Calhoun's western military program, 1817-1825

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CALHOUN'S WESTERN MILITARY PROGRAM,  
1817-1825 

A Thesis 
Presented to the 
Department of History 
and the 
Faculty of the Graduate College 
University of Nebraska at Omaha 

In Partial Fulfillment 
of the Requirements for the Degree 
Master of Arts 

by 
Ronald L. Johnson 
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Accepted for the faculty of The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

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PREFACE

John Caldwell Calhoun's Secretaryship of War has not loomed large in the ever-growing Calhoun bibliography. Calhoun was a many-faceted political giant in American history, but his book-length biographers have failed to capture his first venture in executive leadership. Early biographers have treated his secretaryship only as a background to the Presidential election of 1824. Twentieth-century biographers have hardly done better. Arthur Styron covers his War Department tenure in three pages; Gaillard Hunt does it in four pages. Margaret L. Coit, who received the Pulitzer Prize for her Calhoun biography, discusses this period in sixteen pages and fails to go beyond generalities. Charles M. Wiltse's three volume treatise covers the same period in fourteen chapters but emphasizes the Secretaryship in approximately four chapters aggregating about fifty pages. Gerald M. Capers recent interpretive reappraisal of Calhoun comprehends the period in thirty pages, half of which stress the election of 1824. Other Calhoun writings are proportionately scanty about his War Department years.

Until very recently, editors of Calhoun documents have seemed to belittle the War Department years.
Richard K. Cralle's six volume edition of Calhoun's Works contains less than thirty letters and reports to Congress written during 1817-1825. J. Franklin Jameson's edition of Calhoun's Correspondence for the American Historical Association is also characterized by its paucity of letters applicable to this period. Robert L. Meriwether, however, started a project that is certain to illuminate this period of Calhoun's life. Before his death in 1958, Meriwether edited volume one of the Calhoun Papers. This is a comprehensive effort--now under the editorship of W. Edwin Hemphill--that presents in five volumes pertinent extant Calhoun letters through 1820. Volumes two through five each presents about three thousand distinct papers that concerned Calhoun. In fact, ninety per cent of the documents presented in this continuing work have never been previously published.

It has been a revelation and a joy to research Calhoun's secretaryship. Any novice historian is elated by "finds" even if it turns out that many of these "finds" cannot be included in the literary project. Naturally, the American State Papers has been an invaluable aid along with Hemphill's Papers. Research trips totaling over three thousand miles have afforded an opportunity to broaden the basis of understanding for this topic. For this opportunity and the opportunity to attend this university, special
recognition is given the Department of Army, Infantry Branch, and the taxpayers of this country.

During the research phase of this paper, many people have offered distinctive aid and encouragement. Particularly noteworthy is the assistance of Mrs. Helen Harrington, Librarian for the Missouri Historical Society at St. Louis. It was an honor and a pleasure to be able to use the facilities of this society. Considerable courtesy and help was also provided by Dr. Roger Bridges at the Illinois Historical Society and the librarians at the State Historical Society of Missouri at Columbia and its affiliated Western Historical Manuscript Collection. Invaluable assistance was tendered by Mrs. Louise Small, librarian, and Donald Snoddy, manuscript curator, at the Nebraska State Historical Society. I would certainly be remiss if I did not acknowledge the staff of our own Gene Eppley Library. Mr. Joseph Lu, head of the Documents Department, was particularly helpful.

Professor Roy M. Robbins is responsible, more than any other person, for this thesis. He presented the idea early in my graduate studies and has painstakingly assisted me in the final stages of its presentation. It has certainly been an honor to work under his guidance and scholarship. It is appropriate to also mention the professionalism of the entire history department at this university. Their contributions necessarily vary, but they
have created a learning atmosphere which is very much student-oriented. Appreciation is also extended to the committee that has voluntarily given of their time to read and challenge this thesis. Constructive criticism is a necessary tool in the learning process.

Moreover, I would be remiss if I did not publicly thank two people who have played a major role in the production of this thesis. Mrs. Brenda Hicks has not only been an excellent typist but has helped beyond what is normally expected of a typist. Lastly, my wife Charlotte has had to bear the vicissitudes of helping her husband through school. She has offered encouragement, helped in the laborious proof-reading process, and has patiently suffered through the often irrational demands of a graduate student. To her, very special thanks is extended.

November 1, 1971

Ronald L. Johnson
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CHAPTER I

FRONTIER HERITAGE

John Caldwell Calhoun has left a legacy that embraces the ideals of a nationalist, a nullifier, and, at his death, a sectionalist. The apparent paradox of Calhoun's life can only be understood by examining the time in which he lived, because he was a reflection of America's changing attitudes. This thesis deals with that portion of his life that was dedicated to the philosophy of extreme nationalism. It is a period that is too often overshadowed by his later sectionalism, but it is a period most indicative of his frontier heritage. As a public servant and as a member of Monroe's cabinet, he espoused and accomplished more nationally significant works than during any other period of his life. Specifically, this thesis will relate and evaluate his contribution to the prestige and improvement of the War Department during his tenure as Secretary from 1817 to 1825. This contribution is seen specifically by analyzing the circumstances, rationale, and effect of his Indian policy and of his establishing the military posts of Fort Atkinson and Fort Snelling.

Calhoun was a first generation descendant of Scotch-Irish immigrants. His father, Patrick Calhoun, was born in
Ireland in 1723, and he left Ireland with his parents in 1733. Typical of other Irish immigrants, they landed in New York, settled in western Pennsylvania, and then, during the English-French conflagration, crossed over into the wilderness of the Virginia piedmont. In 1756, persuaded by reports of better, more fertile lands south of the Catawba River, the Calhoun family moved to the northwestern part of South Carolina called District Ninety-six, to a settlement known as Long Canes.  

By 1758, the Calhouns, having obtained land warrants totaling almost 2,000 acres, were busily surveying their lands. Peace was not a persistent commodity on the frontier, and the next years were accentuated by terrible clashes with the Indians who resented the ever-expanding white man. It was during one of these clashes that Patrick's mother and brother were killed. Two daughters of another brother were killed and another daughter taken into captivity only to be liberated fourteen years later. The Calhoun family had felt the wrath of frontier life, but they were able to overcome this adversity and continue. This was part of a frontier heritage, shared by other immigrants, that developed


generations of strong, persistent, and dedicated people.

Patrick Calhoun's first marriage ended in the tragic death of his wife. In 1766, his wife and unborn twins died in childbirth. This was a severe blow to Patrick who had waited longer than usual to marry and start a family.\(^3\) This loss only served to further involve him in developing his estate and to embroil him in the political controversy between the tidewater planters and the piedmont farmers. Benefiting from the action of the upcountry "Regulators," South Carolina managed to effect governmental reform that gave the piedmont farmers representation in the state legislature. Patrick, a consistent agitator, was elected to the Common Assembly.

In 1770, Patrick married Martha Caldwell whose forebears had migrated from Ireland with the Calhouns. On March 18, 1782, John Caldwell Calhoun became the third son born to this happy union. Except for a three year period, Patrick Calhoun continued to serve in the state legislature until his death in 1796.\(^4\) Although young John was only fourteen at his father's death, he was well acquainted with his father's philosophy of government. Like his father, John held the frontiersman's apathy towards the tidewater controlled government, and saw little hope that

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 18.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 22.
the newly constituted federal government would provide any better consideration towards the frontier people. His main objection to the new federal form of government was that it permitted the taxation of South Carolinians by someone other than themselves, thereby violating a principle of the Revolution.5

This frontier attitude only served to rekindle the sectional quarrel within the state. Good government meant the maximum of individual liberty compatible with an ordered society. Of course, this was an enduring ideal of all frontiersmen. The challenge of political equality to rectify the economic inequality of the sections eventually led to a compromise settlement in South Carolina.6 John Calhoun did learn at a young age the value of compromise, and the initial worth of purposeful resistance in formulating compromise. Forty years later, however, he would lose his biggest argument in an effort to appease national sectional differences on the question of slavery.

As a boy, John was not exempt from the physical labor required of every frontier farmer. His education was limited to home study and to the circulating library of Moses Waddel. Waddel had married Calhoun's sister Catherine. After his father's death, his two older brothers left the

5Ibid., p. 24.

6Ibid. Upcountry representation was increased in both houses, but the tidewater maintained its majority.
farm to enter business. John was left to manage the farm. He was deeply interested in agriculture and was a successful farmer until 1800. At that time, a family council decided that John should complete his education and prepare to enter the law profession. He asked for seven years to complete his education. He would rather remain a planter than become a half-educated lawyer. The family council agreed to his conditions, and his brother James returned to manage the farm and finance John's education.7

John began his education under his former brother-in-law, Moses Waddel (his sister died during her first year of marriage). Waddel Academy became one of the most famous schools in the South during this period. One of Waddel's pupils was William H. Crawford, a future political antagonist of Calhoun. 8 Waddel infused discipline and educational pride into the nineteen-year-old Calhoun. The two years spent under Waddel proved to be ample preparation for his next school at New Haven, Connecticut. Yale was gaining a national reputation under its able president, Timothy Dwight, grandson of Jonathan Edwards. Calhoun became an active member of Phi Beta Kappa and found pleasure in his studies of history, politics, and natural science. Weekly debates gave the young southerner ample opportunity to defend his

7Starke, "Early Life," p. 78.
8Wiltse, Nationalist, p. 28.
frontier republicanism in the hotbed of northern Federalism. A likeable dissenter, Calhoun's political acumen earned him the respect of his fellow students and President Dwight.9

When graduation exercises arrived, Calhoun was suffering from yellow fever. As a result, he lost his chance to speak at the commencement exercises. His graduation theme dealt with the qualifications of the ideal statesman and probably would have been a continued espousal of individualism and republicanism. After his convalescence and a brief vacation with relatives, he returned in late 1804 to study law in the office of the noted Charleston lawyer and Federalist, Henry De Saussure.10

After reading law that winter, Calhoun returned to New England to study law in earnest. He chose to study at the most famous law school in America, Judge Tapping Reeve's school in Litchfield, Connecticut. Calhoun was once again among ardent Federalists, but they did not change his political ideology, rather they served to strengthen it. Although Calhoun excelled in his studies, he failed to be stimulated by the study of law. Politics and agriculture continued to be the consuming interests of Calhoun. Bound by the original family bargain, Calhoun leisurely returned to Charleston and resumed his position in De Saussure's

9 Ibid., pp. 30-4.
10 Ibid., p. 35.
law office preparatory to being admitted to the South Carolina bar.\textsuperscript{11}

The summer heat of Charleston was disagreeable to the young lawyer, therefore he returned upcountry to Abbeville to complete his legal apprenticeship. It was during this period that the Leopard-Chesapeake affair exploded upon the American scene, and true nationalism replaced the now petty sectional differences. The Abbeville residents were quick to denounce the British, and young Calhoun was chosen as a member of a committee to draw up resolutions denouncing the British. This occasion allowed Calhoun to display his political adeptness that favorably placed him before his future constituents. The following year, 1808, Calhoun was admitted to the bar, and his favorable impression the previous year assured him a successful law practice. Even this success could not dissuade Calhoun from his aversion to the practice of law.\textsuperscript{12}

The reapportionment of state representation in 1808 allowed the popular Calhoun to win election to the new General Assembly as the representative of Abbeville District. National questions dominated the sessions of the legislature, especially the nomination of Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates for the upcoming election. This

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 40.
offered Calhoun an opportunity to state his views condemning Jefferson's embargo and predicting the war with England as inevitable. This jingoistic nationalism singled Calhoun out as one of the leaders of the house. For such a young man, Calhoun was moving rapidly along the political road, and circumstances would soon add impetus to this movement.

After two distinguished terms in the South Carolina legislature, Calhoun benefited from the retirement of his cousin, Joseph Calhoun, from Congress as the representative of the Abbeville-Newberry-Laurens district. By virtue of his popularity as a lawyer and republican legislator, he seemed to be the logical Congressional replacement for his cousin. His election was assured and, in 1810, he carried his frontier nationalism to Capitol Hill.

Calhoun's law practice was very lucrative, but his marriage served to eventually make him a man of considerable property. Beginning during his Litchfield days and slowly maturing through the years from friendship to love, Calhoun became engaged to Floride Bonneau Calhoun, the only daughter of his widowed aunt, Mrs. John Ewing Colhoun. (The difference in the spelling of Calhoun is attributed to John Ewing's obdurate desire to spell the Anglicized form of the family name, Colquhoun, with an "o." His widow adopted the

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13 Ibid., p. 47.
14 Ibid., p. 51.
more conventional family spelling. Mrs. Calhoun agreed to a partial partition of her extensive estate among her two sons and daughter before the marriage on the suggestion of the future bridegroom. Floride's property and honor would be his when their marriage finally took place on January 8, 1811. The young couple enjoyed their marital status until the new Representative took his seat in November at the start of the Twelfth Congress. During his Congressional years, Floride remained in the South. She bore the first of their nine children, Andrew Pickens Calhoun, before the Twelfth Congress convened.

