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Soldiers in Peace and War: Comparative Perspectives on the Recruitment of the United States Army, 1802–1815

J.C.A. Stagg

FOR the past thirty years, historians have been investigating the social origins of the men who served in the armed forces during the formative years of the United States, from the beginning of the Seven Years' War in 1756 to the end of the second war with Great Britain in 1815. Much of this literature, starting with John Shy's essay about the nature of the colonial militias and culminating in Charles Patrick Neimeyer's social history of the Continental army, has been organized as a sustained assault on the long-accepted notion that the sturdy yeoman farmer and the independent skilled artisan constituted the backbone of America's military efforts during this period.¹ In place of this apparently mythical view of the new nation's fighting men, a widely held belief now posits that the armed forces of late colonial and early national America were drawn overwhelmingly from the youngest, the poorest, and the most marginal members of America's communities, including significant numbers of minorities, particularly recent immigrants and also many blacks.²

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¹ John Shy, "A New Look at Colonial Militia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 20 (1963), 175–85; Charles Patrick Neimeyer, *America Goes to War: A Social History of the Continental Army* (New York, 1996), esp. 15–27. For historiographical surveys of this "new military history," see E. Wayne Carp, "Early American Military History: A Review of Recent Work," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 94 (1986), 259–84; Edward M. Coffman, "The New American Military History," *Military Affairs*, 48 (1984), 1–5; Peter Karsten, "The 'New' American Military History: A Map of Territory, Explored and Unexplored," *American Quarterly*, 36 (1984), 389–418; Richard H. Kohn, "The Social History of the American Soldier: A Review and Prospectus for Research," *American Historical Review*, 86 (1981), 553–67; and Reginald C. Stuart, "'Engines of Tyranny': Recent Historiography on Standing Armies During the Era of the American Revolution," *Canadian Journal of History/Annales Canadiennes d'Histoire*, 19 (1984), 183–99.

² The bibliography is now large. A selection of the more relevant titles is Gregory T. Knouff, "'An Arduous Service': The Pennsylvania Backcountry Soldiers' Revolution,"

Only a few scholars have sought to question or to qualify the details of this argument. Fred Anderson and Harold E. Selesky found that New England troops in the Seven Years' War were representative of their society at large and that it was their youth rather than any lack of social respectability that explained their availability for service. If they were poor in the sense that they possessed little personal or real property, it was largely a temporary condition. In the fullness of time, and often with the assistance of bounties earned from military service, most of these young men did attain the status of respectable artisans and farmers.³ John Ferling suggested that Virginians who served in the same conflict were probably not a representative cross-section of the colony's young adult white males inasmuch as the regiments contained greater numbers of artisans and immigrants than could be found in most Virginia communities at that time. Yet Ferling also doubted that either these men or others in the ranks—largely planters and farmers—were drawn from truly

Pennsylvania History, 61 (1994), 45–74; Allan Kulikoff, "The Political Economy of Military Service in Revolutionary Virginia," in *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (Charlottesville, 1992), 152–80; Mark Edward Lender, "The Enlisted Line: The Continental Soldiers of New Jersey" (Ph. D. diss., Rutgers University, 1975), 110–27, "The Mind of the Rank and File: Patriotism and Motivation in the Continental Line," in William C. Wright, ed., *New Jersey in the American Revolution III* (Trenton, 1976), 21–34, and "The Social Structure of the New Jersey Brigade: The Continental Line as an American Brigade," in Karsten, ed., *The Military in America: From the Colonial Era to the Present* (New York, 1980), 27–44; Joseph A. Goldenberg, Eddie D. Nelson, and Rita Y. Fletcher, "Revolutionary Ranks: An Analysis of the Chesterfield Supplement," *VMHB*, 87 (1979), 182–89; Edward C. Papenfuss and Gregory A. Stiverson, "General Smallwood's Recruits: The Peacetime Career of the Revolutionary War Private," *WMQ*, 30 (1973), 117–32; John R. Sellers, "The Common Soldier in the American Revolution," in Stanley J. Underdal, ed., *Military History of the American Revolution: The Proceedings of the Sixth Military History Symposium, USAF Academy . . .* (Washington, D. C., 1976), 151–61; Shy, "Hearts and Minds in the American Revolution: The Case of 'Long Bill' Scott and Peterborough, New Hampshire," in *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for Independence* (New York, 1976), 163–80; William B. Skelton, "The Confederation's Regulars: A Social Profile of Enlisted Service in America's First Standing Army," *WMQ*, 46 (1989), 770–85; R. S. Stephenson, "Pennsylvania Provincial Soldiers in the Seven Years' War," *Pa. Hist.*, 62 (1995), 196–212; John B. B. Trussell, Jr., *The Pennsylvania Line: Regimental Organization and Operations, 1776–1783* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1977), 46–47, 67–68, 115, 154–55, 200–01, 223, 243–56, and *Birthplace of an Army: A Study of the Valley Forge Encampment* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1983), 77–79; John R. Van Atta, "Conscription in Revolutionary Virginia: The Case of Culpeper County, 1780–1781," *VMHB*, 92 (1984), 263–81; and Matthew C. Ward, "An Army of Servants: The Pennsylvania Regiment during the Seven Years' War," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 119 (1995), 75–93. Also important and useful is Harold E. Selesky, *A Demographic Survey of the Continental Army that Wintered at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1777–1778* (New Haven, 1987).

³ Anderson, "A People's Army: Provincial Military Service in Massachusetts during the Seven Years' War," *WMQ*, 40 (1983), 499–527, and *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill, 1984), 26–62; Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven, 1990), 166–94.

unskilled, impoverished, or destitute "misfits" of the province. He concluded that Virginia's soldiers may have been "far more representative" of the colony's society than had been realized.⁴ And in the case of regular army enlistees in the War of 1812, I have argued that although many of them had experienced difficult social and economic conditions, they, too, could not be rightly described as belonging to an underclass of the permanently disadvantaged. They came, instead, from the broader spectrum of men in the ordinary and largely respectable occupations of the society of the early republic. Groups such as blacks, laborers, and immigrants were not unusually conspicuous in the United States army during the "second war for independence."⁵

The purpose of this article is neither to perpetuate nor to resolve whatever disputes may still exist about which social groups made up a majority of America's armed forces at any particular time between 1756 and 1815. Rather, it is to place the issue in the different perspective that can be derived from a comparison of the social origins of men who enlisted in the army either for peacetime service or for war during the years from 1802 to 1815. Justification for this comparison rests on the assumption that peacetime armies and wartime armies are two different sorts of institution and that their differences are of sufficient importance to warrant more scholarly attention than they usually receive. In this context, the customary emphasis found in military history on the composition and conduct of armies in war needs to be balanced by a greater amount of research devoted to the social structure and behavior of armies in peace. Relatively few military historians have studied these latter topics in any depth, but when they have done so their findings have often improved our general understanding of how military institutions work, not only in peace but also in war.⁶

Differences in the organization and function of peacetime and wartime forces can be found easily enough in early modern era armies between 1689 and 1815. Stated simply, these differences arose from the lack of attention or effort peacetime armies gave to preparing for the next war, usually because they were assigned to duties of a nonmilitary nature and organized in ways that conflicted with the requirements of training

⁴ Ferling, "Soldiers for Virginia: Who Served in the French and Indian War?" *VMHB*, 94 (1986), 307-28.

⁵ J.C.A. Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army, 1812-1815: A Preliminary Survey," *WMQ*, 43 (1986), 615-45.

⁶ Three important studies that rest on an understanding of the differences between peacetime and wartime armies are Richard Glover, *Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809* (Cambridge, 1963); J. A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (Oxford, 1981); and Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton, 1965).

for battle. Regiments were not necessarily disbanded, but they were effectively broken up by the dispersal of their component companies across large geographical areas in order to employ men on non-combat-related tasks, including the maintenance of civil order and the enforcement of unpopular laws, especially revenue laws. Soldiers in peacetime also often engaged in menial pursuits of a fatiguing and tedious nature ranging from farming, foraging, and cutting wood, on the one hand, to laboring and construction projects, such as making and mending roads and erecting fortifications, posts, and other public buildings, on the other hand. These practices were followed repeatedly by the British army in periods of peace in the eighteenth century, and by the early nineteenth century similar routines had emerged in the infant United States army as well.⁷

With respect to the social origins of men who join armies, it is important to inquire whether the typically limited amount of recruiting undertaken by armies in peace gave rise to social formations that were observably different from those produced by the more extensive mobilizations for war. Peacetime recruiting, to the extent that it occurred, was often confined to maintaining the ranks at a level specified after the conclusion of the last war. Recruiting for war, by contrast, normally required an expansion of the ranks and might even include recourse to a draft. Methods of voluntary recruitment, however, did not change between peace and war; their scale was merely extended on the latter occasions to enable an army to take in larger numbers of the adult male population than it would otherwise have done. That being the case, historians interested in the social composition of the rank and file should explore the possibility that men who were prepared to rally to the flag for combat might not have been much attracted to military service in peace. They should also consider how far the opposite might have been true—that some men were willing to carry out the peacetime, or nonmil-

⁷ See Houlding, *Fit for Service*, 1-98, 388-95, and Shy, *Toward Lexington*, 358-74. See also Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London, 1987), 130-31, and Arthur N. Gilbert, "A Tale of Two Regiments: Manpower and Effectiveness in British Military Units during the Napoleonic Wars," *Armed Forces and Society*, 9 (1983), 277-79. For the U. S. army, see James Ripley Jacobs, *The Beginnings of the U. S. Army 1783-1812* (Princeton, 1947), 244-45; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783-1846* (New York, 1969), 169-92; and Norman Caldwell, "The Enlisted Soldier at the Frontier Post, 1790-1814," *Mid-America*, 37 (1955), 195-204. Even at the most tense period in Anglo-American relations before the War of 1812—the Embargo crisis of 1807-1809—the U. S. army was not placed on a war footing, and many of its troops were used instead to assist customs collectors in enforcing trade restrictions; see Theodore J. Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army: Political and Social Reform of the Military Establishment, 1801-1809* (New York, 1987), 176-79. For an unpublished study that grasps the importance of placing early American military history in a transnational dimension, see James D. Scudieri, "The Continentals: A Comparative Analysis of a Late Eighteenth-Century Standing Army, 1775-1783" (Ph. D. diss., City University of New York, 1993).

itary, duties of an army without having any interest in acquiring the honor and glory of war by risking the hardships of campaigning.⁸

These differences between peacetime and wartime military service are not trivial. They go to the heart of the purposes of an army. The imagery and symbolism projected by a peacetime army of the early modern era as it went about its nonmilitary duties frequently stood in sharp and unflattering contrast to the public displays of pageantry and patriotism that could surround the same force in war. Depending on the circumstances, therefore, armies in peace and war could generate quite different sets of emotional and practical responses to their presence in the communities they served, and those varying responses might well have produced differences in peacetime and wartime recruiting patterns.⁹ Yet military historians have neglected this aspect of their subject. Instead, in their efforts to identify the social groups that have borne the burden of service in war, they have produced a body of scholarship that overlooks the significance of the differences between peace and war establishments. For that reason, if for no other, studies of the social origins of America's armed forces should pay as much regard to the nature of the military service into which the recruits entered as they do to the structure of the society in which the recruiting occurred.

Applying these considerations to the study of armies in early America is far from easy. Unlike the nations of Europe, where standing armies had long been part of the institutional landscape, the American colonies and the United States were slow to develop comparable military organizations that can be investigated with a view to understanding questions of conti-

⁸ Two anecdotal cases, admittedly from the War of 1812, demonstrate this point. William Garwin and Isaac Hubble, privates in the 25th Infantry and 29th Infantry, respectively, attempted to defend themselves, albeit unsuccessfully, against charges of desertion in 1814 and 1815 on the grounds that at the time of their enlistment, they had been promised by their officers that they would perform no duties other than those associated with their trades. Garwin was a cooper; Hubble a ship's carpenter. They both deserted after having been ordered to carry out the duties of a soldier; Court Martial Case Files, 1809-1894, A-9 and H-5, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General, Record Group 153, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

⁹ For an understanding of the importance of the image projected by an army and its role in shaping public perceptions of military service, see the discussions of the British army in Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992), 285-308; J. E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997), 95-125; Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), 53-66; and Gillian Russell, *The Theatres of War: Performance, Politics, and Society, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1995), 15-25. Shy, *Toward Lexington*, 140-48, also documents how the attitudes of colonial Americans toward the British army could fluctuate according to circumstances. For yet another discussion of how different social groups could arrive at different understandings of the meaning of military service, see André Corvisier, *L'Armée Française de la Fin du XVIIe Siècle au Ministère de Choiseul: Le Soldat*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964), 1:81-100.

nuity and change in army life through times of peace and war. In the years between 1756 and 1789, the several American colonies and states, and the Confederation Congress as well, all created a widely assorted array of temporary armies according to the needs of the moment. They then discarded these armies as soon as the moment had passed.¹⁰ None of these forces had a lengthy or stable institutional life, not even the Continental army of the Revolutionary War.¹¹ At the end of the Revolution in 1783, Congress simply disbanded the Continental lines and relied for the remainder of the decade on state militia and a small regiment of three-year recruits for its occasional military needs.

