-in-Chief, with whom he has frequent communication.”<sup>14</sup> Congressman David Rogerson Williams argued that the quartermaster general “should be a military man” because his duties would take him beyond the confines of his desk. “Indeed,” he explained, “his presence is at times required in the field, to distribute the supplies.”<sup>15</sup>

Colonel Parker also emphasized factors outside the control of military agents. He pointed to “the great duties imposed on [military agents]” and noted that they performed those duties without sufficient staff.<sup>16</sup> Even though the system of military agents did not work efficiently in peacetime, Congress made little effort to change it. On April 12, 1808, in response to the attack on the frigate *USS Chesapeake* by the British frigate *HMS Leopard*, Congress increased the authorized strength of the Army to 9,921 men from about 3,300. The Additional Military Force of 1808 consisted of eight new regiments, including five infantry regiments, and single regiments of riflemen, light dragoons, and light artillery. Although Congress authorized the appointment of eight regimental and two brigade quartermasters, it failed to increase the number of military agents or reestablish the Quartermaster Department.<sup>17</sup> The three military agents and the War Department staff, consisting only of the secretary of war and a handful of clerks, were unable to satisfy the logistical demands of this augmented army. As a result, the mobilization of the Additional Military Force was chaotic, and provided a foretaste of the botched effort to mobilize the regulars, volunteers, and militia who would serve in the War of 1812.<sup>18</sup>

### The Restoration of the Quartermaster Department

As Congress debated the looming war with Great Britain, it did not take the necessary steps to mobilize logistical support for the army despite the broad consensus among military and political leaders that the nation would need the services of a quartermaster general. In 1809, Secretary of War Eustis suggested that, even in peace, a logistical system run by a quartermaster general would be preferable to a peacetime

system based on military agents because army officers could impose a “more regular and rigid accountability” than civilians could. The current system proved to be a good deal less efficient than the old Quartermaster Department. In war, however, a Quartermaster Department was essential. Eustis warned, “To meet a state of war without such an establishment, which has justly been denominated the right hand of an army, would be to disregard the practice and experience of our own and every other nation, and expose to hazard and defeat every military operation.”<sup>19</sup> Congressman Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina exhorted his colleagues to take action, saying, “It was impossible to go to war without a Quartermaster General; for there is no man [who] has so much to do about an army as this officer.”<sup>20</sup> The Eleventh Congress raised the issue, but failed to pass a Quartermaster Department bill. An attempt to establish a Quartermaster Department in 1810 stalled in Congress. The Senate and House disagreed over whether the quartermaster general should be a specialist or take charge of all supply and logistical functions. The Senate proposed streamlining the duties of a quartermaster general and commissary general by combining their roles in the same person. The House, on the other hand, pushed a version of the bill that created separate departments. Congressman Williams thought the Senate version was a mistake. He pointed out that the roles of the quartermaster general and commissary general were “perfectly distinct,” and that no other military establishment in existence blended the two. While the quartermaster general possessed military expertise, the commissary general dealt exclusively with purchasing and so “ought to be a man well acquainted with mercantile concerns.”<sup>21</sup> Congressman Tallmadge reached a similar conclusion. “[T]here is not the least similarity between the two officers,” he observed, “one being the purchasing, the other being the distributing

officer.”<sup>22</sup> Congressman Macon concurred: “The qualifications necessary for the Quartermaster General and Purveyor are very different; the one ought to be a soldier, the other a merchant.”<sup>23</sup> Secretary Eustis encouraged Congress to reject the Senate proposal. Congress passed a bill that was close to the House version but did so a mere three months before President Madison signed the War Bill on June 18, 1812.

The “Act to establish a Quartermaster’s Department,” which Congress enacted on March 28, 1812, restored the office of the quartermaster general, as it had existed during the Revolutionary War. Section 18 of the law officially abolished the system of military agents. Congress accepted Secretary Eustis’s suggestion that the quartermaster general would hold the military rank of brigadier general and receive its attendant pay and emoluments. Unlike the military agents, the quartermaster general could hold his staff of deputies accountable. This staff included at least four deputy quartermasters and a maximum of eight and as many assistant deputy quartermasters as the service required. Although many of the quartermaster’s purchasing duties overlapped with other departments, a source of confusion during the war, he would shoulder the basic task of receiving and distributing supplies, procuring forage, constructing barracks, and cutting military roads. The act authorized other positions that fell under the authority of the Quartermaster Department. They included a principal wagon master and a principal forage master, each of whom would have as many assistants as the service required. An amendment to the legislation, enacted on May 22, added a principal barrack master and assistant barrack masters to the department. As an army officer responsible for a staff that performed such multifarious duties, the quartermaster general filled a role of greater importance and respect than that of an agent for transportation or master of accounts.<sup>24</sup>



In addition to the Quartermaster Department, Congress created the Office of the Commissary General of Purchases (or Purchasing Department) and the Ordnance Department. The commissary general of purchases (a civilian) replaced the now-defunct position of purveyor of public supplies, and he assumed the responsibility for purchasing most items including clothing, accoutrements, camp equipage, weapons, ammunition, and medical stores. On May 14, 1812, Congress established the Ordnance Department. The head of the department, the commissary general of ordnance, inspected and proved ordnance and gunpowder; constructed carriages, wagons, and pontoons; and prepared ammunition. At the start of the war, these supply departments would support about 12,000 soldiers including 5,000 raw recruits. Because Congress was dilatory in providing funds, they would do so without the means to pay for all of the necessary supplies and transportation. The delays in establishing the supply departments, moreover, did not leave staff officers enough time to learn their duties, or perform such tasks as the construction of barracks. Congressional delay ensured that the U.S. Army would go to war without a fully functional supply and logistics system.<sup>25</sup>

The War Department appointed Morgan Lewis quartermaster general on April 4, 1812. Within weeks, Brigadier General Lewis began conveying to the secretary of war his ideas for making the new Quartermaster Department more efficient. Under one plan, a deputy quartermaster would supervise logistical operations in one of six proposed military districts with the assistance of a clerk. The quartermasters would make transportation arrangements for shipments that originated from the district and for those that passed through it. The deputy quartermaster at Washington, D.C. would supply the southern states, while the officers who managed the Boston and Albany depots would

supply New England and New York, respectively. Lewis proposed that the headquarters of the Northwestern Army should double as its primary supply depot. Although he acknowledged that Major William Linnard would continue to run logistical operations in Philadelphia, his opinion of that officer was “not of the most favourable kind.”<sup>26</sup> Since Lewis lacked confidence in Linnard, he recommended the current militia quartermaster of New Jersey for a commission so that he could manage the departmental affairs in that state rather than Linnard.<sup>27</sup> Philadelphia would only serve as the hub for supplies moving west to western Pennsylvania and Ohio. Lewis’s case for a New Jersey district also included a plan for the Trenton depot to serve as a manufacturing center.<sup>28</sup>

Secretary Eustis revised Lewis’s plan by eliminating the district of New Jersey. Instead, he included that state in the same district as Pennsylvania and Delaware. He also mapped out a district for the southern states, and two additional districts for the western and southwestern territories. His eight districts would make use of the maximum number of authorized deputy quartermasters. Lewis would be in charge of the districts numbering one through four, which covered the Mid-Atlantic States, New York, and New England. Eustis would supervise logistical operations in the districts numbered five through eight, which put him in charge of supplying the seacoast fortifications on the South Atlantic, and the Southern and Northwestern Theaters of operations.<sup>29</sup>

Secretary of War John Armstrong, Eustis’s successor, redrew the boundaries of the military districts in order to supply the army more efficiently. The Act of March 3, 1813, also known as the General Staff Law, authorized eight quartermasters general with the rank of colonel to manage the logistical operations in the new military districts. The law also authorized eight deputy quartermasters and thirty-two assistant deputy

quartermasters. The War Department assigned them to the principal depot of a given district or one of its sub-depots. The quartermaster general or the commander of the district chose the location of the depots.<sup>30</sup>

This regional depot system was an improvement over the old one because the district boundaries were coterminous with the theater of operations of the principal armies. The Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Military Districts corresponded to the theater of operations of Jackson's Southern Army, Harrison's Northwestern Army, and the Northern Army, respectively. The critical Fourth Military District, which included Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, fed supplies to all three armies. Pittsburgh, a burgeoning manufacturing center, served as a way station for wagon trains arriving from Philadelphia hauling shipments destined for the west or southwest via the Ohio River or to the Great Lakes via the Allegheny River. During the Peace Establishment, the assistant military agent in Pittsburgh received extra compensation to reflect the amount of work required to manage this busy depot. The generals commanding the First through the Sixth Military Districts organized the defense of the coast, the general who commanded the Tenth Military District defended Washington, D.C.<sup>31</sup>

The shared boundary line of the Third and Ninth Military Districts bisected New York State at the Hudson River Highlands. It made sense to separate command over the defense of the port of New York and its surrounding areas from that of the U.S.-Canada borderlands, and the Highlands formed a more natural demarcation than the state's borders. The region south of the Highlands, encompassing the southern portion of New York and the entirety of New Jersey, formed the Third Military District. Quartermasters in that district shipped supplies north via the Hudson River, undertook repairs of New

York harbor and Fort Columbus, and hired laborers and artisans for the boat construction program on Lake Ontario. The Ninth Military District, including Vermont and the region north of the Highlands, had three important depots—Niagara, Sackets Harbor, and Burlington—that served as destination points for supplies headed to the Niagara frontier, Lake Ontario, and Lake Champlain, respectively. After the capture of Fort Niagara by the British, the Americans used Buffalo to access Lake Erie and the western Great Lakes. The Albany depot, the headquarters of the quartermaster general of the department, occupied a central position. It formed a junction, or nodal point, for shipments arriving up the Hudson River, and then continuing by keelboat along the Mohawk River towards Lake Ontario or by wagon on the overland route to Lake Champlain. For traffic flowing from Albany to Sackets Harbor, Oswego served as the principal way station and a storage site for deposits of rations.<sup>32</sup>

As early as 1808, a single contractor typically supplied rations to the soldiers who occupied one of the country's sixteen contracting districts. Since the contracting districts did not correspond to the eight military recruiting districts of 1812, or the ten military districts drawn up in 1813, the boundaries often overlapped. After March 1813, eight military districts included at least two contracting districts within their jurisdiction. The soldiers in these military districts would have their rations supplied by more than one contracting firm. A contractor could also supply rations, however, to more than one military district. For example, the boundaries of the Second Contracting District (Kentucky and Tennessee) overlapped with both the Seventh and Eighth Military Districts, while the Twelfth Contracting District (Maryland, Delaware, and Washington, D.C.) overlapped with the Fourth, Fifth, and Tenth Military Districts. Each contractor

was responsible for procuring and distributing rations to garrisons within his district and any units that marched through it. Once he completed his transactions with local farmers, millers, and merchants, he would sell the rations to the government at a fixed price. The contract price was supposed to take into account the price of local commodities and transportation costs so that he could make a profit. The contractor then deposited the rations in a storehouse or magazine at a prearranged time and place. For posts in the west, the War Department required that the contractor provide enough rations so that there was always a three to six months' supply.<sup>33</sup>

Delimiting contractor activities in this way should have prevented counterproductive competition for local resources, but contractors could still work at cross-purposes. Contractors who won bids to supply an army or garrison in a given district sometimes procured supplies from another district when there was none available in their own. For example, Ebenezer Denny, the contractor in Pittsburgh, responded to Brigadier General William Henry Harrison's requisition for 400,000 rations by sending an agent to procure flour in the neighboring contracting district in Ohio because his own district lacked enough flour to meet the terms of the contract. The cause of the flour shortage was a drop in the water levels of nearby rivers, which prevented the mills from running. Denny expanded his search because he had no other choice. By doing so, however, he risked interfering with other suppliers to the Northwestern Army including John Hunt Piatt, Harrison's deputy commissary of purchases, and Ohio contractor James White, who procured rations in the southern portion of the state. Denny's position improved after White failed to deliver on his contract. General Harrison then charged

him with fulfilling the entire contract for his army (1,098,000 rations of flour), a task facilitated by higher river levels.<sup>34</sup>

The system of contracting districts did not work for other reasons. First, there was no provision for supplying an army that crossed over the border into Canada, a remarkable oversight. The War Department created the contracting districts for the Peace Establishment but made no modification to it during the War of 1812. Adopting the Revolutionary War practice of holding contractors responsible for provisioning an army no matter where it marched, rather than units within a specific geographical area, would have obviated this problem. Second, an officer who failed to communicate his anticipated location to the contractor could leave the latter holding onto unused provisions. Third, contractors continued to be unaccountable to military authority. They rarely paid a penalty for failing to deliver on their contract beyond that of the commander's decision to purchase on the contractor's account. Finally, inflation, difficult road conditions, and unexpectedly poor weather and harvests could increase the price of rations or the cost of transportation. Therefore, the contract system only worked under ideal circumstances. As John Armstrong explained to Secretary Eustis, in January 1812, contractors could succeed in "well-peopled districts, where corn and cattle are abundant, prices little subject to change, roads safe and unobstructed." They generally failed to deliver on their contracts, he noted, where "the population is thin and poor, supplies scarce and high priced, roads few and bad and much exposed to obstruction."<sup>35</sup>

The reason why the United States went to war with Great Britain without an efficient logistical system lay in the commonly held notion that the nation could do

without a staff of professional army officers in time of peace. A corollary to this notion was that the nation could readily recreate the general staff while preparing for war. The wisdom of the former proposition, however, depended on the feasibility of the latter. Although it made practical sense to abolish the Quartermaster Department when the Peace Establishment consisted only of 3,000 effectives scattered among the maritime and frontier posts, Congress failed to reestablish the department until the nation was already mobilizing for war. It did not seriously consider the amount of time required for organizing the new department and staffing it with uniformed men who possessed special skills. Nor did it consider how long it would take to build housing for soldiers or produce, acquire, stockpile, and deliver the firearms, clothing, and equipment they would need in battle, on the road, or in camp. The amount of time that Congress allocated was insufficient for completing the transition from the civilianized system of military agents that supplied a small peacetime establishment to a complex military bureaucracy that supported a large regular army. Congressional delay meant the nation would go to war without an effective supply and logistics system. A longer lead-time would have spared the nation from many of the supply failures that plagued the army throughout the war.

---

<sup>1</sup> Act of May 8, 1792, ch. 37 1 *Stat.* 279; Act of April 2, 1794, ch. 14 1 *Stat.* 352; *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 1: 61, 69; Act of February 23, 1795, ch. 27 1 *Stat.* 419; Act of July 16, 1798, ch. 85 1 *Stat.* 610; Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support for the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775–1939* (Washington, DC: Office of the Quartermaster General, 1962), 82–84, 111–112, 119–129.

The three quartermasters general were Samuel Hogdon, James O’Hara, and John Wilkins, Jr. The Treasury Department retained the power to review War Department expenditures, however, until Congress transferred that responsibility in 1812 to the newly created Purchasing Department.

<sup>2</sup> Act of March 16, 1802, ch. 9 2 *Stat.* 132; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 131.

<sup>3</sup> Act of March 16, 1802, ch. 9 2 *Stat.* 133, 136; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 130–133; John F. Callan, *The Military Laws of the United States, Relating to the Army, Volunteers, Militia, and to Bounty Lands and Pensions, from the Foundation of the Government to the Year 1863* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1863), 142–143; *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America* (Washington: Duff Green, 1828), 1: 422.

<sup>4</sup> Act of March 16, 1802, ch. 9 2 *Stat.* 134.

<sup>5</sup> Leonard White, *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801–1829* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951), 212, 215. White argues that the abolition of the Quartermaster Department was a direct result of Republican opposition to a large, peacetime army.

<sup>6</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 154–155.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Jefferson to Nathaniel Macon, May 14, 1801, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by H. A. Washington (New York: John C. Riker, 1854), 396–397.



---

<sup>8</sup> Act of March 16, 1802, ch. 9 2 *Stat.* 132; *ASP: MA*, 1: 175–177.

<sup>9</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 257.

<sup>10</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 256.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 257–258.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., I, 802.

<sup>15</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., I, 795–796.

<sup>16</sup> *ASP: MA*, I: 257.

<sup>17</sup> Act of April 12, 1808, ch. 44 2 *Stat.* 481–482.

<sup>18</sup> William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 9.

<sup>19</sup> *ASP: MA*, I: 256–257.

---

<sup>20</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., I, 802.

<sup>21</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., I, 795–796.

<sup>22</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., I, 802.

<sup>23</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., I, 803.

<sup>24</sup> Act of March 28, 1812, ch. 46 2 *Stat.* 696; Act of May 22, 1812, ch. 93 2 *Stat.* 742.

<sup>25</sup> Act of March 28, 1812, ch. 46 2 *Stat.* 696; Act of May 14, 1812, ch. 83 2 *Stat.* 732.

<sup>26</sup> Morgan Lewis to William Eustis, 29 May 1812, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M221, RG 107, NARA.

<sup>27</sup> Morgan Lewis to William Eustis, 29 May 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 138; J.C.A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783–1830* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 160.

<sup>28</sup> Morgan Lewis to William Eustis, 29 May 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; John C. Fredriksen, ed., *The War of 1812 War Department Correspondence, 1812–1815* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016), 238.

<sup>29</sup> Morgan Lewis to John Armstrong, 8 February 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 138–139; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 239.

---

<sup>30</sup> Act of March 3, 1813, ch. 52 2 *Stat.* 819.

<sup>31</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 384–388, 432; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 128, 130; Callan, *Military Laws*, 143; Donald R. Hickey, *Don't Give Up the Ship!: Myths of the War of 1812* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 246–248.

<sup>32</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 385, 387–388, 432; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 128–129; Hickey, *Ship*, 246–248.

<sup>33</sup> Henry Dearborn, “War Department, April 13, 1808,” *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser* (Charleston, SC), 9 June 1808; Steve R. Waddell, *United States Army Logistics from the American Revolution to 9/11* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010), 31 (see table 1.2).

<sup>34</sup> Ebenezer Denny to William Eustis, 22 September, 11 October & 9 November 1812; William Henry Harrison to William Eustis, 28 September & 22 October 1812; William Henry Harrison to Ebenezer Denny, 10 October 1812, all in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 159–160; John A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics 1775–1953* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966), 109; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 110, 161.

<sup>35</sup> John Armstrong quoted in Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 345–346.

CHAPTER 3

THE BUSINESSMEN IN UNIFORM: A PROSOPOGRAPHY OF THE  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF QUARTERMASTERS DURING THE WAR OF 1812

The Corps of Quartermasters during the War of 1812 consisted of career officers and men appointed directly from civil life. When military and civilian leaders anticipated that the nation would quickly create a supply and logistical organization on the eve of war, they also assumed that they could find qualified men to fill quartermaster vacancies on short notice. The failure to find enough qualified men, however, exposed the fallacy of the prewar civilianization of logistics. Moreover, the pattern of appointments to the Quartermaster Department indicates that those responsible for quartermaster recruitment—the president, secretary of war, quartermaster general, and commanding officers—were well aware that the shortage of qualified men was having a deleterious effect on military operations. Since men with both the military training and logistical expertise required for quartermaster work were relatively uncommon, military and civilian leaders alike sought out candidates who possessed skills analogous to those of a military logistician. They thus recruited career officers with proven ability in mathematics or accounting, and businessmen and clerks who served in either the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War or in the Old Army (i.e., the peacetime army). Because the nation had neglected logistics for such a long time, there was no other viable recruitment policy.

The wartime Corps of Quartermasters performed as well as the nation could expect given the unfavorable circumstances over which they had little control.

Nevertheless, quartermasters' lack of experience managing logistical affairs resulted in a considerable waste of money and property. After the war, reformers such as Thomas Sidney Jesup pointed to unsatisfactory outcomes such as these as an argument in favor of professionalizing the Quartermaster Corps. Jesup's memories of the businessmen-in-uniform prompted him to use a different set of criteria for quartermaster recruitment and retention when he became the quartermaster general.

When Congress passed the General Staff Bill on March 3, 1813, it more than doubled the number of quartermasters in the Quartermaster Department. The logistical capacity of the U.S. Army needed to keep pace with the expansion of the Additional Military Force, which added twenty-one regiments to the Army in January 1812 and another nineteen in January 1813. The General Staff Law provided for eight quartermasters general with the rank, pay, and emoluments of a colonel. The position was entirely new. Each quartermaster general would manage the supply arrangements of one or two military districts, under the supervision of the quartermaster general of the department or the secretary of war. The law also provided for eight deputy quartermasters with the rank of major and thirty-two assistant deputy quartermasters with the rank of captain. By comparison, the Act of March 28, 1812, that reestablished the Quartermaster Department had authorized the president to appoint up to eight deputy quartermasters, and as many assistant deputy quartermasters as necessary. The War Department was slow, however, to fill these positions. Before the expansion of the Quartermaster Department, only six officers held the position of deputy quartermaster and fourteen officers held that of assistant deputy quartermaster.<sup>1</sup>

The cohort that entered the Quartermaster Department in the second year of the war came from the elites of American society. The pressing need to fill the vacancies created by the General Staff Law provided an opportunity for men with wealth, political connections, and administrative skills to acquire high rank in the Quartermaster Department. In 1812, the department staff consisted almost entirely of military holdovers from the Old Army and the civilian holdovers who had run the logistical system under the Peace Establishment. Career officers at the rank of lieutenant and captain served mostly under former military agents and civil officeholders, who obtained a direct appointment to the rank of major. The composition of the department would change after the enactment of the General Staff Law. Beginning in the spring of 1813, civilians would outnumber career officers at every rank from captain and above.

The vast majority of the men appointed directly from civil life were businessmen. President James Madison, in consultation with Secretary of War William Eustis, nominated men whose prewar occupations made them uniquely qualified for handling the large sums of money that moved through the department at all levels. A perusal of the records of the War Department reveals that applicants to quartermaster positions, political patrons, administration officials, and professional military men all believed that skills in business were the *sine qua non* for the work of a quartermaster. The pattern of appointments, moreover, indicates that those involved in the quartermaster selection process put this view into practice.

The logistical failures of the war prompted eyewitnesses and historians to call this policy into question. The consensus view that emerged was that civilian and military leaders—i.e., those responsible for appointing quartermasters—mistakenly equated

business talent with competence in military logistics, and that the policy of appointing businessmen to the Quartermaster Department was misguided. In 1824, Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup informed the secretary of war, “Until lately, it was thought that every man who was able to write a good hand and cast accounts was qualified to be a quartermaster, but experience has proved that other qualifications are necessary.”<sup>2</sup>

Historians Marvin A. Kreidberg and Mertyn G. Henry, in their study of U.S. Army mobilization, drew up a list of twelve lessons of the War of 1812. They described one of those lessons in these terms: “Aptitude in business or in politics is not necessarily a sound indicator of military leadership qualifications.”<sup>3</sup> The implicit assumption here is that business skills were the sole criteria for selecting quartermasters. A systematic analysis of the backgrounds of quartermasters, however, complicates this view of the wartime Quartermaster Corps. Although most quartermasters of the War of 1812 were businessmen-in-uniform, the War Department did not marginalize career officers or officers of the line whose service began during the war years. Indeed, almost all of the quartermasters promoted from within the department fall into those two categories. Moreover, a significant minority of businessmen-in-uniform possessed military credentials of some sort. Together, career officers and civilian appointees with military experience constituted a majority of the Corps. This strongly suggests that civilian and military leaders must have considered a quartermaster’s knowledge of military affairs as an important qualification.

The policy that enabled large numbers of businessmen to serve in the department was a practical one. The potential pool of qualified candidates was small. Since civilian military agents had managed the logistical system during the Peace Establishment, only a

few career officers had acquired even a modicum of logistical expertise, usually as assistant military agents. The United States Military Academy, at West Point, New York, whose curriculum trained cadets for service in the technical branches, had only produced eighty-nine graduates before the war. Of these prewar graduates, only sixty-five would serve as officers during the war. Given the low supply and high demand for logisticians, any other personnel selection policy would simply not have been feasible at this moment in time.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Corps of Quartermasters, March 1812 to March 1813

Congress enacted sweeping change in the U.S. Army's logistical system when it reestablished the Quartermaster Department and transformed the army supply system from a civilianized system into a militarized one. It abolished the system of military agents, in which civilians performed the same roles as uniformed quartermasters, but lacked authority over their subordinates, the assistant military agents. The new system gave logisticians military rank and the authority to hold subordinates accountable. The militarization of logistical personnel, however, was only partial. The procurement, transportation, and distribution of rations remained the responsibility of civilian contractors. Moreover, the head of the department, Brigadier General Morgan Lewis, was a politician-general and not a military professional. His most recent experience of command occurred during the American Revolution. General Lewis also did not have complete control over the affairs of his department. The secretary of war still oversaw logistical operations south of the Potomac River. Although the former military agents would now wear a uniform, most of them remained military amateurs.<sup>5</sup>



To ensure a smooth transition to the new system, President Madison nominated Lieutenant Colonel Zebulon Montgomery Pike, and military agents William Swan, Jacob Eustis, and Anthony Lamb as the new deputy quartermasters. On April 3, 1812, the Senate approved the appointments of Pike, Swan, and Lamb, and approved Eustis on April 8. Colonel Pike's tenure at the New Orleans depot was short—on July 6, he transferred to the Fifteenth Infantry. William Swan succeeded him as quartermaster of New Orleans. Bartholomew Schaumburgh, in turn, took the place of Swan. William Linnard continued to run the U.S. Army's principal clothing establishment in Philadelphia, a job he had performed as a military agent since 1802. Anthony Lamb, the Secretary of State of New York under Governor Daniel D. Tompkins, took charge of the Albany depot. Jacob Eustis, the brother of the secretary of war, continued at Boston. Of the first six deputy quartermasters of the wartime establishment, only Jacob Eustis and Anthony Lamb fit the characteristic profile of a political appointee. Colonel Alexander Parker, the commanding officer of the Old Army's Fifth Regiment of Infantry, must have had men such as Eustis and Lamb in mind when he lamented the lack of military knowledge among military agents.<sup>6</sup>

Zebulon Pike, William Swan, and Bartholomew Schaumburgh, by contrast, possessed extensive military experience. After a stint in the militia, Zebulon Pike learned to tackle logistical problems during his ten years of service as an army officer on the Western frontier. During the years 1805–6, he led an expedition to find the source of the Mississippi River, and another in 1806–7 to find the headwaters of the Arkansas and Red Rivers. After the Spanish took him captive for a brief period, he returned to the Army and obtained a promotion to major in 1808. The following year, he changed his

place of residence to New Orleans and obtained a promotion to colonel in 1812, just before his appointment as quartermaster. William Swan began his military service as a first lieutenant in 1799, when the U.S. Army expanded during the Quasi-War. The dissolution of the Additional Army in 1800 resulted in a short break in his career. In February 1801, Swan returned to the army when President John Adams nominated him as a first lieutenant in the First Infantry Regiment. After acquiring logistical experience as assistant military agent at Fort Massac, Illinois, he left the army in 1809 at the rank of captain to accept an appointment as military agent for the Southern Department. Secretary of War William Eustis thought so well of Swan that he appointed him as deputy quartermaster in the wartime establishment even though he had not solicited an appointment. A few months later in 1812, Captain Swan settled his accounts in New Orleans and left to take charge of the department's affairs in Norfolk, Virginia. Bartholomew Schaumburgh received an ensign's commission in the First Infantry Regiment in 1791, and then served in the Legion of the United States, eventually attaining the rank of captain in the Additional Army. After the 1802 reduction of the Army cut his military career short, he pursued a career as a military supply contractor and later as an agent in the Orleans Territory. Schaumburgh assumed his duties at New Orleans station in 1812. After failing to secure an appointment in the line in 1814, he continued his quartermaster duties in the city until the end of the war.<sup>7</sup>

William Linnard did not have any military experience before the war, but he did not fit the typical profile of businessman-in-uniform either. His prewar career included ten years as a military agent at the Schuylkill Arsenal in Philadelphia.<sup>8</sup> Years later, Winfield Scott included Linnard on a list of twenty-seven officers of the Old Army who,

in his estimation, were the exceptions to the “swaggerers, dependents, decayed gentlemen” who were “*utterly unfit for any military purpose whatever.*” He described Linnard in glowing terms as a “public servant of the rarest merit” and a man whose integrity “had long been proverbial.” He continued, “For thirty-three years, at Philadelphia, he made all disbursements on account of the army . . . amounting to fifty-odd millions, without the loss of a cent, and at the smallest cost in storage, clerk, hire and other incidental expenses ever known.” Linnard won Scott’s admiration not only because of his competence and honesty, but also because of his work ethic. Scott added, “He personally performed double, if not treble, the amount of ordinary labor.”<sup>9</sup>

Linnard honed his logistical expertise under the old system of military agents and understood its defects well enough to propose substantive reforms. In January 1812, he successfully lobbied Secretary Eustis for an appointment to the Quartermaster Department, suggesting that his experience as a military agent made him qualified for a deputy quartermaster position. Secretary of War John Armstrong promoted Major Linnard to quartermaster general after the reorganization of the Quartermaster Department, in 1813. In May 1815, when Colonel Linnard expressed a desire to remain in the service, Secretary of War Alexander Dallas appointed him a provisional deputy quartermaster under Major General Jacob Jennings Brown. He became only one of three quartermasters then in office that a board of general officers, charged with selecting officers for the postwar establishment, chose to retain in the U.S. Army. Linnard’s commitment to his profession and the broad recognition of his logistical expertise by those who knew him sets him apart from the other civilians who secured a direct appointment to the Quartermaster Department.<sup>10</sup>

## Overview of the Appointment Process

The process by which a civilian obtained an appointment in the Quartermaster Department was inherently political. Candidates usually sought out a political patron—a governor or congressman—who would submit a recommendation to the secretary of war or the president on their behalf. The secretary of war would then compile a list of viable candidates, which he would then deliver to the president. After consulting with the secretary of war, the president would submit his official nominations to the United States Senate for approval or rejection. If the president approved an appointment during a recess period, the Senate would take up the nomination after it reconvened. On occasion, a candidate would solicit an appointment directly or receive an appointment without solicitation. The beneficiaries of the latter two methods were usually career officers who had demonstrated their ability, integrity, and industry to their superior officers.<sup>11</sup>

The fourth method of appointment was informal. Commanding officers or quartermasters general of a military district could fill a vacancy on their own initiative, but with the tacit or explicit approval of the secretary of war or the president. The man who held the position of acting deputy quartermaster or assistant deputy quartermaster did not require Senate confirmation. Although the quartermaster received no military rank or pay associated with the position, he was still required to submit a bond. A commanding officer might assign a line officer to quartermaster duty on a temporary basis or place a trusted civilian (often a militia officer or a clerk) in the position indefinitely or in anticipation of a formal commission. Twenty-three men served in quartermaster positions without ever acquiring a military rank. They constituted 33 percent of the nominees appointed directly from civil life. The process for selecting

quartermasters was flexible enough to allow the War Department, in 1813, to expedite the staffing of a chronically undermanned Quartermaster Department.<sup>12</sup>

The wartime career of the wealthy Kentucky proprietor, James Taylor, is an illustrative example. In February 1812, Taylor wrote to President Madison and Secretary Eustis requesting the authority of a quartermaster in order to make purchases. As evidence of his competence or trustworthiness, he cited his services as military agent in his home state. In 1809, Taylor successfully oversaw the construction of an arsenal and barracks in the burgeoning town of Newport. He also purchased mules for the army. In April 1812, the Senate thwarted his attempt to acquire a position in the Purchasing Department. Although the Senate “negatived” his appointment, that did not mean the end of his involvement as a supplier. From February to July 1812, Taylor served as the quartermaster general (without a military rank) in Brigadier General William Hull’s Army until the surrender of Detroit resulted in his captivity by the British. After his release, he spent the rest of the war arranging compensation for the wagoners and soldiers who lost property resulting from the city’s capture. He also served as paymaster to the Kentucky and Ohio militia, and to the army captured at Detroit.<sup>13</sup>

A few men who entered the war as informal appointments actively sought a commission in the Quartermaster Department. In most cases, they did eventually receive a commission. In August 1812, Joseph Wheaton submitted his bond to serve as assistant deputy quartermaster general in Pittsburgh.<sup>14</sup> In December, Wheaton told Secretary Eustis that his lack of military rank was impeding his ability to perform his duties. Given a quartermaster’s wide-ranging responsibilities, he argued, “Military rank ought to accompany every such appointment.” In Wheaton’s view, it was also dishonorable.

When another officer refused to carry out his order, that officer remarked “in the presence of the wagon master” that he held “no command whatever.”<sup>15</sup> Unless the situation changed, Wheaton insisted, he would resign as soon as the convoy under his direction reached its destination. Wheaton received his captain’s commission in April 1813, as well as orders to serve under Colonel John C. Bartlett and take charge of the stores at Chilicothe, Ohio. On October 10, 1814, Secretary of War James Monroe included Wheaton’s name on a list of appointments and promotions, which he forwarded to the Senate. Although the Senate rejected his promotion to deputy quartermaster general, he continued his work as post quartermaster at Richmond, Virginia, until his discharge in June 1815.<sup>16</sup>

Some quartermasters sought a commission, but failed to obtain one. Captain George Wadsworth only served two weeks as assistant deputy quartermaster in the Ninth Military District (Northern New York and Vermont), from May 20, 1813, to July 7, 1813, before the Senate rejected his appointment for unstated reasons.<sup>17</sup> To Wadsworth’s superior officer, Colonel James Thomas, the Senate’s decision was unjustified. Thomas declared, “Of Mr. Wadsworth I know nothing, other than in his official duties in this station . . . [which] he has discharged with an alacrity seldom met with those of his experience in the duties of the department.”<sup>18</sup> Captain Wadsworth’s failure to receive a commission, however, did not prevent him from continuing his service in another capacity. In September 1813, Callender Irvine appointed him assistant commissary general for the depot at Burlington, Vermont. Major General Wade Hampton then attached him to his force of 10,000 as a field commissary prior to the offensive against Montreal.<sup>19</sup>

Although most informal appointees expected to receive a military rank at some date in the future, at least one did not. In the spring of 1813, Brigadier General Wade Hampton, then-commander of the Fifth Military District (Virginia and Maryland) appointed Joshua West to fill the position of deputy quartermaster general at Richmond. West performed his duties without a military rank, perhaps expecting that he would continue in office indefinitely in that capacity. After Captain Wheaton arrived to replace him in December of that year, West began the discharge process by settling his accounts with the department.<sup>20</sup>

#### Career Officers

A sizeable minority of quartermasters were career officers. They were the active duty officers in the Old Army at the outbreak of war. They filled 28 percent of the vacancies created by the General Staff Law and comprised roughly 25 percent of all quartermasters who served during the war. An additional 7 percent of quartermasters were officers who served in the Old Army or the Legion of the United States, but left the service before the war. In total, active and former regulars constituted about a third of the Quartermaster Corps. Although not a majority, it belies the notion that the War Department only recruited business talent.<sup>21</sup>

Quartermasters who began their military service in the Additional Military Force of 1808 outnumbered those who entered the U.S. Army in any other single year of the Peace Establishment. For this reason, career officers tended to be younger—in their twenties and thirties—than their citizen-soldier counterparts, who were typically men in their thirties, forties, and fifties. The average career-length for officers of the Old Army

who entered the Quartermaster Department during the War of 1812 was relatively long. Collectively, the career officers in the Quartermaster Department had served an average of seven years as officers, roughly the equivalent of one-third of a lifetime career in the army. Six of the longest-serving career officers include Zebulon M. Pike, Nathaniel Leonard, James House, William Piatt, Amos Stoddard, and John De Barth Walbach. They all received their first commissions during the Quasi-War (1798–1800). Pike, Leonard, House, and Stoddard survived the successive reductions of the Army in 1800 and 1802, but President John Adams chose not to select Piatt and Walbach for retention in the Peace Establishment. Discharge in 1800, however, was not fatal to their careers. In 1801, the president reappointed Piatt and Walbach as lieutenants and both officers continued military service without interruption until the war. Historian William B. Skelton pointed out in his seminal work on the origins of the American military profession that this type of career pattern was unexceptional in the early republic. In analyzing the service records of Army officers, he calculated that a high turnover rate existed among the officer corps of this era—a product of the reductions of the Army in 1800, 1802, 1815, and 1821. The consequent broken career pattern experienced by many officers, he argued, retarded the development of military professionalism in the U.S. Army by producing instability and social fragmentation in the officer corps. Broken career patterns were not typical, however, among those officers who served in the Quartermaster Department during the war. From a sample of twenty-nine career officers, only Piatt and Walbach experienced this type of interruption in their military career. The careers of the other twenty-seven officers were unusually stable.<sup>22</sup>



Holdovers from the Old Army who spent a portion or the entirety of their wartime service in the Quartermaster Department were comparatively more likely to have received a professional military education. Approximately 33 percent of the career officers in the Quartermaster Corps and 9 percent of all quartermasters were graduates of the U.S. Military Academy, at West Point, N.Y. By contrast, West Pointers comprised about 2 percent of the entire officer corps of the war years. The Quartermaster Department was also the most common staff appointment for Military Academy graduates. Ten of the ninety-four West Pointers who served as officers during the war, including the men who graduated with the Class of 1813 and Class of 1814, were quartermasters at some point in their careers. The reason that they became quartermasters is clear. Quartermaster duties involved performing technical functions that required functional literacy in mathematics. Cadets trained in the “useful sciences” could transfer those skills toward bookkeeping and other clerical tasks, which were essential for the effective management of departmental affairs.<sup>23</sup>

Lieutenant Christopher Van De Venter’s ability to understand and work with numbers, a skill he learned at the Military Academy, was apparently an important reason why he became a quartermaster. Upon graduation from West Point, in 1809, Van De Venter received a second lieutenant’s commission with the Regiment of Artillerists. While serving in various garrisons along the Atlantic coast from 1809 to 1812, he acquired logistical experience as an assistant military agent. During that time, Lieutenant Van De Venter conducted extensive business with the Philadelphia depot under William Linnard. Although Linnard had never met the young officer, the accuracy of his transactions and his willingness to follow correct procedures impressed him. Major

Linnard recommended Van De Venter, in April 1812, for an appointment as assistant deputy quartermaster general at Fort Columbus, New York, because of his technical skills and performance.<sup>24</sup>

Van De Venter later explained that he pursued a career in the staff for professional reasons. So, too, did his Academy classmates. They hoped to obtain, he observed, “more knowledge of their profession than they could from merely performing the duties of the line, and thereby render themselves more useful to their country.”<sup>25</sup> His quartermaster career included duties at stationary depots and on the field. In early 1813, he managed a complex shipbuilding operation at Sackets Harbor. Then on March 24, 1813, Secretary Armstrong appointed him deputy quartermaster. For reasons that are unclear, in April 1813, Van De Venter asked for leave to settle his accounts, but retracted the request when Morgan Lewis took command of a division near Fort Niagara and informed him that the spring campaign would begin. He then took up the duties of a field quartermaster, supplying two brigades during the seizure of Fort George, on May 27, and joining Major General Henry Dearborn’s staff a few days later. He took part in the Battle of Stoney Creek on June 6, 1813, which resulted in his capture. Except for an abortive escape attempt, he remained in captivity for the duration of the war.<sup>26</sup>

A former mathematics professor at the Military Academy also secured an appointment as assistant deputy quartermaster. William Amherst Barron was educated at Harvard College, graduating with the Class of 1787 and receiving his A.M. degree in 1792. In the ensuing years, he worked for his *alma mater* as a mathematics tutor. In 1800, he earned a commission with the Second Artillerists and Engineers on the condition that he would instruct fellow officers in mathematics. He then transferred to

the Corps of Engineers when, after the Army's reorganization in 1802, he accepted an assignment as Acting Professor of Mathematics at the Military Academy. Over the course of Major Barron's four years at the Academy, he took command for long stretches as the acting superintendent while the superintendent, Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Williams, was away to supervise the construction of works in New York harbor and attend to other duties. In June 1807, his arrest on charges of gross neglect—allowing academics and discipline to deteriorate—and personal misconduct brought by Lieutenant Charles Gratiot compelled him to resign his commission. A court-martial trial ended in his dismissal from military service. The War of 1812 gave his military career a new lease on life, however. The War Department reappointed him in 1813 with the rank of captain, and he performed the greater part of his service as quartermaster in New York City. Barron was technically a direct appointment, but his expertise in mathematics and his military experience made him well qualified for a quartermaster position.<sup>27</sup>

Career officers formed the professional nucleus of the Quartermaster Corps of the regular army. Among the ten individuals who became quartermaster general with the rank of lieutenant colonel or colonel, four already held commissions in the army when hostilities began. William Piatt was the longest-serving career officer to hold that office. Major Piatt served as a deputy quartermaster general in Major General William Henry Harrison's Northwestern Army. After his promotion to colonel, in 1813, he repaired to New Orleans to take charge of departmental affairs in that city.<sup>28</sup> Simeon Knight—described by General Winfield Scott as a “good disbursing officer”<sup>29</sup>—and James Strode Swearingen had served continuously since 1802 and 1803, respectively. Colonel Knight replaced Piatt in New Orleans and Colonel Swearingen replaced Lieutenant Colonel John

C. Bartlett as the Northwestern Army's quartermaster, after the death of the latter in 1814. Military Academy graduate Justus Post transferred from the Corps of Artillery to fill the quartermaster general vacancy at New York City. The 2:3 ratio of career officers to direct appointments amply demonstrates that the influx of civilians into the Quartermaster Department, from 1813 to 1814, did not mean that the War Department marginalized career officers.<sup>30</sup>

### Officers of the War Years

Twenty-five quartermasters from a sample of 115 received their commissions as line officers during the war, usually as ensigns or lieutenants. A few men with military experience in the Old Army began their wartime service as captains. Thomas L. Butler joined the Additional Army in 1808, but terminated his career in 1811. Upon his return to the army in 1813, he received a captain's commission. Abraham Edwards was a surgeon's mate at Fort Wayne from 1804 to 1810. After a hiatus from the army, he returned as a surgeon under Brigadier General William Hull at Detroit. He then joined General Harrison's Northwestern Army. In April 1814, Edwards replaced Colonel Swearingen as deputy quartermaster at Fort Fayette, Pennsylvania. Quartermasters who began their wartime service as enlisted men were rare. Sergeant John L. Meredith was one of two exceptions. He obtained a commission as an ensign with the Twelfth U.S. Infantry in March 1814. His career as the assistant deputy quartermaster of the Pittsburgh depot, where he supplied the Seventeenth U.S. Infantry at Erie, lasted less than a year. Thomas Porter entered the service as a private soldier in a troop of volunteer light dragoons in October 1812, sustaining serious wounds in the course of two engagements.

In 1814, he accepted a commission—obtained without solicitation—as an ensign with the Sixteenth U.S. Infantry. Secretary of War James Monroe soon thereafter appointed him—again without solicitation—assistant deputy quartermaster at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Monroe may have intended to relieve Captain Porter of physically demanding work while he recovered from his wounds. His exertions as a quartermaster, as noted later by the sponsor of a bill to provide him a pension, were almost certainly arduous enough to ensure that he never fully recovered from those wounds.<sup>31</sup>

Commanding officers on occasion slated particularly trustworthy and proficient line officers for quartermaster duty on the eve of a campaign. John B. Hogan and John G. Camp are illustrative examples. In June 1814, Major General Jacob Jennings Brown removed the Irish-born Major Darby Noon from the position of deputy quartermaster general shortly before the Left Division's invasion of Canada. Noon had served as a militia quartermaster under Major General Peter Buell Porter, the quartermaster general of the New York militia, and received his commission in the regular army in 1813. Brown determined that Noon's demonstrable bravery was not sufficient, however, for continued service as a quartermaster. He sent a letter to Secretary Armstrong requesting that he promote both Captain Camp and Captain Hogan to the rank of major.<sup>32</sup> He described the former as "a meritorious officer" and noted the latter was with him at the encampment of French Mills, where he "rendered his country important services."<sup>33</sup> Brown intended that they both serve under him as deputy quartermasters general for the upcoming campaign. He ordered them to find sufficient transportation to enable his division to cross the Niagara River on short notice, a task that they were able to fulfill.

Their dedication elicited praise from the general, who remarked, “Such men are rare in the quartermaster’s department.”<sup>34</sup>

John G. Camp was unusual in that he began his military career as a midshipman in the U.S. Navy in 1809. He resigned his commission in 1811. When the war commenced, he received a commission as first lieutenant in the Twelfth Infantry Regiment, followed by a promotion to captain the next year. Even though Camp had no prior experience as a staff officer, his performance during the Niagara campaign justified Brown’s confidence in him.<sup>35</sup>

In 1812, John B. Hogan received his commission as ensign in the Twentieth Infantry and a promotion to second lieutenant. In 1813, Hogan accepted his appointment as assistant deputy quartermaster general in the Ninth Military District.<sup>36</sup> At the Albany depot, Quartermaster General Robert Swartwout was able to observe Hogan’s work habits directly. He considered him as “an excellent & valuable officer.”<sup>37</sup>

Career officers and officers of the war years often obtained their appointments to the Quartermaster Department often without the aid of a patron. President Madison nominated a number of officers who did not solicit an appointment or who nominated themselves. Successful self-nominations kept political patronage from completely dominating the selection process. In June 1812, Captain James W. Bryson wrote to Secretary Eustis to nominate himself for the position of assistant deputy quartermaster general at Newport, Kentucky. Eustis officially approved Bryson’s appointment, which the latter accepted in July.<sup>38</sup> In April 1812, Captain Samuel Perkins also successfully appealed to Eustis for an appointment without providing any endorsements.<sup>39</sup> In 1812, William Swan did not lobby for his retention at the New Orleans depot. When Secretary

Eustis surprised Swan by appointing him deputy quartermaster general in the wartime establishment, the latter attributed the move to Eustis's "goodness."<sup>40</sup> Professional soldiers benefited from these alternatives to political patronage far more than the men appointed directly from civil life did. A flexible selection process opened the vacancies to appointments based on merit.

The War Department did not marginalize career officers and officers commissioned during the war when it awarded promotions within the Quartermaster Department. The War Department promoted only nine quartermasters (out of 115) to higher rank within the department. That included promoting four assistant deputy quartermasters to deputy quartermaster, and six deputy quartermasters to quartermaster general. Career officers and civilian appointees received promotions in roughly equal measure. The officers promoted from captain to major, for example, included two officers of the war years, one career officer, and one civilian appointee.

### Direct Appointments

The War Department opened the new vacancies in the Quartermaster Department to civilians out of a sense of urgency and necessity. During the first year of the war, the staffing of the Quartermaster Department lagged considerably behind the expansion of the line. Harried deputy quartermasters routinely requested permission from the War Department to hire qualified clerks in order to lessen their workload and often mentioned the need for an assistant deputy quartermaster for their own department and for nearby posts. Moreover, the addition of new regiments to the Additional Military Force in January 1813 threatened to compound the shortage in staff. Educated men from the

professional classes and wealthy men from the private sector constituted a readily available pool of applicants.

