

**Applied Science, Abolition and Men of Arts:
Contemporary Perspectives on Progress and Modernity in
Antebellum North Carolina State University**

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Preface

The superpower-republic of the United States of America and the multicultural American civilization have both undoubtedly been of enormous influence on the World since at least the 20th century. This influence has been most obvious on the spheres of politics, economics, science, language and mass culture, but could be extended to almost any walk of life. Thus, a scholarly historical interest in the development of these entities of any scope or arising from any corner of the Globe, in my case from northern Finland, should be in no need of explanation.

Such a scholarly and personal interest is made further obvious, when one makes note of the correlation between Americanization and other on itself geographically and ethnically neutral progresses of Modernism: Capitalism, republicanism, urbanization and spread of education. These progresses, as they came to mold the United States itself in the 19th Century, are at the core of this research dissertation as well.

By the 1850s, the United States was split in two parts, the North and the South, by political and social division, at the core of which was the issue of black chattel slavery, abolished in most of the North but holding strong in the South. This division was reflected also elsewhere in society and would soon spark into the bloody American Civil War of 1861-1865, as Southern slave states seceded from the Union amidst fears of slavery abolition, a move considered treasonous in the North. The threatened slave society entrenched itself also intellectually, and in this dissertation the term *Southern Luddism* is introduced to describe a slew of attitudes encountered in Southern thought.¹

In this work I will make a presentation of the general development of the Northern and Southern United States to the 1850s as is necessitated by the scholarly purpose of this work. Moreover, this work shall engage in a twofold polemical research mission:

Firstly, I will make cross-referential examination of the theme underlying this work, the difficultly defined concept of an apparent Southern Luddism, and present questions on its nature and scope as informed mostly by the research literature. This examination will be

¹ Collins 1985, 183.

found on the second section of the first chapter and will further inform the source-based research of this paper.

Secondly, I will examine a collection of historical source material derived from online collections assembled for scholarly purposes by the very University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, as it presently exists, concerning its own history. I shall examine two small and distinct groups of source writing from the 1850s with textual analysis and the following line of questioning: *What kind of attitudes towards modernity, education and progress is reflected from the texts in question?* This research mission will be informed by the research literature as well as the earlier line of examination towards Southern Luddism.

The two main bodies of research literature aiding the core research mission are articles by James LeLoudis and Erika Linderman, and the book *White Society in the Antebellum South* by Bruce Collins. Other research literature provided further support, most notably the article by Michael Sugrue in the book *The American College in Nineteenth Century* and the book *The American Nation* by John A. Garraty and Robert A. McCaughey.

The articles by James LeLoudis cited by this dissertation accompany (and refer to some of the sources included in) the online collection of primary sources, *The First Century of the First State University*. Two of these articles were originally part of a 1994 book by LeLoudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920*, focus of which is however mainly in the postbellum period. The Erika Lindemann article, *The Debate Societies* accompanies and refers to the other online collection, *True and Candid Compositions: The Lives and Writings of Antebellum Students at the University of North Carolina*.

The research mission will be almost solely of qualitative nature, with quantitative facts examined only in a very general sense. I would qualify this dissertation as a source-based research, even as the research mission was formed and influenced by source material, research literature and my own deliberation all. This is because the source material nevertheless preceded, limited and molded the research mission.²

² Tosh 1984, 49-50.

I find the subjects and themes researched fruitful to further research and examination, also to one emerging outside of the so called anglosphere. The particular source materials focused on in the later part of my work are referenced only tangentially or not at all by James LeLoudis, and not at all elsewhere, as far as I could find.

The fields of historical research this research paper is most related to are history of science and social history. It can of course also be placed on the more precise traditions of American history, history of the Newest Age, as well as the histories of education, slavery or industrialism.

1. The Antebellum United States: Industrialization, Education and the American Divide

1.1 The American Divide

The United States in 1850 was an unusual country emergent from two distinct revolutions still making strides at the time: The Political, American Revolution of 1776 forming a part of the Enlightenment-inspired Atlantic Revolutions, and another one: The First Industrial Revolution.³

However, as is well known, as the United States progressed and industrialized on, there was a significant part of the country holding back on this development.⁴ This was the American South, or the Dixie, which was later to form a cultural basis for a new political union, Confederate States of America (CSA). The CSA would have a short life span of the duration of the American Civil War but a long-lasting legacy, giving a coloring to any assessment of the Dixie, even those of antebellum and postbellum.

