

Henry Cabot Lodge,
Alexander Hamilton
and the Political
Thought of the
Gilded Age

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Annotated and Introduced by

H.G. Callaway

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PREFACE

One of the roles which Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804) has played in American history and politics is that of an advocate for the power of the federal government and of the need of a forceful, energetic chief executive. In contemporary terms, he was a state builder and an advocate of “state capacity.” Hamilton was an aid to General Washington during the Revolutionary War, and his experience, situated at the center of Washington’s war-time correspondence, provided an overview of events and stimulated his critical perspective on the weaknesses of government under the Articles of Confederation. Keeping the Continental Army in the field and well supplied required funding; and *requisitions* from Congress were sent out to the States: they were often ignored, delayed or denied. Hamilton became a chief critic of weak central government; the Civil War taught a similar lesson to Henry Cabot Lodge.

Hamilton rose to prominence as a soldier, and it was as a soldier that he first became a critic of the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. He served in the Congress of the Confederation, and afterward attended the Constitutional convention of 1787 as a delegate from New York. Together with James Madison and John Jay, he coauthored the classic defense of the new constitution, *The Federalist Papers*. Hamilton played crucial roles in organizing the finances of the federal government as the first Secretary of the Treasury under Washington, and he was also central in the organization of America’s first conservative party—the Federalists. Under President John Adams, Hamilton rose to prominence briefly again, organizing a Provisional army at the time of the Quasi-war with France; but he quickly fell from influence once the danger of war had past.

Three quarters of a century after his death, Hamilton and Hamiltonian themes of statecraft were revived, notably by Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr. (1850-1924) and more broadly in the Republican party of the Gilded Age and the Progressive era. Lodge was a

scholar, holding both a law degree and a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He studied with historian Henry Adams, a grandson and great grandson of Presidents, and for a time, Lodge taught history at Harvard. Beyond his volume on Hamilton, he also wrote political biographies of George Washington and Daniel Webster. He edited an edition of *The Works of Alexander Hamilton*, 12 volumes in the 1904 version; and he coauthored a book on American heroes with Theodore Roosevelt. Like many of the American founders, Lodge was at once scholar, political advocate and politician.

Lodge was a politician of considerable power and influence both in his home state of Massachusetts and eventually in the country at large. A paradigm of the “Boston Brahmin,” he could trace his family back to the Federalist politician and U.S. Senator, George Cabot (1752-1823) and further to the seventeenth century settlement of Massachusetts. Lodge served in the Massachusetts legislature, as a congressman and he afterward became a powerful member of the U.S. Senate for 3 decades (1892-1924). He was a personal friend, supporter and political confidant of President Theodore Roosevelt.

Lodge favored the late nineteenth-century build-up of the U.S. Navy and overseas expansion. He promoted the Spanish-American war of 1898, wrote a book in its defense, and also supported the acquisition of overseas territories. He argued for the high protective tariff early on, restrictions on immigration and favored U.S. entry into WWI. After the war he was influential in the debate on the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations in the U.S. Senate. Given Lodge’s career, and the momentous events of his times, there is considerable value in understanding how and why Lodge drew on Alexander Hamilton for political inspiration and wisdom. The present critical edition of Lodge’s biography of Hamilton focuses on the study of Hamilton and Lodge. A more general aim is to better understand the relationship between Hamilton’s political philosophy and the politics of the Gilded Age.

The text of Lodge’s *Alexander Hamilton* has been recovered below, and the orthography modernized and Americanized throughout. Lodge’s quotations have been indented, and the sources of his quotations identified in footnotes—in terms familiar to contemporary historical scholarship. Lodge’s few footnotes are identified as

such, and all other annotations are the editor's. A bibliography of relevant writings has been assembled at the end of the present volume, and this volume contains a new, comprehensive index. This work is intended to contribute to the contemporary revival of interest in the life and work of Alexander Hamilton and has benefited significantly from Ron Chernow's excellent, recent biography and other contemporary sources concerned with Hamilton's roles in the early republic. But the particular focus on the present work is on Lodge's use of Hamilton in the politics of the American Gilded Age.

Alexander Hamilton has once again become a popular figure and motif of American history and politics, as he was in Lodge's times. Readers will also, perhaps, recall the closely related political theme of "Jeffersonian ends sought by Hamiltonian means" originally given currency by Herbert Croly.¹ But in tendency, as the figure of Alexander Hamilton recurrently rises, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and the centrality of the American commitment to the democratic, constitutional republic tend to fall. Overall, my argument is, in broad sympathy with Madisonian federalism, that liberal democratic nationalism is an unstable combination which, in the absence of external threats comparable to that of the Cold War, tends to break down. "Federalism," as a contemporary term, is not Hamilton's rush for centralization of power but better captures a Madisonian tension between state and federal powers—typically and properly resolved in the courts on a case by case basis.

1. See Herbert Croly 1910, *The Promise of American Life*. Croly often appears to use Hamilton and Jefferson chiefly as symbols of his understanding of nationalism and democracy. This may explain his lack of detailed attention to their writings. After the Cold War, however, we have some grounds to be again suspicious of excesses of American nationalism—and to recognize that American federalism is a working, adjustable compromise between the two.