In May 1812, the Senate began the process of appealing to potential recruits from the civilian world by considering the repeal of the prohibitions against conducting trade that the Act of March 28, 1812, imposed upon quartermasters and commissaries. The penalty for conducting trade, owning a sea vessel, purchasing public lands or property, or using public securities for private use under that law was removal from office, a fine of \$3,000, and a maximum imprisonment of five years.<sup>41</sup> The Senate also debated a motion relieving the Quartermaster General and Commissary General of liability for the money that passed through the hands of subordinate quartermasters. Morgan Lewis seems to have made his acceptance of the quartermaster generalship conditional on the Senate's passage of the latter amendment.<sup>42</sup> The congressional clerk described the debate over the measure. "On the one hand," he noted, "it was said that the restrictions were so rigid that no competent men would accept the offices; and on the other hand that the restrictions were necessary, usual, and moderate, and therefore ought not to be dispensed with to gratify any particular person or persons who might be candidates for office."<sup>43</sup> Both amendments, which struck out the sixth and third sections of the Act of March 1812, respectively, passed the Senate despite strong initial opposition.<sup>44</sup>

There is no evidence that potential recruits from the business world would have declined their appointments to the department had Congress continued to curtail quartermasters' ability to conduct business while in office. During their military service, most businessmen-quartermasters ceased engagement in their private affairs as a matter of course. When they felt compelled to attend to their businesses, they tendered their



resignation. James Morrison, a military contractor and colonel of U.S. Volunteers, seems to have been an exception. He continued selling rations to the Northwestern Army while performing his duties as its quartermaster. Remarkably, neither Colonel Morrison nor General Harrison considered the potential for gross conflicts of interest as a bar to Morrison's appointment. Whether or not the change in the law relating to trade made a difference to recruitment outcomes, the men appointed directly from civil life outnumbered the military officeholders. They filled a majority (60 percent) of vacancies in the Quartermaster Corps and constituted 62 percent of appointments to deputy quartermaster. Out of a sample of seventy-nine officers who served as assistant deputy quartermasters, forty-two (53 percent) were direct appointments.<sup>45</sup>

Quartermasters appointed directly from civil life were overwhelmingly businessmen. This occupational class included merchants, bankers, speculators, and contractors. They were not shopkeepers from the middling classes, but men of property who could draw on their extensive financial and political connections in the performance of their duties. The civilian and military leadership alike considered them attractive candidates because of their claim to special skillsets and influence that would prove useful in the Quartermaster Department. These were men with knowledge of accounting and experience handling vast sums of money, who would presumably be able to rein in departmental expenditures.

Major General Henry Dearborn was a proponent of recruiting business talent for the Quartermaster Department. Early in the war, he pressed Secretary Eustis on the need for administrative reforms. "Permit me to remind you of the absolute necessity of an improvement in the organization of the Staff Departments, and especially in that of the

Quartermaster Genl, or [it] will be utterly impossible,” he warned, “for an army to perform an active campaign with any probability of success.”<sup>46</sup> Part of the solution, in his estimation, was to appoint a quartermaster general who was himself a businessman. Dearborn advised Secretary of War Armstrong, Eustis’s successor, to keep this fact in mind when selecting Quartermaster General Morgan Lewis’s replacement. He insisted, “It is indispensable that the Q.M.G. should be altogether a Man of business.”<sup>47</sup>

Morgan Lewis possessed relevant experience as quartermaster general of the Northern Department during the Revolutionary War. Although he continued to be interested in military affairs during the intervening thirty years of peace, his professional experience was that of a jurist and politician. He was neither a military professional nor an entrepreneur. Lewis held a variety of appointed and electoral posts in New York State. He served as an assemblyman in the state legislature, a common pleas court judge, the state’s attorney general, and the state’s Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He defeated Aaron Burr in New York’s gubernatorial election of 1804, but was defeated himself in his reelection bid by Daniel D. Tompkins in 1807. In 1812, Lewis declined President Madison’s offer to be the new Secretary of War, accepting instead the nomination for the position of quartermaster general. Although Lewis believed he was qualified to command an army, and would have preferred a field command, the administration’s adoption of his proposals to reform the Quartermaster Department persuaded him to accept a staff appointment instead. As quartermaster general, however, Lewis was indifferent to the tasks necessary to keep his department running efficiently. In March 1813, Secretary Armstrong replaced Lewis with Robert Swartwout, a thirty-

three year-old entrepreneur, and placed the former in command of a division in the Northern Department.<sup>48</sup>

The appointment of Robert Swartwout as quartermaster general anticipated a significant shift in the War Department's pattern of quartermaster appointments. Like Morgan Lewis, Swartwout had extensive political experience. During the Jefferson Administration, he was part of Aaron Burr's faction in the New York State Assembly. Unlike Lewis, however, Swartwout was also a prominent businessman and speculator. He became a primary stockholder for the Cayuga Bridge Company, which secured a charter to build what was then the longest bridge in the United States, in the Finger Lakes region of New York. In 1810, he opened a mercantile firm with his brother John. Swartwout's military service did not begin until the War of 1812 when he secured an appointment as a colonel in the New York militia and then as commander of the volunteer U.S. Fourth Brigade. Swartwout was a more energetic quartermaster general than Lewis, but he could not overcome structural deficiencies of the U.S. Army's logistical system. The failures of the contract system of supply, the poor national infrastructure, and the chronic shortage of funds prevented him from becoming a truly effective quartermaster general. Nevertheless, Secretary of War James Monroe—Secretary Armstrong's successor—could not spare Swartwout's services and rejected his request to resign. Swartwout remained the head of the Quartermaster Department until its dissolution after the war.<sup>49</sup>

The careers of incoming quartermasters resembled that of Robert Swartwout more than the political career of Morgan Lewis. Reliable information regarding the prewar careers of quartermasters appointed from civil life is currently available for twenty-two

men out of a sample of seventy. Of those twenty-two, however, seventeen were primarily merchants, entrepreneurs, bankers, military agents, or professional clerks. Only two quartermasters—Thomas P. Baldwin and William Christy—were lawyers by trade. One was a farmer and two others were political officeholders. Several businessmen were involved in local or state politics, and one of the politicians dabbled in business. Benjamin Romaine was a prominent figure in Tammany Hall politics, but he also engaged in some dubious business ventures. In 1806, Romaine became a political liability to the Democratic-Republican Party because of his role in a corrupt land deal that involved the acquisition of valuable real estate in the center of New York City for next to nothing. The Common Council removed him from the office of New York City Controller.<sup>50</sup>

The letters of political patrons and commanding officers who wrote on behalf of a trusted quartermaster or a candidate for a quartermaster position invariably mentioned their business credentials. Abraham Baldwin Fannin was a cotton merchant who currently held the position of deputy quartermaster general in Savannah, Georgia.<sup>51</sup> Governor Peter Early of Georgia suggested that the War Department allow him to accompany a detachment of raw recruits on their way to General Jackson's headquarters. He contended that Fannin's "experience and capacity for business" would prove valuable to a "detachment of militia where officers and staff will be for the first time in actual service."<sup>52</sup>

Business experience was the most important criterion even for career civil officeholders. The War Department commissioned Elisha Jenkins in 1813 as a colonel with orders to take charge of the Quartermaster Department's affairs in the Ninth Military

District.<sup>53</sup> Governor Daniel D. Tompkins's recommendation letter for the incumbent secretary of state for New York emphasized that Jenkins had been "bred a Merchant."<sup>54</sup> Tompkins was referring to his role as a partner in the family-owned Hudson River shipping firm Thomas Jenkins & Sons. Jenkins spent a considerable portion of his time operating the business from Dunkirk, France. From 1798 to 1812, he held a series of administrative positions in both local and state government in New York, including that of Columbia County treasurer and New York State comptroller.<sup>55</sup> Governor Tompkins personally vouched for Jenkins's character, assuring Secretary Eustis, "In point of intelligence, respectability, integrity and responsibility," he knew of no man better qualified for that office.<sup>56</sup> Quartermaster General Swartwout also held Jenkins's abilities in high esteem, and expressed relief when he learned that it was Jenkins who would replace Anthony Lamb as quartermaster general at the Albany depot.<sup>57</sup>

Professional clerks figured prominently among the new quartermasters, second only to merchants. Colonel James Thomas, who took charge of the department at Burlington, Vermont, acquired experience as a clerk in the Court of Hancock County, Massachusetts, in the brief interlude between his resignation from the army in early 1812, and his acceptance of an appointment as deputy quartermaster with the rank of major in September 1812. Major James Rees, one of the quartermasters of the Left Division, spent the Revolutionary War as a clerk in the counting house of the financier Robert Morris. Morris was apparently so fond of him that he authorized him to conduct confidential business. Captain Robert Patterson was a clerk in a Philadelphia counting house, as well, and became a Pennsylvania militia colonel after Congress declared war on Great Britain. Captain Marshal Jenkins (brother of Elisha) served as Clerk of Columbia

County. There he kept the county records and performed clerical work for the Inferior Court of Common Pleas.<sup>58</sup>

Late in the war, deputy quartermasters would occasionally fill vacancies with professional clerks. These quartermasters, hard-pressed by the onerous workload of the department, made use of the provision in the regulations of March 1812 that allowed the department to hire clerks with a salary of no more than \$1,500 per year. The request to hire a clerk was usually one of the first orders of business for a new post quartermaster. For a few deputy quartermasters, a clerk-hire was ideal since the appointee was already familiar with departmental affairs at the post. Thus, the departure of the incumbent would not disrupt the operations of the department. Major William Swan appointed Robert Brock as his assistant deputy quartermaster explicitly for this reason. When William B. Lewis, the assistant deputy quartermaster general at Nashville, Tennessee, informed Secretary of War James Monroe that he intended to resign from his office, he requested that he appoint James Camp to replace him. Camp served as Lewis's clerk and attended to the department's financial affairs while Lewis was away from the post.<sup>59</sup>

Biographical information obtained from the correspondence of the secretary of war, army registers, government documents, family and town histories, newspapers, and memorials, frequently describe the businessmen-in-uniform as "gentlemen," "men of prominence," and "men of property." The officers of the Quartermaster Department were, on average, much wealthier than the officer corps as a whole. A significant proportion of quartermasters were relatively older men, who were established members of their communities. John Bleecker, for example, was fifty-one years old at the time of his appointment as deputy quartermaster general at Burlington, Vermont. Not much

information is available about his life, except that he was a landholder in West Troy, New York, and married into the wealthy Van Rensselaer family. Thomas Melville, Jr., a deputy quartermaster at the Pittsfield depot, returned to his native Massachusetts in 1812 after amassing a fortune in banking during his twenty-one-year residence in France. His French wife's well-connected family enabled him to form close bonds with the merchant elite, which facilitated his success in banking and other commercial ventures. James Taylor was in his early forties when he served as quartermaster under Generals William Hull and William Henry Harrison. Before the war, he acquired the title to his father's land in present-day Newport, Kentucky, and set about making his fortune from government contracts, using the profits to invest in sawmills and gristmills, and from land speculation in Ohio and Kentucky.<sup>60</sup>

Direct appointments for young men were not common in the Quartermaster Department. In these cases, one can determine their social class by the occupation of the father. Lacking this kind of information, one can gauge an officer's social status by his level of education. Septimius Tyler is a case in point. His father Daniel Tyler was a leading citizen of Brooklyn, Connecticut. The older Tyler served as a militia adjutant under his father-in-law Major General Israel Putnam, during the Revolutionary War and became a prosperous farmer after the war. Septimius was the seventh child of "Old Captain Tyler."<sup>61</sup> He entered Yale College in 1808, graduating with an A.M. in 1813. The career of Tyler's father and his own elite education are evidence of a life in the upper-tier of the local elite. After receiving a captain's commission in 1814, Septimius Tyler served for eighteen months as assistant deputy quartermaster general at Norfolk, Providence, and New London. In June 1815, the army terminated his military service

with an honorable discharge, along with almost every other civilian appointee of the Quartermaster Department. In December 1816, Tyler obtained a diplomatic position. Secretary of State James Monroe appointed him agent of the United States to the Kingdom of Haiti, charging him with protecting the commercial and property rights of American citizens residing there. On the voyage home from this mission in 1817, Tyler succumbed to yellow fever.<sup>62</sup>

Quartermasters were more likely to come from the elite of society than the rest of the officer corps because few men had the financial means or connections to submit a bond signed by two sureties. When a man accepted an appointment as quartermaster, he included a bond along with his signed oath of office. The purpose of the bond, according to the Act of March 28, 1812, was to “ensure the faithful expenditure of all public moneys, and accounting for all public property.”<sup>63</sup> Quartermasters would redeem their security when they settled their accounts upon discharge from the service. Unlike the quartermaster general of the department, they were liable for unexplained losses sustained at their depot. The secretary of war fixed the amount of the bond, which could range from about \$500 to \$10,000. For example, Captain Satterlee Clark, a graduate of the Military Academy, submitted a bond of \$500, the equivalent of over a years’ salary for an assistant deputy quartermaster.<sup>64</sup> The secretary of war could fix a relatively small sum for officers whom he considered trustworthy. Upon accepting his appointment, Major William Linnard expressed gratitude to Secretary Eustis for placing such confidence in him, which he assumed was the case based on the low amount of the bond.<sup>65</sup> When submitting the bond, officers invariably vouched for the character and wealth of their sureties. Christopher Van De Venter noted that the surety who submitted



his bond was his father and William Amherst Barron described his bondsman simply as “a respectable gentleman” and “a man of property.”<sup>66</sup> William Linnard felt the need to provide details regarding his sureties’ wealth and standing in their respective communities.<sup>67</sup>

Members of the elite could also hope to obtain an appointment in the department on the recommendation of a prominent relative. Nepotism seems to have played a role in a few appointments. The most clear-cut example of nepotism was that of John Coles Payne, President Madison’s ne’er-do-well brother-in-law. The War Department rejected Payne’s solicitation for an appointment in the line because of his poor physical condition. He then secured a position as assistant deputy quartermaster general in Clarksburg, Virginia. He was able to do so despite his lack of business credentials and a career—arranged by James Madison—in Tripoli as secretary to the American consul that ended in failure.<sup>68</sup> Gregory Dillon began his service in the department on March 4, 1814, as a clerk-hire for his father-in-law Major Benjamin Romaine, who was then serving as deputy quartermaster general in New York.<sup>69</sup> Romaine attested to Dillon’s character and assured the secretary of war that he was capable of running the department in the event of his absence. “Without his aid,” Romaine contended, “my situation must have been rendered extremely embarrassing, if not intolerably so; not having a Book nor scarcely a paper to guide me in the office at my entering on the duties of it.”<sup>70</sup>

Familial connections also seem to have played an outsized role in the career success of Samuel Brown, a brother of Major General Jacob Brown. After the declaration of war, Brown became a quartermaster in the New York militia. His entrepreneurial bent and knowledge of the countryside made him a desirable candidate

for the Quartermaster Department.<sup>71</sup> Like his brother, he made the transition from amateur soldier in the war's first year to a professional in the regular army. From April 1813 to June 1815, he served as deputy quartermaster general at Sackets Harbor and as a field quartermaster for the Northern Army. His performance, however, was inconsistent. In a case of gross negligence, he allowed 10 to 15 boxes of summer and winter clothing in his care to deteriorate. Assistant Commissary of Purchases Mathew Irwin complained, "[I]nstead of storing, Mr. Brown suffered the whole to be exposed to the inclement months of October & November; and as a necessary consequences, all or nearly all, sustained irreparable damage." Brown denied that it was his responsibility to attend to the cache of clothing. When Irwin produced the secretary of war's order stating otherwise, the clothing nevertheless "remained exposed for several weeks after."<sup>72</sup> After the army reduction of 1815, Major Brown was one of only two direct appointments in the Quartermaster Department (the other being Colonel Linnard) who the retention board decided to retain in the postwar establishment. Since the performance reports for the Northern Division—the basis upon which the retention board made its decisions—are not extant, the reasons for his retention are opaque. General Jacob Brown did note, in an official letter to his brother, that Secretary of War Alexander Dallas used his influence on his behalf. Samuel Brown continued his military service in the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office, but the War Department soon thereafter reassigned him as the principal quartermaster in the Northern Division under the command of General Brown.<sup>73</sup>

The practice of selecting men with wealth and financial connections for the Quartermaster Department proved fortuitous in a way. When the federal government ran out of funds, quartermasters often paid for supplies from their own pockets or obtained

loans on their own private credit. The Quartermaster Department experienced a shortage of funds for the entirety of the war. Nearly every depot reported to the War Department that the lack of funds caused difficulties with purchasing supplies, paying creditors, and arranging contracts for transportation. The problem worsened when the United States defaulted on the national debt and many banks suspended specie payments. The crisis in American public finance paralyzed the operations of the department. Given the department's precarious financial situation, it is not obvious that military knowledge would have always been more useful for quartermasters assigned to the stationary depots than financial connections.

William Berkeley Lewis received his appointment as quartermaster of the Tennessee Volunteers and as assistant deputy quartermaster of the regular army at Nashville due to his financial connections and his close friendship to Andrew Jackson. Lewis, a state land official and lawyer by profession, added to his property holdings by marrying the daughter of a Tennessee planter and land speculator in August 1813. He had the means to acquire supplies on his own personal credit if the state and federal government did not provide the necessary funds. When Governor Willie Blount failed to raise the money to supply Jackson's volunteers in 1813, Lewis secured advances on supplies from local merchants and negotiated a loan with the Nashville Bank. Although his efforts succeeded, it also caused him to go into debt.<sup>74</sup> Local reputation was a factor in at least one other appointment. Major General William Henry Harrison alluded to John C. Bartlett's prominence in his home state when he recommended that the field-commissary should replace James Morrison as deputy quartermaster general of the

Northwestern Army. He wrote to Secretary Armstrong, noting that Bartlett had the “confidence of the western country, particularly of Kentucky.”<sup>75</sup>

The connections elites enjoyed made them effective recruiters, and they routinely provided the department with lists of “gentlemen” for both the quartermaster and commissary departments. They could also provide accurate information about the availability of local supplies. General Harrison explicitly mentioned, in his recommendation letter, Bartlett’s “intimate knowledge of the western country and its resources”<sup>76</sup> as an important qualification for the position of deputy quartermaster general. Commanding officers often cited such knowledge as a point in a candidate’s favor. For example, Morgan Lewis recommended an appointment for Captain James Thomas as assistant deputy quartermaster in his division, in part, because he was “well acquainted with the account of the Country”<sup>77</sup> near the Niagara frontier.

Men who aspired to serve in the Quartermaster Department made a point of noting their ties to a region when soliciting an appointment. Major Thomas Melville, Jr., officially a commissary and superintendent of supplies at Cantonment Pittsfield, Massachusetts, justified his unauthorized work as the *de facto* deputy quartermaster of General Dearborn’s Northern Army based on his value to the Quartermaster Department. He attempted to mollify the Commissary General of Purchases, Callender Irvine, by arguing that his knowledge of the resources in southern New England was proving useful to General Dearborn.<sup>78</sup>

When Joseph Wheaton pursued a captain’s commission in the Quartermaster Department, he sold himself to the War Department as an expert on the maritime provinces of Canada. Wheaton, a native of Nova Scotia, fought for American

independence during the Revolution, serving in the Rhode Island line as an officer from March 1779 to December 1783.<sup>79</sup> His father, Caleb Wheaton, disinherited him for joining the “damned Yankee rebels.” An interlocutor later wrote to Wheaton on his father’s behalf. “You have thrown yourself from your father’s favor,” he admonished the younger Wheaton, “who mentioned in his will his poignant regret at your disloyalty and want of filial affection to your King and country, and consequently cut you off with [sic] a shilling.”<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, Wheaton maintained ties with Canada after the war. In December 1784, he lost his merchant vessel and its cargo in a wreck off the coast of Nova Scotia.<sup>81</sup> He remained in the province for four years before returning to the United States.<sup>82</sup> Wheaton’s allies alluded to these ties with Canada in pointing to his “knowledge of the enemy and the country,”<sup>83</sup> when they endorsed his nomination. He reiterated his acquaintance with the Maritime Provinces in duplicate letters to Secretary Eustis and President Madison. In order to prove the point, he gave a lengthy description of the population, roads, rivers, natural resources, and defenses of the region surrounding the city of St. John’s in New Brunswick. He added that he would be happy to supply the administration with more information if it planned to invade Canada. He noted, “I was at the taking of the City of St. Johns in the month of June 1775 and have often vissited [sic] it Since.” He concluded that the seizure of this “depot of British Merchandise” was a feasible military objective, asserting, “One Regiment of Infantry of 1,000 men, three companies of Artillery—with the volunteers of Passamaquada Machias, and there vicinities would constitute a Sufficent force to conquer, and Maintain that invaluable Country.”<sup>84</sup>

The vast majority of direct appointments to the Quartermaster Department worked in the military districts where they resided at the outbreak of war. Out of a sample of thirty-three civilians-turned-quartermasters, the War Department assigned twenty-seven (82 percent) to depots that were in the same state as their place of residence. The Quartermaster Department found men knowledgeable of local conditions useful, but quartermasters also preferred to work close to home. James Thomas of Massachusetts was a case in point. He began his military service with the Additional Army of 1808 as a captain in the Regiment of Light Dragoons. When he resigned his commission in November 1811, he offered his services as a military agent where he resided, at Castine, Maine. He made the case for his appointment because of military necessity, citing the absence of an agent within 100 miles of the post. In September 1812, however, he accepted a direct appointment as deputy quartermaster general with the rank of major and performed his duties at Albany and Buffalo. The following year, however, he secured a transfer to the Ninth Military District, with headquarters at Burlington, Vermont, and served at that depot until the end of the war as quartermaster general with the rank of colonel.<sup>85</sup>

William B. Skelton, in his study of high army leadership during the War of 1812, observed that the geographical distribution of officers above the rank of captain strongly correlated with the distribution of the free population, as recorded in the Census of 1810. He also argued that the slightly overrepresented West and South Atlantic sections in the officer corps reflected the war's popularity among Westerners and the overrepresentation of Southern Congressmen in the U.S. House of Representatives owing to the three-fifths clause in the Constitution. Perhaps because there were practical reasons for keeping

quartermasters close to home, the geographical distribution of the Quartermaster Corps correlated even more strongly with the distribution of the free population. The underrepresentation of the New England and Mid-Atlantic sections among the high-ranking officers in the line was not the case in the Quartermaster Corps. Quartermasters recruited from New England comprised 22.5 percent of those who served in the Quartermaster Department while those who hailed from the Mid-Atlantic States comprised 29.4 percent. The percentage of the free population for both sections was 24.4 percent and 33 percent, respectively. Quartermasters were slightly less overrepresented in the south and west than the rest of the officer corps. Quartermasters from the south Atlantic States comprised 31.3 percent of the Quartermaster Corps, and those from the west comprised 16.7 percent. The percentage of the free population was 27.8 percent and 14.9 percent, respectively. The importance of New Orleans as a supply depot probably accounts for the west's overrepresentation among quartermasters.<sup>86</sup>

When Major General William Henry Harrison recommended John C. Bartlett for the position of deputy quartermaster general, he reassured Secretary of War John Armstrong that Bartlett's lack of military experience would not hinder his performance in office. A quartermaster in Kentucky and Ohio, he reasoned, did not "require so much military information as is necessary for the officer at the head of that department in the other sections of the union."<sup>87</sup> The pattern of appointments to the Quartermaster Department indicates that the War Department may have shared Harrison's judgment. The War Department chose to fill the vacancies in the relatively quiet military districts with businessmen-in-uniform or with career officers who specifically requested such a posting. Most appointees did not object. In November 1814, however, Captain

Septimius Tyler expressed his dissatisfaction to Secretary Armstrong about his relative idleness at the Norfolk depot. "There appears to be no want of an officer of my grade in the Qr Mr Genl Dept,"<sup>88</sup> he complained. He suggested that he be reassigned after he completed the construction of huts for the troops in his district, and listed district numbers one through four as his preferred stations, as well as the Ninth Military District and the Tenth Military District (Washington, D.C.). Two weeks later, he again inquired about a reassignment while noting that the commanding officer of the Fifth Military District, Brigadier General Moses Porter, did not wish him to remain at the post. Tyler soon thereafter received a transfer to the Ninth Military District.<sup>89</sup>

Although the officials who appointed new quartermasters did not see the lack of military experience among civilian candidates as disqualifying, political patrons and candidates behaved as if such experience was all-important for entrance into the Quartermaster Department. In letters of solicitation and recommendation, a candidate's service in the Revolutionary War received as much attention as any other qualification. When William Linnard solicited an appointment to the Quartermaster Department, he pointed to his experience as military agent, but also felt the need to add that he was not "an idle spectator"<sup>90</sup> during the Revolutionary War. Tennessee Senator Joseph Anderson and William Anderson attested to Joseph Wheaton's service in the Rhode Island line in recommending him for a commission. They emphasized his martial qualities exclusively, testifying that they personally observed Wheaton's performance at the Siege of Yorktown. They noted that he was "active, intelligent, judicious in discipline" as an officer and brave and daring as a soldier. They concluded, "He has exchanged lead and steel with enemies of his country before, and is not a man to flinch in the face of a foe."<sup>91</sup>



In an attached testimonial, the signatories—friends of Wheaton—pointed to Wheaton’s constitution at camp, which demonstrated that he was suited for the soldier’s life. His former commanding officer, Colonel Marinus Willet, and Major General Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee sent the War Department separate testimonials on his behalf.<sup>92</sup>

Seven men who became quartermasters during the War of 1812 were veterans of the Revolutionary War. Only one—Stephen Ranney—served in the regular army continuously since the Revolution. The remaining veterans were all prominent businessmen during the interwar years. Morgan Lewis was not the only officer who served as a wartime quartermaster—Captain Abraham Ten Eyck had experience as a regimental paymaster and quartermaster with the rank of lieutenant in the First Albany Regiment. After the nation won its independence, Ten Eyck became a partner in the glassworks firm, Thomas Mather & Co., in Coeymans, New York. During the War of 1812, he served as assistant deputy quartermaster in the Ninth Military District. Major Paul Bentalou, the deputy quartermaster at Baltimore, began his military career as an officer in the French Royal Army. In September 1776, he moved to America to join the Rebel cause, receiving a second lieutenant’s commission in the German Regiment. From 1778 to 1781, he served as a captain in the First Troop of Pulaski’s Legion and became a close aide to Casimir Pulaski. He suffered a wound at the Siege of Savannah, on October 9, 1779. After Bentalou’s retirement from military service on January 1, 1781, he engaged in trade with Saint-Domingue, first as a smuggler of slaves and later as partner in a Bordeaux mercantile firm. In 1802, he relocated to Baltimore and started his own eponymous trading company.<sup>93</sup>

Applicants perceived that wartime service added such prestige to one's credentials that one apparently believed that his father's Revolutionary War service would help him in his pursuit of a commission. Thomas Melville, Jr., asked Secretary of War William Eustis to consider the Revolutionary War service of his father Thomas Melville, Sr., in his decision. Melville described his father as "one of the Indians who destroyed the tea in Boston, & an officer thro' the whole term of the Revolutionary War,"<sup>94</sup> making sure to note that his father passed on those sentiments. Quartermasters whose fathers, grandfathers, and uncles served as militia leaders or Continental Army officers were common. A few examples will suffice. William Piatt's father, William, Sr., was a captain in the First New Jersey Regiment, and James Strode Swearingen's paternal grandfather Van was a captain in the Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment. Sons of private soldiers included Gustavus Loomis, whose father, Beriah Loomis, served in William Heaton's company of Vermont militia from 1780 to 1781, and Hezekiah Johnson, whose father Sylvanus Johnson, was a soldier in the Connecticut Line. Captain John Barney, assistant deputy quartermaster at Baltimore, was the son of the illustrious naval officer, Commodore Joshua Barney. The father and namesake of Hopley Yeaton, the assistant deputy quartermaster at Fort Nelson, Virginia, became the first commissioned officer in the revenue marine service, in 1791. Ethan Augustus Allen, a graduate of the Military Academy's Class of 1806 and assistant deputy quartermaster at Fort Massac, Illinois, during the war, was the son of the commander of the Green Mountain Boys. Joseph Wheaton, as the son of a captain in the British service during the Revolution, seems to have been unique. Quartermasters of the War of 1812 were also founders of family

military traditions, as quite a few of their sons became graduates of the Military Academy and pursued military careers of their own.<sup>95</sup>

Few civilian appointees acquired military experience in the thirty years between the Revolution and the War of 1812. Only five men out of the seventy appointed directly from civil life once held commissions in the regular army, four in the Old Army and one (William Cox) in the Legion of the United States. Elite members of society were more likely to have occupied leadership roles in the militia. At least six quartermasters were once militia officers or volunteer officers during the first two years of the war. The inexperience of civilians-turned-quartermasters with military affairs mirrored the broader neglect of military affairs in American society.

#### Partisan Affiliation

Those who solicited appointments to the Quartermaster Department or who recommended others not only believed in the value of Revolutionary War service to an applicant's prospects, but also believed there was a political litmus test for entry as well. Roughly, 90 percent of the officer corps during the War of 1812 consisted of Republicans. This lopsided outcome in the process of officer procurement was the result of President Jefferson's purge of Federalist officers after Congress's passage of the Military Peace Establishment Act of 1802, and the near-monopoly that the sons of prominent Republicans had on officers' commissions in the Old Army and on appointments to West Point.<sup>96</sup> Most quartermasters with an unambiguous political allegiance were Republicans. For example, quartermasters elected to political office in New York—Robert Swartwout, Morgan Lewis, Elisha Jenkins, Benjamin Romaine, and

Anthony Lamb—were all Republicans. Identifying the political affiliation of quartermasters who were not involved in politics before the war is problematic. Mentions of political leanings appear in the context of personal conflict, as when Benjamin Romaine accused William Amherst Barron of making common cause with various factions to remove him from office.<sup>97</sup> Sometimes candidates for a commission declared their affiliation with the president's party in the hope that it would redound to their benefit. Anthony Lamb, for instance, reminded the secretary of war of his political loyalties when he solicited an appointment to the Quartermaster Department.<sup>98</sup> Thomas Melville, Jr., likewise described himself as a "zealous & firm supporter" of the Madison Administration in his own solicitation letter. He also noted that his duty to the "interests of the government" and the "welfare of the army" was more apparent than his politics. He boasted, "I dare flatter myself, that I have merited the approbation of those who may even differ from me, in political sentiments."<sup>99</sup>

There is no evidence that President Madison or the U.S. Senate consistently sought to block the appointment of Federalists to the officer corps. The case of Joseph Wheaton is instructive. Republican critics charged that Wheaton's loyalties to the United States were suspect, and that he was a possible crypto-Federalist or even a British sympathizer. Nevertheless, Wheaton received an appointment as assistant deputy quartermaster with the rank of captain on April 28, 1813. President Madison nominated him for the position of deputy quartermaster on October 14, 1814. When Congress adjourned, he made Wheaton one of his recess appointments. After Congress reconvened, Representative Henry Clay informed Wheaton that the House approved but that the Senate had yet to vote. On January 30, 1815, however, the Senate rejected his

appointment by a vote of ten to sixteen. Wheaton was only one of two quartermasters of the war years—the other being George Wadsworth—whose appointment was “negatived” by the Senate. Although there is no record of the Senate debate on the question, a rejection on political grounds is unlikely because the yeas and nays did not break down along party lines. Wheaton’s conduct as quartermaster is a more plausible reason for his rejection. In 1813, General Harrison suspected Captain Wheaton of embezzling a portion of the funds allocated toward transporting supplies and ordnance from Pittsburgh to the Northwestern Army. Colonel Bartlett likewise alerted the War Department that Wheaton’s handling of such funds was highly irregular. Wheaton’s history of questionable business dealings, including his failure in 1806 to deliver on a contract with the U.S. postmaster to construct a postal road in Georgia, lends credence to the claims.<sup>100</sup>

Although there is no evidence that Wheaton or Wadsworth were the victims of a partisan litmus test, or that President Madison prioritized the nomination of Republicans, the correspondence of quartermasters and commissaries indicates that they thought Federalist political leanings would be a liability for any candidate. When Robert Swarwout accepted his appointment as quartermaster general, he submitted a short list to the War Department of men he thought would make good quartermasters. Regarding Charles F. Nichols, whose politics Swartwout described as “moderately federal,” he assured Secretary of War John Armstrong that Nichols nonetheless believed the war was “just and necessary.”<sup>101</sup> Nichols did not receive a commission.

In August 1814, Brigadier General Thomas Humphrey Cushing, commander of the Second Military District, appointed Hezekiah Goddard, a Connecticut militia

quartermaster, on his own initiative to the position of deputy quartermaster of the district. Once Goddard arrived, he would relieve the commissary at Norwich, Connecticut, from his quartermaster duties and become acting quartermaster until the President sent his approval. Cushing notified the War Department that Goddard was a Federalist who opposed the war, but justified his action because the young man possessed talent.<sup>102</sup> Elisha Tracy, the commissary at the post, vociferously opposed the appointment on political grounds. "I know of no qualification this Goddard possesseth to intitle him to the confidence of the government," he asserted. While noting that he did not object to the nomination of a moderate Federalist Goddard was, in his estimation, was "a vulgar low man," who was used by the Federalist Party as "a common sewer for the lowest purposes." As evidence, he painted a picture of a man who "publicly stalks the streets at all times using language respecting the President, Heads of Departments, & majority of Congress; that is . . . the language of a Billingsgate."<sup>103</sup> Goddard remained in his position, but there is no record of him ever receiving a commission.<sup>104</sup>

#### Attrition Rates

The Quartermaster Department experienced a low attrition rate relative to the entire officer corps. Historian J. C. A. Stagg, in his analysis of officer performance during the War of 1812, calculated that the attrition rate in the officer corps, including resignations, deaths, and dismissals within one year of an officer's appointment, was 23 percent over the course of the entire war, rising steadily from 10 percent in 1812 to 38 percent in 1814. By comparison, resignations, deaths, dismissals, or transfers of quartermasters within one year of their appointment constituted only 20 percent of the

Quartermaster Corps. Stagg also compared the names on the army registers of 1813 and 1814 to get a sense of the officer turnover rate after passage of the controversial legislation, in January 1813, that weakened the seniority system of promotion in the regiments. His tally, taken from a geographically representative sample of eight infantry regiments, showed an annual turnover rate of 41.4 percent.<sup>105</sup>

The legislation did not affect officers of the Quartermaster Corps and there is no recorded instance of a quartermaster resigning in protest, as was the case in the regiments. On the contrary, the Quartermaster Corps became more stable after the enactment of the General Staff Law of March 1813. Thirty-five percent of those who appeared in Hamersly's list of quartermasters for the year 1812 were no longer in the Quartermaster Department in 1813. A comparison of the quartermasters listed in Hamersly's *Army Register* for 1813 with the *Army Register* for 1814 reveals that the turnover rate was approximately 25 percent. This figure underestimates the turnover rate somewhat because it does not account for those quartermasters whose service dates fall in between the publication of the two editions of the army register. Still, a 75 percent retention rate in the department over a twelve-month period among those quartermasters appointed right after enactment of the General Staff Law indicates a surprising level of stability in the Corps.<sup>106</sup>

Quartermasters resigned for a variety of reasons. A common one was chronic illness. In November 1813, Secretary Armstrong dismissed Captain Samuel Perkins, the assistant deputy quartermaster general at Newport, Kentucky, from the army. Captain Perkins had written to Brigadier General Joseph Bloomfield stating that he wanted a transfer to a less demanding post because of his age (fifty-one years) and poor health.

Either Bloomfield or Armstrong misinterpreted his request as an indication that he was unable to perform the work of a quartermaster. The dismissal came as a surprise to the captain, and he wrote back to Armstrong making it clear that he wished to remain in the service. In response, Secretary Armstrong reassigned him to the Military Academy as a quartermaster. Soon thereafter, he was embroiled in a controversy with Superintendent Alden Partridge, an affair that resulted in his resignation and a court of inquiry.<sup>107</sup>

Other personal matters included family and financial responsibilities, which quartermasters neglected during their wartime service. James W. McCulloch worked at his Baltimore post for only two months before citing unspecified family concerns that required his immediate attention. Anthony Lamb initially declined an appointment to the Quartermaster Department owing to his wife's illness, only to accept the appointment after her health improved. William B. Lewis tendered his resignation because of his need to attend to the mounting debts that he accrued because of his quartermaster duties. Usually, a quartermaster who experienced personal financial difficulties owing to the federal government's delays in sending funds requested a furlough so that he could travel to Washington to settle his affairs in person.<sup>108</sup>

A conflict with another officer, usually a dispute over authority, was the cause of a handful of resignations. Colonel William Swan informed Secretary Armstrong, in December 1813, that his disagreements with the commanding officer would cause disruption at the Norfolk depot. For this reason, he wished a transfer or dismissal from the Army. Secretary Monroe acted on his request the following year, transferring him to the Fourth Infantry Regiment. Swan explained that, although he would accept the appointment, he wished to remain in the department. Colonel Swan remained on duty at



Norfolk until he settled his accounts, prepared the department's estimates for 1815, and appointed a successor.<sup>109</sup>

William Piatt resigned his position as quartermaster at New Orleans over a conflict with an officer from the Ordnance Department. In March 1814, he informed Brigadier General Thomas Flounoy that that an ordnance officer had appropriated a storeroom belonging to his department. Without a favorable resolution of the matter, he stated that he would resign and return to Washington to settle his accounts. Piatt officially terminated his service in the Quartermaster Department on June 30, 1814, and transferred to the Thirty-Fourth Infantry. His correspondence indicates, however, that he remained at the post at least through September of that year.<sup>110</sup>

#### Postwar Establishment

Following the Treaty of Ghent, which officially concluded the war, Congress passed the "An Act Fixing the Military Peace Establishment" on March 3, 1815. It set the strength of the army at 10,000, decreasing the number of officers from 3,495 to 656, and converted the ten wartime districts into two divisions with nine territorial departments. The Act replaced the Quartermaster Department with four brigade quartermasters taken from the line. The transition did not take effect all at once. The U.S. Army temporarily retained the quartermasters who expected payments from the government as supernumeraries until they settled their claims. Quartermaster General Swartwout remained in office to oversee the collection and sale of military stores and provisions in the Northern Theater.<sup>111</sup>

The board of generals charged with recommending men for retention in the postwar establishment offered appointments to only three men actively serving in the Quartermaster Department. It retained Major Samuel Champlain, who became quartermaster general in Andrew Jackson's Southern Division, and Major Samuel Brown, who secured an appointment as quartermaster general in Jacob Brown's Northern Division. Callender Irvine successfully urged Secretary of War Alexander Dallas to retain Major William Linnard as deputy quartermaster because of the central role of the Philadelphia depot to the entire supply establishment. Henry Stanton, Gustavus Loomis, Milo Mason, Mann Page Lomax, and Thomas Sidney Jesup all served stints as assistant deputy quartermasters during the war and were officers in the line when the board decided to retain them in the service. Jesup, Stanton, Mason, and Loomis returned to the Quartermaster Department after the War Department reestablished the bureau, in 1818. After spending over a year-and-a-half as a prisoner of war in Quebec, Major Christopher Van De Venter returned to the staff in January 1815, first as assistant adjutant general, then as brigade quartermaster, and Agent of fortifications in New York harbor, and finally as an aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Joseph Gardner Swift. In June 1816, the War Department restored Van De Venter to rank, as deputy quartermaster general. He resigned from military service in 1816 and assumed the office of Chief Clerk at the War Department, which he held from 1817 to 1827. From 1815 to 1818, the War Department reinstated six more former quartermasters, as well. When the army cut its strength again, in 1821, these officers had served an average of thirteen years, a remarkable length of time by the standards of the day and a strong indicator of professional commitment.<sup>112</sup>

Many discharged officers joined Van De Venter in taking quasi-military or civilian positions in the War Department or civil service. Some quartermasters had served as paymasters prior to their appointment as quartermaster. Before becoming the deputy quartermaster at Charleston, Abraham B. Fannin served as an officer in a Georgia volunteer company known as “Baldwin’s Volunteers.” He later obtained an appointment as paymaster general with the rank of major. His niece vividly recalled, in her memoirs, “Uncle Abram Fannin” stopping at her father’s house in Putnam County, Georgia, when she was a child. “He was on his way from Washington City to Old Fort Hawkins,” she wrote, “[and] had with him great boxes filled with money with which to pay the soldiers.”<sup>113</sup> Unlike quartermaster duties, the duties of a paymaster were entirely analogous to those of an accountant. Except for the uniform, there was little to distinguish the paymaster from a civilian. Even though paymasters held the military rank of major, they were accountable to the Treasury Department.<sup>114</sup>

The War Department prioritized discharged officers, especially former quartermasters, for appointments to the positions of paymaster and military storekeeper. These officers coveted the positions as an alternative means of drawing a salary and holding a military rank. William Skelton argues that the government used the positions to compensate officers for the lack of pension benefits. Major John B. Hogan was one officer who wished to serve in the postwar establishment. His request for retention denied, he obtained the position of paymaster in the Seventh Infantry in September 1817. Nine months later, he returned to the line in the Fourth Infantry until his discharge in the 1821 army reduction. In general, however, these were terminal positions. The War Department used the position of military storekeeper, in particular, to transition officers

out of military life. Captain Hezekiah Johnson, who reentered the Quartermaster Department in 1818 after his June 1815 discharge from the Army, briefly served as military storekeeper in the four months after his June 1821 discharge. Simeon Knight and James Ward both ended their military careers in 1820 after serving full terms as a battalion paymaster and a military storekeeper, respectively.<sup>115</sup>

In 1815, there were few indications that the nation would learn from its military defeats. Congress did little to correct the defects in administration that led to the recurring problems of mobilization and logistics. It renewed the economy drive of the Jeffersonian era and rejected Secretary of War William H. Crawford's proposal in 1816 to establish a permanent staff. Major Van De Venter feared the civilianization of the postwar establishment. In particular, he wondered whether the War Department would allow civilians to use their connections and influence to circumvent the seniority system. He sent a long missive to the adjutant general in which he questioned the policy of filling vacancies with discharged officers rather than simply promote officers from the preceding grade. He argued that the practice would injure the service and demoralize young officers. In other words, delaying the promotion of career officers would harm the development of military professionalism. This "tardiness of promotion," he contended, "suffocates each spark of zeal for the glory of the profession." The losers under such a system, in his view, were the graduates of the Military Academy. As he put it, "The officers who sprung from that institution have had more obstacles to advancement to contend with, than those who started from private life."<sup>116</sup>

Although few quartermasters returned to the army after the war, many maintained their ties to the government in the civil bureaucracy or as military suppliers.

Representative occupations included inspector of customs, collector of customs, clerk, sheriff, marshal, postmaster, contractor, and sutler. Most of these civil servants and military suppliers were career officers or officers of the war years. The sample, which includes forty-two individuals in sixty-seven occupations, is not representative, but only suggestive. It likely over represents those who left behind a paper trail and appear on lists of civil and military officeholders, professional institutions, or legal and business documents. Nevertheless, the preliminary results of such an analysis of postwar civilian careers indicates that the most common occupations fall in the broad category of business (i.e., merchants, bankers, mill owners, company directors, and bank cashiers), followed closely behind by civil service employees. It is not surprising that businessmen-in-uniform would return to their prewar occupations or that some officers, including West Point graduates John Bliss and Ezra Smith, used the connections and experience they acquired in the business of war to become civilian entrepreneurs or merchants in their own right. Lawyers, judges, and sheriffs constitute the third largest share of the total and political officeholders—most of whom were state legislators—constitute the fourth. Three of these future legislators were recruited from the Mid-Atlantic States during the war, but moved west after the war in search of economic opportunity. Justus Post left Vermont for the Missouri Territory and became a slaveholder. George W. Cullum's *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.* lists Post's occupations as farmer, engineer, and merchant, and his civil posts as judge and state senator. John B. Hogan of Virginia became a prominent citizen in Mobile. He was collector of the port of Mobile, an Indian agent, and a founder of a steamboat business that transported cotton downriver into the city. He was also a

Jacksonian Democrat who once held seats in both the Alabama House of Representatives and Senate. The smallest categories were farmers, engineers, and educators.<sup>117</sup>

Quartermasters appointed directly from civil life came from the elite of society to a greater degree than the officer corps as a whole. Most were men of business with little military experience. Military and civilian leaders valued their management and accounting skills, and made use of their wealth and knowledge of their locale to supply the army. For this reason, the businessmen-in-uniform constituted a majority of the Corps of Quartermasters during the War of 1812. Still, the pattern of appointments indicates that business talent was not the sole criterion for selecting a quartermaster. Unlike commissaries, paymasters, and military storekeepers, a large proportion (40 percent) of all quartermasters were either career officers or officers with experience in the line. The War Department did not marginalize career officers at the company-grade or field-grade ranks. Moreover, civilian applicants to the Quartermaster Department did not fail to emphasize their military credentials when pursuing a commission. When the war ended, however, these civilian appointees returned to their civilian occupations. Few of them wanted to become career officers themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Act of January 11, 1812, ch. 14, 2 *Stat.* 671; Act of March 17, 1812, ch. 46, 2 *Stat.* 696; Act of January 29, 1813, ch. 16, 2 *Stat.* 794; Act of March 3, 1813, ch. 52 2 *Stat.* 819; and Thomas H. S. Hamersly, *Complete Army and Navy Register of the United States of America, from 1776 to 1887*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: T. H. S. Hamersly, 1888), 64–67.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Jesup to an unidentified recipient, 8 March 1824, *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 3: 164.

<sup>3</sup> Marvin A. Kreidberg & Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775–1945* ([Washington, DC]: Department of the Army, 1955), 59–60.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics calculated from George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891).

<sup>5</sup> Leonard D. White, *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801–1829* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), 224–232; Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775–1939* (Washington, DC: Office of the Quartermaster General, 1962), 135–136, 138.

<sup>6</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 138; *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 1: 257–258; White, *Jeffersonians*, 224–225; U.S. *Senate Executive Journal*. 1812. 12<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1, 3, & 8 April; Henry Lawrence Eustis, *Genealogy of the Eustis Family* (Boston: David Clapp and Son, 1888), 8–9; Hamersly, *Army Register*, 51, 323; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from Its Organization September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1: 792.

<sup>7</sup> On Zebulon Pike, see *American National Biography Online*, s.v. “Pike, Zebulon Montgomery,” (by Paul David Nelson), <http://www.anb.org> (published online: February

---

2000); and see Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 792. On William Swan, see U.S. *Senate Executive Journal*. 1809. 11<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 18 December; U.S. *Senate Executive Journal*. 1801. 6<sup>th</sup> Cong. 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 5 February; Hamersly, *Army Register*, 1: 50, 54; Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 938; Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783–1854*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 2: 470; and see John C. Fredriksen, ed., *The War of 1812 War Department Correspondence, 1812–1815* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016), 376–377. On Bartholomew Schaumburgh, see Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 863; William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 65; and see Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 345–346.

<sup>8</sup> Hamersly, *Army Register*, 51, 323; Theophilus F. Rodenbough and William Haskin, eds., *The Army of the United States: Historical Sketches of Staff and Line with Portraits of Generals-in-Chief* (New York: Maynard, Merrill and Co., 1896), 47; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 130–131.

<sup>9</sup> Winfield Scott, *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott, LL.D.* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1864), 1: 34–35.

<sup>10</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 138, 182; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 243, 246; Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 634; Hamersly, *Army Register*, 328.

<sup>11</sup> Act of March 3, 1813, ch. 52 2 *Stat.* 819.

<sup>12</sup> Out of a sample of 70 quartermasters appointed directly from civil life, 23 never received a formal commission. There is no complete list of U.S. Army quartermasters in any single source. The author's sample, which does not include regimental quartermasters or militia quartermasters, is compiled from a variety of sources, including published army registers, *American State Papers*, *Senate Executive Journal*, and official correspondence in the National Archives' Record Group 107 (Letters Sent and Received by the Secretary of War). The trajectory of quartermasters' wartime careers is reconstructed from various sources, especially Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, volume 1, and John C. Fredriksen *The War of 1812 War Department Correspondence*, an annotated and indexed finding aid for over 40 rolls of microfilm in the National Archives. Fredriksen's valuable



---

reference book contains more than a few errors, however, especially with respect to the dates of letters. Biographical data found in army registers and family genealogies, such as dates of birth and death, prewar careers, and the details of an officer's military service are often incomplete or in error, as are the spellings of names. Compiling biographical information from a variety of sources and checking them against each other has produced a more accurate record of the military service and prewar and postwar careers of U.S. Army quartermasters during the War of 1812.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. *Senate Executive Journal*. 1812. 12<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1 & 3 April; Robert C. Vitz, "General James Taylor and the Beginnings of Newport, Kentucky," in *A Kentucky Sampler: Essays from the Filson Club Historical Quarterly, 1926–1976*, ed. Lowell Harrison & Nelson L. Dawson ([Lexington]: University Press of Kentucky, 1977), 181–182; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 384.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Wheaton to William Eustis, 11 August 1812, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 414.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Wheaton to William Eustis, 22 December 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 414.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Wheaton to William Eustis, 22 December 1812, and Joseph Wheaton to John Armstrong, 20 May 1812, both in Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 414–415; Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 1022; U.S. *Senate Executive Journal*. 1814–15. 13<sup>th</sup> Cong., 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., 10 & 31 October, 18 & 30 January.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. *Senate Executive Journal*. 1813. 13<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 7 July 1813.

