

# **Historia**

A Publication of the Epsilon Mu Chapter of  
*Phi Alpha Theta*  
and the Department of History  
at  
Eastern Illinois University

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<b>Coney Island</b> Darius Frazier	5
<b>The Hiss-Chambers Case: Three Acts of Espionage Theater</b> Ryan Ervin	14
<b>Rural Radicals: Illinois and the Farmer-Labor Party</b> Mary Barford	43
<b>Oral History: From Fact Finding to History Shaping</b> Nicholas Mariner	59
<b>Industrialization: Architecture's Resistance and Adaptation</b> Sarah Hagye	70
<b>An Inadequate Ideology: Republican Motherhood and the Civil War</b> Annie Tock	77
<b>Children of the Aztecs</b> Kelly Thoele	93
<b>Jamaican Christian Missions and the End of Slavery</b> Rachel Elam	101
<b>William Jardine: Architect of the First Opium War</b> Benjamin Cassan	106
<b>Charles Spurgeon: The Prince and the Paupers</b> Robyn Carswell	118
<b>Liberal Nationalism's Role in the Development of the German Nation-State</b> Matthew Burke	136

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

We are pleased to present the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of *Historia*, a student written and edited journal of the Epsilon Mu Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta and the Eastern Illinois University History Department. The articles included in the journal were chosen through a rigorous and anonymous selection process; we are confident that they represent the best student scholarship of the past year.

The following pages explore a wide range of chronological and regional topics, ranging from ancient Aztec family relationships to the political drama of the Alger Hiss case. Also included in our journal are essays on local Illinois coal miners and their relationship to the short-lived Farmer-Labor Party; oral history as an historical methodology; the history of Coney Island; the influence of Christian missions on the end of slavery in Jamaica; the nineteenth-century English preacher, Charles Spurgeon; a new perspective on Republican Motherhood; an examination of the cause of the British Opium War; and the historiography of late nineteenth-century American architecture; the importance of nationalism in the role of the development of the German Nation-State. Several of these articles have won awards, both from the History Department and the University. These honors are listed on the contributors' page.

*Historia* would never have been completed without the help of many people. We are grateful to the many students who submitted papers, both those that were chosen for publication and those that were not. The selection process was a difficult one, and we want to encourage those whose papers were not chosen to submit papers to next year's *Historia*. We would like to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Michael Shirley, for his careful guidance, never-ending patience, and unfailing sense of humor. We would also like to thank Dr. Anita Shelton, Ms. Donna Nichols, and the history faculty for their assistance and support. Finally, we thank the alumni for their support of this journal; they are its audience, and are in consequence responsible for its continued success.

-The Editors

**Darrius Frazier**, a senior from Chicago, Illinois, who received B.A.s in African American Studies and History in May 2005, wrote his paper for Dr. Lynne Curry's History 4920, *Industrializing America*, in Fall 2004.

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**Annie Tock**, a graduate student and member of Phi Alpha Theta from Champaign, Illinois, received her B.A. in history from Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana. She wrote her paper for Dr. Mark Voss-Hubbard's History 5390, *The Civil War*, in Spring 2004.

**Kelly Theole**, a senior and member of Phi Alpha Theta from Montrose, Illinois, wrote her paper for Dr. Jose Deustua's History 3255, *Colonial Latin American History*, in Fall 2004. Her paper won the Simon Bolivar Award for the best undergraduate paper on a Pre-Colombian, Colonial, or modern Latin American history topic for a course taught at Eastern.

**Rachel Elam**, a sophomore and member of Phi Alpha Theta from Villa Grove, Illinois, wrote her paper for Dr. David Kammerling-Smith's History 1590, *Roots of the Modern World: Society and Religion*, in Spring 2004.

**Benjamin Cassan**, a senior from Oak Forest, Illinois and contributing editor of this year's *Historia*, wrote his paper for Dr. Michael Shirley's History 2500, *Historical Research and Writing*, in Fall 2004.

**Robyn Carswell**, a junior from Shelbyville, Illinois, wrote her paper for Dr. Michael Shirley's History 2500, *Historical Research and Writing*, in Fall 2004. Her work won the Robert Irrmann Award for the best paper on a topic in European History written by an undergraduate at Eastern Illinois University, and earned her third place in the Social Science Writing Award competition.

**Matt Burke**, a junior from Elk Grove Village, Illinois, wrote his paper for Dr. Sace Elder's History 3450, *Modern Germany*, in Fall 2004.

## Coney Island

Darrius Frazier

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the United States developed more and larger industries. These urban centers, the characteristic feature of industrial civilization, created a dynamic economic culture, but also produced a sense of social malaise, created slums, and promoted despair among its citizenry. In response to the momentous gravity of these structural changes in America, entertainment centers, such as Coney Island, were created. They sought to help the urban residents temporarily escape the day's chaos and tension. Before Disneyland, Coney Island was undisputedly our nation's first successful entertainment resort and its legacy has left a lasting influence on today's multibillion dollar amusement industries.

Coney Island, one of America's first exemplary theme parks, is located on the Atlantic shore of Brooklyn, New York's largest borough. Several summer traditions in America were born there, including the hot-dog, outdoor amusement parks, roller coasters, carnivals, Ferris wheel rides, bumper cars, vaudeville theaters, storefront nickelodeons, bathing facilities, circuses, and burlesque. In addition to the amusement park, there were several hotels, most notably the Elephant Colossus. There were also racetracks, beer gardens, gambling dens, concert saloons, and dance halls. These were designed to attract a variety of visitors. Hence, it became the people's playground. As America's renowned aviator, Charles Lindbergh noted, "The only thing about America that interests me is Coney Island."<sup>1</sup> Even a chorus at Coney Island announced that: "Uncle Sam is once again a boy at play"<sup>2</sup>, meaning people should become a child again and relearn "how to play."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Immerso, *Coney Island: The People's Playground* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 3-6; John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Millions: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), 4-7; Coney Island (Accessed 1 December 2004); available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coney\\_Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coney_Island).

