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America's Greatest Statesman: Henry Clay in the American Memory

Department of History
University of at Albany, State University of New York
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for graduation with Honors in History

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Abstract

This paper explores how the image of Henry Clay has developed in the American mind from his death in 1852 to the 1980s. The memory of Henry Clay has received little attention from scholars. The few studies that exist look at the memory of Clay as used by the North and South during the Civil War. Most works on Clay have focused on Clay's biography, his "American system," and his part in shaping the Compromises of 1820 and 1850. A memory study gives an understanding of how Americans have reinterpreted Clay to fit their needs. Four distinct images of Henry Clay have existed in the American mind during that time: Clay the Economic Patriot, Clay the Unionist, Clay the Pan-American, and Clay the Federalist. Economics, war, international commerce, and conservatism have heavily influenced American's formation of these images. This work draws primarily on the use of newspapers, biographies, eulogies, magazine articles, and the Henry Clay Memorial Foundation papers

Keywords:

Henry Clay

Patriotism

Unionism

Pan-Americanism

Federalist

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On June 29, 1852, Henry Clay died in his room at the National Hotel in Washington D.C.¹ Clay had been struggling with tuberculosis since his return to the Senate in 1850. Serving in the Senate, House of Representatives, Secretary of State, and as a diplomat, Clay had been a staple in American politics for fifty years. Out of respect for Clay President Millard Fillmore shut down the government for the day.² The following day the Senate and the House of Representatives gathered to offer their eulogies for the late Henry Clay. Clay was well respected by Whig and Democrat alike. His political rival John C. Calhoun once stated, “I don't like Clay. He is a bad man, an imposter, a creator of wicked schemes. I wouldn't speak to him, but, by God, I love him!”³ He had been a worthy political advisor whose, “distinguished services as a statesman are inseparably connected with the history of his country.”⁴ Joseph R. Underwood, Senator from Kentucky, believed Clay would live on in America, “as a portion of our national inheritance incapable of annihilation.”⁵ Senator Underwood believed Clay would live strongly in America’s collective memory, “so long as genius has an admirer, or liberty a friend.”⁶

Whether it was known or not the topic of debate on the floor of the House and Senate that day was Henry Clay’s legacy. Clay’s patriotism and ardent defense of liberty and the Constitution were constant themes of the day, but what was to be his crowning achievement? Senator Brooks of New York avowed that the last great success of Clay’s career was the Compromise of 1850. Clay was the creator of the omnibus bill that became the foundation for the Compromise. Brooks called the compromise the, “last crowning act of his glorious life” done

¹ Colton, *The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1856), Thomas H. Clay to his wife, 636

² David Heidler and Jeanne Heidler, *Henry Clay: The Essential American* (New York: Random House, 2010), xi

³ https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Henry_Clay_Dies.htm

⁴ Calvin Colton, *The Last Seven Years of the Life of Henry Clay* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1856), 230

⁵ Colton, *The Last Seven Years of the Life of Henry Clay* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1856), 230

⁶ Ibid.

for “the preservation of the peace and integrity of this great Republic.”⁷ Brooks was not alone; Representative Faulkner stated the Compromise of 1850, “will long continue to cement the bonds of this now happy and prosperous Union.”⁸ The Compromise had brought peace when many thought America was on the verge of falling apart. Other Senators remarked that Clay’s support for the revolutions in South America would be Clay’s lasting achievement.⁹ Clay’s calls for the United States to recognize the independence of the South American republics became, “mottos on the banner of freedom in every land.” A void was left in the halls of Congress with the death of Henry Clay.

The next day a carriage pulled by six white horses brought Clay’s body to the Capitol, where he became the first American statesman to lay in state in the Rotunda.¹⁰ His body then traveled through five state capitals before he came to rest in Lexington Cemetery. In each city where his body stopped crowds of ordinary people came to pay their respects. In New York City, an estimated 100,000 people came to the Governor’s room in City Hall to pay their respects.¹¹ There was no place in America where Henry Clay was more beloved than his home state of Kentucky. At Louisville all young men were called to the courthouse to “receive the remains of Henry Clay and to escort them to Ashland.”¹² After twelve hundred miles the procession entered the Lexington Cemetery accompanied by thirty thousand people.¹³ Clay’s body was temporarily

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ “Henry Clay,” United States Senate Arts and History https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Henry_Clay_Dies.htm; Joan Sayers Brown, “The Funeral of Henry Clay,” *Magazine Antiques* 112, (1977)

¹¹ Colton, *The Last Seven Years of the Life of Henry Clay*. Pp. 439

¹² Box 1, folder 14, Henry Clay Memorial Foundations papers, 1777-1991, undated University of Kentucky Special Collections <https://exploreuk.uky.edu/fa/findingaid/?id=xt751c1thm3n#fa-heading-ref4323>

¹³ James C. Klotter, Kentucky, the Civil War, and the Spirit of Henry Clay, *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 110, no. 3

buried in a grave near his mother, until his mausoleum was constructed. Clay's funeral procession was the longest of any politician until the death of his political acolyte Abraham Lincoln. Clay famously said he knew, "no south, no north, no east, no west" but each region of the country remembered him. The memory of Clay was now in the hands of the American people, but how would America remember their "Greatest Statesman"? Americans across the country formed Clay committees to discuss how they would honor his memory. *The Liberator*, a Boston abolitionist newspaper, quickly constructed their image of Clay with an article published less than two months after his death. The author, Joseph Barker, did not hold back in his contempt for Clay. When considering the Fugitive Slave Act that accompanied the Compromise of 1850, Barker asked the reader, "what glorious service could Henry Clay render to his country, or his kind, by originating this hateful and execrable law [the Fugitive Slave Bill]?"¹⁴ Baker's image of Clay was one of the first in the American collective conscience but it would not be the last.

Since the later years of the twentieth century memory studies, an interdisciplinary field comprising philosophy, literature, sociology, and history, has garnered increased attention.¹⁵ Following the "history wars" of the 1990s, a new burst of interest in the study of historical memory led to the 2008 publication of the *Journal of Memory Studies*. Historical memory explores the preservation of the past "to which we no longer have an 'organic' experiential relation."¹⁶ Conversely, collective memory is "the active past that forms our identities" and is highly selective.¹⁷ Memory studies follows how a person or event has been interpreted and

¹⁴ Joseph Barker, "American Slavery- Henry Clay," *Liberator* (Boston, Mass), Aug. 27, 1852.

¹⁵ Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social memory studies: from 'collective memory' to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, Issue 1 (1998)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

reinterpreted over time as our identities change. Collective memories do not establish truth but are created through contemporary views of history. As nations and cultures change over time their interpretation of the past changes with them. Wars, politicians, and the founding myths of countries are common subjects of memory studies. David W. Blight's, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, and Jill Lepore's, *The Name of War*, for instance, analyzed the American memory of the U.S Civil War and King Philip's War.¹⁸ Blight focused on how soldiers from the Union and Confederacy reconciled and restored relations with one another after the war. Lepore discussed how Native Americans and colonists called King Philip's War by different names. When different names were given to the same war, its meaning and how people remembered it changed. Historical memory studies do not seek to prove that any interpretation of the past is true. Rather, it seeks to show how interpretations of historical figures and events have evolved over time.

Henry Clay's image has ebbed and flowed in and out of prominence in the American mind since his death in 1852. There have been four images of Clay that have existed in America in the past 169 years. Throughout the course of American history his name and image has been used to meet a variety of goals. The images were rooted in Clay's economic policies, Unionism, and Pan-Americanism. The first image of Clay appeared after his death, *Clay the Economic Patriot*. Americans first celebrated Clay for the success of his economic plan the "American

¹⁸ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2001); Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press 2014); Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1998); Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press 1994); Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 1950); John D. Seelye, *Memory's Nation: The place of Plymouth Rock*, (Chapel Hill :University of North Carolina Press 1998); Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (1st edition: Beacon Press 2001); Joseph A. Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of regional Identity from the pilgrims to the Mid -Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2001)

System,” which used protective tariffs to benefit American manufacturers. Specific areas of the country erected statues of Clay to commemorate his brand of economic patriotism. As the Civil War consumed America Clay was reimagined as *Clay the Unionist*. Speeches and letters of Clay were republished to inspire Unionism in America. Clay’s image grew faint following the Civil War, but he returned during the 1880s through the 1940s as America increased trade with Central and South America. This gave rise to *Clay the Pan-American*. After 1945 a new generation of academic historians imagined Clay’s economic policies, whereby he became *Clay the Federalist*, a proponent of economic policies that sought alliances between government and industry. These changing memories of Clay were not only reflections of him but were also reflections of America’s culture and economy as it changed over time. In other words, as the needs and goals of the United States changed so too did the ways Clay was remembered.

Henry Clay the Economic Patriot

The “American System” was Henry Clay’s political economic system, which became central to Whig policy in the early nineteenth century. The American system was based on three key elements a national bank, tariffs, and internal improvements. Tariffs would protect American manufacturing and provide the government with revenue to fund internal improvements. American manufacturing during the antebellum period was young and expensive. Most of America’s raw materials were still being sent to England to be manufactured and then were sold back to Americans. In 1816, English goods imported to the United States were worth \$151 million.¹⁹ American manufacturers felt they were being smothered by the lower-priced

¹⁹ Maurice G. Baxter, *Henry Clay and The American System* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky 1995)

manufactured goods and therefore needed government protection.²⁰ The federal government responded by passing a series of tariffs between 1820 and 1850 aimed at protecting American manufacturers. The tariffs placed heavy duties on sugar, iron, wool, and Russian hemp. The prices of foreign goods were raised to an equal or higher price of the domestic product. New England, the primary location for American manufacturing, was thought to be the main benefactors of these tariffs. But two other areas of the country also celebrated Clay for his economic policies Pottsville, Pennsylvania and New Orleans, Louisiana. Pottsville and New Orleans were home to very different industries. Pottsville, an industrial town, was home to anthracite coal mines. New Orleans on the other hand was home to large sugar plantations. These two cities honored Clay with statues in the name of economic patriotism.

Pottsville, Pennsylvania was home to large deposits of anthracite coal, a rare form of the mineral. Anthracite coal's unique quality is its 90 to 98 percent carbon density, which is far higher than the more common bituminous coal with a carbon density of only 50 to 80 percent carbon.²¹ Anthracite burns hotter and cleaner than the more commonly used bituminous coal but is difficult to light. The intense heat provided by anthracite combined with little maintenance needed to maintain a flame made it perfect for iron manufacturing. The Tariff of 1842 raised duties on bar iron to 17 dollars per ton and rolled iron to 25 dollars per ton. Sufficiently cutting importation from England, the tariff supported iron manufacturing in the United States. As a result, American iron manufacturers increased production to meet America's needs. The "iron forged with anthracite coal shattered previous limits to growth."²² Bituminous and charcoal

²⁰ Maurice G. Baxter, *Henry Clay and The American System* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky 1995); Douglas C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860* (New York, 1966), 234.