<sup>18</sup> James Thomas to John Armstrong, 8 July 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA.

<sup>19</sup> George Wadsworth to John Armstrong, 12 September 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 389, 408–409.

---

<sup>20</sup> Joshua West to John Armstrong, 9 December 1813, and Joshua West to John Armstrong, 26 January 1814, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 414.

<sup>21</sup> The subject of this study is the one hundred fifteen quartermasters, which the author believes is a representative sample. Because it is not a complete list of wartime quartermasters, however, it may undercount the number of officers on temporary quartermaster duty whose service in the Quartermaster Department appears only in the correspondence of field commanders or in the records of the adjutant general. Out of the 115 quartermasters, 29 were career officers. Out of the 39 quartermasters appointed to the department from March to September, 1813, 11 were career officers. See the “Register for the Army in 1813,” in *ASP: MA*, 1: 389.

<sup>22</sup> Skelton, *American Profession of Arms*, 34–67; Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 544, 628, 790, 792, 829, 994. See also the lists of appointments and promotions in the *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the United States of America*, vol. 1 (Washington: Duff Green, 1828). The relevant dates are 29 May 1798, 1 June 1798, 20 February 1799, 1 March 1799, 2 April 1800, 5 February 1801, 25 March 1802, and 5 January 1805.

<sup>23</sup> Military service records of Academy graduates compiled from the first volume of Cullum’s *Biographical Register*. As with other registers, the information is not complete or entirely accurate. The graduates are Ethan Augustus Allen (Class of 1806), Milo Mason (’07), Samuel Champlain (’07), Justus Post (’07), Satterlee Clark (’07), Christopher Van De Venter (’09), John Bliss (’09), Gustavus Loomis (’09), Ezra Smith (’11), and Richard H. Ashley (’11). On the numeracy of Academy graduates post-War of 1812, see Samuel J. Watson, *Jackson’s Sword: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1810–1821* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012), 259–261.

<sup>24</sup> William Linnard to William Eustis, 13 April 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 1: 91; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 244, 401.

<sup>25</sup> Christopher Van De Venter to Daniel Parker, 1815, Christopher Van De Venter Papers, William L. Clements Library.

---

<sup>26</sup> John Armstrong to Christopher Van De Venter, 24 March 1813, Christopher Van De Venter Papers, Clements Library; Christopher Van De Venter to John Armstrong, 15 April 1813, and Christopher Van De Venter to John Armstrong, 1 June 1813, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 401–402.

<sup>27</sup> Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 1: 78; Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 195; Arthur P. Wade, “Artillerists and Engineers: The Beginnings of American Seacoast Fortifications, 1794–1815,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1971), 72; George W. Cullum, *Campaigns of the War of 1812–1815, Against Great Britain; Sketch and Criticised; with Brief Biographies of the American Engineers* (New York: James Miller, 1879), 23, 157; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), 3: 486, 499–501, 510, 583, 638–639.

<sup>28</sup> Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 790; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 303–304.

<sup>29</sup> Scott, *Memoirs*, 1: 34.

<sup>30</sup> Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 196, 606, 800, 939; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, 1: 77; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 227, 377–378.

<sup>31</sup> *Cong. Globe*, 33<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. 1499 (1854); Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 270, 398, 704, 800; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 60, 120, 274; B. J. Griswold, *The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne[,] Indiana: A Review of Two Centuries of Occupation of the Region about the Head of the Maumee River* (Chicago: Robert O. Law Company, 1917), 158.

<sup>32</sup> John D. Morris, *Sword of the Border: Major General Jacob Jennings Brown, 1775–1828* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2000), 88; Jacob Brown to John Armstrong, 15 June 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 51.

---

<sup>33</sup> Jacob Brown to John Armstrong, 15 June 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 51.

<sup>34</sup> Morris, *Sword of the Border*, 91–92; Jacob Brown to John Armstrong, 22 June 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 51.

<sup>35</sup> Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 276.

<sup>36</sup> Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 535.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Swartwout to John Armstrong, 29 December 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 378.

<sup>38</sup> James Bryson to William Eustis, 21 June & 11 July 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 56.

<sup>39</sup> Samuel Perkins to William Eustis, 14 April 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 300.

<sup>40</sup> William Swan to William Eustis, 24 May 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA. Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 376.

<sup>41</sup> Act of March 28, 1812, ch. 46, 2 *Stat.* 696–697.

<sup>42</sup> *Annals of Congress* 1812, 1376–1378, 1416, 1434; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 137.

---

<sup>43</sup> *Annals of Congress* 1812, 1378.

<sup>44</sup> *Annals of Congress* 1812, 1376–1378, 1416, 1434; Act of May 22, 1812, ch. 92, 2 *Stat.* 742–743.

<sup>45</sup> The breakdown is as follows: Assistant deputy quartermasters (42 civilian appointments, 37 officers), deputy quartermasters general (21 civilians, 13 officers), quartermasters general (6 civilians, 5 officers). The count does not include regimental quartermasters or militia quartermasters. It only includes those who obtained appointments (formally or informally) in the Quartermaster Department. Nine men are counted twice because they obtained a promotion from one grade to another. The four civilians who received a promotion to the succeeding grade are Paul Bentalou, James Thomas, James Rees and William Linnard. The five officers who won promotion to the next grade are John G. Camp, Christopher Van De Venter, John B. Hogan, William Swan, and William Piatt.

<sup>46</sup> Henry Dearborn to John Armstrong, 28 January 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 104.

<sup>47</sup> Henry Dearborn quoted in Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 171.

<sup>48</sup> Bud Hannings, *The War of 1812: A Complete Chronology with Biographies of 63 General Officers* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2012), 332–334; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 136–137, 171; J.C.A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783–1830* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 160.

<sup>49</sup> Hannings, *Chronology*, 347; Nancy Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* ([New York]: Viking, 2007), 180; Joseph Alfred Scoville, *The Old Merchants of New York City* ([New York]: Thomas R. Knox and Co., 1885), 252.

---

<sup>50</sup> Gary Giroux, *Business Scandals, Corruption, and Reform: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, n.d.), 1: 583; Gustavus Myers, *The History of Tammany Hall* (New York: B. Franklin, [1968]), 23.

<sup>51</sup> Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800–1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 84.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Early to James Monroe, 10 October 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 118–119.

<sup>53</sup> Elisha Jenkins to John Armstrong, 30 April 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 210.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel D. Tompkins to William Eustis, Albany, 7 July 1812, in *Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins[,] Governor of New York[,] 1807–1817, Military* (Albany, NY: J. B. Lyon Company, 1902), 3: 23.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph P. Downs & Fenwick Y. Hedley, eds., *History of Chautauqua County, New York, and its People* (New York: American Historical Society, 1921), 1: 145; Anna Bradbury, *History of the City of Hudson, New York, with Biographical Sketches of Henry Hudson and Robert Fulton* (Hudson, NY: Record Printing and Publishing, 1908), 34.

<sup>56</sup> Daniel D. Tompkins to William Eustis, Albany, 7 July 1812, in *Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins[,] Governor of New York[,] 1807–1817, Military* (Albany, NY: J. B. Lyon Company, 1902), 3: 23.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Swartwout to John Armstrong, 1 May 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 377.

<sup>58</sup> William Graham Sumner, *The Financier and the Finances of the American Revolution* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1891), 1: 271–272n5; Spencer C.

---

Tucker and Paul G. Pierpaoli, Jr., *U.S. Leadership in Wartime: Clashes, Controversy, and Compromise* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 1: 236; H. P. Smith, comp., *Columbia County at the End of the Century: A Historical Record of its Formation and Settlement, Its Resources, Its Institutions, Its Industries, and Its Peoples* (Hudson, NY: Record Printing and Publishing, 1900), 132–133; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 389.

<sup>59</sup> William Swan to John Armstrong, 16 October 1813, and William B. Lewis to James Monroe, 14 Feb 1815, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 243, 376.

<sup>60</sup> “Sketch of Thomas Melville Junior, by a Nephew,” in Joseph Edwards Adams Smith, *The History of Pittsfield (Berkshire County), Massachusetts, from the Year 1800 to the Year 1876* (Springfield, MA: C. W. Bryan and Co., 1876), 2: 398–400. On James Taylor, see Robert C. Vitz, “General James Taylor and the Beginnings of Newport, Kentucky,” in *A Kentucky Sampler: Essays from the Filson Club Historical Quarterly, 1926–1976*, ed. Lowell Harrison & Nelson L. Dawson ([Lexington]: University Press of Kentucky, 1977).

<sup>61</sup> Willard Irving Tyler Brigham, *The Tyler Genealogy: The Descendants of Job Tyler, of Andover, Massachusetts, 1619–1700* (N.p.: Cornelius B. Tyler and Rollin U. Tyler, 1912), 1: 170.

<sup>62</sup> *American State Papers: Foreign Relations*, 4: 634; 26 Cong. Rec. 3130 (1894); House, *Claims on Hayti*, 27<sup>th</sup> Cong., 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., 1842, H. Doc. 36, 117, 121; Willard Irving Tyler Brigham, *The Tyler Genealogy: The Descendants of Job Tyler, of Andover, Massachusetts, 1619–1700* (N.p.: Cornelius B. Tyler and Rollin U. Tyler, 1912), 1: 170; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 399. In some sources, Septimius Tyler’s first name is misspelled as “Septimus.”

<sup>63</sup> Rodenbough and Haskin, *Army of the U.S.*, 47; Act of March 28, 1812, ch. 46 2 Stat. 696.

<sup>64</sup> Satterlee Clark to William Eustis, 22 June 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 78.

---

<sup>65</sup> William Linnard to William Eustis, 8 June 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 244.

<sup>66</sup> Christopher Van De Venter to William Eustis, 22 June 1812, and William Amherst Barron to John Armstrong, 23 April 1813, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 24, 401.

<sup>67</sup> William Linnard to William Eustis, 8 June 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 401.

<sup>68</sup> Holly Cowan Shulman, "Dolley Payne Todd Madison," in *America's First Ladies: Their Lives and Their Legacy*, ed. Lewis L. Gould (New York: Routledge, 2001), 25; Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 373.

<sup>69</sup> Charles McVean, "In the Matter of Proving the Last Will and Testament of Benjamin Romaine, Deceased," in *The New-York Legal Observer, Containing Reports of Cases Decided in the Courts of Equity and Common Law, and Important Decisions in the English Courts*, ed. Samuel Owen (New York: Samuel Owen, 1846), 4: 412; Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 777.

<sup>70</sup> Benjamin Romaine to John Armstrong, 26 April 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 339.

<sup>71</sup> "In Memoriam: Jacob B. Brown, 1831-1906," in *Proceedings of the Delaware County Institute of Science*, ed. Carolus M. Broomall (Media, PA: 1907), 2: 25.

<sup>72</sup> Matthew Irwin to Callender Irvine, 10 April 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 198.

<sup>73</sup> Harrison Augustus Royce, *A Sketch of the Organization of the Quartermasters' Department, from 1774 to 1868* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1869),



---

22; Samuel Brown to Alexander Dallas, 10 June 1815, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 54.

<sup>74</sup> Louis R. Harlan, "Public Career of William Berkeley Lewis [Part 1]," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 7 (March 1948): 6–9; Mark R. Cheatham, *Andrew Jackson: Southerner* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 84; William B. Lewis to Andrew Jackson, 20 July 1815, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 242–243.

<sup>75</sup> William Henry Harrison to John Armstrong, 12 March 1813, in *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, during the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812, 13, 14, & 15*, ed. John Brannan (Washington City: Way and Gideon, 1823), 138–139.

<sup>76</sup> William Henry Harrison to John Armstrong, in *Official Letters*, 139.

<sup>77</sup> Morgan Lewis to John Armstrong, 17 April 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 240.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas Melville to Callender Irvine, 19 December 1812; Thomas Melville to John Armstrong, 13 May 1813; Callender Irvine to Thomas Melville, 11 June 1813, all in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 191, 273.

<sup>79</sup> Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 1022.

<sup>80</sup> *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 36<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 1860–1861, H. Rep. 28; Benjamin De Wolf, "Mr. Joseph Wheaton," *The Daily Advertiser* (New York, NY), 15 July 1789.

<sup>81</sup> "Order of the Day," *The Salem Mercury* (Salem, MA), 26 May 1789.

---

<sup>82</sup> Joseph Wheaton to Thomas Jefferson, 1 February 1802, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Volume 36, 1 December 1801 to 3 March 1802, ed. Barbara B. Oberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 489 (see footnote).

<sup>83</sup> Joseph Anderson *et al.*, Recommendation for Joseph Wheaton, 3 July 1812, Joseph Wheaton Papers, Yale University Library.

<sup>84</sup> Joseph Wheaton to William Eustis, 27 June 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 414.

<sup>85</sup> Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 954; James Thomas to William Eustis, 31 January & 3 September 1812, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 389–390.

<sup>86</sup> William B. Skelton, “High Army Leadership in the Era of the War of 1812: The Making and Remaking of the Officer Corps,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 51 (1994): 257–258. The place of residence of officers when they were recruited can be found in Heitman, *Army Register*, vol. 1.

<sup>87</sup> William Henry Harrison to John Armstrong, 12 March 1813, in *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers*, 139.

<sup>88</sup> Septimius Tyler to James Monroe, 14 November 1814, Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA.

<sup>89</sup> Septimius Tyler to James Monroe, 14 & 29 November 1814, both in Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 399.

The military districts, from July 1813, were as follows: First Military District (Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts), Second Military District (Rhode Island and Connecticut), Third Military District (Southern New York and Eastern New Jersey), Fourth Military District (Western New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware), Fifth

---

Military District (Maryland and Virginia), Sixth Military District (North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia), Seventh Military District (Tennessee, Louisiana, and the Mississippi Territory), Eighth Military District (Ohio; Kentucky; and the Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois Territories), and the Ninth Military District (Northern New York and Vermont). The Tenth Military District (Washington, D.C.) was added in July 1814.

<sup>90</sup> William Linnard to William Eustis, 6 January 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 243.

<sup>91</sup> Joseph Anderson, *et al.*, 3 July 1812, Wheaton Papers.

<sup>92</sup> Joseph Anderson, *et al.*, 3 July 1812, Wheaton Papers; *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives*, 36<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 1860–61, H. Rep. 28.

<sup>93</sup> J. Jefferson Looney and Ruth L. Woodward, *Princetonians, 1791–1794: A Biographical Dictionary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1991]), 236; Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 212, 950; Manuel Covo, “Baltimore and the French Atlantic: Empires, Commerce, and Identity in a Revolutionary Age, 1783–1789,” in *The Caribbean and the Atlantic World Economy: Circuits of Trade, Money and Knowledge, 1650–1914*, ed. A. B. Leonard and David Pretel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 94, 97–98.

<sup>94</sup> Thomas Melville to John Armstrong, 13 May 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 273–274.

<sup>95</sup> See Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution, April, 1775, to December, 1783* (Washington, DC: W. H. Lowdermilk and Co., 1893), 328, 390. On Ethan Augustus Allen, see Martha L. Moodey, ed., *Lineage Book[,] Daughters of the American Revolution[,] Volume L[,] 49001–50000[,] 1904* (Washington, DC: Judd & Detweiler, 1919), 22. On Gustavus Loomis, see Emilius O. Randal, Moulton Houk, William L. Curry, eds., *Year-Book of the Ohio Society of the Sons of the American Revolution[,] 1904* (Columbus, Ohio: For the Society, 1904), 51; Elisha S. Loomis, *Descendants of Joseph Loomis in America and His Antecedents in the Old World* (N.p.: Elisha Scott Loomis, 1909), 218, 320; and see Kenneth E. Lawson, *For Christ and Country: A Biography of Brigadier General Gustavus Loomis* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2011). On John Barney,

---

see Thomas Williams, *American Brave: Story of Admiral Joshua Barney* (Bloomington, Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2014), xvii, 425. On Hezekiah Johnson, see John Springer, "Sylvanus Johnson," in *Iowa Historical Record* 18 (April 1902): 450. On Hopley Yeaton, see Robert W. Sawyer, "Some Errors in Howard's Genealogy of the Cutts Family," in *The New Hampshire Genealogical Record: An Illustrated Magazine Devoted to Genealogy, History, and Biography* 5 (January–October 1908): 95. On James Strode Swearingen, see *The Constitution and Register of Membership of the General Society of the War of 1812, June 1, 1908* (Philadelphia: 1908), 154; and see *Official Bulletin of the National Society of the Sons of the Revolution* 2 (December 1907): 26.

<sup>96</sup> Theodore Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army: Political and Social Reform of the Military Establishment, 1801–1809* (New York: New York University Press, 1987); Reginald C. Stuart, *Civil-Military Relations during the War of 1812* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 42; and see Skelton, *American Profession of Arms*, 16–25.

<sup>97</sup> Benjamin Romaine to James Monroe, 7 October 1814, Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 339.

<sup>98</sup> Anthony Lamb to William Eustis, 12 June 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 228.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Melville to John Armstrong, 13 May 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 273–274.

<sup>100</sup> U.S. *Senate Executive Journal*. 1815. 13<sup>th</sup> Cong., 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., 14 & 31 October, 18 & 30 January; Joseph Wheaton to Thomas Jefferson, 1 February 1802, in *Jefferson Papers*, 489note; William Henry Harrison to John Armstrong, 19 May 1813, and John C. Bartlett to Joseph Wheaton, 13 July 1813, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 24; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 163.

<sup>101</sup> Robert Swartwout to John Armstrong, 12 April 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 377.

---

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Humphrey Cushing to John Armstrong, 26 August 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 96.

<sup>103</sup> Elisha Tracy to John Armstrong, 20 August 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 396. The “language of a Billingsgate” refers to the abusive, profane language purportedly heard from the women who sold fish at the Billingsgate fish market, in London.

<sup>104</sup> Elisha Tracy to James Monroe, 19 October 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 396.

<sup>105</sup> J. C. A. Stagg, “United States Army Officers in the War of 1812: A Statistical and Behavioral Portrait,” *Journal of Military History* 76 (October 2012): 1006–1007.

<sup>106</sup> Hamersly, *Complete Army and Navy Register*, 64, 86, 132.

<sup>107</sup> Samuel Perkins to Joseph Bloomfield, 28 November 1813, Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA; Samuel Perkins to John Armstrong, 28 December 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 300.

<sup>108</sup> James W. McCulloch to John Armstrong, 27 May 1813, and Anthony Lamb to William Eustis, 4 May 1812, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; William B. Lewis to James Monroe, 14 February & 20 July 1815, both in Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 228, 243, 256.

<sup>109</sup> William Swan to John Armstrong, 16 December 1813, 26 May & 17 September 1814, all in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 376–377.

<sup>110</sup> William Piatt to Thomas Flourney, 30 & 31 March 1814, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 303.

---

<sup>111</sup> Act of March 3, 1815, ch. 79, 2 *Stat.* 224; Robert Swartwout to Alexander Dallas, 4 June & 1 July 1815, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 380; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 177.

<sup>112</sup> Data compiled from Heitman, *Army Register*, vol. 1. War Department, Adjutant General's Office, "Statement of the Military Service of the Late Christopher Van De Venter," 24 October 1900, Van De Venter Papers.

<sup>113</sup> Kate Haynes Fort, *Memoirs of the Fort and Fannin Families* (Chattanooga, TN: MacGowan and Cooke, 1903), 11–12.

<sup>114</sup> Skelton, *American Profession of Arms*, 151, 228.

<sup>115</sup> Heitman, *Army Register*, 1: 535, 575, 606, 1001; Skelton, *American Profession of Arms*, 63–64.

<sup>116</sup> Christopher Van De Venter to Daniel Parker, 1815, Van De Venter Papers.

<sup>117</sup> Harriet E. Amos Doss, *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2001), 22; John Craig Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 61.

Ethan Augustus Allen served as superintendent of the recruiting service and then inspector of customs. Samuel Champlain, who resigned in 1816, also served as inspector of customs. Customs collectors include Abraham Fannin, Samuel Champlain, John Hogan, Ezra Smith, and James W. McCulloch. Postmasters include James Rees, Samuel Perkins, and John Nicks. John Nicks, John L. Meredith, and John Bliss also became sutlers.

Out of a sample of forty-two men in sixty-six occupations, there were twenty-one businessmen, seventeen civil service employees, ten lawyers, nine political officeholders, six farmers, two engineers, and one educator. Farmers are likely the most underrepresented group in the sample.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FAILURE OF U.S. ARMY SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS DURING THE WAR OF 1812

Military and civilian leaders were fully aware of the structural defects of the logistical system on the eve of the War of 1812 and did not exclusively blame the Corps of Quartermasters for the U.S. Army's repeated failure to provide soldiers with essential supplies. Nevertheless, the nature of their service made them vulnerable to criticism. Over the course of the war, quartermasters assumed responsibility for duties that extended beyond their core function of transporting soldiers and supplies. They supervised the construction of roads, barracks, and boats, and purchased camp equipage, forage, and mining and entrenching tools. They also, on occasion, purchased clothing, rations, and ordnance. These tasks put them in charge of much of the War Department's business with the civilian world, including hiring mechanics and laborers and negotiating with local merchants and banks. With the funds of the War Department at their disposal, quartermasters regularly made transactions involving large amounts of money. Indeed, Quartermaster Department appropriations exceeded those of any other federal agency.

When officers failed to receive expected shipments of supplies, they often concluded that quartermasters were either corrupt or incompetent. To be sure, there were quartermasters who engaged in petty fraud or violated the regulations, such as conducting personal business while in uniform. In spite of the many opportunities available for defrauding the government, however, they were no more corrupt than the officers and enlisted men in the other branches of the Army. Structural defects in the administration

and organization of the U.S. Army's logistics, Congress's flawed approach to funding the war, the nation's poor infrastructure, and an unworkable system for supplying rations better explains the repeated failure to feed, clothe, and arm the regular army than the perceived character flaws and incompetence of quartermasters.<sup>1</sup>

During the War of 1812, the secretary of war faced the daunting task of reorganizing the military establishment while simultaneously administering the war effort. There were no clear operating procedures in place when war broke out. He experienced mixed results enforcing accountability over spending and property, and finding qualified men to staff the supply agencies. The neglect of supply and logistics before the war caused much confusion, waste, and a labor shortage in the supply departments. The absence of a fully functioning logistical system precisely when the demand for one became high was disastrous for the nation.

The method of financing the conflict by means of war loans proved inadequate to the task of supporting the armies in the field. Quartermaster depots reported the "want of funds" as having a deleterious effect on their operations. Even after Congress adopted internal taxes as a source of funding, the refusal of banks to lend money to the federal government, in the fall of 1814, paralyzed logistical operations during the concluding months of the war.

Finally, the profit motive that undergirded the contract system put the private, pecuniary interests of the contractor in conflict with the national interests of the army. The contract system broke down almost immediately. Federal contractors in every theater of operations issued food that the soldiers could not consume and often failed to deliver on their contracts. The quartermasters, commissaries, and line officers who



assumed the contractors' duties when they failed to provision the army were, at best, only able to mitigate the damage. Together, these structural factors caused supply and logistic failures to occur even when quartermasters performed their jobs well.<sup>2</sup>

Although the structural factors that diminished the logistic capacities of the nation were not the fault of the Corps of Quartermasters, these officers still possessed agency. Quartermasters worked under unfavorable circumstances over which they could nonetheless exert some influence. The most able quartermasters had the foresight to take corrective measures that made the system work in some special cases. A few went even further by proposing reforms that they hoped would guide the conduct of logistical operations in the future.

#### “A Want of System”: The Failure to Rationalize Logistics

The structural defect over which quartermasters had the most control was administration. Commanding officers and quartermasters pointed to the lack of a rational and uniform system of supply and logistics as the primary cause of the high death rates among American soldiers. Major General Jacob Jennings Brown, the commander of the Left Division, wrote to Secretary of War James Monroe about the need for reforms in all matters having to do with the care of the soldier. He lamented, “Perhaps in no country it is so difficult to provision men as in ours, and yet . . . there never was a govt. that took less pains to preserve the soldiers.” He complained that the winter clothing and footwear, requisitioned with an early October delivery date in mind, invariably arrived so late that the troops had little to “protect them from the terrible November of this clime.” Brown contended that the goods that did reach camp were usually damaged or of exceedingly

poor quality. He cited the shoes, in particular, as a source of misery for his men. “To say nothing of the manner in which they are put together,” he continued, “the leather with which they are made really does not deserve the name, but is almost as porous a substance as sponges.” He also complained about the failure to provide adequate shelter. He sarcastically remarked that it was almost as if the government thought “the nature and constitution of a man, the moment he exchanged the habits of domestic life for those of the soldier, experience a change also, and render him capable of enduring all the vicissitudes of climate and weather, without requiring quarters or even covering.” By the time the soldiers did receive the necessary clothing and shelter, moreover, the winter weather had already “broken and destroyed” their health. In a damning indictment of the logistical system, Brown estimated that “five men have perished by disease, to one who has fallen by the sword.”<sup>3</sup>

Major General Edmund Pendleton Gaines made a similar assessment in his report to the secretary of war. He wrote, “If I were called before heaven to answer whether we have not lost more men by the badness of the provisions than by the fire of the enemy, I should give it as my opinion that we had.” Supply and logistic problems were chiefly responsible for the low morale among soldiers and the inability of the nation’s armies to move with alacrity. He continued, “If asked what causes have tended to most retard our military operations and repress that high spirit of enterprise for which the American soldiers are preeminently distinguished . . . I should say the irregularity in the supply and badness of the rations have been the principal causes.”<sup>4</sup>

An analysis of the correspondence between the secretary of war and the Quartermaster Corps reveals that the inefficiency of the Quartermaster Department was,

in large part, an unintended consequence of the ways in which the civilian leadership decided to run the War Department. They contributed to departmental inefficiency in four ways. First, the War Department was dilatory in appointing quartermasters to vacant positions. In particular, the Quartermaster Department suffered from a chronic shortage of assistant deputy quartermasters with the rank of captain and professional clerks throughout the war. These shortages substantially increased the labor of quartermasters general with the rank of colonel and deputy quartermasters with the rank of major.

Second, Congress contributed to the chaos in the War Department by creating new supply agencies with overlapping functions. The ambiguously written legislation establishing the Quartermaster, Purchasing, and Ordnance departments resulted in the needless duplication of work. It also caused confusion among quartermasters and commissaries over their proper responsibilities. Staff shortages and the expanding scope of quartermaster duty meant that quartermasters found themselves stretched thin as everything having to do with supply—not merely the transportation of men and supplies—fell within their purview.

A third reason for the inefficiency of the Quartermaster Department was decentralization. The decision of Secretary of War William Eustis to divide authority over the quartermasters in each of the nation's eight military districts between himself and the quartermaster general wrecked the chain of command. Quartermasters serving under the secretary of war did not generally communicate with the head of the Quartermaster Department. The secretary of war also precluded any attempt at coordinating logistics across the different theaters of war by neglecting to inform the quartermaster general of his activities and appointments. Decentralization was a feature

of the army's logistics further down the chain of command, as well. The deputy quartermasters and assistant deputy quartermasters stationed at the various posts operated almost independently from one another.

The fourth source of departmental inefficiency was the War Department's failure, in 1812, to produce a comprehensive set of regulations for instituting accountability and performing routine but important tasks, such as submitting reports and recording transactions. Secretary of War John Armstrong's publication of the 1813 *General Regulations* was a significant step in the right direction, but lax enforcement limited its impact.

#### An Overextended Quartermaster Department

The hasty organization of the Quartermaster Department, which came a mere three months before the United States and Great Britain entered a state of war, on June 18, 1812, did not leave much time for the secretary of war to find qualified men to fill assistant deputy quartermaster vacancies. It took the better part of the summer before all the supply departments had enough staff officers to function properly. Secretary Eustis remarked on the absurdity of mobilizing the manpower of the nation while trying to create a staff organization anew, describing it dryly as a "rare phenomenon."<sup>5</sup>

Brigadier General Morgan Lewis was the first appointment to head one of the departments. Per the act establishing the Quartermaster Department, the secretary of war attached the new quartermaster general to the principal army, at Albany. Lewis spent his first months in office implementing the functions of the Purchasing Department and Ordnance Department until the War Department appointed men to fill those positions. In

August 1812, he notified the War Department that “the want of officers in the other departments, particularly the Commissary, [and] Ordnance” meant that everyone directed their supply requirements—clothing, camp equipage, arms, and ammunition—to him alone.<sup>6</sup> The delays in organizing those departments, in turn, hindered Lewis’s efforts to run his own department effectively. Lewis was often unresponsive to the queries of his subordinates. Major William Linnard expressed his frustration at the quartermaster general’s silence to Captain Christopher Van De Venter, stating that the quartermaster general was leaving him “grovelling [sic] on in the Dark.”<sup>7</sup>

The civilian leadership exacerbated the staff shortage by gravely underestimating the amount of labor required to manage logistics for garrisons and armies in the field. Congress, in particular, took no measures to relieve the burdens of the quartermaster general. Instead of assigning the head of the Quartermaster Department to Washington, where he could focus exclusively on overseeing operations of the entire department, the quartermaster general doubled as the field quartermaster for the Northern Army. Moreover, as late as 1813, the Quartermaster Department still only had five clerks available to assist the quartermaster general. Finally, the Quartermaster Department lacked assistant deputy quartermasters at many posts even though the law permitted the president to appoint as many as required.<sup>8</sup>

The prewar military agents who the secretary of war reappointed as wartime deputy quartermasters were the first to bring this deficiency to the War Department’s attention. In July 1812, Anthony Lamb told Secretary Eustis that, since the Albany depot lacked an assistant deputy quartermaster, he could not both perform his normal duties and simultaneously carry out the secretary’s orders to build boats and barracks at Whitehall,

New York. He therefore asked for an assistant to be stationed with him at Albany and for a disbursing officer to be sent to either Whitehall or Lake Champlain. The shortage persisted even when the passage of the General Staff Law of 1813 authorized the appointment a new crop of quartermasters pulled from the line or recruited from civil life. In August 1813, Jacob Eustis relayed Brigadier General Thomas H. Cushing's observation that every one of the posts within his district still lacked quartermasters. In their letters to the secretary of war, quartermasters often suggested, usually as an aside, that the secretary of war could increase the efficiency of the department by appointing a quartermaster to a particular post that lacked one.<sup>9</sup>

The quartermasters who entered the service because of the General Staff Law echoed the complaints of the quartermasters appointed in 1812. Sometimes, only a single quartermaster would perform all of the department's duties at one of the principal depots. Major Samuel Brown, the quartermaster at Sackets Harbor, explained to the War Department that he had difficulties finding men to perform labor for him. Although he could ask a line officer to detail five or six soldiers for fatigue duty, he observed that the "commanding officers it appears to me consider men they furnished as a personal favor done to the Quarter Master." He added that he really needed the authority to employ a rotation of at least four soldiers on a regular basis.<sup>10</sup>

Field armies did not always begin operations with enough senior-level quartermasters. In those cases, the problem persisted until the commanding general appointed one on his own initiative. Brigadier General Robert Swartwout, the new head of the department, in Albany, made this problem the subject of a report about how to increase the efficiency of army logistics. Swartwout noted that although the number of

quartermasters assigned to stationary duty in each of the ten military districts was probably sufficient, the War Department should also take care to assign a quartermaster general with the rank of colonel and a deputy quartermaster general with the rank of major to every field army and every army division.<sup>11</sup>

The staff shortages experienced by the Purchasing and Ordnance Departments compounded the workload for quartermasters. Because of delays in filling vacancies in those departments, quartermasters took it upon themselves to perform the work of commissaries, ordnance officers, and storekeepers. In April 1813, Major Samuel Brown conveyed his frustration to the War Department at the lack of a “public armorer” at Sackets Harbor, which meant that officers were storing their weapons in a haphazard manner. “Officers are constantly turning the old guns into the charge of the Quarter Master,” he complained, “[and] as there is no officer of the proper departments here to receive them I have been compeled [sic] from a sense of duty to receive them into my charge.”<sup>12</sup>

In January 1814, Major William Piatt, the deputy quartermaster at New Orleans, wrote a similar letter to the War Department in which he explained that he was currently performing the duties of a commissary general of purchases owing to the lack of one at the depot. Furthermore, the commanding officer had charged him with completing the works at Fort St. Philip and Petite Coquille.<sup>13</sup> In January 1815, Captain Joseph Wheaton found himself obligated to manage the operations of the hospital, armory, and laboratory at the depot in Richmond, Virginia. He wrote, “Unless these duties had been assumed by me, the sick of the army must have been left to perish,” and the soldiers of the district would have been “unsupplied with ammunition.”<sup>14</sup> Although quartermasters took on

extra responsibilities when a post lacked qualified staff officers from the other departments, at posts lacking a quartermaster, the commissaries and storekeepers often performed the role of quartermasters.

Deputy quartermasters most often dealt with the shortage in staff by doing the work of assistant deputies or clerks themselves, requesting clerical help from the War Department, and simply waiting until it filled the vacancy. In July 1812, however, Major Linnard hired an additional clerk on his own initiative expecting that the War Department would approve the move retroactively. He asserted that the workload at the site of the nation's principal clothing establishment, in Philadelphia, had doubled since the outbreak of war and that "no man breathing" could perform his duties without at least two clerks. He informed Eustis that, "At this time myself & Clerks are engaged from sunrise to 10 or 11 o'clock in the evening (Sundays not excepted) and can scarcely get through our business."<sup>15</sup> Quartermaster General Morgan Lewis was not impressed and claimed that Linnard was simply inefficient in his work habits. Lewis seems to have been the only one to hold that view.<sup>16</sup>

Sometimes quartermasters performed logistical triage. In March 1813, Captain Christopher Van De Venter observed that Major William Swan was "over run with business" at Niagara during preparations for the coming campaign even though he had three assistants at his disposal. He suggested to the War Department that he should leave Sackets Harbor to provide additional help.<sup>17</sup> In July 1814, Major Swan, now in Norfolk, wrote the War Department that he intended to employ a militia quartermaster in the role assistant deputy quartermaster.<sup>18</sup>



The arduous workload not only impaired the ability of quartermasters to perform their jobs effectively, but it could also take a toll on their health. In 1854, the U.S. House of Representatives considered a bill to provide financial support for the children of the late Captain Thomas Porter, the assistant deputy quartermaster at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in the form of back pension for injuries sustained during the War of 1812. On the House floor, Congressman Thomas Andrew Hendricks introduced a physicians' report on the death of Captain Porter as a piece of evidence. The physicians noted that the labor Porter performed as quartermaster caused the treatable wound that he sustained early in the war, as a private soldier, to become "incurable." The report concluded that his death was a direct result of those injuries.<sup>19</sup> A biographical sketch of Ensign Church in a history of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, Ohio, claimed that overwork was responsible for his discharge and premature death. Church began his wartime service as a militia quartermaster under General Simon Perkins. Soon thereafter, he became a deputy quartermaster at Pittsburgh. Less than a year later, however, the War Department discharged him for health reasons. Church was only thirty-one or thirty-two years old when he died, in April 1813. Regarding the cause of death, the author noted that he was "broken down by fatigue in the service."<sup>20</sup>

Commanding officers often responded to the delays in appointments by taking on the role of quartermaster general. In the first couple of years of the war, Major General William Henry Harrison assumed quartermaster duties for the Northwestern Army. So did Major General Henry Dearborn for the Northern Army and Brigadier General Peter Porter for the New York militia. The practice continued late in the war, as well. In 1814, Brigadier General William H. Winder micromanaged the defense of the new Tenth

Military District based in Washington, D.C., by performing the duties of both commissary and quartermaster.

American generals viewed quartermaster duties as an imposition, and only performed them because they had no other choice. During the preparations for the Niagara campaign, from March to May 1813, General Dearborn was hard-pressed to fill the role of the vacating quartermaster general, General Lewis. Lewis resigned from his position as head of the Quartermaster Department in March to assume a field command and left the Albany depot immediately without first consulting with Dearborn. His timing was exceedingly poor, especially since the start of military operations was only weeks away. The Quartermaster Department needed strong administrative leadership to make the transition to the new organization created by the General Staff Law. General Swartwout did not expect to take charge of departmental affairs in the Ninth Military District until the middle of April. Mindful of potential delays, the War Department gave Dearborn authority over departmental finances so that he could still purchase provisions. In that time, Dearborn let contracts for provisions with the merchant Elbert Anderson and instructed him on where to deposit them.<sup>21</sup>

The War Department was slow to act on Dearborn's requests to attach a deputy quartermaster to his headquarters at Albany, and neglected to assign brigade quartermasters to his army. In February, Dearborn complained to Secretary Armstrong about the lack of brigade quartermasters. He followed up three weeks later by asking whether the new quartermaster general accompanied the infantry regiments presently *en route* to Sackets Harbor. He implored, "I should like to know who we are to have for a Quarter Master General."<sup>22</sup> In early April, while preparing the soldiers assembling there

to embark with Commodore Isaac Chauncey for York (Toronto), Dearborn sent Armstrong a letter requesting that he send a quartermaster general with “suitable deputies” as soon as possible. Until then, he noted, the affairs of the department would remain in a “wretched state.”<sup>23</sup> Ten days later, he informed the War Department that preparing the campaign without a senior-level quartermaster “occasioned many embarrassments and considerable delay in the movement of troops and military stores.”<sup>24</sup>

Although General Lewis’s premature departure was responsible for wreaking havoc on Dearborn’s preparations, he also mismanaged the department’s funds. When General Swartwout arrived at the Albany depot on April 18, he found its finances in a complete state of disarray. Lewis had accumulated debts totaling \$100,000, which the new quartermaster general felt obliged to settle. He asked the newly appointed secretary of war, John Armstrong, to send him \$200,000 for that purpose so that “the credit of government may not be impaired” and to avoid further delays to the campaign.<sup>25</sup>

Armstrong expressed dismay at the news, informing him that he already sent him \$100,000 to General Dearborn and \$50,000 to him. “Whence therefore is it,” Armstrong asked, “that there are no funds & many drafts in the Department unpaid?” He continued, “This question shews [sic] that you ought not to entangle yourself with old accounts.” Armstrong also told Swartwout that it was the responsibility of Lewis and his deputies to close their business with the accountant in the Treasury Department. “Yours is a new book,” he counseled, “keep it regularly & above all attend to your quarterly settlements.” He then pledged to send him \$60,000 and \$40,000 to Colonel Elisha Jenkins.<sup>26</sup>

As *de facto* quartermaster, Dearborn managed the finances of the department no better than Lewis. Armstrong conveyed to Swartwout his frustration with General

Dearborn's requests for more funds: "The General has altogether lost sight of the State & usages of the Treasury." He operated within a monthly budget of \$1,400,000 which was hardly enough to "subsist, pay, equip, cloathe [sic] & move five or six Armies of Regulars & Militia." Because of this financial limitation, he advised the new quartermaster general that "economy" should henceforward be their "alpha & omega."<sup>27</sup>

Once in office, General Swartwout encountered difficulties in coordinating his efforts with the commanding officer or his subordinates. He realized that he was finding it impossible to produce reliable estimates of the department's future expenses because he did not have the returns of the district's quartermasters and storekeepers on hand. Moreover, General Lewis neglected to inform him of the identity of his subordinates, so he was unable to send letters requesting the returns. He then resorted to asking the secretary of war for the information. He pleaded, "Will you be pleased General, to furnish me with a list of Deputies & Assistants for this district?" Swartwout also found it difficult to forecast the army's expenses for the coming Niagara campaign. For reasons that are unclear, Dearborn told Swartwout that he could not tell him what troops were going to take part in the campaign. "I have no data on which to ground my calculations," Swartwout lamented. Nevertheless, General Dearborn reassured him that the funds he possessed on hand would be enough to meet all of the Northern Army's supply requirements. Until Swartwout had the information he needed, he resigned himself to depending on "the judgment and liberality of the War Department."<sup>28</sup> Colonel Jenkins, Swartwout's trusted subordinate, also operated without critical information after he replaced Anthony Lamb as quartermaster general of the Ninth Military District. When he arrived at Albany in early May, neither his predecessor nor the district's quartermasters

could provide him with inventories of the public stores in their possession. Jenkins decided to inspect the posts within his district to get the information he required. Such lapses in communication and neglect of government property were typical of the army early in the war.<sup>29</sup>

There were exceptions. General Harrison's improvised procurement method and adroit handling of logistics contributed to the successful campaign that culminated in the British defeat at the Battle of the Thames River on October 5, 1813. Rather than wait for unreliable contractors to fulfill their contracts, he commenced the campaign with ammunition and clothing supplied by the local population and pork salted by his own soldiers. He fed his army on the march by means of advance depots and transported them into Canada by coordinating with Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's fleet.<sup>30</sup>

Congress contributed to the overextension of the Quartermaster Department by enacting poorly conceived legislation. The law that created the department did not clearly define the responsibilities of the quartermaster general and that of the commissary general of purchases. Although it stated that the principal duty of the quartermaster general was "to procure and provide means of transport for the army, its stores, and camp equipage," it authorized the secretary of war to charge the quartermaster general and his subordinates with the duties of commissaries when he deemed it necessary. Therefore, quartermasters would also be responsible for purchasing "military stores, camp equipage, and other articles requisite for the troops," which nearly matched the wording used to describe the duties of the commissary general of purchases.<sup>31</sup> The addition of procurement duties to the Quartermaster Department resulted in the duplication of work, a significant increase in labor of quartermasters, and saddled the secretary of war with the

job of sorting out the purchasing responsibilities of a quartermaster and commissary should a conflict arise.<sup>32</sup> Commissary General of Purchases Callender Irvine worried about the latter possibility, explaining to Secretary Eustis that better instructions were necessary to prevent the heads of the supply agencies from performing the duties of the other. Irvine warned, “Without particular instructions defining the duties of a Qr Mr Genl., Commy Genl. of ordinance and Commy Genl. of purchases, I am very apprehensive they will clash in the execution of their several duties, and that the public service may be retarded.”<sup>33</sup>

What made the lack of precision in the language of the law surprising is that it worked at cross-purposes with the rationale for dividing authority for procurement and transportation between a civilian and an army officer. The effectiveness of the law depended on the commissaries and quartermasters having clearly defined and distinct duties. Congressman David Rogerson Williams justified this division of labor when he explained that it would make the quartermaster and commissary accountable to the public because each supply officer could then serve as “a check upon each other.”<sup>34</sup> A corrupt officer who controlled every step in the acquisition and distribution process could more easily escape detection. General Lewis opposed subsuming the Superintendent of Military Stores under the Quartermaster Department on the same basis, as it would remove an “excellent Check”<sup>35</sup> against corruption.

The law also had the pernicious effect of compelling the secretary of war to micromanage procurement and logistics. This outcome was the exact opposite of the law’s intent, which was to relieve the secretary of war of his prewar role as the *de facto* quartermaster general. The existing responsibilities of the War Department were already

a burden for a secretary of war and his staff of eleven clerks. Secretary Eustis had already attempted to lighten his workload by lobbying Congress to appoint two assistant secretaries of war but was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Eustis did himself no favors by allowing the minutiae of supplying the army to distract him from his chief responsibility, which, to Senator William H. Crawford, consisted of “forming general and comprehensive arrangements for the organization of his troops and for the successful prosecution of the campaign.” Rather than direct armies, Crawford wrote, “[Eustis] consumes his time in reading advertisements of petty retailing merchants to find where he may purchase one hundred shoes or two hundred hats.”<sup>36</sup>

In the first year of the war, the Quartermaster Department’s functions overlapped with that of every other supply agency in the War Department. Quartermasters engaged in procurement activities that were the responsibility of the commissaries working in the Purchasing Department and vice versa. For example, in 1812, Major Linnard contracted for gunpowder from the firm of Mr. Biddleman & Co., and assumed responsibility for existing contracts for cartridge boxes and medicine chests.<sup>37</sup> Although the officers of the Ordnance Department handled gunpowder, the Purchasing Department, under the commissary general of purchases, was responsible for its procurement. General Dearborn ordered his commissary to purchase forage for his horses, which was typically the duty of quartermasters. Secretary Eustis exacerbated the situation when he, in a missive to General Lewis, authorized the quartermaster general to purchase clothing if the need was urgent, but added that he should also “ensure a supply of provisions and a regular distribution thereof to the troops.”<sup>38</sup> A mystified Lewis asked for clarification,

but suspected the secretary of war simply made a mistake when he casually ordered him to perform the work of a military supply contractor.<sup>39</sup>

General Lewis tried to remedy the problem by defining the purchasing responsibilities of each department in a way that suited his own department. He thus suggested that the War Department forbid the Purchasing Department from acquiring anything other than clothing and allow the Quartermaster Department to purchase all other articles except ordnance, arms and ammunition, and hospital stores. His proposal was a response to the amateurish way in which the commissaries were performing their duties, which caused the Quartermaster Department to waste time and energy trying to correct their mistakes. “We know nothing of the state of their preparations,” he contended, “nor does any article forwarded to this quarter come accompanied with anything like an invoice.” Since his quartermasters could not gauge the contents of packages, he continued, they were “compelled to unpack every thing, at a great expense, and then to repack for their ultimate destination.” Granting the Quartermaster Department sole authority to purchase many items would enable quartermasters to “provide what we want, at the nearest point where required, know at all times what we have, save much expense and more vexation.”<sup>40</sup>

There were earnest efforts to rectify the vagueness of the Act of March 28, 1812. In May 1812, Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin ordered a review of all War Department purchases in order to identify the extent of the duplication of work. President Madison preempted the review because he determined that Gallatin did not have the authority to undertake such an action. In March 1813, however, Madison ordered Secretary Armstrong to write the general regulations that clearly defined the responsibilities and



duties of the various staff officers. The *Rules and Regulations of the Army of the United States*, published in May, stated that quartermasters would receive, transport, and issue all military stores, camp equipage, and artillery, as well as clothing, arms and ammunition, and ordnance. They were also responsible for the quartering and transporting of troops, the construction of military roads and bridges, and storehouses. The regulations limited quartermasters' purchasing responsibilities to forage, fuel, straw for soldiers' bedding, stationary, materials for constructing barracks, hospitals, and bridges, and horses, oxen, wagons, carts, and boats for transport. The correspondence of the War Department indicates that, after the publication of the regulations, there was a near complete cessation of duplicate work.<sup>41</sup>

### Decentralization of Logistics

The War Department failed to enforce the chain of command in the Quartermaster Department or even make sure that the quartermaster general had overall responsibility for supplying the armies in the field. The decentralization of logistics was a product of both design and the predilections of Madison's first secretary of war, William Eustis. Since the law establishing the department attached the quartermaster general to the principal army, his focus was limited to the U.S.-Canada borderlands along the St. Lawrence and Niagara rivers. The secretary of war, meanwhile, exercised authority in the south and northwest. Despite Congress's intentions, which were to put an army officer in charge of the entire Quartermaster Department, a civilian would continue to run much of the logistics of the U.S. Army.<sup>42</sup>

Decentralization reduced the incentive for the secretary of war to coordinate with the quartermaster general. Indeed, Secretary Eustis rarely informed General Lewis about personnel decisions outside of his district.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps with this in mind, Major Linnard reminded Eustis that he should know when the War Department appointed an assistant deputy quartermaster to all the other military districts. “[I]nform me who they are and where they are stationed,” he wrote, “as it may facilitate the transportation of the stores by sending them to the proper person.”<sup>44</sup> Such information was vital for the quartermaster of the most important supply establishment of the war.

