According to Benedict Anderson, the nation is best defined as "an imagined political community." It is "imagined" because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" and it is "imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."¹ This is perhaps the most over used theoretical construct in the field of nationalism studies today, and while it has been challenged, it still offers the scholar of nationalism a powerful tool with which to view their subject. A nation is made up of many things, for example, Craig Calhoun offers us ten characteristic components of "the rhetoric of nation": "boundaries," "indivisibility," "sovereignty," "an 'ascending' notion of legitimacy," "popular participation in collective affairs," "direct membership," "culture," "temporal depth," "common descent," and "special or even sacred relations to a certain territory."² But above all else, and this is why we are still beholden to the simple rhetorical genius of Anderson, the nation is an act of the imagination, a phenomenon that lives in the emotive and intellectual recesses of the human mind.

In thinking about the American Civil War and the Southern Confederate nation that briefly arose from it, it makes sense to look at the various acts of the imagination that sought to give solidity to the idea of Southern separatism and nascent Confederate nationalism. My project today is to say a few brief words about two such acts of the imaginary, novels penned by Southerners who foresaw the day (which in the case of Edmund Ruffin was just about two months away) when a

² Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis, 1997), 4-5.
Southern Confederate nation would emerge from the United States and would attempt to defend its assumed right to hold humans of African descent in contented bondage. But first, let me briefly illuminate the power of this imaginary on the minds of at least some Confederates, a hold over their imaginations that the war's end did not necessarily diminish.

News of the General Robert E. Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Courthouse came to Turnwold, Georgia on May 2, 1865, just about three weeks after the event. On that day, Joseph Addison Turner, the editor and proprietor of a plantation journal called The Countryman noted that, "the great heart of the nation has been paralyzed. God has touched it, and it is still. . . . The whole southern country is now one gigantic corpse, and a black pall lies listless on its lifeless limbs."4

Three weeks later still, on May 23 – by which point all major Confederate commands but one had surrendered and President Jefferson Davis had been captured5 – Joseph Turner proposed to breathe a little life back into the pallid carcass of the South, with a bold proposal for reconciliation with the Northern victor. He enumerated a five point plan for reconstructing the nation:

1. – A new flag. – Our people have so long fought against the United States flag, and it has waved over the bloody graves of so many of them, and over so many of their ruined homes, and burned towns, and villages, that you cannot expect it to command their hearts and heads, though you do their hands, in its support.
2. – A new constitution should be agreed upon, because the old one is not sufficiently explicit as to our rights.
3. – A full and complete acknowledgement of our state rights, and state sovereignty should be accorded us – together with a complete recognition of our institution of slavery.

---

3 Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.
5 Joseph Johnston surrendered in North Carolina on April 26; Richard Taylor surrendered in Alabama on May 4; Jefferson Davis was captured on May 10; and Edmund Kirby Smith surrendered the Confederate trans-Mississippi West on May 26.
4. – An abnegation of the idea that our people became rebels, or were guilty of treason when they seceded, and waged war against the north – they owing allegiance to their respective states alone.

5. – A consolidation of the war debt of the two sections.\textsuperscript{6}

Turner conceded that the chances of this plan finding favor in Congress were limited, but he appealed to Northerners to work to conquer their prejudices and "give us good terms."\textsuperscript{7}

In this rendering of the Confederate imaginary, the Confederacy – which had always been an American nation as well as a Southern one, would graciously allow the Yankees to reassimilate them, so long as they accepted the legitimacy of the Confederacy's existence in first place! In defeat, the hold of the Confederate imaginary on Turner's mind was powerful, and the development of the mythic ideology of the Lost Cause in the postbellum years – a topic outside of my scope today – alludes to the fact that political and military defeat did not mean ideological subjugation for many white Southerners.

