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Richard C. Cole

Robert Colvill's *Savannah*



The successful British defense of Savannah against the attacks of the French and the Americans in the fall of 1779 looms large in British periodicals and verse. The *London Mercury* for 1780 speaks for most of the British periodicals and the versifiers in its appraisal of the British victory at Savannah: "The repulse of D'Estaing at Georgia, was the noblest action that had hitherto been performed in the course of the present contest" (p. 6). The most significant of the many poems written on the siege is *Savannah, A Poem in Two Cantos, To the Memory of the Honourable Colonel John Maitland* (London, 1780), by the Scots poet Robert Colvill (d. 1788).¹ Alexander A. Lawrence in his *Storm over Savannah* (Athens, 1951, reprinted 1968), cites the poem several times, but a more extensive treatment is needed. Although the poem's interest today is more historical than literary, its considerable interest to readers of 1780 is suggested by the four issues of its three editions and its unabridged printing in a popular London newspaper. Among the many poems on the siege it is unique in its attempt to revise the history of the siege. The final result, in spite of the strong propaganda element in the poem, is a valid protest against omissions and inaccuracies in the official record of the siege and an effort to rectify these deficiencies.

The poem's publication history reflects its controversial nature. The first edition seems not to have survived, but the text of the poem in the *London Chronicle* for March 18-21, 1780, presumably derives from the first edition. No edition is ever advertised or reviewed in any London periodical that I have seen,² even those like the *London Chronicle* and the *Public Advertiser*, that often carry the publishing lists of Thomas Cadell, for whom the second edition and the first issue of the third edition were printed. The date January 27, 1780, in the lengthy preface and at the end of the poem in its second and third editions is probably not a reliable indication of the time of final revision or publication because the poem appears to use sources not available to Colvill until February. The first edition represents several important differences from the second edition.³ The heading for the poem in the *London Chronicle* is simple: "For the London Chronicle / Savannah: a Poem. / By Mr. Colvill." There is no indication that the poem has been separately published by Thomas Cadell in London or by any other publisher. The first edition lacks the prose introduction and the extensive annotation of the second edition, and it also lacks the division into cantos. There are forty stanzas or 320 lines in the first edition as compared with forty-three stanzas or 344 lines in the second edition. The stanza structure, meter, and rhyme scheme are the same in the two editions, eight lines in iambic tetrameter rhyming *ababcded*. Thirty-eight of the forty stanzas that the two editions have in common are essentially the same, though there are some differences in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, and improvements in the phrasing of a few lines in the second edition.

The second edition of *Savannah* is advertised, not in a London newspaper, but in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* for April 11-14, 1780.⁴ The advertisement is long but worth quoting because of the problems that the controversial poem encountered:

On Saturday April 15, 1780 will be published and sold by all the Booksellers in Town and Country, Inscribed to the immortal Memory of the Hon. Colonel Maitland, Savannah, a Poem, In Two Cantos, Second Edition, with additional Stanzas, pp. 20, price 1s. Si Quid mea Carmina possunt.⁵ By Mr. Colvill. Remarkable incidents in the memorable siege, and some very singular characters peculiar to these hard times, are occasionally displayed throughout the poem. The very illiberal treatment with which this little tribute, inscribed to the memory of such A Great Character, has been opposed in the publica-

tion, may possibly, with the numerous subscribers, the impartial and generous public, apologize for the unfavourable, but unavoidable delay of the poem. The impression will be allowed to be, in all respects, elegant, when it is considered the author has had, from the beginning, to contend with an unmanly and unprovoked opposition, who drive him into an unnecessary and un-conscionable expence.

