American historians and the diplomacy of the American Revolution | An historiographical study

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AMERICAN HISTORIANS AND THE DIPLOMACY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: AN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The struggle against Great Britain by the original thirteen colonies in North America arrested the dominance of the world by the British Empire and simultaneously introduced the new United States into world politics. The Revolution produced an immediate need for competent men to negotiate with European countries in order to secure the various forms of aid and the alliances that were essential for the survival of this venture in republicanism. Hence the study of American foreign policy essentially begins with revolutionary diplomacy and an awareness of its success and failures.

The men and events involved in this initial era of American diplomacy have been the subject of numerous monographs, biographies and articles. This thesis will confine itself to a study of American writings, with the exception of Bernard Faÿ's well-accepted volume on Franklin. (Faÿ's books, which include Louis XVI of The End of the World and The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America: A Study of Moral and Intellectual Relations between France and America at the End of the 18th Century, are well received on both sides of the Atlantic for their content and scholarship.)
This thesis will concentrate on historical evaluations of the American diplomats and their political and private activities in Europe. It will point out the prevailing scholarly opinions on these subjects, and then discuss the authors who present new approaches.

The representatives of the United States were plunged into the intricacies of European politics. Certain problems almost invariably confronted these first diplomats from the United States. Their instructions from Congress usually proved unrealistic during the actual negotiations with European foreign ministers. The men dispatched from the United States discovered the difficulty in following the congressional instructions while trying to ingratiate themselves and their country with a particular European nation. Then, among the original Paris commission, there were serious disagreements and, even with John Adams as a replacement for Silas Deane, the quarrels continued. The contradictions between official and personal goals often contributed towards the confusion and disagreements among the Americans and Europeans. Defining the goals of the United States if independence were achieved often presented problems, especially as the discussions of the terms of a peace treaty progressed.

Basically, historians who wrote in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are quite enamored of the efforts of the American diplomats to secure recognition of American independence, while more recent historians recognize the
conflicts of allegiances and priorities experienced by some of the American envoys. Great Britain was determined to retain control of the colonies, both to enhance her economic structure and to sustain her strong position on the Continent. In addition, France and Spain were forced to make adjustments in receiving representatives from a rebellious United States, because the American envoys insisted that European governments recognize the independence of the United States before negotiations for alliances or treaties could begin. This required great flexibility on the part of the European statesmen, since at least several realized that an independent United States could possibly present a geographical and political threat to any kind of power balance Europe could try to maintain. The American commissioners had to adjust to the instinct of self-preservation that pervaded the courts of Europe and Great Britain.

Four nineteenth-century historians have written or edited books about Arthur Lee, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams which emphasize their invaluable roles in American diplomacy. The two-volume work on Franklin by Edward Hale and Edward Hale, Jr., is comprised of Franklin's writings, and the editorial comments praise Franklin's contributions to the revolutionary effort. As controversial as Arthur Lee's diplomatic and political career was, his grand-nephew, Richard Henry Lee, endeavors to characterize him as the epitome of wisdom in his decisions and a martyr for having withstood personal attacks from Deane and Franklin.
For authors who study Arthur Lee, this biography is the only primary text available. Because of the bias in these two volumes, subsequent authors must attempt to substantiate or discredit the opinions of this first writer. The account of John Adams's life by John T. Morse is another nineteenth-century biographical study which praises the abilities of Adams and rarely alludes to any of the problems which resulted from his recalcitrance and pride.

In the nineteenth century, Francis Wharton compiled six volumes of the diplomatic correspondence of the American Revolution which provide material for a study of the men of the Revolution and their diplomacy, their attitudes and activities. These volumes do not contain editorial remarks attempting to shape the reader's viewpoint, however.

The transition made by twentieth-century historians in writing about the diplomacy of the American Revolution points towards more objective analyses of the men and the situations they encountered. Although J. C. Hildt is writing about a time period that extends beyond the Revolution, he does attempt to present a realistic view of the problems Francis Dana encountered in Russia. In contrast, George Clark seems to belong in the nineteenth-century tradition as he praises all the efforts that Silas Deane made towards securing the independence of the United States and condemns those men who criticized Deane's activities in Europe. His flagrant disregard for the canons of historical research and writing is exemplified by the absence of docu-
mentation and the obvious bias in favor of Deane. E. S. Corwin's book on the alliance with France critically evaluates American policy in France, as he avoids a laudatory interpretation of the negotiations surrounding the Franco-American alliance. W. P. Cresson and Frank Monaghan, two biographers of early American political leaders, have written useful accounts of the efforts of Francis Dana and John Jay in American diplomacy. Cresson carefully examines Dana's career in Russia and attributes the failure of his mission to the difficulty of fulfilling the congressional instructions and coping with the unexpected turmoil in Catherine's court. Monaghan emphasizes the adverse circumstances that John Jay faced in Spain and then extols his achievements on the peace commission in Paris. Moreover, both these accounts are useful not only for the information they provide about the lives and activities of these men in the European courts but also for the material concerning the machinations of European diplomacy. Thomas Perkins Abernethy has written two articles discussing the quarrels that developed among the original representatives to Paris, Franklin, Lee and Deane. In contrast to the eulogistic approach of the nineteenth-century authors and the rather one-sided treatments by Cresson and Monaghan, Abernethy demonstrates that there were legitimate reasons for Lee to doubt the propriety of the activities of Deane and Franklin in Paris. His argument that historians have overlooked evidence implicating Deane and Franklin in questionable financial
activities and in relationships with Englishmen, merits discussion in this historigraphical analysis.

According to many historians, the scholarly milestone dealing with revolutionary diplomacy is Samuel Flagg Bemis's *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*, which was published in 1935. From a combination of European and American documents and printed sources, Bemis has achieved a rare combination of scholarship and objectivity. He avoids the pitfalls of psychological analysis of historical figures which indulges in observations of personalities and personal crises that might have influenced decision-making. His book discusses both American and European diplomacy, illustrating the significant effects that negotiations among European countries had upon the success or failure of American diplomatic efforts.

Since the publication of Bemis's book, historiography has shown the influence of its scholarship. Carl Van Doren's biography of Franklin is complimentary in its discussion of Franklin's contributions to the Revolution, but he takes into account Franklin's earlier political setbacks and does not attempt to dismiss them as inconsequential. Van Doren indicates, however, that Franklin's diplomatic achievements in Paris are beyond reproach. John C. Miller has undertaken the enormous tasks of covering many aspects of the Revolution and the effects which it had upon the formation of the national government. Arthur Darling writes of the diplomatic activities of the nation from 1763 to 1803. Miller
deals with the American envoys in Europe, excluding Dana, while Darling specifically emphasizes the roles of Franklin and Jay in the final negotiations for peace. Both avoid the perils of biases in defending the actions of the American diplomats, but they generally commend their overall achievements in Europe. Van Doren, Darling and Miller also use more extensive bibliographies than the authors who precede Bemis.

In the 1950s, authors discuss with greater sophistication the men of the Revolution, their personalities, their diplomacy, and their concepts of the goals of the Revolution. Felix Gilbert's article on American foreign policy is useful in explaining Adams's attitudes towards American alliances with European powers. Gerald Stourzh's analysis of Franklin's foreign policies reveals the philosophical, as well as the pragmatic reasons, which motivated Franklin's actions in Europe. Stourzh does not speculate about Franklin's intentions in Europe but rather explains them through the use of his writings and those of his contemporaries. Stourzh provides factual information which is useful in the study of Franklin's diplomacy. Helen Auger deals with the clandestine activities, authorized by the United States government, of the Americans in Europe, although obviously impressed with Franklin's sagacity and Deane's ingenuity, she avoids offending her readers with an overwhelming sense of bias. Instead, she relates the activities of the privateering war with a certain sense of drama and action but
consistently maintains the scholarship of her book with extensive references to primary material. Both Coy H. James and Julian P. Boyd discuss the career of Silas Deane in Europe. In his unpublished dissertation, James writes favorably of Deane's contributions to revolutionary diplomacy and defends his shortcomings and questionable associations against his critics. In Boyd's series of articles on Silas Deane, he reveals that the accusations linking Deane with Edward Bancroft, a man suspected of spying for the British, are basically true. These articles are scholarly in approach and content and do not succumb to the temptations of sensationalism, although the title contains a touch of drama. Two other historians who have written articles about the men of the Revolution have contributed to an understanding of the personalities of Franklin and Adams. Max Beloff's essay on Franklin as an international statesman is useful, although not exceptionally original in its content. The enigmatic personality of John Adams receives adequate treatment from Clinton Rossiter. Adams was a difficult person to evaluate as he was a man of extremes, and Rossiter attempts to explain Adams's eccentricities which at the same time made him an outstanding patriot and yet a questionable diplomatic representative. E. James Ferguson points out that although commercialism pervaded the first American commission, this is not a reason to dismiss the first diplomatic efforts as failures.

More recent historians generally follow the canons of
research and scholarship established by Bemis in their monographs written about revolutionary diplomacy. Richard B. Morris's book deals with the peace commission and provides detailed examinations of the activities of Jay, Franklin, and Adams, which led up to the final negotiations for peace. Richard W. Van Alstyne does not limit his study to the diplomats who influenced the American Revolution, and the reader is able to ascertain the interaction between domestic and foreign affairs which might have affected American foreign policy. William Stinchcombe's study of French policy towards the American alliance creates the awareness of the influence conditions within the United States government had upon the successes or failures of its diplomacy. The two articles by David M. Griffiths on Russian-American foreign policy also exemplify modern scholarship in his use of available Russian as well as American sources. He is critical of Francis Dana's inability to discern that Russian policy was based upon commercial gain rather than upon diplomatic considerations. Naturally, the criticism he directs against Dana contradicts Cresson's earlier appraisal of the reasons for Dana's unsuccessful attempts at securing an alliance with Russia. H. James Henderson uses information from the congressional debates as the basis for an interesting article on the factionalism that developed in Congress during its attempt to recall Franklin.

Although Bernard Bailyn, Page Smith, Roger Burlingame, and Donald C. Smith have concentrated upon specific individ-
uals in their writings, they have avoided imparting to the reader offensive biases. Page Smith's two-volume biography of John Adams is detailed about his life and is informative about his diplomatic endeavors in Paris, Holland, and then again in Paris on the peace commission. The sections concerned with Adams's diplomatic efforts are favorable, but Smith has used the personal papers of Adams as his main source, which is an explanation for the praise Smith extends to Adams and his criticisms of Franklin. Bernard Bailyn's short article on Adams discusses many of the troublesome and unusual character traits which L. H. Butterfield's editions of Adams's diary and autobiography reveal. From Bailyn's discussion, it is easy to realize why Adams might have encountered difficulties in his dealings with the foreign ministers of France and Holland. Although Donald Smith's collection of John Jay's writings is brief, it does indicate Jay's concept of American foreign policy. Smith's editorial remarks are favorably disposed towards Jay's policies. Roger Burlingame has also contributed to the biographical studies on Franklin but has limited his work to Franklin's experiences in Europe. In some instances, he is almost critical of Franklin's subservience to French demands upon the United States. The approach of these recent writers is distinctly different from that of the nineteenth-century biographers who have heralded the early diplomats as virtually faultless.

In a class separate from the previous historians is
Cecil B. Currey, who has taken it upon himself to expose Benjamin Franklin as a spy for the British. The sensationalism of his account arouses the skepticism of most knowledgeable historians who would disregard Currey's sweeping generalizations about Franklin's dishonest activities. Although some historians and reviewers might contend that such a book adds a needed dimension to historical writing, it would seem that the blatant charges he makes against Franklin without substantial evidence have seriously weakened the credibility of his book.

An historiographical study of the diplomacy of the American Revolution should trace the development of scholarship and professional writing. Although most of the above-mentioned authors have contributed to our knowledge about American foreign policy, some have demonstrated that the techniques of scholarly historical writing have eluded them. However, the different books on diplomacy and the men who formulated it are essential to a complete historiographical study of early American foreign policy.
CHAPTER II

SILAS DEANE IN PARIS

The Committee of Secret Correspondence decided that the American war effort could easily meet with disaster unless aid was obtained from a country with money and military supplies. In 1776, the Committee appointed Silas Deane, a Connecticut merchant, as its representative in France for both diplomatic and commercial affairs. Had Deane persevered in an unblemished, loyal and patriotic career, he would be praised as the founder of American diplomacy in Europe. However, Deane's diplomatic years are controversial because of his involvement in extra-curricular commercial activities, which some historians contend were detrimental to the struggling nation. In addition, historians argue about his commitment to the American cause and the degree to which he, as well as Franklin, transferred information vital to American success to the British. Edward Bancroft supposedly subverted Deane's career, but there is disagreement as to Deane's susceptibility to his persuasions. A hatred developed between Deane and the Lee brothers, especially Arthur, because they suspected him of placing his personal affairs and economic gain above America's best interests. Historians debate
whether Deane and Arthur Lee were unable to place matters of state above personalities and how this affected Deane's service to his country. Finally, Deane's later life, after the completion of an investigation into the justice of his recall, added another dimension to his already complicated career. There is argument among historians as to whether he renounced his allegiance to the United States and became another Benedict Arnold in Europe. His death aroused little interest until printed conjectures suggested that Deane had been murdered by his comrade in complicity, Edward Bancroft. This chapter will pursue the issues pertaining to Deane's service in the Revolution, according to the differing viewpoints of historians.

Silas Deane's career in Europe involved securing French aid for the United States. However, his outside financial interests promote doubt with regard to his diligence in seeking this aid, according to Carl Van Doren and Thomas Perkins Abernethy. Carl Van Doren's *Secret History of the American Revolution* (1941) intimates that because of Deane's outside commercial activities, he was especially susceptible to the attractive offers which Paul Wentworth, the chief British spy, made in his efforts to direct the attention of the American minister away from the cause of independence.¹ Thomas Perkins Abernethy's article, "Commercial Activities of Silas

Deane in France" (1934), criticizes Deane's acceptance of Robert Morris's proposal that an organization be established which would carry on trade among all nations regardless of their status as belligerents. Members of this enterprise included Thomas Walpole, Ferdinand Grand, a French banker, M. le Ray de Chaumont, and a group of French merchants, in addition to Morris and his associates. To facilitate their operations, Caron de Beaumarchais helped transfer the goods arriving from British ports to French ships bound for America. Abernethy even lists Vergennes as a participant in this private business stating, "... it is not unlikely that Vergennes got his share of the profits."²

Silas Deane's career in Europe introduces the question of the extent to which personal financial ventures influenced or interfered with his official purpose of securing French aid. John C. Miller and Helen Auger substantiate the allegation that Deane endeavored to represent the United States diplomatically, as well as assist the private financial interests of domestic firms. Both Miller and Auger acknowledge that Deane was actually on a double mission. In Miller's Triumph of Freedom (1948), he explains Deane's efforts to attempt simultaneously to obtain loans and supplies from the French while he was representing the commercial interests of Willing, Morris and Company for a 5 percent

commission.⁵ Auger's *Secret War of Independence* (1955) concurs that, although Deane was instructed to investigate the possibility of purchasing military supplies, he also represented Morris's business venture for personal profit. Supposedly Deane was also involved in the Vandalia operations, an international trading company organized to sell land between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Throughout Deane's mission in Europe, Robert Morris defended the legitimacy of Deane's mercantile connections and supported his integrity.⁴

Although Deane is never disassociated from the commercialism that pervaded American negotiations in Europe, Gerald Stourzh and Coy H. James relate his commercial activities to his mercantile background. Gerald Stourzh, in *Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy* (1954), states that Deane attempted to avoid power politics by placing relations with France on a commercial basis. Despite Deane's pro-French sentiments, he wrote to Charles William Frederick Dumas in Holland,

> It is my ultimate and early wish that America may forever be unconnected with the politics or interests of Europe as it is by nature situated distant from it, and that the friendly ties arising from a free, friendly and independent commerce may be the only ties between us.⁵

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⁵Gerald Stourzh, *Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign
Stourzh received support from Coy H. James who, in his unpublished dissertation on "The Revolutionary Career of Silas Deane" (1955), refers to Deane as a "... merchant conscious of and apprehensive for the commercial future of the colonies." Apparently Deane planned to re-enter business when the war ended, and also believed that speculation in western lands would be profitable with the return of peace.6

If Deane was involved in personal commercial ventures, it was not detrimental to his mission, according to James. This historian also believes that Deane's efforts were primarily directed towards securing independence; therefore, he urged the French alliance mainly for this reason. However, from his point of view, the economic aspects of the alliance were as important as the political. James assumes that the central problem in Deane's mission resulted from the failure of Congress to distinguish between commercial and diplomatic functions. Deane and Franklin considered that privateering and the sale of prizes were under their

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6Coy H. James, "Revolutionary Career of Silas Deane" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1956), pp. 46, 193. (Hereinafter referred to as James, "Revolutionary Career.")
jurisdiction, while Arthur Lee did not.\textsuperscript{7}

E. James Ferguson prefers to approach Deane's career from the standpoint that Deane was typical of the enterprising merchants of his day. His article in the \textit{William and Mary Quarterly}, "Business, Government and the Congressional Investigation in the Revolution" (1959), emphasizes that Deane was like all small capitalists who aspired to become more successful in an era of vast speculation. His political appointment allowed plenty of room for commercial activity, as he was in charge of disposing of prizes taken by American privateers, which he could easily sell to himself or his partners.\textsuperscript{8} Considering the commercial atmosphere, Ferguson decides there was nothing unethical about Deane's partnership with Robert Morris and his expectations of playing a vital role in Morris's expanding empire.

Richard Van Alstyne implies that Deane combined commerce and politics to insure massive support from France and draw that country into the war. Deane's commercial schemes are enumerated by Van Alstyne in \textit{Empire and Independence} (1965), but he indicates that Deane hoped that if French merchants speculated in American trade, and the United States employed influential Frenchmen in the American army,

\textsuperscript{7}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{8}E. James Ferguson, "Business, Government and the Congressional Investigation in the Revolution," \textit{William and Mary Quarterly}, XVI (July, 1959), 303-304. (Hereinafter referred to as Ferguson, "Congressional Investigation.")
the French government would be obligated to enter the war to support the Americans. Deane also emphasized the benefits which would accrue to France if she participated in the privateering ventures and gave the United States aid. Then France would be permanently secure from English threats on the Continent or on the seas.\(^9\)

Attempts by earlier historians to explain or justify Deane's commercial activities are discredited by Cecil B. Currey in his book, *Ben Franklin, Patriot or Spy* (1972). He accuses Deane of establishing his own enterprise "separate from his profiteering partnership with Beaumarchais." This business was, of course, the firm which Abernethy mentions, and Deane's contribution was to arrange and coordinate its operations.\(^10\)

Silas Deane's relationships with French officials and representatives, especially Comte de Vergennes and Beaumarchais, contributed to the controversy over his career. Some historians define Deane's association with Beaumarchais through the firm of Hortalez and Company as based strictly upon governmental business; others contend that both sought personal financial gain through the commercial activities of the Revolution.

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Hale, Bemis, Miller and Auger concur that their relationship was based upon official business. Edward Hale and Edward Hale, Jr., in *Franklin in France* (1887) state that from the letters exchanged between Beaumarchais and Deane, it is evident that their relationship placed government business first.¹¹ Samuel Flagg Bemis explains in his book, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (1935), that France established the policy of secret assistance before Deane's arrival.¹² Miller intimates that Deane and Beaumarchais were honest in their activities. Beaumarchais regarded Deane as the only trustworthy member of the American commission in Paris. Deane was the one man who objected to a separate peace between the United States and Great Britain, and he also prevented Lee and Franklin "... from straying into the British camp."¹³ Because of the confused state of the accounts of Hortalez and Company, Auger insists that there is insufficient evidence to prove that Deane and Beaumarchais engaged in ventures for personal profit. She adds that Deane directed his attention first to the subject of a commercial treaty with France, to which Vergennes was receptive except for the American demand that France recognize the independence of the colonies.¹⁴

¹¹Edward E. Hale, and Edward E. Hale, Jr., *Franklin in France* (2 vols., Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1888), I, p. 45. (Hereinafter referred to as *Hale, Franklin.*)


¹⁴Auger, *Secret War*, pp. 131, 139.
Undeniably, there are questions involving Deane's relations with the French, but James, Stourzh and Van Alstyne regard none of them as critical enough to discredit Deane's entire mission. According to James, Beaumarchais promised French aid to Arthur Lee, but there is proof that he was not authorized to financially commit the French government. Then Vergennes came to support Beaumarchais's plan for French aid. Defending Deane and Beaumarchais, James discounts accusations that the two had turned a gift from the French into a commercial operation.\(^{15}\) Although Stourzh recognizes that the French regarded Deane as the most reliable and sympathetic to the French government, he stresses Deane's hope that commerce would be the only tie between the two countries.\(^{16}\) Van Alstyne considers the influence that Beaumarchais exerted over the French court to have been minimal. Historians have overestimated the importance of the French playwright. Deane regarded him as a willing tool, and the French court considered him expendable. Nowhere does Van Alstyne indicate that Deane, Vergennes and Beaumarchais pursued personal financial interests. To Deane's credit, he never allowed the French to know where his true sympathies lay. In contrast to Miller, Van Alstyne explains that Deane played upon the fears and ambitions of the French, so that they would fear

\(^{15}\) James, "Revolutionary Career," pp. 30, 39.

\(^{16}\) Stourzh, *Franklin, Foreign Policy*, p. 128.
the possibility that a separate peace between the United States and England might be negotiated.17

According to Currey, historians have incorrectly credited Deane with the honor of securing French aid when actually France and Spain had been dispatching aid through Beaumarchais before either Deane or Franklin arrived in France. The French considered it in their own best interests to hurt Great Britain by sending aid to the United States.18

Another aspect of Silas Deane's career which has caused debate among historians is his friendship with Benjamin Franklin. The controversial issues relating to their friendship concern the association of Deane and Franklin with men suspected of being British agents, their mutual dislike of Arthur Lee, and the degree of independence they exerted in negotiating with the French. Franklin defended the integrity of their relationship until 1781 when Deane allowed the British to publish his letters condemning the revolutionary effort. Franklin wrote Deane in 1782 that the

... publication of those letters has done great Prejudice to your Character there [America], and necessarily diminished much of the Regard your Friends had for you.19

17Van Alstyne, Empire, pp. 97, 124.
18Currey, Code #72, pp. 91, 93.
The Hales and Bernard Fay agree that Franklin supported Deane during frustrations of his mission which included the feud with the Lees and the presence of British spies in his entourage. Fay adds in his book, Franklin, the Apostle of Modern Times (1929), that Franklin even jeopardized his secure position in France by defending Deane against the Adams-Lee faction.

There is agreement among Abernethy, Auger and James that Franklin and Deane enjoyed a close association, but they do not indicate that their relationship was dishonest. Abernethy admits that Franklin and Deane were committed to independence. They attempted to carry on the work of the commission without Arthur Lee's cooperation, because Lee constantly endeavored to disrupt the harmony of the friendship between Franklin and Deane. In addition, they sought to prevent an agreement between Vergennes and Lord Stormont, the British minister in Paris, by creating an open scandal about French participation in American privateering raids. Franklin was able to explain the privateering efforts to Congress, and Deane knew how to handle organizational details for the privateering enterprise. Both urged Congress and the Committee to begin action on every sea on which Britain

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20. Hale, Franklin, I, p. 49. See also Bernard Fay, Franklin, the Apostle of Modern Times (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1929), p. 443. (Hereinafter referred to as Fay, Apostle.)


carried on commerce. Franklin definitely missed Deane in the commercial work after his recall, as Adams and Lee were of no help, but he rebuked Deane's later activities when he learned of the "intercepted letters" which Deane had written. James corroborates the idea of a harmonious relationship between the two men and says the friendship continued after Deane's recall to America and his return in disgrace to Paris. Franklin believed that since Deane had rendered valuable service to the Revolution, he deserved a fair trial in the United States. In writing to James Lovell in 1777, Franklin repeated that any mistakes Deane made earlier in his European career had long since been rectified by his devoted service to the government. However, Franklin admitted to Robert Livingston that by 1782 Deane had changed. His conversations had come to include "... 'an open vindication of Arnold's conduct.'" An explanation for this change in Deane, Franklin thought, was that Deane's mental faculties had gradually begun to decline. Franklin continued to insist, however, that his service to the United States had been commendable.

Currey criticizes their relationship, explaining that both Franklin and Deane worked more for their own private benefit than for the independence of their country. It

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23 Auger, Secret War, p. 163.
24 Ibid., pp. 298, 334.
25 James, "Revolutionary Career," pp. 141, 228-229.
was Franklin who instructed Deane to see Bancroft upon his arrival in France. When Arthur Lee would leave Paris, Deane and Franklin ignored their share of the diplomatic workload to pursue their own private interests. Their main concern was to remove Arthur Lee from Paris and, when he would return, neither Franklin nor Deane made an effort to inform him of any developments during his absence. When Lee's notes were stolen in Prussia, Franklin and Deane only increased their efforts to isolate him from their activities. Franklin and Deane participated in a "multitude of private and clandestine matters," which included employing and defending British spies, allowing those who should not have had it special access to state information, arranging secret meetings with British agents and misusing congressional funds.

One of the contributing factors to the controversy surrounding Deane's career was his association with men regarded by some historians as being British spies. The names of Paul Wentworth and Edward Bancroft are particularly associated with such nefarious activities. Deane's affinity towards Edward Bancroft unalterably links him to the British spy network, according to some historians. Other historians are sympathetic towards Deane, like Bemis, Auger, and James, and defend him as being unaware of Bancroft's devious character. They also claim that Deane rejected attractive mone-

26Currey, Code #72, pp. 67, 126.
27Ibid., pp. 126, 211-212.
tary offers made by Wentworth if Deane would agree to reconcili­ation. Samuel Flagg Bemis emphasizes that, although the British sought Deane out, Wentworth's attempt to persuade Deane to advocate reconciliation failed.\textsuperscript{28} Lee warned Deane about Bancroft's character. But since he could produce no proof, Deane discounted this information as he distrusted Lee's continually suspicious temperament.\textsuperscript{29} In his Secret History of the American Revolution, Van Doren is more skeptical of Deane's rejection of Wentworth's offer. The opportunities and the advantages promised by Wentworth might have combined with Deane's interest in commercial activity to form the basis of a kind of preliminary agreement reconciling Britain and the United States. North was able to inform George III about goods purchased by the United States from France through a list furnished to Bancroft by Deane. Furthermore, Van Doren, in contrast to Van Alstyne, asserts that the king was willing to trust Deane as one who would bring the United States to an agreement on reconciliation.\textsuperscript{30}

Edward Bancroft is suspected by some historians of having been a British agent. It was Deane's close association with Bancroft which has caused much debate as to the sin-


\textsuperscript{29}Bemis, "British Secret Service," 476.

\textsuperscript{30}Van Doren, Secret History, pp. 62-63. See also Van Alstyne, Empire, p. 111.
cerity of Deane's commitment to independence. Both Bernard Fay and John C. Miller contend that Bancroft and William Carmichael informed Lord North of all American transactions in Paris, thus creating confusion in the American camp with everyone suspecting everyone else.\(^1\) Edward Bancroft cleverly insured that Deane would continue to supply him with information. For example, on one of his visits to England, he had himself arrested as an American agent. After he was miraculously released from prison, Deane never doubted that his friend had fallen into the hands of the merciless Britons.\(^2\)

Although Auger and James recognize that Bancroft easily influenced Deane, neither condemns Deane's patriotism but rather explains that Bancroft easily dominated Deane, who had a weaker character. Whenever Deane began to hesitate with regard to his association with Bancroft, the latter would soothe Deane with plans for new projects involving Wentworth, North and George III.\(^3\) Deane was conscious of being surrounded by British agents like Wentworth, and realized that the French would resent frequent visits by Englishmen. However, early in Deane's mission, Bancroft had learned of its aims and continuously reported his knowledge of Deane's

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\(^1\) Fay, Apostle, p. 426. See also Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, p. 170; Deane to Dumas, October 13, 1776, "Mr. Carmichael can give you the best intelligence of present affairs in America."

\(^2\) Miller, Triumph, p. 282.

\(^3\) Auger, Secret War, p. 157.
letters, progress on treaties and commercial transactions. James admits that Deane's best friend and advisor during his mission was fundamentally dishonest, but easily deceived Deane because of his warm personality.\textsuperscript{34}

Edward Bancroft secured the dominant role in the relationship between the two men, according to Julian P. Boyd's article concerning the friendship between Deane and Bancroft (1959). Boyd recognizes that Bancroft's genius enabled him to fit Deane to his own plans, which involved schemes for gaining wealth from trade, purchasing supplies for Congress, land speculations, spying and double-dealing. William Eden's group of intelligence agents spied for varying motives, and Bancroft "... moved to the center of these flexible consciences, towering above all for deceit and good fortune." As a result of the information provided, England was so well informed about Franco-American negotiations with regard to Deane's conversations with Vergennes and Beaumarchais that Stormont knew far more about what Deane was doing than did Congress. However, if it served the purposes of Bancroft and Deane to withhold information from Stormont, they did so without qualms. Eventually their "lives had been welded together in deceit and distrust, and they possessed secrets about each other that made alienation, to say the least, inadvisable."\textsuperscript{35} Thus, he

\textsuperscript{34}James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 41.