In thinking about the Confederate imaginary, we need to turn the clock back almost thirty years from Turner's last gasp attempt to elicit official recognition of his defeated nation's legitimacy. In 1836, Duff Green, the Washington journalist, published a novel called \textit{The Partisan Leader: A Tale of the Future}, ostensibly written by one Edward William Sidney.\textsuperscript{8} In this novel, set in 1849 and purporting to be written in 1856, Sidney set out his account of secession, the creation of a Southern Confederacy in opposition to the pseudo-monarchical tyranny of Martin Van Buren – then embarking upon his fourth consecutive term as President, and the travails of an occupied Virginia as she sought to win free of the yoke of tyranny and join her Southern brethren. Sidney, who was in fact Beverly Tucker, former judge, and Professor of Law at the College of William & Mary, and a


\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{8} Edward William Sidney, \textit{The Partisan Leader: A Tale of the Future} (Washington, D.C.: Duff Green, 1836). One may assume that the author's adoption of Sidney as his pseudonymous family name harkened back to Algernon Sidney, the Whig, republican martyr executed in 1683 for his alleged complicity in a plot to assassinate King Charles II. Tucker himself was a Whig.
confirmed opponent of Jacksonian economic policies and the tariff in particular, intended the novel as an anti-Van Buren campaign tract to influence the 1836 presidential election.\(^9\) It was published too late for that goal to be achieved, and was perhaps too far-fetched an account for the contemporary audience, not to mention poorly-written, and unfinished, as Tucker leaves the audience hanging with the fate of his principal character undetermined and the tyrant still in power.

Beverly Tucker died in 1851, having influenced several generations of young Southern college students, and so he did not see his novel achieve its greatest success, which came during the fulfillment of his prophecy, secession and civil war at the hands of an ostensible tyrant. According to Carl Van Doren, "no book, of any time, surpasses *The Partisan Leader* for intense, conscious Virginianism," and that is true, but Tucker's vision was larger than that, encompassing as it did the idea of a unified South in opposition to Northern tyranny, and the future of a Southern League or Confederacy.\(^10\) In its initial – and for a quarter-century, only, print run – *The Partisan Leader* enjoyed rather modest success. Tucker's biographer, Robert J. Brugger, notes that Duff Green could account for only the distribution of one thousand three hundred and three copies, divided between Boston and Philadelphia (339 copies), Maryland and Virginia (446 copies), Columbia, Augusta, and New Orleans (518 copies). In contrast, Hugh Holman, who edited the 1971 reprint of *The Partisan Leader*, noted that the first printing of the 1861 New York edition of the book sold seven thousand copies in just about three weeks.\(^11\)

\(^9\) In a letter written to John C. Calhoun in November 1844, supporting the annexation of Texas, Tucker bluntly noted, "I am a States Right Man. No more–No less." Beverly Tucker to John C. Calhoun, November 13, 1844. *The Papers of John C. Calhoun, Volume XX, 1844*, Clyde N. Wilson, ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), p. 287. This simplicity of thinking does seem to have characterized his career.


This offers a rather stark contrast with the publication record of the second Confederate "future history" of which we are aware, Edmund Ruffin's *Anticipations of the Future To Serve as Lessons for the Present Time*, published in Richmond in June 1860, just as the Democratic Party was splintering in Charleston in the act of slavery-induced self destruction that would ultimately throw the 1860 Presidential election to Abraham Lincoln and so precipitate the start of the Civil War.¹² Ruffin's apparently timely novel, which he hoped would impact the 1860 election as well as sway wavering to the Southern cause, had an initial print run of one thousand copies, of which it sold some four hundred. It was, therefore, Tucker's vision of their future to which Unionists and Confederate took, rather than Ruffin's blood soaked Gothic tale of devastation and ruin.

Ruffin commenced his story, written as a series of letters to the *London Times* from their correspondent in the United States, in the immediate aftermath of William Seward's election to the presidency in 1864. Seward succeeded Abraham Lincoln, whom Ruffin had added as the first Republican president after Lincoln unexpectedly secured the 1860 nomination. In Ruffin's alternate future, during the 1860s, first under Lincoln and then Seward, the abolitionist Congress (and after 1864 the President, as Lincoln was relatively quiescent in Ruffin's predictions) continued to attack the South and its institutions, as they had since 1846. In December 1867, unable to take any more, the states of the Deep South seceded, followed shortly thereafter by the Upper South, after Seward's army crossed into Virginia.