²¹ Harold W. Aurand, *Coalcracker Culture: Working Values in Pennsylvania Anthracite, 1835-1935* (London: Associated University Press, 2003)

²² Christopher F. Jones, "A Landscape of Energy and Abundance: Anthracite Coal Canals and the Roots of American Fossil Fuel Dependence," *Oxford Journals* 15, no.3.

furnaces that were more common could simply no longer compete with anthracite. A newly established system of canals and railways provided transportation for large quantities of coal. In 1847 alone over 2.3 million tons of coal were shipped through the region.”²³ A railroad between Pottsville and Philadelphia furthered the growth of the iron industry in the lower Schuylkill Valley.²⁴ The demand for coal increased the population and led to the growth of other parts of the local economy.²⁵ The growth of industry and wealth in the area were acknowledged by the people of Pottsville to be a product of Henry Clay’s protectionist policies.

Pottsville was the first city in the United States to build a monument for Henry Clay, laying the cornerstone to their monument on July 26, 1852, less than a month after Clay’s death. There was also a political aspect as to why a monument to Clay was constructed in Pottsville. The Whig party was the dominant political party in Schuylkill County. Benjamin Bannan the editor of the *Miner’s Journal*, a Whig newspaper, was the leader in forming the Henry Clay Memorial Committee. Samuel Silliman, a local Whig politician and, mine operator joined Bannan as member of the monument association. Silliman even contributed 3,000 dollars of his own money -almost half the total cost- toward the monument. A large majority of the members on the memorial committee were part of the Whig party. All were of the same mind that Clay was “the greatest American statesman since George Washington” and deserved a monument.²⁶ Clay was the hero of Pottsville, someone who had defended their industry from European

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Anne Kelly Knowles and Richard G. Healy, “Geography, Timing, and Technology: A GIS- Based Analysis of Pennsylvania’s Iron Industry, 1825-1875,” *Journal of Economic History* 66, no. 3.

²⁵ Christopher F. Jones, “A Landscape of Energy and Abundance: Anthracite Coal Canals and the Roots of American Fossil Fuel Dependence,” *Oxford Journals* 15, no. 3

²⁶ *Henry Clay Monument: Pottsville Pennsylvania* (Pottsville, Pennsylvania: Clay Monument Committee, 1985) The book was written because a new committee had been formed to deal with the maintenance of the monument. The introduction was written by the editor, Leo L. Ward. Ward has authored four books about Pottsville and Schuylkill County. Ward was also a member of the Schuylkill Historical Society.

economic subordination.²⁷ By July 4, 1855 the statue was completed and was for a short time the only monument to Clay in the United States.²⁸

Henry Clay's monument in Pottsville was the manifestation of the economic power gained by the coal industry. The statue and column were both cast in iron and designed in a Grecian Doric style. Doric pillars have long been thick, heavy, and associated with masculinity and strength. The Pottsville monument's pillar weighed over 45 tons and stood 124 feet.²⁹ The monument's height and position on Monument Hill, gave it a commanding and powerful presence. The churches and patch houses where the miner's lived in Pottsville were dwarfed by the statue of Henry Clay. During Clay's life he was not described as overtly masculine as the column of the monument implied. On the contrary, he was a tall, slender man, whose warmhearted and self-sacrificing nature left him described by some as "womanly." That was very different from the masculine interpretation of Clay designed by F. Hewson for the Pottsville monument.³⁰ Pottsville was not emulating the strength or masculinity of Clay with their monument. They were stating their strength and economic might gained from Clay's policies. Miners in the antebellum period were proud people who made a living doing back-breaking labor. Coal had to be hammered from the walls of the tunnel by hand and loaded into carts. Once it reached the surface it was again hammered to be broken into small enough pieces for sale. The greatest compliment a miner could receive was the title of "hard worker."³¹ To Pottsville, Clay's tariffs on iron were his way of recognizing their hard work. Tariffs to the people in Pottsville were Clay's way of

²⁷ Anthony F. C. Wallace, *St. Clair: A Nineteenth-Century Coal Town's Experience with a Disaster-Prone Industry* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 243

²⁸ "The Clay Monument at Pottsville," *Sunbury American* (Sunbury, Pennsylvania) July 7, 1855.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ "Cast Iron Monument to Henry Clay," *Green Mountain Freeman* (Montpelier, Vermont), Nov 25, 1852.

³¹ Harold W. Aurand, *Coalcracker Culture: Working Values in Pennsylvania Anthracite, 1835-1935* (London: Associated University Press, 2003), 107

stating that their industry was of value to Pennsylvania, the nation, and deserved to be protected. In the words of the people of Pottsville, “[Clay’s] illustrious services... brought peace, prosperity and glory to his country.”³² As the monument in Pottsville was being praised, residents of New Orleans collected funds to erect their own monument to Clay.

Louisianians supported Clay’s American System because the high tariffs protected sugar plantations. Southern planters were generally opposed to tariffs on European goods. England was the primary market for their crops and also sold many of the goods needed to operate a plantation. Planters feared American tariffs would start a trade war, driving up costs and diminishing their biggest trade market. Sugar was an expensive venture during the early part of the antebellum period. A large slave population and expensive equipment were required to operate a plantation. High costs of land, floods, hurricanes were constant threats and frequently wiped-out large portions of crops.³³ Some year’s harvests would barely cover costs and on average sixty percent of the sugar planters made only a small profit.³⁴ Alexander Porter, a Louisiana sugar planter, said “the duty on sugar is a question of life and death with us in Louisiana.”³⁵ Many of the sugar planters shared Porter’s sentiment and believed a tariff would, “eliminate the United States dependency on West Indian Sugar.”³⁶

³² “The Pottsville Monument to Mr. Clay,” *Weekly Raleigh Register* (Raleigh, North Carolina), July 8, 1855.

³³ Sarah Paradise Russell, “Cultural Conflicts and Common Interests: The making of the Sugar planter Class in Louisiana, 1795-1853,” (Doctor’s thesis, University of Maryland, 2000)164-175

³⁴ David O. “Whitten, Tariff and Profit in the Antebellum Louisiana Sugar Industry,” *Business Historical Review* No. 2, Vol 44. Small sugar plantations were more numerous but only constituted between 17-39 percent of sugar crop in 1853.

³⁵ David O. “Whitten, Tariff and Profit in the Antebellum Louisiana Sugar Industry,” *Business Historical Review* No. 2, Vol 44; Wendell Holmes Stephenson, *Alexander Porter: Whig Planter of Old Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana University Press, 1934), 27

³⁶ Sarah Paradise Russell, “Cultural Conflicts and Common Interests: The making of the Sugar planter Class in Louisiana, 1795-1853,” (Doctor’s thesis, University of Maryland, 2000)164-175

On Saturday April 12, 1856, the seventy-ninth birthday of Henry Clay, New Orleans laid the corner stone to their monument. Not a cloud seen in the sky that morning. A light breeze gave life to the flags throughout the city as the people of New Orleans gathered in the streets to begin the day's festivities.³⁷ They were joined by members of the city's guard and the guard of Mobile, Alabama. Patriotic feelings surrounded the celebration as cannon fire boomed from three areas across the city while a parade marched down Canal street.³⁸ Grand Marshal General H. W. Palfrey led a procession of distinguished politicians, military officials, and citizens of New Orleans down Canal Street to the place where Clay's monument was to be erected. The statue was cast in bronze and designed by Kentucky native, Joel T. Hart.³⁹ Clay was depicted in a familiar place beside the speaker's stand, relaxed giving one of his rousing patriotic orations. Clay's statue stood with one arm outstretched to the city of New Orleans as if even in death he was still deeply engaged in debate. Clay's statue did not tower above the people and buildings as it had in Pottsville. Rather, in New Orleans Clay stood on a pedestal of only six feet. The statue gave the impression that the "Great Commoner" Clay was still among the people of New Orleans. The position of the statue on Canal Street put the image of Clay in a place of commerce. Clay's statue was the first in an 1838 plan by the city to build statues of American heroes down Canal Street.⁴⁰

A crowd of over a thousand people gathered on Canal Street in New Orleans. Others filled the balconies in adjacent buildings to hear Judge McCaleb, who praised Clay for his wisdom, eloquence, "and every other intellectual and moral necessary to elevate, fortify, and

³⁷"Henry Clay's Birthday, Inaugural Ceremonies on Laying the Corner Stone on the Clay Monument," *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA.) April 13, 1856.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Moore, "Henry Clay Monument," Department of Public Works, New Orleans, State Library of Louisiana, 1930; <https://louisianadigitallibrary.org/islandora/object/state-lwp%3A7977>

⁴⁰ The Times-Picayune, (New Orleans, LA.) April 13, 1856

adorn a true statesman.”⁴¹ He then reflected on the effects that Clay’s American System had on the industry and people of New Orleans. He asked the people how could “domestic industry prosper in its infancy if it be not the object of encouragement and protection from a parental government?”⁴² “What can be progress of the axe and the ploughshare if wise and stable legislation did not inspire ... the assurance of permanent enjoyment of future acquisitions- the hard-earned fruits of honest labor.”⁴³ Clay’s policies provided the plantation owners with markets for their goods which helped them develop the confidence to grow and invest in their enterprise. In McCaleb’s eyes, Clay’s policy of protection benefitted not only plantation owners but, the people in the shipping industry as well. He stated, the “spirit of enterprise and adventure of be not fostered by that policy which tenders to the bold argonauts of the ocean the strong right arm of government for their protection.” He gave the highest of praise to the sailors when referring to them as “argonauts.” In Greek mythology the argonauts were the bravest and strongest sailors, who sailed with the hero Jason on his journeys. New Orleans’s sailors were the heroes of industry who, inspired by Clay helped ship American products across the world.