The advertisement ends with a quotation: "Zoilus! thou reason'st well! / For what are heroes, country, fame to thee, / Who fattens't on the garbage of thy spleen." The writer, probably Colvill himself, attributes the quotation to Fletcher, presumably the seventeenth-century playwright John Fletcher, whose play, composed with Francis Beaumont, *Cupid's Revenge*, has a character named Zoilus, but the quoted lines are not in this play. Zoilus, the fourth century B.C. critic of Homer, was best known to eighteenth-century readers from Thomas Parnell's popular life of him first published with Parnell's *Poems* in 1717 and frequently reprinted; as the result of Parnell's biography Zoilus symbolized any hostile critic of questionable motives. The notice does not reflect the imprint of the second edition and the first issue of the third edition: "London, Printed for T. Cadell in the Strand." Apparently, Colvill got funds from subscribers in Scotland to pay Cadell to have the poem printed, but he did not pay Cadell to market and promote the poem in London. If Cadell had undertaken a publisher's usual responsibilities, he would have advertised the poem, and the imprint would have read "Printed for and Sold by T. Cadell." Cadell may be the Zoilus, or perhaps Whig readers who objected to the chauvinism of the poem, or possibly admirers of the British commander at Savannah, Major General Augustine Prevost, who gets short shrift in the poem; the poem is controversial enough to provoke opposition of many kinds. The subscriber response, however, was sufficiently enthusiastic that Colvill thought he could sell out a second edition to the general public. Presumably the names of the subscribers were listed in the missing first edition, but their names are not retained in the three later issues.⁶ The lack of the subscriber list makes it difficult to ascertain the size of the first edition, but subscriber lists in other poems of the time are helpful. The seventeen volumes of poems published in Britain by subscription 1755-1760 had a mean figure of 480 subscriptions and a median of 426, and this range is probably a fair indication of Colvill's subscriptions. The figures are not far short of 500, the number of copies most often printed by the famous London pub-

lisher, William Strahan, in later years Thomas Cadell's partner.⁷ The reprinting of the first edition in the *London Chronicle* in March enlarged Colvill's reading public considerably and certainly helped to create a demand for the second edition published in April. The *London Chronicle* was printed in 2500 copies, and each copy was read by perhaps ten readers.⁸

The third edition of the poem takes two forms.⁹ One is essentially identical with the second edition, with the same quarto format, the same imprint, the same pagination, and the same setting of type. The second issue of the third edition is a duodecimo volume with different pagination from the Cadell issue and the simple imprint, "Printed in the year 1780." Its typography is both different from and inferior to that of the Cadell second and third editions. The text, however, is essentially the same in these three printings. In both issues of the third edition the prose preface and the footnotes are slightly expanded from the second edition, and there are a few lines that have minor changes in wording, and a good many changes in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. The publication announcement of the poem in the *Glasgow Mercury* for May 4-11, 1780, clearly refers to the second issue of the third edition. John Gillies, bookseller in Perth, announces his publication of a collection of Scots poems, *The Cheerful Companion*, which will be sold by himself and by seven Glasgow booksellers. These eight booksellers also have "Savannah, a Poem in two Cantos, To the Memory of the Hon. Colonel John Maitland" for sale; Colvill's name is not mentioned, no edition is identified, and the price of four pence has been drastically reduced from the shilling of the second edition. From this brief history of the poem's publication we may surmise that interest in the poem and in the events it commemorates continued to be keen, that second and third editions were needed and accordingly printed for Cadell in April, and that in response to further demand Colvill got a second issue of the third edition printed by one of the Scots printers in May. It is possible that there was still another issue of Cadell's third edition. The two copies I have examined of the Cadell third edition are identical in every respect but size.

Colvill's sources require study because, unlike the other poets commemorating the British repulse of the French and American assault on Savannah, Colvill reacts strongly against several crucial aspects of the military dispatches reporting the British victory. There was no news of the British success and the withdrawal of the allies in October of 1779 until a *London Gazette Extraordinary* of December 20, 1779, which was

quickly copied by all the London and Scots newspapers and later by the magazines. There are three sets of dispatches or Gazettes that appear first in the *London Gazette* and then in the other papers in the last days of December. The first is to the Secretary of State for the colonies by Sir Henry Clinton, Commanding General of all British forces in America, who encloses detailed accounts of the siege by Governor Tonyn of the East Florida province and Colonel L.V. Fuser commanding at St. Augustine. The second is by Captain John Henry of the *Fowey* to the Admiralty Office stressing the contribution of naval forces to the lifting of the siege. The last and most comprehensive is Major General Augustine Prevost's own daily journal of his successful defense of Savannah and his lengthy correspondence with Count d'Estaing, the French commander of the allies; in several of the London papers a brief statement by the royal Governor of Georgia, Sir James Wright, is appended to the Prevost dispatch. All three Gazettes mention Colvill's hero, Colonel John Maitland, and his march at the head of his regiment of Highlanders from Beaufort in the South Carolina province to Savannah to assist General Prevost's troops, but they do not acknowledge any special contribution by Maitland to the victory, and they do not mention his death. Among the officers Captain Jams Moncrieff of the Corps of Engineers is most often cited along with Captain Thomas Tawse, who was killed, and several other officers of the 71st Regiment of Foot commanded by Colonel Maitland. General Prevost's succinct comment on Maitland as printed in the *London Gazette* for December 21-25, 1779, is representative of the three Gazettes: "Colonel Maitland had been obliged to come round Dawfuskie, and land on the marshes; and dragging his boats empty through a cut, got into Savannah river above the enemy, and so to this place." Prevost's lengthy journal cites by name not fewer than thirteen officers for heroism, but Maitland is not among them. Colvill's poem reflects doubts about the accuracy and completeness of these three Gazettes and uses additional evidence from Scots sources not mentioned in the Gazettes or in other reports in the London papers.

