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Je Suis Huger: Shaping Identity in South Carolina, 1685-1885

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JE SUIS HUGER: SHAPING IDENTITY IN SOUTH CAROLINA, 1685-1885

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
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Accepted by:
Dr. Paul Christopher Anderson, Committee Chair
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Dr. Alan Grubb

ABSTRACT

In 1685, a large group of Huguenots, or French Calvinist Protestants, migrated to South Carolina seeking economic opportunity and religious toleration. By the outbreak of the Civil War, the descendants of these French immigrants had transformed into bastions of Southern identity and society. But how had this transformation taken place?

This study attempts to answer that question. It aims to trace the journey of Huguenot assimilation from French Protestant refugees to British Colonists, from Colonists into Americans, and finally from Americans into Southerners. Focusing on the experiences of a single lineage, the Huger family, it hopes to add to existing scholarship on the South Carolina Huguenot experience in two specific ways. First, this research seeks to extend the study of Huguenot identity beyond the Colonial period, on which other works have retained an almost exclusive focus. Second, it tries to add a personal character to the story of Huguenot transformation, giving a name and persona to the individuals involved in this larger process of identity redefinition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All historical works are the result of a collective effort, and this thesis is no exception. Therefore, it seems only appropriate to take a moment to recognize some of the people who helped turn this dream into a reality.

First, I would like to sincerely thank the faculty in the Department of History at Clemson University. Foremost among these are the members of my thesis committee: Dr. Paul Anderson, Dr. Rod Andrew, Jr., and Dr. Alan Grubb. These outstanding scholars and teachers were incredibly accommodating in seeing this work to completion. Their patience, understanding, and assistance throughout my time at Clemson will not be forgotten.

Second, I wish to express my deep gratitude for the assistance provided by my family. Thanks to my mother and father, Penney and Richard, who always pushed me to succeed academically and helped fund a great deal of the research for this work. Most importantly, I want to recognize my dear wife, Melanie, whose undying love and support has been a constant source of comfort and inspiration. You are the fuel that drives my soul, and I will forever be in your debt. Thank You.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER	
I. REFUGEES AND COLONISTS.....	6
II. PATRIOTS AND AMERICANS.....	46
III. SOUTHERNERS, CAROLINIANS AND CONFEDERATES	77
CONCLUSION.....	107
REFERENCES.....	112

INTRODUCTION

As the Civil War ravaged the Southern portion of the United States, the rosters of Confederate soldiers from South Carolina were filled with strange sounding names: Bacot, Bonneau, De Saussure, Huger, Manigault, Peronneau, Prioleau, Ravenel, and Trezevant. Yet few people have appeared to recognize the significance in this odd instance of nomenclature. These seem to be unusual names for quintessential Southern slave holders, people who represent everything that the antebellum South stood for, as these names ring with a distinctly French air. In fact, they are indeed French surnames. More specifically, they represent just a few of many family names of the Huguenots, French Calvinists who fled their native land in the late seventeenth century seeking refuge from the horrendous religious persecution they suffered at the hands of the French government.

Several literary works depicting Huguenots in the years surrounding the Civil War portray these people as archetypal Southerners. The characters of French Protestant descent in these novels appear as “members of the Southern aristocracy at the height of its glory.” They stand as symbols of the affluence and power of the antebellum South. The South Carolina novels Peter Ashley and

Look Back to Glory contain female protagonists depicted as typical ladies of the lowcountry aristocracy. We find them engaged in the tasks of maintaining their households, providing for the health and welfare of their slaves, and even overseeing the operations of their plantations. The books Red Lanterns on St. Michaels and When for the Truth present additional main characters of Huguenot ancestry as the epitome of the elite class of South Carolina slaveholders. In fact, all of the French Protestant descendants portrayed within these works emerge not as Huguenots, but as Southern aristocrats. They are products not of their French heritage, but of the blended English-French environment which their forbears had helped create.¹

But how did this state of affairs come to pass? A distinctively French group of immigrants had cast off their native identity and transformed into archetypal Southerners. They had abandoned the language and traditional occupations of their ancestral homeland. Even more astounding, they had set aside the religious traditions which their flight from France had intended to protect. On the eve of the Civil War, their names remained the only extant connection to their place of origin. Without those names, their French lineage would be impossible to discern. Yet the question remains: How did a group of

¹ Mary Crow Anderson, "The Huguenot in the South Carolina Novel" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1966), 163-199.

French Protestant refugees come to embody the essence of what it meant to be Southern?

This study seeks, in some small way, to answer that question. It attempts to trace the journey of the Huguenot from Frenchman to Southerner.

Furthermore, it strives to meet the challenge of demonstrating when and why these identity transitions took place. Focusing on the experiences of a single pedigree, the Huger family, the study endeavors to reveal the processes of assimilation and integration that would firmly embed the family within the elite class of Southern slaveholders.

The Huger family was indeed considered to be one of the most ideal personifications of Southern people in the Civil War era. The South Carolina novels Peter Ashley and Look Back to Glory both contain minor characters that possess the surname Huger. One of these characters, Alfred Huger, was a real historical figure and an integral part of the Hugers' transition from American to Southern identity. These Hugers, like the other Huguenot characters more central to the plot of the novels, appear as quintessential Southern planters.²

During nearly two centuries of residence in America, the Huger family had transitioned from French Protestant refugees to British Colonists, from

² Ibid.

Colonists into Americans, and finally from Americans into Southerners. This study sets itself to the task of illuminating this shift in identity. In addition, it attempts to supplement the existing scholarly literature on the South Carolina Huguenot experience in two specific ways.

First, this research seeks to extend the study of Huguenot identity beyond the period on which other works have focused. All scholars of the South Carolina Huguenots have focused exclusively on the colonial period and its story of rapid and thorough assimilation into the British Colonial identity. It seems as though these historians feel that once the refugees ceased to be distinctly French and had merged completely into the British society of Carolina, their story is no longer of any importance. However, the Hugers, like the larger population of Protestant immigrants from France, played essential roles in the formation of both the American and Southern identities. Surely their extensive influence and active participation in the creation of these identity phases deserves some examination.

Second, it attempts to add a personal character to the story of Huguenot assimilation and identity transformation. Most studies of South Carolina Huguenots have focused on the overall trend of integration among the general population of French Protestant refugees. These works retain a broad focus, only

occasionally mentioning the experiences of particular families. This work seeks to break from that trend by focusing on the actions and experiences of individuals, not of the Huguenot population as a whole, giving a name and personality to the people involved in this larger process of identity redefinition.

However, this exploration does not provide a comprehensive biographical or genealogical history of the Huger family, though such information has been provided where it is pertinent to the discussion of identity formation and transition. A great deal of works of this type already exists, and this author could not provide a substantially significant addition or improvement to this body of literature. Furthermore, such an undertaking represents a task of an immense scope, far beyond that which a mere thesis could hope to accomplish. Instead, this study uses the Huger family as a platform for investigating the patterns of shifting identity in South Carolina from arrival through Reconstruction. As such, the family becomes a set of parameters to break up the vast story of Huguenot identity into a manageable subset. In essence, this is the history of a family, but not a family history.

CHAPTER ONE

REFUGEES AND COLONISTS

April 1, 1651 marked a joyous occasion for Jean (John) Huger and his wife Anne. Jean, “Notaire du Roi” or Royal Notary in the town of Loudun, and Anne Rufin (sometimes spelled Ruffin and also as Rassin), daughter of the successful merchant druggist Anthony Rufin, celebrated one of the most pivotal events in their lives. For on that day, in their hometown situated in the province of Poitou, France, Ann gave birth to the couple’s first child, a son. They named the child Daniel after Jean’s father and baptized him in the Reformed Church of Loudun.³

Yet the harsh reality of the environment into which young Daniel was born overshadowed Jean and Anne’s elation. The toleration and protection provided to French Protestants by the Edict of Nantes, issued by Henry IV in 1598, was being slowly eroded by scores of small, informal decrees and proclamations. In addition, France’s government employed extremely cruel tactics aimed at either converting or eliminating the Huguenots: laying waste to

³ “Huger Family Record,” Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files (30-4 Huger), South Carolina Historical Society. William H. Huger, “Paper Describing the First Generations of the Huger Family in South Carolina,” *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina*, 4 (1897): 11.

their churches and cemeteries, stealing away their young children to be raised Catholic, and restricting their professions solely to agriculture and trade. Even more atrocious was the use of the dragonnades, in which Protestants were forced to shelter soldiers in their homes. These troops regularly destroyed the personal property of the families that quartered them, and severe beatings and rapes were not uncommon. The seventeenth century witnessed the gradual intensification of all these measures of persecution, eventually culminating in 1685 with Louis XIV's Edict of Fontainebleau, the formal revocation of the Edict of Nantes.⁴

Although Jean and Anne were well aware of the volatile situation young Daniel would face in France, this couple surely could not have foreseen the dramatic changes that lay in store for their newborn son. Daniel Huger would eventually choose to depart from his native land and emigrate to the New World. Once there, he would become the patriarch of one the wealthiest and most influential families in the history of South Carolina. Most importantly, he would begin a process of identity transformation that would abandon his French heritage and integrate the Hugers into the larger British colonial society. His

⁴ Richard M. Golden, introduction to *The Huguenot Connection: The Edict of Nantes, Its Revocation, and Early French Migration to South Carolina*, ed. Richard M. Golden (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 1-2.

descendants would continue this process, thus transforming themselves from refugees into colonists.

As a young man in seventeenth century France, Daniel Huger suffered great hardship. He and his family were subjected to all of the French government's harsh measures aimed at eliminating Protestantism from the Catholic dominated country. But religious persecution was just the beginning of the adversity Daniel had to endure. In October 1661, at the tender age of ten, his mother passed away. A mere six years later he lost his father. A few months after the death of his father, Daniel lost his youngest sister Magdalen. His eldest sister Mary was laid to rest shortly thereafter. So, at the age of seventeen, Daniel Huger had witnessed the deaths of both his parents and nearly half of his siblings. By the decade of the 1670s, there was little to comfort Daniel or encourage him to remain in France and continue to endure persecution.⁵

However, Daniel was able to find a bright spot in the midst of this dark time. During the 1670s he fell in love with a young lady by the name of Margueritte (Margaret) Perdriau, the daughter of a silk and drapery merchant. In May of 1677, they were married in La Rochelle by the minister Monsieur Lesegulles. Less than a year later, Margaret gave birth to their first child on

⁵ "Huger Family Record," Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. Huger, "First Generations of the Huger Family," 12-13.

February 21, 1678. They named their daughter Margaret in honor of her mother and had her baptized by Monsieur Guibert, minister of the Reformed Church in Rochelle.⁶

No longer an unfettered bachelor, Daniel Huger now carried the responsibility of securing his wife and daughter's safety and welfare. His family bore the burden of increased religious, political, and economic restrictions. In addition, they suffered through the escalation of the cruel tactics employed by the French government against Protestants. This state of affairs surely made him uneasy about the prospect of protecting his family. And his own turbulent childhood experience only added to his fears. In the face of this tenuous set of circumstances, Daniel decided to leave his homeland in search of toleration and opportunity elsewhere.

Daniel had already moved twice in an attempt to seek refuge. First, he left his native Loudun for the port of La Rochelle. Unable to find the refuge he so desperately desired, he moved again, this time with his wife and daughter to the Isle de Ré. Yet the persecution from which he was fleeing still haunted his

⁶ Ibid.

family, so Daniel made the decision to leave France altogether. They embarked from the Isle de Ré on a ship bound for London in the year 1682.⁷

The Hugers spent four years in London, and their stay in England would prove a pivotal factor in their later experience in the New World. Their time there would help the refugees develop a familiarity with and affinity for the people, customs, and institutions of Britain, laying the foundations for their rapid and complete assimilation into the British colonial identity, as was the overall case for the Huguenot population that immigrated to South Carolina.

Jon Butler notes that the nature of the Huguenot exodus itself set the stage for their later integration into the society of colonial South Carolina. The migration Huguenots embarked upon to protect their faith began to change the refugees themselves. Their flight from France stretched over more than a decade, and this extended length of the mass departure caused continuous upheaval and change within the refugee population in London. This constant flux prevented the development of any community stability that would have built a strong, lasting sense of cultural identity among the French Protestants. Furthermore, Butler reveals that the groundwork for Huguenot assimilation was laid even before their arrival in London. While still in France, government restrictions

⁷ Charles W. Baird, *History of the Huguenot Emigration to America* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1973) 1:308-310, 2:49-51.

limited their religious activities, preventing them from developing any sort of solid national organization. Since 1659, no national synod of Huguenots had been allowed to meet, thus causing an extreme localization of their traditions and practices. Once in London, the refugees discovered a wide spectrum of French Protestantism that they had not known in France. This situation further hampered cohesiveness in their community and prevented the development of a universal Huguenot identity. The mass departure of Protestants out of France simultaneously prevented them from sustaining their past and shaped their future. Thus the seeds of the South Carolina Huguenot assimilation were sown long before their arrival in the colony. As Butler espouses, "These characteristics reveal how thoroughly the dramatic changes typical of refugee Huguenotism began in the Revocation and exodus, not in South Carolina or the other places of final exile settlement."⁸

After a brief stay in England, Daniel Huger and his family would again uproot themselves. This would be their fourth move to a new home, and it would prove a significant one. In 1686, Daniel, his wife and two daughters, along with two family servants, left London aboard the *Margaret* bound for

⁸ Jon Butler, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and Huguenot Migration to South Carolina," in *The Huguenot Connection: The Edict of Nantes, Its Revocation, and Early French Migration to South Carolina*, ed. Richard M. Golden (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 63-66. Quote from p. 65.

Charles Town in the colony of Carolina. They were part of a large number of Huguenots who left London for Carolina in that year. This group represented the largest influx of French born immigrants in the history of the colony.⁹

But why did these Huguenots choose to leave London for a new and uncertain land half a world away? Their initial impetus for leaving France was the search for religious toleration, and they found it in England. In London, they suffered none of the cruel persecutions they had been subjected to in their native land. So why did they choose to displace themselves yet again when they had already achieved their goal of religious freedom?

England, like the other European exile centers to which the Huguenots fled, did not easily absorb the French Protestant refugees. Popular anti-French sentiment combined with an erratic economy prevented them from fully assimilating into British society. Furthermore, the growing success of Louis XIV's crusade to eliminate Protestantism removed all hope of ever returning to France. Most importantly, economic concerns would prompt them to try their luck elsewhere. Many Huguenots suffered extreme poverty after their flight from France, regularly accepting charity in the form of food, clothing, and

⁹ "The Passenger List of the Margaret," *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina*, 93 (1988): 32-34. A.S. Salley, Jr., ed., *Warrants for Lands in South Carolina 1672-1711* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 464-465.

residence in the city of London. Their impoverished experience did nothing to encourage them to remain there. This situation reveals a paradox that characterized the early Huguenot refugee experience: religious refugees emigrating for economic motives.¹⁰

In terms of economic status, Daniel Huger's experience differed from that of most Huguenots who would make the voyage to Carolina. Leaving France in 1682, well before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Daniel escaped with more of his personal possessions and wealth than Huguenots who fled later. Those who left closer to the revocation had much of their property destroyed or confiscated. Many refugees abandoned most of their belongings in their haste to exit France in safety. Daniel certainly did not suffer the harsh poverty that burdened many other Huguenot families in England. His first land acquisition upon arriving in the new colony makes his financial security during his stay in London quite clear. When Daniel arrived on the shores of Carolina, he brought two servants in addition to his family. By importing these servants into the burgeoning new colonial enterprise, Daniel received an additional one hundred acres of land in his total grant of three hundred. Most Huguenots only received

¹⁰ Butler, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and Huguenot Migration to South Carolina," 67-68.

the amount allotted for their own relocation, as they were too poor to afford servants and pay for their passage to the New World.¹¹

However, Daniel still sought to better his station in life, and the prospect of a new start in an untouched land surely must have appeared promising. An unstable economy in London made the idea all the more attractive. The colony's land grant policies, especially the clauses granting additional land for the importation of servants, stood to provide him with a sizable plot. His modest wealth could grow into a considerable one in the fertile new colony. Though Daniel Huger escaped the extreme poverty that plagued many Huguenots in England, it is still not surprising that he chose to relocate to Carolina.

