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Author(s): Peter A. Ford

Source: *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1992, Third Series, Vol. 104 (1992), pp. 21-41

Published by: Massachusetts Historical Society

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25081046

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An American in Paris: Charles S. Storrow and the 1830 Revolution

PETER A. FORD*

CHARLES S. STORROW (1809–1904), who later gained prominence as one of America's leading civil engineers and who designed and constructed the industrial city of Lawrence, Massachusetts, witnessed in his youth the 1830 Revolution that overthrew the autocratic regime of French King Charles X. A student at the time at the prestigious École des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris, Storrow was keenly aware that he was living through an event of historic importance, and he made an effort to learn as much as he could about the revolution going on around him. Several times during the three days of revolution (July 27–29) and the days that followed, he ventured into the streets to gather information. In the evenings, he wrote down in his journal an account of what he had seen and heard as well as his own assessment of the course of the revolution.[1]

There have been published to date over sixty eyewitness accounts of the July Revolution (including one by another American engineering student), many of them longer than that contained in Storrow's unpublished journal.[2]

* Peter A. Ford is Professor of History at Merrimack College. The author wishes to thank Mr. Charles S. Denny, great-grandson of Charles S. Storrow, for his kind permission to consult the Storrow papers in the Denny family collection.

1. Storrow's journal (hereafter cited as CSS, Journal), covering the years 1829–1832, is in the privately held Denny family collection. The present article also utilizes two other sets of Storrow papers in the Denny collection: one comprising 15 pocket-sized memorandum books covering the years 1845–1875, and the other consisting of 17 private memoranda on the background of the Civil War and on the war itself, written in 1860–1863 (hereafter cited as CSS, Memorandum Book, and CSS, Memorandum, respectively).

2. David H. Pinkney, *The French Revolution of 1830* (Princeton, N.J., 1972), 373–377, lists the published accounts of the revolution. The account written by Charles Ellet, the other American engineering student in Paris, is published in Herbert P. Gambrell, "Three Letters on the Revolution of 1830," *Journal of Modern History* 1(1929):594–606. Three other accounts are printed in J.P.T. Bury, "The Revolution of 1830: Three Eyewitness Accounts," *French History* 4(1990):224–237. On the July Revolution, see also John M. Merriman, ed., *1830 in France* (New York, 1975); Lloyd S. Kramer, "Lafayette in 1830: A Center That Could Not Hold," *Canadian Journal of History* 17(1982):469–492; T.E.B. Howarth, *Citizen-King: The Life of Louis-Philippe, King of the French* (London, 1961); H.A.C. Collingham, *The July Monarchy: A Political History of France 1830–1848* (London, 1988); and Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, *La Révolution de 1830 en France* (Paris, 1970).

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What Storrow's account has to recommend it is its careful attention to detail and the perceptive nature of many of its observations, no small achievement for so young and so inexperienced a political observer. It is also noteworthy for its recollections of Storrow's conversations with the Marquis de Lafayette, a pivotal figure in the revolution and a close friend of the American student.

Though a foreigner, Storrow was hardly a stranger to the world of French society and politics. The son of a Boston merchant family that had moved to France in 1818 when he was nine years of age, Storrow had grown up in Paris and received his early schooling in French private schools. When he was fifteen, his parents had sent him back to Massachusetts to continue his education at the Round Hill School in Northampton and at Harvard College. Upon graduation from Harvard in 1829, he returned to Paris to live with his parents and to pursue two years of engineering studies at the École des Ponts et Chaussées.[3]

In the 1830s there was a permanent community of perhaps three hundred American residents in Paris. Among them were diplomats, southern planters, businessmen, students, writers (the most prominent of whom were Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper), and a few painters. One of the largest single groups consisted of American doctors—a total of over six hundred in the antebellum period and as many as thirty at any one time in the early 1830s—who came to Paris to further their medical training by visiting the hospitals, surgical theaters, and dissecting rooms of the French capital. Whether by choice or necessity, members of the American colony in Paris tended to remain aloof from French society, forming their own tight-knit community ("a little republic apart," one observer commented in 1835) and socializing together at banquets, parties, and Fourth of July celebrations.[4]

3. Most of this information on Storrow's early life is based on an autobiographical sketch that he added to his journal on July 16, 1829. Short of funds due to his father's bankruptcy in 1828, Storrow was able to sail for Europe only after receiving a loan for $500 from his Harvard mentor and family friend, Prof. George Ticknor. Ticknor to CSS, Apr. 22, 1835, Samuel Storrow Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. Box 2 of this collection contains over 20 pieces of Storrow's private correspondence, much of it having to do with the years he spent in France.

4. On Americans in France in the antebellum period, see Henry Blumenthal, *American and French Culture, 1800-1900: Interchanges in Art, Science, Literature and Society* (Baton Rouge, 1975), 26–37; Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny, "American Travelers in France, 1814-1848," in *Diplomacy in an Age of Nationalism*, ed. Nancy Barker and Marvin Brown (The Hague, 1971), 11-24; Russell M. Jones, "American Doctors in Paris, 1820–1861: A Statistical Profile," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 25(1970):142–157; and Francis C. Haber, *David Bailie Warden: A Bibliographical Sketch of America's Cultural Ambassador in France, 1804-1845* (Washington, D.C., 1954).