Although the Scots periodicals take over the three Gazettes from the London papers, they supplement them with reports that focus much more on Colonel Maitland's actions at the siege and his death. Undoubtedly, this is in part because Maitland was a member of a famous Scots family, a younger son of the sixth Earl of Lauderdale and brother of the seventh Earl; he was also an M.P. and commanding officer of the 71st Regiment of Foot, known as the Fraser Highlanders after its founder General Simon Fraser of Lovat. The Scots periodicals do not reflect simply Scots patriotic zeal but solid evidence about

Maitland's heroism not printed in the three Gazettes or in London periodicals, or if printed in London periodicals, appearing much later, apparently copied from Scots papers. The *Edinburgh Magazine* for December 30, 1779, for example, includes a letter from a Scot in Savannah claiming that General Prevost would have surrendered Savannah had Maitland not been there (p. 35). The *Magazine's* obituary of Maitland relates how the trials and dangers of Maitland's march from Beaufort through the swamps to Savannah constantly harassed by enemy troops brought on fever and ultimately death to Maitland after the raising of the siege "whereby the nation has lost as active and brave an officer as was in his Majesty's service" (p. 36). The *Glasgow Mercury* for December 23-30, 1779, re-prints Maitland's obituary from the *New Jersey Journal*, a loyalist paper, for November 21st. The *Scots Magazine* for December 1779, reports Maitland's death and also a letter from London about interviews with the messengers from Savannah who asserted: "The saving of the army, the destruction of d'Estaing, the annihilation of the rebel force, and indeed the success of the whole, was owing to his [Maitland] bringing 800 men across the swamps, deemed almost impassable, and forcing his way through the enemy's troops to join Gen. Prevost; who, without them, could hardly have made any resistance" (pp. 684-685). The siege killed him, but before his death he saw "like the gallant Wolfe, the most brilliant success accompany his exertions in behalf of his country." The same issue prints a letter from a merchant in Savannah to his friend in Scotland that credits Maitland with the successful defense of the town and with strengthening the faltering resolve of the garrison (p. 715).

The different attitudes toward the three Gazettes taken by the English and Scots periodicals are also reflected in the different uses made of the Gazettes by English and Scots poets. English poets accept the accuracy of the Gazettes; Scots poets dwell more on what the Gazettes do not report--the feats of Maitland. These English and Scots poems are alike, however, in reflecting the widespread jubilation over what was regarded as the first important British victory since the Seven Year's War. The artillery pieces at the Tower of London and in St. James's Park were shot off as Horace Walpole reported to Sir Horace Mann on December 20, 1779;¹⁰ most newspapers mention the artillery salute and also the ringing of bells in church steeples throughout London. In Edinburgh people illuminated all the houses at the same time according to James Boswell.¹¹ The victory caught the imagination of English poets and versifiers, and they took the three Gazettes at face value. Occasional poems are apt to be ephemeral, and this is especially

true of those that appear in newspapers, but two poems on the siege presented in theaters and then published are worth noting because of their wide circulation. A leading playwright of the time, Frederick Pilon, included with his popular comedy *The Deaf Lover* a prologue satirizing Count d'Estaing, the commander of the allies, and praising General Prevost. The play opened in Covent Garden on February 2, 1780, and ran for twenty performances before as many as 2389 persons a night; some Londoners bought the play to read in its first or second edition, and I have found the prologue printed in twelve periodicals. Pilon's comedy was also staged in loyalist New York four times during the years 1780-1782.¹² Another popular dramatist and song writer, Charles Dibdin, added a scene about the siege to his comedy *The Mirror, or Harlequin Everywhere*, performed at Covent Garden twenty-two times during the season 1779-1780 and for the first time on January 17, 1780, with the new scene. In the new scene Count d'Estaing is driven back by British grenadiers, apparently the Grenadier companies of the 60th Foot praised by General Prevost for their actions during the main assault of October 9, 1779. The stage grenadiers, played by genuine Grenadiers from the London garrison, then burst into the famous marching song, "The British Grenadiers," to celebrate their victory.¹³ Dibdin's play, also published in two editions, provoked two comic poems on the siege in the *Public Advertiser* of December 24 and 28, 1779, or possibly Dibdin wrote them himself. Maitland, however, plays no role in these or any other verse accounts of the siege in English publications.