England had claimed the area that would later become Carolina since John Cabot's exploratory voyage of 1497, but the nation had done nothing to assert its claim on that land. In fact, the Spanish and French had tried their hand at settling the area long before Britain made any effort to do so. Several attempts at colonization in the area of Port Royal (present day Beaufort) were made by France and Spain during the sixteenth century, all of which failed miserably. The English would not join the contest for colonization in Carolina until 1585, when

¹¹ Salley, *Warrants for Land in South Carolina*, 464-465. Jon Butler, *The Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in New World Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 55. Baird, *History of the Huguenot Emigration to America*, 1:308-310, 2:49-51.

they attempted to establish a settlement at Roanoke Island in present day North Carolina. This endeavor, like the French and Spanish attempts that preceded it, failed and gave birth to the mythic legend of the “Lost Colony.” No further attempt to establish a colony in Carolina would be made by any European nation until well into the next century.¹²

In 1629, Charles I issued the first proprietary charter for Carolina to his attorney general, Sir Robert Heath. Heath sponsored several explorations of the area and at least one attempt at colonization. However, the group sent to settle the new colony never arrived. Upon arriving in Virginia, this group opted to remain in that colony rather than continue their journey to Carolina. Subsequently, Heath lost interest in the colony, and no permanent settlement was ever established.¹³

Thirty years later, this colonial enterprise would be revisited partly through the efforts of John Colleton. Colleton, a royalist exile, returned to England in 1660 after the Restoration, seeking a reward for his faithful support of the monarchy. He received knighthood and place on the Council for Foreign Plantations in recognition of his loyalty. While serving on this council, Colleton

¹² Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), p. 21-62.

¹³ *Ibid.*

became acquainted with several influential men, including Sir William Berkeley, Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, Sir George Carteret, and Edward Hyde. When Colleton became interested in the colony of Carolina, he joined with his associates from the Council for Foreign Plantations, along with William Craven and John Berkeley, and petitioned Charles I for a proprietary charter. This cohort of powerful men succeeded in securing this charter in March of 1663. These men became the sole possessors and administrators for the colony and came to be known as the Lords Proprietors. The Lords Proprietors sole purpose in embarking on this enterprise was to seek a handsome financial return. The charter granted to them in 1663 certainly provided a huge potential for profit. In the charter, the Lords Proprietors were given extraordinary powers including the right to make war and peace, create towns and ports, raise and maintain an army, and collect taxes and custom duties. These powers would allow the proprietors to make money through the collection of taxes, tariffs, and fees. The Lords Proprietors also received control over all the natural resources, fishing rights, and Indian trade in the colony, further increasing the potential to fatten their pockets.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ibid.

Yet in order to make money from the colony, the Lords Proprietors would have to populate this virtually untouched wilderness. After an initial failed attempt at settlement, the Lords Proprietors chose to take decisive action to ensure the success of their new economic venture. In 1669, they put up the money to cover the cost of an initial settlement, bought three ships and supplies, and convinced a group of men and women to make the voyage to Carolina. During that same year, they penned the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina. Meant to be the law and governmental framework for the colony, the document was also designed to encourage further settlement by offering religious toleration, naturalized citizenship, and substantial land grants. The initial group of recruits landed on the South Carolina coast aboard the British ship *Carolina* in March 1670, and they established the first permanent settlement in the colony. During the next ten years, English settlers, especially from Barbados, continued to arrive in Carolina. But many more colonists would be needed for the Lords Proprietors to achieve their goal of substantial economic gain from this enterprise.

As a result of their tremendous need for colonists, the Lords Proprietors actively recruited Huguenot migration to Carolina. In March of 1679, René Petit and Jacob Guerard petitioned the Lords Proprietors to transport about eighty

French Protestant families to the colony and advance them the sum of two thousand pounds. They agreed as a result of their belief that the proposal would produce several positive benefits. By moving the refugees there, the Lords hoped to protect a sparsely populated and threatened territorial possession from the nearby Spanish in Florida. These Huguenots could also provide economic potential. They were master silk manufacturers, wine producers, goldsmiths, in addition to practicing many other skilled trades. The Lords Proprietors wished to establish these trades in the new colony to help ensure its success, and the Huguenots provided an excellent means to do so. These migrants would also serve the greater mercantilist cause by purchasing a considerable quantity of commodities from the mother country. Most importantly, the Lords Proprietors felt these refugees would help recruit others to move to the colony. So in December 1679, they transported the French Protestant families to Carolina aboard the *Richmond*. Once there, the refugees received monetary advances and large tracts of land.¹⁵

The Lords Proprietors' prediction that the Huguenots would recruit their fellow refugees to the colony proved correct. Carolina Huguenots wrote back to their friends and relatives extolling the beauty and potential of their adopted

¹⁵ A.S. Salley, Jr., comp., *Records in the British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina 1663-1684* (Atlanta: Foote and Davies Company, 1928), 1:62-96.

home. In 1683, Louis Thibou writes a powerful endorsement for the colony in a letter to Gabriel Bontefoy. He paints a picture of beautiful place with an excellent climate, good land fit for productive cultivation and the raising of livestock, abundant natural resources, and endless possibilities for those who possessed a strong work ethic. Thibou depicts a land of great potential for his fellow refugees:

I admit that a man who starts with nothing has a little difficulty for the first two or three years, but a man who has something to back him and can afford a couple of farm hands, a maidservant and some cattle can establish himself very well right away and live very happily in this country. Carolina is a good country for anyone who is not lazy; however poor he may be, he can live well provided he is willing to take a little trouble. Carpenters, cobblers, tailors, and other craftsmen necessary for building or clothing easily make a living. I have no doubt that one of our French friends has put this country in a bad light in his letters but if he had really wished to work he could have done as well as I have and would have had a good word to say for Carolina with as much reason as I, for I assure you that when I arrived with my wife and three children I was not worth a farthing and my furniture did not consist of very much, whereas now I am beginning to live well.¹⁶

Thibou further encourages his fellow French Protestants to embark to the colony and find tranquility:

¹⁶ Louis Thibou to [Gabriel Bontefoy], 20 September 1683, mss. coll., South Caroliniana Library.

I believe there are lots of French in England who have taken refuge there on account of the persecutions. If they want to live in peace they need merely come to this country. They can settle in town or in the countryside, on the plantations where they will be able to live in peace... Those who are willing to come to Carolina will discover the truth of what I say; I would advise all the young men who have a trade to come and settle here rather than stay in England.¹⁷

The Lords Proprietors took the early correspondence encouraging the settlement of other Huguenots in Carolina and turned it into an official literature campaign. Descriptive accounts, letters, and other materials started appearing in English publications. Correspondence, like the Thibou letter, between Carolina Huguenots and those in London was purchased or confiscated from the Huguenots and published in pamphlets promoting migration to the colony. Though the pamphlets always presented religious refuge as a benefit of the colony, their primary focus remained on economic and political advantages. The same accounts of ample land and potential for wealth that characterize the Thibou letter filled the pages of the promotional writings. Easy naturalization, essential to the exercise of privileges, served as a strong selling point, as did the presence of the French settlers brought over on the *Richmond*. The literature circulated throughout France as well as England, reaching a broad base of

¹⁷ Ibid.

potential immigrants. An extraordinarily successful venture, the promotion created a powerful yearning among Huguenot refugees to relocate to the colony, what Bertrand Van Ruymbeke terms “Carolina Fever.”¹⁸

This promotional campaign would reach its peak between 1684 and 1686, during which time Daniel Huger left London bound for Carolina. Surely he read the *Richmond* group’s letters and the other material circulated throughout London. These glowing reports of the opportunity Carolina afforded must have appealed to him, especially the assertion that a man with a little money and a few servants could establish himself very well from the start. Daniel saw a chance to turn his modest wealth into a fortune. So with few economic, political, or social prospects to keep him in England, Daniel Huger set out for Carolina in 1686.

The Huguenot experience in colonial South Carolina tells a tale of a steady, complete, and relatively rapid integration into the larger British colonial society and identity. From their very arrival, the French Protestants began a process of assimilation that would engross them completely by the decade of the 1740s and thoroughly erode the differences between themselves and the settlers of Anglo-Saxon origin. This process of identity transformation occurred in two

¹⁸ Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon to Eden: The Huguenots and their Migration to Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 35-49.

phases. The first was secular, integrating the Huguenots into the larger white colonial identity economically, politically, and socially. Phase two would alter them religiously, converting them from Calvinist French Protestants to Anglicans. As a result, they became fully embedded within the larger colonial identity in South Carolina, becoming citizens of the British Empire.

Arthur Hirsch, in the first scholarly work to focus solely on the Huguenot of South Carolina, described the speedy and complete assimilation of the refugees as the most remarkable feature of their history in the colony. Out of economic and political necessity, they merged with the British settlers. English institutions, especially the Anglican Church, later absorbed them thoroughly. By the 1710s, a younger generation dissatisfied with strict devotion to old French customs and institutions had emerged, and they became British in almost all respects. Great distance kept them cut off from their homeland and thus diminished ties to their national origin. Furthermore, most South Carolina Huguenots came to the colony after a layover in Britain. This stay familiarized the French Protestants with British institutions, thereby easing their assimilation in the colony. Again, economic necessity constituted a major reason for integration. Gaining and maintaining wealth required the Huguenots to mingle among the British in the business, social, and political spheres. The French

language fell into disuse, and the French immigrants married into British families. Most Huguenots eventually converted to the Anglican faith, which became necessary in order to attain certain political offices. Through these processes, the French Protestant in South Carolina became thoroughly enmeshed in the larger colonial society and identity.¹⁹

Recent scholarship by Bertrand Van Ruymbeke has built upon Hirsch's work. He found that the majority of South Carolina Huguenots emigrated from the western provinces, especially the area around the port of La Rochelle. La Rochelle's importance in Atlantic trade prior to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes made it a primary destination of departure for the refugees. Van Ruymbeke also found that the majority of Huguenot immigrants represented the artisan and merchant classes. The Hugers were, in fact, a family of merchant origin themselves.²⁰

Like Hirsch, Van Ruymbeke believes that the French Protestant community quickly and thoroughly merged with the dominant white Anglo society. He notes:

¹⁹ Arthur H. Hirsch, *The Huguenots of Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 90-102.

²⁰ Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, "The Huguenots of Proprietary South Carolina: Patterns of Migration and Integration," in *Money, Trade, and Power: The Evolution of Colonial South Carolina's Plantation Society*, ed. Jack P. Green, Rosemary Brana-Shute, and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 29-37.

In the first decades of the eighteenth century, these Huguenots began to intermarry with English settlers. For them, the preservation of estates and status became more important than their French identity. Viewed from a broad perspective this trend can be interpreted as a sign of overall integration.²¹

The experiences of Daniel Huger and his progeny during the colonial period fit well within the overall story of the South Carolina Huguenot. Like most, he had emigrated from the La Rochelle area, not surprising because of its proximity to his hometown of Loudun. His family came from a long line of merchants, as did many of the South Carolina Huguenots. He came to Carolina as part of the largest wave of French Protestant migration into the colony, lured by the prospects of economic opportunity described in the height of the promotional literature's propagation. Most importantly, the family would immediately begin the process of assimilation upon their arrival, fully integrating into the British colonial society by the 1740s.

The first phase of the Huger family's assimilation in colonial South Carolina was secular, as was true of the overall population. This part of their transformation involved both economic and political integration. In Carolina, Huguenots would set aside the traditional trades they occupied in their homeland in favor of the ubiquitous Carolina occupation: planter. Huguenots

²¹ Ibid., 37-39. Quote from p. 39.

amassed large tracts of land, uniting their economic interest with the British land owners in the colony. This unification of interest would be strengthened by their substantial accumulation of slaves, a process integral both to their assimilation in the colonial period and to the development of their Southern identity much later. Furthermore, they would seek Naturalization soon after their arrival, integrating them politically into the colonial society and identity.²²

Daniel Huger began the process of economic integration soon after his arrival. In 1694, he took out a warrant for 300 acres of land due to him for the arrival rights of his family and the two servants he transported to the colony in 1686. Two years later, in October 1696, he received the official grant of that land, "situated in Craven County and lying on the North side of Wambaw Creek." This land would become his Wambaw Plantation, where the patriarch of the South Carolina Hugers died and was laid to rest.²³

It may seem strange to assert that the Hugers immediately began a process of economic assimilation when the record shows that Daniel waited a full eight years to claim the land grant due to him for the arrival of his family and servants in 1686. However, his actions mirror the course taken by the

²² Butler, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and Huguenot Migration to South Carolina," 69-77.

²³ Salley, *Warrants for Land in South Carolina 1672-1711*, 464-465. Colonial Land Grants 1675-1788, vol. 38:316, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

majority of the other Huguenots who arrived with him during the 1680s. These official land grants required the annual payment of quitrents to the Lords Proprietors. Considering the extreme financial hardship most of the refugees suffered while in England, they did not feel it possible for them to clear their land and establish stable, profitable farms in time to afford the quitrents. Rather than claim these grants immediately and oblige themselves to begin yearly payments, the Huguenots chose to purchase land outright from settlers already in the colony and live on property rent free. This would allow the achievement of a level of economic security that would enable them to meet the expense of quitrent payments.²⁴

Though Daniel Huger did not experience the poverty most other Huguenots endured, he was still no less concerned about securing the financial well being of his family. The prospect of acquiring land without the requirement of quitrent payments must have appeared promising in a fledgling colony with a still developing economy. Living on rent free land could help ensure the modest wealth he brought with him to Carolina would not be lost. Such an arrangement could also allow Daniel to substantially increase his assets. Furthermore, his relative financial clout made the immediate purchase of land easily within the

²⁴ Van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon to Eden*, 196-198.

realm of possibility. So Daniel Huger joined in the larger Huguenot trend, purchasing about thirty acres and waiting eight years before claiming the propriety grant owed for his arrival. Though no record of this purchase exists, the bequeathal of his estate to his son, Daniel Jr., makes this acquisition quite clear. In his 1711 will, Daniel left 690 acres to his son. Only 660 of these are accounted for in the Lords Proprietors' colonial grant records.²⁵

Daniel did not stop at the 330 acres he had obtained through this purchase and his proprietary grant. Between 1696 and 1704, he would acquire 360 more acres to supplement his initial grant. These acquisitions came in the form of three subsequent grants: two for 100 acres each, and another for 160 acres. All the grants Daniel received were tracts adjacent to his original plot on Wambaw, thereby increasing his total acquired from the Lords Proprietors to a considerable 660 acres. He managed in the short span of than twenty years to amass a substantial plantation, the entirety of which he would leave to his son, Daniel Jr., upon his death in 1711. In addition to the plot he left his son, Daniel had obtained an even larger quantity of land. A land grant in 1705 conveyed 230 acres in Craven County to him. Another dated September 3, 1709 gave him the substantial sum of 1,000 acres. He most likely sold this land, since he did not

²⁵ Public Register, Conveyance Books 1719-1723, vol. A:234-235, SCDH.

bequeath it to his son, and no mention of it can be found in his will. The sale of such acreage would have only increased the Huger family's financial security and further eased their assimilation. Daniel Huger's successful accumulation of land put his family well on the way to economic integration in the colony.²⁶

The patriarch of the Huger family furthered this process of economic assimilation through the acquisition of slaves. Though no extant records of his purchases are available, his acquisition of slaves is apparent nonetheless. In 1692, Daniel petitioned the Grand Council for assistance in recovering an Indian slave named Betty, who had escaped and hid among the Yemassee tribe. This appeal reveals that Daniel had already joined the ranks of Carolina slave holders after only a few years in his new home.²⁷

The marriage contract between Daniel's son and Elizabeth Gendron provides further proof of his participation in slavery. In this contract, signed January 7, 1710, Daniel agreed to give his son half of all his possessions on the day following the marriage's consummation, provided that the young couple agreed to live on Wambaw plantation. This included his land, "horses, oxen, cows, sheep and pigs." Father and son would split all profits from the plantation

²⁶ Colonial Land Grants 1675-1788, vol. 38:431 and 459, vol. 39:2 and 82, SCDAH. Public Register, Conveyance Books 1719-1723, vol. A:234-235, SCDAH.

