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JOHN OLDMIXON, EARLY WHIG HISTORIAN

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
1972

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOREWORD</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. A LIFE OF JOHN OLDMIXON (1673-1742)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. WHIG HISTORIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. A HANOVERIAN WHIG IN MEDIAEVAL ENGLAND</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. BARBARISM AND PROGRESS UNDER THE TUDORS</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. JOHN OLDMIXON AND THE ROYAL HOUSE OF STUART</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE HISTORIAN AS POLEMICIST</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOREWORD

In this dissertation I shall give an account of John Oldmixon as an historian of England. My thesis is simply that John Oldmixon was a forerunner of the Whig historians of the nineteenth century. To prove this thesis I shall first give a brief account of Oldmixon's life and then turn to a discussion of the salient characteristics of the Whig interpretation of history as illustrated in the pages of Hallam and Macaulay, the founders of the school, as G. P. Gooch has remarked. I shall then examine Oldmixon's view of England in mediaeval, Tudor, and Stuart times and show how Oldmixon anticipated the characteristics of the later Whig historiography. In Chapter VI I shall show the baleful effect that polemic (Oldmixon was first and foremost a polemicist) had on Oldmixon's view of the period after 1688.

I have used the expression "Cokian" often in this dissertation. I mean by it someone who views English institutions as Sir Edward Coke viewed them, that is, as unchanging through time. Coke believed that Parliament and the English common law had existed from the very dawn of English history, and had not changed through the centuries. And, as Professor Pocock has shown, the belief in an unchanging constitution was the peculiarity and the desideratum of the age of Coke.
CHAPTER I

A LIFE OF JOHN OLDMIXON (1673-1742)

John Oldmixon, whose historical works form the subject of this thesis, was the son of John Oldmixon of the manor of Oldmixon situated near Bridgwater, county of Somerset, England. He was, as Professor George Aitken wrote in his life of Oldmixon, "a member of an ancient family which had been settled at Axbridge, Somerset, as early as the fourteenth century. . . ."¹

Oldmixon's father died when he was an infant² and his mother died when he was sixteen. As a boy he lived in the home of Humphrey Blake, the brother of the celebrated general and admiral of the Protectorate.³

As a boy he witnessed the battle of Sedgmoor, "I was upon the Spot before the Dead were buried, and, young as I was, observed the Slain to be more on the King's part than on the Duke's."⁴ And had it not been for the "protection of a Papist" he would have been in great difficulty, "For after the Defeat, everybody expected military execution, except such as were of the Popish and Tory Factions."⁵

By 1687 Oldmixon was in London living with his uncle, Sir John Bawden, merchant and dissenter.⁶ In the winter of 1688-1689 he was watching James' return to London after his first
flight. In 1692 Oldmixon commenced his career in letters. He published in that year a libretto in The Gentleman's Journal, a forerunner of the famous Gentleman's Magazine.

In 1696 Oldmixon published his first major work, Poems on several Occasions, written in Imitation of the Manner of Anacreon, with other Poems, Letters, and Translations. This book of poesie was dedicated to Lord Ashley. In Professor Rogers' opinion the volume confirms the view that Oldmixon was not endowed with any very marked creative gifts, but he was a good literary opportunist, whose basic qualities of intelligence, a reasonable imitative faculty and diligence were liberated more than they were hampered by the literary conventions of the day.

In 1697 Oldmixon brought out An Idyll on the Peace, a pastoral poem praising William who had, in the words of the refrain, "sheath'd his Sword, and giv'n the Nations Peace." In 1697 Oldmixon also brought out his first play, "Thyris, a Pastoral" which formed the first act of Motteux's Novelty, or Every Act a Play. In 1698 Oldmixon published a Poem Humbly Addrest, to the Right Honourable the Earl of Portland, &c. On His Lordship's Return from his Embassy in France. The poem was noteworthy for its "xenophobic hyperbole" and its poor timing. Portland soon fell from favor. Oldmixon also wrote in 1698 Amintas, a Pastoral based upon Tasso's Amynta. The play had a prologue by John Dennis. In 1699 Oldmixon defended the stage against the attack of Mr. Jeremy Collier in Reflections on the
stage and Mr. Collyer's defence of THE SHORT VIEW: in 4 dialogues. In 1700 Oldmixon produced an opera at Drury Lane entitled The Grove, or Love's Paradise. The opera had an epilogue by Farquhar and the music was written by Daniel Purcell. Cibber was one of the players.

In 1702 Oldmixon wrote A Funerall Idyll, Sacred to the Glorious Memory of King William III. The fear Oldmixon expressed at William's passing was a true reflection of those times:

The World his Burthen, with his proper strength,  
Like Atlas he sustain'd the Falling Globe.  
Now Terrible to think— the Pond'rous Ball  
Totters unsteadily in the vast Expanse,  
By cruel Zeal, or wild Ambition blown,  
In the first Tempest from its base 'twill start. . . .

In 1703 Oldmixon published Amores Britannici. Epistles historical and gallant, in English heroic verse: from several of the most illustrious personages of their times. In imitation of the Heroidum Epistolae of Ovid. This volume was dedicated to Lord Vicount Say and Sele. The year 1703 also saw the production of Oldmixon's last play The Governour of Cyprus. In 1704 Oldmixon published A Pastoral Poem on the Victories of Schellenburg and Blenheim with this "vision of the Whig apocalypse" as Professor Rogers put it:

These Iron Times, as off has been foretold  
Shall rowle their Course, and turn an Age of Gold.  
Faction, and Frantick Zeal, and War shall cease  
And Victory resign her Reign to Peace.

In the spring of 1706 Oldmixon wrote Iberia Liberata, a poem which commemorated the victories of the Earl of Peterborough in Spain.
Written at a time when Peterborough was still a Whig favorite, it soon became a labor lost. And there were lines in this poem, as Professor Rogers has noted, that would have pleased Fielding:

'Tis boundless Lust of Arbitrary Pow'r,
That those you can't controul you might devour;
For this your Doctors insolently Preech,
And old explod'd Passive Tenets teach,
False Doctrine, to corrupt their Flocks, revive,
And keep Division by their Heat alive;
For this your Poets paltry Satyrs write,
Your Sophists Argue, and your Bully Fight,
For this the flowing Goblet's soften Crown'd,
With vigorous Juice, and wicked Healths go round,
The Rural Mansion rings with drunken Zeal,
And round the spacious Hall the Roaring Bigots reel;
Loud Oaths and Imprecations reach the Sky,
The Temple is their Care, the Temple is their Cry. . . .

In January, 1707 Oldmixon brought out The Muses Mercury or The Monthly Miscellany, Consisting of Poems, Prologues, Songs Sonnets, Translations and other Curious Pieces, Never before Printed. The magazine was truly to belong to the muses because Oldmixon made it clear that this was to be a literary effort:

We Except against all Political or Personal Scandal, what is Injurious to good Sense or good Manners, Immoral or Profane; All Party Libels and Lampoons; and those who cannot speak well of Public or Private Persons. . . .

Among its contributors were Garth, Motteux, Henley, Steele and Addison. This magazine ceased publication with its thirteenth number (January, 1708). Part of the blame for its apparent failure may have been due to mismanagement (Oldmixon admitted in a later issue to delays in publication), but by far the greater part of the blame must lay with its organization. The Muses
Mercury was too miscellaneous, too patched together, too much of an opportunistic job to be a success. 19

In 1708 Oldmixon published his first history, The British Empire in America with "The common Arguments against our Plantations in America, answer'd; and the Advantages of them to England, Asserted." 20 If Oldmixon is an ardent advocate of trade—"We have no ways of making ourselves considerable in the World, but by our Trade, which breeds Seamen, and brings in Wealth to maintain them." 21—he is also the stalwart Whig:

There are some Persons who pretend the Spaniards have ruin'd themselves, by exhausting their Country, for the sake of their American Acquisitions. To which may be answer'd, their banishing the Convert-Moors, the Jews, and the setting up of the Inquisition, with the Tyranny of their Government, have more exhausted Spain, than all their Settlements in the West-Indies. 22

Oldmixon would have liked Grote, "Did the Athenians and other Greeks lose by the colonies they sent into Asia?" Or rather, was not Ionia the barrier of Greece, which defended it against the Persian Usurpation? 23

In 1709 Oldmixon came out with a curious little book entitled The History of Addresses. The book was nothing more than a compilation of addresses by the various corporations to the Crown before and after the Revolution. In collecting them, Oldmixon wrote,

he had no other View, but to compare the present Tempers of Men with the past, and see who are they that are alter'd for the better, and who for the
worse; who are Constant to their Principles of Slavery, Spiritual and Temporal, and who to those of true Loyalty and Liberty.  

This simple psychology of good versus evil was to be a lasting characteristic of Oldmixon's histories.

The book is memorable for its definition of a whig. Oldmixon tells us in the Dedicatory Address that the author is one who abhors the late Modern Distinction of Old Whiggs and New Whiggs; but has a hearty Respect for a true Whigg, by which Denomination I understand nothing more than this; A Man who is Zealous for the Maintenance of the Laws of his Country, the Monarchy as founded on these Laws, the Liberty of the Subject as far as these Laws establish it, the Church of England according to the present Constitution, but would not infringe the Toleration granted to Dissenters in any Manner, nor deprive any Protestant of any of the Privileges of an Englishman... And if there's any Party that goes farther, we leave them, let them give themselves what names they will, 'tis certain we may say of them as was said from the Throne not long since, they assume 'em, to carry on Designs they dare not own.

The History of Addresses is also noteworthy because it marks the beginning of Oldmixon's association with Edmund Curll, the Unspeakable Curll.  

In October, 1710 Oldmixon became the party writer, the servant of the Kit-Kats. He met his fellow collaborator in The Medley, Arthur Mainwaring, through their mutual friend, Dr. Samuel Garth.

About Michaelmas 1710, He [Arthur Mainwaring] sent to speak with me, accordingly I gave him a Meeting at Whites Chocololate House... He began the Discourse of the Affair he had then in his Thoughts, by Complaining mightily of the Villany and Insolence of the
Examiner, saying, it did a World of Mischief. He told me he wish'd I would set up a Paper as an Antidote to that Poyson, and that he would assist me in it, not only with his Advice, but with his Pen; which Promise he perform'd in a very ample Manner.28

Oldmixon's contributions to The Medley come, for the most part, between Christmas, 1710 and May, 1711 when Mainwaring lay ill.29

Number 24 is typical of Oldmixon's later polemical writing:

I have in former Papers observ'd how ill-grounded their Pretences to Zeal and Loyalty are, how they have abandoned the Church, how they have insulted their Sovereign; and now I will enquire into their Morals and Doctrine, and see whether the Growth of Deism and Immorality is not of Tory Origin.

Oldmixon was not only in his element when writing The Medley—he had great expectations as well. Mainwaring had promised to him a place after their hebdomadal battles were over.30 "But this was all; I never heard a word more of any such useful Employment, and have had the bad Luck to see the valuable Ones given away to those that wou'd not, or perhaps cou'd not do any Thing to deserve such Favour."31 The Medley was not only a disappointment to Oldmixon's hopes for advancement, but it was a personal financial loss as well. "... The Impression was thrown on my Hands, to my very great loss, as it continues to this time [1715]."32 "He never again found," concludes Professor Rogers, "so suitable a battle-ground for his favourite activity—contending boisterously with the eminent writers of the day."33
In May, 1712 Swift published a blatantly political essay proposing an English Academy to regulate the English language in the manner of the French Academy. Swift's essay was entitled *A Letter to the Earl of Oxford.* Oldmixon replied in kind in *Reflections on Dr. Swift's Letter To The Earl of Oxford About The English Tongue.* The Tories were a poor choice for founders of an academy since "... there never was one ... that had any smattering of Learning, except in Pedantry, nor Taste of any Books but Eikon Basilike, and the Thirtieth of January Sermons. ..." Learning, "which always goes by the Stile of Common-wealth," never "would submit to the Arbitrary Government of an Ignorant and Tyrannical Faction." Whiggery aside, Oldmixon did make a good criticism of the Proposal:

> The Latin Three Hundred before Tully was as unintelligible in his Time as the English and French of the same Period are now. And the Corruptions afterwards by the Barbarians made it as different from Cicero's as Ennius's; yet amidst all those variations, Horace's works are still Monumentum aere perennius. When a Tongue is come to any degree of Perfection, whoever writes Well in it will Live; there's a Thirst after Wit in all Ages, and those that have a Taste of it will distinguish the Thought from the Diction. Chaucer will, no doubt, be admir'd as long as the English Tongue has a Being; and the Changes that have happen'd to our Language have not hinder'd his Works out living their Contemporary Monuments of Brass or Marble.

"The Doctor," Oldmixon adds, "may as well set up a Society to find out the Grand Elixir, the Perpetual Motion, the Longitude, and other such Discoveries, as to fix our Language beyond their own times."
Oldmixon's recognition of the change that occurs in language from one age to the next, "a sort of cultural historicism," as Professor Rogers calls it, proved, however, not to be a feature of his histories of England.

Oldmixon also brought out in 1712 a pamphlet defending the late ministry's policies entitled The Dutch Barrier our's: or the Interest of England and Holland inseparable. With reflections on the insolent treatment the Emperor and States-General have met with from the author of the Conduct [i.e., The Conduct of the Allies by Jonathan Swift], and his Brethren. In this year, too, appeared the first two parts of The secret history of Europe, shewing that the late greatness of the French power was never so much owing to the number or goodness of their troops . . . as to the treachery and corruption of ministers abroad. This history was published by Curll.

In 1713 Oldmixon wrote The life and history of Belisarius, who conquered Africa and Italy, with an account of his disgrace, the ingratitude of the Romans, and a parallel between him and a modern hero [Marlborough]. In viewing antiquity as in viewing modern times Oldmixon was the perennial Whig.

In 1714 Oldmixon came out with the Arcana Gallica: Or, The Secret History of France, For the Last Century. Shewing, By What Steps the French Ministers destroy'd the LIBERTIES of that Nation in General, and the PROTESTANT RELIGION in Particular.
Oldmixon was furious with the French for not preserving their constitutional apparatus in 1614-1615:

Thus in Three Months there was an end put to the Authority of the Two Assemblies, that were the Bulwarks of the French Liberties, that of the States General, and that of the Parliament of Paris. But

If Oldmixon anticipates Burke in this respect, he is, at least in this instance, completely unlike Burke because he is unaware of change. In the Arcana Gallica Oldmixon shows himself to be the complete Cokian. In his dedication to the second Earl of Portland Oldmixon noted that his lordship's heart was

so perfectly British, that it is a Secret Reproach to many of our Country-Men who pique themselves of a long Descent of British Ancestry, and yet seem to have no more Regard for the true Interest of their Country than their Ancestors, the Normans, had, when they invaded it. They have nothing of the Ancient German Blood in them: Have no Notion of that Spirit and Principle of Liberty which inspir'd our Saxon Fathers in the Defence of it.

If Oldmixon can admit of change in the constitution of France, he will not tolerate it in the case of England:

What since has been call'd the Third Estate, or the Deputies of the People, owes its Original to Philip the Fair, upon his Return from his Expedition against the Flemings. Much about the same time, it is pretended those Deputies were admitted to assist at the Assemblies in England, tho' the latter is only Pretence, for the Old Verse tells us what such Assemblies were compos'd of, even before the Conquest in the Saxon Monarchy.

Prelati Proceres missisq; Potentibus Urbes.
The Prelates, Peers, the Cities by their Powrs. . . .

The comparative studies which inspired many seventeenth century Englishmen to enquire into their past never made an impression on this Cokian mind.
In the late summer or autumn of 1714 we find our author calling upon the Whigs not to repeat the error of granting a Bill of Indemnity to the Tories as they did in 1688. The pamphlet in question was The false Steps of the Ministry after the Revolution: Shewing, That the Lenity and Moderation of that Government was the Occasion of all the Factions which have since endangered the Constitution. With some Reflections on the License of the Pulpit and Press. "... No constitution," Oldmixon declared, "can support itself where power is wanting to punish." The party violence of the times can be seen in Oldmixon's picture of the Harley ministry:

But when it shall appear that all the good effects of the late glorious war were ruined at once by Their [the Tories] begging France to put an end to it, by their sacrificing the interest and liberties of Europe to their ambition, that they have rendered an expense of above one hundred millions useless, and by a scandalous treaty given up all glory and advantage of ten years victory; when their deeds of darkness shall be brought to light; when their intrigues with France to destroy the Dutch, the emperor, and at last ourselves, to introduce the Pretender, and with him popery, poverty, and slavery; when that black scene, I say, shall be laid open, I doubt not but the people of Great Britain will hardly have patience to forbear doing themselves justice; and that even the tories will be the first to demand it on those that so wickedly abused and betrayed them.  

Oldmixon probably infuriated Alexander Pope as well as the Tories in this year. As the editor of Poems and Translations by Several Hands Oldmixon had printed one of Pope's tavern pieces, "Epigram upon Two or Three," having first given it "the more
alluring title,""A Receipt to make a Cuckold. By Mr. Pope."

To make matters worse, Oldmixon attacked Pope in the Preface:

"I know of but one Poem that has crept into it, which I would have had kept still in Manuscript. 'Tis a very little One, and will be easily slipt over in so great a Number of Others that seem intended for the Press; which certainly that never was. Thus much was due to Justice, considering the Company it is in."

Oldmixon had clearly become involved in Curll's war on Pope.

In 1715 Oldmixon published The Life and Posthumous Works of Arthur Maynwaring, dedicated to Robert Walpole. It is in this biography that Oldmixon acknowledges his role as a party writer:

"I can with good Conscience affirm, that the publishing these writings of Mr. Maynwaring's, and my Concern in the Medleys, was not a Twentieth part of what I publish'd and wrote in Vindication of the old Ministers, the Constitution, and Protestant Succession, even while the late Managers were in the Height of their Usurp'd Power. . . . For if I wrote for Profit only, and not out of Principle, it would be impossible for me to do what I have done, and shall still do upon all Occasions, where 'tis requisite to continue my Labours."

Mainwaring, he tells us, alerted him to "the new Danger we were brought into of Popery and Slavery" and "put me upon applying my Studies to that use." Oldmixon, however, probably knew most Whit potentates at second hand, through Mainwaring who . . . became Intimate with all the Principal Lords and Gentlemen at Court, and about Town, who were in the true English Interest. He was admitted a Member of the Kit-Kat Club, and was look'd upon as one of the Chief Ornaments and Supports of it, by his Pleasantry and Wit."
In the spring of 1716 Curll brought out an unauthorized edition of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's poems. Oldmixon had supplied the poems to Curll. The whole affair angered Pope and he took his revenge in *A full and true Account of a horrid and barbarous Revenge by Poison, on the Body of Mr. Edmund Curll*, bookseller. The "revenge" was an emetic and at one point Pope has the dying, retching, and repenting Curll exclaim:

"Ah! Mr. Oldmixon," said poor Mr. Curll, "to what a condition have your works reduced me! I die a martyr to that unlucky preface. However, in these my last moments I will be just to all men; you shall have your third share of the Court Poems, as was stipulated. When I am dead, where will you find another bookseller? Your Protestant packet might have supported you, had you writ a little less scurrilously; there is a mean in all things."

In *A further Account of the most deplorable Condition of Mr. Edmund Curll, Bookseller*, which Pope probably brought out in November, 1716 Oldmixon is given rougher treatment:

As the poor man's frenzy increased, he began to void his excrements in his bed, read Rochester's bawdy poems to his wife, gave Oldmixon a slap on the chops, and would have kissed Mr. Pemberton's a__ by violence.

Pope's parting shot at Curll includes an allusion to a life of the Earl of Nottingham that Oldmixon was then writing. Pope has an insane Curll imagine that his books are attacking him:

Why flutter ye your leaves and flap your covers at me? Damn ye all, ye wolves in sheeps' clothing; rags ye were, and to rags ye shall return. Why hold you forth your texts to me, ye paltry sermons? Why cry ye,--at every word to me, ye bawdy poems? --To my shop at Tunbridge ye shall go, by G__, and thence be drawn like the rest of your predecessors,
bit by bit, to the passage-house; for in this present emotion of my bowels, how do I compassionately those who have great need, and nothing to wipe their breech with?

Having said this, and at the same time recollecting that his own was yet unwiped, he abated of his fury, and with great gravity applied to that function the unfinished sheets of the conduct of the Earl of Nottingham. 57

Oldmixon's attack on Pope's Homer at the end of May in this year may account for this distinction. In THE Catholic Poet; or Protestant Barnaby's Sorrowful Lamentation Oldmixon declared that Pope's Homer had been a literary failure. Oldmixon also accused Pope of trying to charm "pretty Bell Fermor" with "vile smut," being a Jacobite and a "hunch-back'd Papist." 58

Sometime in this year of 1716 Oldmixon left London and went down to his native Somerset as Collector of the Customs at Bridgewater. 59 From the very beginning Oldmixon was unhappy and dissatisfied with his new post. In his Memoirs of the Press (published after his death) 60 Oldmixon stated that it had been represented to him that the profits were twice what they actually were, that in a month's time he wished himself back in London, but was persuaded to stay by friends and relatives. 61

In June of 1717 Oldmixon was writing Joseph Addison, newly appointed as Secretary of State for the Southern Department, asking for his help in securing a post for a cousin. "... Your Protection in this Case ... would be a great Relief to Me." Oldmixon also called Addison's attention to "my Absence at a Poor Post 120 miles off." 62
In November of 1717 Oldmixon was writing to Jacob Tonson, Jr., reminding him that "punctual Payment is the Soul of all Business," and that he had not been paid for work already delivered. "& you will own I have not been handsomely dealt by." The letter includes an itemized bill "which," Oldmixon tells Tonson, "is 1½d a line." Oldmixon was not only an author for hire—"I have finished Cornwall and Devon which will make at least 32 Sheets"—he was also apparently a literary jobber as well. He tells Tonson, "The Town clerks of Lime and Weymouth are at Work for me Now." This letter also shows that Oldmixon made indices for a living:

This day send the Index to Dr. Eachard to my wife. 
... Tie very large and if I demanded 12 gs for it woud be little... I had for the Index to Kennets 3 voll. 35 pd me by Nicolson this I am sure is better in proportion and I was 3 hard weeks about it.63

In March of 1718 and again in July Oldmixon was in trouble with the local authorities. On the first occasion he was implicated in a riot and in the second Oldmixon was accused of applying himself to and frequenting Presbyterian and Anabaptist conventicles.64

In December of 1718 Oldmixon asked the elder Tonson to intercede for him for the then vacant place of Poet Laureate:

... I flatter my self you will be so kind as to speak to my Lord the Duke of Newcastle that I may succeed Mr. Rowe in the Laureats Place which I was to have had before had it not been for him as Sir Samll Garth knows.
Oldmixon goes on to point out that,

Hard will be my Case if while I am banished in
a Corner of ye Kingdom surrounded with Jacobites
vilifyd insulted & having not a Minutes Ease
My Friends will not endeavor that this fatal
Absence of mine may not be my Ruin.

Oldmixon was, in his own opinion, the most worthy claimant:

If some of em have done for ye Muses, which I ques­tion, I will prove that I have done more than all of
them for the Crown. Besides I am the Oldest Claimer.
[A deletion occurs here.] Long have I been in the
Service of the Muse and the Press without any Reward
& the Life I lead here is not worth living. . .
Mr. Hughes has a 500£ a year place, So they all have,
I think.65

In 1719 Oldmixon had, perhaps, reconciled himself, for the
time being at least, to what he considered his ill-deserve'd fate.
In the spring of this year Oldmixon was very much occupied with
his work as an officer of the Crown. In a letter to the Customs
Commissioners Oldmixon informed them of the appearance of a Swede
in those parts and of his anger with a "Justice & Under Sheriff
taking him for a Trifler & a Vagrant rather than a Spyde. . . ."
He also informed his superiors on the state of loyalty to the
Crown in Bridgewater:

The Rabble of this Place was very much incencd against
me & my Brother Officers for disturbing this Foreigner
whom They took to be a Friend to the Cause & a Company
of them as we past peaceably by cryd out What do those
damd Rogues pretend to?66

The next extant letter (again, to the Customs Commissioners)
deals with business and the state of the countryside.
Hon'd Sirs/ I have remitted to ye Receiver Generall £492: 10: --since I mentiond the £400 -- by which means the Chest is emptyd & I am now easy on yt Account & indeed on all Others with Respect to ye Invasion. The very Jacobites who are anything do not like it & are afraid Spaniards & Irishmen will only distinguish those that have from those that have not. We are very quiet & Peoples Apprehensions Lessen dayly.67

In a letter written shortly after these two, Oldmixon informs his superiors of his intention to "strictly examine the country people" about the Swedish "Spye." He also complains in this letter of "the faction & some weak [deleted] 'who' represent the projected invasion as an Amusement of the Governmt. . . . "68

Letters such as this may well have been the cause for Professor Aitken's description of Oldmixon as a man who "acted as a sort of political agent . . . at Bridgwater."69

In the winter of 1720 Oldmixon was in high dudgeon, denying an apparent charge of the younger Tonson of "swelling . . . unnecessarily" his histories of Somersetshire and Yorkshire. "I shall not charge you with a Sheet after y' Letter came to hand. . . ." Oldmixon's closing remark was possibly a bluff: "As to Somersetshire A Bookseller has spoken to me & made me a considerable Offer, & the sooner you will please to return it the better."70

In April of 1720 Oldmixon was still negotiating for the return of The History of Somersetshire: "Send those Papers and Discharge me from my Obligations to you on that Score."71
Oldmixon goes on to point out that,

Hard will be my Case if while I am banished in a Corner of ye Kingdom surrounded with Jacobites vilifyd insulted & having not a Minutes Ease My Friends will not endeavor that this fatal Absence of mine may not be my Ruin.