Not until the 1790s did an American version of the European standing or regular army begin to emerge in a recognizable form and with an administrative staff that could make and preserve detailed personnel records.¹² Unfortunately, though, most of the records for the United States army in the first decade of its existence were destroyed by fire in 1800.¹³ As a consequence, only after the turn of the nineteenth century, when Thomas Jefferson's administrations reformed and consolidated the various Federalist military forces of the 1790s into the Peace Establishment of March 1802 and then went on to create the Additional Military Force of April 1808 during the Embargo crisis, do sufficient bodies of evidence survive that permit historians to address the question of continuity and change in the social composition of an early American army in any degree of depth and detail.

The example of the Jeffersonian military establishments thus promises to be instructive. To date, historians know next to nothing

¹⁰ Two introductions to the history of early American war making are Don Higginbotham, "The Early American Way of War: Reconnaissance and Appraisal," *WMQ*, 44 (1987), 230-73, and E. Wayne Carp, "The Problem of National Defense in the Early American Republic," in Jack P. Greene, ed., *The American Revolution: Its Character and Limits* (New York, 1987), 14-50.

¹¹ For the argument that the Continental army perpetuated many colonial military practices even as it endeavored to emulate those of a European standing army, see Robert K. Wright, Jr., "'Nor Is Their Standing Army to be Despised': The Emergence of the Continental Army as a Military Institution," in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Arms and Independence: The Military Character of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, 1984), 50-74. Scudieri, "The Continentals," 380-401, by contrast, emphasizes the success of the Continental army in conforming to the norms governing European armies in the same period.

¹² See Richard H. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1802* (New York, 1975), and James Kirby Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763-1789* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1982).

¹³ The Papers of the War Department, 1784-1800, a project headed by Theodore Crackel at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, is currently reconstituting the surviving military records for the period between the end of the Revolution and the beginning of the 19th century in order to improve our knowledge of the formative years of the U. S. army.

about the social origins of the enlistees,¹⁴ even though it is generally understood that the Jefferson administration, as early as 1802, tried to “republicanize” the ranks by shifting the sources of their recruitment away from urban areas and toward the rural population of the nation.¹⁵ Whether that policy was successful has never been determined by historians, but the records for addressing this question, as well as many others about the social history of the early nineteenth-century army, have long been readily available. The twenty-six manuscript volumes preserved in the Office of the Adjutant General (Record Group 94) in the National Archives in Washington, D. C., under the title “Records of Men Enlisted in the U. S. Army prior to the Peace Establishment, May 17, 1815” contain the names of 5,086 men who enlisted for the regular service between March 1802 and December 1811 in both the Peace Establishment and the Additional Military Force. Accompanying each name are varying amounts of personal and service data, and this information can provide the basis for the first comprehensive analysis ever made of the enlisted men in the United States army between the end of the Quasi-War with France and the era of the War of 1812.¹⁶

Furthermore, the social profiles of these peacetime recruits can be compared with those of the men who followed them into the regular army during the period of recruiting for the War of 1812, from January

¹⁴ For some fragmentary, impressionistic data, suggesting that recruits in the early 19th century were from “the bottom rung of society” and consisted largely of the unskilled, the illiterate, and immigrants, see Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784–1898* (New York, 1986), 16–17.

¹⁵ In issuing recruiting instructions at the end of 1802, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn stated that, in making his selection of recruiting posts, he had avoided “large seaport towns from a conviction that soldiers recruited in those places are inferior to those recruited in country places, and much more frequently desert”; Dearborn to Thomas Cushing, Dec. 24, 1802, in *Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs*, Record Group 107, National Archives. For discussions of Jefferson’s efforts to “republicanize” the officer corps, see Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson’s Army*, 36–97, and “Jefferson, Politics, and the Army: An Examination of the Military Peace Establishment Act of 1802,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 2 (1982), 21–38; and Donald Jackson, “Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis, and the Reduction of the United States Army,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 124 (1980), 91–96.

¹⁶ For the contents and organization of this source, see Stagg, “Enlisted Men in the United States Army,” 617–18 and notes 7, 8. These registers record, in varying degrees of completeness, 15 categories of information about the recruits, their service careers, personal characteristics, and social backgrounds. There are some “additional remarks” about desertion, punishment, and sickness for each recruit. For the 5,086 men enlisted between 1802 and 1811, the data in these categories, including the degree of completeness in each category, are: rank (4,347, 85.5%); regiment (4,438, 87.3%); height (2,387, 46.9%); eye color (2,355, 46.3%); hair color (2,333, 45.9%); skin color (2,364, 46.5%); age (2,283, 44.9%); occupation (2,296, 45.1%); place of birth (2,179, 42.8%); date of enlistment (4,056, 79.7%); place of enlistment (1,648, 32.4%).

1812 through February 1815. This comparison uses the data derived from a systematic sample of every tenth man who enlisted in the United States army during the war, taken from the same source as that containing the data on the peacetime recruits, and the procedure of drawing the sample produced a population of 6,370 cases.¹⁷ In combination, these two data sets yield a total population of 11,456 cases drawn from the enlistment records across the years from 1802 to 1815, and the two groups of recruits can then be compared with respect to the various categories of service and personal data recorded about them by their enlisting officers.

The comparisons of these peacetime and wartime forces show that, although they were alike in some respects, their differences were as numerous and occasionally more striking than their similarities. If their constituent groups overlapped at some points, they diverged widely at others. These differences, in turn, throw new light on long-standing questions about what sort of men might choose the life of a soldier in peace and in war. In view of recent historiography on the social composition of the early American armed forces, the findings generated by the comparisons are illuminating, perhaps even paradoxical. The recruits who entered the army in times of peace were almost certainly poorer and more marginal socially than most of the men who joined the force to fight in the War of 1812, so much so, in fact, that the data might even support the conclusion that the peacetime and wartime armies of the early republican era were made up of two distinguishably different bodies of men. The results of these same comparisons also confirm the argument that it is misleading to assume that early national America's first major war between 1812 and 1815 was fought largely by the poorest and most disadvantaged men in its communities.

What sorts of men did join the United States army in the first decade of the nineteenth century? During the years of peace between 1802 and 1811, slightly more than four-fifths (81.0 percent) of the recruits were native-born Americans, and the remainder (19.0 percent) were immigrants. More than two-fifths (42.7 percent) of the native-born men gave their birthplaces as being in the South Atlantic states; slightly less

¹⁷ For a description of the systematic sample of 6,370 cases taken from the enlistments between January 1812 and February 1815, see Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 619. For the purposes of comparing this sample of War of 1812 recruits with the total population of the 5,086 men enlisted between 1802 and 1811, this article assumes that the size of the sample drawn for the wartime soldiers is more than large enough to represent accurately the variability of that population. For a discussion of the relationship between the size of a sample and the degrees of confidence that can be placed in samples of various sizes, see Hubert M. Blalock, Jr., *Social Statistics*, 2d ed. (New York, 1972), 156-73, 177-88, 219-41.

than one-fourth (23.7 percent) did the same for New England; and less than one-third (30.7 percent) hailed from the Middle Atlantic region. The western states and territories provided only a fraction (2.9 percent) of these native-born men (see Table I). The men who enlisted between 1812 and 1815 were slightly more likely to have been native-born (86.9 percent) and slightly less likely to have been immigrants (13.1 percent). The birthplaces of the native-born wartime recruits, however, were far more evenly distributed among the major geographical regions of the nation than were those of the peacetime men. The New England, the Middle Atlantic, and the South Atlantic regions each accounted for approximately one-third of their places of origin (33.1 percent, 31.3 percent, and 32.9 percent, respectively). In war as in peace, though, the western states and territories contributed only a small number (2.7 percent) of these native-born men.¹⁸

How can we account for the differences in the regional origins of the recruits? A variety of factors can be adduced, but for the most part they merely reflect the respective military priorities of the Jefferson and Madison administrations. Even at the outset of Jefferson's two presidential terms, the army's troops had been distributed in greater numbers along the southern and western frontiers of the nation than they had been along the border shared with the Canadian colonies of Great Britain.¹⁹ The Louisiana Purchase of 1803, together with the subsequent problems of providing for the security of New Orleans and the western country generally, served only to reinforce this concentration of military effort along the southern and southwestern frontiers.²⁰ It should come as no surprise, therefore, that regiments originally recruited in the southern and western regions and based there during their service should also have continued to draw recruits from these sections. After 1812, the shift northward in the birthplaces of the recruits reflected both the policy of the Madison administration to raise additional forces for the conquest of Canada and the corresponding need for the army to establish new recruiting districts closer to the major population centers of the nation.²¹

Immigrants have often contributed significantly to America's wartime forces, but between 1802 and 1815 the peacetime army contained

¹⁸ Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 625-28.

¹⁹ Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army*, 100.

²⁰ Ibid., 101-10, 124-57. See also Mary P. Adams, "Jefferson's Military Policy, with Special Reference to the Frontier, 1805-1809," (Ph. D. diss., University of Virginia, 1958), esp. 215-24.

²¹ For a discussion of how these considerations also affected the distribution of officer appointments, see Skelton, "High Army Leadership in the Era of the War of 1812: The Making and Remaking of the Officer Corps," *WMQ*, 51 (1994), 255-58. For a brief account of recruiting for war in 1812, see Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830* (Princeton, 1983), 169-76.

TABLE I
BIRTHPLACES OF NATIVE-BORN RECRUITS, 1802-1811.

<i>Place</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Massachusetts	193	11.0
New Hampshire	62	3.5
Vermont	22	1.2
Connecticut	122	7.0
Rhode Island	19	1.0
TOTAL	418	23.7
New York	147	8.4
New Jersey	84	4.8
Pennsylvania	308	17.5
TOTAL	539	30.7
Delaware	25	1.4
Maryland	154	8.8
Virginia	317	18.1
North Carolina	160	9.1
South Carolina	66	3.8
Georgia	26	1.5
TOTAL	748	42.7
Ohio	3	0.2
Kentucky	13	0.7
Tennessee	21	1.2
District of Columbia and Territories	14	0.8
TOTAL	51	2.9
GRAND TOTAL	1,756	100.0

a higher percentage of foreign-born men than its wartime counterpart (19.0 percent as opposed to 13.1 percent). In both peace and war, most of the immigrant recruits were Irish (61.0 percent in the peace establishments, 52.7 percent in the wartime army). Other British-born recruits, including those from Canada, as well as men born in France and Germany, were inducted in roughly the same proportions into the force before the war as they were throughout its duration (see Table II).²² As

²² British-born recruits between 1812 and 1815, including those born in Canada but excluding men from Ireland, amounted to 21.1% of the number of immigrants enlisted. Men born in France and Germany contributed 6.9% and 9.2%, respectively, of the wartime immigrant recruits; Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 628.

TABLE II
BIRTHPLACES OF FOREIGN-BORN RECRUITS, 1802-1811.

<i>Place</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
England	42	9.9
Scotland	15	3.5
Ireland	258	61.0
Great Britain	3	0.7
France	14	3.4
Holland	8	1.9
Switzerland	3	0.7
Germany	41	9.7
Poland	4	0.9
Russia	1	0.2
Sweden	1	0.2
Spain	2	0.5
Italy	5	1.2
Canada	19	4.5
Others (West Indies)	7	1.7
TOTAL	423	100.0

the best estimate available for the number of immigrants in the population in 1810 is 11.1 percent, this datum suggests that immigrants were over-represented in the peacetime army but not necessarily so in the wartime force.²³ The most significant question posed by these figures is why the peacetime army was more heavily immigrant, and especially more heavily Irish, than the wartime army. That matter might seem all the more puzzling because the legislation governing the 1802 Peace Establishment and the 1808 Additional Military Force stipulated that "citizens" only should be enlisted, whereas the laws for the forces after 1812 permitted the recruitment of "effective able-bodied men" without regard to their citizenship.²⁴ If nothing else, the percentage of immigrants in the

²³ For the estimate of 11.1% as the number of immigrants in the population in 1810, see J. Potter, "The Growth of Population in America, 1700-1860," in D. V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley, eds., *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography* (London, 1965), 666-67. The argument that immigrants were not necessarily over-represented in the wartime army is based on Kohn's reminder that immigrants in the ranks, when compared with the number of immigrants *of the same age* in the population, may not be as over-represented as the figures might suggest; Kohn, "The Social History of the American Soldier," 557.