Calhoun arrived in the nation's capital in a time of crisis. Retaining and further refining the "hawk" attitude he espoused in his home state, he quickly became allied with the rising group of new Congressmen from the West. They openly demanded war with England and the conquest of Canada and Florida. He was appointed to the Committee on Foreign Relations and subsequently introduced the bill calling for a declaration of war. Throughout the war years, he became one of the outstanding majority leaders along with the Speaker of the House, Henry Clay.

\[15^{\text{Starke, }}"\text{Early Life,}\" \text{p. 83.}}\]
\[16^{\text{Biographical Dictionary of the American Congress, 85th Cong., 2nd sess., 1961.}}\]
\[17^{\text{Gerald M. Capers, John C. Calhoun--Opportunist (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 1960), p. 29.}}\]
Calhoun's popularity in the postwar years was impressive. This popularity can only be derived from his constant identification with the spirit of nationalism. He strove to unify the country by protecting the interests of all economic groups, although he did not support the institution of slavery. Clay is normally given credit for the "American System," but Calhoun was intimately involved in its early formulation by proclaiming a nationalistic economy, self-contained, and self-sufficient. It was imperative that the nation develop a sound economic and military establishment from the one that had been so sorely tried during the war. The instruments for this recovery and development revolved around a "protective" tariff and internal improvements.

A revenue producing tariff would help manufacturers, ease the impoverishment of the treasury, and internal improvements would provide the needed transportational avenues necessary in developing the economy. Additionally, the military establishment had to be improved and professionalized. The threat of another war had not been obviated by the current halt of hostilities. An improved military would only become a reality as a consequence of the

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18 Ibid., p. 43.
improvement of the nation's total economy.20

In 1816, as chairman of the Committee on National Currency, Calhoun introduced the bill chartering the Second Bank of the United States. His argument for a B.U.S. followed generally that argument used earlier by Hamilton. Such a bank was the most practical means of rehabilitating an inflated and diverse currency system. Calhoun's support of the tariff bill was instrumental in its ultimate passage. He believed that America was ready to develop industrially and excess capital should be used to develop American industry. The tariff, although not strictly protective, would increase mutual interdependence within the Union, and thereby promote internal improvements as a logical consequence of this expanding domestic economy.21 We see Calhoun now as a statesman raised under Jeffersonian republicanism adding a touch of Hamiltonian theory.

On December 16, 1816, Calhoun introduced his Bonus Bill. This bill provided for federally sponsored internal improvements, although it did not specify the exact nature of the improvements. Funds for these improvements would be derived from the profits of the B.U.S. Calhoun artfully presented his case in Congress, and the bill narrowly gained Congressional approval in February, 1817. Madison favored

20 Capers, Opportunist, pp. 48-9.
21 Wiltse, Nationalist, p. 122.
internal improvements, but he felt that the Constitution failed to make such a provision. Consequently, he vetoed the bill. Congress tried but could not overcome his veto. Madison's veto was ostensibly based on constitutional grounds, but it may also be construed as a means to put the "war hawks" in their place, and perhaps halt the meteoric rise of young Calhoun. Calhoun was the most vociferous proponent of the bill, and Madison was still an "Old Guard Republican" espousing his states' rights philosophy.

Calhoun's advocacy of the bank, tariff, and internal improvements was not inconsistent with the desires of his constituents. South Carolina had the growing metropolis of Charleston and felt herself equal to any other state. Further evidence of her support for Calhoun and his programs was the re-election of Calhoun in 1816 even though the stigma of the Compensation Bill defeated many other candidates seeking re-election. Final evidence of Calhoun's apparent wisdom were the pervasive signs of prosperity throughout the Union.

Safely elected to another term in Congress, Calhoun was once again to benefit from the fallibility of politics. Monroe had been elected President to succeed Madison, and he hoped to perpetuate the "Era of Good Feelings" by avoiding partisanship in his cabinet selections. He selected

Ibid., p. 125-36.
J. Q. Adams, a New Englander, as his Secretary of State; the southerner, William Crawford, to continue as Secretary of the Treasury, and hopefully the westerner, Henry Clay, as Secretary of War. Clay had higher aspirations and declined the nomination. Andrew Jackson did not want the nomination. Finally, Isaac Shelby of Kentucky was nominated and accepted by Congress only to refuse the appointment. William Lowndes, Calhoun's intimate friend from South Carolina, also refused the position. Almost as a last resort and probably in deference to his popularity nationally and among the military officers, Calhoun was offered the appointment on October 10, 1817.  

Calhoun's apparent motives for accepting this executive appointment transcends even his nationalistic fervor. From Adams to Monroe, all American presidents served their apprenticeship in a subordinate executive position. The rationale behind such apprenticeships was the supposed need to demonstrate governmental executive abilities before accepting the ultimate appointment. Since this principle seemed to have some credence, if history is an indicator, Calhoun's acceptance is somewhat revealing. He had gained an enviable reputation in Congress collaborating with the representative of Kentucky, Henry Clay, and other

"war hawks." Calhoun had retained his hawk attitude after the war and looked at a renewed war with Britain as a distinct possibility, especially as long as she claimed Canada, and as long as Canadians competed for America's rich western fur assets.

Considering Calhoun's patriotism and the innuendos that easily evolve, it is not difficult to understand his acceptance of a rather ill-favored appointment. If war with Britain or even the dying Spanish occurred, who would be in a better position to capitalize on such a misfortune than the Secretary of War? Was Calhoun moving too impetuously towards every politician's ultimate goal? As the new secretary, Calhoun would be tested to the fullest and make some of his greatest governmental contributions.
On November 1, 1817, Calhoun accepted President Monroe's invitation to become Secretary of War. He pledged "to add to the prosperity of the country and the reputation of your [Monroe's] administration." Certainly Calhoun's enthusiastic fervor can not be denied, but existing problems within the department were to provide distinct obstacles for the new secretary. His previous training as a legislator, lawyer, and land owner gave him minimal preparation for the problems that lay ahead. Personal initiative, family heritage, and God-given ability were the tools he would use to make his tenure as secretary both innovative and distinctive in the annals of the War Department.

Any militaristic arm of government is highly favored by Congress and the public during wartime crisis. Conversely, after war it quickly fades from the limelight and regains its somewhat less favored position. In 1817, the War Department was in utter chaos--financially and administratively. The War of 1812 was the major contributor to this

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ineptness, but the department had failed from its inception in 1789 to become a viable arm of the Executive. Durable leadership had been lacking in such an important department particularly during the last war. From 1813 to 1817, the department had no less than five secretaries. This fact alone would add confusion to any governmental agency that depended to a large degree on the leadership of its secretary, but added to this defect was the far flung and diverse responsibilities of the department.

It is somewhat difficult to comprehend the diversity of the department's role in the Executive and governmental structure. The national military policy was determined by Congress and the President, who had the advice of the Secretary of War. Congressional laws prescribed limits to the size and cost of the Army, but the numerous details of administration were worked out by the War Department, and the task of carrying out the policy fell upon the rank and file. The Army Reorganization Act of March 3, 1815 had failed to be fully implemented when Calhoun assumed his duties in 1817.

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3 The act reduced the Army from a wartime strength of 38,186 to a peacetime strength of 10,000. Failure to provide an adequate Army staff was a major deficiency of the Act. Annals of Congress, 13th Cong., 3rd sess., pp. 1196-1253.
Secretary of War William Crawford (December, 1815-October, 1816) recognized the need for an adequate staff that would become the nucleus of the Army during peacetime. As a result of the Act of 1815, the Adjutant and Inspector General, Quartermaster General, and Paymaster General resided in Washington, but the Commissary General and Apothecary General conducted their business from Philadelphia. Although Crawford recognized the worth of a viable staff, he was not innovative when it came to staff organization and function.

Calhoun was quick to see that the Army of 1817 was really only a facade of the required military establishment. Reporting to Congress in late 1817 (barely a month after assuming the duties of Secretary of War), he appraised the strength and disposition of the Army. He felt that the military establishment was sufficient to "keep the existing fortifications in a state of preservation, but it [is] wholly inadequate. . .against a regular attack. . . ." Considering that the northern, western, and southern boundaries of the United States were not yet secured by treaty even though the Treaty of Ghent had been signed, Calhoun was setting the temper of his War Department administration. He wanted to do more than maintain the inadequate status quo.

4 De Caimdry, War Department, p. 104.
5 American State Papers, Military Affairs, I, 636.
6 Ibid., I, 669.
Defense, however, was not solely the charge of the War Department. According to Calhoun, the existing fortifications were not only completely insufficient, but since "the declaration of war is the act of the whole community, . . . the country should, as far as possible, be protected against its ravages." The aggregate strength of the Army at the end of 1817 was only 8,221, hardly a formidable force. Calhoun was not only trying to retain this minimal force against continuing efforts of Congressmen to further reduce its strength, but also build a case for increasing the Army's strength.

The Act of 1815 had divided the country into two military divisions and into nine subdivisions called departments. The Division of the North consisted of the region north of Virginia and the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, with the exception of Illinois Territory. The departments numbered 1 to 5 were in the Northern Division and the other four in the Southern Division. The largest number of soldiers were assigned to Detroit and other posts in the Fifth Department, and a like number (1,154) were assigned to the Ninth Department with headquarters at Bellefontaine near St. Louis.

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7 Ibid., I, 670.
9 American State Papers, Military Affairs, I, 670-72.
Source: Roger L. Nichols, General Henry Atkinson, p. 73.

Figure 1
When Calhoun became Secretary, Major General Jacob Brown commanded the Division of the North and Major General Andrew Jackson that of the South. There was not a commander-in-chief until 1821, therefore Brown and Jackson were equal in rank and power. They supervised the department commanders, who in turn had charge of garrison and post commanders. General Brown established his Northern headquarters at Brownsville, New York. Colonel Miller commanded the Second Department with headquarters at Boston; Brigadier General Scott administered both the First and Third at New York City; Colonel Porter the Fourth at Philadelphia, and Brigadier General Macomb the Fifth at Detroit. In the Southern Division, Jackson established his headquarters at Nashville. Brigadier General Gaines administered both the Sixth and Seventh Departments and maintained his headquarters at Fort Hawkins, Georgia; Brigadier General Ripley the Eighth at New Orleans, and Brigadier General Thomas A. Smith commanded the Ninth at Bellefontaine. 10

When Calhoun successfully argued against a reduction of the Army in 1818, the strength level had climbed to 12,656 soldiers and comprised seventy-three posts, an increase of almost fifty posts in two decades. It seems as if the Army strength had increased, but the Northern

10 Ibid.
Division had 4,054 soldiers assigned and the Southern only
3,367. Calhoun's plan for the east coast was to fortify coastal installations against a naval attack. The bulk of
the Army was to be deployed on the western frontier since it was there that Calhoun saw a real threat or encroachment of our unmarked boundaries developing.

During the War of 1812, Americans along the Mississippi frontier were hard pressed to hold their own let alone reduce the enemy. The British had a strong ally in the Indians, and it was quickly decided to strengthen this frontier as part of the post-war security plan. James Monroe, Secretary of War from August 30, 1814 to March 13, 1815, suggested the establishment of forts along the northern border. He instructed the commissioners who were to negotiate treaties with the Indians to inform them that a chain of post "verry [sic] high up the Mississippi and from the Mississippi to Lake Michigan. . ." would be erected. As a result, the western military frontier was strengthened with new posts and the reestablishment of those posts that had been captured or destroyed by the Indians and British. Fort Armstrong on Rock Island, Fort Crawford at

\[1^1\] Ibid., I, 779-99.
\[1^2\] De Cainsky, War Department, p. 104.

Figure 2
Prairie du Chien, and Fort Howard, near the mouth of the Fox River were built in 1816. Fort Dearborn at Chicago was reoccupied, and Fort Osage, Fort Clark, and Fort Edwards were strengthened. 14

On June 18, 1817, Major Stephen H. Long of the Topographical Engineers was ordered to Prairie du Chien to:

1. meander and sketch the course of the Upper Mississippi,
2. exhibit the general topography of its shores, and
3. designate such sites as were suitable for military purposes.

Long started north from Fort Crawford to assess the strategic value of this new fort and to determine if any additional forts were necessary. Long confirmed the negative effect of Fort Crawford on reducing the intruders from Montreal since the Upper Mississippi and the St. Peters (Minnesota) rivers were still being used by foreign traders. 15 Long did not construct any fortifications, but on his return to Washington for debriefing, he did recommend a site for an additional fort to supplement Fort Crawford and further extend the jurisdiction of the government. He considered the junction of the St. Peters and Mississippi as an

14 Wesley, Frontier, p. 121; 137. The western frontier is defined as that area bounded by the Mississippi River on the west. The northwestern frontier is that area north of the confluence and bounded by the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.

When Calhoun assumed office, the most western military post was at Fort Smith. Fort Smith was erected near the junction of the Arkansas and Poteau rivers. Construction of this fort was started because of the conflict between the Osage and Cherokee Indians. The Cherokees were transplanted eastern Indians whose customs and life ways conflicted with the established Osages. Added to this internal conflict were degenerate traders and squatters who infringed on the inviolability of the Indian lands. On July 30, 1817, Secretary of War George Graham (October, 1816-December, 1817) issued the necessary orders to General Jackson to begin construction of the fort. Jackson made General Smith (whose name the fort was to bear) of the Ninth Department the action officer for the construction. Major Long, just returned from his Mississippi expedition, accompanied the soldiers from the Rifle Regiment at Bellefontaine and selected the site of the new post. By 1821, Fort Smith was completed, and it soon developed into a military protector of the Indians against the "civilized" white


17 De Cai ndry, War Department, p. 104.
settlers and traders. By late 1817, settlers could generally settle west to the Mississippi, but Calhoun perceived both a greater western expansion and a threat of foreign interests beyond this unofficial line.