The next speech offered a personal perspective on Henry Clay’s life that was not expressed at any other time. Octavia Wanton LeVert was a friend of Clay and his family, and at the request of the Henry Clay Monument society wrote a speech for the ceremony.⁴⁴ LeVert was the only person to know Clay outside of the political realm to offer her perspective. Even at the ceremony for Clay’s monument in Lexington none of his living children or wife gave a speech. Clay did not keep a journal and little is known about his personal life. Keeping with the customs of the

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Brenda S. Argo, “Madam Octavia LeVert’s tribute to Henry Clay,” *Louisiana Studies* 12, no. 4 (1973): 632

time LeVert did not give the address herself. Instead, the address was given by Captain Charles D. Dreux. LeVert told how Clay was a “king of the mind, one of the wisest people of his age analogues only to Washington.”⁴⁵ Washington was the American demigod, and a comparison to him was a high honor. The qualities that had made Clay a great statesman also made him a kind person. Clay possessed “heroism of heart,” chivalry, and a passionate eloquence.⁴⁶ She ended her speech by comparing Clay’s statue to that of Themistocles in Athens and stated, “the fame of Henry Clay can never die.”⁴⁷ Judge McCaleb and Octavia LeVert’s speeches both touched on patriotism. McCaleb went into great detail about the mounting feelings discontent in America and thoughts of secession in the South. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 had repealed the Compromise of 1850 and led to fighting along the Kansas border between pro-slavery and anti-slavery groups. Judge McCaleb implored the people of Louisiana to remember Clay and his unionism. LeVert wanted the statue of Clay to be a symbol of patriotism. But both of these sentiments were secondary to the celebration of Clay’s protectionist policies.

Henry Clay the Unionist

The image of Henry Clay had shifted as the Civil War drew closer. An 1857 celebration of Henry Clay’s monument in Lexington, Kentucky differed from those in Pottsville and New Orleans. Pottsville and New Orleans centered their celebration around the success of Henry Clay’s American System. The Lexington monument was Kentucky’s show of patriotism, and state pride. New Orleans and Pottsville had benefited greatly from the American System. Taxes

⁴⁵ “Henry Clay’s Birthday, Inaugural Ceremonies on Laying the Corner Stone on the Clay Monument,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA.) April 13, 1856.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Brenda S. Argo, “Madam Octavia LeVert’s tribute to Henry Clay,” *Louisiana Studies* 12, no. 4 (1973)

on foreign iron and sugar protected their young industries and provided opportunities to thrive. The Kentucky hemp industry experienced some growth under the protection of the American System but not to the same degree as coal and sugar. Kentucky was set to gain from the internal improvements that were to be built from tariff revenue. The Maysville Road Bill which would have funded a road through Kentucky, was vetoed by President Jackson on the grounds that, “the road was wholly within Kentucky and was therefore a local project, not a national one.”⁴⁸ Without the internal improvements or large industry gains, Lexington centered their celebration of Clay on his patriotism and service to Kentucky.

The cornerstone to Henry Clay’s monument in the Lexington Cemetery was laid on Saturday July 4, 1857. The sun shined on businesses and homes adorned with flowers and evergreens in a, “brilliant and patriotic display.”⁴⁹ The Masonic Fraternity led a parade of distinguished guests, fire companies, and national guardsmen. Music played and artillery fired as the residents of Lexington gathered on the sidewalks to watch the procession. The Clay family carriage, “ornamented with white funeral plumes and wreaths of evergreens and flowers,” followed the parade to the cemetery. Aaron Dupuy, a formerly enslaved person and Henry Clay’s personal servant, drove the carriage. A bust of Henry Clay, and an engraving of his leave-taking of the Senate, were the only other items in the carriage. Dupuy had been manumitted by Clay before he died and attended the ceremony legally a free man.⁵⁰

At the cemetery Henry Clay’s sons, Thomas and James, and their families were present for the ceremony. Seated near them was Vice President John C. Breckinridge, and many other

⁴⁸ Douglas A. Irwin, “Antebellum Tariff Politics: Regional Coalitions and Shifting Economic Interests,” *The Journal of Law and Economics* 51, no. 4 (2008)

⁴⁹Box 1, folder 16, Henry Clay Memorial Foundations papers, 1777-1991, undated University of Kentucky Special Collections, <https://exploreuk.uky.edu/fa/findingaid/?id=xt751c1thm3n#fa-heading-ref4323>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Kentucky politicians. T.N. Wise, the Grand Master of Kentucky's Masonic Lodge, laid the corner stone. The brief ceremony was "brilliant and beautiful... and gladdened the eye or heart of the most enthusiastic."⁵¹ After a prayer the procession moved to the fair-grounds where addresses were to be given. Dr. Breckinridge was the keynote speaker but, unfortunately due to the size of the crowd few people heard what he said. Estimates as to the number of people in attendance vary. The monument association estimated there were 10,000 people and the *Louisville Journal* estimated there were between 40,000 and 50,000 in attendance. Regardless of the exact number, Kentuckians came out in droves to celebrate Henry Clay. The fair ground was alive with excitement. Families shared picnic dinners and the military band played filling the air with "a deep and enthusiastic feeling of patriotism, pride and pleasure."⁵²

The Lexington Clay Association used both Corinthian and Egyptian styles in their design for Clay's monument. Corinthian pillars are tall, slender, with elaborate decorations around the top resembling leaves and flowers. The ancient Greeks and Romans used Corinthian pillars when constructing temples for gods, the most famous being the Temple of Apollo at Bassae. The finest details of Clay's monument were patriotic, "corn leaves and appropriate national emblems, form the capital of the column."⁵³ Ordinarily twenty-four flutes would be carved into the pillar but the Lexington monument was constructed with "13 spears one for each of the 'Old Thirteen."⁵⁴ The monument association envisioned the pillar to be ornamented with bronze. Originally the statue of Clay on top of the monument was to be made of bronze. Lexington's Clay Monument Association wanted the 120-foot monument to shine like beacon and be, "a Mecca of American

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Box 1, folder 16, Henry Clay Memorial Foundation papers, 1777-1991, undated University of Kentucky Special Collections, <https://exploreuk.uky.edu/fa/findingaid/?id=xt751c1thm3n#fa-heading-ref4323>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

patriotism.”⁵⁵ Clay had transcended to a place above all other statesman in Lexington, and Dr. Breckinridge later stated, “next to Washington, [Clay was] the greatest of mortals.”⁵⁶

While the Corinthian pillar embodied the demigod sentiment of people like Breckinridge, the Egyptian style base, represented the tomb of a king and a great leader. The Egyptian style mirrored the look of the pyramids that housed ancient Egypt’s greatest Pharaohs. While Clay never became president, he was the leader of the Whig Party that represented half of American politics. During one of the most tumultuous times in American history Clay’s name was tied to the Compromise 1820, Compromise of 1833, and the Compromise of 1850. Together the Corinthian and Egyptian inspired parts of the monument tell the onlooker, Clay was an American patriot unlike any other. President Filmore stated Clay’s Kentucky monument “furnishes a noble example as well as a precious legacy, to the future generations of his countrymen.”⁵⁷ He was not alone in his assessment either. The *South-Western*, a Louisiana newspaper said, “The lofty column will ever remain a noble testament of the affection in which held by the people of the Union.”⁵⁸ The monument was a show of love not only for Clay but for America. The monument was believed to “ever be a rallying point for the hosts of that Unions defenders whenever the confederacy shall be threatened by sectional foes.”⁵⁹ To Kentuckians Henry Clay was the new standard of what it meant to be a patriot.

The Lexington monument was an undertaking done completely by the people of Kentucky and was designed by Julius Adams, a Lexington native. The limestone used for

⁵⁵ “Monument to Henry Clay,” *Fayetteville Weekly Observer* (Fayetteville, North Carolina), July 13, 1857

⁵⁶ *The Louisville Daily Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky) July 7, 1857

⁵⁷ Henry Clay Memorial Foundations papers, 1777-1991, undated University of Kentucky Special Collections, box 1, folder 16 <https://exploreuk.uky.edu/fa/findingaid/?id=xt751c1thm3n#fa-heading-ref4323>

⁵⁸ “The Clay Monument,” *Republican Banner* (Shreveport, Louisiana), August 5, 1857

⁵⁹ Box 1, folder 16, Henry Clay Memorial Foundations papers, 1777-1991, undated University of Kentucky Special Collections, <https://exploreuk.uky.edu/fa/findingaid/?id=xt751c1thm3n#fa-heading-ref4323>

construction was dug sixteen miles from Lexington in the Grimes Quarry.⁶⁰ The project was mainly funded by the people of Kentucky with the state contributing 10,000 dollars.⁶¹ The remainder of the funding came from donations from the people of Kentucky. By 1861 the Lexington monument was completed after several delays at a final cost of 58,000 dollars.⁶² Henry Clay's body was not placed inside the mausoleum until the death of his wife Lucretia Clay in 1864. There was some disappointment in the monument association's decision to use Corinthian architecture. A dissenter to the monument stated "America has an originality of her own" and, Corinthian architecture was not American enough.⁶³ A Corinthian design may have been appropriate for an ancient hero but not to Kentuckians who believed "Henry Clay above all others... deserves an *American* monument."⁶⁴ Objecting voices wanted the monument committee and Julius Adams to use America's natural beauty and the genius of her people as inspiration.

As the Civil War approached Henry Clay was increasingly remembered as an advocate for Unionism and a source of patriotism. Letters along with some of Clay's most famous speeches that embodied patriotic and Union sentiments were reprinted in newspapers. Newspaper editors used the "Clay position" to rebut the arguments of northern Democrats, copperheads who wanted a peaceful end to the war. The *Pittsburgh Daily Commercial* used the "Clay position" to answer the question of who were the agitators of the war. The paper stated that it was the copperhead democrats that were at fault and if "death had not removed Clay from the Senate Chamber, the revival of the slavery discussion... would have never taken place."⁶⁵ The *Pittsburgh Daily Commercial* believed unequivocally that Clay would have stood for the

⁶⁰ *The Louisville Daily Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky), July 7, 1857.

⁶¹ "The Grave of Henry Clay," *Republican Banner* (Nashville, Tennessee) Thursday, June 25, 1857.

⁶² Henry Clay the Ashland Estate, "Death and Funeral" <https://henryclay.org/death-and-funeral/>

⁶³ "The Clay Monument," *Louisville Daily Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky) Feb 23, 1857

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ "Who are the Agitators," *Pittsburgh Daily Commercial* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) Sept 22, 1863

Union above all else. There were also many articles published across the country titled “Voice of Henry Clay.”⁶⁶ These titles gave the American people the impression that even though Clay was dead he was still speaking to them and inspiring unionism. Clay’s patriotism helped the American people justify the turmoil brought by the Civil War.