\textsuperscript{35}Julian P. Boyd, "Silas Deane: Death by a Kindly Teacher of Treason," William and Mary Quarterly, XVI
agrees with the earlier interpretations of Bemis and Auger and has influenced succeeding historians.

In his discussion of the Bancroft-Deane friendship, Richard B. Morris concludes they had a close working relation, but Van Alstyne dismisses the concept of a British spy network as strictly conjecture. In *The Peacemakers, the Great Powers and American Independence* (1965), Morris characterizes Bancroft as an amoral opportunist who leaked news of the 1778 treaty with the French to promote his personal interests on the London Stock Exchange. However, Bancroft's close association with Deane carries "sinister overtones, and lends credence to, if it does not confirm some of Arthur Lee's worst suspicions." On the other hand, Van Alstyne accuses historians, notably Samuel Flagg Bemis, of creating legends concerning the machinations of certain "British spies" who furnished the ministry with "secret information" about French diplomacy. He considers this idea as ridiculous and explains that any "facts" the British government might have received would have come from merchants who were suffering from the depredations of Spain and France.

Currey links Deane and Bancroft, explaining that Bancroft recruited Deane into the British "silent force"

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37Van Alstyne, *Empire*, p. 118.
through various inducements. Deane's desire to satisfy his personal interests allowed Bancroft to dominate his life in Paris. Currey adds, "His [Deane's] association with Bancroft ultimately cost him the opportunity for service with a new nation, his reputation and eventually his life." 38

One of the main reasons Silas Deane elicits discussion is because of his clash with Arthur Lee. Lee was certain that Deane was diverting congressional funds for his own benefit, while justifying his actions with the explanation that Beaumarchais had to be repaid. If this indiscretion was not enough, Lee also asserted that Deane maintained secret relations with the British through Bancroft. In an undocumented yet favorable account of Deane's career, George Clark, in his Silas Deane, A Connecticut Leader in the Revolution (1913), blames Arthur Lee as the political enemy of Beaumarchais and Deane, who was "... determined to advance himself though he ruined every one who stood in his way." 39 E. S. Corwin mentions the controversy between the two men in his book, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778. He suggests that Lee was correct in assuming the supplies had needlessly been purchased, as they had been contributed by the Bourbon kings. Still, Lee

38 Currey, Code #72, p. 96.

was unduly suspicious of Deane's financial motives.\textsuperscript{40}

Also contributing to the conflict between the two men were Arthur Lee's objections to the authority assumed by Deane in the American commission, and Deane's efforts to discredit Lee. Thomas Perkins Abernethy says that Franklin's appointment of Jonathan Williams to the commercial agency at Nantes aroused Lee's wrath. Not only was he appointed while Lee was in Spain, but he also received his orders only from Deane. Then Deane recommended that Lee employ John Thornton as his secretary. Thornton was assumed to be the British source of information on the Franco-American treaty, and such accusations naturally implicated Lee.\textsuperscript{41} In Abernethy's later article, "The Origin of the Franklin-Lee Imbroglio" (1938), he argues that the feud occurred, because Franklin and Deane were intent on taking the privateering business out of the hands of the official agents and utilizing it for their own purposes. He accuses other historians of unjustly condemning the Lees, because they opposed Franklin and Deane.\textsuperscript{42}

Bemis introduces a new element. He contends the feud arose from a misunderstanding concerning Deane's succession

\textsuperscript{40}E. S. Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1916), p. 207. (Hereinafter referred to as Corwin, French Policy.)

\textsuperscript{41}Abernethy, "Commercial Activities," 483-484.

\textsuperscript{42}Thomas Perkins Abernethy, "The Origin of the Franklin-Lee Imbroglio," The North Carolina Historical Review, XV (January, 1938), 51. (Hereinafter referred to as Abernethy, "Franklin-Lee Imbroglio."
to Lee's role in dealing with Beaumarchais. In 1776, the Secret Committee on Correspondence sent Deane to seek French support politically and to secure military supplies from the French government. Although Beaumarchais had already dealt with Arthur Lee, he immediately turned to Deane as the man with more authority.\footnote{Bemis, Diplomacy, pp. 35, 37. He states that there is a lack of evidence to document exactly what happened between Lee and Beaumarchais.}

Miller agrees with Corwin that Lee was unduly suspicious towards Deane. Although Lee vociferously charged that Deane was involved in a fraud with Beaumarchais, Miller notes that there was no evidence of extreme irregularity except for exceptionally disorderly accounts.\footnote{Miller, Triumph, pp. 369, 373.}

James emphasizes that whenever Lee encountered a person whom he could not dominate, he immediately became convinced that the person was an adversary determined to destroy him. Lee's constant suspicions of Deane's brazen manner in his dealings with Beaumarchais eventually drove Franklin and Deane to send him on pointless missions to Madrid and Berlin. Lee complained to his brothers that, "'Mr. Deane, Dr. Bancroft, and William Carmichael . . . have been practicing against me, and what I do not know is how far it may extend.'" In addition, he surmised that important matters were being concealed from him, because of Deane's midnight visits to Versailles and, previous to that, the lack of any official communications while he was journeying about. As
a result of his doubting and jealous tendencies, he wrote
to Richard Henry Lee, suggesting that he remain in France,
"'the center of commercial activity,'" while Franklin was
sent to Vienna and Deane to Holland.\textsuperscript{45} Then, at the con­
clusion of the treaty of amity and commerce in 1778, Ralph
Izard, William and Arthur Lee decided that Deane was favor­
ing New England's commercial interests at southern expense
because of the prohibition of import duties on molasses
coming from the French West Indies.\textsuperscript{46} (This objectionable
article was later struck out.)

According to Boyd and Ferguson, all of Lee's accusa­
tions against Deane might not have been incorrect. Boyd
holds that Lee's accusations might have had some validity
because of Deane's relations with Bancroft and his ques­
tionable diversion of public funds. Apparently, Deane ex­
cluded Lee from his counsel immediately after meeting with
Bancroft. He rejected Lee's warning that certain men were
to be avoided, and was indignant that Lee suggested he
should report such men to Congress. From Deane's viewpoint,
such serious charges could not be made without proof.
Arthur Lee's doubts regarding Deane's honesty increased
about the time the alliance was signed when one of Deane's
remittances to Samuel Wharton became involved in the pub­
lic accounts, thus confirming Lee's suspicion that Deane

\textsuperscript{45}James, "Revolutionary Career," pp. 102-103, 105.
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. 123.
was using public money for private gain. Ferguson also recognizes that Lee had a possible basis for distrusting Deane because of his commercial activities and questionable personal associations. Ferguson holds that Lee believed from his conversations with Beaumarchais that the supplies were a gift from France. When Deane contracted for repayment, Lee perceived a conspiracy simply because he failed to comprehend the personal commercialism that pervaded the American commission.

Agreeing with Bemis's earlier premise, Morris and Van Alstyne assert that the feud was a result of Beaumarchais's preference for Deane over Lee. Morris asserts that early in the Lee-Beaumarchais association, Lee became convinced that the French dramatist's supplies were a gift from the French government, and he denounced Deane's agreement to repay Beaumarchais. Van Alstyne concurs that Beaumarchais's choice of Deane over Lee was the beginning of the enmity between Deane and Lee.

Currey combines the opinions of Boyd and Ferguson, stating that Deane deliberately avoided Lee, despite his instructions, and established an agreement with Beaumarchais. Deane then ignored Lee's warnings concerning Bancroft's

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49 Morris, Peacemakers, p. 9.
50 Van Alstyne, Empire, p. 96.
character and Wentworth's dangerous influence. Lee's suspicions and hostilities are, to Currey, a legitimate indication of Deane's dishonesty.

The quarrel between Lee and Deane finally resulted in Deane's official recall to the United States. This effort to resolve questions concerning Deane's public accounts met with varying reactions from Americans and received strong criticism from the French, who obviously preferred Deane to Lee. Some historians also question if Deane's efforts to straighten out his financial complications were sincere, intimating that Deane had something to hide after all. Although Clark's book is of questionable historical value, he does lend considerable support to Deane's defense in the congressional recall. He believes the whole scenario was a plot Lee devised to increase his power. Consequently, Deane was only a tool Arthur used to strengthen his political machinery. In contrast to Clark, Thomas Perkins Abernethy claims that Deane intentionally left his papers in France in an effort to get a settlement without an audit, because he had failed to distinguish between public and private use of money. In addition, there was no account of the cargoes forwarded for public use, with a designation of the persons to whom they had been consigned. In Van

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51 Currey, Code #72, p. 94.
52 Clark, Silas Deane, p. 132.
Doren's opinion there is insufficient evidence to resolve the accusations against Deane involving the misuse of congressional funds and the release of secret information to the British. It is also impossible to determine if Congress owed Deane a settlement for the financial trouble and mental trauma it caused him.\textsuperscript{54} The matter of evidence became secondary as two opposing groups formed in Congress. Silas Deane's fate was put aside as the question became whether the businessmen or the people would run the country, Miller claims.\textsuperscript{55} Auger concludes that incomplete evidence made it impossible for Congress to substantiate the charges against Deane.\textsuperscript{56}

Deane's recall received mixed reactions in America, but greatly disturbed the French. James details the efforts of the French to protect Deane and clear his reputation. Vergennes and his colleagues chose to regard Deane's recall as a victory for the anti-Alliance members of Congress. Thus, the French decided to bestow the highest recommendations upon Deane. Vergennes praised, "... the zeal, activity and intelligence with which he has conducted the interests of the United States, by which he has merited the esteem of the King." Beaumarchais wrote a letter exonerating Deane from any wrongdoing with regard to Hortalez

\textsuperscript{54}Van Doren, \textit{Secret History}, p. 432. \\
\textsuperscript{55}Miller, \textit{Triumph}, p. 373. \\
\textsuperscript{56}Auger, \textit{Secret War}, p. 305.
The French preference for Deane aroused another conflict in Congress when Thomas Paine began publishing information from the files of the Committee on Secret Correspondence to implicate Deane. Paine hoped that this material would prove that the supplies Deane had contracted for with Beaumarchais were actually a gift of the French government. The French angrily denounced Paine's misuse of Franco-American classified information, and Paine was forced to resign from his relatively insignificant post as clerk of the Committee for Foreign Affairs.

French support of Deane placed Congress in a dilemma in attempting to resolve the issue of his guilt or innocence. James states that out of the many charges against Deane, only two are conspicuous enough to merit comment. The first was that he was "in trade" and the second placed his accounts in a state of "studied confusion." Congress refused either to convict Deane or acquit him, and its inability to rise above partisan strife contributed to this stalemate. Deane was dismissed from further attendance at Congress with neither censure nor approbation. Thus, he reasoned that since there were no charges, Congress must have approved his conduct. Even though Deane received no formal vindication, Robert Morris, one of his sympathizers, wrote,

"I consider Mr. Deane as a martyr in the cause of America. But I have no doubt the day will

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57 James, "Revolutionary Career," pp. 127, 130.
58 Ibid., p. 177.
59 Ibid., pp. 143, 181, 184.
come when his merit shall be universally acknowledged and the authors of these calumnies held in the detestation they deserved. 60

E. James Ferguson does not excuse Deane's activities, yet he indulges in no condemnation of Deane based upon unfounded prejudices. He argues that accusations of Deane's speculating in British stocks are based upon hearsay testimony. But since Deane financed a ship through Continental funds for his own use, and shifted the loss of a privately owned ship to the government by purchasing it in the government's name, the questions surrounding his activity deserve investigation. Ferguson admits that Congress was unjust in its treatment of Deane, listening to testimony from his enemies and only allowing him to reply in writing. The whole episode was inconclusive as only one or two irregularities were proven against Deane. However, the division of Congress into two camps, one defending Deane and the other attacking him, was demoralizing when Congress most needed unity. 61

Page Smith, in his first volume on John Adams (1962), sympathizes with the dilemma Congress faced. Finding Deane guilty would also implicate Franklin, and to acquit Deane would indict Lee and Izard. Deane's proposal that he return to Europe for the necessary papers to clear himself seemed a logical solution and was agreeable to Congress, but Deane's

60 Ibid., p. 191.
"impulse to self-destruction" caused him to turn to the people, as he wrote and published attacks against his accusers.62

Briefly, Morris supports Ferguson in criticizing congressional incompetency in handling the whole affair. After Congress heard all his accusers, Deane was allowed only written replies. When all the evidence was amassed, there was only enough "to prove one or two irregularities, and to suggest countless others." On the other hand, the Lee brothers were not innocent of speculation, as Arthur had shipped personal merchandise on continental vessels; while William simultaneously maintained his position as alderman in London and worked for the American commission in Paris. Morris indicts William Lee, stating that he was not above trying to capitalize on his knowledge of the potential alliance with France.63

Both H. James Henderson and Cecil Currey imply that Congress was justified in taking action against Deane. Deane was more concerned with making money through the Middle States's merchants than with defending New England's rights, according to Henderson's article, "Congressional Factionalism and the Attempt to Recall Benjamin Franklin" (1970).64 From Currey's viewpoint, Congress recognized the


63Morris, Peacemakers, p. 11.

64H. James Henderson, "Congressional Factionalism and
possibility that Beaumarchais and Deane were defrauding the government, so it resolved to recall him. Any effort by Deane to bring order to his accounts was negligible, because he and Franklin realized the implications if they were disclosed.65

After Deane was dismissed by Congress without either censure or vindication, his attitude towards the Revolution changed. Historians debate whether he was intentionally traitorous in deserting American honor, or emotionally unbalanced and insecure from the unjust treatment he had received from Congress. Miller acknowledges that Deane, having lost faith in the American Revolution, went over to the British as a propagandist, and was eventually classified by the Americans with Benedict Arnold. He adds that Deane's service to his country was generally beneficial despite his outside financial interests, as mixing profit and patriotism was hardly unique among his countrymen.66 Helen Auger's evaluation of Deane explains him as a man suffering from a martyr psychosis. By the time he returned to Paris, he was drained of every emotion but resentment, thus taking on the character others had chosen for him. She insists that his accomplishments during his service demonstrated incessant

the Attempt to Recall Benjamin Franklin," William and Mary Quarterly, XXVII (April, 1970), 247. (Hereinafter referred to as Henderson, "Congressional Factionalism.")

65 Currey, Code #72, pp. 205, 228.
66 Miller, Triumph, p. 375.
resourcefulness in gaining French sympathy for the American cause. James also portrays him as a man whose services remained unrecognized. Until the time of his death, he held to the idea of returning to the United States, which implies that he had not totally denied his allegiance to his native country.

Although Boyd categorizes Deane as avaricious and a fallen patriot, there is no evidence that he resorted to blackmail in his relationship with Bancroft. It was Bancroft who was reluctant to have Deane return to the United States in 1789, because Bancroft's secure monetary position would be endangered if Deane should reveal the intimacies of their relationship. Therefore, Boyd hypothesizes that Bancroft conveniently ended Deane's life. Deane's death has previously been attributed to suicide because of his depressed condition, which was a culmination of the treatment he had received from Congress, the discouraging second trip to Europe, and his frustrated attempts to return to America.

Although historians do not accord Silas Deane the prestigious position in the annals of the United States as some of the more dominant names in the diplomacy of the American Revolution, like Franklin, Adams and Jay, his career

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67 Auger, Secret War, pp. 318, 129.
68 James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 258.
provides insight into the American diplomatic effort in Europe. Historians have found that primary sources contributed greatly to their knowledge of this man. Yet, their interpretations differ significantly in some respects, and thus these varying viewpoints lend depth and interest to a historiographical study of the literature written about Silas Deane as an American diplomat.

Basically, the same primary sources were available to even the earliest authors, although Deane's papers may not have been as well organized for these first historians. Naturally, those authors who have published more recently also have the use of earlier monographs and biographies to give additional detail to their discussions. Two early historians, E. S. Corwin and George Clark, represent the dichotomy that may result from historical interpretations. Corwin's extensive investigation of sources from French archives and material from Henri Doniol, as well as French printed sources and the writings of American revolutionary figures, including Deane, results in a very useful work on French policy during the Revolution. In contrast, Clark's biased and undocumented account of Silas Deane only serves to discredit Deane further, as this favorable presentation of Deane is dismissed as unreliable. Bernard Faÿ, a French author, is a necessary author to study in the historiography of the Revolution. Although he cites no footnotes, his extensive bibliography includes primary materials from Europe and America and naturally, the papers of Franklin. He is
very complimentary to Franklin, as the French do have great admiration for him; yet his account is not so biased as to make it useless. Carl Van Doren has investigated the Deane papers, along with colonial and federal records of the commercial transactions of the Revolution. He also adds that the *Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress* were invaluable. John C. Miller's study includes many aspects of the Revolution besides diplomatic, and his use of manuscripts, historical collections, memoirs and letters, and monographs is extensive. Although he does not cite Deane's personal papers, he investigated congressional journals and related correspondence in evaluating Deane's contributions to the Revolution. Samuel Flagg Bemis does not deal extensively with Silas Deane, but his thorough investigation of Doniol's documents, as well as the official correspondence of the American Congress and officials as edited by Sparks and Wharton, and the papers of Deane, Franklin and Arthur Lee, negate any accusations that Bemis was cursory in his study of Deane. His article on the British secret service primarily utilizes British correspondence, but he also uses French and American sources to avoid a limited interpretation that only one set of source material would provide. Bemis represents the transition between early twentieth-century authors and more modern ones, as he combines primary and printed sources into an intelligent and objective analysis of American diplomacy. Helen Auger designates personal correspondence, including Deane's papers as her
most important sources. Her study of the diplomacy is influenced primarily by Bemis, Corwin and Stourzh, who have contributed more to the specific understanding of diplomacy than those authors whose subject matter includes all aspects of the American Revolution. From Gerald Strouzh, one gains a philosophical analysis of primary source material, which not only includes Franklin's papers, but also those of Adams, Arthur Lee and Deane. His interpretation represents a more modern approach to the subject of diplomacy, as he deals with personalities in diplomacy. He explains that the American envoys did not greatly influence France as she had decided to secure an alliance with the United States, regardless of who was the American representative. It was strictly a matter of how the American commissioners adapted to circumstances. In Coy H. James's unpublished dissertation, he concentrates upon the papers of Deane, Franklin, Lee and Adams, as well as those official correspondence pertinent to his discussion of Deane. This work is surprisingly objective and introduces Silas Deane as a historical character of many complicated facets which merit thorough investigation. Richard B. Morris writes mainly from personal papers about the men of the Revolution. His narrative style expresses the opinion that men and not events make history, and yet, he is not overly laudatory in his account of the American negotiators in Europe. Differing from Morris's approach is Richard W. Van Alstyne. Van Alstyne's source material is similar to that of previous authors, but he concentrates more on the information avail-
able from European and American government documents. His short monograph highlights the important events contributing to independence, concentrating upon the maneuvering for reconciliation by the British, the Franco-American negotiations for a treaty, and eventually the peace discussions and their effect in America and Europe. Cecil Currey has published a recent interpretation of the same material that previous authors have used. However, he has misread and twisted these original sources to fit his thesis that Franklin was a British spy, which also implicates Deane. The bias makes this account more of a popularization of old material.

Valuable information is available from articles. Abernethy's two articles concentrate on primary sources, including the papers on Franklin, Arthur Lee and Deane, and government documents from England and the United States. His article on the Franklin-Lee imbroglio takes the unique position of defending Arthur Lee and supporting his accusations against Franklin and Deane. Julian P. Boyd's three-part study of Deane is based on another extensive investigation of Deane's papers along with those of Franklin, Arthur Lee and Adams, and government correspondence. This series is valuable because of its in-depth study of the transition in Deane's personality as Edward Bancroft came to control completely his life. Henderson and Ferguson rely upon the records of Congress to state the facts involving the congressional efforts to have Franklin recalled and its investigation of the business conducted by the Americans in Paris.
Both men studiously avoid evaluating the personalities involved and make a sincere effort to record the facts for their readers.

Silas Deane's career ended ignominiously, filled with controversy and doubts about his patriotism. Historians recognize Deane's penchant for commercial gain. However, the consensus among them is that commercialism during the Revolution was not abnormal, and that his roles as merchant and diplomat did not necessarily detract from the benefits he provided the United States in establishing the basis for French aid and the alliance. Both Van Alstyne and Currey dissent from this viewpoint, accusing Deane of deliberately setting up outside commercial activities which would be beneficial to him. The idea that he and Beaumarchais established a thriving business with the assistance of congressional funds enrages authors like Currey, but is denied by Auger, James and Van Alstyne. Admittedly, Deane was pro-French; yet he refused to become beholden to any of his French associates. The purpose of his efforts, authors agree, was to ship goods to America. Both Deane and Beaumarchais were only continuing a policy the French had already established, as French aid, according to Van Alstyne and Currey, had been arriving in America before Deane and Beaumarchais met.

Deane's association with Franklin receives attention to the degree that Franklin supported Deane's activities. There is general agreement that they worked well together, while Arthur Lee's naturally suspicious nature excluded him from
much of their negotiations. Hale and James state that Franklin did not extend his support to Deane when he published the unpatriotic letters in England. Currey maintains they worked in close conjunction to insure the success of their pernicious activities, although Franklin was finally forced to admit that he could defend Deane only on the basis of past performance.

Deane's most questionable associations were those he established with Edward Bancroft and other British agents. Bemis, Auger, James and Miller realize the negative aspects of the friendship between him and Bancroft, but assume that Deane did not suspect Bancroft's dishonest and selfish motives. Currey promotes the idea that Deane was fully aware of Bancroft's dishonest character, and willingly joined him to enhance his personal fortune. Julian P. Boyd's article never condones their association, nor assumes that Deane was an innocent victim. Rather he explains that Deane succumbed to Bancroft's persuasive tactics in gaining Deane's cooperation in supplying information to the British. Eventually, they became partners in deceit and Deane was never strong enough in character to extricate himself from this association. Van Alstyne summarily dismisses the whole concept of a British spy network as ridiculous and unsubstantiated. He mentions, however, that Deane talked freely with Bancroft, which enabled him to report to London that Deane was bidding for an alliance and would quite possibly get it.

The argument between Arthur Lee and Silas Deane over his
request for congressional repayments to Beaumarchais and Deane's friendship with Bancroft expanded into a vicious verbal and written battle. Corwin and Abernethy recognize Lee's justification in protesting Deane's private commercial activities. Corwin feels Lee overstated his suspicions, while Abernathy states that Deane and Franklin were guilty of the accusations Lee made. Boyd agrees that Lee had a basis for condemning Deane. On the other hand, James, Bemis and Ferguson realize that Lee failed to understand the commercialism that pervaded the commission in Europe and thus assumed there was nothing honest about Deane. Currey justifies Lee's vituperative campaign, because Deane flatly ignored his warnings concerning the activities of Wentworth and Bancroft.

Generally, historians agree that congressional efforts to investigate Deane's European ventures failed dismally because of the sectional self-interest that arose. Deane's attempts to clear his reputation were ignored, and when he returned to Paris, he was rightfully embittered. No historian defends Deane's efforts to disgrace the Revolution by publishing the critical letters in Great Britain. Perhaps his unstable and trusting temperament gave rise to his efforts to gain personal friendships and monetary security in Europe, which led to his diplomatic decline and destruction.
CHAPTER III

WILLIAM AND ARTHUR LEE AS DIPLOMATS

The entry of the Lee brothers into the diplomatic arena produced new obstacles and controversies in the American quest for independence. The basic tactlessness of Arthur and William Lee towards France, Spain and Prussia, and their antagonism against Silas Deane and Benjamin Franklin have aroused the criticisms of some historians. Other authors have defended their diplomatic abilities and emphasized their adamant stand against any shady dealings in the American commission. The distrust that developed between the Lees and Franklin and Deane, argue some historians, detracted from the success of American diplomacy in Europe. Other historians contend that, without their devotion to duty, the American commission might have disintegrated into a commercial venture for Franklin and Deane. Militia diplomacy and the Lees's willingness to migrate from court to court in Europe in search of alliances and support of American independence are also the subjects of controversy among historians. The congressional battle that ensued after the recalls of Deane and Lee has resulted in historical discussions as to the validity of the congressional actions.
Because of Arthur Lee's dogmatic approach to diplomacy and his unpredictable character traits, historians have discussed his fitness for diplomatic negotiations. The grandnephew of Arthur Lee, Richard Henry Lee, wrote a filiopietistic biography of him in 1829. The Lees traditionally supported each other, so the bias in this two-volume work is not unexpected. Richard Henry Lee counters disparaging remarks against Arthur's character by defending his patriotism and stating that even great persons in history cannot escape malicious accusations. Arthur's constant fidelity to the cause of independence enabled him to forgive the congressional failure to offer him commissions to either Spain or Great Britain. He was so devoted to his country that he never allowed the hostile congressional factions, even during the time of his recall, to alter his pro-American sentiments. John Adams's defense of Lee's actions towards Deane and his associates also strengthens Richard Henry Lee's argument that Lee was properly motivated in defending his country's cause. In a brief but succinct appraisal of Arthur Lee, Edward Hale's *Franklin in France* (1887) categorizes him as a man who longed to do something great, but who proved by his impatience and wrongheadedness that he could hardly have succeeded. Cecil Currey's recent book,  

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2 Hale, *Franklin*, I, pp. 43-44.
Code #72: Ben Franklin, Patriot or Spy (1972), defends Arthur Lee against historians who have been unjust in their judgment of his character. Arthur's American associates in Paris created an atmosphere where he was constantly victimized and suspected for uncooperative activity which naturally caused him to be bitter.3

While William Lee's role in diplomacy is considerably less prominent than his brother's, Auger views his temperament critically, while Currey states he was well-suited for his appointment to Nantes. Helen Auger's Secret War for Independence (1954) touches lightly on William to the extent that she brings out his selfish tendencies. A quotation from an article in the Morning Post in London, seems to summarize her thoughts on William: "'... His character ... is well known to be tinctured with avarice, parsimony, selfishness and meanness.'"4 Currey maintains that William Lee was very capable as his work at the commercial agency at Nantes demonstrated.

Arthur Lee began his career in Europe in the spring of 1776, as a colonial agent seeking monetary assistance for the rebellious colonies from European countries. He was first associated with Caron de Beaumarchais, the creator of The Marriage of Figaro. Beaumarchais's subsequent preference for Silas Deane, who was formally charged by Congress with securing French aid, aroused Lee's indignation. Because

3Currey, Code #72, p. 156.
4Auger, Secret War, p. 267.
of his intense pride, Lee coveted the success and the fame that supplying the colonies with the much needed military and monetary aid might provide. A controversy that developed from Lee's displacement in the commercial realm was over whether Congress was obligated to repay Beaumarchais or if France intended the aid to be a gift. Hale's assessment of the repayment controversy is unclear, although his information is derived from primary sources. From the viewpoint of this nineteenth-century historian, the whole issue arose from Lee's proclivity for confusing the truth, especially when there was an opportunity to discredit Deane, Franklin and Beaumarchais. Hale adds that Lee eventually convinced himself that the King of France never expected repayment from the United States, and Lee wrote Congress that Vergennes had assured him that no repayment was expected for the cargoes dispatched by Beaumarchais.

Samuel Flagg Bemis's monograph on The Diplomacy of the American Revolution (1935) finds no clear evidence that Beaumarchais assured Lee that only nominal payments in American produce would be required in order to disguise the aid as a commercial transaction. When Beaumarchais realized that Deane had congressional instructions to purchase military stores, payable in American produce, he did not hesitate to demand repayment. Congress willingly agreed with Lee, who

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5Hale, Franklin, I, pp. 42, 43, 50. See also Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, I, p. 353. Vergennes in 1783 affirms that the aid was granted with no repayment expected.
pointed out that the French government had given Beaumarchais the supplies, hence he had no right to charge anything for them. It was not so much Lee as it was Congress which had made an agreement and then repudiated it, even when Congress realized that French supplies were responsible for the victory at Saratoga.6

Lee's objection to the United States repaying Beaumarchais is criticized by John Miller, Helen Auger and Coy James. In his book, Triumph of Freedom (1948), Miller contradicts earlier attempts to prove Lee had valid arguments in objecting to the repayment. He attributed Lee's attack on Beaumarchais and Deane to Lee's inability to forget that he had been replaced by Deane. Miller understands that Beaumarchais, never considering his shipments as a gift, fully expected to be paid.7 Both Auger and James agree with Miller's contention that aid was not given to America without thought of repayment. According to Auger, Congress preferred to believe no repayment was necessary, but an audit of congressional accounts by Alexander Hamilton showed that Beaumarchais was owed 2,280,000 francs.8 James states that Beaumarchais was unaware that Lee had written his brothers that the French government expected no repayment. In addition, Lee's letters impugned the personal motives of

7Miller, Triumph, pp. 366, 368, 327.
8Auger, Secret War, p. 327.
Beaumarchais and Deane.  