Of course, an even more darker coloring is necessitated by the overwhelming presence of Black Chattel Slavery in the antebellum Dixie. Even so, the presence and significance of usage of originally African enslaved work force predominantly in agricultural labor was a characteristic as well as one of the origins for many emerging Euro-American societies of New Age.⁵ Neither was the Dixie the last society in the Americas holding on to this form of forced labor, with for example the monarchy of Brazil giving up on the institution, while holding relative societal peace in contrast to the USA, only in the year 1888.

Nevertheless, while one wouldn't describe the Dixie as *fundamentally* different from the rest of the slave societies in the Americas, it did become distinctive in its connection to the distinctiveness of the peculiar American development. This distinction is defined by a twofold conflict: One might be called socio-political and the other economic-industrial.

³ Garraty & McCaughey 1987, 242-243.

⁴ With 90 % of industrial produce coming from the North at the beginning of the Civil War, as testified by Arrington 2011.

⁵ Garraty & McCaughey 1987, 45-47.

The most famous words in the preface to the American Declaration of Independence are the following: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal---”. These words were written by a young radical of the American Revolution, Thomas Jefferson, a Virginian Southerner and, alas, a Slave owner – yet a self-declared, if hypocritical and ineffective opponent of Slavery. The Declaration, and the personhood of Jefferson was revered already during the 19th century even – if not especially – in the proud Dixie.

The stern assessment of equality among Mankind became however a cause of controversy and debate on the founding of the CSA. The Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens in his notorious Cornerstone speech asserted that while the notion of African Slavery was seen as wrong at least in principle by the American Founders, this was an earnest error made by great men, and asserted the notion of White Supremacy in its stead. Meanwhile during the course of the war increasingly abolitionist Union president Abraham Lincoln (by the way *something* of a Southerner as a Kentuckian) took the words of the declaration to be the very core of American ideal.

The cultural and political fortification of the South was accelerated by the emergence and spread of an abolitionist ideology in the North. In the yeoman-dominated northernmost states slavery was illegalized often already in the 18th century. In the 19th century however, as the North-South division became the basis of an overall political division in countrywide politics, the issue of slavery abolition arose as an issue of practical and moral urgency. In particular the issue of *expansion* of slavery to the West galvanized northerners, in whose version of Manifest Destiny the Frontier would be a vast new soil for new yeoman liberty.⁶ This relatively spontaneous social tension exploded violently in so called Bleeding Kansas during the 1850s.

Jefferson was only one example of Intellectuals among the Southern slave owners championing the radical Enlightenment ideas of the American Revolution. This group would also include various other American Founding Fathers, including George Washington and James Madison. Nevertheless, as Bruce Collins makes note, this progressive reputation had at least in Northern consciousness by 1840s floundered into

⁶ Foner 1995.

an opposite view of disdain towards the Southern United States as reactionary backwoods.⁷

The second, and yet more objectively observable, distinction between the North and the South, was the one referred by myself as economic-industrial, but which in truth was more totalistic than the term used would imply: As the North was more industrialized and capitalistic compared to the South where agriculture and slave economy still domineered, the South was also less urbanized and less educated.⁸

Though, with regards to capitalism and industrialization relating to the reality of slavery, one might note the paradoxes, that while slaves were not proletarians and that the slavery, even in south, belonged mostly to the slowly waning realm of rural agriculture, the institution of slavery was notoriously empowered on the other hand by the demands of the world market and then on the other hand by efficiency of cotton gin machines and railroads and other forms of transportation, all afforded by the strides of industrialism.⁹

1.2 “The Mind of the South” – A Southern Luddism?

Even regardless of these complicating paradoxes, it would not be the case that simply because an area was less educated, industrialized and urbanized, that this was the *preferred state of affairs*. In other words, it would not be the case that the Southern political thought appearing to us (as well as many contemporaries) as socially and politically reactionary would correspond to any idea that could be loosely referred as *Luddistic* – anti-scientific, anti-industry, anti-progress ideology.