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What contact American residents did have with their French hosts was facilitated, more often than not, by Lafayette, the darling of the American colony. In 1830 the symbolic image of Lafayette as a living link with the American and French revolutions and champion of human freedom was at its height, having been rekindled by the general's triumphant tour of the United States in 1824–1825 and then strongly reinforced, among Americans at least, in 1830 by his role in a third revolution. American residents as well as travelers in France sought out the aging nobleman at his Paris home on the Rue d'Anjou or at his country estate at Lagrange, feted him at banquets, and hung on his every word as he recalled his role in the American Revolution or proclaimed the superiority of American democratic institutions. Never tiring of their adulation, Lafayette seems to have enjoyed the company of Americans sincerely and was only too glad to write letters of introduction (over 1,000 of them by one estimate) for newly arrived visitors from the United States desiring an entrée into French circles.[5]

Of his many American acquaintances, Lafayette had a special fondness for the Storrow family and for young Charles in particular. Charles's father, Thomas Wentworth Storrow, and Lafayette were very close friends and over the years the general came to rely upon the American merchant for financial advice. The Storrow children looked upon Lafayette almost as a second father and when, in fact, Charles's sister was married in Paris in August 1830 to Washington Irving's nephew, Lafayette, wearing the officer's uniform of the recently re-formed National Guard and accompanied by an aide-de-camp, gave the bride away in her father's absence. "In looking round upon the circle of our acquaintances in this foreign land," Charles wrote of the family's choice of Lafayette, "we could see no one whom we regard so much as our friend, no one whom we would so willingly see in father's place." Storrow was especially moved that Lafayette, who was still at the very center of political uncertainty in the days following the July Revolution, would take the time to attend the ceremony. "We cannot forget," he wrote, "how kind it was for this excellent old man to come

5. On the American image of Lafayette, see Russell M. Jones, "The Flowering of a Legend: Lafayette and the Americans, 1825-1834," *French Historical Studies* 4(1966):384–410; William Gribbin, "'A Greater Than Lafayette Is Here': Dissenting Views of the Last American Visit," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 73(1974):348–362; Lloyd S. Kramer, "America's Lafayette and Lafayette's America: A European and the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 38(1981):228–241; Fred Somkin, *Unquiet Eagle: Memory and Desire in the Idea of American Freedom, 1815–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1967); and Anne C. Loveland, *Emblem of Liberty: The Image of Lafayette in the American Mind* (Baton Rouge, 1971).

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at a moment when a thousand engagements from every quarter were pressing upon him."[6]

While many Americans embraced the romantic image of Lafayette as the apostle of liberty, few did so with the earnestness and conviction of Storrow. Lafayette had been his hero since boyhood, and as the young man came to understand more fully the historic role the general had played on two continents, his veneration only deepened. Invited on a regular basis to the Tuesday evening receptions at Lafayette's Paris home, Storrow listened spellbound whenever the general regaled his guests with recollections of the American and French revolutions. After one of these *soirées,* Storrow hastened home to enter into his journal in French as much as he could remember of what Lafayette had said about his dealings with Danton during the French Revolution and about the hardships he later endured while imprisoned in Germany.[7]

Thanks to his friendship with Lafayette, Storrow got to meet many prominent figures in French political and intellectual life. At one reception, for example, Storrow talked with (or was at least introduced to) political thinker Benjamin Constant, scientist and politician Charles Dupin, and historians Jean Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi and the Baron de Barante.[8] Storrow did not, however, rely solely on Lafayette's help to enter French circles. Unlike many American residents, he participated actively in the cultural and social life of the capital, attending the opera, listening to the debates in the Chamber of Deputies, and frequenting meetings of the Académie des Sciences.[9]

When revolution erupted in Paris on July 27, 1830, the Storrows were

6. CSS, Journal, Aug. 19, 1830. It was through Lafayette's influence that Storrow was admitted to the École des Ponts et Chaussées. Lafayette to CSS, Jan. 31, 1830, Samuel Storrow Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. On the friendship between the Storrows and Washington Irving in Paris, see Stanley T. Williams, ed., *Washington Irving and the Storrows: Letters from England and the Continent, 1821–1828* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933); and Williams, *The Life of Washington Irving* (New York, 1971), 1:256, 436, n.62.

7. CSS, Journal, Feb. 22, 1831. The Lafayette influence upon young Storrow was not limited to their association in France. When Storrow returned to the United States in 1824 to complete his schooling, he got to see Lafayette again when the general visited the Round Hill School where he was studying. No doubt the experience of seeing Lafayette at the height of his acclaim contributed further to the young man's adulation. On Lafayette's visit to the school, see Russel B. Nye, *George Bancroft: Brahmin Rebel* (New York, 1944), 72. It is also worth noting that Professor Ticknor, Storrow's mentor at Harvard College in the years 1826–1829, had published a highly laudatory biography of Lafayette in 1825.

8. CSS, Journal, June 20, 1830.

9. Ibid., Nov. 15, 1830, Feb. 16, 23, 1831.

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living on the Rue Bleue, just off the Rue Charles X (now the Rue Lafayette), in the present-day ninth *arrondissement.* Although the main clashes during the three days of revolution took place mostly in parts of the city one or two kilometers to the south and southeast of them—in the area stretching from the Louvre and the Rue de Richelieu to the Place de la Bastille—their own neighborhood was the scene of some revolutionary activity on July 28 and 29. "We could hear all around us," Storrow wrote on July 28, "the rapid discharge of musketry and the heavy sound of the cannon." Cries of "down with the King" and "down with the Bourbons" were heard in the street. Along the Rue Bleue insurgents knocked over the lampposts and tore down shop signs bearing the king's name. Nearby, a crowd forced passengers out of their stage coach, turned it over to make a barricade, and then forced them to chant "vive la charte" [that is, the Constitutional Charter issued in 1814 by Louis XVIII] before sending them on their way on foot. Directly in front of his house Storrow witnessed "many meetings" of armed citizens and members of the re-formed National Guard. At 11:00 that evening, fearing the worst was yet to come, he wrote apprehensively in his journal: "O God, grant us thy protection; grant us fortitude; may we feel that whatever happens, happens by thy will."[10]