<sup>2</sup> William Woody Register, *The Kid of Coney Island: Fred Thompson and the Rise of American Amusements* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Coney Island has always had an element of entertainment. The name "Coney Island" derives from the obsolete English word "coney", meaning rabbit, dating back to the 1640s, when rabbit hunting was routine. The Dutch who settled there, renamed the region New Amsterdam and named the area of Coney Island, *Conye Eylant*, after the "conies" that lived along the dunes. After the Civil War, the area was converted to a resort, which eliminated open space for rabbits.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1870s, there were signs Coney Island was rapidly becoming a unique, out-of-this world experience. Activities there, such as donkey rides, fireworks, and hot-air balloons were not experienced elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> As one observer noted, "Coney Island seemed to be a World's Fair in continuous operation."<sup>6</sup>

As Coney Island's attractiveness was noticed during the 19th Century's last 25 years, its marketing was diversified. This was financed by railroad men and entrepreneurs who desired to capitalize on the interests of New Yorkers. In an attempt to satisfy each social class's entertainment needs, it was split into four separate zones from east to west. The wealthy selected Manhattan Beach, the middle class chose Brighton Beach, the working/poor classes were granted West Brighton, and the underclass was left with Norton Point. Entrepreneur Austin Corbin yearned for an elegant resort for a diversity of amusements at or near New York and at the same time wanted to rival Newport, Rhode Island for the upper class market. Brighton Beach, the creation of Brooklyn's merchants and entrepreneurs, was patronized by the middle class because of the variety of shows there. West Brighton was popular with the working class daily excursionists because of theater performances. Norton Point, located at the West end of Coney Island held its seedy reputation for the underclass since the incidence of lawlessness and prostitution was prevalent. Because of the diversity of tastes at Coney Island, it became "an air of a perpetual feast."<sup>7</sup> This ushered in an era of leisure time in addition to cheap amusements.<sup>8</sup>

From about 1880 to 1950, Coney Island was the number one tourist attraction in America, drawing several million visitors a year,

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<sup>4</sup> Immerso, *Coney Island*, 4-6; 12.

<sup>5</sup> Jon Sterngass, *First Resorts: Pursuing Pleasure at Saratoga Springs, Newport & Coney Island* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 75.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Immerso, *Coney Island*, 3-6; 30-31.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

until it was finally eclipsed in popularity by Disneyland. Because of its popularity, many people called it “The People’s Watering Place.”<sup>9</sup> During its peak in popularity, the park boasted three major parks: Luna Park, Steeplechase Park, and Dreamland, until destructive fires and legal issues hastened their demise.<sup>10</sup>

In 1895, Captain Paul Boyton chose Coney Island as the site for what is now considered to be the first true amusement park. Boyton, who had a reputation globally for performing publicity stunts, opened his large water circus, Sea Lion Park, directly behind the Elephant Hotel at Coney Island. Two years later, George Tilyou, who created Steeplechase Park, featured a Ferris wheel decorated with incandescent lights as well as a horseracing center. In 1903, Frederic Thompson and Elmer Dundy opened Luna Park, with its astral attraction, a ride called *Trip to the Moon*. Dreamland followed the following year, culminating with a 375-foot central tower as well as white faux Beaux Arts buildings. These amusement park owners invested heavily in land, buildings, and machinery, giving them unparalleled control over the content and type of leisure within the park.<sup>11</sup> As a result, Coney Island managed to draw an estimated twenty million people during the summer of 1909, as well as more revenue than Disneyland drew during its opening in 1955.<sup>12</sup> At Coney Island, with the admission set at ten cents, millions of dollars were made each summer, with the money going to each partner and investors.<sup>13</sup>

Another man who was undeniably responsible for the growth of Coney Island was John Y. McKane, an elected town commissioner of nearby Gravesend, New York. He began his career as Coney Island politician from 1869-1893. Under McKane’s watch, Coney Island became a vanguard of American seaside resorts. He initiated this possibility by preventing the privatization of the beach by sponsoring leaseholders that generally subdivided the land. When visitors came to Coney Island, they found a variety of amusements crowding the island, each owned as a private concession. Consequently, it produced concentrated competition, low prices, and new forms of entertainment.<sup>14</sup> In addition, McKane’s town

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<sup>9</sup> Immerso, *Coney Island*, 12.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Sterngass, *First Resorts*, 229-30.

<sup>12</sup> Immerso, *Coney Island*, 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> Register, *The Kid of Coney Island*, 93.

<sup>14</sup> Sterngass, *First Resorts*, 235-38.

government provided basic services such as water and electricity to residents. During the 1870s, McKane instigated an updated sewage system that separated Coney Island from the Atlantic Ocean and Sheepshead Bay. McKane exacted towards pickpockets and counterfeiters whom he felt ruined business profits by having one of his bodyguards go after the alleged perpetrators and have them legally expelled from the area. On the flip side however, he tolerated prostitution, claiming: “houses of prostitution are a necessity on Coney Island.... I do not think it is my duty altogether to stop any people enjoying themselves that come down there in the summer season.”<sup>15</sup> After he was defeated in 1893 in a run for reelection, he paved the way for other vices, such as rowdiness and prostitution, to exist despite efforts from the local police and politicians to clean up the area.<sup>16</sup>

One reason Coney Island was so popular was its construction. It was constructed to attract different cultures in order to bring together social change, entertainment, and order, meaning that because there was an abundance of activities for everyone there remained little possibility of violence. Existing institutions, such as libraries, museums, art galleries, symphonies, etc., failed to attract diverse groups of visitors due to the fact that many new immigrant groups, as well as the urban working class, continued to hold on to their own culture and chose not to frequent them. Additionally, many of the immigrants and working class thought these institutions did not appeal to their desires.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, what made Coney Island significant was that audience and activity frequently took place simultaneously. Coney Island was the first amusement park to inspire heterogeneous groups to discover new things. It pioneered a new cultural institution challenging the notion of public conduct and social order, meaning nearly everyone involved tested and sometimes violated societal norms by interacting with individuals in a different social class. Furthermore, it shed light on the cultural transition of America and the struggle for the moral, social, and aesthetic changes that transpired in the United States at the turn of the century. This was when Coney Island became not only a fun place, but also a place of major changes in American manners and morals.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 254-57.