²⁴ For the sections of the military laws governing recruiting before 1812, see Richard Peters, comp., *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, 17 vols. (Boston, 1848-73), 2:135, 482-83.

Jeffersonian establishments reveals that the citizenship requirements of the laws were not strictly enforced before their removal in 1812.²⁵

Fluctuations in British, particularly Irish, immigration help explain the pattern of ethnic recruiting. Irish migration to America had been at a high level during the second half of the eighteenth century, with a final peak occurring in the years 1800–1802 when as many as 15,000 persons may have arrived.²⁶ Thereafter, the resumption of war in Europe in 1803, followed by effective British enforcement of the Passenger Act of the same year, sharply reduced Irish migration to the United States.²⁷ The recruiting of British regiments in Ireland also absorbed a significant number of potential Irish male immigrants, and to the extent that migration patterns followed the flow of commerce, the frequent disruptions of Anglo-American trade between 1807 and 1815, coupled with the practice of impressment by the Royal navy, undoubtedly reduced still further the numbers of Irish men reaching the New World.²⁸ Possibly, too, some British-born emigrants, including the Irish, were more hesitant to enlist after 1812 when the act of enlistment would have amounted to a deliberate decision to take up arms against the nation of their birth and its sovereign.

²⁵ The War Department did not issue recruiting instructions that contradicted the provisions of the law. Officers were commanded to examine recruits for proof of age, health, and American citizenship, and they were also to insure that the men were free from bodily defects that might impair their ability to perform military service, including such habits as intoxication. Nor were men supposed to be enlisted under the influence of "Spirituos Liqueurs"; see, for example, "Directions to the Recruiting Officers," May 7, 1807, in Letters Sent by the Secretary of War, National Archives. At the same time, though, the department did condone the enlistment of non-citizens. As Adjutant General Thomas Cushing pointed out in a July 23, 1803, letter to Lieut. Col. Constant Freeman, while Cushing knew the law contemplated the enlistment of citizens only, he read that to mean that the law did not expressly forbid the recruitment of non-citizens provided "they can give sufficient evidence of character to entitle them to confidence." Cushing added that he would be "strongly inclined" to enlist immigrants if there was little "reasonable expectation of keeping up the Corps by enlisting citizens only"; Letters Sent by the Office of the Adjutant General, Record Group 94, National Archives.

²⁶ Patrick J. Blessing, "Irish Emigration to the United States, 1800–1920: An Overview," in P. J. Drudy, ed., *The Irish in America: Emigration, Assimilation and Impact* (Cambridge, 1985), 17; Louis M. Cullen, "The Irish Diaspora," in Nicholas Canny, ed., *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500–1800* (Oxford, 1994), 143–49; Maldwyn A. Jones, "Ulster Emigration, 1783–1815," in E.R.R. Green, ed., *Essays in Scotch-Irish History*, 2d ed. (Belfast, 1992), 46–48; and Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York, 1985), 169–92.

²⁷ The purpose of the 1803 Passenger Act was to restrict the number of persons leaving Great Britain on board non-British (i.e., American) ships. For its effectiveness, see Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, "European Immigration to the United States in the Early National Period, 1783–1820," *APS Proc.*, 133 (1989), 204–11.

²⁸ For the extent to which the British Army was heavily dependent for manpower on the "Celtic fringes" of Ireland and Scotland, see Cookson, *British Armed Nation*, 126–81.

Inspectors Office, West Town St^d
23^d July 1803.

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 10th instant with the several Returns &c for June.

You must exercise your own judgment as to the admission or rejection of foreigners as recruits—The law seems to contemplate the admission of none but Citizens, but it does not expressly exclude foreigners, and when such men offer, if they can give sufficient evidence of Character to entitle them to confidence, I should be strongly inclined to enlist them; and particularly, if so situated, as to exclude a reasonable expectation of keeping up the corps, by enlisting Citizens only.

I am not authorized to decide on the sergeants claim for expenses, and presume that this, like all other contingent claims, must be sent to the Accountant of the War Department for Settlement.

Captain Nicoll has been premature in Returning Mr Cobb promoted,

FIGURE I

Army policy on enlisting immigrants. Thomas Cushing to Lt. Col. Constant Freeman, July 23, 1803, in Letters Sent by the Office of the Adjutant General. Courtesy, National Archives of the United States.

British-born immigrants who enlisted before 1812 might not have regarded the decision to join an American army in quite so serious a light.²⁹

As for other minorities, particularly blacks, it is difficult to identify them and ascertain their numbers. Even so, there were far fewer black men in the United States army between 1802 and 1815 than there had been in the Continental army during the American Revolution when both free blacks and slaves served in the ranks and when perhaps as many as 10 percent of the men in some brigades may have been of African-American descent.³⁰ For a variety of reasons related to fear of rebellion

²⁹ Although it is impossible to quantify the political attitudes of Irish emigrants, it is incorrect to assume that all Irish coming to America were united by hostility to Great Britain. There were serious antagonisms among the various groups of Irish, be they Protestant, Roman Catholic, Ulstermen, or tradesmen from southeastern Ireland, and a minority, at least, of these migrants retained conservative attitudes of loyalty to the British crown; see Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 190–92, and David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, 1998), 47, 56, 67, 87.

³⁰ See Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 82–85, and Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1961), ix, 68–93.

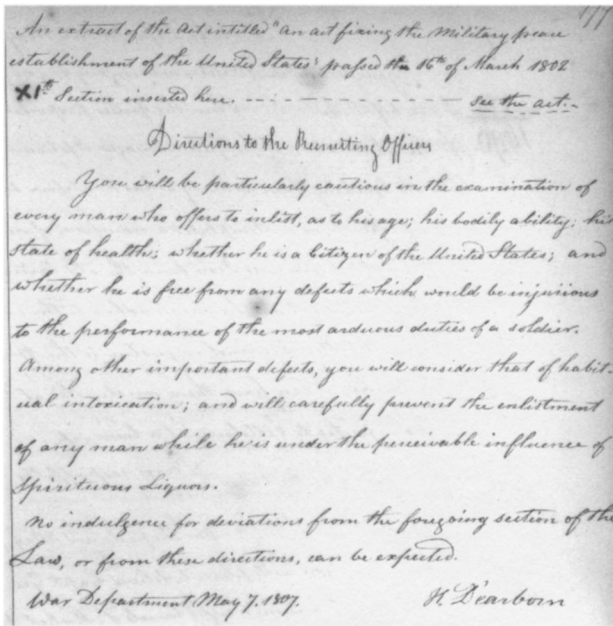


FIGURE II

Recruiting instructions, May 7, 1807, in Letters Sent by the Office of the Secretary of War. Courtesy, National Archives of the United States.

and the need to protect property rights, the regulations of the United States army did not countenance the enlistment of slaves, while the absence of an explicit definition of national citizenship in a federal system also left unclear how far it was possible to recruit free blacks.³¹ Substantial numbers of free blacks lived in the southern states—more than 100,000 according to the 1810 census—and before 1812 a handful of them *might* have been enlisted despite the citizenship requirements of the military laws.³² In states where slavery had been abolished or was in the

³¹ The separate jurisdictions of the state and federal governments made for ambiguity and confusion about many aspects of the legal status of free blacks. Among the free states, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont granted adult black males the rights of citizenship, but Congress, in 1790, limited the right of naturalization to white aliens, then in 1792 restricted enrollment in the militia to able-bodied white male citizens. There were, however, no legal provisions specifically barring black men from serving in the U. S. army, navy, or marines; see Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago, 1961), 30–40.

³² Of the 8 men enlisted before 1812 who were described as having "black" complexions, 3 were enlisted in jurisdictions where slavery was legal—Mississippi Territory, the District of Columbia, and Baltimore.

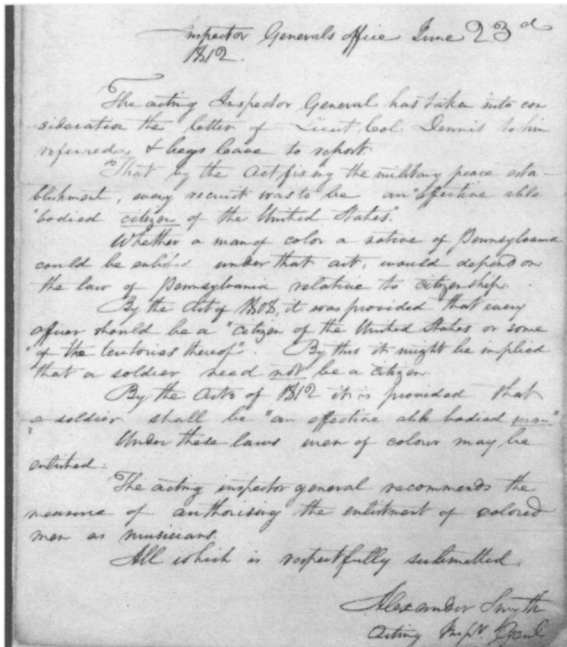


FIGURE III

Army policy on enlisting free blacks. Alexander Smyth, Report of June 23, 1812, in Confidential Inspection Reports of the Office of the Adjutant General. Courtesy, National Archives of the United States.

process of gradual abolition, the number of free blacks was small, amounting to not much more than 2 percent of their total population.³³ Depending on whether these states regarded black men as citizens, an even smaller number of these men, probably amounting to about 1 percent of the population at most, would have been of military age and legally eligible for recruitment.³⁴

³³ This estimate represents the percentage of free blacks in the population of the New England and Middle Atlantic regions and Ohio in 1810. A more precise figure is difficult to calculate because the 1810 census did not provide breakdowns by age or sex for the free black population. Free blacks made up 2.6% of the total population in 1810.

³⁴ No War Department correspondence discussing either the legality or the desirability of enlisting free black men has been found for the 1802–1811 period. The issue arose in 1812 when Lt. Col. Richard Dennis, who had promised to raise 500 recruits in Philadelphia, inquired whether he could enlist a band of 30 "sober, well-regulated" black men as musicians (see Dennis to William Eustis, June 18, 1812, in Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, Record Group 94, National Archives). A clerk endorsed his letter with the remark: "The law confines the enlistments to whites," but the secretary of war sought the opinion of Inspector General Alexander Smyth. Smyth reviewed the

Regrettably, the registers of enlistments do not appear to have recorded consistently whether recruits described as having "black," "brown," or "yellow" complexions were also "colored men." Some men with complexions so described were listed as "colored men," but others were not, thus making data on the complexion of the troops an uncertain proxy for their racial background. The difficulty in using skin color as proof of racial identity in the early nineteenth century is compounded by the problem of the "black Irish" and other foreign-born men with dark complexions. Their presence in the ranks makes it almost impossible to tell how far army recruiters intended to indicate race by their descriptions of complexions.³⁵ However, most of the recruits with "black" skins who enlisted between 1802 and 1815 were not Irish or from some other immigrant background, and this leaves open the possibility that some of them could have been of African-American descent.

Of 2,364 men who enlisted between 1802 and 1811 whose skin color is known, 8 (0.3 percent) are described as "black," and a further 44 (1.9 percent) are listed as "brown" or "yellow." None of these men was identified as "colored," and it would almost certainly be incorrect to conclude from these data that free black men provided 2.2 percent (111) of the enlistments in the peacetime army. Nevertheless, assuming that all the men with "black" complexions and perhaps as many as one-half of those with "brown" or "yellow" complexions were of African-American descent, it could be argued that a smaller percentage, approximately 1.3 percent of the force (60 or so men), might be a more plausible estimate. In the wartime army, where citizenship restrictions no longer applied, men described as "black," "brown," or "yellow" numbered 118 (2.9 percent) of the sample recruits whose skin color is recorded (4,063). Nearly one-fifth of these men (22, or 18.6 percent) are also identified as "colored men." Assuming again that all "black" men who were not immigrants and as many as one-half of the others may also have been of African-American descent, perhaps as much as 1.6 percent (or as many as 1,000) of the total number of recruits (estimated at 63,700) in the wartime army

provisions of the relevant legislation before concluding that "men of colour may be enlisted" under the laws passed in 1812 and that Dennis could have his musicians; "Confidential Report of Alexander Smyth," June 23, 1812, in Confidential Inspection Reports of the Office of the Adjutant General, 1812-1820, National Archives.