Secretary Eustis also failed to coordinate with his commanders on personnel decisions. Even though General Harrison had already informally appointed James Morrison, a colonel of U.S. Volunteers, as his deputy quartermaster, Eustis sent Captain Piatt to serve as the senior quartermaster of the Northwestern Army without first notifying the commander. Colonel Morrison later sent a letter to Secretary Armstrong insisting that he outranked Piatt.<sup>45</sup> John Armstrong, Madison’s second secretary of war, eventually resolved the controversy in Morrison’s favor, but it left a bitter taste in Morrison’s mouth and he decided to leave the service. Harrison wrote to Armstrong of his disappointment at having lost a trusted subordinate “in consequence of the singular arrangement made by the late secretary of war, of sending on another deputy quartermaster general of equal powers to those vested in colonel Morrison.” He continued, “Since the departure of captain Piatt, I have used my utmost endeavours [sic] to prevail upon colonel Morrison to continue in service, but he perseveres in his determination to retire at the end of the month.”<sup>46</sup>

The War Department also decentralized the Quartermaster Department at the depot level. Secretary Eustis had a tendency of communicating directly with quartermasters of all ranks, which undermined the chain of command. Secretary Armstrong exercised more restraint in communicating with deputy quartermasters, but made one exception. In December 1814, Colonel Linnard explained to Armstrong's successor, Secretary of War James Monroe, the reasons for his predecessor's practice of communicating directly with the deputy quartermaster at Pittsburgh, Linnard's subordinate, and permitting him to draw funds from the War Department without his explicit authorization. Armstrong broke the chain of command because routing official correspondence through Philadelphia could hinder the operations of the Northwestern Army, which relied on Pittsburgh depot. Linnard advised Monroe to "continue the same practice, as the sudden movement of an army may be paralyzed [sic] by his dependence on a circuitous route for funds."<sup>47</sup>

For ostensibly the same reason, Captain Taylor Berry attempted to correspond directly with the War Department after accepting his appointment as deputy quartermaster at St. Louis. Berry did so without formal approval, however, and a dispute with his superior ensued. When Major James Strode Swearingen, the quartermaster general of the Eighth Military District, with headquarters at Chilicothe, Ohio, asked for copies of Berry's accounts, he declined to forward them. Berry informed him, "I have not been instructed except by yourself to change my mode of drawing." Berry argued that he was following a precedent set by Brigadier General Benjamin Howard, the commanding general at St. Louis, who sent his letters regarding supply matters directly to Washington. Berry observed, "My returns of every description have been regularly

forwarded to the heads of the several different departments and then adjusted, and I see no reason or public utility why you should be furnished with a set, nor any existing regulations authorising you to require it of me.”<sup>48</sup> He held himself accountable only to the War Department. When it came to defining and delineating the duties of the supply departments, the *Rules and Regulations* was a success. It was not explicit, however, about the proper channels through which to forward paperwork. It merely stated that quartermasters should regularly forward their accounts and estimates to the secretary of war.<sup>49</sup> The lacuna in the regulations gave Berry the chance to bypass the chain of command and his conduct was not actually prejudicial to good order. Nevertheless, Swearingen was justified in not wanting a subordinate who operated independently in his district.

### Rationalization of Logistics

The *Rules and Regulations* was a landmark achievement in the history of American military professionalism. Historian Donald Hickey described it as “so well-conceived and so clearly drawn that it became the bible for army operations for years to come.”<sup>50</sup> Secretary Armstrong, its principal author, seems to have deliberately addressed some of the more common complaints that issued from the pens of quartermasters in the first year of the war. For example, quartermasters reported to the secretary of war that they did not know how to handle army officer demands that they pay for the transportation of their baggage. Major Linnard inquired about the new regulations on the subject, specifically the amounts that he would have to pay out. The *Rules and Regulations* resolved the problem by setting the maximum transportation allowance (by

weight) for each rank and fixing the rate at \$2 per 100 pounds of baggage, for every 100 miles traveled.<sup>51</sup> It did not help Major William B. Lewis, the deputy quartermaster at Nashville, however, who wanted to know whether he should obey an order from Major General Andrew Jackson requiring him to pay the transportation accounts of officers even though they were not regular army officers but Tennessee volunteers.<sup>52</sup>

The new regulations established standard procedures for many aspects of logistics, such as preparing shipments for transport or submitting reports. The commissary general of purchases or his deputies were required to complete the purchase of bulk items and carefully pack them. The quartermaster would then receive the shipment from the commissary and transfer it to a conductor or wagon master who would transport it, under his supervision, to its destination. Every parcel included an invoice and a legible mark identifying the destination and the unit that would receive it. This procedure corrected the problem of neglecting to label shipments, but mentioned nothing about how to pack goods. The loss of clothing from water damage was the most common consequence of faulty packing. Callender Irvine, for example, ascribed the loss of a shipment of clothing during its transport by boat from Pittsburgh to New Orleans to the use of crates instead of boxes.<sup>53</sup>

To ensure pecuniary accountability, the regulations required quartermasters to forward to the secretary of war monthly and quarterly statements of expenses, and inventories of public property under the care of quartermasters—i.e., forage, horses, oxen, wagons, boats, camp equipage, tools, and clothing—every six months. Later, quartermasters were required to forward their quarterly returns to the superintendent of military supplies instead of sending them directly to the secretary of war. The

quartermaster general transmitted his annual estimates of expenses for his department to the Treasury Department before December 1. This document formed the basis for the following year's appropriations. Although the regulations charged the Treasury Department with prescribing the proper forms, the Quartermaster Department did not use standardized forms until the tenure of Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup. Major Paul Bentalou, the deputy quartermaster general at Baltimore, did design a form as an *ad hoc* solution to this problem, but there is no evidence that the War Department ever considered it for general use. Despite these requirements, the system of pecuniary accountability was ineffective because of sloppy recordkeeping practices. Quartermasters contributed to the chaos in administration by repeatedly failing to submit their returns in a timely fashion.<sup>54</sup>

The lack of a rational system of accountability during the war's first year contributed to the financial confusion in the Quartermaster Department. Many depots consequently fell into arrears and, in the second year of the war, Secretary Armstrong reassigned the most effective quartermasters to problem depots in order to get their finances under control. When Colonel James Thomas, Major William Swan, and Major William Piatt arrived at their respective depots, in the summer and fall of 1813, each one described departmental affairs as chaotic.

Major Piatt, who left his assignment in Pittsburgh to take charge of the New Orleans depot, wrote that he had "never seen any public department in such disorder and confusion."<sup>55</sup> The department's debts totaled \$23,000. Secretary Armstrong seems to have removed Major Bartholomew Schaumburgh, Piatt's predecessor, for mismanaging the department's finances. In his defense, Schaumburgh justified his increasing

expenditures by pointing to the pressing need to repair the buildings that suffered damage during a recent hurricane. He also explained that the financial restrictions imposed on him by Major General James Wilkinson and his difficulties in obtaining credit from local banks were leaving him “perfectly penniless.”<sup>56</sup> His lack of funds forced him to stop work on fortifications and made running the department difficult given the amount of business that he conducted every day. For that reason or perhaps from a sense of propriety Piatt avoided casting the blame on Schaumburgh. Major William Swan was likewise chary of criticizing his predecessor at Norfolk, Captain Hopley Yeaton, for accumulating \$75,000 in debts, including claims reaching \$40,000 that remained unsettled a year after his departure.<sup>57</sup> Colonel James Thomas, the quartermaster at Burlington, also inherited considerable debts.<sup>58</sup> All three men were methodical in taking stock of their situation, cutting spending, and introducing economy to the task of purchasing goods and property. Swan, for example, calculated that simply purchasing horses for the department was more cost-effective than renting them.<sup>59</sup>

Quartermasters increased the cost-effectiveness of logistics in a variety of ways. These measures included acquiring bulk goods locally to reduce transportation costs; purchasing ordnance from Philadelphia where it was produced more cheaply; making better use of natural waterways; and using packhorses instead of horse-drawn wagons. Major Bentalou found a novel way of cutting expenses, which resulted in a \$3,000 surplus for his department. Rather than pay the exorbitant prices for wood, he opted to hold on to his funds until the merchants lowered them. Most quartermasters, however, did not have the luxury of *not* purchasing supplies. Economy was not the overriding value for every decision. Transport by sea was far more economical than overland travel,

but the Royal Navy's blockade of the Atlantic ports made such travel risky. In some cases, concerns about timely deliveries outweighed concerns about costs. Although Major Swan was conscientious about his spending, he nonetheless bought gunpowder at inflated prices because he thought the need was critical.<sup>60</sup>

There were many reasons why a quartermaster lost control of his department's finances. For instance, he could fail to curb the excesses or unreasonable demands of commanding officers. In these situations, some quartermasters apparently thought it was best to simply obey orders and shift the responsibility. Captain Joseph Wheaton cautioned Lieutenant Colonel John C. Bartlett that his debts would mount if he continued to indulge the spending habits of two senior officers. Nevertheless, Wheaton also told him that he was not accustomed to resisting the wishes of a superior, implying that he would have done the same thing. "[I]f wrong," he counseled Bartlett, "let him take the responsibility."<sup>61</sup> Major William B. Lewis likewise believed it was not his duty to resist General Jackson's order that he pay his officers' transportation expenses, even though he suspected it might be illegal. "If Gen'l Jackson has issued an order not authorized by the law," he wrote the secretary of war, "that is between him and the government."<sup>62</sup>

Controlling spending was not always within a quartermaster's power, however. One serious obstacle to good financial management was the rise of contingent expenses, especially during a military operation. In 1814, Colonel William Linnard described the process of calculating his monthly estimates to Secretary Monroe as conjecture. The Quartermaster Department, he observed, spent a substantial amount of money dealing with unforeseen circumstances. These contingent expenses, he wrote, prevented him from making accurate estimates. He warned Monroe that the difference between his



estimate and the actual sum needed could be great. A month later, he acknowledged that his previous estimate underestimated the actual expenditures of his department and lamented the fact that the December 1814 estimates would be no more accurate than the previous one.<sup>63</sup>

However much these men tried to find ways of making logistics work they were not able to overcome significant structural factors that prevented them from placing their departments on a sound financial footing. The underlying cause of the Quartermaster Department's chronic debts lay in the flawed system for financing the war. Early in the war, the United States raised money by authorizing a series of five loans, which proved completely inadequate. In March 1813, Treasury Secretary Gallatin alerted President Madison to the dire situation: "We have hardly money enough to last till the end of the month."<sup>64</sup> The Democratic-Republican Party's resistance to a national bank and internal taxes was the chief culprit for this state of affairs. Although Congress did pass a tax bill early in 1813, it delayed the implementation of the bill. The economic situation became even more alarming when, in 1814, many banks suspended specie payments and the federal government defaulted on the national debt. As a result, many quartermasters reported to the secretary of war that they were completely out of money and were having difficulties obtaining loans from local banks.<sup>65</sup>

When quartermasters were out of funds, military operations would stall. Secretary Armstrong attempted to rectify the shortage in the War Department by curtailing spending on seacoast fortifications and militia calls. This kind of triage was how Armstrong coped with the financial limitations placed on the War Department. In 1813, he shifted funds from the Northwestern Army to the Northern Army because he

prioritized the invasion of Canada above other war aims. In May 1815, Colonel Linnard voiced concerns to Secretary of War Alexander Dallas about his inability to transport General Scott's troops from Philadelphia to Carlisle. Linnard stated that he did not have even a single dollar for the purpose. Instead of waiting for funds to materialize, Scott attempted some triage of his own by diverting money allocated for fortifications toward transportation. Although Linnard opposed the move on principle, he would accommodate Scott with the secretary of war's permission.<sup>66</sup>

Quartermasters had almost as much difficulty handling public property as they had handling money. One reason for the lack of accountability for property was the War Department's failure to enforce it. Without proper enforcement, officers in the regular army and militiamen could ransack the public stores. For example, Captain Hezekiah Johnson informed Secretary Eustis that Brigadier General William Hull, on his own initiative, simply helped himself to the tents in his possession at Pittsburgh. Major General Morgan Lewis concluded, after inspecting the posts within his new command, in western New York, that the militia was responsible for the loss of supplies intended for the army.<sup>67</sup>

Another reason for the unnecessary loss of property was the War Department's failure to introduce an inventory system. Inconsistent recordkeeping practices meant that quartermasters often did not know what they had on hand until they themselves took an inventory of their stores. The commissary general of purchases reported similarly shoddy procedures for recording the acquisition and distribution of clothing. Commanding officers, moreover, were generally poor accountants. When they assumed the duties of a quartermaster during emergencies, they did not always produce accurate records of

transactions. Congress provided a solution when it established the position of superintendent general of military supplies, whose office was located in Washington, D.C.<sup>68</sup> The superintendent general was responsible for holding commissaries, quartermasters, and surgeons accountable for their handling of government property. His chief duty was to “keep proper accounts of all the military stores and supplies of every description, purchased or distributed” and to “prescribe the forms of all the returns and accounts of such stores and supplies purchased, on hand, distributed, used, or sold.”<sup>69</sup>

In spite of this reform, quartermasters still failed to keep complete inventories of their military stores. At the Battle of New Orleans, firearms, flints, and accoutrements were in short supply on the American side, and a shipment of firearms on its way to the city arrived too late to be used in the battle.<sup>70</sup> A year later, the acting quartermaster of the New Orleans depot, Captain Charles Wollstonecraft, requested that Major Thomas S. Jesup examine a cache of Spanish muskets and bayonets that had been stored there for many years but left unopened, apparently forgotten and not employed during the campaign. Jesup described his impressions of the discovery as follows:

Most of the muskets were damaged and none of them were such as I would have been willing to put into the hands of soldiers, except on the greatest emergency. Knowing that an order had been given to sell all foreign and damaged arms, I inquired why those had not been sold, and was informed that they had been covered by empty boxes, old iron, and other rubbish, and had only been discovered a few days before I was called upon to examine them. Had the general been apprized that they were in store, bad as was their condition, he would no doubt have used them advantageously—that he was not apprized of the fact, I have always ascribed to the wretched state of our army, as well before as during the war.<sup>71</sup>

Jesup, recalling the incident over a decade later, told former president James Monroe that he took this incident as an object lesson in the need for an efficient staff. Henceforward, he would ensure, in time of peace, that the nation would be able to exploit every means available to it in time of war.<sup>72</sup>

#### “The Worst of All Possible Modes”: The Failure of the Contract System

The most controversial aspect of the U.S. Army’s supply and logistics system was the practice of relying on civilian contractors to purchase and transport rations. The correspondence of army officers is replete with pointed criticisms about dishonest contractors who caused men to go hungry by failing to fulfill their contracts. Complaints centered on how the rations were often unfit for consumption. Flour and salt-beef or pork were the key components of the standard ration, but contractors motivated by profit more than the well-being of soldiers sometimes adulterated the flour with foreign substances such as chalk or plaster of Paris.<sup>73</sup> Descriptions abound about how the rotting meat was offensive to the senses. Lieutenant John Graham, in command of a detachment of the Thirteenth U.S. Infantry, complained to Armstrong that the salt-beef portion of the 600 rations that he ordered from a Sackets Harbor contractor was “disgusting to the sight and smell.” He accused the contractor of knowingly taking advantage of soldiers on the march.<sup>74</sup> Colonel Charles Boerstler of the Fourteenth U.S. Infantry described the beef that contractor Augustus Porter issued to the encampment at Black Rock, New York, as looking “more like carrion than food for men.”<sup>75</sup> Soldiers who consumed rotten meat and adulterated flour risked succumbing to gastrointestinal illnesses but, as General Edmund Gaines observed, contractors often left them with a choice between eating bad food and

starvation.<sup>76</sup> Sometimes contractors cut corners on an order by failing to include the requisite supply of whiskey, soap, vinegar, and candles. Colonel William Paul Anderson of the Twenty-Fourth U.S. Infantry cited the lack of these items for a period lasting nearly two months, in addition to “miserable old tents” and “unwholesome provisions,” as the chief reasons for the poor morale of his troops. He regretted that his soldiers’ privations were “just sufficient to drive them home possessing the most utter hatred to all that’s military.” Regarding the conduct of the war, he reached the same conclusion as the other army officers who voiced an opinion on the matter. “Surely it is an army where little system prevails,” he lamented, “where all is hurry & bustle.”<sup>77</sup>

The government adopted the contract system as a means to cut expenditures. It did so by driving down the price of army rations through a process of competitive bidding. The lowest bidder then supplied rations at a fixed price. The price of rations could vary widely. Rations bought in remote, resource-poor areas with subsistence farming usually commanded higher prices than those in agriculturally productive and heavily populated areas where it was easier to bring goods to market. In 1812, an agent to contractor James Morrison submitted bids ranging from 15 to 32 cents to supply the Northwestern Army in the Indiana, Missouri, and Illinois Territories, while another contractor from Natchez offered to supply the Louisiana and Mississippi Territories at 15 to 18 cents per ration. Contractors in North Carolina and Georgia, by contrast, won bids to supply rations for 14 and 15 cents, respectively. In 1813, a New Jersey contractor offered rations at 14 cents each while an officer recruiting in western Virginia paid 20 cents per ration.<sup>78</sup>

Contractors offered bids that took into account the cost of procurement and transportation in a given region. Contingencies played as much of a role in determining the cost of procuring rations, however, as did proximity to wheat, beef cattle, and good roads. Farmland devastated by raiding or unseasonable weather could drive up prices. Contractors could face ruin if the cost of procurement exceeded the contract price. Wartime inflation could also have the same effect. In January 1815, one contractor sought to revise the terms of his contract, which stipulated that he would provide rations at 15 cents each, to 17 cents because of rising costs. Because the contract obligated the contractor to adhere to the contract price regardless of exigencies, it created some perverse incentives. He had little incentive to fulfill the terms of the contract if he could not make a profit.<sup>79</sup>

Congress chose not to abolish the contract system in spite of its faults. In early 1813, it did attempt to rectify the problem of what to do in case a contractor failed to deliver on his contract. “An Act the better to provide for the supplies of the Army of the United States, and for the accountability of persons entrusted with the same” authorized the president to appoint a special commissary or an officer in the Quartermaster Department to purchase and issue subsistence to the army in case of contractor failure. The president could also appoint an officer to subsist the army if there were no contractors available. The law, however, did not resolve the issue of who was responsible for subsisting the army during an invasion of Canada.<sup>80</sup>

When contractors failed, quartermasters attempted to fulfill the delinquent parties’ requisitions. For example, General Wilkinson told Major Samuel Brown, in January 1814, that the contractor responsible for purchasing the flour that he had requisitioned on

November 16 had still not fulfilled the contract. Unless his army received the flour, he warned, the “common soldier has no resort but starvation.” Wilkinson then ordered Brown to “call on all the energies” of his department and use the funds at his disposal to “avert the calamitous consequences which may ensue.”<sup>81</sup>

Colonel Boerstler reasoned that a quartermaster would have no more success than the contractor would if the latter failed because food was scarce. He wrote, “The officers relying on these bloodsuckers can not avail themselves, from the exhausted state of the country immediately around, of the clause in the contract, to purchase at the expense of the contractor & are reduced to the poignant necessity of seeing those entrusted to their care suffer for want of food.”<sup>82</sup> The Act of March 3, 1813, which authorized a special commissary or quartermaster in case of contractor failure, was merely a stopgap measure. General Winfield Scott sought a more permanent solution. He distributed hard bread to his soldiers, which they could carry with them on long marches without the fear that it would spoil. Historian Richard V. Barbuto described as this effort as an attempt to “break the stranglehold of the contract system.”<sup>83</sup>

Instead of trying to make the ineffective contract system work, army officers would have preferred to abolish it altogether and replace it with another. Major Thomas Sidney Jesup wrote, “It is madness in the extreme to carry on war with such a system.”<sup>84</sup> In 1814, Secretary of War James Monroe solicited the advice of three officers—Major General Winfield Scott, Major General Edmund P. Gaines, and Colonel John R. Fenwick. He attached their observations to his own report to the House Committee on Military Affairs. The report formed the basis for the critiques of the contract system by secretaries of war William H. Crawford and John C. Calhoun after the war, and laid the foundation

for reforms in subsisting the army such as the commissary system and establishment of the Subsistence Department.

Each of the reports touched on five basic critiques of the contract system. First, all three officers were convinced that contractors were wholly unscrupulous. They believed the contractors' desire for profits would take precedence over the army's needs in every case. "The interests of the contractor," General Scott wrote, "are in precise opposition to those of the troops." Colonel Fenwick asserted that contractors invariably seized the many opportunities to increase their profits at the army's expense. They did so by issuing "bread half baked, sour flour, damaged meat," and by delivering only half the required amount of soap, vinegar, and candles. Scott ascribed the root cause of this apparent callousness toward the well-being of soldiers to the profit motive. When the cost that the contractor paid for acquiring such items exceeded the contract price, contractors either did not deliver the items or offered to substitute whiskey in their place. The contract system incentivized failure, as the contractor would invariably withdraw from his contract when the purchase price fell below the contract price.<sup>85</sup>

General Gaines identified a different source of the problem. The principal contractor, he noted, avoided the drudgery of procuring and transporting provisions by farming out the work to subcontractors after securing for himself his cut of one cent per ration. Since the subcontracts were less profitable, subcontractors often increased profits by resorting to unsavory methods. Gaines described the subcontracting process thusly: "The contract, after being duly entered into at Washington, is bid off, until it falls into the hands of men who are forced to bear certain loss and ultimate ruin, or commit frauds, by



furnishing damaged provisions; they generally choose the latter, though it should tend to destroy the army.”<sup>86</sup>

Colonel Fenwick believed that the moral turpitude of contractors extended to treason. Men capable of causing the suffering of the soldiers of their own country were also capable, he reasoned, of talking to the enemy. General Scott asserted that the contract system itself bred traitors even though there were no reported cases during the war of contractors being caught spying or turning their coats. Still, Scott described how it could happen. Although the government knew who the principal contractor was, he mused, it often did not know the identity of the subcontractors or the contractor’s agents. These men would have as much information about the army as the principal, and were in a better position to communicate with the British without detection. They could also sabotage the army by failing to supply it at the critical moment. That supplies often failed to arrive when it was most needed no doubt contributed to officers’ suspicions of contractors.<sup>87</sup>

Scott, Gaines, and Fenwick shared similar views on the consequences of contractor delays and failure. Fenwick warned that even the “best planned operations” could be “frustrated by a tardy contractor.” Scott concurred, noting that the contractor was often responsible for defeating the “best views and hopes of the commander-in-chief.” Moreover, since the movements of the army relied on the regular delivery of provisions, the contractor dictated the timing of a march. For this reason, he lamented, the contract system “puts the contractor above the General.”<sup>88</sup> Gaines and Scott also noticed a pattern: contractor failure would often occur when the army was close to the enemy. Although they suspected treason, there was a less sinister reason for such

occurrences. When the U.S. Army marched and fought in resource-poor areas the profit margin for supplying rations often declined precipitously.

All three officers argued that the lack of accountability made the contract system unworkable. Fenwick asserted that commanding officers did not have the power to punish abuses. Scott disagreed, noting that officers could prevent abuses if they vigilantly enforced the terms of the contract. He cautioned, however, that few officers had the “leisure to resort to those checks.” In general, contractors defrauded the government with impunity because they were not accountable to military authority. The ultimate remedy, Scott observed, could only be a trial in the civil courts. He regretted that a general could not “hang a contractor” on American soil (but could do so in Canada).<sup>89</sup>

Their collective solution was the abolition of the contract system and adoption of the commissariat system. Scott and Fenwick noted that the British and French had long since abandoned a system relying on private contractors in favor of commissaries. Gaines wrote that the army should rely on commissioned officers, only, to supply the army, “men who stand most solemnly pledged to serve the U.S. honestly and faithfully and to obey orders—men who may be cashiered or capitally punished by military law for neglect of duty or for fraudulent practices.” He argued that provisions would arrive regularly and in good condition, and even at lower cost. Scott believed that one should not judge the merits of the commissariat system based on the performance of special commissaries and quartermasters who subsisted the army after a contractor’s failure. These officers, compelled to supply the necessary rations in an emergency, did not have the time to seek out the best prices for commodities and other items.<sup>90</sup> An examination of

officers' correspondence lends credence to Scott's view. In June 1814, Captain Charles Stansbury of the Thirty-Eighth Infantry procured rations after a contractor failed to fulfill his contract, but could only do so at exorbitant rates (25 and 37 cents per ration). As long as the commanding officer gave a commissary or quartermaster enough advance notice, Scott assured the secretary of war, he was sure those officers could find the lowest prices. At most, they would have to pay 18 cents per ration. The commissariat system would avoid the basic conflict between duty and interest that plagued the contract system. A commissary, he wrote, "if destitute of character, might be disposed to charge the government more for a barrel of whiskey, or a bullock, or flour, than the article cost him; but it can never his interest to impose unsound provisions on the troops."<sup>91</sup>

The defects in the administration of supply and logistics, the method of war funding, and the contract system set up the Corps of Quartermasters for failures in the War of 1812. In spite of the best efforts of military and civilian leaders to rationalize the management of supply and logistics, these structural factors undermined the positive effect of their efforts. Because the system functioned only somewhat better in 1814 and 1815 than it did in 1812, even competent quartermasters failed to perform their basic duties effectively. Quartermasters spent the war improvising solutions to systemic logistic problems. Meanwhile, the logistic reforms proposed by field-grade army officers during the war provided the basis for the reforms of the postwar era. These proposals laid the foundation for the rationalization of logistics and the professionalization of the Quartermaster Corps.

<sup>1</sup> The third structural defect in U.S. Army logistics, an inadequate system of roads and canals, is the subject of Chapter 5.

<sup>2</sup> See sociologist Charles Perrow's discussion of "normal accidents," in *Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technologies* (New York: Basic Books, 1984). Normal accidents are disasters that occur because of faults in how a complex organization functions rather than those that happen because of individual error. See also Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 1991). The authors draw a direct comparison between "normal accidents" and certain types of military failure that they classify as "misfortunes."

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Brown to James Monroe, 29 November 1814, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M221, RG 107, NARA; John C. Fredriksen, ed., *The War of 1812 War Department Correspondence, 1812–1815* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016), 52.

<sup>4</sup> *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 1: 600–601.

<sup>5</sup> William Eustis quoted in J.C.A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783–1830* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 160.

<sup>6</sup> Morgan Lewis to William Eustis, 28 August 1812, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 239.

<sup>7</sup> William Linnard quoted in Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775–1939* (Washington, DC: Office of the Quartermaster General, 1962), 168.

---

<sup>8</sup> Act of May 22, 1812, ch. 92 2 *Stat.* 742; Act of March 28, 1812, ch. 46 2 *Stat.* 696.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Lamb to William Eustis, 12 July 1812, and Jacob Eustis to John Armstrong, Letters Received, 15 August 1813, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 124, 228.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Brown to James Monroe, 27 April 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 54.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Swartwout to James Monroe, 28 December 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 378.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Brown to James Monroe, 27 April, 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 54.

<sup>13</sup> William Piatt to John Armstrong, 21 January 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 303.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Wheaton to James Monroe, 19 January 1815, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 416.

<sup>15</sup> William Linnard to William Eustis, 11 July 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 244.

<sup>16</sup> Morgan Lewis to William Eustis, 29 May 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 238; Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, 160.

---

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Van De Venter to John Armstrong, 15 March 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 401.

<sup>18</sup> William Swan to John Armstrong, 30 June 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 376.

<sup>19</sup> Francis Preston Blair, John Cook Rives, Franklin Rives, eds., *The Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings, and Laws, of the First Session of the Thirty-Third Congress* (Washington: John C. Rives, 1854), 28: 1499, 1854.

<sup>20</sup> *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches* (Cleveland: H.Z. Williams and Bro., 1882), 2: 32.

<sup>21</sup> Henry Dearborn to Elbert Anderson, 14 April 1813, and Henry Dearborn to John Armstrong, 26 March 1813, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 104–105; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 171–173; John A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics 1775–1953* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966), 109–111.

<sup>22</sup> Henry Dearborn to John Armstrong, 23 February 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 104.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Dearborn to John Armstrong, 5 April 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 105.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Dearborn to John Armstrong, 14 April 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 105.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Swartwout to John Armstrong, 19 & 27 April 1813, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 377.

---

<sup>26</sup> John Armstrong to Robert Swartwout, 25 April 1813, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, M6, RG 107, NARA.

<sup>27</sup> John Armstrong quoted in Carl Edward Skeen, *John Armstrong, Jr., 1758–1843: A Biography* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981), 133; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 173–174.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Swartwout to John Armstrong, 19 & 27 April 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 377.

<sup>29</sup> John Armstrong to Elisha Jenkins, 23 April 1813, Letters Sent, M6, RG 107, NARA; and Elisha Jenkins to John Armstrong, 30 April, 3, 17 & 31 May 1813, all in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 210; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 173–174.

<sup>30</sup> Huston, *Sinews of War*, 109.

<sup>31</sup> Act of March 28, 1812, ch. 46 2 *Stat.* 696; Act of March 3, 1813, ch. 48 2 *Stat.* 816.

<sup>32</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 141–142; Leonard D. White, *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801–1829* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), 225.

<sup>33</sup> Callender Irvine to William Eustis, 20 August 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 187.

<sup>34</sup> David Rogerson Williams quoted in White, *The Jeffersonians*, 225.

---

<sup>35</sup> Morgan Lewis to William Eustis, 26 June 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA.

<sup>36</sup> Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 75–76; William H. Crawford quoted in Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America during the First Administration of James Madison* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 2: 395.

<sup>37</sup> William Linnard to William Eustis, 16 May & 1 June 1812, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 244.

<sup>38</sup> William Eustis quoted in Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 142.

<sup>39</sup> Morgan Lewis to William Eustis, 4 September 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA.

<sup>40</sup> Morgan Lewis to William Eustis, 17 August 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 239; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 141.

<sup>41</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 428–429; Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, 157–161; Hickey, *War of 1812*, 112; Skeen, *John Armstrong*, 128–129.

<sup>42</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 138–139.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> William Linnard to William Eustis, 23 April 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 244.



---

<sup>45</sup> James Morrison to John Armstrong, 28 January 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 283; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 163–164.

<sup>46</sup> John Brannan, ed., *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, during the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812, 13, 14, & 15* (Washington City: Pr. By Way and Gideon, 1823), 138–139.

<sup>47</sup> William Linnard to James Monroe, 16 December 1814, Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 245.

<sup>48</sup> Taylor Berry to James Swearingen, 6 November 1814, Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 29.

<sup>49</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 428–429.

<sup>50</sup> Hickey, *War of 1812*, 112.

<sup>51</sup> Anthony Lamb to William Eustis, 12 June 1812, and William Linnard to William Eustis, 11 June 1812, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 228, 244; *ASP: MA*, 1: 431.

<sup>52</sup> William B. Lewis to William Eustis, 25 January 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 242.

<sup>53</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 431; Callender Irvine to John Armstrong, 6 March 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 190.

---

<sup>54</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 428; Paul Bentalou to John Armstrong, 1 August 1813; James McClosky to James Monroe, 9 January 1815; William Christy to James Monroe, 16 December 1814; William Piatt to John Armstrong, 29 April 1814; W. B. Banon to Benjamin Romaine, 21 October 1814, all in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 21, 27, 75, 253, 304.

<sup>55</sup> William Piatt to John Armstrong, 8 November 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 303.

<sup>56</sup> Bartholomew Schaumburgh to John Armstrong, 9 March 1813; Bartholomew Schaumburgh to John Armstrong, 9 May 1813; Bartholomew Schaumburgh to Thomas Flournoy, 7 June 1813, all in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 376.

<sup>57</sup> William Swan to John Armstrong, 20 August 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 389.

<sup>58</sup> James Thomas to John Armstrong, 20 & 29 June 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 345–346.

<sup>59</sup> William Swan to John Armstrong, 2 September 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 389.

<sup>60</sup> Paul Bentalou to John Armstrong, 1 May 1814, and William Swan to William Eustis, 18 May 1812, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 28, 376.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph Wheaton to John C. Bartlett, 7 July 1813; John C. Bartlett to Joseph Wheaton, 7 July 1813, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 415.

---

<sup>62</sup> William B. Lewis to James Monroe, 19 October 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 415.

<sup>63</sup> William Linnard to James Monroe, 15 November & 15 December 1814, both in Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 245.

<sup>64</sup> Albert Gallatin quoted in Skeen, *John Armstrong*, 131.

<sup>65</sup> Max M. Edling, *Hercules in the Cradle: War, Money, and the American State, 1783–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 108–144; Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*, Bicentennial Edition (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 232–234.

<sup>66</sup> William Linnard to Alexander Dallas, 9 June & 14 June 1815, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; William Linnard to James Monroe, 24 May 1815, Letters Received, M222, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 246; Skeen, *John Armstrong*, 133–134.

<sup>67</sup> Hezekiah Johnson to William Eustis, 10 May 1812, and Morgan Lewis to John Armstrong, 20 April 1813, both in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 215, 240.

<sup>68</sup> Marvin A. Kreidberg & Merton G. Henry, *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775–1945* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1955), 58–59.

<sup>69</sup> Act of March 3, 1813, ch. 48 2 *Stat.* 816.

<sup>70</sup> C. Edward Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 169.

---

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Jesup to James Monroe, 7 October 1827, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Jesup to James Monroe, 7 October 1827, Jesup Papers.

<sup>73</sup> John Watts to William Eustis, 18 September 1812, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 345–346; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 413.

<sup>74</sup> John Graham to John Armstrong, 23 October 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 151.

<sup>75</sup> Charles Boerstler to John Armstrong, 13 January 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 41.

<sup>76</sup> Edmund Gaines to James Monroe, 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 139.

<sup>77</sup> William Paul Anderson to John Armstrong, 20 January 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 13.

<sup>78</sup> Huston, *Sinews of War*, 104–105; James C. Wilkins to William Eustis, 29 September 1812 (Natchez contractor); Caleb Halstead to John Armstrong, 26 February 1813 (New Jersey contractor); Joseph Hooks to William Eustis, 15 October 1812 (North Carolina contractor); Joseph Hutchison to William Eustis, 16 October 1812 (Georgia contractor); John Key to John Armstrong, 17 April 1813 (Virginia recruiter); William P. Bryon to William Eustis, 31 October 1812 (Northwestern Army contractor), all in Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 56, 155, 176, 184, 223, 419.

---

<sup>79</sup> Cornelius Griffith to James Monroe, 30 January 1815, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 154; Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, 345–346.

<sup>80</sup> Act of March 3, 1813, ch. 48 2 *Stat.* 816.

<sup>81</sup> James Wilkinson to Samuel Brown, 14 January 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 424.

<sup>82</sup> Charles Boerstler to John Armstrong, 20 January 1813, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 41.

<sup>83</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 600–601; Richard V. Barbuto, *Niagara 1814: America Invades Canada* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 134.

<sup>84</sup> Thomas Jesup to unknown, 8 September 1814, Jesup Papers.

<sup>85</sup> *ASP: MA*, 1: 600–601.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Charles Stansbury to John Armstrong, 24 June 1814, Letters Received, M221, RG 107, NARA; Fredriksen, *Correspondence*, 367.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE MILITARY CASE FOR INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS

After the War of 1812, military and civilian leaders arrived at the consensus that a lack of good roads was as responsible for the wartime failure to supply the U.S. Army as the chaotic administration of the War Department, unscrupulous contractors, and incompetent quartermasters. To avoid a costly repeat of such logistical “embarrassments,” they pointed to the need for a national system of internal improvements, a permanent logistical organization, a commissariat system, and a professional Quartermaster Corps. The transportation difficulties of the army, in particular, gave longtime internal improvers a potent new argument in favor of their proposals. Reform-minded officers who experienced these difficulties firsthand soon joined their ranks. Although the military case for internal improvements was not as salient as the arguments that promised commercial prosperity or national unity, it still formed an important part of the public debate on the issue. The military case was as follows: Military roads would make remote regions accessible to supplies and civilian settlement, shorten travel times to the inland and maritime posts, and save money by cutting the costs and losses associated with transporting men and supplies over difficult terrain. Military internal improvers further warned that the prospect of a third war with Great Britain or a war with Spain made the construction of new roads and canals an urgent matter. When immediate worries of war with a European power dissipated in the ensuing years, they touted military roads as an effective way to meet the threat that restive American Indians posed to white settlements on the frontier.

John C. Calhoun and Thomas Sidney Jesup were two of the most enthusiastic advocates of a national system of roads and canals. Reflecting upon the nation's lack of preparedness in the late war, they focused on solving the problem of how to mobilize the nation for the next one. For the United States, the problem of logistical mobilization remained acute because the country's population was still sparse and its territory was becoming increasingly extensive. The U.S. Army faced the problem of not having enough men to cover all the strategic points. An integrated network of internal improvements would allow the army to ameliorate the nation's geographical vulnerability by using interior lines to concentrate rapidly along the frontier. The existing transportation system, which had developed according to the dictates of regional interests, lacked the necessary coherence to serve the country's commercial and military needs.<sup>1</sup>

Giving voice to a confident nationalism that would typify the postwar era, Calhoun and Jesup argued that a national system would promote national greatness by spurring commercial activity and binding together the various sections of the country. Only the federal government had the wherewithal to build an integrated road network capable of meeting the logistical challenges of transporting men, supplies, and munitions to the frontier. Without federal funding, the parochial interests of states and localities would often take precedence over national ones. The idea for a national system harkened back to the landmark Gallatin Plan of 1808. That year, Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin proposed a system that included the nearly two dozen public roads, which he believed would promote national interests. His plan went nowhere. The concomitant



piece of legislation, known as the Pope-Porter Bill, died in Congress. Construction on roads and canals would continue, but only in an erratic fashion.<sup>2</sup>

That even applied to military roads. Before the war, the army built roads in response to immediate supply and transportation problems. The shortcomings of this approach, however, became clear during the War of 1812. The lack of roads in the Northwestern Theater of operations resulted, in part, in the loss of the Michigan Territory to the British Army. Cutting roads through marshland had been the most arduous task carried out by the Northwestern Army led by Major General William Henry Harrison. In response, Calhoun and Jesup thought about how logistics would fit into a national defense strategy and how logistical mobilization could be improved so that the nation would be prepared for a future conflict. Although a national transportation system did not come to fruition, the postwar push for internal improvements reflected a wider awareness of the country's strategic needs.

Calhoun and Jesup not only championed internal improvements, but they also initiated enduring reforms in army organization and logistic procedures. They played an instrumental role in abolishing the contract system, establishing the bureau system, rationalizing logistical procedures, and professionalizing the Corps of Quartermasters and commissaries. Their advocacy of internal improvements was part of a comprehensive reform program that would professionalize and modernize U.S. Army logistics in the early national era.

## The Debate over a National System of Internal Improvements

Military road construction progressed in tandem with the construction boom in turnpike roads and canals that would continue unabated until the Panic of 1837 deprived internal improvers of both private and public funding. Although military roads, commercial roads, and post roads ostensibly served separate functions, there was little real difference between them. Political and economic developments that affected the construction of civil roads also affected the military road-building program. Soon after receiving special appropriations from Congress, in 1816, the army began construction on “Jackson’s Military Road,” which ran from Nashville to New Orleans, and the Sackets Harbor-Plattsburgh Road.<sup>3</sup> Federal funding for military roads, however, became a casualty of the ideological debate over general internal improvements in Congress. These debates centered upon the Bonus Bill of 1817, which earmarked the \$1.5 million bonus from the Bank of the United States toward the construction of roads and canals. Unlike Albert Gallatin, the proponents of this bill did not propose specific projects in order to allay sectional fears of federal encroachment on states’ rights.<sup>4</sup> The bill’s principal supporters were Republican nationalists such as Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky and Congressman John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. Calhoun’s advocacy of internal improvements for military reasons commenced during his tenure as secretary of war, which began on December 8, 1817. As a congressman, however, Calhoun argued for the merits of the bill primarily on commercial and political grounds. In a speech to the House of Representatives, on February 7, 1817, he argued that internal improvements were an invaluable tool for counteracting sectional divisions. To Calhoun, the alternative was disunion followed by “misery and despotism.” His solution: “Let us

then . . . bind together the Republic with a perfect system of roads and canals . . . Let us conquer space.”<sup>5</sup> Congressman Thomas Bolling Robertson of Louisiana exemplified the opposition to the bill when he questioned the motives of the nationalists who, in his view, wished to have “one grand, magnificent, consolidated empire.” He argued that internal improvements was a matter best left to the states and proposed an amendment—successfully voted into the final bill—that would dole out the money provided by the bonus to the state governments.<sup>6</sup> Although Congress passed the bill, President James Madison, in a dramatic shift from his previous support of federal legislation on internal improvements, vetoed it because he believed it was unconstitutional.<sup>7</sup>

The strict constructionism of President James Monroe, who stated in his first annual message to Congress that federal funding of general improvements required a constitutional amendment, ensured that state governments and private companies would continue to be responsible for funding internal improvements. The stillborn national system of roads gave way to a roads and canals network that would take shape without central direction, a product of commercial competition between states, and local and private interests. The veto affected the funding of military roads, as well. Although President Madison had approved federal appropriations for military roads, under President Monroe funding would come entirely from the general appropriation of the Quartermaster Department, with the exception of the special appropriation to complete the Sackets Harbor-Plattsburgh road in March 1823.<sup>8</sup>

While federal funding for civil projects, such as turnpike roads, was the focus of this debate, military roads were the subject of some controversy as well. Senator Jeremiah Morrow of Ohio proposed in February 1816 to the Committee on Roads and

Canals that only a national system of internal improvements could increase the nation's capacity to resist foreign aggression. Such a system would make military operations less expensive. Morrow wrote, "The disadvantages experienced and heavy charges incurred during the late war, for want of inland navigation along the seacoast, connecting the great points of defence, are of too recent date and decisive character, to require any other demonstration [that] a facility in inland communication constitutes a principal means of national defense."<sup>9</sup> Improvements that relied on local funding, he observed, would only produce local benefits. National projects, such as military roads, required national aid. Therefore, he requested federal appropriations to construct canals for the Atlantic states, including a twenty-one-mile Chesapeake-Delaware canal, which would shorten the route over the isthmus by more than 450 miles. Turnpikes would facilitate communication between the north and south, and between the coast and western rivers. Military roads would connect the frontier posts and make access to a canal at the Falls of the Ohio River easier. Morrow's outline drew on some of the ideas in Gallatin's 1808 plan.<sup>10</sup>

Outright opposition to military roads was rare in Congress. Representative Cyrus King of Massachusetts decided to break with the norm on the House floor. He argued that ambitious civil projects would "squander millions, when thousands of our citizens are destitute of bread," that New England's current post roads were sufficient to meet its needs, and that other states should concentrate on improving their own post roads. He feared that military roads would lead to renewed war with Great Britain. "Suppose them made, and all the armories, and arsenal, and military academies, which gentlemen can desire, and the nation stands in complete armor. What next? War! war! is the next cry which will resound in these walls." In such a war, he observed, improved roads would

make U.S. territory more accessible to the enemy. “Others propose noble military roads,” he said, “in various parts of the country, to facilitate the march of numerous armies, which they wish to be on foot, not recollecting that they will be equally convenient for an invading army.”<sup>11</sup>

Although Cyrus King’s colleagues did not share his dim view of military roads, even internal improvers expressed concern that military road projects could serve as a pretext to pursue other objects. As historian John Lauritz Larson has argued, the suspicion that hidden motives lay behind proposals for national development was pervasive.<sup>12</sup> In a January 1819 debate on military appropriations, Henry Clay feared that the president could simply use his power to employ soldier labor on military roads and redirect it to build commercial and post roads instead. Since Congress lacked the constitutional authority to do the same, he considered it an overreach of executive power. Clay used military terminology in an ironic way to paint a vivid picture of the true function of such a road. He described the “great and magnificent . . . *military road*” that connected the Tennessee River to Lake Ponchartrain, where “it was proposed very soon to march a detachment of stage coaches, proposals having already been made to the Post Office Department to avail itself of the services of this description of *military corps*.”<sup>13</sup>

In spite of these concerns, civilians and military men recognized that a road built expressly for military purposes, with the labor of troops, would also have value as a commercial road. Secretary of War Calhoun argued in his report on the state of internal improvements, dated January 7, 1819, that there was no distinction between military supply lines and commercial routes. He declared, “The road or canal can scarcely be designated, which is highly useful for military operations, which is not equally required

for the industry or political prosperity of the community.” He added that the number of military roads that did not also have a commercial function was nearly nonexistent. For Calhoun, this fortunate coincidence meant that building a national system of military roads would necessarily generate commercial benefits as well. “It is in fact one of the great advantages of our country,” he wrote, “enjoying so many others, that whether we regard its internal improvements in relation to military, civil, or political purposes, very nearly the same system, in all its parts, is required.”<sup>14</sup>

Civilians from the western territories were among the most ardent proponents of the concept of dual-purpose roads. Such arteries would end the region’s isolation and create new markets for agricultural surpluses and resources by opening communications with the eastern seaboard and lowering transportation costs.<sup>15</sup> Governor Lewis Cass of the Michigan Territory was one such advocate. In 1826, he made the case that the security of the area depended upon a network of roads. Governor Cass’s memoir expounded the common argument that military roads would also encourage settlement and that would make the region more defensible. He therefore proposed the construction of three new military roads. These roads would ensure a reliable means of overland communications between Detroit and Lake Michigan at Chicago, and between Detroit and Lake Huron at both Fort Gratiot and Saginaw Bay. He touted the benefits that such roads would have for both civilian society and the army. They would attract “vigorous farmers” to the region, who would be “able and willing to defend” their new homes. These farmers would produce enough subsistence for the regular army, which would obviate the need to ship foodstuffs from a long distance. Furthermore, by ending the isolation of the forts on the upper lakes, the roads would enable the United States to

“restrain or chastise” the native tribes “as circumstances may require.”<sup>16</sup> To Cass, the potential benefits of military roads to accelerate settlement justified the expense of such an undertaking.

Governor Cass’s allies, Major General Jacob Jennings Brown and Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, were vocal about their support for military roads.<sup>17</sup> In June 1816, Macomb described to Secretary of War Crawford the potential benefits that the planned construction of the Detroit-Fort Meigs would give the territory. He explained, “Every one is convinced of the vast importance of a military way which will connect this sequestered settlement with the inhabited parts of Ohio. It will of itself form the best defence ever afforded to this frontier and moreover be the means of introducing a population which will forever hereafter secure it from the desolation and distress to which it has so recently exposed.”<sup>18</sup> Settlement was an appealing alternative to transporting supplies over long distances to garrisons stationed in isolated, resource-poor regions.