With their own sources to work with in addition to the three Gazettes, Scots poets focus on Maitland's heroism. One verse epitaph for Maitland appeared in December 1779 in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* and *Scots Magazine* and a week later in the *Edinburgh Magazine*. Appearing not only in these Scots periodicals but later in the *General Evening Post* and the *Whitehall Evening Post* in London and as late as August 1780 in Rivington's *Royal Gazette* in New York, it deserves quoting. It is attributed in the *Scots Magazine* to "Dr. C....R" (p. 684), probably Dr. Robert Couper (1750-1818), Scots physician and minor poet:

When Gallic perfidy, and rebel pride,
 Presum'd the British Lion to subdue,
 With rapid wing, but not before untried,
 From Beaufort's banks the gallant Maitland flew.
 He reach'd, in time, Savannah's leaquer'd coast;¹⁴
 The force of France and perjur'd foes defied;
 Repell'd, dispers'd the formidable host,

Preserv'd a country, blest the day, and died.

Before publishing *Savannah* early in March, Colvill, using the pseudonym Parson Sheridan of Dysart, published a "Christmas Epistle" in the *Edinburgh Magazine* for January 7, 1780. The poem in part concerns victory over d'Estaing's "strutting peacock's pride" and "Lincoln's treason" [Benjamin Lincoln, the American general], but while citing both General Prevost and Captain Moncrieff, the poem focuses on Maitland, who "found like Wolfe a grave, / Dying his country's rights to save." The *Scots Magazine* for January 1780 contains another poem that Colvill probably had seen, *Ode to Britannia*, by Robert Alves (1745-1794), separately published on January 9, 1780, by William Creech in Edinburgh at 6d. Alves extols recent British victories such as Omoa in the West Indies and Savannah and devotes the third stanza of his long poem to Maitland without citing any other participant in the siege; Alves, too, finds Maitland "Another Wolfe at Quebec's wall." Yet another poem that Colvill may have known is "Lines written by a young gentleman on hearing of the death of Colonel Maitland" in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* of January 18-21, 1780.¹⁵

Colvill then clearly set out to revise the official history of the siege with the help of Scots sources and his own imagination, and his poem is both a protest against the inaccuracy of the Gazettes and a propaganda vehicle for Maitland. His poem does not begin at the beginning but *in medias res* with the surrender demand by Count d'Estaing to General Prevost, who is always identified as the "chief" or "chieftain" and is never mentioned by name. On the basis of the correspondence between d'Estaing and Prevost, reprinted in most British periodicals, Colvill constructs a twelve-line speech for d'Estaing, who, like Prevost, is never called by name but always identified with a pejorative label such as "the plund'ring Goth." This surrender demand took place on September 16, 1779, after the French fleet had first been sighted on September 4th, according to the Prevost dispatch. Colvill uses d'Estaing's surrender demand to set the stage for the first appearance of Colonel Maitland as the only person with the fortitude and leadership capacity to meet d'Estaing's challenge. Colvill creates a speech for Maitland, the first of four in the poem, urging his regiment in Beaufort to rescue the "Freeborn" at Savannah:

Haste on, ye brave! your COUNTRY cries;
Fierce wolves of *France* and *faction* wait:
The FREEBORN, chains, shame, death, defy;
Your swords decide an empire's fate.

(I.ix.5-8)¹⁶

"Mid hosts of foes" Maitland and his Highlanders struggle through the swamps to Savannah.

The next scene is especially dramatic and also controversial in its rejection of the accounts in the three Gazettes. In Savannah Maitland and his Highlanders find "fears irrelute reign, / And doubtful cares distract the chief / To yield or Britain's right maintain" (I.x.6-8). Maitland demands of General Prevost and his advisory council that the British fight for their freedom. Colvill probably found the embryo of the long speech he puts in Maitland's mouth in an anecdote printed in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* for February 18-22, 1780, and the *Edinburgh Magazine* for February 25, 1780: "Upon hearing mention made of capitulation, the gallant Colonel...said, that the word Capitulation was what he abhorred; adding, in a firm tone, that 'if he should survive, and go home to Britain, he would report to the King the name of the first officer who should dare to propose a Capitulation.' This had the proper effect--the consequence is known."¹⁷ Probably Colvill had also seen in the *Scots Magazine* for December 1779 the letter to a Scot from a veteran of the siege questioning Prevost's resolve and asserting that Maitland "could not hear the word capitulation with any degree of patience, but took every opportunity of openly declaring what he thought a man deserved that could think of it" (pp. 715-6). The position of the three Gazettes is that Prevost and his council at no time considered surrendering. Since Colvill attempts to show that the British refused to surrender only because of Maitland's leadership, Maitland's speech calling the garrison to arms should be quoted in full:

Freedom your lot or endless shame!
Your COUNTRY pleads in ev'ry vein,
And dares he boast a *Briton's* name,
Who scorns her glory to sustain!