After the secession of eleven states Henry Clay’s image became a useful tool for those who wanted to preserve the Union. By the beginning of the Civil War around ten biographies on Clay and collections of his speeches had been published.⁶⁷ The overarching goal of newspapers republishing Clay’s speeches was to inspire feelings of Union and patriotism. The *Cleveland Daily Leader* used the words of Clay to inspire patriotism while also endorsing a candidate for office. The hope was that a comparison to Clay would inspire people to vote for their candidate, Colonel Todd. The excerpts came from Clay’s speeches where he took a stance on secession. Clay said in event of disunion he would be, “on the side of my country... and for the maintenance of the Powers of the Union.”⁶⁸ This statement was taken to mean by the people in the North that Henry Clay would have sided with them in during the Civil War. Clay’s stance was then used as a way to dissuade people in the North from voting Democrat. The Democrat party was said to be, “upon the other side, and will give no help to the country.”⁶⁹ They were the

⁶⁶ “A Voice from Henry Clay,” *Cleveland Daily Leader* (Cleveland, Ohio) June 26, 1861; “The Warning Voice of Henry Clay,” *Gettysburg Complier* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania) Dec 24, 1860; “Voice of Henry Clay,” *Valley Spirit* (Chambersburg, Pennsylvania) Oct 24, 1860; “The Voice of Henry Clay,” *Raftsmen Journal* (Clearfield, Pennsylvania) Jan 16, 1861; “The Voice of Henry Clay,” *Centre Democrat* (Bellefonte, Pennsylvania); “The Voice of Henry Clay,” *Lancaster Gazette* (Lancaster, Ohio) Dec 24, 1863

⁶⁷ James C. Klotter, Kentucky, the Civil War, and the Spirit of Henry Clay, *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 110, no. 3; For Clay books in print by the time of the Civil War, see George D. Prentice, *Biography of Henry Clay* (Hartford, Conn., 1831); David Mallory, *The Life and Speeches of the Hon. Henry Clay of Kentucky* (New York, 1843); Swain, *Life of Clay*; Epes Sargent, *The Life and Public Service of Henry Clay . . .* (New York, 1844); Calvin Colton, *The Life and Times of Henry Clay* (New York, 1845); Colton, ed., *The Works of Henry Clay* (New York, 1855); Colton, ed., *The Private Correspondence of Henry Clay* (New York, 1856); Colton, *The Last Seven Years of the Life of Henry Clay* (New York, 1856). Richard Chambers, ed., *Speeches of the Hon. Henry Clay . . .* (Cincinnati, 1842) and A. H. Carrier, *Monument to the Memory of Henry Clay* (Cincinnati, 1856)

⁶⁸ Henry Clay on Disunion, *Cleveland Daily Leader* (Cleveland, Ohio) Oct 5, 1861

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

party of secession. To truly be like Henry Clay and to promote the union voters could only elect Col. Todd and “associates upon the Union ticket.”⁷⁰

Henry Clay’s speeches were also used to justify the power the federal government assumed during the Civil War after President Lincoln had suspended habeas corpus April 27, 1861. Article 1, section 9, of the U.S. Constitution states habeas corpus, “shall not be suspended, unless when in the case of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it.” It is not explicitly stated whether this power was granted to Congress or the Executive. Many legal experts at the time believed the power belonged to Congress because article 1 listed the powers of Congress. Chief Justice Taney thought Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus could lead to a military dictatorship since habeas corpus was a symbol of individual freedom to the American people.⁷¹ Many people in the Union were unsure if Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus was constitutional. The patriotic words of Clay were used a way to quell American’s fears of, “tyranny and oppression.”⁷² Americans turned to a speech made by Clay on the floor of the Senate in 1850 in which he stated that the federal government should act assertively if any state or individual threatened the union. In the case of secession Clay stated he was for, “trying the strength of the Government. I am for ascertaining or not, practical, efficient, capable of maintaining its authority and upholding the powers interests which belong to the Government.”⁷³ Clay ended his speech stating he would support the authority of the government for the purpose of maintaining the powers of the Union.⁷⁴ Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus was unpopular but it was a constitutional power of the government. The *Lancaster Examiner* stated Clays words

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ronald C. White Jr., *A. Lincoln* (New York: Random House, 2009), 417

⁷² “Trying the Strength of the Government- Opinion of Henry Clay, *Lancaster Examiner* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) Oct 2, 1861.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

were, “a full and perfect endorsement of all that has been done, or is proposed, in the present war.”⁷⁵ The *Lancaster Examiner* also stated that anything less than war would be unpatriotic because who could be, “more patriotic than Henry Clay!”⁷⁶

Clay’s speech had stated secession was in violation of the Constitution, and the federal government had the authority to use the military in the event of secession. Clay gave this speech after South Carolina threatened secession during the Nullification Crisis as a response to the Tariff of 1828. South Carolina was threatened with military action by President Jackson but the nullification of federal law ended peacefully with the Compromise of 1833. After South Carolina seceded in 1861, Lincoln sought military action and issued a proclamation which called on the states to send 75,000 militia volunteers to serve in the Army. A month later he called for another 42,034 volunteers, 18,000 sailors and expanded the standing army to 22,714 soldiers.⁷⁷ The United States had never possessed a standing army this large. Organized battles between the armies of the Union and Confederacy drew closer and Americans were in a state of moral conflict. Southerners just a few months ago were countrymen. To rationalize the government’s response to southern secession a letter between Henry Clay and Thomas B. Stevenson was republished. Clay was expressing in his letter what he thought the proper response of the government would be if South Carolina seceded. Clay stated, “secession is treason, and if it were not ... it would be a virtual dissolution of the Union. ... I have confidence in the instrumentality, but depend upon it that no human Government can exist without the power of applying force, and the actual application of it in extreme cases.”⁷⁸ Clay was justifying the war, to the people in

⁷⁵ Trying the Strength of the Government- Opinion of Henry Clay, *Lancaster Examiner* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) Oct 2, 1861. Letter quoted in the newspaper is dated: “Ashland, May 17,1851”

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ronald C. White Jr., *A. Lincoln* (New York: Random House, 2009), 413

⁷⁸ Trying the Strength of the Government- Opinion of Henry Clay, *Lancaster Examiner* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) Oct 2, 1861

the North. Clay's letter furthers this point when he says, "there are those who think the Union must be preserved and kept together by an exclusive reliance upon love and reason. This is not my opinion."⁷⁹ The American people in 1861 used Clay's words to justify the war because war was seen as the only viable solution to save the Union. There was resentment in the North for copperheads and likeminded people who wanted a peaceful reunification of the country.

According to the *Examiner*, Clay's words put "to shame the timid or traitorous ones who now, in the midst of just such a war... raise the unpatriotic cry 'for peace!' Or must we think these men are more humane and patriotic than Henry Clay!" To be a true patriot the *Lancaster Examiner* stated, people had to "continue to manifest a tithe of the patriotism and the *manliness* of Henry Clay."⁸⁰

Henry Clay's letter to Thomas B. Stevenson was printed again in a pro-Union newspaper the *Nashville Union*. The article in the *Nashville Union* spoke about a nameless Tennessee Whig who asked, "On which side would Henry Clay be, were he alive to-day?"⁸¹ The *Nashville Union* responded to this question by stating, "Let them not try to hide their cowardice, by attempting to create a doubt as to what, in times like these, would be the position of Clay..."⁸² The nameless Tennessee Whig had his chance to save his state from secession but chose to not follow the patriotic words of Clay. The article was also reprinted in two Ohio newspapers, the *Lancaster Gazette*, and the *Fremont Weekly Journal*. Clay's letter in 1863 was not no longer used to rationalize the Civil War as it been by the *Lancaster Examiner*. Their goal was to portray Clay as an emblem of union and American patriotism. The *Lancaster Gazette* stated, "Were Henry Clay

⁷⁹ Trying the Strength of the Government- Opinion of Henry Clay, *Lancaster Examiner* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) Oct 2, 1861

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Nashville Daily Union (Nashville, Tennessee) Nov 8, 1863

⁸² Ibid

alive to-day, he would be found exerting his talents and influence to rebuke treason and traitors everywhere.”⁸³ To the people in the Union there was no doubt Clay would have sided with them if he had been alive. The editor of the *Gazette* called the Tennessee Whigs attempt to bring doubt to Clay’s Unionism “treachery and cowardice.”⁸⁴ To further their point the *Gazette* added italics to Clay’s pro-Union words. Clay had stated in the letter that if there was a rebellion the Constitution, “*must continue to enforced there, with all the power of the Union if necessary... no human government can exist without the power of applying force, and the actual application of it in extreme cases.*”⁸⁵ To the Unionists Clay had not only predicted a Civil War, but he had also foreseen what the proper response from the government should be. Clay’s Unionist image was so deeply imbedded in the North that any doubt was interpreted as an attack against the Union.

There was no place in the Union where the memory of Clay was needed more than his home state of Kentucky as a civil war was the worst fear of Kentuckians. Kentucky had the unfortunate circumstance of being on the boarder of the Union and the Confederacy. Henry Clay laid bare this shared fear with Kentuckians in a letter to Stephen A Miller where he expressed that South Carolina would, “suffer only comparative evils.”⁸⁶ Kentucky on the other hand was surrounded by slave and free states. Kentuckians supported their position of neutrality. For the time being it kept them from danger. The policy of neutrality sparked the idea of home guards being formed for the purpose of protecting against any outside threat.⁸⁷ The people came together to form Union companies. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss how they were

⁸³ “The Voice of Henry Clay,” *Lancaster Gazette* (Lancaster, Ohio) Dec 24, 1863

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ “What Henry Clay Thought of Secession: Henry Clay to Stephen A Miller,” *New York Times* (New York, New York) Dec 26, 1860.

⁸⁷ “A Telegram Sent to the Louisville Journal,” *Republican Banner* (Nashville, Tennessee) Apr 21, 1861.

going to defend themselves. Their goal was to maintain peace in Kentucky and defend their land.⁸⁸

Kentucky teetered on the edge of secession as its Governor, Beriah Magoffin was sympathetic to the southern cause and wanted Kentucky to join the Confederacy. Clay's patriotism was invoked and was used to bolster arguments for remaining in the Union. John J. Crittenden, a Senator from Kentucky, helped lead the charge for Union. Crittenden had described himself as the heir to the mantle of Henry Clay and had proposed six constitutional amendments in 1860 to stop southern secession. The six amendments would have made slavery constitutional and stopped any Congress afterward from ending slavery. His amendments failed because Republicans in Congress refused to vote in favor of any policy that would preserve or expand slavery. Crittenden was given another chance to emulate Clay in Kentucky by promoting the Union. Crittenden spoke to the Kentucky legislature about remaining in the Union and boldly stated, "What do I ask of you more than Henry Clay himself."⁸⁹ Crittenden's plea to the Kentucky legislature was heard, "the General Assembly tabled a motion to call a convention."⁹⁰ Kentucky then took an unconventional step and declared themselves neutral in the conflict. A decision President Lincoln decided to honor. He would not make an enemy out of Kentucky if they were not an enemy of the Union.