Oldmixon was, in his own opinion, the most worthy claimant:

If some of em have done for ye Muses, which I ques­tion, I will prove that I have done more than all of them for the Crown. Besides I am the Oldest Claimer. [A deletion occurs here.] Long have I been in the Service of the Muse and the Press without any Reward & the Life I lead here is not worth living. . . Mr. Hughes has a 500£ a year place, So they all have, I think.65

In 1719 Oldmixon had, perhaps, reconciled himself, for the time being at least, to what he considered his ill-deserve'd fate.

In the spring of this year Oldmixon was very much occupied with his work as an officer of the Crown. In a letter to the Customs Commissioners Oldmixon informed them of the appearance of a Swede in those parts and of his anger with a "Justice & Under Sheriff taking him for a Trifler & a Vagrant rather than a Spye. . . ." He also informed his superiors on the state of loyalty to the Crown in Bridgewater:

The Rabble of this Place was very much incencd against me & my Brother Officers for disturbing this Foreigner whom They took to be a Friend to the Cause & a Company of them as we past peaceably by cryd out What do those damd Rogues pretend to?66

The next extant letter (again, to the Customs Commissioners) deals with business and the state of the countryside.
In the autumn of this year Oldmixon informed possibly the younger Tonson that he had drawn on his account "to make up a sum to the Receiver Gen of his Maj*® Customes Francis Hawes Esq". I need not tell you," he wrote, "how much my Honour is concernd in the Answer you give such Drafts & that I shall be in Town in 10 days, If Im well, & shall bring Bills with me to made good sev such Sums if there is not so much coming to me on your Acct. . . ." Oldmixon's jumbling of accounts was not new. In the same letter he goes on to say:

I have had a sad Time with Bills & am afraid to meddle with any whose Drawers I don't well know within these 9 months, above £1500 have come back but I have not yet lost a penny by it.72

In June of 1721 Oldmixon was again in trouble with his superiors. In a letter possibly sent to Charles Delfaye, Under-Secretary to Townshend, he complained that the

Letter I wrote to the Commissioners of the Customes has had no other effect as Yet then a Reprimand from them to me & the Dep Controller for not sending that Account before which we coud easily answer if we were to talk to Commrs.73

Oldmixon's forte was not figures. Oldmixon preferred a vigilance over his Majesty's subjects to a vigilance over his Majesty's accounts. In the same letter he wrote: "Sr/I think it my Duty to inform you that the People of this Place have behavd with their usual Insolence and Disloyalty on Occasion of the 10th of June."74

In 1724 J. Pemberton, Curll's associate, brought out Oldmixon's The Critical History of England, Ecclesiastical and
Civil. Oldmixon wrote it, he said, to "expell the Poyson with which the Reader may be infected by Mr. Echard's History of England." The history is memorable for its Cokian view of the English Constitution—"I shall endeavour to prove, that our Parliamentary Constitution is as old as the Saxons"—and its attacks on the English scholars who attacked the Cokian thesis—"Brady therefore had a Pension given him, to prove that the English Subjects were Slaves, 'till Henry the Third gave them a Parliament. . . ."  

It was in the autumn of this year that Oldmixon had his first dealings with James Brydges, first Duke of Chandos, "the most successful war-profiteer in that age," as his biographers described him. "Princely Chandos" was negotiating with Oldmixon to become a tenant in his Castle street building project. Oldmixon must have impressed Chandos because Oldmixon became Chandos' overseer in Bridgwater in 1726. He became a nominal partner in another Chandos project, a glass works, about this time. He apparently was also connected with Chandos' soap works. In 1728 Oldmixon was replaced by another. Oldmixon's fall as Chandos' factotum was due to his mismanagement of the Duke's interests.  

Zachary Grey's answer to The Critical History of England entitled A Defence of Our Antient and Modern Historians Against the Frivolous Cavils of a late Pretender to Critical History (1725), a page by page rebuttal, showed that Oldmixon was, like
Coke before him, prone to reading texts to suit himself. As Grey wrote:

... And all that he meant by that Account of a Witterna-Gemot, was, That it had the Same Power of Legislature that a Parliament has now; not that it consisted of the same members.

And, like Coke, Oldmixon was prone to ignoring them altogether. Here is Grey again:

The first Alteration that he meets with was in the second Year of Henry II, where is added to the Episcopi, Comites, & Barones, Concilium Militum & Hominum suorum, which extendeth beyond the Barons. But to grope no further (says he) in this Darkness, the first certain Light that I discover for the Form of our Parliaments at this Day, is that which riseth forty Years after in the Magna Charta of King John.

In almost disbelief Grey noted that Oldmixon dealt with his authorities as if in a dream:

... He seems either to have been in a Dream all the while he was writing it, or, as he says of Dr. Brady, p. 28, whilst he was copying his Famous Historians, he read them, as witches do their Prayers, backwards.

The explanation for all of this, as Grey suggested, was Oldmixon's absorption in polemic:

... His Design (I fear) was not so much to write true History, as to Rail at those, who (I may modestly venture to say will at least be accounted his Equals. And, if instead of A Critical History, he had styled his Work, An Infamous Invective against our English Historians, the Title would have been much more Suitable to the Performance.

Oldmixon's historical sins, therefore, were never sins at all to him. One is reminded of Johnson's famous reply to Boswell's query
as to whether or not Foote was an infidel: "I do not know, Sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject." 90

A further example of Oldmixon's headlong flight, of his lack of responsibility, occurred in 1727 in a pamphlet entitled Clarendon and Whitlock compar'd. Oldmixon declared that the editors of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion had changed the text.

It is suspected that the Lord Clarendon's History was very much alter'd by the Editors at Oxford. That the Original was very much alter'd by the Editors at Oxford. That the MS. is interpolated and raz'd in several Places, on which I lay no Stress; though I believe I have good Reasons to suspect it. The Gallicisms Eclaircissement, Eclat, To give into a Thing, &c. are modern, and were hardly in Use in France at that Time, in the Sense the Historian uses them. Whether there are really any such Razzures and Interpolations or not, 'tis certain, the Bent of the History was Originally the same as it is now. . . . 91

This charge is conjecture as we shall soon see. Oldmixon never saw the Clarendon manuscript; he was trying the Oxford editors on hearsay. 92

In 1728 Oldmixon brought out An Essay on Criticism which, in the opinion of a modern scholar, "presents, albeit not very imaginatively, a statement of many of the literary theories and attitudes of the Augustan period." 93 In this Essay (written in the manner of Longinus and his French successors) Oldmixon again
attacked Pope. Speaking of Pope's Essay on Criticism, Oldmixon wrote:

I dare not say any Thing of the last Essay on Criticism in Verse, but that if any more curious Reader has discovered in it something new which is not in Dryden's Prefaces, Dedications, and his Essay on Dramatick Poetry, not to mention the French Criticks, I should be very glad to have the Benefit of the Discovery.94

And there was a belittling tone to many of Oldmixon's remarks on Pope's translation of the Iliad:

'Tis true, no Poet will ever undertake a Translator with more Advantage than the last Translation of Homer had; for besides Eight or Ten Versions in Latin, Italian, French, &c. there are Three or Four in English; a Prose Translation by Madam Dacier, and a Cart-load of Comments in all Languages. I am satisfy'd so good a Versifyer as the Translator of the Illias might with those Helps, have made a very good Translation, without understanding any more Greek than my self; and nothing in the World could have been more easy, than out of one Commentator to have corrected another, and to have alter'd and amended the Reading in the Name of any of the Criticks, from Eustathius down no [Sic] Dacier.

After quoting "One of the Greatest Masters of the Greek Tongue, in our Time" to the effect that there were not twenty men in England who really understood Greek and the opinion of Menage that there were only three men in France who knew the language, Oldmixon says this of Pope:

If it be so, the Translation of the Illias, from the Greek of Homer, must shew the Translator to be a greater Master of the Greek Language than all the Learned Men in France except Three, and all the Learned Men in England except about Twenty.95
Small wonder that Professor R. J. Madden should describe the Essay as "a step on the way to its author's immortalizing in lead." However, it was in 1728 that Pope launched his long-expected attack on mediocrity in English letters entitled The Dunciad, the purpose of which was, in the words of Robert Kilburn Root, "to save the good estate of letters and of learning, to which he bore devoted allegiance, from the depredations of pretentious dullards—but it was also a magnificent jest." Before Pope could launch this attack, it was necessary that he be first attacked by his victims. Therefore, in the spring of 1728, he set a trap for them in a satirical essay entitled Peri Bathous, Or The Art of Sinking in Poetry, a primer for writing dull poetry.

Wherefore, considering with no small grief, how many promising geniuses of this age are wandering (as I may say) in the dark without a guide, I have undertaken this arduous but necessary task, to lead them as it were by the hand, and step by step, the gentle down-hill way to the Bathos; the bottom, the end, the central point, the non plus ultra, of true modern poesy!

Oldmixon appears among the Porpoises, one of Pope's several kinds of geniuses in poetry.

The Porpoises are unwieldy and big; they put all their numbers into a great turmoil and tempest, but whenever they appear in plain light (which is seldom) they are only shapeless and ugly monsters.
Grub Street answered with a flurry of invective and Pope brought out in May of 1728 his *chef d'oeuvre* of ridicule, the mock epic, *The Dunciad*. In the following spring Oldmixon received his "immortalization in lead" in the "complete" and "perfect" edition of the *Dunciad* entitled *The Dunciad Variorum With the Prolegomena of Scriblerus*. The frontispiece shows an ass burdened down with the works of dulness. Each tome has an author's name inscribed thereon and Oldmixon's name is there for all to see among the works of Welsted, Ward, Haywood, Dennis and Theobald (the hero of the poem). On the ground lay broadsides of various Grub Street journals, one of which, the *Flying Post*, Pope associated with Oldmixon. 101 Oldmixon is next mentioned in the Prolegomena of Martinus Scriblerus (Pope's German pedant creation who makes learned comments on the text of the *Dunciad*) in the "Testimonies of Authors, Concerning our Poet and his Works." Among "the various judgments of the Learned concerning our Poet" that Scriblerus has collected "according to the laudable usage of Editors" is Oldmixon's opinion in his *Essay on Criticism* of Pope's *Essay on Criticism* cited above. Scriblerus accuses Oldmixon of being "peremptory" in his censure of the *Essay on Criticism* and describes him as "our hypercritical historian Mr. Oldmixon." 102 At another point in the "Testimonies of the Authors" Oldmixon's *Essay on Criticism* is mentioned again and he is described as "That ready writer Mr. Oldmixon." 103 In the poem Oldmixon appears among the authors who participate in a game instigated by the Goddess of
Dulness—"Daughter of Chaos and eternal Night"—to celebrate
Theobald's coronation as Monarch of the empire of Dulness.

The object of the game proposed is to see who can win the approval
of a stupid lord ("He grins, and looks broad nonsense with a
stare"). Oldmixon is a signal failure in this respect:

Welsted his mouth with Classic flatt'ry opes,
And the puff'd Orator bursts out in Tropes.
But Oldmixon the Poet's healing balm
Strives to extract from his soft, giving palm;
Unlucky Oldmixon! thy lordly master
The more thou ticklest, gripes his fist the faster.

Oldmixon's unsuccessful patron-hunting, his dedicatory prefaces
to Whig magnates, is the subject of this satire. Oldmixon's
whole career was well known to Pope as this note of Martinus
Scriblerus to this portion of the poem illustrates:

Mr. John Oldmixon (next to Mr. Dennis the most
ancient Critick of our Nation) not so happy as
laborious in Poetry, and therefore perhaps
characteriz'd by the Tatler, No. 62. by the name
of Omicron the unborn Poet. Curl, Key to the
D. p. 13. An unjust censurer of Mr. Addison
whom in his imitation of Bouhours (call'd the
Arts of Logic and Rhetoric) he misrepresents in
plain matter of fact. In p. 45. he cites the
Spectator as abusing Dr. Swift by name, where
there is not the least hint of it: And in
p. 304. is so injurious as to suggest, that
Mr. Addison himself writ that Tatler No. 43.
which says of his own Simile, that "'tis as
great as ever enter'd into the mind of man."
This person wrote numbers of books which are
not come to our knowledge. "Dramatick works,
and a volume of Poetry, consisting of heroic
Epistles, &c. some whereof are very well done,"
saith that great Judge Mr. Jacob. Lives of the

I remember a Pastoral of his on the Battle
of Blenheim; a Critical History of England;
Essay on Criticism, in prose; The Arts of Logic
and Rhetoric, in which he frequently reflects on our Author. We find in the Flying-Post of Apr. 13, 1728, some very flat verses of his against him and Dr. Sw. He was all his life a hired writer for a Party, and received his reward in a small place which he yet enjoys.108

In Book III of the Dunciad Variorum Oldmixon found himself the victim of one of Pope's favorite tactics, viz., using one Dunce to denounce another. Scriblerus cites Oldmixon's low opinion of Laurence Eusden, Poet-Laureate, in the Arts of Logic and Rhetoric to corroborate Pope's opinion of Eusden.109 Oldmixon is also mentioned in Appendix II, A List of Books, Papers, and Verses, in which our Author was abused, printed before the Publication of the Dunciad: With the true Names of the Authors.110 The List, of course, was the raison d'être for the Dunciad. It was Pope's justification for his attack on the Grub Street poets, the men whom he considered to be imperiling good letters.111 If to be included, therefore, among "the Grub Street race,"112 was Oldmixon's fate, the ignominy was of his own doing as his "laborious poetry,"113 his alliance with Curll, his life-long position as a "hired writer for a Party,"114 and his remarks on Pope's Homer illustrate.

In the autumn of 1729—this year of the Dunciad Variorum—Oldmixon declared in the Preface to The History of England during the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart that the Oxford editors of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion had altered and interpolated the original manuscript.115 Oldmixon's charges were
based upon hearsay—"I speak this by Hearsay; but Hearsay from a Person Superior to all Suspicion, and too illustrious to be named without leave"—and explicit faith in one George Ducket who told him of the deathbed confession of one of the Oxford "interpolaters," the poet Edmund Smith, author of, as Oldmixon put it, "that excellent Tragedy, Phaedra and Hippolitus."

Oldmixon's critics pointed out in the ensuing years (the controversy dragged on even after Oldmixon's death in 1742) his glaring errors and the unsubstantiated nature of his claims. Even Oldmixon knew where his own deficiencies lay:

'Tis conjuring Work to enter into the Particulars of Alterations, without collating the Original Manuscript with the printed Copy, which I had no Opportunity to do, and I dare say never shall, for Reasons too obvious to need Explanation.

At one point, at least, in the controversy, Oldmixon was reduced to tears, the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune being too much to be borne:

The Returns I have met with for the Pains I have already taken, being by no Means answerable to the Labour, Honesty and Usefulness of my Design. What I have suffer'd and do daily suffer, from the Enemies of the Constitution, all the World know. But they know not what I have suffer'd from some of its Friends...

Oldmixon, however, refused to give in. He defended George Ducket to the last, Ducket who "was in his Grave, and could say nothing for himself." And elsewhere he adds: "I own it is incumbent on me to make good that Charge, which I am, and shall always be ready to do; and to give as many more
Instances, when call'd upon. . . ."  He fought back in a way that would be typical for a polemical Whig. After noting that "Great frauds are always deeds of Darkness, not easily to be penetrated" he could argue that if common fame were sufficient to impeach Buchingham "it is sufficient to render suspect ye editors of Cl's history."  

If the History of the Rebellion's authenticity could not be shaken ("what matters who was the author?") , Oldmixon was determined by sheer force of polemic to show that the History of the Rebellion was not for patriotic Englishmen. Clarendon's history, he wrote, ought to be given

the more agreeable Title, of Faults on both Sides, a mean Pamphlet, so-call'd, which then made a great Noise, an Account of its being suppos'd to be written by Direction of Mr. Robert Harley, by one Clements, a New-England Jobber, to carry on a very bad Cause.

Oldmixon's polemical temperament would never let him admit that there could be two sides to a struggle.

None of this stood well with Oldmixon's contemporaries.

In the Idler, No. 65, Dr. Johnson wrote:

The authenticity of Clarendon's history, though printed with the sanction of one of the first Universities of the world, had not an unexpected manuscript been happily discovered, would, with the help of factious credulity, have been brought into question, by the lowest of all human beings, a Scribbler for a party, and a Commissioner of Excise.

The remaining years of Oldmixon's life were devoted to the writing of his mammoth folio histories of England in the
sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. The History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart came first in October of 1729; The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne George I followed in July of 1735, and the last, The History of England during the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, appeared in 1739. The costs of the first two histories were met by public subscription and the last history Oldmixon himself paid for. The printing of these histories was a staggering task. Oldmixon noted in the Preface of his History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary "that at Six Houses, he could not sometimes get Six Sheets a Week; this has been his main Hindrance for several Months past."

The last two histories were written at great physical cost. He began the History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, he wrote in 1735, thirty months before, but was "incapable of writing twelve month, at least, because of Sore and weak eyes with which he had not been troubl'd twenty years before." He was also plagued by the gout: "two or three severe fits." There were mental harassments as well. Oldmixon thought he was the victim of "Prejudice & Faction, Bigotry & Ignorance which mislead so many in these our Days. . . ." Oldmixon also complained of the general indifference of the public. The source of this anguish may have been the state of his reputation. In 1729 Oldmixon declared that he did not
write for a party. He had been "maliciously aspers'd." The criticism of men such as Zachary Grey and Pope no doubt had its effect. Financial worries were also a part of Oldmixon's anxieties.

While Oldmixon's histories are largely based upon secondary accounts (Rapin, Whitlock, Ludlow, Burnet, Clarendon, Eachard), they have been of use to modern scholars. S. R. Gardiner was thankful for the fact that Oldmixon had included copies of the letters of the parliamentary leaders to the Scots in 1640. Robert J. Allen found Oldmixon's _History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary_ very useful when he wrote _The Clubs of Augustan London_. And J. P. Kenyon often cited the same history when he wrote his life of Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland.

Oldmixon's giant folio histories are also a source of biographical information. At the time of the Peace of Ryswick, for example, Oldmixon tells us that he was swindled on treasury bills by some "Harpies" in the City. The occasion of this information was Oldmixon's discussion of the treasury reforms of the Whig financier, Charles Montagu. Oldmixon admired Montagu and understood the "funding" technique. He had an aristocratic disdain for the common people and he was never sympathetic to revolutionary Levellers. (He had all the préjugés of the Whigs.) He appears to have been Sir Samuel Garth's man Friday. He considered himself ill-used for the services he
rendered to the Whigs between 1710 and 1714. And Oldmixon on
one occasion, at least, blamed Joseph Addison for blocking the
road to preferment.

Oldmixon attached a great deal of importance and urgency
to these folio histories. He wrote the _History of England During
the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart_ to "expose the evil and
pernicious counsels and Actions of those Men, who did their utmost,
after the Restoration, to destroy our Liberties, Spiritual &
Temporal." And he wrote the _History of England During the
Reigns of King William and Queen Mary_ to show "how the same sort
of Men, have ever since the Revolution continued these evil and
pernicious Counsels and Actions." "To avert the danger of this
period [i.e., from the reign of William and Mary onwards] falling
into the like hands," he wrote, he postponed the publishing of
his seven book _History of Christianity_ "which has been ready for
the Press these Four Years."

This last mentioned work, probably written in 1731, must
have been very Cokian, for its title implied a belief in an
unchanging constitution for the Christian church as Coke believed
that the English constitution as it existed in his own day had
existed since time immemorial. The title ran in this way: _The
History of Christianity: being an attempt to prove the Perpetuity
of the Faith, and to trace our most Holy Religion, in its Purity
through all the dark ages of Popery, to the Reformation._ . . .

(1731)
Oldmixon came down to London to write the History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary. We know that Oldmixon was in London in June of 1733, living in Southampton-Buildings. During his sojourn in London Oldmixon’s deputy at Bridgewater involved him in a debt to the Crown of £360. In 1735 Oldmixon resigned from the post of Collector of Customs in order to make his life simpler. As late as 1740, however, Oldmixon was still settling his accompts with the Crown. In July of 1741 Oldmixon wrote a pitiful letter to the Duke of Newcastle:

My Lord/ I durst not approach Your Grace in my present Trouble & Distraction but that ye Necessity wch forces me to it will I hope plead for me. I have only here Time to inform Your Grace that a small Payment wch her late Majesty was graciosly pleased to procure for me is cut off at a Time that in ye Dependance on it wch. I flattered myself I might with reason make, I had anticipated the whole Arrear for ye necessaries of Life whereby I am threatened with immediate Ruin & am now dragd to a Place I cannot mention in ye midst of all ye Infirmitie of Old Age Sickness Lameness & almost Blindness & without ye means even of subsisting wch. oblige me most humbly to throw myself on Yr Graces Compassion nor have I less to hope from that Bounty wch. I have before experienced from Yr Grace than in Yr Noble & Successful Adherence to that good Cause I have all my Life Long labourd to serve in ye Worst of times & pray Yr Graces Comiseration of an Old faithfull & distresst Labourer in that Cause [who am deleted] now almost distracted. I am May it please Yr Grace Yr Grace’s most devoted, most faithfull & obigd Humble Servant. J. Oldmixon. The great borough monger must have answered Oldmixon’s prayer because a month later an official in the treasury was ordered to pay Oldmixon £50 as a royal bounty.
During these last years Oldmixon found his way into

**Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot (1734)**

From these\(^{160}\) the World will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooke.\(^{161}\)

and the Satires of Dr. Donne Versified, Satire IV

A tongue, that can cheat widows, cancel scores,
Make Scots speak treason, cozen subtlest whores,
With royal Favourites in flatt'ry vie,
And Oldmixon and Burnet both outlie.\(^{162}\)

In The Dunciad of 1743 Oldmixon leads the diving competition:

In naked majesty Oldmixon stands,
And, Milo like, surveys his arms and hands;
Then sighing, thus, "And am I now threescore?
Ah why, ye Gods! should two and two make four?"
He said, and climb'd a stranded lighter's height,
Shot to the black abyss, and plung'd downright.
The Senior's Judgment all the crowd admire,
Who but to sink the deeper, rose the higher.\(^{163}\)

Martinus Scriblerus' critical note has been changed as well.\(^{164}\)

In addition to what he said before, Scriblerus now adds:

But the top of character was a perverter of History,
in that scandalous one of the Stuarts in folio, and
his Critical History of England, two volumes, octavo.
Being employed by Bishop Kennet, in publishing the
Historians in his Collection, he falsified Daniel's
in numberless places. Yet this very man, in the
preface to the first of these books, advanced a
particular fact to charge three eminent persons of
falsifying the Lord Clarendon's History; which fact
has been disproved by Dr. Atterbury, late Bishop of
Rochester, then the only survivor of them; and the
particular part he pretended to be falsified, pro-
duced since, after almost ninety years, in that
noble author's original manuscript. He was all his
life a virulent Party-writer for hire, and received
his reward in a small place, which he enjoyed to
his death.\(^{165}\)
Oldmixon missed this edition of The Dunciad, having passed away at his house in Great Pulteney Street on July 9, 1742, in his sixty-ninth year. He was buried at Ealing. In the postscript of his last work, Memoirs of the Press, published soon after his death, Oldmixon asked those who pitied him in his misfortune to subscribe to his History of Christianity.

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If Oldmixon was, in many respects, deserving of contumely, he was also a man of great courage. The folio Histories alone testify to a perseverance and tenacity that is rare among men. Labouring long in the Whig vineyards, it must have been a great disappointment to see other men being advanced. (Oldmixon was certainly no worse than some of those who were preferred; his connections, we can surmise, were not as good.) Yet Oldmixon never wavered from the Whig cause. Had he been the scoundrel that his contemporaries thought him to be, he would have changed sides again and again, but Oldmixon had his principles. It was his duty in life to put the record straight, "to set the Dark and Pernicious Designs of the Enemies to our present Happy Constitution, in a Fair and Full light." He was a man absorbed in the politics of his day, polemical, credulous, ready to believe any tale.