In March 1818, the Republican nationalists in the House of Representatives conducted a series of four roll call votes to gauge the sentiments of the House on whether it was possible to override an anticipated presidential veto of a bill granting Congress the authority to fund military roads. The two questions concerning military improvements—one on military roads, the other on military canals—failed to pass. A vote on the power to appropriate money, however, passed by a narrow margin.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, on April 4, the House Committee on Roads and Canals requested that Secretary of War Calhoun report on the state of the nation’s infrastructure and recommend constitutional means of supporting a program of roads and canals. The result was Calhoun’s landmark 1819

report. He presented an outline for a national system of internal improvements, which he claimed would make the vast and exposed frontiers of the United States more defensible. A planned system that connected military roads, canals, and navigable rivers to the frontiers would facilitate military operations in war and the “transportation of munitions of war” and offer the nation a “more complete defence.” The nation would be able to resist an invasion by a European power even though it had to muster troops and ship supplies over great distances. His system, in short, was the best way to solve the American logistical dilemma of how to supply far-flung posts within a large territory that was only sparsely populated. He concluded, “There is no country to which a good system of military roads and canals is more indispensable than to the United States.”<sup>20</sup>

Even though the House requested that Calhoun propose specific projects and appropriations, as well as offer suggestions on how Congress could assist a roads and canals program by constitutional means, the secretary of war thought his plan would have more success if he tried to avoid political controversy. He demurred on the question of the program’s constitutionality and chose not to include an estimate of expenses or delineate the exact courses of canals and roads. His plan was more aspirational than prescriptive. Calhoun proposed the construction of new roads and canals and the completion of works-in-progress for areas most vulnerable to an attack by Great Britain or Spain—the Atlantic coast, the U.S.-Canada borderlands on the northern frontier, and the U.S. border with the Spanish territory of Florida. He also proposed that Congress authorize the Corps of Engineers to conduct a comprehensive survey, which would form the basis for an “efficient system” of military roads and canals. To Calhoun, the lack of such a system risked a repeat of the war’s logistical failures and the repeat of “the delay,



the uncertainty, the anxiety, and exhausting effects” of mobilizing the militia. Rather, the nation should “profit by experience” and take measures that would give “economy, certainty, and success to our military operations.”<sup>21</sup> Although Congress did not put his plan into effect, it passed the General Survey Act in 1824, which gave the president the authority to order the Corps of Engineers to conduct surveys—using Congressional appropriations—for roads and canals that were not strictly military in character. The General Survey Act expanded the scale of internal improvements in the western territories for the rest of the decade.<sup>22</sup>

### Soldier Labor on Military Roads

In response to wartime logistical failures in the south, President Madison’s secretary of war, William Crawford, directed Major General Andrew Jackson to employ soldier labor to cut a road that began near Columbia, Tennessee, on the Tennessee River south of Nashville, and ended near Madisonville, Louisiana, north of New Orleans on the opposite end of Lake Pontchartrain. Jackson approved the route. Construction lasted from June 1817 to January 1820. The soldiers built the entire 392 miles, including thirty-five bridges and 392 causeways. Brigadier General Eleazar Ripley, commander of the Eighth Military Department, and Major Perrin Willis directed construction of the so-called “Jackson’s Military Road.” The road would replace the Natchez Trace and shorten the original course by about 200 miles. Captain Hugh Young, a topographical engineer, surveyed the line and the Army employed over 300 civilian artisans, including carpenters and blacksmiths, with tools supplied by the quartermaster. In 1818, Ripley began construction—on his own authority—of a forty-eight-mile road that bisected Jackson’s

Military Road and terminated at the bay of St. Louis, Mississippi, on the Gulf of Mexico. He completed the work in 1819.<sup>23</sup>

On the orders of Major General Jacob Jennings Brown, commander of the Division of the North, Colonel Henry Atkinson directed the troops building the Sackets Harbor-Plattsburgh road in 1816. The project suspended operations in 1821. Work resumed in 1823, but ceased again a year later. In 1820, Atkinson, now a brigadier general commanding the Ninth Military Department, ordered the construction of a 300-mile road from Council Bluffs, on the Missouri River, to the Grand River. Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, commander of the Fifth Military Department, supervised construction of the seventy-mile road from Detroit to Fort Meigs, Ohio. Secretary Crawford authorized the construction of this road on the recommendation of General Brown. The War Department charged the Quartermaster Department with supervising the survey and construction of roads, supplying tools, conducting repairs to roads and bridges, paying the troops—at a rate of an added fifteen cents a day and a second ration of whiskey—and hiring contract labor when necessary. Although these functions overlapped with those of the Corps of Engineers, the road-building duties of quartermasters were limited to those of military value whereas the engineers were often involved in civil projects, as well.<sup>24</sup>

Although civilian and military leaders acknowledged the distinction between military, commercial and post roads were not always clear, army officers still sought to limit the use of soldier labor to only those projects that had a clear military value. Army officers welcomed road and canal projects and did not object to the practice of using troops on road construction, but they often expressed concern that the practice could open

the door to corruption or lead to the abuse of their troops. Thomas Sidney Jesup considered the use of troops on projects of dubious military value to be equivalent to a tax on the military establishment because it diverted their labor from their proper military functions. The army should employ troops only on those roads that were necessary for their operations. Jesup resented the fact that the army would pay for internal improvements from Quartermaster Department appropriations when the responsibility should fall on federal and state governments, as well as the “large land holders” who would stand to benefit financially from such projects. For example, he was not convinced that the Sacketts Harbor-Plattsburgh Road served a legitimate military purpose. Had the road passed through Indian country or public lands, the sales of which would have increased federal revenue, his assessment of that project would have been different. Moreover, he calculated that providing extra pay and rations to soldiers for work done on roads, together with the time taken away from military duties, did not amount to a significant cost savings when compared to contract labor. In other words, soldier labor on the road would neither save money nor make money. He concluded, “I think there would be as much propriety in employing the troops and using the funds of the military Department in opening a canal between the Chesapeake and Delaware, as in constructing a road between Plattsburgh and Sacketts Harbor.”<sup>25</sup> Jesup opposed the use of troop labor for construction of roads that served a more obvious commercial purpose.

General Brown likewise opposed the use of soldier labor and military funds to construct roads lacking military justification. In 1819, Peter B. Porter suggested to Calhoun, President Monroe’s secretary of war, that the army employ soldiers with the assistance of civilians to work on the road stretching between Niagara Falls and Lake

Erie. Although Brown understood the desire of the local population to recoup their losses due to British depredations during the war, he could not approve the use of soldiers on a project that did not have military value.<sup>26</sup> Brown opposed military involvement in roadbuilding on the Niagara frontier because he considered the region to be a strategic backwater. Should there be a renewed war with Great Britain, he believed the main effort would take place along the St. Lawrence River. He cautioned, “[A]ll blows struck above the outlet of Lake Ontario are struck in vain.”<sup>27</sup> Other civilian and military leaders shared Brown’s opinion. Secretary of War Monroe of the Madison administration had developed a plan in 1815 to invade Canada via the St. Lawrence in an attempt to cut off Montreal’s communications with Upper Canada. Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup proposed to James Monroe that the central goal of the next campaign should be Halifax. The British naval blockade would only end if the United States deprived the Royal Navy of a homeport in North America.

Lieutenant Colonel Zachary Taylor considered the practice of employing soldiers on internal improvements to be corrosive to military discipline if it consumed an excessive period of time. He developed this belief during his experience building “Jackson’s Military Road” in the spring of 1820 with Colonel Duncan L. Clinch’s Eighth Infantry Regiment. When Taylor arrived in eastern Tennessee to take command of his 460-man unit, on March 20, he discovered that it was “composed entirely of recruits without organization, subordination, or discipline, and without harmony among officers.” Moreover, six weeks of subsisting on half rations inflicted a physical toll. Taylor described his soldiers as being in a “state of starvation” which would only get worse as they only had five days’ worth of rations available.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor's men had little to show for their travails. Taylor lamented, "The opening of this road has been most shamefully delayed." He attributed the cause of the delay to poor leadership. "[T]he want of arrangement & system from the head of the dept down in the management of it," he complained, "has been outrageously bad."<sup>29</sup> Historian K. Jack Bauer argues that Taylor was almost certainly unjustified in criticizing Colonel Clinch for the supply situation because that officer was "one of the more competent regimental commanders of the period."<sup>30</sup> There were other reasons, as well, why Taylor's initial assessment of his fellow officers may have been unduly harsh. The environmental conditions almost guaranteed that there would be a breakdown in logistics. The region lacked resources—the quartermaster could only purchase beef in the immediate vicinity of the work site and he was only able to acquire the most recent shipment of corn from a distance of thirty miles. Farmers transporting their corn by wagon from Pearl River had to use a portion of their load to carry feed. Moreover, the unusual amount of rain produced waterlogged roads, which compelled farmers to reduce their wagon shipments to half a load.<sup>31</sup>

Taylor remedied the supply situation by securing the officers' belongings in a hastily constructed storehouse and using the now-empty wagons to transport provisions and quartermasters' tools. He bought local fresh beef and flour at inflated prices, understanding that the exorbitant cost of transport resulted from a scarcity in pack animals, since farmers were reluctant to pull them away from the fields. Yet it seems that Taylor calculated that paying more for local foodstuffs in the short run was preferable to waiting for supplies to arrive from New Orleans via the Pearl River. Obtaining

provisions locally would not only relieve the suffering of his men, but could also prove more cost-effective if it helped conclude the construction project in a timely manner.<sup>32</sup>

On April 20, Taylor told Quartermaster General Thomas Sidney Jesup that, in the month since taking command, he had made considerable progress and would complete the final 120 miles of road by May 20. At that point, the transportation cost for each barrel arriving from the Pearl River—about 100 miles away from the current work site—was \$20. The more progress the regiment made on the road the further away it moved from the river, which meant that transportation costs would increase in proportion to the distance travelled. In order to curtail expenditures, Taylor picked up the pace of construction and his soldiers finished the road a month later.<sup>33</sup>

On September 15, Taylor qualified his objection to the use of soldier labor. He told Jesup that he did not mind soldiers working on roads so long as it was for a military purpose and that they would expend only a portion of their time on such tasks. The Eighth Infantry, which worked for 18 months on “Jackson’s Military Road,” provided a cautionary example, however. He complained that after the regiment completed the road it could not “even go through its facings correctly, much less through its firings & battalion evolution.” Taylor now seems to have had a change of heart regarding the abilities of his subordinates. He did not blame the officers for failing to whip the soldiers into fighting shape because, as he observed, they did not lack either intelligence or industry. Indeed, he had “never seen so well appointed a regt as respects officers.” Taylor implied that even good officers could find it impossible to restore discipline, subordination, and harmony among the troops after they suffered “every privation that it was possible for men to undergo.” Taylor wondered whether the continuous treadmill of

roadbuilding and other construction would have a harmful long-term effect on the army by devaluing military professionalism. He observed, “Such unfortunately is the passion in our country for making roads, fortifications, and building barracks . . . that a man who would make a good overseer, or negro driver, is better qualified for our service, than one who has received a first rate military education.” He did not see the practice ending soon, however. He concluded, “The ax, pick, saw, & trowel, has become more the implement of the American soldier, than the cannon, musket, or sword.”<sup>34</sup>

Civilians were much more sanguine about the use of soldier labor. They justified using troops on road projects on moral grounds in addition to practical ones. A common refrain was that such work would be beneficial for officers and soldiers alike because it kept them free of the vices of camp life and the deleterious effects of idleness.<sup>35</sup> In December 1815, President Madison’s war secretary, William Crawford opined, “It is believed to be no less necessary to the discipline, health [,] and preservation of the troops, than useful to the public interest.”<sup>36</sup> John Calhoun, President Monroe’s secretary of war, also defended the practice, arguing that labor was preferable to garrison life, which was hostile to the army’s vigor and discipline.<sup>37</sup>

Following the army’s reduction in 1821, it relied more heavily on contract labor. Prior to 1821, soldiers were almost solely responsible for constructing military roads. The shrinking number of military personnel combined with the growing demand for roads meant a 33 percent decline in soldier labor from 1824 to 1830. Moreover, the General Survey Act of 1824 took responsibility for road construction out of the hands of quartermasters, and entrusted it entirely to the Corps of Engineers.<sup>38</sup>

In 1830, Jesup submitted a detailed history of the roads constructed by the Army to Secretary of War John H. Eaton at the request of the House of Representatives. Jesup's research turned up little information on soldier labor before and during the War of 1812 other than the fact that it occurred. His report listed fourteen military roads constructed between 1816 and 1830, five of which remained unfinished. Before the General Survey Act, line officers planned the course of these military roads—five in total—and supervised the troops who built them.<sup>39</sup>

#### Road Construction on the Northern Frontier

During the War of 1812, the lack of good roads on the northern frontier, which comprised the U.S.-Canada borderlands in New York and New England, contributed to some of the U.S. Army's supply failures. Following the war, General Jacob Brown recalled the difficulties in transporting supplies via the two principal invasion routes into Canada, i.e., the road following the bank of the Richelieu River and the one along the Chateauguay River. Moreover, the absence of good roads on the American side made transporting supplies to the frontier problematic. For this reason, Brown ordered Colonel Henry Atkinson to commence work in 1816 on a road connecting two points on Lake Champlain, the town of Plattsburgh and the fortification at Rouses Point, at the U.S.-Canada border. A year later, President Monroe decided to go ahead with plans for an east-west route to connect Sackets Harbor, on Lake Ontario, and Plattsburgh. Brown proposed to Calhoun that Monroe substitute the road, which circumvented mountains directly between the towns, for two north-south roads covering the principal invasion routes. The eastern section of the road would lead from Sackets Harbor north to



Morristown, on the St. Lawrence River. The western section connected French Mills, the site of Wilkinson's 1813 winter camp, to Plattsburgh. The former would provide access to Rouses Point, which commanded the entrance to Lake Champlain, while the latter would supply a proposed fortification on the St. Lawrence. Rouses Point would provide a base for the Army to cut off Montreal from Canada. Once the U.S. Army seized the St. Lawrence River, forces at the two points could communicate with each other. The proposed roads were part of a strategy that he originally articulated to Secretary of War Crawford in 1815, and reiterated to Secretary of War Calhoun, to defend the Great Lakes region by means of a decisive thrust at the St. Lawrence River.<sup>40</sup>

Colonel Atkinson, Colonel Hugh Brady, commanding the Second Infantry Regiment, and Major Enos Cutler supervised construction and soldiers performed the work with tools furnished by the quartermaster. Aside from a small appropriation in 1816, the War Department funded construction entirely from Quartermaster Department appropriations. Brown did not succeed in procuring the help of the local population for construction of a bridge, but anticipated that growing commercial opportunities and an increasing population in the region would eventually spur them to complete the road. Fiscal parsimony on the part of Congress and the War Department resulted in a protest from Brown that strict spending constraints—which curtailed the use of oxen—would jeopardize completion of the project. The U.S. Army suspended the road's construction in 1821, but resumed it in 1823. It finally terminated military involvement in the project in 1824, owing to a lack of appropriations.<sup>41</sup>

## Canal Construction on the Atlantic Coast

After 1815, Calhoun and reform-minded officers and politicians attempted to solve the transportation problems of the War of 1812 by employing three modes of transportation. Wagons, which would use improved dual-use military roads and turnpikes, were the first mode of transport. The second—river vessels—would exploit the nation's abundance of inland rivers and the construction of canals. The third relied on oceangoing vessels, either government ships or those chartered privately, to transport troops and supplies along the coast. Should one mode of transport fail, the army could potentially supply itself by means of another.<sup>42</sup>

The effect of the blockade of Atlantic ports by the Royal Navy had as much an impact on reformers' thoughts about the military function of internal improvements as did poor road conditions. Before the war, overland traffic along the coast was negligible. As D. B. Warden, consul for the United States at Paris, observed in 1819, "The war gave rise to an internal trade greater in point of distance than any hitherto known, except that between Moscow and China." He elaborated, "Before the war there were but two wagons that plied between Boston and the town of Providence, and soon after its commencement the number increased to 200."<sup>43</sup> Wagon train traffic increased throughout the war but only for trade over short distances. Long-distance trade became prohibitively expensive since the time it took a wagon to transport a shipment from Savannah to Boston averaged 115 days.<sup>44</sup> Senator Morrow, in his 1816 report on internal improvements, commented on the experience of this increased wagon traffic over the Chesapeake peninsula: "The inconveniences felt and incalculable expense incurred . . . during the late war, in the vast and heavy transportations across the isthmus, must be

fresh in the recollection of every one.” He described roads that did not perform well under the stress of this dramatic increase in wheeled traffic, forcing wagoners to choose alternate routes at great expense. He wrote, “So great was the carriage, during this period, of goods, tobacco, flour, cotton, and other bulky articles across the peninsula, that it became necessary to use four distinct lines of transportation from different points of the Chesapeake to corresponding points of the Delaware.”<sup>45</sup>

Canals offered an alternative means of transport by reducing the friction of heavy wagonloads and the level of exhaustion to both teamsters and draught animals. This alternative did not exist during the war and internal improvers saw the boom in canal construction as an opportunity to boost the nation’s ability to mobilize for war. A canal linking the Delaware River to the Chesapeake Bay became an important part of their vision for a system of inland waterways. The British naval blockade, Senator Morrow indicated, underscored the importance of waterways “along and near the frontier” which would “admit of the transportation of an army . . . in safety, from point to point, with a celerity of movement equal to that of the enemy.” He also recalled that the transportation of “baggage, stores, and heavy artillery” across the isthmus had caused General George Washington such delay on his march to the south that “under circumstances less favorable, might have proved fatal to him and his army.”<sup>46</sup>

Secretary of War Calhoun’s recommendations for roads and canals in the Atlantic states, detailed in his 1819 report, reflected a preoccupation with a repeat of the naval blockade that ground coastal trade to a halt during the war. He warned that, if Great Britain again blockaded the ports on the Atlantic coast, the nation would lose 500,000 tons of shipping per year. The current state of roads and inland waterways could provide

no substitute for the carrying capacity of oceangoing vessels. The cessation of coastal shipping would also mean the curtailment of much of the north-south commerce, just as it had during the war.<sup>47</sup>

Calhoun anticipated two different kinds of threats to the Atlantic coast: The destruction of coastal towns and a full-blown invasion. Calhoun believed that a European naval power could raid the Atlantic coast with near impunity. Although he did not think the latter scenario likely, he believed that the nation should nonetheless prepare for such a contingency. Canals would enable the army to maintain communications with the western states and the interior of the Atlantic states, and establish a more effective overland system of north-south communications.

To Calhoun, the first line of defense was the U.S. Navy and a system of coastal fortifications, while improved roads and canals would enable the government to concentrate troops rapidly at the point of invasion. He cautioned, "For much of this security, we ought to look to a navy, and a judicious and strong system of fortifications; but not to the neglect of such roads, and canals, as will enable the government to concentrate promptly and cheaply, at any point, which may be menaced, the necessary force and means for defence." In case of a raid, the army would move troops and transport supplies along the line of the coast or inland, to the east. During an invasion, a network of canals and roads would allow the army to transport men from the interior of the Atlantic states and the western states. There were three lines of intercourse with the west that held out the most promise for better travel conditions with the west: Albany to the Great Lakes via the Erie Canal; Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond

to the Ohio River on the Lancaster Turnpike and its feeder roads; and Charleston and Augusta to the Tennessee River.<sup>48</sup>

Calhoun made the case for a federal role in funding road and canal projects in the Atlantic states. He acknowledged that state governments could improve existing roads with their own appropriations and would do so of their own volition for economic reasons so that, in a few years, there would be a noticeable increase in transport between the interior and the coast. Calhoun suggested that the federal government bear a proportional share in the expense of the construction of the strategically important north-south communications. Only the federal government could develop those roads since there would be little commercial incentive for states to improve upon a system that worked well enough in peacetime. “It must be perfected by the general government,” he explained, “or not be perfected at all, at least for many years” because “[no] one or two states have a sufficient interest.”<sup>49</sup>

Calhoun proposed a line of inland navigation along the coast at the expense of \$3 million. He argued that an enemy naval force could achieve little by harassing the coastline with such a system in place. By shortening travel distances, the army could concentrate locally available troops using interior lines of communication. To bolster his case, he presented the following scenario:

Suppose the fleet of such an enemy should appear off the capes of Delaware before it could possibly approach and attack Philadelphia, information by telegraphic communication might be given to Baltimore and New York, and the forces stationed there thrown in for its relief. The same might take place if Baltimore or New York should be invaded; and should an attack be made on any of our cities, the militia and regular forces at a great distance along the coast, could, in a short time, be thrown in for its relief. By this speedy communication, the regular forces, with

the militia of the cities and their neighborhood, would be sufficient to repel ordinary invasions, and would either prevent, or greatly diminish, the harassing calls upon the militia of the interior.<sup>50</sup>

The completion of the Erie Canal, in 1825, provided the army with an opportunity to gauge the usefulness of canals for military logistics. Earlier, Secretary Calhoun looked forward to the completion of the New York waterways—the Erie Canal and a canal from Albany to Lake George—as a means of connecting the inland to the coast and allowing the transport of munitions of war and concentration of troops from any portion of the Atlantic states. In 1823, General Jesup ordered his quartermasters to conduct a series of experiments on the canal. They reported to him that soldiers traveling by canal would cover fifty to sixty miles per day in comparison to the twenty-mile-per-day pace of soldiers on foot. Moreover, soldiers traveling by canal arrived at their destination free from the physical exhaustion that soldiers typically experienced after a long stretch of marching. Because of these experiments, Jesup concluded that canals were the most reliable and efficient means of concentrating an army for war.<sup>51</sup>

#### Logistics on the Western Frontier

In 1816, the U.S. Army began construction of advance posts further to the west to replace older posts. The pattern would repeat itself as the threat from the native tribes to the east subsided. Secretary Crawford of the Madison administration accelerated the process of building major depots in the region. At Prairie du Chien, he ordered the erection of Fort Crawford to replace the defunct Fort Shelby. This post became an important supply depot along with three additional posts: Fort Howard at Green Bay,

which the army established in 1816, and Fort Armstrong on Rock Island, and Fort Edwards, near the future site of Warsaw, Illinois.<sup>52</sup>

The U.S. government's reestablishment of civil and military control over Detroit (Fort Shelby) in late 1813 and Mackinac (Fort Michilimackinac), in 1815, was crucial for both U.S. Army logistics and the expansion of the frontier. Control of these posts was important because it enabled the army to enforce a monopoly over the fur trade in the Mississippi and Missouri territories and to keep a watchful eye for possible contacts between the Native Americans and the British at Fort Malden, in Upper Canada. Until the postwar period, the natives had pursued a strategy of playing Americans and British off one another, one that the Sauk warrior Black Hawk described as serving "two fathers." When the British abandoned their native allies, after the war, that strategy was no longer viable.

The logistical challenges that another war with Great Britain would present the U.S. Army in the west were similar to those on the Atlantic frontier. During the War of 1812, the army failed to exploit the nation's inland rivers as a means of transportation, while the British occupation of Detroit rendered water transport via the Great Lakes moot. Army officers and politicians considered the possibility that the British would, in a future war, attempt to disrupt commerce and the flow of military supplies across the lakes, just as they had after the fall of Detroit. Their solution was to establish—as on the Atlantic coast—a network of roads to permit wagon traffic through the difficult terrain of the Old Northwest.

Jesup recognized the strategic and logistical challenges involved in operating on the Northwestern frontier. Indeed, memories of his capture at Detroit and imprisonment

at Fort Malden must have been fresh in his mind. He considered the most important western supply routes to be the ones that connected the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and proposed to Secretary Calhoun of the Monroe administration that the army build posts along each route. After assessing the relative importance of each route, he proposed the construction of new posts and roads to make the supply of the frontier more reliable. Jesup's plan for supplying the army on the Great Lakes and upper Mississippi depended upon the command of the major roads and rivers leading from the Atlantic coast to the inland frontier. The points that protected important routes included the posts at Detroit, Chicago, Green Bay, and the Sault Ste. Marie. These posts guarded four logistical chokepoints: the outlet of Lake Huron (Detroit), the outlet of the Fox River (Fort Howard), the outlet of Lake Superior (Sault Ste. Marie), and Chicago (Fort Dearborn). Jesup considered the occupation of these points as essential for protecting maritime traffic through the Great Lakes and ensuring communications between the lakes and the interior.<sup>53</sup>

Jesup also considered the Great Lakes route, which the post at Detroit (Fort Shelby) commanded, to be the most vulnerable to British interdiction. During the war, supplies and reinforcements could not reach Fort Shelby from the interior, but had to take a route leading from Lake Erie via the Detroit River. This exposed ships to "the flank attack of the enemy" along its twenty-mile length. Since Detroit supplied all the other American posts to the north, its capture would also endanger them. Jesup noted that the British had successfully exploited these geographical circumstances. They were able to choose the point of attack and to capture the remaining posts in the upper lakes. Therefore, Jesup recommended the construction of "good roads" to the interior to end



Detroit's isolation from the settlements to the south and ensure the "certainty of supply" during a hypothetical conflict with Great Britain. These roads would run from the Ohio settlements and Indian country to Chicago "or some other point on Lake Michigan."<sup>54</sup>

Work on such roads had already begun. In 1816, Secretary of War Crawford ordered the construction of a road from Detroit to Fort Meigs at the foot of the rapids of the Miami River. He directed Brigadier General Alexander Macomb, commander of the Fifth Military District, to supervise the use of soldier labor for construction of the seventy-mile road. "In time of war, when the enemy commands the lakes," Crawford advised Macomb, "the subsistence of the troops by which they may be occupied must be drawn, has been sufficiently demonstrated by the events of the late war."<sup>55</sup> Secretary of War Calhoun later argued that, together with a canal from the Illinois River, the Detroit-Fort Meigs Road would afford "all of the facilities which would be essential to carry on military operation in time of war, and the transportation of munitions of war, for the defence of the western portion of our northern frontier."<sup>56</sup>

In addition to the military argument, the advocates of internal improvements often pointed out how the presence of new roads or canals would save money during a war. In response to the objection that overland transportation was much more expensive than the water route, General Jesup wrote that supplies passing by water would face "inevitable capture unless we employ a large military and naval force for this protection." New roads would give them another option. A decision against constructing roads, he argued, amounted to false economy.<sup>57</sup>

This point was a recurring theme among internal improvers. In 1816, Senator Morrow calculated that the cost of building the Chesapeake-Delaware Canal was only

twice the cost of wagon transport from the river to the bay for a single year.<sup>58</sup> In 1819, Calhoun noted that good roads would have saved the nation from some of the extraordinary economic losses that occurred during the War of 1812: “In that single contest in men, money, and reputation, [roads] more than indemnified the country for the expense of their construction.”<sup>59</sup> In 1821, a select committee of the House of Representatives recalled that Major General William Henry Harrison’s attempted march and road construction through the Black Swamp east of Lake Erie consumed a disproportionate amount of the War Department’s appropriations for transportation during the war. Cutting a road in the middle of a campaign proved costly. The committee’s report concluded, “The prodigious sums of money which were expended in the efforts which the nation made to reoccupy that Territory, would have constructed many such roads.”<sup>60</sup> Spending money on good roads would have avoided a national humiliation.

Jesup advocated building well-fortified posts; garrisoned with enough troops to resist an assault. Roads would connect these posts to other posts in the interior. In wartime, they would serve as muster points, supply depots, and bases of operations. He shared the common military view that a few “large depots in time of peace well supplied with all the munitions of war, on the great avenues leading to the frontiers” constituted a better form of defense than many intermittently occupied fortifications scattered along the frontier.<sup>61</sup> In reality, the latter had been the army’s standard practice.

Jesup identified Chicago, Green Bay, and Sault Ste. Marie as commanding the important routes from Canada into Indian country. Regarding Chicago, he believed that it owed its military value to its location on a communications route linking Lake

Michigan and the Mississippi. He thought it was less useful as a supply depot because it stood too far west and did not have a good harbor. Instead, he proposed the construction of a harbor at the point where the St. Joseph River enters Lake Michigan, and a road connecting it with Fort Wayne, one hundred twenty miles away. He estimated that five companies would be able to cut the road in a season. Jesup perceived that Fort Howard, at the mouth of the Fox River where it empties into Green Bay, covered an equally important route. For that reason, he recommended strengthening the works to accommodate a second company in time of war, and the establishment of another post at the junction of the Fox River and a small, navigable river that communicated with Lake Superior. Finally, Jesup proposed the construction of a fort at Sault Ste. Marie, which commanded the entrance to Lake Superior, and a road leading from that site to the shore opposite Mackinac Island. He considered the post on that island, Fort Michilimackinac, to be “of trifling importance” because “it can control no avenue.”<sup>62</sup> The War Department ordered the construction of Fort Brady at Sault Ste. Marie in 1822.

Steam power introduced an entirely new element to postwar army logistics. Steamboats enhanced the army’s logistical capabilities more than any other innovation prior to the advent of the railroad. Their primary value derived from their ability to move quickly upstream against the strong currents of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. For this reason, Calhoun considered the use of steamboats as a technological solution to supplying far-flung outposts on the western frontier. Steamboats were rarely used as troop transports during the War of 1812, but by 1819 Calhoun could note that they were in use “on almost all of our great rivers”<sup>63</sup> to transport civilian passengers. When the army began to discontinue the use of keelboats Calhoun intended to replace them with

steamboats. He anticipated that they would be useful as transport vessels and would aid the militia in achieving a rapid concentration of forces in time of war. The use of steamboats in military operations, however, was premature as they were still untested under difficult conditions.

In 1818, Jesup cautioned Calhoun against their use on the expedition up the Missouri River. Passenger steamboats had never navigated the Missouri River and it was not clear if they could withstand the river's strong current. The transportation contractor, James Johnson, obtained a contract with the assistance of his brother Congressman Richard Mentor Johnson, who persuaded the secretary of war that steamboats would be invaluable in transporting men and supplies. Unfortunately, the steamboats that the Johnsons provided were of shoddy construction and the engines lacked the horsepower to navigate upstream. The steamboat *Calhoun* broke down in the Mississippi River and never reached Belle Fontaine, the first objective of the expedition. The *Jefferson* stalled on the Missouri River near the advanced outpost Fort Osage and the *Johnson* also fell well short of Council Bluffs—700 miles up the Missouri and the future site of Fort Atkinson. Because of these failures, Jesup decided to arrange for keelboats to transport the necessary provisions and stores. The expedition abandoned the *Enterprise* further up the Missouri even after having discarded most its stores to lighten the load. Only Colonel Stephen Long's steamboat, *Western Engineer*, which joined the expedition in a scientific capacity, reached Council Bluffs in 1819 via a long water route from Pittsburgh.<sup>64</sup>

## Logistics on the Southern Frontier

In September 1816, Thomas S. Jesup, as the commander of the Eighth Military Department, wrote a lengthy letter to Secretary of War James Monroe explaining in detail the situation in the Division of the South. Foremost in his mind was the possibility that a foreign power would disrupt commercial traffic on the rivers and in the Gulf of Mexico. The nation's economic prosperity and military security depended upon control of the Mississippi River, a single route stretching over a thousand miles and its outlet at the port of New Orleans. He noted that the Mississippi received the "movable wealth" of not only the Mississippi and Missouri Territories, and the state of Louisiana, but also Western Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois, owing to its confluence with the Ohio River. The river had potential access to wealth that exceeded the combined wealth of Western Europe, and vessels traveling on it could only reach the ocean via New Orleans. New Orleans was a strategically important point of defense for the entire nation, in Jesup's view, because the Mississippi and its tributaries enabled the "immense military means of the whole western country" to concentrate forces in the city in only two months.<sup>65</sup>

All the rivers of the Appalachians that fed into the Ohio ran north to south. Troops and supplies could arrive from Indiana, Illinois, Western Virginia, and Pennsylvania using only water routes. The Mississippi also directly received the waters of the Arkansas, the White, and the Red Rivers from the west, as well as smaller rivers to the east. A foreign power could interdict the entire commercial traffic of the river, as well as the transportation of supplies and men, by seizing Baton Rouge. Jesup believed that the occupation of this chokepoint, situated on the high ground 120 miles above New

Orleans, could allow an invading force to cut off the port's communications with the north and force its surrender. The loss of the city would—according to the experience of the late war—also provide a rallying point for restive natives, slaves, and “disaffected citizens.”<sup>66</sup>

Jesup was aware of the intimate connection between politics, economics, and military affairs. He noted that both national security and the political popularity of the Madison administration depended upon the protection of commercial routes and the free movement of goods to the ocean. He asserted that failure to keep the Mississippi open would hurt the government since Westerners, who “seldom reason when they feel the pressure occasioned by obstructed commerce,” would not ascertain its “true cause” but “throw the [exclusive] blame upon the government.” The growth of commerce made the national economy more vulnerable to a foreign power if it chose to prevent goods and surpluses from going to market. This vulnerability made the security of commercial routes all the more necessary. In order to secure the nation's commerce, and especially the surplus commodities of the western states and territories that were rapidly increasing after the war, Jesup suggested that the nation adopt certain defensive and offensive measures. “The military policy of the country should be to secure every assailable point,” he asserted. In addition to the lower Mississippi, below where all of its tributaries converged, he identified the Pearl River, the rivers running into the Bay of Mobile, and the Appalachicola, as points that were vulnerable to disruption.<sup>67</sup>

Jesup sent Secretary of State James Monroe his thoughts on the construction and improvement of fortifications and riverine defenses, as well as communication routes. He proposed the construction of an eighteen-mile turnpike road from Baton Rouge to

Galveston on Lake Maurepas, and the clearing of a water route between the river and the lake. Such measures, however, offered only a temporary solution. He argued that the United States could not hold New Orleans and the surrounding country with defensive works and armed patrols so long as Spain retained control of West Florida, which commanded the Mississippi for 80 miles. Spain was within striking distance of compelling the surrender of New Orleans and cutting off the eastern Mississippi Territory's communications with the Gulf, but could also sever communications with the state of Georgia. Jesup implied that the southern frontier was so weak that the construction of new roads would not provide a viable alternative to river traffic along the Pearl River and the Mississippi River.<sup>68</sup>

Jesup also implied that oceangoing vessels could not remain a secure method of supply as long as Cuba remained under control of Spain. He considered it intolerable that the products of the eastern states must "pass to a market almost under the guns of Havana." Cuba was a "key of all Western America," Jesup asserted, and he expressed concern that a naval power could use Cuba as a base from which to interdict maritime traffic heading to the Gulf of Mexico. He did not consider Spanish control of Cuba problematic but, "In the hands of Great Britain it must become so formidable as to menace the independence of our country." He told Monroe that he suspected Spain was drawing up a secret treaty with Great Britain to deliver up both Florida and Cuba. Great Britain, he noted, had designs on the former that "have long been known" while their designs on the latter "are being developed." British possession of Cuba was a far greater threat to the United States, he believed, than Spanish possession because Britain was far more capable of striking a blow at New Orleans, which would result in the loss of the

western territories. Moreover, dislodging Great Britain would be difficult since “she will be able to obtain supplies by seas” and therefore “render it impregnable.” A preventive war to capture Cuba, therefore, was in the national interest not only because it would secure American independence and its territorial security but also, in his view, “save many future wars.”<sup>69</sup>

Jesup believed an invasion of Cuba was preferable to a defensive campaign within his department because he found the state of the defenses untenable and supply lines exposed. In August, he found his pretext. He notified Major General Andrew Jackson that he had uncovered overtures made by Luis de Onís, Spanish envoy to the United States, to unnamed Americans to employ them in the Spanish service. These men, he asserted, would take part in an expedition to capture New Orleans. On August 21, he reported, “I have positive information that an attack is contemplated by the Spaniards on this city during the present season.” He continued, “The plan is to approach by the way of Baratania and carry it by a coup de main.”<sup>70</sup> On September 5, he claimed that Onís was hatching a “scheme to detach New Orleans from the United States.” Jesup was eager for Jackson to give him command of the expedition in case of hostilities, unless he planned to take command of it himself. In that case, he would be happy to serve under the general, but only if Jackson adopted his plan.<sup>71</sup> On September 9, Jesup contacted Jackson at Nashville, providing him with further details on the state of his department’s fortifications. He also boasted that he did not fear for the safety of his department, but only feared that Onís would “not have the courage to attack” him.<sup>72</sup>

Jesup sensed that the perilous logistical situation in Havana provided an opportunity for the United States to seize Cuba in a relatively quick campaign. He



informed Monroe that the proper reply to any Spanish attempt to seize Mobile or any other post should be the capture of Havana, which is “in a defenceless state.” From the intelligence he gathered, he estimated that the garrison lacked sufficient military supplies and ammunition, and possessed few guns and usable carriages. Their morale was poor, owing to them being “badly fed and clothed . . . seldom paid, and are entirely without discipline.” He continued, “I shall take immediate possession of Cuba for I hold it to be an axiom in military affairs that the better way to defend a country is to carry the war into that of the enemy.”<sup>73</sup>

For Jesup, logistical calculations took precedence in his plans for a Cuban campaign. Indeed, his preparations had advanced far enough so that a campaign could begin at short notice. He was in the process of coordinating a joint operation with the U.S. Navy by arranging transport ships to link up with his force of 2,000 regulars and 2,000 volunteers at Pass Christian, Mississippi. He informed Monroe that this force could concentrate there a mere twenty days after receiving his order. The construction of a large government ship, begun during the war, was nearing completion, and he expected this vessel to carry 1,200 men in addition to its crew. Other naval transports concentrated at nearby Ship Island, would carry the remaining troops, along with provisions and military stores.<sup>74</sup> He ordered the department’s quartermaster, Major Charles Wollstonecraft, to draw up an inventory of available supplies for the campaign and to forward it to the Navy’s Commodore Daniel Patterson. Jesup expressed his optimism to Patterson regarding the feasibility of the plan. He determined that “carrying the war into the territories of the enemy” was the best way to defend the nation against “any hostile

movement.” He concluded, “I consider an attempt upon the Havanna [sic] as more likely than any other enterprize to be crowned with success.”<sup>75</sup>

The war scare ended once it became clear that Spain did not intend to seize New Orleans. Five years later, Quartermaster General Jesup directed the physical handover of Florida from Spain to the United States, as stipulated in the Adams-Onís Treaty. The Quartermaster Department transported Spanish soldiers out of Florida to Havana and replaced them with American soldiers.<sup>76</sup> He ordered Captain George Bender, quartermaster at Boston, to provide transportation and supplies for three American companies, one of which was to disembark at Charleston, South Carolina, and the other two at Amelia Island. There they would await the removal of Spanish troops from Fernandina to Havana before leaving for the Florida posts.<sup>77</sup> He ordered Captain Henry Stanton to proceed to Fernandina, Amelia Island, to arrange the Spaniards’ departure. He wrote, “The treaty with Spain provides that the Spanish troops stationed in Florida be transported to Havana, at the expense of the United States.” Therefore, “To prevent delay or difficulty, however, it is proper then that an officer be on the spot with full powers to act under all circumstances.”<sup>78</sup>

Following the cession of Florida, the Quartermaster Department faced the problem of how to supply the isolated posts on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. The expense of employing government ships to transport regular supply shipments was prohibitive. For that reason, Colonel William Linnard arranged contracts with private companies for the transport of clothing from Philadelphia to the coastal ports as matter of course. The resumption of coastal commerce in the postwar period resulted in more opportunities to contract with private shippers to move Army supplies between the ports on the Atlantic

and Gulf coast ports. Sending supplies to New Orleans did not pose a logistical problem. A port of call at one of the smaller coastal posts, however, was not as profitable for private shippers because supplies sent there invariably formed a small portion of the cargo. A shipment of supplies to Pensacola, for example, would take a circuitous route to its final destination at greater expense to both the government and the contractor.<sup>79</sup>

In 1819, Secretary of War Calhoun noted that the logistics of the southern frontier relied on the completion of Jackson's Military Road and the Carondelet Canal, as well as the force of the Mississippi's "rapid stream." These routes afforded every "facility required for the transportation of munitions of war, and movements and concentration of troops," as well as a strong defense for this "important frontier." Now the region needed more roads. From 1824 to 1827, Congress authorized the use of federal appropriations—under the General Survey Act—to survey and build four roads totaling 961 miles to connect the Florida posts. The new routes connected Pensacola and Fort Mitchell, Alabama; Pensacola and St. Augustine; Tampa Bay and Coleraine, Georgia; and St. Augustine and New Smyrna.<sup>80</sup>

John C. Calhoun and Thomas S. Jesup were two of the strongest advocates for a national system of internal improvements. They explained the logistical vulnerabilities in each of the nation's frontiers and considered how a network of military roads and canals could prevent a repetition of the failures of the late war with Great Britain. Calhoun, Jesup, and other internal improvers, such as Jacob Brown, Alexander Macomb, James Morrow, and Lewis Cass, understood that reliance on a single mode of transportation in wartime could be disastrous. On the northwestern frontier, the regular army experienced

transportation difficulties owing to the lack of good roads and to the absence of a feasible means of water transportation. On the Atlantic coast, the British blockade meant that the nation had to rely on coastal roads that could not handle the significant increase in wheeled traffic. In the south and southwest, the posts acquired following the Florida cession were not easily accessible by wagon.

From 1816 to 1821, Calhoun and Jesup proposed a national system of roads and canals that would ensure that, in the event of war, the nation would not be so reliant on one mode of transportation. Their plans included a network of canals in the Atlantic states, which would provide an alternative in case a naval power blockaded the ports. In the northwest, they advocated roads to end the region's vulnerability to British naval interdiction and the isolation of forts on the Great Lakes. On the southern frontier, Jesup sought to end the logistical vulnerability of the nation's "weak flank" by proposing to seize Cuba in a war with Spain. After Spain ceded Florida to the United States, Congress took up this approach by authorizing a series of roads to end the relative isolation of the Florida posts. The case that the military internal improvers made for infrastructure formed a part of a larger campaign to reform U.S. Army logistics after the war. Calhoun, Jesup, and other reformers were largely successful in this endeavor.

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Franklin Cooling, ed., *The New American State Papers: Military Affairs* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1979), 15: 2–13; Thomas Jesup, Box 23, undated manuscript, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress. Internal dating suggests Jesup wrote this manuscript sometime before 1822, prior to the establishment of Fort Brady, located at Sault Ste. Marie, that year. See Robert B. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts: The Military, Pioneer, and Trading Posts of the United States* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988), 415.

<sup>2</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13; Jesup, undated manuscript, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress; John Lauritz Larson, *Internal Improvement: National Public Works and the Promise of Popular Government in the Early United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 59–63.

<sup>3</sup> *American State Papers: Military Affairs* 4: 626.

<sup>4</sup> Larson, *Internal Improvement*, 63–69.

<sup>5</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 14<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 854; Larson, *Internal Improvement*, 64–65.

<sup>6</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 14<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 865; Larson, *Internal Improvement*, 66–67.

<sup>7</sup> James D. Richardson, ed., *Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* ([Washington: By Authority of Congress], 1900), 1: 584–585.

<sup>8</sup> *ASP: MA*, 4: 626; Richardson, *Messages of the Presidents*, 17–18.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 14<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 110.

<sup>10</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 14<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 110; C. Edward Skeen, *1816: America Rising* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 104.

<sup>11</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 14<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 913; Skeen, *1816*, 117.

<sup>12</sup> Larson, *Internal Improvement*, 119.

<sup>13</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 15<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 452.

<sup>14</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13.

<sup>15</sup> Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783–1846* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 190–191; Brian Balogh, *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 212.

<sup>16</sup> H. R. Doc. No. 42, 19<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Sess. (1826).

<sup>17</sup> Prucha, *Sword of the Republic*, 189.

<sup>18</sup> Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), 11: 652.

<sup>19</sup> Larson, *Internal Improvement*, 117–119; *Annals of Congress*, 15<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1678–1679. See *Annals*, 15<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 1340–1400 for the March debates.

---

<sup>20</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13;

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Act of April 30, 1824, ch. 46, 4 *Stat.* 22.

<sup>23</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13; Act of April 30, 1824, ch. 46, 4 *Stat.* 22; William Love, “General Jackson’s Military Road,” *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society* 9 (1910): 402–417.

<sup>24</sup> *ASP: MA*, 4: 625–627; Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army, 1775–1939* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1989), 212–215; John D. Morris, *Sword of the Border: Major General Jacob Jennings Brown, 1775–1828* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2000), 201–202.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 July 1831, Letters Sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>26</sup> Morris, *Sword of the Border*, 201–202.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph M. Schweninger, “‘A Lingering War Must Be Prevented:’ The Defense of the Northern Frontier, 1812–1871,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1998), 83–84; Jacob Brown to John Calhoun, 9 December 1818, Letterbook no. 2, Jacob Jennings Brown Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>28</sup> Zachary Taylor to Thomas Jesup, 20 April 1820, Zachary Taylor Papers, Library of Congress; K. Jack Bauer, *Zachary Taylor: Soldier, Planter, Statesman of the Old Southwest* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 35–37.

---

<sup>29</sup> Zachary Taylor to Thomas Jesup, 20 April 1820, Taylor Papers.

<sup>30</sup> Bauer, *Zachary Taylor*, 37.

<sup>31</sup> Zachary Taylor to Thomas Jesup, 20 April 1820, Taylor Papers; Bauer, *Zachary Taylor*, 36–37.

<sup>32</sup> Zachary Taylor to Thomas Jesup, 20 April 1820, Taylor Papers; Bauer, *Zachary Taylor*, 36–37.

<sup>33</sup> Zachary Taylor to Thomas Jesup, 20 April 1820, Taylor Papers; Bauer, *Zachary Taylor*, 36–37.

<sup>34</sup> Zachary Taylor to Thomas Jesup, 15 September 1820, Taylor Papers.

<sup>35</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 15<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 463–464.

<sup>36</sup> William Crawford to Andrew Jackson, 8 March 1816, in John Spencer Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1926–1935), 2: 235.

<sup>37</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13.

<sup>38</sup> *ASP: MA*, 4: 626–627.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*



---

<sup>40</sup> Morris, *Sword of the Border*, 197–201; Francis Paul Prucha, *A Guide to the Military Posts of the United States, 1789–1895* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964), 5–6; Joseph M. Schweninger, “A Lingering War,” 66, 83–84; Jacob Brown to William Crawford, 30 November 1815, Letterbook no. 1, Brown Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Morris, *Sword of the Border*, 197–201; *ASP: MA*, 4: 626.

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the four systems of military transportation (i.e., rivers, rail, coastal shipping, and wagon trains) employed during the American Civil War, see Earl J. Hess, *Civil War Logistics: A Study of Military Transportation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017).

<sup>43</sup> Sylvester W. Burley, *American Enterprise: Burley's United States Centennial Gazeteer and Guide* (Philadelphia: S. W. Burley, 1876), 472.

<sup>44</sup> Brian Arthur, *How Britain Won the War of 1812: The Royal Navy's Blockades of the United States, 1812–1815* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2011), 143.

<sup>45</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 14<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 113.

<sup>46</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 14<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 111–113.

<sup>47</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Chester L. Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979), 104–105.

<sup>52</sup> See Prucha, *Military Posts of the United States*, and Robert B. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts: The Military, Pioneer, and Trading Posts of the United States* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988).

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Jesup, Box 23, undated manuscript, Jesup Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> *ASP: MA*, 4: 629.

<sup>56</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Jesup, Box 23, undated manuscript, Jesup Papers.

<sup>58</sup> *Annals of Congress*, 14<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 113.

<sup>59</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13.

<sup>60</sup> Robert B. McAfee, *History of the Late War in the Western Country, Comprising a Full Account of all the Transactions in that Quarter, from the*

---

*Commencement of Hostilities at Tippecanoe, to the Termination of the Contest at New Orleans on the Return of Peace* (Lexington, KY: Worsley and Smith, 1816), 66, 210–213.

<sup>61</sup> *ASP: MA*, 6: 152–153.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Jesup, Box 23, undated manuscript, Jesup Papers.

<sup>63</sup> Cooling, *New American State Papers*, 2–13.

<sup>64</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 188–193; *ASP: MA*, 6: 152–153; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 76–87.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Jesup to James Monroe, 30 September 1816, Jesup Papers.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Jesup to Andrew Jackson, 21 August, Jesup Papers.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Jesup to Andrew Jackson, 5 September, Jesup Papers.

---

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Jesup to Andrew Jackson, 9 September 1816, Jesup Papers.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Jesup to James Monroe, 18 August 1816, Jesup Papers.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Jesup to Daniel Patterson, 19 August 1816, Jesup Papers.

<sup>76</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 209.

<sup>77</sup> Thomas Jesup to George Bender, 21 March 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas Jesup to Henry Stanton, 21 May 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>79</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 205–208.

<sup>80</sup> *ASP: MA*, 4: 626.