Fortunately, the next day, July 29, passed without harm to the family. In the evening, Storrow ventured out of the house and walked along streets and boulevards heavily barricaded with felled trees and pavement blocks. From what he was able to observe, "the cause of the people seems triumphant in Paris at last." He spotted the tricolor flag flying from the Vendôme column and the Tuileries Palace. Passing by the Tuileries, he saw "meanly dressed" (and, we know from other sources, mostly drunken) insurgents shouting from the palace windows and throwing to the ground clothing, books, and other items from the chambers of the Duchesse d'Angoulême. He watched as a band of men paraded through the streets with the duchess's petticoats hoisted as a multi-colored flag.[11]

Storrow spent much of the following day, July 30, walking about the city. Although "great numbers of people" could still be seen building barricades, Storrow observed that shops were beginning to open and that things

10. Ibid., July 28, 1830.

11. Ibid., July 29, 1830. On the crowd's pillaging of the Tuileries Palace, see Pinkney, *French Revolution,* 135. The Duchesse d'Angoulême was the daughter of Louis XVI and the niece and daughter-in-law of Charles X.

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appeared to be more peaceful than in the previous two days. Everywhere, he witnessed the signs of human and physical destruction left by the revolution. He saw "in a thousand places the marks of bullets upon the houses" and he watched the bodies of dead horses being burned in the streets. He was told that "the bodies of the citizens and soldiers are mostly thrown into the river." Almost everyone he passed in the street wore the tricolor cockade of revolution, which was being sold or given away by women and children.[12]

"I have been almost everywhere today," Storrow wrote on July 31, "to see the state of things and get news." He made his way through "immense crowds" in the streets and boulevards, again with almost everyone, himself included, wearing the cockade. Throughout the city he saw people repaving streets and tearing down the barricades. He was especially struck at how quickly life was returning to normal. "The bank pays," he wrote that evening, "the shops are open, the post regularly comes and goes, and there is hardly anything in the annals of history so wonderful as this revolution which seems quietly finished in three days."[13]

One final fright came to the Storrows in the aftermath of the revolution when they heard on August 3 the rumor (untrue as it turned out) that Charles X's men had seized and shot Lafayette. Storrow could barely contain his fury when he heard the report. His only wish, he wrote in his journal, was that "an enraged people" would drag Charles X to the scaffold if the former king had "so much as hurt a hair on the head of that venerable and true hearted old man."[14]

For Storrow, the 1830 Revolution marked a stirring historic advance in the human struggle against autocratic rule. The child of a nation only one generation removed from its own great revolution, Storrow revered the American Revolution, as did most of his countrymen, and he saw the July Revolution as a laudable emulation of the American example.[15] So enthusiastically, in fact, did he endorse this most recent revolution that he later

12. CSS, Journal, July 30, 1830. Some of the bodies that had been thrown into the Seine were later retrieved and buried. Pinkney, *French Revolution*, 233.

13. CSS, Journal, July 31, 1830.

14. Ibid., Aug. 3, 1830.

15. Ronald P. Formisano describes the persistance of the aura of the American Revolution in public life through the 1820s in *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York, 1983), 57–62. On the changing perceptions of the American Revolution and the early Republic in the following generation, see Jean Baker, "From Belief into Culture: Republicanism in the Antebellum North," *American Quarterly* 37(1985):532–550.

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felt obliged to explain in his journal why he had not fought alongside the French people "on the great week of July." His first duty during those dangerous days, he said, had been not to risk his life fighting in the streets so that he could protect his family, though he vowed that "if ever in our own country the occasion presents itself my blood shall flow."[16]

Nevertheless, there runs through Storrow's journal a deep-seated ambivalence regarding revolution in general. While he was able to applaud the moderate July Revolution, which after all was not marked by a great deal of violence and which resulted simply in a change of political regimes, he had a strong distrust of the revolutionary crowd and a fear of the unpredictability of what he called the "the hydra of revolution."[17] His attitudes in this regard had been largely formed, as had those of many Americans during that period, by the images of mob violence and other excesses associated with the original French Revolution forty years earlier. For Storrow, the only acceptable goals of revolution were the overthrow of despotism, the establishment of constitutional government, and the guarantee of personal freedoms, and he recoiled not only from excessive revolutionary violence but also from more radical revolution which aimed at installing democratic rule.

Though not a wealthy man (in fact, his father's bankruptcy in 1828 had caused serious economic hardship for the family), Storrow shared with the largely well-to-do residents of the American colony a middle-class unease toward the lower classes, particularly the more violent poor of Paris. In his journal he expressed a nostalgia for the "chivalrous ideas of noble birth and hereditary grandeur" of the Old Regime, and he admitted a sympathy for the nobleman of that period who suffered indignity, reproach, and even physical harm during the French Revolution and who had "his fortune torn from him to glut some low born ruffian." Thus, it was with a sense of relief that Storrow observed the restrained behavior of the crowd in the July Revolution. "Who would have foretold," he marveled, "that a mob called the most violent in the world, with arms in their hands and the wealth of Paris at their disposal should not be guilty of the slightest excess . . .?" He noticed, in fact, one other thing about the crowd that surprised him, namely that many of the insurgents were not, as one might have expected, from the

16. CSS, Journal, Sept. 22, 1831.

17. Ibid., May 14, 1831.

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lowest levels of Parisian society but were, in his words, "people of respectable appearance and language."[18]