Had he been less driven by polemic (Oldmixon did live in an age when great issues were hanging in the balance), had he had a sense of history as something more than the juxtaposing of one
account (of which he approved) against another, had he sought more to record what occurred than to pass judgment, he might well have been a major source for this period.

Oldmixon was part of an age that did not believe in history as change or development. This attitude took its form in England in the belief in an English constitution existing unchanged time out of mind. While Robert Brady and his fellow researchers in the later half of the seventeenth century were destroying this belief, Oldmixon carried on the earlier thought. Oldmixon could be at times the complete Cokian, and Coke, as Professor Pocock has remarked, was the parent of the Whig interpretation of history.
REFERENCES CITED

1 G. A. Aitken, "John Oldmixon," The Dictionary of National Biography (edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, London: Humphrey Milford and Oxford University Press, 1921-1922), Vol. XIV, p. 1009. See also Frederick William Weaver (ed.), The Visitations of the County of Somerset in the Years 1531 and 1573. Together with Additional Pedigrees, Chiefly from the Visitations of 1591 (Exeter: W. Pollard, 1885), p. 56. The Pedigree of the Oldmixons of Oldmixon in Hutton is given and there is a description of the family coat of arms. "Another ancient place lies between Hutton and Uphill, and is denominated Oldmixon, or Oldmixon. This manor was held for divers successions of the family of Arthur by the Wykes of Ninehead, and at length came to the possession of the Oldmixons, who had their name from the place. Of this family was John Oldmixon, author of the History of England, Life of Queen Anne, &c. He died in an advanced age, July 9, 1742." John Collinson, The Histories and Antiquities of the County of Somerset (Bath: Printed by R. Crutwell, MDCCXCI), Vol. III, p. 591.

2 Ibid.


4 Ibid., p. 704.

5 Ibid.


9 Ibid., p. 36.


12 As quoted in Rogers, "The Whig Controversialist," p. 58.


14 As quoted in Rogers, "The Whig Controversialist," p. 68.

15 Ibid., p. 70.

16 The Muses Mercury, January, 1707, Introduction.

17 Addison's Imitation of Horace (Ode iii, Lib. iii) first appeared anonymously in the February, 1707 issue, p. 47, of this periodical. This was apparently Addison's only contribution. Walter Graham concludes that Oldmixon and Addison were friends in this year. English Literary Periodicals (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1930), p. 61. "Addison's connection with this earlier periodical," writes Professor Graham, "although almost completely overlooked by scholars, is significant, in view of his later contributions to the Tatler," p. 61.

18 The Muses Mercury, December, 1707.

19 See Rogers, "The Whig Controversialist," pp. 84-85. The Muses Mercury also broke its pledge never to publish anything "before printed." See 'The Whig Controversialist," pp. 82-104, passim. At this point Rogers concludes that Oldmixon's creative career is over; henceforward he will be the party writer, the compiler of histories, p. 100.

Ibid., p. xxi.

Ibid., p. xxxv.

Ibid., p. xxxvi. Oldmixon would have hated Rousseau: "Their [the Indians'] Language, if possible, is more barbarous than their Manners; and one would think has not been refind since the Confusion of Tongues at Babel. For Instance, Nummakhekodtant amoonganunnonash; is in English, Our Lusts. . . . There certainly will be occasion of no more Examples, to convince any reasonable Person of the barbarities of the Indian Language," p. 101.

The History of Addresses. By One very near a Kin to the Author of the Tale of a Tub. (London: Printed in the Year 1709), p. 1. "By One very near a Kin to the Author of the Tale of a Tub" is no doubt a ruse to conceal the author's identity.


"It is not unreasonable to suppose that the Kit-Cat Club directed the journalistic campaign of the whole party and rewarded such writers as Oldmixon, Boyer, and Ridpath. Positive evidence of this kind of patronage is, however, completely lacking, and only the likelihood of it may be insisted upon." Robert J. Allen, *The Clubs of Augustan London* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), p. 232.

The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne King George I Being the Sequel of the Reigns of the Stuartts, The whole is in Prosecution of the Author's First Scheme to set the Dark and Pernicious Designs of the Enemies to our present Happy Constitution, in a Fair and Full Light to which is prefixed A Large Vindication of the Author against the Groundless charge of Partiality . . . etc. By Mr. Oldmixon (London: Printed for Thomas Cox, under the Royal-Exchange, Richard Ford, and Richard Hett, both in the Poultry, MDCCXXXV), p. 456. Sir Samuel Garth, says Oldmixon, set Mainwaring on to sound Oldmixon out. Both Garth and Mainwaring were members of the Kit-Cat Club. For Mainwaring's
role in Whig circles see Rogers' *Life of Arthur Mainwaring* in Appendix III of "The Whig Controversialist."


29 Rogers, "The Whig Controversialist," p. 211.


31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. xiv. Oldmixon is referring here to *The Medley* when it appeared as a book.

33 Rogers, "The Whig Controversialist," p. 221. Rogers also states that *The Medley* "is certainly the worthiest testimony extant to the wit and controversial skill of the forgotten Whig luminary, Arthur Mainwaring. And it constitutes, too, further evidence of the versatility, professional craft and keen literary opportunism of a figure almost equally neglected--John Oldmixon," p. 221.

34 Professor Louis A. Landa suggests that Swift made this essay political in tone because "he wished the Whigs to dissociate themselves from the project and that he used the tactics expected to achieve this end, in the desire that entire credit for the founding of the Academy should rest with Harley and Harley's supporters. The partisan approach was therefore shrewdly calculated to provoke opposition and to avoid any leaven of Whiggism in the 'institu­tion and patronage' of the Academy. Swift wanted the contemporary prestige, as well as the favorable verdict of posterity, to be unmistakably placed. Nevertheless there was no intention of excluding meritorious Whigs from the original membership--only, as is clear from Swift's attitude, from the 'institution and patronage' of the Academy." Augustan Reprint Society, Series Six: Poetry and Language, No. 1, p. 3.

36. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
37. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
38. Ibid., p. 37.
40. See Straus' The Unspeakable Curll, pp. 220-221. Straus says the Secret History was published in December, 1712.

42. "Burke's essential ideas are that institutions are the products of history; that history consists in an unceasing and undying process in which the generations are partners and in which men perpetually adapt themselves to new needs and new situations; that existing institutions are the fruits of this process. . . ." J. G. A. Pocock, The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth century (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1957), p. 242. Pocock does note, however, that the thought of Burke "owed far more to the common-law concept of custom than to the system-building historicism of the eighteenth century. . . ." p. 249.

43. Oldmixon, Arcana Gallica, p. 35.

45. As found in Walter Scott (ed.), A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts, on the Most Interesting and Entertaining Subjects: But Chiefly Such As Relate To the History and Constitution of These Kingdoms. Selected From An Infinite Number in Print and Manuscript, in the Royal, Cotton, and Other Public, As Well As Private, Libraries; Particularly that of the Late Lord Somers (2d ed., London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand, 1815), XIII, p. 560.


See Sherburn's The Early Career of Alexander Pope, Chapter VI, "Enter Edmund Curll: 1716," pp. 149-185, passim. Straus attributes this work to Curll. See The Unspeakable Curll, p. 231. Included in Poems and Translations by Several Hands was yet another attack on Pope, "Advice to Mr. Pope, on his intended Translation of Homer," which stresses Pope's mercenary purpose for doing the translations, "the true one," as Sherburn would say. The Early Career of Alexander Pope, p. 164.


Ibid., p. 20.


So says Curll in the preface to his second volume of Pope's Literary Correspondence: "You know very well, Sir, that in the year 1717, when the Court Poems (viz. The Basset-Table, The Toilet, and The Drawing-Room) were published, upon your sending to me to the Swan Tavern in Fleet-street, in company with Mr. Lintot, and inquiring into the publication of that pamphlet, I then frankly told you, that those pieces were by Mr. Joseph Jacobs, a dissenting teacher, given to Mr. John Oldmixon, who sent same to be published by Mr. James Roberts in Warwick Lane, and that my neighbour, Mr. Pemberton, and myself, had each of us a share with Mr. Oldmixon in the said pamphlet. For this you were pleased to treat me with half a pint of Canary antimonials prepared; for the emetic effects of which, it has been the opinion of all mankind you deserved the stab. My purgation was soon over; but yours will last (without a timely repentance) till, as the ghost says in Hamlet, with all your imperfections on your head, you are called to your account; and your offences purged by fire." As quoted in William Roscoe (ed.), The Works of

Pope thought so, too, at the time. Here is his description of the meeting with Curll in A full and true Account: "This gentleman Pope, with a seeming coolness, reprimanded Mr. Curll for wrongfully ascribing to him the aforesaid poems: he excused himself by declaring, that one of his authors (Mr. Oldmixon by name) gave the copies to the press, and wrote the preface. Upon this Mr. Pope, being to all appearance reconciled, very civilly drank a glass of sack to Mr. Curll, which he as civilly pledged; and though the liquor, in colour and taste, differed not from common sack, yet was it plain, by the pangs this unhappy stationer felt soon after, that some poisonous drug had been secretly infused therein." Printed in The Works of Alexander Pope, Vol. VII, p. 253. Note that Oldmixon is known to Pope as "one of Curll's authors." Rogers states that this association with Curll would help to make Oldmixon a candidate for inclusion in The Dunciad. See "The Whig Controversialist," pp. 233-300/1, passim.

54 Sherburn is of the opinion that the wrath of Lady Mary was the main reason for this attack on Curll. "Pope had known her probably less than a year, but he was already the victim of that unlucky fondness that was to occupy his mind for the next few years." The Early Career of Alexander Pope, p. 169.


57 Ibid., p. 269. Oldmixon's work is entitled The Conduct of the Earl of Nottingham.

Henry Horwitz, in his book Revolution Politicks: the career of Daniel Finch, second earl of Nottingham, 1647-1730 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), writes: "Early in George I's reign, John Oldmixon did begin to prepare a vindication of and apologia for Nottingham with the earl's consent. However, when he saw the manuscript, Nottingham objected so strenuously to his treatment at Oldmixon's hands that he had the work suppressed," p. vii.

58 As quoted in Sherburn's The Early Career of Alexander Pope, p. 178.

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42
This was no doubt his reward for his pamphleteering from The Medley days onward. See Aitken’s "life" in The Dictionary of National Biography, p. 1011.


Oldmixon to Jacob Tonson, Jr., Edinburgh University Library, MS Lai. II 423/181, 9 November 1717, as printed in Rogers, "The Whig Controversialist," Appendix V, pp. 480-482. Rogers points out that the index mentioned above that Oldmixon did for Eachard’s History of England "falsifies the spirit of Eachard’s text by the Whiggish tone of the entries supplied." "The Whig Controversialist," p. 484, note #4. Readers of Oldmixon’s History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart will note that the work is a long running battle with Eachard. None of these works mentioned in this letter has survived, if they were at all printed.


Oldmixon to the Customs Commissioners, PRO, SP 35/15/119, [25 March 1719], as printed in "The Whig Controversialist," Appendix V, p. 492.

Oldmixon to the Customs Commissioners, PRO, SP 35/15/129, [27 March 1719], as printed in "The Whig Controversialist, Appendix V, p. 495.
Oldmixon to the Customs Commissioners, PRO, SP 35/16/16, 8 April 1719, as printed in "The Whig Controversialist," Appendix V, p. 497.


Oldmixon to Jacob Tonson, Jr., BM Add. MS 28275, f. 84, [25 January 1720], as printed in "The Whig Controversialist," Appendix V, pp. 498-499. The younger Tonson may well have called Oldmixon's bluff. There is no mention of The History of Somersetshire in any of the bibliographical collections; nor is there mention of it in the British Museum Catalogue. One can only assume that The History of Somersetshire was never published and had the same fate as Oldmixon's later The History of Christianity, completed around 1731.

Oldmixon to Jacob Tonson, Sr., BM Add. MS 28275, f. 95, [4 April 1720], as printed in "The Whig Controversialist," Appendix V, pp. 503-504.

Oldmixon to Jacob Tonson, Jr., BM Add. MS 28275, f. 133, 29 October 1720, as printed in "The Whig Controversialist," Appendix V, p. 506.

Oldmixon to Charles Delafaye, PRO SP 35/27/23, [13 June 1721], as printed in "The Whig Controversialist," Appendix V, pp. 507-508. Regarding this passage Rogers writes: "Oldmixon was in perpetual difficulties over money, very largely owing to his inability to keep accounts straight and his propensity for confusing public with private expenditure." "The Whig Controversialist," p. 510, note #12.

Bridgwater must have been a hotbed of Jacobitism. In this same letter to Delafaye Oldmixon states that "One of the Aldn & part of the Common Council at the Desire of the Lieut Coll Hamilton of Homeguards Dragoons made a order against tumults & wearing White Roses & desird the Mayor Jonathon Thomas to publish it instead of which Himself, His Cryer & Clerk of the Market got out of Town to the Key Stuck over with white Roses to encourage the Like Insolence in the Rabble."
75 John Oldmixon, The Critical History of England, Ecclesiastical and Civil: wherein the Errors of the Monkish Writers, and others before the Reformation, are Expos'd and Corrected. As are also the Deficiency and Partiality of Later Historians. And particular Notice is taken of The History of the Grand Rebellion and Mr. Eachard's History of England. To which are added, Remarks on some objections made to Bishop Burnet's History of his Times (London: Printed for J. Pemberton, at the Buck and Sun against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street, MDCCXXIV), p. v.

76 Ibid., pp. 29-30.

77 Ibid., p. 28. The history is also memorable because it went through 4 editions.


79 Ibid., p. 224.

80 Ibid., p. 225.

81 Ibid., p. 233.

82 Ibid., p. 231.

83 Ibid., pp. 223, 225.

84 The source of this information is to be found in Chandos' letters to John Oldmixon (there are none extant from Oldmixon to Chandos) in the Stowe collection, the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. The letters addressed to Oldmixon are found in letter books ST 57 among volumes 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 37 and 38. Rogers in "The Whig Controversialist," Appendix V, gives abstracts of these letters.

85 This is my analogy, not Grey's.


89 *Ibid*.


92 See pages 26-27.


94 Madden, An Essay on Criticism, p. 2.


Pope made the earlier editions incomplete to give the satire more momentum to increase the suspense. See Root's introductory essay in the Princeton University Press' facsimile reproduction of *The Dunciad Variorum*, pp. 12-13. "The Dunciad of 1728 was deliberately intended to be an 'imperfect' copy.

See page 26 of this dissertation and note #110.


Ibid., p. 6.


Ibid., line 188, p. 38.

Ibid., lines 199-204, p. 39.

Ibid., p. 39. The Arts of Logic and Rhetoric that Pope refers to in the critical-satirical note above came out in the same year as his *An Essay on Criticism* (1728). It was a translation of the Abbe Bouhours' *La Maniere De Bien Penser*. The references to Pope and Swift are "much harsher," as Madden noted in his introductory essay to Oldmixon's *An Essay on Criticism*. "This delicate Author [Pope] has written a rhiming Essay on Criticism, and made himself merry with his Brethren in a notable Treatise call'd the Art of Sinking, to which he and his Partner S__, have contrubited, more than all the rest of their contemporary writers, if Trifling and Grimace are not in the high Parts of Writing. . . . What a Precipice is it from Locke's Human Understanding to Swift's Lilliput and Profundity! . . . There might have been Hopes of rising again; but we sink now like Ships laden with Lead, and must despair of ever recovering the Height from which we have fallen." John Oldmixon, *The Arts of Logic and Rhetoric* (London, 1728), pp. 416-417, as quoted in R. J. Madden's introduction to Oldmixon's *An Essay On Criticism*, The Augustan Reprint Society, Publication Number 107-108, p. iii.
Ibid., p. 75. Oldmixon is also mentioned earlier in Book III. Pope (or, rather, Scriblerus) chides him for overlooking an obvious error (which, of course, Pope deliberately contrived) in the text. "I think I may venture to affirm all the Copyists are mistaken here: I believe I may say the same of the Criticks; Dennis Oldmixon, Welsted..." Oldmixon still felt "so long after," as Scriblerus put it, that he should have been the Poet-Laureate, p. 75. This, too, is an indication of the man's tenacity, his pugnacious nature, if these attacks on Pope were not proof of such a disposition.

Oldmixon's works cited in the List are: An Essay on Criticism; "A Letter against Gulliver and Mr. P," Flying-Post, April 4, 1728; "A Fragment of a Treatise upon Swift and Pope," Flying-Post, April 6, 1728; "Verses against the same Swift, and against Mr. P's Homer," Flying-Post, April 13, 1728. In the second part of the List entitled After the Dunciad, 1728, The Arts of Logic and Rhetoric is cited. In both instances see The Dunciad Variorum, Appendix II, pp. 91-94.


The Dunciad Variorum, Book I, line 42, p. 5.


Ibid.

In 1727 Oldmixon first made this charge in "Clarendon and Whitlock Compar'd."


Ibid., p. ix. See the "letter" on this page which Oldmixon reproduces in its entirety. Oldmixon identifies George Duckett as the writer in the Preface of his History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne King George I. See pp. iv-v of that Preface.
In DUCKET'S letter (see note #117) Edmund Smith had accused Atterbury, Smalridge, and Aldrich of altering the text. Bishop Atterbury replied in _The Late Bishop of Rochester's Vindication of Bishop Smalridge, Dr. Aldrich, and Himself, from the scandalous Reflections of Mr. Oldmixon, relating to the Publication of Lord Clarendon's History_. Atterbury pointed out (among other things) that neither he nor Bishop Smalridge had anything to do with the publication of _The History of the Rebellion_; Lord Rochester (Clarendon's son) Bishop Sprat, and Dr. Aldrich had seen the manuscript through the press, p. 129.

Burton pointed out the weakness of Oldmixon's case in 1744. "The Oxford Editors are accus'd of interpolating, of making additions and alterations in Lord Clarendon's history of the Rebellion. How then is the charge prov'd? . . . first by an hearsay evidence from a person Superior to all Suspicion, and too illustrious to be nam'd without leave, secondly, by an appeal to a certain honourable person . . . thirdly, by an appeal to a certain Rev. Doctor then living . . . fourthly, by an appeal to a gentleman of distinction both for merit and quality. Concerning this sort of Evidence it must be in general observ'd, that Some-body indeterminate in this case is to all intents and purposes the same as no-body." _The Genuineness of Ld. Clarendon's History of the Rebellion Printed at Oxford Vindicated. Mr. Oldmixon's Slander Confuted. The True State of the Case Represented._ By John Burton D. D. Fellow of Eton College (Oxford: Printed at the Theatre for James Fletcher, Bookseller in the Turl, and Sold by M. Cooper in Pater-Noster-Row, London, 1744), pp. 48-49.

Oldmixon, _The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary_, Preface, p. 5.
Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Preface, p. v.

Ibid.


Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart was 782 pages long, contained a million words.

Rogers in his article "The Printing of Oldmixon's Histories," Library (June, 1969), pp. 150-151, shows that the publication date for The History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart, given on its title page as 1730, is incorrect.

Oldmixon, Memoirs of the Press, 1742, p. 58, as quoted in Rogers' article in Library, cited above (note #129).

P. viii.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. iii.

Ibid. See the quotation (also from this Preface) on page 27.

137 See Scriblerus' note on page 25 of this dissertation. And Grey's A Defence of the Antient and Modern Historians, pages 19-20 of this dissertation. Oldmixon went to great lengths to prove his impartiality in his histories, no doubt, to counter the charge of being a party writer. See the Prefaces passim. Oldmixon may also have had in mind the pamphlets that his "History of the Stuarts" occasioned. The anonymous author of Remarks upon a Scandalous Book lately publish'd, Called The History of the Royal House of Stuart (1731), for example, accused Oldmixon of being "ready to repeat any scandalous story" (p. 15) and of having "a virulent pen" (p. 47).

138 See page 32.


140 See note #26.


142 Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, p. 150.

143 Ibid., pp. 149-150, p. 414, and passim. Oldmixon thought funding was the great strength of the nation. See page 414 and passim.

144 Ibid., p. 652, p. 751, and passim.

145 Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart, p. 419. Oldmixon also had no use for the Fifth Monarchists, men such as Harrison, Carew, and Rich, p. 423. He did not care for their "Enthusiasm," p. 423. Oldmixon's sympathies were always with parliaments, regardless of how they had been called. See his defense of the Barebones Parliament, p. 415.

146 Oldmixon, History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, p. 510. Oldmixon collected depositions from witnesses to the Mohun-Hamilton duel at the request of Sir Samuel Garth.
Ibid., p. 627.

Ibid., p. 415. The year is 1708 (Oldmixon probably wrote this in 1734-1735) and the allusion is this: "The Earl of Wharton was made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who made Mr. Joseph Addison, his Secretary, and appointed the Author of this History to be one of his substitutes, though his Secretary, at that Time professing Friendship, took care to prevent it." This passage also points to a link with Montagu. Rogers states in "The Whig Controversialist" that Oldmixon was a distant relation of Montagu's. See pages 300/47 of that work.

Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, p. viii.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid. If Oldmixon says in the Preface of The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary (which was probably written prior to publication in 1735) that the History of Christianity was ready for publication four years earlier, it seems safe to assume that this work was completed sometime in 1731 or thereabouts. The work, however, is no longer extant. Oldmixon advertised for subscribers for this history in his Memoirs of the Press, Historical and Political, for Thirty Years Past, from 1710 to 1740, as noted in Aitken's life of Oldmixon in the Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XIV, p. 1012.

Aitken's life of Oldmixon in the Dictionary of National Biography, p. 1012. Aitken's source was probably Memoirs of the Press.

The Weekly Miscellany of June 30, 1733 (No. 29) has this note: "R. Hooker informs us, that Mr. Oldmixon has lately, very lately, printed a Piece, which he gives away at his House in Southampton-Buildings, under the Title of a Reply to the groundless and unjust Reflections upon him i.e. three Weekly Miscellanies . . . but so little to his Justification that Mr. Hooker thinks it deserves rather banter than a serious Answer." This article was part of the Clarendon controversy; it was reproduced in The Gentleman's Magazine: July, 1733, p. 335.

Ibid. See also note #157 below.

There are two entries in the treasury calendars that substantiate this statement. For June 1, 1738, the entry reads: "J. Scrope to the Customs Commissioners. Concerning the case against John Oldmixon and his sureties, detailed, for Oldmixon's debt to the Crown, as late collector of Customs, Bridgwater port. Customs Book XIV. p. 307." The Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers, 1735-1738, p. 547. For March 26, 1740, the entry reads: "Petition to the Treasury from John Oldmixon, late Collector of Customs at Bridgwater. For relief from certain rent and tax charges against him since his supercession in 1735. Reference Book X. p. 146" The Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers, 1739-1741, W. A. Shaw (ed.) (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1901), Vol. IV, p. 304.


"From these . . ." refers to Pope's friends, St. John, Swift, et al.


See page 25 of this dissertation.