Calhoun's legislative experience as a War Hawk during the last war, imbued him with the necessity of physically protecting our boundaries. Diplomatic treaties were necessary, but the British and French trader paid little or no heed to the provisions of treaties. America's northwest offered lucrative fur trade opportunities with the Indians. The Convention of 1818 between the United States and Britain had not been negotiated until October 20, 1818, and it only established the "49th degree of north latitude, from the Lake of the Woods to the Stony mountains..." as an undemarcated boundary. No American had surveyed this boundary nor had any other country even though it had also been part of the settlement of the Treaty of Utrecht that separated the British and French in 1713. In 1818, it had become common diplomatic knowledge that the British wanted the right of access to the Mississippi and the right of navigation on its waters.

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20 Ibid., p. 381.
Long's 1817 expedition had established the presence of foreign traders along the Upper Mississippi. Matthew Irwin, a factor at Green Bay, testified that British traders were able to acquire trading licenses from less-than-honest Indian Agents. Governor Cass's expedition of 1820 in the region of Lake Superior provided continuing evidence of British influence among the Indians. A Chippewa chief raised the British flag when Cass sought to counsel with him. Cass promptly tore down the flag and subsequently signed a treaty with the Chippewas. The Indians around Lake Superior made frequent visits to the British posts at Malden and Drummond's Island where they received valuable presents and liberal supplies. Such a policy on the part of the British appeared ominous. If military and diplomatic motives be minimized, there remained the commercial object of securing for the United States the fur trade and good will of the Indians in the northwest.

Throughout Calhoun's tenure as Secretary of War, he continued to stress the need to secure our northern border.


and push on to the Pacific Ocean. Support for his opinion vacillated both in Congress and in the minds of the public. It is ironic that in 1825, Calhoun's ideas on this issue were once again in vogue.24 In 1818, however, Calhoun proposed a plan to protect the northwestern frontier. This plan later became known under the various titles of the "Yellowstone Expedition," "Missouri Expedition," "Mississippi Expedition" or "Long's Expedition."

His frontier protection plan was quite simple and seemed destined to fulfill his conception of a secured northern boundary and the ultimate occupation of the Louisiana Territory. Hopefully, it would also pave the way to the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, it would help to assuage those frontiersmen who hoped to reap the harvest of the rich Indian fur trade. His plan required no more than the movement of garrison soldiers from the east to the frontier regions. Posts would be established and fortified at the mouth of the St. Peters and up the Missouri near its junction with the Yellowstone River. From these vantage points, the Indians could be conciliated and foreign intruders and influences controlled.25


Admittedly, a major portion of Calhoun's secretaryship dealt with military policy and its implementation, but other responsibilities produced some of his greatest contributions as an administrator and innovator. Above all, the existing debt of the department, totally $45,111,123 in 1817, required considerable fiscal acumen. Calhoun's military proposals may have seemed to complicate the debt problem, but he was able to make giant strides to eliminate or reduce the debt. By 1822, the debt had been reduced to $4,689,292, an astounding reduction considering the depressed economic situation surrounding the Panic of 1819. His early plantation management probably served him in good stead in manipulating Congressional appropriations in such a manner to facilitate such a debt reduction program.

Militarily, Calhoun made the General Staff a viable, responsive institution that proved to be the genesis of today's complex military apparatus. In 1817, the military establishment lacked an effective chain-of-command. It needed reform in operating procedures, and it required a workable interrelation between staff officers and officers in field commands. The division and department commanders determined questions of discipline, procedure, and defense plans that should have been determined by a general staff.

\[26\text{American State Papers, Military Affairs, II, 450.}\]

\[27\text{Ibid.}\]
Each unit made its purchases and kept its accounts in accordance with the varying notions of the commanders, and accounts were sent directly to the Treasury Department without any prior audit.

Calhoun's solution was a systemizing of the functional administration of the Army. He thought "that every distinct branch of the staff should terminate in a chief, to be stationed, at least in time of peace, near the seat of government, and to be made responsible for its condition."  

In accordance with Calhoun's plan, a bill was introduced and became law on April 14, 1818. This act authorized Calhoun to coordinate administrative offices and supervise expenditures. The chief staff officers of each department of the Army were called to Washington, where they, with their assistants, formed sub-departments or bureaus through which plans could be efficiently carried out. Definite accountability was secured, and when the Army was reorganized in 1821, Calhoun was able to further extend the


Calhoun had taken much of the tedious Army administration—and some power—away from field commanders and properly lodged this responsibility directly under the control of the Secretary of War. The creation of a commander-in-chief in 1821 further enhanced Army administration by placing a general in command of the whole Army. This was not an eminently successful move, and it was not until the Civil War that this position gained the stature it required.

Thus with much wisdom and diligence Calhoun settled many of the internal chaotic conditions of the department. But other responsibilities continued to plague his resourcefulness. He was responsible for issuing military land bounties to veterans of the last war, but records of service were often nonexistent or incomplete. Judgment played an integral part in solving this problem, and he seems to have mollified these veterans with an able assist from Josiah Meigs, Commissioner of the General Land Office. Calhoun was responsible for improving the curriculum of the Military Academy. He felt that the establishment of military

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30 American State Papers, Military Affairs, II, 345.

31 A comprehensive portrayal of the administration of the military bounty lands and Josiah Meigs can be found in Malcolm J. Rohrbough, The Land Office Business (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 71-88.
academies "was the cheapest and safest mode of producing and perpetuating this [military] knowledge."\textsuperscript{32} He recommended an additional military academy in 1819 that would better serve and accommodate the southern and western portions of the country.\textsuperscript{33} Unfortunately, Congress was not agreeable.

\textsuperscript{32}American State Papers, Military Affairs, I, 834.

\textsuperscript{33}Ibid.
CHAPTER III

INDIAN POLICY, 1817-1822

On April 4, 1818, Congress adopted a resolution requiring the President to present a workable system of Indian trade. As Monroe's designated representative, Calhoun made the required report on December 8, 1818. Calhoun's Indian trade system proposal exhibited a realistic attitude towards dealing with the complex, volatile problem of pacifying the Indians. Co-equal with military policy on the frontier, Indian policy was a major responsibility of the Secretary of War until 1834.

In dealing with the Indians, Calhoun had to formulate a plan that involved diplomatic, commercial, humanitarian, and military aspects. These aspects constituted an integral part of America's Indian policy. No single aspect was self-sufficient. The overall Indian policy involved complex planning and the use of all available resources. The resources available directly to Calhoun were the Army, the factory system, and Indian agents. The humanitarian policy was often carried out under

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governmental approval by civilian organizations. The basic assumption of the Indian policy—​at least up to the time of Jackson—​was that the Indians must become civilized if they were to form an integral part of American society.

Indian agents were the designated governmental representatives or diplomats among the Indians. The British had established this method of representation, and it was continued by the colonies. The legality of the agents was cloudy until 1786 when Congress passed a law creating Indian superintendents. The superintendents were to prevent foreigners from engaging in trade with the Indians and issue licenses to qualified citizens for the purpose of trading.

With the advent of new government in 1789, Congress consolidated or reaffirmed previous laws. In 1796, Congress passed a new law regulating Indian affairs. It specified the boundaries of Indian lands and provided for making treaties. No citizen was to trade with the Indians without a license, buy horses from them, contract for land, or settle among the tribes. To facilitate trade with the Indians, a general revenue act of 1799 provided that no duties should be charged on peltries coming from Indian

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2American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 200-01.
3Ibid., II, 205-06.
4Ibid. An annual license cost $50, and traders had to furnish a bond of $3000.
lands. The intercourse laws were renewable on a three year basis, and the law of 1802 was amended to forbid the sale of liquor to the Indians. The laws of 1796 and 1802 formed the legal basis for the growth of the agency system.

As new territories were formed, the position of Indian superintendent was merged with the duties of the territorial governors. The Act of 1790 also allowed the President to appoint "temporary" agents to reside among the Indians. The instructions for these agents emphasized their duties in civilizing the Indians by means of agriculture and domestic arts. Eventually, the word "temporary" was dropped from their title, and they became assigned to particular tribes or areas.

The expansion and variety of duties performed by the agents made them indispensable in the management of Indian affairs. They arranged and negotiated treaties; promoted peace on the frontier and among the tribes; persuaded Indians to move to new lands as the frontier moved West; licensed traders; paid annuities, and in general were the primary representatives of the government among the Indians. They

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8 American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 365.
were placed under the general superintendence of the territorial governors and were directed to report through them to the War Department. 9

The factory system was intimately associated with the Indian agents and was another tool of the War Department. Established officially in 1796 and patterned after the British system, it was designed to carry on a liberal trade with the Indian nations. 10 The purpose of the factories was threefold: (1) to destroy the influence of British traders and secure the friendship of the Indians; (2) to economically eliminate the British traders and secure the rich fur trade for Americans, and (3) to supplement the military and Indian agents in controlling the Indians.

The President was directed to appoint factors to reside at the posts and sell goods to the Indians. The price of the goods was computed at actual cost plus carrying charges. The factors were to report twice a year to the Secretary of the Treasury and account for all money, furs, and supplies. They were to take an oath for the faithful performance of their duties and to furnish bond as the President directed. No factor was to be engaged in the trade on his own account, and he was prohibited from receiving presents from the Indians or any furs except in

9Crale, Works, V, 9. It was not until the act of 1834 that the agents were given a legislative foundation.

exchange for government goods. Any factor who violated this trade restriction was subject to a $1000 fine. The total capital appropriated to sustain the system was increased to $200,000 and $8000 was drawn from the Treasury on an annual basis to pay for the administration, i.e., wages of factors and clerks. The act was limited to two years plus the duration of the Congress then in session.\(^{11}\)

In 1811, the capital fund was increased to $300,000, and $19,250 was authorized to be drawn from the Treasury to pay the wages of the superintendent, clerks, and factors.\(^{12}\)

By 1818, eight factories were operating: Fort Mitchell, Georgia; Chickasaw Bluffs, Mississippi; Fort Confederation, Tombigbee River; Fort Osage, Missouri River; Sulphur Fork, Red River; Green Bay, and Chicago.\(^{13}\)

By the time Calhoun took office, the general plan of operation was well established. The Superintendent of Indian Trade, Thomas L. Mc Kenney, sent out order blanks, and the factors sent in their requisitions.\(^{14}\) The superintendent made every effort to supply the goods ordered

\(^{11}\)Ibid.

\(^{12}\)American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 205-06.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., II, 150. The President was authorized to appoint a superintendent of Indian Trade by an act of 1806. Henceforth, the act was renewable on a three year basis. Congress did not follow this proviso, and renewals were made on a yearly basis after 1818.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., II, 422.
by the factors, and he often checked on the quality of the goods although the type of goods was left to the discretion of the factors.  

15  Mc Kenney purchased most of the goods in Washington, although tobacco was purchased at Pittsburgh and St. Louis, and powder from the Du Pont works at Wilmington, Delaware. The transportation of goods to the factories was an expensive, time-consuming, and often wasteful process. Since most of the factories were located in remote places, goods had to be reshipped several times. Furs acquired from the Indians were sold at an annual auction in Washington, and late arriving furs were sold at supplemental auctions at New Orleans, St. Louis, Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, and Mobile.  

17  The military was the enforcer of Indian policy. In addition to combating Indian hostilities, it was used whenever it was necessary to carry into effect the trade acts. The military could seize unauthorized goods that were to be sold to or articles already purchased from the Indians. Necessarily, the military could arrest persons charged with violating any of the provisions of the Indian trade acts.  

18  Indian agents and factors were often located

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16 *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, II, 335.  
17 Ibid.  
at military posts and cooperation among these three representatives of the government was essential. Settlers were constantly pressuring the frontier. Land policy was still as coercive as ever; too often it was take what you can by treaty, and if that fails, use force. The representatives of the government on the frontier had to ameliorate both the Indians and the ever-advancing frontiersmen.

The factory system which Calhoun wanted to implement would favor organized, properly capitalized fur companies over the individual trader. This was not an altogether Hamiltonian approach, but rather an approach to insure proper treatment of the Indians. An act of 1802 established the provisions for granting fur trading licenses that required annual renewal. As compared to the Act of 1796, the cost of the license was raised from $50 to $100; trading without a license was subject to imprisonment not to exceed thirty days instead of a $500 penalty. Traders had to be bonded, and the restriction of granting licenses only to citizens was lifted to include foreigners.19

In a subsequent act of 1816, foreigners were once again prohibited from trading with the Indians except by special permission of the President. This power was often delegated as low as the factor level, thereby making it

19 Cralle, Works, V, 10.
somewhat less than effective. Calhoun proposed to increase the cost of individual trade licenses from $100 to a sum not to exceed $500. Non-licensed traders were to be fined up to $1000 and imprisoned a maximum of six months. Once granted a license, a trader could not have it revoked without reason as long as he paid his annual fee. This plan would tend to force under-capitalized, individual traders out of the system. A more restrictive proviso would require traders to maintain a fixed location subject to government inspection. Hopefully, these restrictions, although tending to discriminate against the individual trader, would prevent many of the abuses practiced against the Indians.\textsuperscript{20}

Calhoun favored a continuance of the 1796 factory system under direct government control. He characterized the Indian as ignorant and easily susceptible to less than honest traders. To balance the whole system, the government would give renewed vigor to the frontier. A part of the balance would come from the addition of three northwest forts--one on the Missouri near the mouth of the Yellowstone River, one extended up the Mississippi River at its confluence with the St. Peters, and one between Lake Huron and Lake Superior.\textsuperscript{21} The remaining balance would come from the

\textsuperscript{20}American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 203-04.

decrease in the number of traders caused by the increase in license fees. Thereby it would be easier for the government to control the Indian trade. By virtue of requiring fixed locations, the government could more easily inspect and monitor the fur trade. An additional effect would be a hastening of the civilization process of the Indian.