To this point, the political machinations of the next decade do not seem far fetched, but after the war commences Ruffin's fevered hatred of the North takes hold and the novel degenerates into an orgy of bloodshed, perpetrated in the first instance by an interracial army under the command of one of John Brown's sons. Ultimately, this force is betrayed by the loyal slaves of Kentucky they sought to free, Owen Brown is hung along with every one of his surviving officers,

---

and not a single white member of the expedition survives. In Maryland, a similar attempt to incite slave revolt ends the same way, with loyal slaves hewing to their masters. Instead of the corpse of John Brown being hoisted to another gallows, as is symbolically the case with his son, this time the centerpiece of the mass hangings that follow is William Lloyd Garrison himself. The end of the war comes in October 1868, as the newly seceded West joins with the South to vanquish the Northern foe. The defeated North regresses to a state of chaos, with prophetic riots in the streets of New York, along with Philadelphia and Boston, all three cities being destroyed in flames. The South, although bruised and bloodied, emerges victorious.

According to one of Ruffin's earliest modern biographer's, distinguished Southern historian Avery Craven, *Anticipations* was "a glorious picture of ruin turned to prosperity; of a people suffering because they had delayed taking steps which in the end proved to be necessary; of a majority, drunk with power, blundering forward to ruin and forcing a minority to defend its superior social-economic system; and in the end, of urban-industrial things bowing before the superior merits of agriculture." Yet this is in fact not what the modern historian takes away from *Anticipations*, and if I may steal Craven's formulation here, the real Confederacy of which Ruffin's *Anticipations* was an imaginary forebear, was an inglorious picture of white planter prosperity turned to ruin; of a people suffering because they had delayed taking steps which in the end proved to be necessary – the abolition of slavery, for example; of a white majority in the South, drunk with power, blundering forward to military, political, and economic ruin; and in the end, of agricultural things bowing down before the superior merits of the urban-industrial system.

---

Fred Hobson, writing in *The Southern Literary Journal* in 1977, and then expanding his analysis in the 1983 book, *Tell About the South*, places Ruffin's solitary fictional adventure at the intersection of his antebellum Southern nationalism and his experience of personal tragedy in the decades before the Civil War. As *Anticipations of the Future* clearly demonstrates – in its myriad scenes of Northern death, devastation, and ruin, Ruffin nursed a hatred towards the damn Yankees that Judge Tucker could not come close to matching. As Hobson puts it, "the tension between North and South began to grow most heated just as Ruffin came to experience a void in his own life that he could fill from nothing within himself." He had lost his mother when he was young, three of his children died in infancy, his wife died in her prime in 1846, and in 1855 three of Ruffin's surviving daughters died unexpectedly. As he wrote in his diary in October 1859, "If I had died five years ago, how much of unhappiness would have been escaped." By 1865, when he died, Ruffin had lost two more daughters, a son and grandson dead in Confederate gray, and both of his plantations ransacked and burned by Union forces, with the 1862 burning of Beechwood memorialized on the cover of *Harper's Weekly*.

For Hobson, while Ruffin was already "a committed Southern nationalist" before the mid-1850s, "it is undeniable that his need to write voluminously . . . was greatly motivated by the emptiness and misery which he found in his own life," and for Hobson, it is *Anticipations* in which Ruffin – for the one time in his literary career – achieved a "freedom" from the restraints of "an editor and . . . the essay form," which allowed him to express "his dream, his hopes, and his total identification with the Southern cause" to a greater extent than "anything he else he ever

---

15 Hobson, *Tell About the South*, p. 33.
17 Hobson, *Tell About the South*, p. 43.
The most famous statement of Ruffin's creed, of course, comes in the final entry in his extensive diary, written on the day he committed suicide, Saturday June 17, 1865, and repeated in the concurrent letter of instruction he wrote to his son, Edmund Jr., concerning the disposition of his effects. In the very last sentences that he wrote to his son, incongruously just after he broke off another screed against Northerners to bequeath a watch to his grandson, Ruffin wrote these words:

And now, with my last writing & utterance, & with what will be near to my last breath, I here repeat, & would willingly proclaim, my unmitigated hatred to Yankee rule – to all political, social, & business connection with Yankees, & to the perfidious, malignant, & vile Yankee race.