²⁷ A. S. Salley, Jr., ed., *Journals of the Grand Council of South Carolina, April 11, 1692-September 26, 1692* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1907), 31.

equally. Most importantly, Daniel Jr. received part ownership of his father's "Negroe as well as Indian slaves...with the exception of a young slave girl named Babet already given to demoiselle Huger his wife."²⁸

The first Huger to arrive in South Carolina, like the majority of Huguenots who came to the colony, had quickly begun to take steps toward economic assimilation. He discarded his traditional French trade, for his family had been merchants before the exodus out of their homeland, exchanging it for a distinctively colonial occupation. By purchasing substantial quantities of land and slaves, Daniel transitioned from merchant to planter, an integral part of the Huguenot's economic integration and transition into the colonial identity. His success would help ensure that his offspring would remain part of the planter class well beyond his lifetime.

Daniel would also take a significant step towards political integration early in the colonial period. He chose to renounce his official French designation, seeking instead to become an Englishman. In 1697, hundreds of Huguenot refugees joined together and signed a petition requesting British naturalization. This document became known as the "Liste des Français et Suisses" and provides one of the earliest pieces of evidence illustrating the rapid political

²⁸ "Marriage Contract between Daniel Huger and Philippe Gendron, January 7, 1710," Miscellaneous Records (Proprietary Series), vol. 1714-1717:173-177, SCDAH.

assimilation of Huguenots in the colony. Daniel Huger's name appears as the eighth entry on the list of approximately one hundred and fifty, putting him front and center within this Huguenot transformation. By deciding to give up his French nationality and remake himself into a naturalized English citizen, Daniel made a pivotal contribution to the Huger family's assimilation in the political sphere. His choice not only revealed a willingness to cast off his French heritage and adopt a new identity, it also laid the foundation for continued political integration by other Hugers later in the colonial period. For as long as English settlers saw the French Protestant refugees as aliens in their land, the Huguenots could not fully exercise political benefits in Carolina. Without Daniel Huger's naturalization, the powerful political station many of his descendants achieved would never have been possible.²⁹

Daniel's choice to seek naturalization was not a decision made in a vacuum. Rather, it represented the direct result of the contentious politics in Carolina during the early colonial period. The proprietary period was a time of intense battling between political factions within the colony. Almost immediately after a permanent settlement had been established, the colony

²⁹ "Liste des Français et Suisses Refugiez en Caroline qui souhaitent d'être naturalisés Anglais" in *A Contribution to the History of the Huguenots of South Carolina* (1887; reprint, Columbia: The R. L. Bryan Company, 1972).

found itself politically divided. In 1672, Sir John Yeamans was appointed governor after creating quite a stir in Carolina. As a wealthy landgrave and deputy to Lord Berkeley, the senior proprietor, Yeamans had claimed that he was the rightful governor of the colony. The Lords Proprietors eventually agreed, and Yeamans secured the position. Yeamans ascension to the governorship helped create a strong political faction in Carolina known as the Goose Creek Men. This political party opposed any type of interference that might restrict the colonists' economic pursuits, and they succeeded in creating a great deal of trouble for the Lords Proprietors.³⁰

The recruitment of the Huguenots during the 1680s was designed, at least in part, to remedy this situation. In this decade, the Lords Proprietors encouraged the migration of members of several dissenting religious denominations, in addition to the Huguenots, in a desperate effort to create a proprietary party that could oppose and neutralize the Goose Creek Men. They hoped that these immigrants would form a group of loyal settlers who would faithfully support the Lords Proprietors and their agenda out of gratitude for the religious freedom they had been granted. Their plan worked initially, and the Huguenots became enthusiastic supporters of the men who had given them

³⁰ Edgar, *South Carolina*, 82-108.

religious refuge and naturalized citizenship. However, it would not be long before the Huguenots, reacting to the controversies of Carolina politics, would realign their political allegiance.³¹

In 1692, elections were held for the first session of the newly formed Commons House of Assembly. Five out of six Craven Country delegates elected were Huguenots. The Dissenters, who had been partners with the Huguenots in the proprietary party, became enraged at the election results and petitioned to have the French Calvinists prevented from taking office. It was incomprehensible, in the Dissenters' opinion, that these "aliens" who did not speak their language should be allowed to take part in making their laws. Yet this was not enough for some of the Dissenters, and they pushed to have the Huguenots disenfranchised, removed from all political participation, and stripped of their right to own and inherit property. The Dissenters argued that since these people were aliens, they did not deserve any of the rights granted to English citizens. When the Huguenots appealed to the Lords Proprietors, their plea fell on deaf ears. In fact, rather than attempt to assist the refugees, the Lords Proprietors were unsympathetic and opted to blame the victims for their own plight. If the Huguenots had helped ratify the Fundamental Constitutions as the

³¹ Ibid.

Lords Proprietors had wished, none of this would have happened. This display of callousness would not be forgotten.³²

The Goose Creek men found an excellent opportunity to advance their own power in the Dissenters' aggression and the Lords Proprietors' lack of sympathy. They championed the Huguenot cause and, in 1697, helped pass a legislative act that would naturalize all Huguenots who petitioned to become British citizens, giving them all the rights and privileges due to any person of English parentage. This is the genesis of the "Liste des Français et Suisses," in which Daniel Huger had opted to renounce his French heritage in favor of English citizenship. As a result of the Goose Creek Men's efforts, the Hugers, like the larger community of French Protestants, turned against the Lords Proprietors and began to support the anti-proprietary party of the Goose Creek Men. This political alignment would continue until the coalition effectively brought proprietary rule to an end in the 1720s.³³

By the time of his death in 1711, Daniel Huger had placed his family securely on the path to assimilation. He had amassed a substantial estate consisting of a significant quantity of land and slaves. These acquisitions helped to economically integrate the Hugers into the colonial identity of South Carolina.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

He also made an important leap toward political integration by casting off his French nationality and becoming a naturalized English citizen. His actions laid a solid foundation for his descendants' assimilation in Carolina. Even though Daniel only lived in Carolina for twenty five years, less time than he had resided in France, he had already distanced himself from his French heritage and developed a deep, sincere affection for his adopted home. He stated:

Oh Lord in Christ our blessed Redeemer.
I here acknowledge with all humility that thy chastisements hath been minded with wonderful mercies. Thou hast preserved us from the land of the persecutors of Thy blessed Gospel, and brought us into this remote part of the world, where Thou hast guided us and blessed us here in a wonderful manner, and we now enjoy the benefits of Thy dear Gospel, in peace and quietness, through our dear Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.³⁴

At his death, Daniel Huger left only two offspring residing in the colony of Carolina. His ten other children had all died young. His daughter Margaret, who had been born in La Rochelle before the Hugers emigrated, had married Elias Horry in August 1704, afterwards residing on Horry's Craven County plantation adjacent to the Hugers' land. Early in the morning of March 16, 1688,

³⁴ "Huger Family Record," Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. Huger, "First Generations of the Huger Family," 12-13.

Daniel Huger Jr. was born on his father's plantation in St. James Santee, Craven County, and baptized by the Huguenot minister Mr. Prioleau. Daniel's only son, and heir to his estate, he represented the first Huger born outside France. This Carolina born Huguenot would continue the processes of economic and political assimilation his father had initiated. His efforts were so successful that by the time of his death in 1754 the Huger family found itself fully absorbed into the colonial society and its identity.³⁵

Daniel Jr. began to follow his father's example of economic integration even before the patriarch was laid to rest. In this respect, Daniel Jr. would not only emulate his father's aggressive land acquisition, he would far surpass it. His receipt of half the Wambaw estate and its profits from his father as a wedding gift in 1709 provided him with a steady income to fund the attainment of an extraordinary magnitude of land that dwarfed his father's achievements. That same year, he purchased Limerick plantation, a 3,415 acre agricultural estate on the eastern branch of the Cooper River in Berkeley County. Even before the father had passed away, his son had far outshined him. In 1714, Daniel Jr. received a grant of 500 acres in Craven County, adding an additional 500 in Berkeley County two years later. An even larger grant of 1,000 acres in Craven

³⁵ "Huger Family Record," Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. Huger, "First Generations of the Huger Family," 13.

came in 1717. By the end of the 1710s, he had amassed so much land that he felt comfortable selling the original 690 acre inheritance received from his father to James and Paul Mayrant.³⁶

The 1720s found Daniel Jr. continuing this aggressive accumulation of land. He would add approximately 2,000 additional acres to his assets during this decade. Two grants of 200 acres each increased his holdings in Craven County, while the purchase of 1,500 expanded his Berkeley County possessions. In addition, he obtained two lots in Charles Town, providing him with the benefits of both city and country life.³⁷

Daniel Huger Jr. actively sought economic integration in the colonial society through the purchase of land, and he was incredibly successful at the endeavor. In his first acquisition, he had bought the enormous 3,415 acre Limerick plantation in Berkeley, and later added 1,150 nearby acres to his purchase. Additionally, he owned the plantations known as Cypress, a 2,925 acre estate, Hagan measuring 1,070, and Rice Hope. His total holdings at his death in 1754 amounted to nearly 10,000 acres of plantation land, as well as nine

³⁶ Walter B. Edgar and N. Louise Bailey, ed., *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly, 1692-1775* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 339-340. Colonial Land Grants 1675-1788, vol. 39:51, 183, 197, vol. A:234, SCDAH.

³⁷ Colonial Land Grants 1675-1788, vol. C:119, vol. D:218, vol. F:51, vol. H:238, SCDAH.

homes in Charles Town, immense stores of furniture and other household commodities, a large amount of livestock, and a substantial number of South Sea Annuities. Daniel Jr. had taken up his father's cause of economic assimilation and advanced it to the point of the Hugers' complete absorption into colonial society.³⁸

A 1755 appraisal of his estate reveals that he also furthered the Huger family's economic integration through an insatiable procurement of slaves. Daniel Jr. took his father's example of slave ownership and achieved a level of accomplishment in this realm of which his father could only have dreamed. By the time he died in 1754, he owned at least 329 slaves. This figure included 93 men, 81 women, 28 boys, 20 girls, and 106 small children, all listed by name in the inventory of his estate. His level of achievement rivaled that of any of his contemporaries, making him one of the wealthiest and most successful slave holders in South Carolina.³⁹

The first native Carolinian of the Huger line also continued the family's progression toward political assimilation. Daniel Sr. had set the stage for his

³⁸ Caroline T. Moore, ed., *Abstracts of the Wills of the State of South Carolina, 1740-1760* (Columbia: R. L. Bryan and Company, 1964), 184-185. Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly*, 339-340.

³⁹ "The Appraisalment of the Personal Estate of Daniel Huger," *Inventories of Estates 1748-1756*, vol. R(2):286-292, SCDAH.

son's success in the political realm with his 1697 petition for naturalization. The request ended his official designation as a Frenchman, and made him and heirs legal British citizens. As such, they were entitled to all the political rights and privileges granted to any colonial citizen of English stock. Without this step, his son's impressive achievements in the realm of government would never have occurred. Once again, Daniel Jr. built on the foundation his father laid with the decision to naturalize, and again his efforts resulted in the total integration of the Hugers.

His public career began in his late twenties with a position as tax inquirer and inquisitor for the Parish of St. Thomas and St. Denis in 1716. He would be named to that position again in 1719. More significantly, Daniel Jr. was a member of the colony's Seventeenth Assembly, from 1720 through 1721, and the First Royal Assembly, lasting from 1721 until 1724. Subsequently, the Parish of St. John Berkeley elected him three more times to the Second, Twelfth, and Fifteenth Royal Assemblies. The Parish of St. Philip would also elect him in 1729 as their representative for the Sixth Royal Assembly. Beyond this already impressive record of political service, Daniel Jr. additionally served as justice of

the peace for Berkeley County in 1721, 1734, and 1737 and as Commissioner of the High Roads in 1721.⁴⁰

The second phase in the Huguenot assimilation was one of religious conversion. As early as the second decade of the eighteenth century, Huguenots began to gravitate toward participation in the Anglican Church. This transition is hardly surprising due to the majority of Huguenots' inability to effectively establish traditional French Protestant institutions in the colony. Their concern for economic stability overshadowed the preservation of religious traditions. For the poorer ones, religious conformity was necessary to secure their livelihoods. Furthermore, the Huguenot ministers who came to the colony from England harbored deep Anglican sympathies. During their refugee stay in London, most Huguenot clergymen could not support themselves, and strict conformity to the Anglican Church was compulsory in order to receive financial aid. As a result, the ministers vowed to be loyal to the Church of England, and never recreated the denominational organization and institutional mechanisms, in London or Carolina, necessary for the prolonged existence of a strong and distinct Huguenot faith.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly*, 339-340.

⁴¹ Butler, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and Huguenot Migration to South Carolina," 76-80.

The roots of the Huguenots' religious assimilation stretch back to earliest years of the eighteenth century. Much like their choice to integrate politically by applying for naturalization in 1697, their religious assimilation was the result of the nature of Carolina politics in the proprietary period. The contentious issue of the Huguenots' status did not die with the Commons House of Assembly's passage of a naturalization act in 1697. The Dissenters continued to decry the participation of aliens in the colony's politics and, in 1703 made a formal appeal to the Lords Proprietors to put a stop to it. When the Lords Proprietors did not reply, the Goose Creek Men saw an opportunity to increase their power in Carolina. In 1704, they passed an act that permanently guaranteed the right to vote to all naturalized citizens. This act was doubly pleasing: it benefited the Huguenots by eternally securing their rights and benefited the Goose Creek Men by increasing their voting base. As a result, the Goose Creek Men gained a majority in the Commons House of Assembly and used their superior numbers to pass the Church Act of 1706. The act established Anglicanism as the official state religion of Carolina and required all members of the Commons House of Assembly to conform to the worship and rituals of the Church of England. By

passing this act, the Goose Creek Men weakened their rival Dissenters by excluding them from political participation.⁴²

Though the Huguenots were not Anglican at this time, the act did not have the same political effects on them as it had exerted on the Dissenters. Rewarding the Huguenots for their political support, the Goose Creek Men included several clauses in the Church Act of 1706 that allowed the Huguenots to continue their political participation. The act created two French parishes and provided a framework for the French Protestants to receive Anglican services in their native language. In this way, Huguenots could meet the requirements of the Church Act and serve as representatives in colony's assembly. The measures introduced by the Goose Creek Men eased the Huguenots religious assimilation and helped transition them to traditional Anglican worship.⁴³

Of course, conformity to Anglicanism did not come immediately, and it would take years before the act had any real effect. A transitional period ensued, during which time most Huguenots continued to practice their Calvinist traditions. They had become Anglicans, but in name only. Conformity, for them, seems to have initially been more of an institutional move than a spiritual one. Their religious conversion was a decision with a distinct political

⁴² Edgar, *South Carolina*, 82-108. Van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon to Eden*, 123-137.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

dimension, resulting from practical necessity. In fact, a dual denominational affiliation existed among the Huguenots until about 1730. Nonetheless, the Church Act of 1706 had a very real and powerful effect upon the Huguenots. It led to their eventual religious assimilation and finalized their integration into the colonial identity. In 1706, the Huguenots had reached a “point of no return.”⁴⁴

Fulfillment of the religious phase of Huguenot incorporation into colonial society occurred slower among the Hugers than in many other Huguenot families. Scores of marriage, baptism, and burial records featuring French Protestant surnames begin to appear in the Parish register of St. Philips Anglican Church in the 1720s. The well known Huguenot families Mazyck, Palmer, St. Julien, Prioleau, and Laurens stand amid a host of others. Yet no mention of any Huger family member appears in the registers before 1749, indicating a much slower shift to Anglicanism among the family than in the larger Huguenot experience. Perhaps the Hugers’ triumphant achievement of economic security allowed them to focus more of their efforts on the preservation of their religious tradition, thereby delaying their conversion to Anglicanism.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Van Ruymbeke, *From New Babylon to Eden*, 123-137, 156-160.