INTRODUCTION: LODGE, HAMILTON AND THE POLITICS OF THE GILDED AGE

1. Globalization: retrospect and prospects

Modern western history exhibits three great episodes of commercial and political globalization.¹ The first two episodes vastly expanded intercontinental trade, immigration, human contacts and colonization, and following intermittent military and diplomatic conflicts, culminated in large-scale war. We are presently experiencing a third episode. It is important to understand the gigantic economic and competing political ideas and forces at work, and perhaps attempt to influence how they will play out. The present work attends—within a limited domain and focus—to the first two episodes. Alexander Hamilton was a major influence in forming the American federal government, and especially its fiscal, economic and trade policies, toward the end of the first episode; and Henry Cabot Lodge, partly looking back to Hamilton for inspiration, played crucial political roles in forming and implementing American politics and policy during the second episode. Both Hamilton and Lodge were conservatives, proud American nationalists and advocates of the centralization of power in the federal government. They share “aristocratic” (or elitist) sympathies and a political realist cast of thought.²

The first episode followed the European voyages of exploration and discovery of the old and New World and subsequent colonization by western European powers: Great Britain, France, Spain and

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1. “Globalization”: the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by expansion of trade, free flow of capital and the tapping of cheaper foreign labor markets. Compare “globalism”: (1943) a national policy of treating the whole world as a proper sphere of political influence.
 2. See Lodge 1882, below, on the idea of the “aristocratic republic,” pp. 31, 85, 91, 186.

Portugal. The European powers conquered, invested, enslaved, establishing entire colonial sub-polities based on slave labor, and sometimes settled peacefully or fought with each other—employing sail, techniques of navigation, gunpowder and canon, seeking to control great riches, resources, commercial opportunities and indigenous populations. Readers better aware of the negative effects for labor will perhaps be less sanguine about indefinite continuation of similar and analogous economic expansions—in which capital seeks cheap labor.

Spain and Portugal came to terms, so far as the Western hemisphere is concerned, dividing Latin America between them. In North America the stronger military and colonizing powers, Britain and France, entered into prolonged and intensive armed conflicts, first in the Seven Years' war (1757-1763)—a war including battles on the North American frontier, known as the French and Indian war—which spread out into world-wide scope.³ The long Anglo-French conflict, after first endowing Great Britain with imperial control of the eastern half of North America, including the conquest of Quebec, culminated a half-century later in the American Revolution, the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. In North America, the Americans first combined forces with the British to drive the French empire from the continent in the Seven Years' war; and afterward, in the American Revolution, America allied with France to end British colonial rule and establish independence.

The second great episode of western commercial, political and colonial expansion came during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴ In the process large areas of Africa and Asia were colonized by the European powers; and the competitive colonial expansion, following any number of comparatively minor colonial wars,

3. Including battles between Britain and France and their allies on land and sea in North America, the Caribbean, Europe, South Asia and Africa, the Seven Years' war established the first British empire. Winston Churchill called it a "first world war."

4. On nineteenth-century globalization, cf. George C. Herring 2008, *From Colony to Superpower, U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776*, p. 266.

culminate in the social and political disaster of the first World War. People, goods, armies, ideas and investments spread around the globe by steamship, railroad, telegraph and transoceanic cable. The powers competed for colonies in Africa, Asia and Oceania. They sought to strengthen their positions in European competitions by the acquisition of overseas colonies—for control of markets and expanded access to resources. They began to consider Latin American interventions in challenges to the Monroe doctrine—which alarmed the U.S.

The United States first expanded its navy in the late nineteenth century, a development given impetus during the administration of President Cleveland (1837-1908)⁵ at the time of the first Venezuela crisis (which involved a threat of war with Britain), and afterward entered into the system of world powers in the short war against Spain in 1898. We acquired our own colonial possessions in the Caribbean and in the western Pacific. Henry Cabot Lodge was a major political advocate and agent of these developments, and his partisan political biography of Alexander Hamilton brought more conservative currents of political thought from the early republic into the politics of the Gilded Age.

Part of the purpose of the present book is to study the relationship between the economic and political aspects of the first two episodes—within the limits of direct consideration of the political thought of Hamilton and Lodge. The expectation *is not* that history repeats itself by law or with exactitude. (It is perhaps more like repeating musical themes with variations.) Analogous developments, in spite of ever present and intriguing differences and *dis-analogies*, tend to create similar problems and outcomes; and in particular, the social and economic euphoria of rapid economic expansions tends to create social and political illusions.⁶

5. Grover Cleveland, formerly mayor of Buffalo and Governor of New York, was the 22nd and 24th President and the only President elected to two, non-consecutive terms of office (1885-1889; 1893-1897).

6. Cf. Gordon Wood 2008, *The Purpose of the Past*, p. 71: “By showing that the best-laid plans of people usually go awry, the study of history tends to dampen youthful enthusiasm and to restrain the can-do, the conquer-the-future spirit that many people have. Historical knowledge

Of particular interest is the relationship between economic expansion and the intensity and highly polemical, factional character of political debate and conflicts. We want to understand why the American political debates of the 1790s and again, those of the Gilded Age became so intensely and destructively partisan and polemical; and a plausible answer advanced here is that the parties to the conflicts and polemics became divided by the speed and intensity of their developing and changing economic interests.⁷

Though the earlier stages of extensive domestic and international economic and commercial expansion do link people together by shared and joint economic interests, the argument is that the later political adjustments and regulation of ever expanding human relations and networks of economic interests are much more difficult to manage—both in the domestic manifestations of polemical factionalism and on the world stage of international relations. International economic networks are particularly problematic due to severe limits of international political consensus and the lack of more effective international institutions and authority. This is a thesis of empirical and historically based *political philosophy*.