However; in research literature one is encountered with the notion that there indeed were prevalent ideologies among Southerners, that in some extent or equated to resistance towards scientific and industrial progress and possibly equated them with the ongoing political upheaval, particularly surrounding the issue of slavery and its abolition

⁷ Collins 1985, 1.

⁸ Collins 1985, 120-121; Collins 1985, 183.

⁹ Pierson 2009.

or containment. In an argument put forth by James LeLoudis the resistance towards teaching and learning of natural sciences necessitated by industrialization was a deep-rooted idea of the form of classical education championed in the South in general and in his own reference by the old guard of people in the College on Chapel Hill.

Furthermore, LeLoudis makes an even more far-reaching assessment about this attitude, prejudice or ideology: That there was a contestation made between a classical university tradition represented by the old curriculum of North Carolina University at Chapel Hill, and the subjects practical to modernism such as Engineering and Chemistry, represented at Chapel Hill in 1850s by the program “Application of Science to the Arts”, which is discussed in more detail later in this research. A pair of damning quotes are given as examples of this sentiment from a speech made by a student in 1859: ¹⁰

The powers of inventiveness and imagination responsible for Samuel Morse's “Magnetic Telegraph” and John Ericsson's “Caloric engine,” they declared, also stood accountable for the “wild dreams and dangerous speculations” of the “Hell hounds of abolitionism.”

writes LeLoudis.

In this slew of perspectives, one encounters a picturesque idea of a Southern gentleman plantation master, trained in classical arts of old republican languages of Greek and Latin and constitutional law. This character was indeed under an immediate threat by the modern industrial society in more ways than one. One should make note that the idea of a classical education did not exclude all exact sciences – the classical curriculum, also in Chapel Hill included astronomy and mathematics. ¹¹

Analogous to the discussed attitudes seem the frequent Southern (figurative) attacks on “Northern Urban Society” referred to by Collins. According to him it is a long-existing attitude in historical literature that there was a connection between disinterest in intellectual inquiry among Southerners and the supposedly complacent, dream-like lull of

¹⁰ LeLoudis 1996a.

¹¹ Board of Trustees Minutes, December 19, 1818 [Containing the Plans of Education for the Preparatory School and the College]. NCSUA.

Southern rural life. The origin of this notion is referred to be a classic of historical literature on this subject, *Mind of the South* by W. J. Cash, though Collins makes note that “few modern historians would see the South as so devoid of --- friction ---”.¹²

Furthermore, a similar exploration of Southern attitudes in yet more ambiguous terms is offered elsewhere by Collins. In this case however, the attitudes discussed are with regards to education in general – indeed, Southerners literacy rates were clearly below to those of Northerners –, as opposed to making some sort of ideal distinction between classical education and the kind necessitated by industrial progress, as was made by LeLoudis. This exploration nevertheless hints towards the discussed form of Southern Luddism.

According to Collins, at the core of Southerners’ apparent disdain towards, again, higher education *in general* was the practical unnecessary of high expertise to a typical Southern planter. Careers like those of a physician, a businessman or a lawyer were seen not only less rewarding and stable than that of a plantation master, but perhaps even less respectable! However: Relevantly to the current line of examination, Collins notes that “[t]here were social reasons to become conversant with the classics ---”.¹³

As noted by LeLoudis elsewhere, the discussed resistance towards progress was a notable tendency among conservative intelligentsia on both sides of the Atlantic. A special note should be made, that the phrase used by myself, *Southern Luddism*, doesn’t appear as such in the research literature used. However, in the light of the research literature, I feel justified presenting the phrase as a contestable formulation.¹⁴

In my conception, Southern Luddism would be defined – firstly, of course, by its geographic and periodic origin in the Antebellum South, but secondly –as any form of intellectual resistance towards modernity, expanse of education or industrialism motivated explicitly or by clear implication by the preservation and protection of the

¹² Collins 1985: 183.

¹³ Collins 1985 120-121.

¹⁴ LeLoudis 1996b.

Southern slave society and its social order. Thus, in contrast, a Southern yeoman lamenting the threat of excessive industrialization would not in my use constitute a form of Southern Luddism.¹⁴

Yet more, as far as this Southern Luddism existed as an ideology or an attitude, it still doesn't mean that it was a truly local part of 'Southernism', truly tied to the planters and farmers of the South as a class, and most importantly, not necessarily uniform with its attitude towards classical and modern education, or high education in general. All this should be kept in mind with regards to how the notions discussed inform the later research mission.