Henry Clay's patriotic image came from the selective nature of the American collective conscience and the context of the Civil War.⁹¹ America rallied around the image of Henry Clay because he had written and patriotic and Unionist words during South Carolina's original threat

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ James C. Klotter, Kentucky, the Civil War, and the Spirit of Henry Clay, *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 110, no. 3

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Zeba Crook, Matthew, memory and the New No Quest, *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 70, no. 1

of secession, the Nullification Crisis. The people in the Union used the words of Clay to inspire Americans to support the Civil War. Since the Civil War was about slavery, this put some stress on the patriotic image of Clay because he was a slave owner. The *Perry County Democrat*, a Pennsylvania newspaper published an article talking about the contradiction of abolitionists celebrating Clay. The paper stated, “[Clay] was never an Abolitionist and those who pretend to revere his memory or cling to his principles cannot sustain the Republican party.”⁹² This contradiction between the use of Clay’s image and his words were also echoed by a West Virginia newspaper, the *Daily Register*. The paper reprinted a letter between Clay and Calvin Colton titled, “The Voice of Henry Clay: The Demon of Abolition- Prophetic Words of the Great Statesman of the West.”⁹³ In the letter Clay says Abolitionist were, “extremely mischievous, and burrying on the country to fearful consequences. They are not to be conciliated by the Whigs.”⁹⁴ The article title, “The Voice of Henry Clay,” was meant to be ironic. The editor wanted to mock the abolitionists who had used the title in their papers. The *Daily Register* stated before the letter that their purpose was to, “specifically commended to the prayerful consideration of Mr. Clay’s old political friends who have strayed from their old leader.”⁹⁵ Though Clay’s patriotic image was challenged by the sympathizers to the southern cause, they were unsuccessful. Clay’s patriotic image faded as the Civil War came to a close. America was preoccupied with mourning the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and reunifying the United States.

⁹² “Another Nut for the ‘Advocate’ to Crack,” *Perry County Democrat* (Bloomfield, Pennsylvania) July 3, 1862

⁹³ “The Voice of Henry Clay. The Demon of Abolition- Prophetic Words of the Great Statesman of the West- Henry Clay’s Letter to Rev. Mr. Colton,” *Daily Register* (Wheeling, West Virginia) Oct 17, 1864

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Henry Clay the Pan-American

The image of Henry Clay faded from the American mind after the Civil War. In that time the American south rapidly industrialized and more people migrated west. New economic opportunities began to arise in the United States and manufacturing alone grew from \$1,019,106,616 in 1850 to \$5,369,579,191 in 1880.⁹⁶ The economy of Western America shifted from a primarily consumer market to a producer. The Midwest after the Civil War increased its manufacturing power and, became 14 to 26 percent of the national output.⁹⁷ Western America was able to transport heavy iron goods and coal on complex rail systems that reduced cost and enabled the proliferation of cheaper goods.⁹⁸ Manufactured goods were not the only item to be transported cheaply across the country. Cities along the Ohio and Mississippi and Ohio rivers grew in population and by 1870 the Midwest had a larger population than New England and the Mid- Atlantic regions combined.⁹⁹ America was on its way to becoming an economic powerhouse on the world stage.

Henry Clay's vision of a protective tariff that nurtured American industry was still part of America's economic plan into the late 1800s. Republican, William McKinley, as head of the House Ways and Means Committee in 1889, proposed a protective tariff on one thousand items. McKinley called his new bill, "an American bill" a protective tariff that was "made for the

⁹⁶ Joseph Nimmo, "American Manufacturing Interests," *The North American Review* 136, no. 319 (1883): 507-525

⁹⁷ David R. Meyer, "Midwestern Industrialization and the American Manufacturing Belt in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 4 (1989): 921-937. Percentage of national manufacturing value taken from the years 1860-1900.

⁹⁸ David R. Meyer, "Midwestern Industrialization and the American Manufacturing Belt in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 4 (1989): 921-937.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

American people and American interests.”¹⁰⁰ The “McKinley Tariff” became law in 1890, and raised prices on tin and wool goods used by every American household. The price of these widely used goods rose to such a degree that original supporters of the tariff began to oppose it. President Grover Cleveland along with a Democrat majority in Congress repealed many parts of the tariff. After winning the presidency McKinley decided to adopt a new tariff strategy of reciprocity. The reciprocity approach worked with other countries to reduce tariffs on both sides of trade to stop trade wars from happening.¹⁰¹ America was now a, “manufacturing nation with the necessity of stimulating commerce with the world at large.”¹⁰² America produced more industrial and agricultural goods than it could consume and needed reliable trade partners outside of Europe. The idea of Pan-Americanism received criticism from within the United States as well as Europe. Europe consumed the majority of United States surplus and some Americans thought Pan-American trade would hurt their established European markets.¹⁰³ European powers thought the increased influence of the United States would negatively affect their power in the western hemisphere. England still held power in North and South America at the time and were not afraid of the United States. The London paper, the *Standard*, stated Pan-Americanism was the United States’s way of preparing for future commercial wars.¹⁰⁴

After a mostly successful Pan-American conference in 1890 attention turned to Latin America as the place for the United States to trade its excess goods. At the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, McKinley stated, “Isolation is no longer possible or

¹⁰⁰ Robert W. Merry, “Protectionism in America,” *The National Interest*, No. 146, America’s Assad Quandary November/December 2016, pp. 28-36

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² “Modern Business Development and the Protective Principal,” *The Indianapolis Journal* (Indianapolis, Indiana) Nov 2, 1901.

¹⁰³ “Pan-Americanism,” *Chicago Chronicle* (Chicago, Illinois) Oct 2, 1895

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. The *Chicago Chronicle* quotes the *Standard* in their article.

desirable.”¹⁰⁵ The Spanish-American War bolstered the size and capabilities of the United States Navy. America possessed the ambition and economic capability to be the leading influence in the western hemisphere. McKinley was not alone in his assessment of what America’s role in hemispheric trade should be. Brazil’s Ambassador to the United States Joaquim Nabuco echoed this sentiment in a speech to a Buffalo Liberal Club where he recognized that for Pan-Americanism to be successful the hemisphere needed the United States. The viability of a Pan-American Union had been in doubt since the first was called for by Simon Bolivar in 1824. In 1901 the *Washington Times* voiced the doubts of many about whether Pan-Americanism would work in an article titled, “Is Pan-Americanism Possible?”¹⁰⁶ But if the Buffalo Conference resulted in general terms of commerce Pan-Americanism would be moving in the right direction”¹⁰⁷ The hope of the United States and South America was that the western hemisphere could create a system of economic cooperation to rival the influence of Europe.

The new call for trade with Latin America by McKinley made the United States look back on their past policies and history. Henry Clay began to again emerge in the American mind as one of the original figure heads of Pan-Americanism. Henry Clay’s image as a leader of Pan-Americanism grew slowly. Originally, Henry Clay’s image competed with that of President James Monroe. The credit for the general peace of the hemisphere and the, U.S. diplomatic relations with Latin America went to Monroe because his foreign policy doctrine saw the formal recognition of the emerging republics. The Monroe Doctrine received credit for keeping Europe out of the affairs of the western hemisphere.¹⁰⁸ After the war for Cuban independence, however,

¹⁰⁵ Robert W. Merry, “Protectionism in America,” *The National Interest*, No. 146, America’s Assad Quandary November/December 2016, pp. 28-36

¹⁰⁶ “Is Pan-Americanism Possible?,” *The Washington Times* (Washington, District of Columbia) Oct 29, 1901.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ “Continental Fraternity,” *Chattanooga Daily Times* (Chattanooga, Tennessee) Feb 21, 1907.

the Monroe Doctrine was unpopular with many South American leaders. They believed the Monroe Doctrine treated them as protectorates of the United States and was used as justification for U.S. intervention in Latin American affairs. *The Gazette*, an Iowa newspaper, stated the Monroe Doctrine was, “purely selfish, representing the interest of the United States rather than of the western hemisphere.”¹⁰⁹ The United States and the southern republics were searching for common heroes. For Pan-Americanism to become a reality the hemisphere needed to create a shared vision for the future but they also needed a shared vision of the past. Seminal figures in this relationship became Henry Clay and Simon Bolivar.

Henry Clay was an important figure to the people in South and Central America. Clay was their most vocal and prominent supporter in the United States in their fight against Spain. When discussing commerce between the United States and South America Brazilian ambassador Joaquim Nabuco described it as an American system. The term American system had been used before by Clay and Thomas Jefferson. Both men had spoken in favor of the creation of a system of economic cooperation using the name the “American system.” Jefferson described an American system as a hypothetical in a letter to Alexander Von Humboldt in which he commented on the 1813 revolutions in New Spain; “America has a hemisphere to itself. It must have its separate system of interests which must not be subordinated to those in Europe.”¹¹⁰ Jefferson wanted the western hemisphere to become economically independent from Europe. On May 10, 1820 Clay gave a speech calling for the recognition of the Latin Republics where he also talked about a system of commerce. “It is in our power to create a system of which we are the centre, and which all South America will act with us. ... Our enterprize, industry, and habits

¹⁰⁹ “Onward March of Americanism,” *The Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) May 23, 1914.

¹¹⁰ Randolph B, Campbell, “The Spanish America Aspects of Henry Clay’s American System,” *The Americas* 24, No. 1; Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed., Andrew A Lipscomb (Washington, 1903-1904)

of economy, will give us the advantage in any competition which South America may sustain with us.”¹¹¹ Nabuco referred to Jefferson and Clay in his speech to give the concept of Pan-Americanism a long history. At the time, Pan-Americanism had been defined by the Monroe Doctrine which America had used as a tool for political intervention. Nabuco wanted to redefine Pan-Americanism to be economic cooperation within the hemisphere so he referenced Jefferson and Clay. As the countries in the western hemisphere were cementing a history of Pan-Americanism they also needed to take from their more recent past to build functional relationships.

James G. Blaine, Secretary of State under President Garfield, led the charge for what would become the twentieth-century vision of the Pan-American Union with the 1889 Washington Conference. During the five-month conference the republics of South America and the United States voted to bring new countries into the Union, establish trade treaties, and to create uniform systems of weights, measures, international copyright law, and patent protection.¹¹² What came out of this conference became the foundation of the Pan-American Union. By the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Pan-American Union in 1914, Blaine was called the, “father of modern Pan-Americanism.”¹¹³ Blaine’s attempt at Pan-Americanism gave a standard of how hemispheric relations should operate. But the United States and Latin America continued to turn to Henry Clay as one of the foundational figures that their current success was built on. Blaine was not replacing Henry Clay as the face of Pan-Americanism but was recognized for taking Clay’s vision of hemispheric trade and building a functional system. At

¹¹¹ Randolph B. Campbell, “The Spanish America Aspects of Henry Clay’s American System,” *The Americas* 24, No. 1; Henry Clay, Mary W. M. Hargreaves, and James F. Hopkins, *The Papers of Henry Clay, Vol 2 The Rising Statesman, 1815-1820* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2016)519-520.