Linking people initially by trade and economic interests goes comparatively fast and easy, and Adam Smith's "invisible hand" does indeed produce a public good early on in extensive economic expansions. But political *regulation* of the economic and political conflicts which subsequently arise is a slow and laborious process—and attended by intensive political, factional, polemical, ideological and diplomatic difficulties. In such situations, one may doubt the suitability of expansionist and nationalist politicians and policy, and especially the suitability of politicians like Lodge's Alexander Hamilton, a man, as Lodge puts it, of "imperious will and head-

takes people off a roller-coaster of illusions and disillusion; it levels off emotions and gives people perspective on what is possible and, more often what is not possible."

7. The intensive political polarization and libelous, polemical journalism of the 1790s, finds its parallels in the factional political spoils system, the populism of the Gilded Age and in the jingoistic "yellow press," of the 1890s.

strong disposition.”⁸ As a recent biographer put it, Hamilton was a man of a “blazing ungovernable temper,” that was “unworthy of him” and which, when lacking Washington’s guidance, “rendered him less effective.”⁹

2. Lodge, Roosevelt and Republican partisanship

Like his close personal friend and political confidant, President Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), Henry Cabot Lodge (1850-1924) was a Republican and an American conservative. Still, both men favored reform of the nineteenth-century, political spoils system, were open to political and even progressive policy innovations, eventually including social legislation and antitrust action; and they were among the most intellectually active Republicans of the Gilded Age and the following Progressive Era. Lodge and Roosevelt became friends soon after their student days at Harvard University, and Lodge was an advisor to Roosevelt and supported his career.¹⁰ Both men were writers of history and political biography and became powerful political leaders in the Republican party and in the country at large. The Republican party of martyred President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) had saved the republic from the tragedy of disunion and Civil War and had freed the slaves; and that party, as they saw it, deserved and required their loyal support. Lodge broke with Roosevelt politically only when the former president bolted the party, following the progressive tide, in his “Bull Moose” presidential campaign of 1912 (against his own hand-picked successor).

Though the Republican party of the Gilded Age struggled with, and, often fell into rank corruption and bossism (especially in Pennsylvania and New York State),¹¹ the friendship of Lodge and

8. See Lodge 1882, below, p. 54.

9. Ron Chernow 2004, *Alexander Hamilton*, p. 492.

10. Theodore Roosevelt was the 26th U.S. President. Elected Vice President in 1900 in McKinley’s second administration, he took office on the death of President McKinley in September 1901. Roosevelt was reelected President in 1904.

11. For details, see Lincoln Steffens 1904, *The Shame of the Cities*, especially the chapters devoted to New York, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Roosevelt, and their wider circles, in spite of political differences, chiefly represented the reform side of the party—attempting to rise above its failings while preserving its accomplishments. If America was to be saved from itself, from its own Gilded Age, economic excesses and attendant political conflicts and corruption, then Lodge’s view was that New England tradition, including the nationalists among the New England Federalists, could supply needed moral-intellectual resources; and this central conviction brings the political career, the partisan histories and the Boston particularism of Cabot Lodge into a sharp focus. Lodge along with Roosevelt eventually resisted the domination of American society by wealth. He saw a danger that “the growth of wealth” would end “by producing a class grounded on mere money” and “class feeling,” (in contrast to aristocratic service), “a thing noxious, deadly, and utterly wrong in this country.”¹²

In this context, one will better understand and evaluate Lodge’s political stands, his 1882 biography and his promotion of the nationalist-Federalist political philosophy of Alexander Hamilton. For Lodge, history and political biography were a means and medium of political and moral philosophy; and his studies of the life, career and writings of Alexander Hamilton focus attention on Hamilton’s contributions to American government and on his nationalist, centralizing Federalism.

3. Corruption, reform and foreign policy

Historians and political opponents have generally been kinder to Theodore Roosevelt, whose image graces Mt. Rushmore along with those of Presidents Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln, than to Cabot Lodge.¹³ Diplomat Warren Zimmerman argued in his critical

Steffens drew support from Roosevelt, and their association dated from the time of Roosevelt’s anti-corruption work as a New York City Police Commissioner 1895-1897.

12. H.C. Lodge 1909, *Speeches and Addresses*, pp. 6-7. That Lodge earlier or consistently held to this view is, however, doubtful.

13. However, see the critical view of Roosevelt in Thomas Evan 2010, *The War Lovers, Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898*. Plausibly, Roosevelt the trust-buster graces Mt. Rushmore.