³⁵ Of the 27 men with "black" complexions in the systematic sample of the men enlisted between 1812 and 1815, two (7.4%) were born in Ireland; Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 628. Another two (7.4%) were born in Cuba and Italy, respectively. For discussions of why and how the Irish were regarded as something less than "white," see Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York, 1995), passim, and David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York, 1991), 133-56.

could have been free black men.³⁶ Thus free black men may have been slightly better represented in the peacetime army than their numbers in the population of the free states would suggest; and they were almost certainly better represented among the troops who were recruited between 1812 and 1815. At no time between 1802 and 1815, though, were free black men disproportionately represented in the ranks.

In neither peace nor war is the burden of military service shared evenly by men of all ages throughout the population. Younger men are much more likely to serve than older men, and the cohort of men who were recorded in the 1810 census as belonging to the category of adult white males aged between 16 and 45 years undoubtedly provided the vast majority of the recruits for the army between 1802 and 1815.³⁷ It will, therefore, be useful to compare the regional distribution of the places of enlistment recorded for the recruits with the regional distribution of 16-to-45-year-old men in the population at large. Such data will furnish some clues about where the army concentrated its recruiting efforts and also indicate whether the recruits were geographically mobile in the sense that they had joined the ranks in places other than those of the states of their birth.

According to the 1810 census, barely one quarter (24.5 percent) of the nation's white male population 16-to-45 years of age was to be found in New England; one-third (33.2 percent) of this population was to be found in the Middle Atlantic region; and slightly more than one quarter (27.1 percent) was in the South Atlantic states. The remainder (15.2 percent) was in the western states and territories. The places of enlistment for the army recruits between 1802 and 1811, however, reflect a very different regional distribution. Little more than one-tenth (12.2 percent) of the peacetime recruits entered the army in New England; slightly fewer than one-third of them did so in the states of the Middle Atlantic and South Atlantic regions (30.9 percent and 31.4 percent), while the remainder (25.5 percent) joined up in the western states and territories (see Table III). Men of eligible military age from the New England states were thus significantly under-represented in the ranks between 1802 and 1811, while those from the South Atlantic states and the western states and territories were substantially over-represented.

³⁶ Admittedly, this is a higher estimate than those provided in 1986 when I calculated that between 280 and 370 free blacks might have been in the ranks by 1815; Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 628. That estimate should be regarded as a conservative one, while the present calculation is perhaps the most generous one that might be made. We shall probably never know how many army officers enlisted free black men without drawing attention to the fact in their recruiting returns and correspondence with the War Department.

³⁷ The 1810 census rather than that of 1800 was used as the point of comparison because three quarters (75.1%) of the men in the army between 1802 and 1811 were enlisted in the years 1807-1811.

TABLE III
ENLISTMENTS BY PLACE OF RECRUITMENT, 1802-1811.

<i>Place</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Percentage of Adult White Males, 16-45 Years, 1810</i>
Massachusetts	107	7.2	11.9
New Hampshire	27	1.8	3.5
Vermont	2	0.1	3.6
Connecticut	11	0.7	4.2
Rhode Island	36	2.4	1.3
TOTAL	183	12.2	24.5
New York	141	9.4	16.1
New Jersey	2	0.1	3.8
Pennsylvania	320	21.4	13.3
TOTAL	463	30.9	33.2
Delaware	6	0.4	1.0
Maryland	138	9.2	4.3
Virginia	128	8.6	9.3
North Carolina	25	1.7	6.2
South Carolina	62	4.2	3.7
Georgia	109	7.3	2.6
TOTAL	468	31.4	27.1
Ohio	3	0.2	3.8
Kentucky	14	0.9	5.3
Tennessee	94	6.3	3.5
District of Columbia and Territories	271	18.1	2.6
TOTAL	382	25.5	15.2
GRAND TOTAL	1,496	100.0	100.0

Source: 1810 Census

The comparable data for the army between 1812 and 1815 confirm the impact of the shifting of the army's recruiting toward the Canadian border. This northward reorientation was particularly pronounced in the New England states; that region's percentage of men from the 16-to-45-year age group in the ranks more than doubled after 1812 (from 12.2 percent to 25.1 percent) and even came to exceed slightly the region's percentage of the nation's population of that age group in 1810 (24.5 percent). (These data also suggest that the War of 1812 was much more pop-

ular in New England than many historians have ever supposed).³⁸ The Middle Atlantic region also recorded a sizable increase in the percentage of 16-to-45-year-old men recruited after 1812 (from 30.9 percent to 37.1 percent), while both the South Atlantic states and the western states and territories experienced marked decreases of 6.6 percent and 12.5 percent, respectively, in the recruiting from this age group.³⁹

A comparison of the distribution of the enlistment places of the men recruited between 1802 and 1811 with the distribution of the birthplaces of the native-born men as recorded in Table I also suggests that many of these latter recruits had left the places of their birth and were on the move when enlisted. Geographical mobility, to the extent that this phenomenon can be measured by determining whether greater or lesser numbers of men persisted in the states of their birth, can serve as a reasonably good indicator of the social and economic status of adult white males in the early republic.⁴⁰ Men with opportunities for advancement close to home usually had little reason to migrate, but from the middle of the eighteenth century onward rising population in the longer-settled areas of America's eastern coast, coupled with the widespread practice of partible inheritance and a corresponding decline in farm size and soil fertility, required increasing numbers of men, especially those from farming backgrounds, to leave the places of their birth in search of fresh lands and new opportunities. High rates of geographical mobility, however, were not always conducive to the rapid accumulation of property, either real or personal, and low rates of persistence among army recruits might suggest, therefore, that men who enlisted after leaving home may have

³⁸ Historians have always known that despite the unpopularity of the War of 1812 in New England, the region's men served in some number in the army. They have never been clear, though, about either the numbers or the percentages involved. Even Henry Adams, *History of the United States during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, 9 vols. (New York, 1890-1896), 8:235-37, could do little more than insinuate that New England probably did more than its fair share, and Virginia less, in providing the human resources for war after 1812.

³⁹ This section is based on figures derived from Table IV in Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 630.

⁴⁰ Discussions of social status and migration patterns in the late colonial and early national period can be found in most social and economic histories of these periods as well as in many local and community studies published over the last 25 years. This literature is now too large to list conveniently, but for the most useful discussions of the relationship between migration and social mobility, see Kulikoff, *Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*, 206-23; Douglas Lamar Jones, *Village and Seaport: Migration and Society in Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts* (Hanover, N. H., 1981), 40-54, 103-21; Alan Taylor, "Land and Liberty on the Post-Revolutionary Frontier," in David Konig, ed., *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic* (Stanford, Calif., 1995), 82-86; and Georgia C. Villafior and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, "Migration in Colonial America: Evidence from the Militia Muster Rolls," *Social Science History*, 6 (1982), 539-70, esp. 554-57.

continued to experience limits on their opportunities for economic and social advancement.

The persistence rates for men who enlisted between 1802 and 1811 are strikingly low, with barely one-third (34.8 percent) enlisting in their home states. Only in the newer societies of the western states and territories does the number of men who joined the ranks in the jurisdictions of their birthplaces exceed even two-fifths of the total, while in the South Atlantic states the same percentage falls well below one-third of the total, to 29.9 percent (see Table IV).⁴¹ As for the migration patterns of these recruits, the data are limited, inasmuch as information on both the place of birth and the place of enlistment is available for fewer than one-third (29.8 percent) of them. These data, nevertheless, are sufficient to suggest that the movements of at least some of the men were consistent with the major population shifts occurring throughout the nation at large from the older, long-settled coastal regions to the newer, more rapidly expanding northern, southern, and western frontiers, where most migrants sought out areas that would permit them to reproduce the sorts of communities and cultures they had left behind.⁴²

Slightly more than one-third (34.1 percent) of the New England-born migrants, for example, moved either to another state in the region or to New York, with smaller numbers of men from Connecticut and Vermont (9.7 percent of the combined totals from the two states) also choosing to migrate to Pennsylvania. In the Middle Atlantic region, the largest single group of men leaving New York (16.9 percent) entered the army in Pennsylvania, while one-half (50.9 percent) of the men leaving New Jersey were recruited either in New York or in Pennsylvania. About one-tenth (11.4 percent) of the Pennsylvania-born men enlisted in the

⁴¹ Additional evidence that the overall persistence rate of 34.8% (or an out-migration rate of 65.2%) is very low may be found by comparing it with the migration rates that have been calculated for Revolutionary War veterans between 1780 and 1840. These studies have revealed that slightly more than one-half the veterans of the Revolution (54%) left the states of their birth during their lifetimes (or, 46% persisted). The comparison should not be pressed too far as these studies do not distinguish between those who joined the Continental army and those who served in the militia, but the low persistence rates for the 1802–1811 regulars in comparison with those of the Revolutionary War veterans highlights the mobility of the former; Crackel, "Longitudinal Migration in America: 1780–1840: A Study of Revolutionary War Pension Records," *Historical Methods*, 14 (1981), 133–37, and "Revolutionary War Pension Records and Patterns of American Mobility, 1780–1830," *Prologue: Journal of the National Archives*, 16 (1984), 155–67.

⁴² General discussions of population movements in the U. S. in the early 19th century are James E. Davis, *Frontier America 1800–1840: A Comparative Demographic Analysis of the Settlement Process* (Glendale, Calif., 1977), 35–92, and Peter D. McClelland and Richard J. Zeckhauser, *Demographic Dimensions of the New Republic: American Interregional Migration, Vital Statistics, and Manumissions, 1800–1860* (Cambridge, 1982), 5–8, 18, 50–52.

TABLE IV
PERSISTENCE OF RECRUITS IN STATE OF BIRTH, 1802-1811.

<i>State</i>	<i>Number Born</i>	<i>Number Recruited</i>	<i>Percent Persisting</i>
Massachusetts	117	60	51.3
New Hampshire	26	12	46.1
Vermont	17	—	—
Connecticut	43	5	11.6
Rhode Island	9	4	44.4
TOTAL	212	81	38.2
New York	89	39	43.8
New Jersey	51	1	2.0
Pennsylvania	229	105	45.9
TOTAL	369	145	39.3
Delaware	20	—	—
Maryland	107	34	31.8
Virginia	236	75	31.8
North Carolina	95	16	16.8
South Carolina	46	23	50.0
Georgia	15	7	46.9
TOTAL	519	155	29.9
Ohio	—	—	—
Kentucky	6	1	16.6
Tennessee	19	10	52.6
District of Columbia and Territories	25	11	44.0
TOTAL	50	22	44.0
GRAND TOTAL	1,150	403	35.0

adjacent states of Maryland, New York, Ohio, and Virginia, but nearly twice as many (20.5 percent) were picked up further south and west, notably in Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and the territories of Mississippi and Orleans. From the South Atlantic states, there appear to be two sorts of migration patterns: recruits born in the Chesapeake (29.7 percent) either moved to another state in the region or to Pennsylvania; another group of men (24.5 percent), mostly Virginians, moved southward and enlisted in Georgia, Tennessee, and Orleans Territory. One-half (48.9 percent) of the men leaving the Carolinas were to be found in Georgia and Tennessee.

In many other cases, though, the movements of the peacetime recruits were too scattered or too random to fall into clear patterns, and presumably they cannot be explained without information peculiar to the lives of the individuals involved. Without such specific knowledge, it is difficult to explain, for example, why four men born in Massachusetts should have enlisted in Georgia; why three Marylanders joined the army in Massachusetts; or why seven native New Yorkers entered the ranks in the Mississippi Territory. Examples of this sort can be multiplied, but enlistees whose movements did not conform very closely to the broader migratory patterns of the population at large were probably drawn from the most footloose and uprooted portions of the adult white male population of the early republic. On the face of it, therefore, these men had not only been unable to establish themselves in the places of their birth; they had also failed to accomplish that purpose through migration.