From the title page of Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reign of King William and Queen Mary.
CHAPTER II

WHIG HISTORIOGRAPHY

The heart of the Whig interpretation of history is the reading of the present into the past. Or, to put it another way, the relation of the events of the past with the present constantly in mind. The Whig historian then asks himself such questions as who were the friends of liberty, who were the exponents of progress (as he defines progress), who were the constitutionalists (as he envisages the constitution), and who then best exemplified the virtues that his own time holds dear and true. As Lord Acton said of Macaulay's Critical and Historical Essays: "... a key to half of the prejudices of our age."¹ Lord Acton, of course, meant the prejudices of Macaulay's age, the nineteenth century. This was the present of the Whig historians. Reading the present into the past was, as Professor Herbert Butterfield would say, the "underlying assumption" of Whig historiography.²

This "underlying assumption," this studying of the past for the sake of the present, is most vividly illustrated in the anachronistic nature of Whig historiography. The Whigs were constantly attributing to earlier periods a constitutional
significance which they did not have. Macaulay, for example, 
saw the nineteenth century English constitution existing at 
the beginning of the thirteenth century. Speaking of thirteenth 
century England he wrote:

Then first appeared with distinctness that 
constitution which has ever since, through all 
changes, preserved its identity; that constitu­
tion of which all other free constitutions in the 
world are copies, and which, in spite of some 
defects, deserves to be regarded as the best under 
which any great society has ever yet existed dur­
ing many ages. Then it was that the House of 
Commons, the archetype of all the representative 
assemblies which now meet, either in the old or 
in the new world, held its first sittings. 3

It never occurred to Macaulay that the thirteenth 
century might have been a very different place from his own 
time. "The study of the past with one eye, so to speak, upon 
the present," wrote Professor Butterfield, "is the source of 
all sins and sophistries in history, starting with the simplest 
of them, the anachronism." 4

The Whig historians believed in progress. Mankind (or 
at least the English part of it) was continually ameliorating 
its condition, was becoming simultaneously more humane, more 
prosperous and more enlightened. As Macaulay wrote in his 
celebrated third chapter of The History of England:

There is scarcely a page of the history of 
lighter literature of the seventeenth century 
which does not contain some proof that our ances­
tors were less humane than their posterity. The 
discipline of workshops, of schools, of private 
families, though not more efficient than at 
present, was infinitely harsher. Masters, well
born and bred, were in the habit of beating their servants. Pedagogues knew no way of imparting knowledge but by beating their pupils. Husbands, of decent station, were not ashamed to beat their wives. The implacability of hostile factions was such as we can scarcely believe. Whigs were disposed to murmur because Stafford was suffered to die with out seeing his bowels burned before his face. Etc.\(^5\)

This belief in progress was based upon an admiration of the present that was always implicit in the Whig historiography. Following a long recital of the cruelties of the seventeenth century (an excerpt of which is quoted above), Macaulay wrote in his celebrated third chapter, "State of England in 1685,"

Nowhere could be found that sensitive and restless compassion which has, in our time, extended a powerful protection to the factory child, to the Hindoo widow, to the negro slave, which pries into the stores and watercasks of every emigrant ship, which winces at every lash laid on the back of a drunken soldier, which will not suffer the thief in the hulks to be ill fed or overworked. ... But the more we study the annals of the past, the more shall we rejoice that we live in a merciful age, in an age in which cruelty is abhorred. ...\(^6\)

Sir Charles Firth and Cotter Morison both agreed that Macaulay's celebrated third chapter, "State of England in 1685," suffered because Macaulay had his own times constantly in mind when he wrote of the seventeenth century.

The whole of his famous Third chapter, on the State of England, is one long paean over the superiority of the nineteenth century to the seventeenth century -- as if an historian had the slightest concern with that.\(^7\)
Closely allied to the Whig belief in progress was the Whig belief that history was teleological, that is to say, that all of history had a purpose, that all of history was working towards some predetermined end. "The sources of the noblest rivers," wrote Macaulay,

which spread fertility over continents, and bear richly laden fleets to the sea, are to be sought in wild and barren mountain tracts, incorrectly laid down in maps, and rarely explored by travellers. To such a tract the history of our country during the thirteenth century may not unaptly be compared. Sterile and obscure as is that portion of our annals, it is there that we must seek for the origin of our freedom, our prosperity, and our glory.®

English history is the noble river flowing towards a present of freedom, prosperity, and glory.

In the passage quoted above we also see yet another characteristic of Whig historiography, viz., the Whig belief in origins. That is to say, unlike the Cokians, the nineteenth century Whig historians did not believe in institutions existing time out of mind. They had both a sense of change and a sense of continuity within change. The passage continues:

Then [i.e., in the thirteenth century] first appeared with distinctness that constitution which has ever since, through all changes, preserved its identity; that constitution of which all the other free constitutions in the world are copies, and which, in spite of some defects, deserves to be regarded as the best under which any great society has ever yet existed during many ages. Then it was that the House of Commons, the archetype of all the representative assemblies which now meet, either in the old or in the new world, held its first sittings.®
The danger, of course, was, as this passage illustrates, that these nineteenth century Whigs, in their enthusiasm, could fix upon a thirteenth century House of Commons (the term itself is an anachronism in this century) and attribute to it all the attributes of a much later institution, thus becoming Cokians themselves, apologists for an unchanging constitution.

"A robust English patriotism was a common attribute of the Whig school of historians," wrote H. A. L. Fisher in an essay entitled "The Whig Historians." Macaulay took great pride in England's past and thought that Englishmen were something extraordinary. Writing of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the "preserving revolution," Macaulay wrote:

Now, if ever, we ought to be able to appreciate the whole importance of the stand which was made by our forefathers against the House of Stuart. All around us the world is convulsed by the agonies of great nations. Governments which seemed likely to stand during ages have been on a sudden shaken and overthrown. The proudest capitals of Western Europe have streamed with civil blood. All evil passions, the thirst of gain and the thirst of vengeance, the antipathy of class to class, the antipathy of race to race, have broken loose from the control of divine and human laws. . . . The truest friends of the people have with deep sorrow owned that interests more precious than any political privileges were in jeopardy, and that it might be necessary to sacrifice even liberty in order to save civilisation. Meanwhile in our island the regular course of government has never been for a day interrupted. The few bad men who longed for license and plunder have not had the courage to confront for one moment the strength of a loyal nation, rallied in firm array round a parental throne. And, if it be asked what has made us
differ from others, the answer is that we never lost what others are wildly and blindly seeking to regain. It is because we had a preserving revolution in the seventeenth century that we have not had a destroying revolution. . . . For the authority of law, for the security of property, for the peace of our streets, for the happiness of our homes, our gratitude is due, under Him who raises and pulls down nations at his pleasure, to the Long Parliament, to the Convention, and to William of Orange.  

The present was never very far from the mind of Macaulay, that tranquil Britain of the nineteenth century.

Henry Hallam, the man of whom G. P. Gooch wrote, "At the moment when the Reform Bill inaugurated a generation of Whig politics, he inaugurated a generation of Whig history," was equally robust in his patriotism. He, too, took pride in England's past and in the national character. Here is a typical tribute to the temper of the English as spoken by Hallam:

It is a singular part of Cromwell's system of policy that he would neither reign with parliaments nor without them; impatient of an opposition which he was sure to experience, he still never seems to have meditated the attainment of a naked and avowed despotism. This was probably due to his observation of the ruinous consequences that Charles had brought on himself by that course, and his knowledge of the temper of the English, never content without the exterior forms of liberty, as well as to the suggestions of counsellors who were not destitute of concern for the laws.

Hallam's remarks illustrate yet another Whig characteristic, the love of law. Macaulay and Hallam, disapproved of violent and destructive revolutions, for so often liberty was lost in the process. If Macaulay sounds like Burke in the passage
cited above, a passage which Professor Gooch might well have described as "a classical exposition of the Whig doctrine of government," Hallam is not to be outdone. He blithely compares Oliver Cromwell to Napoleon:

Though both coming at the conclusion of a struggle for liberty, trampled upon her claims, and sometimes spoke disdainfully of her name, each knew how to associate the interests of those who had contended for her with his own ascendancy, and made himself the representative of a victorious revolution.

You will note that Macaulay attributes the rule of law to Long Parliament, the Convention and William of Orange, in other words to those revolutions that were essentially controlled by Parliament. These revolutions were conservative in nature. It is no accident that Macaulay fails to mention the period of the Interregnum. "The Whig historian," wrote Professor Gooch, "loves the Commonwealth and Protectorate little more than the Stuart despotism."

The Whig historians had a bias in favor of liberty. Book VIII, "The Constitutional History of England," of Hallam's celebrated and pioneering work History of Europe during the Middle Ages is heady in its praise of liberty. Hallam begins his chapter in this fashion:

Climates more propitious may impart more largely the mere enjoyments of existence; but in no other region have the benefits that political institutions can confer been diffused over so extended a population; nor have any people so well reconciled the discordant elements of wealth, order, and liberty. These advantages are surely not owing to the soil of this island, nor to latitude in which
it is placed, but to the spirit of its laws, from which through various means, the characteristic independence and industriousness of our nation have been derived.\footnote{17}

And if Hallam is not praising the blessings of liberty, he is lamenting its absence:

... None of the Conqueror's successors were as grossly tyrannical as himself. But the system of rapacious extortion from their subjects prevailed to a degree which we should rather expect to find among eastern slaves than that high-spirited race of Normandy whose renown then filled Europe and Asia.\footnote{18}

And since Hallam was not wildly Whiggish in the sense that Sir Edward Coke was who believed in ancient constitutions and parliaments ante-dating the Norman Conquest, it is only fair to conclude that this bias towards liberty was something inherent in the historian's own milieu, that is to say, in his own present. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the Whig view of the past encompassed the democratic ideal. Macaulay distrusted the "mob," as his description of the Irish Night makes clear,\footnote{19} and Hallam, Professor Gooch tells us, thought that the Reform Bill had gone too far.\footnote{20} The Whig interpretation of history focused on an aristocratic notion of liberty and looked to the past for its roots.

Though the Whig historians did not believe in an ancient constitution, existing time out of mind, as did Sir Edward Coke, they did accept Coke's view of the constitution. As Professor Butterfield wrote: "But we must not forget what
is the whig interpretation of history *par excellence* -- the interpretation of the constitutional conflict of the 17th century itself."²¹ Hallam, for example, accepted Sir Edward Coke's novel interpretation of *Magna Carta*. In the case of the Five Knights Hallam wrote:

> The counsel for the prisoners grounded their demand of liberty on the original basis of *Magna Charta*, the twenty-ninth section of which, as is well known, provides that "no free man shall be taken or imprisoned unless by lawful judgment of his peers, or the law of the land."²²

Hallam, like Sir Edward Coke, had made *Magna Carta*, a feudal instrument, a part of the common law. As Professor Gooch wrote of Hallam: "He believed that there was a definite Constitution to break, and that the first two Stuarts broke it."²³

Whig historiography was likewise very Protestant in its point of view. The Whigs would often reveal their prejudices by their choice of words. As Macaulay wrote of James II's state of mind at the calling of his Irish parliament in the spring of 1689: "Superstition had not utterly extinguished all national feeling in his mind; he could not but be displeased by the malevolence with which his Celtic supporters regarded the race from which he sprang."²⁴ Or as Hallam wrote of James II's efforts to grant a toleration in 1685: "But James had taken too narrow a view of the mighty people whom he governed. The laity of every class, the tory gentleman almost equally with the presbyterian artisan, entertained an inveterate abhorrence of the Romish superstition."²⁵
The Whig love of liberty and the Whig detestation of Catholicism joined together to produce an intense dislike of clerical domination. As Professor Gooch said of Hallam: "He detested political and ecclesiastical tyranny . . . ." Note, for example, Hallam's opinion of the Roman Catholic practice of auricular confession:

But in proportion as his attention is directed to the secrets of conscience, his influence may become dangerous; men grow accustomed to the control of one perhaps more feeble and guilty than themselves, but over whose frailties they exercise no reciprocal command; and, if the confessors of kings have been sometimes terrible to nations, their ascendancy is probably not less mischievous, in proportion to its extent, within the sphere of domestic life. In a political light, and with the object of lessening the weight of the ecclesiastical order in temporal affairs, there cannot be the least hesitation as to the expediency of discontinuing the usage.

And Macaulay wrote of the obsequiousness Anglican clergy at the time of the Glorious Revolution:

Unhappily the Church had long taught the nation that hereditary monarchy, alone among our institutions, was divine and inviolable; that the right of the House of Commons to a share in the legislative power was a right merely human, but that the right of the King to the obedience of his people was from above . . . . It is evident that, in a society in which such superstitions prevail, constitutional freedom must ever be insecure. . . . To deprive royalty of these mysterious attributes, and to establish the principle that Kings reigned by a right in no respect differing from the right by which freeholders chose knights of the shire, or from the right by which Judges granted writs of Habeas Corpus, was absolutely necessary to the security of our liberties.
The Whig historians believed in the power of ideas. They believed that discussion and debate influenced men and shaped events. This is illustrated in the Whig habit of going to great lengths to give recapitulations of debates in parliament. Macaulay's long section on the reduction of the armed forces following the treaty of Ryswick is a good example of this tendency. Hallam's detailed attention to the addresses and speeches of members of Parliament in their running argument with James I over impositions (or, indeed, on any of the constitutional issues of the reign) is another example. Indeed, the Whig faith in reason led them on occasions to address the reader as if it were important that he be convinced. Hallam, for example, departs from the narrative to make this animadversion on the canons of the convocation of 1606, canons which set forth a patriarchal theory of government and the duty of passive obedience to the ruler:

It is not impossible that a man might adopt this theory of the original of government, unsatisfactory as it appears on reflection, without deeming it incompatible with our mixed and limited monarchy. But its tendency was evidently in a contrary direction. The king's power was of God; that of the parliament only of man, obtained perhaps by rebellion; but out of rebellion what right could spring? Or were it even by voluntary concession, could a king alienate a divine gift, and infringe the order of Providence? Could his grants, if not in themselves null, avail against his posterity, heirs like himself under the great feoffment of creation?

Macaulay, too, had a habit of addressing the reader, and of assuming that men then and now harken to reason. Commenting
upon the arguments that the opposition parties in parliament used to bring about a reduction in the army after Ryswick Macaulay wrote:

It must be evident to every intelligent and dispassionate man that these declaimers contradicted themselves. If an army composed of regular troops really was far more efficient than an army composed of husbandmen taken from the plough and burghers taken from the counter, how could the country be safe with no defenders but husbandmen and burghers, when a great prince who was our nearest neighbor, who had a few months before been our enemy, and who might, in a few months, be our enemy again, kept up not less than a hundred and fifty thousand regular troops? If, on the other hand, the spirit of the English people was such that they would, with little or no training, encounter and defeat the most formidable array of veterans from the continent, was it not absurd to apprehend that such a people could be reduced to slavery by a few regiments of their own countrymen?32

As Sir Charles Firth said of Macaulay, "Whatever subject he is treating in his History the orator is always appearing behind the historian, or rather the two are one. . . ."

The raison d'être of orators, of course, is to prove a point and the Whig historians were oftentimes as eager to prove points as to narrate events. Thus it is that Whig historiography can be very polemical in nature. Macaulay himself was aware of the danger. Writing of Charles James Fox's History of James II Macaulay declared that the author should have been more on his guard against those more serious improprieties of manner into which a great orator who undertakes to write history is in danger of falling. There is about the whole book a vehement, contentious,
replying manner. Almost every argument is put in the form of interrogation, an ejaculation, or a sarcasm. The writer seems to be addressing himself to some imaginary audience, to be tearing to pieces a defence of the Stuarts which has just been pronounced by an imaginary Tory.34

The polemical nature of Whig historiography can be seen in Hallam's preoccupation with his own "imaginary Tory," the very real Mr. David Hume. Speaking of the Commons' vindication of themselves, "A form of Apology and Satisfaction to be delivered to his Majesty," Hallam writes: "If the English monarchy had been reckoned as absolute under the Plantagenets and Tudors as Hume has endeavored to make it appear, the commons of 1604 must have made a surprising advance in their notions of freedom since the king's accession."35 Hallam took the side of the English parliament in the negotiations in 1606-1607 for union between England and Scotland. Behind his résumé of the King's position on the proposed union is his anger with David Hume for stating that the inaction of parliament had ruined the negotiations.

He [James] dwells continually upon the advantage of unity of laws, yet extols those of England as the best, which the Scots, as was evident, had no inclination to adopt. Wherefore then was delay to be imputed to our English parliament, if it waited for that of the sister kingdom? And what steps were recommended towards this measure that the commons can be said to have declined, except only the naturalization of the ante-nati, or Scots born before the king's accession to our throne, which could only have a temporary effect? Yet Hume, ever prone to eulogize this monarch at the expense of his people, while he bestows merited praise on his speech in favor of the union, which is upon the whole a well-written and
judicious performance, charges the parliament with prejudice, reluctance, and obstinacy.\textsuperscript{36}

The Whig historians, as this outburst by Hallam reveals, were House of Commons men, that is to say, they sided with parliament against the king.

In the Whig historian's love of liberty, in his veneration for Magna Carta and the rule of law, in his fear of clerical domination and in his belief in rational discussion and the power of ideas, one can see a concern for rights of the individual affirmed again and again. This is what gives Whig historiography its air of nobility and makes it, for all its want of historicity, attractive to its readers then and now. Whig historiography summed up what nineteenth century Englishmen believed and believed in. As Sir Charles Firth wrote in his \textit{A Commentary on Macaulay's History of England}:

\begin{quote}
However, the success of Macaulay's History was not due merely to the genius or the labour of the author. The prosperity of any book depends on the temper of the audience to which it is addressed. Macaulay's was happy in the moment of its appearance; it expressed ideas which just then were universally popular; it expressed them in such a way that it flattered the self-esteem of the English people. We are not as other nations, Macaulay seemed to say; compare their revolutions with ours. Our Revolution of 1688 was 'the least violent' and 'the most beneficent' of all revolutions.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

The Whig historians were prone to making moral judgments. They believed as Lord Acton believed that "history deals considerably with hanging matter."\textsuperscript{38} Professor Butterfield attributed this Whig penchant for moral judgment to the "underlying
assumption," reading the present into the past, and, by so doing, praising those who had furthered the arrival of the present and condemning those who had delayed its arrival.\textsuperscript{39} As Professor Butterfield noted: "By the very finality and absoluteness with which he has endowed the present he has heightened his own position. For him the voice of posterity is the voice of God and the historian is the voice of posterity."\textsuperscript{40} And as Sir Charles Firth wrote of Macaulay's portrait of William Penn:

Macaulay's original conception of Penn's character prevents him from soberly appreciating the value of evidence or correctly stating it. Having come to the conclusion that Penn was the accomplice of James in a design against the liberties of England during 1686-1687, he was incapable of seeing any facts which told against his view.\textsuperscript{41}

The Whigs were ready to condemn groups of men, as well as individuals, if they opposed progress. Thus Macaulay denounces the Tory opponents of Charles Montagu, the Whig financial genius:

The success of his budget of the preceding year had surpassed all expectation. The two millions which he had undertaken to find had been raised with a rapidity which seemed magical. Yet for bringing the riches of the City, in an unprecedented flood, to overflow the Exchequer he was reviled as if his scheme had failed more ludicrously than the Tory land Bank. . . . Though that House of Commons was economical even to a vice, the majority preferred paying high interest to paying low interest, solely because the plan for raising money at low interest had been framed by him. . . . But he was set upon with cowardly malignity by whole rows of small men none of whom singly would have dared look him in the face.
A contemporary pamphleteer compared him to an owl in the sunshine pursued and pecked to death by flights of tiny birds.\textsuperscript{42}

Macaulay was delighted to see that parliament disappear in the election of 1701.\textsuperscript{43} An impediment to progress had been removed.

Hallam showed the same exasperation with historical personages, the same teleological impatience with men and events when he wrote of Cromwell and his approaching death: "And, though there might be little chance that Oliver would abate one jot of a despotism for which not the times of the Tudors could furnish a precedent, yet his life was far worn, and under a successor it was to be expected that future parliaments might assert again all those liberties for which they had contended against Charles."\textsuperscript{44}

Professor Butterfield has also pointed out that behind the Whig belief in moral judgments is an even "more fundamental thesis," viz., that history should be the arbiter or teacher of morals, the very upholder of the moral laws. It is perhaps, wrote Professor Butterfield, the highest possible form of the whig tendency to exalt historical study. To Bishop Creighton Acton wrote that when the historian makes a compromise on the question of moral principles, history ceases to be an 'arbiter of controversy, the upholder of that moral standard which the powers of earth and religion itself tend constantly to depress.'\textsuperscript{45}

And regarding this view Professor Butterfield noted:

It is history raised into something like the mind of God, making ultimate judgments upon the things which are happening in time. Here is the true Pope, that
will not be servus servorum Dei; here is the only absolutism that the whig is disposed to defend; here is divine right and non-resistance, for (if a word can be allowed in malice) is not history on the side of the whigs?  

Thus Macaulay censored Penn, damned James, and castigated Sunderland and Hallam condemned Henry VIII, outlawed the Regicides, and denounced Oliver Cromwell. As Professor Fisher noted in his essay "The Whig Historians," "ethical convictions came before other feelings."  

The Whig historians often exhibited a singular lack of sympathy with certain men and particular periods in the past. Their histories are replete with examples of men and eras who have been denied historical sympathy or understanding because they have sinned against the Whig present or the Whig sense of morality. We have already seen an example of this lack of sympathy in Hallam's comparison of Cromwell to Napoleon. Hence it is that the Whig historiography deals in black and whites, heroes and villains, and caricatures. As Sir Charles Firth noted: "The men pictured by Macaulay are not the grey shadows which figure in the pages of most historians."  

Note, for example, Macaulay's comparison of William and his ministers at the time of Sir John Fenwick's confessions:

For the sake of those interests, proud and imperious as he was by nature, he submitted patiently to galling restraints, bore cruel indignities and disappointments with the outward show of serenity, and not only forgave, but often pretended not to see, offences which might well have moved him to bitter resentment. He knew that he must work with such tools
as he had. If he was to govern England he must employ the public men of England; and, in his age, the public men of England, with much of a peculiar kind of ability, were, as a class, low-minded and immoral. There were doubtless exceptions. Such was Nottingham among the Tories, and Somers among the Whigs. But the majority, both of the Tory and of the Whig ministers of William, were men whose characters had taken the ply in the days of the Antipuritan reaction. They had been formed in two evil schools, in the most unprincipled of courts and the most unprincipled of oppositions, a court which took its character from Charles, an opposition headed by Shaftesbury. From men so trained it would have been unreasonable to expect disinterested and steadfast fidelity to any cause.57

This passage seems to suffer from what Professor Gooch would call an "excess of light."58

The Whig historians never realized that they were dealing with an immensely complex problem, the reconstruction of events that occurred in a kaleidoscope setting, each historical event being a small piece of an even larger picture, all in turn affecting each other. As Professor Butterfield noted:

It is as much as the historian can do to trace with some probability the sequence of events from one generation to another, without seeking to draw the incalculably complex diagram of causes and effects for ever interlacing down to the third and fourth generations. Any action which any man has ever taken is part of that whole set of circumstances which at a given moment conditions the whole mass of things that are to happen next. To understand that action is to recover the thousand threads that connect it with other things, to establish it in a system of relations; in other words to place it in its historical context. But it is not easy to work out its consequences, for they are merged in the results of everything else that was conspiring to produce change at that moment.59
The Whig historians had a love of narrative and the dramatic which gave their work an epic quality. The teleological tone, the belief in progress, the penchant for moral judgment, the anachronism, the lack of sympathy, the patriotism, and the love of liberty of Whig historiography found their appropriate art form in the epic narrative. The reader feels that there is a right side and a wrong side in history and is warmed by the dramatic narrative that recounts their struggle. Macaulay's *History of England* is infused with this quality of drama. His account of the Battle of Namur is typical of many other passages:

On the second of July the trenches were opened. On the eighth a gallant sally of French dragoons was gallantly beaten back; and, late on the same evening, a strong body of infantry, the English footguards leading the way, stormed, after a bloody conflict, the outworks on the Brussels side. The King in person directed the attack; and his subjects were delighted to learn that, when the fight was hottest, he laid his hand on the shoulder of the Elector of Bavaria, and exclaimed, "Look, look at my brave English!" Conspicuous in bravery even among those brave English was Cutts. In that bulldog courage which flinches from no danger, however, terrible, he was unrivalled. There was no difficulty in finding hardy volunteers, German, Dutch and British, to go on a forlorn hope: but Cutts was the only man who appeared to consider such an expedition as a party of pleasure. He was so much at his ease in the hottest fire of the French batteries that his soldiers gave him the honourable nickname of the Salamander.

Epics have heroes and Cutts was one of them. Macaulay glories in William's victory:

... Here the exultation was greatest. During several generations our ancestors had achieved nothing considerable by land against foreign enemies. ... But from the day on which the two
brave Talbots, father and son, had perished in the
vain attempt to reconquer Guienne, till the Revolu-
tion, there had been on the Continent no campaign
in which Englishmen had borne a principal part. At
length our ancestors had again, after interval of
near two centuries and a half, begun to dispute with
the warriors of France the palm of military prowess.
... The judgment of all great warriors whom all
the nations of Western Europe had sent to the conflu-
ence of the Sambre and Meuse was that the English
subaltern was inferior to no subaltern and the
English private soldier to no private soldier in
Christendom.61

Hallam also gives an epic quality to his narrative.
He does so by assuming that the Tudors were breaking the
English constitution and that the Stuart parliamentarians saved
it. Hallam, for example, considered the tribunal of Star
Chamber as "that illegal and arbitrary jurisdiction" and devoted
pages to proving that it ran contrary to existing statute. 62
Henry VIII enjoyed, however, the inestimable privilege of being
not only a villain but a hero as well. Concerning his passing
Hallam wrote:

A government administered with so frequent viola-
tions not only of the chartered privileges of English-
men, but of those still more sacred rights which
natural law has established, must have been regarded,
one would imagine, with just abhorrence, and earnest
longings for a change. Yet contemporary authorities
by no means answer to this expectation. Some mention
Henry after his death in language of eulogy ... very
few appear to have been aware that his name would
descend to posterity among those of the many tyrants
and oppressors of innocence, whom the wrath of
Heaven has raised up, and the servility of men has
endured. I do not indeed believe that he had really
conciliated his people's affection. That perfect fear
which attended him must have cast out love. ... But
the main cause of the reverence with which our fore-
fathers cherished this king's memory was the share he
had taken in the Reformation. They saw in him, not indeed the proselyte of their faith, but the subverter of their enemies' power, the avenging minister of Heaven, by whose giant arm the chain of superstition had been broken, and the prison gates burst asunder.  