Like most of his contemporaries, Storrow was struck by the speed and finality with which the revolution dispatched Charles X from power. "He dares to make an attack on the chartered rights of his subjects," he wrote, "and in forty-eight hours from the time his edicts are known, he is driven forever from his throne." Nor did Storrow miss the irony in the timing of the revolution, coming as it did even as the crown basked in the success of its recent military expedition against Algeria. The revolution erupted, Storrow noted, just when "the king [was] receiving homage for a signal victory won by his troops over a barbarian foe [the Dey of Algiers] who has long insulted and often baffled the efforts of European princes." One may dispute, however, Storrow's further observation that Charles X was overthrown at a time when "the kingdom was more prosperous than it had ever been before." Since at least 1828, France had been suffering from a severe economic depression, punctuated by high unemployment, bankruptcies, crop failures, and steep food prices. While it is true that by the time of the revolution economic conditions had improved somewhat, there is enough evidence of hardship in 1830, particularly among the working class of Paris, to question Storrow's contention that the populace was not, in his words, "enraged by physical distress."[19]

In the days just after the revolution Storrow watched closely the political maneuvering over what form the new government would take. While he recognized that there were "many lovers of liberty" in France who wanted to install a republic along the lines of the American government—he witnessed, in fact, large demonstrations outside the Chamber of Deputies that were "clamorous" in support of a republic—he felt that such a course was unrealistic and unlikely, given the hostility of the European powers to radical change in France. More prudent and likely of success, in his opinion,

18. Ibid., July 28, Aug. 4, 1830, May 14, 1831. Storrow's observation regarding the nature of the crowd during the 1830 Revolution is corroborated in a general way by modern studies. Pinkney, *French Revolution*, 252–261, has demonstrated, for example, that the crowd was made up mainly of artisans and skilled workers—printers, stonemasons, carpenters, locksmiths, and the like—and not the very poor or the well-to-do. See also Pinkney, "The Crowd in the French Revolution of 1830," *American Historical Review* 70(1964):1–17; and Edgar Leon Newman, "What the Crowd Wanted in the French Revolution of 1830," in Merriman, ed., *1830 in France*, 17–40.

19. CSS, Journal, Aug. 4, 1830. Pinkney, *French Revolution*, 59–68, treats the condition of the French economy prior to the revolution. On the social and economic issues in the July Revolution, see Newman, "What the Crowd Wanted," 17–40; and Newman, "The Popular Idea of Liberty in the French Revolution of 1830," in *Proceedings of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750–1850*, ed. Donald D. Howard (Gainesville, Florida, 1978), 103–112.

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was the move afoot to create a constitutional monarchy with Louis-Philippe as king. "All seem to turn their eyes to the Duke of Orleans," he observed on July 30. "It is thought he will be proclaimed king with limited powers." On August 3 Storrow stood in the crowd that pressed forward to watch Louis-Philippe, newly named lieutenant-general of the kingdom, enter the Palais Bourbon to address a session of the Chambers of Peers and Deputies.[20]

On August 8 the young American got a closer look at Louis-Philippe as the duke rode on horseback to the Chamber of Deputies to take the oath of office as constitutional monarch. "He is a fine, honest, frank-hearted-looking man," Storrow noted, "and I could not but be pleased with his appearance." Storrow was surprised, however, that the crowd showed little enthusiasm as Louis-Philippe passed by, though he later learned that the duke was warmly received inside the chamber. At first troubled by this lack of enthusiasm, Storrow was able upon reflection to explain it to his own satisfaction. "When I think of it," he wrote, "it is very natural it should be so. He is not made king by violent party feeling, but he is the deliberate choice of the most prudent and sober-minded part of the French nation."[21]

Storrow was very much aware that it was Lafayette who had to a great degree determined the outcome of the July Revolution by means of his support for Louis-Philippe and a constitutional monarchy. In Storrow's estimation Lafayette had an "enormous influence" upon the course of events, not the least in his success in moderating his followers' demands for a republic. His republican reputation was such, Storrow wrote, that even "the most rigid leveller must be willing to accede to what he proposes."[22] In thus steering the revolution in the direction of a constitutional monarchy (albeit, he hoped, with liberal institutions) Lafayette won the approval not only of Storrow but also of most American observers of the 1830 Revolution, who generally felt that France was not ready for a republic and who feared a repetition of the excesses of the First French Republic in 1792–1795.[23]

Storrow got an opportunity to talk at length with Lafayette on August 18, less than three weeks after the revolution, when the general returned to the Storrow home after Charles's sister's wedding. Lafayette was in high

20. CSS, Journal, July 30, Aug. 3, 1830.
21. Ibid., Aug. 9, 1830.
22. Ibid., Aug. 12, 1830.
23. Loveland, *Emblem of Liberty*, 121.

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spirits, still very much pleased with the outcome of the July Days. "I never saw him look so well or so young as he did on that day," Storrow wrote in his journal. Lafayette had great praise for the bravery of the students from the École Polytechnique who had fought at the barricades in July. It had been their idea, he recalled, one which he had adopted, to let government troops pass down the streets in large numbers and then build barricades behind them, in order to seal off their retreat.[24]

Despite his overall good humor, Lafayette was still bristling over a recent newspaper report that had attributed to him the statement that "we have now in France the best sort of republic" in the form of the constitutional monarchy. His true feelings, he said, were that it was not "so good as" the type of government in the United States. He seemed pleased with Louis-Philippe, however, calling him "a man of honorable principles, with a very excellent family." The King, he insisted, was really "republican at heart." "Almost all Frenchmen are," he added. Characteristically, Lafayette felt the need, as he would again and again in the years that followed, to defend the decisive role he had played in the triumph of constitutional monarchy over a republic, though in doing so he revealed the contradictions in his position. "If we had insisted upon a republic," he explained, "we should have had terrible divisions. None but aristocrats really want a monarchy, but when we speak of a republic, those who really wish it think of the excesses of 1793 and are silent. We must wait."[25]

Although Lafayette's support for Louis-Philippe disappointed many of his French republican followers and tarnished his liberal image, his reputation in the American colony in the aftermath of the revolution could not have been higher. On December 8, four months after the revolution, about one hundred prominent American residents of Paris held a banquet in his honor. It was an occasion rich in symbolic associations with the American and French revolutions. To a toast offered by his close friend and the banquet's organizer, James Fenimore Cooper, Lafayette responded with a toast of his own: "To the American people, the first born, and most highly gifted sons of Independence and freedom."[26] Storrow, who attended the banquet with his brother Thomas, felt himself transported back to his

24. CSS, Journal, Aug. 19, 1830.

25. Ibid.

26. Stuart W. Jackson, "Lafayette Letters and Documents in the Yale Cooper Collection," *Yale University Library Gazette* 8(1934):126.