As the Indian became dependent on these installations, his relative density would increase and cause a division of real property. Calhoun did not favor treating the Indians as organized tribal units but rather as individuals. In this case the Indian would become more dependent on the government and learn civilized ways. As the peltry trade decreased with the extinction of the fur bearing animals, the Indians would turn more and more to the soil for their livelihood. Naturally the Indians would also use their government land annuities for education and improving their settlements. Perhaps Calhoun was too idealistic and utopian in his attitude towards the Indians.

If Calhoun sounded idealistic at times, he was also very realistic. He believed that the Indians should be gradually brought under "our authority and laws. . . [since] it is impossible, with their customs. . . to exist as independent communities in the midst of civilized society." The Indians should be taken under our guardianship; and

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22 Cralle, Works, V, 17.
our opinion and not theirs, ought to prevail." A large part of civilizing the Indian should be undertaken by private societies. When Congress appropriated $10,000 for this purpose, Calhoun had "the opinion that the subject... would be more certainly effected... in the aid of efforts of societies or individuals, who might feel disposed." The American Board for Foreign Missions, the United Brethren or Moravians, and the Baptist Board for Foreign Missions were eager to abide by Calhoun's opinion. They used the Lancasterian method to teach the Indians, and the curriculum included reading, writing, and arithmetic as basic ingredients. The boys were also offered general mechanical arts and agriculture. The girls were encouraged to learn sewing, knitting and weaving.23

Calhoun did not contemplate dealing with all Indians in the same way. The Indians in the northwest would take longer to bring under civilization, perhaps as long as thirty years. Because of this, it was necessary to mitigate the influence of outside interests as represented by the Canadian fur traders and Selkirk's settlement on the Assiniboine River.

In 1809, Lord Selkirk acquired an extensive tract of land from the Hudson's Bay Company that stretched from Lake Winnipeg south to the headwaters of the Mississippi

23American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 200-01.
River, and from the Lake of the Woods to the upper reaches of the Assiniboine River.\textsuperscript{24} This parcel of land crossed the undemarcated boundary of the United States, and Calhoun was fearful both of its effect on the Indians and its threat to America's rich fur trade. In addition, the Canadians continued to give gifts to the Indians in the area around Forts Malden and Drummond. Calhoun estimated that $9,000 annually was given to the Indians by this means.\textsuperscript{25} In 1817, Benjamin O'Fallon, an Indian agent, reported to Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory that "Mackinac traders abound in Prairie du Chien and British traders villianously incite Indians against Americans.\textsuperscript{26}"

The extension of military posts would enable the government to reduce the effect of the foreigner as well as earn the goodwill of the Indian. The Indians in this area were largely migratory and followed the fur bearing animals north as summer approached. Thus, in the summer the Indians were susceptible to the Canadian influence. This influence would be reduced by well capitalized traders or associations who would endeavor to monopolize the trade. The contemplated military posts would give these traders the necessary security their operations would require. As in the past, the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Annals of Congress}, 17th Cong., 1st sess., p. 319.
  \item \textit{American State Papers, Indian Affairs}, II, 358.
\end{itemize}
government factories would locate at the posts also. It is easy to see that Calhoun was using his Indian trade proposal to complement and substantiate his proposed northwest posts. Calhoun still harbored the theory that a war with Britain would break out if Canadian traders continued their intercourse with the American Indians west of the Mississippi River. This threat could only be obviated by winning the faith of the Indians through an enlightened fur trading policy. The new posts would provide security for this policy as well as prevent further intrusion of Canadian traders in this critical area. In 1819, Congress approved the necessary appropriations to continue the factory system.

Although Calhoun managed to convince Congress of the need to continue the factory system, it came under investigation again in 1820. The Senate requested its Committee on Indian Affairs to investigate the expediency of abolishing the system. The current law was due to expire on March 3, 1821. Instrumental in the decision of the Senate committee was the testimony of Major Thomas Biddle and Colonel Henry Atkinson. On February 16, 1820, Biddle, who had much experience with remote Indian tribes, such as the Osage, Kansas, Missouris, and Pawnee, replied to the

28American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 185-86.
committee's inquiry. He recommended that the government should take over all of the Indian trade. Honest and efficient agents should be employed, and factories established wherever one was needed to accommodate the Indians. Biddle also commented on a weakness of the system—compensation for the factors. Factors had been on fixed wages, but Biddle thought that a factor's compensation should depend upon the value of the furs which he purchased from the Indians. Certainly, if this recommendation had been adopted, the entire factory system would have been vitalized. Competition breeds success, and commissions would have gotten the factors unglued from their sedentary ways.

Colonel Atkinson's response, through a letter to Calhoun, essentially agreed with Biddle's comments. Atkinson felt that private traders were abusing the Indians, and his own military mission would be greatly enhanced if "the Indian trade be properly regulated by law." He recommended that all trade by individuals with the Indians be abolished. Next, the government or a single company should conduct all trade with the Indians. On April 5, 1820, the committee reported to the Senate that "it is inexpedient to abolish the present system of Indian trade." Forces, however, were

29 Ibid., II, 202-03.
30 Ibid., II, 203-04.
31 Ibid., II, 205.
continuing to build in an effort to abolish the system. But Calhoun believed in the factory system; it was essential to his plans for the frontier and America's destiny.
CHAPTER IV

MILITARY EXPEDITIONS, 1818-1820

The interdependence of Indian policy and military policy was inherent in Calhoun's frontier program. His plan for the extension of the military frontier predated his Indian trade proposal by nine months, but they were mutually related programs. In each case, Calhoun sought to mitigate the influence of foreign fur traders, secure the allegiance of the Indians, and expand America's fur trading economy.

On March 16, 1818, Calhoun officially declared his intention to establish a military post at the mouth of the Yellowstone River. Lewis and Clark had earlier envisioned and recommended to Jefferson that a military post be built there.¹ This contemplated post would provide a significant extension of military jurisdiction and would be the nation's most western post. As such, he hoped to "greatly curtail their [English traders] trade towards the head of the Missouri, but we must expect every opposition from them."²

Because Calhoun anticipated possible armed resistance from


Canadians in this area, it was imperative that the expedition commander take pains to conciliate the Indians and assure them that his intentions were strictly honorable. To ally the Indians, Calhoun authorized a sum not to exceed $3000 be spent on presents for them. ³

Calhoun ordered General Thomas A. Smith of the Ninth Department to consult with Governor William Clark of the Missouri Territory. Clark would be familiar with the country and "its capacity to supply the wants of the detachment, the navigation of the [Missouri] river, and the force and disposition of the tribes of Indians in that quarter." ⁴ Based on Clark's information, General Smith could best plan the size of the expedition. To prevent a reduction in his current commitments, Smith would receive at least two hundred recruits from the East. Calhoun thought the expedition would begin in 1818, although he doubted that it would or could reach the planned destination before winter closed the river. He did, however, estimate that the expedition could get as far as the Mandan village, the 1804 winter quarters of Lewis and Clark.⁵

The remoteness of such a post would create logistical problems. Calhoun anticipated this weakness in his plan and

³Ibid., II, 195.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid., II, 194.
declared that such posts should be self-subsistent. Initially, that is, the expedition would be supported by the fertility of the land and the abundance of the wild game. By September 11, 1818, he expressed this belief in an official policy. Each permanent military post would cultivate a kitchen garden of such an extent to provide vegetables year-round. The commanding officer would be personally responsible. When a change of command occurred, a report would be rendered indicating the current state of the garden and the vegetables on-hand. More extensive cultivation would be undertaken at distant posts such as Fort Smith and those contemplated on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. Excess produce and crops would be sold at prevailing market prices to the Commissary General, and the proceeds distributed to the men of the garrison.6

The Missouri Gazette looked favorably on the new regulation and praised Calhoun as the "soldiers friend." Particularly salutary would be the constant supply of fresh food for distant posts. It would improve the health, confidence, and morale of the soldiers as well as increase their pay. Soldiers would learn the art of agriculture, thereby preparing them for civilian life. The order was also representative of a republican form of government.7

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6Missouri Gazette and Illinois Advertiser, October 30, 1818.
7Ibid.
Calhoun thought of these benefits, but additional fiscal credits were evident. The cost of supplies would be reduced--actual cost of food and transportation--and the indebtedness of the department could be further reduced. Congress would be reluctant to support his far flung military expeditions if greatly increased appropriations were necessary.

While General Smith was busy making the necessary arrangements and adjustments to launch the expedition, Calhoun was further refining his plan. In a letter to General Jackson on August 22, Calhoun thought the principal post ought to be at the Mandan village rather than at the Yellowstone. The Mandan village was nearest to the British post on the Red River, and as Calhoun commented, "best calculated to counteract their hostilities against us, or influence the Indians. It appears to be very important that a strong post should be taken at the mouth of the St. Peters (now the Minnesota River) on the Mississippi."  

In October, Calhoun further amplified his plan to General Brown. He advised Brown that the post at the mouth of the St. Peters should be made unusually strong due to its proximity to Selkirk's colony, and because it would be near the powerful Sioux. He also announced plans to build a fort at the head of navigation on the St. Peters in order to form

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a communication with the proposed fort at the Mandan village. Still another post at the head of navigation on the St. Croix was planned to complete the cordon of forts which would restrain foreign traders.9

By March 6, 1819, one year after he announced his original plan, Calhoun had definitely decided that the principal post would be at the Mandan village, and that no attempt would be made to occupy a higher position until that one was firmly established. He doubted that the troops would reach even the Mandan village during the current year. In case the officers found the circumstances unfavorable for such an extended advance, they were to erect an intermediate post at Council Bluffs or the Great Bend.10 What had started out as the Yellowstone Expedition had now been divided into two separate, but related expeditions—the Missouri Expedition and the Mississippi Expedition. The objects of Calhoun's plan, however, remained constant. It would secure the Northwest frontier and extend America's fur trade.

The Missouri Expedition was the first military movement into the Northwest, and it attracted widespread attention. It received the enthusiastic endorsement of

9Ibid., II, 147-48.

10Ibid., II, 153. The Great Bend is about forty miles above the mouth of the White River in the south central part of South Dakota.
Lord Selkirk's Settlement and an Sioux Crow Dakota Sioux Panca Omaha Iowa Fox Kansas Osage

LOCATIONS OF INDIAN TRIBES AND PROPOSED EXPEDITION ROUTES


Figure 3
frontiersmen and western newspaper editors. A St. Louis editor felt that the expedition would add to western security; keep the Indians in check; tend to destroy the influence of the British over the Indians, and improve the geographical knowledge of the West and the Missouri River. Additionally, it would encourage immigration as well as protect and encourage the fur trade. A note of warning was also forthcoming. The leaders of the expedition should be wary of the Indians, but they should use prudence and discretion. The unjustifiable severity used in the past should be abandoned. The British have rapport with the Indians because "the most prudent and discreet agents are sent by the British government among the Indians; men who know the Indian character." Equal treatment of the Indian was advocated, at least in newspapers. Another editorial saw the expedition as a "large step toward actual possession of the whole American Territory." Frontier newspapers were wholeheartedly in support of Calhoun's frontier program, at least in 1819.

Although it took Calhoun sometime to formulate all aspects of his frontier program, it seemed to be a feasible, acceptable solution for the frontier. Implementation,

11 Missouri Gazette and Illinois Advertiser, April 21, 1819.

12 Ibid., September 22, 1819. Additional examples of editorial support can be found in Niles' Weekly Register, 320; XV, 117, 182; St. Louis Enquirer, September 4, 1818.
however, showed the inadequacy of some leaders and weaknesses inherent in Calhoun's planning. Transportation was slow and not always dependable. The use of steamboats to transport and/or supply the expeditions would be a drastic gamble. Discipline was often arbitrary, and communications between the frontier and Washington was slow—often thirty days to send a letter and receive a reply. Calhoun's organization of his Army staff had not been completely effected, and private contractors were still necessary for provisioning the western Army.