## CHAPTER 6

### THOMAS SIDNEY JESUP AND THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE U.S. ARMY QUARTERMASTERS CORPS IN THE EARLY NATIONAL ERA

#### Military Professionalism, circa 1820

On May 8, 1818, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun appointed Brigadier General Thomas Sidney Jesup to head the newly established Quartermaster Department. When Jesup entered his Washington office in June of that year, there was broad consensus in both the army and the government that the supply system was ineffectual. As quartermaster general, Jesup wanted to make sure that the logistical failures of the War of 1812 would not happen again. From 1818 to 1821, Jesup took a series of actions intended to replace the old system of supply with a rational system staffed by a cadre of experienced and competent supply officers. He established procedures of accountability regarding the use of department funds and property and inculcated his subordinates with professional habits by strictly enforcing regulations. Through these measures, Jesup succeeded in creating the nucleus of a professional Quartermaster Corps.

In July 1818, Jesup completed the task of writing the regulations that would govern how the Quartermaster Department operated. Calhoun and Brigadier General Winfield Scott approved the document's inclusion in the *General Regulations for the Army*, which they published in 1821. Jesup's goal was to introduce "uniformity and system" and "military responsibility" to the supply bureaus because he believed that the absence of those qualities was the primary cause of American military defeat during the recent war. The previous Quartermaster Department, hastily organized during the war,

never clearly defined the duties of quartermasters and commissaries, and was lax in requiring them to submit reports in a timely fashion. As a result, supply officers were routinely in doubt as to their responsibilities and the quartermaster general was often ignorant about the most basic concerns relating to his department. Jesup sought to avoid these outcomes by closely examining every aspect of logistical practice in the course of writing his regulations. He also demonstrated hands-on leadership. Few details regarding the activities of the various quartermaster posts escaped his attention and he consistently admonished subordinates who did not measure up to his standards. Jesup's regulations and his enforcement of them were, in short, the necessary preconditions for the professionalization of the early national U.S. Army Corps of Quartermasters.

Jesup himself embodied the attributes of a consummate professional soldier, according to the criteria of expertise, responsibility, corporateness as set forth by Samuel Huntington. Over the course of a military career that spanned fifty-two years, he demonstrated a sense of corporateness and a respect for civil authority. He was also an advocate of "military knowledge," which he considered a distinct body of knowledge that separated the professional soldier from the amateur. Moreover, he expected his quartermasters to acquire such knowledge through study or practical experience. He selected educated "gentlemen" with many years of experience in the line for appointment to his department because he believed quartermaster duty required more skillsets than duties in the other branches of the U.S. Army. With such men, he endeavored to turn his department into a *de facto* staff school and storehouse of expertise in the art and science of logistics.<sup>1</sup>

## Military Knowledge

As a proponent of the military profession, Jesup discerned the difference between the specialized military branches and their civilian analogues. In a reflective essay on the art of fortification, he expressed dismay that so few engineers in the army understood tactics as well as they did fortifications. Indeed, they seemed to regard their specialization as no different from that practiced by the civilian engineers. To Jesup, however, an engineer who was ignorant about tactics was as useless as the tactician who was ignorant about fortifications. He wrote, “Regarding their own branch as the first of arts, they disdain all other branches of the military science forgetting that, as their name imports, they were originally nothing more than artificers; and that without a knowledge of tactics they are now and can be nothing more than master carpenters and master masons.”<sup>2</sup> The implication is clear: An army engineer should have a professional orientation that shared more in common with his fellow officers in the other branches than with civilian engineers.

Jesup likewise argued that quartermaster duties were not analogous to those of an accountant. Although Jesup acknowledged that the quartermaster’s skillset included the “casting of accounts and the copying of letters,” just as important was his expert military judgment in assessing whether the expenditures of a regiment or military district were appropriate given the nature of its operations. He explained that these were points “on which military men alone are competent to decide.”<sup>3</sup> Jesup even went so far as to write into his regulations the knowledge that a quartermaster would need in order to carry out his duties. For example, he required quartermasters to become familiar with the terrain, natural resources, and the most feasible transportation routes in their respective areas of

operations. This knowledge was necessary for siting depots, laying out courses for military roads, and determining the best locations for concentrating troops and supplies.<sup>4</sup> Jesup's regulations not only set the quartermasters apart from the civilian clerks as military experts, but also set minimum standards of competence. The *Rules and Regulations of the Army for 1813*, by contrast, listed only the quartermasters' duties.<sup>5</sup> Jesup's decision to make professional knowledge explicit in his regulations represents a significant step toward the professionalization of the Quartermaster Corps.

The view that officership constituted a profession in its own right was directly opposed to the notion, promoted by critics of the military profession, that regular army officers had no special claim to military competence. Although the longstanding myth of the citizen-soldier fell out of favor following the mediocre performance of the militia at the battles of Queenston Heights, Sackett Harbor, and Bladensburg, Major General Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans gave it a new lease on life. Congressman George Michael Troup of Georgia was full of praise for the militia's conduct at New Orleans. In a speech delivered before the U.S. House of Representatives, he declaimed, "*I came, I saw, I conquered, says the American husbandmen, fresh from his plough.*" He further boasted, "The men of Europe, bred in camps, trained to war, are not a match for the men of America taken from the closet, the bar, the counting-house and the plough."<sup>6</sup> The *Boston Yankee* also credited the victory to the militia. Remarking on the militia's shortage of flints and ammunition, it speculated that "they must have taken [the British] by the throat as they leaped into the entrenchments and choked them unto death," before adding, "What savages these Kentucky men are!"<sup>7</sup> The *Philadelphia Gazette* did not forget to praise Jackson's contingent of regulars for teaching the "masters in the art of



war that they were apt & able scholars.” Nevertheless, the newspaper concluded that the Americans won primarily because the British regulars underestimated the militia. It summarized the battle thusly: “Contempt of the Yankee Militia, by leading his Invincibles up to the Ramparts at New Orleans, where he was taught that respect for brave and inexperienced men, the want of which was the cause of his disgrace and defeat.”<sup>8</sup>

Although hostility to the officer corps did not gain political salience until the 1830s, when the Jacksonians attacked the U.S. Military Academy at West Point as an aristocratic institution, there is evidence that such populist sentiments existed as early as 1820. In March of that year, the House of Representatives debated, with “much warmth,” the motion of Congressman Newton Cannon of Tennessee to abolish West Point. The House rejected the motion by “a large majority.”<sup>9</sup> It was the first legislative attempt to abolish the institution in the postwar period. At the beginning of the Jacksonian era, growing anti-military sentiment compelled Jesup to defend the military profession as a whole in a memorandum addressed to Secretary of War John Eaton. He did so by pointing out a logical inconsistency in the arguments of critics who, “In opposition to the facts of history, and the conventions of experience deny the necessity of previous preparation & practical military knowledge to the military commander.” Those who would never think of hiring a carpenter to make a coat or a tailor to build a house, he dryly noted, nonetheless thought it made perfect sense to “expect a lawyer, a doctor, a merchant, or a farmer, without previous study, laborious preparation, and experience in the practice of service to become an accomplished and able officer.”<sup>10</sup>

## Education

General Jesup thought an army officer should be an educated man and education was an important factor in his selection of quartermasters to staff his department. An analysis of Jesup's writings reveals that he held three basic views on education. First, he argued that military knowledge was more important than raw talent and that an officer could develop his talents through study and practical experience. He told Secretary Calhoun, in 1820, that he considered an officer with the requisite experience to be "a hundred per cent" more valuable than one who possessed considerable ability but little experience. Second, although Jesup was a proponent of military expertise, he also appreciated the value of a broader understanding of history and politics. Finally, Jesup thought that one should learn theory insofar as it aided the acquisition of applied knowledge. An education that focused on learning theory alone was worthless.<sup>11</sup>

Jesup believed in the efficacy of study and practical experience to such a degree that he thought it could enable officers to develop talents widely considered the exclusive province of military genius. He challenged the notion that the *coup d'oeil* or the ability to sense the battlefield at a glance, was "a gift of nature" that could not be learned. "This is a mistake," he wrote in a personal note, "for we all have the coup de oeil [sic] in proportion to the mind, and good sense with which providence has blessed us." He concluded, "It is derived from both but the knowledge, the improvement & perfection of it are assured to us by experience." In another document, Jesup defined the *coup d'oeil* as a "perfect understanding" of the battlefield terrain, the positions of the armies, the quality of the troops, and systems of supply. As with other aspects of military science, he thought it was possible to acquire the *coup d'oeil* through constant practice. In this case,

Jesup not only seems to have been an advocate of professional military expertise but of professional development, as well.<sup>12</sup>

The great captain who possessed the *coup d'oeil* in greatest abundance was, in Jesup's estimation, the Carthaginian general Hamilcar. This reference was not the only time he cited a historical example to make a point about military matters and it demonstrates that history formed a significant part of his personal studies. His biographer, Chester L. Kieffer, noted that though Jesup lacked a formal education, he had been a studious boy with an aptitude for military subjects. Kieffer suggests that by the time Jesup received his commission as second lieutenant, he had read as much as he could of the available literature on military science. When war began, he wrote to a friend that he not only wished to win distinction, but was also determined to master the profession.<sup>13</sup>

Later in life, Jesup confessed to having spent much of his leisure time reading history. Over time, he had produced pamphlet-length summaries on the history of ancient Rome and the history of the Irish; reflections on the Roman art of war and the French system of fortifications; commentaries on law and various forms of governments; musings on metaphysics; and a compilation of facts from the Book of Genesis. To Jesup, the point of studying history was to derive moral and practical lessons from illustrative historical cases. He even saw the utility and relevance of examples drawn from ancient history.<sup>14</sup>

In a letter to his sons, William and Charles Edward, Jesup advised them to read history and explained why it would be useful to them. He argued that a knowledge of history could enable one "to avail himself of the experience and knowledge of past ages

& render them subservient to the improvement of his own.” History provided a surfeit of examples where “knowledge, wise laws, correctness, and sound morals” made once barbarous nations prosperous and powerful, while “ignorance, prejudice, error, and vice” caused the “decline and ruin” of civilized nations. Jesup compared the former to a vigorous youth and the latter to “a decrepit but profligate old man.” He also observed that the decline could come rapidly after a nation had progressed to a certain point.<sup>15</sup>

Jesup intended that his two-stage model of historical development—with nations passing from barbarism to civilization and vice versa—should serve as a warning. He told his sons that it was important for American citizens to avoid complacency. They should not rely on providence alone to preserve their freedoms, but on their exertions. Free citizens, he argued, could only remain free if they understood their rights, performed their duties, and possessed the historical knowledge that would allow them to “contemplate man in every situation.” Presumably, history would provide citizens with ample cases of corrupt and despotic leadership, which would then form a basis for comparison when evaluating the actions of contemporary leaders. “Without a considerable degree of knowledge,” he wrote, “it is impossible to watch over the conduct of public men, to know when they perform their duty and to form such an estimate of the measures pursued by them as to be able to say whether they deserve the confidence of the people.” He concluded, “A careful study of history will convince you that the freedom has as well as the prosperity of nations has . . . always been in proportion to this general diffusion of knowledge among them.”<sup>16</sup>

For Jesup, reading history amounted to a civic duty. He may have recognized that a broad knowledge of politics and geography would be useful, as well. Jesup understood

the ways in which European political traditions and geography influenced that continent's logistics. Although he drew upon the British, French, and Prussian field manuals while writing his own regulations, he also realized that methods of supply intended for use in continental Europe would not be effective in the wilderness of North America without modification.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, he did not go as far as his deputy Major Trueman Cross, who declared in his report to Calhoun, "It is in vain therefore to search the records of the European world for a model to guide us."<sup>18</sup> Foreign models, Jesup believed, were still useful so long as they were adapted to American circumstances. Therefore, Jesup perused the correspondence of his predecessors Thomas Mifflin, Nathanael Greene, and Timothy Pickering for lessons that he could apply to logistical problems unique to America.<sup>19</sup> No doubt, he also drew lessons from his service as a quartermaster during the War of 1812.

Adapting European military systems was part of the American military tradition. Winfield Scott based his *Institutes*, which established definitive procedures for every facet of army life, on the British and French manuals. Scott did point out, however, that he had improved on his sources. Alexander Macomb derived much of his *Treatise on Court-Martial*, which he published in 1809, from Alexander Fraser Tytler's *Essay on Martial Law*. Macomb wrote in the preface that he had adapted the essay to suit the American system of martial law. Thus, Jesup was not alone in looking to Europe for models.<sup>20</sup>

Wholesale borrowing from foreign military systems was another matter. Jesup objected to the return of Commissary General Callender Irvine's system of clothing accountability that had come into use in 1816, but which the army abandoned in 1817.

He observed that it borrowed from the British system of clothing supply without taking into account American circumstances.<sup>21</sup> The system required a paymaster at every post, who added a clothing allowance to the monthly or annual pay of the soldiers stationed there. The soldier would receive his clothing only after an inspector, who made the rounds of the posts in two-month cycles, approved its issuance. The paymaster then charged the soldier for each article of clothing he received. Jesup identified several flaws in Irvine's system. First, given the number of posts on the frontiers and the government's focus on economy and retrenchment, "it was impossible to have a paymaster at each post." Itinerant paymasters were not the solution either because the army could not hold them accountable for the theft or destruction of property while they were away from the post. Finally, a soldier who quickly lost or damaged an article of clothing could wait as long as two months for a replacement item. Irvine's system, "though plausible in theory," he told Calhoun, "were found in practice, like most of those borrowed from foreign services, without regard to the difference of circumstances, to be entirely inapplicable to the state of our army, dispersed as it was, in small detachments throughout the union."<sup>22</sup>

On March 2, 1821, Congress cut the size of the army in half, from 12,644 to 6,183 officers and men, and the staff of the Quartermaster Department by two-thirds, from thirty-seven to thirteen officers. In the ensuing years, Jesup repeatedly warned that such reductions were not only having a detrimental effect on the staff departments and national security, but also did not take into account America's strategic situation. In 1823, Jesup complained to Calhoun that "every intelligent man" understood the fact that the workload of the department depended on the number of posts in operation, and not on the number

of troops on duty.<sup>23</sup> In a later report, he included a concise comparative analysis of foreign and American military systems of supply to make an effective case against further cuts. He explained to John H. Eaton, President Jackson's secretary of war, that a drastic reduction of his staff was a mistake. The appropriate number of supply officers in a military establishment, he contended, depended not on the number of troops, but on the extent of the frontier, whether the population and resources were scattered or concentrated, and on the state of the country's infrastructure. It was entirely appropriate for France to have a small staff because its roads, canals, and bridges were "perfect" and its lines of communication were short. Only "three or four great depots" could meet the supply needs of a force located anywhere on the frontier. In France, moving supplies would thus require comparatively little labor and expense. In the United States, however, it made more sense to tie the reduction of supply officers to a reduction in the number of posts. Doing so would reduce the distance supplies had to travel, in addition to reducing expenditures and the workload of the department.<sup>24</sup>

Jesup further argued that a small and overworked Quartermaster Corps was not appropriate for the United States because it was a republic with a political tradition of military subordination to civil authority. Where civilian control of the military was lacking, a defective staff had hardly any impact on supply operations because the military could always compel local officials to cooperate. "Even in Great Britain," he remarked, "it is made the duty, by law, of every magistrate to facilitate the movement and supply of the troops." Military subordination was even more tenuous in continental Europe where "the whole civil power has there been made subservient to the Military, and whenever supplies are required, civil officers perform the duties of commissaries to the Army; but

happily, for our country, the civil power is paramount.”<sup>25</sup> Jesup here not only demonstrated a respect for civilian control of the military, but also an appreciation of the fact that the military systems of nations did not exist in a vacuum.

The third tenet of Jesup’s conception of the educated officer, in addition to having military expertise and a knowledge of politics, history, and geography, was a focus on applied knowledge over theory. In a personal note, he compared a person with only a theoretical education to a sailor who understood the names of all the sails but did not know how to use them in sailing. He concluded that theory could be useful so long as it was grounded in experience.<sup>26</sup> In September 1820, upon Jesup’s return from a tour at West Point, Lieutenant Colonel Zachary Taylor sent a private letter to Jesup that shared his views on the growing presence of West Point graduates inside the officer corps. Jesup must have been satisfied to witness, Taylor wrote, “The rapid improvement of the youth of our country in military science combined with that of general knowledge.” Taylor expressed the hope that, sometime in the future, all of the new appointments would come from West Point. He was unsure, however, whether their military education would balance theory and practice, or focus on the former at the expense of the latter. If he had to choose between the two, he stated, “It would be better to have a practical, than a theoretical soldier.”<sup>27</sup>

### Corporateness

Jesup’s disdain for amateurs, a typical characteristic of the professional soldier, stemmed from his experience with the patronage system. Before the War of 1812, congressional recommendations were not only an important source of commissions, but



officers already in the service used their political connections to compete for promotions. Jesup entered the army in 1808, obtaining a commission as a second lieutenant in the Seventh Infantry. As a young infantry officer, he expressed disgust at the idea of seeking a political patron in order to gain promotion. The prospect that his professional studies and military abilities would not advance his career disturbed him. He even toyed with the idea of leaving the service to become a lawyer. He wrote to James Taylor, an officer in the Kentucky militia, that he intended to “exchange Ney for Blackstone” because he at least knew that his efforts would be rewarded at the bar.<sup>28</sup> In a letter to an unnamed friend, Jesup wrote that the process of soliciting “other aid” had compelled him to abandon his hopes for a commission in the additional force of 25,000 that Congress authorized in January 1812. He also told his friend that he would have no chance of obtaining a promotion unless he visited Washington personally.<sup>29</sup> Although Jesup opposed the patronage system, he was ambitious enough to seek out a patron during his stay in Washington that month. He requested that his friend, James Findlay, who was mayor of Cincinnati, write on his behalf to Ohio Congressman Jeremiah Morrow instead of the secretary of war. In a demonstration of political savvy, he perceived that letters sent to the War Department through an influential intermediary would “receive more attention.”<sup>30</sup>

The patronage system could result in the appointment of a rank amateur ahead of a professional soldier. Jesup considered that an injustice. On the evening of his arrival in Washington in January 1812, he received word that Secretary of War William Eustis of the Madison administration intended to fill two captain’s vacancies in his regiment with civilians. In response, Jesup met with several western Congressmen to present his case

against their appointment. Senator Thomas Worthington of Ohio then informed Eustis that he would reject the appointments if they came to the Senate floor. Eustis relented and promoted a couple of junior officers instead.<sup>31</sup> Years later, in a lengthy postmortem on the war, Jesup lamented the fact that Congressmen would grant commissions to civilians “without the least regard for their military fitness.” He asserted that the nation did not make good use of the talents of professional soldiers who comprised the “elite of the officers of the old Corps.” He contrasted the uneven professionalism of the army’s officer corps with the navy’s officers, who he described approvingly as “masters of their profession.”<sup>32</sup>

To Jesup, the offensive failures in 1812 and 1813 were the direct result of a flawed system of supply and the mediocre leadership of political appointees and the veterans of the Revolutionary War. The tactical successes of the Niagara campaign of 1814, on the other hand, were only possible because the professional soldiers replaced the amateurs. The different outcomes presented a striking contrast and undoubtedly heightened Jesup’s sense of corporateness. In 1812, the presence of political appointees within the officer corps made Jesup apprehensive about the coming war. He wrote, in a draft of a letter to a friend, that he had reconsidered his earlier wish for war and now thought it would be “the greatest calamity to befall” the country. He judged that there was “too much ignorance and imbecility in the higher ranks of the army to admit the slightest hope of success.” He added, “I would not speak thus freely to any man other than yourself” before crossing out the sentence.<sup>33</sup>

After the war, Jesup reflected on the causes of defeat at length in his 1820 report to John Calhoun, Monroe’s secretary of war, claiming that it was the first such

postmortem. Drawing an implicit parallel with the current drive to reduce the officer corps, he concluded that wartime failure resulted from the neglect of military affairs during the thirty years of peace between the two wars with Great Britain. The nation's turn to politics and commerce, he argued, had caused a kind of national amnesia with regard to military affairs. He blamed President Thomas Jefferson, in particular, who had shortsightedly eviscerated the Peace Establishment in the name of economy. That act deprived the nation of a vast storehouse of military expertise in war. He wrote,

General Washington, however, sensible of the importance of military knowledge, endeavoured to form an establishment, which might perfect and preserve it and though his efforts were circumscribed by the limited resources of the country, he created a staff suited to the exigence of the service. Mr. Adams improved [it]; but the succeeding administration not only abolished it, but destroyed the army. Hence at the commencement of the late war every difficulty was experienced. Time, so important in military operations, was lost by the ignorance and incapacity of our commanders. The national leisure was uselessly squandered away by the inefficiency of the administrative branches of the staff. The corps were without organization or discipline. Their supplies were of the worst quality and bad as they were, not regularly served. The consequence was that more than one half of the force was generally in the Hospital or the grave, before the commencement of campaign and the whole power was paralyzed until time and disaster had formed officers capable of commanding and of performing staff duties.<sup>34</sup>

By prefacing his case against the reduction of the officer corps with a postmortem of the War of 1812, Jesup implied that Congress's present course of action would have the same impact on the nation's ability to fight the next war as the infusion of political appointees had on the previous war.<sup>35</sup>

Although he acknowledged that the United States would always have a small peace establishment, it still needed a means by which it could preserve military

knowledge. Jesup considered Calhoun's expansible army to be the most feasible means because an army with a higher proportion of officers to enlisted men in peace could lend itself to a rapid expansion in war without any loss of military knowledge. He pointed out that retaining a large body of enlisted men, whose skills were limited to parade and garrison duties, was unnecessary. The nation needed men capable of training, supplying, and commanding these soldiers. Thus, he proposed the adoption of "a judicious organization of the staff in its various branches applicable to a state of war." The staff departments would exist "at least in miniature, as a basis for extension in the event of war." Expanding the army's skeletal force would be a far simpler task, he concluded, than creating an entirely new staff organization.<sup>36</sup>

Jesup returned to the same rhetorical strategy in his report to President Andrew Jackson's war secretary John H. Eaton to argue against a further reduction of the officer corps. Appealing to Eaton's memory of the War of 1812, he wrote, "What American with a single spark of patriotism and national pride . . . can look back to the events of the late war without the deepest humiliation." The consequence of relying on amateur soldiers was that there was "no well organized plan of operations, no combinations, or concerts in the movements of the different Armies or the different divisions of the same Army." As in his report to Calhoun, he painted a narrative arc of the war as one of decline, disaster, and recovery. To Jesup, the professionals who fought on the Niagara peninsula were responsible for rescuing the nation from disgrace. These were not the "political gentry, who filled the high places at the commencement of the war." They were the "men without political patronage, who had forced their way forward from the

old corps, or had been formed partly in the militia and partly in the regular service, & had qualified themselves by the practice of two campaigns to lead to victory in the third.”<sup>37</sup>

Although Jesup was only twenty-nine years old when he became quartermaster general, he had already logged ten continuous years of military service as both a line and a staff officer. One year after receiving his first commission, he gained promotion to first lieutenant. In 1812, after the fall of Detroit, the British captured the ambitious officer during his service, as adjutant general, on the staff of Brigadier General William Hull. He then spent a month at Fort Malden as a prisoner of war. Within months after Jesup’s release, he received a promotion to captain and served in the Northwestern Army under Major General William Henry Harrison. In that army, he participated in the operations to recapture Detroit as both a quartermaster and an infantry officer. In April 1814, he received a promotion to major and participated in the Niagara campaign where he would achieve the distinction that he yearned for.<sup>38</sup>

Jesup commanded the Twenty-Fifth Infantry in Major General Jacob Jennings Brown’s Left Division during the Niagara campaign. At the Battle of Chippawa on July 5, 1814, Jesup’s regiment formed the left of General Winfield Scott’s brigade. Jesup routed a force of British light infantry, Canadian militia, and Indians who were firing on him from the woods to his front and left. Then he turned the British right flank and eventually compelled the enemy to retreat to the other side of the Chippawa River. Jesup received a brevet promotion to lieutenant colonel for his actions. After the Battle of Lundy’s Lane on July 25, Jesup was brevetted colonel. He sustained multiple wounds during a hard-fought engagement that decimated his regiment but resulted in heavy casualties on the British side, as well. He was nonetheless able to hold his position on

Scott's right through the night in the face of repeated British counterattacks. His unit also captured the commander of the British Right Division, Major General Phineas Riall, in an attack earlier in the day that routed the Canadian militia and flanked the British left. For Jesup, the experience validated his decision to remain in the army. After becoming a prisoner of war in 1812, and occupying the unrewarding position of a quartermaster in 1813, Jesup had finally gained the distinction he had sought at the beginning of the war.<sup>39</sup>

Jesup reserved high praise for those soldiers like himself who not only mastered military science, but also exhibited traditional martial virtues in battle. He had mixed feelings about General William Hull, who had served as a militia officer during the American Revolution and achieved recognition for his performance in several battles. On August 2, 1812, two weeks before the capture of Detroit, he described Hull as a "highly accomplished gentleman" and a "fine writer," who had "good ideas on military subjects." To Jesup, however, Hull also lacked personal courage, which he considered the *sine qua non* of officership. In that draft letter, he confided to his friend, "I have not ventured to hint my doubts even to my most intimate friends here," but he considered Hull "destitute of that nerve, of that energy of character necessary to sustain him under the weight of responsibility now pressing upon him." He concluded, "He *is* a coward and will not risque his person."<sup>40</sup> In 1814, Jesup gave eyewitness testimony during Hull's court-martial.<sup>41</sup>

Major General Jacob Jennings Brown also began his military career as a militia officer. Jesup admired his leadership even though he was a non-professional. Brown was a successful combat commander and had done much to professionalize the army. When Brown died in 1828, Jesup was moved enough to write a personal eulogy for his

late commander. Jesup described Brown in glowing terms. He had a capacity for remaining “calm, cool, collected” under any battlefield situation “however unforeseen or appalling.” Brown also possessed the *coup d’oeil*, the characteristic trait of the great captain, which enabled him to “perceive the faults of his enemy in an instant” and to “strike at the proper time and with the most decisive effect.”<sup>42</sup> Jesup had no fixed idea about how a soldier could become a professional but, if his opinion of Brown is any indication, granting a regular commission to those with distinguished militia service was preferable to commissioning individuals whose experience was limited solely to civilian pursuits.

Jesup was more circumspect when it came to expressing his views on the militia than some of his colleagues. In his official correspondence, he took care to acknowledge that the United States would continue to rely on the militia even as it established a professional officer corps. “The militia must in the event of war constitute the greater part of an active force, whether for offence or defence,”<sup>43</sup> he wrote in his 1820 report on the Peace Establishment. Jesup, however, seems to have mixed political realism with civic respect for this American tradition. Since the nation would always rely on the militia, it was his duty to find ways to improve it. He thought that one of the functions of a professional officer corps was to train citizen-soldiers. The regular army would “form a rallying point for the militia” in times of war, so that “intelligent and competent officers” would “impart to that essential arm of the national defense a part of its own efficiency.”<sup>44</sup> Jesup’s attitudes toward citizen-soldiers and army officers appointed directly from civil life reflected his view that the nation should rely on military professionals to lead its

armies. His conception of the officer corps as a corporate body, or a group distinct from non-professionals, informed his efforts to professionalize the Quartermaster Corps.

### Military Responsibility

When General Jesup arrived in Washington to assume his duties as quartermaster general, Calhoun had already departed the city. He conveyed to Calhoun the following day, June 5, 1818, his regret that they could not speak to each other in person. He stated that his ambition was to make the Quartermaster Department “what it is in all European services, the first department in the army.” He continued, “I wish to give it that character and those features which will render it efficient in time of war, and which, both in peace and in war, will insure a strict responsibility in all its branches.” The main point of the letter, however, was to affirm their shared view that the army’s supply system would be placed under military control to a greater degree than it had been in the past. Thus Jesup noted approvingly that his office was “properly a military one.”<sup>45</sup>

The term “military responsibility” was in common use among U.S. Army officers in the early national era. A responsible officer understood his military duties, subjected himself to military discipline, and put the public trust ahead of his own pecuniary interests. The supply system was deficient in military responsibility for two reasons. First, the Quartermaster Department during the war was lax in enforcing the regulations that required quartermasters to submit timely and accurate reports on their spending. Moreover, poor record-keeping practices meant that it was difficult to hold quartermasters accountable. Second, the government had already civilianized the supply system to a considerable degree. In 1802, Congress had replaced the Quartermaster



Department with a system that relied on civilian military agents and junior officers from the line who performed double duty as assistant military agents. The lack of a Quartermaster Department in the Peace Establishment compelled the secretary of war to take on the role of a quartermaster general. Although there was broad public recognition that Congress would reestablish the Quartermaster Department in time of war, reform-minded officers who reflected on the War of 1812 observed that the attempt to reorganize army administration in the middle of a war produced chaos. “The greater portion of the disaster which have attended arms since the revolution,” Jesup declared, “may be traced to the ignorance and inefficiency of this department.”<sup>46</sup> Brigadier General Alexander Macomb came to the same conclusion. He told Jesup, “It is evident that all our misfortunes in the late war originated in the defects of the Staff Departments and all may also attribute the enormous waste and extravagance to the same cause.”<sup>47</sup>

Jesup limited the influence of civilians in the department by selecting men—with few exceptions—who already possessed military experience. He also opposed the hiring of professional clerks and recommended the abolition of the contract system of supply. He bemoaned the civilianization of army logistics because he believed it caused the breakdown of the logistics and supply system during the war. He thus recommended that the War Department staff the Quartermaster Department with young and intelligent officers who were capable of accomplishing the same tasks as professional clerks. Since civilian employees were “without military responsibility”<sup>48</sup> because they were not acquainted with department regulations or accountable to military authority, Jesup reasoned that they had no place in his department. He relied instead on an assistant quartermaster, two additional officers, and a sergeant to deal with the paperwork that

flooded his office in Washington, D.C. Jesup prohibited the use of clerks at the quartermaster posts, as well.<sup>49</sup> In 1818, Captain Archibald W. Hamilton, the quartermaster at the Boston station, requested permission from the quartermaster general to hire a temporary clerk. Captain George Bender, the assistant quartermaster general in Washington, ordered Hamilton—on Jesup’s behalf—to use officers from the line instead. Although Jesup’s decision to keep clerks out of his department made sense from a strictly military perspective, it also deprived him of a valuable tool to alleviate his staff’s workload when the volume of paperwork increased.<sup>50</sup>

By 1824, however, Jesup relented and hired two civilian clerks to mitigate the toll the increasing workload was having on his officers and himself. Congress’s drastic cuts to the Quartermaster Department in 1821 had made the task of supplying the army’s inland and maritime frontiers more onerous because it did not also reduce the number of posts on those frontiers. The War Department worsened the problem by transferring responsibilities from the Purchasing and Engineer Departments to the Quartermaster Department.<sup>51</sup> As a result, Jesup often worked eighteen-hour days to meet the demands of his office.<sup>52</sup> Historian Chester L. Kieffer suggests that Jesup’s recurring bouts of illness was a consequence of this punishing work schedule. They also account for his decision to purchase a farm in Kentucky, in the event that another illness gave him no other choice but to retire.<sup>53</sup>

The supply contractors who furnished rations to the army also lacked military responsibility. When they failed to deliver on their contracts, which was a frequent occurrence, quartermasters resorted to purchasing supplies on their own accounts. In 1813, as acting deputy quartermaster general in Cleveland, Captain Jesup supervised the

construction of seventy-eight boats over the course of four months in preparation for the campaign to invade Upper Canada. A lack of wooden planks, however, brought the construction to a sudden, but temporary, halt when the contractor failed to supply them.<sup>54</sup> In August, a couple of weeks after Jesup completed the construction project he realized that another contractor had not supplied the necessary provisions. Faced with the choice between allowing the British prisoners of war in his care to starve and purchasing the rations himself he chose the latter. “Duty, as well as humanity,” he explained, “pointed to the latter.”<sup>55</sup> His experience with contractors was a common one.

Army officers routinely found fault with the performance of contractors. A sampling of Jesup’s wartime correspondence reveals that he experienced the entire range of complaints that officers had voiced during the war. Contractors overcharged him for goods, delivered items that were unusable or of poor quality, made late deliveries, or failed to fulfill their contracts altogether. Jesup therefore recommended the abolition of the contract system. Congress finally got around to eliminating the contract system in 1818, replacing it with a commissariat system. The legislation would not go into effect, however, until the expiration of the contracts a year later. As quartermaster general, Jesup would once again have to endure contractor corruption and incompetence. In 1818, the contractor James Johnson failed to deliver the promised stores to a designated depot on the Missouri River. By mid-year, the Missouri Expedition experienced cost overruns that consumed the War Department’s appropriations for the entire year.<sup>56</sup> Jesup told Secretary of War Calhoun, “Our system of supply is a bad one: the commissariat is paralyzed by the contract system which is connected with it. If contracts were done away entirely, the army might be furnished from ten to twenty percent less than at present.

And it would be much more efficient, because its movements would depend upon itself.”<sup>57</sup> Unlike his position on clerks, Jesup did not reverse himself regarding contractors.

Jesup spent much of his time seeking to improve the Quartermaster Department’s handling of its finances. Toward this end, he included in his regulations a uniform system of procedures that ensured the quartermaster general would be aware of all expenditures in his department. The regulations also prohibited quartermasters from engaging in business activities, either directly or indirectly.<sup>58</sup> A violation of this provision constituted serious breach of the public trust and could result in the subordinate’s dismissal. In 1818, Jesup ordered Captain Thomas Tupper, the quartermaster at Sackets Harbor, to construct a new block of barracks at the post. Jesup wrote to the commanding general, Major General Jacob Jennings Brown, that his inspection of Captain Thomas Tupper’s estimates revealed that he was “either ignorant of the state of his own department at Sackett’s harbor, or that he is endeavoring to deceive you and the Secretary of War, as well as me.”<sup>59</sup> Tupper had apparently defrauded the local citizens who provided labor and construction material for the barracks and failed to pay the enlisted men for their own labor, as well. Brigadier General Daniel Parker, the adjutant and inspector general, ordered Tupper’s dismissal in February 1819.<sup>60</sup>

During Jesup’s tenure in office, corruption was rare and he insisted to Calhoun that his subordinates generally performed their duties properly.<sup>61</sup> The standards of conduct that he imposed on his quartermasters were high, and he was keen to avoid even the perception of wrongdoing. Thus, he expressed his concern to Captain George Bender, the quartermaster at Boston, that local newspapers had accused the latter of

conflicts of interest in procuring supplies. “It has been stated that you gave drafts on your brother,” he revealed. After repeating the exact wording of the charge, he stated reassuringly that Bender had done nothing wrong, but warned that officer to be sensitive to public distrust of the army. Jesup cautioned Bender, “You have lived long enough in this world to know that it is necessary not only to act correctly, but to pursue such a course as to put it out of the power of malignity itself to misconstrue your motives.”<sup>62</sup> He concluded the letter by advising him to institute a process of competitive bidding and to give the public proper notice of it.

### Accountability

Secretary Calhoun described Jesup’s vision for his department as a “school of instruction,” where quartermasters could educate themselves in their duties under the supervision of the quartermaster general. In Washington, the assistant deputy quartermaster general and other officers would acquire expertise under his direct supervision while post quartermasters on the frontiers would receive frequent missives regarding their conduct and proper procedures. Major Trueman Cross, who was part of the first cohort of quartermasters appointed under Jesup, worked closely with him. When the quartermaster general was away on an inspection tour, or on leave because of illness, Major Cross would serve as acting quartermaster general. His official correspondence reveals that he faithfully followed Jesup’s methods.<sup>63</sup>

Jesup’s correspondence indicates that he did indeed think his department should serve as a school for logistics. In addition to training experts in logistics, who would serve as custodians of professional knowledge in peace and instructors to citizen-soldiers

in war, Jesup thought his department should improve “habits of business” among quartermasters and ensure a “strict accountability” in the handling of department funds and property. The Quartermaster Department was not a proto-general staff school, however. Academic study was non-existent. The dispersion of the quartermaster posts also meant that there would be scant opportunity for professional socialization. Nevertheless, the “school of instruction” idea was significant because it showed that officers were already discussing ways of promoting military expertise and military responsibility. Indeed, army officers did propose schools of advanced study for various branches of the U.S. Army. In 1824, Calhoun established the first such school, the Artillery School of Practice at Fortress Monroe, Virginia.<sup>64</sup>

To inculcate his subordinates with “habits of business,” Jesup expected his officers to read and follow the draft regulations that he provided to them. He invariably reprimanded them when they failed to do so. As he told Captain R. M. Harrison, the quartermaster at Sackets Harbor, “The regulations of the department are sufficiently explicit to enable all officers making disbursements to perform their duty correctly, and it is a matter of astonishment to me that you should pay so little regard to them.”<sup>65</sup> Jesup was extremely detail-oriented and held his officers to high standards of pecuniary accountability. He often exhorted quartermasters to reduce expenditures, to inject competition into the bidding process, and to exercise punctuality in submitting returns. In cases where an officer committed an infraction of the regulations, he would point out the mistake by calling the quartermaster’s attention to the relevant paragraphs in the regulations. The most common infractions were unauthorized purchases, inaccuracies in preparing estimates, and a failure to record all expenses in reports. Jesup also required

that all paperwork should pass through his office. In one instance, Jesup rebuked Captain Harrison for failing to forward his accounts. He warned him that his “such neglect can no longer be tolerated” and that he should send his accounts to him immediately.<sup>66</sup>

Serious offenses involved a breach of the public trust, either a serious neglect of duty or actions that caused the department considerable arrearages, such as profligate spending or the diversion of funds. When Captain John D. Orr, a West Point graduate, failed to report for duty upon acceptance of his appointment as assistant deputy quartermaster general in May 1820, Jesup demanded to know why he did not give an explanation. The reason for Orr’s irregular conduct is not clear but, according to the *Army Register*, he held the position of military storekeeper soon thereafter. Jesup filled some of the storekeeper vacancies with quartermasters who were in the process of leaving the service. In December 1822, Orr received an honorable discharge.<sup>67</sup>

Although corruption was rare in the Quartermaster Department, Jesup occasionally had to defend his subordinates from unfounded charges. For example, Jesup dismissed Lieutenant Anthony Drane’s suspicions regarding Captain Hamilton’s excessive spending as “mere opinion and conjecture” and even suspected his motives. After inspecting Hamilton’s papers, he concluded that he did indeed pay a high price for the item in question, but that there was no evidence of “collusion or neglect of duty.” “The most that can be said in regard to his agency in the affair,” he concluded, “is that he has made a bad bargain.”<sup>68</sup> In 1820, Jesup defended Captain James McGunnegle, the quartermaster at St. Louis, from criticism of his conduct during the Missouri Expedition debacle. “There is no abler man of his rank in the army and that for correctness of duty

he is surpassed by no one,” he insisted. Jesup further stated that McGunnegle was simply following his orders and those of Colonel Henry Atkinson.<sup>69</sup>

Limiting expenses to within the department’s budget proved a challenge for the Quartermaster Corps as a whole. Major Cross was an acute observer of the financial mismanagement at the quartermaster posts. Upon returning from Boston, he wrote to Calhoun that the supply operations there evinced “little system” and noted that Captain Hamilton and Lieutenant Samuel Washburn had accumulated debts to the amount of \$15,000.<sup>70</sup> Cross later lamented to Major Henry Stanton that it was “a melancholy fact that the army suffers more from the conduct of its officers than from any other cause.”<sup>71</sup> Writing to Captain Bender on Jesup’s behalf, Major Cross explained that the quartermaster general did not intend to deprive the other officers at the Boston station of necessities by restraining spending. He told Bender that he was not surprised, however, to hear that the line officers of the Boston station, “where they had so long been improperly indulged by the agents of the department,” were chafing under the new regulations. He advised Bender to ignore their criticism of him and carry out his duties.<sup>72</sup>

A few posts were notorious for their financial mismanagement. In those cases, Jesup replaced the incumbent quartermaster with one who was more responsible. He replaced Captain Tupper with Captain Harrison and replaced Captain Hamilton with Captain Bender. Major Cross identified the management of the Boston station as particularly problematic, noting there had been “much abuse before the arrival of Captain Bender”<sup>73</sup> in April 1819. Jesup also replaced Captain Archibald Darragh, the quartermaster at Detroit, with Major Stanton, who was one of his most trusted subordinates. When Jesup ordered Stanton to assume his duties in Detroit, he clearly



placed restoring the post's finances at the top of his priorities. "All your energies and intelligence will be necessary," he advised "to place the business in that department on a proper footing and to reestablish the public credit."<sup>74</sup>

Jesup would also ensure accountability by conducting periodic inspection tours. In September 1821, Jesup planned to leave Washington on a four-month inspection tour to correct the waste and abuse at the southern posts. An illness forced him to postpone his tour, and he left in October instead. He traveled by steamboat from the port of New York to the quartermaster posts at St. Augustine, St. Marks, Pensacola, and New Orleans. In July 1820, Jesup dispatched Major Cross on a tour of the northern posts.<sup>75</sup>

### Quartermaster Selection and Retention

In addition to writing and enforcing the regulations, General Jesup professionalized the Quartermaster Corps by selecting men with considerable military experience to fill his department's vacancies. During the War of 1812, the War Department appointed men to quartermaster positions directly from civil life. These were usually businessmen whose skills in accounting and writing were considered applicable to quartermaster work. Jesup believed that these skills were insufficient. The concomitant failure to recognize the military dimension of quartermaster work, he argued, was responsible for the employment of men with little appreciation for military responsibility. When Calhoun gave Jesup the authority to select his subordinates according to the criteria he deemed most appropriate, he took the opportunity to institute this major change in personnel policy.<sup>76</sup>

One month prior to Jesup's arrival, in May 1818, the Corps of Quartermasters consisted of two deputy quartermaster generals with the rank of major; nine assistant deputy quartermaster generals with the rank of captain; and fifteen regimental and battalion quartermasters with the rank of lieutenant. Major Milo Mason and Major William Linnard functioned as the deputy quartermaster generals of the Southern and Northern Divisions, respectively. Linnard had become, perhaps, the most capable quartermaster in the service. He continued to operate the Philadelphia depot, which was the site of the U.S. Army's largest clothing establishment, serving there for sixteen years. His retention gave the department some continuity in the midst of drastic organizational change.<sup>77</sup>

Since the table of organization of 1818 provided for nineteen quartermasters, not including the regimental and battalion quartermasters, Jesup could fill the vacancies in his department with eight appointments in the first few months of his tenure. He described his first appointees as "gentlemen" of "education, intelligence, and honor." In June, he filled the first six vacancies. His new assistant deputy quartermaster generals were Thomas F. Hunt of North Carolina; Trueman Cross of Louisiana; Thomas S. Rogers of Georgia; Hezekiah Johnson of Pennsylvania; Jonathan S. Findlay of the Missouri Territory; and James C. Pickett of the Alabama Territory. Jesup assigned Captain Hunt to the important New Orleans station. He distributed the other assignments as follows: He sent Captain Johnson to Pittsburgh, Captain Rogers to Baton Rouge, Captain Pickett—a friend since boyhood—to St. Louis, and Captain Cross to Washington. Later in the year, Jesup selected Captain John Jones of Massachusetts, who he ordered to the Baltimore station; Captain James Green of Tennessee, who he assigned to West Point;

and Captain James McGunnegle of Pennsylvania to become the quartermaster of the Ninth Military Department, whose headquarters was located at Belle Fontaine.<sup>78</sup>

Jesup selected officers from every section of the United States. He told Calhoun that he knew all of the appointees, of which all but one had been an officer.<sup>79</sup> Only Jonathan S. Findlay—a civilian—did not receive an appointment.<sup>80</sup> Jesup also expressed satisfaction to General Brown that so many of the nation's "first young men" were seeking appointments to his department.<sup>81</sup> The term he used referred to their social class rather than their qualifications. Although Jesup owned land and slaves, he did not rank among the wealthiest Americans. He seems to have derived a good portion of his income from his general's pay. As a man of means, he did internalize a class bias typical of the age. He regularly referred to men he admired, such as Zachary Taylor, as "gentlemen." Jacob Brown selected Jesup as his adjutant in 1817, not only because of his illustrious service under his command but also because he was a "gentleman."<sup>82</sup> While the class composition of this first cohort of quartermasters is not completely clear, Jesup must have expected his appointees to share some of the same ideas regarding personal honor and to possess at least a modicum of politesse.

Personal ties to Jesup also played a role in quartermaster appointments and assignments. Jesup reserved the vacancy in Washington for one of his most trusted lieutenants. Major Cross had served as quartermaster under his command from 1816 to 1817, in the Eighth Military Department in Louisiana. During that time, he backed Jesup in his bitter war of words with Brigadier General Eleazar Ripley.<sup>83</sup>

Experience in war, especially as line officers, seems to have been the overriding qualification for an appointment to the Quartermaster Department during the period of

1818 to 1821. Jesup looked down on officers who had the opportunity to serve in combat but shirked such experience. He expounded the importance of experienced staff officers in a draft letter to Secretary Calhoun, but added this sarcastic comment: “The Gentlemen who acquired their experience by their fire sides, in war, and in the routine of garrison duty, in peace, no doubt entertain different views.” He implied that, without practical experience in war, an officer’s views on military affairs should carry less weight. Jesup thought better of his tone and crossed out the sentence.<sup>84</sup> In the end, all of the men who filled the nine captain vacancies in 1818 were veterans of the War of 1812. All had received commissions in the regular army during the war, except for Johnson who received his commission in 1804.<sup>85</sup>

Three of these nine captains took on assignments as staff officers in the postwar army while one (Hezekiah Johnson) had quartermaster experience in the war. In addition to Cross, McGunnegle served as regimental paymaster, and Rogers served as regimental adjutant and regimental quartermaster. Six of the nine officers experienced the broken career pattern that inhibited the professionalization of the officer corps in the early republic. In 1815, the board of general officers charged with reducing the army chose not to retain the services of Green, Pickett, Johnson, Rogers, and Hunt. Their discharge, however, did not end their careers. Rogers and Hunt returned to the U.S. Army in December of that year. Green, Pickett, and Johnson received their commissions with their appointments to the Quartermaster Department. Only Cross and McGunnegle had served continuously since 1815.<sup>86</sup>

The quartermasters who obtained their appointments between 1818 and 1821 averaged six years of service prior to their assignment in Jesup’s department. The

numbers are consistent with Jesup's recommendation that an officer have three years of experience in the line and six months' at his office before appointment to a quartermaster or assistant quartermaster general position. After the 1821 reduction of the U.S. Army, Jesup boasted to Calhoun that the quartermasters who remained on the rolls all had at least five years' worth of experience in the line and some of them much more than that. The ten quartermasters listed on the army register for August 1822 averaged 10.33 years of experience as officers.<sup>87</sup>

After 1821, Calhoun made it his policy to fill vacancies in his officer corps primarily with West Point graduates. Their presence in the postwar Quartermaster Corps, however, was more limited in spite of the skills they offered the department. West Pointers, after all, had undergone a rigorous curriculum that emphasized mathematics and engineering. These were useful skills for quartermasters, who performed arithmetical calculations as part of their routine work and who, on occasion, supervised the construction of military roads. Nonetheless, there were only eleven West Point graduates out of the fifty-six quartermasters listed in the army register from May 1818 to January 1821. By June 1821, none remained in the department. Six West Pointers transferred to the line, three received honorable discharges, one received a dismissal from the service, and one died. Over the next five years, no West Pointers served in the Quartermaster Department. Jesup retained only those officers who were the most responsible for restoring the financial footing of the quartermaster posts. An Academy education seems to have been a secondary qualification at this time.<sup>88</sup>

New positions opened up in 1826 when Congress finally heeded Jesup's repeated requests for an increase in the number of quartermasters. Congress raised the

department's full complement of quartermasters from thirteen to twenty-five officers, including twenty officers taken from the line. From 1826 to 1836, West Pointers monopolized appointments in the department just as they did in the officer corps as a whole. During this period, they comprised twenty-nine of the thirty-nine new appointments. The average appointee accumulated 14.5 years of experience as officers, including time spent as supernumeraries, before receiving their appointment to the department.<sup>89</sup>

Jesup recognized that he could ill afford to lose his most able quartermasters. Training a qualified quartermaster represented a significant investment in time and resources, and replacing them was not easy. For that reason, he regularly warned public officials that cutting the staff—especially quartermaster positions—amounted to false economy. First, he believed that a qualified staff officer had to know how to command a company or regiment. “It is a well established fact,” he wrote, “that no officer can be efficient in the staff who does not understand the duties of the line.”<sup>90</sup> Second, a staff officer required more skillsets than line officers or non-commissioned officers. “To make soldiers is not the work of a day,” he explained. Moreover, “To make officers is less so, and to make Staff officers versed in the multifarious details of military operations is a task which half a life time may be insufficient to attain.”<sup>91</sup> Third, quartermasters required more skillsets than other kinds of staff officers. They essentially had to learn two *métiers*—the military profession and accounting. He wrote, “If there is any department of the staff in which experience is worth less, where novices are equal to proficients it certainly is not the quarter masters department.”<sup>92</sup> This statement was the closest he came to thinking of the Corps of Quartermasters as an elite branch of the

service. Alexander Macomb agreed with that assessment. As he explained to Jesup, “There is no branch of the staff, in my opinion, of more importance than the one over which you preside because it requires more talent, more activity, and experience than any other—to say nothing of calculation, foresight and honesty.”<sup>93</sup>

Jesup therefore proposed an increase in compensation in order to attract the most qualified officers and to retain them for as long as possible. Although lower pay might not affect the size of the applicant pool, he argued, those who did apply were more likely to be unscrupulous men who would exploit their position for financial gain. As he trenchantly observed, “Whenever an office is set up to the lowest bidder, there will always be bidders enough.” He recalled his “past experience,” which taught him that a dishonest officer could “practice a system of fraud with impunity” since there was “scarcely the possibility of detecting them.” While offering higher pay would cost more money in the short term, it was worth the expense if it meant retaining the best-qualified and most responsible quartermasters. He reasoned thusly, “True economy would dictate a change of policy, and hold out such inducements as would command for the service of the department men of known integrity and capacity who, satisfied with the compensation, would direct their zealous efforts towards retrenchment, and in whose honor would be found an ample guarantee for the safety of the public funds.”<sup>94</sup>

After 1821, retention rates in the Quartermaster Department were high. Of those who began their service between 1818 and 1821, John Lane Gardner served in the department for ten years before transferring to an artillery regiment. Joshua B. Brant served until his resignation in 1839. Trueman Cross’s continuous service in the department was cut short by his death in 1846 during a skirmish with bandits on the

Texas-Mexico border. Two quartermasters from the 1818–1821 cohort remained on the rolls until their deaths in 1856: Thomas F. Hunt and Henry Stanton. The lengthy and continuous service of these men enabled the department to supply the army more efficiently than their predecessors and to function as a storehouse of professional expertise. Their service also demonstrated a nascent professional ethos; namely, a commitment to a lifetime of service to the nation.<sup>95</sup>

Jesup's regulations and his commitment to holding his subordinates accountable were his most important contributions to army logistics in the early national era. Just as important, however, was his advocacy of and devotion to military science.