Edmund Ruffin is perhaps the prototypical symbol of the Southern fire-eater and Confederate loyalist, stoking the fires of his hatred of the opposing race and nation until quite literally the moment at which he pulled the trigger to end his life. How typical he is as a representative of real Confederates, rather than symbolic ones, is more problematic.

What is interesting, as I noted above, is that it appears to have been Tucker's vision of the Confederate imaginary that resonated the most strongly with contemporary Americans; if either of these works can be said to have had an impact, it was The Partisan Leader. For Hobson, "Tucker's novel . . . lacks the intensity, the repeated scenes of death and destruction, and the unrestrained glee at Yankee misfortune which characterize Anticipations of the Future. Sir Walter Scott, rather than some private demon, was the force behind The Partisan Leader." Ruffin himself, re-reading The Partisan Leader in October 1864 for the first time in almost thirty years, noted in his diary that while "I have been much more of a true prophet than the author of the 'Partisan Leader.' Yet he has, at last, received great praise on this score, & my book & its predictions, and the lessons designed to be taught through these hazarded & unreliable anticipated incidents, have met with notice from very

18 Hobson, Tell About the South, pp. 33, 37.
20 Hobson, Tell About the South, p. 38.
few readers, & total disregard & neglect from the reading public. Possibly, some thirty years hence, my turn to be noticed may arrive."\(^{21}\)

In the wider work of which this piece will become a part, it is my intention to use these two novels, written in 1836 and 1860, to illuminate the antebellum Confederate imaginary and to link the ideas of prewar Confederate nationalism to those of the war itself, which is the core of my wider project. However, in the interests of time here tonight, I will largely confine my comments to The Partisan Leader, saving a fuller analysis of Anticipations of the Future for a later date. Having said that, if we treat Beverly Tucker's work as that of a Virginian trying to grapple with the place of his state in the Union and more particularly in the South, then we can see that in this case a future Confederate identity is constructed from a medley of place, family, and history.

**Place** is vitally important in the construction of this novel. As The Partisan Leader opens, we find Arthur Trevor, the younger brother of the hero, Douglas, riding through the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in search of the partisans led by his brother. Instead of a sign and counter-sign to identify their allies, the partisans subscribe to what we might call the mysticism of "Old Virginia."\(^{22}\) The younger Trevor tells Christian Witt that he did not need a sign, because he knew they were for Virginia: "'I knew it by the place where I find you. I heard it in your voice; I saw it in their eyes; and I felt it in my heart.'"\(^{23}\) In fact, we come to find out that one difference between Douglas Trevor and his Van Burenite elder brother, Owen, is that Douglas had been "infected" with Virginianism during a winter spent at home.\(^{24}\) In Tucker's conception, Virginia was a place that got under the skin, that infected the very soul of the individual. In essence, place sets the table for

---


\(^{24}\) *ibid.*, p. 28.
everything else, place (the soil and terrain) gives Virginia her particular economic institutions and practices, notably slave-based agrarianism, and therefore white Virginian's could not help but be opposed to the manufacturing-led, tariff-based tyranny of the Van Burenites.

Family too is vital to Tucker's conception of the Southern self, but in this case, family is expressed in more variegated ways than place.\textsuperscript{25} In the first instance, the Trevor family itself is split, with Hugh and Bernard Trevor, brothers and parents of the main protagonists of the novel, divided on the question of Union. Hugh, the elder brother, and father of Douglas, has an honest disagreement with Bernard, father of Delia, the principal female character and love interest of Douglas, about the fidelity owed to the national government. This is not a debate about Van Buren, whom they both abhor, but about the value of loyalty – in short, does duty to the \textit{forms} of government outweigh duty to the \textit{principles} of government? This is not only a debate within one family, this is a debate writ large within the United States as a kin community, both in 1836 when the novel was written and in 1860, when some of its predictions came to pass. Bernard Trevor, speaking to his nephew Douglas, sets this dichotomy precisely:

what if your views of the constitution had shown you that the acts of the Government were violations of the constitution, and that the men denounced \ldots as traitors were its most steady supporters. What duty would your oath have prescribed in that case? Would you support the constitution by taking part with those who trampled it under foot, against those who upheld it as long as there was hope?\textsuperscript{26}