Her sinking scale one great effort
O'er public shame and loss shall raise:
One glorious hour her high report
Redeem from stain of adverse days.
Let cowards skulk; to brave alarms,
Hark! Glory calls! In Heav'n I trust,
Bourbon shall bow to *British* arms;
Her laurels soil in blood and dust.

O HEAV'NS! to turn war's headlong tide
 With ruin on th'insulting foe!
 Their vaunted trophies' guilty pride,
 In vengeance' crimson'd fields laid low.

This palm I crave, through fire and death;
 Eternal infamy entwine
 The coward's ignominious wreath!
 To TRIUMPH! and to DIE, be mine!

Colvill may also have gotten oral reports from returning veterans of the siege. The letter by "An Old Lieutenant of the Navy" published in *Lloyd's Evening Post* for March 24-27, 1780 (No. 3551, without pagination), probably reflects the sentiments of other veterans who had returned to Britain earlier and complained about the inaccuracies of the Gazettes; the letter may even have been prompted by Colvill's poem published earlier in the month. The lieutenant has just returned from the West Indies and is outraged that the three dispatches that he has just read in the *London Gazette* give no credit to Maitland and fail to mention his death. The lieutenant claims the combatants on both sides knew that Maitland was mainly responsible for the British victory and that even after his arrival in Savannah "in a Council of War a Capitulation with d'Estaing was proposed, and in all probability would have been agreed upon, had not the Colonel warmly opposed the motion, which had been approved of by his superiors, and spirited up the Officers and men to make that noble defence." The writer adds that French prisoners whom he had interviewed in the West Indies after their capture at Savannah had agreed that Maitland prevented the surrender and brought about the final victory. These French prisoners probably echoed the journal of the siege published in 1782 by a French officer noting that Prevost was ready to surrender but Maitland aroused the others to fight.¹⁸ Although his statement did not appear in the papers, Sir James Wright, the royal Governor of Georgia, wrote to the Secretary of State on November 5, 1779, that he had "some strong Reasons to apprehend and fear" that Prevost would surrender.¹⁹

The poet's use of the Cato metaphor adds to the effectiveness of this confrontation scene between Maitland and Prevost. Maitland makes his impassioned address to Prevost and his council "with Cato's spirit." The Latin motto for the first canto from Virgil's *Aeneid* also cites Cato. For Colvill, Maitland is another Cato of Utica, the great spokesman for liberty at the end of the Roman Republic, who was known best to eighteenth-century readers through Joseph Addison's popular

tragedy *Cato* (1713).²⁰ In a setting like Prevost's council at Savannah, Cato persuades the fearful citizens of Utica to defy the tyrant Julius Caesar, whose army is at the city gate:

Oh let it [liberty] never perish in your hands!...
Do thou, great liberty, inspire our souls,
And make our lives in thy possession happy,
Or our deaths glorious in thy just defence.

(III.v.79-83)

Colvill had also used the Cato metaphor effectively in 1771 in his *Cyrnean Hero* to make a classical hero of his protagonist, in this instance the famous Corsican patriot Pascal Paoli (1725-1807), who, like Maitland, is fighting against French tyranny.

Maitland's leadership results in the British rejection of d'Estaing's surrender demand, and the French artillery then shell the town for "Six furious days," altered in the second and third editions of the poem from the first edition's "Six tedious days." In the course of the bombardment heroic actions are carried out by several Scots, Captain Moncrieff of the Engineers and three infantry officers, "Valiant M'Pherson, Frazer, Grahame"; Colvill again alters the first edition's "Bold Caledonians, Frazer, Grahame" to add Lt. Henry McPherson of Maitland's 71st Foot, who was killed several days later in the main assault of October 9th. Colvill essentially accepts the validity of the Prevost dispatch here which also singles out Moncrieff and Major Graham for special praise during this phase of the siege.