For the men who joined the army between 1812 and 1815, the situation was different. Their rates of persistence are markedly higher, with more than one-half of them (51.0 percent) being recruited in their home state. In all parts of the country, the regional persistence rates after 1812 were similarly higher than those recorded for the peacetime recruits. For the New England, the Middle Atlantic, the South Atlantic, and the western states and the territories, these rates fluctuated about the 50 percent mark (48.4 percent, 59.0 percent, 45.6 percent, and 55.2 percent, respectively).⁴³ Only in Rhode Island was the persistence rate of wartime recruits lower than it had been for the peacetime men (26.9 percent as opposed to 44.4 percent).⁴⁴ Moreover, even among those wartime recruits who had left the state of their birth, the patterns of their movements conform to a far greater extent and in far greater numbers to the movements of the population at large than do those of the men in the Jeffersonian establishments. Most of the New England migrant recruits between 1812 and 1815 were recruited either in another state in the region

⁴³ We lack studies of the postwar lives and migration patterns of the veterans of the War of 1812 comparable to those made for Revolutionary War veterans, and the limited data that are available appear to describe the mobility and social status of militiamen rather than the fate of men from the U. S. army. Nevertheless, a sample study of 1,600 veterans of the War of 1812 revealed that they were far less geographically mobile than either the Revolutionary War soldiers or the regular troops of the 1802–1811 period. In 1850, nearly 2/3 of these veterans could still be found in the states of their birth or the states in which they had done their military service. In terms of their real property holdings, these men were also “relatively well off” and “comfortably above the national mean” for adult white males at that time; James W. Oberly, “Westward Who?: Estimates of Native White Interstate Migration after the War of 1812,” *Journal of Economic History*, 46 (1986), 431–40, and *Sixty Million Acres: American Veterans and the Public Lands before the Civil War* (Kent, Ohio; 1990), 103–04.

⁴⁴ See Stagg, “Enlisted Men in the United States Army,” 631.

or in New York or Pennsylvania; most of the New Jersey migrant recruits enlisted in New York or Pennsylvania; and most of the Virginia-born men were picked up in Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, or Tennessee.⁴⁵

If these pronounced differences in the persistence rates and geographical movements of the enlisted men indicate that peacetime recruits were more socially marginal than their wartime counterparts, the contrast should also be reflected in occupational profiles. The men who joined the ranks between 1802 and 1811 are hardly a representative cross-section of the adult white male workforce in Jefferson's republic of yeoman farmers. Farmers, in fact, amounted to little more than one quarter (28.7 percent) of the peacetime recruits, and the largest (39.7 percent) single occupational group in the ranks by far was composed of artisans of various sorts.⁴⁶ Laborers (21.6 percent), seamen (1.7 percent), and miscellaneous occupations (8.3 percent)—the last comprising such categories as clerks, boatmen, cartmen, barbers, and tobacconists—made up the remainder. The occupations of the immigrant recruits were also rather different from those of the native-born men, with the former (81.0 percent) consisting largely of men who had been working as artisans, laborers, or in the miscellaneous category. The latter (71.9 percent) were mostly artisans and farmers (see Table V).

Recruiting for war after 1812 resulted in a significantly different distribution of occupations in the ranks. Farmers became the largest single occupational group (39.0 percent) in the force, while the percentages of both artisans and laborers declined, the first only slightly, to 37.0 percent, and the second by more than one-third, to 14.2 percent. The proportion of seamen in the army rose threefold (to 5.1 percent), while men

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 629–30. Another common form of geographical mobility involved movements from rural to urban areas (defining the latter as a center with a population of 2,500). According to the 1810 census, 7.25% of the population lived in such areas, and of the 1,648 men recruited between 1802 and 1811 whose place of enlistment is known, more than 2/5 (43.4%) were enlisted in such places. The percentage of men enlisted in urban areas between 1812 and 1815, at 38.4%, was rather lower; Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 631–32. The difference between these two figures could be adduced as evidence that the wartime army recruited more extensively in rural areas than the peacetime force did, but the figure of 43.4% for recruiting in urban areas between 1802 and 1811 may also be too high. In the cases of nearly 1/5 (19.8%) of the peacetime recruits, the place of their enlistment is given only as a fort or a military post that was located in an urban area. Undoubtedly, many of these men were either residents of urban areas or happened to be in such areas at the time of their decision to enlist. On the other hand, groups of men were also gathered by recruiting parties from a larger geographical area than a town or city of over 2,500 and these men were taken to a military post in an urban area which was subsequently recorded as the place of their enlistment. For confirmation that the army did recruit in this fashion, see Cushing to Dearborn, Feb. 18, 1804, in Letters Sent by the Adjutant General, National Archives.

⁴⁶ The category of artisan was created from the aggregation of 107 skilled trades and occupations listed in the registers.

TABLE V
OCCUPATION OF RECRUITS, 1802-1811.

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>All Recruits</i>		<i>Native Born</i>		<i>Foreign Born</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Farmer	660	28.7	596	31.6	64	15.8
Laborer	496	21.6	379	20.0	117	29.0
Artisan	911	39.7	763	40.3	148	36.6
Seaman	38	1.7	25	1.3	13	3.2
Miscellaneous	191	8.3	129	6.8	62	15.4
TOTAL	2,296	100.0	1,892	100.0	404	100.0

in the miscellaneous category declined by nearly one-half (to 4.7 percent). The differences between the immigrants and the native-born men remained, however. Nearly two-thirds (65.8 percent) of the wartime immigrant recruits were still either artisans or laborers, even as the number of foreign-born seamen in the ranks increased by more than a factor of three and the percentage of such men in the miscellaneous category fell by nearly one-third. In short, wartime recruiting drew into the ranks significantly more farmers and seamen, but also far fewer laborers, than had been the case during the years of peace.⁴⁷

Why did wartime recruiting attract more farmers and seamen to the ranks? If there is any single reason behind the rise in the number of farmers in the army after 1812, it is probably the vastly expanded scale on which recruiting was conducted. Peacetime recruiting had been limited both in its geographical extent and in regard to the numbers of men needed. The larger numbers of men required after 1812 compelled the army to send recruiting parties into many rural areas where peacetime recruiters seldom bothered to venture, and men in these areas clearly responded to the call of the flag.⁴⁸ In some cases the attraction may have

⁴⁷ Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 633.

⁴⁸ Before the War of 1812 the U. S. army was composed of the Corps of Engineers, one regiment of Artillery, one regiment of Light Artillery, 7 regiments of Infantry, and one regiment of Riflemen, with a total authorized strength of 9,147 enlisted men. By March 1814, the army consisted of the Corps of Engineers, the Corps of Artillery, one regiment each of Light Artillery, Light Dragoons, Riflemen, and Rangers, 44 Infantry regiments, and the Sea Fencibles, with a total authorized strength of 59,179 enlisted men. Neither the peacetime nor the wartime establishment was ever at its fully authorized strength at any time between 1802 and 1815; Francis B. Heitman, comp., *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* . . . , 2 vols. (Washington, D. C., 1903), 2:569-77; Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 619-25.

been the prospect of adventure offered by army life, but as the war progressed the land and money bounties, as well as the increase in army pay, would also have appealed to many farmers' sons who were trying to accumulate either land or capital to get a start in life.⁴⁹ As for the seamen, beginning with the Embargo in 1807–1809 and for the six-year period thereafter, their livelihoods were frequently disrupted by the policies of commercial restriction and war pursued by the Madison administration. In these circumstances, ever larger numbers of seamen appear to have chosen a period of army service as an alternative to their normal employment.

The peacetime and wartime forces differed in one other respect—that of age. Men in the Jeffersonian establishments, with one minor exception (seamen), were generally older than their wartime counterparts. Table VI demonstrates that both the mean and median ages for the former body of recruits (27.2 years and 26.1 years) are higher than they are for the latter (26.8 years and 24.7 years). Similarly, with the exception of the relatively small number of seamen in the prewar army, men from all birthplaces and all other occupational groups before 1812—farmer, artisan, laborer, and miscellaneous—were older than the wartime enlistees. Not only were the peacetime recruits older, but also in no case, possibly excepting again the seamen, did the occupational categories of the peacetime force include significant numbers of younger men. By contrast, the farmer recruits during the War of 1812 consisted of two groups of agricultural workers: one was a large pool of young farm laborers (median age 22.8 years); the other was a substantial minority of older men (as is suggested by the mean age for all wartime farmer recruits—25.1 years).⁵⁰

The age differences between the two bodies of recruits, moreover, would indicate that peacetime military service, unlike that in wartime, held little appeal for younger men in the first decade of the nineteenth century. If so, many of the peacetime recruits presumably chose to enter the army at a time in their lives when most men of comparable age in their communities, especially if they were farmers or artisans, had already established themselves. Men thus established were probably married, or if not they were at least in a position to contemplate the responsibilities of marriage and supporting a family.⁵¹ It is unlikely that very many of the

⁴⁹ Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 636–39.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 633–34.

⁵¹ The average age at marriage for males in New England in the early 19th century appears to have been between 25.3 years and 26.8 years; Maris A. Vinovskis, *Fertility in Massachusetts from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York, 1981), 42–49, esp. 44. In Philadelphia, the median age at first marriage for "lower middle" and "lower" class males in the same period was 22.8 years; Susan E. Klepp, *Philadelphia in Transition: A*

TABLE VI
AGE OF RECRUITS, 1802-1811.

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean Age</i>	<i>Median Age</i>
All Recruits	2,092	27.2	26.1
Farmers	585	26.2	25.3
Laborers	474	26.9	25.5
Artisans	835	27.7	26.6
Seamen	34	26.0	24.1
Miscellaneous			
Occupations	164	31.5	30.2
Foreign Born	388	31.1	30.4

men who joined the army between 1802 and 1811 had become the head of a household. Assuming that was the case, the age of the peacetime recruits reinforces the impression that they were probably poorer, had fewer prospects, and had weaker ties to their communities of origin than the wartime recruits.

To amplify this last hypothesis, it will be helpful to compare in greater detail the social characteristics of the farmers, artisans, and laborers who enlisted between 1802 and 1811 with their wartime counterparts. More than two-thirds (68.4 percent) of peacetime farmer recruits, as can be seen in Table VII, came from the South Atlantic states and the southwestern frontiers of the nation. New England and the Middle Atlantic, by comparison, provided fewer than one-third (31.6 percent) of their numbers. These farmers also experienced very high rates of geographical mobility, with barely one-third (34.7 percent) having been recruited in the states of their birth (see Table VIII). These data are consistent with what is known about migration from the South Atlantic region, particularly from the Chesapeake, in the period 1790-1820, when a quarter of a million people, mostly nonslaveholding small farmers, tenants, and laborers, left in search of fresh land on the southwestern fron-

Demographic History of the City and Its Occupational Groups, 1720-1830 (New York, 1989), 63. Comparable data for males in the South Atlantic states is lacking, though fragmentary data collected by Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1986), 49-52, suggests that the age of marriage for males in the region was rising in the second half of the 18th century and that for the sons of poorer men it may have been as high as 29 years. Recruiting officers almost never reported the marital status of enlisted men. One exception was Capt. David T. Welch of the 31st Infantry who recorded in his Company Book the marital status of 174 New Englanders he enlisted in 1813 and 1814. Of these men, only 33 (19.0%) stated that they were married; Records of United States Army Commands 1784-1821, Record Group 98, National Archives.

TABLE VII
DISTRIBUTION OF RECRUITS' OCCUPATION BY PLACE OF RECRUITMENT, 1802-1811.

Place	Farmers		Laborers		Artisans		Seamen		Miscellaneous	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Massachusetts	130	30.0	22	16.9	58	44.5	3	2.3	8	6.2
New Hampshire	5	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	—	—	—	—
Vermont	3	66.6	1	33.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Connecticut	40	37.5	7	17.5	18	45.0	—	—	—	—
Rhode Island	16	12.5	8	50.0	3	18.6	—	—	3	18.6
TOTAL	194	30.9	40	20.6	80	41.2	3	1.5	11	5.7
New York	135	10.4	36	26.7	72	53.3	—	—	13	9.6
New Jersey	2	—	1	50.0	1	50.0	—	—	—	—
Pennsylvania	318	16.0	77	24.3	158	49.7	1	0.3	31	9.7
TOTAL	455	14.3	114	25.1	231	50.8	1	0.2	44	9.7
Delaware	6	16.6	1	16.6	3	50.0	—	—	1	16.6
Maryland	102	15.7	36	35.3	41	40.2	2	1.9	7	6.9
Virginia	126	23.8	32	25.4	54	42.9	3	2.4	7	5.5
North Carolina	47	55.3	8	17.1	11	23.4	1	2.1	1	2.1
South Carolina	67	43.3	8	11.9	24	35.8	3	4.5	3	4.5
Georgia	79	53.1	12	15.2	15	19.0	7	8.9	3	3.8
TOTAL	427	33.7	97	22.7	148	34.7	16	3.7	22	5.1
Ohio	8	12.5	2	25.0	4	50.0	—	—	1	12.5
Kentucky	4	75.0	—	—	1	25.0	—	—	—	—
Tennessee	88	45.5	16	18.2	32	36.3	—	—	—	—
DC and Terr.	333	24.6	77	23.1	119	35.7	3	0.9	52	15.7
TOTAL	433	29.1	95	21.9	156	36.0	3	0.7	53	12.2
GRAND TOTAL	1,509	26.2	346	22.9	615	40.8	23	1.5	130	8.6

TABLE VIII
PERSISTENCE RATES OF NATIVE BORN BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS,
1802-1811.