¹¹² “Onward March of Americanism”, *The Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), May 23, 1914

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

every opportunity politicians returned to the image of Clay to promote Pan-Americanism. John Basset Moore stated that the vision of the western hemisphere as a free, harmonious abode of justice, peace, and good will was Clay's vision.¹¹⁴ By 1915 all of the Latin American nations were present at the Pan-American Scientific Conference in Washington D.C. With over 1000 delegates present, Pan-Americanism was hailed as an, "actuality rather than a Utopian dream."¹¹⁵

Henry Clay's Pan-American image was widely accepted by the majority of the diplomats in the western hemisphere. Clay the Pan-American needed to be accepted by the average person as well. In the United States, Henry Clay and his Pan-Americanism was discussed by women's clubs. The Delphic Club in Paducah, Kentucky, spent 1917 discussing Latin America, the Pan-Americanism of Clay, and the Monroe Doctrine.¹¹⁶ Even the suffragists in Brooklyn, New York were proponents of Pan-Americanism and encouraged children to learn Spanish.¹¹⁷ Pan-Americanism and functional hemispheric unity was beginning to be looked at as viable. During World War One, the channels of communication Pan-Americanism created helped the western hemisphere take a similar stand in the war. Europe even began to see Pan Americanism as a successful endeavor. The *Burlingame Enterprise*, a Kansas newspaper, quoted an influential member of the English government who stated, "a Pan European Union organized on the same basis and for the same purpose and controlled in the same way as the Pan American Union in Washington, there would never have been a European war."¹¹⁸ The popularity of Pan-Americanism was adding more energy to the memory of Henry Clay.

¹¹⁴ "Pan American Plan is favored by Henry Clay", *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minnesota), July 11, 1915.

¹¹⁵ "Wilson Gets Credit for New Policy," *The Daily Telegram* (Clarksburg, West Virginia), Dec 9, 1915.

¹¹⁶ "Delphic Club Closes Year," *The Paducah Sun-Democrat* (Paducah, Kentucky), April 28, 1917.

¹¹⁷ "Suffragists Hear Talk on Pan-Americanism," *The Standard Union* (Brooklyn, New York), Feb 16, 1916.

¹¹⁸ Pearl Haskins, "Pan-Americanism," *The Burlingame Enterprise* (Burlingame, Kansas), May 30, 1918.

While the image of Henry Clay as the father of Pan-Americanism was accepted by the American people it was not well accepted by his biographers. They interpreted Clay's support of Latin American independence as an attempt to be a thorn in the side of the Monroe administration. Carl Schurz 1887 biography on Clay concluded Clay's support for the republics of South America came from his desire to be president.¹¹⁹ Clay made his first attempt to be president of the United States in 1824, and Schurz interpreted Clay's support of Spanish America as a political move to set Clay apart from others candidates. Joseph Rogers, and Ellis Oberholzer agreed with Schurz but added that Clay's goal was also to embarrass the Monroe administration.¹²⁰ Monroe did not want to endorse Latin American revolutionaries out of concern it would hurt American relations with Spain. This interpretation of Clay's motives is thought to have come from an over reliance on John Quincy Adams diaries. Adams was Secretary of State and was in discussion with Spain to acquire Florida at the time. Clay's persistent calls for recognition of the Spanish Colonies added stress to the situation.¹²¹ Optically to Schurz, Rogers, and Oberholzer the events that followed Clay's endorsement of Latin revolutionaries appear opportunist. Their case for opportunism appeared stronger after the election of 1824 because, none of the candidates reached the required number of electoral votes to win. In what was seen as a "corrupt bargain" Clay promise his electoral votes to John Quincy Adams. As a result, Adams was elected president and Clay received the coveted appointment of Secretary of State. Every president since Jefferson had held the position and when Clay gained the cabinet position was seen as the current president unilaterally anointing the next.

¹¹⁹ Charles Schurz, *Life of Henry Clay Vol. I* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1887), 151

¹²⁰ Joseph M. Rogers, *The True Henry Clay* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1905); Thomas Hart Clay, and Ellis Paxson Oberholzer, *Henry Clay* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Company, 1910).

¹²¹ David S. Heilder and Jeanne T. Heilder, *Henry Clay: The Essential American* (New York: Random House, 2010)

On April 12, 1927, the 150th birthday of Henry Clay twenty nations from South America came to Washington D. C. to honor the statesman. Clay's birthday coincided with the meeting of the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union.¹²² To the people of South America Clay was a symbol that united, "the peoples of this continent in one single aspiration of confraternity and justice."¹²³ Many of Clay's speeches in support of the revolutions by the Spanish colonies had been translated into Spanish and read by revolutionaries in the 1820s. To the people in South America Clay was seen as their biggest supporter in the hemisphere. Clay had even kept correspondence with Simon Bolivar, where he expressed his support for their fight for freedom. Clay's famous words in support of the revolutionaries were, "I have no commiseration for princes. My sympathies are reserved for the great mass of mankind."¹²⁴ The Republics that later formed from did not forget Clay's support. Even into the twentieth century Clay was seen by the people of South America as the apostle of Pan-Americanism.¹²⁵ Though great strides were made the international relations of the western hemisphere were still imperfect, Clay's image continued to provide Latin America and the United States with inspiration that their efforts would culminate hemispheric unity.¹²⁶

Henry Clay's Pan-American image was at the height of its prominence during that time. President Coolidge along with his Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg, offered Venezuela a statue of Clay. The statue of Clay was erected in Caracas and placed in a plaza that was also named after Clay. The statue was the first statue of an American citizen to ever be formally

¹²² "Latin America's Homage to Henry Clay," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* 61, no. 6 (June 1927): 539-546

¹²³ Minister of Columbia, Ibid.

¹²⁴ Calvin Colton, *The Life and Times of Henry Clay* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1846), 244

¹²⁵ Minister of Guatemala, Ibid

¹²⁶ Minister Grisanti of Venezuela, Ibid

presented to a foreign government.¹²⁷ In return, the United States built a statue of Simon Bolivar that was placed in New York City's Central Park. Caracas was chosen as the home for Clay's statute because it was Simon Bolivar's home city. The ceremonies in Caracas lasted four days. The United States representatives joined the leaders of Venezuela in placing wreaths on statues of Bolivar, and visited his remains in the Caracas Pantheon. Clay's statute was unveiled on December 9, 1931 an important day for the people of Venezuela. The day marked the 106th anniversary of the battle of Ayacucho, and the end of Spanish rule.¹²⁸

Clay was beloved by the people of South America. Argentinian author Dr. Miguel Cane in 1905 said that "a statue to Clay should be erected in every South American capitol."¹²⁹ Clay had become almost a religious figure to the people of South America. At the unveiling of Clay's Caracas statue Dr. Jose Santiago Rodriguez stated the ceremony was, "the modern equivalent of the blessing of the bells."¹³⁰ This comparison was a deeply religious statement as the first blessing of church bells was done by Pope John XIII in 968 at the church of Lateran. Bells in the Catholic tradition are symbols of the Apostles calling the congregation to worship. For that reason, church bells are given the names of saints after they have been blessed.¹³¹ Keeping with the religious imagery, Dr. Rodriguez praised Clay as "an apostle of democracy."¹³² Clay's Caracas statue was sacred to the people of Venezuela. The ceremony was not simply a celebration of freedom. It was the consecration of Clay as a representation of liberty. Minister

¹²⁷ Eunice Fuller Bernard, "To Henry Clay Comes Paradoxical Fame," *New York Times* (New York, New York) April 10, 1927

¹²⁸ Maurice H. Thatcher, "Presentation of the Statue of Henry Clay to Venezuela," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* 65, no. 2 (February 1931): 115-135

¹²⁹ "The Pan-Americanism of Henry Clay," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* 36, no. 5 (February 1913): 685-691

¹³⁰ Maurice H. Thatcher, "Presentation of the Statue of Henry Clay to Venezuela," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* 65, no. 2 (February 1931): 115-135

¹³¹ "The Blessing of the Bells," *Pilot* (Boston, Massachusetts) April 12, 1862

¹³² Maurice H. Thatcher, "Presentation of the Statue of Henry Clay to Venezuela," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* 65, no. 2 (February 1931): 115-135

Grisanti of Venezuela echoed the same sentiment of Dr. Rodriguez stating Clay was, “a man of high ideals whose vision divided the secrets of the future, and constitutes him an apostle of liberty and justice.”¹³³ Clay’s statue represented not only hemispheric unity but also freedom. Clay once stated, “I have no commiseration for princes. My sympathies are reserved for the great masses of mankind!”¹³⁴ These words still rang like bells in the ears of the people of South America in 1931. Clay’s words guided and supported the people of South America during their fight for freedom and the Kentuckian was their Apostle that called South America to the promise land of freedom.

The delegates sent to represent the United States during the ceremonies in Caracas carried a gavel made from an Ash tree on Henry Clay’s Ashland plantation. The gavel was thought to be constructed from the tree Clay sat under when he wrote his speeches on Latin America.¹³⁵ Unfortunately, many of the trees on the Ashland plantation had been cut down during the Civil War for military purposes.¹³⁶ The ceremony was the final step in the creation of a shared past between the United States and South America. Clay and Bolivar, the heroes of Pan-Americanism were symbolically joined together. In the United States, Clay’s statue in Caracas was viewed as, “the beacon light of Pan-Americanism.”¹³⁷ The statue would continue to guide the hemisphere to peace and prosperity. This was the pinnacle of Clay’s image as the leader of Pan-Americanism. Clay was now recognized throughout the entire hemisphere and honored in Venezuela the home of Simon Bolivar.

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Calvin Colton, *The Life and Times of Henry Clay* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1846), 244

¹³⁵ Maurice H. Thatcher, "Presentation of the Statue of Henry Clay to Venezuela," *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* 65, no. 2 (February 1931): 115-135

¹³⁶ “Spots Which Should be Sacred,” *Lancaster Intelligencer* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) Dec 21, 1864

¹³⁷ “Hewer of Freedom,” *Leader Telegram* (Eau Claire, Wisconsin) June 9, 1928

Henry Clay's Pan-American image faded immediately after its height because some people in the United States saw Clay's Pan-American fame as paradoxical.¹³⁸ Clay's life was riddled with contradictions: a slave owner who hated slavery, did not allow gambling at home yet gambled frequently, iniquitous during campaigns but was Lincoln's ideal statesman. Clay started to become a niche part of American history, representing a spiritual "link between the Revolution and the Civil War."¹³⁹ Americans found it to be strange that the senator from Kentucky had become widely popular for making speeches in support of the South American Revolutions. Clay was referred to by the *New York Times* as Spanish America's, "spiritual Lafayette" who gained his fame from one speech made in Congress on their behalf.¹⁴⁰ The America people grew less interested in Pan-Americanism once the Great Depression began in 1929 as the American economy collapsed, hemispheric trade became secondary to internal issues. Clay's memory was faint in the American collective conscious but he was not gone completely.