Like that of the first, the Latin motto of the second canto, *Dulce et decorum [est] pro PATRIA mori*,²¹ is well chosen since the canto focuses on Maitland's death. The canto opens with the main attack by the allies on October 9, 1779. For the first time General Benjamin Lincoln, the American commander, "in Treason's guise," and elsewhere, "ignoble traitor," is identified, but American troops are given almost no role in the poem; as in the three Gazettes the enemy is the traditional one, France, usually called the Bourbon or the Goth, whose goal for centuries has been to destroy British freedom. Among the British defenders "Pale fear o'er all the bulwarks sped, / Despair unmans the Chieftain's [Prevost's] soul" (II.iii.5-6). Colvill again sets the stage for Maitland's entrance:

...HE, by guardian angels led,
To turn the scale of death and shame,
From *Lincoln* vanquish'd,²² MAITLAND sped,
To die, or save his country's fame.

Like lion rous'd, all dust and blood,
 'Mid the wild waste of war he flew:
 These he transfix'd in wrathful mood,
 These headlong down the walls he threw.
 (II.v.1-8)

The zeal of the propagandist carries Colvill too far here since no source takes issue with General Prevost's dispatch that the Grenadier companies of the 60th Foot assisted by marines were responsible for driving the allies away from the wall that some had already mounted. The Prevost dispatch, however, fails to state that Maitland commanded the right wing which bore the brunt of the attack led by d'Estaing in person and that Maitland had ordered the Grenadiers into action at the critical moment.²³ This may be the only point Colvill is making, but if so, his poetic license has led him to overstate his case. Colvill and Prevost do agree on the feats of Captain Thomas Tawse of Maitland's regiment, who "with glorious wound, / Like tyger panting o'er his prey, / 'Gainst hosts of foes maintain'd the mound" (II.vi.5-7). The British repulse of the allies on October 9th is decisive, and the enemy withdraws, never to repeat the assault, but British joy is short-lived, for Maitland is dying, not from wounds received in battle but from the fever, presumably malaria, he has suffered from during the march from Beaufort and during the siege itself. Colvill creates a death-bed speech for Maitland to his Highlanders, which is limited to one stanza of eight lines in the first edition but expanded to two stanzas of sixteen lines in the second and third editions. The additional lines allow Colvill to put in Maitland's mouth an appeal for peace after the humbling of the ancient enemy France:

Your SOLDIER's last oraison hear,
 Dread POW'RS! who BRITAIN's fortune guide,
 Direct the lightning of her spear!
 O! crush false Bourbon's guilty pride!
 (II.xv.5-8)

BRIGHT, o'er the realm, with orient rays,
 Descend, sweet PEACE! with blessings crown'd!
 Dispel the tempest DEMONS raise!²⁴
 O! sooth with BALM! each rankling wound.
 (II.xvi.1-4)

The death-bed scene is highly controversial like the confrontation scene between Maitland and Prevost over the surrender demand. The poet laments that though Maitland has

defeated d'Estaing and has won immortal honors like his great predecessors, Percy, Douglas, and Wolfe, he cannot "villain Envy's shafts defy."²⁵ Colvill then launches into a tirade against those who out of envy would deprive Maitland of his just recognition:

AH! round thy trophied arch of praise
 Envy's insidious harpies fly!
 With vengeful fangs to rend the bays
 Which LOYAL VALOUR hung on high:
 Vain strife! on eagle-pinions borne,
 Thy WORTH's acclaim to heav'n shall go,
 Whilst Malice rides the blast of SCORN,
 Felon! to reap where OTHERS sow!

(II.xix.1-8)

Though he is never mentioned by name in the poem General Prevost is clearly the "Felon," and in a footnote his generalship at Charleston earlier in the year which Maitland had objected to is questioned by the poet. This attack on a war hero soon to return home to great acclaim²⁶ may have given Thomas Cadell some hesitation about publishing the poem or antagonized certain readers and prompted Colvill's comment about "unmanly and unprovoked opposition" when he announced his second edition. In a stanza added after the first edition the poet describes how Truth, Justice, and the goddess Caledonia herself will banish Maitland's detractors and guard his reputation. Though Colvill the propagandist is again led into exaggeration, he was not alone in thinking that Maitland had been slighted in the three Gazettes and that envy was a cause. In the naval officer's complaint in *Lloyd's Evening Post* cited above the writer asks: "Must we not be contented to believe that it has originated from some principle of jealousy? and that General _____ fearing, if all the truth had been declared, the honour of that noble defence would not have been by the world given to him, has grasped at many of those laurels which ought to have adorned the brow of Colonel Maitland had he survived." In the *General Evening Post* (London) for April 6-8, 1780, a certain W.S. in Colchester laments that justice has not been done to Maitland. The letter reviews Maitland's earlier military feats in the Marines, his loss of an arm in the Seven Year's War, and the high regard his troops had for him "as a father and a friend." In a footnote to his *Ode* cited above, Robert Alves had observed that Maitland's part in the siege was alluded to "with so much coldness by the commander in chief."