Earlier in their discussions, Bernard had urged Douglas to consider a situation where his duty to his father would conflict with his duty as a soldier, if his father were in rebellion against the central government, thus subtly leading Douglas to the eventual conclusion that Virginia, acting in this sense as a meta-father-figure, trumped Van Buren and the United States.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} For a more literary explication of Tucker's use of family, see John L. Hare, \textit{Will the Circle Be Unbroken?: Family and Sectionalism in the Virginia Novels of Kennedy, Caruthers, and Tucker, 1830-1845} (New York: Routledge, 2002): pp. 107-126.
\textsuperscript{26} Tucker, \textit{The Partisan Leader}, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{27} \textit{ibid.}, pp. 55-57.
Family also works here in several other ways, for the honest debate between Hugh and Bernard on the value of principle is constantly distorted by the interference of the North – embodied in President Van Buren. Owen Trevor, the eldest son of Hugh, has been flattered and seduced into Van Burenism and away from filial and hereditary loyalty, and Douglas' attempts to wrestle with the intellectual dilemmas just posed are greatly complicated by the President's attempts – at the behest of the villainous Judge Baker and his son, to have him court martialed for some convoluted offense he gave to the latter. In fact, Douglas' offense was in protecting the public reputation of his cousin, Delia, a goal for which he was willing to sacrifice his career, and perhaps even his life. In stark contrast, Owen Trevor is so debased from the ideal of a Virginian gentleman, that at the climactic moment of the book he breaks his parole, kidnaps his brother and delivers him to the certain injustice of the tyrant, and then reneges on an agreement to surrender the Lynchburg garrison to the partisans.28 He is killed in the ensuing battle, and Tucker spends not a word mourning his passing.

Family also works for Tucker as a metaphor for relations between the Southern states. The whole narrative thrust of the book revolves around the question of whether Virginia will secede – and in fact whether she will be able to secede – to join her Southern brethren who have already done so. Yet, they do not necessarily want her. After Bernard and Douglas flee to North Carolina, they are party to a tavern conversation between a shop-keeper, a planter, and a wagoner. Mr. Hobson, the planter, is particularly leery of "them high-headed Roanoke planters," whom he blamed for handing the election to Van Buren in 1848, and who now want to enjoy the benefits of the trade agreement worked out between the Southern Confederacy and Great Britain.29 In particular, he is concerned that Norfolk merchants will siphon off much of the trade advantage North Carolina was then enjoying in tobacco. Douglas Trevor, overhearing this byplay, is disgusted at this "sordid desire

29 *ibid.*, p. 127.
to monopolize" trade, but as so often in this novel, Tucker moves on quickly, having introduced a point he is either unable or unwilling to follow through to its conclusion.\textsuperscript{30} Here, Tucker’s Virginianism shines through clearly. It is, however, an open question as to whether Tucker was merely being elitist, or whether he truly saw the sort of narrowly conceived, crudely economic self-interest of Hobson to be against the best interests of Virginia and her position within a future Southern Confederacy.\textsuperscript{31}

Finally, Tucker also includes, almost without thought it seems, slaves in his conception of familial relations in Virginia. Given that Nat Turner’s revolt occurred just a few years before Tucker wrote his novel, it is perhaps interesting that he was perfectly ready to countenance the idea of a black man with a gun. Before they escaped to the Carolinas, Bernard Trevor had used his faithful slaves – his Black Watch or \textit{sidier dhu} – to capture a party of federal troops sent to arrest him.\textsuperscript{32} According to the mysterious Mr. B--, "they . . . are one integral part of the great black family, which, in all its branches, is united by similar ligaments to the great white family."\textsuperscript{33} The "similar ligaments" mentioned are those of the fostering relationship of "mammy" and her children. Again, Tucker deals with this issue in rapid-fire fashion, dispensing with the peculiar institution in the conventional way by asserting that the Yankee has "not the qualities which would enable them to

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{ibid.}, p. 128.