⁴⁵ A. S. Salley, Jr., ed., *Register of St. Philip’s Parish, Charles Town, South Carolina, 1720-1758* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971).

However, the Huger family's personal records indicate that their religious integration began as early as 1741. In that year, Daniel Jr. was married to Mary Cordes, his second wife, by the Anglican minister Reverend Daniel Dwight. All four sons produced by that marriage would be baptized in the Anglican church of St. John's Parish, Berkeley County, by that same minister. The Reverend Dwight would again perform the ceremony for Daniel's third marriage to Lydia Johnson, the daughter of a New England merchant⁴⁶.

By the latter half of the eighteenth century, the name of virtually every member of the Huger family materialized in the registers of Anglican churches. In 1749, the marriage of Daniel Huger Jr. to his fourth wife, Anne LeJeau, appears in the register of St. Thomas and St. Denis. The register also records his burial six years later. In 1751, Daniel Jr. chose to have his son Francis baptized in the Anglican church of St. Thomas and St. Denis, the first Anglican baptism of a Huger recorded in any official parish register.⁴⁷

On March 23, 1762, Daniel Jr.'s second son, Isaac, married Elizabeth Chalmers in the St. Philips Episcopal Church. The Anglican minister Robert Smith performed the ceremony. In addition, almost all of Daniel Jr.'s

⁴⁶ "Huger Family Record," Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS.

⁴⁷ Robert F. Clute, comp., *The Annals and Parish Register of St. Thomas and St. Denis Parish, in South Carolina From 1680 to 1884* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., 1974), 34, 67, 102.

grandchildren would be baptized in that same Anglican church. Elizabeth, Mary, Margaret, Isaac, and Ann Huger, children of Daniel Jr.'s son Isaac, were all baptized in St. Philips Church between 1763 and 1767. The 1770s would witness the Anglican baptisms of the children of John and Benjamin Huger.⁴⁸

At the close of the colonial period, the Hugers had fully assimilated into the colonial identity and society of South Carolina. They had pursued a voracious acquisition of land and slaves that surpassed most of their English born counterparts. The immense estates obtained in this process placed them firmly among the elite slave holding planter class, uniting their economic interests with that of other colonial citizens and completing their economic absorption. Huger family members also integrated politically by attaining official British citizenship through naturalization and achieving an impressive record of political service. By the decade of the 1740s, they had assimilated religiously, marrying and baptizing their children in Anglican churches. Their integration had begun immediately upon arrival, in many ways even before that time, and found them fully absorbed by 1741. These Protestant immigrants were

⁴⁸ D. E. Huger Smith and A. S. Salley, Jr., ed., *Register of St. Philip's Parish, Charles Town, or Charleston, South Carolina, 1754-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 58, 65, 79, 90-91, 94-95.

no longer Frenchmen, Huguenots, or refugees. They had transformed into Colonists.

Jon Butler eloquently sums up the general trend of colonial Huguenot assimilation, of which the Huger family's story makes up only a small part. He states:

What, then, had happened to South Carolina's Huguenots? They had arrived in the 1670s, 1680s, and 1690s seeking opportunity and safety following revocation of their privileges of worship in France and a dismal exile in Europe. Once in South Carolina, they had undergone major changes. Artisans and craftsmen had become planters. Religious refugees had become slaveholders. Protestants had remained neither French nor Huguenot...In all, they had become Americans—British Americans to be sure, but Americans nonetheless, for they had undergone Americanization long before there was a United States.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Butler, "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes and Huguenot Migration to South Carolina," 81. Though Butler calls them "Americans" or "British Americans," it seems more pertinent to describe them as "Colonists" or "British Colonists," since no comprehensive "America" existed at the time as he himself notes. The process he terms "Americanization" is the same process which I have decided to call "assimilation into the colonial identity."

CHAPTER TWO

PATRIOTS AND AMERICANS

On the eve of the American Revolution, one could not see any discernable difference between the Huguenots and the rest of the people inhabiting South Carolina. These individuals of French Protestant heritage found themselves fully immersed in the identity of the colony. Their traditional language and occupations had been abandoned out of economic necessity. To ensure their success in this new home, they integrated politically and economically with the other settlers and renounced their French heritage by becoming naturalized British citizens. The refugees even went so far as to discard their religious traditions, the very thing that had initiated their exodus, in favor of membership in the Anglican Church. The Huguenots had now been a part of the larger colonial identity for more than three decades. Nothing, save their names themselves, reminded one of their origin. Yet even their names had come to serve as more of a symbol of the South Carolina colonial elite than a reminder of their French heritage.

In 1776, however, external events would once again push the South Carolina Huguenots toward a redefinition of their identity. As was the case in

their transition from French Protestant refugees to British Colonists, this change was not an abrupt, spontaneous decision. Rather, it represented the result of a continual progression that had begun decades before. From the time they had fully completed their assimilation into colonial society in the 1740s, the Huguenots found themselves entangled in a process that steadily widened the gap between the colonists and those in the mother country. This period witnessed the development of contentious economic and political issues that threatened the freedom and security the Huguenots had struggled to attain. By the middle of the 1770s, the state of affairs in colonial South Carolina necessitated the Huguenots to participate in another identity transformation, the second since their arrival in the New World.

The British government had become financially burdened with the constant problem of protecting the colonies from attacks and intrusions by the French, Spanish, and Native Americans. By the close of the French and Indian War in 1763, England was deep in debt and decided that the Colonists should help foot the bill. Strict enforcement of existing taxes, along with a series of new taxes and restrictions on the purchase of Indian land, began shortly after the war's conclusion. These actions enraged colonists, who came to resent the British government for trying to restrict their economic growth. When these measures

failed to cover the cost of defending the colonies, the British sought additional means to raise revenue, passing The Stamp Act in 1765 and The Townshend Acts two years later. The imposition of these taxes further escalated the tensions between the colonies and the mother country.

This period contained a distinctly political controversy as well. Now facing a level of taxation they had never before known, the colonists grew angry at England's refusal to provide them with representation in Parliament. Viewing themselves as British citizens, they felt entitled to all the rights and privileges that citizenship entailed. The British government, however, saw the colonies as merely that: colonies, to be used and exploited for the benefit of the mother country however they saw fit. The colonists' payment of taxes did not entitle them to any political rights, as this was merely payment owed to the mother country for their protection.

By 1776, tensions had reached a boiling point. The actions of the British government engendered anger and disdain among the colonial population. As a result, affection for England began to wane among the colonists. Feeling progressively more isolated, they gradually ceased to see themselves as Englishmen. So when a group of colonists declared independence from Britain

and staked their claim as a new nation and people, the Huguenots joined the movement en masse.

Arthur Hirsch eloquently summed up the state of Huguenot identity on the eve of the American Revolution:

Their interests and affections, long diverted from their native land by their exile and the attitude of the French government after their departure, were given over to the espousal of the claims of the country of their adoption. In the Revolutionary war, their descendants, with but few exceptions, were loyal supporters of the cause of the Colonies and with unalloyed devotion fought and died in the ranks that sought the overthrow of British rule.⁵⁰

But why did the Huguenots choose to discard their identity as British colonists so soon after they had achieved it? The imposition of taxes and other economic restrictions troubled the entire colonial population. The Huguenots, who had strived so hard to establish financial security in South Carolina after their impoverished refugee experience in London, certainly must have recoiled at this threat to their economic development. The British government's refusal to provide colonists with any political rights or privileges also played a part. Having fought diligently to secure political liberties early in the colonial period, during which time they had sought naturalization and relinquished their official

⁵⁰ Arthur H. Hirsch, *The Huguenots of Colonial South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 264.

designation as Frenchmen, they watched with trepidation as their rights were once again threatened.

The imposition of economic and political restrictions was not unknown in the Huguenot experience. Before their departure from France, Louis XIV had implemented such measures in his attempt to rid his country of Protestantism. Furthermore, the British Parliament's passage of The Quartering Act in 1765, which forced colonists to house and feed British soldiers serving in North America, possessed an eerie similarity to Louis XIV's use of the dragonnades. All these factors combined to make England a tyrannical government in the eyes of South Carolina's Huguenots, much like the one their ancestors had left France to escape. "Oppressed as they had been in their native land, it was not surprising that the Huguenots should be found on the side of the oppressed rebellious colonists."⁵¹

When the colonists began the quest for independence, the Huguenots of South Carolina quickly joined the fight. The struggle for freedom from tyrannical rule greatly appealed to the Huguenot sensibility. Writing nearly a

⁵¹ Clermont Huger Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family: Their Line of Descent from Daniel and Margaret Perdriau Huger of France and South Carolina* (Bluffton, SC: Bluffton Historical Preservation Society Inc., 2002), 2. Alfred Huger, "The Huguenots of South Carolina," *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina* 11 (1904): 18.

century and a half after the American Revolution, a member of the Huger family would explain this attraction to the cause of American independence:

“Liberty” was a word that had a burning significance in the minds of these families. They knew only too well what it meant to be bound with the fetters of arrogant and intolerantly oppressive rule. It was for “Liberty” that they made the sacrifices which won them crowns of glory. And so it was that the dash and fire of these ardent souls placed them at once in the front rank among the leaders who defeated England and thereby establish the United States of America.⁵²

The American identity would be born out of the Revolution. In his famous essay, “Fame and the Founding Fathers,” Douglass Adair recognizes that the Revolution had a powerful effect on the goals and ambitions of the people who participated in that war. He notes: “It is the conflict with the mother country itself that creates the characters of the leaders we celebrate. The Founding Fathers, in a very true sense, are thus children of the Revolution, men who are transformed in the process of making it.”⁵³

In Adair’s view, the American Revolution cast the Founding Fathers as actors on a stage with a worldwide audience. As a result, the Revolutionary

⁵² Alfred Huger, “A Triumph of Spirit,” *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina* 27 (1922): 54-55.

⁵³ Douglass Adair, “Fame and the Founding Fathers,” in *Fame and the Founding Fathers: Essays by Douglass Adair*, ed. Trevor Colbourn (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1974), 4-7. Quote from p. 7.

generation developed a deep obsession with the attainment of fame. This concept of fame differs from our modern understanding of it as simply popular notoriety among contemporaries. The fame sought by the Founding Fathers certainly included the recognition and approval of their own generation, but it was more specifically aimed at securing the respect and admiration of their posterity. It was a special type of fame that sought praise from a particular, not yet existent, audience: the good and wise people of the future. This conceptualization of true fame was rooted in Plutarch's model of the great lawgiver and founder of a commonwealth. Building on this foundation, the Revolutionary generation incorporated the ideas of Sir Francis Bacon. Bacon put forth a multi-level hierarchy of fame. The lowest level was reserved for fathers of their country, men who governed justly and helped create peace and prosperity. The next levels included the saviors of empire, who delivered their country from the servitude of tyrants, great lawmakers, and founders of states and commonwealths. The highest level of fame remained reserved for philosophers (scientists) and inventors who used Reason for the benefit of mankind.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7-16.

The Founding Fathers' "lust for fame" that developed after 1776 was a key force shaping their behavior after the Revolution. It transformed their ambition and self-interest into a dedication to public service and devotion to the welfare of the larger community. It spurred them to action, and, as a result, they left the imprint of their ideals and deeds on the fabric of American history. In fighting the revolution, the Founding Fathers had already achieved the lower levels of Bacon's hierarchy of fame. They were fathers of their country and saviors of empire, delivering their country from the chains of tyranny to a state of fair and just governance. In order to achieve the highest levels of fame, however, the Revolutionary generation would have to go even further. They found an opportunity to preserve their legacy in the creation and ratification of the Constitution. With such a deep desire for lasting fame, it is not surprising that the Founding Fathers found it necessary to create a strong government in order to ensure that the ideals they had fought for in the Revolution, as well as the fame they attained in the process, would not fade throughout later generations. By writing and adopting the Constitution, the founding fathers structured themselves as great lawmakers, founders of a state, and philosophers who utilized the gift of Reason to benefit mankind, thereby achieving the highest levels of Bacon's hierarchy and guaranteeing their lasting notoriety. More

importantly, they had solidified the burgeoning American identity in the process.⁵⁵

In essence, all Americans were British citizens who formed a new identity. This identity was created, to a large degree, through the patriotism of service in the Revolutionary army. This military experience created an obsession with fame among those who had fought against the British. That obsession, especially the desire to preserve their fame among future generations, led the Revolutionary generation to write and ratify the Constitution in hopes that their efforts on the battlefield would not have been in vain. That action, in turn, only strengthened the American identity that had developed out of the war itself.

The Huger family was most certainly on the forefront of the fight for freedom from British rule and the formation of an American identity. Daniel Huger Jr. had produced five sons that survived to adulthood, and three of these children would prove to be distinguished officers in the Revolutionary War. A fourth one would distinguish himself as a patriotic American politician. These Huger men, the second generation of the family native to South Carolina, had been born into a world where their family, like all of the Huguenots, viewed themselves as British citizens. They were completely immersed in the British

⁵⁵ Ibid., 11-24.

colonial identity, with their economic interests tied to those of colonists of English origin. Politically, they were fully integrated as well, as all five of them had served as members of various sessions of the Royal Assembly. Even their religion had been entirely assimilated. They were members of the Church of England, having all been baptized by Anglican ministers. Furthermore, their marriages and the baptisms of their children all occurred in Anglican ceremonies. Their entire young lives had been lived as British colonists, totally absorbed within the colonial identity. However, when the colonies declared their independence from Britain, this generation of Hegers all chose to cast off their British colonial selves in favor of the newly emerging American identity.

The eldest of these brothers, Daniel III, had certainly been a British colonist prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution. He had been born on February 20, 1742 on his fathers Limerick plantation in St. John's Parish, Berkeley County. Two months later he was baptized in the Anglican church of that Parish by the Reverend Daniel Dwight. Daniel III had spent many years in England as a young man, receiving the entirety of his secondary education in that country. At the age of 31, he was elected to the Thirty-Third Royal Assembly as a representative of St. Thomas and St. Denis Parish. A year before, he had married a young woman of English heritage, Sabina "Binkey" Elliott. The most telling

sign of his immersion in the British colonial identity came in 1771 when he applied to the British Kings of Arms to grant a suitable coat of arms for the Huger family to use in place of their original one, which had been lost in their flight from France. It seems quite revealing that Daniel III chose to request the creation of a British coat of arms for his family, rather than make any attempt to petition the French government for their original one.⁵⁶

Yet the very motto contained within this family crest would foreshadow his choice to abandon a British identity and adopt an American one. The coat of Arms reads "UBI LIBERTAS IBI PATRIA." Translated from the Latin, it means "Where there is liberty, there is my country." True to these words, Daniel III would support the side of the American colonists in their struggle for freedom.