¹⁴ It is to be noted, that the word 'Luddism' is also used in this dissertation in the more general sense of the word to discuss the nuances of attitudes under examination.

2. North Carolina State University

2.1 An Early State University

North Carolina State University, or University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was chartered in 1789 and began its function as a university in 1792. It is still engaged with a friendly rivalry with the State University of Georgia – chartered in 1785 and founded in 1801 - over the status of the first state university. American University as an institution was itself much older, but under the influence of the Revolution's enlightenment thinking, state-run university institutions were founded as well.¹⁵

In likewise parallel, in the neighboring South Carolina, a state university was founded in 1800. To some extent to in contrary to the narrative of a prideful and an anti-intellectual Southernism, the founding was commented with self-flagellating condemnation of the State's intellectual state by a local politician where he lamented "*the general deficiency of intelligence and education in the upper country*".

Of course, this was all well before the age of squabbles over slavery and rapid industrialization, and during an era of southerner-dominated Jeffersonian democracy, a period of notable political emergence for America. Nevertheless, the founding of the college is described by Michael Sugrue as "a Noah's ark" for an atavistic elite, already reflecting a conservative fortification of the old social order. Same, one would assume, would hold true to the University in North as well.¹⁶

The curriculum at Chapel Hill was, as described by LeLoudis, a classical one. The plans of education from 1818 put forth a program of higher education both with a striking variety and a striking emphasis on the abstract rather than practical. It didn't shy away from natural sciences and mathematics, but it didn't seem to focus these or other parts of learning into any particular expertise.

¹⁵ LeLoudis 1996b.

¹⁶ Sugrue 2000 92.

The subjects for the College program included things like antique languages and antique literature, but also algebra, arithmetic and astronomy, and then both natural and moral philosophy. As in the common expression, the education at Chapel Hill was a general one.¹⁷

Also, while natural sciences formed indeed a part of the classical curriculum, according to LeLoudis their teaching at Chapel Hill was distinguished from modern learning and the kind necessitated by the society-in-forming: The learning of natural sciences was, in this accord, “didactic” than rather than “experimental”. This meant in this context that shallow memorizing dominated student understanding of the subjects over a deeper internalization of scientific rigor.¹⁸

2.2 The Student Dialectic Society

One characteristic of student life at the classical university, in addition to peculiar things like fencers’ fraternities, were the students debating societies, at Chapel Hill represented by the Student Dialectic Society. For our purposes, the society in question was fruitful in terms of relevant source material generated in its midst. At the society the students, at on principle their own initiative, that essential skill of a Southern gentleman living under republican liberty, the skill of speech.

The sentiments expressed in the body of texts provided by the Society shows the students largely adhering with youthful fervor to the conservative sentiment of their surrounding society. Nevertheless, being products of a debate society, dissenting visions also emerge from the Society’s remains, even if such views might well be only products of contrarian, argumentative exercise. This understanding should influence one’s view on the body of arguments presented in the sources.¹⁹

¹⁷ Board of Trustees Minutes, December 19, 1818 [Containing the Plans of Education for the Preparatory School and the College]. NCSUA.

¹⁸ LeLoudis 2004.

¹⁹ *True and Candid Compositions: The Lives and Writings of Antebellum Students at the University of North Carolina*. NCSUA. *The First Century of the First State University*. NCSUA.

Nevertheless, this compilation of my abridgement of debate subjects and the debates' binary conclusions presented by Erika Linderman is telling:²⁰

--- 1854 Are we progressing? (negative)

1854 Should any more foreigners be naturalized? (negative)

1854 Is extension of territory detrimental to the United States? (affirmative)

1854 Should Cuba be annexed to the United States? (affirmative) 1855

Is southern slavery justifiable? (affirmative) ---

2.3 The School of Application of Science to the Arts

Regardless of possible Southern prejudices towards high education, scientific or otherwise, in 1840s there was a conscious recognition and a drive to better Southern expertise in the areas necessitated by industrialism. At North Carolina State University this drive was represented by the program to bring teaching of Chemistry and Engineering to Chapel Hill, fronted by the future agricultural chemistry professor Benjamin Hedrick and the future engineering professor Charles Phillips, son Chapel Hill's mathematics professor James Phillips.²¹

The resulting program, the school of Application of Science to the Arts was indeed initiated in 1852. The program, however, met with problems of material scarcity, student disinterest, and apparent prejudice by higher-ups. Most damning of the program's misfortunes was the firing of Hendrick for political reasons in 1856, as he came out in support the anti-slavery party Republicans' Presidential candidate John C. Fermont. These misfortunes are connected to the described Southern prejudices by LeLoudis.²² In the coming section, sources surrounding the program will be examined along with others. The

²⁰ Lindemann 2004.