Some historians assert that the undeviating support of American independence that Arthur Lee displayed is admirable, yet other scholars disagree with this verdict. The patriotic zeal with which Richard Henry Lee credited Arthur Lee is also acclaimed by Bemis, who notes Lee's uncompromising opposition towards the British proposal of reconciliation. Although James is critical of many aspects of Arthur Lee's career, he commends both Lees for their loyalty to the revolutionary cause. In contrast, Richard Van Alstyne, in his 1965 study entitled *The Empire and Independence*, places Arthur Lee in a more equivocal role, as he was plotting with Beaumarchais on one hand and making speeches in London recommending the restoration of imperial unity on the other. Currey expectedly supports Bemis's praise of Arthur Lee's consistent affirmation of American independence.

The appointment of Arthur Lee as an agent by the Secret Committee on Correspondence and the subsequent arrangement that his brother, William, be the commercial agent at Nantes, caused diplomatic and personal controversies that jeopardized the success of the Franco-American treaties, according to

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9James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 34.
11James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 71.
12Van Alstyne, *Empire*, p. 70.
some authors. Yet others contend that Arthur, and to a lesser degree William, contributed to the beneficial agreements arrived at between France and America. Richard Henry Lee credits Arthur's "...earnestness and ability..." for establishing the receptive atmosphere that Deane and Franklin enjoyed in Paris. Lee frequently sought advice from Vergennes regarding the most practical ways to obtain Franco-American treaties. In reference to Lee's objection to Article Twelve, which allowed the French to export molasses tax-free from the French West Indies to America, Richard Henry Lee presents Arthur as much more flexible on reaching a solution than do succeeding authors. Lee conceded that he would agree to this section if it were the only way to insure French cooperation.14 E. S. Corwin's *French Policy and the American Alliance* (1916) confirms Lee's willingness to cooperate with France. Lee claimed to understand the Spanish-French relationship and never openly criticized French support of Spanish land claims in America. Corwin censures those who discredit Lee's loyalty to the alliance and does not comment upon Lee's objections to Article Twelve.15

More recent evaluations of Lee are more critical of his attitudes and diplomatic activities in France. Miller tersely categorizes him as the least popular of the three commissioners, because Lee behaved as though he had never known an

honest man. Lee fell into increasing disfavor with the French until Conrad Alexandre Gérard finally requested his recall, Auger claims. She continues that the moment Lee returned to Congress, he began fighting with Gérard, who he believed to be responsible for the criticism of his missions to Spain and Prussia. William Stinchcombe, The American Revolution and the French Alliance (1969), also emphasizes the suspicion of the French court towards Lee, although it was based upon a mistaken belief that Lee had leaked news of the alliance to Lord Shelburne. Although the French were rather devious in their relations with the American, they disliked Lee because they distrusted him. H. James Henderson's article, "Congressional Factionalism and the Recall of Franklin" (1970), mentions that Lee was in disfavor at the French court.

Among recent historians, Currey defends Arthur Lee, stating that his recalcitrance should not be considered "... officious interference as Franklin's biographers have maintained. ..." Lee was more concerned with American sovereignty, and believed that the molasses clause in the commercial treaty violated rights of reciprocity. Therefore, the

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16 Miller, Triumph, p. 361.
17 Auger, Secret War, p. 327.
19 Henderson, "Congressional Factionalism," 251; see also Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, I, p. 525; Vergennes informed Gérard that Lee had the confidence of neither France nor Spain.
French considered him an obstacle to the success of the alliance.20

While Arthur was appointed in an official capacity, William waited in Paris for the congressional notice that would send him to the commercial agency at Nantes. James assumes that William's presence in the capital only confirmed his querulousness, as he complained about not being consulted by the commissioners and offered unsolicited advice about the proper administration of congressional affairs.21

Although William's previous experience justified his position at the commercial agency at Nantes, his loyalty was questionable, due to his lingering British political associations. Because of his experience as a London merchant, Auger believes his appointment to Nantes was not unreasonable. Upon arriving at Nantes, William discovered that Thomas Morris had been replaced as head of the commercial agency by Jonathan Williams, Franklin's nephew. Thus, he complained bitterly that Deane and Williams had virtually taken over his job, and he agreed with the antagonism his brother held for them. His political connections with England made the wisdom of his appointment doubtful. Both Auger and James point out that he retained his British citizenship and his position of alderman until 1780, which possibly indicated that his service to America was still

20 Currey, Code #72, pp. 194-195.
21 James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 86.
subject to loyalty to Great Britain. Both James and Currey agree, however, that Lee's services at Nantes were useful in bringing order out of chaos. Currey adds that the entire task rested upon his abilities, as he received only minimal cooperation from Franklin, Deane and Williams.

The Lees consistently supported "militia diplomacy," or as Franklin called it "suitoring after alliances," and this has caused controversy among historians. Richard Henry Lee is reluctant to commend Arthur Lee's policy in Spain, as he terms Lee's approach towards Spain as "slow and cautious." He appealed to Spanish sympathies by pointing out that should America lose, war would be inevitable in Europe. Aid to the United States would give Spain the opportunity to disable England forever. Although Lee formally accomplished nothing significant, his public service was good, and he exercised foresight in seeking more responsive countries like Prussia. Bemis is inclined to agree that the financial assistance from Spain, although in "... secret and small sums ...," made Lee's efforts worthwhile.

Helen Auger designates this method of militia diplomacy as especially suited to the Lees, since their brother, 

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22 Auger, *Secret War*, pp. 173-174, 276, 175; see also James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 85.

23James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 87; see also Currey, Code #72, pp. 152-153.


Francis, was in Congress and would support their efforts to bestow ministerial posts upon themselves and their friends. She adds that the only benefit of militia diplomacy was that it removed the Lees, especially Arthur, from Paris so Franklin and Deane could continue the maritime war without interference. To emphasize the ineffectiveness of Arthur Lee's search for European alliances, Auger states that Lee's primary motive for negotiations with Spain was to satisfy his hunger for personal diplomatic triumphs. He was angered because the Spanish government prevented him from entering Madrid immediately, but the Spanish were displeased at the news of his visit, since the British ambassador would surely discover him, incognito or not. He contributed to Spain's annoyance with him by informing Charles III that Britain had no objection to the American commission in Paris; then he bluntly demanded a substantial loan. Auger appropriately calls these methods of suitoring after alliances "caveman style." It was only because of Spain's hatred of Britain that Jerónimo Grimaldi agreed to any aid at all.26

26 Auger, Secret War, pp. 126, 168, 160-161.
27 Van Alstyne, Empire, p. 125.

Arthur Lee's Spanish diplomacy received favorable comment from Van Alstyne, and naturally Currey is enthusiastic. Van Alstyne evaluates the establishment of a line of credit with Spanish bankers in Holland as noteworthy, even acclaimed by Silas Deane.27 The ultimate praise is bestowed by Currey, Lee's indefatigable supporter. He claims that Lee distin-
guished himself by engineering the first major diplomatic breakthrough of the war in gaining four hundred thousand livres from the Spanish king and a promise of additional payments. 28

From Spain, Lee journeyed to Prussia which was another futile exercise in diplomacy. According to Richard Henry Lee, it would have taken an extraordinary man to achieve the objectives of commercial intercourse, prevention of aid to Great Britain, and the purchase of war materials, because Prussia was obligated to Britain by certain treaties. Lee's viewpoint of the itinerant diplomat once again assumed positive tones. He adds that Arthur left Prussia only after duly impressing King Frederick and Baron de Schulenburg and receiving assurances that "...Prussia would not be the last power to acknowledge the independency of his country." 29 Lee indicates that the theft of important state documents in Lee's possession was only a minor setback in comparison to the progress he gained towards recognition.

Miller and Auger critically evaluate Lee's negotiations in Prussia, while Currey blames Franklin and Deane for exaggerating the failure of his mission. Frederick's evasiveness failed to discourage Arthur, according to Miller. Disguising himself as a private citizen, Lee tactlessly pursued the emperor even after Frederick informed Lee that he would

28 Currey, Code #72, pp. 116-117.
29 Lee, Arthur Lee, pp. 86, 89, 98.
tolerate no more demands for recognition. Despite all his maneuvering and persistence, all Lee gained was permission to buy clothing and arms, which Miller discounts as insignificant. 30 Auger dismisses the mission as a failure, with the theft of Arthur's papers by the British as its outstanding event. Arthur failed to take advantage of Frederick's intense resentment of Great Britain. 31 Currey mentions the theft of the official papers, but blames Franklin and Deane for exploiting the event in order to discredit Lee. 32

As if Arthur's failure in Prussia was not enough, William embarked upon a journey to Berlin to gain concessions from Frederick. Schulenburg explained that the mission was futile from the outset, as the king was unwilling to agree to any kind of commercial relations. 33 From Miller's viewpoint, Arthur and William were totally misplaced in Prussia as they were "... crotchety, hot-tempered and overzealous diplomats...". 34

From Prussia, William's peripatetic route led him to Vienna where he found the emperor as reluctant to see him as Frederick. Bemis explains his activities from Vienna to Holland. William attributed his rebuff in Vienna to the

30 Miller, Triumph, pp. 363-364; see also Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, I, p. 524.
31 Auger, Secret War, pp. 214-215.
32 Currey, Code #72, p. 127.
33 Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, I, p. 293.
34 Miller, Triumph, p. 363.
Emperor's preoccupation with the War of the Bavarian Succession. The penultimate stage of William's diplomatic career occurred in Holland where he and one Jean de Neufville drew up an absolutely pointless treaty. William had no such official power and "... everybody knew the burgomasters of Amsterdam had no authority to draw up treaties with foreign powers." The text of the treaty followed the Franco-American treaty of commerce, but the American commissioners in Paris never considered it binding, and neither did the burgomasters.  

Returning again to William's first venture in Prussia, Auger agrees that his effort was insignificant, while Currey's dissenting voice argues that William has not been properly recognized for his achievements. According to Auger, William was in a disadvantageous position before he arrived because of Arthur's impertinence in directing Frederick as how to run his country better. Therefore, William was ignored in his attempts to increase the paltry concessions for the United States to buy clothing and arms from private merchants. Although Currey believes that William's achievements in Prussia have never been properly recognized, he fails to enumerate them. Currey is convinced that Franklin assumed that he was responsible for obtaining recognition from as many countries as possible, and therefore he ignored

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any attempt by William to gain recognition from Prussia.\textsuperscript{37}

The suspicious and proud attitudes of the Lees were manifested in the feud which developed between them and Deane and Franklin. Most historians have blamed Arthur's unreasonable accusations and his antipathy against Deane, who had replaced him in dealing with Beaumarchais, for the magnitude of this feud. Thomas Perkins Abernethy, in his article, "The Origin of the Franklin-Lee Imbroglio" (1938), deviates from this traditional approach and supports Arthur's contention that Franklin and Deane were intent on taking the privateering business out of the hands of the agents appointed by Congress and retaining control of it for their own purposes. Although William Lee was officially appointed to oversee the commercial agency at Nantes, Deane and Franklin ignored him, entrusting the business to Jonathan Williams. They had no authority for this act, ",... but the prize business was profitable and important, and they could not afford to let it fall into the hands of a man who would not cooperate with them." Because of the control Franklin and Deane exercised over the privateering enterprise, Congress never derived any advantage from it. Abernethy is convinced that the only mistake committed by the Lees was that they attempted to obtain an account of public moneys, and thus came into conflict with Franklin and Deane. The one offense of the Lee brothers overlooked by historians was that William

\textsuperscript{37}Currey, Code #72, p. 190.
speculated on the London Stock Exchange while acting as a commercial agent, but then Deane and his associates did the same.  

In contrast to Abernethy's defense of the accusations of the Lee brothers against Deane and Franklin, Miller, James and Auger find many of Arthur Lee's charges invalid and unsubstantiated. The dispute began with Arthur's assertions that Deane was involved in a fraud against the United States with Beaumarchais and Robert Morris. Miller denies that any substantial evidence of irregularity was produced. Lee distrusted most men with whom he associated, but he was particularly suspicious of Deane and Beaumarchais, accusing them of traitorous activities. Franklin irritated Lee by defending Deane's honesty. Lee finally ended his own diplomatic career, and returned to Congress with an intense antipathy towards Deane and Franklin, as well as France, which had taken extraordinary precautions to insure that the Congress did not injure Deane. Auger agrees that Lee's attempts to prove Deane was involved in stockjobbing were based purely upon circumstantial evidence. Because of his unfounded accusations involving Beaumarchais and Deane, Lee incurred the dislike of Beaumarchais, which probably influenced French sentiments against him. The power of the Lee family made it impossible to ignore these unsubstantiated charges against Deane and Franklin, however. James views the Lee brothers

38Abernethy, "Franklin-Lee Imbroglio," 51, 45, 52.
39Miller, Triumph, pp. 369, 371, 376.
as being motivated by their own selfishness, as Arthur devised a plan by which he would be the only commissioner in Paris. William suffered from frustration, because he believed that he was being denied a commercial opportunity, since Deane already controlled Nantes. According to James, Arthur's paranoia eventually caused him to conclude that he was being victimized by a cabal formed by Deane and Franklin. 40

Analyses of Arthur Lee's attitude towards Deane often deal with the personality conflict between them. E. James Ferguson in "Business, Government and the Congressional Investigation in the Revolution" (1959), believes that Lee was simply shocked by the commercialism and self-promotion of the trading world and diplomacy. However, the United States benefitted from the recall of Deane and Lee, which enabled the mission to be represented by more adroit diplomats like Adams and Jay. 41

Morris and Currey compare the honor of the Lees and Deane. Morris states that the Lees were not without guilt in participating in the commercial and political opportunities afforded by the Revolution. Arthur had shipped personal merchandise on the Continental ship Alliance, and William is credited with the dubious distinction of being the only American to hold the post of alderman in London.

40 James, "Revolutionary Career," pp. 105, 97, 134.
41 Ferguson, "Congressional Investigation," 318.
He, too, was not above trying to capitalize on his advance knowledge of the French alliance. But Currey admits that the constant trouble among the commissioners was disgraceful, he blames Franklin and Deane for the quarrel, since they were responsible for the economic discrepancies that appeared in the financial records. Lee's solution for alleviating such mishandling of public funds was to place himself in sole charge of the Paris mission.

Although Silas Deane was more victimized by Arthur Lee's accusations, Benjamin Franklin did not completely escape Arthur's attempts to discredit him. Because of his established reputation and his popularity in Europe, he was less vulnerable, however. Richard Henry Lee criticizes Franklin's aggravating temperament and inclination towards frivolity in France. Carl Van Doren's biography of Franklin (1941) refutes the idea that Arthur enjoyed a position in the virtuous majority. Van Doren maintains that Lee would remain in the minority as Franklin would always be supported by the majority and would not be affected by his shrill accusations. Lee bred trouble where he could not find it, and Franklin summarily commented on the recall of both Lees and Izard that "... no soul regrets their departure. ...".

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42 Morris, *Peacemakers*, p. 11.
43 Currey, *Code #72*, pp. 210-211.
45 Carl Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Garden
Franklin's personal business and his associations also aroused Lee's suspicions. Auger acknowledges Franklin's involvement in the Vandalia operation but charges that Lee was bitter, because the Ohio Company, with which he had been associated, had been displaced by the more successful Vandalia.  

Another question associated with Lee's career was his relationship with John Thornton. Originally Thornton gained Lee's confidence by supplying the information that Deane had sent Bancroft to London to gamble on stocks, but soon Lee became the main source of information for the British spy. H. James Henderson's article on the congressional factionalism and the efforts to recall Franklin (1970) states that Lee also charged Franklin with stockjobbing.

Whatever doubts earlier historians have concerning the validity of Lee's accusations, Currey believes that Franklin's activities with regard to Lee amply demonstrate his perfidy. According to Currey, Franklin's nefarious plans are best demonstrated by the plot to place Thornton in Lee's employ which would hopefully ruin his credibility. Lee had come dangerously close to recognizing the working relationship Bancroft enjoyed with Franklin as well as Deane, and

City Publishing Co., 1941), pp. 584, 609. (Hereinafter referred to as Van Doren, Franklin.)

Auger, Secret War, pp. 197, 272-273; see also Van Doren, Franklin, p. 382. Because Lee was not always in the confidence of Franklin and Deane, Thornton could not learn much.

Henderson, "Congressional Factionalism," 249.
Franklin conceived of this plot to discredit Lee. Lee also charged that Franklin was stealing from public funds. However, Vergennes discounted Lee's charges because of his association with Thornton, and Congress placed little credence in his attack on Franklin. Thus, Lee's importance has been diminished in historical perspective.\textsuperscript{48}

Although Lee remained in Paris working with Adams and Franklin, he, too, was eventually recalled by Congress. Deane's charges against him of revealing information to Shelburne, of sponsoring Dr. Berkenhout while he was a British agent in America, and of dragging out the French negotiations to give England time for a counter-proposal proved too critical for Congress to overlook. Lee considered his recall a form of censure, but in 1789 an investigating congressional committee concluded that his conduct while in Europe had been creditable.\textsuperscript{50}

The only significant result of the recall of the two feuding diplomats was the sectional feelings that surfaced. Richard Henry Lee verifies the sectional interests in Europe, saying that Arthur worked to import supplies to Virginia, while Franklin and Deane favored northern interests.\textsuperscript{51} On the subject of the sectional split over the recall, James states that the Lee brothers and Ralph Izard were convinced

\textsuperscript{48}\textsuperscript{48}Currey, Code #72, pp. 191-192.
\textsuperscript{49}\textsuperscript{49}James, "Revolutionary Career," pp. 164-165.
\textsuperscript{50}\textsuperscript{50}Currey, Code #72, p. 235.
that Franklin approved of Deane’s favoring New England’s commercial interests over southern agriculture. Franklin was fortunate to remain untouched by the condemnation of the Lees, while Deane was more vulnerable.

The French interference in the congressional dispute only widened the breach between New England and the South. Gérard’s campaign against Lee did nothing to heal the dispute, according to Stinchcombe. Gérard emerged victorious from the congressional and personal battles, as he was successful in replacing Lee with Jay who the French assumed would not insist on all the American claims for fishing rights. Henderson also discusses the French cabal against Lee, pointing out that Gérard was able to secure southern support for his cause. Gérard emphasized Lee’s unfavorable position in Paris, and he persuaded a significant number of southerners to reject Lee in favor of a strong Franco-American alliance.

The major contribution of the Lee brothers to American diplomacy seems to be their undaunted persistence in attempting to gain recognition of American independence from European countries. Arthur was the more controversial of the two brothers as he endeavored to direct the commission at Paris, to travel to other European courts seeking recognition of American independence, and to curtail the extraneous

52 James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 123.
53 Stinchcombe, French Alliance, p. 66.
financial activities in which he suspected Franklin and Deane of indulging. Despite the discussions of Arthur's diplomatic career, Samuel Flagg Bemis describes him "... as an historical mystery, who may never be satisfactorily known. ..."

Arthur Lee's papers have never been systematically arranged. They were randomly divided in three parts and placed in the libraries of the University of Virginia, Harvard College and the American Philosophical Society. Richard Henry Lee's account of the life of Arthur Lee is the only printed source using most of these papers. Thus this two-volume work has become the main point of reference based on primary material on Lee. However, the outstanding bias in favor of Arthur is indicated by his editorial comments. Therefore, historians are without biographies of Arthur Lee that would be more objective. Two of the best primary sources are the volumes of diplomatic correspondence edited by either Sparks or Wharton, as they explain the controversies surrounding both Lee brothers. Historians also gain background on the activities of the Lees in Europe from the papers and correspondence of Franklin and Deane.

The diverse interpretations which historians provide demonstrate that there are no definite answers as to whether Arthur and William Lee's diplomatic behavior actually benefitted the United States. Those authors who deal with Arthur

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55 Bemis, Diplomacy, p. 268.
Lee to any extent, like Bemis, Miller, Auger and James, rely upon the primary sources mentioned above. Bemis is once again outstanding from the standpoint of his sources as he also derives information from the official documents of the countries where the Lees journeyed. Diametrically opposing the informative studies by Miller and Bemis is Cecil B. Currey's sensational account of Franklin's activities in Paris which lead Currey to assume he was sympathetic to and spying for the British Empire. Since Franklin and the Lees were constantly feuding, they, and especially Arthur, enjoy high commendation from Currey for their efforts to control Franklin and Deane. Thomas Perkins Abernethy's article contrasts significantly with Currey's vindictive account, although he also is attempting to demonstrate that history has unjustly condemned the Lees. However, his approach is more subdued and scholarly than Currey's, and thus lends more credence to his defense of the Lees's charges against Franklin.

The controversies concerning the diplomatic careers of Arthur and William Lee arise primarily from Arthur's suspicious and stubborn temperament. The feud over the repayments to Beaumarchais creates disagreement among historians. Because Beaumarchais switched from Lee to Deane in negotiating for French aid to America, Hale, Miller, Auger and James all agree that Lee contrived the notion that French aid was given gratis to America. Bemis states a different opinion. He assumes that Congress was at fault for supporting Lee's
arguments, because it should have realized that Deane had been officially authorized to buy supplies.

In other discussions, Bemis, Currey and even James agree that Arthur's support of America was undeviating, and Richard Henry Lee credits him for establishing the basis for French-American negotiations upon which Franklin and Deane would later capitalize. Corwin also defends Lee's patriotism and success in dealing with the French. Currey's anti-Franklin bias is emphasized by his praise of Lee's concern for American sovereignty. Once again, Miller and Auger concur that Lee actually was only a minor figure in the Franco-American negotiations, because he incurred the dislike of both Vergennes and Gérard, who launched a campaign against Lee in the United States. Most of the historians attempt to present both the positive and negative aspects of Lee's career in Europe, while Currey makes no pretense at disguising his sentiments that Lee was the only honest member of the Paris commission.

Most historians agree that Arthur's diplomatic ventures to foreign courts to seek recognition of American independence were ineffective. Auger is especially critical of the policy of "militia diplomacy," as it was only a method conjured up by the Lees to satisfy their personal egos. Richard Henry Lee is forced to acknowledge that Lee's Spanish mission was inconsequential, at best, and served only to emphasize his willingness for public service. The Prussian venture was a formidable task, and it was no discredit to
Lee that nothing was accomplished. Auger and Miller dispel any illusions that Lee achieved anything of significance in Prussia, and even Currey considers the theft of the important state papers as the outstanding event of this mission.

Both Lees were involved in the feud with Franklin and Deane. Characteristically, Currey defends Arthur's position in attempting to halt the dishonest activities of Franklin and Deane. In a more objective and informative study, Thomas Perkins Abernethy explains in detail the origins of the hostilities among the men, and criticizes other historians for ignoring obvious evidence that would implicate Franklin and Deane for diverting public money for their private use. In contrast, Miller, James and Auger find many of Arthur's charges against Deane and Franklin lacking in evidence. Carl Van Doren dismisses Arthur's charges against Franklin as unbelievable. The outcome of this serious dispute was the recall of both Arthur Lee and Silas Deane. Ferguson represents the majority opinion stating that the United States gained more strength diplomatically after their recall as it could depend upon Jay and Adams who were less concerned with personal gain.

Defending the Lees is a difficult task, and thus even historians who support their motives do not always commend the way in which they executed their plans to make independence possible. The temperaments of the Lees have made them controversial in a study of American diplomacy, but they undeniably added another dimension of interest to American diplomacy.
CHAPTER IV

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S CAREER IN EUROPE

The early foreign policy of the United States combined varying degrees of pleading, pressure and tact, and history has traditionally praised Benjamin Franklin for his unique ability in applying these qualities to help achieve American independence. His perceptive approach in dealing with the French and his general dedication to the American cause were not the only factors contributing to the winning of independence, but some historians credit his abilities as guaranteeing the success of American foreign policy. Other historians reject his role as a hero and criticize his actions as a diplomat. The debate over Franklin's career in Europe encompasses many aspects of diplomacy, but this chapter will not attempt to discuss the details of his diplomatic efforts. Rather it shall explain the situations he encountered in Paris and the conduct of his career there. Historians disagree on Franklin's attitudes towards the purpose of diplomacy. Also, his friendly approach towards France, its officials and its people have made some authors skeptical that he might have been less inclined while negotiating to keep American interests foremost. However, the "pressure diplomacy" that he applied to Vergennes implies to other historians
that he was more committed to American interests than to French desires. According to critics, Franklin maintained an interest in land speculation which diverted his attention from diplomacy to personal financial concerns. This activity, along with Franklin's association with Edward Bancroft and other Englishmen suspected of spying, aroused the wrath of the Lee clan, especially Arthur. Naturally, historians have argued over the validity of the Lees's attacks on Franklin, and the effects they had on the American commission in Paris. Although Congress believed it had alleviated the problem of personality conflicts when it appointed John Adams to succeed Silas Deane, the conflicts over life styles and diplomatic tactics between Franklin and Adams have caused historical controversy. Franklin and John Jay were compatible on the peace commission, yet their differences over procedures during the peace negotiations with England stimulate an historical debate. Historians disagree whether Jay induced Franklin to support separate negotiations with the English, or whether Franklin suggested the idea himself out of dedication to American independence.

Franklin had formulated opinions concerning diplomacy and its purposes before he left the United States for his official mission in Paris. Historians encounter problems in defining precisely what these opinions were and how Franklin planned to execute his diplomacy. Franklin generally opposed the idea of seeking recognition from European countries, which he characterized as "militia diplomacy."
However, his instructions from John Hancock stipulated that Franklin should seek recognition and aid from France and Spain.¹ Francis Wharton, a nineteenth-century editor and author, explains in his first volume, which introduces an extensive collection of revolutionary diplomatic correspondence, that militia diplomacy caused the United States problems since Congress sent unqualified men drifting about Europe seeking aid and recognition. Franklin differed from these inexperienced men because of previous assignments in England beginning in 1757 as a pre-revolutionary colonial agent. According to Wharton, he demonstrated exceptional diplomatic ability.²

A group of distinguished twentieth-century historians, Samuel Flagg Bemis, Gerald Stourzh and Richard B. Morris, agree that Franklin was humiliated by the prospect of running from court to court "'begging for money and friendship.'"³ Stourzh's *Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy* (1954), which is an excellent study of Franklin's attitudes toward foreign policy, claims that from the inception of militia diplomacy in 1776, Franklin maintained a consistent opposition to it.⁴ Morris, in *The Peacemakers, the Great Powers and American Independence* (1965), also

¹Hale, Franklin, I, pp. 63-64.
²Wharton, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, I, pp. 294, 487-488.
⁴Stourzh, *Franklin, Foreign Policy*, p. 126.
emphasizes Franklin's continued dislike of militia diplomacy as he criticized Adams's mission to Holland as another humiliating experience of begging for money.  

Franklin's opposition to militia diplomacy did not mean that he objected to any form of relations with Europe. Felix Gilbert's article on new American diplomacy in World Politics (1951) states that Franklin devised his own formula for the direction America should take in establishing a role in world affairs. He explains that Franklin believed commerce would be the basis for diplomatic relations between France and the United States. Franklin separated cooperation at sea from cooperation on land. While he preferred that no member of the French army should ever place foot in America, he would commit America to a monopolistic commercial agreement with France. Stourzh agrees that Franklin desired only commercial relationships in Europe while avoiding any entanglements in European feuds and negotiating only from a position of strength. Franklin concluded that American diplomacy should be based upon security as one of the natural rights of man, rather than upon power politics. Franklin's vision of world peace and security is demonstrated in a conversation he had with a young Englishman. In speaking of nations of the world, he said,

But, if they would have patience, I think they might accomplish it . . . agree upon an alliance against all aggressors, and agree to refer all disputes between each

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5 Morris, Peacemakers, p. 190.
other to some third person, or set of men, or power. Other nations, seeing the advantage of this, would gradually accede; and perhaps in one hundred years, all Europe would be included.  

However, Franklin's love of peace never implied that he would neglect precautions which a "world of power politics required." He urged that the United States guard her position in the world by maintaining fidelity to the treaties agreed upon, and avoiding being lulled into a false sense of security. Critics complain that Franklin failed to distinguish between French aid and the intention of the French government to surround the new nation with certain checks to prevent her from becoming entirely independent. Franklin always intended that the United States would be independent, a point his critics often ignore.  