Though Daniel Huger III never achieved the distinguished record of military service his younger brothers achieved during the American Revolution, he was an American patriot nonetheless. His political career reveals that he was clearly a part of the new American identity. After independence had been declared, Daniel served as a representative of the parishes of St. Philip and St. Michael in the Second and Third General Assembly of South Carolina from 1778

⁵⁶ "Huger Family Record," Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. Walter B. Edgar and N. Louis Bailey, ed., *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly, 1692-1775* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 340-341. Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family*, 7-8.

through 1780. While serving in the Third General Assembly, he was elected to the Privy Council (1780-1782). When it became apparent that the city of Charleston would fall into British hands, Daniel fled with Governor John Rutledge in an attempt to continue the functioning of the state's civil government. He later served as a member of the Sixth General Assembly and during this term was again elected to the Privy Council. Even more significant in illustrating his American identity, Daniel Huger III was elected as a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1786 and served there until 1788. As a member of this governmental body, he was on the forefront of the creation and implementation of the U.S. Constitution. He would continue this notable political service to his country after the adoption of the Constitution, serving from 1789 to 1793 as a member of the First and Second Congresses of the United States.⁵⁷

The second Huger in this generation of American patriots, like his older brother, had been fully a part of the British colonial identity in the first half of his life. Born in the early morning hours of March 19, 1743 at his father's Limerick plantation, he had also been baptized by the Anglican minister Reverend Daniel Dwight. As a young man in 1761, he earned the rank of Lieutenant in the South

⁵⁷ Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly*, 340-341.

Carolina Regiment of Volunteers and had helped defeat the Native Americans in the Cherokee War. A year after this victory, he married Elizabeth Chalmers in a ceremony held at St. Philip's in Charles Town, an Anglican church. All of his children would subsequently be baptized by the Anglican minister of St. Philip's. Isaac also achieved an impressive political career in the colonial period, serving in the Thirtieth and Thirty-First Royal Assemblies.⁵⁸

The personal records of the Huger family paint a vivid picture of Isaac, who always wore "a cocked hat, knee-breeches, boots and spurs." The account further notes:

General Isaac Huger was a man of portly size and fluid complexion. His animal instincts must have been strongly developed, for he was a man of great personal courage, strong passions, and dissipated habits. When under fire he would snort like a charger, pleasurably excited by the dangers of the conflict.⁵⁹

When the royal government collapsed in South Carolina, he was appointed a Lieutenant-Colonel in the militia. Two years later, he had risen to the rank of Brigadier General in the Continental Line. As commander of the Fifth

⁵⁸ "Huger Family Record," Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family*, 9-10. D. E. Huger Smith and A. S. Salley, Jr., ed., *Register of St. Philip's Parish, Charles Town, or Charleston, South Carolina, 1754-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971): 58, 65, 79. Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly*, 341-342.

⁵⁹ "Huger Chronicles," Huger Family Collection, SCL.

regiment, he fought valiantly in the battles of Savannah, Stono Ferry, Monck's Corner, and Charleston. There was not a single battle of importance in South Carolina or Georgia in which General Isaac Huger had not played a part. He fought twice at Savannah, first in its defense against the British attack on the city and later in the American forces' unsuccessful attempt to liberate Savannah from British control at the Battle of Stono Ferry. In this second skirmish, he fought courageously and was wounded as a result.⁶⁰

General Isaac Huger's valiant command of troops in the two battles at Savannah in 1779 had earned him a sterling reputation as a military officer. This reputation, however, would be slightly marred a year later. In his first military engagement in his native state, the British colonel Tarleton caught General Huger's regiment unprepared in the battle at Monck's Corner. With most of his troops captured or dispersed, the encounter resulted in an embarrassing defeat for Isaac. However, this loss did not prove ruinous to his military reputation or career. Most people attributed the defeat to the confusion and lack of experience of the newly initiated and undisciplined troops under his command, rather than to any inadequacy or carelessness on the General's part. Managing to escape into the swamp surrounding Monck's Corner, Isaac made his way to Charles

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Town where he commanded troops in an attempt to dispel a British attack on the city. Unfortunately, this conflict also proved unsuccessful, and Charles Town fell into British hands.⁶¹

After the defeat of American forces at Charles Town, General Isaac Huger commanded a brigade of Virginia troops in the battle at Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina. General Nathaniel Greene had gathered together several continental and militia regiments at the “High-rock ford, on the Haw river,” intending to attack the British forces camped near Guilford. Departing that meeting place on March 12, 1781 the army arrived at Guilford two days later. Receiving intelligence on the morning of the 15th that the British were advancing toward them, they stationed themselves in three lines on the crest of hill and prepared for the British attack. An intense battle ensued, and both sides suffered great loss. As the commander of the third line, General Huger was the last to engage the British troops. He effectively checked their advance, allowing the remaining American forces to retreat safely and preventing the battle from becoming a complete rout. During the battle Isaac was shot in the hand,

⁶¹ Ibid.

suffering his second injury of the war. Additionally, more than one hundred of the troops under his command were killed or wounded.⁶²

Nathaniel Green found the battle quite to his satisfaction, despite the fact that the American forces had been defeated. He found confidence in the news that “the enemy’s loss is very great, not less in killed and wounded than six hundred men.” His only regret was the loss of several important officers who were killed or injured in the battle, one of whom was “General Huger shot in the hand.” He praised Isaac and the other officers’ courage in the fulfillment of their duty, noting:

The firmness of the officers and soldiers, during the whole campaign, has been most unparalleled. Amidst innumerable difficulties, they have discovered a degree of magnanimity and fortitude that will for ever add a luster to their military reputation.⁶³

At the close of the Revolution, Isaac Huger’s record of service in the war for independence had established him as a renowned American patriot. In recognition of his courage and sacrifice, he was promoted to Major General in 1783. That same year the South Carolina General Assembly extended its official thanks to him, presenting him with several gold medals. Isaac had been born a

⁶² “Camp, at the iron works, ten miles from Guildford court house, March 16, 1781,” Revolutionary War Online Collection, SCHS.

⁶³ Ibid.

British colonist, but by 1783 he was firmly embedded within a new identity. He was no longer British; he had become an American.⁶⁴

The experience of John Huger, the third brother in this group of American patriots, was similar to that of his oldest brother, Daniel III. Born June 5, 1744 and baptized in the Anglican church of St. John's Parish, he had spent much of his youth in England. After completing his education there, he returned to South Carolina in 1766 and married Charlotte Motte. Serving a representative of St. Thomas and St. Denis in the Twenty-Eighth and Twenty-Ninth Royal Assemblies between 1768 and 1771, he was later elected to the Thirty-Third Royal Assembly from the parish of St. John. John Huger had truly been a part of the British colonial identity that existed in South Carolina prior to the Revolution.⁶⁵

Yet John would begin to develop sympathies for the American cause well before the war erupted. While serving in the Twenty-Eighth Roy Assembly, he became one of the "Unanimous Twenty-Six" who received the Massachusetts Circular Letter from Samuel Adams and voted to join Adams in opposition to the new taxes imposed by the Townshend Acts. John joined the American military effort as Captain of the Charleston Volunteers. However, like his brother Daniel

⁶⁴ Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family*, 10.

⁶⁵ "Huger Family Record," Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. Edgar and Bailey, ed., *Biographical Directory*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly*, 343-344.

III, he would be more active in the political aspects of the new nation. He served in the First and Second Provincial Congresses upon the collapse of the Royal government in the South Carolina, and he was later elected as the first Secretary of State under the Constitution of 1788. Most significantly, the parish of St. Thomas and St. Denis chose John as their delegate to the South Carolina Constitutional Convention in 1788. He was an ardent supporter of the new Constitution, which his brother Daniel had helped to create in the Continental Congress, and voted in favor of its ratification. Like all of his brothers, he had discarded his British colonial identity and become a passionate American patriot.⁶⁶

The youngest of these Huger males, Francis, would emulate the course of action taken by his brothers. He too had been completely absorbed into British colonial society, having been baptized in the Anglican church of St. Thomas Parish. His parents had both died when he was only three years old, leaving him a substantial inheritance that he would put to good use. In 1766, Francis traveled to England to receive an education. There he studied for two years at Eton

⁶⁶ Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family*, 12-13. Edgar and Bailey, ed., *Biographical Directory*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly*, 343-344.

College and afterwards continued his academic training at the renowned Cambridge University.⁶⁷

While pursuing his education in Great Britain, Francis established himself as an accomplished horseman and fox hunter, earning him great respect and admiration. This distinguished reputation among the English elite, combined with his handsome appearance and graceful manner, secured an engagement to a young lady of the English gentry. At the outset of the American Revolution, however, he would decide to follow his siblings in their support of the American cause. When Francis “turned Rebel” and joined the side of the colonists, his fiancé broke off their engagement. Heartbroken, he returned to South Carolina and would remain unmarried for the duration of his life. In a clear example of his adoption of the newly forming American identity, Francis chose to sacrifice the love of his life for his new country.⁶⁸

After returning home, Francis Huger earned the rank of Captain in Colonel William Moultrie’s Second Regiment of Regulars. In this position, he would help reinforce the provincial troops at Fort Johnson following its seizure from British control in September 1775. The next year he fought the British forces

⁶⁷ “Huger Family Record,” Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. N. Louise Bailey and Elizabeth Ivy Cooper, ed., *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives*, vol. 3, 1775-1790 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981), 354-355.

⁶⁸ “Huger Chronicles,” Huger Family Collection, SCL.

at the Battle of Fort Moultrie. In hours preceding the conflict, the American forces selected Francis, most likely due to his attractive appearance and refined social graces, as the bearer of a flag of truce to the commander of the British fleet. When the British commander, Sir Henry Clinton, extended the offer of a pardon if the colonists would turn over their weapons, Francis and the other officers immediately refused. The resulting battle ended in a decisive victory for the outnumbered American forces. Following his valiant service in this pivotal altercation, Francis was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and named Deputy Quartermaster General for the Southern Continental troops. Additionally, he lent the government of South Carolina a total of £42,410 to assist them in their fight for American independence. Francis Huger had given a great deal, in service, sacrifice, and money, to his new nation and identity.⁶⁹

Benjamin Huger, Francis's older brother and the fourth in this generation, provides what is perhaps the most revealing example of the Huger family's transition from British colonists to Americans. Though he had been an influential part of British colonial society, a member of the Church of England and representative in the Twenty-Ninth Royal Assembly, he nonetheless began to display an early enthusiasm for the American cause. In 1769, he participated

⁶⁹ "Huger Chronicles," Huger Family Collection, SCL. Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family*, 18-19. Bailey and Cooper, *Biographical Directory*, vol. 3, 1775-1790, 354-355.

as a member of the General Committee of the Non-Importation Association, formed to encourage colonists to cease consumption of British imports in response to what they viewed as unfair taxes levied on those commodities. Benjamin also refused a seat on the Royal Council three years later, feeling that it had become a mere tool of the Crown.⁷⁰

Benjamin began his military career as a Lieutenant in the Charleston Artillery Company in 1774 and by 1776 had advanced to the rank of Major in the Fifth Regiment of the South Carolina Line. As a military commander, Benjamin Huger was esteemed as one of the most promising officers in the Continental forces. He had whipped his soldiers into shape, bringing “his Regiment into a high state of efficiency,” and as a result earned a reputation as an excellent disciplinarian. However, this talented young officer would not live to reach his full potential. While conducting reconnaissance during a British attack on Charles Town in May of 1779, Benjamin was tragically shot and killed by American forces who had mistaken his party for the approaching enemy. A zealous patriot, Benjamin Huger had made the ultimate sacrifice in his support of the new American nation and identity.⁷¹

⁷⁰ “Huger Family Record,” Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory*, vol. 2, *The Commons House of Assembly*, 337-338.

⁷¹ “Huger Chronicles,” Huger Family Collection, SCL.

An account of a no longer extant letter in the Huger family collection reveals Benjamin's passionate loyalty to the American cause:

I (Dr. William Huger) have seen a letter (at one time in Aunt Lizzie's possession) written by Maj. Ben to some member of his family shortly before the attack by the British on Fort Moultrie. The letter breathes a high spirit of patriotism, a perfect reliance in the justice and unshaken confidence in the success of the Rebel Cause.⁷²

Benjamin Huger would influence his family's continued espousal of an American identity through more than just his military service. For on the morning of June 14, 1777, he would welcome into his home a pivotal player in the American Revolution. The night before, a small and lightly armed French vessel, unable to land at Charles Town due to the British blockade of that port, had cautiously entered the mouth of Winyah Bay. On board that ship was a lanky, red-haired youth who had distinguished himself in the army of France. This man would prove to be the Marquis de Lafayette, who had come to lend his aid to the Americans in their fight for independence. Once the residents of Winyah Bay realized that this ship was not part of the British fleet, a small boat manned by slaves set out to meet it. The slaves carried Lafayette to the shore of North Island, and from there he made his way to a nearby cottage. There, in the

⁷² Ibid.

front bedroom of Major Benjamin Huger's summer home, the Marquis de Lafayette spent his first night on American soil.⁷³

Lafayette's stay had a powerful impact on Benjamin's youngest son, Francis Kinloch Huger. Francis, though very young, was so favorably impressed by the Marquis that he developed a deep respect for the General. This admiration would drive Francis to perform a reckless act of patriotism nearly two decades after this encounter. Disregarding his own safety, Francis Kinloch Huger joined in an abortive attempt to free Lafayette from an Austrian prison in 1794.

The Marquis de Lafayette had returned to France after the American Revolution as a hero. Shortly after his return, he found himself entangled in a new democratic uprising, the French Revolution. Lafayette initially supported the revolutionary cause, participating in the development of a constitution that would turn the absolutist Bourbon regime into a limited monarchy. But after the fall of the Bastille in July 1789 and the violence that followed, he found himself torn between his patriotism and uneasiness with the growing brutality of the French Revolution. The crisis reached a boiling point in 1792 after the deposition of Louis XVI, when the Legislative Assembly issued a decree of impeachment

⁷³ "Where History Was Born-Lafayette Arrives," *Charleston News and Courier*, March 21, 1965. "Huger Chronicles," Huger Family Collection, SCL.

against Lafayette. The Marquis, unable to secure the support of his troops, fled to Prussia with hopes of returning to America.⁷⁴

Unfortunately, the Marquis de Lafayette was arrested and imprisoned before he could escape Prussia. In 1794, he was secretly transferred to the Austrian prison at Olmutz. The news of Lafayette's imprisonment enraged the American public, who revered him as a hero of their war for independence. A group of Americans began an attempt to secure his release. When diplomatic measures failed, this group hired a German adventurer by the name of Erich Bollman to find out where the Marquis was being held and attempt a rescue. Bollman managed to locate Lafayette at Olmutz prison, and the two men exchanged letters with secret messages written in lemon juice through the prison doctor. By this exchange, they developed a plan to free the Marquis from captivity.⁷⁵

Francis Kinloch Huger, in Austria at this time studying medicine at the University of Vienna, met Erich Bollman at coffeehouse he frequented in his spare time. Through several conversations, Bollman discovered the close

⁷⁴ "The Marquis de Lafayette: Prisoner of Olmutz," Huger Family Papers 1795-1897, SCHS.