²¹ Cherry 1994.

²² LeLoudis 1996a.

sources relevant to the program in question consist mostly of the professors' correspondence, with a single exception.²³

²³ *The First Century of the First State University*. NCSUA.

3. The Contemporary Perspectives at Chapel Hill

In the following core scholarly portion of my presentation I will examine the contemporary views of people associated with University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill which I have deemed related to the loosely defined theme of my research. More precisely, I have limited my scope of examination to the last Antebellum decade of 1850s. Moreover, my examination is sadly limited by the arbitration of the compiler of the two original collections of source material. It is not my intention, as it is not in my competence, to judge the representativeness of the source material regarding my research mission. It is merely called for to make note of the possible limitations of the scope of this research.

3.1 The Students' Perspectives

For an examination of the students thinking as represented in their debating society, Students Dialectical Society, I will analyze two sets of sources from two occasions of debate. It is regrettable, that probably the most fruitful of the existing pieces provided by the Society, the one where “Hellhounds of abolitionism” are equated with modern industrialism – entitled likewise strikingly as “Progress of Humbugger” and presented by one David G. Worth – is not included among the source material available for my examination. On the other hand, there might well be particular value in sources where the common ideology would emerge only tangentially.²⁴

The first set of sources examined are four debate speeches given by four students on the subject “Have Men of Action Been More Beneficial to the World Than Men of Thought?” in 1857. This set of speeches is likewise referred on a footnote to present “student concerns over the dangers of imagination and speculation” by LeLoudis, which I shall allow to inform my own assessment.

²⁴ LeLoudis 1996a.

Two of the speeches in question answer the debate question in affirmative, these speeches presented by Hugh Brown and Leroy McAfee. These are first under my examination, after which two negative responses by Hamilton Jones and William Coleman shall be examined.

Even in the first two speeches, it is notable – even as it is to be expected from university men – that there is no intrinsic negativity assigned to being “A Man of Thought”. Furthermore, no division is being made between classical thinking and the kind producing industrial progress. McAfee also seems to emphasize there existing both good and bad ideas as well as action – with action being nonetheless the more relevant to affecting the world, in a somewhat digressing argument.²⁵

However: In the line of argument pursued by Brown there does emerge an attitude condemning in some sense *excessive* thinking: “It is true that meditation is a jewel, yet a dangerous thing; for there is something in a life of exclusive thought, which has a tendency to lead the mind from the beaten track of precedent (sic) into wild dreams and dangerous speculations”

Furthermore, he notes, while condemning along with his co-debater both concrete *and* ideological the excesses of the French Revolution, that while “[the] leaders of the reign of terror spilt some of the best blood of France, and glutted the guillotine with thousands of innocent victims; but they could only destroy their lives, while the [supposedly atheistic] philosophy of Volta[i]re consigned their souls to everlasting destruction ---”!

Here, and throughout the speech, while no strict division is made between natural sciences and philosophy, and indeed the engineering profession being subtly commended elsewhere in the speech, one finds a heart of rabid, religious anti-intellectualism at the core of one sort of Luddism. The prevalence of overwhelming religious thinking in the Dixie is regrettably a relevant topic left underexamined in my dissertation.²⁶

²⁵ "Have Men of Action Been More Beneficial to the World Than Men of Thought?" Debate Speech of Lee M. McAfee. for the Dialectic Society, June 2, 1857. NCSUA.

²⁶ "Have Men of Action Been More Beneficial to the World Than Men of Thought?" Debate Speech of Hamilton C. Jones Jr. for the Dialectic Society, June 2, 1857. NCSUA.