\textsuperscript{31} In a letter written to John C. Calhoun in January 1846, Tucker disparaged "the presumption of men whose proper place is between the handles of the plough, but who affect to lead in great affairs." Beverly Tucker to John C. Calhoun, January 23, 1846. \textit{The Papers of John C. Calhoun, Volume XXII, 1845-1846}, Clyde N. Wilson, ed. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), p. 502. One wonders if Mr. Hobson was just such a character.


\textsuperscript{33} Tucker, \textit{The Partisan Leader}, pp. 112-113. Vernon Parrington, Carl Bridenbaugh, and Clyde N. Wilson all assume that Mr. B-- was John C. Calhoun, but Hugh Holman, noting that Tucker was no friend of Calhoun in 1836, suggests instead that "the temptation is strong to say that Mr. B-- is really Mr. Beverley himself and that he is what Tucker would like to be as a powerful statesman." Holman, p. xxii. See also Carl Bridenbaugh, \textit{Introduction}, Nathanial Beverley Tucker, \textit{The Partisan Leader}, ed. Carl Bridenbaugh (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1933), p.p. xxix; and Clyde N. Wilson, ed., \textit{The Papers of John C. Calhoun, Volume XIII, 1835-1837} (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980), p. 257.
comprehend the negro character. . . . [their] disinterested devotion, . . . [and] unsophisticated heart." For Tucker, as for later Confederate adherents, the dream of independence and liberty was based on a social and economic foundation of black labor. Yet, just as the foundation of a house is largely invisible to the outside observer, but the very existence of the house is utterly dependent upon the solidity of that foundation, so too was the black South a necessary, and in this case largely invisible, foundation for the rhetorically-created Confederacy. One simply could not exist without the other; in fact, one could not even be imagined without the other, a symbiotic and parasitic relationship indeed.

History is the least explicit element of Tucker's medley, but given his background as a jurist of some distinction, and the son of a Revolutionary War veteran, it is striking to the modern reader the extent to which Tucker's story seems to place Virginia in fictional 1849 in the position of the colonies in the real 1770s. The story starts out with a group of rifle-armed men "chiefly clad in half-dressed buck-skin," and includes at least one brief aside to the superiority of the rifle over the musket, echoing the tradition of the frontiersman's Kentucky rifle. More centrally, Martin Van Buren is repeatedly described in monarchical terms, as "King Martin, the First," for example, or as one who had Owen Trevor "consecrated to the purple," or even in his own words as Douglas Trevor's "too partial sovereign." More than that, however, this homegrown King George III seems guilty of exactly the same crimes of which the colonials accused the original in the Declaration of Independence. Many of the specific charges laid against the British dealt with their interference in colonial self-government, and Van Buren not only sends federal troops to meddle in Virginian elections, but is also revealed as hoping that the Virginia House of Burgesses, "this superfluous State Legislature, this absurd relic of imperium in imperio," will "abolish itself." As Van  

34 Tucker, The Partisan Leader, p. 113. Again, this is Mr. B-- speaking to Douglas.  
35 ibid., p. 2, 195.  
36 ibid., p. 95, 27, 90.
Buren mused, "we can then restore them all the benefits of real and efficient local legislation, by erecting these degraded sovereignties into what they ought always to have been – municipal corporations, exercising such powers as we choose to grant." Other charges dealt with imperial interference in colonial justice, and we see here that Van Buren has convened his own Star Chamber, an extra-constitutional Court of High Commission chaired by the mercenary Judge Baker, and intended to deal with the President's enemies outside the inconvenient channels of due process and defendant's rights. Finally, of course, George III was accused of having "kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures." Van Buren's "army of observation" in Virginia serves as an exact analogy.

While we may infer from Tucker's background and interests that he was moved by the comparisons of Van Burenite tyranny to British oppression in the late colonial period, the comparison is never explicitly drawn by the author. While we may see *The Partisan Leader* as a justification of revolution, in the Lockean tradition, we must assume that Tucker expected his audience to be moved by the familiar, by the experiences learnt from parents and grandparents, and the lessons taught by the repeated public and private commemorations of the Revolution. History works beneath the surface of this narrative, but it works in ways just as profound the expected audience as does Tucker's evocations of place and family.