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country's revolutionary past, sitting as he was not only with Lafayette but with two other French generals, Mathieu Dumas and the Count de Lameth, all three of whom had "fought by the side of Washington." Later that evening, he composed a deeply emotional panegyric that expresses as effectively as any contemporary statement the full flowering of the Lafayette legend:

> The eyes of the world are now turned upon the venerable man whose unequalled firmness showed him ever the same advocate for the rights of man, whether crossing the seas to assist a youthful nation, or commanding the national guards of France, or lingering in the dungeons of Olmutz or sealing the fate of him [i. e., Napoleon] who crushed the liberty of France by his military power, or marching in his old age through the barricades of Paris to encourage a valiant and generous nation to fight for freedom. Illustrious old man, where is the man whose life has been as checkered as thine by good and by evil fortune, and who has shown himself like thee firm as the broad mountain upon its base [?][27]

In the months following the revolution Storrow came to realize that for many in France—for example, workers with economic grievances and republicans hoping for a democratic republic—the outcome of the revolution was a bitter disappointment. He described in his journal the series of protests, strikes, and demonstrations (aftershocks of the revolution, one historian has called them) in later 1830 and in 1831 that reflected this disappointment. However, convinced as he was of the soundness of the July Revolution, he was often hard put to find an explanation for these outbursts of popular anger, and he sometimes dismissed them as the work of agitators. When, for example, workers presented a petition at the Prefecture of Police on August 15 against the competiton of immigrant labor, spurring a rash of other protests demanding jobs, higher wages, a shorter workday, and the government-subsidized destruction of power-driven machinery, Storrow blamed the unrest on "some wicked or ignorant persons" who, he claimed, had incited the workers ("raised their spirits a little") by posting placards urging them to destroy machinery. Again, in the case of the violent protests in September 1831 against the French government's failure to come to the aid of the Polish revolutionaries he saw at work irresponsible elements in society, in his words, "the dregs of the populace, the released galley slaves, and all the abandoned wretches who form the out-

27. CSS, Journal, Dec. 8, 1830.

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skirts of society [and who] seize such occasions to increase the disturbance in the hope of some change which may benefit them."[28]

Although Storrow was absent from Paris during the near-revolutionary disturbances of October 1830, he was an eyewitness to the equally ominous anti-government demonstrations in December. On December 15 the former ministers of Charles X were placed on trial before the Chamber of Peers on charges of treason, and during a week of waiting for the verdict, crowds gathered menacingly around the Luxembourg Palace, the site of the trial. The government feared that an acquittal would spark widespread violence on the part of a populace that was suffering from heavy unemployment. Storrow was very much aware of the gravity of the situation. "The conduct of the Parisian people on this occasion will decide in great measure," he wrote, ". . . whether anarchy and disorder or respect for the laws and obedience to their magistrates are to prevail among the French nation. It is indeed a critical moment." On the evening of December 20, as he walked through the streets around the Luxembourg, he saw patrols of soldiers rushing toward the palace to break up the "mobs" surrounding the building. "Tonight, it must be confessed, things look a little dark," he wrote.[29]

The next afternoon, Storrow returned to the Luxembourg Quarter and saw "an immense concourse of people" gathered. "The National Guards fill the streets," he reported, "and prevent the people from penetrating through them." Several times he tried to reach the palace only to be turned back by National Guardsmen. He sensed revolution in the air as he observed the nervousness of the Guard officers and noticed the presence of "those evil looking wretches who come forth from their lurking places only when a revolutionary spirit is abroad." If the government could not control these dangerous crowds, he could only conclude, "there must be a civil war."[30]

28. Ibid., Aug. 15, 1830, Sept. 17, 1831. On the Aug. 15 protests, see Pinkney, *French Revolution*, 313–314. Newman argues convincingly in "What the Crowd Wanted," 28–29, that the loud demands for French intervention to aid the Polish revolutionaries were in part an expression of a "working-class nationalism" that yearned for a return to the military glory of the Napoleonic past. Storrow's contention that these disturbances were led by the dregs and outcasts of society is similar to a statement by a prefect of police in 1832 attributing revolutionary activity to the gamins—the street urchins—of Paris. Neither statement is borne out by the evidence assembled by Pinkney, *French Revolution*, 256–258. Despite his low opinion of the demonstrators, Storrow deeply sympathized with the plight of the Poles, and he was crestfallen when word arrived in Paris on Sept. 16 that Warsaw had capitulated. "How long," he lamented, "will it be thus upon earth[?] How long shall might make right[?]" CSS, Journal, Sept. 17, 1831.