⁷⁵ Daniel Huger Bacot, "Huger's Plot To Rescue Lafayette Aroused World," *Charleston News and Courier*, November 17, 1957. "The Marquis de Lafayette: Prisoner of Olmutz," Huger Family Papers 1795-1897, SCHS. Francis Kinloch Huger, *Memoir*, Huger Family Papers 1795-1897, SCHS.

connection between the Marquis and the Huger family. In time, he revealed his plan to rescue Lafayette, and Francis quickly agreed to join in the attempt. On November 8, 1794, Lafayette's coach left the gates of the prison, with Bollman and Huger following at a safe distance. When Lafayette and his guard had walked a good distance away from the coach, Francis Huger and Erich Bollman rushed upon them. The guard put up a fervent resistance, grabbing Lafayette by the throat and strangling him. Francis, a powerful and skilled fighter, subdued the guard and freed Lafayette from his grasp. Holding the guard to the ground, Francis entreated the Marquis to mount his horse and "go to Hoff," a nearby town where Bollman and Huger planned to meet him. By this time, a group of people in a nearby field had noticed the altercation and informed the authorities. Francis never made it out of sight of the authorities and was captured not far away. Lafayette, unaware of the existence of the Town of Hoff, mistakenly thought Huger had instructed him simply to "go off." Becoming anxious when the rescue party failed to meet him, he made his way to Brounseifen that evening, where his disheveled appearance and bloody clothes aroused suspicion. He met a man whom he thought trustworthy and asked him how to find the way to Neiss. The man quickly turned Lafayette over to authorities, and he was returned to Olmutz. Erich Bollman reached Hoff and waited for the arrival of his

fellow conspirators. They never arrived, and Bollman was arrested and taken to Olmutz prison. Thus, their enterprise failed entirely.⁷⁶

Now imprisoned, Francis Kinloch Huger, shackled to the wall by large chains, languished in a dark dungeon. Provided with only a dry piece of bread and jug of water daily, the prisoner had no comforts to ease his suffering. Initially, as he was later told by one of the prison guards, he had been sentenced to death in a Tribunal. Francis had been unable to understand the proceeding of the trial since he did not speak German. However, after further inquiry into the case, he was moved into a more comfortable holding room, where he was better fed and allowed on occasion to take walks in a walled and highly guarded courtyard. Despite the complete failure of their attempt and the cruel treatment he initially received at Olmutz, Francis found positive aspects in the circumstances of the effort. He felt it best that the rescue had not been successful, "as perhaps at that age, he might have fancied himself a hero." Furthermore, he believed that "the long solitary confinement made him more thoughtful and was an advantage to his character."⁷⁷

Francis Kinloch Huger's conduct most certainly reveals that he possessed a strong sense of American identity. If he had still held a strong attachment to

⁷⁶ Francis Kinloch Huger, *Memoir*, Huger Family Papers 1795-1897, SCHS.

⁷⁷ "Recollections of the Attempted Rescue," Huger Family Papers 1795-1897, SCHS.

his French origin, perhaps he would have hesitated in attempting to free a man who had been deemed an enemy of the French state. Yet Francis held no qualms about assisting the man who had fought bravely for America's freedom. His disregard for the official opinion of the French government toward Lafayette and personal view of him as a hero provides a powerful example of the Huger family's participation in the American identity. Francis's reasoning for joining the rescue attempt reveals his place within the American identity. He saw the opportunity "of doing a service to the man who had done so much for the liberation of my country, who had helped it to win the independence I enjoy at home."⁷⁸

The Huger family's espousal of American identity would continue into the nineteenth century. In an 1808 letter to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Harriott Lucas Huger, Francis Kinloch Huger's wife, expressed great joy at her relative's chance to travel through America. Her repeated use of the possessive pronoun "our" in referring to the country reveals a strong sense of attachment to the American nation. She noted:

How much I should like to participate in the
opportunity you will now have of seeing so much of
our own country, you will visit I suppose Washington

⁷⁸ Francis Kinloch Huger, *Memoir*, Huger Family Papers 1795-1987, SCHS. Alexandra Lee Levin, "An American's Attempt to Rescue Lafayette," *American History Illustrated* 22, no. 6 (1987): 20.

and most of our principal cities and have it in your power to see part of our country which it is possible you may never see again.⁷⁹

In 1812, when America took up arms against the British for the second time, the Hugers once again joined in the defense of their country. In 1798, Francis Kinloch Huger, true to family tradition, had received a commission as a Captain in the United States Army. He earned a promotion to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Second Artillery in December of 1812 and soon after acquired the post of Adjutant General. Francis would serve his nation throughout the full duration of the war. His cousin Daniel Elliott Huger, son of Daniel Huger III, joined the effort in 1814, abandoning his successful law practice to protect his nation.⁸⁰

The European tour made by Francis Kinloch Huger's son, Benjamin, in the late 1820s clearly shows the young man fully engaged in American identity throughout that decade. After passing a good deal of time in England, Benjamin made his way to Paris in the spring of 1828. Upon arriving there, he felt ill at ease in this unfamiliar land and sought the comforting companionship of his American countrymen. Writing home to his sister, Benjamin noted, "When I first

⁷⁹ Harriott Lucas Huger to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, August 10, 1808, Huger Family Collection, SCL.

⁸⁰ Harriott Lucas Huger to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, December 5, 1812, Benjamin Huger Family Papers 1809-1973, SCHS. Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family*, 20-26.

arrived here I went to a hotel where most of the strangers in this land from America generally stop.”⁸¹

Benjamin’s March 1828 letter to his sister not only illustrates his American identity, it also demonstrates a complete lack of any attachment to his family’s French heritage. He describes himself as a “stranger in this land.” Furthermore, he makes no mention of the country as the land of his ancestors, which would certainly be expected from someone who possessed any sense of a French identity or remembrance of his French origin. This was no joyous homecoming, as Benjamin felt uneasy in this strange land.

Even after an eight month period of adjustment, Benjamin Huger continued to feel uncomfortable in France. He professed:

What an unpleasant thing it is to be in a country where you do not understand the language. You feel yourself so helpless, every body imposes upon you as a matter of course, and you are as helpless as a child. How I envied the little children when I first arrived in France, it seemed a hard case that they should chatter away in French with so much ease, when it caused me an effort sufficiently strong to dislocate a jawbone to pronounce a word, if it was only to ask for bread or water.⁸²

⁸¹ Benjamin Huger to Elizabeth Pinckney Huger, March 25, 1828, Benjamin Huger Family Papers 1809-1973, SCHS.

⁸² Benjamin Huger to Elizabeth Pinckney Huger, November 13, 1828, Benjamin Huger Family Papers 1809-1973, SCHS.

Benjamin's time in France did not reestablish any connection to his French ancestry. Nor did it develop within him any affection for the French nation or people. In fact, his trip through France had the opposite effect. It served to strengthen his identity as an American and increased his pride in his native country:

I would go much farther and take much more interest at works of art that I think may one day be useful to myself or my country rather than to see all the beauties and enjoy all the pleasures this country affords. I really think that a trip here is of great advantage to a person from our nation. Not so much from the actual information gained here, but to learn how to make a proper estimate of our country and ourselves. From our childhood up we are accustomed to regard the Old World and all that comes from it as perfection—such a thing was made in Europe, it must be excellent, such a man was educated in Europe, he must know much more than we poor devils. Now though it must be allowed that in many things, they from their age and other advantages excel us far, yet to the most common observer it must appear plain that though we have not brought some things to so high perfection, yet what we have is quite superior. Here in France which has figured so much in history, we read of her Kings, her grand wars, her magnificence. But in the examination of the country we find every little article, their houses, their cultivation, their utensils of all kinds, ploughs, carts, wagons, etc., and above all their people far, far inferior to us.⁸³

⁸³ Benjamin Huger to Elizabeth Pinckney Huger, September 9, 1828, Benjamin Huger Family Papers 1809-1973, SCHS.

At the close of the 1820s, the members of the Huger family were immersed in the American identity and had been for more than half a century. Responding to the escalation of contentious political and economic disagreements between the colonists and the mother country late in the colonial period, the Hugers had chosen to abandon their identity as British colonists in 1776. Joining the fight for independence, they established themselves as distinguished American patriots on the battle field. They also served as influential political patriots, playing an integral part in the creation and ratification of the Constitution. From the outbreak of the American Revolution, they had defined themselves as Americans, and this self-designation would continue unabated throughout the first three decades of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, all connection to their French heritage had been completely severed during this period. In 1830, by virtue of their long and celebrated record of patriotism, the Huger family stood tall among the prominent families of the United States. Yet that decade would witness the beginning of a process that would push the Hugers to once again adopt a new identity.

CHAPTER THREE

SOUTHERNERS, CAROLINIANS AND CONFEDERATES

In 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte sold a massive 828,000 square mile territory to the United States for approximately \$15,000,000 in payments and cancellation of French debt. This acquisition effectively doubled the country's size, supplying ample terrain to accommodate Americans' insatiable thirst for western expansion. Yet the process of populating this new land threatened to upset the balance between slave states and free states that had been preserved up until this time. As a result, Americans fought over whether or not to allow slavery in this new land, and this bickering created an intense sectional division in the United States. Thus, the Louisiana Purchase set into motion events that would eventually push people in the South toward another identity transformation.

In fact, the issues surrounding the expansion of slavery into these new territories acquired in the Louisiana Purchase played a major role in the transition from American to Southerner. Intense disagreements arose between residents of slave states, who needed to expand slavery in order to ensure its continued success, and those of free states, who wished to limit slavery in the new lands and thereby increase opportunities for the development of the free

labor economy. As a result, the Hugers, like all people of the slave states, began to redefine themselves once again. Before the contentious issue of slavery was thrust to the forefront of American life, no need for a redefinition of identity had existed. Only when external political and economic circumstances necessitated it would a new Southern identity come into being.

The earliest expressions of this transition from American to Southern by the Huger family appear in the 1830s. If the Hugers had fully shifted their identity and thought of themselves as distinctively Southern before this time, then they made no mention of it in any of their correspondence or personal reflections. Responding to the controversial issues surrounding slavery that divided the nation geographically, the family would begin to display a sense of this separation from their free state counterparts through the use of a new lexicon for describing themselves and those from the North.

Writing to her grandmother in 1833, Sarah Huger made an inquiry concerning a relative's travels that would reveal a budding sense of Southern identity. She asked, "How does Maria like a winter at the North? I have heard that Southerners generally find the first winter there less severe than the second or third." This small talk holds a hidden significance: it represents the first use of the word "Southerner" in any of the letters or memoirs written by Huger

family members. Here we find the first instance in which they think of themselves as something beyond just American, somehow dissimilar to many of their fellow countrymen. Furthermore, the importance contained in Sarah's use of the term "the North" must not be overlooked. By using the article "the" and capitalizing "North," she makes an important recognition of this area as a specific place separate and unlike the place where they lived. At this point the transition to a Southern identity was still in its formative stages. It had not yet reached a level of exclusivity, since the Hugers still thought of themselves as Americans as well. This sense of dual identity resulted, at least in part, from the simultaneous and symbiotic development of both the American and Southern identities. An American identity had not yet been completely abandoned, and a Southern one had not yet been fully adopted. Yet the seeds of Southern identity were beginning to take root, and they would grow steadily stronger as time passed.⁸⁴

Alfred Huger would also display the shift from American to Southern in this decade. Alfred had been born in November of 1788, the son of the revolutionary era politician John Huger. He would emulate his father's political success, serving continuously in the South Carolina Senate from 1818 to 1833. As

⁸⁴ Sarah Huger to Sarah Lance, December 29, 1833, Huger Family Correspondence, Daniel Huger Papers 1772-1886, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

a delegate to the Nullification Convention, which had been assembled in 1832 to determine what course of action South Carolina should take in response to the Tariffs of 1828 and 1832, he had been one of the few who opposed the Ordinance. His vote earned him an appointment as postmaster of Charleston in 1834 after President Andrew Jackson fired the previous one for his support of the Nullification Ordinance. Yet despite Alfred's refusal to support nullification, the duties of his newly earned position would eventually push him to reveal a sense of Southern identity.

The decade of the 1830s witnessed the extensive publication of literature denouncing slavery, and in 1835 the American Anti-Slavery Society launched a massive propaganda campaign by flooding slave state with abolitionist tracts. As postmaster of a city in the heart of the slave-holding South, Alfred Huger was caught in difficult predicament. He placed great importance in the duties and responsibilities of his office, but he also identified himself as a Southerner and as such held the beliefs that made these publications offensive to his sensibilities. To fulfill the duties of his office and disseminate this literature in Charleston would mean proliferating opinions that attacked the very base on which the entire economic and social order of the South was built. Alfred's correspondence

with New York postmaster, Samuel L. Gouverneur, reveals his self-identification as a Southerner and his desire to defend the institution of slavery.⁸⁵

In a letter dated August 6, 1835, Alfred Huger would begin to demonstrate his Southern identity. He stated:

We hope that the good sense which distinguishes your city will shew itself now: that the true philanthropy which belongs to you will stretch forth its mighty hand and that the Enterprising Spirit of that community which has pushed an unrivall'd commerce into Every quarter of the Globe, will not quietly look on these efforts to Establish Anarchy and Misrule among us. I confidently calculate that New York will take this matter up—that the Slave and the Owner will be left where the Constitution of the U.S. placed them and all will be well; but if the South is driven to protect itself, we shall do it to a man.⁸⁶

The final line of this excerpt clearly demonstrates that Alfred Huger viewed himself as a Southerner. He makes mention of “the South,” a specific and unique place. Alfred not only recognizes the South as a distinctive entity, he discloses that he considers himself a part of it. When he noted that the South would go to extraordinary lengths to defend itself and its prosperity, he used the expression “we” as opposed to “they” or even “it.” This word choice confirms that Alfred placed himself within a Southern identity at this time.

⁸⁵ Frank Otto Gatell, “Postmaster Huger and the Incendiary Publications,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 64, no. 4 (1963): 193-194.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

He would write even more directly about his identity as a Southerner a week later in another letter to Gouverneur. He would leave no question regarding his Southern identity when he stated:

And where Fanaticism (mis-called Humanity) shall once cause the Sword to be drawn against our own Property, the War will be one, not of defence or assault, but of utter desolation and annihilation. And Southerner as I am (thank God) and Slave holder as I found myself at birth, I never can contemplate without horror, the possibility of sooner or later embruing my hands in the blood of those who never injured me.⁸⁷

It is not surprising that the first use of the terms “Southern,” “the South,” and “the North” appear in the 1830s. After all, this is the period in which the overall Southern identity was being formed. The political, economic, and social developments that arose in that decade pushed the people of the Southern states to reevaluate their identity, and in the process they began to redefine themselves. The early years of the decade found the nation embroiled in the controversy known as the Nullification Crisis. In 1828, the United States Congress passed a highly protective tariff designed to promote and protect Northern manufactured goods by placing high taxes on imported goods. This law hurt Southerners by forcing them to purchase Northern goods at prices much higher than they had

⁸⁷ Ibid., 200.

been accustomed to paying for European manufactures. Faced with a reduced market for their exports, Britain reduced its importation of cotton from the United States, further devastating the Southern economy. When Andrew Jackson, whom Southerners had expected would severely reduce the tariffs, signed into law the Tariff of 1832, which only made slight reductions, Southerners were sorely disappointed. In response, South Carolina called together a convention and issued the Ordinance of Nullification, declaring the two laws null and void within the boundaries of the state. When Congress passed a bill authorizing the president to use force against South Carolina in order to enforce the tariff, the issue threatened to burst into violence. However, Congress passed a renegotiated tariff bill more suitable to Southerners in February of 1833, and South Carolina repealed the Ordinance of Nullification. Though danger had been averted, the disagreement had created the impetus for the formation of a new Southern identity.