<sup>17</sup> Kasson, *Amusing the Millions*, 4-7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

Coney Island became a place where all social classes could intermingle. It mocked the established order of social roles and values by the creation of a carnival atmosphere. During seasonal feasts and festivals, members of each social community felt free to express their emotions, which they deemed appropriate. In effect, it became a moral holiday for the attendees who entered its gates.<sup>19</sup> Coney Island's influence of an alternative environment expressing a condemnation of urban conditions and culture spread to the 1893 Columbian Exposition Fair in Chicago. The Columbian Exposition provided architects and artists the opportunity to redecorate the landscape absent from the urban environment. The Fair aimed to showcase what an industrial city would look like in the near future and seek to create to have America join in 'a new cultural Renaissance.'<sup>20</sup> It also represented groups of different classes and races uniting for a common cause. This provided a case for creativity and an escape from societal norms. Many visitors were delighted by the fair's superlative display. As one put it, the fair "revealed to the people, possibilities of social beauty, utility, and harmony of which they had not been able to dream."<sup>21</sup> Many visitors, however, observed that "the strenuous cultural demands of the fair could prove oppressive."<sup>22</sup> According to Frederick Law Olmsted, many of the visitors had a tired, uninterested look similar to the city streets and attempted to counteract this experience with large, more natural parks.<sup>23</sup>

Coney Island had influence on other places such as New York City's Central Park, Newport, Rhode Island and Saratoga, New York. Central Park provided areas where people could congregate. The emphasis was the arrangement of natural landscape elements so visitors would not be overwhelmed by the city.<sup>24</sup> Newport, like Manhattan, attempted to attract the upper class only. Because many people from the upper class considered commonplace activities, such as bathing at the beach, to be a social flaw in their surroundings, Newport's main attraction was its luxurious hotels.<sup>25</sup> Saratoga, on the other hand, attempted to attract visitors from

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 17-23.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Sterngass, *First Resorts*, 192-94.

various parts of life by bringing a diverse section of commercialized entertainment. These include minstrels, theatricals, live music performances, ventriloquists, and Siamese twins. One visitor declared Saratoga to be "the most picturesque feature of the region"<sup>26</sup> based on the beautiful scenery of the parks and their great lake. A great majority of the people did not leave Saratoga without souvenirs. However, the citizens there viewed the visitors as no more than "potential profitable commodities."<sup>27</sup>

Coney Island also represented a switch to a service-oriented economy. The park was marketed to be a place of fantasy where people could revive their childhood memories and enjoy an escape from reality where really nothing but entertainment is produced. Entertainment was designed to mock the ho-hum experience of everyday life.<sup>28</sup> However, corruption proved to be Fred Thompson's undoing in the face of the possibilities for pleasure and profit in manufacturing amusement.

Coney Island was connected to the railroad provided by the city, instead of the visitors being bused into Coney Island or different railroads terminating near Coney Island. Many of the different railroads were being bankrupt, enabling New York's public transit to gain control of the railways leading to Coney Island. The city transit system wanted to capitalize on the success of Coney Island by drawing in more visitors to take the trains there at a low price. According to Transit Construction Commissioner, John H. Delaney, the five-cent fare on all rail routes would begin on May 1, 1920.<sup>29</sup>

Sea Lion Park opened in the spring of 1895. It became the world's first enclosed amusement park. It featured Shoot-the-Chutes water slide, Old Mill ride, and a Sea Lion show. Boyton demonstrated at Sea Lion Park his floating rubber suit, which would enable him to paddle across the English Channel as well as down the major rivers in Europe and North America.<sup>30</sup> In 1897, George Tilyou opened Steeplechase Park along the fifteen acres of beach in Coney Island. He obtained the right of a horseracing ride from the British inventor, improving the structure. It became his leading attraction. Other rides and attractions surrounded the horse race

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 168-72.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Register, *The Kid of Coney Island*, 6-7.

<sup>29</sup> *New York Times*, 21 March 1920.

<sup>30</sup> Coney Island Timeline, (accessed 2 December 2004); available from <http://naid.spsr.ucla.edu/coneyisland/articles/1880.htm>.

track within the park's walls. In order to attract more visitors to his area, Tilyou charged one price to ride all of the rides as many times as the customer wanted.<sup>31</sup>

Luna Park, a 22-acre park on Coney Island, was constructed by Frederic Thompson and Elmer Dundy. It featured several amusement attractions, including *A Midway to Nations* and *A Trip to the Moon*. It was on the site of the old Sea Lion Park. The debut of Luna Park on the evening of May 16, 1903, brought 45,000 people. To commence the event, there were live bands and circuses. The entrance of Luna Park featured five Roman chariots, each containing a beautiful young woman of evening attire along with a red picture hat. It also featured a forest of one hundred towers and spires. To beautify the park, they used 122,000 electric lights at night, which could be seen for miles, to attract additional visitors. It immediately became a success.<sup>32</sup>

One hotel that was unique in Coney Island was the Elephant Colossus, also known as the Elephant Hotel. It opened in May 1885 after two years of construction. It was, essentially, a wooden carcass that was shaped similar to an elephant. Its length from the hind legs to the tip of its trunk was one hundred fifty feet. Its legs alone were eighteen feet high and its tusks were forty feet in diameter. The forelegs contained a cigar store and the hind legs held circular stairways, also known as the diorama, leading to the rooms on the next floor. The entire body was covered in a coating of blue tin. Inside the body were thirty-one rooms that varied in shape and size, including a grand hall, a gallery, various amusement and novelty stalls, and a museum, that was located near its left lung. The Stomach Room was 60 x 35 feet and triangular shaped. The Cheek Room was where the visitors would enjoy a fantastic view of the Atlantic Ocean and down the trunk.<sup>33</sup> Tragically, the Elephant Hotel collapsed as a result of a fire in 1896, after being unoccupied for several years. After its initial success, it eventually became vacant.<sup>34</sup> During the fire, it took nearly an hour for the structure to collapse since it was made from wood and water was scarce. The fire attracted hundreds of people and many of them looted through

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> "Luna Park First Night: Coney Island visitors dazzled by Electric City," *New York Times*, 17 May 1903.