In Coy Hilton James's unpublished dissertation, Franklin is presented as a commercial diplomat, but James realizes that his economic plan for the United States included ships from all countries, not only from France. One of the consequences of American independence from England would be the exclusion of the United States from the British mercantile system. Therefore, she would have to establish her own trading enterprises. Franklin reasoned that a non-aggressive policy towards France was feasible, because he believed France realized that it was in the best interests of her

6 Stourzh, Franklin, Foreign Policy, pp. 134, 223.
7 Ibid., pp. 246, 180.
commerce that the United States break away from England. James's analysis of Franklin's diplomacy emphasizes the importance Franklin placed on winning the affection of the French people, and then the government. Still the most important guide to Franklin's attitude towards diplomacy was his dictum that, "... a virgin state should not go suitoring after alliances, but wait with a degree of dignity for the application of others."

In contrast to earlier authors, Max Beloff's article, "Benjamin Franklin: International Statesman" (1955), primarily considers Franklin's desire for imperial unity. Beloff perceives that Franklin sought a commercial policy equally beneficial to both the United States and Great Britain. Franklin then began to consider how the United States could take advantage of the desire of France and Spain to weaken the British Empire without falling into dependency upon Britain's enemies. Beloff's evaluation concludes that Franklin meant to achieve an early form of manifest destiny, since he believed it was the future of the United States to expand without any entangling alliances.

Stourzh's thorough treatment of Franklin's diplomacy lessens the importance of the remarks of other historians.

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8 James, "Revolutionary Career," pp. 62, 109, 68.

However, Julian P. Boyd's article on Silas Deane (1959) does comment briefly on Franklin's fitness for diplomacy. The diplomatic success of Franklin was commendable, because he was able to ignore the narrow suspicions of the Lees and Izard and transcend the charges of disloyalty.\(^\text{10}\)

Page Smith, in his biography of John Adams (1962), discredits Franklin by calling him indolent. However, he maintains that Franklin's personality was ideal for a diplomat, because he had a style with which everyone could identify, while Adams in comparison seemed austere and self-righteous.\(^\text{11}\)

Some historians commend Franklin's influence in forming the French-American treaties of 1778, while a few authors have criticized his self-interest and his general indifference to their success. Franklin's autobiographical writings talk very little about the negotiating procedures. However, his tactic with Louis XVI was to emphasize America's sole reliance upon French power. Franklin states that the king's friendship for the United States was demonstrated through the fairness of the treaties, and France's refusal to claim any special privileges in commerce with America.\(^\text{12}\)

A question which arises from historical interpretations of Franklin's policy towards the French relates to his use of pressure tactics or pressure diplomacy in urging the

\(^{10}\)Boyd, "Silas Deane," 228.

\(^{11}\)Smith, \textit{Adams}, I, p. 281.

\(^{12}\)Van Doren, ed., \textit{Autobiographical Writings}, pp. 434-435.
French to negotiate a treaty. Samuel Flagg Bemis's "British Secret Service and the French-American Alliance" (1934) first introduces the concept that Franklin was willing to coerce France into the alliance with the United States. For instance, he made sure that Vergennes knew about his talks with Paul Wentworth, in order that the French foreign minister would fear American reconciliation with Britain. However, Bernard Fay indicates that Franklin was sympathetic with Vergennes's hesitency in making a formal agreement with the Americans. He briefly mentions that Franklin employed some pressure on Vergennes but does not explain if it was successful. Fay does not attempt to discredit Franklin's importance in dealing with Vergennes, as he emphasizes that the envoy had considerable influence over Vergennes. However, France entered the war not only for America's benefit but also to teach Britain a lesson and to gain "... only a few commercial advantages." Franklin, too, considered his country's welfare as he appealed to the American people to support the cause of independence, thus showing potential European supporters that they were sincere in their efforts.

In his book, Triumph of Freedom (1948), John C. Miller agrees with Bemis that Franklin was primarily concerned with securing the alliance and would resort to devious means to achieve it. When he found Vergennes hesitating, he purposely

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spoke with Benjamin Vaughan in a Paris bathhouse, hoping to frighten Vergennes into believing that reconciliation with Britain was possible. He deliberately tried to make the French anxious by spreading the rumor that he would soon leave for England in the role of a peacemaker. Miller agrees that Franklin's tactics were successful, but he also praises France for demonstrating enlightened thought in agreeing to the text of the treaty.\textsuperscript{15}

Once again, Gerald Stourzh's analysis of Franklin's policy towards France is objective and informative. It was not Franklin alone who was responsible for the successful negotiations of the treaties; rather a history of the French alliance indicates that her national interests, not personalities, decided the issue. However, Franklin's prestige served to influence public opinion in France to support Vergennes's policy. Franklin understood the French desire to re-establish their prestige, yet he cared more for the honor of the United States in Europe and was reluctant to beg for financial help.\textsuperscript{16}

According to Helen Auger's book, The Secret War of Independence (1954), both Franklin and Vergennes understood each other's motives. Vergennes wanted an alliance to weaken Britain rather than to emancipate the United States, and Franklin was willing to play the game of power politics in

\textsuperscript{15}Miller, \textit{Triumph}, pp. 295, 301, 306.

\textsuperscript{16}Stourzh, \textit{Franklin, Foreign Policy}, pp. 253-254, 140, 162.
order to keep France as an ally. Therefore, they played a game of delicate manipulation to see where their interests could merge. The statement that no separate peace would be concluded was the point where their interests coincided, as France could relax from the fear of an Anglo-American reconciliation, and the United States could receive much needed aid.

Considering the possibility of Franklin's use of pressure diplomacy, Max Beloff denies the entire concept, while James, Boyd and Roger Burlingame, *Benjamin Franklin: Envoy Extraordinary* (1967), agree that it was used with success. Beloff argues that Franklin's affection for France prevented him from employing such tactics. James, Boyd and Burlingame point out that Franklin met with Wentworth in an effort to frighten France into thinking that Anglo-American reconciliation was near. Burlingame considers Franklin's plan of meeting with Wentworth to intimidate France into supplying aid as an adroit demonstration of diplomacy.

Franklin's major critic, Cecil Currey, in *Code #72, Ben Franklin: Patriot or Spy* (1972), contends that Franklin went to Paris to satisfy personal motives. If the American cause succeeded, he would receive great acclaim for negotia-

17Auger, *Secret War*, p. 150.


19James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 117; see also Boyd, "Silas Deane," 329.

tions with France. If it failed, he would be safer in Paris than in the United States. Edmund Burke, a close friend of Franklin's during his previous residence in England, argued that Franklin would never end a long life with "'so foul and dishonourable a fight.'" Currey believes that Franklin's strongest attachments were with Great Britain, rather than with either France or the United States.

While historians argue about Franklin's intentions in dealing with the French government, they generally agree that Franklin's relationship with the French people had a positive effect in securing the alliance. Hale indicates that the French generated their enthusiasm for the United States because of Franklin's example in France. According to Corwin, Franklin could demand that terms of equality be incorporated into the treaty, because the French greatly respected him. Auger's statement that the French were enthusiastic about Franklin to the point of hysteria seems a bit exaggerated, yet fits into the rather dramatic tone of her book. Changing his analysis from his earlier article, Bemis concludes in The Diplomacy of the American Revolution (1935) that Franklin, rather than the commission, personified the American cause in 1777, and that his flair

21 Currey, Code #72, pp. 75-76, 78.
22 Hale, Franklin, I, p. 69.
23 Corwin, French Policy, p. 93.
24 Auger, Secret War, p. 148.
for public opinion made him the "American virtuoso" in Paris. More recently, Claude Anne Lopez states that Franklin's arrival in France had a vital effect in stimulating the French war effort because of his favorable reception by French officials, as well as by influential members of French society and the common man.

Any agreement that historians arrived at concerning Franklin's favorable impression on the French ceases as they discuss his outside financial interests in relation to his commitment to his diplomatic duties. The main issue centers around Franklin's involvement in the Vandalia operation, which had been organized for large-scale speculation in western lands. Stourzh denies that Franklin had any personal interest in western lands. Primarily, Franklin considered these lands as possessions of the United States, and did not mention them in his plan of confederation or the peace treaty. He deemed it inappropriate to speak about the western lands as they were not his immediate concern. Although Auger recognizes Franklin's connection with The Vandalia Company, she insists that during the Revolution, he was one of the few men without any private business interests.

Julian P. Boyd and Richard B. Morris maintain that

25Bemis, Diplomacy, pp. 48-49.
27Stourzh, Franklin, Foreign Policy, p. 204.
28Auger, Secret War, p. 198.
Franklin retained his association with Vandalia during the Revolution, which Burlingame denies. According to Boyd, Franklin's statement withdrawing his name from the list of Vandalia associates was a mere formality, since he retained his shares in the company. Franklin hoped that "'when the troubles of America are over my posterity will reap the benefits of them.'"29 Such involvement ran counter to public policy and not only involved him but also Bancroft and Deane in correspondence with the enemy. Richard B. Morris agrees that Franklin created a conflict between public service and private interest, by maintaining secret holdings in the Vandalia Company. However, he concludes that Franklin's speculative interests seem not to have affected his patriotism.30 Burlingame denies that Franklin indulged in any questionable financial activities while in France by pointing out that Franklin disapproved of the privateering war as it offered too many personal advantages for the commissioners.31

Currey is unalterably convinced that Franklin was involved in some form of commercial enterprise. Currey is inclined to make such accusations, and without any qualifications, he places Franklin in the midst of private financial operations, although he lacks evidence. Supposedly Franklin

30 Morris, Peacemakers, p. 249.
31 Burlingame, Envoy, p. 175.
utilized the eleven months before the treaty was ratified for commercial ventures of his own. In addition, Franklin received written information via Edward Bancroft from Thomas Walpole, the English banker, relating to Walpole's efforts to purchase shares of stock in the land enterprise from other men. Walpole also enclosed Franklin's share of the profits. Finally, he and Deane regularly purchased captured prizes at a low price, only to sell them at considerable profit.\(^\text{32}\)

Franklin's friendship with Silas Deane, a man whom many historians suspect of dishonest intentions in the Revolution, also raises questions as to his loyalty. In 1782 Franklin finally qualified his support of Silas Deane, explaining to Deane that the respect held for him in the United States had diminished after the publication of his letters condemning the Revolution. It appeared to many Americans that Deane had abandoned his country's cause, as Benedict Arnold had done.\(^\text{33}\) Hale's account of Franklin's career in France indicates that Franklin might have been made cognizant of Deane's commercial business with the French from Beaumarchais, Vergennes, or Deane himself, but probably deemed it none of his business.\(^\text{34}\)

Although some historians implicate Deane, Faÿ, Auger

\(^{32}\)Currey, Code #72, pp. 114-115, 144, 148.

\(^{33}\)Van Doren, ed., Autobiographical Writings, p. 513.

\(^{34}\)Hale, Franklin, I, p. 51.
and James state that Franklin readily defended Deane from Arthur Lee's charges, thereby risking the wrath of the Lee family. Franklin and Deane found relief from Lee's haranguing by sending Lee on diplomatic missions to Spain and Prussia. Auger sympathizes with this action and with Franklin's defense of Deane. Although Deane might have been involved in questionable financial transactions, Franklin missed him after his recall by Congress, since Adams and Lee were not helpful in running the commercial aspects of the war. Also, James suggests that their compatibility during the mission in Paris induced Franklin to defend Deane against Arthur Lee.

In contrast to the preceding opinions, Boyd and Currey are most suspicious of the friendship between Franklin and Deane. Franklin was concerned with protecting his personal interests, and thus recommended that Congress settle its accounts with Deane. Remaining out of the controversy, Franklin managed to emerge as an impartial witness, while Deane was accused of spying for the British. Currey criticizes historians who have dismissed the idea that Franklin knew of Deane's treachery. Franklin's virtual escape from historical condemnation further infuriates Currey.

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35Fay, Apostle, p. 443.
36James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 41.
38Currey, Code #72, p. 142.
Franklin's acquaintance with men known to be associated with the British Secret Service arouses additional criticisms about his conduct in Europe. His eminent biographer, Carl Van Doren, explains that Franklin trusted most men, including Edward Bancroft. Miller agrees that Franklin and Deane implicitly trusted Bancroft, sharing secrets with him that they withheld from other American diplomats in Europe. Auger does not indicate that Franklin and Bancroft enjoyed a particularly close relationship, and any association was a result of a failing in Franklin's usually shrewd analysis of character. Continuing the theme of Franklin's curious gullibility about the innate goodness of mankind, Burlingame hesitates to accuse Franklin of deliberately passing information to the British, although Franklin was exceedingly casual in his disregard of the warning that British spies surrounded him. His reply to the advice that he should be more cautious with his papers was that he had nothing to hide.

In contrast to authors who defend Franklin's involvement with Bancroft as innocent, Van Alstyne and Currey disclose that he was aware of Bancroft's association with the British. Van Alstyne states that Eden, knowing of Bancroft's close friendship with Franklin and Deane, paid him to keep

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40 Miller, *Triumph*, p. 283.
the British government informed about their activities. According to Van Alstyne, Bancroft's importance has been exaggerated by historians, who have failed to observe that Stormont had no dealings with Bancroft since his sources of intelligence were superior to those of Bancroft.43

This theory is quickly discounted by Currey who places Franklin in the center of the spy network. The only reason Bancroft even associated with Deane was because Bancroft realized that he would then be closer to Franklin. Franklin accepted Bancroft's frequent travels across the channel, because he returned with information supposedly valuable to American efforts, although it happened to be false. Currey provides considerable detail regarding Franklin's associations with Bancroft, Deane, Carmichael, Captain Joseph Hynson, and Samuel Wharton. Currey absolves Franklin only on the charge that he carried on regular conversations with Wentworth, because it appeared that Franklin was adamant for independence when he did talk with Wentworth.44

The man who has caused historians to argue about Franklin's character was one of the original commissioners, Arthur Lee. Although Franklin rebutted the charges of secrecy and dishonesty that Lee made against him with the succinct reply that he was responsible only to the public and Congress,45 Lee was relentless in his campaign against Franklin. When-

43 Van Alstyne, Empire, p. 134.
44 Currey, Code #72, pp. 67, 88, 187.
45 Van Doren, ed., Autobiographical Writings, pp. 440-442.
ever Lee was in Paris, the commission was torn with strife, as he went about Paris "whispering whatever suspicion occurred to him at the moment." Only when Lee was gone was Franklin free from his intrigues, according to the Hales. 46

Although the Lees have generally been considered as the instigators of the quarrels involving themselves, Franklin and Deane, some historians have defended their actions. Thomas Perkins Abernethy of the University of Virginia criticizes the historical practice of hero-worship that tends to discard evidence that Franklin was not altogether upright in his actions. His short article, based upon the correspondence of the ministers and their associates, emphasizes that the argument between Deane and Franklin and the Lees arose, because the first two were intent on taking the privateering business out of the hands of the agents appointed by Congress and obtaining control of it for their own purposes. Thus Congress was deprived of a source of considerable profit, which outraged Arthur Lee's pure sense of honesty. These historians who have condemned the Lees have used general accusations, while Abernethy feels that the evidence of Franklin's commercial activity and his concerted efforts to withhold records from public accounting is more concrete. 47

Other historians condemn Lee's tirades against Franklin and commend the latter's unusual calmness in coping with

46 Hale, Franklin, I, p. 140.
47 Abernethy, "Franklin-Lee Imbroglio," 52.
Lee's hysteria. Van Doren justifies Franklin's efforts to exclude the Virginian from the commission's confidence, because he knew that Lee's own secretary was a spy. Assurances from Lord North that Franklin was not engaged in stock-jobbing failed to convince Lee that Franklin was an honorable person. Throughout Lee's verbal accusations, Franklin remained the master of the serenity which has come to personify his character. However, Franklin's calmness eventually became disturbed by Lee's activities, especially when he masterminded a plan to remove all the commissioners but himself from Paris.

Of course, Currey sympathizes with Lee's efforts to again make the commission honest. Franklin angrily denied Lee's accusations, because he wanted to protect himself. His concern about the commission was only secondary. Currey adds that every time Lee left Paris, the two remaining commissioners virtually forgot about diplomacy. Whenever Lee returned, Franklin did his best to ignore him, and finally embarked upon a plan to discredit him by arranging to install the Britisher, John Thornton, as Lee's personal secretary and then openly proclaim Lee's insanity.

Because of Lee's ambitious project to have Franklin as

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48 Van Doren, ed., Autobiographical Writings, pp. 282, 598-599.
49 James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 105; see also, Auger, Secret War, p. 217.
50 Currey, Code #72, pp. 156, 191-192.
well as Deane recalled, the controversy that arose in Congress must be mentioned. H. James Henderson's article on the recall of Franklin (1970) aptly illustrates the sectionalism of the country as demonstrated in Congress. Although some members of Congress felt a wholesale revamping of the diplomatic service was needed, any efforts in that direction only caused a battle over personal and sectional interests. Robert Morris felt that, in order that he might obtain one of the diplomatic posts in Europe, Franklin must be recalled. Gérard was not adverse to this, as he would have been able to manipulate the ministers with greater ease. Ultimately Franklin was able to maintain a neutral position in Congress which gained his reappointment.

If Franklin anticipated that the congressional recall of Silas Deane would result in a replacement who would bring harmony among the commissioners, he was to be disappointed with the appointment of John Adams. Adams turned out to be another antagonist of Franklin's. In view of Adams's disgust over Franklin's obvious enjoyment of French society, and his direct antagonism against Vergennes, some authors contend that Adams made it difficult to secure aid from the French. On the other hand, proponents of Adams's hard-line diplomacy applaud it as necessary in stabilizing the turbulent commission. Although Adams had no specific reason to be critical of Franklin, his Autobiography and Diary (1777-

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51 Henderson, "Congressional Factionalism," 265-266.
1780) states that upon his arrival in Paris, he realized that he was destined to mediate between Franklin and Lee, and that his voice would be the deciding opinion. Hale's primary sources reveal that Adams regarded Franklin as susceptible to flattery by the French, but Adams failed to gain respect on the commission by arguing with Vergennes over the American desire to seek aid from Holland and particularly over the currency issue. Briefly the dispute over currency involved a congressional decision to pay off a French loan according to the value of the United States money at the time the loan-office certificates were issued. To Vergennes, it appeared that Congress was reducing the two hundred million dollars which it owed to five million, which would mean a considerable loss to French creditors. Adams reacted strongly against Vergennes's accusation that Congress depreciated its paper money in order to finance the Revolution and to avoid repaying the full amount due. Mutual distrust developed between Franklin and Adams, as Adams verbally fought with Vergennes over the currency problems. Adams's indiscreet and independent approach to Vergennes regarding currency depreciation intensified Franklin's dislike of Adams.

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53 Smith, Adams, I, p. 475.

54 Hale, Franklin, I, p. 380.
In his book, *John Adams* (1894), John T. Morse denies Franklin's charges that Adams interfered in the diplomacy with the French, especially with regards to the currency issue, which Franklin believed was his responsibility. Adams feared that Franklin was neglecting his duty by not establishing a basis for repayment of this Continental loan, and Adams felt obligated to clarify the issue with Vergennes. 55

Adams's desire for recognition motivated him to discredit Franklin, who was regarded with high esteem in Paris. Fay explains that Adams was irritated when he was relegated to a role subordinate to Franklin's, and thus he was impelled to believe the accusations which linked Franklin to British spies. 56 W. P. Cresson, in *Francis Dana, a Puritan Diplomat at the Court of Catherine the Great* (1930), quotes at length Adams's criticisms of Franklin. In Adams's mind Franklin had to be watched because in French hands he was "'submission itself.'" 57

Van Doren and Miller agree that the two men were not compatible, but Van Doren insists that the antipathy between them did not exist until the peace negotiations began. He


57 W. P. Cresson, *Francis Dana, A Puritan Diplomat at the Court of Catherine the Great* (New York: The Dial Press, 1930), p. 256. (Hereinafter referred to as Cresson, *Puritan Diplomat.*)
says that Adams respected Franklin and that Franklin reciprocated the feeling, although they disagreed fundamentally on how to deal with the French. By the time of the peace negotiations Adams had developed such an aversion to Franklin that he supported John Jay without reserve. Miller observes, however, that Adams led the fight in Congress against commissioning Franklin to seek an alliance with France. Upon his arrival in Paris, Adams was outraged at Franklin's indulgence in frivolities. Adams's chief rival for the position of "Number One Diplomat" was stealing the limelight despite Adams's efforts to lessen the French admiration for Franklin. Miller explains the irony in Adams's efforts to be recognized in history, as he seemed to be destined to be mentioned as "also being present." Adams's accusations that Franklin was deceitful and received orders from Vergennes were exaggerated, according to Miller.

There was a basic difference between Adams's blunt treatment of the French, which has been characterized as "shirtsleeves diplomacy," and Franklin's praise of France's generosity in negotiating the treaties. Thus, Stourzh explains that the disagreement between Franklin and Adams was over diplomatic tactics rather than basic policy. Although Adams criticized Franklin's "diplomacy of gratitude," at the conclusion of the peace negotiations, Adams agreed with Franklin that France's friendship was essential so long as

59 Miller, Triumph, pp. 273, 358-359.
Britain held Canada. James agrees that both men viewed the present in terms of how it would affect the future.

Page Smith, the talented biographer of John Adams, argues that Franklin enjoyed a life of dissipation in France while still receiving credit for his diplomatic accomplishments. Adams's constant criticism of Franklin included assertions that Franklin intentionally promoted his own fame and was overly conciliatory in his attitude towards France. Although Adams suggested that Franklin be made the sole minister plenipotentiary, Smith regards him as a more profound student of diplomacy than Franklin in spite of the latter's experience. However, Adams generously acknowledged, at the end of the peace negotiations, that Franklin had contributed to their success.

Basically Adams objected to Franklin's proclivity for indolence, as Morris and Van Alstyne agree, but they realize that Adams was tactless, which made working with him difficult. Morris maintains that Adams's treatment of Vergennes was too argumentative, whereas Franklin knew how to handle the French foreign minister. Morris indicates that Adams only gave credit to Franklin's efforts after the peace treaty was completed, and for him, this was "an enormous concession." Van Alstyne is inclined to defend Franklin against

60 Stourzh, Franklin, Foreign Policy, pp. 153, 183.
61 James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 62.
63 Morris, Peacemakers, pp. 196, 380.
Adams's criticism of his conduct in French society and in the circle of statesmen. Adams admitted that the French had no confidence in him, and Van Alstyne states that Adams had been offensive in his "indiscreet speeches." Adams's blunt policy led Franklin to refer to him as a "'mischievous madman,'" intent on forcing apart the Franco-American alliance upon which the United States depended and in which Franklin believed. 64

The most adamant critic of Franklin is Cecil B. Currey, who supports Adams's negative comments about the venerable diplomat. Of course, Adams regretted the diplomatic dispute which had arisen out of Franklin's alleged duplicity, and Adams had the courage to try to control the wily doctor. According to Currey, Franklin demonstrated his consistent opposition to alliances and friendships with European countries in his attempts to block Adams's diplomatic trip to Holland. 65

Fortunately for the peace effort, Franklin's relationship with John Jay was much less tempestuous. They were in accord about the goals of Jay's mission to Spain and of the peace negotiations, although Jay was skeptical of the French role in the peace talks. They reached an agreement on separate negotiations, which allowed the talks to proceed harmoniously. Also, according to Franklin, Frank Monaghan, Jay's biographer, and Richard B. Morris, they decided that any concessions to the Spanish concerning navigation on the Mississippi River

64 Van Alstyne, Empire, pp. 380, 164, 228.
65 Currey, Code #72, pp. 217, 235.
were inadvisable. 66

Roger Burlingame, Richard W. Van Alstyne and Cecil Currey indicate, however, that there was disagreement between Franklin and Jay after Jay arrived in Paris and the informal peace negotiations began. Jay disapproved of Franklin's informal conversations with the temporary peace commissioners from Britain. In addition, Jay suspected that a secret agreement between France and Spain had been ratified, and he began to press Franklin to cease including France in the peace discussion, a prospect that horrified Franklin. 67 Since Jay and Adams were close friends, Van Alstyne states that they regarded themselves as having performed a rescue operation for the United States against French wiles and Franklin's pliancy. 68 Currey commends Jay's independence and foresight in urging negotiations independently of France, despite Franklin's efforts to persuade Jay that France and Spain had not collaborated on a secret agreement. He intimates that Jay was reluctant to compliment Franklin's service in Paris. Currey points out that when Franklin requested that Jay write a letter to Congress supporting him, Jay's commendation was reserved at best. 69


68Van Alstyne, Empire, p. 214.

69Currey, Code #72, pp. 253, 259.
The last controversial activity engaged in by Franklin in Paris involves his efforts in the peace negotiations. Questions arise concerning his commitment to independence in contrast to his desire for reconciliation with Britain. Moreover, historians debate Franklin's actions regarding the congressional instructions which stipulated that France must be included in the proceedings, and his agreement with Adams and Jay to exclude the French. Franklin personally believed that a sincere reconciliation would be more beneficial than mere peace, because it would indicate that there was a mutual good will between the United States and England. When he began to negotiate officially with England, his personal comments show his resolve to abide by the congressional instructions stipulating that France be included in the peace talks, as he was positive that Spain, Holland and France would not negotiate separately.  

In his interpretation of Franklin's attitude towards reconciliation, Hale explains that Franklin assured Vergennes that he had rejected Hartley's proposal for reconciliation. Furthermore, he told Vergennes that he would avoid future interviews with Hartley in order that no breach might occur in the Franco-American alliance. In Fay's opinion, Franklin's commitment to peace and independence was so strong that Franklin was able to receive British envoys in the name of peace, and still maintain his position that no Loyalist in

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70 Van Doren, ed., Autobiographical Writings, pp. 521, 582.

71 Hale, Franklin, I, p. 224; II, p. 50.
the United States would ever benefit from her victory.  

Franklin's primary consideration was American independence, according to Frank Monaghan, Samuel Flagg Bemis, Arthur B. Darling (Our Rising Empire, 1763-1803, 1940), and Carl Van Doren. However, their views differ in discussing Franklin's opinion of the French alliance. His "necessary and advisable articles" in 1782 indicate that reconciliation was not a part of his plan for the United States. At the same time, Franklin distinctly stated that once independence was granted, "'... the Franco-American treaty was at an end.'" Bemis commends the entire commission for breaking away from rigid congressional instructions and taking advantage of European quarrels to make a successful treaty. Darling disagrees that Franklin intended to forget the French alliance, since Franklin rebuffed Hartley's proposal of a separate treaty, because no man in America would desert a "generous friend" for the sake of a truce with the enemy. However, Darling continues by explaining that Vergennes had no objection to separate negotiations, although he had no intention of supporting the land claims of the United States, since France recognized that it would make America more cautious if she knew Spain still held land adjacent to the new nation. Darling observes that Franklin never seems to have recognized Vergennes's intentions to impede the negotia-

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72 Fay, Apostle, pp. 475-477.
73 Monaghan, Jay, p. 192.
74 Bemis, Diplomacy, p. 255.
tions, or if he did, he did not deem his motives harmful. Franklin genuinely believed that French interest in American independence lay at the heart of French policy. 75 Van Doren agrees that Franklin was committed to independence. Moreover, Franklin understood that there was a certain amount of bartering over agreeable settlements going on among the three countries, so he went to Richard Oswald to use Canada as a bargaining point. According to Van Doren, Franklin regarded the cession of Canada as necessary to obtain a durable peace, and Franklin also reiterated that he would talk about nothing seriously until England empowered her agents to go beyond preliminaries. 76

Miller, Auger and Stourzh agree that Franklin's primary consideration was obtaining independence for the United States. Despite the rigid congressional instructions that the American commissioners were not to make a separate peace, Franklin violated these instructions, indicating a willingness to conduct peace talks in secret. The British were hopeful that he would then be willing to go all the way and make a separate peace. That Franklin would have jeopardized the French alliance is extremely unlikely, however. 77 Auger emphasizes that Franklin distrusted British motives when they

75Arthur Burr Darling, Our Rising Empire, 1763-1801 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 46-47, 66, 89. (Hereinafter referred to as Darling, Rising Empire.)

76Van Doren, Franklin, pp. 673, 368.

77Miller, Triumph, pp. 632-634.
offered him free passage to Britain to discuss a settlement. Because he held to his plan of independence, Auger claims that the peace treaty was a major accomplishment for revolutionary America and the future of the nation. According to Stourzh, Franklin's constant assurances of good will and his wishes for peace have occasioned an erroneous interpretation of his desire for peace with Great Britain. Actually, he was referring to the general happiness of mankind, while the British assumed he meant reconciliation with Great Britain.

