

## INTEGRATING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES: A MODEL FROM EARLY AMERICA

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It is always a boon to history teachers when one of the profession's most respected scholars publishes a synthetic, concise, and accessible book. It was therefore with much enthusiasm that I assigned Joyce Appleby's recently published *Inheriting the Revolution* in my undergraduate course on early America, and it came as no surprise when this work provoked a lively discussion.<sup>1</sup> Students who were aware of Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* were intrigued by Appleby's implicit suggestion that America's truly great generation was not comprised of Brokaw's heroes, but rather those men and women born in the years just after the Revolution. Others demurred, questioning the utility of comparing generations at all, and arguing that generations do not exist autonomously, but rather build upon each other, acquiring an identity through the selective adaptation and rejection of the preceding generation's habits and characteristics. Appleby similarly struck a cord with her claim that the founding generation of Americans enjoyed a rare opportunity to set a precedent for American individualism, and that the definition that they forged remains—for better or worse—an integral aspect of American culture today. Perhaps most importantly, *Inheriting the Revolution* evoked excitement from a generally indifferent undergraduate audience because of the primary sources that she used: autobiographies. Her explanation that "almost four hundred men and women in this cohort wrote autobiographies" inspired one student to remark that writing the book "must have been a lot of fun."

As much as I enjoyed this discussion, though, Appleby's book ultimately left me feeling frustrated. Writing the book must have been fun, and as a professional historian, I too have savored the experience of molding the voices of the past to the interpretations of the present. My undergraduate students, however, have not. They were thus only able to appreciate Appleby's research methods from a cold distance, and my traditional approach to the book failed to help close this interpretive gap. In this failure, I know I'm not alone. History teachers are frequently torn between the competing goals of conveying a sound overview of a topic's historiography and establishing a familiarity with the topic's salient primary sources. More often than not, we lack models to help us structure these exercises in a way that allows students to evaluate historical documents against the backdrop of a popular interpretation and historiography. Herein, of course, lies the real thrill of historical investigation—not just grasping what someone else has written or attempting an autonomous interpretation of a discrete primary document, but evaluating that document in the context of what other historians have said about it, and comparing your interpretation to theirs. The

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<sup>1</sup>Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

combination of historiography and primary document analysis adds a rich layer of meaning to the process of historical study that remains well within the grasp of most undergraduates. How, then, can we bring together these goals in a coherent and realistic fashion?

This essay provides one model for doing so. Combining research that I have done on a series of remarkable letters from a Massachusetts family between 1790 and 1810 with the historiography on education and patriarchy from this same time period offers a valuable example of how these disconnected pedagogical imperatives can converge. The letters and the historical issue that I have chosen are not arbitrary. The Cary family's letters are housed in the Massachusetts Historical Society, but they are also published. The closely related topics—the history of education and patriarchy—are scholarly issues with relatively clear historiographical divisions. That is, the issues that historians debate with respect to these topics are not especially abstruse or abstract, but rather concrete and digestible enough for an undergraduate audience. The Cary letters and these two historical themes are also especially useful because they provide applicable examples of how we as teachers might incorporate social history into the undergraduate classroom.

This last goal deserves an added comment. Traditionally, even as the profession as a whole has enthusiastically embraced the methods and perspectives of social history, teachers have continued to rely primarily on political documents to hone student analyses of primary sources. The underlying fear of integrating the social historian's documents, I suspect, has much to do with the suspicion that the particular source might appear disconnected and irrelevant from "conventional" history. The critical student might legitimately wonder why he or she is studying a seemingly odd family letter written in 1796 rather than, say, the Farewell Address. The evaluation of what might appear to be a random historical tidbit, however, takes on added significance when situated in a broadly accepted historical interpretation. This point, in short, can be profoundly reassuring to curious undergraduates: almost any historical document gains legitimacy when it is situated and examined in the proper context. And it's up to the teacher to provide that context.

The classroom material required for the exercise that follows is realistic and manageable. It requires three book chapters totaling about 75 pages, and about 25 letters from the Cary collection.<sup>2</sup> The Cary letters from 1790 to 1810 are published in

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<sup>2</sup>Edmund Morgan, "Parents and Children," *The Puritan Family* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 65–87; Mary Ryan, "Family, Community, and the Frontier Generation," *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790–1865* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 18–52; Appleby, "Enterprise," *Inheriting the Revolution*, 56–89; Cary Family Papers, 1789–1883, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

*The Cary Letters*,<sup>3</sup> but history teachers might want to obtain copies of the originals, if possible, in order to give students a more genuine feel for the document, as well as pushing them to examine the handwriting. What follows is a sample lesson plan and suggestions as to how the readings and documents might be interpreted and applied in a two-week section.