29. Ibid., Dec. 20, 1830.

30. Ibid., Dec. 21, 1830.

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However, by the time Storrow got to write in his journal again a week later on December 28, the crisis had passed without serious incident, thanks in large measure to Lafayette's steadying influence on the National Guard, whose loyalty the government had questioned.[31]

Once the crisis was over, the government of Louis-Philippe manuveured successfully to ease Lafayette out of his command of the National Guard. In recent months, the position of Lafayette had become increasingly untenable. Not only had his program for a liberal restructuring of the government gone largely unheeded, but his influence, popularity, and republican ideas had become a source of increasing uneasiness for the king, his ministers, and the Chamber of Deputies. "How soon people learn to be ungrateful," was Storrow's bitter reaction when he learned that the Chamber of Deputies had voted to abolish Lafayette's position. He noted the cynicism in the timing of the Chamber's action: "The moment the disorder is at an end," he wrote, "the moment the general has ensured perhaps their political existence, the chamber of Deputies frames a law which deprives him of his office." That evening Storrow joined a large number of friends and supporters who gathered at Lafayette's home on the Rue d'Anjou to offer their regrets.[32]

Several days later on January 2, Storrow and his brother called on Lafayette and had a long conversation with him. They found him saddened but not bitter about the manner in which he had been treated, though he did take offense, he told them, at things that had been said in the debates in the Chamber over the bill to abolish his office. His main disappointment was over the failure of the government to move in a liberal direction, as promised. He placed the blame for this situation chiefly on "a party [in the Chamber of Deputies] holding back the progress of the revolution, and of bringing the nation to the point from which they started in July."[33]

Not surprisingly, given what had happened since the revolution, Lafayette was far less enthusiastic about Louis-Philippe than he had been when Storrow talked with him in August. Although he said that he and Louis-Philippe were still on friendly terms, he had come to realize that the king "wished to retard the concessions which the people expected." He explained to Storrow and his brother how "in the heat of the revolution" it

31. Pinkney, *French Revolution*, 344–357.

32. CSS, Journal, Dec. 28, 1830.

33. Ibid., Jan. 2, 1831.

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had been up to himself "whether there should be a king or not" and that he was the one who had "first thought of" Louis-Philippe as a candidate for the throne. He recalled how he had gone to Louis-Philippe and told him that his own sympathies were republican and that he considered the American constitution to be "the best in the world." To this the Duke of Orleans had replied that he felt the same way but that he did not think that the republican form of government could be introduced "in the circumstances in which France was placed." Lafayette had agreed, remarking that otherwise he would not have approached Louis-Philippe. At that point, Lafayette related, he and Louis-Philippe decided that "the best thing was a popular throne surrounded by republican institutions."[34]

Even as they spoke, their conversation was interrupted repeatedly by National Guard officers coming by to wish Lafayette well and to say that they would miss him as their commander. Before Storrow and his brother left the Rue d'Anjou that day, Lafayette gave them copies of his addresses to the national guards of France, which he asked that they send to friends in the United States.

With the exception of the year 1848, Storrow could not have chosen a more dramatic period of revolutionary activity in which to be living abroad in the nineteenth century than 1830, for in the months following the July Days, the French example inspired a dozen or so other uprisings against monarchy across Europe. Storrow closely followed the progress of these other revolutions in the daily press and on two occasions, in fact, his travels took him to countries undergoing political upheaval. The first such occasion came in the late summer of 1830, when he made a sightseeing trip through Belgium, Holland, and the Rhineland with his friend William Lawrence, the son of merchant-industrialist Amos Lawrence, who was living with the Storrows while studying in Paris. As the young men traveled through Belgium, they found themselves moving just a few days ahead of the eruption of violent (and eventually successful) protests against the rule of the Dutch monarchy. Storrow later learned that only hours after he and Lawrence had left Brussels on August 24, a rioting crowd had burned the palace of the minister of justice to the ground.[35] A year later, in the summer

34. Ibid. Pinkney, *French Revolution*, 163, reproduces the same conversation between Lafayette and Louis-Philippe, held on Aug. 1, from the general's memoirs.

35. CSS, Journal, Aug. 23–24, 27–28, 30, 1830.

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of 1831, Storrow was in England (to inspect engineering monuments) in the midst of the turmoil over passage of the Reform Bill. While in London he passed by the Duke of Wellington's residence and noticed that even though the whole capital was brightly lighted in celebration of the coronation of William IV, the duke's shutters were tightly drawn—the former prime minister's protest, Storrow explained, at a mob having smashed his windows when he refused to "illuminate" at the time of passage of the bill's second reading in Commons several weeks earlier.[36]

It is little wonder, given his encounters with challenges to the established order seemingly at every hand, that Storrow became emotionally caught up in the prospect of a mighty wave of revolution sweeping outward from France. "Courage, brave band of free men throughout the world," he called out in his journal on August 4 as Europe nervously awaited the spread of revolution from Paris, "the rights of men must be respected, and they will be. Free principles will at last be adopted all over the world."[37] Once revolutions had begun to erupt elsewhere, he hailed the July Revolution for having launched this tide of freedom, calling it "a glorious thing to have so stirred up the minds of the world."[38] Probably more than any single event, it was this experience of living through an age of revolutionary explosions that led Storrow to come to view the cause of freedom as a dynamic and ultimately unstoppable force in the history of the modern world.

In March 1832, after more than two years of study and travel abroad, Storrow returned to the United States and embarked upon what would be a long and distinguished career as a civil engineer. By dint of talent, training, hard work, and family connection, he rose to positions of prominence and trust among the merchant-industrialists known as the Boston Associates, serving as chief engineer and agent of the Boston and Lowell Railroad from 1835 to 1845, and beginning in 1845, as chief engineer, agent, treasurer, and later president of the Essex Company, the land and waterpower concern that developed the textile city of Lawrence, Massachusetts. Storrow not only designed and constructed the industrial center, but in its early years he was a dominating presence in the community, holding the posi-

36. Ibid., Sept. 9, 1831.
37. Ibid., Aug. 4, 1830.
38. Ibid., Aug. 24, 1830.

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tions of president of its first two banks and chairman of its finance and school committees. When Lawrence was incorporated as a city in 1853, he was elected as its first mayor.[39]