Morris states that Franklin's decision to approach the peace negotiations independently of France proved that he realized the need to present a solid front to the British negotiators for the sake of independence, and thus he joined in supporting his two colleagues in negotiating without the French. Morris continues that Franklin played upon the divisions between Oswald and Thomas-Grenville, hoping that Shelburne would send Oswald back to Paris, since his moderation and sound judgment appealed to Franklin. In addition, the demand for Canada was only a technique Franklin employed to bring England around to his way of thinking on other aspects of the negotiations, and he never realistically thought the United States could obtain Canada. After the negotiations were completed, Franklin defended the failure of the commissioners to include France, assuring Vergennes that none of

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79 Stourzh, _Franklin, Foreign Policy_, p. 187.
the peace articles was detrimental to France. He managed to retain Vergennes's support of the United States by asking Vergennes if he would give the British the satisfaction of knowing that they had broken the Franco-American alliance. Van Alstyne credits Franklin with being the first to violate openly the congressional instructions of maintaining confidence in France. He goes further, saying that separate negotiations were agreeable to Vergennes, who was trying to extricate himself from pursuing both American interests and Spanish desires in America and Gibraltar.

Concluding the discussion of Franklin and the peace treaty, Currey intimates that Franklin worked against it. But Currey needs factual evidence to verify his allegations, which are conspicuously undocumented throughout his book.

In writing about Benjamin Franklin, historians have had access to his personal papers and correspondence, but the context in which this information is applied provides varying interpretations which make a historiographical discussion of these books possible. Those authors who focus on Franklin's career tend to present a more favorable impression of his diplomatic career than those who include the many aspects and complications of diplomacy in Europe and discuss the methods by which the American commissioners, individually

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80 Morris, Peacemakers, pp. 357, 276, 384.
81 Van Alstyne, Empire, p. 216.
82 Currey, Code #72, p. 256.
and collectively, approached the problems of negotiating for recognition and alliances in Europe. To illustrate this comparison, Bernard Faÿ, Carl Van Doren, Gerald Stourzh and Roger Burlingame praise Franklin's insight and tact in his diplomacy. Bernard Faÿ is useful because of his extensive use of French sources dealing with Franklin and his activities and associations in Paris. In addition, his French interpretation of American sources, especially Franklin's personal papers, serves to emphasize the twentieth-century viewpoint that Benjamin Franklin was vital to the success of American diplomacy in Europe. From the evidence offered through Franklin's autobiography, writings, and correspondence, Van Doren obviously believes that Franklin directed the success of the American commission in Europe. However, he does not limit his investigation only to Franklin's writings, as he includes English manuscript sources and monographs that deal with Franklin and life in America and Europe. This biography of Franklin is valuable for the insight it gives to the development of Franklin's career and philosophy, as well as for the information it furnishes about life in eighteenth-century America and Franklin's adaptation to the Parisian life-style. Gerald Stourzh's study about Franklin and his foreign policy also relies heavily on Franklin's personal writings and correspondence, but combines them with some European manuscripts and numerous monographs and articles dealing with Franklin's philosophy as it related to his foreign policy. Not only is this book necessary for an
understanding of Franklin's foreign policy, but it also provides useful comments about other secondary material written about Franklin as Stourzh compares his own interpretations to those of other historians. In comparison to the preceding authors, Roger Burlingame’s more recent book on Franklin's years in Europe is more elementary in its approach. However, he provides a bibliography for each chapter which indicates that his scholarship is commendable. His major sources of information are the volumes on Franklin edited by Smyth, in addition to English and American revolutionary correspondence. The last chapter of Burlingame’s book is a superficial analysis of Franklin in relationship to the United States in the 1960s, which only serves to weaken his somewhat interesting investigation of Franklin's European career.

Cecil Currey expends much effort in finding minute flaws in Franklin's diplomatic career and then expanding them into crimes of the highest magnitude, and one finds it difficult to believe that he has read the same sources as Stourzh and Van Doren. Although some recent historians believe that Currey's work is a necessary addition to provide historical perspective about Franklin, it does seem that Currey could have exercised better judgment than to base his hypotheses upon nebulous conjecture.

Naturally, those authors whose topics circumscribe the larger issue of the entire Revolution are unable to deal in specifics like those who concentrate on Franklin alone. However, Bemis, Miller and Darling ably discuss the important
aspects of Franklin's career in Europe. Once again, Bemis represents the transition to modern historical writing in his study of the beginning of American diplomatic history. Although most of his documentation is from official governmental transcripts from the United States and Europe, he also uses the personal papers of Franklin. He claims the best biography on Franklin up to the date of publication of his book is Fay's 1929 biography, and that is the only secondary source he uses in speaking of Franklin.

Arthur Darling's first chapters deal with the diplomatic activities of Jay and Franklin in Europe and their efforts on the peace commission. He includes primary sources such as the journals from the Continental Congress, Wharton's and Franklin's papers. His explanation of Franklin's efforts in Europe is useful. However, he obviously believes that John Jay was more crucial to the negotiations for a fair peace, so the section on Jay is more extensive.

John C. Miller's bibliography includes such an extensive listing of manuscript sources, memoirs and letters, historical collections, newspapers, monographs, and biographies that it would be impossible to mention them all. His use of Franklin's manuscripts from the American Philosophical Society constitute his major source on Franklin, which is supplemented by Van Doren's biography and numerous other primary sources from England and the United States. This book is an informed study of the men and events of the Revolution, internationally as well as nationally.
Richard Van Alstyne's short monograph concentrates more on the events of the Revolution, yet he does not ignore the men of importance in the diplomatic area. From Franklin's letters, personal papers and writings and numerous official reports and personal papers from England and France, Van Alstyne compiles an informative study that deals with Franklin's work in Europe and other selected aspects of diplomacy.

Other authors who contribute interpretations of American diplomacy and Franklin's participation in this phase of the American Revolution include James, Corwin, Morse, Cresson, Monaghan, and Smith. James's unpublished dissertation on Silas Deane uses extensively memoirs and personal papers of revolutionary leaders, including those of Franklin. He also has included biographies and other secondary sources, some of which are especially useful in dealing with Franklin, his association with Deane and Lee, and his contributions to diplomacy. Corwin's rather old but reliable book on French policy towards the American alliance relies mainly upon Doniol. Bemis commends this book as invaluable to his study of American diplomacy. It is easy to dismiss Morse's biography as of little historical value because of his complete lack of documentation and obvious prejudice in favor of John Adams. However, as a source of reference for Adams's career and his relations with the men on the American commission, it must be mentioned in a historiographical study. Cresson and Monaghan have written about figures in revolutionary diplomacy. Their use of collections of personal
papers and correspondence from the men on the commission in Paris enabled them to write biographies that are useful in studying Franklin's role in diplomacy. Smith concentrates his investigation on John Adams by using his personal papers and only briefly mentions Franklin. Finally, Hale's two volumes on Franklin, based entirely upon primary material, present insights into Franklin's public and private life in Paris.

The articles from periodicals relating to Franklin and his career in Europe are informative. Felix Gilbert's treatment of diplomacy in the eighteenth century is unique because of his sources. He combines extensive use of French works on political philosophy with primary material taken from the journals of Adams and Lee, as well as autobiographies of revolutionary leaders like Franklin. Max Beloff utilizes mainly the secondary sources by Stourzh, Bemis and Darling but does not ignore Franklin's papers or his correspondence. This article is very similar in viewpoint to Stourzh and Darling, and also attempts to compare the challenges facing Franklin in eighteenth-century diplomacy with those of twentieth-century diplomacy. Abernethy deviates from the traditionally laudatory approach to Franklin's activities in Paris, and emphasizes Lee's charges that Franklin and Deane conspired to take advantage of their positions in Paris for their own financial betterment. However, he states that historians have ignored evidence that implicates Franklin which he found investigating the papers of Deane,
Franklin and Lee. This unusual interpretation must be considered in a study of Franklin's diplomatic career. Julian P. Boyd's articles concentrating upon Silas Deane include his relationship with Franklin. Therefore, with characteristic scholarship, Boyd includes in his list of primary sources the papers and correspondence of Franklin.

Historians have debated the issues which have been discussed in this chapter. Although many times they are in agreement, there are points of conflict among their interpretations of historical data. Franklin's opposition to militia diplomacy is an accepted concept. However, the idea that he intended diplomacy to be based upon commerce is supported by Gilbert, Stourzh and James. Stourzh especially emphasizes that Franklin based his concept of commercial diplomacy upon the hope that the United States would always remain independent. Some authors maintain that Franklin believed an alliance with France was so important that he resorted to pressure tactics to persuade Vergennes that reconciliation with England was possible if France refused to give the United States formal support. Bemis, Miller, James, Boyd and Burlingame all agree that "pressure diplomacy" was part of Franklin's plan for securing the alliance. However, Beloff and Fay agree that perhaps the motivating force in the French agreement to an alliance with the United States was her desire to subvert England's power in Europe. Stourzh basically agrees that the French desire to reestablish her prestige, not the
activity of individuals, motivated her to conclude an agree-
ment with the United States.

Franklin's activities in Europe possibly extended beyond the realm of official diplomacy. According to Currey and Morris, his interest in personal financial gain created a conflict with his official duties. On the other hand, Stourzh, Auger and Burlingame deny that he engaged in any outside financial affiliations detrimental to the alli-
ance.

Because of Franklin's financial interests, his friend-
ship with Silas Deane and associations with the British in Paris, Arthur and William Lee engaged in a plot to discredit Franklin as well as Deane. Fay, Auger, James, Hale, and Franklin himself, agree that he was fully aware of Deane's faults but wished to protect Deane from Lee's venomous in-
vectives and efforts to have him recalled. Van Doren, Auger and Burlingame agree that Franklin trusted the goodness of mankind which was the major reason for his failure to recog-
nize Bancroft's evil motives. Van Alstyne claims that Ban-
croft's role in American revolutionary diplomacy has been exaggerated. But Currey and Abernethy point out that there is a basis for Lee's suspicions of Franklin. Abernethy's less dramatic account of the disagreement between Franklin and Lee emphasizes that he intends to defend Lee against the many historical criticisms of his career in Europe rather than to persecute Franklin.

Franklin's association with the other two peace com-
missioners, especially with John Adams, is another area of Franklin's career in Paris which historians discuss. Miller, Morris and Van Alstyne agree that Adams was unalterably jealous of Franklin's superior reception and position in Paris. Then Smith and Currey agree to some extent that Franklin and Adams were in opposition to each other because Adams feared that Franklin opposed any alliances with European countries which would further separate America from England. Except for Burlingame and Van Alstyne, historians generally agree that Jay and Franklin were compatible. Burlingame and Van Alstyne state that Jay was more willing to negotiate for peace without French assistance than was Franklin.

With regard to the peace commission, most historians agree that Franklin's first consideration was American independence. Darling, Bemis and Miller explain that Franklin's eventual willingness to negotiate separately with Great Britain indicate his dedication to independence. Morris studies the peace negotiations extensively and concludes that Franklin's efforts, along with those of Adams and Jay, were unjustly condemned by Congress which tried to appease France's anger over the separate treaty. Stourzh explains that some historians have mistakenly construed Franklin's determination for peace as a desire for reconciliation with England.

Franklin's diplomatic career involves criticism and praise for his efforts in Europe. His activity in Paris
is worthy of thorough investigation in the study of the
development of American diplomacy. Although there are
controversies involving his career as a diplomat, they
do not seriously detract from his significance in American
revolutionary diplomacy.
CHAPTER V

THE DIPLOMACY OF JOHN ADAMS IN EUROPE

The Adams family includes some of the most prominent and revered names in American history, and John Adams, as one of the major figures in the American Revolution, has been discussed extensively by historians. This chapter will investigate his diplomatic career during the Revolution, which included two trips to Europe. During the first he unsuccessfully negotiated with Vergennes for approval of a British-American trade agreement. Later he returned to negotiate a successful treaty with Holland and participated in the American peace negotiations with England along with Benjamin Franklin and John Jay. According to some historians, many of Adams's problems in Europe stemmed from his suspicions and his contentious approach to European officials. Other historians disagree with this criticism and praise his unwavering devotion to independence, regardless of how much it irritated European governments. Adams did not escape the unfortunate fight between Deane and Arthur Lee. Some historians argue that the Lee clan influenced him to support its side of the imbroglio, while other authors explain that Adams attempted to maintain his neutrality by refusing to enter into any of the investigations conducted against Deane. In addition, his relationship
with the French foreign minister, Vergennes, was far from harmonious, and historians debate if his obstinacy in refusing to follow Vergennes's advice about negotiating commercial treaties with England and Holland was detrimental to Franco-American relations. The difficulties Adams encountered in Holland while negotiating for an alliance causes some authors to question Adams's fitness for diplomacy, while others defend his tenacity in surmounting the endless delays of the Dutch government and achieving a commercial treaty beneficial to the United States. Adams's hostility towards Benjamin Franklin hindered the progress of the peace negotiations, according to some historians. Adams disagreed with Franklin's insistence that France be included in all the peace negotiations. He believed that Franklin's enjoyment of Parisian society and his affable relations with Vergennes proved his preference for the French over the United States. The varying interpretations of historians continue to make John Adams a controversial character in American diplomatic history.

One of Adams's principal supporters, John T. Morse, regards Adams as a competent diplomatic representative of the United States. Although Morse acknowledges in his book-length essay on John Adams (1899) that Adams was outspoken and incapable of concealing his dislike for certain people, he considers him to have been the right man in the right place. In comparison to Adams, Franklin was less capable
in the field of diplomacy.\(^1\) Since historical documentation is lacking in Morse's book, his personal prejudice for Adams is obvious.

Frank Monaghan, John Jay's biographer (1935), disagrees with Morse's support of Adams, and John C. Miller questions Adams's ability as a diplomat. Monaghan discusses Adams's patriotism but feels that his extreme devotion to the United States did not enhance his competency as an agent in Paris and adds that "... he was the complete egotist who suspected himself to be a universal genius." With his strict view of American isolationism, he divided the world into Americans and foreigners.\(^2\) Miller wonders how he could have exerted any significant influence in Europe, since he never lost the haughtiness and contentiousness which continually offended people.\(^3\)

Clinton Rossiter and Bernard Bailyn explain Adams's rather untraditional attitudes in Europe, while Richard B. Morris declines to criticize his unusual character traits. Rossiter's article, "The Legacy of John Adams" (1957), is an analysis of Adams's personality, including both positive

\(^1\) Morse, Adams, pp. 165-166, 168. See Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Warren Papers (70 volumes, Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1878), IV, p. 240. Adams was misplaced in the French Court because of his plain habits and unpolished manners. (Herein-after referred to as Warren Papers.)

\(^2\) Monaghan, Jay, p. 170.

\(^3\) Miller, Triumph, pp. 573-574.
and negative character traits. The core of Adams's political thought was an austere view of the nature of mankind, compounded by skepticism, distrust, pity and charity. However, he was not overbearing or conceited, but rather suffered from a lively sense of persecution which developed into a penchant for self-debasement. Franklin once said of him, "... always an honest man, often a wise one, but sometimes, in some things, absolutely out of his senses." If he deprecated himself, he compensated for this by maintaining courage and independence from outside influences in double portion.  

Rossiter's more understanding view of Adams's nature influences opinions expressed in later studies on Adams. Bernard Bailyn's short article on "Butterfield's Adams" (1962) also emphasizes Adams's insecurity. Adams never overcame his sensitivity to slights and ridicule, and his distrust of others was demonstrated by his suspicion that Franklin had hired a secretary to spy on him. Even Morris, who is enthusiastic about Franklin's role in diplomacy, seems almost sympathetic towards Adams's very touchy nature which, Morris says, resulted in inconsistency and an inability to ever make up his mind.

4Clinton Rossiter, "The Legacy of John Adams," The Yale Review, XLVI (June, 1957), 534. (Hereinafter referred to as Rossiter, "Legacy.")

5Bernard Bailyn, "Butterfield's Adams: Notes for a Sketch." William and Mary Quarterly, IX (April, 1962), 252. (Hereinafter referred to as Bailyn, "Butterfield's Adams.")

6Morris, Peacemakers, p. 207. See his example about Adams first wanting to go to Vienna, then noting its impropriety, then suggesting that he go.
This New England diplomat began his career in Paris, because Silas Deane had been recalled to America. Just how much Adams sympathized with the Lee family, with whom his name has been unalterably linked, has received varying degrees of affirmation and denial. His own account of the recall in his Diary and Autobiography agrees that Deane had spent sums of money which had remained unaccounted for, and had authorized contracts which had almost ruined the military and thoroughly embarrassed Congress. Because he believed that Deane and Franklin had been reluctant to supply information that might have cleared up questions about the accounts, he wrote to Samuel Adams that the ministers were living too high at the expense of the country and perhaps one minister would be sufficient. Adams does not mention that he urged that Franklin be appointed the sole minister in Paris.

According to Coy James and Page Smith, Adams refused to become involved in the Deane-Lee imbroglio. In a letter written in 1778, Adams explained that he had never concealed his sentiments against men whom he had opposed in public life, but that Deane "... is not and never was a man of enough importance to make me deviate from a rule I have observed all my life, when obliged to be a Man's Enemy, to be open and generously so." Page Smith's biography of Adams

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8 James, "Revolutionary Career," p. 136.
(1962) substantiates the view that Adams did not want to become involved in the controversy and refused to investigate Deane himself. However, he definitely sympathized with Arthur Lee's accusation that Deane conducted a personal business enterprise while in Paris. Smith commends Adams's initiative to proceed with the negotiations and overlook the Deane-Lee feud.9

Evidence that Adams remained free of the feud and its implications is provided by H. James Henderson's article on the recall of Benjamin Franklin (1970). The congressional investigation of the activities of the Paris commission implicated all the envoys except Adams.10

Hale, Bemis and Miller deny the suggestion that Adams adamantly opposed any alliances with European countries. Hale argues that Adams preferred strictly commercial treaties with no political or military clauses.11 Bemis mentions Adams's sympathy towards the alliance, stating that both he and Franklin agreed that alliances would facilitate independence as well as trade with all nations.12 Miller traces Adams's changing attitude towards the French alliance from his fight against the congressional commission instructing Franklin to make an alliance with France to his later

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9Smith, Adams, I, pp. 381, 376.
11Hale, Franklin, I, p. 179.
12Bemis, Diplomacy, p. 36.
declaration that it was "'a Rock upon which we may safely build.'" Regardless of his support of the French alliance, he strongly opposed any French interference in the internal affairs of the United States.¹³

One of the best analyses of Adams's sentiments towards the French alliance is Felix Gilbert's article on "The New Diplomacy of the 18th Century" (1951). Its second section deals with American diplomacy, and Gilbert utilizes journals, diaries and autobiographies to substantiate his interpretations. From these sources and secondary studies on American isolationism and foreign policy, Gilbert explains that Adams did not oppose the French alliance but rather wanted to avoid all obligations and temptations to take part in future European wars. Adams considered the only common interest the United States and Europe would share would be in the realm of commerce. Adams's step-by-step outline as to what an alliance should entail never implied a political bond. After Adams returned from The Hague, he was more convinced of the validity of establishing commercial relations with Europe, because peace was only a "delusive dream."¹⁴

According to William Stinchcombe in The American Revolution and the French Alliance (1969), John Adams intended to "strengthen independence" with the model treaty he drafted

¹³Miller, Triumph, pp. 381, 575.

¹⁴Felix Gilbert, "The New Diplomacy of the 18th Century," World Politics, IV (October, 1951), 19, 24, 30. (Hereinafter referred to as Gilbert, "New Diplomacy."
in 1776. This formed the basis for the instructions to the newly appointed commissioners to France. At this time, the questions of commerce and trade relations were secondary ones to Adams.15

Although most historians agree that Adams anticipated that the United States would benefit from the alliance, his personal relationship with Vergennes arouses much more controversy. Historians generally acknowledge that he was basically unable to get along with the foreign minister, but exactly who was responsible for the disagreements between them remains a controversial and unanswered question. Adams believed the arguments began when Vergennes impertinently refused to discuss the possibility of Adams's negotiating a treaty of commerce with England similar to that concluded with France until Gérard arrived with Adams's instructions from Philadelphia.16 Adams was offended by this insult to his authority and also concluded that Vergennes planned to extend the war to achieve a French advantage in the final settlement. Adams resolved to do his best to cooperate with Vergennes as he submitted to Vergennes his official instructions, although he informed Vergennes that this was not a particularly satisfactory solution to the issue.17 In the collection of personal letters between John

15 Stinchcombe, French Alliance, p. 8.
16 Butterfield, ed., Diary and Autobiography, IV, pp. 244-245. See also Hale, Franklin, I, p. 379.
Adams and Mercy Warren, Adams argues that Vergennes attempted to deny Adams's authority, because he had discovered that Vergennes was not entirely honorable in his intentions towards America. Morse explains Adams's justification for his dislike of Vergennes. Vergennes dreaded and would attempt to prevent any commercial relationships between the United States and Great Britain. In addition, he desired control over the peace negotiations in order that France might first secure her interests. Morse is obviously sympathetic with Adams's anger towards Vergennes, and he makes only a minimal attempt to conceal his bias in favor of Adams.

In contrast to Morse's defense of Adams's attitude towards Vergennes, E. S. Corwin and W. P. Cresson criticize Adams's suspicions of Vergennes, which were exaggerated by his blunt and tactless diplomacy. In Corwin's book, *French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778* (1916), he believes that Adams was true to his obstinate form in refusing to consider Vergennes's simile that appealing for a commercial treaty with England was like "...furnishing a house before the foundation is laid." With an amazing lack of tact, Adams pressed the French government by referring to an English circular which blamed France for intending to exhaust the "...strength and resources of this country [England] and of depressing the rising power of America."

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Corwin enumerates Adams's offenses against Vergennes, but Vergennes's toleration ended when Adams accused the French king of abandoning the United States. Finally, Vergennes bluntly announced that he would limit his negotiations to Franklin. W. P. Cresson assumes in his book, Francis Dana, A Puritan Diplomat at the Court of Catherine the Great (1930), that had Adams been the sole minister in France, he could have easily broken up the alliance. Adams believed the United States was dangerously close to becoming a French protectorate and was determined to place America's interests first. However, Cresson does not claim that Adams's declarations signified total devotion to his country, but instead suspects him of thinking that his close connection with Congress placed him in a superior and supervisory position on the commission. Adams also exercised "tactless diplomacy" as he insisted on talking to the British Ministry, ignoring Vergennes's advice that this was not the proper time.

John Adams's irascible temper did nothing to ingratiate himself with Vergennes, but Bemis argues that Adams deserves better treatment from historians than they have been willing to give him. Vergennes associated Adams with the members of Congress who opposed the principles of the French alliance and who were eager to undertake separate negotiations with England. Adams's insistence that he should at least give

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19 Corwin, French Policy, pp. 274-278. See also Monaghan, Jay, p. 171.
20 Cresson, Puritan Diplomat, pp. 65, 87-88.
England the chance to accept America's terms for peace increased Vergennes's suspicions of Adams, because Vergennes believed such an overture would only demonstrate to England a rift in the Franco-American alliance.  

Gerald Stourzh argues that Adams tried to demonstrate American power through his own capabilities. The determination of Adams to conclude a commercial treaty with Britain preceded the opposition of Vergennes to any of Adams's subsequent activities. Stourzh emphasizes that Adams intentionally set about to prove that his negotiating power was independent of French advice. To exemplify this sentiment, in 1780 he purposefully delayed his first meeting with Vergennes for several weeks. When he finally met with the French minister, Adams informed Vergennes that he was authorized to negotiate peace and a commercial treaty with Great Britain.

In contrast to Adams's critics, Page Smith defends his perception in realizing French motives with regard to American independence. At first, Adams was grateful to the French for negotiating such liberal and generous treaties, but eventually he realized that the Gallic crown was using America's struggle for independence to advance its own interests. Apparently, Adams was prepared to ignore Vergennes's lack of candor, but the intent of the foreign minister to hinder the

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21 Bemis, Diplomacy, pp. 176-177.
22 Stourzh, Franklin, Foreign Policy, pp. 155-157.
peace effort and their argument over the currency issue aroused the famous Adams temper.23

The debate over Adams's relations with Vergennes is continued by Morris and Stinchcombe who basically agree that it was Vergennes who instigated the quarrel between them. Because Adams had expressed his disapproval of Franklin to Chevalier de La Luzerne and had cautioned him that the French alliance would be endangered if the French minister became involved in the internal party alignments of Congress, La Luzerne presented an unfavorable picture of him to Vergennes. Therefore, Morris contends that Vergennes was exceptionally rude to Adams and determined to have his powers to negotiate with England curtailed. Naturally, Adams had no patience with Vergennes's attempts to control his activities by demanding full knowledge of his instructions. Vergennes argued with Adams over the congressional decision to redeem its depreciated currency at forty to one, instead of speaking with Franklin, who was the accredited minister of Congress to France. Actually, Adams bore no official responsibility for Franco-American relations.24 Stinchcombe also claims that Vergennes should have taken his grievance about the congressional decision to depreciate the currency to Franklin instead of Adams. Vergennes decided to restrain Adams, who considered himself to be defending the United States, by urging Congress to place in Franklin's jurisdiction the pro-

24 Morris, Peacemakers, pp. 194-196.
posed mediation conference at Vienna. Vergennes would have been satisfied had Congress limited Adams's power or placed him under the direct control of the French government.25

When John Adams was appointed to the mission to Holland, he was given the opportunity to demonstrate his diplomatic prowess. Most authors agree that Adams's perseverance in Holland resulted in a successful agreement with the Dutch. Franklin reveals that, at first, Adams was reluctant about going because of the gloomy prospects for a loan.26 Morse, who is usually very complimentary towards Adams, says little about his mission to the United Provinces to negotiate a treaty of alliance.27

Both Cresson and Bemis realize that Adams's mission to Holland was difficult, because Vergennes disliked the truculent Adams, and the French foreign minister also objected to the United States competing with France for loans from Amsterdam. Despite Vergennes's opposition, the Dutch recognized Adams as a minister plenipotentiary in 1782, which enabled him to negotiate a successful treaty of commerce and friendship.28 Cresson agrees that Adams represented a threat to Vergennes's desire to maintain Dutch neutrality because the Anglo-Dutch alliance was no longer binding. But at least Adams was free from Franklin's influence, and he

25 Stinchcombe, French Alliance, pp. 155, 156.
26 Van Doren, ed., Autobiographical Writings, p. 529.
27 Morse, Adams, p. 191.
28 Bemis, Diplomacy, p. 169.
was able to put his diplomatic talents to use as he employed journalistic propaganda to persuade Hollanders of British cruelties. Cresson adds that the success of Adams's negotiations focused Catherine's attention on completing her mediation policy, because she desired a reconciliation between the Stadtholder and King George.  

Cecil Currey lacks the intellectual sophistication to delve into details of Adams's mission to Holland. His main purpose is to discredit Franklin's activities in Europe, and he is delighted to support anyone who disagreed with Franklin. Therefore, he unhesitatingly commends Adams's "... extremely successful mission in Holland."  

Cresson and Bemis discuss Adams's misconception of the goals of Catherine's mediation policy, while Morris commends his understanding of the empress's foreign policy. While Adams was in Holland, the plans of the Russian empress for a League of Armed Neutrality aroused his interest, according to Cresson. Adams believed that the United States should naturally be a participant in this confederation, which proved his misunderstanding of the Czarina's foreign policy. She had no intention of allowing a belligerent into the League. Bemis further demonstrates Adams's ignorance of Russian foreign policy, since he believed that he could

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29 Cresson, **Puritan Diplomat**, pp. 125, 131-132, 233.
30 Currey, **Code #72**, p. 247.
31 Cresson, **Puritan Diplomat**, p. 226.
persuade Catherine to his sentiments with the same firm diplomacy he employed in Holland. Bemis concludes that Adams ultimately opposed the mediation plan, because he thought that it was designed by Vergennes to control the United States bid for independence.\textsuperscript{32} Morris credits Adams with exceptional insight, because he discerned that the League members placed their own desires above American interest. Thus, Adams insisted that they acknowledge a minister from the United States as the "... representative of a free and independent power."\textsuperscript{33}

Adams's critical and opinionated judgments were not limited to European officials since he regarded Franklin with varying degrees of hostility, according to most historians. Adams defined their relationship as a "friendship commonly felt between two members of the same public assembly." He held no high regard for Franklin, as Deane was well liked by Franklin, an association of which Adams disapproved.\textsuperscript{34}

Early historians argue about Adams's association with Franklin. Hale and Morse disagree on whether Adams interfered with Franklin's diplomacy with Vergennes, especially concerning the currency controversy. Hale feels that Adams overstepped his authority in arguing with Vergennes about

\textsuperscript{32}Bemis, \textit{Diplomacy}, p. 186.

\textsuperscript{33}Morris, \textit{Peacemakers}, pp. 205, 208-209.