**Secondary Reading Assignment #1:** Edmond Morgan, "Parents and Children," (21 pages)

Morgan's chapter remains the classic articulation of the patriarchal-based, colonial New England family's negotiation of educational instruction. "A parent had to provide for his children," he explains, "because they were unable to provide for themselves." If a father was ever to free himself of such an obligation, "he must see to it that they knew how to earn a living." It was, throughout the colonial period, every father's calling to ensure that "his children were instructed 'in some honest lawful calling, labour or employment.'" The most common avenue through which a son learned a trade was, as Morgan explains, an apprenticeship. Fathers, however, had to be careful not to push sons into trades for which they were ill suited, for a misguided path not only produced an unhappy master and student, but an angry God. Morgan writes, "It was imperative that a child should undertake no other occupation than that in which he could best serve the Lord." A pupil thus had to avoid working in a line of work "for which God had obviously given him no call." But it was ultimately the father's decision as to what was an appropriate vocation.

As Morgan's ideas bounce around during a classroom discussion, teachers should make sure that they culminate in the conclusion that, throughout the colonial period, the vast majority of New England families followed an educational norm whereby fathers, bolstered by customary, patriarchal authority, made career decision for their sons. And sons, in turn, generally obeyed with minimal resistance.

**Secondary Reading Assignment #2:** Joyce Appleby's "Enterprise" (33 pages)

The American Revolution established the preconditions for an economic transition away from the small farming systems that prevailed during the colonial period to the increasingly industrialized economy of early America. In this very readable chapter, Appleby explains that "Americans in the early republic experienced the steady reworking of the material environment—acres brought under the plow, steam engines applied in unfamiliar ways, rivers and streams dammed and sluiced to power mills, canals, and roads cut through the wilderness." Widespread economic diversification supported an emerging cultural emphasis on novelty, opportunity, individualism, and mobility. Americans, especially young Americans, started to "look to machines" as they "democratized opportunity" and adopted the attitude of one young man who

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<sup>3</sup>Caroline G. Curtis, *The Cary Letters* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1891).

recalled that "he did not want to work for the farmers, for they worked late and early and their work was too hard for me." A "surprising willingness to venture outside the realm of their experience" underwrote an increasing emphasis on entrepreneurial ventures among young white men in non-agricultural pursuits.

In the class discussion of this chapter, students should be encouraged to appreciate the ways in which commercial expansion opened worlds to which young men previously had never been privy. They should also speculate on the impact that these economic developments might have had on the traditional educational norms described by Morgan.

#### **Primary Reading Assignment #1: The Cary Letters, 1790–1794**

In light of these two interpretations, students can now turn to the primary documents. These letters suggest the tensions that arose within families when the traditional patriarchal and educational values forged on the family farm confronted early America's burgeoning economic opportunities. They provide, in other words, a concrete example of how one family experienced and responded to the transition from Morgan's traditional world to Appleby's modernizing one. The following summary of the Cary letters from 1791–1795 describes the nature of this conflict.

On May 31, 1791, eighteen-year old Samuel Cary bade a tearful farewell to his mother, father, sister, and three brothers. The Massachusetts family had spent the previous ten years cultivating sugar on a Grenada plantation and was finally sailing back to Chelsea, the quiet farming town that they had always called home. It was, for Mrs. Sarah Cary, Samuel's mother, a welcome trip. "It is distressing to be obliged to live in a state of separation from our friends," she had written in 1779. Samuel Sr. expressed his own regrets. With palpable sadness, he adhered to Yankee tradition by leaving behind his eldest son and namesake Samuel to manage the plantation. "Perhaps I will never see you again," the frightened Samuel wrote his mother shortly after the family's safe arrival in Massachusetts. Noting that the family had "a great chance for happiness" in Chelsea, he stressed his own hopelessness towards achieving such a question. "Trying as the parting is to me," he explained, "I will subsist on philosophical fortitude."<sup>4</sup>

A month after his family arrived in Boston, Samuel sent them a second letter. Describing the house in Grenada, he complained, "In spite of myself I cannot drive away the melancholy the place inspires me with." He worked in "the little counting room that Marget [his sister] once had," but now "the prospect from the window which I thought would enliven me serves only to inspire me with its own dullness [sic]." Samuel Jr. envied the family's new location ("Oh! the charms of a country life!"), and the absence of his younger siblings especially provoked a nostalgic longing for a lost atmosphere of familial comfort and interaction. "Where is the little group of innocents