<sup>33</sup> Immerso, *Coney Island*, 38-40; *New York Times*, 30 May 1885.

<sup>34</sup> Edo McCullough, *Good Old Coney Island: A Sentimental Journey into the Past* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 304.

the structure salvaging souvenirs, despite the best efforts of the police and the fire fighters to keep everyone away. The loss was estimated at that time to be \$16,000 on the elephant and \$2,500 on the property of the lessee, L. D. Shaw.<sup>35</sup> Needless to say there was nary a building built as unique as the Elephant Hotel structure.

Other well-known hotels near Coney Island, besides the Elephant Hotel, were the Manhattan, Brighton and Oriental. The Manhattan Hotel, being 660 feet long, opened at the eastern edge of Coney Island on July 1877. It was designed by architect J. Pickering Putnam in the Queen Anne style. Located adjacent to it was an outdoor amphitheater and bathing pavilion. It housed 360 guestrooms and was alternately three and four stories high. It provided lodgings for travelers and short-term guests.<sup>36</sup> However, to magnetize the wealthy New York families who wanted to encamp at Coney Island for an entire year, Austin Corbin constructed the copious Oriental Hotel, which opened in 1880, with President Rutherford B. Hayes in attendance. It stood a quarter mile east of Manhattan Hotel. Corbin abandoned the Queen Anne style in favor of Eastern and Moorish influences. The structure was 477 feet long and six stories high.<sup>37</sup> The following year, William Engeman assembled the three-story, 174-room Brighton Hotel. Built in Gothic style, it rose alternately from three to five stories high, and was 525 feet long. While it was intended to attract the Brooklyn middle-class, it held the same amenities as the Manhattan Hotel.<sup>38</sup> However, these buildings were eventually demolished by 1920 due to legal issues, such as gambling, prostitution, and alcohol.<sup>39</sup>

According to a February 4, 1904 report, Coney Island had plans with the help of Commissioner Oakley of the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity and Deputy Commissioner Byrne, to protect its property from flames. Byrne proposed the usage of salt water from the Atlantic Ocean to extinguish flames in case of a fire. It would have been located at the pumping station on Coney Island's property. The pump would have a capacity of 80,000 gallons an hour with a pressure of 250 gallons a minute seventy-five feet high. All in all, the pumping station would handled 4,000,000 gallons a

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<sup>35</sup> *New York Times*, 28 September 1896.

<sup>36</sup> Immerso, *Coney Island*, 24-26.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 124.

day.<sup>40</sup> On July 30, 1907, a fire swept through Steeplechase Park. It did not help that Coney Island had a new pumping station because the fire fighting equipment was inadequate. There were plans that this section would be built within a few years with the same type of material that caused its ruin. Many of the attractions, along with the surrounding area of Bowery burned, causing approximately \$1.4 million in damages.<sup>41</sup> Another disastrous fire spelled doom in the same area as well as Dreamland on May 1911. This time the fire began around midnight, and in a span of a few hours became the worst fire in Coney Island history based on monetary structural damage, which was close to \$5 million.<sup>42</sup>

Coney Island was set up to provide entertainment for people. It was the forerunner of amusement park concept. Other amusement parks used Coney Island as a guide to providing entertainment. They also learned from the mistakes of Coney Island and how to be successful. It helped paved the way for an entertainment industry and shaped the legacy of the amusement park. From an economical perspective, Coney Island provided jobs to the local economy, strengthened the tax base, and increased the production potential of the laborers who visited Coney Island. Likewise, from a political angle, Coney Island created special taxing districts that were responsible for controlling the profits and governing the investment activities for the shareholders.

Coney Island's name has become synonymous with a family friendly environment. It was a bridge to close the cultural divide, and the paradigm of excellent entertainment for people from every part of the social and economic spectrum.

## The Hiss-Chambers Case: Three Acts of Espionage Theater

Ryan Ervin

*“Experience had taught me that innocence seldom utters outraged shrieks. Guilt does. Innocence is a mighty shield, and the man or woman covered by it, is much more likely to answer calmly: ‘My life is blameless. Look into it, if you like, for you will find nothing.’”*—Witness, Whittaker Chambers

Memories of the Hiss-Chambers Case have faded in the nearly 60 years since it dominated headlines in 1948, merging into a vague stew of Communist espionage and congressional hearings. When all of the judgmental paint is wiped away, however, a single, specific question remains: did Alger Hiss lie to the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC)? The debate has instead centered on those involved, focusing on Whittaker Chambers's seedy and notorious past, on Hiss's outstanding resume and career, and, above all, on HUAC's questionable conduct during the initial hearings.

In August 1948, Alger Hiss lied before HUAC. He knew Chambers when Chambers had been a Communist. His testimony before HUAC proves this beyond any doubt. Intercepted Soviet cables during the Cold War, released in 1996, further prove Hiss's Communist ties.<sup>1</sup> The House Committee was instrumental in finding the inaccuracies, errors, and lies Hiss told. But although HUAC was central to cracking the case, its procedures and conduct in a politically-charged atmosphere have allowed it to continue long after the hearings ended. Likewise, those who either trusted Hiss or believed in Chambers have defended them without relying on the evidence. Their unyielding support, based on superficial opinions, has entangled the case in a briar patch of doubt. By dropping all of the litigious rhetoric of both groups, the truth in the testimony is all

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<sup>1</sup> The NSA began decoding encrypted Soviet messages in the 1930s and 1940s. A March 30, 1945 cable almost conclusively identifies Hiss as a Communist under the codename “Ales.” The activities of “Ales” during the Yalta Conference led encryption experts to conclude: “Ales: Probably Alger Hiss.” See John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 155-56, 170-73, 352.

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<sup>40</sup> *New York Times*, 4 February 1904.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*, 30 July 1907.