\textsuperscript{34}Butterfield, ed., \textit{Diary and Autobiography}, IV, p. 118.
the congressional decision, while Morse defends Adams for taking the responsibility of informing Vergennes of the repayment schedule, as Franklin had neglected his duty to inform Vergennes.35

In the points of view of Cresson and Fay, Adams was jealous of Franklin, which contributed to their conflict. Adams scorned Franklin's urbane sophistication in diplomacy, resented his success in dealing with Vergennes, and criticized Franklin's popularity within French social circles. Cresson adds that Adams was sure that Franklin supported Vergennes's negotiations with the Russian court regarding mediation. On this subject, he was justified in his apprehension of Vergennes's motives.36 Fay assumed that Adams was insulted when he realized that he was merely a reflection of Franklin in Paris. The antipathy he felt towards Franklin was manifested by his support of Lee's charges that Franklin worked closely with Bancroft and Carmichael.37

Van Doren and Miller explain Adams's dislike of Franklin because of Franklin's congeniality with the French, as well as his successful approach to Vergennes. It was particularly distressing to Adams that Vergennes would not properly recognize him. Adams assumed that Vergennes preferred Franklin, because he was more pliable in Vergennes's

35Hale, Franklin, I, pp. 380-381; see also, Morse, Adams, p. 184.
36Cresson, Puritan Diplomat, pp. 92-93, 169.
37Fay, Apostle, p. 442.
Franklin did not respond to Adams's antagonism, maintaining that he was basically very capable. Miller also states that Adams considered Franklin to have bungled matters badly in France, because of his policy of subservience to French ministers. Adams resolved to establish a new approach of independence and boldness towards the French government, especially Vergennes. However, Franklin's reputation was superior, which frustrated Adams's continual efforts to discredit him.

Stourzh's analysis of the Franklin-Adams relationship stresses that their basic disagreement was over tactics, not policy. Adams preferred to approach the French alliance with emphasis on the strength of America, and failed to understand that Franklin's overt gratitude towards and friendship with Vergennes were politically more expedient than offending Vergennes.

Both Auger and Smith agree that Adams was suspicious of Franklin's pro-French sentiments. However, Auger does mention that Adams suggested that Franklin be retained as the

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38 Van Doren, Franklin, p. 621. See also, Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, I, p. 568. (Adams could not tolerate it when French and British ministers turned to Franklin.)

39 Van Doren, Franklin, p. 667.

40 Miller, Triumph, pp. 574, 578. See also, Darling, Rising Empire, p. 89. (Darling states that Adams's appraisal of Franklin was mistaken.)

41 Stourzh, Franklin, Foreign Policy, pp. 158-159.
only minister plenipotentiary. On the other hand, Smith explains that Adams's suspicions of Franklin's loyalties included his sympathy with the English as well as the French. Adams saw Franklin being seduced by the British proposals for breaking the American alliance with France and agreeing to a separate "accommodation" with England. When the peace negotiations began, Adams's suspicions of Franklin lessened, because they both disagreed with congressional instructions to follow France's lead in the peace negotiations.

The idea that Franklin would consider unofficial preliminary peace talks with the English upset Adams. Morris adds that Adams accused Franklin of allowing William Alexander, his Passy neighbor, to spread the word in England "... that no such acknowledgment of our independence would be insisted on." Franklin's choice of the double-talking Alexander for the mission of extending peace feelers convinced Adams that the doctor ignored ordinary "prudence and discrimination in his choice of agents." Throughout the peace negotiations, Adams was inclined to berate Franklin and praise Jay.

Richard Van Alstyne briefly mentions the Franklin-Adams disagreements, and he agrees with Miller that Adams was apparently jealous of Franklin in Paris. Adams complained that Franklin "... is not a sufficient statesman for all the business he is in." But he finally acknowledged that only

44 Morris, *Peacemakers*, pp. 304, 357.
Franklin combined the qualities that satisfied French society and French statesmen. The main problem with Franklin, Adams thought, was that he had spread his abilities in too many areas and was insufficiently informed about any.\textsuperscript{45}

The general antagonism between Adams and Franklin could have precluded a successful peace treaty, except for John Jay's rather moderate character, according to Frank Monaghan. Towards Jay, Adams exhibited a rare trust and affection that overshadowed any disagreement he might have had with Jay over policy towards the French, the British and Franklin. Adams especially admired men who shared his views, and when he found Jay's similar to his own, their relationship was all "eulogy and friendship."\textsuperscript{46} Monaghan denies, however, that Jay shared Adams's venomous distrust of Franklin.

According to Morris, both Franklin and Adams commended Jay's role in the peace negotiations. For Adams, Jay's direct approach to explicit independence was a pleasant contrast to Franklin's murky course. Morris agrees that there was no real controversy between Franklin and Jay, and he also explains how well they got along, indicating that Adams and Jay were not exactly similar in their attitudes towards Franklin.\textsuperscript{47}

Discounting any respect either Jay or Adams might have held for Franklin, Currey's analysis places Jay and Adams

\textsuperscript{45}Van Alstyne, Empire, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{46}Monaghan, Jay, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{47}Morris, Peacemakers, pp. 339, 286-287.
in a consensus about Franklin's dangerous vulnerability to Vergennes. Both were concerned that Franklin was unaware of the French conniving in the peace negotiations. Currey assumes that there were at least two honest men in Paris to control Franklin, but to a less biased author, the question might arise as to who needed the controlling--Franklin or Adams.\(^{48}\)

John Adams's moment of glory came with the peace negotiations, and his righteous fight for the United States right to the fisheries. La Luzerne had finally succeeded in having his powers to negotiate a commercial treaty with England revoked,\(^{49}\) and Adams's last opportunity for historical fame seemingly rested upon affixing his name to an outstanding peace. Although Arthur Darling criticizes Adams's unfounded skepticism about Franklin, he maintains that Adams's contributions to the peace settlement were beneficial. Adams realized the need of New England fishermen to utilize the fishing grounds in Newfoundland and pursued that issue in the negotiations. According to Darling, his major flaw was his lack of diplomatic tact.\(^{50}\)

The most strenuous objection Adams raised during the peace discussions was over the congressional instructions

\(^{48}\)Currey, Code \#72, p. 250.

\(^{49}\)Morse, Adams, p. 208. See Butterfield, ed., Diary and Autobiography, IV, pp. 175-176. (Adams flattered La Luzerne, emphasizing his continuing high opinion of the French minister.)

\(^{50}\)Darling, Rising Empire, p. 88.
that France be included throughout the negotiations. Morse sympathizes with Adams's anger at these instructions, as Morse recognizes that his negotiating procedures would only be hindered by French influence. Adams also insisted that all European quarrels must be settled before a treaty was signed.  

Although E. S. Corwin briefly criticizes Adams's policy, he does not mention Adams's feelings against the French. Instead he believes Adams was partial to his native Massachusetts, since he particularly insisted on fishing privileges off the Grand Banks. Corwin implies that Adams was chiefly concerned about the area where his domestic attachments lay. 

The issue of separate negotiations is important to Miller's analysis of Adams's work on the peace commission. Both he and Jay were confident that they could handle the British without French aid. Although France did not appear to be seeking undue advantages in the peace, her support of Spain's "extravagant" land claims effectively placed her in a position opposing American efforts. To Adams and Jay, the congressional instructions offended their fierce patriotism, because they believed that taking France into their confidence during the negotiations was comparable to surrendering American independence. Adams maintained that by

51 Morse, Adams, pp. 204-205.  
52 Corwin, French Policy, pp. 345-346.
disregarding the congressional instructions the commission had saved the United States from a French-dictated peace which "... would have made Us long the miserable Satellites of some great European Planet."53

Page Smith states that the negotiations began with Adams considering the French and American to be "... allies and equals in theory, if not in fact." He did not condemn Vergennes's efforts to guide and influence Anglo-American negotiations, because he recognized that the French foreign minister was only acting in accordance with the requirements of his responsibilities to his country. However, he did object to those members of Congress who advocated that the commissioners rely upon French advice, because he considered this a threat to American honor and independence. Smith considers the congressional reprimand to the commissioners as unjust and praises Adams's determination that Americans must above all be independent.54

Morris, in his investigation of Adams's efforts on the peace commission, commends as his finest moments his negotiations for the fishing rights in Newfoundland. However, Adams also demonstrated his skill in framing an ambiguous clause, stipulating that individual states legally settle the Tory claims, which mollified the British and left the

53 Miller, Triumph, pp. 632, 646. See also, Bemis, Diplomacy, p. 174. (He indicates that the congressional Instructions allowed the commissioners leeway in using their own discretion in securing American goals.)

54 Smith, Adams, I, pp. 446, 548, 554.
actual situation unchanged. Morris adds that neither Adams nor Jay forgave Congress for criticizing their efforts which not only included separate negotiations but also the secret article concerning West Florida. Morris, at this point, substantiates Adams's suspicion of Franklin by recognizing that Franklin was unwilling to assume the consequences of the actions of the commission.  

Stinchcombe explains that congressional instructions to the commission were an effort by southern delegates to prevent Adams from seeking the fisheries for his region at the expense of other sections of the nations. He continues that the United States voluntarily placed the fate of the negotiations in the hands of a few men by agreeing to hold them in Europe. Although Congress would set the broad policies, the individual ministers would actually make the majority of the decisions.

Adams's attitude towards the French during the negotiations is attributed to the way his thoughts evolved the longer he stayed in Europe. Van Alstyne claims that Adams never really defined his sentiments towards either France or England. At first, he regarded England as a "'... natural and habitual enemy,'" which forced the United States to seek help from France. It seems only logical that France and Spain would desire to punish Great Britain, and thus

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France was a "'natural ally.'" However, by 1783, his sentiments had changed so that he became eager for a commercial treaty with England and for the exchange of ministers between the United States and Great Britain. Therefore, if Van Alstyne is correct, it was not so much his antipathy against France, but his anticipation of commercial advantages from England which influenced his policy during the peace negotiations.

John Adams's contributions to American foreign policy receive no general consensus of praise or condemnation. Although his temperament might not have been suited for tactful diplomacy, his devotion to the ideas of American independence defines his role in Europe as patriotic and possibly even beneficial to the American cause. Adams's personal papers and correspondence as well as those of his compatriots have been available to twentieth-century authors. L. H. Butterfield edited a four-volume edition of Adams's autobiography and diary which contributes additional insight into Adams's diplomatic career and personal attitudes towards his associates. John T. Morse's study of John Adams is suspect on account of its complete lack of documentation. However, his lengthy essay on John Adams is valuable for historiography as it attempts to explain Adams's personality traits and his efforts to secure independence for the United States. Monaghan, as John Jay's biographer, necessarily

57 Van Alstyne, Empire, pp. 180, 229.
included information on Adams to complete thorough study of Jay. The major primary source Monaghan uses with regard to Adams are the ten volumes of his works, edited by Charles Francis Adams. Monaghan includes such traditional editors and authors as Wharton, Bemis, Hale, Doniol, and Corwin, all of whom speak to the question of Adams's character and actions in Europe. John C. Miller adds helpful insight into the personality of John Adams with the information from Adams's works, Doniol, Sparks and the papers, journals and correspondence of other men who were associated with Adams, both in Europe and America. Also, Adams's collection of papers from the Massachusetts Historical Society provides useful background on Adams before he departed for Europe. One of the most thorough and readable accounts of Adams's diplomatic career is by Richard B. Morris. His extensive use of the journals and correspondence of the three peace commissioners, and archival material from Europe and the United States, provides invaluable information about Adams's career in Europe. He also includes secondary works which have been previously mentioned. The two-volume biography of Adams, written by Page Smith, relies almost solely upon Adams's writings and correspondence. The first volume, which includes his diplomatic career in Paris and Holland, is complimentary of his abilities and achievements. This book needs to be balanced by other accounts of Adams which are more critical in order to achieve a somewhat realistic picture of Adams. Samuel Flagg Bemis discusses Adams in
relation to his contributions to the peace negotiations. Along with the ten volumes of Adams's works, he incorporates significant information from Jay's diary, the Hales's volumes and English primary materials pertinent to the peace negotiations. His belief that the work of the peace commissioners was exceptional coincides with other accounts of this aspect of Adams's diplomacy. Gerald Stourzh adds additional useful interpretations of Adams in comparison to Franklin, using basically the same primary sources as other authors. As has been previously stated, however, his comments on secondary sources are also helpful and interesting. William Stinchcombe does not concentrate on one particular man in his study of the Franco-American alliance, but he compares source material from Adams's works to French studies of the alliance for a useful interpretation of Adams's attitudes towards the French alliance.

The articles dealing with Adams also examine his personal traits and diplomacy. Both Rossiter and Bailyn examine his rather unique and complex characteristics which made him so sensitive and determined to adhere to his concept of independence regardless of the influences from others. They both rely upon Butterfield's editions of Adams's autobiography and his correspondence. Felix Gilbert's study of Adams's diplomacy is based upon Adams's works, biographical accounts and an extensive study of French philosophical writings concerned with foreign policy. This article provides an interesting and unique interpretation
of Adams's theories on American foreign policy.

The authors who have studied Adams have disagreed over his diplomatic tactics, but most of them concur that he was a devout American patriot. John Adams, as a diplomat in Europe, arouses differing opinions with regards to his abilities. Morse, in his favorable account of Adams, acknowledges his outspoken manner but asserts that he was the right man in the right place. No other author suggests such a one-sided opinion. Monaghan and Miller examine his tendency continually to offend the French especially in his efforts to place American independence foremost. They interpret his actions as indications of his fear that he would not receive the credit and acclaim for negotiating American independence which Franklin would. Rossiter and Bailyn realize that his touchy and sensitive nature possibly hindered his negotiating ability as he was constantly aware of personal slights. Morris agrees that Adams's personality hindered his ability as a diplomat.

Another early controversy in Adams's diplomatic career relates to the feud between Deane and Lee. According to his own diary, he remained convinced that Deane and Franklin were enjoying Parisian life at the expense of Congress, but apparently he remained detached from direct involvement in the controversies. Page Smith reaches the same conclusion as Coy James, who states that Adams purposely remained uninvolved in the controversy. The congressional journals furnish further proof that Adams was absolved from all
charges arising from the imbroglio, according to H. James Henderson.

Two of the most controversial aspects of Adams's career was his attitude towards the French alliance and his relationship with the French officials, especially Vergennes. Hale, Miller and Bemis state that he was never opposed to the French alliance, because he considered it a matter of necessity. Felix Gilbert is much more articulate in explaining Adams's attitude towards the alliance. He introduces the idea that Adams believed the alliance to be the beginning of a future commercial relationship without entanglements necessitating further American involvement in European affairs. Stinchcombe refutes this concept and states that Adams's thoughts were centered on independence. Unfortunately, Adams encountered difficulties with Vergennes, who insisted that Adams conduct his negotiations in accordance with the provisions of the Franco-American alliance. Regardless of Adams's personal accounts of his suspicions of Vergennes's motives, both Corwin and Cresson conclude that Adams was unduly suspicious of Vergennes, and thus was blunt and tactless in defying Vergennes's requests. On the other hand, Bemis and Stourzh indicate that critics have been unfair in condemning Adams's basic policy. Stourzh emphasizes that his tactics with Vergennes were different from Franklin's, but essentially they both considered the needs of the United States first. Bemis indicates that Adams wished to open negotiations for a commercial treaty with England
with the hope that it would eventually lead to peace. Page Smith defends Adams's perception in realizing Vergennes's duplicity in dealing with the American commissioners. Both Morris and Stinchcombe, through their extensive use of Adams's personal correspondence, decide that Vergennes was unnecessarily rude to Adams.

Generally, historians agree that Adams's mission to Holland was successful, but both Bemis and Cresson maintain that Vergennes also controlled Dutch policy; yet Adams successfully overcame his influence. Cecil Currey simply acclaims Adams's success in Holland in an effort to support one of Franklin's antagonists, without objectively interpreting his sources.

The subject of Adams's relationship with Franklin is extensively discussed, and most authors agree that the enmity between them arose because of Adams's jealousy of Franklin's official and personal successes in France. However, Smith is convinced that Franklin's suspicious activities with both the French and English justified Adams's doubt of Franklin's priorities.

In contrast to the conflict between Adams and Franklin, he and Jay were compatible, although Currey's rather biased and unprofessional investigation concludes that Adams and Jay equally distrusted Franklin. Currey's interpretation of the same sources used by previous authors, who reached much different conclusions, is questionable at best.

John Adams's contribution toward the peace negotiations
is generally commended by historians because of his undeviating commitment to independence. Arthur Darling, whose source material is extensively drawn from journals and correspondence, agrees that while Adams's judgment of Franklin was incorrect, his work on the peace negotiations was highly commendable. Adams's disregard for the congressional instructions that France must be included in the negotiations with England is not criticized by historians, who recognize that Adams saw this procedure as the only way to negotiate efficiently for American independence without contending with French demands. Both Smith and Morris maintain that the congressional rebuke for this action was unjustified.

Most historians rely upon the information supplied by official European and American government documents, the papers of Jay and Franklin, and Adams's own diary and letters to reach a conclusion as to his success or failure as a diplomat. There is no definite judgment on his ability in the diplomatic negotiations in Europe. However, most historians state that, regardless of his petulant and sensitive personality, his commitment towards American independence was commendable. Thus, he endeavored to work for the establishment of his country's role as a new and expanding nation in a world dominated by European powers.
CHAPTER VI

THE MISSIONS OF JOHN JAY

John Jay began his diplomatic career in Spain, and although it was a disappointing experience, he then moved to Paris where he gained a measure of fame for his role in the negotiations for the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States. He was commissioned to Spain late in 1779 for the purpose of securing an alliance similar to the one between France and the United States, but he was unsuccessful. The mission to Spain frustrated him, because the harder he tried to gain recognition and aid for his country, the more obstacles he encountered. Some historians stress Jay's inability to adapt to the inscrutable tendencies of Conde de Floridablanca, the Spanish foreign minister, while others commend Jay's efforts to avoid the United States submission to unreasonable Spanish demands involving land claims and navigation rights. Jay faced a dilemma: whether to abide by the congressional instructions, while realizing that his personal judgments on obtaining the most beneficial results for his country sometimes contradicted these instructions. Another controversial aspect of his experience in Spain which extended to the negotiations in Paris, was the animosity he developed against the French, presumably because of the dubious advice Gérard and Comte de Montmorin offered.
to him regarding the most successful ways to deal with the Spanish. Then, after Congress decided that Jay would serve his country better in Paris negotiating for peace, he was dispatched there only to encounter new difficulties which also merit historical comment. The very diverse personalities of Franklin and Adams placed Jay in the position of a mediator, according to some historians. Yet, a few authors maintain that Jay was more compatible with one over the other. The peace treaty and Jay's efforts to insure its successful completion inspire debate among historians, as they evaluate the degree to which Jay contributed to or hindered the progress of the peace negotiations. Although Congress ratified the peace treaty, it reprimanded the three commissioners for violating their instructions and negotiating without France. The justice of the congressional action involves historians in still another unresolved debate.

John Jay's appointment to Spain came after Deane, Lee and Franklin had laid the groundwork for American negotiations with other European countries. His instructions were specific, in that he was to secure recognition of American independence and an alliance with Spain while also obtaining a financial loan from Spain.

Bemis criticizes Jay's irresolute approach to the Spanish since he maintained, apart from his instructions, that an American guarantee to Spain of free navigation of the Mississippi River to and from the sea was contingent upon an imme-
diately Spanish acceptance of American proposals for a treaty and loan. But in Bemis's opinion, Jay faced too many adverse circumstances for one to characterize him as a personal failure. Hence, it was no discredit to Jay that the two most important dates of his mission were those of his arrival and departure.¹

Jay encountered difficulties in his negotiations with the Spanish government. Initially, he considered that the United States, as a sovereign nation, was free to borrow money on the same principle of repayment of principal with interest, as E. S. Corwin points out. The congressional instructions concerning the Mississippi also presented a dilemma for Jay. Although he personally was somewhat ambivalent in his sentiments, actually the congressional instructions made his own opinion irrelevant. Eventually, Jay disregarded the orders of Congress and adopted the opinion that free navigation should be granted only upon Spanish insistence.² Corwin denies that Jay was disgruntled and disillusioned when he left Spain, pointing out that Jay fully expected to renew negotiations with the Conde de Aranda, who was the head of the Consejo de Castilla, the supreme governing body for all Spain.³ This plan proved


²Corwin, French Policy, pp. 343, 323.

³Morris, Peacemakers, p. 48.
futile, because Aranda was not empowered to deal with such matters in Paris.4

Jay's lack of success in Spain was not his fault, according to Frank Monaghan, his biographer. Monaghan admires Jay's diplomacy and tenacity in dealing with the Spanish, and makes no attempt to conceal his sentiments. According to Monaghan, from the beginning of Jay's stay in Spain, he was a victim of Spanish procrastination, receiving excuses such as the minister was ill or Gardoqui was not at the court, when he definitely was. Floridablanca, the Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was Jay's main problem in his efforts to execute his instructions. First, the Spanish minister vehemently disliked republics and their principles. Adding to this difficulty was his resolve to free Spain from French influence; thus, he refused to consider the 1778 treaty between the United States and France as a basis for a Spanish-American agreement. The proposal by Floridablanca that the Spanish government would pay the costs incurred in building ships for American merchants within two years if the United States would immediately supply Spain with frigates aroused Jay's indignant protests.5 The Spaniard continued his questionable tactics with the American minister, assuring Jay that Abbé Hussey and Richard Cumberland had come to Spain on personal business, when, in fact, they were confidential agents of the British ministry.

4Corwin, French Policy, p. 326.
5Monaghan, Jay, pp. 146, 150, 144-145.
Ultimately, Jay recognized that no significant aid would be forthcoming, since Spain had little money. Congress added to Jay's difficulty by drawing bills upon him, assuming that he had received a loan from the Spanish when, in reality, Jay had not even received an interview with Floridablanca to discuss the possibility of a loan. Jay's awareness of Spanish duplicity increased when he realized that his correspondence from the United States was intercepted and read by the Spanish, and thus they knew of congressional plans before he did. Jay also suspected that the Spanish procrastination in meeting with him was based upon Spain's desire to enfeeble permanently the American colonies in order that Spain might establish firm control over the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Valley. Monaghan believes that it is to Jay's credit that he continued to work for an alliance with Spain, even after he had received news of a potential peace with Britain. It was only after Montmorin encouraged him to depart for Paris that Jay resigned himself to the futility of his mission.

Another question arising regarding Jay's mission is whether France sincerely supported the American cause in Spain. Monaghan insists that Montmorin intended to place the United States in a position subservient to France and

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6 Ibid., pp. 141, 153; see also, Henry P. Johnston, ed., The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay (4 vols., New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1890), 1, p. 338. (Hereinafter referred to as Johnston, ed., Jay Correspondence.)

7 Monaghan, Jay, pp. 134, 181.
Spain. Jay's frustration in continually being ignored by the Spanish foreign minister led him to seek assistance from Montmorin. Instead of volunteering to approach Floridablanca on behalf of the American minister, the Frenchman reminded Jay that he represented "... only rising states, not firmly established or generally acknowledged..." and urged him to write Floridablanca a letter "... praying an audience." Monaghan continues his account of this incident with a lengthy dialogue between the two men in which Jay firmly stated his opinion that the United States should never lower itself to begging for recognition. Jay emphasized that the French government had been of no assistance in arranging a meeting between him and Floridablanca, although it had promised that France would help the Americans in Spain. Monaghan feels that Montmorin placed Jay in an untenable position, because he insisted that Jay be humble in dealing with the Spanish foreign minister.

Miller explains the relationship between the French and Spanish with his typical clarity and conciseness. When France aligned herself with the United States, Spain was outraged at such unilateral action. So Vergennes faced the task of appeasing Spain in order to insure her participation in the war against England. Therefore, Vergennes agreed with Spain that the United States should be permanently

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\[8]\text{Ibid.}, pp. 147-148. See also Johnston, ed., \textit{Jay Correspondence}.\]
weakened by surrendering the Floridas and its claim to the navigation of the Mississippi to Spain. Also, Vergennes had little sympathy with the United States growing into a world power, which further insured French support of Spain's demands on America.⁹

According to Samuel Flagg Bemis in *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (1935), the Spanish mission was a complete failure, but he refrains from accusing Jay of sole responsibility. Jay maintained that Spanish hesitency to aid the United States was attributable to the stand Congress had taken on the Mississippi question. As has been discussed previously, Jay opposed the idea of "... bartering the Mississippi for a Spanish alliance." Moreover, in 1781, when Congress empowered him to recognize the "... exclusive right of Spain to the navigation of the Mississippi below 31° in return for a Spanish alliance..." Jay obliged but worded the concession with "reserve and ambiguity." Ultimately, it was Spain's decision to "... win her own stakes without corresponding American successes..." which signalled the futility of the mission.¹⁰

Although Miller sympathizes with the difficulties Jay encountered in attempting to negotiate with the Spanish indirectly through the French or personally with Florida-blanca, he criticizes Jay's diplomatic procedures. Miller

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¹⁰Bemis, *Diplomacy*, pp. 106-107, 111.
confirms that no American diplomat would have been received favorably by the Spanish, "... but John Jay settled his fate by bringing to the Spanish court the proud, mettlesome, and uncompromising demeanor of an American republican."

Jay's eagerness for the Spanish alliance was not so great that he was willing to yield the navigation of the Mississippi, although Congress had instructed him to do so. His stubbornness in regards to the Mississippi question was particularly detrimental, because Floridablanca was fully aware of Jay's instructions from Congress. Jay's plea of his country's poverty was no exaggeration, but Floridablanca exhibited little sympathy for his monetary plight of the United States, carefully explaining that Spain was hardly in a financial position to underwrite any other nation. In an evaluation of Jay's contribution to American diplomacy in Europe, Miller concludes that because of the treatment Jay received in Spain, his international sympathies disappeared and he became a confirmed nationalist, advocating isolationism. For Jay, travel to Europe was a disastrous experience, because he became acquainted with the "... deplorable realities of European power politics."\(^{11}\)

In contrast to Miller, Donald Smith states in his collection of Jay's writings, *John Jay, Founder of a State and Nation* (1968), that congressional instructions precluded any agreement between the United States and Spain. Smith specifies that the congressional demands for recognition of

\(^{11}\)Miller, *Triumph*, pp. 568, 567, 571.
American independence, substantial financial aid, and a formal treaty of alliance, combined with Floridablanca's desire for exclusive navigation rights on the Mississippi River were major points of disagreement. Not only did Spain's duplicity anger Jay, but Congress increased the difficulty of the Spanish-American negotiations by drawing upon funds that did not exist.¹²

Both Richard W. Van Alstyne and Richard B. Morris state that congressional irresponsibility regarding finances and the navigation of the Mississippi River caused the main points of contention between Jay and the Spanish. Van Alstyne adds that Jay's refusal to submit to Spanish demands regarding the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico was the reason Floridablanca stopped payment on Jay's bills.¹³ Morris also considers the navigation of the Mississippi River to be the main point of contention between Jay and the Spanish, who also enjoyed French support. Spain's refusal to recognize Jay added to his problems. Originally, Jay was instructed to "... seek free navigation of the Mississippi into to and from the sea, ..." and to secure a free port or ports below 31° NL on the river. In return, America would guarantee the possession of the Floridas to Spain if the king could wrest them from the British.¹⁴

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¹²Donald L. Smith, John Jay, Founder of a State and Nation (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1968), pp. 75, 76. (Hereinafter referred to as Smith, State and Nation.)

¹³Van Alstyne, Empire, p. 183.

¹⁴Morris, Peacemakers, pp. 231, 222. See also Johnston, ed., Jay Correspondence, pp. 248-250.
reconfirming this offer in 1780, Congress altered it in 1781, permitting him to recede from the Mississippi demands "... to remove every obstacle to the accession of Spain to the American alliance...". Montmorin informed Jay that he was not in a position to make demands upon Spain until he conceded on the Mississippi issues. Both Spain and France knew Congress had sent Jay new instructions authorizing him to accede to Spanish demands on the Mississippi issues, and Floridablanca announced that when Jay was willing to yield on these points, he could "... expect frankness in return..." Morris praises Jay's foresight in exercising discretion by "... having placed a limited duration on his offer of the Mississippi navigation as being "absolutely necessary to prevent this Court's continuing to delay a treaty to a general peace..." Congress then endorsed Jay's actions, as it had begun to have second thoughts about the way it had freely acquiesced to Spanish demands. Morris adds that Congress contributed to Jay's difficulties by drawing bills against money which it assumed Jay had received from Spain. There was justification for Jay's antipathy against Spain, because he realized that Spain had declared war for objectives that did not include those of the United States.