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<sup>4</sup>Samuel Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, May 31, 1791.

who once inhabited here?," he exclaimed. Surveying his empty house, he wrote, "The sight of which used to make my heart glow with pleasure is now a lifeless shill."<sup>5</sup>

Samuel begged to come home, but his father demurred, writing, "You cannot know until you are a father the satisfaction your letters afford me, be assured nothing would give me so much pleasure as your setting down near me, but it would be harmful to you and me if anything I should say you should miss an oppty. of engaging in business and afterwards be disappointed in your expectations here." Samuel's mother ostensibly shared her husband's sentiments regarding their son's exile in the West Indies. In a separate letter, she wrote, "I cannot but agree in part with what your father proposes, which is, if anything very highly advantageous offers when you come of age, to remain in the country two or three years longer it should not be rejected, if it will furnish you with sufficient capital." She concluded: "Every good parent is ready to sacrifice his dearest wishes for the advantage of a beloved child." Samuel stayed put.<sup>6</sup>

**Writing Assignment #1:** "How does the Cary's experience reflect the historical developments described by Morgan and Appleby?" (1 page)

Students must grasp how Samuel Sr.'s insistence that his son remain in Grenada reflected the convergence of a traditional social expectation and a newly emerging economic reality. Fathers in New England, as Morgan shows, had always expected their sons to play an integral role in the family's economic affairs. Sons typically stayed on the family farm well into their twenties in order to earn an inherited plot of their father's land, which fathers usually granted before death. This arrangement rarely prevailed, however, in non-agricultural pursuits like fishing, or merchant or artisan work. Significantly, upon moving to Chelsea, Samuel Sr. did not continue in an agricultural endeavor but, as Appleby suggests so many Americans did, worked as a small time merchant with the profits that Samuel was generating in Grenada. His expectation that his son remain on the plantation in Grenada thus reflected the influence of a traditional colonial arrangement. While this arrangement remained bound together by the time-honored carrot of property inheritance, the major difference now was that father and son were working in different regions of the transatlantic world, thereby missing the essential daily interaction that helped maintain this crucial bond of loyalty. Father's new line of work might have been of a non-agricultural nature in an increasingly opportunistic environment, but father's reasoning went, a son should still work for him. Samuel Sr. thus depended on a traditional sense of paternalism in a newer economic context that simultaneously challenged it. His expectation for his son, only recently so common, suddenly felt anachronistic. Willfully or not, Samuel Sr. was seeking to preserve the best of the old world while moving into the new one.

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<sup>5</sup>Samuel Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, July 30, 1791.

<sup>6</sup>Mrs. Sarah Cary to Samuel Cary, n.d.; Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, n.d.

In light of this dilemma, students might reasonably wonder about the social consequences that might ensue, both for the Carys and the nation as a whole. How long would this precarious arrangement hold?

**Secondary Reading Assignment #3:** Mary Ryan, "Family, Community, and the Frontier Generation" (39 pages)

In clear, jargon-free prose, Ryan describes the fate of patriarchal authority as economic opportunity undermined traditional social arrangements between 1790 and 1820. Her chapter effectively places the Cary family's dilemma in context. The transition from "a primitive home economy to a specialized trade network"—a transition marked by the decision to "locate offspring in new occupations" and locations—exposed the "corporate patriarchal family" to a whole new set of vulnerabilities. As the "bounds of the family economy" were stretched, the "standard of authority and submission" (perhaps best described as a "benevolent monarchy") diminished noticeably. As fathers lost the land to bequeath to their children, as they experienced less frequently the daily interaction necessary to impart traditional work habits, and as they lost the opportunity to reinforce a clear patriarchal presence, "an awkward period of the family cycle" ensued. Ryan concluded that "the complex economic strategies of the industrial era had also transformed the internal dynamics of family life." As "the internal order and experience of family life had been considerably altered," she continues, "a shift from patriarchal authority to domestic affection" ensued. "The idea of fatherhood itself," in the midst of these changes, "seemed almost to wither away."

**Primary Reading Assignment #2:** The Cary Letters, 1794-1802

Students should approach this section of letters wondering how the historical developments described by Ryan manifest themselves in the relationship between Samuel Cary and his son. How did the separation of father and son in an increasingly commercialized environment alter their relationship and the patriarchal authority that once defined it? Again, the following summary provides an example of the way in which students can effectively approach these letters.