The epic quality of Whig historiography has led to some of its greatest mistakes. As Professor Butterfield noted: "... It tends to divert our attention from what is the real historical process." And Professor Gooch remarked of Macaulay's History of England: "The History is a paean to the Revolution and to its principal author. A more critical generation adopts Macaulay's view of the blessings of 1688, but it regards the actors in the drama in a somewhat different manner."  

What Professor Gooch said of Froude—"Froude closes the age of the amateurs, whose brilliant writings belong as much to literature as to history"—can be applied to the Whig historians as well. The characteristics of their histories are due to two errors; first, their inability to comprehend change, to see that the whole of the past has made the whole of the present, and, secondly, their inability to resist moralizing. When the historian makes moral judgments, for example, he loses his true prospective. Cromwell became a Napoleonic figure instead of a man trapped by circumstance, a man who hated military rule as much as anyone in that age, and who devoted most of his efforts to restoring what he had destroyed. The Regicides became a band of outlaws instead of men who were left no choice by
Charles I's habitual double-dealing and whose very existence could have started the Civil War all over again as he had once before.

As Professor Butterfield wrote:

The Historian presents us with the picture of the world as it is in history. He describes to us the whole process that underlies the changes of things which change. He offers this as his explanation, his peculiar contribution to our knowledge of ourselves and of human affairs. It represents his special mode of thought, which has laws of its own and is limited by his apparatus. If he postures good against evil, if he talks of "the reign of sin, the sovereignty of wrong," he sets all the angles of his picture differently, for he sets them by measurements which really come from another sphere. If he deals in moral judgments at all he is trying to take upon himself a new dimension, and he is leaving that realm of historical explanation, which is the only one he can call his own. So we must say of him that it is his duty to show how men came to differ, rather than to tell a story which is meant to reveal who is in the right. It must be remembered that, by merely enquiring and explaining, he is increasing human understanding, extending it to all the ages, and binding the world into one. And in this, rather than in the work of 'perfecting and arming conscience,' we must seek the achievement and the function and the defence of history.

By reading the present into the past the Whig historians, of course, gave to their narratives a sense of purpose that events did not have, that really was not there. Had they seen each age as inextricably linked to the next they would have been more aware of the fact that there is no purpose, no "unfolding logic." Decisions are fraught with consequences no man foresaw; chance plays a mischievous role in the affairs of men. The Whig historians were never willing to admit that possibility. As professor Butterfield noted,
He [the Whig historian] does not see whig and tory combining in virtue of their antagonism to produce those interactions which turn one age into another. He does not see that time is so to speak having a hand in the game, and the historical process itself is working upon the pattern which events are taking.\textsuperscript{69}

Sir Charles Firth noted that there was an insular quality about Macaulay's history that Ranke's History of England did not have. Macaulay, wrote Sir Charles, "did not devote a tithe of the attention to foreign affairs which he devoted to English affairs. What happened abroad, however important, interested him much less than some relatively trivial incident at home."\textsuperscript{70} This would not have happened if Macaulay had been aware of historical change as mediation and interconnection, rather than straight teleological progression. As Sir Charles said, "He [Macaulay] did not put himself back into the seventeenth century, and endeavour to understand the position and the interests of the various states concerned in the struggle. He judged European politics purely from the standpoint of a nineteenth-century Englishman."\textsuperscript{71} Hence Macaulay's History was the paean to the Revolution that Professor Gooch called it.

All history is abridgment, wrote Professor Butterfield, but unlike most historical abridgments the Whig interpretation is based upon an arbitrary principle of selectivity; that is to say, the Whig historian organizes his narrative on the basis of those who furthered progress and those who hindered it.\textsuperscript{72} Hence the Whig historian can make those masterly judgments and can
cut through the complexity of the historical process. Hence he can say that this person is good, that person is bad. Hence he can give an epic quality to his work; and people his history with heroes and villains. Hence he can write from a teleological point of view, seeing purpose in history.

The Whig historian's lack of a sense of change played him false and his assertion of the role of judge was not to be. The Rankian revolution in historical writing left the Whig historiographer high and dry. Ranke's disarmingly simple words in the Preface to the Histories of the Romance and Teutonic Peoples were to change everything. "History has had assigned to it the task of judging the past, of instructing the present for the benefit of the ages to come. To such lofty functions this work does not aspire. Its aim is merely to show what occurred." As Professor Gooch said of Ranke's contributions: "The first was to divorce the study of the past from the passions of the present, and to relate what actually occurred. . . . It is Ranke's glory to have rendered the history of modern Europe fully intelligible, to have established its unity and portrayed the leading actors in the drama." 74

The Whigs, if anything, were trapped by their past, by their heritage, for the Whig interpretation was very old. J. G. A. Pocock would have seen the Whig interpretation, no doubt, as a continuation of the common law mind of the seventeenth century. 75 Professor Butterfield in The Englishman and
His History treated the Whig interpretation as "as aspect of the English mind," as "part of the landscape of English life, like our country lanes or our November mists or our historic inns."
"We can say that it moulded Englishmen," wrote Professor Butterfield, "before anybody moulded it or began to be conscious of it at all."76

The Whig historians were living proof of one of the many aphoristic sayings of one of their contemporaries, George Meredith. "There is nothing like a Theory for blinding the wise," wrote Meredith in The Ordeal of Richard Feverel. But not dispassionately to search for the origin of the Whig interpretation of history is to commit the very fault for which the Whigs are condemned. And if one does search for the earliest practitioners of Whig historiography, one will surely find among them John Oldmixon.
REFERENCES CITED


4 Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation, pp. 31-32.


6 Ibid., pp. 384-385.


9 Ibid., p. 27.


14 Gooch, History and Historians, p. 293. Gooch had Hallam's description of the revolution of 1688 in mind when he wrote this. "... He [Hallam] describes with delight the conservative revolution of 1688, and his discussion of that event forms a classical exposition of the Whig doctrine of government." History and Historians, p. 293.


16 Gooch, History and Historians, p. 293.


18 Ibid., p. 236.


20 Gooch, History and Historians, p. 292.


26 Gooch, History and Historians, p. 292.


Ibid., p. 318.


Firth, A Commentary, p. 35.

Macaulay, Critical and Historical Essays (F. C. Montague edition, three volumes, 1903) as quoted in Sir Charles Firth's Commentary, p. 37.


Ibid., p. 306.

Firth, A Commentary, p. 14.


Ibid., p. 107.

Firth, A Commentary, p. 271.


Ibid., pp. 498-504.

45 Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation, p. 113.

46 Ibid., pp. 113-114.


48 Ibid., pp. 588-589.


51 Ibid., p. 622.

52 Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 8, 12, 14, 32.

53 Fisher, Pages from the Past, p. 71.


55 See page 61 of this dissertation.

56 Firth, A Commentary, p. 48.


58 Gooch, History and Historians, p. 303.


61 Ibid., p. 67.

Ibid., pp. 49-50.

Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation*, p. 39. The Whig historian, Butterfield, noted, "gives an over-simplification of the historical process. . . . The Whig historian is apt to imagine the British constitution as coming down to us safely at last, in spite of so many vicissitudes; when in reality it is the result of those very vicissitudes on which he seems to complain. If there had never been a danger to our constitution there never would have been a constitution to be in danger. In the most concrete sense of the words our constitution is not merely the work of men and parties; it is the product of history." *The Whig Interpretation*, pp. 40-41.


Ibid., p. 339.


Ibid., p. 42.

Ibid.


Ibid., pp. 248-249.


As quoted in Gooch, *History and Historians*, p. 78.

Ibid., pp. 101-102.


Butterfield, *The Englishman and His History*, p. 2.
CHAPTER III

A HANOVERIAN WHIG IN MEDIAEVAL ENGLAND

John Oldmixon exhibited all of the characteristics of the later Whig historiography when he wrote about the middle ages. He began by giving his work a polemical tone. The whole purpose of writing *The Critical History of England, Ecclesiastical and Civil*, he stated, was to prove that the right of revolution, of deposing arbitrary monarchs, had always been a part of the English constitution.

What can be more necessary then, than to set People Right in that which most concerns them, their Religious and Civil Liberties, and justify the Proceedings of the Present Age, by those of the past? What can be more useful, than to confirm our English Principles by those of our Ancestors, and shew that the Revolution is an ancient and certain Part of our Constitution; of which nothing appears, but the quite contrary, through all Mr. Echard’s History of England.

Oldmixon was going to use history to answer the Tory critics of the Revolution of 1688.

With his thoughts focused on the present, with his intention of using history to prove a point clearly announced, it is not surprising to see Oldmixon transferring that present into the past. He saw in those far away struggles of king and baron a reenactment of the late struggle between the Stuarts and the
parliament. The barons who opposed Edward II, for example, he considered to be "the assertors of Liberty." And he thought that parliamentary institutions with all their accompanying checks on royal power had existed since Saxon times.

I shall endeavour to prove, that our Parliamentary Constitution is as old as the Saxons, and much the same as at present. The honest English Reader will often meet with the like Assemblies, in the Period between the Saxon and Norman Invasions, though under the Names of Witenagemots, Mychelgemots, Conciliums, Colloquiums, . . . Bede says, the Laws of King Ethelbert were made cum Concilio Sapientum, which is a Witenagemot; and in another Place, that the King Populum suum convocavit, By the People there, to use Dr. Hody's words, must be understood not the Commonalty in Opposition to the Great Men, but all in general, who were to be conven'd, Lords and Commons. . . . King Ina's Laws were enacted, Omnum Senatorum meorum consensu. And again, per commune consilium & assensum Omnum Episcoporum & Principum Procerum Comitum & Omnium Sapientum Seniorum & POPULORUM totius Regni. King Ina's Parliament consisted of the Princes, Bishops, Nobles, Earls, Wisemen, Elders, and People; sufficit hoc, says Spelman, admodum Exprimendum Omnum Conciliorum Anglo Saxonum. This suffices to shew what all English Councils consisted of; to which may be added what they did: For they consented to all Laws, and without their Consent nothing Legislative was done.5

With a view of the past thus shaped by the present it was natural for Oldmixon to attach no significance to the Conquest. The most that he will hazard is an admission that the Conquest was a dangerous time for the English constitution:

'Tis true the Normans afterwards invaded our Laws, as well as our Country, but not with like Success; and the English Constitution was then preserv'd against French Arms, though it was never in so much
Danger, except in the Reigns which immediately follow'd Queen Elizabeth's.  

To support this contention Oldmixon pointed out that the laws of King Edward were confirmed by the Conqueror "in Parliament." "Mr. Selden," he wrote, "uses the very Word on this Occasion...."  

Oldmixon thought that Robert Brady's researches had produced "only a Quibble at last." 

Oldmixon assigned to history the same high purpose of teaching morals that the nineteenth century Whig historians had given it.

It will enlarge his Soul, inspire him with generous sentiments, make him in Love with Justice, Moderation and Clemency, and give him an abhorrence of Tyranny, Cruelty and Oppression. He will learn to despise everything base and mean, and qualify himself for the Duties of a good Subject, and good Citizen. He will be taught Wisdom by the surest Ways, as a great Modern Author phrases it; 'For History sets before us what we ought to shun, or to pursue, by the Examples of the most famous Men whom it records, and by the Experience of their Faults.'

Mark Twain's celebrated Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court could not have affected moral outrage more vigorously than Oldmixon did in this reflection on the crusade in the reign of Richard I:

... One of the most Romantick and unwarrantable Enterprizes that ever was undertaken. King Richard was put upon it by the Pope, who made it very meritorious for a Man to sacrifice his All, his Wife, Children, Estate, and Life, to recover the Stones of the ruin'd Temple of Jerusalem, and the Dust and Ashes to which the Bodies of the Christians that dy'd there, were reduc'd. The Pope mightily encouraged this Errantry, and many Hundred Thousand Men were such Fools, as to hearken to him, and be knock'd
on the Head in Palestine, besides many Hundred Thousandsthat dy'd of Want and Distempers, or were drown'd. These Pilgrims had no Call to this War, no Right to drive the Possessors out of their Country: For whatever Right the Arabians had to it, the Europeans surely had none, and the Slaughter and Ruin which attended these Expeditions, are the dreadful Effects of Bigorty, and Popish Obedience.

A judgment just as severe was reserved for those men who favoured tyranny. Writing of Thomas Becket he wrote: "... No man ever affronted the Majesty of Kings, and advanc'd Ecclesiastical Tyranny more than he did. ... No honest Opinion can side with him in his Attempts to destroy the Constitution of the Kingdom." And Oldmixon was quite merciless when he discussed the Merciless Parliament of 1388:

Tresilian, the Chief Justice, was hang'd; and he richly deserv'd it, being one of the principal Advisers of that wicked Advice to destroy the chief Lords, and to command the Sheriffs to return no Members for the Parliament, but such as the King and Council approv'd.

As the passage shows, Oldmixon, like the nineteenth century Whigs, was a parliament man. No doubt he was thinking of their seventeenth century counterparts when he wrote of the actions of the Lords Appellant.

There are no "grey shadows" (as Sir Charles Firth put it) in the pages of Oldmixon. His penchant for moral judgment eliminated the chance of there ever being "grey shadows." Oldmixon's portraits are contrasts of nobility and villainy, of good and evil. The Lords Ordainer and the Lords Appellant are "assertors of liberty," and Edward II and Richard II are
"Tyrants," and employers of "wicked Counsellors," and authors of "Pieces of Villany." Similarly, Henry V, whom Oldmixon tells, us came to the throne "by Virtue only of his Parliamentary Right," is the "most powerful and glorious Prince of his Age" and the priests "were so apprehensive of the Justness, as well as Greatness of his Genius, that they inspir'd him with a Thirst of Glory, which added almost all France to his Dominions." Richard II is "a Monster in Body and Mind" and came to the throne "by Murder." Oftentimes, Oldmixon's unalloyed portraits are based upon the test of how well such and such a personage got on with his (Oldmixon's) notion of the English constitution. If Edward I's reign is "glorious," it is because he "cherish'd the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects." Edward III's reign is memorable because he "scorn'd to advance his Power, by depressing the Rights of his subjects."

Oldmixon denied historical sympathy to whole periods, as well as to persons. His account of Richard I's Crusade is an example of this tendency. So also is his portrait of the ages that follow the arrival of Augustine:

Now was Monkery in the Height of its Glory about the Eighth Century, and for several Centuries so continu'd. There could not be more Wickedness and Ignorance in the World, and the only Way to Heaven was now through an Abby-Gate. Kings and Queens turn'd Friars and Nuns, and probably carry'd with them to the Convent more Religion than they found there.

The period was "one of the darkest and most corrupted Periods of English History." By contrast, the age before Augustine's
arrival is portrayed as one of enlightenment: "... The British Christians could not conform to the Ceremonies and Superstition of his [Augustine's] Religion and Discipline. They were upon a Primitive Scripture Bottom, which makes almost as much Difference between Popery and Christianity as between Christianity and virtuous Paganism." 21

Oldmixon, of course, gave his history an epic quality with his tableau of good parliaments struggling against evil kings and their wicked servants. The utility of history for Englishmen, he declared in the opening pages of The Critical History, is that "it informs them of the Antiquity and Strength of our Constitution, lays open the foundations of our Liberty, and shews them how it has been preserv'd from the First of Times, to our own, against the Assaults of Power and Priestcraft, and how it has been frequently and miraculously sav'd, when it was on the very brink of Ruin." 22 It is clear that Oldmixon had made up his mind to see the historical process in terms of struggle between the forces of good, "the Antiquity and Strength of our Constitution," and the forces of evil, "the Assaults of Power and Priestcraft." Oldmixon, moreover, never allowed himself to be diverted from his task. He ignored the complexity of historical change by making his history a series of laudatory and animadverting remarks on the successive reigns. 23

Oldmixon, like the Whig historians of the nineteenth century, had a bias in favor of liberty. The purpose of
The Critical History was "to set People Right in that which most concerns them, their Religious and Civil Liberties. . . ."\textsuperscript{24} The utility of English history is that it shows Englishmen "the Antiquity and Strength of our Constitution, lays open the foundations of our Liberty and shews . . . how it has been preserv'd from the First of Times."\textsuperscript{25} Reading the general history of Europe and "comparing the Happiness of our Constitution with the Misery of those other Nations" will make an Englishman "still more in Love with Liberty, and more tenacious in preserving it."\textsuperscript{26}

This bias in favor of liberty pervades the whole book. Oldmixon was determined to see free institutions existing in every age since the coming of the Saxons, and was quick to praise or condemn monarchs on the basis of how well they had protected the liberties of the subject.\textsuperscript{27} Henry III, because he had appealed to the Papacy in his struggle with the barons, never met with Oldmixon's stamp of approval. As Oldmixon writes of Henry III:

To enslave his People, he submitted himself to the vilest Slavery. King of a potent Kingdom, he own'd himself a Vassal to the Bishop of Rome. His own Honour, as well as the Nations, the Safety of his Kingdom, the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects were here all at once sacrific'd to the Pcape's Pride and his Favourite's Revenge.\textsuperscript{28}

Oldmixon's bias in favor of liberty even led him to impute evil motives to his own contemporaries. Of Robert Brady he wrote: "Brady therefore had a Pension given him, to prove that the English Subjects were Slaves, 'till Henry the Third gave them
a Parliament; and he confesses he was sorry they are not slaves
still. . . . ."29

Oldmixon's bias in favor of liberty caused him, as it
casted nineteenth century Whigs, to dislike and to fear too
powerful clergy. He considered an overbearing clergy a threat
to that English constitution which he saw existing since the
days of the Saxons. He censured Thomas Becket because the arch-
bishop had "affronted the Majesty of Kings, and advanc'd
Ecclesiastical Tyranny," and had attempted to "destroy the
Constitution of the Kingdom."30 He condemned Henry III because
he opened the door to clerical control: "To enslave his People,
he submitted himself to the vilest slavery. . . . He own'd
himself a Vassal to the Bishop of Rome. . . . The Rights and
Liberties of his Subjects were here all at once sacrif'ed to
the Pope's pride. . . ."31 And he praised Edward I because he
had controlled the clergy:

This great King, to diminish the exorbitant
Power of the Ecclesiasticks, held a Parliament in
the Year 1279. wherein the first Statute of
Mortmain was enacted. By this Act, the Laity were
hinder'd from ruining their Families to enrich the
Priests; who having, as they pretended, their Souls
at their Mercy, were won't to extort from them, on
their Death-beds, the best Part of their Lands.32

The experience of Oldmixon's own time, no doubt, showed
up his feelings on the clergy's role. At practically every point
in his The Critical History there is some uttering allusion to the
Tory clergy of the reigns of Queen Anne and George I. Commenting
upon a speech of the Earl of Lincoln in the reign of Edward II, for example, Oldmixon added this reflection: "In this Speech the English Reader will find the true Spirit and Principles of the Old English Barons, very far from the Doctrines preach'd by the inferior Clergy in our Times."  

The Critical History is very patriotic. The English were very different from any other people in the world:

No Nation has preserv'd their Gothick Constitution better than the English, who cannot consider the Happiness they enjoy, in Comparison with those who have lost it, without having a just Veneration for the Memory of their noble Ancestors, who at the Expence of their best Blood, have secur'd to them such valuable Rights: And though for Four Reigns together, bold Attempts were made by Court and Church Flatterers and Creatures to destroy them, and root out the generous Spirit which had hitherto been their Guard, yet our Age was not so degenerated, but the same Zeal appear'd at the Revolution, to transmit them to Posterity.

And transmitting that Gothick Constitution, that heritage of "Rights secur'd," to the present gives us the teleological aspect, that sense of progression in history, that the nineteenth century Whig historians imparted. Every age provides a pièce justificative for 1688:

Henry of Huntington tells us, that Sigebert for his Pride and Wickedness was depos'd, and Kinewulf elected by a Convention. . . . So full is the Saxon History of Instances of such interruptions, that the English Reader must be wonderfully surpris'd to find either Preachers or Writers against the Doctrine of Revolution; yet often do they assert the most daring Falshoods, in Opposition to the most plain and frequent Facts.
The next Reign is a great Invasion of the Lineal Succession. Robert, Duke of Normandy, eldest Son to the Conqueror, is laid asid; and William Rufus, his Second Son, ELECTED King, as Gervase of Tilbury informs us.  

King Henry the Fifth, who succeeded his Father Henry the Fourth, by Virtue only of his Parliamentary Right, prov'd the most powerful and glorious Prince of his Age. . . .

Oldmixon was also very Protestant and it colored his perspective.

What they call the Church History of these Times, with respect to England, as well as other Parts of Christendom, are only instances of the Pride, Inso­lence, Cruelty and Avarice of the Romish Priests; and the like Instances are not to be met with in Pagan Darkness and Idolatry.

And if it were not for such disparaging remarks as the above the reader would scarcely ever know that Oldmixon believed in progress, so omnipresent is the present in The Critical History of England, Ecclesiastical and Civil. Oldmixon attached his belief in progress to the ecclesiastical side of the history. The middle ages were "bad times," "wicked Times," "one of the darkest and most corrupted Periods of English History," "Little enough," wrote Oldmixon, "was the learning of the World, for Ten Centuries. . . ."

Oldmixon also at times sought the origins of institutions and customs. In his pages there is occasionally a search for the origins of the present. The English constitution arrives with the Saxons: "I shall endeavour to prove, that our Parliamentary Constitution is as old as the Saxons, and much the same as at
He also sought the origin of imperfections in English life. Thus it was the Pope's emissary, Augustine, who introduced superstition: "We are now come to a new Conversion of the Inhabitants of this Island from Paganism to Popery; for I am very fearful of calling so much of the Romish Superstition as Austin the Monk brought hither with him, the Christian Religion."  

Oldmixon's insistence on the antiquity of the English constitution is sure proof that he shared with the later Whig historians the belief in the rights of the individual. At every juncture he is anxious to prove that Englishmen have always had parliaments and consequently enjoyed those rights of the individual, actions by the various monarchs to the contrary notwithstanding. He cannot accept Brady's thesis that parliament evolved out of feudalism because it would mean that parliaments came late and that the rights of Englishmen were at one time nonexistent. "Brady therefore had a pension given him, to prove that the English were Slaves, 'till Henry the Third gave them a Parliament; and he confesses he was sorry They are not Slaves still. . . ."  

Oldmixon's insistence on the antiquity of the English constitution also illustrates his love of law. For the constitution was the law. He used the law to judge kings, royal councillors, and clergy. Like Sir Edward Coke he made the law
an inflexible standard. Edward II had chosen "rather to lose his Kingdom than govern by Law." 46

Finally, Oldmixon had the nineteenth century Whig historians' faith in the power of ideas. The purpose of The Critical History is to "shew that the Revolution is ancient part of our Constitution..." 47 to prove that Englishmen have always enjoyed a "Revolution Right," 48 to "confirm the Honest English Reader in his honest English Principles." 49 He would not have written The Critical History "had I not thought it necessary for the Preservation of our present happy Constitution in Church and State." 50 The book is written to persuade; it is a tract for the times. Not only did Oldmixon believe that ideas can influence men he believed that they can shape events as well. Ideas had destroyed the Stuart Tyranny: "... Yet our Age was not so degenerated, but the same Zeal appear'd at the Revolution, to transmit them [the valuable rights of Englishmen] to posterity. 51

Oldmixon's sources for mediaeval England were primary and secondary: Prynne's Calender of Parliamentary Writs, 52 Willis' Notitia Parliamentaria, 53 Tanner's Notitia Monastica, 54 Bede's History of England, 55 The Saxon Annals, 56 Hody's Convocations and Councils, 57 Petty's Rights of the Commons, 58 Raleigh's de Prerogativis Parliamentorum, 59 Cotton's Henry III, 60 Temple's
Life of William I, Fuller's Church History, et cetera. Yet it really would not have mattered what Oldmixon consulted for his mind was made up. He had no intention of allowing the past, mediaeval England in this instance, to speak for itself. Instead he imposed the present upon the past and that present was Hanoverian Britain. Oldmixon was, in short, a Hanoverian Whig in mediaeval England.
REFERENCES CITED

1 John Oldmixon, The Critical History of England, Ecclesiastical and Civil: wherein The Errors of the Monkish Writers, and others before the Reformation, are Expos'd and Corrected. As are also the Deficiency and Partiality of Later Historians. And particular Notice is taken of The History of the Grand Rebellion And Mr. Echard's History of England. To which are added, Remarks on some Objections made to Bishop Burnet's History of his Times (London: Printed for J. Pemberton, at the Buck and Sun against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street, MDCCXXIV).