Issues surrounding the institution of slavery in the 1830s further influenced the formation of a Southern identity. In 1831, the Nat Turner revolt put Southerners on edge. As Turner and his cohorts traversed through Southampton County, Virginia, freeing slaves and murdering their owners, Southerners were horrified. Though the revolt was quickly suppressed, it had a

lasting effect on the Southern psyche, creating great fear among them and pushing them towards a virulent defense of their economic institution. This decade also witnessed the rise of abolitionism. Abolitionist societies were formed in the North, and anti-slavery journals and newspapers were published and circulated in growing numbers. Until this decade, Southerners had never known such direct and aggressive threats to the safety of their economic system and way of life. It is no wonder, then, that the Southern identity would be born out of this period.

The years from 1840 to 1849 witnessed an extension of this espousal of Southern identity. As disagreements concerning the institution of slavery grew more bitter, members of the Huger family became disenchanted with the course the country seemed to be taking. Cleland Kinloch Huger, the son of Francis Kinloch Huger who had displayed a strong attachment to the American identity in his attempted rescue of the Marquis de Lafayette, would reveal this growing disillusionment with the American nation in a letter to his brother Benjamin. He cautioned his brother against making a long term loan for the purchase of his plantation in Abbeville, especially in a time when circumstances were changing so rapidly and unpredictably. Noting the capriciousness of the period, he warned in an 1846 letter: "I would immediately doubt any man who asks for so

much time, as things are too changeable in this country; in ten years, we may be a Mobocracy or even a Monarchy.” In this statement, Cleland reveals his view that the path down which the country was headed represented a sort of betrayal of the principles on which the nation had been founded. He echoes the sentiments of his relative Alfred Huger, who had expressed a similar outlook a decade earlier in asserting that the slaves and their owners should “be left where the constitution of the U.S. placed them.”⁸⁸

In response to this growing dissatisfaction with the course of events in the United States, the Hugers progressively saw themselves as less and less American, and their descriptions of themselves as Southerners steadily increased in strength and frequency. In 1848, a Huger family member would reveal a strengthened sense of Southern identity that had developed out of the contention surrounding the issue of the expansion of slavery. Appalled by the candidacy of a man “who has admitted that ‘Slavery is an evil,’ though with the saving clause that it is a necessary one, and hopes for its eradication sooner or later,” this Huger avowed:

Under no political necessity whatever will we, the
people of the South, support for the office of President
or Vice President of the United States, any person

⁸⁸ Cleland Kinloch Huger to Benjamin Huger, February 23, 1846, Cleland Kinloch Huger Papers, SCL. Gatell, “Postmaster Huger and the Incendiary Publications,” 197.

who does not amply satisfy us that he is opposed to any and all forms of excluding Slavery from the Territories of the United States.⁸⁹

This assertion reveals several important facts about the Huger family's identity transition. First, the family clearly placed itself within the Southern identity by this time. The use of the phrase "we, the people of the South" indicates their conception of the South as a separate, distinct place, as well as their recognition of themselves as part of that entity. Furthermore, the author's refusal to vote for any candidate who did not openly and enthusiastically support slavery demonstrates the close connection that existed between the institution and the development of Southern identity.

Another letter from 1849 reaffirms the Hugers' strengthened sense of Southern identity during this decade. Relaying an interesting encounter that took place during a trip through Georgia, the communication displays the author's solid conceptualization of himself as a Southerner. This correspondence contains the first utilization of the infamous, and derogatory, term "Yankee" to describe the people of the Northern states. The letter signed B. Huger (Benjamin?) recounts:

⁸⁹ B. Huger to Unkown, 1848, Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

The day previous, an Itinerant hocus-pocus, hodge-podge of a man issued hand bills, giving notice of his intent to make recitations from Shakespeare, sing Yankee songs and with a touch of marvelous stories wind up with his powers of ventriloquism, which exhibition was to take place on Monday evening.⁹⁰

This piece of correspondence further illustrates the application of this new word choice for describing those from the North by recounting the circumstances of an unexpected meeting with a prior acquaintance. The writer notes:

Mr. Force passed through Stone Mountain when I was there...and was giving me a description of the beauties of his present situation, being on a high ridge of land, with a beautiful prospect and fine grazing for his cattle of which he has a great many, that he had sent for a Northern dairy man to attend his dairy and what he meant to do, shewing me, as fine a cheese made on his place as could be produced in Yankee land.⁹¹

By using the terms “Northern” and “Yankee,” the Hugers distinguish these people as group different from themselves. In a type of inverse assertion of identity, they have declared themselves to be Southern by affirming that they differ from these “Northern Yankees.”

This letter from 1849 not only differentiates Northerners as a distinct group by calling them “Yankees,” it also assigns specific distinguishing

⁹⁰ B. Huger to “My dear son,” October 24, 1849, Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

⁹¹ Ibid.

characteristics to them. The Yankee that the author speaks about in the letter is described as an “itinerant hocus-pocus, hodge-podge of a man” who dabbles in ventriloquism. In other words, he is a roaming charlatan who possesses no roots or morals. This character definition goes far beyond simply distinguishing Yankees as different and revealing a powerful contempt for them. It clearly shows that the Hegers both value and view themselves as the diametric opposite of this man: an honorable and civilized people grounded in tradition and principles.

This decade also witnessed the Hegers’ continued attempt to distance themselves from their French heritage. In this period, the family would move beyond a mere abandonment of any French sensibility and develop an intense dislike and condemnation of the French nation and its people. A letter from 1845 displays the emergence of the first real sense of contempt for the French among the Heger family:

You have read of course the accounts by the last steamer from France the unheard of atrocities committed by that infuriated people, such as are disgraceful to this civilized age. Who would have believed it possible for women to cut off the feet of their prisoners and to send them back to their friends in that mutilated state? Yet such is the statement made by Mr. Munet (Munat?) in his letter to his wife. France is destined to much misery before order is

restored, if ever, for it would appear as if they were in a state of anarchy, and if the reflecting and more virtuous portion of that people, who make up but a small number, do not gain the ascendancy, the days of Robespierre and Danton will be renewed.⁹²

Even though the family patriarch was himself a Frenchman, this piece of correspondence describes the French people as a group completely separate from the Hugers themselves. The French are repeatedly referred to as “they,” and no indication of any connection, however distant, to them can be discerned within the language of this document. Even more significant, the letter describes them as “that infuriated people” who have committed horrible acts “such as are disgraceful to this civilized age.” This statement reveals an interesting similarity between Frenchmen and Northerners. In a way, the French are Yankees as well, or at least share some of the defining characteristics of a Yankee. The terminology contained in this letter provides a clear example of the growing condemnation with which the Hugers had come to view the people of their ancestral homeland. This sentiment would be most vividly expressed by Thomas Pinckney Huger in 1848. Writing about the poor state of the rice market in the South Carolina lowcountry, resulting in part from a lack of serious participation by French buyers, Thomas Huger would wish the worst upon

⁹² Unsigned Letter, 1845, Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

them. He exclaimed, "I wish these d---d Frenchmen were all in hell. They have done all this with their d---d revolution."⁹³

By 1850, a sense of Southern identity had grown so strong among the Huger family that they expressed a willingness to fight to defend it. As tensions regarding the question of slavery's expansion worsened, they state their commitment to make the ultimate sacrifice for the preservation of the South and the economic institution that supported it. Their language becomes the rhetoric of an oppressed minority, and they will spare no expense in achieving freedom from this tyranny:

What? The South submit when they have dared the deed and it has been done? When the halls of Legislature ring with their vilification and abuse, when a Southerner is looked upon as an unclean thing, when the name of John C. Calhoun is pronounced a disgrace to Yale College as one of its graduates, when the stamp of inferiority is placed upon our brows and we are forbidden access with our property to the territories which have been purchased with our own treasure and our own blood when immediately succeeding the passage of the Peace Measures the bark of the Abolition blood-hound is heard at our doors and the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia (the next step) is threatened and

⁹³ Unsigned Letter, 1845, Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS. Thomas Pinckney Huger to Cleland Kinloch Huger, April 19, 1848, Cleland Kinloch Huger Papers, SCL. This excerpt is displayed here exactly as it appears in the letter. The choice not to spell out the curse words was made by T. P. Huger himself and does not represent a decision on my own part.

postponed only for expediency, when that immense concession, the fugitive Slave Bill, is being most violently opposed all over the North, and the cry of repeal has already gone forth, when in a word, all our outposts have been driven in and our danger is most imminent, is that the time to cry for Peace?...My dear brother, I hope, I know that you are all a South Carolinian, a true South Carolinian (the only name which reeks not of treachery and dishonor) that you are ready to stand by the dear old State to the last extremity, ready to shed every drop of blood for her, to sink or to swim with her, to live or to die with her.⁹⁴

This growing sense of Southernness that developed between 1840 and 1850, once again, resulted from the political events that transpired during those years. The Missouri Compromise had temporarily resolved the contentious issue of the expansion of slavery into newly acquired territories. But the annexation of Texas would upset the balance between slave states and free states, and the debate was again thrust to the forefront of American politics. When the United States entered into the Mexican-American War, the issue was exacerbated by the Wilmot Proviso, which proposed that slavery should be prohibited from all territory that might be gained from Mexico. When the United States gained additional territorial possessions from the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, arguments over the future of the land fully reopened any old wounds that might

⁹⁴ Unsigned Letter to H.H.B., October 13, 1850, Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

have begun to heal. California's application for admittance to the Union as a free state certainly did nothing to calm Southerners' fears. Attempts to outlaw the slave trade in the District of Columbia and block the passage of a stringent fugitive slave law only added to their growing concerns. All these factors served to intensify and harden the new Southern identity.

When the Southern states seceded from the Union and took up arms against the federal government, the Hegers quickly joined in the effort. Secession played an important role in strengthening Southern identity. Now the South had a defined set of official boundaries and an organization at the national level. Southerners gained a new government, as well as a new term to add to their lexicon of Southern identity, "Confederate." With a completely unified sense of place and purpose, the South would develop the strongest identity it had ever known. The shared experience of the war would subsequently ensure that the Southern identity would remain powerful through Reconstruction.

The sentiments of the Hegers were with the Southern cause from the very beginning. When South Carolinians attacked the federal forces at Fort Sumter in April 1861, several Heger family members were standing in the crowd at White Point Gardens, also known as the Battery, at the tip of the Charleston peninsula. While visiting her cousin Elizabeth who lived near the Battery, Julia Heger

watched as throngs of people filled the place to witness the first skirmish of the Civil War. Racked with concern for the safety of her husband, Robert Dewar Bacot, she and her cousin made their way into the multitude gathering in the Battery to watch the battle unfold. In this location, Julia sat perfectly poised to behold the entire spectacle.⁹⁵

She reflected on the event and the flutter of pride it induced in her heart:

To think that what we feared would have been a most mortal and deadly conflict, should have resulted without bloodshed on either side, and an unconditional surrender taken place. How I glory in being a daughter of South Carolina. Our little State has acted most nobly and our own dear Charleston has won laurels for herself, and the event of the 13th of April will be a memorable epoch in our history. The children and myself were at Cousin Elizabeth Huger's the whole of Friday morning witnessing with the most intense excitement the whole affair. On the lowering of the Federal Flag, which was immediately succeeded by the raising of the white flag, (females though we were) yet liberally the shout of joy and exaltation resounded from us. On coming up home the streets presented the greatest animation, soldiers on horseback flying in all directions proclaiming the joyful tidings, and the drivers as they passed along King St. bearing aloft a large sheet with "Fort Sumter surrendered" in the most conspicuous characters.

⁹⁵ Julia Huger Bacot to Robert Dewar Bacot, April 12, 1861, Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

Amidst all my dearest husband, I could not help my heart overflowing with love and gratitude.⁹⁶

The Hugers would not only spout the rhetoric of Southern identity, they would don the gray of the Confederate military and join in the South's cause. The family would give the Confederacy a total of four officers. The father-son team of Cleland Kinloch Huger and Cleland Kinloch Huger, Jr., comprised the first two. Cleland Kinloch Huger served in the Confederate Army as a Major in Hagood's Brigade. His son, after several years as an enlisted man, received a commission as Lieutenant in the 1st Regiment, S.C. Artillery. Regrettably, he would be killed in combat shortly afterwards. The other two Hugers to become Confederate soldiers were both serving as officers in the United States military when the conflict erupted. These men immediately resigned their posts and joined the Confederate war effort.⁹⁷

Benjamin Huger, eldest son of Francis Kinloch Huger, had followed the family military tradition from an early age. In 1825, he had graduated eighth in his class at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He had as

⁹⁶ Julia Huger Bacot to Robert Dewar Bacot, April 15, 1861, Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

⁹⁷ Cleland K. Huger, Jr. to D. E. Huger Smith, Charleston, October 23, 1863, *Mason Smith Family Letters, 1860-1868*, ed. Daniel E. Huger Smith, Alice R. Huger Smith, and Arney R. Childs (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1950), 68. Clermont Huger Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family: Their Line of Descent from Daniel and Margaret Perdriau Huger of France and South Carolina* (Bluffton, SC: Bluffton Historical Preservation Society Inc., 2002), 27-29.

classmates at that school the likes of Jefferson Davis and Robert Anderson.

Benjamin was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Third Artillery upon finishing his education. By 1847, his outstanding conduct in the Mexican-American War had earned him promotion to Colonel. But when the war began in 1861, Benjamin resigned all his commissions held in the United States Army and offered his services to the Confederacy, becoming a Major General.

Unfortunately, General Benjamin Huger fell prey to the actions of unscrupulous commanders and politicians, and he became a scapegoat for certain military failures.⁹⁸

Thomas Bee Huger began his military career when he entered the United States Navy in 1835, and he had seen active service in the Mediterranean. Yet on the outbreak of war, he resigned his commission in the Navy of the United States and “drew his sword in behalf of the cause” of Southern liberation. Lieutenant Thomas Huger would command the Confederate steamer *MacRae* that attempted to defend the forts outside New Orleans at the end of April 1862. In that contest he would give his life to the defense of the South. During the clash, Thomas came into contact with the Union ship *Iroquois*, which had been the ship he had served on during his Mediterranean tour of duty. He delighted in this

⁹⁸ Lee, *The Joseph Alston Huger Family*, 27-29.

circumstance, admitting “I could not resist the temptation of a little private fight with her.” Early in the battle, Thomas was shot, but continued to fight valiantly as the blood streamed down his face. He recounted: “I had already been shot once, bleeding profusely from the brow, still I felt the salvation of the vessel and the honor of my flag depended on my crew seeing me continually before them.” Before the battle ended, Thomas received a second, more severe wound. He died in a New Orleans hospital shortly afterwards. Lieutenant Thomas Huger gave his life in defense of his Southern identity. “In the honorable consistency of his life, and in the glorious heroism of his death, he has shown himself a son of whom South Carolina may well be proud.”⁹⁹

The Huger family members who remained on the home front would also assert their support for the new Southern nation. As the war began, they developed a passionate confidence in their new country and the justice of its cause. The Hugers at home would offer words of encouragement for their kin in the battlefield:

My prayers and blessings attend you my dearest
Brother in your post of danger—as also our other dear
ones scattered about. May our Heavenly Father
protect and defend you with his Almighty love, and

⁹⁹ Thomas B. Huger to Dr. Benjamin Huger, May 7, 1862, Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS. “Death of Lieutenant Thomas B. Huger,” Huger Family Historical and Genealogical Research Files, SCHS.

give you an arm of strength and spirit of Valor to defend your Country and its rights. I would not have you otherwise than where you are—though my heart is torn with conflicting emotions...Now do I commend you all into God's gracious keeping, praying that He would see fit to spare you to love and serve Him with greater diligence and steadfastness of purpose. A sister's voice cheers you on in the path of duty to your home, state, and country. Fight for her valiantly and trust now in your own native strength. Your country calls you and I bid you God speed.¹⁰⁰

As the war progressed, the family's assertion of support for the Confederate effort gained strength. Many Hugers found themselves separated from their homes in Charleston, which was under the constant threat of attack by Union forces. This displacement furthered their appreciation for their Southern identity and increased the contempt they felt for the North. While the "impudent Yankee shells" flew overhead during the siege of Charleston, the Hugers clung to hope. Reflecting on their separation from home, they would eloquently express their devotion to the South and pray for deliverance from the imposing enemy:

If it were not for the awful dread of the Enemy either shelling or getting possession of the City, I would prefer being in town. But as it has pleased the Almighty to visit us with such a sore affliction as to be without a home of our own, He will I trust in

¹⁰⁰ "Your own dear loving sister" to "My Dearest Brother," 1861, Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

Judgement remember mercy and save and deliver our
much loved native home from the hands of a cruel
and bloodthirsty foe.¹⁰¹

The Confederacy's defeat in 1865 did nothing to allay the Hugers family assertion of Southern identity. In fact, it had the exact opposite effect. The shared experience of suffering and sacrifice during the conflict brought Southerners closer together. This collective sense of loss among the people of the South only reinforced their identity as Southerners. In other words, the Confederate experience was a powerful assimilating force, because it combined all the dynamics of identity formation (social, political, economic, and martial) into one potent package. As a result, Southern identity was much stronger after the Civil War than it had ever been before the conflict ensued.