Coming to the two negative responses to the debate question, the ones defending “men of thought”, the one by Hamilton Jones engages these attacks on French Enlightenment by Brown. Defending his assertion he assigns to men like Voltaire only libertine patriotism and accuses solely “men of action” like Marat from the Terror’s excesses. As a mostly political speech apparently neutral towards modernism, this source bears little relevance to the line of questioning pursued by my research, even as such an omission might bear its own relevance.²⁷

Finally, in the flowery debate speech by William Coleman, there does not emerge any sense of anti-intellectualism, if not any modernist enthusiasm either. Coleman venerates great men of thinking, saving the most beautiful descriptor for Martin Luther, but placing men like Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton (as well as William Shakespeare) in the same vein. Like Jones, he seems to assign most evils of history to supposed men of action like Napoleon.²⁸

However ambiguous the attitudes expressed in the first set of source material, one finds an entirely contrasting view to condemnations of “excessive meditation” and “dangerous speculation” in another, singular student speech from another debate held in 1858. The debate question was “Are the Ancient Languages worthy the place which they now hold in the course of education?” and the debater named Wilbur Foster.

In his speech Foster asserts that Ancient Greek and Latin are overemphasized in the university’s education and suggests that natural sciences should take a stronger role. He claims the ancient languages hold no particular moral value and thus utility, while natural sciences “purify our hearts”, “refine our moral nature” and “exalt our minds”! Indeed, in almost Icarian fashion the student exalts the natural sciences for their promise of brighter future unburdened by shackles of the “barbaric” past and bringing humankind to (only!) an “approximation to the Divine Nature”.

²⁷ "Have Men of Action Been More Beneficial to the World Than Men of Thought?" Debate Speech of Hamilton C. Jones Jr. for the Dialectic Society, June 2, 1857. NCSUA.

²⁸ "Have Men of Action Been More Beneficial to the World Than Men of Thought?" Debate Speech of William M. Coleman for the Dialectic Society, June 2, 1857. NCSUA.

Certainly, the religious sentiment of the time is reflected likewise in exalting Science as the language of the God and condemning Greek and Latin (quite oddly) as “pagan” languages. And of course, serious negativity towards learning of any languages would constitute another form of anti-intellectualism. Nevertheless, here is sentiment quite far removed from a religious, classics-obsessed Luddism.²⁹

In conclusion: To the extent that these argumentation exercises are to be seen as representations of genuine sentiments – the scholarly example of LeLoudis does lend such a justification – they paint an inconclusive picture of attitudes towards modernity, science and progress. While a kind of luddite sentiment emerges from some of the speeches, in the context of the speeches it certainly cannot be considered uniform or unopposed.

3.2 The Case of the School of Application of Science to the Arts

Closing this dissertation will be an analysis of sentiment emerging from the sources surrounding the founding and running of the pioneering program of applied sciences, The School of Application of Science to the Arts. The most prominent type of source in this set will be letters from Benjamin Hedrick, the chemist, and Charles Phillips, the engineer. The main line of inquiry will similar to the one applied to the students’ speeches, that is, examining what possible sentiments regarding progress, modernity and goals of education by the authors emerge from the written source material. Also, a slight source-based inquiry will be performed with regards to problems facing the program, particularly with the firing of Hendrick.

With regards to the collection of letters at hand, most of them are addressed by either Hedrick, Phillips or both to the university president David Swain. By LeLoudis’ account it is the atavistic tendencies of this Swain that were to blame for some of misfortunes and scarcity facing the applied science program. On the other hand, as Thomas Kevin B.

²⁹ Junior Debate Speech of Wilbur F. Foster for the Dialectic Society, 1858: "Are the Ancient Languages Worthy the Place Which They Now Hold in the Course of Education?". NCSUA.