Early in the summer of 1818, James Johnson of Kentucky contracted to furnish supplies and offered to employ steamboats on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. He calculated that he would be able to make the journey from St. Louis to the Yellowstone in sixty days.\textsuperscript{13} The well-known fur trader, Manuel Lisa, was sent up river to prepare the Indians for the coming of the Army.\textsuperscript{14} On August 30, 1818, the advance contingent of the Missouri Expedition, consisting of about 350 men under the command of Colonel Talbot Chambers, left Bellefontaine.\textsuperscript{15} They reached Cow

\textsuperscript{13}Niles' Weekly Register, XIV, 344.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., XV, 117. It is doubtful that Lisa was on a special mission for the Army, but rather provided information to the Indians during his normal trading ventures. See Nichols, Journal, p. 41.

\textsuperscript{15}Journal of the Advance Corps of the Military Branch of the Yellowstone Expedition (commonly referred to as the Kavanaugh Journal), Coe Collection, Yale University,
Island in October and prepared winter quarters. Chambers left the expedition to assume temporary command of the Ninth Department. On July 29, General Smith had requested permission to retire and on October 10, he was allowed to retire. Captain Wyly Martin was left in charge of the winter quarters. Subsequently, these quarters were named Cantonment Martin.

Cantonment Martin was approximately 400 miles up the Missouri from Bellefontaine. Lack of adequate planning was evidenced by the composition of the detachment. Nearly one-third of the men were near the end of their enlistments, and the remainder were mere recruits. They were hardly the well-disciplined, organized unit required for such an expedition. The Indians provided considerable harassment to Martin's men. Kansas braves robbed hunting parties of horses, clothes, and food. For these offenses, Martin arbitrarily captured a Kansas chief and two braves. He had

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16 Thomas A. Smith Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, Letterbook, VI, 26. General Daniel Bissell assumed command of the department on February 6, 1819.

17 Ibid., Thomas A. Smith to Calhoun, July 29, 1818.
them held in chains until the guilty ones recanted.18

Martin was inexperienced in dealing with the Indians as this episode reveals, however, an Indian agent was not present at this time to offer wise counsel.

When Calhoun heard of this incident, he became very concerned that an armed conflict would develop with the Indians and threaten the very purpose of the expedition. A solution would be to re-enforce the detachment at Cow Island or at least increase the strength of the expedition for the spring-move. Calhoun had no doubt that a new commander was needed, a more experienced and able commander.19 By March 6, 1819, Calhoun informed General Jackson that he had decided to name Colonel Henry Atkinson to personally command the Missouri Expedition and replace General Bissell as commander of the Ninth Department. Atkinson's newly designated Sixth Regiment would supplement the detachment at Cow Island.20

The previous October Calhoun had named Stephen Long to conduct a scientific expedition into the northern portion of the Louisiana Purchase.21 It was a separate venture that merely coincided in part with the Missouri Expedition, but it formed another part of Calhoun's frontier program.

19 Jameson, Correspondence, II, 150-51.
20 Ibid., II, 159-60.
21 Niles' Weekly Register, XV, 111.
Long's scientific expedition was designed to explore and gain knowledge of the area that formed the northern portion of the Louisiana Purchase. The actual northern boundary, the 49th parallel, had not been surveyed, and Calhoun thought that further information of this area would help prevent unnecessary conflicts with Selkirk's colony and errant Canadian fur traders. Long was given instructions to make every effort to conciliate the Indians and to ascertain the number of tribes inhabiting the area. Long left Pittsburgh on May 5, 1819, arrived at St. Louis on June 9th, and joined the Missouri Expedition camped on Cow Island on August 18th. Long had requested and had been granted permission to secure a steamboat to navigate the Missouri as far as the Council Bluff.

The adaptability of Long's steamboat, Western Engineer, allowed his expedition to precede the Missouri Expedition to Council Bluffs. Long established Engineer Cantonment just north of Manuel Lisa's trading post, and he then returned east for the winter. When Long stopped at Washington, he received new instructions from Calhoun.


24 Hemphill, Papers, III, 89; IV, 388.
Long was to ascend the Platte to its source and return to the Mississippi by way of the Arkansas and Red rivers. The result of this expedition had a traumatic effect on the westward moving frontier. In his report, Long stated: "In regard to this extensive section of country, I do not hesitate in giving the opinion that it is almost wholly unfit for cultivation." Such a verdict was not encouraging to an expanding people eager to possess a land that extended to the Pacific. As a result, his report of the "Great American Desert" set up a psychological barrier that made this area the last to be settled in America's march to the ocean. 25

Calhoun's choice of Colonel Atkinson to command the Missouri Expedition proved to be a beneficial decision. Atkinson was a competent officer and able organizer who would overcome many obstacles confronting the expedition. His Sixth Regiment, temporarily commanded by Colonel Josiah Snelling, left Plattsburg, New York on March 11, 1819. Atkinson had gone on ahead to Washington to receive final instructions from the War Department, then preceded the regiment to Pittsburgh to insure that the necessary keelboats and supplies were waiting. To his chagrin, no preparations had been made. He contacted the Quartermaster General's agent at Pittsburgh and made the necessary arrangements. The

25 James, Expedition from Pittsburg, XIV, 10-12.
regiment departed Pittsburg on May 8th and arrived at Cincinnati in a week. Held back by strong winds, the flotilla did not arrive at Bellefontaine until June 6th.\textsuperscript{26}

Although the Sixth Regiment, with a detachment of recruits for the Mississippi Expedition, was behind schedule, it was of little significance. James Johnson was hopelessly beleaguered with financial, supply, and steamboat problems. Johnson had commissioned five steamboats for the expeditions, but they suffered considerable breakdowns and delays caused by low water. The extreme dryness the previous year was now manifested by low water on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. On June 14th, Colonel Chambers with 260 men in keelboats set out for Cantonment Martin. Atkinson and the main contingent finally departed on July 4th and 5th using keelboats and three of the five steamboats. Only the steamboat Expedition was able to reach Cow Island before it too was forced to quit and let keelboats do the job. The other steamboats had to have their cargoes and troops loaded onto keelboats in order to keep the expedition moving.\textsuperscript{27}

Atkinson had only minor problems during the remainder of his journey to Council Bluffs (not to be confused with

\textsuperscript{26}Fort Atkinson Records 1819-1827, ed. by A. E. Sheldon (6 vols.; Lincoln, Ne.: typescript, 1915). These records provide virtually complete documentation for the movement of the Sixth Regiment from Plattsburg and the history of Fort Atkinson.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid.
Council Bluffs, Iowa). A cantonment site was chosen twelve miles above Long's camp. Atkinson designated the new post Cantonment Missouri and set about constructing a permanent log fort. This was probably Atkinson's worst decision because spring floods inundated the post and forced its removal to the bluffs overlooking the Missouri.  

Atkinson had returned to St. Louis during the winter in order to maintain better communications with Calhoun and better administer his entire command.

That winter the soldiers at Cantonment Missouri suffered the debilitating effects of scurvy. Dysentery had preceded the outbreak of scurvy and several reasons were presented by Surgeon Thomas G. Mower for its outbreak. Necessarily, the arduous trip from Plattsburg, New York had its effect. The winter of 1819-1820 was extremely cold; the mean temperature for January was only 8 degrees. Diet played a substantial role. There was a shortage of fresh beef, vegetables, vinegar, and some of the salted beef became putrescent.  

The resulting effect, minimized by the dedicated work of Surgeon John Gale, was over 200 sick, but only thirty died from the sickness. One hundred of the sick had been sent downriver to Fort Osage to recuperate. The

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28 Ibid.
29 Mower's report is reproduced in P. M. Ashburn, A History of the Medical Department of the United States Army (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), pp. 41-4.
effect could have been worse if Atkinson had not rushed cattle, vegetables, and vinegar to the beleaguered post.  

Colonel Henry Leavenworth, commander of the Fifth Regiment and the Mississippi Expedition, had little difficulty transporting his men from Detroit to the St. Peters. Perhaps, this was due to his use of conventional watercraft, not steamboats. He departed Detroit on May 14, 1819 and arrived at Prairie du Chien on June 30th. In six weeks, he had shipped across Lakes Huron and Michigan to Fort Howard, moved up the Fox River, portaged to the Wisconsin River and down it to Prairie du Chien. He was delayed there until August 6th waiting for 120 recruits that had accompanied Atkinson. He was also required to occupy Fort Crawford and Fort Armstrong with part of his unit.  

It took Leavenworth sixteen days to complete the last leg of the Mississippi Expedition. The events that followed proved conclusively that the expedition lacked not only decisive leadership and proper supplies, but it had not  

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30 Atkinson to Calhoun, April 28, 1820, Fort Atkinson, Nebraska Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society. This is a loose collection of manuscripts that have not been catalogued.  

31 Marcus L. Hansen, Old Fort Snelling 1819-1858 (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1918), p. 10.  


33 Ibid., III, 160.
been adequately planned. Food supplied by James Johnson deteriorated unnecessarily. Leavenworth was ambivalent in choosing the site for his post. The site he did choose was completely devastated in the spring floods. Scurvy ran rampant during the winter as it did on the Missouri, but no relief action was taken. As a result, twenty per cent of the winter force failed to survive until summer. Before a permanent post could be constructed, Colonel Josiah Snelling replaced Leavenworth. Snelling successfully organized the efforts of his new unit and rapid progress resulted. Snelling was rewarded for his achievement by having the post named in his honor on January 7, 1825.34

Calhoun continued to elaborate his frontier program before Congress. On January 3, 1820, he contemplated five objectives for 1820: (1) move the Rifle Regiment on up the Missouri to the Mandan village and erect barracks for five hundred men; (2) remove obstructions in the Missouri; (3) open a road from Chariton to Council Bluffs and on to the Mandans; (4) open a road from Council Bluffs to the mouth of the St. Peters, and (5) connect the Fox and Wisconsin rivers by canal or road.35

The first objective was defeated by Congressional withdrawal of the necessary appropriations. The second one

35American State Papers, Military Affairs, II, 32.
involved great expense and was not undertaken. The road from Chariton to Council Bluffs was surveyed and approved by Calhoun. The road was made within the year by the soldiers on the Missouri. On April 20th, Calhoun ordered Atkinson to send an exploring party to mark a route to the mouth of the St. Peters. Captain Matthew Magee was put in charge of a party that included fifteen soldiers, six officers, an Indian guide, and servants. The party set out on July 2nd and crossed what is now Iowa in a northwesterly direction. They reached the Mississippi several miles below the Fort Snelling and ascended the river, arriving there after a journey of twenty-three days. Magee reported that the scarcity of wood and water and the rugged character of the hills rendered the route impractical except for small parties.

The main thrust of Calhoun's frontier program began to dissipate. The Mississippi Expedition had successfully attained its objective. The Missouri Expedition had ground to a halt at Council Bluffs. It is noteworthy that Cantonment Missouri did achieve Calhoun's idea of becoming a self-sustaining post. Atkinson's leadership had produced

38 Ibid., III, 13.
large crops and great herds of cattle and hogs. A saw mill and brick kiln were constructed not to mention the refinements of a library and school. It became in fact a complete community. Finally, in 1821, Atkinson was rewarded for his "indefatigable industry and skilful efforts in accomplishing the objects of the Executive" by having the post on the Missouri designated Fort Atkinson.  

39Calhoun to Atkinson, January 5, 1821, Fort Atkinson, Nebraska Collection.
CHAPTER V

JAMES JOHNSON, ARMY CONTRACTOR, 1819-1821

When Calhoun reorganized the Army General Staff, he planned to abolish the contract method of supplying the Army by June 1, 1819.\(^1\) Necessarily, it would take time to structure the Army to supplant the civilian contractors who supplied the Army not only with its subsistence but with its ordnance, clothing, and means of transportation on waterways. The Yellowstone Expedition, the pivotal maneuver of Calhoun's frontier program, was required to depend on the civilian contractors. The supply of the expedition and the transportation of some soldiers rested with James Johnson, Army contractor from Kentucky.\(^2\) Johnson held contracts with the government to transport the ordnance, clothing and medical supplies from Pittsburg to St. Louis. He was to furnish food for the troops and transport men and supplies up the Missouri River.\(^3\)

James Johnson was an experienced Army contractor. He and two partners were the main suppliers of Jackson's

\(^1\)American State Papers, Military Affairs, I, 80.
\(^3\)American State Papers, Military Affairs, II, 324-25.
army during the War of 1812, and there is no indication that
Jackson was less than satisfied with Johnson's performance. 4
James Johnson had also served six months as the second-in-
command and paymaster of his brother Richard Mentor Johnson's
Kentucky militia regiment. 5  James and his brothers were
influential in Kentucky politics. John had been in Congress
and served as a Federal judge; Benjamin was a Circuit Court
judge; Richard Mentor was the most distinguished, serving
in the House, Senate, and was vice-president under Van Buren;
Joel was probably the least distinguished brother but an
able assistant to James. James was not a success as a
politician. He served in the Kentucky legislature and was
an 1816 candidate for governor, but he withdrew when it
became obvious he could not win. 6 In 1818, Johnson had
contracts for forty per cent of all supplies furnished to
the frontier Army posts. 7

James Johnson held three contracts with the Army that
proved vital to the western expeditions. On December 6, 1817,

4James A. Padgett, ed., "The Life and Letters of
James Johnson of Kentucky, Kentucky State Historical Register,
XXXV, 303.

5American State Papers, Military Affairs, II, 622-23.
The regiment distinguished itself in the Battle of the Thames
and Richard Mentor Johnson was presented a sword before
Congress. Johnson was called the "Hero of Tippecanoe." He
had apparently slain the Indian chief Tecumseh.