15 Morris, Peacemakers, pp. 231, 222. See also Johnston, ed., Jay Correspondence, pp. 248-250.
17 Morris, Peacemakers, pp. 227, 223-224.
Jay's problems in Spain, both diplomatically and in his personal associations with the French and Spanish ministers, were not reflected in his relationships with the other two peace commissioners, Adams and Franklin. He was particularly successful in gaining the friendship and respect of John Adams, a man who was easily offended and rarely forgave anyone who slighted his sensitive nature. Both Monaghan and Morris cautiously approach Jay's relationship with Adams, evaluating them as representatives of the United States government. Monaghan concludes that fundamentally they agreed on the idea that America's future did not include European alliances. Both men disliked and denounced France and Spain, although Jay's Spanish experience made his objection to both France and Spain more valid than Adams's. Monaghan says that Adams's loathing of Franklin did not persuade Jay to the same opinion, despite what other authors claim.\textsuperscript{18} Morris emphasizes that Adams and Jay agreed that explicit recognition of American independence was the only course to follow in the peace negotiations. Adams was delighted when he observed how similar their attitudes were on the peace proceedings.\textsuperscript{19} Morris hesitates throughout his book to describe any personality clashes that might have hindered or detracted from the glorious role of the American peacemakers. Thus he declines to

\textsuperscript{18}Monaghan, \textit{Jay}, pp. 207, 186.

\textsuperscript{19}Morris, \textit{Peacemakers}, p. 256. See also Johnston, ed., \textit{Jay Correspondence}, pp. 330-331.
mention whether Adams's dislike of Franklin affected Jay's personal opinion of Franklin.

Currey rejects the idea that Jay might possibly have condoned Franklin's activities. According to Currey's hostile account of Franklin's career, both Adams and Jay reached the conclusion that Franklin was susceptible to the French connivings during the peace negotiations. Currey is less vitriolic in his discussion of the attitudes of Adams and Jay towards the career of the venerable diplomat.\(^{20}\)

In speaking of the relationship between Jay and Franklin, Morris approaches it strictly from the standpoint of diplomatic negotiations. Franklin possibly held some reservations about Jay's legal quibbling, but his admiration for Jay allowed them to work in harmony. Jay was successful in persuading Franklin that separate negotiations with the British were the only feasible solution to achieving a peace favorable to the United States. Together they managed to conceal most of their diplomatic moves from Vergennes and his entourage.\(^{21}\)

The idea that Jay and Franklin were not entirely compatible is touched upon by Van Alstyne and confirmed by Currey. Adams and Jay were convinced that they had literally rescued the American operation from French deception and Franklin's servility to the French. Fortunately, Jay per-


\(^{22}\)Van Alstyne, *Empire*, p. 214.
ceived that Spain was receiving France's primary attention and determined to defy congressional instructions, despite Franklin's protestations. Jay was never overly enthusiastic about Franklin's assistance on the commission, and only briefly commended his cooperation in promoting the final terms on the fisheries.23

Although Jay arrived in Paris enthusiastic over the prospects of peace, he harbored some resentment against France who, he thought, had influenced Spain's uncooperative attitude. Most historians concur that Jay objected to the activities of Vergennes when they detracted from achieving a peace settlement favorable to the United States. Some authors contend that Jay's dislike of France was intense and was inherited from family sentiments, while more moderate evaluations portray Jay as being objective in trying to judge whether France actually promoted the best interests of the United States. E. S. Corwin's favorable appraisal of French policy explains that Jay's attitude towards France was grateful but cautious. Jay ungrudgingly acknowledged France's generosity but realized that France would continue the war to achieve her own objectives as well as those of the United States. Therefore Jay heartily resisted congressional instructions, because they forced American ministers to "... receive and obey the instructions of those on whom no American minister ought to be dependent."24 Jay's suspi-

23 Currey, Code #72, pp. 253, 259.
24 Corwin, French Policy, pp. 336-337, 346-348. See also
cions of French intentions deepened when he read Joseph-Matthias de Rayneval's proposal to divide part of the western lands into two Indian protectorates under Spanish and American jurisdiction, and then leave all the territory north of the Ohio River to the British. This controversial proposal added to Jay's doubts that France's actions were in the best interests of the United States. Corwin justifies the French activities by explaining that France was not trying to prolong the war, but was only meeting her commitment to Spain, a concept the American commissioner failed to understand.  

Monaghan and Bemis maintain that Jay developed a dislike for France while in Spain. Monaghan claims that his unfortunate relations with Montmorin led him to suspect France of trying to keep both America and Spain under her influence. The secret Treaty of Aranjuez in 1779 bound France to support Spain. It stipulated that France would not terminate the war or negotiate for peace until Spain secured Gibraltar, and that Spain would not recognize American independence before Great Britain did. Bemis also points out that France had invoked Jay's distrust while he was still in Spain. Gérard had done his best to persuade Congress that the French alliance with America did not guarantee American territorial rights up to the Mississippi. As if to defy directly the Franco-American alliance, France


signed the Treaty of Aranjuez, but its contents did not long remain secret. Jay became more reserved around Vergennes, as the French foreign minister urged the American commissioners to refrain from making extreme claims concerning boundaries and fishing rights.26

Miller's account of Jay's attitude towards France denies that Jay, early in his mission, suspected French motives. As late as 1779, Jay was considered a strong supporter of France, speaking well of that country and earning the respect of the French ambassador in Spain and Vergennes in France. According to Miller, Jay endeared himself to Spain and France when he said of the Mississippi River navigation "... that it was a privilege 'which we would not want this age. . . .'"27 Unfortunately, other authors do not comment upon Miller's interpretation of Jay's attitudes towards France.

Jay's skepticism of French motives is developed by Gerald Stourzh, Page Smith and Roger Burlingame, who conclude that although Jay doubted French loyalty to the United States, he did not harbor a vindictive hatred against her. Jay delivered this astute appraisal of French policy, as quoted by Stourzh.

They are interested in separating us from Great Britain, and on that point we may, I believe, depend upon them; but it is not their interest that we should become a


27Miller, Triumph, pp. 565-566. See also Johnston, ed., Jay Correspondence, p. 305.
great and formidable people, and therefore they will not help us to become so.

Vergennes supported leaving the territory north of the Ohio to England and giving the southwest to Spain. He also opposed American participation in the Newfoundland fisheries. Page Smith describes Jay's anti-French attitude as so extreme that it was disconcerting to Adams, who found himself defending the French. Finally, Jay realized that the only way to counteract the alleged French conspiracy against American peace efforts was to violate the Franco-American treaty, as well as congressional instructions, and negotiate separately with England.

Morris also agrees that Jay displayed little affection for the French. Raised in a circle of Huguenot refugees, he had an inherent dislike for the French. This sentiment influenced his later career and was intensified when Jay realized that Vergennes agreed with Floridablanca's plan to defer recognition of American independence until a general peace was signed in order to prevent the Americans from dropping out of the war before Gibraltar was secured. Jay vigorously argued with Franklin that, unless the congressional instructions were violated, American honor would be nonexistent. However, he maintained that ignoring congressional instructions was not synonymous with violating the treaty with France.

28 Stourzh, Franklin, Foreign Policy, p. 174.
29 Smith, Adams, I, pp. 540-541.
30 Burlingame, Envoy, pp. 194-195.
The controversy involving Jay's association with France receives attention from William Stinchcombe and Richard W. Van Alstyne. Both authors agree that Jay began his career favorably inclined towards the French. Gérard asked Congress to appoint Jay as the American representative at the peace negotiations, as he was thought to be more amenable to French policy, especially regarding the fisheries, than Arthur Lee had been. Van Alstyne states that upon Jay's arrival in Europe, he shared Franklin's enthusiasm for the French. When he became aware that the French were favorably disposed towards Spanish land claims in America, his sentiments towards them became increasingly hostile.

By the time Jay reached Paris, he was committed to achieving independence from Britain through a reasonable peace agreement. Historians do not question his motives, but some argue that his tactics were not indicative of his country's honor. E. S. Corwin mildly criticizes Jay's activities in Paris, which included secretly dispatching Benjamin Vaughan to England and his decision to disregard congressional instructions to include France in the negotiations. Thoroughly alarmed that France might aid Spain in negotiating with England for possession of western lands, Jay sent Vaughan to London "... to combat Rayneval's reasoning and to urge a new commission for Oswald authoriz-

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32 Stinchcombe, French Alliance, p. 66.
33 Van Alstyne, Empire, pp. 213-214.
ing him to treat with the United States of America." This measure actually diminished the concessions Britain was willing to make to the United States. Shelburne had realized that only by authorizing extensive concessions to the Americans would he separate France and the United States, but Vaughan's mission revealed that this had already been accomplished. With regard to the commissioners's violation of their instructions, Corwin explains that technically they did not violate the "... pledge given in the Treaty of Alliance." On the other hand, they should have warned France that "... the United States reserved the right to make a separate peace, if a final peace should be obstructed by France for reasons not covered by the treaty of Alliance. ..." Corwin concludes that the independent policies adopted by the commissioners were a result of Jay's suspicions which, he concedes, were due mainly to Jay's interpretation of facts, rather than the facts themselves. 34

Monaghan explains Jay's evolution from the position of refusing to consider separate negotiations to one of realizing the necessity of independent negotiations with the British. When Jay arrived from Madrid, he was indignant over his treatment by both France and Spain, but was further angered over the congressional instructions. However, he assured Franklin that there was no possibility of a separate peace with

Britain so long as France remained faithful to the United States. He emphasized that he "... would rather see America ruined than dishonored." However, Jay's sentiments began to change when he saw that the American boundaries proposed by the French indicated a settlement favorable to Spain and France rather than to the United States. When Rayneval informed Jay that France would oppose both the extension of the United States to the Mississippi and its claims of free navigation of that river, Jay was convinced of the necessity of negotiating separately with England. The intercepted Barbé-Marbois message, which suggested a means by which the Americans might be excluded from the Newfoundland fisheries, increased Jay's suspicions of French motives. Jay's decision to send Vaughan to England to inform Shelburne of the commissioners' views towards the peace negotiations did not violate congressional instructions. Monaghan explains that Jay maintained the instructions had been written under the assumption that France would support American demands, but when she discouraged American claims, she was no longer entitled to exclusive American confidence.35

Bemis says that Jay's suspicion that Vergennes attempted "... to postpone American independence until French views and the objectives of Spain could be gratified by a peace..." influenced him to advocate separate negotiations. In an effort to thwart French designs, he sent

35 Monaghan, Jay, pp. 188, 195, 201, 202-203.
Vaughan to England with the message that it would be in the best interests of France, and not England, if recognition of American independence was postponed. Bemis commends Jay's decision to grant West Florida to the British, and also indicates that it was not a crucial error for Jay to omit Franklin's demand for Canada in his discussions with Oswald when they formulated the first draft of the actual treaty. Bemis concludes that the commissioners displayed insight when they broke away from congressional instructions, taking advantage of "... European quarrels to cut their country from them," and Congress ratified the treaty. 36

Like the preceding authors, Arthur Darling, in his book, Our Rising Empire, 1763-1803 (1940), attributes Jay's antipathy for France to the French efforts to play Britain against the United States for the benefit of Spain and France. Vergennes's plan to limit the independence of the United States and their territorial domain, along with the Barbé-Marbois message, aroused Jay's suspicion of French motives. Darling credits Jay with drafting the major part of the treaty to which England finally agreed and praises him for insisting that the independence of the United States be the basis of peace between the two countries. 37

Carl Van Doren agrees that French efforts to use the quest of the United States for independence to her advantage prompted Jay to disregard congressional instructions.

36 Bemis, Diplomacy, pp. 210-211, 255.
37 Darling, Empire, pp. 77, 81, 85-86, 91.
Jay believed that Vergennes intentionally delayed the peace negotiations, because he planned to utilize them to secure Spanish land claims in America. Thus, Jay urged the American commissioners to follow their own judgment rather than their official instructions. In addition, the intercepted Barbé-Marbois letter confirmed his suspicions that France opposed American independence. Unfortunately, Jay failed to realize that England was prepared to meet American demands, and as a result did not press hard enough for them.38

According to Miller, Jay's patriotism inspired him to disobey the congressional instructions, because he believed them detrimental to American honor. Miller labels the congressional instructions a victory for French diplomacy. Although France had not previously sought advantages from her association with America, her support of Spanish land claims effectively placed her in a position opposing the United States. Jay distrusted France to the extent that after France failed to secure Spanish land claims in the southwest, he maintained that France would probably favor British claims in the region, rather than see the United States come into power there. Needless to say, the British were delighted with Jay as he unreservedly took them into his confidence, and Miller concludes that it is doubtful if, by exhibiting their suspicions of France, Jay and Adams served the cause of independence. On the other hand, Franklin's

38Van Doren, Franklin, pp. 682, 684.
more subtle hints to the British that they would be in a more favorable position with the United States should they make a generous peace, proved more effective.  

The idea foremost in Jay's mind, according to Morris, was American independence. Should England and France reach any kind of secret agreement, the peacemaking efforts of the Americans would be endangered. Jay and Franklin agreed on the 45th parallel as a boundary, since Franklin finally understood that there was no real chance of securing Canada.

Stinchcombe explains the consequences of Jay's blistering attack on Congress in 1781 regarding the instructions to the peace commission, while Van Alstyne barely comments on Jay's role in Paris. Apparently, Jay exerted considerable power in Congress, and his feelings about the instructions were significant. La Luzerne believed that he was more influential in Congress than either Franklin or Adams. However, his diatribe only revived the difficulties about "authority and honor" among the American diplomats and made an open break among them possible. Van Alstyne remarks that Jay overcame his "anti-French feelings sufficiently" to support Franklin's plea for more money from the French. More significantly, however, Jay was receptive to David Hartley's proposal of a common citizenship between Great Britain and

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the United States, because of his desire to head off any possibility of an agreement for mutual security between Spain and Britain against the United States.  

If Jay was justified in disputing congressional instructions, that legislative body would not publicly recognize that his actions had been in the best interest of the country. Monaghan and Morris contend that Jay received an unjust reprimand for the steps he had exercised in gaining American independence. Monaghan criticizes Congress for making Jay justify his violations of its instructions after peace had been declared. Morris explains that the major conflict developed over the secret and separate article involving West Florida, which seemed to many delegates an unnecessary insult to congressional honor. Neither Jay nor Adams forgave their critics in Congress, and Morris is inclined to sympathize with their anger. The American commissioners acted on their own initiative to the annoyance of Congress, yet the outcome was to the advantage of their country.

As a diplomatic representative and a member of the peace commission, John Jay does not inspire extreme controversy among historians, yet there are varying historical opinions regarding his career. From his personal papers

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42 Van Alstyne, Empire, pp. 227-228.
43 Monaghan, Jay, p. 212.
44 Morris, Peacemakers, p. 439.
and correspondence and those of his colleagues, authors have been able to investigate his career and reach their own conclusions about the success or failure of his diplomatic efforts. His sole biographer, Frank Monaghan, depends largely upon manuscript sources, congressional journals and Wharton's edited volumes of diplomatic correspondence, and supplements this information with several secondary sources. This biography lends interesting insight into Jay's diplomatic career but also covers his succeeding years as a politician and Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Donald Smith also deals with his career from before the Revolution until the end of his political activity. His book is comprised of selections of Jay's writings, while he inserts occasional comments. The book is useful from the standpoint of Smith's choice of material, as he feels that it best represents Jay's sentiments about the nation. Morris also relies heavily on Jay's personal papers for a source. As has been stated, Morris does an exceptional job of discussing the careers of the peace commissioners through his emphasis on primary sources and some secondary studies. Neither Stinchcombe nor Van Alstyne consider Jay's career as important as those of his colleagues in Paris, but their use of collections of revolutionary records and the papers of Adams and Franklin provides useful information. An early historian, E. S. Corwin, conducts his investigation from French sources, and there is no lengthy comment about Jay. However, Corwin does contribute to the interpretations about Jay's attitudes
towards the French. Once again, Miller's monograph, with its extensive bibliography, is valuable for its concise analysis. Although he does not include Jay's papers in his bibliography, his study of the peace negotiations includes a lengthy discussion of Jay's contributions. Miller does use information from the papers of European figures in revolutionary diplomacy, among them Benjamin Vaughan, which adds insight into Jay's activities in Paris. Samuel Flagg Bemis edited ten volumes about America's secretaries of state, which includes an essay on John Jay. This primarily deals with his later diplomatic efforts, but does speak briefly about his fruitless mission to Spain and his later success in Paris. Bemis's full-length book on American revolutionary diplomacy speaks about Jay's endeavors in Spain and France. With these sections, he includes information drawn from Jay's diary and public papers, and he presents Jay as an able diplomat in Paris. Arthur Darling devotes an entire chapter to Jay's successes on the peace commission based mainly upon the writings of all three commissioners. He presents as valuable a study of Jay's diplomacy in negotiating for peace as any of the historians who deal more extensively with Jay's diplomatic career.

John Jay does not receive undue criticism for his lack of success in Spain; however, the difficulty he encountered attempting to persuade the Spanish government to accede to American requests is extensively discussed by historians. Corwin and Monaghan agree that Spain's insistence on
monopolizing the navigation rights on the Mississippi River, and congressional indiscretion in drawing upon funds it assumed Jay had obtained from Spain were the main problems Jay needed to overcome to succeed at his mission. Corwin tends to be less sympathetic with Jay's frustrations as he focuses upon Jay's diplomacy with Spain and its effects upon his relations with France. On the other hand, Monaghan sympathetically discusses Jay's mission to Spain and extends his praise for Jay's contributions on the peace commission. Jay's failure in Spain was due to uncontrollable circumstances and was not a reflection of his lack of diplomatic skill. Monaghan's study concentrates upon Jay's diplomatic and political career, while Corwin's topic demands that he deal less with personalities.

Monaghan and Corwin also disagree over Jay's attitude towards the French in Spain. Monaghan believes that Montmorin was dishonest in pretending that he would assist Jay's cause with the Spanish government. According to Monaghan, the French never had any intention of persuading Spain to recognize the United States, while Corwin explains that Jay, as well as other American officials, failed to comprehend that France's first obligation was to support her old European ally. Bemis concurs with Monaghan's basic premise that Jay faced insurmountable obstacles in that Spain demanded concessions on the Mississippi River issues, which Congress first refused to yield until assured that Spain would recognize American independence as France had. Bemis's use of
diplomatic material from the Spanish government as well as congressional journals and Jay's correspondence lend credence to his position. Miller also agrees that Jay's problems in Spain were attributable to the Spanish demands for American concessions which were supported by France. Yet Miller concludes that Jay was not exactly suited to a diplomatic appointment because of his strong republican sentiments. Donald Smith's short account of Jay's contributions to the founding of the nation, taken from Jay's personal writings, blames Congress for the obstacles Jay encountered in Spain, because the instructions demanded more than Spain was willing to grant. Van Alstyne and Morris, who are well-respected historians, basically agree that congressional handling of international finances and the Mississippi River questions diminished the prospect of Jay's success in Spain. Van Alstyne also points out that Jay's stubbornness regarding the Mississippi questions added to the sense of doom which pervaded his mission. Morris contends that congressional ambivalence on the Mississippi questions allowed Jay to interpret the instructions as he chose, and Jay's antipathy towards Spain precluded a beneficial agreement between the two countries. With respect to France's influence on Jay's diplomatic endeavors in Spain, Corwin mainly points out that Jay failed to realize the prior commitments that France had to Spain, and therefore mistook Montmorin's advice as an effort to place him and the United States in an inferior position. Most other historians agree that the
French minister ignored Jay's demands and supported Spanish claims in America.

In contrast to the disputes over his experiences in Spain, there is general agreement among historians that Jay's role in Paris was indispensable. Morris and Monaghan describe how he was able to maintain harmony in the commission because of his moderate temperament and friendship with both Franklin and Adams. Van Alstyne and Currey, however, claim that he and Adams, not Franklin, initially decided to ignore congressional instructions, because Franklin was too willing to comply with French suggestions.

When Jay arrived in Paris, the hostility he harbored against France after his experience in Spain was crucial, according to Monaghan, Bemis, Stourzh, Smith, and Burlingame. In contrast, Corwin and Miller imply that Jay's gratitude for France's generosity overshadowed any ill-feeling he might have held against France. Monaghan, Stourzh and Bemis concur that French designs to control the expansion of the United States within boundaries east of the Mississippi infuriated Jay. Page Smith maintains that Jay was more anti-French than was Adams. Burlingame defends Jay's decision to negotiate separately with England, as does Richard B. Morris. Stinchcombe and Van Alstyne conclude that Jay's dislike of the French occurred after he perceived the dishonest treatment he had received from them in Spain.

Jay moved to Paris in 1781 and, according to some authors, solely directed the negotiations with England.
However, Corwin asserts that the independence Jay exercised in sending Vaughan to England hindered the American cause, as it assured Britain that there was a breach between France and the United States. Monaghan, Bemis, Darling and Van Doren contend that French efforts to delay the peace by playing the United States and Britain against each other influenced Jay's decision to defy congressional instructions. Bemis and Darling are more expertly versed in foreign policy than the other historians, and their use of primary source material from Europe and the United States contribute to their understanding of this delicate situation. Monaghan and Van Doren concentrate more upon the personalities and not the situations which influenced Jay's decision to negotiate separately with Britain. Miller continues his investigation of Jay's actions and mentions his extreme patriotism but does not condemn Jay for defying those instructions which would have harmed the future of the United States. Stinchcombe's critical opinion that Jay recognized his influence in Congress and thus did not hesitate to attack this congressional mandate, is not commented upon by other authors. Both Morris and Monaghan agree that Jay, along with the other two commissioners, was unjustly reprimanded by Congress for concluding a peace that would essentially define the role of an independent United States and insure its security in the world.

John Jay's early career in diplomacy admittedly was doomed to failure, but he successfully proved his diplo-
matic ability in Paris for the eighteenth-century and succeeding generations. He struggled with adverse situations in Spain, and yet according to most historians, surmounted his failure in Spain by directing the peace negotiations in Paris. Thus, Jay was vital to the success of early American diplomacy.
CHAPTER VII

FRANCIS DANA IN RUSSIA

The diplomacy of Francis Dana at the court of Catherine the Great has long remained obscure in the history of American foreign policy, although the accomplishments of Adams, Jay and Franklin have received extensive attention from historians. Francis Dana was a Boston lawyer whom Congress appointed in 1781 to continue the tradition of militia diplomacy. He was instructed to seek Russian recognition of the United States and some form of alliance. His only biography, published in 1930, a 1906 study in early Russian-American diplomatic relations, and more recently, historical articles dealing with Russian foreign policy and the American Revolution, reveal that his mission to Russia was more complicated than had been formerly assumed. When Dana arrived in Russia, he failed to realize that the Russian empress was primarily concerned with insuring Russian power in Europe, and that the American Revolution only supplied her with a convenient approach towards weakening the British Empire. Both he and the American Congress believed that Count Panin's friendly attitude towards the United States would pervade the entire system of Russian diplomacy. However, the power of the Russian foreign minister had been eclipsed by the time Dana arrived. Thus the envoy encountered
the frustrations of non-recognition and was victimized by Russian deception, which continued throughout his stay in Russia.

Given these circumstances, historians discuss, with varying interpretations, the events of his mission, using the information provided by the Dana papers, published government documents from the United States and Russia, as well as pertinent printed sources on Catherine and the League of Armed Neutrality. Historians differ in discussing his attitudes towards relations with the Russian officials. Also, Dana's claims that the French and British envoys in Russia worked to secure the goals of their respective countries and ignored those of the United States cause historical discussion. Whether Dana strictly adhered to congressional instructions while in St. Petersburg causes debate among historians.

W. P. Cresson's biography of Dana, *Francis Dana: A Puritan Diplomat at the Court of Catherine the Great* (1930), emphasizes that the congressional instructions to Dana made his mission to Russia especially difficult. His instructions assumed that the United States, although a belligerent, would readily be admitted to the League of Armed Neutrality. This concept diametrically opposed any agreement that Catherine was willing to make. According to Cresson, Dana was instructed to explain to the empress the "'... justice of our cause, the nature and stability of our union...'" and then impress upon her the advantages that a treaty of friend-
ship and commerce could provide for Russia. Yet Congress failed to provide him with reasons which might convince Russia.\(^1\) Upon his arrival there he realized that Catherine had assumed an attitude of impartiality, as she was hoping to control the proposed mediation conference at Vienna. Dana was unprepared for this reception, because Count Panin had always been favorably disposed towards the United States. Robert Livingston, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, had assumed that Catherine would receive Dana amicably and had been confident that Russia would agree to treaties with the United States and invite it to join the League of Armed Neutrality. The tenor of the congressional instructions changed when Livingston realized that Dana's efforts were only languishing among the intrigues of the court, and he began to discourage further negotiations. A congressional committee on foreign policy then enunciated the purposes of the United States in European affairs: "... The true interests of these states require they should be as little as possible entangled in the politics and controversies of European Nations."\(^2\) Ultimately, even before Dana was recalled, Congress abandoned its interest in his mission and gave him no further responsibility.

The more recent articles by David M. Griffiths on Russian-American relations are vital to a study of American revolutionary diplomacy. Based upon a wide array of primary

\(^1\)Cresson, *Puritan Diplomat*, pp. 142-143.

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 301-302.
sources, he explains Dana's mission to Russia as part of the efforts of the Adams-Lee faction in Congress to discredit the relationship Franklin enjoyed with France. Griffiths also suggests that the Adams-Lee faction urged that Dana's mission be immediately authorized, because they feared that Franklin's subordination to France would insure a French monopoly of American commerce. In their minds, recognition of American independence by Russia would lessen the potential of control by one country.  

Dana's Russian venture was excessively complicated. Although he received instructions from Congress, other men attempted to exert influence over his tactics. John C. Hildt's *Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States and Russia* (1906) explains that Franklin had urged that Dana should go to St. Petersburg as a private citizen, as he opposed sending an official minister before the United States was assured of recognition. After arriving in Russia and establishing communications with Count Ostermann, a vice-chancellor and one of the ruthless aides of Prince Potemkin, Panin's successor, Dana suffered innumerable delays and excuses from the Russian court. Thus, he received an early

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3David M. Griffiths, "American Commercial Diplomacy in Russia, 1780-1783," *William and Mary Quarterly*, XXVII (July, 1970), 384. (Hereinafter referred to as Griffiths, "Commercial Diplomacy."")

introduction to the problems he would face as a minister unrecognized by the court to which he had been sent.

Cresson elaborates further on the unforeseen difficulties of Dana's mission caused by the capriciousness of various individuals. He received no support from Franklin and Vergennes, both of whom opposed the futile efforts of militia diplomacy. In addition, Adams warned Dana to beware of the intrigues of Vergennes and Franklin who, he claimed, would attempt to control the mission. Adams urged Dana "... to let Catherine send an ambassador to the United States ...," and thus avoid the insidious influence of Franklin and Vergennes. However, Cresson's major emphasis on the human obstacles confronting Dana stresses the instability of the Russian court. Ostermann informed Dana that he would receive an audience only after a peace treaty had been signed. As time went on, Dana began to understand that favoritism and blackmail were routine in the Russian court. Catherine's prejudices and her pursuit of personal pleasures diverted her from ever meeting with Dana. Time after time, he was denied diplomatic recognition but he remained optimistic that the United States military successes would favorably impress the empress. Dana began to realize that European nations hesitated to accept the United States into the League of Armed Neutrality, because they were waiting to see if Great Britain would recognize

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^Cresson, Puritan Diplomat, pp. 148, 222.
American independence. According to Dana, the nations involved in the League might risk the loss of commercial benefits tendered by the United States if they waited too long. Dana remained convinced that future relations with Russia would be based upon commerce.  

Samuel Flagg Bemis states that the whole mission was "ill-considered" from its inception. The original idea of the United States joining the League of Armed Neutrality, even if Russia had recognized her, was incomprehensible to Russia, according to Bemis, because she was a belligerent. In addition, Catherine was maneuvering for acceptance of her mediation policy through which "...Great Britain could negotiate with the revolted colonies separately and independently and at the same time negotiate a European peace without recognizing their independence." Russian recognition of American independence could have proven disastrous for Catherine's diplomacy.