2002 book, *First Great Triumph*, that Lodge and Roosevelt, profiled in the volume (along with three others) “made their country a world power,” and this amounts to some rare recognition for Lodge¹⁴ (elevating him above McKinley)—in contrast to a long series of admiring studies and biographies devoted to Theodore Roosevelt. America has remained a world power, carrying Roosevelt’s “big stick” ever since. But we more recently ask about the purposes, excesses and limits of this role.¹⁵

Lodge and Roosevelt were very close personally and politically—as is evident in their extensive correspondence carried out over three and a half decades.¹⁶ Both resisted the Republican party spoilsmen, “stalwarts,” closely associated with the corruption rooted in the Civil War and the administration of President Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885),¹⁷ and yet they navigated to avoid the wavering, independent course and the criticism of Republican “mugwumps” (liberal, fence-sitters) who bolted the party to reject “Grantism” and to support the election of Democrat Grover Cleveland in the presidential race of 1884. Though Lodge started his political career advocating for a third party of independents, he soon became a loyal Republican party man—and was afterward lambasted by the mugwumps.

Both Lodge and Roosevelt attended the Republican National Convention of 1884 as delegates, and worked against the nomination James G. Blaine (1830-1893), the favorite of the spoilsmen; both loyally supported the party choice once Blaine was nominated.¹⁸ Both men supported reform of the civil service to remove

14. See W. Zimmerman 2002, *First Great Triumph: How Five Americans made their Country a World Power*.

15. See, e.g., Francis Fukuyama 2006, *After the Neocons*.

16. See H.C. Lodge ed. 1925, *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, 1884-1918*.

17. General Grant, the chief military commander of the Union forces in the Civil War (1861-1865), was the 18th President (1869-1877). In spite of rampant corruption in Grant’s administration, the Republican stalwarts sought to nominate him for a third term.

18. See the accounts of their decision to stay with the party, e.g., in David McCullough 2001, *Mornings on Horseback*, pp. 308-314. Cf. Edmund Morris 1979, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, pp. 279-281.

minor federal offices from the hands of politicians, reduce the role of patronage and root out political corruption.¹⁹ Lodge argued in 1890 that the extensive patronage system of the times, to which he opposed Roosevelt's work on the federal Civil Service Commission,²⁰ created disruptive political factions—competing political networks more interested in remunerative office than in the public good or the wisdom of legislation and policy.

Both Lodge and Roosevelt supported “sound money,” the expansion of the protective tariff early on, expansion of the U.S. Navy, and a more aggressive foreign policy. Both men clamored for war in 1898 to throw the Spanish colonial regime out of Cuba and later supported the U.S. occupation and retention of the Philippines. Roosevelt, was more charismatic, and more the man of action; he had greater personal charm and was more capable of winning the good will of adversaries. In contrast Lodge was more reserved and polarizing, often intent on downing opponents and consequently drew both intense loyalties and many political enemies. Lodge, the older man, repeatedly acted to advance Roosevelt's political career.

At the start of the McKinley administration in 1897, Lodge coordinated the extensive lobbying to get Roosevelt appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The efforts eventually succeeded, and Lodge wrote at the time that “The only, absolutely the only thing I can hear adverse is that there is fear that you will want to fight somebody at once.” This, indeed, was McKinley's fear as well.²¹ But Lodge saw Roosevelt's aggressiveness as an advantage in support of a more assertive American foreign policy.

19. See Lodge 1890, “Why Patronage in Offices is Un-American,” p. 127: “Patronage is un-American,” says Lodge, “and an impersonal system which offers a fair field and no favor is as distinctly democratic and American as anything well can be.”

20. See John Taliaferro 2013, *All the Great Prizes: The Life of John Hay*, p. 259. Hay suggested Roosevelt for the office of Assistant Secretary of State in 1889, but he was appointed instead a Civil Service Commissioner. Secretary of State James Blaine said of him at the time, that “he lacks the repose and patient endurance” required of an Assistant Secretary of State; he is “amazingly quick in apprehension. Is there not danger he might be too quick in execution?”

21. Edmund Morris 1979, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, pp. 559-560.

It was as though Lodge aimed to play a supportive, more reflective Washington, seeing Roosevelt in the image of Hamilton. While Lodge knew that he could not make Hamilton popular, since “his genius and achievements were not of the kind which appeal to the hearts and imagination of the people,”²² Roosevelt, in contrast, was a man of strong popular appeal with the added advantages of money and an elite background. Henry Adams wrote of Roosevelt that “his restless and combative energy was more than abnormal;” Roosevelt, according to Adams, was “pure act.”²³ Roosevelt, “whose contempt for Thomas Jefferson” was matched only “by his worship of the autocratic Alexander Hamilton,” had rejected the Jeffersonian principle that “minimum power should be shared by the maximum number of people.”²⁴ Concentrated, centralized power was the key to decisive action and focused responsibility; and, according to Roosevelt, Jefferson was “the most incompetent chief executive we ever had.”²⁵

The political careers of Lodge and Roosevelt converged most significantly on a more aggressive American foreign policy. The massive industrialization of the U.S. in the Gilded Age, built up behind high protective tariffs, facilitated what Lodge called the “large policy,” of a more assertive American role in the world, and this, in turn, involved not only acquisition of overseas territory, from Hawaii to Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and the Canal Zone, but also, eventually, first steps of a move away from the nineteenth-century American tradition of high protective tariffs—holding out the prospect of “reciprocal” trade agreements with foreign powers. A greater opening to world trade would, incidentally, diminished the domestic political hold of the great industrialists, trusts and monopolies.²⁶ It held the potential of moving American

22. Lodge 1882, below, p. 16.

23. Henry Adams 1918, *The Education of Henry Adams*, p. 417.

24. Edmund Morris 1979, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, p. 233.

25. Elting Morison ed. 1951-1953, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, vol. v., p. 803.

26. In general terms, since the extremes of protectionism favored the political domination of great *domestic* concentrations of wealth, a related tendency toward disruption of smaller firms, and rampant

politics away from domination by domestic big money. One can see in this point something of Roosevelt's later progressivism.