2 Ibid., p. ii.

3 Ibid., pp. 54-55.


5 Ibid., pp. 29-30.

6 Ibid., p. 32. This passage with its denial of any change at the time of the Conquest is proof that Oldmixon was influenced by the common law tradition of the seventeenth century. J. G. A. Pocock points out in The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law that England's long common law tradition encouraged a belief in an ancient constitution, existing time out of mind. In the seventeenth century, this belief, common to all Englishmen, assumed a political aspect because of "the need to make a case for an ancient constitution against the King," p. 46. An immemorial constitution would not be subject to a king's will "since a king could not be known to have founded it originally," p. 51. Hence it was necessary to show that the Norman Conquest had not destroyed this immemorial constitution. When Tory scholars challenged this "purely negative argument," p. 51, in the second half of the century, they showed that the Norman conquest had introduced new institutions into England such as feudal tenures and parliaments. This explains Oldmixon's hatred of Robert Brady, one of the pioneers in this field. See The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law, Chapter VIII, "The Brady Controversy," pp. 182-228, and passim.

7 Ibid.
Ibid., p. 26. Far from producing a quibble, the researches of Dr. Robert Brady's Introduction to the Old English History (1694) was, in the words of Professor David Douglas, "a pioneer work on Anglo-Norman history . . . it remains today one of the most valuable extant treatises on the Norman Conquest." English Scholars (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939), p. 159; see also Chapter VI, "The Norman Conquest and Dr. Brady," pp. 148-174, passim.

Ibid., p. 3.

Ibid., pp. 95-96.

Ibid., pp. 93-94.

Ibid., p. 104.

Ibid., p. 54.

Ibid., pp. 104-105.

Ibid., p. 108.

Ibid., p. 111.

Ibid., p. 51.

Ibid., p. 57.

Ibid., pp. 80-81.

Ibid., p. 95.

Ibid., p. 78.

Ibid., p. 3.

Ibid., p. II.

25 Ibid., p. 3.
26 Ibid., p. 11.
27 See pages 85, 86, 88-90.
29 Ibid., p. 28.
30 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
31 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
32 Ibid., p. 51.
33 Ibid., p. 52.
34 Ibid., p. 25.
35 Ibid., p. 22.
36 Ibid., p. 33.
37 Ibid., p. 108.
38 Ibid., p. 36.
39 Ibid., p. 80.
40 Ibid., p. 84.
41 Ibid., p. 95.
42 Ibid., p. 81.
Oldmixon's sense of change, however, has been dulled by his Cokian prejudices. Especially is this the case in view of the fact that Oldmixon believed that Britons before the Saxon Conquest were governed by a parliamentary constitution of their own making. See The Critical History, pp. 17-20. What Oldmixon does recognize here is that the Saxon invasions brought something new to Britain.

See page 93 of this dissertation for the full quotation.
60 Ibid., p. 59.

61 Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

BARBARISM AND PROGRESS UNDER THE TUDORS

John Oldmixon wrote about the Tudors in a work entitled The History of England during the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth. Here, again, he exhibited all the characteristics of the later Whig historiography. The work is very teleological. At every point Oldmixon shows an impatience with the historical process. "We are come, he writes, to the 24th year of this King's Reign [Henry VIII], and there's nothing yet done by him towards a Reform of Religion, but abolishing some Branches of the Papal Power, and transferring them to the Regal. It does not appear that he had the least Conviction in his mind that there were any Errors in Faith or Worship, Doctrine or Discipline in Popery; and what he has done against the Pope, was to put himself in his stead in his own Dominions, and to be reveng'd of him for treating him so presumptuously and fraudulently in the Affair of the Divorce; for his spiritual Butchers are still busy in their holy Slaughter-houses, and Protestant Blood streaming still in the Streets, to glut the insatiate Thirst of the Romish prelates."

Seeing history in a teleological way also explains Oldmixon's fury with the men who opposed the Duke of Somerset's protectorate:

"... The Earl of Warwick, and several Lords of the Regency and Council, who envy'd his Greatness ... resolv'd to ruin him, and the Kingdom too, rather than not attempt to encrease their own."
Jealousies, in other words, were threatening to postpone the teleological progression of events. And Elizabeth is also the object of Oldmixon's disapprobation, because she, too, caused those times to be more difficult than they need have been. This is what Oldmixon says of her solution to the religious settlement, the *via media*:

This Scheme and Attempt occasion'd the future Troubles about Religious Matters, without answering the End propos'd by it: Was it possible to unite Superstition and Purity in the worship of God? or, to preserve the Divine Spirit in it, with a Mixture of Rome's idolatrous Rites and Pageantry? or, the simplicity of Faith, with the monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation? Since that was not possible, had the Church been at once clean'd of all Romish Filth, the Struggle with Popery might have been fiercer at first; but the Goodness of the Protestant Cause . . . would, doubtless, have supported a full Settlement in a thorough Reformation, had not Queen Eliz herself desir'd it should go no farther.4

And, needless to say, Oldmixon's *The History of England* is very Protestant.

If Oldmixon's history was teleological, that is to say, progressing towards some point in the future, it was because he again repeated the mistake that he had made in his treatment of mediaeval England, viz., reading the present into the past. He refused to take the age of the Tudors on its own merits, as an age differing from his own:

Here the Judges declare the King [Henry VIII](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_VIII_of_England) might, by Commission, raise Money without Act of Parliament. The Judges declar'd the same in the reign of Charles I and in his Son James II's Reign. . . . Thus will it be when such Ministers as Wolsey, Laud or Jeffries serve such Princes as
Henry, Charles and James. Happy for Great Britain, in the late Reigns, and the present, to have had Kings and Ministers who would put no such question to the Judges. . . .

Henry VIII's parliaments especially came in for censure because they did not conform to the eighteenth century standard:

The late Parliament [1539] pass'd some Acts which shew'd they were not only abandon'd to a slavish Submission to the King's Will, but that they had given up their Consciences and Understandings to it, swallow'd Absurdities and Contradictions as they were directed, and gave them the Sanction of Laws.

And this is how Oldmixon viewed an incident in the parliament of 1571: "The Queen," he wrote,

was so displeased with Mr. Strickland for his Motion [For a further reformation], that she sent for him before the Council and forbid him the Parliament, which alarmed the Members, and occasioned so many warm Speeches, that she thought fit immediately to restore him. This was destroying the freedom of Parliaments, and carrying the Prerogative to a Length unknown to our Laws.

It is not surprising that Oldmixon should have viewed the constitutional developments of the century in the way he did given this opening statement in The History of England: "I did not form the design of the History of England out of Vanity . . . but purely to let my country men see . . . that the English Constitution is originally free." On constitutional matters Oldmixon is the complete Cokian, refusing to see any change in the English constitution, existing from time immemorial.

J. G. A. Pocock (The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law, passim) has shown that it was a common characteristic of
common law historians, particularly Sir Edward Coke, to regard the constitution as immemorial. In this respect Oldmixon was more like Coke than Macaulay, more like the common law historians of the seventeenth century than the Whig historians of the nineteenth century. However, the nineteenth century Whigs did not differ all that much from the seventeenth century common law historians, for the Whigs in their search for origins were guilty of anachronisms.

The Whig historian's love of law is illustrated in Oldmixon's reaction to the "judicial murders," as G. R. Elton called them, in the reign of Henry VIII.

In this Session of Parliament were attainted Margaret Countess of Salisbury, her son Reginald Pole, Cardinal, Gertruyd wife to the Marquis of Exeter, Sir Adrian Fortesque and Thomas Dingley. . . . These Offenders were by this Act condemn'd, without being heard, and the Judgment given against the Marquis of Exeter, Henry Pole Lord Montague, and others before mentioned, was confirmed after they were Executed. A strange way of proceeding! very agreeable to the King's imperious, and the Parliament's complying Humour.9

How could the Parliament, as Rapin writes, deem the Impeachment [of Thomas Cromwell] just tho' destitute of Evidence?10

Oldmixon called Cromwell's execution a "murder."11

The History of England is full of moral judgments. Oldmixon considered Dugdale's Monasticon of no value not only because it was, in fact, written by Dodsworth, "a North Country Papist," but also because it failed "to correct the Impiety and Dissoluteness of the Age, by examples of Holy and Discreet Lives and Manners in the Monasticks; or the Order and Beauty of the
Architecture, by a Description of their rude Walls and Buttresses?" Oldmixon had again assigned to history that same lofty purpose that the nineteenth century Whig historians had given it.

Examples of moral judgment have already been seen in The History of England. Oldmixon condemned Henry's parliaments for being obsequious and accomplices to murder. Elizabeth was scolded for allowing personal religious preferences to embroil her countrymen. Sir Thomas More is castigated because he represented a threat to the modern times, to eighteenth century notions of church and state: "... He put himself at the Head of the cruel Popish Persecutors, contrary to Equity, to natural Right, to Christian Liberty, to Humanity and common Sense. ..." The charges against Anne Boleyn of adultery and incest with her brother were both "equally Monstrous and incredible!" The Pilgrimage of Grace was caused by the "seditious Lectures, Libels, and Reports" of the popish clergy. The Six Articles were the "impious and absurd articles," the "bloody statute," "An act for arbitrary power." The Hottentots at the Cape, the Cannibals in the Caribbees, if they have any Religion at all, have none so extravagant and murderous as this," said Oldmixon. Northumberland's scheme to put Lady Jane Grey on the throne was "as Rash and Desperate as Illegal and Unjust." Queen Elizabeth's severity towards Lady Catherine Grey was "unjustifiable;" the house of Suffolk
was "Protestant" and "English" "and the Stuart Line wou'd, in all liklihood, be both Papist and Foreign. . ."\textsuperscript{24} The commissioners of Elizabeth's High Commission Court "sadly abus'd their Power in this, and the two next Reigns, turning what was intended against Papists, against the most Religious of the Reform'd."\textsuperscript{25}

Oldmixon's moral judgments, of course, illustrate a failure to see each historical event as a complex situation having complicated antecedents and complicated consequences. For Oldmixon the historical process is quite simple. There is a right side and a wrong side. Sir Thomas More, Henry VIII, Somerset, and Elizabeth are all on the wrong side at their respective moments in time. Consequently, we can see here a disposition to regard history as an epic struggle between right and wrong. And, moreover, we have Oldmixon's word for it:

To conclude the Reader will see by my history of England which is brought down from the Death of King Henry VII to that of his late majesty King George, who were the Persons, and what their views, who were the causers of all the Evils which have befallen the nation by Strife and Contention about Church Forms. . . . The Reader will see here how the spirit of Prosecution was transferr'd from the Pope's Bishops to Henry the Eights, and to many of their successors; who in that Sense -- indeed, may pretend to an uninterrupted Succession. From this Persecuting Spirit have sprung all the Mischiefs that have disturb'd, . . . and Endanger'd both Church and State. . . . What have been the End of Persecutors . . . my History of England Shews and when it is read, 'twill be a Matter of Rejoicing to all Lovers of the Protestant Religion
and Liberty, that the Day is over with Persecution, and Persecutors; and, whatever Disposition the same sort of men who Persecuted in the following Reigns have to the same wicked work again, Protestant Liberty has so strong a Barrier in our present Happy Constitution, that it must be of the same Duration, and both stand or fall together.  

And arising from this idea of history as a struggle between right and wrong is Oldmixon's denial of sympathy to men and events who promote the wrong. Oldmixon's portraits are again contrasts of good and evil, of nobility and villainy. Edward VI is portrayed as a man who cared for nothing in this life "but the Preservation of the Reform'd Religion, which, it is certain, he intended to purge of all the remaining Filth of Popery..." Henry VIII is an "Errant Papist" and "An Enemy to his Protestant Subjects." Elizabeth is a "wise and determined" princess. Mary, Queen of Scots, is "degenerate in her Principles and Practices..." The Puritans are the godly; the doctors and proctors of Doctors Commons are "ravenous officers, odious to God and Man..."  

These contrasts are continued when Oldmixon discusses the events of the Tudor period as well. It is quite clear that certain periods are definitely within and others definitely without the Whiggish pale. The reign of Elizabeth is a golden age worthy of comparison to those halcyon days of Whig rule in the reign of Queen Anne: "We had a Revival of this Golden Age Elizabeth's reign with great Additions and Improvements in the six years of Queen Anne, from the Battle of Blenheim to
Sacheverel's Sedition. 32 Oldmixon has no sympathy with the age that the dissolution of the monasteries brings to a close: "Yet how do the Monasticonists Dugdale, Tanner, and Willis] lament the turning those Drones out of their Hives, and the demolition of their rude Gothick Edifices; which shew us that there was as much Barbarism in their Taste, as Superstition in their Principles.″ 33 Nor does he sympathize with the period that follows: "... A Horrid Mixture of cruelty and blood disgraces this Reign of Henry VIII, to a degree that gives both Writer and Reader a disgust to the History." 34 With such contrasts Oldmixon could sustain the impression of history as an epic struggle easily.

Oldmixon's remarks on the rudeness, the barbarity, and superstition of the monastic age illustrate his Whig belief in progress, in the superiority of his own times. Now the historian might well be happy in his heart that those times are gone, as Oldmixon definitely is, but that feeling has little to do with the historian's task, which is to show how one age evolved out of another. Oldmixon never realized that the present is the sum total of the past. To him, the present had somehow arrived there full blown, to be used as a standard for judging the past. It was just plain foolishness to lament the passing of the monastic age, as Willis did. "A Burthen to the Mind of Mr. Brown Willis, under which he very much groans." 35

Oldmixon, of course, anticipated the nineteenth century Whig belief in the rights of the individual. His dislike of
Henry VIII is, as much as anything, due to this belief in the rights of the individual. Henry's trials are a violation of those rights. The Six Articles are "An Act for Arbitrary Power," an "Abominable Tyranny." Henry's reign is "a horrid mixture of cruelty and blood." And ecclesiastical courts are not to be borne: "... I abhor Compulsion in cases of Conscience, as Tyrannous and Impious...." "For they [the Puritans] were now daily cited into the Spiritual Courts, to suffer the rigorous Execution of the Penal Laws, for the Benefit of Doctors and Proctors, and other ravenous Officers, odious to God and Man...."

And like the nineteenth century Whigs Oldmixon feared a too powerful clergy because of the threat that such a clergy would pose to individual and civil liberties. Sir Thomas More's refusal to acknowledge Henry's supremacy throws Oldmixon into a rage: "... He put himself at the Head of the cruel Popish Persecutors, contrary to Equity, to natural Right, to Christian Liberty, to Humanity and Common Sense...." Oldmixon can only see More's action in modern terms; More was keeping open the door to continued clerical control.

Behind Oldmixon's belief in the rights of the individual and his fear of a too powerful clergy lay, of course, the Whig bias in favour of liberty. Henry VIII's parliaments were castigated for their "slavish Submission" to the tyrant's will.
They had shown a "complying humour" in Henry's murder of the Poles.\(^\text{43}\) The Statute of Six Articles was a "prodigious Law for the Church."\(^\text{44}\) They had acquiesced to impeachments "tho destitute of evidence."\(^\text{45}\) And they had passed statutes which made Henry the pope of England.\(^\text{46}\) As Oldmixon wrote in the Preface to The History of England: "I did not form the design of the History of England out of Vanity . . . but purely to let my countrymen see . . . that the English Constitution is originally free."

The History of England was very patriotic. The English were enlightened, so well aware of the "Errors of the Romish Church," "that had King Henry, on the first Hesitation of the Pope in that Cause \([\text{the divorce}\] consulted his own Clergy, and upon their Judgment referr'd it to the Parliament, as he did afterwards, there's not the least reason to doubt but he would have succeeded everywhit as well, and have sav'd himself a great deal of Trouble and Expence. . . ."\(^\text{47}\) England's \textit{éclaircissement} in matters ecclesiastical was due to her own native reformers, to John Wycliffe and his followers. And this, too, was a source of patriotic pride:

. . . The Romish Errors were known, abhorr'd, and renounc'd in this Kingdom long before the preaching of Luther. . . . Besides, it will appear in this Work, that Luther's Reformation fell short of Wickliff's, and especially of his Disciples, who made greater Progress in it than Wickliff himself; and consequently our Reformation is neither owing to Luther nor Zwinglius, nor any foreign Reformer, but
In Oldmixon's assertion that the English reformation was a native movement, we can see also his faith in the power of ideas to influence men and shape events. The English reformation was not due so much to circumstances in Henry's time as to the efforts of the Lollards and to the idea of a reformed Christianity that they propagated. The English reformation, wrote Oldmixon, came not from Luther

or from King Henry's Quarrel with the Pope about his old Wife and new Wife, but from the pious Labour's and powerful Labours of the Ministers of the Gospel, from the Martyrdom of William Sawtre in the reign of Henry V to the Martyrdom of Thomas Bileny, both Ministers, 130 years afterwards in the reign of Henry VIII. This being premis'd, true Protestants will heartily despise the false Slander thrown on the Reform'd Religion in this Kingdom, as if it sprung from the adulterous Concupiscence of Henry VIII to enjoy Anne Boleine ... which, as has been said, did only hasten the condemning of the Pope's usurp'd Dominion by the Laws of the Land, which Dr. Wickliff and his Disciples had 150 years before asserted to be condemn'd by the Laws of Christ.

And Oldmixon showed the Whig faith in the power of ideas in the efficacy he attached to rational discussion as a means of resolving difficulties. Religious persecution among Protestants in this century was completely incomprehensible to his Hanoverian mind: "I abhor Compulsion in Cases of Conscience, as Tyrannous and Impious ... and if it could be done by Reason and Persuasion a Uniform Way of Worship would certainly be agreeable to that communion of Saints."
Further proof of Oldmixon's belief in the power of ideas is to be found in the polemical nature of *The History of England*. It is definitely written to persuade the reader to adopt a Whiggish view. If Oldmixon is not denouncing some action such as Henry VIII's treatment of his parliaments or Warwick's cabal against Somerset he is discrediting the histories of those "imaginary Tories," to use Macaulay's phrase, whose works cover the same period. "Let us see from what Quarter the late Panegyricks on Monkery have come. Dugdale's great Assistant was Dodsworth, a Papist; Brown Willis values himself on the Assistance of Wharton, a Nonjuring Priest..." Dodsworth's purpose in writing the Monasticon was "to keep in Remembrance their [the monks'] Superstition and False Zeal, the Riches and Grandeur of the Priests... and the whole Trumpery which operates so quickly on the senses of the Rabble..." It is no exaggeration to say that every page is a skirmish line where Whig principles are defended. Well might Johnson describe Oldmixon as "a Scribbler for a party."

Like the nineteenth century Whig historians Oldmixon looked for the origins of the present in the past. This can be seen in his derivation of modern liberty from the Reformation era. He believed that Protestantism helped create English liberty. Oldmixon also sought the origins of the English Reformation among the fourteenth century Lollards.

Oldmixon was a parliament man. Elizabeth's summoning of members of parliament before her council was simply incredible
"This was destroying the freedom of Parliaments, and carrying the Prerogative to a length unknown to our Laws..."\textsuperscript{57}

...Oldmixon had again read the present into the past and, by so doing, had made an age distant from his own strikingly similar to his own. No matter how thoroughly he covered the period\textsuperscript{58} he was not any closer to an understanding of it, for he was arguing in a circle. By looking for correspondences in the past he was begging the historical question and denying the past an existence of its own. Oldmixon was still very much a Hanoverian Whig, who could not believe that men once lived by other ideals than those which prevailed in his own time.

With regard to the problem of change Oldmixon again illustrates the contradiction in his position that we saw in Chapter III.\textsuperscript{59} On constitutional questions he is a Cokian,\textsuperscript{60} denying any change, but in other areas he does show a sense of change as his association of liberty with Protestantism and his search after the origins of English reformation in fourteenth century Lollardy demonstrate. Oldmixon, in short, was a transitional figure, who bridged the gap between the era of Coke and the era of Macaulay.
REFERENCES CITED

1. John Oldmixon, *The History of England during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth including the history of the Reformation of the Churches of England and Scotland... also a more full clear, and faithful history of Mary Queen of Scots than has hitherto been publish'd, etc.* (London: 1739).

2. Ibid., p. 78.

3. Ibid., p. 178.

4. Ibid., p. 301.

5. Ibid., p. 48.

6. Ibid., p. 121.

7. Ibid., p. 417.

8. Ibid., Preface.


10. Ibid., p. 119.

11. Ibid.


13. See pages 105 and 106.

14. See page 104.


16. Ibid., p. 95.
17 Ibid., p. 100.
18 Ibid., p. 116.
19 Ibid., p. 115.
20 Ibid., p. 116.
21 Ibid., p. 115.
22 Ibid., p. 208.
23 Ibid., p. 328.
24 Ibid., p. 335.
25 Ibid., p. 303.
26 Ibid., Preface.
28 Ibid., pp. 69 and 154, respectively.
29 Ibid., pp. 322-323. Oldmixon's opinion of Elizabeth was contradictory.
30 Ibid., p. 325.
31 Ibid., p. 411.
32 Ibid., p. 648.
33 Ibid., p. 89.
34 Ibid., p. 121.
35 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
It is an exaggeration to say the English Reformation is due solely to the Lollards, but the native roots of the English Reformation are far stronger than one would imagine. See A. G. Dickens' *The English Reformation* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1966), Chapter II, "The Abortive Reformation," pp. 22-37. This was one of Oldmixon's purple patches.


See pages 103 and 105.

Oldmixon, The History of England during the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, Preface. In tracing the beginnings of liberty back to Protestantism, Oldmixon commits a classic error of Whig historiography. He forgets that the early Protestant churches were just as intolerant as the papists and that liberty was the result of the clash of these Christian factions. Liberty was the end result of a failure by the orthodox and heterodox to gain supremacy.

56 Ibid., p. 53. See pages 112 and 113.

57 Ibid., p. 417.

58 Oldmixon, The History of England during the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth is 648 folio pages long. It is largely, however, based on the works of other authors--Foxe, Fuller, Rapin, Buchanan, Burnet, Wicquefort, et cetera.

59 See pages 94-95 and note #43.

60 See pages 85-87 and note #6; see pages 105 and 106.
CHAPTER V

JOHN OLDMIXON AND THE ROYAL HOUSE OF STUART

Herbert Butterfield called the Whig view of the constitutional conflicts of the seventeenth century "the whig interpretation of history par excellence," and no greater proof of these words can be found than in the pages of John Oldmixon's *History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart.* Whenever Oldmixon came to a constitutionally significant juncture in the seventeenth century he missed the significance of the event simply because he assumed that the past was like the present. He failed to see, for example, the importance of the revival of impeachments by parliament in the spring of 1621. Impeachments were as much a part of the English constitution in the reign of James I as they were in the reign of George II. Regarding the impeachments of Sir Giles Mompesson and Sir Francis Michell, Oldmixon had only this to say: "Parliament contented themselves with falling upon the under-workers in the odious Business of Patents." And Oldmixon dismissed as nonsense Charles' answer to the Parliament of 1625, when they attacked his chaplain Richard Montagu, that they had no right to arrest one of his servants, that his servants enjoyed the
same immunities as the servants of the Burgesses. It was "like
the Sophistry of the Court Arguments in those Days." "No servant
to Lord or Commoner," wrote Oldmixon, "was protected in Offences
against the publick Peace and nothing could be more offensive
than endeavouring to create jealousies between his Majesty and
his Subjects. This air appear'd early in the King's Speeches
and Messages..." Lord Keeper Williams' fear of affixing the
Great Seal to a pardon for papists is entirely lost on Oldmixon, who can only see that action as proof of the Stuart
conspiracy against the English constitution:

Thus we see that in almost the first Moon of his Reign he set up a despotick Power against the Constitution, and his Will against the Law, in pursuance of the Design form'd by King James to introduce arbitrary Government, which his Son prosecuted more openly and avowedly.