Storrow would not lose in later years the fascination for observing and documenting human behavior that had drawn him into the streets of Paris in the summer of 1830. When he was building Lawrence in the late 1840s, for example, and a community began to take shape along the northern bank of the Merrimack River, he was intrigued by the process of social change unfolding before him. "Our thoughts have been almost as much absorbed in the creation of a social edifice," he wrote in 1848, "as in the creation of material structures."[40] Calling upon observational and descriptive skills he had first honed as a witness to revolution almost twenty years earlier, he carefully recorded in his journal the changes he discerned—from the appearance of the first undertaker and the first hack in town to the major stages of social transformation—in the community's rapid evolution from construction camp to settled textile city.[41]

Nor would he lose in later years the romantic attachment of his student days to the themes of revolution and liberation, or his youthful confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom. For the most part, however, Storrow proved to be less than liberal in his political and social views during the course of his long career. As an implementor of the industrial plans of the Boston Associates, for example, he subscribed unreservedly to the conservative social philosophy of corporate paternalism that they, particularly Francis Cabot Lowell, had devised.[42] In the 1840s and early 1850s he was a member of the Whig party, which dominated Massachusetts politics for most of that period, and he ran as the Whig candidate for mayor of Law-

39. On Storrow's later life and professional career, see Hiram F. Mills, "Charles Storer Storrow," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 40(1904–1905):769–773; *Dictionary of American Biography*; Peter M. Malloy, "Nineteenth-Century Hydropower: Design and Construction of the Lawrence Dam, 1845–1848," *Winterthur Portfolio* 15(1980):315–343; Duncan E. Hay, "Building 'The New City on the Merrimack': The Essex Company and Its Role in the Creation of Lawrence, Massachusetts" (Ph. D. diss., Univ. of Delaware, 1986); and Peter A. Ford, "Charles S. Storrow, Civil Engineer: A Case Study of European Training and Technological Transfer in the Antebellum Period," *Technology and Culture* 34 (1993): 271–299.

40. CSS to Major G.T. Poussin, Nov. 9, 1848, in Memorandum Book V.

41. CSS, Memorandum Book III, Dec. 27, 1846; IV, Dec. 12, 1847; V, Feb. 3, 1849.

42. On the Waltham-Lowell system of the Boston Associates, see Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 31–36; and John F. Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776–1900* (New York, 1976), 64–106.

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rence in 1853.[43] On slavery, the burning issue of the antebellum years, he followed the equivocal policy of the party's upper-class Boston leadership. Although he decried slavery as a "terrible evil," he nevertheless regarded it as "a matter entirely under the control of each state for itself alone," and he was opposed not only to what he called the "reckless fanaticism" of the abolitionists but probably also to the efforts of "Conscience" Whigs to turn the party in Massachusetts in an unequivocally antislavery and anti-southern direction.[44] Up to the very eve of the Civil War he favored a policy of compromise and concession toward the South in the hope of heading off armed conflict.[45]

A series of private memoranda that he wrote in the years 1860–1863 on the causes and issues of the Civil War reveals, on the other hand, the persistence in his thinking of attitudes first formulated three decades earlier in an age of liberal aspirations. As was the case with many northerners at the time, Storrow's thinking regarding the North-South crisis underwent a far-reaching transformation in the wake of the patriotic fervor that swept the North in the weeks following the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861. He initially regarded the conflict simply and solely as a war to prevent dismemberment of the Union and he even viewed with some equanimity the possibility of permanent secession. His sympathy for the plight of the South turned to anger, however, as he contemplated the enormity of its attack upon constitutional government.[46] By early 1862 he had fashioned for himself a new interpretation of the war, which drew upon the grander themes of his youth and which raised the conflict to a higher level of meaning.

The war between the states, he came to believe, was nothing less than the latest incident in the centuries-long contest "between aristocracy and democracy, slavery and freedom, absolutism and self-government." Ever since the Middle Ages, he wrote, when cities started to throw off feudal oppression and serfs began to gain their freedom,

43. *Lawrence Courier*, Apr. 15, May 3, 6, 1853; Robert Tewksbury, "Lawrence," *Standard History of Essex County* (Boston, 1878), 217.

44. CSS, Memoranda, Jan. 12, Dec. 17, 1861. Beginning in 1845, Conscience Whigs denounced in increasingly strident tones what they viewed as a cynical political alliance between, in Charles Sumner's words, "the lords of the lash and the lords of the loom," that is, southern cotton planters and New England textile industrialists. Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite*, 202.

45. CSS, Memoranda, Jan. 12, Mar. 3, 1861.

46. Ibid., Apr. 13, June 24, 1861.

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> . . . a contest has been going on, in which with various alterations of success and defeat, free principles, democratic principles have on the whole moved forward with a secular, not a daily or an annual motion, but a secular progress toward ascendency. It has been so in England, it has been so in France, it has been so in Germany, it has been so in Russia[;] even Spain, even Turkey have felt the influences of this progress.[47]

As he now perceived it, the issue transcended the South's secession and went to the essence of the differences between the two societies, the one democratic and the other aristocratic, differences which, he insisted, dated back to their foundations in the colonial period. Using its own cherished cavalier myth against it, he branded the South as a "proud oligarchy . . . hugging slavery and aristocracy to its bosom," while he drew upon another cherished tradition in asserting that the northern states had been "originally settled by republicans, not in name but in fact."[48]

Storrow was by no means alone in viewing the war as a conflict between democracy and aristocracy. In the early months of the war several northern authors, among them historian and fellow Bostonian Francis Parkman, as well as some members of the northern press and clergy, had begun to put forward a similar interpretation.[49] The ultimate effect of these and other such efforts, of course, was to redefine the war as an ideological conflict and to infuse it with a moral purpose—an interpretation of the struggle which would reach its historic climax in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in November 1863. Storrow was one of the few, however, to advance beyond the simple affirmation that the war was, in the words of one sermon, "the old conflict reenacted of Despotism against Freedom," and, making use of his familiarity with European revolution, to set it into the longer history of the Western struggle for freedom to which he believed it belonged.[50]

47. CSS, Memorandum, Feb. 2, 1862.

48. Ibid. On the origins of the cavalier thesis and the New England tradition of the Puritans as founders of American political liberty, see Wesley Frank Craven, *The Legend of the Founding Fathers* (New York, 1956); William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York, 1957); J.V. Matthews, "'Whig History': The New England Whigs and a Usable Past," *New England Quarterly* 51(1978):193–208.