The precariousness of Samuel Sr.'s paternalistic oversight within this shifting transatlantic context became painfully evident when an explosive and sudden slave insurrection in 1794 shook both Grenada and Samuel Sr.'s economic security. The revolt not only unraveled Samuel Sr.'s customary authority over his plantation but, as we will see, it simultaneously compromised his authority over his wife and children. Samuel, most notably, was now bound to his father with nothing more than loyalty, and he took advantage of the revolt to abandon once and for all the plantation on which he had been more or less forced to oversee under the promise of inheriting it. Instead of heading home to Chelsea, however, he started a merchant business on the island of St. Christopher. Samuel Sr. was stunned. His desperation over his son's defection became palpable as he pondered the fact that he now had to revisit Grenada himself—leaving

behind his family—to deal with the insurrection's ruinous consequences. "The greatest misfortune that could happen," he wrote to his son, "would be a separation from my family." "I do not see," he continued, "how they could go on without me."<sup>7</sup>

With the eldest son off to start his own business and his boys home from school to expand the family's small Chelsea farm, Samuel Sr. packed his bags for Grenada in 1795 as a man whose domestic authority had sustained a considerable blow. The family's traditional patriarchal structure weakened further when Sarah Cary assumed competent control of the Chelsea farm's expansion. "As to the farm," Samuel Sr. wrote from Grenada, "do the best you can." In terms of money management, he advised, "Do as much as you can by shares; the less money you have to pay the better." His agricultural instructions often turned specific. "If the Spring is wet and the crop plentiful the more you have done with the harvest the better," but "if dry, labor will be lower and pay higher, of course." The letter soon evolved into a crash course in farm management. He continued, "The wood, you will, I hope get for salt hay, by giving good loads; and if the hay will not pay ... the horses Brier and Bramble must be sold, and the Spring is the time to sell them; which you should better do at any rate." Samuel's officiousness annoyed Sarah, who appeared to have the situation under her own competent control. In a letter to her son, she confessed her impatience with her husband's mercurial missives. "His mind," she wrote, "is sometimes deprived of all firmness. Now this, now that. He resolves, then re-resolves, still remains undecided, and I dread a state of sickness in his state of mind."<sup>8</sup>

As Samuel Sr.'s world turned upside down, his son's world steadily stabilized. From his trading house in St. Christopher's, Samuel established lucrative contacts with merchants who hailed from Philadelphia to New York. "My emoluments," he wrote his mother, "have far exceeded what my labor has earned." He elaborated that "I have satisfaction also to inform you that this vessell which arrived from M-que [Martinique] has given satisfactory first speculations—which has cleared me three thousand dollars." By 1799, his business had grown to such an extent that his father was asking for any work Samuel could not handle. "I will thank you for any business," he wrote from Boston, "that can be done without an advance, from any quarter, and by that means I may supply the family without calling on Mr. Campbell [for a loan]." When Samuel sent business in his father's direction, however, Samuel Sr. failed to carry it out successfully. A note from a London merchant to Samuel Sr. reveals the nature of his difficulties. "No part of your sugars are yet sold," the London house complained. "When sales take place they will be at very reduced prices indeed." It was a cold reassurance, but the Londoner concluded, "We have every inclination to deal gently

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<sup>7</sup>Samuel Cary to Samuel Cary, Sr., n.d.

<sup>8</sup>Mrs. Sarah Cary to Samuel Cary, November 12, 1799; Samuel Cary, Sr. to Mrs. Sarah Cary, March 15, 1797.

with you." In a move that conveyed the changing economic relationship between father and son, Samuel advanced his father £2000 to cover the debt. His father, realizing the straits into which he had fallen, pleaded with his son, "Tell me what I should do?"<sup>9</sup>

**Writing Assignment #2:** How does the father-son relationship in the Cary family reflect and complicate Ryan's analysis?

"Tell me what I should do?" Samuel Sr.'s question signaled a power shift without established precedent in the historiography of the New England family. Fathers had always known what to do. But, as Ryan claims, these were changed times. A deep tradition of small-scale, independent farming based primarily on family labor had once perpetuated a generational connection that ensured that sons would remain home and help fathers until the father unilaterally decided when he was ready for independence. To mark that critical transition, as indicated by Morgan, the father would grant his son a plot of land. For the Cary family, however, this conventional strategy disintegrated in a post-revolutionary transatlantic context. The insurrection—which caused the frequent mobility of both Samuel Sr. and his son up and down the East coast, the transference of the family farm's management to Sarah Cary, and Samuel's comparatively strong economic progress—rendered the older patriarchal ideal null and void. In its place, the Carys substituted a newly forged power balance that almost immediately situated Samuel in the patriarchal position once solidly occupied by his father.