Henry Clay the Federalist

By the middle of the 1940s Henry Clay's image as the first Pan-American faded from the American collective conscience. In a post New Deal and World War Two America Clay was reimagined and envisioned by historians as a Federalist for his American System. The Federalist image did not live in the entire collective conscience of the United States like Clay's past two images. Instead, Clay's Federalist image was relegated primarily to academia. Academics in that

¹³⁸ Eunice Fuller Bernard, "To Henry Clay Comes Paradoxical Fame," *New York Times* (New York, New York) April 10, 1927

¹³⁹ Ibid

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

time, approached Henry Clay with the concept of Cyclical theory. The theory challenged the idea of Progressive history. Where history was once believed to have been the story of human progress, history was seen as a cycle between periods of liberalism and conservatism. Cyclical history was created by historian and Harvard professor Arthur Schlesinger Sr., and was also used by his son Arthur Schlesinger Jr.¹⁴¹ Under the theory of Cyclical theory Andrew Jackson and the Democratic party were progressive making Clay and the Whig party conservatives. They started with Alexander Hamilton's Federalist party and from there followed conservatism to Clay's Whig party. There was also an effort to trace the economic philosophy of political parties throughout American history. Clay's American System was reimagined as a rebirth of Federalism, Neo-Federalism, Neo-mercantilism or Economic Nationalism. Scholars used, tariffs, the use of the necessary and proper clause of the Constitution, and the Bank of the United States as evidence to conclude the American System had Federalist origins.

Henry Clay's American system does bear some resemblance to Hamilton's Federalist beliefs but the Whig and the Federalist theory of economics were not one in the same. Hamilton and Clay both promoted an enlarged governmental role in commerce through the use of tariffs. They also both justified the increased role of government with the use of necessary and proper clause, section 1, article 8 of the Constitution which gave Congress the power to take action that was necessary and proper for the government to function. This included forming a National Bank, and internal improvement, which were two important aspects of the American System. In Hamilton's 1790 "Report on Manufacturing," he favored a tariff of eight percent for the purpose of raising revenue for the government. At the time there was no direct tax to United States citizens, instead the federal government used its powers to regulate international trade as a means

¹⁴¹ The use of the last name Schlesinger refers to Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

of creating revenue. Hamilton's plan favored the manufacturing interests of the United States but did not outright protect them. That is different from the goal of the American System. Clay's tariffs of over thirty percent protected existing manufactures and allowed them to compete in the market place. Clay's hope was that agriculture would sell their excess to American manufacturers, and the tariff kept the prices of manufactured goods competitive in the market. Most of American manufacturing existed in places like New England, an old Federalist stronghold, and many former Federalists became Whigs.

Professional historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. furthered the idea of the American System as a rebirth of Federalism in his article, *The Age of Jackson*.¹⁴² Schlesinger stated, "The blaze of nationalism suggested a new disarming name -the American System- and under Clay's solicitous care, this rebaptized Federalism won its way to the inner councils of the government."¹⁴³ To Schlesinger, Clay became the leader of the Hamiltonian vision during the antebellum period and bestowed Clay the heir apparent to Federalism. Though this came less from his personal views on Clay and more from his views on Andrew Jackson. Schlesinger in his book, *The Age of Jackson*, portrays Jackson as a progressive figure in American history. This portrayal hurts Clay's image because it implied that the Whigs did not act in the interest of the United States. Schlesinger claimed that Clay was attempting to shamelessly revive Federalism with a more nationalistic flavor: "Henry Clay furthered the Federalist program with all the fascination of his personality, the fire of his rhetoric and the darling of his political management. It acquired a broad emotional significance which the colder Hamilton had never succeeded in

¹⁴² Arthur M. Schlesinger, "The Age of Jackson," *The New Republic* 114, no. 12 (1946). Schlesinger also wrote a book with the same name.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

giving it.”¹⁴⁴ Hamilton and Federalism had been branded as the political ideology of wealthy elites. This made Federalism off putting to the average person and created a class separation of political thought. This image of Clay completely disregarded any of the Jeffersonian influences on Whig politics.

Schlesinger also put the image of Clay as a Federalist in his book, *The Age of Jackson*. Andrew Jackson was portrayed as the center of all antebellum American politics, which relegated Clay to a secondary role in American history. Schlesinger along with being a historian was also a political activist who served as part of John F. Kennedy administration. He was the founder of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA). The ADA was founded to be a political organization that advocated for progressive candidates. The ADA formed in response to the Progressive Citizens of America and, marked a split in the New Deal Era progressives in the United States. Schlesinger wrote Jackson to be a progressive figure in history which gave the New Deal progressives in the 1940s a history of progressivism in America. This also centered the antebellum period around Jackson which created the idea that progressives and their policies had previously been the center of American politics. Clay was the leader of the conservative party and had been Jackson’s political opposition but now he was written as Jackson’s antithesis. Schlesinger created an imagined past “within the limits of a national territory and across the bounds of a national time.”¹⁴⁵ Schlesinger’s use of language and selective sources concluded that Hamilton’s “Report on Manufacturing” served as the model for the Whig party. Schlesinger stated Alexander Hamilton “made a classic statement of the long-run possibilities for business in

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Ana Maria Alonso, “The Effects of Truth: Re-Presentations of the Past and the Imagining of Community,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no. 1 (1988)

an alliance with the government” in the “Report on Manufacturing.”¹⁴⁶ He gave industrialism a political philosophy but only for wealthy individuals who had allied their efforts with government.

Schlesinger being an influential public intellectual and Harvard professor had other historians build on his theory. Henry Clay’s American System was defined as the Whig party’s unsuccessful attempt to put the ideas of Alexander Hamilton into practice.¹⁴⁷ The Whig party was thought to have taken the Federalist position of government intervention in the economy and ran with it. Melvyn Dubofsky stated,

“Hamilton was perhaps the first outspoken American advocate of neo mercantilism, became unusual prophet, one with honor in his own country. Men as diverse in their aims and personalities as Albert Gallatin, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, William Henry Seward, Abraham Lincoln and Daniel Webster further developed, refined and apply Hamilton economic conceptions.”¹⁴⁸

Dubofsky brought Clay into the larger story of American economic history. What connected all these men was their support for tariffs, a stable currency, and federal construction of roads and canals. Starting with Hamilton at the center, Dubofsky traced governmental intervention in the economy from the early republic through the Civil War. Dubofsky concluded that Clay’s American System was simply an expansion of Hamilton’s program.

¹⁴⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger, “The Age of Jackson,” *The New Republic* 114, no. 12 (1946)

¹⁴⁷ Melvyn Dubofsky, “Daniel Webster and the Whig Theory of Economic Growth: 1828-1848,” *New England Quarterly* 42, no.4.

¹⁴⁸ Melvyn Dubofsky, “Daniel Webster and the Whig Theory of Economic Growth: 1828-1848,” *New England Quarterly* vol. 42, no. 4

Clay was also tied to Federalism through his association with Daniel Webster who became a figure many historians returned to as evidence of a through line from Federalism to the Whig economic plan. Webster began his career in politics as Federalist, and later became a Whig when the party folded. As a Representative from Massachusetts, Webster's campaigns were funded by wealthy elites, who were also former Federalists. These wealthy men were the main benefactors from Hamilton's economic plan, and were used as evidence of a connection between Federalist and Whig economics.¹⁴⁹ Melvyn Dubofsky, a labor historian, stated that since his early days as a Federalist Webster "imbibed the Hamiltonian vision of a broad federal program to abet private entrepreneurs in their dreams of material preference for a society in which the interest of the community transcend that of the individual."¹⁵⁰ Dubofsky stated that Webster and Clay carried on Hamilton's ideas by "attempted to fit the party policies into a Federalist frame: internal improvements, tariff protection, and a national banking system."¹⁵¹ Henry Clay's economic policy was being reimagined at this time because of its stark contrast to some of Jefferson's writings. Jefferson believed that a society based on agriculture was a place where liberty would thrive. Jefferson said a society with primarily waged workers would be a, "good-enough barometer whereby to measure its degree of corruption."¹⁵² At face value the American System does appear to be in opposition to Jefferson's idea of an agrarian society because increased manufacturing would have increased waged workers. What Clay and Webster were attempting to do was cultivate an economy that was not dependent on Europe which was also a

¹⁴⁹ Robert Rich, "A Wilderness of Whigs": The Wealthy Men of Boston, *Journal of Social History* Vol. 4, no. 3 (1971)

¹⁵⁰ Melvyn Dubofsky, "Daniel Webster and the Whig Theory of Economic Growth: 1828-1848," *New England Quarterly* vol. 42, no. 4

¹⁵¹ Melvyn Dubofsky, "Daniel Webster and the Whig Theory of Economic Growth: 1828-1848," *New England Quarterly* vol. 42, no. 4

¹⁵² Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), 46

goal of Jefferson.¹⁵³ When Clay and Webster were reimagined as Federalists by Dubofsky he was selecting one idea of Jefferson and placing it in opposition to the American System.

Henry Clay's Federalist image came through an analyzation of the history of economic thought in the United States. Historians had noted that Alexander Hamilton was the most prominent influence on American economic thought.¹⁵⁴ It was acknowledged that Hamilton was not as influential as the economic scholars of Europe such as Adam Smith. Nonetheless, Hamilton was the driving influence of American economics and academics began to look for other connections between Clay and Hamilton. Clay was not the originator of the economic philosophy that became the American System and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. commented that Clay "possessed few settled principles, and small analytical curiosity."¹⁵⁵ Clay was believed to have taken up the economic theories of Hamilton, Mathew Carey, and Fredrick List. Mid-twentieth-century historians began to use Mathew Carey an economist, and pamphleteer from Baltimore, as a link between Hamilton and Clay. Carey was a vocal supporter of tariffs to foster manufacturing, and internal improvements. After the Crisis of 1819 Carey helped create the Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of National Industry.¹⁵⁶ The Philadelphia Society led a thirteen-address pamphlet campaign to popularize manufacturing. Clay was on speaking terms with Carey and List, which led to the interpretation that Clay was their mouthpiece in Washington.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Thomas Jefferson, *The Portable Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 547-550.