Quartermasters who wished to become masters of their profession thus had a ready model to emulate. Those who came closest to following his example could be considered, by the standards of the day, as true professionals.



## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 8–18.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Jesup, undated reading note, Box 24, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 3 February 1821, Letters Sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>4</sup> Winfield Scott, *General Regulations for the Army; or, Military Institutes* (Philadelphia: M. Carey and Sons, 1821), 179.

<sup>5</sup> “Rules and Regulations of the Army of the United States,” 1 May 1813, *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 1: 428.

<sup>6</sup> C. Edward Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 175–176; *Reporter*, “American Skill & Heroism,” 13 March 1815.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily National Intelligencer*, “From the Boston Yankee,” 16 February 1815; Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers*, 175.

<sup>8</sup> *Reporter*, 17 March 1815.

<sup>9</sup> *City of Washington Gazette*, 11 March 1820, 10 March 1820; *Vermont Intelligencer*, 27 March 1820; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States* 13: 297. For a discussion of Jacksonian populism, see Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point*

---

(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 106–108, 113, 115; and Huntington, *Soldier and the State*, 203–211.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, report, 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Jesup, undated note, Box 23, Jesup Papers; Thomas Jesup, undated reading note, Box 24, Jesup Papers.

<sup>13</sup> Chester L. Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979), 5–6; Thomas Jesup, undated note, Box 23, Jesup Papers.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Jesup, undated note, Box 23, Jesup Papers. For Jesup's writings on historical and religious subjects, see folders titled, "Reading Notes" and "Notes and Reflections," in the Jesup Papers.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Jesup to his sons, 27 August 1824 [sic], Jesup Papers; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 318–319. The date on the letter to Jesup's son William is "August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1824" but this is an error. William and Charles Edward were not yet born in 1824.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Jesup to his sons, 27 August 1824 [sic], Jesup Papers.

<sup>17</sup> Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army, 1775–1939* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1989), 184; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 68.

---

<sup>18</sup> Trueman Cross to John Calhoun, "Remarks on the Organization of the Army," 1 December 1820, Letters Sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>19</sup> Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 68; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 184.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Macomb, *A Treatise on Martial-Law and Courts-Martial; as Practiced in the United States of America* (Charleston, SC: J. Hoff, 1809), 5–6; Allan Peskin, *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2003), 66–68.

<sup>21</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 199.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Jesup to James Barbour, "No. 2. Extract from a report dated February 9, 1824," 26 December 1825, *ASP: MA*, 3: 163.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 22 November 1823, *ASP: MA*, 2: 559–560.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, report, 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Jesup, undated reading note, Jesup Papers.

<sup>27</sup> Zachary Taylor to Thomas Jesup, 15 September 1820, Zachary Taylor Papers, Library of Congress; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 94–95.

---

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Jesup to James Taylor, 28 December 1812, Jesup Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Jesup to “a dear friend,” [1812], Jesup Papers.

<sup>30</sup> William Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 50; Thomas Jesup to James Findlay, 19 January 1812, in John Ewing Bradford, ed., *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* (Cincinnati: Press of Jennings and Graham, 1909) 4: 131.

<sup>31</sup> Bradford, *Ohio Historical Society*, 130; Skelton, *Profession of Arms*, 50.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Jesup to “a dear friend,” [1812], Jesup Papers.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 March 1820, Jesup Papers.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

<sup>38</sup> Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 7–8, 12, 16–17; Samuel Watson, “Thomas Sidney Jesup: Soldier, Bureaucrat, Gentleman Democrat,” in *The Human Tradition in*

---

*Antebellum America*, ed. Michael Morrison (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000), 101–102.

<sup>39</sup> Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 30–32, 35–37; Watson, “Thomas Sidney Jesup,” 102–103; Barbuto, *Niagara 1814: America Invades Canada* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 174–175, 178, 213–233. The lack of recognition quartermasters received for their services was a recurring theme in Jesup’s correspondence.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Jesup to an unidentified recipient, 2 August 1812, Jesup Papers.

<sup>41</sup> Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 22–25.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Jesup, undated note, Jesup Papers.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, report, 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 5 June 1818, Letters Sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Jesup, “On a Re-organization of the Quartermaster General’s Department,” 8 March 1824, *ASP: MA*, 3: 164.

<sup>47</sup> Alexander Macomb to Thomas Jesup, 30 January 1820, Jesup Papers.

---

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 5 June 1818 & 3 February 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>49</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 197, 734.

<sup>50</sup> George Bender to Archibald W. Hamilton, 19 June 1818, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>51</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 196.

<sup>52</sup> Watson, "Thomas Sidney Jesup," 110.

<sup>53</sup> Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 114.

<sup>54</sup> Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 16–17; Thomas Jesup to John Armstrong, 16 April & 1 August 1813, both in Letters Received by the Secretary of War, M221, RG 107, NARA; John C. Fredriksen, ed., *The War of 1812 War Department Correspondence, 1812–1815* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2016), 214.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Armstrong, 18 August 1813, Jesup Papers.

<sup>56</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 182, 190–192, 202.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 25 June 1819, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>58</sup> Scott, *Institutes*, 182.

---

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Jesup to Jacob Brown, 28 August 1818, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>60</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, “No. 591. Materials, Labor, &c., for the Erection of Madison Barracks at Sackett’s Harbor,” 25 February 1822, *ASP: Claims*, 1: 839–841.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 21 August 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Jesup to George Bender, 1 July 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 3 February 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>64</sup> Skelton, *Profession of Arms*, 248–254.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Jesup to R. M. Harrison, 1 March 1822, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Jesup to R. M. Harrison, 22 August 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Jesup to John D. Orr, 13 January 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 14 March 1822, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

---

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 16 December 1819, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>70</sup> Trueman Cross to John Calhoun, 10 November 1818, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>71</sup> Trueman Cross to Henry Stanton, 25 March 1819, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>72</sup> Trueman Cross to George Bender, 21 January 1820, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>73</sup> Trueman Cross to John Calhoun, 6 August 1819, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Jesup to Henry Stanton, 8 September 1818, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 6 September 1821, and Thomas Jesup to Trueman Cross, 8 July 1820, both in Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 95.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas Jesup to an unidentified recipient, 8 March 1824, *ASP: MA*, 3: 164.

<sup>77</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 138, 182.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 16 June 1818, and Thomas Jesup to Daniel Parker, 16 November 1818, both in Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.



---

<sup>79</sup> Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 114.

<sup>80</sup> Bradford, *Ohio Historical Society*, 107. Jonathan S. Findlay was a younger brother of James Findlay, a friend of Thomas Jesup. He was an army supply contractor before the war and a land register after the war. Findlay represents the sole exception to Jesup's self-imposed restriction against appointing contractors.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Jesup to Jacob Brown, 23 October 1818, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>82</sup> Watson, "Thomas Sidney Jesup," 105.

<sup>83</sup> Watson, "Thomas Sidney Jesup," 104–105.

<sup>84</sup> Thomas Jesup, undated draft memorandum, Box 23, Jesup Papers.

<sup>85</sup> See Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903).

<sup>86</sup> Biographical data compiled from Heitman, *Army Register*. See Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, Chapter 3, for the impact of broken career patterns on the development of American military professionalism.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, note, [1821], Jesup Papers; Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 3 July 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA. Biographical data compiled from William A. Gordon, *A Compilation of Registers of the Army of the United States, from 1815 to 1837* (Washington: James C. Dunn, 1837) and Heitman, *Army Register*, vol. 1.

---

<sup>88</sup> Samuel Watson, *Jackson's Sword: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1810–1821* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012), 246–247; Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms*, 137–139. Biographical data compiled from Gordon, *Registers of the Army*, Heitman, *Army Register*, vol. 1, and George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, Since its Establishment in 1802* (Saginaw, MI: Seeman and Peters, 1910). One officer, James C. Pickett, was a midshipman in the U.S. Navy prior to entering the army officer corps during the War of 1812. He was honorably discharged in June 1815 and again in June 1821.

<sup>89</sup> See Cullum, *Biographical Register*, Gordon, *Registers of the Army*, and Heitman, *Army Register*, vol. 1.

<sup>90</sup> Thomas Jesup, undated draft memorandum, Box 23, Jesup Papers.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 1 December 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas Jesup, undated draft memorandum, Box 23, Jesup Papers.

<sup>93</sup> Alexander Macomb to Thomas Jesup, 30 January 1820, Jesup Papers.

<sup>94</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>95</sup> For a biographical sketch of Trueman Cross, see C. Frank Powell, *Life of Major-General Zachary Taylor* (New York: D. Appleton and Company; Philadelphia: Geo. S. Appleton, 1846), 60–61. Service records compiled from Heitman, *Army Register*, vol. 1.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE REFORM OF U.S. ARMY LOGISTICS, 1818–1821

The period 1818 to 1821 witnessed a turning point in the conduct of logistics by the United States Army. The War of 1812 had demonstrated the fallacy of attempting to reform the supply system in the middle of a war. Because of American logistical failures between 1812 and 1815, Congress established permanent supply departments for the peacetime military establishment for the first time in American history. It passed a landmark piece of legislation, “An Act regulating the staff of the army,” on April 14, 1818. This measure reorganized the Quartermaster Department and created the Subsistence Department, which furnished food to the Army. Each department operated under a single chief in Washington, who reported directly to the Secretary of War.<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of the bureau system signaled a sharp break from the previous pattern of logistical administration. During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress organized a Quartermaster Department, only to abolish that agency in time of peace. During the War of 1812, Congress reestablished the Quartermaster Department to meet the exigencies of armed conflict. With the cessation of hostilities, it passed legislation that retained the position of quartermaster general, but divided authority over the department between two quartermasters general, each one attached to one of the army’s two geographical divisions. The 1818 organization of the Quartermaster Department, however, created a permanent and stationary supply bureau. Historian Erna Risch argues that a stationary Quartermaster Department staff, first proposed by William H. Crawford in 1816, was “a revolutionary proposal” because the head of the department

“had always been regarded as a field staff officer, appointed only in time of war and serving with the principal army.”<sup>2</sup> Now, the quartermaster general would become the chief of a military supply bureau.<sup>3</sup>

Lack of stability in the organization of army logistics had precluded the possibility of institutionalizing reforms because there was no continuity in the administration of military supply. After 1818, however, the existence of a permanent Quartermaster Department increased the chances that the United States would go to war with an effective supply system. Organizational continuity was an essential aspect of military reform. It enabled the new department heads—the Quartermaster General and Commissary General of Subsistence—to institutionalize professional standards and develop procedures that would allow U.S. Army logistics to mature over time. The nation’s civilian leadership was mostly responsible for this change. Secretary of War William H. Crawford of the Madison administration originated the plan and his successor John C. Calhoun, President Monroe’s secretary of war, embraced the idea and promoted it to lawmakers in Washington. These civilian reformers, in turn, benefited from the advice of such military professionals as Major Christopher Van De Venter, who served under Calhoun as his chief clerk.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of the military supply bureaus was not the only lesson that American public officials in the mold of Crawford and Calhoun learned from the War of 1812. The war taught civilians and officers alike the importance of internal improvements for army logistics and the advantages of militarizing certain logistical functions. Widely shared memories of failed offensives resulting from the miserable state of the nation’s infrastructure underscored the importance of constructing new

military roads. Poor roads and unnavigable rivers impeded the movement of both supplies and men to the borderlands and interior of the continent. In the early national era, federal funding of military roads became a universally recognized good. Even a constitutional strict constructionist such as President James Monroe—who repeatedly vetoed bills that involved the federal government in the construction of roads—endorsed the idea of federal funding of roads for the common defense. In 1816, Secretary of War Crawford instructed Major General Andrew Jackson to employ soldier labor on road-building projects and troops commanded by Major Generals Jackson, Jacob Jennings Brown, and Alexander Macomb began construction on six military roads from 1817 to 1820.<sup>5</sup>

The Act of 1818 started the militarization process by increasing the ratio of officers to civilians under the employ of the supply bureaus. It did so by abolishing the discredited system of employing civilian contractors to supply rations to the army and by repealing the provisions for forage, wagon, and barrack masters outlined in the 1816 “Act for organizing the general staff.” Hitherto the province of civilians, quartermasters would now assume responsibility for transporting rations to troops on campaign or to those garrisoning forts. After Brigadier General Thomas Sidney Jesup became quartermaster general in June 1818, he replaced the civilian clerks in his Washington office with his own assistant quartermasters. He justified his decision by noting that these specialists in accounting lacked military knowledge and responsibility. Years later, Jesup advocated replacing hired mechanics and other skilled artisans with a permanent support service under military authority. The militarization process was tentative, however. The abolition of the contract system was not made permanent for another five years and the

army would continue to rely heavily on civilians owing to chronic shortages in manpower.<sup>6</sup>

While the creation of the bureau system, the military road-building program, and the militarization of supply were partly the product of reformist impulses external to the officer corps, army officers alone initiated other reform efforts without which the reorganization of the logistical system would have failed. General Jesup, in particular, was the driving force behind the two most important developments in logistics that date from this period: the professionalization of the Quartermaster Corps and the rationalization of Quartermaster Department operations. Jesup professionalized the Quartermaster Corps by introducing standards of personnel selection, training, education, and performance. He rationalized logistical procedures by codifying them in his regulations for the department and by enforcing those regulations through missives, inspections, and disciplinary action.

Jesup's assiduous enforcement of the regulations made his efforts to rationalize logistics in the years from 1818 to 1821 at least a partial success. The War of 1812, by contrast, had witnessed little improvement in the system of supply even after 1813, the year the War Department reorganized the Quartermaster Department and instituted the new supply and logistical regulations. Quartermasters General Morgan Lewis and Robert Swartwout, moreover, were not able to enforce the regulations with consistency or exercise full control over their department's finances or property. Reorganization and rulemaking, in this case, did not result in military reform.

## Fiscal Accountability

Jesup's first weeks as quartermaster general proved critical to his reform drive. He continued writing his regulations and appointed his first cohort of new quartermasters. His routine duties were no less important, however. He understood that the failure to enforce regulations, such as the timely submission of returns, had plagued the department in wartime. On July 17, 1818, he told Calhoun that one of the "principal objects" for his department was enforcing "strict accountability" among the quartermasters and agents who handled department property and funds. Jesup's official correspondence is replete with references to "accountability," which became the watchword of his early tenure as quartermaster general.<sup>7</sup>

On July 30, 1818, Jesup outlined two systems of accounting. He proposed first that the quartermaster general draw funds and submit requisitions for the disbursing officers of the Quartermaster Department. These officers would then send their accounts, at pre-established times, to the proper accounting office in the Treasury Department. "This is the whole system," he wrote. "It is infinitely more simple than any other, and best secures accountability because it makes each individual responsible for his own acts."<sup>8</sup> His second system—the one the War Department adopted—required the ranking quartermaster of a military department or field army to submit his accounts to the quartermaster general on a quarterly basis for inspection. The quartermaster general, in turn, would transmit those accounts to the Treasury Department. If the quartermaster general received a rejected voucher from Treasury, he would then request the disbursing officer to submit an explanation or resubmit a valid voucher to the quartermaster general

in its place. The ranking quartermaster could only settle his account once Treasury accepted all of the vouchers.<sup>9</sup>

Whether Jesup would be able to ensure strict accountability under this system depended on his access to quartermaster accounts. He centralized oversight of department finances by creating a regulation stating that all paperwork must pass through his office and insisted that his subordinates be punctual in adhering to the new procedure. Jesup further stated that he would replace those officers who failed to do so. He also subjected quartermasters' books to periodic inspection. When Jesup was absent from Washington he charged Major Trueman Cross, the assistant quartermaster general in Washington, with enforcing the regulations.<sup>10</sup> On one occasion, Major Cross alerted Major William Linnard, the quartermaster at the Philadelphia depot, to the fact that quartermasters must from now on, "Transmit all accounts[,] and returns designed for the Treasury department through this office."<sup>11</sup>

Jesup restored fiscal accountability by also having quartermasters charge their purchases to their own accounts. That made them liable for unauthorized or irregular purchases. They could only settle their accounts once they justified their actions to the satisfaction of the quartermaster general or the Treasury Department. Jesup seems to have envisioned his role as that of an intermediary between Treasury and his quartermasters. He thus told Calhoun that it would not be fair to hold him responsible for the purchases of his subordinates. He was responsible, he contended, for transmitting the funds disbursed by the War Department to the ranking quartermaster of a military department or field army. Jesup expected that the new system of accountability would give him the tools to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the Quartermaster Department.



He was willing to let his reputation “stand or fall” based on the success of the system of accounting that he devised, but insisted that he would not be responsible for the failure of a system that was not his own.<sup>12</sup>

Desk duty was not a task that Jesup relished and he spent years lobbying the War Department for a field command. Nevertheless, he would habitually arrive at his office well before the official start of the day and remain there until late into the night, making military estimates, reports, and statements, and reviewing returns and receipts.<sup>13</sup> Jesup also downplayed the importance of fiscal accountability in strict military terms, describing it as “a mere business of dollars and cents and effects the national interest no further than the amount of dollars and cents concerned.” He compared his accounting duties unfavorably to his other two goals for the Quartermaster Department, namely the efficient and ample distribution of supplies and the facilitation of the army’s movements and operations. Jesup concluded, “Without my regard for this branch, all the objects of an army may be effected. The most arduous campaigns be made, the most brilliant victory achieved. The only end proposed by it is to compel those who secured money or property to show how they dispose of it.”<sup>14</sup>

Jesup understood, however, that fiscal accountability was important for the public reputation of the Quartermaster Department. If he failed to put his department on a sound financial footing, both Congress and the public would assume the wasteful spending was the result of quartermasters exploiting their office for their own financial benefit instead of the normal functioning of a bad system. He informed Calhoun that he was “aware that some reputation is risked, in the attempt to introduce system into a Department, hitherto without arrangement, without organization.”<sup>15</sup> Jesup’s moral leadership was a critical

part of his efforts to hold quartermasters financially accountable. He made a point of holding himself to the same standards that he expected from his subordinates. Although he exercised the right to inspect the books and accounts of the quartermasters at any time, he did not exempt his own books and accounts from the same scrutiny.

Jesup was also sensitive to accusations that impugned his honor or that of his department. On April 26, 1822, Jesup objected to the language used by the Auditor and Comptroller of the Treasury regarding his alleged unsettled accounts. He characterized the language as “injudicious and ungentlemanly.” He further declared that he was “unwilling” to have his name “on a list of delinquents” owing to the “base and negligent falsehood”<sup>16</sup> of these officials. In June 1821, he demonstrated an excess of caution in protecting his reputation by deferring receipt of the double rations to which he was entitled. He explained to Calhoun that he had done so simply because the secretary of war wished it and not because he agreed with him that it would be impolitic to do so. He asserted, “I should consider it to be dishonorable to receive a cent to which I am not justly entitled . . . [but] I owe it to myself to insist upon receiving that which others of my rank receive.”<sup>17</sup>

Several years later, in a draft memorandum to John H. Eaton, President Jackson’s secretary of war, Jesup warned him that the fate of the nation’s military establishment depended upon its system of fiscal accountability to a degree that did not exist in Europe, where the civil power was subservient to the military. Where civil control of the military was robust, by contrast, the public would hold the army accountable for how it handled the public trust. For that reason, the American system of accountability was more effective than the systems of accountability used by other national armies.<sup>18</sup> In 1832,

Lieutenant Colonel John E. Wool concurred with Jesup's assessment. Writing from London, he relayed to Jesup his view that the administrative departments of the French Army were "by no means as well organized, and as well conducted as the United States; and the accountability as far as I can ascertain is extremely lax and uncertain."<sup>19</sup>

### Line-Staff Friction

Arrearages proved to be the most intractable problem of Jesup's early years as quartermaster general. To be sure, the main cause of the department's debts was the unexpected costs of conducting military campaigns and expeditions. Congress was still appropriating money in 1817 to pay for arrearages dating from the War of 1812. The First Seminole War resulted in increased disbursements for 1817 and 1818, and the Yellowstone Expedition did the same for 1820. Even in years when there were no major operations, such as 1820 and 1821, Congress appropriated \$20,000 in 1821 and \$70,000 in 1822 to settle the debts from the previous year. These cost overruns equaled 4 percent and 19 percent of the 1820 and 1821 budgets, respectively.<sup>20</sup>

Although large-scale military operations drained department appropriations so did quotidian purchases made by officers. Jesup blamed the officers of the line, in particular, for much of the department's financial difficulties. These difficulties stemmed from what he described as their interference in the operations of the Quartermaster Department. Jesup described the problem of arrearages as largely resulting from the "improper and injudicious interference of the officers of the line in ordinary purchases, and making contracts on the part of the Department which they have neither the ability or the authority to discharge." As Jesup complained to Calhoun, "The funds of the

quartermasters department are disposed of by commanding officers as their caprice may dictate without regard to law or regulations.” The interference of line officers was a problem that had persisted since the War of 1812. The underlying cause was the inability of the quartermaster general to control the Quartermaster Department’s disbursements and property. A significant proportion of Jesup’s official correspondence was concerned with combatting various challenges to his authority by the line officers. Jesup believed that if he allowed such interference to continue unchecked, neither he nor his “most faithful, zealous, and energetic” quartermasters could control the department’s credit.<sup>21</sup>

The misuse of department funds by commanding officers for purposes not detailed in the estimates of the quartermaster general was one recurring type of interference. The diversion of funds encompassed a range of activities, from unauthorized purchases for personal items to the construction of permanent barracks without going through the proper channels. Since he provided Congress with estimates that determined the appropriations for his department, it was his responsibility to ensure that quartermasters used those appropriations for their intended purpose. When commanding officers compelled quartermasters to divert funds allocated for one purpose to another, the department could become the target of a congressional inquiry should the practice result in considerable arrearages. In March 1822, Jesup cautioned Major Charles J. Nourse, “The interference of the officers by diverting the funds of this Department from the objects for which they were apprehended and applying them to objects for which no appropriation was made or intended by Congress has caused a large arrearage with which that body is not very well satisfied.”<sup>22</sup> Jesup noted that this recurring problem presented the “most fruitful source of embarrassment” for his own reputation and for the

reputation of his department, which he believed was already suspect in the eyes of the public. The diversion of funds was a practice “fraught with mischief” that would result in public opinion placing “all the odium upon” the department should its financial difficulties result in the failure to pay the contractors.<sup>23</sup>

In November 1818, Jesup discovered from the accounts of Captain Thomas Hunt in New Orleans that Major General Eleazer Ripley and Brigadier General Daniel Bissell had purchased several items on the department’s credit that they lacked the authorization to make. The purchases included spyglasses for Ripley’s personal use and penknives for Bissell. Jesup protested to Calhoun, stating that there was no justification for such purchases in the War Department’s regulations or the military laws of the United States. He then recommended that the War Department hold Ripley and Bissell charge the items to their personal accounts and relieve the quartermaster from responsibility.<sup>24</sup>

The practice of officers erecting permanent quarters of their own accord and charging them to the account of the Quartermaster Department dismayed Jesup who thought such an irregular and costly practice was unique to the U.S. Army. Although the supervision of barracks construction was a responsibility of the Quartermaster Department, a responsibility it shared with the Engineer Department, line officers were undertaking such projects without authorization. It was a common type of interference. In 1819, Jesup complained to Calhoun that Colonel George E. Mitchell, the commanding officer at Baltimore, “interfered” with the quartermaster there by coercing him to furnish the colonel’s house. Another example includes the unauthorized use of soldier labor to build the barracks at the Green Bay post. Jesup counseled the quartermasters that the proper procedure was for the commanding officer to submit a requisition to the War

Department, with a justification for the expense that included a detailed estimate. The secretary of war would then forward it to Congress. If Congress appropriated the money, only then could the officer charge the Quartermaster Department for the expense.<sup>25</sup>

A common, but less serious kind of abuse was the purchase of items by commanding officers and quartermasters that were the procurement responsibility of another department. Officers who breached this part of the regulations were not necessarily acting unprofessionally. Rather, ambiguous wording seems to have caused much confusion. In May 1819, Major Trueman Cross, who was then managing the department while Jesup was away, informed Captain George Bender, the quartermaster at Boston, that the regulations did not authorize him to draw on the Quartermaster Department in order to purchase tools because that was the responsibility of the Ordnance Department. Moreover, Ordnance's failure to provide tools for the army was not a valid reason to breach the regulations. As Cross wrote, "The defect in the system of issues of this [Ordnance] department cannot justify imposing duties on the officers of this quarter master department which do not belong to them much less the expenditure of funds of that department in the purchase of articles for which no estimate or appropriation has been made." He emphatically concluded that the regulations were clear in stating that the Ordnance Department was responsible for procuring and distributing all tools required by the army.<sup>26</sup>

Major Cross reiterated the point to Major J. B. Crane, in February 1820, when he stated that the regulations required line officers to apply to the proper department when submitting requisitions for supplies. He therefore instructed Major Crane to apply to the Ordnance Department when purchasing tools. He then remarked that in the past six years

ordnance officers “were never until lately called upon to perform [this] part of their duty.”<sup>27</sup> In August 1821, Jesup pointed out to Captain Joshua B. Brant, quartermaster at Detroit, that the Ordnance Department should have furnished the tools that an officer requisitioned for the post at Green Bay, and not the Quartermaster Department. The practice created some antagonism, not among the bureaus, but between the quartermasters in the Washington office and those officers of the line who expected that post quartermasters would simply furnish any items upon request.<sup>28</sup>

Although the regulations did charge the Ordnance Department with supplying ordnance supplies to the army, the tools that the department was required to provide was restricted to certain types. While entrenching and miners’ tools for the attack and defense of fortifications and those tools required for ordnance duties were the procurement responsibility of the Ordnance Department, ordinary camp tools such as axes, spades, and shovels did not constitute ordnance supplies. Indeed, quartermasters would purchase tools on the account of the Quartermaster Department for use in performing the routine duties of the department. Tools purchased for the repair of storehouses and barracks, and those used for transportation fell into this category.<sup>29</sup> Jesup informed Major Charles J. Nourse that the Quartermaster Department could supply tools, but that the requisition must explicitly state the reasons for the purchase otherwise the quartermaster would be within his rights to refuse to supply them.<sup>30</sup>

Aside from the ambiguity relating to the procurement of basic camp and pioneers’ tools, the regulations were silent about the identity of the department that would supply musical instruments. In this case, Major Cross made a determination based on longstanding practice, as well as his own judgment. When Captain Bender used

department funds to purchase “drums, fifes, and musical instruments,” Cross informed him that his action was improper because instruments had long been the responsibility of the Purchasing Department and not the Quartermaster Department. He also reasoned that they were a “species of accoutrement” that served as “a substitute for arms in the hands of musicians.” Because of this function, he concluded, it made little sense to place musical instruments in the same category as quartermaster stores.<sup>31</sup> These ambiguities and inconsistencies in the division of procurement responsibilities continued to produce as much confusion as they had during the war, and represented an exception to the overall trend of steady progress in the rationalization of logistics.

Jesup resorted to a variety of techniques to protect the credit and property of the department. He ordered the quartermasters to stand firm in adhering to the regulations, noting that commanding officers could not compel them to do otherwise. Jesup admonished Captain Brant by stating, “It is the business of officers of the QM Dept to resist the improper demands of officers of the line.” He also warned that quartermasters who made unauthorized purchases because of these demands “must submit to the consequences.”<sup>32</sup> Usually, that meant the War Department would charge the quartermaster with the expense of the purchase. As quartermaster general, Jesup could decide whether offenders would pay for unauthorized items from their individual accounts, but his power was limited because he lacked the legal authority to mulct delinquents. His inability to coerce quartermasters to settle their accounts, which accumulated at the end of each year, was yet another source of frustration for him. For example, for the fiscal year 1821, Captain Richard J. Easter’s delinquency caused



considerable arrearages at several posts in Creek country, the payment of which reduced the department's appropriation for that year.<sup>33</sup>

Jesup understood that the continued interference of the line officers in the operations of the department would destroy the system of accountability that he was trying to institute. He remonstrated against the practice, telling Calhoun, "I cannot consent to be responsible either for the estimates, or the application of the appropriation of the Qr. Master's department, if any officer, high soever [sic] his rank, be permitted to apply the funds of the Department of the army as his caprice may dictate." In some cases, he appealed to Calhoun to intervene on his behalf. "It is only by making the several officers and Departments of the army responsible for the prompt and correct discharge of their respective duties, and positively prohibiting them from interfering with those of others," he concluded, "that a strict accountability can be established."<sup>34</sup> On another occasion, he resorted to threats. Referring to the impact that the irregular practice was having on department appropriations, he warned Major Nourse, "I have for the last two years borne the blame, but I will bear it no longer and Congress shall be informed of the cause of the arrearage and the name of every individual who has caused improper expenditures."<sup>35</sup>

### Economy

By 1821, Jesup's own assessment of the results of his efforts to control the Quartermaster Department's finances was pessimistic. He lamented that the department's credit had never been worse. He expressed concerns that interference from line officers continued to result in arrearages for the department.<sup>36</sup> Secretary Calhoun, in

his report to Congress of March 5, 1822, presented a different perspective. He remarked that the military establishment as a whole had reduced its expenditures every year under the organization of 1818. By 1820, the average expense of each officer was \$135.69 less than in 1818. In 1821, the average expense was \$164.55 less than 1818. He compared the expenditures of the army as a whole using figures calculated by the Second Auditor of the Treasury. In 1818, the U.S. Army consisted of 8,199 officers and men, which cost the government a grand total of \$3,702,495.04. Calhoun calculated that a force of the same size would have cost only \$2,589,900.12 in 1820 and \$2,353,276.98 in 1821. He attributed the reductions, in part, to the “more minute control” exercised over disbursements of public money and the preservation of public property by the staff departments. To Calhoun, the new establishment was proving its worth from a financial perspective. He also wrote that the Quartermaster Department achieved cost savings that were not apparent in its total expenditures because the spending increases that offset the savings were beyond the control of the quartermaster general. These increases resulted from the expense needed to supply a great many posts in remote areas.<sup>37</sup>

Jesup improved cost-efficiency not by micromanaging the activities of quartermasters but by exhorting them to inject the principle of economy into their purchases. His drive for economy took on a greater sense of urgency after the Panic of 1819. The financial crash prompted renewed calls in Congress for retrenchment, which took the form of debates over the next two years on the subject of reducing the military establishment. The U.S. House of Representatives then passed a resolution on May 11, 1820, that charged the secretary of war with reporting to the House, by the next session of Congress, with a plan to reduce the military establishment to 6,000 officers and men.

This plan would also include an estimate of expenditures. Calhoun then conferred with Jesup and other senior officers to produce a politically viable plan that limited the damage to the military establishment.<sup>38</sup>

Jesup responded to the new political environment with some measure of defensiveness and exasperation. He was worried that the prewar pattern of discontinuity in personnel and organization would repeat itself. The inability of the previous military establishments to retain experienced professionals in the staff and to maintain a continuous organization was the main obstacle to professionalizing the Quartermaster Corps and rationalizing the logistical system. He recalled, "The frequent changes and mutilations of the staff have been a serious evil in the operations of all the department of the army. One system has scarcely been known before another has been adopted . . . and the consequence has been an ignorance of all."<sup>39</sup>

Although Jesup was concerned that the organization of the army would suffer from the 1821 reduction, he also seems to have viewed retrenchment as an opportunity to instill habits of economy in his quartermasters. He drew a direct connection between his exhortations for greater economy in the Quartermaster Department and Calhoun's campaign to prevent the abolition of the regular army. The theme of his missives on the subject was that quartermasters could save the army by reducing their expenditures at the various posts. For that reason, the profligacy that plagued many of the posts early in his tenure must end. In March 1819, only a few weeks after the financial crisis, Jesup conveyed to Captain Stanton, then quartermaster at Detroit, Calhoun's approval of the rejection of Lieutenant John Sullivan Pierce's requisition. Jesup told Stanton that quartermasters should rein in the habitual "extravagant issues" that were made on the

orders of commandants of the posts. Jesup continued, “The army can be saved from disbandment but by a reduction of its expenses. This reduction can be effected only by a thorough reform. On that reform the Secretary at War has determined, and he expects all officers who have any regard for the interests and prosperity of the army to afford him their aid.”<sup>40</sup> By summer, Jesup had noted that the quartermasters had indeed corrected the abuses stemming from the interference of the line officers at all posts, with the exception of the posts at Green Bay, New Orleans, and the Florida frontier. He relayed to Stanton (now a major) Calhoun’s wishes that he correct the continued abuses at those posts and gave him control over their disbursements.<sup>41</sup> In September 1821, Jesup this time warned Captain Thomas Hunt, quartermaster at New Orleans, of the possibility of disbandment. He stated matter-of-factly that the appropriation for the department was “so nearly exhausted,” that it became necessary to exercise the “utmost economy.” He concluded that economy, “[uniting] in measures to relieve the Treasury,” would redound to the benefit of the officer corps.<sup>42</sup>

Even in the era of congressional imposition of financial retrenchment, the regular army was never in danger of complete disbandment. Nevertheless, Jesup tried to preserve as much of its present organization as he could. That meant supporting cost-savings measures that facilitated efficiency, or true economy, while opposing those cost reductions that had a deleterious effect on military readiness, or false economy. In subsequent years, Jesup submitted proposals to the secretaries of war on ways to achieve greater cost-efficiency without damaging the military establishment. He advised Secretary of War John Eaton of the Jackson administration, for example, that he could accomplish this goal, in part, by discharging the supernumerary officers and reducing the

number of West Point cadets. Regarding the system of military supply, true economy consisted of militarizing logistical functions, improving internal communications, and adopting logistical practices that suited American circumstances.<sup>43</sup>

Both General Jesup and Major Cross suspected, however, that Congress was more interested in finding opportunities to reduce appropriations even at the expense of an efficient organization. They warned about notions of false economy that would prove costly to the nation in both treasure and the lives of men. Three examples of false economy stand out in the Quartermaster Department records: the low pay for quartermasters, drastic personnel cuts, and excessive streamlining of the bureaucracy. Jesup argued that the low pay of quartermasters in comparison to their counterparts in civilian life reduced incentives to remain in the service. He also cautioned against drastic cuts to the staff of the supply departments, which reduced the efficiency of military supply officers and the celerity and strength of the army. “Without a well organized staff,” Jesup argued, “no army can move with promptitude and effect.”<sup>44</sup> In a report entitled “Remarks on the Organization of the Army,” Major Cross argued on behalf of the quartermaster general that an army without an efficient *État-Major*, in his estimation, would perform in battle as though it had lost half its strength.<sup>45</sup> Finally, Major Cross recommended against replacing allowances in kind for commutation allowances, which would place the onerous burden of supply on officers of the line.<sup>46</sup>

Militarization of logistical functions was one way to reduce costs, increase efficiency, as well as introduce military responsibility and accountability to the supply agencies. Hiring civilians to perform manual labor, or procurement, transportation, and accounting tasks was usually more expensive than employing the labor of troops or

military professionals. The most egregious example of waste was price gouging by subsistence contractors. The abolition of the contract system was thus the best way to make the supply system more cost-efficient. In June 1819, while working at the St. Louis depot during the Yellowstone Expedition, Jesup noted that the lingering effects of the contract system—some contracts were still active as recently as June 1—was paralyzing the commissariat. Jesup contended that, had the commissariat system been in place sooner, the army would have been able to purchase rations for the expedition at less expense. To be sure, the Quartermaster Department would now be responsible for the transportation of rations to the posts, which would increase its operating costs considerably. The price of transport, however, would still be much lower than what the contractors were charging. Therefore, replacing the contract system with the commissariat system saved money in aggregate. Moreover, as Jesup noted, the army would move more quickly on campaign since its movements would depend on the performance of the Quartermaster Corps and not on that of the contractors.<sup>47</sup>

Jesup frequently exhorted quartermasters to open up the process of contracting for supplies and transportation to competition. He was concerned that the department was paying higher prices for items than was necessary. Only through a public competition, he believed, could the department keep the prices of goods comparable to the market rate. Since contractors submitted proposals to quartermasters personally, a potential source for conflicts of interest, Jesup wanted to them to place advertisements in newspapers to make the process public and so avoid the appearance that firms were using their connections to quartermasters to secure contracts on good terms. A competitive bidding process would alleviate public suspicions of official corruption and demonstrate that the quartermasters

were conducting business in the best interests of the country. He advised Captain Bender, in March 1821, “To invite competition is proper that public notice be given—and for your own security, as well as that of the department you should require that all proposals be in writing.”<sup>48</sup> A transparent process would be likely to avoid a repeat of the recent scandal involving the contractors for the Yellowstone Expedition, who had circumvented the competitive bidding process.

In July 1821, Jesup wrote a missive explaining the law on the correct process for procuring supplies, by “open purchase or by agreement,” on the market for the benefit of his quartermasters. The goal of the law, he stated, was to ensure that the quartermaster purchased supplies on “the best possible terms,” as well as affording “every citizen an opportunity of sharing in the public expenditures.” The department would purchase fuel, forage, straw, and stationary by contract at the quantities stipulated in the annual estimates of the quartermaster general. The post quartermaster would place advertisements in the newspapers calling for proposals. All bidders submitted sealed bids until a given date, when the quartermaster made the bids public. The firm that won the contract submitted two sureties and a bond to protect the government against losses occasioned by the contractor’s failure to deliver on his contract. Although Jesup prohibited the quartermaster from making advance payments to contractors, he did allow the quartermaster to pay for services or supplies in installments to coincide with the “actual progress of their executions.” Jesup concluded by insisting that quartermasters send copies of all advertisements and contracts they entered into. He would then file the originals in case they needed it for future reference.<sup>49</sup>

Major Cross, in a reflective letter to Jesup, calculated that the department under the 1818 organization was four times more efficient, for half the pay, than the prior organization because it substituted assistant deputy quartermasters for the “horde of wagon, forage and barrack masters who were worse than useless.” To Cross, this was a case where retrenchment could serve the interests of efficiency. Adding another four to six deputies would improve the cost-effectiveness of the department even further. He figured that it would “give efficiency to the operations of our army of three times our present establishment” while still spending less than the previous establishment by several thousand dollars.<sup>50</sup> A slightly larger Quartermaster Corps would benefit the army far more than it would harm the national budget.