4. Isolationist or imperialist?

Subsequent liberal historians condemned American isolationism, tended to identify Lodge with isolationism and consequently condemned Lodge. He became a frequent target of Wilsonian and later New Deal Democrats.²⁷ The key issue in this critical view of Lodge is his opposition to President Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924)²⁸ after the first World War, when the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations were under consideration in the U.S. Senate.

But the animus to Lodge is broader. His personality has been criticized. His biographer, the eminent historian John A. Garraty, compared Lodge to earlier, combative political figures of controversy, such as South Carolina Senator (and Vice President) John C. Calhoun and President Andrew Jackson.²⁹ Garraty wrote that Lodge "had a certain selfishness in later life which many of his contemporaries noted."³⁰ His Beacon-hill and Boston "Brahman" background was a matter of suspicion and especially among Democrats. One of Lodge's first books was a somewhat defensive biography of his New England, Federalist ancestor, U.S. Senator George Cabot (1752-1823), who was closely connected to the so-called "Essex junto" and the conservative New England Federalists. Lodge wrote that he came to appreciate Hamilton as politician and political

corruption, then the extremes of free trade, may have an equal and opposite tendency (for better or worse) to de-center domestic politics and to disempower pre-existing domestic political constituencies.

27. The most partisan work is the quite negative biography of Lodge by Karl Schrifftgiesser 1944, *The Gentleman from Massachusetts*.

28. Wilson was the 28th President of the U.S. (1913-1921). In 1912, Wilson upset incumbent President William Howard Taft, when Roosevelt split the Republican party to run as the candidate of the "Bull Moose" party.

29. John A. Garraty 1953, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, p. vii.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

thinker through his study of George Cabot.³¹ Hamilton and Cabot opposed the secessionist inclinations of the New England Federalists which point emphasizes Hamilton's nationalism.

According to Owen Wister (1860-1938), another occasional writer of political biography³² (though better known for his Western fiction), a friend of Lodge and Roosevelt and another Harvard man, "It was his Bostonism" and his "mastery of the sneer" which gave the cartoonists and critics their "malignant line and attitude."³³ Or, one might also say that it was his high-minded, moralistic yet intensive partisanship, conducted from a position of Boston-Brahman social superiority which goaded his critics. Yet, his New England regionalist perspective also moderated his nationalism by a focus on distinctive regional traditions and interests. We cannot quite imagine Henry Cabot Lodge seeking national unity, say, by cultivating or placating offended Southern post-Civil War sensibilities in the style of Wister's novel *Lady Baltimore*.³⁴

There is little reason to doubt that Lodge was a consummate politician and parliamentarian in spite of, but also because of, his partisanship and New England particularist commitments. He long dominated the Massachusetts Republican party, was first elected to Congress in 1886 and served in the U.S. Senate for 3 decades (1893-1924), eventually as Senate Majority Leader (1918-1924) and Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (1919-1924).

31. See H.C. Lodge 1877, *Life and Letters of George Cabot*. George Cabot was a U.S. Senator from Massachusetts 1791-1796 and was later the presiding officer of the Hartford Convention of 1814. George Cabot was, according to Garraty 1953, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, p. 4, a "friend and political confidant of Washington, Hamilton and John Adams, and a bulwark of New England Federalism until his death in 1823."

32. Wister wrote biographies of George Washington and Ulysses S. Grant.

33. Owen Wister 1930, *Roosevelt: The Story of a Friendship, 1880-1919*, p. 154.

34. See the pronounced sympathies for nineteenth-century, Charleston, SC society and culture in Wister 1906, *Lady Baltimore*; and President Roosevelt's cutting political criticism of the novel—reproduced in Wister 1930, *Roosevelt*, pp. 248-257.

Wister though personally lacking for success or much ambition in politics, was, in many ways, as much the reforming, conservative as Roosevelt and Lodge.³⁵ His Philadelphian and colonial heritage was equally prominent. One of Wister's ancestors, Pierce Butler (1744-1822) had been a Federalist, slaveholding U.S. Senator from South Carolina. Wister testifies to Lodge's private warmth, and his intimate side. He argues, interpreting the Elihu Root-Lodge reservations to the League of Nations, at considerable length, that it was not mere partisanship, "it was no feeling against Wilson," which motivated Lodge to support the Senate reservations, "it was to prevent the United States from registering a promise to take on foreign quarrels."³⁶ Primarily, the argument is that Lodge defended U.S. sovereignty; there is no reason to doubt that Lodge thought little of President Wilson.

Lodge was willing to approve the treaty and a limited commitment to the League of Nations, given the reservations voted by the Senate. The most important of the reservations was simply that "no American troops could be dispatched without Congressional authorization."³⁷ But President Wilson wanted no reservations, and the treaty went down to defeat, at the hands of a combination of "irreconcilable" rejectionists and Wilsonian Democrats. The Senate voted to defeat the treaty and membership in the League both *with and without* the Senate reservations. A later attempt to modify the Senate reservations in 1920 was equally unsuccessful.