<i>State</i>	<i>Farmers</i>			<i>Artisans</i>			<i>Laborers</i>		
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Recruited</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>Recruited</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>Recruited</i>	
	<i>Born</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Born</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Massachusetts	66	26	34.9	69	41	59.4	32	18	56.3
New Hampshire	32	9	28.1	23	12	52.1	—	—	—
Vermont	11	1	9.0	5	—	—	4	—	—
Connecticut	49	2	4.0	43	3	7.0	—	—	—
Rhode Island	4	3	75.0	9	7	77.8	—	—	—
TOTAL	162	41	25.3	149	63	43.2	36	18	50.0
New York	27	11	40.7	59	55	93.2	40	24	60.0
New Jersey	20	—	—	37	—	—	14	1	7.1
Pennsylvania	52	33	62.3	162	113	68.9	66	40	61.0
TOTAL	99	44	44.4	258	168	65.1	120	65	54.1
Delaware	4	—	—	15	1	6.7	5	—	—
Maryland	34	16	47.0	69	42	60.9	30	13	43.3
Virginia	104	32	30.8	109	45	41.3	73	26	35.6
North Carolina	80	17	21.3	42	2	4.8	31	1	3.2
South Carolina	35	28	80.0	19	15	78.9	9	6	66.6
Georgia	14	5	35.7	4	2	50.0	—	—	—
TOTAL	271	98	36.1	258	107	41.5	148	46	31.0
Ohio	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—
Kentucky	3	3	100.0	4	2	50.0	6	5	83.3
Tennessee	10	3	30.0	4	2	50.0	5	4	80.0
DC and Terr.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	13	6	46.2	9	4	44.4	12	9	75.0
GRAND TOTAL	545	189	34.7	674	342	50.7	316	138	43.7

tiers of the nation. These migrants, generally speaking, were pushed out by a combination of factors: high land prices, declining soil fertility, low prices for staple crops, especially tobacco, and rising population and a reduction in the average size of family landholdings.⁵²

⁵². See David Hackett Fischer and James C. Kelly, *Away, I'm Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement* (Richmond, 1993), 66-75; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 157-61; Jean B. Lee, *The Price of Nationhood: The American Revolution in Charles County* (New York, 1994), 9-10, 259-62; and John Solomon Otto, *The Southern Frontiers, 1607-1860: The Agricultural Evolution of the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Westport, Conn., 1989), 81-127, 129-39. See also Willard F. Bliss, "The Rise of Tenancy in Virginia," *VMHB*, 58

In the Chesapeake, the impact of these factors was compounded by the shift from tobacco planting to wheat and other grains during the years of the European wars between 1793 and 1815. The spread of the latter crops, requiring less labor to produce than the former, reduced some employment opportunities for younger adult white males—fewer overseers, for example, were needed to supervise slaves—and gave rise instead to a more mobile and more flexible hired white labor force, many of whose members then migrated over longer distances in order to establish themselves.⁵³ And on the assumption that these migrant farmers in their mid-to-late twenties had already received whatever portions of the inheritances to which they were entitled, their decisions to enlist in the army in the places that they did indicates that they had failed to better themselves by moving.⁵⁴

The contrast with the farmer recruits of the War of 1812 is significant. After 1812, the percentage of farmers from the South Atlantic and western states and territories in the force decreased from two-thirds to two-fifths (42.6 percent), while the proportion of farmer recruits from New England and the Middle Atlantic rose from less than one-third to over one-half (57.4 percent). The wartime farmers were also far less geographically mobile than their peacetime counterparts. More than half of them (53.9 percent) had been recruited in the states of their birth, and even the wartime farmer recruits from the South Atlantic and the southwestern frontiers were noticeably less footloose than the prewar men, with more than one-half of them (56.3 percent)—as opposed to little more than one-third (36.1 percent) for the 1802–1811 period—having been recruited in their home state.⁵⁵ To the extent that the wartime farmers were younger than the peacetime farmers, it is also much less likely that they had received their inheritances or commenced their careers as independent farmers. In short, most of the wartime

(1950), 427–41; Hughie G. Lawson, “Geographical Origins of White Migrants to Trigg and Calloway Counties in the Antebellum Period,” *Filson Club History Quarterly*, 57 (1983), 286–304; and Charles D. Lowery, “The Great Migration to the Mississippi Territory, 1798–1819,” *Journal of Mississippi History*, 30 (1968), 175, 176, 179, 186–87.

⁵³ The best discussion of these changes is John T. Schlotterbeck, “Plantation and Farm: Social and Economic Change in Orange and Greene Counties, Virginia, 1716 to 1860” (Ph. D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1980), 55–58, 121–37, 168, 190, 197.

⁵⁴ Kulikoff, *Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*, 207, assumes that this was the case. It has been argued that by the early 19th century men were less dependent on inheritances from their fathers to marry than had been the case in the colonial period, but the extent to which that was so was also related to the ability of men to acquire land, or the means to acquire land, by ways other than inheritance; see Toby L. Ditz, *Property and Kinship: Inheritance in Early Connecticut 1750–1820* (Princeton, 1986), 103–18. Military service could be such a means.

⁵⁵ Stagg, “Enlisted Men in the United States Army,” 635, 637.

farmer recruits were indeed young farm laborers, or farmers' sons, as opposed to the older, less successful farmers the peacetime men appear to have been.

If the peacetime farmer recruits were men who had not succeeded in their vocations, how far is that true for the largest single occupational group in the ranks between 1802 and 1811, artisans of various sorts? Artisan recruits before 1812 were drawn from all regions of the country. Just over one-half (50.6 percent) came from New England and the Middle Atlantic, while the balance (49.4 percent) came from the South Atlantic and the western states and territories (see Table VII). Their numbers also appear to include many tradesmen working in rural regions. Little more than a quarter (25.8 percent) of the artisans whose place of recruitment is known were enlisted in urban areas with populations of 2,500 or more. The largest single regional concentration (37.6 percent) of skilled recruits came from the Middle Atlantic states. All these men were far less geographically mobile than the farmer recruits, with slightly more than half of them (50.7 percent) having been recruited in the states of their birth (see Table VIII). More significant, though, the peacetime artisan recruits were drawn preponderantly (67.8 percent) from the building and clothing trades (see Table IX), and shoemakers by far were the largest single group (20.3 percent) of skilled men in the ranks. The only other trade that came even close to providing so many craftsmen for the ranks was carpentry (16.4 percent).

The convergence of two developments in the economy of the early republic—one short-term and the other long-term—may have influenced the decisions of craftsmen to leave their trades for the army. To the extent that artisan recruits lived in cities or depended on city markets, they were likely to be harmed by fluctuations in urban economies that resulted from the instability of international trade during the Napoleonic wars. At the same time, many artisans were also affected by structural changes in the economy that emerged from new ways of organizing production in response to the growth of larger domestic markets. No groups of skilled tradesmen were more vulnerable to this latter trend than carpenters and shoemakers. For men in both these trades, changes in the organization of production operated in ways that forced them into permanent wage labor rather than facilitating their rise to the status of masters in charge of their own shops.⁵⁶ Nor were craftsmen in rural areas

⁵⁶ The literature on downwardly mobile artisan groups in the early 19th century is a substantial one, but see the following: John Commons et al., *A Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, 11 vols. (New York, 1910–1911), 3:19–58; Ian M. G. Quimby, "The Cordwainers Protest: A Crisis in Labor Relations," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 3 (1967), 83–101; Howard B. Rock, *Artisans of the New Republic: The Tradesmen of New York City in the Age of Jefferson* (New York, 1979), 239–57; Charles G. Steffen, "Changes in the

TABLE IX
ARTISAN GROUPS IN THE ARMY, 1802-1811. ^a

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Building Trades	243	26.7
Clothing Trades	374	41.1
Food Trades	59	6.4
Marine Crafts	10	1.1
Metal Crafts	126	13.8
Woodworking	99	10.9
TOTAL	911	100.0

^a The classification of trades comes from Allan Kulikoff, "The Progress of Inequality in Revolutionary Boston," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 28 (1971), 411-12.

necessarily insulated from the consequences of these developments. The increasing concentration of production in urban areas also reduced local demand for their skills and their products.⁵⁷ All these craftsmen, both rural and urban, therefore, could be described as downwardly mobile, and such men are well represented in the ranks of the army.

Were the artisans recruited in the War of 1812 any different? Unlike their peacetime counterparts, wartime artisans came mainly from New England and the Middle Atlantic (68.2 percent), while the South Atlantic and western states and territories furnished barely one-third (31.8 percent) of their numbers. In most other respects, the artisans recruited after 1812 look very similar to those who joined the ranks between 1802 and 1811. Many of them still seem to have come from rural regions; the percentage of artisans known to have been enlisted in urban areas after 1812 rose to only about one-third of their number (33.5 percent). The largest single bloc (47.7 percent) still came from the Middle Atlantic states, their mean and median ages were almost the same as those for the peacetime men, and their rate of persistence was similarly identical, with 50.8 percent having been recruited in their home states. Wartime artisan recruits,

Organization of Artisan Production in Baltimore, 1790 to 1820," *WMQ*, 36 (1979), 101-17; and Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York, 1984), 30-60, 97-103.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of the impact of the growth of urban production on rural artisans, see the essays by Christine Daniels, "'WANTED: A Blacksmith who understands Plantation Work': Artisans in Maryland, 1700-1810," *WMQ*, 50 (1993), 753-67, and "From Father to Son: Economic Roots of Craft Dynasties in Eighteenth Century Maryland," in Rock et al., eds., *American Artisans: Crafting Social Identity, 1750-1850* (Baltimore, 1995), 5-13.

too, came largely from the building and clothing trades (60.5 percent), and the two largest groups of tradesmen to enlist were again shoemakers and carpenters, who each made up about one-fifth (19.2 percent and 15.2 percent) of the skilled men in the ranks.⁵⁸ Such continuity in the identity and experiences of all the artisan recruits between 1802 and 1815 suggests that craftsmen, unlike young farmers or farm laborers, did not regard the advent of war in 1812 as opening up new prospects or new adventures for them. Rather, they appear to have regarded military service, in both peace and war, as a possible form of alternative employment, to be taken up when the circumstances of their trades and lives dictated.

Unskilled laborers composed the other major occupational category recruited into the army between 1802 and 1815. These men can be divided into two broad types: a small number of unskilled urban workers, many of whom were probably immigrants; and a larger number of men from rural backgrounds, who rather than migrating to seek new opportunities chose to stay closer to their homes and find whatever employment they could.⁵⁹ Such men might be found in all regions of the country, but between 1802 and 1811 the army recruited slightly more (55.4 percent) of them in the South Atlantic and western states and territories than they did in New England or the Middle Atlantic (44.6 percent) (see Table VII). A substantial minority of these laborer recruits did come from urban areas; nearly one-fifth of their number (19.0 percent) was enlisted in towns with populations greater than 2,500. The largest single concentration of peacetime laborer recruits (33.0 percent), however, was to be found in the Middle Atlantic region, most of them men from Pennsylvania who probably enlisted in or around Philadelphia. Pennsylvania alone accounted for nearly one quarter (23.3 percent) of all laborers recruited into the army before 1812. That such laboring men tended to stay close to the places of their birth rather than to migrate to seek new opportunities is confirmed by their far higher rates of persistence than was the case for farmers in the same period (43.7 percent for the former group; 34.7 percent for the latter) (see Table VIII).

After 1812, the recruitment of laborers changed little. More (62.1 percent) were enlisted from New England and the Middle Atlantic and fewer (37.9 percent) from the South Atlantic and western states and territories. Rather fewer (15.1 percent) of them, too, were enlisted from urban areas than had been the case before the war. But even more (47.2 per-

⁵⁸ Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 640-41.