7American State Papers, Military Affairs, I, 848-51.
Johnson provided the Army $193,407 in supplies for 1818.
he contracted to supply rations to soldiers "stationed, marched, or recruited within the limits of the state of Indiana and the territories of Illinois and Missouri" during the period June 1, 1818 to May 31, 1819. On the order or requisition of a post commandant, three months supply of rations were to be issued by Johnson. For those posts above the Rock River (Fort Crawford and the contemplated posts on the Yellowstone and St. Peters), a six month supply was to be the basis of issue. The Army paid its contractors on a yearly basis--after actual delivery. This necessitated advances be paid the contractors. The standard stipulation regarding advances stated that excess money paid by the government at the end of the contract must be repaid at six per cent interest dating from the termination of the contract.\(^8\)

In support of the Yellowstone Expedition, Calhoun required Johnson to deposit 420,000 complete rations at Bellefontaine by March 21, 1819.\(^9\) On February 9, 1819, George Gibson, Commissary General of Subsistence, amended this order. Johnson was to deliver an additional 250,000 rations by May 1st, bringing the total number of rations


\(^9\)John C. Calhoun, The Papers of John C. Calhoun, ed. by W. Edwin Hemphill (5 vols.; Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1958--), III, 372. In a letter to James Johnson on December 9, 1818, Calhoun had requested 430,000 rations and seems to retain this impression in a
ordered to 670,000.\textsuperscript{10} Johnson felt that such a requirement would not be difficult to fulfill, in fact, he "could have every article ready to move in thirty days."\textsuperscript{11} The basic error Johnson made, however, was combining his ration contract with his transportation contract. He held the rations in Kentucky until his steamboats were ready instead of sending the rations ahead to meet the due date of the contract.

Johnson's second contract with the Army was also dependent upon water transportation. Johnson had concluded a contract with Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup to transport clothing, ordnance and medical stores necessary for the expedition. These supplies would have to be moved from Pittsburgh to St. Louis. These two contracts were directly dependent on the third contract. Not because the War Department meant it that way, but because Johnson chose to use the transportation required by this contract to fulfill the other contracts. This was only good business for Johnson. The War Department felt that three separate

\textsuperscript{10}bid., III, 558, 560.

\textsuperscript{11}U.S., Congress, House, House Executive Documents, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., VIII, Document 110, p. 180. The major item in a ration was meat. In order to preserve the pork and beef, it had to be salted in barrels. Peas and beans were dried. An individual ration weighed two and one-half pounds.
contractors was not desirable. If one failed, it would defeat the rest and the execution of the expedition. ¹²

The all important third or transportation contract was made on December 2, 1818 between Richard Mentor Johnson and Quartermaster General Jesup. Such an arrangement today would be highly suspect, but in 1818, it was not considered extraordinary. Richard Johnson was the attorney for his brother James and had easy access to the Executive officers. He had convinced Calhoun to experiment with steamboats, and it was left to Richard Johnson to work out the details with Jesup. ¹³

There can be little doubt that the transportation contract was written in such a manner that under any circumstances it would favor the interests of James Johnson. He was required to furnish two steamboats "calculated to navigate the Mississippi River and its waters" and have them subject to the orders of Jesup by March 1, 1819. ¹⁴ If two steamboats proved to be insufficient, Johnson would be given reasonable notice to furnish additional steamboats. If, however, these steamboats should prove ineffective, Johnson would be given "reasonable time, say thirty days"

¹²Hemphill, Papers, V, 49-50.
¹⁴Ibid., p. 6. A summary of the contract is found in Hemphill, Papers, III, 329-30.
to provide a requisite number of keel boats in order to fulfill the contract.\(^{15}\)

At the time the contract was consummated, no steamboat had navigated the Missouri River or the Mississippi as far as St. Peters. To fix precise and definite freight rates would be difficult; therefore, it was determined that Johnson be granted a special proviso. He would receive the ordinary rates of compensation and a "reasonable compensation" for the risk and hazard involved.\(^{16}\) If a disagreement or a difference of opinion should arise about the compensation above the ordinary freight rates, it would be submitted to arbitration. An arbitrator for each side would be chosen. If they failed to agree, a mutually acceptable judge or umpire would be named, and the decisions of these three would be binding upon both parties.\(^{17}\)

Related to the rate of compensation was the possibility of detention. An additional allowance would be given Johnson provided "that if, in the arrangements and operations of the government, the said steamboats" should be detained at St. Louis or at their destination (the Yellowstone and St. Peters). This detention was not to be "imputable to the negligence of the said James Johnson."\(^{18}\)

\(^{15}\)Ibid.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., pp. 6-7.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., p. 7.

\(^{18}\)Ibid.
In consonance with the other contracts, Johnson was allowed to draw advances provided sufficient security was presented. Although these contracts seem more than lenient, Calhoun had no reason to doubt the veracity of Johnson. He had been recommended by Henry Clay, the Masons of Kentucky, and his brother Richard was Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs. If the steamboats were a success, they would certainly impress the Indians and Canadians as well as improve the supply of distant posts. If they failed, well, Johnson had thirty days to fulfill his obligation using the conventional keel boats.

Support for steamboats was not overwhelming. General Smith of the Ninth Department opposed the use of steamboats on several counts. He cited the frequent changes in the Missouri channel; numerous sawyers (tree stumps); the swift current, and the shallowness of the river at several points. As part of his original instructions, he had already procured and fitted keel boats for the expedition. Colonel Atkinson saw the salutary aspects of using steamboats. He was essentially in agreement with Calhoun. He had no "doubt of the practicability of navigating the Missouri with steam

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19 Hemphill, Papers, III, 133; 180-1; 233-4.

20 Smith to Calhoun, July 29, 1818, Smith Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, Letterbook, VI. Smith's comment is made before the Yellowstone Expedition is expanded by the addition of Atkinson's Sixth Regiment. Chamber's advance party in 1818 used keel boats to get to their winter quarters on Cow Island.
power, notwithstanding the almost universal opinion to the contrary."\(^{21}\)

In fulfillment of his transportation contract, Johnson engaged five steamboats, the Expedition, the Jefferson, the Calhoun, the Johnson, and the Exchange. With the exception of the Calhoun, they left Louisville on May 2nd loaded with supplies. The remainder of the contracted supplies were transported in four large flat boats. These boats would go only to the mouth of the Ohio, and the steamboats would return from St. Louis to bring these cargoes the remaining distance up the Mississippi. The Exchange was to be used only to carry cargo to St. Louis and not to ascend the Missouri.\(^{22}\) Already, the steamboats and cargoes were almost two months behind their scheduled arrival of March 1st and 21st, respectively. This was poor planning on Johnson's part, although building difficulties contributed largely to their late delivery date.\(^{23}\)

Johnson could not foresee the breakdown in the machinery of the steamboats nor the lowness of the Mississippi River. The Jefferson broke her piston and the Expedition's boiler failed below St. Louis. The remaining steamboats, experiencing minor mechanical difficulties,


\(^{22}\)Hemphill, Papers, IV, 435.

\(^{23}\)Ibid., IV, 436.
reached Bellefontaine by May 21st. The Johnson had to undergo extensive repairs at Bellefontaine. On June 9, 1819, the steamboat Independence made a round-trip cruise from St. Louis to Franklin. This was the first attempt to ascend the Missouri by steamboat, and it was successful. If Johnson could get his steamboats in good running order, the successful ascent of the Missouri seemed probable.

Financial problems at St. Louis now complicated the plans of the already harassed James Johnson.

Johnson was indebted to the Bank of St. Louis for $56,000. According to Risdon H. Price, president of the bank, this debt was instrumental in the closing of the bank. When Johnson arrived in St. Louis with his steamboats and supplies, the bank attempted to attach this property in settlement of his debt. Johnson immediately wanted to unload his cargo at Bellefontaine, thereby precluding any bank attachment since it would then be government property and exempt from attachment. At first, General Bissell and Colonel Talbot Chambers cooperated, but they soon withdrew their support when civil authorities arrived to attach the property. With some minor heroics on the part of Captain Silas Craig of the Expedition, the

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24Ibid.
25Missouri Gazette, June 9, 1819.
26Ibid., July 14, 1819.
provisions were reloaded. Johnson had to off-load the provisions at some safe spot so that the Army could inspect the provisions in barrels. It is debatable whether he was required to have the provisions inspected. Grudgingly, Johnson acquiesced to the demands of the commissary inspector, Major Hemstead.

Johnson decided to land the supplies on the Illinois side of the Mississippi. This would preclude any legal action by Missouri authorities, and it was acceptable to the Army inspectors. Although Johnson acquiesced to the demands of the Army inspectors, he did not like it. He claimed the provisions were already government property, and inspection would cause unnecessary delay. The inspection found Johnson short of the required number of provisions and a "considerable quantity of beef, pork, flour, and vinegar was condemned." Johnson had to purchase replacement supplies in St. Louis. Naturally, he had to pay inflated prices because his credit was not established and the merchants knew he was in a predicament. All told, Johnson was delayed until July 2nd acquiring provisions and repairing steamboats. Only the Johnson, the Jefferson, and

27 U.S., Congress, House, House Executive Documents, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., VIII, Document 110, pp. 46, 194. Major Hemstead was also a director of the Bank of Missouri.

28 Ibid., p. 194. Two of Johnson's flat boats were sunk on the Ohio, and his agent with the flat boats had sold part of the supplies. This is the primary reason he was short the required amount of supplies.
the Expedition were able to make the attempt to ascend the Missouri. Provisions for the Mississippi Expedition were handled without incident. Four keel boats were used to transport the provisions. Three keel boats arrived at Prairie du Chien before Colonel Leavenworth, and one accompanied the expedition to St. Peters.

By the time the Missouri Expedition was ready to leave Bellefontaine, Atkinson had decidedly changed his mind about the efficacy of steamboats. He ordered Captain McGunnegle, Quartermaster General assistant at Bellefontaine, to have keel boats available should the steamboats fail completely on the Missouri. The Jefferson failed to reach Franklin; it could not negotiate the current and low water. Its supplies were transferred to keel boats on August 13th. The Johnson was somewhat more successful. It reached Franklin on August 3rd and Fort Osage about September 7th. About thirty miles above Fort Osage, it burst a cylinder head, and its cargo had to be shipped by

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29 Ibid. The Jefferson had originally been designated to take recruits and supplies up the Mississippi to St. Peters. Failure of the Exchange and Calhoun forced Johnson to use keel boats for this mission.

30 Ibid., p. 49. Leavenworth's delay was caused by the late arrival of the recruits moving with Atkinson. For unexplainable reasons, Atkinson held these recruits until just before his departure on July 4-5.

31 Ibid., p. 157.
MISSOURI EXPEDITION
1818-19

MISSOURI TERRITORY

Scales:
1" equals 113 miles
Army Posts □
Towns ⬤


Figure 4
keel boats. 32

The Expedition was fairly well constructed for the navigation of the Missouri and would probably have reached Council Bluffs had it not been for low water. It arrived at Franklin on July 22nd, at Chariton on August 5th, and at Fort Osage on August 16th. It left Fort Osage after eight days delay and reached Cow Island on August 27th, but it was unable to proceed. Captain Craig decided that the Missouri was too low to chance it. Again, keel boats were used to replace the steamboat. 33 When Atkinson left Cow Island, he had a keel boat flotilla, and keel boats were spread between the island and Franklin. It was almost two weeks after he closed Council Bluffs before all the keel boats had arrived.

The great steamboat experiment had failed, at least for the year 1819. Calhoun's faith in steamboats was rewarded in 1820 when the Expedition arrived at Council Bluffs in July. 34 The public attitude toward the expedition had materially altered. Johnson's delay in delivering the

32William D. Hubbell, "The First Steamboat on the Missouri: Reminiscences of Captain W. D. Hubbell," ed. by Vivian K. Mc Larty, Missouri Historical Review, Vol. LI (July, 1957), p. 378. The Johnson's engine had to be sent to Louisville for repairs, hence the Johnson spent the winter on the Missouri. There was no foundry west of Louisville at this time.


supplies, the deficiency of his steamboats, and his legal troubles with the Bank of St. Louis reacted unfavorably upon the whole expedition. The St. Louis Enquirer was the leader of the criticism directed at the expedition.\textsuperscript{35} Calhoun's troubles were not over. There still remained the settlement of Johnson's contract. Colonel Atkinson and other Army representatives had no doubt that Johnson had miserably failed to fulfill the terms of his contract, thereby forfeiting any claims he might make.