As we noted earlier, *The Partisan Leader* was first published in 1836, to relatively modest acclaim. However, it was rediscovered by both sides early in the Civil War, being first reprinted in

---


38 *ibid.*, pp. 98, 107, 211-212. In particular, Van Buren wants to try enemies of the state *in absentia* in D.C., echoing Jefferson's charge that George III "has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws," and that "He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone . . ."

39 *ibid.*, p. 97.

New York in 1861 and then in Richmond in 1862. As both reprint editions contained brief introductions that sought to situate the work in the broader context of the war, we have an opportunity to lay Northern and Southern conceptions of this work alongside each other. Interestingly, two of the three of the modern reprint editions – the Gregg Press' 1968 facsimile and Hugh Holman's 1971 North Carolina edition – reprinted the "Explanatory Introduction" from the 1862 New York edition, while the third modern version – Carl Bridenbaugh's 1933 Knopf edition, reprinted neither of the 1860s introductions. So the Southern version, with its introduction by the Reverend Thomas A. Ware, has long been available only in Rare Book Rooms, in microfilm form, or since 1999 on the Web via the University of North Carolina's Documenting the American South (DocSouth) project.

For the anonymous author of the introduction to the 1861 Rudd & Carleton, New York edition, Tucker's work was *prima facie* evidence that "our country is suffering from the effects of a conspiracy unparalleled in the history of mankind," that "the fratricidal contest into which our country has been led is not a thing of chance, but of deliberate design." According to this version of the past, after the defeat of nullification in the early 1830s, Southern secessionists successfully infiltrated and came to dominate the Democratic Party, leading it to pursue aims "purely Southern and sectional," including the annexation of Texas, the Mexican War, and the "evil enginery of Lecomptonism." Once the Democracy had served its purposes, it was "ruthlessly rent . . .

---


43 *ibid.*, p. vi, v.

44 *ibid.*, p. v.
For this commentator, Beverly Tucker had served as the ideologue of the coming revolution, the man with the blueprint for secession and war, the dark visionary who had foretold "nearly every important point of the great conspiracy," and for whom "the Jeff. Davises, Yanceys, Pryors, Rhetts, Letchers, etc." had "done little else than servilely to follow out the programme sketched for them in this remarkable book." The commentator seems to willfully miss Tucker's focus on Northern economic oppression as the root cause of secession, and instead to note that he eschewed abolitionism as a cause, and that therefore "Tucker seems to have been unable to make out the semblance of a good case" for secession as anything other than a tautological necessity.

In at least one way, the Reverend Thomas Ware, writing to introduce the 1862 West & Johnson Richmond edition, agreed with his anonymous Yankee counterpart – Tucker had "substantially foretold the great leading features of the history" of the past quarter-century. However, for Ware, and apparently for the late Judge Tucker as well, who was quoted through an acquaintance in Ware's introduction, those "leading features" were the product of defects in the "Yankee character," defects that Ware did not feel the need to explicate, as presumably being well known to his audience. In fact, Ware seemed to take for granted that his audience did not need to be led point-by-point through Tucker's prescience, and that his republication of the work – and he never acknowledge that Rudd & Carleton had beaten him to it – "would tend to illustrate the

---

45 ibid., p. vi.
46 ibid., p. vi.
47 Tucker, The Partisan Leader (Richmond, 1862) p. iii.
48 ibid., p. iii, v. Ware quotes a letter from the lieutenant governor of Virginia, Robert Latane Montague, who in 1842 or 1843 was a student at William & Mary, enrolled in one of Professor Tucker's classes. Montague reported that he had heard Tucker "declare to his class that he wrote the book," and had subsequently discussed it with him in private, noting Tucker's opinion that "those who were then deriding him, and denouncing his book as a treasonable production would live to see the day when they would acknowledge that his appreciation of Yankee character was correct; and lament in tears and blood that his views were not sooner adopted by the South." p. iv-v.
necessity of our position, to vindicate the justice of our cause, and to intensify Southern patriotism.”