<sup>42</sup> *New York Times*, 27 May 1911.

that remains. Court trials are a kind of theater in which the participants perform for the jury. Congressional hearings also contain dramatic elements, and the Hiss-Chambers Case is a prime example of “Espionage Theater,” with Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers playing their roles in a kind of Greek tragedy, and HUAC acting as the director. Unlike a normal theatrical production, however, in which the drama effected on the stage is designed to clarify the script’s meaning, the dramatic elements offered by Hiss, Chambers, and HUAC served to muddy the words they spoke. The witnesses read their lines with such dramatic flare that the script was virtually ignored by posterity. The case is best understood in this theatrical context, within the framework of three Acts. *Act I* will cover Chambers’s and Hiss’s first testimonies before HUAC; *Act II* will deal with both men’s “follow-up” testimonies in executive session; and *Act III* involves the first, and most important, confrontation between the two. Whittaker Chambers, the accuser, Alger Hiss the accused, and Richard Nixon, the driving force of HUAC, were the leading actors in this play. All three men offered very different accounts of what took place during that humid August of 1948. Chambers, the reluctant, tragedy-plagued witness was thrust into a case he felt compelled, by forces greater than he, to take part in. Hiss, the defiant and brash New Dealer, played the role of victim to the hilt. And Nixon, the obsessive, dogged Congressman who saw an opportunity to destroy the Truman Administration while furthering his own political career. More than anything else, the motives, personalities, and words of these three men have given the case its longevity.

It is important to understand the witnesses’ background at the time of their 1948 testimony. David Whittaker Chambers was born in Philadelphia in 1901. He came from a modest background, and after high school looked for work as a writer. Convinced after WWI that the world was steering towards self-destruction, Chambers joined the Communist Party in 1924.<sup>2</sup> He worked his way up the ladder of the Party, and eventually became a writer for the *New Masses*, a Communist newspaper. In the mid-1930s, however, the Party leadership asked him to go “underground” and partake in

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<sup>2</sup> In the post-WWI years, Chambers was looking for some direction, a plan for the world, that made sense to him. He “believed that a moribund society needed the surgeon’s knife of Marxism-Leninism if it was to survive.” Nathaniel Weyl, *Treason: The Story of Disloyalty and Betrayal in American History* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1950), 429.

espionage activities against the United States government. He joined the Ware Group, named for its leader, Harold Ware.<sup>3</sup> This group posed as an intellectual discussion group but was actually an espionage cell in Washington, D.C. Many in the group worked for the government in some capacity, and Chambers’s acted as a courier for them, taking copied documents to his Soviet agent “handlers.” According to Chambers, the Ware Group included Nathan Witt, John Abt, Lee Pressman, Victor Perlo, Charles Kramer, Alger Hiss, and Donald Hiss (Alger’s brother).<sup>4</sup>

By 1938, Joseph Stalin was at the height of his Soviet purges. Chambers realized this danger when the Soviet Union ordered him to the country for unclear reasons and, certain that his life was at stake, he broke with the Party. He took his family into hiding, and stayed up nights with a revolver in reach. Eventually, though, the threat of retaliation eased, and Chambers gradually re-entered society, having personally renounced Communist ideology. By 1948 he had become a respectable and productive citizen, serving as senior editor of *Time* magazine.

Chambers’s personality is best described as dramatically sad. He was a deeply private man who took things very personally.<sup>5</sup> Chambers saw the world, both while a Communist and after, in the throes of cataclysmic disaster. At his August 3<sup>rd</sup> testimony, he said that when he left the Communist Party, he thought, “I know that I am leaving the winning side for the losing side, but it is better to die on the losing side than to live under communism.”<sup>6</sup> Eric Sundquist remarks that “his renunciation of Communism was produced less by a sudden religious illumination than by the recognition that

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<sup>3</sup> Ware traveled to the Soviet Union and worked on a collective farm in the early 1920s. He returned to the United States later that decade and joined the Department of Agriculture during the early New Deal days. He was part of a “Communist dynasty.” Most of his immediate family members were Communists.

<sup>4</sup> Most or all of the Ware Group members served in government in some capacity.

<sup>5</sup> Eric Sundquist said that his “break with Communism, and his long witness against it, required deep inner upheaval, of a kind that to many people now must seem quaint at best, if not altogether inexplicable.” Sundquist, “Witness Recalled,” *Commentary* 86 (1988): 58.

<sup>6</sup> Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, *Hearings Regarding Communist Espionage in the United States Government*, 80<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., July-September, 1948, 564. In T. Michael Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Inc., 2005), 29.

totalitarian rule was condemning the world to darkness.”<sup>7</sup> A gifted writer who first translated the novel *Bambi* into English, Chambers was nonetheless obsessed with the notion that events were edging the world toward a battle between freedom and totalitarianism, and he would be a major player in those events.

It would be difficult to find two people less alike, in both appearance and life, than Whittaker Chambers and Alger Hiss. Hiss’s life story is one of accomplishment and success. Born in Baltimore in 1904, he attended Johns Hopkins University, where he was voted “most popular” and “best all around” by his classmates.<sup>8</sup> Hiss graduated cum laude from Harvard Law, and then clerked for Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. In the early 1930s he followed many lawyers to Washington to be a part of President Roosevelt’s New Deal. In the course of his career, Hiss served all three branches of government. He gave legal counsel to the Nye Committee, which investigated munitions manufacturing; he served a brief stint in the Justice Department; and he eventually became an advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State. Hiss helped draw up the American plan for the Yalta Conference, and accompanied Roosevelt to the meeting. He also was Secretary General of the San Francisco Conference that ratified the United Nations charter. In 1945, Hiss left government service to become President of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace.

Despite only a three-year age difference, Hiss and Chambers looked nothing alike. Chambers was short, pudgy, and fumbling, with premature gray hair, looking twenty years older than his 47 years of age. Hiss, by contrast, was tall, lean, and dapper, the very image of the New Deal Democrat.<sup>9</sup> His very appearance, a handicap for Chambers, strengthened his credibility.

The House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), before which Hiss and Chambers testified, had been created in 1938 and charged with investigating any and all varieties of “domestic

<sup>7</sup> Sundquist, “Witness Recalled,” 59.

<sup>8</sup> At Johns Hopkins and later at Harvard Law School, Hiss “combined unobtrusive brilliance with an easy-going, modest, attractive personality.” Weyl, 430-431.