Cherry testifies, Swain had indeed shown earlier particular enthusiasm for teaching of agriculture at the university at the precursor of the program, such development being of utility to the rural state. There is of course no reason why both could not be true.³⁰

Coming to the source material, the letters, one finds mostly what one might expect in an address by scientists to their higher up. Along with common courtesies one finds mostly issues motivated by necessity and utility, such as lamentations of lack of funding and listing of monetary necessities faced by the program. One section of interest in a letter by Phillips laments “a class of young men whose efforts are stimulated mainly by the hopes of a diploma ---” and their disinterest and incompetence in scientific labor. This might well be reflection of a “Southern Luddism” among the students, however one is hard-pressed not to find a certain moderating universality in this complaint.³¹

In the most fruitful of the letters, authored by both professors in 1853, a generalizing mission statement is made to their vaguely named program. In particular, a sort of a philosophy is formulated for the engineering profession as a side note: “It will be seen that we do not now offer to teach Natural Philosophy as in general it is understood. Engineering strictly teaches us how to control the forces of Nature, not how to obtain them.”³²

That such a flowery definition was deemed necessary to further justify teaching of engineering skills testifies to the novelty of the subject in the university environment. It also summarizes the contrasting qualities of the new subjects birthed by utility and necessity towards the more abstract and philosophizing older subjects. This summary is however devoid of a polarizing analogy made between modernity and the old order.

Finally, with regards to the firing of Hendrick, from the sources including minutiae of the university’s board of trustees and Hendrick’s private political defense of himself there emerges that Hendrick’s firing for publicized support of the republican Vermont was *explicit* at the time and justified by reference to the school’s rules.³³ Indeed, no explicit

³⁰ Cherry 1994.

³¹ Letter from Charles Phillips to David L. Swain, January 15, 1853. NCSUA.

³² Letter from Charles Phillips and Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick to David L. Swain October 13, 1853. NCSUA.

³³ Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees Minutes, October 11, 1856 [Containing Resolutions

connection between Hendrick's scientific profession and his political views is made in the examined sources. Indeed, no such explicit connection is claimed by LeLoudis either, with the subjective connection apparently emerging between them only after the firing among the school's conservatives.³⁴

Regarding Benjamin S. Hedrick's Actions]; [Letter of] Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick to Governor Thomas Bragg, October 6, 1856. NCSUA.

³⁴ LeLoudis 1996a.

Conclusion

The division of the nation and the country of United States on the wake of its Civil War in 1860 was significant. The division concerned political attitudes, economics and the level of educational and industrial progress. This divide reflected also to Southerners' attitudes towards issues like progress, modernity and education.

There seems to have existed a form of *Southern Luddism*, an anti-progress sentiment particular to the American South. This sentiment was connected to a wider intellectual conservative sentiment. This sentiment was characterized by idealization of Southern order dominated by plantation slavery and slave masters, to whom high education had only nonessential utility. With varying degrees of consciousness and rationalization this order was defended from abstract and concrete threats imposed by modernity. However, the precise scope and uniformity of Southern Luddism is left ambiguous.

In this dissertation, a source-based research focus was placed on textual sources from immediate antebellum period of North Carolina State University, an American university claiming the title of first state university in that country. This university existed in the cultural and political area of American South. It presented an example of traditional classical university, which has been contrasted with an emerging modern university of the time period necessitated by the emergence of industrialism.

A two set of sources from the university's history was examined and analyzed for attitudes towards issues like progress, modernity and education. In the first set, the students' speeches present ambiguous attitudes towards these issues, certainly reflecting some sorts of moderate Luddism, but also un-uniformity in this respect.

The clearest characteristics of Luddism emerging from the sources were a religiously motivated caution towards excessive philosophy and meditation and the connection made between unfettered thinking and destructive radicalism. On the other hand, no explicit condemnation of modernity as such emerges from the texts and then one of the sources expresses an entirely contrasting positivity towards scientific and technological progress.

The second set of sources mostly consisting of correspondence from two of the university's professors oriented towards applied science testified to an ambiguously negative assessment of capability of scientific pursuit among students and a practical attitude to the necessities of scientific expertise and a material scarcity experienced by the School for the Application of Science to the Arts, the university's program aimed at ailing the institution's old-fashioned curriculum.

Source Material and Research Literature

Source Material

North Carolina State University Archives. (NCSUA)

The First Century of the First State University, Online Collection.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/unc/index.html> (Read 20. 5. 2018).

[Letter of] Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick to Governor Thomas Bragg, October 6, 1856

Board of Trustees Minutes, December 19, 1818 [Containing the Plans of Education for the Preparatory School and the College]

Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees Minutes, October 11, 1856
[Containing Resolutions Regarding Benjamin S. Hedrick's Actions]

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Letter from Benjamin Sherwood Hedrick to David L. Swain September 15, 1853

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