Nevertheless, the transportation contract provided for any difference of opinion in respect to the amount of compensation Johnson should receive. In such an event, the outcome would be determined by arbitration. Quartermaster General Jesup offered Johnson little more than ordinary rates. The freight from Pittsburgh to St. Louis would be paid at the usual rates as would the transportation on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. A thirty-three per cent over-allowance would be given for all provisions actually delivered to Council Bluffs by Johnson. Richard Johnson, in the capacity of attorney for James, refused to accept such compensation, and a board of arbitration was convened.\textsuperscript{36} Johnson and Jesup agreed to arbitrate the

\textsuperscript{35} St. Louis Enquirer, July 14, 21, 28; August 11; September 4; October 9, 30; November 27, 1819. Thomas Hart Benton was the editor.

detention of the Johnson and the Expedition at Bellefontaine. Also considered was the detention of the Johnson, the Expedition, and of the Jefferson at points up the Missouri. Only the transportation charges relating to the Missouri Expedition were to be referred.37

John Rodgers, John Mason, and Walter Jones were agreed upon as the arbitrators.38 Each side presented documents and arguments before the board, but no one was able to personally present his case. The arbitrators were able to solicit any testimony they determined was necessary for a just decision. Henry Clay provided the summation and final argument for Johnson. He offered a brilliant argument that praised the character and competency of James Johnson. Clay felt that the delay was unavoidable, "imputable to the culpable neglect of no one." He cited Colonel Chambers and other officers as uncooperative and deemed unreasonable the demand to resalt the meat at Bellefontaine. He argued that Atkinson's Sixth Regiment was tardy arriving at Bellefontaine. (Atkinson's regiment arrived June 6, 1819, and Johnson was not ready to proceed until July 2, 1819.) Clay closed his argument dramatically when he referred to the submitted claims of James Johnson: "If his account is

37Ibid.

38Ibid., p. 12. Walter Jones was chosen as the umpire. Rogers was the Army's choice, and Mason was Johnson's representative.
to be pared down with Jewish rigour, his ruin may be consummated."  

Calhoun chose Attorney General William Wirt to present the War Department's view of the case. Wirt emphasized the relationship of Johnson to all parts of the expedition. Although only two points were submitted to the arbitrators, "it is very clear that if he be authorized to receive damages with one hand" under the provisions of the transportation contract, "he is bound to pay them back" as the defaulter under the subsistence contract. Wirt argued that the three contracts were "one and indivisable" and the arbitrators should so consider them regardless of their arbitration instructions. The War Department would accept the highest known freight rate, six and three-quarters cents per pound, and a ten per cent risk over-allowance. Persuasively, Wirt argued that the ten per cent over-allowance was generous. It was based on one boat sunk for every ten that navigated the Missouri. If this were true--the sinking ratio--the Missouri would no longer be navigable. The detention of the steamboats was due to machinery failure, not to any delay on the part of the government. Additionally, the Army was well within their rights to inspect the provisions at Bellefontaine. They had the right to establish quality conditions, especially since Johnson

was almost two months behind his delivery schedule.40

It would seem that Wirt and the War Department had the most rational, plausible argument when the the three contracts were considered as a whole. However, the arbitrators ruled on legal issues, not moral issues. The transportation contract definitely favored Johnson's case. As previously cited, the vagueness of the contract and the wording regarding delay greatly favored Johnson. It was virtually impossible to prove that the detention was due to any negligence on his part. The degree of risk would be proportional to the amount risked by Johnson, not by any empirical evidence dealing with keel boats. Wirt's argument was rational and believable, but it did not negate the provisions of the contract nor the basis of arbitration.

The arbitrators ruled in favor of James Johnson. The contract did not require inspection of the provisions as a precedent condition to the receipt of the provisions. The many advances made by Calhoun and the Quartermaster General withdrew the steamboats and cargoes from the jurisdiction of the Missouri civil authorities; they were in fact government property. Johnson could not be held negligent for either the breakdowns encountered by his steamboats nor for their inability to navigate the unusually

40 Hemphill, Papers, V, 48-70. Several casks of meat spoiled during the winter of 1819-1820 at Fort Atkinson and Fort Snelling. However, it can not be determined if this was an inordinate amount of spoilage.
low waters of the Missouri River. The board's final decision allowed Johnson $255,213.41 for the Missouri Expedition; $11,645.29 for the Mississippi Expedition, and $8,356.94 for the supplies brought from Pittsburgh. To Johnson's debit was over $350,000 in advances that left Johnson $76,372.65 in debt to the government.\textsuperscript{41}

The amount of advances in excess of Johnson's contract was to be applied to the transportation that remained to be performed in 1820--a continuation of the Missouri Expedition and the supply of frontier posts. It is difficult to understand Calhoun's frequent advances to Johnson when it was apparent he had exceeded the projected amount of his contract and depleted the appropriations of the Quartermaster General and the Commissary General for Subsistence. Responsibility for these advances, however, was claimed by Monroe. Monroe was concerned about the consequences if the expeditions failed. It would be an "embarrassment and disappointment to the government and to the country." To prevent any possible failure, Monroe was "willing to take great responsibility to ensure" the success of the expeditions. He put no limit on the amount of advances to James Johnson.\textsuperscript{42}

Calhoun's role in the Johnson affair is difficult


\textsuperscript{42} American State Papers, Military Affairs, II, 68-9.
to assess. Naturally, he had overall responsibility. Richard Johnson had persuaded him to use steamboats and give his sanction to the transportation contract. Jesup's role as co-author of the contract is understandable. Johnson had Calhoun's approval, why should he doubt the veracity of the contract? Perhaps, he should have expressed his doubts to Calhoun, if he had any. There can be little doubt that circumstances and lack of control played a key part in Johnson's failure. Little did Calhoun know that Johnson's failure would play a contributing part to the halt of the Missouri Expedition.
CHAPTER VI

CONGRESSIONAL INTERVENTION, 1820-1825

The Panic of 1819 is generally viewed as the natural reaction to over speculation in western lands, speculation in manufacturing, and uncontrolled wild-cat banking. When the Bank of the United States sought to halt rampant inflation by establishing a firm fiscal foundation, the result was a far-reaching economic collapse. The episode of James Johnson and the Bank of St. Louis is illustrative of many similar happenings where banks over-extended credit and issued currency that lacked security. The depression that followed the Panic of 1819 hung like a veil over Calhoun's last term as Secretary of War. Economy minded Congressmen demanded a tightening of the federal financial belt, especially in the executive departments where expenditures were now classified as extravagant. A spirit of economy and retrenchment prevailed and the War Department was the first to undergo the scrutiny of Congress.

After formulating his frontier program early in his secretaryship, Calhoun now had to fight for its survival. The ostensible extravagance of the Missouri Expedition, as exemplified by the arbitration of the Johnson transportation contracts, caused Congress to investigate the necessity
of continuing the expedition. The retrenchment in federal expenditures found a familiar target in the size of the peace-time Army. Once again, Calhoun was called upon to propose a plan to reduce the strength of the Army. Also, the Indian factory system was operating at little profit if not at a loss to the government. Moreover, new Congressional forces now sought to eliminate the government's participation and allow private companies to assume this role. Indeed, Calhoun's intellectual powers were put to a new test; his response was rational, but these were not rational times.

In January, 1820, Calhoun responded to the House request for his western military plans for that year. This was not an unusual request, but the House had stipulated that a three year projection of expenses was also required. The House was primarily concerned with the expense for the 1819 expeditions up the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, and a three year projection of costs for these expeditions. Calhoun's response showed that he not only promoted western expansion, but that he would do it at an overall savings to the government.¹

It cost the War Department $49,384 to maintain an Army regiment at a static location for one year. Quartermaster General Thomas Jesup estimated that the Missouri

¹American State Papers, Military Affairs, II, 31-8.
Expedition had cost $162,994 in 1819. The expedition had been executed at a net increase of $64,226 over the normal figure. However, Jesup projected that a continuation of the expedition in 1820 would cost only $100,000, and the overall four year cost would show a net increase of $31,362 over normal projected costs for two regiments. Since the Mississippi Expedition was a part of Calhoun's western military plan, Jesup submitted its expenses in conjunction with the expenses for the Missouri Expedition.

Unlike its sister expedition, the Mississippi Expedition had reached its final destination in 1819. Jesup revealed that it had cost the government only $43,568 to establish Leavenworth's Fifth Regiment on the St. Peters. For the next three years, it would cost an average of $15,000 a year to maintain this regiment. Based on the average expense of an Army regiment, the regiment at St. Peters would save the government $73,032 during the next three years. Combining the expenses of the two expeditions, Jesup's statistics and projections indicated a net savings to the government of $42,485 over the next three years.

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ II, \ 32. \] Jesup's figure was based on his offer to James Johnson in settlement of Johnson's account. The arbitration of the Johnson account had not been completed when Calhoun responded to the House request for a three year financial projection.

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ II, \ 33. \] The Missouri Expedition was composed of the Sixth Regiment and the Rifle Regiment. The Mississippi Expedition was comprised of only the Fifth Regiment.

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ II, \ 32. \]
Calhoun could project a savings because he planned to have the regiments plant crops, raise herds of cattle and hogs, and become self-sustaining. The only expense to the department would be the cost of equipment and clothing. Additionally, the Mississippi Expedition had moved from Fort Howard to the St. Peters in Army-built transportation. The value of these batteaux would be a financial credit to the department. But the actual cost of the Missouri Expedition was largely in error. The arbitration of the Johnson account resulted in a debit of $255,213. This is almost $100,000 more than Jesup had estimated. Once Congress had digested this uncomfortable fact, the Missouri Expedition was no longer a money-saving venture, but a financial fiasco.

On March 11, 1820, Representative John Cocke of Tennessee introduced opposition to a continuation of the Missouri Expedition. Although sectionalism was once again on the ascendency because of the depression, Cocke's opposition was supported by representatives of Kentucky, New York, Connecticut, Ohio, and South Carolina. By a margin

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of eight votes, the House vetoed the continuance of the expedition. The War Department had requested an appropriation of $500,000, for the Quartermaster's Department, but the House reduced this request to $450,000. By exercising its fiscal powers, the House sought to stop any further movement up the Missouri River. The Senate now had to confirm the action of the House.

Hoping to prevent Senate confirmation of the House action, Calhoun informed the Senate that it would cost only $20,000 to extend the expedition up the Missouri to the Mandan village. Ostensibly the House cut the Quartermaster's appropriations for economy reasons, but it soon became apparent that the issue was much more complex. Senator Harrison G. Otis of Connecticut emphasized the complexity of the issue when he joined the Senate debate. "Only $20,000 additional was needed to get to the Mandans; why was it proper to go to Council Bluffs, yet not proper after making two appropriations on the subject, to go a little further?" Money was not the central issue. Some senators felt that there no longer was a controversy with the Indians or Canadians about a northern boundary or trading rights.

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8 Ibid., p. 1634.

9 Ibid., p. 550. Calhoun was also trying to salvage appropriations slashed by the House for summer clothing and military recruiting. Calhoun was unsuccessful in this effort.

10 Ibid., p. 546.
Besides, the expedition had moved too far beyond the westward moving population, and if it was continued up the Missouri, the frontier would have to be extended in other directions. Some Senators, like Calhoun, viewed the expedition in relation to the Indian factory system. They felt that the factories had failed to destroy the influence of private traders; therefore it was unnecessary to extend the military influence to protect another failure.

On April 7, 1820, the Senate voted to have a committee confer with the House on the issue of the Quartermaster's appropriation. The committee reported agreement to the House action, and on April 12th, the Senate, by a margin of two votes, upheld the House action. The Appropriations Act of April 14, 1820 halted the Missouri Expedition at Council Bluffs. Ironically, the act provided $4500 for the survey of waters tributary to and west of the Mississippi River. The abortion of the Missouri Expedition was viewed by Calhoun as an economic necessity. He felt that the "vote in the House of Representatives on that subject, had no relation" to him personally. The halt of the expedition was just one of many necessary cutbacks necessitated by the depression. Calhoun was determined

11 Ibid., p. 547.
12 Ibid., pp. 2574-76. This was Long's expedition of 1820 discussed in Chapter IV.
13 Hemphill, Papers, V, 40.
to stay above partisan politics, but the Appropriations Act of 1820 was only the precursor of Congressional intervention that could halt his entire frontier program.

On May 11, 1820, the House passed a resolution asking Calhoun to prepare plans for the reduction of the Army to six thousand soldiers. On December 11, 1820 Calhoun submitted his report which is considered one of the finest American state papers. Calhoun had been able to prevent such a reduction two years earlier, but now he sought only to minimize the extent of the reduction.

Calhoun ingeniously began by saying that the question of a standing army was not involved, for "its necessity is so apparent, that, even those least favorable to the Army have never attempted to abolish it." He regarded the preparation for war more important than defense in peacetime. Since the mere existence of an army presupposed the possibility of war, it was apparent that the Army should be ready for such an emergency. To be ready, it should be modeled to meet all emergencies. No new creation nor reorganization should be necessary. The skeleton should


16 Ibid., V, 25-40.

17 Ibid., V, 81.
be intact, and the only thing necessary should be the enlargement of the body of the Army. The bureau organization, in which every distinct branch terminated in a chief, should remain unimpaired, for it had proved its efficiency and economy. The number of officers should be proportionately greater in peace than in war, for otherwise the increase would really be the creation of a new army rather than the augmentation of one already in existence.  

Calhoun had proposed an army structured to fit any contingency. It was, in fact, the precursor of today's peacetime organization that maintains a trained cadre or skeleton designed to cope with any expanded military commitments. Calhoun's plan was so effective that Army organization remained unchanged until 1838. Calhoun not only theorized, but presented numerous documents with appropriate commentary that explained the implementation of his new organization.

The act to reduce and fix the military establishment was approved on March 2, 1821. It provided for an Army of 6,183, under the overall command of a major general—brigadier generals would command the two new departments.