<sup>9</sup> “Hiss’s background, style and career symbolized the ethos of the self-confident, left-wing, East Coast, Ivy League, New Deal bureaucrat,” writes David Cate. “His accuser, Whittaker Chambers, was by contrast a humped, shambling writer with a record as a confessed Communist spy.” David Cate, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 59.

political extremism,” which eventually meant a focus on “the Democratic Party’s liberal left more than on avowed Communists or fascists.”<sup>10</sup> It was initially a temporary committee, but by the time John Rankin (D-MS) became chairman in 1945, it had become permanent, and focused most of its attention on the perceived threat of Communism in America. Before the Hiss-Chambers case, HUAC already had a controversial reputation. The Committee’s “investigations of the motion picture industry had received some sharp criticism in the press, and President Harry Truman’s staff had drafted a bill to abolish it should the Democrats control Congress after the 1948 election.”<sup>11</sup>

HUAC consisted of nine Congressmen in 1948: J. Parnell Thomas (R-NJ), Karl E. Mundt (R-SD), John McDowell (R-PA), Richard Nixon (R-CA), Richard B. Vail (R-IL), John S. Wood (D-GA), John E. Rankin (D-MS), H. Hardin Peterson (D-FL), and F. Edward Hébert (D-LA). Robert E. Stripling, the Chief Investigating Officer for the Committee, also played an important role in the case. The more prominent HUAC members were as varied in their demeanor as the states they came from. Karl Mundt displayed more zeal in his duties than any other Congressmen. He was “a born investigator and a clever one. More than almost any other man who ever served on the committee he seemed to enjoy searching for evidence of ‘un-American activity.’” Mundt was constantly concerned about his own publicity in the investigations, and he brought to HUAC “a series of strong prejudices and a bitter sense of partisanship...he did not hesitate to indicate a bias or even fully formed judgment at the beginning of a hearing, and he never lost an opportunity to attack the Democratic administration.”<sup>12</sup> Although acknowledged as one of the more intelligent members of HUAC, at times he was careless with facts.

John Rankin was a blatant racist, “who spiked most hearings with Negrophobic, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic tirades....”<sup>13</sup> J. Thomas was “characteristically ungracious” about allowing witness and their attorneys to confer, and he seemed to take great

<sup>10</sup> Allen Weinstein, *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* (New York: Random House, 1978), 5.

<sup>11</sup> G. Edward White, *Alger Hiss’s Looking-Glass Wars: The Covert Life of a Soviet Spy* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 52-53.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Goodman, *The Committee: The Extraordinary Career of the House Committee on Un-American Activities* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1964), 226-227.

<sup>13</sup> Weinstein, *Perjury*, 5.

satisfaction “in hearing former New Dealers and present eminences of the Progressive Party discredit themselves in public.” Not only would their testimony help the Republican campaign in 1948, he reasoned, but it would also reaffirm the need for investigative committees such as HUAC.<sup>14</sup> John McDowell was “a complete nonentity among members of Congress, a man of exceedingly limited ability, and, what is worse, one who was unable to remain silent or to play the quiet role of a follower which so many men of mediocre talents have wisely selected for themselves.”<sup>15</sup>

Prior to the Hiss-Chambers case, Richard Nixon was a relatively quiet member of the committee. He did not partake in many of the “Hollywood hearings” of 1947, and he even showed “a mild inclination to defend the motion picture industry” against the attack of other members.<sup>16</sup> Nixon was fast learner, and showed a natural instinct “for when to bet high and when to cut his losses.”<sup>17</sup> He had one, clear purpose for being on the Committee: to oust Communists from government.<sup>18</sup> A lawyer by profession before his election to Congress in 1946, Nixon brought much-needed composure and a keen sense of duty to the committee.

Robert Stripling was perhaps the best investigator the committee could ask for. “Strip,” as he was called, had been HUAC’s Chief Investigator since 1938. He was a professional at heart, and “organized his investigations for maximum impact and conducted them with a sense of order [that others] had never been able to master.”<sup>19</sup> Stripling indeed “was superbly fitted for his investigatory role. He had the hallmark attributes of patience and zeal and also a punishing memory. In hearings he seldom consulted files as he fired questions ‘from the hip’ in his East Texas drawl, pursing his thin lips disgustedly while the witness squirmed.”<sup>20</sup>

Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers held different opinions of HUAC. “It seemed to me plain enough,” Hiss wrote, “that some

<sup>14</sup> Goodman, *The Committee*, 251.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>18</sup> “To show that there were Communists in the federal service, to see them punished, to see those who permitted them to gain their public posts discredited, to see the laws changed if existing ones provided an inadequate basis for punishing the wrongdoers—these were Nixon’s interests.” *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>20</sup> Sam Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1997), 215.

members of the Committee were launched on a hunt for political sensations and that their attitude toward anyone charged with Communism would not be objective.”<sup>21</sup> Hiss might have had good reason for worry, because the Case would become a “*cause célèbre*,” and HUAC, “as well as the country, was to show far more interest in the personalities involved and the solution to the mystery than it was in the broader problem which underlay the details of the story.” If one reads the testimony, there is indeed little to learn about the “larger aspects of the threat offered by subversive agents in a democratic society in a world in revolution.”<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, Chambers’s initial view of HUAC was similar to Hiss’s, although his thinking would change later. Chambers knew nothing of the Committee, and was told that its members

were the least intelligent in Congress because no decent man wanted to serve on it. They were uncouth, undignified and ungrammatical. They were rude and ruthless. They smeared innocent people on insufficient evidence or no evidence at all. They bullied witnesses and made sensational statements unfounded in fact. When, occasionally, they did seem to strike a fresh scent, they promptly lost it by all shouting at once or by making some ridiculous fumble.<sup>23</sup>

Chambers’s preliminary understanding of HUAC evolved, however, into respect and admiration. “What I filed away in my mind,” he wrote, “was that the Committee was a force that was fiercely, albeit clumsily, fighting Communism.” He believed that HUAC “acted, at least in the Hiss Case, with intelligence and shrewd force, despite great pressures not to act at all.” Chambers also became friends with Nixon and his family, and with Mundt and McDowell, “a most cordial feeling developed.”<sup>24</sup> Despite these close relationships, he nevertheless thought HUAC behaved “clumsily, crudely, without intelligence, intuition, or even order.” Later though, he would be “astonished at the skill and pertinacity with which [the Committee] made head against great obstacles.”<sup>25</sup> Chambers’s admiration, especially for Nixon, might have had little to

<sup>21</sup> Alger Hiss, *In the Court of Public Opinion* (London: John Calder, Ltd., 1957), 8.