Critics of Lodge have sometimes blurred the distinction between moderate internationalism and more idealistic "Wilsonian" internationalism. In this way, Lodge could be portrayed as an isolationist (not merely an avowed American nationalist) and lumped together

35. See, e.g., Wister 1912, "The Case of the Quaker City," in which he lauds the election and marshals support for Philadelphia's reform mayor Rudolph Blankenburg, "Supine Philadelphia," Wister wrote, had before been "satisfied," and "a quite special spirit of acquiescence" had "discouraged protest" of rampant, Republican-led corruption.

36. Wister 1930, *Roosevelt*, p. 155. Cf. William C. Widenor 1980, *Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy*, especially chapters 7 and 8.

37. Widenor 1980, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, p. 330.

in partisan rhetoric with the Senate rejectionists of the League. Wister was Anglophile while Lodge was by temperament and conviction Anglophobic.³⁸ Lodge, Roosevelt and Wister all supported U.S. entry into WWI. None favored literal American isolation from international politics.³⁹ For Lodge, it was a matter of his later recognizing and accepting the limitations of American power and the difficulties of conducting a democratic foreign policy—requiring open debate and an informed public. The more plausible criticism concerns the earlier aggressive, imperialist policies of Roosevelt and Lodge. It is implausible that Lodge was an imperialist, the advocate of the expansionist “large policy” and also (or later) an isolationist.

William Widenor put the matter in the following way, interpreting Lodge’s more moderate internationalism of 1919-1920:

Lodge’s conception of America’s world role was as idealistic as Wilson’s, but there was a crucial difference. Lodge believed that America had evolved a special, historical individuality and a unique system of values which were as much a product of propitious circumstances as anything else. Though he was prepared to go to great lengths to defend and preserve that individuality, he did not, like Wilson, seek its preservation in an attempt to secure its universal acceptance.⁴⁰

America was to keep its powder dry, then, but keep itself in reserve and retain its own council on when and whether to use its power. Lodge was too much the American particularist to believe in the *Wilsonian* vision of the League of Nations.⁴¹

38. See e.g., Owen Wister 1920, *A Straight Deal, or The Ancient Grudge*, in which Wister appeals to restore good relations with Britain; and Lodge’s negative reaction to the theme in Wister 1930, *Roosevelt*, pp. 157-158.

39. Cf. Garraty 1953, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, p. 348: “while ... [Lodge] did not think a league was practical, he did not propose that the United States adopt an isolationist attitude toward the rest of the world.”

40. Widenor 1980, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, p. 326.

41. Cf. Herring 2008, *From Colony to Superpower*, pp. 427-435, on Lodge, Wilson and the Senate defeat of the treaty and the League.

5. Lodge's Gilded Age Republican politics

Henry Adams (1838-1918) the historian and Lodge's most influential teacher, a grandson and great grandson of Presidents, was a friend of the Lodge family, along with Roosevelt and diplomat John Hay (1838-1905).⁴² When the Lodges took a house in Washington, after his election to Congress 1886, he entered into the social and political circle centered on Henry Adams and Hay.⁴³ Commenting on Lodge and other U.S. Senators returning home after the final 1893 vote to strengthen the gold standard, Adams pulls few punches regarding his perception of what had become of America:

He [Adams] had stood up for his eighteenth century, his Constitution of 1789, his George Washington, his Harvard College, his Quincy and his Plymouth Pilgrims, as long as anyone would stand up for him. He had said it was hopeless 20 years before, but he had kept on, in the same old attitude, by habit and taste, until he found himself altogether alone. He had hugged his antiquated dislike of bankers and capitalistic society until he had become little more than a crank. He had known for years that he must accept the *régime*, but he had known a great many other disagreeable certainties—like age, senility and death—against which one made what little resistance one could. The matter was settled at last by the people.⁴⁴

Adams despised the great economic concentrations of the times and their political influence in the country. He had come to see active political engagement as hopeless, and left behind political involvement—though not his friendships with leading politicians. In consequence he was long somewhat skeptical of Cabot Lodge

42. John **Hay**, who had been a personal secretary to Lincoln, was Secretary of State under Presidents McKinley (1843-1901) and Roosevelt. **McKinley**, who rose to political prominence as a congressman from Ohio and sponsor of the extreme “McKinley Tariffs” of 1890, was elected the 25th President in 1896 and reelected in 1900—serving until his assassination in September 1901.

43. See Taliaferro 2013, *All the Great Prizes*, especially on the critical-skeptical relationship of Henry Adams and John Hay to Lodge and Roosevelt.

44. Henry Adams 1918, *The Education of Henry Adams*, pp. 343-344.

both as a historian and politician: a historian wedded to his own ancient heritage in partisan style and a politician, on Adams' view, intellectually isolated in the American past in spite of, and because of, his ambition to weave together old and new.