In an essay contained in the Huger family papers, the family would articulate this sense of suffering and loss common among all Southerners of this period. The very title of the piece, "The Ruins of Time," expresses this Southern sentiment. Examining the state of affairs in the South since the conclusion of the war, the author paints a bleak picture of the decimated region:

Time has not stayed his hand, but has continued to
revel in spoliation and decay as much as in any of the

¹⁰¹ Jane Huger to "My dear cousin," May 5 [no year], Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS. Unsigned Letter, August 31 [no year], Huger Family Correspondence 1836-1890, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

primeval ages. Civil War, a war for a people's rights, has lately swept across our devoted land. Burned and pillaged towns, the blackness of ashes in the place where once smiling Hamlets dotted the fair landscape, desecrated churches and violated hearths plainly mark the track of the spoiler. What household mourns not its circle broken, contains not at least one vacant chair...The cause for which we fought and bled lies low, tho' registered in Heaven; the alarm of war is now hushed...Death no longer holds high carnival, but has left, in token of his bloody banquet, on the Mountain side and the valley, in wood and dale, the green graves of our many slain. May their memories ever greener be. Peace has resumed her sway, and yet melancholy is the picture still presented to the eye of the beholder. What more of suffering and of anguish is to be our portion? Let those of us who blush not at the name of "Southerner" or "South Carolinian" gather more closely to our "Mother." With her afflicted sisters, she sits manacled in sack-cloth and in ashes. Her pale Crescent which mysteriously rose, as it were, from the waves, and shown with silvery light o'er Sumter's grim battlements, is set in blood; her Palmetto droops; and her sable weeds attest the grief she feels for her perished sons.¹⁰²

A handwritten historical sketch of St. Andrews parish found in the family's papers reiterates the outlook expressed in "The Ruins of Time." It portrays a similarly austere view of the South during Reconstruction. It notes:

The smaller portion of St. Andrew's Parish, on the north-eastern side of the Ashley River, was prior to the War Between the States, a succession of fine old

¹⁰² "The Ruins of Time," Huger Family Papers 1772-1910, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

country-seats or manors or villas, all of which had to be abandoned and given up, because of the complete loss of fortunes following that War, and may now be numbered among the "Ruins of Time"...Every one of the old Mansions and other buildings thereon were ruthlessly burned by predatory bands of United States soldiers between 1861 and 1865, excepting the old Colonial Mansion known as Drayton Hall and excepting too the Old Parish Church.¹⁰³

Furthermore, the sketch reveals a heightened level of contempt for the Yankees, vilifying them to the point that they appear anti-American. Relating the fate of Middleton Place during the Civil War, it states:

Its fine old brick mansion and one of the two detached wings and other buildings were likewise ruthlessly burned down by the vandal foes during the War Between the States. Indeed their vandalism was greatest here (owing, it is said, to the fact that the owner was a very large slave-holder), for they rifled the mansion, casting out priceless old furniture and books beside valuable old oil portraits and paintings and pictures and other works of art, and in their fury they even broke into the massive old Middleton Family Tomb in the midst of the Garden, in which repose the remains, among many others, of Arthur Middleton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and scattered about the bones of the dead. What a commentary this: The United States government, through its Army, desecrating the remains of a signer of the Declaration of Independence.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ "Historical Sketch of St. Andrews Parish," Huger Family Papers 1772-1910, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

The diaries and personal memoirs written by Huger family members during the Reconstruction era are replete with elegiac indications of their Southern and Confederate identity. One such diary, written between 1870 and 1880, contains dozens of poems that illustrate the family's continued self-identification as Southerners. It is not clear whether the Hugers actually authored these poems or simply copied them. Regardless, their decision to collect and preserve these works show a clear identification with the values and ideas contained within them. Too many poems appear in the pages of this diary to give a complete account of them in such a limited space. However, two selections sufficiently demonstrate the themes and opinions expressed in all of them.

The first of these poems, "The Confederate Dead," sets the tone for the entire collection. In dramatic language, the poem mourns the loss of loved ones in the noble fight for Southern rights:

Yea, peace to the dead, Life's warfare is past
And the enemy, Death, has been conquered at last
Though the palm of the victor on earth was ungiven
The hand of the Savior bestowed it in Heaven.

Then mourn not for them, but rejoice in their gain
Our army of martyrs now traverses the plain
Of Emanuel's Land, while each noble brow

Is encircled with garlands of victory now

The Banner round which they rallied and swore
Forever should wave our Southern land o'er
We'll furl round their dust, for they would be proud
Its guardian folds should make them a shroud

'Tis battered and torn and crimson with gore
Like leaves of the autumn its fragments strewn o'er
The hillocks 'neath which our brave soldiers rest
In their "jackets of grey" that cover each breast

No column of marble rears o'er them now
But maidens like lilies around their graves bow
Their tears like dew drops upon their graves lie
And echo soft answers the pale maidens sigh

We ne'er can forget them while memory reigns
The South's fallen heroes she'll bind in her chains
As Elijah, who flung from his fiery car
A mantel which fell on the earth from afar

So our brave men, as they sunk them to rest
Flung over their country's fair bleeding breast.¹⁰⁵

Though written years after this first poem, the second selection from this personal notebook resonates with the same rhetoric and ideals:

They are gone—our friends and brothers
They are gone—who loved us well
And a holy hope lies fallen
Buried with them where they fell

They are gone—our best and bravest

¹⁰⁵ "The Confederate Dead," Poetry Notebook, Huger Family Papers 1772-1910, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

And their souls were borne above
While they sought in vain to shield us
With the Aegis of their love

Sleep they now in marble stillness
Each one in his narrow grave
On their forms the battle harness
Of the land they died to save

How shall we, a ruined people
Deck their blood stained altar here
How shall we, whose hearts are breaking
Other tributes give than tears

Sainted souls, dead peerless heroes
'Till the South forgets her wrong
'Till we greet ye rising glories
From your tombs redeemed and strong

Till the last torn Southern heartstring
Shall have snapped beneath its load
And a weary wasted people
Find eternal rest with God

Ye shall live, O! matchless warriors
Dauntless champions of the truth
Ye shall live, O! Deathless martyrs
Crowned immortal in your youth

Live upon the lips of children
Live in manhood's deeper prime
In the high pure heart of woman
Fadeless in your deeds sublime¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ "Hymn to the Southern Dead," Poetry Notebook, Huger Family Papers 1772-1910, Bacot Family Collection, SCHS.

With the end of Reconstruction, a new process of integration began in the United States. This process was aimed at reincorporating the South and once again unifying America. In trying to make sense of the extreme death and loss of the Civil War, the nation had to decide how the conflict would be remembered. What David Blight terms the “reconciliationist” view overpowered any memory of the importance of slavery and emancipation in the conflict’s legacy. “Romance triumphed over reality, sentimental remembrance won over ideological memory.” An extreme desire to resolve the sectional tensions that had wrought havoc upon the country trumped any effort to preserve the gains the freemen had achieved. Americans, North and South, put the reunification of white society above the maintenance of the ideals of the war that had reshaped America in its aftermath.¹⁰⁷

In this developing culture of reconciliation, South Carolina Huguenot descendants reestablished connections with Northerners. They would find families of French Calvinist heritage among these acquaintances, and the discovery of Yankees that possessed the same lineage as these committed Southerners created an excitement that encouraged them to revisit their heritage and establish a formal organization to preserve the history of South Carolina’s

¹⁰⁷ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2-31.

Huguenots. This return to a sense of Huguenot identity hides a hidden significance. By reasserting their Huguenot heritage, these individuals were actually reaffirming their American identity. In reestablishing themselves as French Protestant descendants, South Carolinians developed amiable connections with Northerners through a sense of similarity and shared history and experience. These associations between Southern and Northern Huguenots would lead to a major event in the history of their identity.

The Huguenot Society of America contacted several South Carolinians of French Calvinist lineage in early 1885, requesting them to join their membership roster and provide representatives to serve on the society's General Committee. A meeting was held in Charleston on March 19 to appoint the delegates. At that meeting, it was resolved that a subsidiary organization of Huguenot descendants should be formed in South Carolina, and a committee was appointed to write its constitution and by-laws. This gathering gave birth to the Huguenot Society of South Carolina and marked the first concerted effort by the state's French Protestant descendants to reconnect with their heritage. Several Huger family members were in attendance that night. The gathering reconvened on April 3, 1885 to review the constitution and establish its mission and membership requirements. The organization encouraged all those present who wished to join

to hand in their names. Dr. William Harleston Huger felt inclined to do so. Cleland Kinloch Huger had received membership almost two weeks earlier, and the chairman of the meeting appointed him to a committee to select the society's first officers. Once again on the forefront of identity transition, the Hugers stood among the very first South Carolinians to reassert their Huguenot heritage.¹⁰⁸

Why this sudden reaffirmation of their roots in 1885? The answer lies in the timing itself. The year held a special significance, marking the bicentennial of the Revocation of Nantes. The commemoration of this event had been the reason for the Huguenot Society of America's original communication with the South Carolina contingent, resulting in the creation of a Huguenot society in the state. Furthermore, the year 1885 represented the approximate anniversary of the largest wave of Huguenot migration to colonial South Carolina that took place during 1685 and 1686. So two hundred years after the official revocation of their ancestors' rights in France and their arrival in the colony of Carolina, these French Calvinist descendants reaffirmed their heritage. In this way, the story of Huguenot identity in South Carolina had come full circle.

¹⁰⁸ "Correspondence Leading to the Organization of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina," *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina* 1 (1889): 3-23.

CONCLUSION

When the patriarch Daniel Huger left France in 1682, he took a step that greatly influenced subsequent generations of his family. Surely he could not have foreseen the consequences of his actions. His decision to separate from his native land and heritage would have a profound impact on the way his heirs defined themselves. It would initiate a process of identity transformation that continued through two centuries. In the end, the family had altered their identity four times within this period.

Fleeing persecution in France and making the journey to the new colony of Carolina in 1686, the Hugers would abandon all recognition of their French heritage and rapidly assimilate into the colonial society of Carolina. By 1740, they were no longer French Calvinist refugees; they had transformed themselves into British Colonists. They gave up their traditional French occupations and assumed the ubiquitous colonial profession of planter. In addition, their official designation as Frenchmen was cast aside as they sought naturalization and gained British citizenship. During this transition, the Hugers, like the larger South Carolina Huguenot population of which they were a part, had even sacrificed the very religious traditions that their exodus had been intended to

preserve. Out of economic and political necessity, they chose to integrate. They took the path that would allow them to attain wealth and influence rather than cling to their Huguenot identity and remain poor and powerless.

Just when the Huger family had been fully integrated into the British colonial identity, the process of their next identity transition had already begun to take shape. The political and economic issues of the late colonial period, brought on by the massive debt incurred in protecting the colony, drove a wedge between the colonists and the people in England. As a result, the amiable ties to the mother country that had previously existed began to weaken, and the Hugers began to lose their sense of themselves as Englishmen. By 1776, tensions had reached a boiling point, and the colonists declared independence from Britain. In doing so, they adopted a new identity as Americans. The Hugers were on the forefront of the formation of this new American identity. Several members of the family served as officers in the American Revolution, earning great acclaim from their heroic efforts in the fight to establish their autonomy. Others would make their mark as political patriots, playing an integral role in the creation and ratification of the United State Constitution. Furthermore, the American period witnessed the Huger family's increased sense separation from France and its people. The French become "them," a people different and removed from the

South Carolina Huguenots. Yet creating the concept of “American” represents the most important development during this phase. This espousal of American identity would continue unabated through the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Yet the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 would provide an impetus to change once again. Disputes over the expansion of slavery in to these new territories widened the gap between North and South, and sectionalism grew increasingly strong. Beginning in 1830, the Huger family would begin to use a new vocabulary in their descriptions of themselves and others. “The South” and “the North” became distinct and separate entities, and “Americans” turned into “Southerners” and “Yankees.” This idea of Southern identity would increase its hold from 1830 to 1850. In that year, the Hugers’ espousal of Southern identity would grow militant, and they expressed a willingness to die in defense of it. The Hugers had joined the Confederate cause after South Carolina seceded, fighting and dying for new country. Defeat only strengthened their Southern identity by providing a shared experience and sense of loss. They would continue to be devout Southerners even after Reconstruction came to an end.

In 1885, the Hugers would revisit their French Calvinist heritage. Prompted by the bicentennial anniversary of the Revocation and the arrival of

largest influx of Huguenots in Carolina, the family would join in reestablishing a sense of Huguenot identity. Impelled to rediscover their lineage by correspondence from the Huguenot Society of America, the French Protestant descendants in Charleston established the Huguenot Society of South Carolina to commemorate and preserve their history. The Huger family participated in the creation of this organization and was influential in selecting its first officers. In addition, they were among the first members to reassert their identity as Huguenots by joining the society. In the two hundred years since their arrival in the colony, the Hugers had transitioned from Huguenot to Southerner and back again.

Some readers may find the apparent elasticity of this series of identity changes unsettling. Perhaps, in their estimation, it seems a stretch to assert that the Hugers made four complete identity transitions in the course of only two hundred years. Indeed, the story does seem remarkable and the family's identity elastic. Yet documentary evidence supports this timeline of Huguenot identity. The family's actions, words, and reflections clearly show them engaged in redefining their identity at these times. Furthermore, these changes were not abrupt and spontaneous. The roots of each identity's formation began long before that identity had fully taken hold of the family. By the time the Hugers

had completed one transition in identity, they were already moving inexorably toward the next one.

Most importantly, the elasticity displayed in the Huger experience speaks to the nature of identity itself. Identity is not a rigid, static concept. Rather, it is an abstract construct that is fluid and malleable. Identity is constantly evolving and changing, reacting to internal and external developments and being reshaped in response to them. From the time an identity has taken root, it has already begun to change. The story of the Huger family fits within this present sociological and psychological understanding of identity. Throughout their history, they had continually redefined their identity in response to political and economic events that necessitated such a change. This is how a French Protestant family had become the embodiment of the Old South.

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