The process was subtle and gradual, but Samuel Sr. conceded patriarchal authority to his son as his economic difficulties and patriarchal status diminished. "I am at a loss for words to convey to you my gratitude to Heaven," he wrote, "for raising up in my very dear son a Protector of the Family—as Joseph was separated from his family that he might be the saving of them, so it has pleased Heaven to give you both the inclination and the ability to support me." In a later letter, Samuel clarified that it was in actuality the entire family that depended on his economic support. "You have," he wrote, "not only our sincere thanks for your care of us, but our sincere prayers for your happiness and prosperity." While a father might have said these words to his son throughout the colonial period, he would have done so after having granted him land. Samuel Sr. continued, "On you therefore do my family depend. Under you they must grow up. To you do they look, feel safe ... should anything happen to you, we are undone." The praise poured forth in a non-stop stream of effusion over the next several years. "It is hard to be so long deprived of your company but your being in West Indies has saved the family," Samuel Sr. wrote in March 1802. This letter only echoed the one he had written the previous spring: "to you we are indebted for our place and situation ... we have no wants my dear son." Just in case there was any doubt about who now

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<sup>9</sup>Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, September 30, 1799; John Campbell to Samuel Cary, Sr., April 4, 1799.



called the family's financial shots, Samuel Sr. assured his son that "there is not anything you propose that I shall not agree to." As father and son's material fortunes moved in opposite directions, familial responsibilities slowly shifted to Samuel.<sup>10</sup>

### Primary Reading Assignment #3: The Cary Letters, 1798-1807

This final batch of letters allows students to finally grapple with the big question of education. With father's patriarchal authority diminished (as Ryan predicts) by the expansion of opportunity in the rising transatlantic market (as Appleby explains), the traditional educational arrangement endemic to the colonial family (developed by Morgan) crumbled. As they approach this last group of letters students should ask what the Cary family did to compensate for the disintegration of this traditional arrangement.

By the late 1790s, Samuel Sr.'s increasingly dismal economic situation, his lengthy dislocation in Grenada, Sarah's assumption of the family farm's operation, young Samuel's economic success, and his personal desire to keep tabs on his siblings' educational progress made him the most logical choice to assume this role. "If [Lucius] comes," Samuel wrote enthusiastically, "I shall find great use in him."<sup>11</sup> Historically speaking, this arrangement was an ephemeral but necessary solution to a new problem. Throughout the colonial era, as we have seen, the vast majority of New England families worked in environments that reinforced the paternalistic authority that Samuel Sr. had lost in an expanding, proto-industrial economic world. The family farm—the most fundamental unit of social and economic life in early America—supported an internal hierarchy whereby fathers and mothers structured the lives of sons and daughters. Sons' beholden to the logic of inheritance, worked the land to someday own a piece of it. Within this time-honored tradition, education and patriarchal authority thrived in a symbiotic relationship.

The Cary family lost this conventional domestic stability after the demise of the Grenada plantation. Their changed economic circumstances, while unique in their particular details, characterized the lives of many New England families involved in an increasingly industrial economy. The ultimate answer for most families to the educational dilemma engendered by a compromised domestic patriarchy was, as Carl Kaestle has shown, the common school.<sup>12</sup> However, as the common school had yet to emerge, families in the 1790s and early 1800s had no choice but to improvise educational strategies that bridged the gap between an unbound patriarchy and a nascent school system. Samuel, in a sense, became that bridge.

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<sup>10</sup>Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, December 20, 1799; Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, August 8, 1800; Samuel Cary, Sr. to Samuel Cary, March 30, 1802.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel Cary to Samuel Cary, Sr., January 6, 1797.