⁵⁹ The geographic immobility of unskilled laborers, relative to other occupational groups, has been noted by John W. Adams and Alice Bee Kasakoff, "Wealth and Migration in Massachusetts and Maine: 1771-1798," *J. Econ. Hist.* 45 (1985), 363-68, and by Villafior and Sokoloff, "Migration in Colonial America," 554-55.

cent) of the laborers recruited after 1812 were drawn from the Middle Atlantic region than had been the case before the war, and Pennsylvania contributed more than one-fifth of their number (21.6 percent). And like their peacetime counterparts, wartime laborer recruits were far less geographically mobile than the farmers recruited between 1812 and 1815, with nearly two-thirds (65.0 percent) of the laborers being recruited in the states of their birth as opposed to only about one-half (53.9 percent) of the farmers.⁶⁰

The most striking feature about the recruitment of laborers into the army between 1802 and 1815 is their concentration in the Middle Atlantic states, particularly in Pennsylvania. Recent research on the economic and social development of the Philadelphia hinterland in the years between 1760 and 1820 highlights the emergence of a growing pool of workers from both farming and artisan backgrounds who leased cottages on an annual basis from landholders in return for labor on demand for a variety of tasks, both in farming and in the production of household goods and services. These landless wage laborers were often married, and they regularly changed employers, though their movements at any one time usually involved only short distances, seldom greater than from one town to the next.⁶¹ Over time, however, more and more of these men moved further away from the places of their birth, and many eventually found themselves residing in or around the city of Philadelphia.⁶²

Once in the city, these laborers pursued a variety of employments to earn a living, particularly in times of economic instability or when their lives were blighted by unusual circumstances or personal misfortune. For men thus situated, military service could have been as much of an employment strategy as digging ditches, painting houses, or pushing a cart. Moreover, the coming of war after 1812, with its attendant disruptions to the economic life of the city, may well have made the material lives of many such laboring men even more precarious than they would otherwise have been, and under such circumstances army service may

⁶⁰ Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 642.

⁶¹ See Paul G. E. Clemens and Lucy Simler, "Rural Labor and Farm Household in Chester County, Pennsylvania, 1750-1820," in Stephen Innes, ed., *Work and Labor in Early America* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 106-43; Simler, "The Landless Worker: An Index of Economic and Social Change in Chester County, Pennsylvania, 1750-1820," *PMHB*, 114 (1990), 163-99; and Lee Soltow and Kenneth W. Keller, "Rural Pennsylvania in 1800: A Portrait from the Septennial Census," *Pa. Hist.*, 49 (1982), 28-29.

⁶² Simler, "Landless Worker," 177-78, 180, 188. For more detailed discussions of the precarious material conditions of many laboring men in Philadelphia, see Billy G. Smith, *The "Lower Sort": Philadelphia's Laboring People, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, 1990), 126-49, and Priscilla Ferguson Clement, "The Transformation of the Wandering Poor in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia," in Eric H. Monkkonen, ed., *Walking to Work: Tramps in America, 1790-1935* (Lincoln, Neb., 1984), 56-64.

have become increasingly attractive. The data on enlistments in Philadelphia support such a hypothesis. As many as one-sixth (16.6 percent) of all the men enlisted in Philadelphia between 1802 and 1811 whose occupation is known were laborers, and after 1812 the percentage of laborers among the city recruits whose occupation is known rose to nearly one quarter (23.3 percent).⁶³

Finally, two other aspects of the behavior of the recruits in the 1802–1815 period—desertion and reenlistment—are noteworthy. These phenomena provide rough measures of satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, experienced by men in the ranks. Of the peacetime recruits between 1802 and 1811, fewer than one-tenth (8.3 percent) are recorded as having deserted once, with a further handful (1.7 percent) listed as having deserted more than once. These figures seem very low, at least when they are compared with the higher rates that have been recorded for or estimated for other American armies during the years from 1756 to 1815. For the Continental army during the Revolution, for example, the overall desertion rate has been calculated at between one-fifth and one-fourth of the enlistments.⁶⁴ The social profile of deserters between 1802 and 1811 suggests that dissatisfaction with army life was distributed fairly evenly throughout the various occupational and other social groups in the ranks. No single occupational group could be described as being disproportionately represented among the deserters, though farmers and laborers appear to have been rather more likely to desert than artisans (see Table X), and native-born men were slightly more likely to abandon the ranks than were immigrant recruits (84.1 percent of the deserters whose birthplace is known were native-born as opposed to 15.9 percent of the immigrants). As for reenlistments, slightly more than one-tenth (13.7 percent) of the peacetime men signed up for another term between 1802 and 1811, and a further 1.6 percent of them reenlisted more than once in that same period.

⁶³ See, in particular, on these points the essays by Smith, "The Vicissitudes of Fortune: The Careers of Laboring Men in Philadelphia, 1750–1800" in Innes, ed., *Work and Labor in Early America*, 221–51, and "Poverty and Economic Marginality in Eighteenth-Century America," *APS Proc.*, 132 (1988), 85–117.

⁶⁴ James Howard Edmonson, "Desertion in the American Army during the Revolutionary War" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1971), 250–61. Possibly, the registers of enlistments under-record the rate of desertion. The data used by the compilers of the registers appear to have been taken largely from company and orderly books and a variety of other sources; the registers do not appear to incorporate data from the courts-martial records preserved in the Office of the Judge Advocate General in the National Archives. However, any under-recording would have been consistent throughout the years covered by the registers, and the addition of data from the courts-martial case files would not alter the difference calculated here between the desertion rates of the peacetime and wartime forces of the 1802–1815 period.

TABLE X
OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE OF DESERTERS, 1802-1811.

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Farmer	60	32.4
Laborer	50	27.0
Artisan	62	33.6
Seaman	2	1.1
Miscellaneous	11	5.9
TOTAL	185	100.0

During the War of 1812, the desertion rate rose by one-half as much over the rate recorded for the peacetime years. The registers of enlistments reveal that 12.7 percent of the wartime recruits deserted at least once. The occupational profile of deserters between 1812 and 1815, however, conforms more closely to the distribution of occupations throughout the ranks than the same profile for the prewar period. No single occupational group was more likely to desert than any other after 1812, but during the war foreign-born recruits appear to have been slightly more likely to desert than native-born men (84.7 percent of these deserters were American born; 15.3 percent were immigrants).⁶⁵ These differences between the peacetime and wartime desertion rates might suggest that men recruited in the War of 1812, assuming that they were enlisted in greater numbers in locations nearer to the places of their birth and their families, were exposed to a greater range of pressures and temptations to desert or had easier opportunities to do so once they became dissatisfied with army life.⁶⁶ For peacetime recruits, if they had weaker ties to their communities of origin, were scattered in smaller groups across the country at greater distances from their places of birth, and so were less likely to have a home or a community to return to, the decision to abandon the ranks as a personal and practical matter may not have been quite so simple.

The rate of reenlistments for wartime men is difficult to calculate for the purposes of fair comparison with the peacetime recruits. Not only did the War of 1812 last for little longer than thirty months but men joining the ranks after January 1812 also had a greater choice of terms for which they might enlist. Between 1802 and 1811, recruits could enlist only for

⁶⁵ Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 643-44.

⁶⁶ Many wartime recruits also had greater resources that both encouraged and facilitated desertion. The very generous money bounty provisions that came into effect in 1814 clearly encouraged the practice of bounty-jumping on a large scale; see *ibid.*, 625.

five years, whereas men recruited after 1812 could enlist either for five years or for the duration of the war or, for a certain number of men who were recruited in 1812 and 1813, for twelve or eighteen months. Only the men falling into these latter categories were confronted with a decision to reenlist during the War of 1812. The number of men on these short-term enlistments amounted to one-fifth (20.6 percent) of all the enlistments made between 1812 and 1815, and of these men no more than 12.6 percent appear to have reenlisted.⁶⁷ On that rather limited basis, it might, nevertheless, be possible to conclude that men who joined the peacetime army were slightly more likely to reenlist than their wartime counterparts.

In conclusion, marked differences are evident in the social origins of men in the Jeffersonian peacetime military establishments and the backgrounds of men who enlisted to fight after 1812. Compared with the recruits of the War of 1812, the men who enlisted between 1802 and 1811 were slightly less likely to have been native born and slightly more likely to have been immigrants; they were more likely to have been southerners and less likely to have come from farmer backgrounds; they were more likely to have been artisans and unskilled laborers of various sorts; they were generally a little older; and they were strikingly more geographically mobile. They also deserted the service less frequently and reenlisted slightly more often. In all these ways, therefore, they were almost certainly poorer and more socially marginal than the men who enlisted in the regular service between January 1812 and February 1815.

The matter can be expressed in another way that clarifies at what points the two bodies of troops were both alike and different. The most likely source of recruits for the army at any time between 1802 and 1815 was a pool of older men in their mid-to-late twenties from the artisan, laborer, and miscellaneous occupational categories. In both peace and war, men from these backgrounds, in varying degrees, made up more than half (69.6 percent in the years before 1812; 55.9 percent between 1812 and 1815) the enlistments, and before 1812 more of these men were found in the southern and western regions than elsewhere. The requirements of mobilization for war against Great Britain's Canadian colonies after January 1812 then led the army to recruit far more men from New England, from farming and seafaring backgrounds, and from younger age groups in the population than it had been able to attract into the ranks between 1802 and 1811. In that sense, there were two different sorts of recruits available to the United States army in the early nineteenth century. Older men from artisan, laboring, and miscellaneous occupations

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 621–22.

could be recruited in both peace and war, but younger men and men from farm backgrounds were more likely to enlist in war than in peace.

If, then, it had been the hope of the Jefferson and Madison administrations after 1802 to shift the location of recruiting places for the United States army away from "large seaport towns" and other urban areas to "country places," where a presumably more virtuous and more "republican" type of recruit might be obtained, the results of the experiment are oddly mixed. Peacetime recruits deserted far less often than their wartime counterparts; urban dwellers were over-represented in the ranks both before and after 1812; and in the peacetime army men from farmer backgrounds formed the largest single occupational group recruited on an annual basis in only four years in ten, from 1802 to 1804 and again in 1809.⁶⁸ Otherwise, between 1805 and 1808 and also in 1810 and 1811, artisans made up the largest single occupational group enlisted on an annual basis.⁶⁹ Thereafter, it took the demands of a war to bring farmers into the ranks in greater numbers, and not until 1813 and 1814 did men from this background clearly emerge as the largest single occupational group recruited into the United States army.⁷⁰

These comparisons between the peacetime and wartime forces of the 1802–1815 period should also be assessed in light of the findings of the last three decades of scholarship on the social origins of the early American armed forces. As a consequence of this scholarship, it has become difficult, if not impossible, to talk of America's mobilization for war between 1756 and 1815 in terms of its independent yeoman farmers springing to the defense of hearth and home with musket in hand. Nevertheless, historians have been framing both their questions and their findings about the social origins of enlisted men in ways that are too broad or too loosely defined to advance the matter. Research into whether common soldiers were "lower class" as opposed to "middle class," coupled with findings that recruits were generally drawn from the "bottom third" or the "bottom rungs" of the social order, has taken us only so far in understanding the problem of what sort of "lower class" early Americans might have chosen a soldier's life and exactly which groups among these men were mobilized in peace and in war.

The terminology of this debate is admittedly imprecise and inherently unsatisfactory, but the real issue is hardly whether most soldiers were "poor" or "lower class" or drawn from some sort of "surplus" popu-

⁶⁸ The percentages of farmers in the annual recruiting intakes from 1802 to 1804 and in 1809 were 36.4%, 47.4%, 51.5%, 38.9%, respectively.

⁶⁹ The percentages of artisans in the annual recruiting intakes between 1805 and 1808 and in 1810 and 1811 were 46.3%, 42.2%, 41.1%, 39.0%, 41.3%, and 43.9%, respectively.

⁷⁰ The percentages of farmers in the recruiting intakes in 1813 and 1814 were 41.3% and 39.5%, respectively.

lation. The time is long overdue to concede that most soldiers were more likely to be poor than otherwise, and to the extent that they possessed lesser rather than greater amounts of wealth, property, education, and refinement, they might also be fairly described as "lower class."⁷¹ Should this conclusion then be construed as proof that the men in early America's armies were either drawn from the "dregs and castoffs" of their communities in the manner that has been so frequently alleged of their European counterparts or even that they were composed disproportionately of the marginal men and minorities from those same communities?⁷² The hypothesis that such men dominated the ranks in wartime is certainly not borne out by the data available on recruiting patterns in the United States army between 1802 and 1815. Indeed, it may even be said that these sorts of arguments only perpetuate, albeit in modern-day and more neutral language, some of the negative stereotypes in eighteenth-century antiarmy ideologies that assumed common soldiers were desperate and abandoned men who could not succeed in peaceful vocations. Historians need to be careful about appearing to endorse such descriptions, even if unintentionally, and they should avoid conflating these stereotypes with the empirical data derived from the more complex realities of the social and economic milieus from which recruits were drawn.⁷³

⁷¹ In the sense of this very general definition, "lower class" appears to have come into English usage by the middle of the 18th century; see Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), 652-55.