The last three stanzas of the second canto, including one

added after the first edition, are ironical in that they envisage throngs of "pilgrims" coming to weep at Maitland's tomb at Hatton, one of the estates of the Earls of Lauderdale in Edinburghshire. Maitland's place of burial has never been found. The *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* for December 13, 1779, presents a report of October 28, 1779, from Savannah about the death of Maitland "last Monday" [October 25] and his burial in the family vault of the Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. John Graham, in Savannah. Alexander A. Lawrence tells us that General Nathaniel Greene was buried in the same vault, but in 1901 when Greene's remains were removed, Maitland's were not found.²⁷ Winthrop Sargent's statement that Captain Moncrieff of Savannah fame was buried in Trinity Church, New York City, in 1791 in the tomb of his friend Colonel John Maitland is tantalizing but untrue.²⁸ Although Colvill ends his poem on this note of mourning but also with the conviction that Maitland's fame is "DEATHLESS," he ends his long prose preface on a more controversial note as he denounces those "pseudo-patriots" who fail to support the American War and appeals to readers to emulate Maitland's zeal, loyalty, courage, and perseverance.

Like most of his poems, Colvill's *Savannah* is occasional and patriotic, with many of the ills that attend such poems. In its zeal to rectify the neglect of Maitland, it borders on hagiography at times, and it is clear that the poem takes some liberties with historical truth. Like most of Colvill's poems, including one just published in 1779, *The Caledonians*, dedicated to three ladies of the noble house of Sutherland, *Savannah* may have been written in part in hope of patronage, in this instance from Colonel Maitland's brother, James Maitland (1718-1789), 7th Earl of Lauderdale. Nevertheless, in its protest against omissions and inaccuracies in the three Gazettes and its focusing on the actions of a leader whose contribution needed to be recognized in the interests of justice and of historical truth, *Savannah* offers a necessary corrective. That the figure of Colonel John Maitland is so central in later histories of the siege beginning with C[harles] Stedman's *History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War* (1794) and continuing to the present time with Alexander Lawrence's *Storm over Savannah* attests to the essential soundness of Colvill's emendation.

NOTES

¹The only recent studies of Colvill's work are G. Ross Roy's bibliography in NCBEL (Cambridge, 1969-1977), II, 2022, and my "James Boswell and Robert Colvill," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 16 (1981), 112-123.

²For this study I have examined the following London periodicals for the years 1779-1780 in the libraries of Yale University: *Annual Register*, *Critical Review*, *Daily Advertiser*, *General Evening Post*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, *London Chronicle*, *London Evening Post*, *London Gazette*, *London Magazine*, *London Mercury*, *London Packet*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Monthly Review*, *Political Magazine*, *Public Advertiser*, *Remembrancer*, *St. James's Chronicle*, *Town and Country Magazine*, *Westminster Magazine*, *Whitehall Evening Post*.

³The *National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints* (London, 1968-1980), CXVII, 96, lists copies of the second edition at eight libraries. I have examined the Yale copy. The *Catalog* errs in listing a copy of the first edition at the New York Public Library; this copy is from the second edition. The University of Georgia Library has a copy of the second edition that is not listed.

⁴I have examined these Scots periodicals for 1779-1780 in the libraries of Yale University: *Caledonian Mercury*, *Edinburgh Advertiser*, *Edinburgh Magazine*, *Glasgow Mercury*, *Mirror*, *Ruddiman's Weekly Mercury*, *Scots Magazine*.

⁵Virgil, *Aeneid* IX.446. The next line is needed to make Colvill's meaning clear: "Nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo" (If my songs can do anything, time will not steal your memory").

⁶The exhaustive catalogue of eighteenth-century books published by subscription compiled by F.J.G. Robinson and P.J. Wallis, *Book Subscription Lists, A Revised Guide* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1975) does not include Colvill's poem in its 1780 list of thirty-five books. This work gives the number of subscriptions only for books published through 1760.