Lodge, after taking his seat in the House of Representatives, sought to give federal backing to black voting-rights in the South, and his bill, the Federal Elections Bill of 1890, was supported by both his Massachusetts colleague U.S. Senator George Hoar (1826-1904) and Republican President Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901)⁴⁵ At the time, black southerners chiefly voted Republican, and extensive southern measures which discouraged, inhibited and intimidated the black vote were widely regarded as responsible for the continued Democratic party dominance of the "solid South" and the election of Democrat Grover Cleveland in 1884. The Lodge bill passed the House but never came to a vote in the Senate due to a filibuster of southern Senators, joined by western (often Republican) silver-mining interests who traded support of the filibuster for southern support of silver interests.⁴⁶

Lodge had voted for the Silver Purchase Act of 1890, seeing it as a compromise with the silver interests. It required the Treasury to purchase silver—at market prices—issuing silver certificates which were, in turn, redeemable from the Treasury in gold. The silver certificates only marginally increased the supply of circulating currency, and the plan rejected the more inflationary policy of the free and unlimited minting of silver—thus dividing the western silver producers from the (chiefly Democratic) advocates of cheaper money. Lodge was never a pure "gold bug," but held that bimetallism could only be sustained on the basis of international agreements.⁴⁷ Unfortunately for Lodge's Federal Elections Bill, the push of the silver interests, along with the Republican emphasis on

45. Benjamin Harrison was 23rd President serving from 1889 to 1893—proceeded and followed in office by Grover Cleveland.

46. See e.g., L. H. Fishel 2007, "The African-American Experience," in Calhoun ed. 2007, *The Gilded Age*, pp. 143-165.

47. Cf. Lodge 1882, below, p. 71, on Hamilton's approach to the silver question.

higher tariffs, the McKinley Tariffs of that year, blocked Senate action on voting rights in federal elections.

The episode which Henry Adams addressed in the passage quoted above came several years later, after Lodge had been elected to the U.S. Senate, and following the panic of 1893, early in President Cleveland's second term in office. The Treasury was in danger of not being able to sustain the redemption of silver certificates in gold. In consequence, the Silver Purchase Act was repealed, which effectively returned the country to the gold standard. The repeal likely reinforced the general *deflationary* effects of the gold standard and may even have deepened the depression. But in any case, President Cleveland and the Democrats were blamed for the severe economic downturn, and the stage was set for William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925), his "Cross of Gold" speech and his nomination at the Democratic National Convention of 1896. In spite of the profound, populist opposition, the elections of 1894 and 1896 initiated substantial Republican domination of the federal government over the following generation.

Never quite so cynical as his teacher and friend, Henry Adams, Lodge considered himself an excellent judge of character: Alexander Hamilton and Theodore Roosevelt being two exemplary cases in point. He was dedicated to the Republican party as the needed instrument of sensible politics and the public interest. When seriously challenged for his Senate seat following Democratic gains in the election of 1910, Lodge defended his record, emphasizing civil service reform, the gold standard, expansion of the navy, the Philippine policy and his efforts to restrict immigration—and he added his contributions to "legislation which in the present phrase, is described as Progressive."⁴⁸

Part of Lodge's arguments in support of Republican tariff legislation had always been that high tariffs (though tending to increase domestic prices of manufacture goods) also protected higher wages of American workers. He viewed restrictions on immigration in a similar light and long fought for literacy tests. His

48. See the brief account of Lodge's January 1911 speech at Boston's Symphony Hall, in Garraty 1953, *Henry Cabot Lodge*, p. 281-282.

break with Roosevelt in 1912 and his antagonism to President Wilson partly turned on their advocacy of more “radical” aims of Progressivism, the popular legislative initiative and recall of judges in particular.⁴⁹ He saw himself as defending the institutions of representative government and the independence of the judiciary. (He did not see the popular election of U.S. Senators as a major challenge to the constitutional system.) While opinions on Lodge’s overall political record are sure to differ, there remain grounds to value Lodge’s political engagement with American tradition in comparison to Henry Adams’ more cynical withdraw from politics.

Lodge’s positions on American foreign policy in the 1890s, like those of Hamilton before him, involved a pronounced antagonism to Spain and Spanish colonies in the Americas. Late in his career, Hamilton drew up plans for an American invasion of Spanish Louisiana as part of an expected war against France and the French Revolution; and he “began to believe,” as Loge puts it, that “the time had come for conquests beyond the Mississippi which should result in the liberation of the Central and even of the South American States, and in the establishment of republics in those regions.”⁵⁰ Because of President Adams’ continued efforts for peace, the plan was never carried out; and the provisional army Hamilton was to command was never fully organized. Adams eventually stopped active recruitment. During the following administration of President Jefferson, Louisiana was obtained from France by peaceful means.

Lodge, writing 100 years later, saw Spain in terms of an ancient conflict of civilizations which was settled by the Spanish-American war. “The final expulsion of Spain from the Americas and from the Philippines is the fit conclusion,” Lodge wrote in 1899, “of the long strife between the people who stood for civil and religious freedom, and those who stood for bigotry and tyranny as hideous in their action as any which have ever cursed humanity.”⁵¹

49. See Lodge, H.C. 1915, *The Democracy of the Constitution*, especially, “The Public Opinion Bill,” pp. 1-31 and “The Compulsory Initiative and Referendum, and the Recall of Judges,” pp. 88-105.