⁷² To what extent the standing armies of European nations before the imposition of mass conscription were composed largely of the "dregs" of their societies is unclear. Studies of the social composition of these armies reveal situations of considerable complexity, though most of the forces in question seem to have consisted largely of sizable numbers of artisans along with a wide range of men working in agriculture. There were also marked imbalances in the numbers of men drawn from different geographical regions, depending on where armies concentrated their recruiting efforts, and men from urban areas were generally over-represented in the ranks. For discussions of the mix of occupational groups in voluntarily enlisted European armies, see Corvisier, *L'Armée Française*, 1:472-542, and *Armies and Societies in Europe, 1494-1789* (Bloomington, Ind., 1979), 143-48; Sylvia R. Frey, "The Common British Soldier in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Profile," *Societas*, 5 (1975), 117-31, and *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin, Texas., 1981), 3-21; John A. Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94* (Urbana, Ill., 1984), 44-49, and *Giant of the Grand Siècle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge, 1997), 321-28; and Samuel F. Scott, *The Response of the Royal Army to the French Revolution: The Role and Development of the Line Army 1787-93* (Oxford, 1978), 16-19, 182-90.

⁷³ Duffy, *Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, 89, notes the same point in a different way: "there is a discrepancy, which has yet to be resolved, between the appalling things which many experienced officers said about the background and motivation of the rank and file and the somewhat different interpretations which may be drawn from our knowledge of individual cases and the scholarly study of the records." The best study of antiarmy ideologies in late colonial and early national America is Lawrence Delbert Cress, *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill, 1982).

A more accurate statement might be that the scholarship of the last thirty years reveals that armies in early America, especially in times of war, comprised for the most part a broad mix of farmers (or their sons), laborers, and small craftsmen. In this mix, men from urban areas were more likely to be over-represented than those from rural regions, while the percentage of immigrants in the ranks varied according to the flow of migrants into particular regions at particular times. Exactly how poor these men were may never be known, at least not without far more evidence about their personal wealth and economic circumstances than we are ever likely to have, but it would be a mistake to assert that there was a considerable degree of overlap between the sorts of men recruited into early American armies and the numbers of the truly indigent and destitute who were concentrated in the towns and scattered throughout the rural communities of the American colonies and states. Men in this latter category were often old or infirm and probably better suited to poor relief than they were to an army. If they did end up in the ranks, they were more likely to be discharged at some point than to continue in service.⁷⁴

On occasion poor men, especially laborers or craftsmen in the less capital intensive trades such as clothing or shoemaking, lost their "independence" by falling into destitution. For some of these men, enlistment could be one solution to their difficulties. But laborers, shoemakers, and tailors, even at their most numerous, hardly made up a majority of the men who enlisted in the armies of early America, so should historians assume that comparable experiences with poverty or destitution also lay behind the decisions made by men from other occupations to join the ranks between 1756 and 1815? Some of the evidence adduced to support this line of argument—data suggesting that enlisted men owned little or no taxable property—is both too fragmentary and too problematic in its nature to be entirely convincing.⁷⁵ To the extent that historians doubt

⁷⁴ This is not to say that old or infirm men were not recruited. It was by no means unknown for unscrupulous recruiting officers to enlist such men in order to meet their quotas and fill the ranks, but these sorts of recruits were also the most likely to be discharged. That the army appears to have recruited roughly the same proportion of men who met this description before and after 1812 is suggested by the fact that the percentage of men discharged for being ineligible on the grounds of age or physical and mental infirmity is very similar for both the peacetime and wartime force—3.5% for men recruited between 1802 and 1811 and 3.4% for men recruited between 1812 and 1815; see Stagg, "Enlisted Men in the United States Army," 624.

⁷⁵ Historians have often assumed the marginality of early American soldiers from their inability to locate large numbers of them in the surviving tax records for the years between 1756 and 1815, but the meaning of the evidence from these sources can be as unclear as it is incomplete. Taxation was an occasional rather than a regular function of government in this period, the object of taxation could vary from place to place, systematic and comparative measurements are almost impossible, and it cannot always be safely assumed that the apparent absence of taxable property in individual cases is proof of

the adequacy of this evidence and the conclusions which it is said to support, should they not also be prepared to reconsider the persuasiveness of arguments that emphasize the marginality, the poverty, and the lack of social respectability of most American soldiers in the late colonial and early national periods?

Consequently, among the tasks awaiting historians is the clarification of the precise nature of the social mix in the armed forces in order to ascertain accurately what sort of men served under what conditions and whether the composition of the recruiting mix either varied from war to war or changed over time during each of the wars fought between 1756 and 1815.⁷⁶ The evidence already available suggests that there are at least as many complexities and discontinuities in these matters as there are the continuities implied in the argument that military service in early America was performed largely by marginal men and minorities. One example that might serve as a warning against assuming continuities in recruiting patterns between 1756 and 1815 is the number of immigrants in

poverty or unemployment or even a lack of property. Many soldiers were probably too young to have been taxed as heads of households. Even when historians have been able to study reasonably complete and seemingly reliable sets of tax records, such as the inventories for the 1798 federal direct taxes, they have found that as many as half the male inhabitants over age 21 in many regions of the U. S. appear to have been without real estate or other forms of property; see Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Income in the United States in 1798* (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1989), 49–93. It is unlikely that many scholars would be comfortable interpreting Soltow's data to mean that half the young adult male population was socially marginal. As an additional complication, studies of the American Revolution have established that some enlisted men did own taxable property—more than 40% of them in the New Jersey Continental Line and 24% of the native-born men in a sample of Maryland's Continental soldiers; see the works by Lender and Papenfuss and Stiverson cited in note 2 above.

⁷⁶ In our present state of knowledge, it is difficult to tell whether armies recruited ever larger numbers of poorer men over the duration of long wars. Anderson's generalizations, in *People's Army*, 226, about the social origins of Massachusetts troops, for example, are based on muster rolls for only the first year of the Seven Years' War, while evidence from the Revolutionary War seems to be inconclusive. The thrust of Charles Royster's argument, in *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775–1783* (Chapel Hill, 1979), 268, is that, as the war progressed, military service was increasingly confined to younger and more marginal men, while some of the findings of Neimeyer, *America Goes to War*, 24, suggest that the social profile of enlisted men changed little over time. The evidence from the War of 1812, a much shorter conflict, reveals the following trends: the percentage of artisans recruited annually declined with each year of the war, from 43.8% of the total intake in 1812 to 35.4% in 1814. The annual percentage of laborers recruited also declined, from 15.3% of the intake in 1812 to 14.7% in 1814. The percentages for the annual recruitment of other occupational groups, however, increased as the war progressed, with farmers rising from 33.2% in 1812 to 39.5% in 1814; seamen rising from 3.9% in 1812 to 5.5% in 1814; and men in miscellaneous occupations rising from 3.8% in 1812 to 4.9% in 1814. These figures might suggest that, as the war continued, army recruiters were exhausting urban areas as easily exploitable sources of manpower at the same time they were extending their ability to obtain recruits from rural areas.

forces from the Middle Atlantic region. All studies of the troops recruited in Pennsylvania between 1756 and 1786 reveal that immigrants made up between one-half and three quarters of the enlistments, but the percentage of immigrants among the Pennsylvania men enlisted thereafter fell dramatically—to exactly one quarter (25.0 percent) for the forces raised between 1802 and 1811, and then to less than one-fifth (17.7 percent) for the men recruited after 1812.⁷⁷ Far fewer immigrants came into the region in the early nineteenth century than in previous years, but the figure of 17.7 percent for Pennsylvania immigrant recruits after 1812 suggests that, even in that most polyglot of states, foreign-born men were by no means so over-represented in the ranks as they once had been.

The armies of the American Revolution might well receive some additional research from this perspective. Current assumptions about the poverty and marginality of the men in the Continental army are based on studies that are either too small in size or too limited in scope to permit us to be entirely confident about their representative value.⁷⁸ Further research could produce findings that would vary widely according to the circumstances of time and place. Such findings, in turn, might require reformulation of an unspoken (and perhaps self-fulfilling) assumption that lies behind many investigations of the social origins of early American soldiers—that as American society became more stratified after the middle of the eighteenth century, military service was likely to be performed largely by poor and marginal men.⁷⁹ The findings on regular soldiers between 1802 and 1815 presented here suggest some alternative hypotheses, among them, that men who were either drafted in time of war or who later enlisted voluntarily in time of peace were likely to be poorer and more socially marginal than men who enlisted voluntarily in time of

⁷⁷ See the works by Skelton, Stephenson, Trussell, and Ward cited in note 2 above.

⁷⁸ The recent generalizations about the origins of the rank and file of the Continental army are based almost entirely on the studies of Lender (New Jersey), Papenfuss and Stiverson (Maryland), and Sellers (Virginia) cited in note 2 above. Their findings rest on the analysis of populations of 710, 308, and 658 soldiers, respectively. Research undertaken by Trussell, *Pennsylvania Line*, 243–56, for the Pennsylvania Line, estimated at a total of 25,678 men for the duration of the war, is based on 1,068 cases with respect to age, 582 cases with respect to places of birth, and 273 cases with respect to occupation. Trussell's findings certainly support the view that immigrants were over-represented among Pennsylvania's Continental recruits, but by occupation only 7.6% of the recruits described themselves as laborers. Most of the remainder were either farmers (33.7%) or artisans and tradesmen of some sort (56.1%).

⁷⁹ This assumption, though widely held, is contestable in many ways. Soltow, *Distribution of Wealth and Income in the United States in 1798*, 229–52, for one, has argued that economic inequality did not substantially increase between the Revolution and Civil War. Other scholars are prepared to concede an increase in inequality but doubt that it necessarily led to a reduction in per capita income, living standards, or opportunity; see, for example, Gloria L. Main and Jackson T. Main, "The Red Queen in New England?" *WMQ*, 56 (1999), 121–47.

war.⁸⁰ But it will also be necessary to keep in mind that recruiting patterns, whatever they reveal, are not merely the outcome of free and random choices among potential pools of recruits. How, where, and when army recruiters chose to concentrate their efforts could also influence the ways in which different social groups were distributed throughout the ranks.

Whether further study would also improve our understanding of the motives of individual men for joining the ranks is an open question. To the extent that early America's soldiers were less socially marginal than has been supposed, it might also be claimed that their reasons for enlisting must have involved more than mere calculations of economic or material self-interest. Yet as Charles Royster has already argued in the case of the Revolutionary War, historians should avoid setting up rigid dichotomies between ideals and interests as motives for military service.⁸¹ From the little we know about soldiers as individuals, their motives are always likely to be mixed, and they need not be defined in ways that exclude all sorts of combinations of economic need, sheer desperation, escapism, adventurism, inadvertence, patriotism, honor, and a taste for the soldier's life, difficult and dangerous though that life could often be. The evidence about the soldiers in the early republican military establishments between 1802 and 1815, interpreted in a narrowly literal sense, might suggest that if poverty and marginality per se were the determining factors in men's decisions to enlist, then poor and marginal men, provided they had the option of military service, were more likely to enlist in times of peace than in times of war. That observation might even be true as far as it goes, but it also leaves us inadequately prepared to understand what happens when a society, or a community, mobilizes for war.⁸² Consequently, wartime recruiting remains a poorly described subject, and one that historians of early America should continue to explore in the future.

⁸⁰ These hypotheses should not be treated too rigidly, but among all the available studies of the origins of early American soldiers, the social profile of the recruits of the 1802–1811 period conforms most closely in its general outlines to that of the men recruited by the Continental Congress between 1784 and 1786. Both bodies of troops contained significant numbers of older men from laboring and nonagricultural backgrounds, as well as large numbers of immigrants; Skelton, "The Confederation's Regulars," 774–76. Raising men by draft in wartime was likely to produce more men of lower socioeconomic status in the ranks, not only because the recruiting pool was larger than it would have been under a system of purely voluntary enlistment but also because the option of purchasing substitutes resulted in men with greater economic resources hiring men with fewer resources to serve in their place; Royster, *Revolutionary People at War*, 67–69. None of the regular army recruits between 1812 and 1815 was raised by a draft.

⁸¹ See Royster, *Revolutionary People at War*, 373–78.

⁸² For a recent discussion of the complexity of community mobilization, see Michael A. McDonnell, "Popular Mobilization and Political Culture in Revolutionary Virginia: The Failure of the Minutemen and the Revolution from Below," *Journal of American History*, 85 (1998), 946–81.