49. Thomas J. Pressly, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War* (Princeton, N.J., 1954), 9–11, 16–17; James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War 1860–1869* (New Haven, 1978), 35–41. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, xv, points out that the idea of the nation divided into democratic and aristocratic societies had become common in the antebellum period.

50. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, 53. On the Gettysburg Address, see Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: Words that Remade America* (New York, 1992).

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Nor was he in the least doubtful about the outcome of the conflict so defined. Writing in early February 1862, when the prospects of northern victory did not seem at all bright, he nevertheless felt that the weight of history was in the Union's favor. "Five hundred years of contest," he wrote, "have shown which must prevail. Privilege must surely succumb, and freedom and self-government must surely prevail." The passage of three decades, it is obvious, had done nothing to dampen the ebullience of his faith in human progress. "Let who will," he predicted, "triumph for a time, the democratic wave will roll over this continent."[51]

It has been observed that when during the war years Francis Parkman spoke of democracy in connection with the Union cause, the brahmin scholar had in mind something considerably more limited than what the younger historian and Democratic politician George Bancroft understood by that word.[52] Much the same might be said of Storrow. Despite the sometimes disarmingly liberal ring of his words, his conception of democracy too was markedly narrower than that of Bancroft, his former teacher at Round Hill School. Indeed, although by the end of 1862 he had brought himself to support the idea of the abolition of slavery in the Confederate states, he did so only as a wartime measure aimed at weakening the South.[53]

In one of the countless tragic ironies of the Civil War, Storrow, who had vowed as a young man to shed his own blood if his country needed him, learned in March 1865 that his son Samuel had been killed in action in North Carolina in the closing days of the war. Shortly thereafter, in what must have been the most heart-wrenching letter of his life he wrote to his old schoolmate Alphonse Vignon in Paris to tell of his son's death and to attempt to relate it to the higher cause for which he had come to believe the war had been fought. Far better, he wrote tearfully to his French friend, that his son had died heroically giving his life "pour la bonne cause, ...

51. CSS, Memorandum, Feb. 2, 1862. The belief in human progress, to which Storrow so firmly held, had come to dominate much of American cultural expression during the first half of the 19th century. See Arthur Alphonse Ekirch, Jr., *The Idea of Progress in America, 1815–1860* (New York, 1944). On the notion of the progress of human liberty in 19th-century American thought, see Loveland, *Emblem of Liberty*, 102–110; and on George Bancroft's highly influential theme of the idea of freedom in American history, see Dorothy Ross, "Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Historical Review* 89(1984):916–919.

52. Pressly, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War*, 9.

53. CSS, Memorandum, Dec. 20, 1862.

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pour la cause de la patrie, de la civilisation et de l'humanité," than that he should have lived "sans le courage et le dévouement qui doivent remplir le coeur d'un jeune homme dans les grandes crises de son pays."[54]

Over the years, Storrow looked back with fondness and pride upon the time he had lived in France.[55] He returned to the country of his youth twice for short visits, the first time in 1851 when he took a brief excursion to Paris while on a textile-machinery-buying trip to London, and the second time in 1862 when, having been retained as a consultant on the stalled Hoosac Tunnel project in western Massachusetts, he spent several weeks inspecting French tunneling techniques at Mont Cenis in the Alps.[56]

Storrow's account of the events of 1830 is, in its own way, an impressive achievement. Gathering information wherever he could—at Lafayette's salon, in darkened streets around the Luxembourg Palace, amidst an angry mob at the Quai d'Orsay, at sessions of the Chamber of Deputies, in the daily press, and elsewhere—he managed to report in an accurate (though necessarily incomplete) fashion the revolutionary and especially the postrevolutionary situation in Paris. His observations upon the events he describes are, moreover, generally perceptive and reflect considerable understanding of the complexities of French political life.

The real value of his account, however, lies not so much in what it contributes to our knowledge of the July Revolution—there already exists, after all, an ample body of contemporary evidence on that event in the form of other eyewitness accounts, newspaper reports, and government documents—as in what it is able to tell us about the broader areas of French-American cultural interchanges and American political perceptions in the early nineteenth century. Thanks to Storrow's account, we know more, for example, about the continuing image of Lafayette as the symbolic link between the two nations' revolutionary heritages. Further, it allows us to view the turbulent events of 1830 through the eyes of an American student and

54. CSS to Alphonse Vignon, June 18, 1865, Samuel Storrow Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

55. Lafayette had died in 1834, two years after Storrow returned to the United States. In 1837 Storrow offered to translate Lafayette's papers for historian Jared Sparks if the latter decided to write a life of the French general. The matter of translation is not mentioned again, however, in their subsequent correspondence. CSS to Jared Sparks, Nov. 11, 1837, Original Sparks Ms. 153, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

56. CSS to John Clark, Feb. 3, 1851, Museum of American Textile History, Essex Company Papers, ms. 69/306, Box 32; "Charles Storer Storrow," *Engineering News* 29 (1893): 147.

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to ascertain not only how he interpreted these events but also how his own political outlook was affected by them. Unquestionably, to a great degree Storrow filtered what he saw and heard in Europe through a political philosophy that valued freedom over equality as the proper goal of government—an attitude that did not change substantially over the course of his long career. Nevertheless his experience with European revolution left him with a heightened awareness of humanity's long struggle for freedom and an historical perspective from which to judge his own country's political evolution.

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