<sup>22</sup> Robert K. Carr, *The House Committee on Un-American Activities: 1945-1950* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1952), 97, 130.

<sup>23</sup> Whittaker Chambers, *Witness* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1952), 536.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 537.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 557-558.

with his conduct during the case. He seemed to have a special link with Nixon, who resembled him in many ways.

Nixon too was an introvert determined to play a role in history. Nixon too was painfully aware of the charm he lacked and diligently compensated for it by means of his 'extraordinary intelligence.' Nixon too harbored secret depths of loneliness and compassion. Nixon too was an unapacific Quaker who saw life in psychodramatic terms of struggle and conflict.<sup>26</sup>

Both men felt the same about the world, both felt they had a duty to expose Communist infiltration, and thus both seemed to be on the same side from the beginning of the case.

*Act I* of the Hiss-Chambers Case began on July 31, 1948, when Elizabeth Bentley testified before HUAC. Bentley, known as the "Red Spy Queen," was a confessed Communist agent who named many Communist agents in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. Bentley's testimony hit a dead end, however, when there were no witnesses, or evidence, to corroborate her testimony. HUAC called on Whittaker Chambers, who had related his involvement in the Ware Group to FBI and executive officials before, to substantiate what Bentley had said.<sup>27</sup> In testifying, Chambers drew up the curtain on the Hiss-Chambers Case.

### ACT I AUGUST 3<sup>rd</sup> AND 5<sup>th</sup>, 1948: CHAMBERS'S AND HISS'S FIRST TESTIMONIES

Richard Nixon was not impressed when first saw Chambers. "He was short and pudgy. His clothes were unpressed. His shirt collar was curled up over his jacket. He spoke in a rather bored monotone." "Both in appearance and in what he had to say," wrote Nixon, "he made very little impression on me or the other Committee members."<sup>28</sup> Chambers was anything but eager to "name names" and tell of his Communist past. "I did not wish to testify before the House Committee," Chambers writes. "I prayed

<sup>26</sup> Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers*, 240.

<sup>27</sup> Chambers was interviewed by Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle, Jr., on September 1, 1939. He again discussed his Communist ties with State Department officials in the spring of 1945, and was interviewed by FBI agents on May 10, 1945. Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 23.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Nixon, *Six Crises* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1962), 2.

that, if it were God's will, I might be spared that ordeal. I knew that I could simply keep silent about any names that I was not directly questioned about, with a good chance that I would not be asked about any that Elizabeth Bentley had not already mentioned. I could minimize whatever I had to say, in any case, so that it amounted to little."<sup>29</sup>

Chambers subsequently gave a brief history of his break with Communism, why he had done so, and what his involvement in the Ware Group had been. He named all of the group's members, including Alger Hiss, and explained its infiltration purposes, namely to influence policy. HUAC questioned Chambers extensively on the nature of the "Washington apparatus," how it operated, and whom Chambers had told his story to in the past. Little attention was given to Alger Hiss or the others named by Chambers at this time, except for this brief exchange:

MR. STRIPLING: When you left the Communist Party in 1937 did you approach any of these seven to break with you?

MR. CHAMBERS: No. The only one of those people whom I approached was Alger Hiss. I went to the Hiss home one evening at what I considered considerable risk to myself and found Mrs. Hiss at home. Mrs. Hiss is also a member of the Communist Party.

MR. MUNDT: Mrs. Alger Hiss?

MR. CHAMBERS: Mrs. Alger Hiss...Mrs. Hiss attempted while I was there to make a call, which I can only presume was to other Communists, but I quickly went to the telephone and she hung up, and Mr. Hiss came in shortly afterward, and we talked and I tried to break him away from the party.

MR. MCDOWELL: He cried?

MR. CHAMBERS: Yes, he did. I was very fond of Mr. Hiss.

MR. MUNDT: He must have given you some reason why he did not want to sever the relationship.

MR. CHAMBERS: His reasons were simply the party line.<sup>30</sup>

It would be difficult to believe Chambers conjured this story up. These brief remarks about Hiss should have called for further questioning, but the Committee members did no such thing. "What implications there were of espionage were often obscured by Representative John Rankin's ceaseless attempts to drag into the hearing every one of his pet hates in and out of the New Deal and to twist Chambers' words into anti-Semitic utterances," argues Ralph

<sup>29</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 533.

<sup>30</sup> Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 31.

de Toledano. “That the committee did its best to ignore Rankin’s outbursts was very much to its credit.”<sup>31</sup> Historian Robert Carr believed Chambers did his best to specifically accuse Hiss on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. “One feels that Chambers was as much interested in this first appearance in putting the spotlight upon Alger Hiss as he was in bringing to light general information concerning espionage in the federal government.”<sup>32</sup> Carr’s conclusion does not agree with the transcript of Chambers’s testimony however. He spoke as often about the other Ware Group members as he did about Hiss. When asked about Hiss specifically, as in the excerpt above, he offered an answer. In addition, Chambers was anything but eager to testifying before HUAC. He wrote that when he entered the Ways and Means Committee Room that day, he “ceased to be a person; I became the target that I was to continue to be for two years. ‘The impassive Chambers,’ ‘the smiling Chambers’ became catch-phrases which were turned against me by those whose self-interest it was to see in my effort at composure only heartlessness—as if a man had ever found any other refuge than impassivity when roped to a public stake.”<sup>33</sup> If anything, Chambers believed the spotlight had been put on him, not Hiss.