Oldmixon saw nothing surprising or new in the impeachment of Buckingham simply because he gave the king bad advice. Buckingham's fate was simply that of any servant of George II's who dared to ignore parliament. Not only is Buckingham's impeachment an example of reading the present into the past, but it is also proof that Oldmixon was very much in the tradition of Sir Edward Coke and the seventeenth century common law lawyers who believed in an immemorial and unchanging constitution, for Oldmixon saw no development no change in the constitution from the impeachments of Mompesson and Michell in 1621 to the impeachment of Buckingham in 1628. The earlier impeachments were based
on criminal acts; Buckhingham's impeachment was based on the advice he gave the king. Here was a first step towards ministerial responsibility. As Professor J. R. Tanner put it: "In his case impeachment is ceasing to be a judicial proceeding and is becoming a process of the Constitution." 8

Oldmixon could note that "the main Part of the Earl's Defence lay in his having the King's commission, and acting only in Conjunction with other Counsellors" and declare immediately thereafter that his case represented "as much Treason against the Constitution of England, as ever traytor was guilty of." 9

If Oldmixon did not understand the Triennial Act of 1641, he at least knew his Coke: "Was it a Favour to have a Parliament once in three years when by ancient laws and Customs there was to be a Parliament once a Year?" 10 And Oldmixon scoffed at Echard's suggestion that the Long Parliament was working a revolution: "The reflections the reverent Historian makes on the Act for the continuance of the Parliament have the usual solidity; it was a new Constitution." 11

Oldmixon saw no new constitutional precedents being set in Clarendon's impeachment 12 in 1667 or in Finch's refusal in 1679 to set the Great Seal to Danby's pardon. 13 The constitutional problems that arose in relation to William's succession to the throne are dismissed by Oldmixon who stated his belief
in "the Original Contract and the natural right of the representative to fill up the throne, when it is at any time vacant."\textsuperscript{14}

Oldmixon's championing of the right of the representative to determine the succession shows that he was, like the later Whigs, a parliament man. Even in times of de facto rule Oldmixon was on the side of the legislature. The parliament of the Commonwealth was the "cause of liberty,"\textsuperscript{15} and Cromwell's speech on dissolving that Parliament ('It is you have forced me to this, for I have sought the Lord Night and Day, that he would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work')\textsuperscript{16} a "Horrid Dissimulation!"\textsuperscript{17} The dissolution was a "Usurpation."\textsuperscript{18}

Oldmixon gave the History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart a teleological tone from the very beginning, by writing in the Dedication: "When you have gone thro' the following Reigns, and are come to their Dissolution, in the Accession of King William and Queen Mary to the Throne, will you not look back upon them, as Voyagers do on the boisterous Ocean, after having escap'd Shipwreck, when they stand safe on the solid Shore?"\textsuperscript{19} The work was going to be predetermined; the past was going to have no value of its own save as an illustration of the progression towards that haven of all Whig mariner-historians, the reign of William and Mary. True to this purpose, Oldmixon usually began each reign with a dark warning. Writing of the Apology that the House of Commons presented to
James in 1604 he declared: "This was a hopeful Beginning of the Royal House of Stuart; and the King took their Apology so ill, that he never heartily lov'd our Constitution afterwards." And of Charles I's reign he wrote: "The spirit of this Reign, and by whom it was influenced, appears in the making this obnoxious Priest [Richard Montague] Chaplain to the King in a few Weeks after King James' Death." Oldmixon greeted Charles II's selling of Dunkirk with this innuendo: "Such were the Beginnings of King Charles's Administration, with respect both to Foreigners and his own Subjects; and it mends not during the whole Continuance of it." 

Dark clouds, of course, portend dark seas and the Stuartine Seas are very tempestuous. James I's peace with Spain is a disaster for England and the world: the Spanish "had made a fast Friend of an Enemy, in whose Power only it was to destroy their ambitions and tyrannical Projects both in Europe and America, and secure the Liberty of Commerce in both the old World and the new." "But," Oldmixon writes, "England is to learn to accustom herself to Affronts during the Reigns we are writing of." And James should have gone to the aid of Frederick when war broke out in Bohemia: "One cannot enough lament the loss of this Opportunity to establish the Protestant Religion in Germany!" "The Truth is," the Whig historian declares, "his Majesty was afraid the Court of Spain wou'd break off the Treaty of Marriage, which was still Spun out, if he did
any thing by War or Negotiation to offend the Emperor."\textsuperscript{26} James was a monster: he "tamely saw the Ruin of his Daughter and a numerous Royal Family."\textsuperscript{27} English policy was, for Oldmixon, truly a scandal in Bohemia.

Charles I's conflict with Parliament in the late 1620's is seen by Oldmixon as proof of that monarch's intention to destroy the English constitution. The battle over the King's right to choose his own counsellors in the Parliament of 1628 prompts this remark:

Let the Reader stop here and consider a little, how I have made out that such a Design [Oldmixon had noted immediately before this that popery and arbitrary power were the aims of the Stuarts] form'd soon after the Death of Queen Elizabeth, was continu'd to the beginning of this Reign, and continues still by the Evidence of the Parliament's Remonstrance.\textsuperscript{28}

Oldmixon sees Wentworth's acceptance of royal office at this time as a betrayal, as apostasy to the commonwealth.\textsuperscript{29} And Oldmixon wrote this of Charles' prorogation of the same parliament in the following year when Speaker Finch was held in his chair to prevent adjournment:

Thus in five Days they had had two Messages to adjourn, both of them unparliamentary and irregular. The House saw that as often as they offered to make Enquiry into Male-Administration their debates were stopped by command to adjourn. They resented this in the Speaker, whose duty it was not to deliver any such Command; for the Adjournment did properly belong to themselves.\textsuperscript{30}
What Oldmixon was really witnessing was the collapse of a constitutional system not a plot to destroy it. As Professor S. R. Gardiner wrote of this period:

There are occasions on which the historian has to acknowledge that no complete solution of existing difficulties was possible at the time. Practically the great evil of the day was that Charles was not fit to be entrusted with powers which had been wielded by former sovereigns.31

The reign of Charles II was no exception to this predetermined view of the seventeenth century. The King's speech to the Pension Parliament in 1664 asking for repeal of the Triennial Act demonstrated his fondness "of absolute arbitrary powers." 32 The Uniformity and Corporation Acts "prepar'd the way for that Slavery Spiritual and Temporal, which would have entail'd upon us and our Posterity had it not been for the Revolution." 33 The real cause of the war with the United Provinces was "that the Dutch were Protestants, that they were Friends to Liberty, and as such, hated and dreaded by all Promoters of Tyranny, Popery, and Persecution." 34 The Exclusion Bill was "both just and necessary." 35 Oldmixon thought that Charles' dissolution of the Oxford Parliament was illegal. "It proved," wrote Oldmixon of a pamphlet by Algernon Sydney,

that by the Statutes of this Kingdom Parliaments should not be prorogu'd or dissolv'd, till all the Petitions and Bills before them were answer'd and redress'd: That the Manner of dissolving the Oxford Parliament was unwarranted by the Precedent of former Times: That the King doth not act any considerable Act of Regal Power, till it be first debated and resolv'd in Council. . . . 36
Ignoring the Tory reaction that set in during the last years of Charles II's reign and the beginning of James II's, Oldmixon marveled at a parliament such as the one that met in 1685 that could vote the king such a great income. "The House of Commons, if, as Coke says, they deserve to be so call'd, were readier to give money than the King to ask it. . . ."37

Well might Oldmixon make this recapitulation at the end of his history:

What I propos'd by this Undertaking, was to shew that the Royal House of Stuart from the Accession of the First King James to the Throne of England, to the Abdication of the Second, did endeavour to subvert the Constitution and subject this Kingdom to Arbitrary Power Ecclesiastical and Civil; That in the Prosecution of their Design, they met with vigourous Opposition from the most Virtuous and Generous of the English Nation, who asserted their Liberty upon all Occasions, according as the Necessity of the Case requir'd, and preserv'd it when in the utmost peril of being lost, by their Courage and Constancy.38

The train of events had come to its logical (that is to say, teleological) conclusion.

If, as a court wit put it, four P's--pride, prohibitions, praemunire, and prerogative--caused Sir Edward Coke's downfall, three P's--polemics, patriotism, and Protestantism--certainly contributed to Oldmixon's failure to appreciate these times. Oldmixon continued, on every page, to fight pitched battles with Tory historians. Passages such as the following are typical:

Yet Echard, very piously, makes a Panegyrick on her [Mary, Queen of Scots] Singular piety, out of
Complement to her pious Son, for renouncing and persecuting the Protestant Church he was bred in. 39

How different are these Things [assertions of the existence of an original contract by Sir Robert Philips] from those in the Archdeacon's [Echard's] Books? Sir Robert Philips, an hundred Years ago, asserted the Rights of the Original Contract, which Filmer, Brady, the Oxford Decree, Hicks, Lesley, Hill, T——p, Swift, deny with so much Assurance, and which so many others of the clergy have condemn'd as Fiction since the Revolution. 40

I will make no Remark upon this fine Flourish [of Clarendon's]; if the Reader can believe a word of it, he has a stock of Faith enough to run thro' the Roman Legends. 41

The polemical nature of Oldmixon's work also illustrates his conception of historical proof. Oldmixon thought that anything could be refuted merely by quoting a favorable source. "The great Selden, A Name of more Weight than any Name in the History of the Rebellion, said..." 42 "... Sir Tho. Widdrington, and Bulstrode Whitlocke, Esq.; whose Memorials are so useful to me in detecting the Falsities in the History of the Rebellion. ..." 43 Whitlocke, the fairest of all writers. ..." 44

Oldmixon, like most eighteenth century historians, trusted secondary accounts.

The History of England during the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart is very patriotic. Oldmixon liked Elizabeth because she made England's name feared: "The terror of her Arms was so great upon the Ocean, that she was stil'd the Queen of the North Sea." 45 And he detested James I because his reign was so "weak and inglorious." 46 James I (and the other kings of the
Stuart line) "took as little care to maintain the Glory of England, as the Protestant Religion, which owes to it its best Protection." Oldmixon loved the Commonwealth because "she had rais'd the Reputation of England from the lowest Depth of Disgrace and Shame to the highest Degree of Honour and Renown." And of Oliver Cromwell Oldmixon wrote:

The Figure he made in Europe was so shining, that the two Reigns before him and the two Reigns after him, are so many Blots in the History of England, which his Protectorate, would render illustrious, had he acquired it as honourably as he maintain'd it.

If the readers of Professor S. R. Gardiner's classic History of England from the Accession of James I can gain a sympathy for the Arminian reaction to the Calvinism of the Anglican Church in the England of pre-Civil War days, Oldmixon, because he is so violently Calvinistic, shows no sympathy for Montagu and Laud and their brethren in the church. His Protestantism enabled him to achieve an historical sympathy only with the enemies of Laud.

The Whig love of law is seen in Oldmixon's reaction to the fall of the Presbyterian-controlled Long Parliament and the subsequent trial of the king. This is what Oldmixon thought of the army's purge of the House of Commons:

After the Soldiery had garbled the House, the Power was usurped, and illegal, and this illegal usurp'd power, and no other proceeded against the King. For no farther can any good Englishman go with the Parliament in this Quarrel, than the last
Isle of Wight treaty; and no farther do I in the least justify the Proceedings of the Parliamentarians, than while they were free, especially from all Military force. 52

When he turned to the story in the House of Lords Oldmixon continued the fight against usurped power. The issue is the Lords’ rejection of the purged House of Commons’ ordinance for trying the king:

The Lords Negative is as Fundamental a Part of the Laws of England as the Commons Affirmative; and their can be no law without their consent; therefore every Act of the governing Powers, from Pride’s Purge to the Death of the King, is illegal, barbarous and tyrannical, and well deserves an Anniversary of Humiliation. 53

And Oldmixon was gratified to note that even after these illegacies men refused to try the king: "But they could not get above 70 or 80 to go through the Drudgery of this wicked work." 54

At the king’s trial itself justice was "turned into a Farce." 55 "And most true it is," wrote Oldmixon, "they were not, and the King could not acknowledge them without betraying his Trust." 56

Oldmixon's defense of the House of Lords is also illustrative of the aristocratic element in Whiggism.

With a love of law, of course, goes a regard for individual rights. And Oldmixon's reaction to events in the latter part of Charles II's reign and the first part of James II's reign illustrates his Whig individualism. Oldmixon described the censorship of those who wrote "on the Side of the Country" as "another sweet Effect of Tyranny and arbitrary Power." 57 The execution of
Oliver Plunket, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Armagh, was "a gross miscarriage of justice."\(^{58}\) Stephen College was the victim of a "wicked jury" who "very greedily took this poor Man's Blood upon them."\(^{59}\) And of Shaftesbury's trial he wrote: "... To attempt to murder a Man by forms of Law, and the Testimonies of perjur'd Criminals, was an Affront to it, which we shall hardly meet with in the worst of times, if ever there were worse than these."\(^{60}\) "This noble Person [Algernon Sidney] was murder'd after the same manner as Lord Russel had been, by forms of Law."\(^{61}\) Lord Jeffries had turned England into an Aceldema; he had "slaughtered" her inhabitants.\(^{62}\) In disbelief Oldmixon noted that in the case of a Lady Lisle Jeffries "charged the Jury to bring her in Guilty!"\(^{63}\)

Oldmixon could, often, however, be blinded by his Whig sympathies and throw individual rights to the winds. He was, for example, wildly credulous of the Popish Plot. He overlooked faulty trial procedures in exulting over Coleman's conviction.\(^{64}\) Strafford had committed "Treason against the Constitution of England, as ever Traytor was guilty of."\(^{65}\) And if the House of Lords in Archbishop Laud's trial had scruples because the law of treason only encompassed treason against the king, Oldmixon had none: "But it is not within common sense to know that he who would destroy the Constitution, the Religion, Laws, Rights and Liberties of the People is a traytor in the worst interpretation of the word."\(^{66}\)
If anything can illustrate the Whig belief in the didactic use of history, it is surely to be found in Oldmixon's belief that liberty should be inculcated by the historian. History is a series of lessons "left you by your Fathers, for the Preservation of the Protestant Religion and Liberty." The historian's task was to reduce the minds of men "to one sound Principle, that of Liberty Spiritual and Temporal. . . ." Readers "will mistake him and his Meaning if they interpret him in any other Sense than that of the Protestant Religion, and Protestant Succession; the Rights, Liberties, Properties and Privileges of Britons." The History of England during the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart is dedicated to "all True Englishmen, Lovers of our Present Happy Constitution." "I set a sort of value upon its simplicity," he wrote, "it being only an historical plan of design of the Stuartine Kings to subvert the Constitution. . . ."

Oldmixon's bias in favour of liberty was the cause of many mistakes. He considered General Monk a dissembler who restored Charles II "with no manner of concern for the future Interest and Liberty of his Country." Oldmixon's portrait of the Commonwealth and Cromwell suffered because of this bias. The Commonwealth was the "cause of liberty" and Cromwell "was all this while sapping and mining its Foundation. . . ." "The nation was settled in a Commonwealth,"
he wrote, "if he [Cromwell] alter'd the Government, it would
doubtless be for Monarchy, and who would then be the Monarch
was easily to be understood."75

Oldmixon's fear of clerical domination can be seen in
his hostility to episcopacy in the seventeenth century. He
feared episcopacy because of its reliance upon the king:

The Princes of the Earth, from whom the Spiritual
Hierarchy derive their temporal Honours and Riches,
have been flatter'd by the most corrupt of them,
with divine and unlimited authority; in which they
have, in return, been admitted to a Share to the
Ruin of Religion, and the Oppression of the People.76

In the English Civil War his sympathies were with the Independ­
ents:

Those of the Parliament who were for so effec­
tively securing their Spiritual and Temporal liber­
ties, that it should not be in the Power of a
single person to invade them hereafter, liked very
well to see the Independents so zealous, and gave
them Encouragement.77

Oldmixon praised the English of the Commonwealth because they
would not "subject their consciences and interests to the
bigotry and Enthusiasm of the Scots ecclesiastics."78 The
Commonwealth's cause was the cause of "Religion and Liberty."79

Oldmixon, like later Whig historians, projected the values
of the present on to the past. He thought, for example, that
seventeenth century Protestants should be as tolerant of their
fellow Protestants as eighteenth century Protestants were of each
other. Of the Hampton Court conference Oldmixon wrote: "The
King perform'd his Menaces very punctually, and by Bancroft and
his Brethren, harried the best Men in the Kingdom out of the Land." It was Oldmixon's opinion of James I that, instead of strengthening the Protestant Interest in both Nations (Scotland and England), by an Ecclesiastical as well as political Union, he not only destroy'd the Constitution of the Kirk in his antient Kingdom, but protected the Prelates in persecuting and ruining their Brethern of the Reformation in the new one... A petition from the Presbyterian City of London in the closing days of the Long Parliament urging parliament to make the "private and separate congregations conform" threw Oldmixon into a rage:

These worshipful Persons were themselves persecuted five or six years ago; and now having the Power, as they thought in their hands, are themselves eager for persecution.

Oldmixon had no use for Charles II's Pension Parliament "which upon one Day flung 2000 Ministers out of their Pulpits." Never was a parliament "so shamefully Betrayers of their Country both in Ecclesiastical and Civil Matters." Because he looked for the present in the past Oldmixon never realized that the confessional state was the desideratum of the age.

Like the nineteenth century Whigs, Oldmixon believed in progress. This characteristic can be seen in the author's disparaging remarks on the age of the Stuarts. "The foreign Negotiations in this Reign [James I's] are so weak and inglorious," he wrote, "that they are not worth mentioning." Of Charles I's reign Oldmixon wrote: "The Reader may well be tired with such history as this is, where the Facts are so poor, and at
the same time so disagreeable." The Pension Parliament of Charles II's day "had no relish of English Liberty, they fled from her, adorn'd as she is with Celestial Beauty, and ran into the Arms of Slavery, the foulest of all Shadowy Beings." Obviously Oldmixon is judging these periods against his own present when England plays a greater role in the affairs of the world, when villains receive their just deserts, when constitutional liberties are secure. This belief in progress, of course, prevents the historian from seeing these periods for what they were and judging them on their own merits and realizing that they created the present and that without these "darker" times there would not have been a present, a "progress," to believe in. A belief in progress is, therefore, totally irrelevant to the historian's task.

Oldmixon's belief in an immemorial constitution fits ill with a belief in progress. As Professor Butterfield noted:

The Whig historian is apt to imagine the British constitution as coming down to us safely at last, in spite of so many vicissitudes; when in reality it is the result of those very vicissitudes of which he seems to complain. If there had never been a danger to our constitution there never would have been a constitution to be in danger. In the most concrete sense of the words our constitution is not merely the work of men and parties; it is the product of history.

And the belief in an immemorial constitution did not prevent Oldmixon from searching for origins. And Oldmixon did search for the origins of things. Thus he found the origins
of the religious troubles of the seventeenth century in Elizabeth's reign:

Had Queen Elizabeth, otherwise a most wise and generous Princess, been less devoted to the Pomp and Grandeur of Religion, and more moderate in the Administration of her supremacy; had not Bishop Parker so soon forgot the miseries of her Sister's Reign, and Bishop Whitgift not rais'd a Persecution of another Kind in her own, there would have been no Separatists, no Dissenters, no Division, no Disturbance, and none of those Troubles, which prov'd so fatal to the Royal House of Stuart.

And the origins of certain troubles in Oldmixon's own time can be traced to the publication of The History of the Rebellion:

It was The History of the Rebellion, and Preachments that were made upon it, which in great measure raised that wicked Spirit which threw the Kingdom into Distraction and Confusion in Sacheverell's time, robbed it of all the Fruits of so many glorious victories, and reduced it to a State of Dishonour and Contempt, like that of the Reigns we have been writing.

This also illustrates the Whig belief in the power of ideas.

Oldmixon showed his true Whig colors in his belief that the historian should make moral judgments. "How afraid Some Persons have been," he wrote, "lest I should be too warm, as if infamy could be too warmly dealt with!" Here, as in the other histories, the basis of many of his judgments is simply whether such and such a personage was an obstacle to the arrival of the Whig present. If Cecil is a "traitor," for example, it is because he advised peace with Spain. Similarly, if Bancroft is "the most obnoxious prelate" of that age it is because he "harried the best Men in the Kingdom out of the Land." The
The Gunpowder Plot was a "hellish device," a "devillish Machination." If James I was a coward for not intervening in Frederick's quarrel with the Emperor: "A dastardly, cowardly act -- enough alone to render ridiculous and odious his whole reign." If Oldmixon treats Sir John Finch with contumely--"that Court Tool the Speaker Finch"--it is because he considered the Speaker of the House of Commons to be the servant of the House: "They resented this irregularity in the Speaker, whose duty it was not to deliver any such Command; for the Adjournment did properly belong to themselves." Oldmixon called Charles' dissolution of this parliament "the most arbitrary Act of Power, which ever was acted by King of England, and that in the most flagrant manner, in plain Violation of the Privileges of Parliament." Laud's edict for Sabbath-breaking was "profane." Charles' peaceful intentions prior to the outbreak of the civil war were false: "How unfeignedly did he desire to prevent war!" The Regicides were to be "abhor'd;" this was "wicked work." Oldmixon described the Commonwealth's collapse as resulting from "Cromwell's Plot for his own Grandeur." It was a "villainous attempt." "He was himself the main wheel that Set all the others in motion, yet he so managed Matters that he himself seem'd to be mov'd by the Desires and Endeavours of others." "... A good Parliament would never have done his Clarendon's Business, both in Church and State." If Clarendon can oppose a project to raise money without the consent of parliament Oldmixon can declare: "I
cannot complement him with an Opinion that he did it out of a Spirit of Liberty, or to keep the Crown in Dependance upon Parliamentary Subsidies. The second Dutch war was an "unnatural War." Oldmixon thought the Exclusion Bill "both just and necessary." James II's parliament scarcely "deserves to be so called," because they "were readier to give money than the King to ask it." 

By making moral judgments, of course, Oldmixon "set all the angles of his picture differently," as Professor Butterfield would say, and robbed history of its complexity. There is simply a right side and wrong side. There arises, consequently, a lack of sympathy, a lack which is so notable in Whig works. Men who are so unfortunate as to be on the wrong side are portrayed in darker hues than they would otherwise have been had all the interconnections been weighed. Cromwell, for example, is the arch-criminal, who for sheer cunning can only be matched by Wilkie Collins' brilliant study of evil, the celebrated Count Fosco. The Commonwealth, by contrast, is given an added glow because of its achievements; her power has had no equal "since that of Rome was made a Slave to Tyranny." Cromwell, Oldmixon contended, deliberately weakened the parliament of the Commonwealth by urging them not to pass an act of dissolution. Every action on the "wrong side," such as Charles' dissolution of Parliament in 1629, is sinister. In such a view of affairs
there will never be anyone to plead the King's case or at least view it from the royal side as Gardiner could do:

Charles was beginning to open his eyes to the magnitude of the issues at stake. It was something more than a mere question of the legality of this or that action. It was sovereignty itself, the right of deciding in the last resort, which he was required to abandon.¹¹³

Lost is that sense that if men change they do so on a day to day basis, that is to say, gradually in response to changing circumstances, and that men can never be judged apart from their historical milieux. With Oldmixon, the characters of these men are fixed. Clarendon, because he is Charles II's minister, will always be suspect. The Regicides will always be "wicked;" the "prelatical" party of the English church will always have on its side "Pride, Avarice, Bigotry, and Ignorance" while on the side of the reformers are "only Knowledge, Piety, and Conscience."¹¹⁴ Pension Parliaments are servile; Exclusion Parliaments are illustrative of that disposition "the People were generally in all over the Kingdom, to preserve their Religion and Liberties..."¹¹⁵ Nowhere to be found are those nuances, those anatomies of men's minds, which are themselves the result of a detailed study of each interaction, that will explain so much of a man's character and the actions that he will take. James is a coward in Oldmixon's eyes; in Gardiner's eyes he is far more complex (and tragic):

James's love of inaction, and his irresoluteness of mind will account for much; but, strange as his conduct was, it can only be fully accounted for by his entire confidence in Gondomar. During his whole life, wherever he placed his confidence, he
placed it without stint, and he was persuaded that, whatever happened, Gondomar would see that he suffered no wrong. He could not believe that when once his son-in-law had been brought, either by persuasion or force, to abandon his unjust claim to Bohemia, the Spanish Government would not be as anxious as he was himself to secure the possession of the Palatinate to its legitimate ruler. 116

Oldmixon, like the Stuarts, saw the world only in his own terms. By seeing the world in terms of black and whites, Oldmixon had created an epic, a struggle between the forces of evil and the forces of good. And if the actual narrative of events destroyed that impression from time to time, 117 it was solely due to the force of the narrative, for the penchant for moral judgment always remained ever ready to partition the narrative into two contending camps.
REFERENCES CITED


2. Oldmixon, *History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart: wherein the errors of Late Histories are Discovered and Corrected; with Proper Reflections, and Original Letters from King Charles, King James II* (London: Printed for John Pemberton, in Fleet Street; Richard Ford, Richard Helt, and John Gray, in the Poultry; and Thomas Cox, under the Royal Exchange, 1730).

3. Ibid., p. 52.

4. Ibid., p. 77.

5. Ibid., p. 75.

6. Ibid., pp. 87-88.

7. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* shows how the common law affected the historical writing of the seventeenth century and points out that the common-law interpretation of English history was "the predecessor and to a large extent the parent of the more famous 'Whig interpretation,'" p. 46. Pocock contends that the concept of the ancient constitution arose "from habits of thought deeply rooted and almost instinctive in the English mind;" and he adds "that there is reason to believe that its prolongation into the eighteenth century indicates, after all, some survival of these traditional habits," p. 242. Oldmixon was a survivor of this school in the eighteenth century.