Griffiths maintains that Catherine and Russian commercial policy were responsible for Dana's failure. His article, "Nikita Panin, Russian Diplomacy and the American Revolution" (1969), points out that Dana's frustrations were a result of Catherine's fickleness towards her own ministers and the subsequent removal of Panin from power, his later article

6Ibid., pp. 220, 245.
7Bemis, Diplomacy, p. 165.
8David M. Griffiths, "Nikita Panin, Russian Diplomacy and the American Revolution," Slavic Review, American Quar-
on Russian-American commercial policy states that a commercial problem was a basic cause of the failure of his mission. Dana's major task was to counter Russian fears that American trade in Europe would compete with Russia's. Dana supplied sound arguments to Russian advisors, insisting that the importance of American commerce to Russia was "... beyond all question..." which met little or no response. Catherine was not openly hostile to the American proposals for an alliance based upon Russian recognition of independence but regarded the benefits of trade with the United States as being of little significance in relation to the magnitude of European commerce.9

Not only did Dana have to contend with Catherine's unpredictable and vacillating diplomatic and political activities, but he also was countered by the French and British representatives at the Russian court. They were seeking to secure political and diplomatic advantages for their own countries from the titular head of the Russian Empire. Historians argue over the relationship between Britain and Russia, and J. C. Hildt, F. A. Golder and W. P. Cresson basically agree that Catherine hoped to use the American Revolution to effectively weaken British influence in Europe. Hildt explains that Catherine was sympathetic

9Griffiths, "Commercial Diplomacy," 379.
to the American cause only because she hoped to frighten Britain into a humiliating peace by pretending that she would support the efforts of the United States for independence. In reality, her only desire was to see an increase of Russian prestige. Concurring with Hildt's premise is F. A. Golder's article, "Catherine II and the American Revolution" (1916). Although his thesis lacks documentation, he argues that Catherine's only interest in the American Revolution was the impact it would have on British and European politics. Catherine blamed Britain for the failure of her mediation proposals, because Britain refused to free the colonies. And Catherine purposely informed France and Spain of British attempts to bribe Russia into supporting the British war effort in order to increase their antipathy towards Britain. W. P. Cresson adds that Catherine came to realize that her role as mediatrix was impeded, as well as her plans for eastern expansion, so when Charles James Fox quit office upon the death of the Marques of Rockingham all negotiations between Great Britain and Russia were suspended.

Griffiths also discounts the notion of a political agreement between England and Russia. He explains that Russian policy divides into two distinct phases: the first under Panin, who sought to preserve the status quo in Europe and to secure de facto independence for the American colonies

10 Hildt, Diplomatic Negotiations, pp. 18-19.
11 Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, I, p. 265.
12 Cresson, Puritan Diplomat, p. 236.
through Russian mediation; the second began when Panin was removed in 1781, and the empress's advisors "... encouraged a more aggressive foreign policy that could only be hampered by a peaceful solution to the war..." That is, Russia could expand her borders if she took advantage of England's weakness. Apparently France was the country with which Russia felt the most kinship in the first phase. Vergennes explicitly explained that the Franco-American alliance contained no exclusive trade privileges for France, and that trade between the United States and Russia would be unimpeded. With this assurance, he hoped to persuade Russia to support the American cause. Russia anticipated that free trade and American independence would render British power politics obsolete and contribute to the downfall of the British mercantile empire.  

The French activities in Russia during the Revolution also stimulate historical discussion. Hildt expresses the opinion that Verac, the French ambassador in Russia, attempted to aid Dana's mission. Hildt says that Verac tried to explain Catherine's mediation policy to Dana, specifying that the United States must negotiate first with Great Britain, and then with other countries. Furthermore, Verac pointed out that Russia had no great affection for the rebels, and it would only humiliate the United States if France unsuccessfully demanded that Russia recognize their independence. Verac advised, to no avail, that Dana would facilitate his

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13 Griffiths, "Russian Diplomacy," 381.
cause if he waited until a preliminary peace treaty was
signed before asking for Russian recognition, but Dana in-
sisted upon negotiating immediately with the Russians. 14

Both Cresson and Bemis agree that Dana was justified
if he suspected that French advice was not always in the
best interests of the United States. Cresson claims that
Verac unintentionally misinformed Dana that the United
States be invited to participate actively in the proposed
mediation. Dana disagreed with the congressional instruc-
tions that he was to seek French advice throughout his nego-
tiations, because he was sure that Sir James Harris, the
British minister in Russia, and Verac agreed that a premature
recognition of American independence was undesirable. 15
Bemis supports Dana's reasons for distrusting France. He
claims that Vergennes had given Verac orders to ignore
Dana's diplomacy in Russia. Vergennes realized that urging
the Czarina to recognize France's ally would only antagonize
her, as her plan of mediation would then be unacceptable to
Great Britain. 16

Griffiths discounts, however, any suggestion that
Britain and France connived against American interests in
Russia. Verac understood Catherine's desire to remain in
the role of the mediatrix, because she felt that neutrality
was the only way to sustain Russia's commercial trade with

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14 Hildt, Diplomatic Negotiations, pp. 17, 18, 22.
15 Cresson, Puritan Diplomat, pp. 171, 177.
16 Bemis, Diplomacy, pp. 165-177, 407.
Great Britain. Despite Verac's warning, Dana was determined to define his own role in Russia, independent of French advice. He failed to understand that the major obstacles in Russian-American diplomacy were Catherine's search for other alliances, her efforts to partition the Ottoman Empire, and the turmoil of her inner court. Therefore he assumed the same distrust for Russia that Adams directed towards the French. Dana promised Vergennes that he would make his official assignment known only when formal relations were assured, but upon his arrival, he commenced acting as though he was an official ambassador. Griffiths concludes that Vergennes never opposed the mission, and desired only to advise Dana about its potential difficulties.\(^{17}\)

According to Cresson, John Adams influenced Dana's policy in Russia. Although their relationship has not aroused an extreme amount of controversy, it merits discussion. Dana was attracted to Adams, because they shared common diplomatic frustrations and prejudices. Adams was convinced that the same methods of firm diplomacy he used in Holland could be applied in Russia. But this approach proved unsuccessful in Russia, and it was only Adams's success in Holland which, in a measure, vindicated these procedures.\(^{18}\)

Cresson and Griffiths state opposing viewpoints in

\(^{17}\)Griffiths, "Commercial Diplomacy," 391, 400-401.
\(^{18}\)Cresson, Puritan Diplomat, p. 229.
evaluating Dana's diplomatic career. Cresson explains that Congress had relinquished too much of its power to the French, which frustrated Dana's efforts to negotiate directly with Russia. When Dana realized that Russia expected a substantial monetary payment from the United States if a commercial treaty was agreed upon, he disapproved of further American involvement in Europe. Thus, according to Cresson, Dana formulated a pattern of peaceful isolationism, which was the policy the new United States government would adopt in regard to Europe. Both Dana and Adams were disillusioned with European affairs, and they exerted their influence towards securing a complete withdrawal from European alliances. Their experiences in European courts convinced them that the sovereigns were manipulating the American Revolution in an effort to place their own countries in positions of power and to satisfy their own vanities. Following the Peace of Paris, Dana also abandoned any hopes of establishing commercial connections with Catherine's court. In contrast to Cresson, Griffiths labels Dana's mission a glaring failure, caused by his inability to understand the basis of Russian diplomacy, which was based upon commerce. For Russia, England was more prominent and infinitely more valuable to Russian commerce than were American ports. Russian authorities were not convinced of the value of American trade, and this

19 Ibid., pp. 272, 299-300.
sentiment became more acute after Panin was forced from office. Dana chose to blame the French for many of the difficulties which confronted him in Russia, assuming that they wanted to subordinate American interests to their own.  

As the most recent author dealing with Dana and Russian-American diplomacy, Griffiths is critical of both Cresson and Bemis for their ineffective and unscholarly analyses of Dana's mission. The source material for Griffiths's articles includes extensive use of Russian official and private correspondence and archival material, as well as Dana's papers and secondary material pertinent to the topic. He dismisses Cresson's biography, claiming that he has investigated only one source remotely associated with Russia, that of an emigre Pole. Cresson, however, clearly states in his bibliographical note that his investigation is limited to Dana's private correspondence and other manuscripts and printed sources dealing with Dana's diplomatic career as well as his later political life. Admittedly, he was deficient in his use of Russian sources, but he is competent in his interpretation of the American primary sources. Bemis incurs Griffiths's criticism for his mistaken emphasis on Catherine's vanity as the basis of Russian policy. Griffiths also chastises Bemis for stating that Russian foreign policy was governed by favoritism and

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20 Griffiths, "Commercial Diplomacy," 399-400.
blackmail. Although Bemis has used mainly American government documents and correspondence, he also cites information from the State Archives at Leningrad, which is available in the Library of Congress. Griffiths does not comment about Hildt's early investigation of Russian-American relations. Admittedly documentation is lacking in Hildt's book, but his work does provide another viewpoint about a rather obscure man in American diplomatic history.

In discussing the issues relating to Dana's mission to Russia, Cresson defends his lack of accomplishment, explaining that the congressional instructions and Panin's sudden dismissal from power combined to make any significant diplomatic achievement impossible. In addition, Catherine decided to assume the role of mediatrix and was reluctant to commit herself to the American cause. Griffiths explains that Dana was dispatched to Russia to assure the Adams-Lee faction in Congress that Franklin would not secure for France monopoly of American trade. Dana failed to comprehend that Russian commercial trade depended more upon Britain's ports than those of the United States.

Dana's status as an unofficial diplomat also presented problems both domestically and abroad. Hildt explains that Franklin's consistent opposition to militia diplomacy prompted him to urge Dana to travel to St. Petersburg as a private citizen. Then upon his arrival in Russia, Dana

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21 Griffiths, "Russian Diplomacy," 23.
realized that the Russian officials would not immediately acknowledge his official status, and thus he was treated as an unrecognized minister. Cresson also comments that Franklin and Vergennes failed to offer Dana any support, and that the Russian court chose to ignore him for various political and personal reasons. Bemis contends that the mission was ill-fated from its inception, because Congress assumed that the United States, although a belligerent, would be accepted into the League of Armed Neutrality. Moreover, Russian recognition of American independence would have been disastrous to Catherine's policy of mediation.

Historians also mention the influence exerted in Russia by France and England. J. C. Hildt, F. A. Golder, and W. P. Cresson explain that Catherine's policy aimed at weakening the British Empire by extending the American Revolution and mediating a peace. Griffiths also discounts any idea that England and Russia enjoyed a political friendship, stating that Russia placed her self-interest foremost. He continues his explanation of Russia's relationships with other European countries, noting that Vergennes urged Panin to recognize American independence, and assured Russia that the Franco-American alliance contained no exclusive trade agreements for France. However, Dana developed a distrust for French advice, similar to that held by Adams. Hildt maintains that the French ambassador in Russia attempted to aid the American cause, but Dana's insistence on proceeding
without a preliminary peace and Russian antipathy towards Republican rebellion contributed to Dana's failure. In contrast, Cresson and Bemis argue that Dana's distrust of French motives were justified, because France had a predilection for placing her national interests first.

Although Dana's diplomatic achievements in Russia were negligible, his mission merits study in an investigation of revolutionary diplomacy. Because of his frustrating experiences in Russia, and perhaps his inability to comprehend the intricacies of European diplomacy, he developed a fixation for peaceful isolation that was to influence American foreign policy in the first crucial years of its development. Thus, Francis Dana contributed his thoughts on diplomacy to a nation struggling to formulate a successful foreign policy.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The books written about revolutionary diplomacy, or dealing to some degree with this aspect of the Revolution, provide both laymen and specialists in the field of diplomatic history with useful information. Although there are variations in interpretations, there is a certain amount of credibility to be found in most of the books. However, there are instances where an author misinterprets evidence to substantiate his subjective ideas.

Admittedly Silas Deane's diplomatic career was not distinguished, as he became embroiled in numerous problems which, most historians agree, detract from his achievements. With the exception of Currey, whose object in writing his book is somewhere beyond the realm of historical investigation, historians concede, however, that Silas Deane did contribute to the success of revolutionary diplomacy. Currey accuses Deane of joining with Beaumarchais in diverting congressional funds for private use, but Auger, James and Van Alstyne refute this notion of a secret partnership. Deane, being only human, was not a criminal if he indulged in some personal financial ventures, as Ferguson points out. Helen Auger devotes her entire book to the privateering and commercialism that was conducted with
both official and unofficial authorization. In general, historians agree that Deane directed his efforts towards achieving the independence of the United States by securing aid from the French through Beaumarchais. Van Alstyne points out, however, that the French had been dispatching aid to America before Deane and Beaumarchais began their business dealings.

Another aspect of Deane's career which has caused debate among historians is his association with Edward Bancroft. Most authors agree that they were acquainted, but Currey and Boyd, although distinctly different in style and scholarship, explain that Deane provided Bancroft with information which the British then used. Boyd decides that Deane was victimized by a more clever man, while Currey states that Deane's dishonesty equalled that of Bancroft's. More benignly, Bemis, Auger, James and Miller claim that Deane was innocent of any crime and was misled by Bancroft. Van Alstyne insists that there was never an organized network of British spies.

As for the feud which developed between Deane and Arthur Lee, Abernethy and Corwin are the proponents of Arthur Lee's side of the argument. Traditionally, as Bemis, James, Auger and Ferguson demonstrate, historians agree that Lee was overzealous in his condemnation of Deane. On the other hand, Deane and Franklin enjoyed a rather harmonious association, according to Hale and James. Once again, Currey's dissenting voice states that they were partners
in crime. Allegations such as this emphasize the questionable scholarship of his book.

Although no historian defends Silas Deane's final defection to the British, James, Ferguson and Morris explain that the congressional investigation was badly conducted and contributed to his bitterness against the United States. On the other hand, Henderson and Currey imply that Congress was correct in recalling and investigating Deane.

Although the career of Benjamin Franklin in Europe promotes little of the same type of controversy among historians as do Silas Deane's activities, Franklin's diplomacy poses some dilemmas for those historians who have discovered in their investigations that Franklin also made some errors in his negotiations. Due to the questions raised by Abernethy and possibly Currey, the career of Benjamin Franklin is not completely free from dispute.

Franklin's concept of diplomacy emphasized independence for the United States but, according to Gilbert, Stourzh and James, he believed that alliances with Europe would also benefit the United States commercially. Stourzh, although one of Franklin's confirmed supporters, concludes that Franklin was not essential to the success of the alliance, because France had determined to establish it, regardless of who represented the United States. However, as Bemis and Miller state, and as Morris agrees, Franklin exerted his own unique pressure on Vergennes to insure continued French support of the United States.

According to Richard Henry Lee, Franklin's financial interests interfered with his official duties, and Abernethy,
Currey and Morris agree with this assertion. Fundamentally, according to the majority of reputable authors, like Fay, Auger, James, Van Doren, and Burlingame, there is little substance to Lee's accusations. Continuing the criticisms of Franklin by his contemporaries, John Adams was often contemptuous of Franklin's activities. However, even Adams's biographer, Page Smith, admits that Adams was jealous and suspicious of Franklin.

Benjamin Franklin also arouses controversy because of his determination while on the peace commission to obey the instructions of Congress and consult France on all negotiations with England. However, Bemis, Darling and Miller conclude that independence was Franklin's first consideration, and thus he eventually agreed to exclude France from the peace negotiations. Stourzh's study of Franklin's diplomacy defends Franklin against those who maintain that Franklin advocated reconciliation with Great Britain. Never, according to Stourzh, did Franklin consider such a step, as was evidenced by his commitment to independence.

The controversies concerning the Lee brothers, especially Arthur, have been mentioned in summarizing the discussions among historians about Deane and Franklin. The activities of the Lees have been defended by a small minority of writers. Although Miller and Auger dismiss Arthur's role in Paris as insignificant, Currey praises him as the only member of the first commission who dis-
played integrity. Richard Henry Lee, Bemis, Currey and even James agree that Lee was a patriot in the purest sense of the term but, unfortunately, he was unable to direct his patriotism in a constructive manner for his country. His missions to Spain and Prussia demonstrated this. In addition, his brother's diplomatic endeavors were equally futile.

In Arthur's defense, Abernethy carefully explains that Lee's accusations against Franklin and Deane have been dismissed although they merited more investigation. Because of Abernethy's article, Currey's support of Lee seems more believable.

John Jay gained more fame later in his political life, but he was also active in the diplomacy of the Revolution. The commission to Spain introduced him to the difficulties of negotiating with another nation. His biographer, Frank Monaghan, sympathizes with Jay's frustrations in dealing with members of the Spanish court. In addition, Bemis, Monaghan, Morris and Van Alstyne agree that Congress was not considerate in demanding large sums of money from Spain through Jay, nor did its vacillation on the Mississippi River question abet his cause. Unfortunately, Jay believed that France sincerely meant to persuade Spain to support the United States bid for independence, and Monaghan and Corwin agree that he was mistaken. However, Corwin explains that Jay was ignorant of France's previous political obligation to Spain. Because of Jay's strong republican
spirit, both Monaghan and Miller imply that Jay might not have been ideally suited to diplomatic negotiations which required flexibility.

In contrast to his failure in Spain, historians generally agree that Jay was an asset on the peace commission, although his experiences in Spain intensified his skepticism of France. He still thought of France as having deceived him in her failure to secure Spanish acceptance of an alliance with the United States, according to Monaghan, Bemis, Stourzh, Smith and Burlingame. Then he realized that France desired to see the borders of the United States curtailed, which increased his distrust of France. This influenced his decision to advocate separate negotiations with England, which Monaghan, Morris and Burlingame deem a wise choice. The three best accounts of Jay's peace negotiations, by Miller, Darling and Bemis, also explain that French efforts to delay the negotiations and play the United States and Great Britain against one another added to Jay's antipathy against France. Because of his contributions to the peace efforts, Morris and Monaghan agree that the congressional reprimand was unjust.

John Adams, also a member of the Paris peace commission, began his diplomatic career as a replacement for Silas Deane. There is no doubt that Adams was a sincere patriot, and Morse concludes that his patriotism helped American independence. However, Monaghan, Miller, Morris, Rossiter and Bailyn point out that his blunt manner and sensitivity
to personal slights detracted from his diplomatic abilities. Honesty remained foremost in Adams's concept of duty, and Henderson remarks that Congress exonerated Adams from the dubious dealings of the first commission.

The activities of John Adams in Paris have aroused historical debate. Adams's unreasonableness was a negative factor in his initial diplomatic mission to France, according to Cresson and Corwin. However, Hale, Bemis and Miller contend that Adams agreed to an alliance with France, because it seemed the only practical way for the United States to gain independence. On the other hand, Morris and Stinchcombe conclude that Vergennes was unnecessarily rude to Adams and rather deserved Adams's dislike. Page Smith also defends Adams's skeptical attitude towards the French.

If Adams encountered difficulties in France, Smith emphasizes that he was successful in Holland and back in Paris on the peace commission. Darling and Morris also commend his work on the peace commission and state that the congressional rebuke of the efforts of the commissioners was unjustified. Smith is convinced that Adams and Jay were responsible for the success of the commission, despite Franklin's unavailing insistence that France be included in all the negotiations. Most historians accept the contention between Franklin and Adams as a reflection of the differences in their temperaments.

In considering the career of Francis Dana, only a few historians have devoted significant research to his mission
to Russia. Because Dana achieved nothing concrete there, many historians have ignored him, but W. P. Cresson attributes his lack of accomplishment to Catherine's mysterious and unpredictable court habits and to the impractical demands set forth in the congressional instructions. On the other hand, Griffiths criticizes Dana's inability to understand that the United States could not offer Russia sufficient commercial advantages to make an alliance worthwhile.

Dana was also disappointed in the diplomatic support which both France and Great Britain extended to Russia. Cresson and Bemis argue that once again France placed her own interests foremost. J. C. Hildt also explains that Dana made the situation more difficult by pressuring an unwilling Russian court to recognize American independence. Eventually, Cresson concludes, Dana became a firm proponent of isolationism because of his experience in Russia.

For research on American revolutionary diplomacy, there are primary materials, published and unpublished, and numerous secondary works to document an interesting study. The authors dealing with American revolutionary diplomacy use essentially the same primary documents, but certain historians have made more scholarly studies than others. Samuel Flagg Bemis set a precedent for twentieth-century historians to follow regarding research and writing that few have been able to emulate. However, Gerald Stourzh has challenged Bemis's style and scholarship. Fortunately, their topics were sufficiently different to avoid a con-
flict, and both of their books are valuable for this study.

Although Bemis and Stourzh have ably followed the
canons of historical writing, other authors have contributed
competently to the literature of early American diplomatic
history. Corwin's study on the French alliance provides a
needed explanation for one of the major problems of the
Revolution. In a span of four years, Morris, Stinchcombe
and Van Alstyne published their books, which thoroughly re­
searched the primary materials pertinent to their topics.
Morris has made the men on the peace commission very real
characters without submerging his scholarship in shallow
analyses of personalities. Stinchcombe and Van Alstyne
also realize the importance that diplomatic negotiations
played in gaining the alliance with France and independence
from England.

From a biographical standpoint, the books by Van Doren,
Cresson, Monaghan, and Page Smith are necessary to this study.
Without their lucid explanations of the motivations and
biases of the early diplomats, it would be difficult to
evaluate their foreign policies. There is no startling new
material in these biographies, but then none has been re­
vealed in the collections of documents relevant to these
American diplomats.

From the many articles that have been published on
diplomacy and the men of the Revolution, those by Abernethy,
Boyd, Bemis, Ferguson, Gilbert and Griffiths are outstand­
ing. Both Abernethy and Boyd distinguish themselves by
drawing scholarly and new interpretations from evidence that has been available to many historians. Griffiths delves into sources on an obscure topic to reveal valuable information about Russian-American diplomacy. His position, to date, remains unchallenged. Ferguson's explanation of the commercial tendencies of American diplomats defends them from the scorn that other authors attach to their commercial interests. Gilbert's examination of the attitudes of Franklin, Adams and the French philosophers of the eighteenth century towards diplomacy lends an interesting perspective to this thesis.

For historians writing about the diplomacy of the American Revolution, there are not the major difficulties in obtaining primary source material that historians dealing with more obscure or recent topics might encounter. However, there is still the problem of writing without including a personal bias which might taint the use made of the sources. This, of course, is an obstacle which almost all historians face, and only a few surmount.

It would seem that the subject of early American diplomats and their policies has been well researched, but there might still be additional material in the archives in Spain, Holland and Russia, which has not been revealed. Yet recent articles like the ones on Dana by Griffiths indicate that perhaps there are other men who have been slighted in revolutionary history. However, an author must carefully avoid the hazard of inventing dramatic or unusual
topics based upon material from the Revolution. Books and articles relying upon sensationalism are irrelevant to historical research, but they do add an interesting dimension to historiography. Unfortunately, an historiographical analysis should also dismiss such writings as almost useless.

Criticism of the diplomacy of the American Revolution must be executed with great tact, because the Revolution itself is revered in our society, and an iconoclast would hardly be appreciated. Therefore, historians are somewhat limited by societal restrictions in their approaches to revolutionary diplomacy and the men who conducted it. As a young nation, we still do not have the perspective of an older or perhaps fallen empire with which to evaluate the success of our early foreign policy. However, the careers of early American diplomats provided the bases for American foreign policy in the years succeeding the Revolution.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Materials

Journals and Letters


The combination of Adams's diary and letters is very useful in a study of Adams's political career, and the editing is excellent.


These volumes of Franklin's writings with editorial remarks are not as revealing as his *Autobiography*, since they only emphasize his contributions to the Paris commission.


Jay was not prolific in his writings about his diplomatic missions.


This candid exchange of letters between Mercy Warren and Adams reveals criticisms of Adams and his defense against them.


This particular collection of Franklin's writings is very useful and skillfully edited.

These volumes, six in number, are necessary to any study of revolutionary diplomacy.

Memoirs


Although biased, it is the only account of Arthur Lee's life, and is compiled from his personal writings.

Secondary Materials--Published

General, Topical and Monographic Works


Auger presents an interesting and well-documented study of the privateering and commercial ventures of the Revolution which took place in Europe. She admires the men who directed these activities.


Bemis deals not only with American diplomacy in the Revolution but also the attitudes and actions of European countries involved in Armed Neutrality and the mediation efforts. He explains both the American and the European sides of the negotiations for alliances and peace.


The section concerning John Jay was informative but was of little use for the study of his diplomatic efforts in the Revolution.

Burlingame considers Franklin to be outstanding in eighteenth-century diplomatic negotiations, because of his ability to understand people and situations. Although not an exceptionally scholarly work, it is useful.


The bias in favor of Deane dominates the book, which is undocumented. From the standpoint of historical content, the study is valueless.


Corwin has written a valuable account of the international politics which resulted in the signing of the Franco-American alliance. He also has studied the problems arising from the American commitment to France during the peace negotiations.


Cresson presents an honest picture of the diplomacy of the Russian court along with his realization that Dana's mission was futile from its inception. Cresson points out how Dana's attitude towards diplomacy affected the United States national policy.


Currey strongly suspects Franklin's role in the diplomatic activity in Paris, associating him with men accused of being British spies. The bias is overriding to the point of careless and circumstantial speculation.

The first four chapters of this book deal exclusively with the negotiations with England for a treaty of peace, which are very useful for a study in revolutionary diplomacy.


Fay's treatment of diplomatic incidents and Franklin in Europe is minimal, as this book is concerned mainly with the many diversions in Franklin's life and his philosophical view of life.


Hildt does not delve into personalities and character studies but is concerned with the diplomatic procedures. The section dealing with Russia is useful but lacks sources from Russia.


This volume is useful in explaining Franklin's social and intellectual activities and his personal relations in France but is almost meaningless for the study of Franklin's diplomacy.


This in-depth study of the American Revolution is beneficial from many aspects, as Miller deals with the English points of view towards the Revolution, as well as the American. The diplomacy of the Revolution is placed in the perspective of the entire event, including military campaigns and political debates.


Monaghan points out that Jay's failure in Spain was no discredit to him, but that his personality might not have been ideally suited to diplomacy. He credits Jay with directing the success of the peace commission, however.

The road to peace involved many varied personalities and events which Morris presents in an interesting and well-documented narrative. He also speaks ably of European influences on American affairs.


Although biased and not well-documented, his account of Adams's life in politics is interesting.


This short volume is composed of Jay's writings with Smith's editorial remarks which present Jay in a favorable frame of reference.


Smith portrays Adams as a very real character, subject to the pitfalls of vanity, temper and sensitivity, yet still to his country's success. This study of Adams's life is excellent but needs to be balanced with other works dealing with Adams, because it is based too narrowly on Adams's correspondence.


This explanation of French activities in France and the United States in order to gain support for the alliance, and America's response to them, is interesting and worthwhile. This is a part of the Revolution that merits historical study.

For a study of Franklin's philosophy towards foreign policy, this is most enlightening. It also contains valuable comments on other works written about Franklin.


The rise of American independence through the American reaction to British legislation is the framework in which this book is set. He treats American foreign policy from the standpoint of the European influences upon it.


Van Doren's book covers Franklin's entire life, and his trips to Europe are well explained. Van Doren admires Franklin's diplomatic abilities yet does not overwhelm the reader with his bias for Franklin.


Although this book concentrates more on the secrecy of the military aspects of the Revolution, Van Doren does mention the shady dealings of Deane in France. However, Benedict Arnold is the main character in this study.

Articles


Abernethy is convinced that evidence from British government documents leads to the conclusion that Deane was the profiteer Lee had accused him of being. This viewpoint is not generally accepted, and thus the article is requisite for gaining a fuller understanding of the conflict between Silas Deane and Arthur Lee.

This defense of both Lee brothers for their accusations against Franklin and Deane differs from the traditional approach of historians. It should be considered as a valid study, useful for those who have always maintained that the Lees were wrong on their attacks on Deane and Franklin.


The author brings out the attachment between British agents and the American diplomatic representatives, especially Franklin and Deane. He demonstrates that this association affected the outcome of the Revolution very little.


This article lends excellent insight into the character of John Adams, which was surprisingly complex. It does not contribute vastly to an understanding of his diplomatic policy, however.


This article considers the formation of Franklin's attitudes towards imperial expansion, his conversion to American independence, and the diplomatic tasks of winning the French alliance and concluding the treaty of peace with Great Britain. It is informative, although not unique in its opinions.


For background on Silas Deane's initial contact with Edward Bancroft, their eventual friendship, and its outcome, this is an excellent study. Boyd is skillful in relating the facts and implications of their relationship.

This article reveals the primary motives of Vergennes in his efforts to secure the Franco-American alliance. It is good for background information while studying American diplomacy during the period.


Ferguson presents the Revolution as an opportunity for men interested in commercial advantages. From his viewpoint, it is fortunate that men like Adams and Jay represented the country, as their motives were not as pecuniary as Deane's. This is a good presentation of rather complicated material.


This article explains the French philosophical approach towards diplomacy, as well as including the diplomatic attitudes of Franklin and Adams, which is a unique and useful combination.


This explanation of Catherine's manipulation of the American Revolution to insure Russian power in Europe is not essential to the study of American diplomacy. It does give helpful background, however, on the obstacles that Dana had to surmount if he were to gain Russian recognition of American independence.


Henderson's analytical approach to the congressional factionalism resulting from the Deane-Lee imbroglio, and the political alignments that formed, is more worthwhile for a study of the American political tradition.

This article commends France for the support she offered America, even before a formal agreement was reached. It deals only minimally with American diplomats.

**Secondary Materials--Unpublished**


As one of the works dealing with Deane, it makes good use of primary material to reveal obscure information about one of the unheralded and overlooked men of the Revolution. He does not avoid the problems that Deane faced while in Paris.