Major Cross’s rudimentary analysis of the costs and benefits of a relatively large Quartermaster Corps did not take into account the political realities in Washington. The tone of his letter expressed incredulity at Congress’s interest in retrenchment rather than the efficiency of the staff. He feared that “false ideas of national economy,” which had the tendency to “strangle [the Quartermaster Department] in the cradle,” would win the debate over the size of the military establishment. In Cross’s estimation, an efficient Quartermaster Department, which was the “main spring” of all the army’s movements, needed the “fostering hand of liberality” in expenditure, perhaps until the department found ways to reduce costs without sacrificing efficiency.<sup>51</sup>

Major Cross also perceived an indifference toward logistics on the part of the public and even some fellow officers. He wrote, “From the little understanding of the real importance and the operations of this Department, they are too often stigmatized as useless appendages to the Army.”<sup>52</sup> Other reform-minded officers, such as Alexander



Macomb, remarked that the Quartermaster Department was under-appreciated.<sup>53</sup> Years later, Jesup expressed disdain for the “erroneous views entertained in certain quarters” that downplayed the importance of logistical expertise, and thus reduced war to a “mere pastime.”<sup>54</sup>

Allowances were natural targets for cost reductions in the military appropriation. Congress reduced the clothing allowance, for example, by one-third in the 1820 budget. Jesup attempted to introduce economy and uniformity into the calculation of transportation allowances to prevent officers from wasting department funds. The army regulations stated that the allowance was limited to those officers traveling alone and under orders. These officers were entitled to reimbursement at the rate of nine cents per mile for a journey of no less than twenty miles. In the interests of economy, however, they had to reduce travel expenses by taking the shortest route as mapped out by the Post Office Department’s book of distances. Jesup also distributed *The Traveller’s Dictionary through the United States*, by John Melish, which provided a more comprehensive description of roads and gave quartermasters a standardized means for calculating transportation allowances.<sup>55</sup>

Since the Quartermaster Department was responsible for providing allowances to the entire army, Jesup spent a portion of his routine duties clarifying for his quartermasters the regulations on the subject. He informed Captain Archibald W. Hamilton, quartermaster at Sackets Harbor, that Lieutenant John Clitz’s travel expenses did not entitle him to reimbursement since the tribunal he attended was a civil one, and not part of his military duties. In another case, Jesup told Lieutenant I. M. Washington, a regimental quartermaster, that Lieutenant Evans Humphrey could not receive

reimbursement for subsistence costs during his passage aboard a vessel since the transportation allowance was not an emolument and only covered the cost of transportation. He also explained the regulations to Major William Linnard, stating that the assistant quartermasters who joined their new stations could not receive the allowance if they were on furlough.<sup>56</sup>

There was one instance when Congress proposed a regulation to streamline the bureaucracy in order to reduce costs without a full understanding of how such a proposal would work in practice. In that case, Major Cross drew upon his military experience and expertise to ascertain the likely impact of the regulation. He expressed his vociferous objection to a Senate resolution of January 11, 1820, which inquired into the feasibility of replacing officers' allowances of rations, forage, servants, fuel, quarters, and stationary with their equivalent in money. Officers would then be responsible for purchasing their personal supplies out of their own pay whether in garrison or during active operations. He argued that prohibiting these allowances would not work. It would force officers to become their own suppliers, imposing tasks that would distract them from their proper military duties.<sup>57</sup>

Cross then envisioned a scenario where the commanding officer of an army, at the end of a day's march, would spend his time seeking forage for his horses, and provisions, fuel, and quarters for himself rather than attending to the needs of his soldiers. A campaign in the resource-poor inland frontier would exacerbate this problem. He described such a situation as "farcical" and predicted that the officers in that situation would nevertheless continue to draw on the Quartermaster Department for provisions. They would do so, even though they would be violating the regulations, because

“necessity has no law.” In his view, officers could only safely dispense with the stationary allowance since it was a relatively trivial matter. Commutation allowances for fuel and quarters, on the other hand, would lead to perverse consequences. Without the fuel allowance, for example, officers would have to perform the work of “wood musterers,” which was “incompatible with that dignity of deportment which it should be our wish to cherish.”<sup>58</sup>

Jesup advised Calhoun that the War Department retain the forage allowance for quartermasters, which provided the two quartermasters with the rank, pay, and emoluments of majors of cavalry with forage for four horses and the assistant quartermasters with forage for two horses. He sensibly noted that quartermasters could not perform their duties on foot and needed the service of horses most of all.<sup>59</sup>

### Retrenchment

Economic considerations—more so than ideological ones—would determine the composition of the military establishment in 1821. Congressional criticism of the current organization focused on the disproportionate number of officers in the army, who were more expensive to keep in the service than enlisted men. The perception of financial mismanagement in the Quartermaster Department also played a role in congressional debates. That year, Brigadier General Henry Atkinson’s expedition experienced considerable delays in moving troops to the western outposts because of the failure of the firm owned by the Johnson brothers to deliver the promised steamboats. The scandal surrounding the Yellowstone Expedition prompted the House Committee on Military Affairs to investigate the expenditures of the Quartermaster Department. Calhoun

restricted department expenditures for the rest of the year to essential items only. The House resolution of May 1820, which reduced General Jesup's estimate for the Quartermaster Department from \$526,000 to \$461,011.56, was likely the by-product of both the scandal and the economic crisis.<sup>60</sup>

Jesup worried that steep cuts in the organization of the staff would lead to the same problems with mobilization that the army experienced during the War of 1812. On more than one occasion, he argued that the lack of an efficient staff and the attempt to organize one during the war was responsible for the early American defeats. "Those departments can be formed and efficiently organized in peace only," he asserted. Logistical mobilization was a more cumbersome process than the recruiting, mustering, and training of men. Transporting supplies to the troops required a stable staff organization in peace. Jesup considered it essential that the logistical system should not change after the outbreak of war. In other words, commanding officers and quartermasters should not have to improvise solutions to logistical problems, as they had during the late war with Great Britain. The failure to mobilize effectively for war would result in an outcome that did not reflect a nation's war-making capacities. In a postmortem on the war, Jesup concluded, "We presented the singular spectacle of a powerful nation with more than a million men capable of bearing arms with resources vastly exceeding those of any other nation of equal population, with two hundred thousand men actually under arms . . . without gaining the object for which [war] had been declared."<sup>61</sup>

Major Cross prepared the report on the cadre plan, which reiterated some of the same points that Jesup expounded in his March 1820 report on the organization of the

army. Jesup endorsed Cross's report and sent it to Calhoun on December 1, 1820. The memorandum, entitled "Remarks on the Organization of the Army" seems to have been the product of a common understanding between the two officers. The idea that undergirded the cadre plan was the retention of a larger proportion of officers to men in the Peace Establishment for the purpose of training large bodies of private soldiers for war. The plan would also retain the full complement of officers in the Quartermaster Department to supply those forces and rapidly put them in motion. More officers in peace increased the potential for mobilizing larger armies in war. Cross described this principle as follows: "Present the longest possible base from a given numerical force." Since training officers took time, he thought the officer corps should be large enough to require little augmentation. In his version of the cadre plan, the officer corps would provide the base for expanding the army fourfold in time of war. This skeletal force, Cross explained, "Could not be relied upon as a competent defense for the State, but is intended as the stock on which a force adequate to the exigencies of war might be engrafted & hastened to maturity." They would serve instead as "a preponderating influence in determining the character of the remaining three fourths."<sup>62</sup>

Cross and Jesup, as did many officers, anticipated a war with a great power such as Great Britain or Spain. Cross determined, perhaps based on his wartime experience, that it would take at least two years to create a new, effective army from a force consisting entirely of raw recruits. He observed that the American troops that met the British in battle in 1814 operated "under many disadvantages even in the third year of their schooling." While the new levies were training, the nation needed a force competent enough to prosecute an offensive war with any other nation. He suggested

that an army of 60,000 could do so “with tolerable efficiency.” The nation could mobilize such a force in two months based on the principle of extension. The army would not create new battalions or regiments, but would merely expand the strength of existing companies fourfold. He held to the principle of fourths—that the base for an extension should be no less than one-fourth the size of the wartime army. Using strict military logic, Cross concluded that the Peace Establishment should therefore consist of 15,000 officers and men. Going to war with an expansible army would be more efficient than creating entirely new units. Continuity in the organization of regiments and companies was as important as continuity in the Quartermaster Department.<sup>63</sup>

The plan depended on a ratio of officers to enlisted men that, as Cross acknowledged, the nation would not accept. Salaries and emoluments made officers relatively expensive and there were strong political sentiments against military professionals. A modification of the plan, so that the officer corps would require a doubling of its number in time of war, Major Cross conceded, could still achieve much good.<sup>64</sup>

The plan for the Peace Establishment did not provide for any reductions to the staff organization. A few years later, Jesup justified his position to Jackson’s secretary of war, John Eaton, by noting that the American peacetime military establishment could only be small in the number of enlisted men. Since its objects in peace were to preserve military knowledge and discipline, construct permanent defenses and internal improvements, and organize, preserve, and prepare the materiel necessary for war, it also required a relatively large complement of specialists. These tasks would “devolve upon officers without the agency of Troops.” The continental European powers, by contrast,

required large military establishments to protect the sovereign and secure his authority in peace, as well as enforce his edicts. The American political context rendered the existence of a large military establishment unnecessary because, in his view, public opinion guaranteed the execution of laws, internal peace, and the protection of public officials in the performance of their duties.<sup>65</sup>

Major Cross likewise objected to cuts in the staff departments. He told Calhoun that the nation could least afford a reduction to the Quartermaster Department. He argued that the number of officers it needed depended upon the disposition of the army rather than its total numerical force. The eighty to ninety posts with garrisons required the services of a quartermaster attending to one or two posts in order to function efficiently. That was the case whether the post garrisoned 100 or 2,000 men. Only a reduction in posts, he argued, could justify a reduction of the Quartermaster Corps.<sup>66</sup>

This was a point that Jesup made both before and after the 1821 reduction. The distances separating posts made quartermasters' labor more difficult and drove up the costs of transportation. To illustrate his point, Jesup contrasted the logistical challenges of the United States with those of France. The logistical challenges of moving supplies and men from Paris to the frontier was comparable to marching troops from the St. Louis depot to the western outposts or transporting arms from Harper's Ferry to the arsenal in Pittsburgh. Furthermore, the quality of roads in the United States was still relatively poor. Since France possessed fewer posts and shorter and better roads and canals, it could afford to have a relatively small logistical support service, whereas the United States could not. Given its number of posts, the extent of the frontier, and state of internal improvements, Jesup concluded, "It must therefore be apparent that we require a

much larger proportion of officers in time of peace compared with the rank and file than most European nations with their large force and small territories could find employment for.” After the 1821 reductions, Jesup claimed that the quartermasters of the 6,000-man regular army were performing the same amount of work that French quartermasters were performing for their 300,000-strong force.<sup>67</sup>

Jesup believed that the expansible army plan best fit America’s unique political and geographical circumstances. A lengthy inland frontier and the traditional American reliance on citizen-soldiers, made a large standing army both impractical and impolitic. The solution, retaining a large staff in peace in proportion to the total force, was a way of reconciling opposition to a large standing army with the military imperative to prepare for war. Jesup wrote, “As to the organization which may be considered the more proper or the more efficient for a peace establishment we should, regardless of European organization, be governed by our own situation, and the circumstances of our own Country.” He wondered how the army could spare any of the quartermasters since there were barely enough to accomplish their present duties.<sup>68</sup>

Congress did not heed Jesup’s advice. Indeed, historian Roger J. Spiller suggests that some people must have suspected that the officers were opposing cuts in appropriations simply because it served their own parochial interests.<sup>69</sup> Congress passed the “Act to reduce and fix the military peace establishment of the United States” on March 2, 1821. It shrank the entire Corps of Quartermasters by two-thirds by eliminating the 18 battalion and regimental quartermasters, and reducing the assistant and deputy quartermasters by one-third, from eighteen to twelve. The act also subjected quartermasters and commissaries to duties in both departments.<sup>70</sup> The reduction of the



staff compelled the War Department to impose additional responsibilities on the Quartermaster Department, which included aspects of clothing supply beyond its distribution, which had always been the quartermaster's responsibility. Jesup reckoned that the addition of clothing supply duties alone increased the quartermaster workloads by one-third.<sup>71</sup>

Over the next two years, Congress reduced Quartermaster Department appropriations by one-third in proportion to the reduction in the total troop strength of the army. Specifically, appropriations declined from \$461,011.56 in 1820, to \$359,240.23 in 1821, and \$306,817.13 in 1822. Jesup had long argued and would continue to argue that such cuts did not consider that the advance of western settlement had necessitated a growth in the number of far-flung posts on the frontier. The increasing distance between the posts, in turn, increased the costs for shipping supplies, and every movement of troops to the western outposts increased the labors of the department. In his report of January 14, 1820, Jesup compared the appropriations for the years 1811 and 1820 with the size of the military establishment and the number of posts. He noted that the near doubling of the appropriations, from \$270,000 to \$526,500, resulted from a combination of a doubling of posts, from forty to eighty-five and the increase in the number of troops from 5,567 to 9,000. Jesup's report of October 1818 on the subject presented the issue more starkly by including the years 1801, 1811, and 1818. The strength of the army was about the same for the years 1801 and 1811 but the appropriation had increased by roughly 50 percent. When comparing the years 1811 and 1818, the size of the army had not kept pace with the increase in appropriation, lending further credence to his argument. Calhoun explained in his 1822 report that, despite the savings obtained from

rationalizing the supply system, the expenditures of the Quartermaster Department remained constant mostly because of the expense of transporting supplies to the western outposts. Since Congress failed to consider that fact in its appropriations, it was not surprising that the department suffered arrearages totaling \$70,000 for 1821.<sup>72</sup>

Jesup later returned to the subject of the expansible army in his memorandum to Secretary of War John Eaton. He argued that the current organization should take the form of regiments with eight companies each because, he believed, it was most compatible with the principle of extension. In time of war, the 6,000 troops in the Peace Establishment would expand to 24,000 in two months by doubling the private soldiers of the companies and adding to each regiment an additional battalion of eight companies. In six months, he believed that the original base of 6,000 men could impart a great degree of its “character and efficiency” on 100,000 men.<sup>73</sup> His modified cadre plan was less elegant than his original one, as it required both the expansion of existing units and the creation of new ones. Doubling the required number of privates to existing units was more efficient.

The Quartermaster Department in 1821 was different in organization and composition from the Quartermaster Departments of 1812–15 and 1815–17. Unlike the wartime and postwar departments, the 1821 department was a functional military bureaucracy staffed exclusively by experienced military men. For the first time, the War Department centralized logistical operations under one quartermaster general who was ultimately responsible for the recruitment, training, and performance of all deputies and assistant deputies. Subordinate quartermasters conducted logistical operations and

financial transactions according to a regular set of procedures. The quartermaster general formalized these procedures in the *General Regulations* and enforced them by means of missives that issued from his Washington office. Quartermasters were therefore now much more accountable for the handling of departmental money and property than they had been before. The rationalization of logistics and institution of systems of accountability meant that the chaos that characterized logistics during the war years was not likely to return.

The years 1818 to 1821 marked the beginning of the professionalization of the Corps of Quartermasters. Brigadier General Thomas Sidney Jesup and Major Trueman Cross began the drive to make the Quartermaster Department more efficient with much success. There were notable constraints on logistical reform, however, that impeded their efforts to make steady progress. Retrenchment imposed potentially deleterious cost-savings and burdensome responsibilities that reduced the effectiveness of the Quartermaster Corps. The officers of the line frequently undermined the quartermaster general's authority and ability to control his department's disbursements. In spite of these complications, the Quartermaster Department after 1821 would experience an unprecedented period of stability and continuity in organization and personnel. This stability would give quartermasters the time to normalize and improve logistical procedures and to develop their professional expertise as military logisticians. The postwar reforms laid the groundwork for the emergence of a professional Quartermaster Corps and an efficient logistical system in the years to come.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Act of 14 April 1818, ch. 61, 3 *Stat.* 426–427; Act of 24 April 1816, ch. 69, 3 *Stat.* 297–299.

<sup>2</sup> Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army, 1775–1939* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1989), 178.

<sup>3</sup> On the advent of the bureau system, see Steve R. Waddell, *United States Army Logistics from the American Revolution to 9/11* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010), 35–36.

<sup>4</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 178, 181–182.

<sup>5</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 212–213; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783–1846* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), 184–188; J. D. Richardson, comp., *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1902* (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1908), 2: 711–752.

<sup>6</sup> Chester L. Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979), 274; 3 *Stat.* 426–27; 3 *Stat.* 297–299.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 17 July 1818, Letters Sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 20 July 1818, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

---

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 20 July 1818, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 185; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 72–75.

<sup>10</sup> Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 185–186; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 72–75.

<sup>11</sup> Trueman Cross to William Linnard, 23 April 1819, Letters Sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 17 & 20 July 1818, both in Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 185–186; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 72–75.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Watson, “Thomas Sidney Jesup: Soldier, Bureaucrat, Gentleman Democrat,” in *The Human Tradition in Antebellum America*, ed. Michael Morrison (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000), 110.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 17 & 20 July 1818, and John Calhoun to Thomas Jesup, 3 February 1821, all in Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 17 July 1818, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Jesup, unaddressed letter, April 26, 1822, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 4 June 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

---

<sup>19</sup> John E. Wool to Thomas Jesup, 30 October 1832, Jesup Papers.

<sup>20</sup> “Expenses of the Army and Military Academy for the Years 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821 and Estimates for 1822,” *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 2: 350–357; Act of February 15, 1819 ch. 18, 3 *Stat.* 480; Act of March 3, 1821 ch. 35, 3 *Stat.* 633.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 August 1819, Jesup Papers; Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 July 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Jesup to Charles J. Nourse, 5 March 1822, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Jesup to Henry Stanton, 11 June 1821, and Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 July 1821, both in Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 23 November 1818, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 187; Kieffer *Maligned General*, 74–75.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 July 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA; Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 30 August 1819, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>26</sup> Trueman Cross to George Bender, 13 May 1819, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>27</sup> Trueman Cross to James Burnet Crane, 28 February 1820, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

---

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Jesup to Joshua B. Brant, 6 August 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>29</sup> Winfield Scott, *General Regulations for the Army; or, Military Institutes* (Philadelphia: M. Carey and Sons, 1821), 152–153.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Jesup to Charles J. Nourse, 5 March 1822, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>31</sup> Trueman Cross to George Bender, 13 May 1819, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 186; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 74.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Jesup to Captain Joshua B. Brant, 6 August 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 24 December 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA; Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 July 1821 & 4 February 1824, both in Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 July 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Jesup to Charles J. Nourse, 5 March 1822, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 July 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

---

<sup>37</sup> “Expenses of the Army and Military Academy,” *ASP: MA*, 2: 350–357.

<sup>38</sup> U.S. *House Journal*. 1820. 16<sup>th</sup> Cong. 1<sup>st</sup> sess., May 11; *Annals of Congress* 1820, 2233; Roger J. Spiller, “Calhoun’s Expansible Army: The History of a Military Idea,” in *Warfare in the USA, 1784–1861*, ed. Samuel Watson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 240–242.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, [31 March 1820], 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA. See also Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 March 1820, Jesup Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Jesup to Henry Stanton, 25 March 1819, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Jesup to Henry Stanton, 11 June 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Jesup to Thomas Hunt, 5 September 1821, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

<sup>44</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 March 1820, Jesup Papers.

<sup>45</sup> Trueman Cross to John Calhoun, 1 December 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.



---

<sup>46</sup> Trueman Cross to Thomas Jesup, 27 April 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 25 July 1819, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 202.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Jesup to George Bender, 21 March 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 July 1821, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>50</sup> Trueman Cross to Thomas Jesup, 16 November [1818?], Jesup Papers.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Trueman Cross to John Calhoun, 1 December 1820, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>53</sup> Alexander Macomb to Thomas Jesup, 30 January 1820, Jesup Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Jesup, undated note, "Miscellaneous Unarranged Notes," Box 24, Jesup Papers.

<sup>55</sup> Scott, *General Regulations*, 143; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 208. See also John Melish, *The Traveller's Dictionary through the United States: Consisting of a Geographical Description of the United States . . . and a Description of Roads* (Philadelphia: For the Author, 1819).

---

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Jesup to William Linnard, 26 May 1821; Thomas Jesup to J. M. Washington, 21 July 1821; and Thomas Jesup to R. M. Harrison, 5 September 1821, all in Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA; Scott, *General Regulations*, 137.

<sup>57</sup> Trueman Cross to Thomas Jesup, 27 April 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 4 February 1824, Jesup Papers; Scott, *General Regulations*, 145.

<sup>60</sup> ASP: MA, 2: 31–34, 68–69; U.S. *House Journal*. 1820. 16<sup>th</sup> Cong. 1<sup>st</sup> sess., May 11; *Annals of Congress* 1820, 2233.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, [31 March 1820], Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA. See also Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 31 March 1820, Jesup Papers.

<sup>62</sup> Trueman Cross to John Calhoun, 1 December 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

---

<sup>66</sup> Trueman Cross to John Calhoun, 1 December 1820, Letters Sent, Letterbook, RG 92, NARA.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Roger Spiller, "Calhoun's Expansible Army," 241–242.

<sup>70</sup> Act of March 2, 1821 ch, 13, 3 *Stat.* 615–616.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 4 February 1824, Jesup Papers.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Calhoun, 14 January 1820, Letters Sent, M745, RG 92, NARA; Kieffer, *Maligned General*, 75; *ASP: MA*, 1: 155; *ASP: MA*, 2: 350–357; *Annals of Congress* 1822, 1202.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas Jesup to John Eaton, undated draft memorandum, Jesup Papers.

## CONCLUSION

The War of 1812 exposed the United States' lack of preparedness for war with Great Britain. American soldiers in every theater of operations lacked adequate food, clothing, and shelter throughout the war. The deficiencies in the supply and logistical system were largely responsible for the American failure to achieve its principal war aim, the annexation of Canada. The upshot of wartime failure, however, was that it acted as a catalyst for the reform of the United States Army after the war. The wartime correspondence and reports of army officers, as well as their later reflections on the war, provided the blueprint for the reforms of the postwar period.

During the War of 1812, the officers of the Quartermaster Department responded resourcefully to logistical problems. Those with foresight and perspicacity went further and proposed solutions that would have made army logistics more reliable and cost-efficient. These proposals would only come to fruition, however, during the postwar period. Two important reforms, which emanated from the correspondence between quartermasters and the War Department, became the key to solving the most pressing logistical problems of the war. The U.S. Army only implemented one of these reforms, however, before the close of hostilities. The first was the publication of Secretary of War John Armstrong's *Rules and Regulations of the United States Army*, which constituted the first step toward rationalizing logistical procedures. In 1813, it brought more than a modicum of system to an army devoid of one. Armstrong's regulations for the supply departments were a precursor to the more comprehensive regulations that Quartermaster General Thomas Sidney Jesup wrote for Major General Winfield Scott's *Military Institutes*. The second reform measure, contained in Secretary of War James Monroe's

report to the House Committee on Military Affairs, proposed replacing the much-hated contract system with the commissariat. The critiques of Generals Winfield Scott and Edmund P. Gaines, and Colonel John R. Fenwick, provided the basis for the army's switchover to the commissariat system in 1819. Most of the innovations and reform proposals of quartermasters remained untried during the war. Moreover, those that did see the light of day had only a modest impact on the overall military situation. Nevertheless, the responses of the consummate military professionals within the officer corps and the civilians who shared their outlook laid the foundation for the logistical reforms of the postwar period.

Military reform touched every branch of the army, and was not limited solely to the staff departments. General Scott, for example, reformed infantry tactics, camp discipline, and bookkeeping practices, which paralleled General Jesup's efforts to formulate a system of accountability and new logistical procedures. Postwar military reformers such as Scott and Jesup were disproportionately the young officers of the Left Division. These men benefitted from a relatively high retention rate because of their aggressive and successful battlefield leadership at Chippawa and Lundy's Lane. They had suffered through the maladministration of the War Department and the pedestrian leadership of the superannuated veterans of the Revolutionary War in the war's first two years and were determined not to let these painful lessons go unlearned. Therefore, they began to change army practices while the war was ongoing, and carried this impulse forward into the postwar period in order to create a more effective and professionalized army.<sup>1</sup> As historian Donald E. Graves, has argued, "With some truth it can be said that

the birth of the modern U.S. Army occurred not at Valley Forge in 1777–1778 but along the Niagara in 1814.”<sup>2</sup>

What made the birth of an American military profession possible, according to historian Richard V. Barbuto, were the military reformers and a civilian leader who supported their cause. His corollary to Graves’s thesis is as follows: “The fortuitous blending of leaders of the Niagara campaign with the obvious talents of Secretary of War John C. Calhoun led to a period of reform that professionalized the army and prepared it for the war with Mexico.”<sup>3</sup> The combination of military and civilian support for reform also had a profound impact on the way the United States Army conducted logistics. Both groups sought to avoid a repetition of the logistical failures of the war by establishing a permanent staff organization, rationalizing supply and logistical procedures, creating and enforcing systems of accountability, and making the case for internal improvements. The result of their efforts was that, for the first time in U.S. history, the U.S. Army would fight the next war with the same supply and logistical system that it employed in peace. After undergoing five changes in organization (in 1802, 1812, 1813, 1815, and 1818) within the span of sixteen years, the system that the Army would employ against Mexico was essentially the one established circa 1818–1821.

This continuity in organization and stability in leadership and personnel enabled the new logistical procedures, systems of accountability, and a commitment to lifelong service among quartermasters to take root. Quartermasters now had the time, hitherto absent in the wartime Quartermaster Corps, to test these procedures in peace, to regularize their work, and to develop their expertise. The War of 1812 was likewise a turning point for the professionalization of the officer corps as a whole. Historian

William B. Skelton has argued that the strides in American military professionalism were achievable in the postwar period only because career trajectories had stabilized. Before the 1821 reduction of the army, the successive series of expansions and contractions of the regular army disrupted military careers and offered officers little hope of fostering a sense of corporate identity or promoting military knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

The logistical system of the postwar period presents a stark contrast with the system of military agents during the old Peace Establishment under Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Postwar logistics was more rational, militarized, and specialized than what preceded it. To be sure, the wartime Quartermaster Department was an advance over the system of military agents but the restoration of military authority over quartermaster functions in 1812, though important, was insufficient. During the period 1812–1818, for example, the War Department still contracted out the task of feeding the troops to civilian suppliers, who operated without military accountability. By 1826, however, the Army logistical system had turned a corner. Congress renewed the commissariat system after a five-year trial run and increased the size of the Quartermaster Corps on General Jesup's recommendation. Most quartermasters now had years of experience operating under the new regulations. Moreover, Jesup exercised strong administrative leadership in the Quartermaster Department. He ensured that the regulations on paper would work in practice by holding his quartermasters to high standards of performance. He restored strict accountability over departmental finances and government property. The postwar reforms proved so effective that many of them would remain in place until the twentieth century.

The composition of the Quartermaster Corps in the postwar period differed significantly from the logisticians of the prewar and war years. Since about 1809, officers and politicians expressed concern about the lack of military expertise among the civilian “military agents” and the wartime quartermasters appointed directly from civil life. Although the latter did hold military rank, they were still essentially businessmen-in-uniform.

The career officers of the War of 1812 began to bring a professional outlook to the U.S. Army after the war. General Jesup was one of those officers who reflected on the state of military knowledge prior to the war and found it wanting. Regarding the staffing of the Quartermaster Department, he disagreed with the notion—common even among military men—that quartermasters needed accounting skills more than military expertise. Jesup went so far as to write into the regulations the minimum standards of military knowledge required of a quartermaster. The pattern of his selections for appointment to the Quartermaster Department revealed that his conception of logistical expertise was different from that of his predecessors. From 1818 to 1821, quartermasters were likely to have had combat experience in the War of 1812 or a Military Academy education. The rest of the officer corps valued those officers with wartime service and a professional military education, as well. Historian Samuel J. Watson has argued that the U.S. Army became more professional in the postwar years because officers controlled the recruitment process in 1815 and 1821, more so than during the prewar reductions and expansions. They produced efficiency reports that emphasized the background, performance, and character of fellow officers as the chief criteria for retention in the



postwar military establishment. By dictating the retention criteria, the officer corps was able to serve as gatekeepers for the profession.<sup>5</sup>

Direct appointments all but ceased in the period after 1821 since most civilians did not have the training, education, or motivation to become career officers. For that reason, West Point graduates gained appointment to the Quartermaster Department at increasingly higher rates, ensuring a steady supply of highly trained and numerate military professionals in the Quartermaster Corps. The United States Military Academy was fast becoming the U.S. Army's principal avenue into the military profession. The trend continued until the American Civil War when fully 75.8 percent of officers were graduates of the Academy. In the intervening years, the growing influence of West Pointers in the army officer corps was indicative of a growing sense of corporateness.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, according to Samuel J. Watson, the Military Academy's focus on merit and subordination produced "a distinctive professional ethos of disinterested public service" among army officers, which caused them "to view their posts as impersonal offices and their perquisites as privileges."<sup>7</sup> General Jesup encouraged such a view among his own subordinates from the start of his tenure. His selection criteria, written regulations, and enforcement of those regulations ushered in an era of proto-professionalism in U.S. Army logistics. By the early 1820s, the Quartermaster Corps had indeed become the vanguard of a professional officer corps.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard V. Barbuto, *Niagara 1814: America Invades Canada* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 324-325.

<sup>2</sup> Donald E. Graves, *Where Right and Glory Lead: The Battle of Lundy's Lane, 1814* (Toronto: Robin Brass Studios, 1997), ix.

<sup>3</sup> Barbuto, *Niagara 1814*, 319.

<sup>4</sup> William Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 1–67.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel J. Watson, *Jackson's Sword: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1810–1821* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012), 244.

<sup>6</sup> Skelton, *Profession of Arms*, 138–139, 179–180, 196.

<sup>7</sup> Watson, *Jackson's Sword*, 256.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

#### *Unpublished Government Documents*

National Archives, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, RG 92  
Letters Sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General, Series 9, 1818–1870, Vols. 1–4.  
Letters Sent by the Office of the Quartermaster General, Main Series, 1818–1870, M745.

National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, RG 107  
Confidential and Unofficial Letters Sent by the Secretary of War, 1814–1841, M7.  
Letters Sent to the President by the Secretary of War, 1800–1863, M127.  
Reports to Congress from the Secretary of War, 1803–1870, M220.  
Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, 1800–1889, M6.  
Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, 1801–1870, M221.  
Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Unregistered Series, 1789–1861, M222.

#### *Manuscript Collections*

Buffalo History Museum, Buffalo, NY  
Peter B. Porter Papers.

Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, MI  
James Taylor Papers.

William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Jacob Jennings Brown Papers.  
Thomas S. Jesup Collection.  
Augustus Porter Papers.  
Winfield Scott Collection.  
Christopher Van Deventer Papers.  
War of 1812 Collection.

Thomas & Katherine Detre Library and Archives, John Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, PA  
Denny-O'Hara Family Papers.

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.  
Jacob Jennings Brown Papers.

Thomas S. Jesup Papers.  
Zachary Taylor Papers.

Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH  
John H. Piatt and Company Records.

Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT  
Joseph Wheaton Papers.

*Published Documents*

Bassett, John S., ed. *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*. Vol. 2, *May 1, 1814 to December 31, 1819*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution, 1926–1935.

Brannan, John, ed. *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, during the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812, 13, 14, & 15*. Washington City: Pr. by Way & Gideon, for the editor, 1823.

Carter, Clarence Edwin, ed. *The Territorial Papers of the United States*. Vol. 11, *The Territory of Michigan, 1820–29 (continued)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949.

Cooling, Benjamin F., ed. *The New American State Papers: Military Affairs*. Vol. 1, *Policy and Strategy of National Defense*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1979.

———. *The New American State Papers: Military Affairs*. Vol. 5, *Combat Operations*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1979.

———. *The New American State Papers: Military Affairs*. Vol. 15, *National Development and the Military*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1979.

Cruikshank, Ernest A., ed. *The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier*. 4 vols. Welland, Ont.: Printed at the Tribune, 1896–1908.

Knopf, Richard C., ed. *Document Transcriptions of the War of 1812 in the Northwest*. Vol. 1, *William Henry Harrison and the War of 1812*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Historical Society, 1957.

———. *Document Transcriptions of the War of 1812 in the Northwest*. Vol. 6, *Letters to the Secretary of War, 1812*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Historical Society, 1959.

New York (State). *Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins[,] Governor of New York[,]* 1807– 1817. Vol. 3, *Military*. Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1902.

- Oberg, Barbara B., ed. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Vol. 36, *1 December 1801 to 3 March 1802*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- McVean, Charles. "In the Matter of Proving the Last Will and Testament of Benjamin Romaine, Deceased." In *The New-York Legal Observer, Containing Reports of Cases Decided in the Courts of Equity and Common Law, and Important Decisions in the English Courts*, edited by Samuel Owen, vol. 4, 411–423. New York: Samuel Owen, 1846.
- Richardson, James D., ed. *A Compilation of Messages and Reports of the Presidents*. Vol. 1. New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897.
- U. S. Army. War Department. *General Regulations for the Army; or, Military Institutes*. Philadelphia: M. Carey and Sons, 1821.
- U.S. Congress. *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States. Class I. Foreign Relations*. Edited by Walter Lowrie and Walter S. Franklin. Vol. 4. Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834.
- . *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States. Class V. Military Affairs*. Edited by Walter Lowrie, Matthew St. Clair Clarke, Walter S. Franklin, Asbury Dickins, and John W. Forney. Vols. 1–3. Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832–1860.
- . *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States. Class IX. Claims*. Edited by Walter Lowrie and Walter S. Franklin. Vol. 2. Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834.
- . *The Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings, and Laws, of the First Session of the Thirty-Third Congress*. Vol. 28—Part I. Washington: John C. Rives, 1854.
- . *Congressional Record: Containing the Proceedings and Debates of the Fifty-Third Congress, Second Session*. Vol. 26. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1894.
- . *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States; With an Appendix, Containing Important State Papers and Public Documents, and All the Laws of a Public Nature; With a Copious Index*. Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1853–1855.
- . *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from the Organization of the Government in 1780, to March 3, 1845*. Edited by Richard Peters. Vols. 1–4. Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1845–1846.

U.S. Congress. House. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, at the First Session of the Sixteenth Congress, in the Forty-Fourth Year of the Independence of the United States*. Washington: Pr. by Gales & Seaton, 1819.

———. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, at the Third Session of the Twenty-Seventh Congress, Begun and Held at the City of Washington, at the Territory of Columbia, December 5, 1842, and in the Sixty-Seventh Year of the Independence of the United States*. Washington: Pr. by Gales & Seaton, 1843.

———. *Reports of the Committees of the House of Representatives, Made During the Second Session of the Thirty-Sixth Congress, 1860–1861*. Vol. 1. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1861.

U.S. Congress. Senate. *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America*. Vols. 1 & 2. Washington: Duff Green, 1828.

Washington, H. A., ed. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: Being His Autobiography, Correspondence, Reports, Messages, Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private*. Vol. 4. New York: John C. Riker; Washington, DC: Taylor and Maury; Philadelphia: George W. Gorton, 1854.

#### *Dissertations*

Jones, Jonathan Milnor. “The Making of a Vice President: The National Political Career of Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky.” Ph.D. diss., University of Memphis, 1998.

Morales, Lisa R. “The Financial History of the War of 1812.” Ph.D. diss., University of North Texas, 2009.

O’Connell, Charles F. “The U.S. Army and the Origins of Modern Management, 1818–1860.” Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1982.

Schweninger, Joseph M. “‘A Lingering War Must Be Prevented:’ The Defense of the Northern Frontier, 1812–1871.” Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1998.

Wade, Arthur P. “Artillerists and Engineers: The Beginnings of American Seacoast Fortifications, 1794–1815.” Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1976.

#### *Newspapers*

*City Gazette and Daily Advertiser* (Charleston, SC), 9 June 1808

*City of Washington Gazette* (Washington, DC), 10–11 March 1820

*The Daily Advertiser* (New York, NY), 15 July 1789

*Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), 16 February 1815

*Niles' Weekly Register* (Baltimore, MD), 7 September 1811–23 February 1822

*The Reporter* (Lexington, KY), 13–17 March 1815

*The Salem Mercury* (Salem, MA), 26 May 1789

*Vermont Intelligencer* (Bellows Falls, VT), 27 March 1820

#### Secondary Sources

Adams, Henry. *History of the United States of America during the First Administration of James Madison*. Vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901.

Ambrose, Stephen E. *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Angevine, Robert G. *The Railroad and the State: War, Politics, and Technology in Nineteenth-Century America*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.

Aronson, Sidney H. *Status and Kinship in the Higher Civil Service: Standards of Selection in the Administrations of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Arthur, Brian. *How Britain Won the War of 1812: The Royal Navy's Blockades of the United States, 1812–1815*. Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2011.

Babcock, Louis L. *The War of 1812 on the Niagara Frontier*. Buffalo, NY: Buffalo Historical Society, 1927.

Balogh, Brian. *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth-Century America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Barbuto, Richard V. *Niagara, 1814: America Invades Canada*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000.

Bauer, K. Jack. *Zachary Taylor: Soldier, Planter, Statesman of the Old Southwest*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985.

Beaver, Daniel R. *Modernizing the American War Department: Change and Continuity in a Turbulent Era, 1885–1920*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006.

Bell, William Gardner. *Secretaries of War and Secretaries of the Army: Portraits & Biographical Sketches*. Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2005.

- Beltman, Britan W. "Territorial Commands of the Army: The System Refined but Not Perfected, 1815–1821." *Journal of the Early Republic* 11 (Summer 1991): 185–218.
- Bowler, Arthur. *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in North America, 1775–1783*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- Bradbury, Anna. *History of the City of Hudson, New York, with Biographical Sketches of Henry Hudson and Robert Fulton*. Hudson, NY: Record Printing and Publishing, 1908.
- Bradford, John Ewing, ed. *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio*. Vol. 4, 1909, No. 4, October–December. Cincinnati: Press of Jennings and Graham, 1909.
- Brigham, Willard Irving Tyler. *The Tyler Genealogy: The Descendants of Job Tyler, of Andover, Massachusetts, 1619–1700*. Vol. 1. N.p.: Cornelius B. Tyler and Rollin U. Tyler, 1912.
- Broomall, Carolus M., ed. *Proceedings of the Delaware County Institute of Science*. Vol. 2. Media, PA, 1907.
- Burley, Sylvester W. *American Enterprise: Burley's United States Centennial Gazeteer and Guide*. Philadelphia: S. W. Burley, 1876.
- Caitlin, George B. "Michigan's Early Military Roads." *Michigan History Magazine* 13 (Spring 1929): 196–207.
- Callan, John F. *The Military Laws of the United States, Relating to the Army, Volunteers, Militia, and to Bounty Lands and Pensions, from the Foundation of the Government to the Year 1863*. Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1863.
- Carp, E. Wayne. *To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775–1783*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Cheatham, Mark R. *Andrew Jackson: Southerner*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013.
- Clary, David A., and Joseph W. A. Whitehorne. *The Inspectors General of the United States Army, 1777–1803*. Washington, DC: Office of the Inspector General and Center of Military History, United States Army, 1987.
- Crackel, Theodore J. *Mr. Jefferson's Army: Political and Social Reform of the Military Establishment, 1801–1809*. New York: New York University Press, 1987.



- Cullum, George W., comp. *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Vol. 1. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891.
- . *Campaigns of the War of 1812–1815, Against Great Britain; Sketch and Criticised; With Brief Biographies of the American Engineers*. New York: James Miller, 1879.
- Cohen, Eliot, and John Gooch. *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*. New York: Free Press, 1991.
- Covo, Manuel. “Baltimore and the French Atlantic: Empires, Commerce, and Identity in a Revolutionary Age, 1783–1789.” In *The Caribbean and the Atlantic World Economy: Circuits of Trade, Money and Knowledge, 1650–1914*, edited by A. B. Leonard and David Pretel. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Doss, Harriet E. *Cotton City: Urban Development in Antebellum Mobile*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2001.
- Downs, Joseph P., and Fenwick H. Hedley, eds. *History of Chautauqua County, New York, and its People*. Vol. 1. New York: American Historical Society, 1921.
- Dupuy, T. N. *Understanding Defeat: How to Recover from Loss in Battle to Gain Victory in War* (New York: Paragon House, 1990).
- Endling, Max M. *A Hercules in the Cradle: War, Money, and the American State, 1783–1867*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Eustis, Henry Lawrence. *Genealogy of the Eustis Family*. Boston: David Clapp and Son, 1888.
- Farley, James J. *Making Arms in the Machine Age: Philadelphia’s Frankford Arsenal, 1816–1870*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994.
- Fishlow, Albert. “Internal Transportation in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.” In *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, edited by Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman. Vol. 2, *The Long Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Fort, Kate Haynes. *Memoirs of the Fort and Fannin Families*. Chattanooga, TN: MacGowan and Cooke, 1903.
- Fredriksen, John C., ed. *The War of 1812 War Department Correspondence, 1812–1815*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2016.

- Gardner, Charles K., comp. *A Dictionary of the Officers of the Army of the United States*. New York: G. P. Putnam, 1860.
- Giroux, Gary. *Business Scandals, Corruption, and Reform: An Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, n.d.
- Gordon, William A., comp. *A Compilation of Registers of the Army of the United States, from 1815 to 1837*. Washington: James C. Dunn, 1837.
- Greenhous, Brereton. "A Note on Western Logistics in the War of 1812." *Military Affairs* 34 (April 1970): 41–43.
- Griswold, B. J. *The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne[,] Indiana: A Review of Two Centuries of Occupation of the Region about the Head of the Maumee River*. Chicago: Robert O. Law Company, 1917.
- Ha, Songho. *The Rise and Fall of the American System: Nationalism and the Development of the American Economy, 1790–1837*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009.
- Hamersly, Thomas H. S., comp. *Complete Regular Army and Navy Register of the United States of the United States of America, from 1776 to 1887*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: T. H. S. Hamersly, 1888.
- Hammond, John Craig. *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007.
- Hannings, Bud. *The War of 1812: A Complete Chronology with Biographies of 63 General Officers*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2012.
- Harlan, Louis R. "Public Career of William Berkeley Lewis [Part 1]." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 7 (March 1948): 3–37.
- Heidler, David S., and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds. *Encyclopedia of the War of 1812*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1997.
- Heitman, Francis B., comp. *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from Its Organization, September 29, 1789 to March 2, 1903*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903.
- . *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution, April, 1775, to December, 1783*. Washington, DC: W. H. Lowdermilk and Company, 1893.
- Hess, Earl J. *Civil War Logistics: A Study of Military Transportation*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017.

- Hickey, Donald R. *Don't Give Up the Ship!: Myths of the War of 1812*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- . *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.
- . *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*. Bicentennial Edition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012.
- History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, with illustrations and biographical sketches*. Vol. 2. Cleveland: H. Z. Williams & Bro., 1882.
- Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *Soldier and the State: The Theory and Practice of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957.
- Huston, James A. *Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775–1753*. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1966.
- Ingersoll, Lurton Dunham. *A History of the War Department of the United States*. Washington, DC: Francis B. Mohun, 1880.
- Isenberg, Nancy. *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr*. [New York]: Viking, 2007.
- Jackson, Donald, ed. *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1783–1854*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978.
- Jacobs, James Ripley. *The Beginnings of the U.S. Army, 1775–1812*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.
- . *Tarnished Warrior: Major-General James Wilkinson*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1938.
- Johnson, Maizie H. *Preliminary Inventory of the Textual Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General (Record Group 92). Parts I & II*. Washington, DC: National Archives, 1967.
- Kieffer, Chester L. *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup*. San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1979.
- Kimball, Jeffrey. “The Fog and Friction of Frontier War: The Role of Logistics in American Offensive Failure during the War of 1812.” *Old Northwest* 5 (1979): 323–343.

- Kohn, Richard. *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783–1802*. New York: Free Press, 1975.
- Kreidberg, Marvin A., and Merton G. Henry. *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775–1945*. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1955.
- Larson, John L. *Internal Improvement: National Public Works and the Promise of Popular Government in the Early United States*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- . *The Market Revolution: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Public Good*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Lawson, Kenneth E. *For Christ and Country: A Biography of Brigadier General Gustavus Loomis*. Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2011.
- Loomis, Elisha S. *Descendants of Joseph Loomis in America and His Antecedents in the Old World*. N.p.: Elisha Scott Loomis, 1909.
- Looney, J. Jefferson, and Ruth L. Woodward. *Princetonians, 1791–1794: A Biographical Dictionary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, [1991].
- Long, Oscar F. “The Quartermaster’s Department.” In *The Army of the United States: Historical Sketches of Staff and Line With Portraits of Generals In Chief*, edited by Theo. F. Rodenbough and William L. Haskin. New York: Maynard, Merrill, and Company, 1896.
- Love, William A. “General Jackson’s Military Road.” *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society* 11 (1910): 403–417.
- Lynn, John A., ed. *Feeding Mars: Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993.
- McAfee, Robert B. *History of the Late War in the Western Country, Comprising a Full Account of all the Transactions in That Quarter, from the Commencement of Hostilities at Tippecanoe, to the Termination of the Contest at New Orleans on the Return of Peace*. Lexington, KY: Worsley and Smith, 1816.
- McKee, Marguerite M. “Service of Supply in the War of 1812 [Part II].” *Quartermaster Review* 6 (March–April 1927): 45–55.
- McHenry, Robert, ed. *Webster’s American Military Biographies*. New York: Dover Publications, 1978.

- Macomb, Alexander. *A Treatise on Martial-Law and Courts-Martial; as Practiced in the United States of America*. Charleston, SC: J. Hoff, 1809.
- Mahon, John K. *The War of 1812*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1972.
- Malcomson, Robert. *Historical Dictionary of the War of 1812*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006.
- Melish, John. *The Traveller's Dictionary through the United States: Consisting of a Geographical Description of the United States . . . and a Description of Roads*. Philadelphia: For the Author, 1819.
- Morris, John D. *Sword of the Border: Major General Jacob Jennings Brown, 1775–1828*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2000.
- Modney, Martha L., ed. *Lineage Book[,] Daughters of the American Revolution[,]* *Volume L[,] 49001–50000[,]* 1904. Washington, DC: Judd and Detweiler, 1919.
- Myers, Gustavus. *The History of Tammany Hall*. New York: B. Franklin, [1968].
- Nelson, H. L. “Military Roads for War and Peace — 1791–1836.” *Military Affairs* 33 (Spring 1955): 1–14.
- Nelson, Paul David. “Pike, Zebulon Montgomery.” In *American National Biography Online* (Oxford University Press, 2000). <http://www.anb.org> (accessed February 22, 2018).
- Nichols, R. L. “Army Contributions to River Transportation, 1818–1825.” *Military Affairs* 33 (April 1969): 242–248.
- Nichols, Roger L., and Patrick L. Halley. *Stephen Long and American Frontier Exploration*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1980.
- Perrow, Charles. *Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technologies*. New York: Basic Books, 1984.
- Peskin, Allan. *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2003.
- Powell, C. Frank. *Life of Major-General Zachary Taylor*. New York: D. Appleton and Company; Philadelphia: Geo. S. Appleton, 1846.
- Preston, Daniel. *A Comprehensive Catalogue of the Papers and Correspondence of James Monroe*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001.

- Prucha, Francis Paul. *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815–1860*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1953.
- . *A Guide to the Military Posts of the United States, 1789–1895*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964.
- . *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783–1846*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969.
- Quimby, Robert S. *The U.S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study*. 2 vols. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997.
- Randal, Emilius O., Moulton Houk, and William L. Curry, eds. *Year-Book of the Ohio Society of the Sons of the American Revolution*[,] 1904. Columbus, OH: For the Society, 1904.
- Risch, Erna. *Quartermaster Support of the Army: History of the Corps, 1775–1939*. Washington, DC: Quartermaster Historian's Office, Office of the Quartermaster General, Department of the Army, 1962.
- Roberts, Robert B. *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts: The Military, Pioneer, and Trading Posts of the United States*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988.
- Robinson, Richard, comp. *United States Business History, 1602–1988: A Chronology*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.
- Royce, Harrison Augustus. *A Sketch of the Organization of the Quartermasters' Department, from 1774 to 1868*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1869.
- Rutenberg, David C., and Jane S. Allen, eds. *The Logistics of Waging War: American Logistics 1774–1985, Emphasizing the Development of Airpower*. Gunter Air Force Station, AL: Air Force Logistics Management Center, [1985].
- Sawyer, Robert W. "Some Errors in Howard's Genealogy of the Cutts Family." In *The New Hampshire Genealogical Record: An Illustrated Magazine Devoted to Genealogy, History, and Biography* 5 (January–October 1908): 95–96.
- Scott, Winfield. *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott, LL.D.* New York: Sheldon and Company, 1864.
- Scoville, Joseph Alfred. *The Old Merchants of New York City*. [New York]: Thomas R. Knox and Company, 1885.

- Sellers, Charles. *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Shrader, Charles R. *U.S. Military Logistics, 1607–1991: A Research Guide*. New York: Greenwood, 1992.
- , ed. *United States Army Logistics, 1775–1992: An Anthology*. Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1997.
- . “Logistics.” In *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, edited by John Whiteclay Chambers, Jr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Shulman, Holly Cowan. “Dolley Payne Todd Madison.” In *America’s First Ladies: Their Lives and Their Legacy*, edited by Lewis L. Gould. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Silver, James W. *Edmund Pendleton Gaines: Frontier General*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991.
- Skeen, Carl Edward. *1816: America Rising*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003.
- . *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999.
- . *John Armstrong, Jr., 1758–1843: A Biography*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981.
- Skelton, William B. *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784–1861*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992.
- . “High Army Leadership in the Era of the War of 1812: The Making and Remaking of the Officer Corps.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 51 (April 1994): 253–274.
- . “Officers and Politicians: The Origins of Army Politics in the United States Before the Civil War.” *Armed Forces and Society* 6 (Fall 1979): 22–48.
- Smith, Elbert. *Magnificent Missourian: The Life of Thomas Hart Benton*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958.
- Smith, H. P., comp. *Columbia County at the End of the Century: A Historical Record of its Formation and Settlement, Its Resources, Its Institutions, Its Industries, and Its Peoples*. Hudson, NY: Record Printing and Publishing, 1900.

- Smith, Joseph Edwards Adams. *The History of Pittsfield (Berkshire County), Massachusetts, from the Year 1800 to the Year 1876*. Vol. 2. Springfield, MA: C. W. Bryan and Company, 1876.
- Society of the War of 1812. *The Constitution and Register of Membership of the General Society of the War of 1812, June 1, 1908*. Philadelphia, 1908.
- Sons of the American Revolution. *Official Bulletin of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution* 2 (December 1907).
- Southerland, Harry DeLeon, Jr., & Jerry Elijah Brown. *The Federal Road through Georgia, the Creek Nation, and Alabama, 1806–1836*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989.
- Spiller, Roger J. “Calhoun’s Expansible Army: The History of a Military Idea.” In *Warfare in the USA, 1784–1861*, edited by Samuel Watson. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005.
- Spiller, Roger J., ed. *Dictionary of American Military Biography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984.
- Springer, John. “Sylvanus Johnson.” In *Iowa Historical Record* 18 (April 1902): 449–456.
- Stagg, J. C. A. *Mr. Madison’s War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783–1830*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Stagg, J. C. A. “United States Army Officers in the War of 1812: A Statistical and Behavioral Portrait.” *Journal of Military History* 76 (October 2012): 1001–1034.
- Stanley, George F. G. *The War of 1812: Land Operations*. *Canadian War Museum Historical Publication No. 18*. [Toronto, Ont.]: Macmillan of Canada, 1983.
- Stuart, Reginald C. *Civil-Military Relations during the War of 1812*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009.
- Sumner, William Graham. *The Financier and the Finances of the American Revolution*. Vol. 1. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1892.
- Taylor, Alan. *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.
- Taylor, Lenette S. *“The Supply for Tomorrow Must Not Fail”: The Civil War of Captain Simon Perkins, Jr., a Union Quartermaster*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2004.



- Thian, Raphael P., comp. *Legislative History of the General Staff of the Army of the United States (Its Organization, Duties, Pay, and Allowances), from 1775 to 1901*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1901.
- Thorpe, George C. *Pure Logistics: The Science of War Preparation. A Naval War College Press Edition in the Logistics Leadership Series*. Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1997.
- Tucker, Spencer C., and Paul G. Pierpaoli, Jr. *U.S. Leadership in Wartime: Clashes, Controversy, and Compromise*. Vol. 1. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009.
- Upton, Emory. *The Military Policy of the United States*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904.
- Van Creveld, Martin. *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Vitz, Robert C. "General James Taylor and the Beginnings of Newport, Kentucky." In *A Kentucky Sampler: Essays from the Filson Club Historical Quarterly, 1926–1976*, edited by Lowell Harrison and Nelson L. Dawson. [Lexington]: University Press of Kentucky, 1977.
- . "James Taylor, the War Department, and the War of 1812." *Old Northwest* 2 (June 1976): 107–130.
- Waddell, Steve R. *United States Army Logistics: From the American Revolution to 9/11*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010.
- Wade, Arthur P. "Roads to the Top—An Analysis of General-Officer Selection in the United States Army, 1789–1898." *Military Affairs* 40 (December 1976): 157–163.
- Watson, Samuel J. *Jackson's Sword: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1810–1821*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012.
- . *Peacekeepers and Conquerors: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1821–1846*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013.
- . "Surprisingly Professional: Trajectories in Army Officer Corps Drawdowns, 1783–1848." In *Drawdown: The American Way of Postwar*, edited by Jason W. Warren. New York: New York University Press, 2016.
- . "Thomas Sidney Jesup: Soldier, Bureaucrat, Gentleman Democrat." In *The Human Tradition in Antebellum America*, edited by Michael Morrison. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000.

Weigley, Russell Frank. *History of the United States Army*. New York: Macmillan, 1967.

Wells, Jonathan Daniel. *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800–1861*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Wettemann, Robert P. *Privilege vs. Equality: Civil-Military Relations in the Jacksonian Era, 1815–1845*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2009.

White, Leonard Dupee. *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801–1829*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1951.

Williams, Thomas. *American Brave: Story of Admiral Joshua Barney*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2014.

Wilson, Mark. *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861–1865*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.