50. See Lodge 1882, below, pp. 142ff.

51. Lodge 1899, *The War with Spain*, p. 1.

Lodge provided an historical rationalization and pretext for jingoism and war; and in spite of all evils of the Spanish colonies, we may certainly doubt the adequacy of viewing the Spanish-American war, as Lodge saw it, as a just continuation of the efforts of William of Orange to liberate the Netherlands from Spanish control 350 years before. The Spanish-American war was a culmination of Lodge's "large policy." His admiration for Hamilton as an aggressive military leader and strategist of empire falls neatly into place. Lodge had prophesied, a decade earlier, that even Canada must inevitably become part of the U.S.; he saw this as a matter of "manifest destiny."⁵² His imperialism of the late 1890s was nothing particularly new.

6. Hamilton, factionalism and the aristocratic republic

Perhaps Lodge's most ambitious scholarly work was his edition of Hamilton's *Works*, which for many years was the best collection of Hamilton's writings available. He also wrote the biography of Hamilton reproduced below, along with similar works devoted to Daniel Webster (1883) and George Washington (1889). Lodge's political thought, often inspired by Hamilton's writings and career, emphasized the historical continuities from the Federalists of the early republic, through the American Whig party and his own Republicans. In effect, Lodge wrote a Federalist history of the U.S.

Explaining Alexander Hamilton's decision in favor of the colonies, while a student at King's College in New York, Lodge says of Hamilton that "His masterful temper and innate love and respect for government, order, and strong rule dictated his prejudices."⁵³ While this might have made a Tory-loyalist of him, his outsider and provincial background and origins together with his ambition drove him toward the colonial side of the conflict with Great Britain. "He was young, unknown, an adventurer in a strange land," Lodge writes "and burning with a lofty ambition;" and

52. Lodge 1888, "The Fisheries Question," p. 130. See the discussion and references in Widenor 1980, p. 71.

53. Lodge 1882, below, p. 4.

“Change, revolution, and war might bring almost anything in the way of military or civic glory.”⁵⁴

Hamilton argued forcefully and eloquently for the political interests of the colonies both in public meetings and in his early pamphlets, though Lodge remarks that “Hamilton was never eloquent in the sense in which Chatham or Mirabeau or Henry were eloquent,” since he lacked “imaginative and poetical temperament;” instead, his was the “eloquence of sound reason and clear logic, combined with great power and lucidity of expression, and backed by a strong and passionate nature.”⁵⁵

Lodge’s admiration for Hamilton invites comparison with his friendship and support for the career of Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt, like Lodge, was of the generation which had been too young to fight in the Civil War, though many prominent political figures of their times had impressive records of service in the Union armies. Lodge’s valorization of Hamilton, like his support of Roosevelt, was, in some degree, or incidentally, a political compensation for the lack of a personal military record. They had a post-Civil War “greatest generation” to contend with.

In his political career, Lodge drew support from several of Hamilton’s views and policies. In the *Federalist Papers*, Hamilton appears as a defender and interpreter of the constitution, and in his work in Washington’s cabinet, Hamilton made practical application of his interpretations. Lodge says of him that his doctrine of “implied powers,” deployed in defense of his successful proposal for the first Bank of the United States, is “the most formidable weapon in the armory of the constitution,” a weapon “capable of conferring on the federal government powers of almost any extent.”⁵⁶ Though Lodge’s claim is an overstatement, and the powers of the federal government are limited in many ways, by the very persistence of the States, and particularly by the Bill of Rights, one can see in this remark that both Hamilton and Lodge were advocates (to use a contemporary term), of needed “state

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

capacity” of the federal government. Like Hamilton, Lodge was a “big government” conservative.

Although Hamilton’s opponents, Jefferson and Madison, fought his proposal for the first Bank of the United States, Madison, as President at the time of the War of 1812, came to the view that his own administration’s proposal for the second Bank of the United States was supported by the precedent or (constitutional arguments) favoring Hamilton’s first Bank. Hamilton, one might say, was a centralizer in a hurry, and while he was willing to support President Washington within the framework of the constitution, his private views were often distinctive—favoring what Lodge calls the “aristocratic republic.”⁵⁷

Neither Hamilton or Madison got the more centralized national government they had favored at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Madison had strongly favored a congressional veto over state legislation, but this idea, as might have been expected, failed to obtain the support of the State delegations. Madison was afterward more willing to sympathize with the broadly based, anti-administration, anti-federalist and republican sentiment in Virginia—and in the country at large—and work with Jefferson to give it an articulate voice. Hamilton, in contrast fought the particularist sentiment which arose both in Virginia and later that of the New England high Federalists and of the Essex junto—including its secessionist sentiment. Lodge’s sympathy with the Federalists follows Hamilton’s nationalist demarcation.

Along with his frequent, though not uncritical praise of Hamilton, Lodge’s writings, are marked by his open, partisan criticism and even disdain of Jefferson and Madison. Lodge gives the reader of his Hamilton biography little sense of any genuine discontent in the country or any sense of the doubts and fears of the anti-federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans. However, the American Revo-

57. See Lodge 1882, below, p. 186: Hamilton “strove with all his energy to make the experiment of the constitution succeed, but he doubted its merit at the outset, and finally came to the conclusion that in its existing form it was doomed to failure. He believed in class influence and representation, in strong government, and in what, for want of a better phrase, may be called an aristocratic republic.”