The Triennial Act of 1641 declared that not more than three years could elapse without a parliament being called.

10 Ibid., p. 165.

11 Ibid., p. 171.

12 Ibid., p. 535.

13 Ibid., p. 627.

14 Ibid., pp. 776-777.

15 Ibid., p. 397.

16 Ibid., p. 412.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 414.

19 Ibid., Dedication, p. v.

20 Ibid., p. 23.

21 Ibid., p. 77.

22 Ibid., p. 490.

23 Ibid., p. 24.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 50.

26 Ibid., p. 51.

27 Ibid., p. 51.

28 Ibid., pp. 98-99.
29 Ibid., p. 102.

30 Ibid., p. 105. Oldmixon's version is very close to the House of Commons' reply: "The House returned him answer, that it was not the office of the Speaker to deliver any such command unto them, but for the adjournment of the House it did properly belong unto themselves. . . ." Wallace Notestein, Commons' Debates for 1629, p. 103, as quoted in Tanner's English Constitutional Conflicts, pp. 68-69.


32 Ibid., p. 516. According to Professor Maurice Lee, Jr., Charles II did not embark upon an absolutist course until 1667 and even then his course was completely unknown to all but several counsellors and this secret attempt was given up in 1674. See Lee's The Cabal (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), p. 3 and passim.

33 Ibid., p. 511.

34 Ibid., p. 517.


36 Ibid., p. 662.

37 Ibid., p. 699.

38 Ibid., p. 781.

39 Ibid., p. 10.

40 Ibid., p. 65.

41 Ibid., p. 81.

42 Ibid., p. 105.

43 Ibid., p. 341.
A typical Gardiner sentence: "It [Laud's system] appealed to the poetic and artistic instincts which were almost smothered under the superincumbent weight of dogmatic theology."


Ibid., p. 348.

Ibid., p. 354.

Ibid., p. 357.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 359.

Ibid., p. 663.

Ibid., p. 665.

Ibid., p. 666.

Ibid., p. 668.

Ibid., pp. 684-685.
For an entirely different portrait of Monk and the difficult situation those disintegrating times placed him in see the closing chapters of Godfrey Davies' *The Restoration of Charles II* (Oxford: University Press, 1969), passim.

See also page 123 of this dissertation.
81 Ibid., p. 9.
82 Ibid., pp. 307-308.
83 Ibid., p. 501.
84 Ibid., p. 515.
85 Ibid., p. 16.
86 Ibid., p. 122.
87 Ibid., p. 516.
88 Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation, p. 41.
89 Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart, p. 6. Gardiner would be in agreement here with Oldmixon, for it was his opinion that Elizabeth's ecclesiastical settlement threatened to divide the nation into two camps. See The History of England from the Accession of James I, Vol. I, p. 33 and passim.
90 Ibid., p. ix.
91 Ibid., p. xii.
92 Ibid., p. 17.
93 Ibid., p. 21.
94 Ibid., p. 24.
95 Ibid., p. 50.
96 Ibid., p. 105.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., p. 105.


117 Oldmixon's own account of the Pension Parliament shows that it was far from being servile; parliamentary committees of accompt are noted, addresses against evil counsellors are described. The History of England During the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart, pp. 548-585, passim.
CHAPTER VI

THE HISTORIAN AS POLEMICIST

Oldmixon did not end his Whiggish chronicle with the year 1688, but carried the narration down to the death of George I in yet another folio history entitled The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne King George I Being the Sequel of the Reigns of the Stuarts. 1

He made no apology for being polemical. Thus he wrote:

It has been said he [the historian] ought to relate things nakedly, and not cloath them with Reflections. That would be to do what no Historian ever did before, or ever will do. For as soon as he sinks into that low manner, he ceases to be an Historian, and becomes a Journalist, or Gazetteer. . . . 2

It is the duty of the historian to "vindicate the constitution" and "expose those who have subverted the Constitution or who tried to do so." 3

With full resolve not to relate things nakedly, but to cloath them with reflections, Oldmixon set out on his journey. He denounced the opposition's tactics in William's first parliament. They were clogging the wheels of Government, he wrote, "some for the Interest of the late King, and more for their own Interest, in gratifying their Avarice, Ambition, or Resentment." 4

The delay in relief for the Protestants in Ireland was due to the

149
"traitorous contrivances of those false Friends to the then Government, who had by their fair Speeches and promises crept into Employment." And of a motion to exclude pensioners from the House of Commons Oldmixon wrote:

This occasion'd a warm debate, wherein some disgusted Revolutioners, fell in with the Enemies of the Revolution, and those that cou'd not get into Places themselves, were very earnest to have others kept out of them. This unnatural mixture of Enemies and Apostate Friends to the then Government, begat the Party which has since usurp'd the Title of Country Party, and have always consisted of the instruments of Persecution and Tyranny, and Men of loose Principles in Politicks, or Morals, or both; who in resentment for missing or losing Employment have more than once started this Question.6

To the passage of the Bill of Indemnity Oldmixon attributed "all the Disturbances, Riots, insurrections and Rebellions, that this Nation has suffer'd by ever since. . . ."?

Oldmixon was a Junto Whig. His enemies, against whom he hurled his polemics, were Country Whigs as well as Tories. He was a party historian. This can be seen in his fury over the Triennial Bill of 1694. If Oldmixon had been trying to promote the Whig philosophy of government, one would think that he would have been for it. Instead, the Whig polemicist triumphs over the Whig philosopher.

The Tenour of this Bill was what was then understood to be Whiggish, but when such Men as Musgrave, Packington, Bolles and Givin, were for it, we may assure ourselves, there was at that time nothing of Whig in the Intention of it. For these very Members, who had been of King Charles's II Long-Parliament, and would in those Days, as soon have past a Bill for a Commonwealth as for a Triennial Parliament, were
now earnest for this, in hopes of dividing the Interest they hated; and thereby lessening that of the Court, or rather of King William, which of course encreas'd that of King James.8

Robert Harley's alliance with the Country Tories in the same year is the source for this moral reflection:

His Example is a lesson to all such as he under Temptation to leave, ever so little, the ways of Truth, or which they believed to be Truth. For Mr. Robert Harley did little think at first, that from joining with the Tories where they joined with the Whigs, he should come also to join them, where they join'd with the Papists; as was every step he took towards a Change of the Ministry in Queen Anne's reign, and a scandalous ruinous Breach of the Confederacy against France.9

Treason, Oldmixon noted, was Harley's principle vice.10 While the Tories were not a part of the plot to assassinate King William, they "were deeply engag'd in all other plots, to distress & destroy King William's government."11 The Partition Treaty "was more for the honour and Interest of England, and all the Confederates than that of Utrecht; which Queen Anne's Ministers impos'd on this Nation and our Allies, at a Time when the French King had by a Thousand Defeats and Disgraces been reduc'd to so low a Condition."12 "... The Lenity of King William's Government," Oldmixon noted, "continued to give Encouragement to his Enemies, to carry on their traitorous Designs against him. ..."13 Oldmixon considered the "undertakers" who replaced John Somers to be "Enemies of the Revolution."14 The House of Commons which was returned in 1701 Oldmixon considered the "best House of Commons that has sate since Queen Elizabeth's Reign. ..."15 Oldmixon thought
Harley's election as Speaker "very unaccountable." The first ministry of Queen Anne's reign was a source of dissatisfaction to all Britons, "seeing so many enemies to the Protestant Succession in Places of the highest Honour & Trust."

"... And the Bulk of the Enemies to the Union [of England and Scotland] were enemies to the Revolution." Oldmixon considered the Whig ministry's negotiations with Louis XIV in 1709-1710 the epitome of fair play:

Tis highly necessary to give more than ordinary Attention to the Proceedings of the British Ministers in the Negotiations of this Treaty [of the Hague], and that of Gertruydenberg, because those of the Utrecht Treaty will, by so doing, be seen in the truer Light, and the Insincerity and Incapacity of the then Managers will be the more apparent.19

Sacheverell's impeachment was an example of Harley's "Craft."20 Harley's entrance into the Cabinet "justly alarm'd all the well-affected in Great Britain, who expected nothing from it, but the reverse of every Thing that had been done for the Security of our Religion, Liberty, and the Protestant Succession."21 Queen Anne's ministers in the period 1710-1714 were "evil Counsellors," authors of "wicked Counsels." Utrecht was a betrayal: "Of course, the nation wanted peace, but not that kind of a peace."24 Oldmixon thought that it was "a wise and happy Measure" to bring in the Electoral Prince by means of a writ to sit in the House of Lords.25 Oldmixon often associated Harley with Henry St. John; they were partners in crime. Regarding events in July of 1714 Oldmixon wrote,
The constant and vigourous Opposition they met with from the true Lovers of our Constitution, kept them in such continual Alarms, that they could not ripen their dark and treasonable Counsels for Execution. 27

These polemical judgments, of course, made a jumble of the age. The complexity of events is ignored because Oldmixon has made up his mind to divide the narrative into a right side and a wrong side to condemn one side and to praise the other. The importance of political parties, mixed ministries, parliamentary management, Place Bills, and Triennial Bills in the development of the constitution is lost because of Oldmixon's penchant for polemics. Foreign events are misinterpreted; individual rôles are distorted.

Consequently his account is lacking in that sympathy which can only come from a full appraisal of all the inter-connections, of all the "angles," as Professor Butterfield would say. The startling contrasts of Whig portraits return. Harley and Mrs. Masham were "... at Penelope's Labour, unravelling by Night what was spun by Day ... undoing, by false Representations and Insidious Insinuations of Persons and Things, what was done in Parliament and council for the Publick Good. ..."28 The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne George I is nothing less than an epic-like relation of good struggling with evil.

History became for Oldmixon a means to expose the inequities of the enemies of the Junto Whigs. The purpose of his
work, he wrote is "to expose those who have subverted the Constitution or who tried to do so."\textsuperscript{29} Harley in 1690 "had not yet lost all his original Brightness, as Milton says of the Fallen Angel."\textsuperscript{30} Jonathan Swift "was the esteemed champion of the same Party, when under other Names and Pretences they endeavoured to destroy our present happy Constitution."\textsuperscript{31} Goldolphin and Marlborough "reconcil'd themselves gradually to the Party that were in the true Interest of England; hearty Enemies to French tyranny, and Lovers and asserters of Liberty."\textsuperscript{32} Henry St. John "would have sacrific'd not only the Protestants of France, but of England, and all Christendom to their Persecutor, Lewis the XIVth, rather than have delay'd the Conclusion of that Treaty one moment."\textsuperscript{33}

If Oldmixon had allowed the historical process to speak for itself and if he had studied the events of his time with a modicum of impartiality, he would have seen these men as part of an historical process out of which a new constitutional arrangement emerged. But this was the price Oldmixon paid for his polemics. Instead of seeing "complication and change,"\textsuperscript{34} as Professor Butterfield would say, Oldmixon saw simplicity, a Manichaean conflict of good struggling against evil. Hence with one device, that of polemic, the desire to prove one side wrong, he heightened the drama and cleared away the complications and interconnections that would have set the issue in its truer light and would have made the seemingly inexplicable explicable. Had he been the
reporter of events, the "Journalist or Gazetteer" that he scorned, he might have treated the Tory party, for example, as the human institution that it was. He might have written as Professor Trevelyan wrote of the Tories in the spring of 1714:

If Bolingbroke and Oxford had, even at this eleventh hour [April, 1714], united to put themselves openly at the head of the Hanoverian interest, they could have swung the central bulk of the Tory party, which was hanging, uncertain and undirected, midway between its Jacobite and Hanoverian wing.

But as Professor Butterfield noted in The Whig Interpretation:

... If he [the historian] insists that it is his business to treat his subject in a realm of moral ideas, he will certainly find a shorter cut to whatever purpose he is working for, and his history will be written in stronger lines, for it will be a form of the Whig overdramatisation.

Oldmixon admired the Junto Whigs, for his Whiggery was an aristocratic Whiggery. Thus, he disliked mobs and respected law. Regarding an act in George I's reign for "amending" the roads near Bristol he wrote:

The good Effect of which was hinder'd by the Insolence and mutiny of the Kingswood Colliers, and other rascally Rabble, who broke down the Turnpikes, and Collectors Stands, as fast as they set up. ... The Mutiny and Insolence of the Peasantry in the Neighbourhood prevail'd over the Force of the Statue, and the Roads, as bad as most in England, remain unrepair'd to this Day.

Oldmixon also illustrated his aristocratic Whiggery in his defense of the Septennial Act of 1716. The Act would prevent the Tories from fomenting trouble at election time and eliminate
corruption as well. Petitions to parliament should be ignored when they go contrary to parliament's wishes. "But it is so easy a Matter to obtain Petitions, Addresses and Letters to Members from Corporations, all over the Kingdom, that little Stress will hereafter be laid upon them when they are against the Sense of the legislature." Oldmixon was very much a parliament man when parliament was not being run by the Harleys and the St. Johns.

Oldmixon's hatred for the Tories was also inspired by an English patriotism. He detested those who made a separate peace with France. St. John's secret negotiations with the French filled Oldmixon with anguish:

I am very sorry, out of Love to my Country, that England should furnish such odious and scandalous Materials for History, during the Ministry of these desperate men.

George I had remedied the "gross defects of the scandalous treaty of Utrecht." It was he who had recovered "the Fruits of a victorious ten Years War, which the late treacherous Ministers had sacrific'd for a Peace, that serv'd only their own base and treasonable Purposes."

At every turn Oldmixon was intent upon proving the baseness or treachery of the Tories. Sacheverell's impeachment was contrived by Harley:

Was it possible for Faction to leave such a Tool in a Nook of a County? Could he escape the Search of a Man of Mr. Harley's Craft? And was it then a Wonder to see him brought upon the Stage to act that Part which was cut out for him?
And of the Tory ministry's effort to capture Quebec in 1711

Oldmixon declared:

But it was not likely that a Sett of Men, whose Hearts were bent on entering into Friendship with the French, should heartily set about an Enterprize that was likely to retard to Peace; however, they gradually engaged themselves in it.\(^4^4\)

So steeped in polemics was Oldmixon that he could say this of so innocuous a matter as Harley's library:

His throwing his Library open to Jacobites, who made such a wicked use of it, occasion'd Surmises not at all agreeable to his Profession of Attachment to the House of Hanover.\(^4^5\)

If The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne King George I is difficult to read (all of Oldmixon's histories are), it can in large measure be attributed to this disputatious aspect. And if Oldmixon fails as a stylist, he also fails as an historian, for he was trying to prove a case rather than trying to show what occurred. It is the historian's duty, Professor Butterfield has written "to show how men came to differ, rather than to tell a story which is meant to reveal who is in the right."\(^4^6\)

Oldmixon's prejudices also led him to publicize himself. This can be seen in one of those occasional autobiographical reminiscences that can be found in his histories. Oldmixon tells us (with great pride) that Mr. Arthur Maynwaring approached him at Michaelmas, 1710 to write a newspaper that would answer the Tory Examiner. "... He wished I would set up a Paper," wrote
Oldmixon, "as an Antidote to that Poison." He had on his hands

the main of the Labour, both in writing and publishing and it answer'd the End. The Examiner was routed, and the Field of Battle yielded to the Medley, which was laid down the week after, not being set up like the Present daily Posts . . . for the Benefit of the Market only, but for the Benefit of the Cause espous'd by all good Britons. 47

Oldmixon was so great an apologist of the Court that he even found it possible to defend standing armies. Of a debate on standing armies in 1722 he wrote:

These few Troops [4500] are magnify'd by the Catos, Danvers, Fogg's, and other such modern Patriots, tho' there is not and never was a true Briton since the Revolution, who had the least Fear upon him, that they were kept up to enslave us, or that the Nation would be beggered by paying them the Money, every Penny of which was again spent amongst them. 48

Though a man of faction he had no difficulty denouncing faction.

Our original Design was to explain by Facts the wicked Purposes of the Faction in England, which before, and after the Revolution, have, under various pretences and Denominations, been endeavouring to destroy our Liberties Spiritual and Temporal. . . . 49

He regarded his friends as patriots; others as factious. He denounced the Country Party in these words:

This unnatural mixture of Enemies and Apostate Friends to the then Government, begat the Party which has since usurp'd the Title of Country Party, and have always consisted of the instruments of persecution and Tyranny, and Men of loose Principles in Politicks, or Morals, or both. . . .50
That this faction grew out of a union of Whig apostates and Tories particularly infuriated him.

... The enemies to the true Protestant Religion and Liberty, made their advantage of the Apostacy of the late Friends to both, encreas'd their Party by it, caus'd perpetual Debates and Divisions in Parliament, and hinder'd the timely execution of his Majesty's Design for the Relief of Ireland, and a vigourous Prosecution of the war with France.51

The cry of the "The Church in Danger!" was "erected into a Principle, to perplex and distress the King and his Ministers, let what will be the consequences of it."52 The most distressing thing about Faction was that it was rewarded. "The King continu'd to oblige the Party, that was far from obliging him in the Vote for Vacancy."53

Oldmixon particularly detested Robert Harley and Henry St. John because they had abandoned their dissenting backgrounds. His rage so blinded him that at the time of the Sacheverell uproar he could write:

One may easily imagine that those two old Puritan Offsprings Mess. Harley and St. John, were at the Bottom of this Sedition. . . .54

And St. John, he complained, 'sacrific'd' the Protestants of France at Utrecht.55

Oldmixon's party zeal turned him from more genuinely historical work. In the Preface of this history he noted that it had taken precedence over another work, The History of Christianity, the purpose of which was "to confirm people in a zeal for the Protestant Religion" and "to trace our most Holy
Religion, in its Purity, through all the dark ages popery." \(^{56}\)

Had he published that work, he would have returned to Coke's ideal of searching for a golden age of purity in the past.

Oldmixon saw faction as the enemy of liberty in England and liberty was a constant theme in *The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne George I.*

It was his opinion that "the faction in England . . . before, and after the Revolution, have . . . been endeavouring to destroy our Liberties Spiritual and Temporal. . . ." \(^{57}\) The history was written to show Englishmen who were "the Betrayers of their liberties." \(^{58}\) An address by the House of Commons against the Partition treaty was "an Affront upon King William's Counsels" when no less than "the Preservation of Religion, Liberty, Trade, Peace . . . depended on the Credit and Authority of them. . . ." \(^{59}\)

". . . The well-affected in Great Britain expected . . . nothing from it [Harley's entrance into the ministry in 1710], but the reverse of every Thing that had been done for Security of our Religion, Liberty, and the Protestant Succession." \(^{60}\)

Oldmixon's conception of liberty was very Whiggish, very aristocratic. This can be seen in his opposition to Triennial Bills and in his defense of the Septennial Act. \(^{61}\) Unreformed parliaments (providing they were Whiggish) were quite acceptable. He was a product of his time. Proof of his aristocratic leanings can be seen in his attitude towards the lower classes. The High Church priesthood, he tells us, "Kept up a Spirit of Mutiny and
Rebellion among the loose and disorderly rabble, who are ready
to take hold of any Pretence to leave Labour, and run into
Riot." The rioters were a "Brainless Brutal Multitude." A certain speculator in George I's time came from the "lowest
Dregs of the People" And Oldmixon approved of the hanging of
John Matthews for publishing Vox Populi, Vox Dei.

But though aristocratic in his sentiments, he was likewise anti-clerical. He showed his dislike of a too powerful
clergy in his attacks on the Nonjurors and the High Church wing
of the Church of England. Both parties he considered a threat
to the settlement of 1688. He accused the Nonjurors of having
"under the Disguise of Conscience a concealed design against
their King and Country." High Church were "Friends to Super-
stition, Persecution, Hereditary Right and Arbitrary Power."  

If polemic had robbed Oldmixon of an understanding of his age, of the complexity of historical change, it had also turned
him into a party historian, a detester of faction, a defender of
the aristocracy. Polemic had made him, in short, an historian
who merely reflected the passions of his age. He was, to para-
phrase Johnson's celebrated opinion of Lord Chesterfield, a
party historian rather than an historian of party.
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1 Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne King George I, 808 pages folio.

2 Ibid., p. iv.

3 Ibid., p. iii.


5 Ibid., p. 22.

6 Ibid., p. 33.

7 Ibid., p. 41.

8 Ibid., p. 95.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 102.

11 Ibid., p. 130.


13 Ibid., p. 195.

14 Ibid., p. 209.

15 Ibid., p. 253.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., p. 292.

18 Ibid., p. 358.
Oldmixon has it both ways. Harley was "no stranger to his intentions [i.e., St. John's] but he concerted nothing with him in this Matter." Ibid., p. 551. Oldmixon's own account of these last days of the Tory ministry shows that these men were bitter enemies. The Schism Bill was designed by St. John, said Oldmixon, to embarrass Harley. "... If he voted for it to keep his Staff, he would lose the Dissenters and the Whigs entirely; if he voted against it he would lose the Queen." Ibid., p. 554. Oldmixon's mention of Whigs and Dissenters as supporters of Harley also makes this story infinitely more complicated than Oldmixon would have it.

35 Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne George I, p. iv. See page 149.


38 Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne George I, p. 804.

39 Ibid., p. 634.

40 Ibid., pp. 635-636.

41 Ibid., p. 471.

42 Ibid., p. 634.

43 Ibid., p. 431.

44 Ibid., pp. 467-468.


46 Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation, p. 130.

47 Oldmixon, The History of England During the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne King George I, p. 456.

48 Ibid., p. 731.

49 Ibid., p. 83.

50 Ibid., p. 33.

51 Ibid., p. 34.

52 Ibid., p. 9.
53 Ibid., p. 90.
54 Ibid., p. 434.
55 Ibid., p. 387.
56 Ibid., p. viii. There is no mention of The History of Christianity "which has been ready for the Press these Four Years" (p. viii) in the British Museum catalogue. Apparently it was lost.
57 Ibid., p. 83.
58 Ibid., p. vi.
59 Ibid., p. 221.
60 Ibid., p. 436.
61 Ibid., pp. 80, 95, 634.
62 Ibid., p. 621.
63 Ibid., p. 622.
64 Ibid., p. 701.
65 Ibid., p. 689.
66 Ibid., p. 625.
67 Ibid., p. 643.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

It would be a mistake, of course, to think that Oldmixon's histories resembled the histories of the nineteenth century Whigs in all respects. Oldmixon was never the scholar that Hallam and Macaulay were. He was more a scribbling chronicler than a denizen of the nineteenth century, aware of the importance of archives in reconstructing the past. To a large extent Oldmixon based his histories on secondary accounts, whereas Hallam and Macaulay went to the original sources.

Hallam and Macaulay, moreover, were more aware of change, of how the past differed from the present than was Oldmixon, who in this respect resembled Sir Edward Coke and the common law historians. There were occasions, however, when Oldmixon did seek for the origins of institutions, thus recognizing that there had been change, that these institutions had not existed since time immemorial. And Oldmixon's belief in progress suggests an awareness of change. Oldmixon, in fact, is a transitional figure, bridging the gap between the seventeenth century and the nineteenth century. His roots, however, are largely in the seventeenth century.
In all other respects, Oidmixon resembles the nineteenth century Whigs. He made moral judgments, read the present into the past, denied sympathy to men of other parties and other epochs, wrote history as epic, and regarded the historical process as teleological. He showed strong biases towards liberty and Protestantism. He was patriotic and anti-clerical. The majesty of the law and the rights of individuals, he upheld. He was the champion of parliamentary power. In purpose and style he was polemical and he based his philosophy of history upon a belief in progress and a faith in the power of ideas to shape events.

The source of many of these attitudes that Oidmixon and the nineteenth century Whigs shared can be traced back in great measure to what Herbert Butterfield would call "the underlying assumption" of Whig historiography, reading the present into the past.

With the present constantly in mind, histories will be full of anachronisms, teleologies, moral judgments (against those who "oppose" the present), epic situations, and denials of sympathy. Biases in favor of Protestantism, progress, liberty, individual rights, and parliamentary government arose from an admiration of the Hanoverian constitution and were cast back upon the history of earlier centuries. The histories of the Whigs are, as Lord Acton wrote of Macaulay's Essays, "... a key to half of the prejudices of our age."
Oldmixon shared many of these prejudices. And herein lies his importance in English historiography. He was not a great historian, but he was read and quoted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During his life he absorbed many of the ideas and prejudices of Englishmen in an age of Whig predominance. He joined these ideas and prejudices to an old fashioned view of history derived from the age of Coke and to polemical style that arose from his own temperament. And this combination of a Cokian view of history, Whig prejudices, and a polemical style he transmitted to the nineteenth century through his many and voluminous historical works.
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Groundless charge of Partiality... etc. By Mr. Old­
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