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19 *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, II, 188-98.  

20 Cralle, *Works*, V, 123. The two divisions and nine departments were abolished and two departments, an Eastern and a Western, were substituted. See figure 1, Chapter II.
To institute the strength reduction, the size of units was reduced--an infantry company was reduced from sixty-eight to forty-two. Congress, however, failed to accept all of Calhoun's recommendations. It failed to provide for an increase in an emergency, thereby retaining the nation's dependence on the militia. Had the entire skeleton concept been adopted, new recruits could have been absorbed without any inordinate delay. Calhoun's plan for a full staff and an ample number of officers failed to gain complete acceptance. This final Congressional act can not be construed as prejudice against Calhoun or the Army, but rather a manifestation of the financial state of the country. Experience was eventually to show the wisdom of Calhoun and the shortsightedness of Congress.21

From its inception, the Indian factory system had been challenged by Congressmen. In view of the country's economic condition and the growing lobby represented by John Jacob Astor, the 17th Congress considered the efficacy of abolishing the Indian factory system. In 1818, Calhoun had favored the factory system, although he did suggest that needed improvements should be made.22 Thomas Hart Benton led the Senate opposition to the factory system. Benton

21 The Mexican War, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War all depended on the costly process of activating and training the militia or citizen-soldiers.

thought the system was uneconomical, mismanaged, and failed in its objectives. He particularly criticized Superintendent Mc Kenney's purchasing practices, his method of selling peltries, and the conduct of individual factors.23

The lobby of Astor and its effect was manifested in the testimony gathered by Benton and the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Ramsay Crooks, manager of Astor's American Fur Company, made a detailed report to the committee. He claimed that the factory goods were not suited to the Indian's needs, but rather to the tastes of the white inhabitants. He cited the inequity in pricing practiced by the factors. He believed that factory prices exceeded cost plus transportation and that competition among private traders would produce more reasonable prices. In summary, Crooks contended that the entire factory system exerted negligible salutary effect among the Indians.24

Benton substantiated Crooks position with similar comments from John R. Bell, journalist in Long's 1820 expedition. Bell added that the Canadians at Fort Mackinac furnished superior goods.25 Benjamin O' Fallon, an Indian agent familiar with the tribes on the Missouri and

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24 American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 329-32.

25 Ibid., II, 328-29.
Mississippi rivers, added fuel to the fire. He stipulated that the factory system had not been successful in winning the good will of the Indians or in reclaiming them from savage habits and converting them to Christianity. When Benton added the testimony of these critics to his economic arguments, the tenuous existence of the factory system was doomed.

Benton made a minor amendment to the bill stating the effective closing date would be June 1, 1822 "or as soon thereafter as can conveniently be done." On March 29th the bill passed the Senate, and Monroe officially approved the abolition of the Indian factory system on May 6, 1822. The goods, wares, and merchandise located at the factories would be used in satisfaction of treaty obligations, in payment of annuities, and in customary presents to the Indians.

By mid-1822, Calhoun's frontier program had come to a standstill. Neither his military program nor his Indian program had achieved his expectations. The remainder of his term as Secretary of War was less exciting or visionary, and more oriented to his administrative problems. The Army reorganization of 1821 required implementation.

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The method of reducing personnel would indeed be a difficult task. No extensive personnel records were kept on Army officers and men. Consequently, on the basis of this inadequate information Calhoun would often have to decide whom to keep. This made the decision-making process extremely difficult.

Occasional frontier flare-ups such as the Arikara War caused difficulties that were short-lived. In 1823, Long's expedition up the St. Peters to the forty-ninth parallel obviated the need for further northwestern posts. Long reported that the deserted wasteland west of Lake Superior provided a natural buffer zone that would protect the nation.29 Finally, Atkinson's expedition up the Missouri in 1825 put an authoritative end to the old claim of Canadian instigation of the Indian disturbances.30

Late in Calhoun's term the persistent problem of Indian removal once again became critical. Calhoun had worked hard to improve the life and treatment of the Indians. He deplored having savage or semi-civilized tribes surrounded by civilized settlers. It was an unhealthy situation for all concerned, and an equitable solution was not easily arrived at. The ostensible solution was either

29William H. Keating, Narrative of an Expedition, intr. by Roy P. Johnson (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1959), p. 10.

30American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 605-08.
removal of the Indians to the open West or the domestication of the tribes. The latter course seemed anathema to most Indians. Monroe and Calhoun were essentially of one mind by 1825. They both felt that the question of land tenure would disappear only if the Indians could be removed to a safe sanctuary beyond the Mississippi. Their nomadic ways and hunter habits were not compatible with the westward moving white settler. 31

On January 24, 1825, Calhoun reported a plan to Monroe that was designed to solve the Indian problem. 32 The essence of Calhoun's plan was the institution of a government in the West for the Indians, one that would preserve order, prevent the intrusion of the whites, and stimulate civilization. He considered this the greatest inducement the government had to offer the Indians in return for abrogating their eastern lands. Monroe addressed a special message to Congress on the subject of removal, based on Calhoun's report. The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs unanimously adopted the system recommended by Monroe, and Calhoun sent Benton a draft bill. Unfortunately, the bill could not gain acceptance in the House, so it failed. 33 Perhaps the bill's failure in the House represented a less

31 Ibid., II, 200-01.
32 Ibid., II, 542-44.
than humanitarian solution to the problem. Complete extinction of those Indians not able to adopt the white man's way seemed to be the only acceptable alternative.
CHAPTER VII

IN SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In some respects, it is difficult to assess Calhoun's tenure as Secretary of War. His administration of the War Department was the most innovative facet of his secretaryship, and it had the greatest lasting effect. However, during his term in office, Calhoun's frontier program had the greatest initial impact. In evaluating this program, it must be considered a failure in relation to the stated goals of his military and Indian policies. In relation to its actual accomplishments, most people would acknowledge that it was a success in some areas.

Early in Calhoun's secretaryship, important administrative changes established lasting precedents and improved the functioning of the War Department. He provided unity of command within the military and re-asserted civilian superiority over military commanders. Prior to Calhoun, considerable friction between the War Department and the Army Division commanders resulted when orders from the department went directly to subordinate field commanders. Conversely, the Division commanders often by-passed the War Department and took Army problems directly to the President. Calhoun's early actions to establish clear-cut channels of
communications and authority had a lasting effect. Today, this policy is an integral part of the administration of the military services.

Calhoun's reorganization of the general staff appears to be a principal accomplishment of his administration. Other War Secretaries recognized that reforms should be attempted. William H. Crawford had argued that "a complete organization of the staff will contribute as much to the economy of the establishment as to its efficiency. The stationary staff of a military establishment should be substantially the same in peace as in war, without reference to the number or distribution of the troops of which it is composed." Calhoun agreed with this position and succeeded where Crawford could not. Calhoun consulted his military experts for advice, and the end result was a bill passed by Congress on April 14, 1818, allowing Calhoun to put his proposals into effect.

The bill created the new positions of Surgeon General, Quartermaster General, Commissary General of Subsistence, and lesser other posts. The main operational bureaus were centered in Washington where the Secretary could better supervise their activities. Calhoun had become convinced of the inherent "incompetency of the contract system in war" to provision the troops with an acceptable degree of efficiency. The new law, therefore, eliminated the fixed area contractors who were required to supply at contractual
prices such rations as the Army might requisition. Calhoun would now give proper public notice to potential bidders for this business. Successful bidders were to make deliveries--subject to quantity and quality controls--in bulk at places which Army officers designated. This plan provided the system that is essentially accepted military practice today. Although the military-industrial complex has drawn many invectives, it is a vast improvement over the pre-1818 method of supplying the Army.

To complement the new supply system and as an economy measure, Calhoun tried to make distant posts self-sustaining. As a minimum, each post would have a vegetable garden. This was certainly an innovative measure for the time, and it quickly gained acceptance. Scurvy and dietary problems still existed in distant areas. Preservation of foods had not begun to approach today's techniques and methods. The epidemics at Fort Atkinson and Fort Snelling in 1819 were indicative of the existing problem. Planting crops and vegetables significantly reduced this problem until canning methods could be sufficiently developed. Calhoun's plan for self-subsistence helped to reduce the department's debt, although recession and depression characterized the economy.

Calhoun's obvious successes in the administration of the War Department are somewhat diminished by his less than successful frontier program. This program was based on three tenets. Calhoun wanted to secure the northwest fur trade
for Americans. He thought that the fur trade would exert a positive effect on the economy, and it was a resource that was being usurped by foreign traders. Secondly, he was not convinced that the War of 1812 had been conclusive. Our northern boundary had not been established nor had it been fortified. It could provide an easy entry into the United States if hostilities with England were resumed. Thirdly, no effective policy had been developed for dealing with the Indians. Settlers were continuing to have confrontations with the Indians over land, and foreign fur traders were believed to be encouraging Indian resistance to this encroachment.

The validity of these arguments had a great deal to do with the success or failure of Calhoun's frontier program. He was correct in his assessment of the fur trade's value to the economy. Unfortunately, private traders also realized this. The existing factory system was not a democratic institution in that it attempted to give the government a monopoly in this area. Closely tied to Calhoun's economic rationale was his belief in humanitarian treatment for the Indians. Private traders too often took advantage of the Indians; consequently, hostilities often resulted. Calhoun believed that governmental control or company monopolies would negate this feature of the fur trade. Unfortunately, Congress did not recognize this, hence the factory system was abolished. The intense competition that followed caused
Calhoun considerable consternation. The Arikara War was a result of a confrontation between the Arikaras and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. If the factory system had been improved along the lines recommended by Calhoun, Indian affairs may have taken a different turn. Certainly his program for civilizing the Indians was noteworthy, but, again, lack of Congressional support failed to give it a fair trial.

Calhoun's attitude towards the Indians was similar to Jefferson's. It was humanitarian, yet realistic. The plan of 1825 was a final effort to prevent bloodshed and to protect the Indians. It was a plan that was partially adopted by later executives, but its implementation was hardly humanitarian. In 1826, Secretary of War James Barbour proposed the removal of the Indians to an area outside the present states and territories. It was estimated that there were 120,000 Indians residing in the current states and territories. He believed that the Indians should be treated as individuals rather than as tribes. Congress should establish a government specially designed for the Indians. It would consist of a Presidential-appointed governor, three judges, and the necessary secretaries.  

This plan was basically that which Calhoun proposed in 1825.

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1 American State Papers, Indian Affairs, II, 646. It was estimated that 300,000 Indians resided within the boundaries of the United States in 1826.
History records the failure of such a plan. The implementation process and the greed of the frontiersman did not accept Calhoun's humanitarian motives.

Calhoun's military program was based on sound motives for 1818. It is debatable whether the influence of Lord Selkirk's colony was a threat to the northwest, but the threat of foreign traders seems to be well substantiated. The Convention of 1818 served to negate the military threat of Canada and also to restrict foreign traders. It would only take time before its provisions could be implemented by both sides. Long's expedition in 1823 verified this, and Atkinson's 1825 expedition put an end to the thought of British interference among the American Indians. None the less, Calhoun's military program was a reaction to existing conditions, and the findings in 1825 could well have been the result of his actions in 1819. Fort Snelling proved vital to the maintenance of peace with the Indians and proved to be a stimulus to settlement in the area between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Fort Atkinson was abandoned in 1827, but it, too, had a salutary effect. Steamboat traffic on the Missouri became commonplace, and settlement increased along the Missouri as a result. Fort Atkinson's short-lived success must certainly have influenced settlers to undertake migration that resulted in the Oregon and Santa Fe migration routes to the Pacific.

In Calhoun's mind, his military program did not
attain his goals. However, it can not be denied that these goals were partly reached, or at least their validity recognized, a short time after the Missouri Expedition was aborted. As early as 1820 and again in 1824, Calhoun's plan for the Missouri was discussed in Congress. In December, 1820, John Floyd, at the suggestion of Thomas Hart Benton, introduced a resolution inquiring into the expediency of occupying the Columbia River region. He requested that a few troops be placed on the upper Missouri and a small force at the mouth of the Columbia. This measure was designed to protect settlers moving through this area and the expanding fur trading system. The resolution was adopted, but no action was taken. In January, 1824, the plan was once again proposed but without any Congressional action being taken.

On March 18, 1824, Senator Benton once again sought Calhoun's advice on preserving the Indian fur trade. He wanted Calhoun's plan for "maintaining peace with the Indians and preserving the fur trade within the United States to American citizens." A rather hostile Calhoun replied that "the opinion of the executive on this subject remains unchanged." The formerly proposed extension of military

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4 *American State Papers, Military Affairs,* II, 448-49.
posts was still the answer, but a reluctant Congress would not act.

At first it seems difficult to account for Calhoun's decided pro-western orientation during his War Department years. He was a native of South Carolina which is a southern state and far removed from the frontier. None the less, Calhoun's heritage was a frontier heritage. As a boy, he had to undergo many of the hardships of frontiersmen, and he understood the frontier mentality which was first espoused to him by his father Patrick. He was an expansionist of the Jeffersonian mold. He had visited Jefferson at least twice although what transpired is not recorded. Considering Calhoun's frontier background, it is easier to bring his frontier program into better perspective. Although success of this program is conditional, it can not be denied that his contributions to the War Department were considerable.
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