Ware actually devoted a considerable portion of his introduction to a trip he had made to Patrick County, Virginia, the reputed location of events foretold in The Partisan Leader, in the course of which he had met one Saunders Witt, a local character of some reputation, who had featured (as Christian Witt) in the opening scene of the novel and who was related as recalling Judge Tucker's pilgrimage to the region in the mid 1820s. Ware seems to recognize, as Tucker had, the importance of place, family, and history in this conception of Southern identity, and in his conversation with Mr. Witt, he ends up in noting that:

I could but regard him with a kind of romantic veneration, as a real character in a great prophetic story, whose thrilling events have been essentially fulfilled, and in the realization of which, evincing the same characteristics and endorsing the same sentiments which it was supposed he would maintain. All that I learned from his neighbors tended but to show that precisely such circumstances as those supposed would probably have developed precisely such a character as he is presumed to have sustained.

What is interesting here, of course, is that both Ware and his anonymous Northern counterpart saw Tucker’s conception of Southern character and motivations as being essentially unchanged, remaining trapped in amber at the point of nullification in the 1830s, without any awareness of how the intervening quarter-century had radicalized both sections and split them further and further apart as the years wore on – a process of radicalization that we see quite clearly when we lay the relative gentility and possibility for redemption of The Partisan Leader against the no-compromise, extremism in defense of liberty extant in Anticipations of the Future. Thomas Ware, and for that matter Saunders Witt, wanted to believe that not only could Tucker's narrative have come to pass, but that

---

49 ibid., p. viii. In fact, Ware concluded his remarks by noting that he would trust "to the intelligence of the reader to apply the coincidences which mark its fulfillment as a political prophecy."
50 ibid., p. v. Ware was "sure that the 'Christian' prefix was given by the author only because he had forgotten his christian name." Saunders Witt, then aged 77, appears in the 1870 Census for Patrick County, Virginia. Eunice B. Kirkman, "The Patrick County Census of 1870," http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/va/patrick/census/censmayo.txt (Last accessed October 15, 2005).
51 ibid., p. vii.
it would come to pass, that Southerners would act in the ways that Tucker had prescribed for them in the 1830s, and that as a consequence they would emerge from the war victorious. The Northern commentator would not have endorsed such a conclusion, but he certainly seemed to agree that Southerners had acted in the manner Tucker described in the intervening period.

This then is a debate about "character," a word mentioned explicitly by Ware in the Richmond edition and implied throughout the introduction to the New York edition. For the former, this was about the perfidy of the "Yankee character," his propensity to lie and dissemble, to bribe and defame honorable men, and to interfere in those matters that were none of his concern. For the latter, much the same can be said, expect about the Southerner. The Southerner worked in the dark to undermine the Union, without a clear intellectual rationale for doing so, other than that he could. The Southerner infiltrated politics – as though they were in some way exterior to the American body politic – and sought to bring about their nefarious ends through shadowy, underhanded machinations. In both cases, there is at least an implied dichotomy, one side is honorable and open, working in the public arena to engage in an honest debate about policy, the other is dishonorable and furtive, working behind the scenes to bring their enemies down. But a debate about character is also a debate about identity, as externally constructed. In both cases, as indeed in the case of Tucker himself, identity is not just something internally imagined – bringing us full circle back to Benedict Anderson, from where I started this discussion – it is also a manifestation of the way one is imagined in and by the world, and the way that one imagines that world. Tucker's Southern identity, as indeed is the case for the nascent Confederate identity that emerged a decade after his death, is one of innocence opposed to Yankee guilt, gentility opposed to Yankee barbarism, reason opposed to Yankee caprice, and liberty and democracy opposed to
Yankee tyranny and crypto-monarchism.\textsuperscript{52} That was at the heart of the Confederate imagined community.

\textsuperscript{52} For further explication of Confederate identity, see Ian Binnington, "'They Have Made a Nation': Confederates and the Creation of Confederate Nationalism" (Ph.D. diss, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2004).