⁷Patricia Herrnlund, "William Strahan's Ledgers: Standard Charges for Printing, 1738-1785," *Studies in Bibliography*, 20 (1967), 104.

⁸Solomon Lutnick, *The American Revolution and the British Press, 1775-1783* (New York, 1967), p. 224; R.J. White, *The Age of George III* (New York, 1968), p. 134.

⁹The *National Union Catalog* lists copies of the third edition in four libraries but does not distinguish between the two issues of the third edition. I have examined the copies of the Cadell third edition owned by the Library Company of Philadelphia and the De Renne Collection of the University of Georgia Library, and the unique copy of the anonymous issue of the third edition in the De Renne Collection.

¹⁰*The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis, et.al. (New Haven, 1937-1981), XXIV, 544-545.

¹¹*Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, 1778-1782*, ed. Joseph W. Reed and Frederick A. Pottle (New York, 1977), p. 153.

¹²*The Deaf Lover, A Farce in Two Acts; as performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden*, 2nd ed. (London, 1780); *The London Stage*, Pt. V, ed. C.B. Hogan (Carbondale, 1968), i, 277-278, 316; George C.D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (New York, 1927-1949), I, 215, 217, 219-220.

¹³*The Mirror; or, Harlequin Every-where, A Pantomimical Burletta, in Three Parts, as it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden* (London, 1779). The published play does not include the new scene which is found in the *Morning Chronicle* for January 18, 1780. Staging information is in *London Stage*, V, i, 278, 300, 312.

¹⁴In other versions of the poem line 5 reads "In time to save, he reach'd SAVANNAH's coast."

¹⁵Alexander Lawrence says that this elegy, the last four lines of which he prints, derives from Rivington's *Royal Gazette* of December 15, 1779, and ultimately from a letter written in Savannah on November 18, 1779 (141, 173). There is a long prose tribute to Maitland in Rivington's *Gazette* of this date, but I find no verse tribute to Maitland in this or in other December issues of the *Gazette* or its rival Hugh Gaines's *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*.

¹⁶All quotations are from the first issue of the third edition printed for Thomas Cadell in London. I list only significant textual variants from earlier editions.

¹⁷The source for the anecdote in the Scots periodicals is unknown. Lawrence, who prints some of the anecdote, says it derives from Rivington's *Royal Gazette* of December 15, 1779 (50, 159); though the prose tribute cited above in n. 15 is in this issue, the anecdote is not included in it.

¹⁸Charles C. Jones, Jr., ed. *The Siege of Savannah in 1779* (Albany, 1874), p. 60.

¹⁹"Letters from Sir James Wright," *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, (1873), III, 260.

²⁰Addison's *Cato* was also popular and influential among the American revolutionaries; see Fredric M. Litto, "Addison's *Cato* in the Colonies," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 23 (1966), 431-449.

²¹Horace, *Odes* III.ii.13, which may be translated: "Sweet and fitting is it to die for one's country."

²²Altered from "vanquish'd *Lincoln*" in the second edition.

²³"Letters from Sir James Wright," III, 266.

²⁴Altered in second and third editions from "'Mid war's wild storm my Country raise" in first edition.

²⁵Altered in second and third editions from "envy's guileful shaft defy" in the first edition.

²⁶The newspapers were reporting in January 1780 that General Prevost was to be awarded both a knighthood and a crack regiment, but he seems not to have received these honors. On his return early in July, however, he was received by the King and honored in Exeter by the Freedom of the City, the ringing of the bells in the church steeples throughout the city, and a parade (*St. James's Chronicle*, July 22-25, 1780).

²⁷Lawrence, pp. 142-143.

²⁸*Loyal Verses of Joseph Stansbury and Doctor Jonathan Odell; Relating to the American Revolution* (Albany, 1860), p. 171. Sargent's source is *Mrs. Coghland's Memoirs* (New York, 1795), p. 160, but Mrs. Coghland's father was not the famous Scots engineer at Savannah, James Moncrieff (1744-1793), who as a colonel was killed fighting against the French at Dunkirk, but Major Thomas Moncrieffe (c. 1721-1791), a

British officer buried in Trinity Church in New York (*Daily Advertiser*, New York, December 13, 1791). The Colonel Maitland with whom the latter was buried was not Colonel John Maitland (1732-1779), the hero of Savannah, but presumably his elder brother, Colonel Richard Maitland (1724-1772), who spent many years in New York, married a New Yorker, and died there (Sir James Balfour Paul, *The Scots Peerage* [Edinburgh, 1904-1914], V, 312-313.)