<sup>12</sup>Carl Kaestle, *The Evolution of the Urban School System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

"I beg to know," he wrote, "if you could spare Lucius—if so send him on ... enclosed is thirty dollars for his expense." Immediately after Samuel Sr. returned from Grenada, Samuel exercised his increasing paternalistic authority to bring his brother Lucius into his St. Christopher merchant house. He assured his parents, "I pay great attention to what you say of his disposition and shall govern myself in my behavior towards him." In case there was any doubt about Samuel's preparedness to educate his brother, he continued, "I have a pretty good idea of the extent of his abilities, and shall have nothing for him to do which he will not in a very short time be able to comprehend." "What I know he shall know," Samuel went on, adding, "as he comes into my hands so much better shall he go out." His parents, after some deliberation, approved. "You tell us ... that you shall not only be able to fix yourself in business, but assist your brother," they claimed. "This is acting the part of a good son and Heaven will doubtless reward you for it."<sup>13</sup>

Life for Lucius under his brother's care began poorly, but his situation slowly improved. "I believe I can now say something," he wrote to his mother, "for the last time I wrote you I was so very homesick that I could scarcely do anything." The days were long and tedious. He explained, "I now get up in the morning, eat my breakfast, and open store. My brother comes down about eleven, and we go about business till one, when we go to dinner and come back at two; at night we shut up store and go home. Now I call this a very lonesome life." In case his mother missed the extent of his misery, he added, "Many a wretched afternoon have I spent since I came here till I almost fretted myself to death." Signs of hope, however, were on the horizon. "I every day receive fresh instances of kindness from my brother," Lucius wrote. "He behaves more like a father than a brother."<sup>14</sup>

Lucius clearly looked up to his brother as if he were in fact a father, thereby assuming the emotional disposition that traditionally bound fathers and sons into successful working relationships. "I would give the world," he explained to his mother, "to see what Sam says about me, so make little extracts from his letters and serve them to me, good or bad." Lucius had trouble with his assignments early on, but eventually he began to develop confidence in his ability to prepare financial reports, correspond with Samuel's clients, and meet detailed orders. His father suggested to Samuel, after Samuel had complained about Lucius's inexperience: "I wish you would let Lucius make a letter-book of a quire or two of paper, give your letters to him to copy and let him send me copies." The advice seemed to work. Soon Samuel Sr. was regularly expressing pleasure in Lucius' progress. "If the whole of Lucius' [report] is his," he wrote after

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<sup>13</sup>Samuel Cary to Samuel Cary, Sr., November 23, 1798; Samuel Cary to Samuel Cary, Jr., January 6, 1797.

<sup>14</sup>Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, February 2, 1797; Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, January 23, 1797; Lucius Cary to Mrs. Samuel Cary, February 8, 1797.

receiving a merchant package from Lucius, "tell him I am exceedingly pleased with it and make no doubt, from his attention, he will be a man of business." By 1803, Lucius's dispatches revealed a comfortable fluency with his work. In a typical dispatch he explained, "The rum is safely landed and according to your desire put into the hands of Mr. Codman ... I thought it most prudent immediately upon my arrival here to write Ross and Co. ... I hope my letter [will] be received in time to save insurance."<sup>15</sup>

In 1799, the brothers moved the business to the island of St. Pierre. "My brother," Lucius reported to his mother, "has been much unsettled these several months, and is not yet quite fixed at St. Pierre." He was prepared to wait patiently, however, as "I shall have many more opportunities making money than I ever should." By the summer after the move to St. Pierre, Lucius was able to report with considerable pride that "my brother has become a [merchant] housekeeper." Much as sons followed their fathers' occupations, Lucius, raised under his brother's apprenticeship, followed Samuel. "I assure you," he wrote his mother, "I know no one single occupation in which I could be more happy or more contented than in my present one." Samuel seemed to think that maybe his brother was warming up to his job too comfortably. He wrote his mother, "One request I wish to make to you ... is that amongst all the good advice you give your son you will not do him such an injury as to deem him to imitate me and make me his model." All other evidence suggests, however, that Lucius was doing just that. The apprenticeship lasted, as was customary, about seven years.<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

Situating *Inheriting the Revolution* in the context of two other secondary sources and a primary source adds a manageable layer of complexity to the process of historical investigation. The interplay between secondary and primary sources comes alive as students examine how the Cary letters both confirm and challenge established historical interpretations. Rather than remaining once removed from the process of historical interpretation, students are able to participate directly in the same process in which the authors engaged. The entire project of making sense of the past thus becomes more active, creative, and ultimately, I hope, more relevant.

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<sup>15</sup>Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, February 8, 1797; Lucius Cary to Samuel Cary, Sr., September 23, 1803.

<sup>16</sup>Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, December 3, 1799; Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, July 3, 1799; Lucius Cary to Mrs. Sarah Cary, October 4, 1799.