James Finemore Cooper Essay, Research Paper

James Fenimore Cooper was born in the year 1789, and lived in New York State until 1803.(1) Since James Fenimore Cooper lived along the frontier, he was able to capture that way of life and accurately portray it in his novels.(2) This is one of the many reasons why he was loved and admired as a writer.

James Cooper attended Yale University. (3) After he was expelled his junior year in 1805,(4) he enlisted in the Navy as a common seaman in 1806 and then went on to warrant a midshipman from 1808 until 1810.(5) Since James Fenimore Cooper spent so much time on the sea, he was inspired to write a few sea novels. He retired after the political assassination of his father, married a wealthy English woman, and moved to England in 1811. He was then made head of the entire Cooper clan in 1819 when the last of his five older brothers died. Between that time and 1826 he had published five novels (the first one on a dare), becoming America?s first significant novelist and setting the tone and the scene for many other novels.

James Fenimore Cooper is one of the best known writers from the nineteenth century. Cooper struggled so hard to understand his countrymen with persistence and a deepness unequaled by any other American novelist.(6)

James Cooper managed more than thirty novels, most of which are almost excessively American. Reenacting with patriotic fervor, the eras of settlement and revolution shaped a new world vision that superseded all the previous mythologies.(7)

James Fenimore Cooper is best known for his Leatherstocking series: The Pioneers, The Last of the Mohicans, The Prairie, The Pathfinder, and The Deerslayer.(8) James Cooper said that his favorite novel in the Leatherstocking series was The Pioneers, but the most famous of this series is The Last of the Mohicans. The Last ot the Mohican focused on the expanding fringe of American civilization.(9)

While living in England, Cooper wrote many novels. On one trip back to the United States he was brought to an unpleasant realization that he was not as popular as he once thought. He wrote a few books the Americans had found offensive.(10) One of these books was, Notions of the Americans. This move refuted what Cooper considered to be false accounts of Americans by European travelers. His novel was ridiculed by American journalists and was reviewed with hostility by Europeans.(11) He was also criticized because of his political, economic, and social behavior. James Cooper was a social critic, novelist, and historian who was the first professional author from the United States.(12) He was a great contributor to the development of the national culture. His works were popular because he wrote about romantic frontier life.

Although he was loved in his early years, he was largely criticized when he was older. People liked his early works because they were about historical romances with recognizable American scenes, characters, and manners. However, when he returned his energies to educating his countrymen on their cultural differences, he was met with scorn and severe opposition.(13) James Fenimore Cooper baffled his generation in its testy attempts to understand him. No other major writer had ever been misunderstood like Cooper was misunderstood. His outspoken individualism was a constant irritation. James Fenimore Cooper is now considered to be on of the greatest authors in American history. He had a great influence on shaping the nineteenth century image of the Indian for popular authors who also used travel accounts to give meaning to their tales.(14)