¹⁵⁴ Robert W. Binkley Jr., "The American System: An Example of American nineteenth Century Economic thinking its definition by its author Henry Clay," (Doctor's thesis, Columbia University 1949); Sidney Sherwood, *Tendencies in American Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1897).

¹⁵⁵ Arthur Schlesinger, *The Age of Jackson* (New York: J. J. Little and Ives Company, 1945), 83.

¹⁵⁶ Robert W. Binkley Jr., "The American System: An Example of American nineteenth Century Economic thinking its definition by its author Henry Clay," (Doctor's thesis, Columbia University 1949).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

Another reason that Clay was also seen as following in the footsteps of Hamilton was his support for the Bank of the United States. For many years Clay's support for the national bank was not viewed as part of the American System. By the 1950s, however, the national bank was widely accepted by scholars as one of the pillars of the American System.¹⁵⁸ A reason for this was the Bank of the United States had been rechartered in 1816 for twenty years and no real harm had been done to the Bank until Andrew Jackson's presidency. Scholars began to draw the similarities between Clay and Hamilton's arguments for the constitutionality of a national bank. Clay stated in 1816 debate that the U.S. Constitution,

[C]ontained powers delegated, and prohibitory powers expressed and constructive. It vests in congress all powers *necessary* to give effect to the enumerated powers- all that may be necessary to put into motion and activity the machine of government which it constructs. The powers that may be so necessary are deducible by construction. They are not defined in the constitution. They are from their nature, indefinable.¹⁵⁹

Clay argued for the constitutionality of a national bank on the grounds that it was a necessary function of the government. This was also the argument used by Hamilton and the Federalists when the Bank of the United States was first chartered. The Constitution did not explicitly grant

¹⁵⁸ Randolph B. Campbell, "The Spanish American aspects of Henry Clay's American System." *The Americas* vol.24, no.1 1967; George Dangerfield, *The Awakening of American Nationalism, 1815-1828* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 207-208; Samuel E. Morison and Henry S. Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic* (New York: Oxford Press, 1950), I, 438-439; Dumas Malone and Basil Rauch, *Empire for Liberty* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1960), I, 406; John M. Blum and others, *The National Experience* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963), 186; T. Harry Williams, Richard Current, & Frank Freidel, *A History of the United States* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1964), I, 369.

¹⁵⁹ Henry Clay, Mary W. M. Hargreaves, and James F. Hopkins, *The Papers of Henry Clay, Vol 2 The Rising Statesman, 1815-1820* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2016).

the government authority to create a bank. Federalists had argued that Article 1, section 8, the necessary and proper clause of Constitution gave the government authority to create a bank. Academics during the 1960s interpreted Clay's stance on the necessary and proper clause to be the same as Hamilton's. As the conversation of Clay's Federalist image moved into the 1980's the exaggerated aspects of the American System were challenged by academics.

Conclusion

Henry Clay's Federalist image faded as the 1980s progressed and the "American System" began to be reanalyzed as the result of Jeffersonian ideology, not Hamiltonian. Merrill D. Peterson's book *The Great Triumvirate* stated, "whatever political debt Hamiltonian tradition, as in the encouragement of domestic manufactures, the American System was the legitimate outcome of Jeffersonian experience at the helm of government since 1800."¹⁶⁰ Peterson recognized that the American system and Federalism shared similarities but concluded that Clay did not sacrificed Jefferson's principles for Hamilton's vision. Instead, Clay was "adapting Jeffersonian principles to new economic imparities resulting from a historic change in the countries relations with Europe."¹⁶¹ Peterson believed that the American System took Jefferson's desire for American economic independence from Europe and put it into action. During the 1990s scholars such as Peter B. Knupfer focused on Clay's Constitutionalism and Unionism. Knupfer found Clay to be a moderate Jeffersonian and stated, "Clay's Constitutional Unionism formed what might be considered the operative dimension of Madisonian Constitutional

¹⁶⁰ Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 69.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

theory.¹⁶² Clay continued to live in the minds of academics as a moderate Jeffersonian but his image would fade again as the twenty-first century was ushered in.

Clay lived through the golden age of oration, and was widely accepted as one of the best orators in his day. Though once the people who listened to Clay died the gravity of his speeches died along with them. What's left of the impression of his speeches in the collective conscious is only accessible through the preservation of his papers. In comparison to many other statesmen like Jefferson or Lincoln, Clay left behind little written texts. Historians and the American public began to see the Compromise of 1820, the Nullification Crisis, and the Compromise of 1850, as causes of the Civil War. What were once seen as the greatest accomplishments of Clay's career were now the causes of the bloodiest war on American soil. The images of Henry Clay have not always aligned with historical truth. The collective conscious of America molded Clay after his death and created a history alive in the minds of the people. Historians such as Joseph M. Rogers had tried to dispel the myths of Clay in his biography, *The True Henry Clay*. Unfortunately, Rogers could not escape the American collective conscience and he did his own part in furthering the mythology of Clay. The only true Henry Clay died in 1852, and any image of Clay to be accepted by the American people was a creation. Since June 29, 1852 Clay has lived in the American mind where he continued to be molded and remolded as the United States changed. All biographies, books, and newspaper articles written about Clay were products of their time and the words that compiled the pages projected the American collective conscience as much as they reflected Clay.

¹⁶² Peter B. Knupfer, "Henry Clay's Constitutional Unionism," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society Vol. 89*, No. 1 (Winter 1991)

Clay has faded considerably in the American collective conscience since his death in 1852 and the once pristine monuments fell into disrepair. Clay's Kentucky limestone shrine, once touted as a "mecca of patriotism" was struck by lightning in 1908. The limestone structure remained in poor condition for many years and people were advised not to approach for fear a piece of the monument might fall on them. The Fayette County government paid for repairs of the mortar and the mausoleum in the early 1970s. To better preserve Clay's Kentucky shrine Fayette county gave the Lexington Cemetery the monument. Pottsville's iron statue to Henry Clay still stands adjacent to a small road. Pottsville's commanding image of Clay now peers through the trees that have overgrown the hill where the monument stands. New Orleans' statue stood prominently on Canal Street for 45 years. In 1901 the city moved the statue to Lafayette square where it replaced a statue of Benjamin Franklin. Surrounded by government and private office buildings Clay still stands in the center of the small square. The Henry Clay Memorial foundation formed by Clay's great granddaughter Nannette McDowell Bullock, maintains the Ashland estate. In 1990 the Ashland estate was labeled a monument at risk and was given 1.25 million dollars by the Fayette government for renovations.¹⁶³

Henry Clay lived vividly in the American mind in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In Pottsville Henry Clay became the symbol of strength to the coal industry. His constant call for protective tariffs led to the growth of their small industry and made the town prosper. During the Civil War Clay words became the voice of patriotism and Union. As America became the industrial power in the western hemisphere, the image of Clay shifted. Clay emerged along with Simon Bolivar as one of the fathers of Pan-Americanism. The Pan-American

¹⁶³ "HCMF Mission Statement," Ashland the Henry Clay Estate, Accessed March 15, 2021 <https://henryclay.org/hcmf-mission-history/>

image of Clay helped in unifying the hemisphere in a system of commerce. Henry Clay was the South American apostle of democracy. In the 1940s Andrew Jackson was used to give the New Deal American progressives a history in the United States. To fit this narrative, historians reshaped the Clay into Federalist. Clay's three images of, patriot, Pan- American, and Federalist, have all been echoes of American culture. Clay's patriotic words eased America's fears of an over reaching government during the Civil War. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Clay's Pan-American image helped build a trusting relationship between the countries of the Western hemisphere. Clay's Federalist image came from intellectuals attempting to ground twentieth century American policy with past precedent.

How will Clay continue exist in the American mind? During the summer of 2020 many people in America called for the removal of statues to Confederate leaders, as well as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Henry Clay on the other hand received little attention. In New Orleans a protest had gathered in Lafayette Square where his statue resides. Protesters called for the removal of many statues in the city but none directly mentioned Clay.¹⁶⁴ In Kentucky a statue of Clay only found in the news due to its proximity to a statue of Jefferson Davis but Clay's name has recently reentered American politics in discussions of home industry.¹⁶⁵ J.D. Vance, author of *Hillbilly Elegy*, mentioned Clay in discussion with political commentator Ben Shapiro. Vance invoked Clay along with Lincoln and Hamilton to stress the importance of

¹⁶⁴ Sarah Ravits, "A Saturday Night Protest Continued the Call to remove several New Orleans Monuments," *Gambit* (New Orleans, Louisiana) https://www.nola.com/gambit/news/the_latest/article_1e92aebc-b952-11ea-8085-3f43b79f844a.html

¹⁶⁵ Lucas Aullbach, "Jefferson Davis Statue Needs to be Removed from the Kentucky Capitol, Andy Beshear Says," *Louisville Courier Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky) June 4, 2020. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2020/06/04/amid-breonna-taylor-protests-andy-beshears-against-jefferson-davis-statue/3147665001/>

government supporting home industry.¹⁶⁶ The patriotic words of Clay may still yet find relevance again in the near future. The growing divide in the United States could see Clay's patriotic words republished to unify the country. Though Clay has faded since his death in the 1852, he never left the American collective conscience. Recently, Clay's image found its way into the background of contemporary American entertainment. In *The Queen's Gambit*, a Netflix mini-series set initially in Kentucky, a viewer with a keen eye will notice the setting the first chess tournament is Henry Clay High School.¹⁶⁷ Kentuckians commended the show's writers for including this small detail. Clay's image in the twenty-first Century has lived on as it does in *The Queen's Gambit*, a background detail. Abraham Lincoln in his eulogy for Clay stated he left America with an important question: "Our country is prosperous and powerful; but could it have been quite all it is has been, and is, and is to be, without Henry Clay?"¹⁶⁸ Lincoln could not have predicted all Clay would become to the American people. Though Henry Clay may be faint in the twenty-first century, generations of Americans could not have gone without him. The images of Clay in the American collective consciences have continued to add to the power and prosperity of America.

¹⁶⁶ Ben Shapiro, "109: J.D. Vance" December 6, 2020, *The Ben Shapiro Show Sunday Special*, produced by the Daily Wire, 1:09:27 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRgrBtADM3k>

¹⁶⁷ Rachel Nix, "A Guide to the Kentucky Connections in The Queen's Gambit," *Building Kentucky* <https://buildingkentucky.com/news/guide-to-kentucky-connections-in-the-queens-gambit/>

¹⁶⁸ "Mr. Lincoln's Eulogy on Henry Clay," *The St. Cloud Democrat* (Saint Cloud, Minnesota) Sept 20, 1860

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