Media opinion of Chambers’s August 3<sup>rd</sup> testimony was unsympathetic. ABC Radio broadcaster Elmer Davis came to Hiss’s defense, suggesting that Chambers’s accusations were a “plot to smear the New Deal.” The *New York Times* noted that “we have a precious heritage in this country of protection of the innocent against false accusation, of a fair trial even for the guilty. What price a few headlines if those rights are compromised?” The *Washington Star* had a cartoon in the next day’s paper “depicting an open sewer manhole labeled ‘The House Un-American Activities Committee.’”<sup>34</sup> The prevailing belief among news outlets was that the whole hearing would damage people’s reputations, and that HUAC should never have subpoenaed Chambers in the first place. HUAC, though, did nothing after Chambers testified but wait for those accused to come forward and testify. Generally, those who did testify claimed their Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination. Everyone in the alleged Ware Group took this course of action, except Alger Hiss.

<sup>31</sup> Ralph de Toledano and Victor Lasky, *Seeds of Treason: The True Story of the Hiss-Chambers Tragedy* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1950), 148.

<sup>32</sup> Carr, *The House Committee on Un-American Activities*, 99.

<sup>33</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 535.

<sup>34</sup> de Toledano and Lasky, *Seeds of Treason*, 150.

He came to HUAC willingly on August 5<sup>th</sup> and claimed he did not know his accuser, Chambers:

MR. STRIPLING: You say you have never seen Mr. Chambers?

MR. HISS: The name means absolutely nothing to me, Mr. Stripling.

MR. STRIPLING: I have here, Mr. Chairman, a picture which was made last Monday by the Associated Press. I understand from people who knew Mr. Chambers during 1934 and '35 that he is much heavier today than he was at that time, but I show you this picture, Mr. Hiss, and ask you if you have ever known an individual who resembles this picture.

MR. HISS: I would much rather see the individual. I have looked at all the pictures I was able to get hold of in, I think it was, yesterday’s paper which had the pictures. If this is a picture of Mr. Chambers, he is not particularly unusual looking. He looks like a lot of people. I might even mistake him for the chairman of this committee. [Laughter.]

MR. MUNDT: I hope you are wrong in that.

MR. HISS: I didn’t mean to be facetious but very seriously. I would not want to take oath that I have never seen that man. I would like to see him and then I think I would be better able to tell whether I had ever seen him. Is he here today?

MR. MUNDT: Not to my knowledge.

MR. HISS: I hoped he would be.

MR. MUNDT: You realize that this man whose picture you have just looked at, under sworn testimony before this committee, where all the laws of perjury apply, testified that he called at your home, conferred at great length, saw your wife pick up the telephone and call somebody whom he said must have been a Communist, plead with you to divert yourself from Communist activities, and left you with tears in your eyes, saying, “I simply can’t make the sacrifice.”

MR. HISS: I do know that he said that. I also know that I am testifying under those same laws to the direct contrary.<sup>35</sup>

“Hiss’s performance before the Committee was as brilliant as Chambers’s had been lackluster,” recalled Nixon. “He so dominated the proceedings that by the end of his testimony he had several members of the Committee trying to defend the right of a congressional committee to look into charges of Communism in government.”<sup>36</sup> Historian Walter Goodman noted how Hiss stood out from the other Ware Group members, “rather like a Man of Distinction on a stroll through the C.C.N.Y. campus.”<sup>37</sup> He went to the hearing accompanied by many friends and supporters in

<sup>35</sup> Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 35-36.

<sup>36</sup> Nixon, *Six Crises*, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Goodman, *The Committee*, 254.

government, and their mere presence notified HUAC exactly who they were questioning. When he claimed he might mistake Chambers's picture for Congressman Mundt, his supporters "sitting in the front rows of the spectator section broke into a titter of delighted laughter. Hiss acknowledged this reaction to his sally by turning his back on the Committee, tilting his head in a courtly bow, and smiling graciously at his supporters."<sup>38</sup>

Nixon especially felt defeated. "He had won the day completely," wrote Nixon. "It would not be an exaggeration to say that probably 90 percent of the reporters at the press table and most of the Committee members were convinced that a terrible mistake had been made, a case of mistaken identity, and that the Committee owed an apology to Hiss for having allowed Chambers to testify without first checking into the possibility of such a mistake."<sup>39</sup> One reporter asked Nixon after the hearing, "How is the Committee going to dig itself out of this hole?" *Washington Post* reporter Mary Spargo told the Congressman, "This case is going to kill the Committee unless you can prove Chambers's story." Ed Lahey of the *Chicago Daily News* was red with anger when he yelled at Nixon, "The Committee on Un-American Activities stands convicted, guilty of calumny in putting Chambers on the stand without first checking the truth of his testimony."<sup>40</sup> Hiss annoyed Nixon, no doubt, but the Congressman especially hated that Hiss used his resume for exculpation. Hiss named many prominent people as character witnesses, including former Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and former Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius.<sup>41</sup> Nixon believed Hiss was conveying "innocence by association," which he especially deplored of New Deal Democrats.

When HUAC met after the August 5<sup>th</sup> hearings, most members believed that a great mistake had been made. "Mundt, speaking for the others [except Nixon] stated categorically that it was quite apparent the committee had been taken in by Chambers." Representative Hèbert thought the best way of dispensing of the whole affair was for the Committee to "wash its hands of both Hiss

<sup>38</sup> Nixon, *Six Crises*, 7. When Hiss asked the Committee if Chambers perchance might be at the hearing, he looked around slowly, giving the impression that he had no idea what he might look like.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Stanley Reed, Roosevelt's Solicitor General, and Francis Sayre, a State Department official, also supported Hiss.

and Chambers" and send the testimony to Attorney General Tom Clark.<sup>42</sup> This seemed to be the consensus, except for Richard Nixon. "I was the only member of the Committee who expressed a contrary view, and Bob Stripling backed me up strongly and effectively," Nixon remarked.<sup>43</sup> He offered several points for continuing the investigation. First, if the case were turned over to the Justice Department, HUAC's reputation would be destroyed. "It would be a public confession that we were incompetent and even reckless in our procedures," Nixon pointed out. No one would ever trust the Committee with investigations again if they handed the matter over to Justice. Second, Nixon argued, the Committee had an obligation, at the very least, to see the case through and try to find out who was lying. If Hiss had lied on the small point of knowing Chambers, Nixon reasoned, "and the committee could prove it...it would be a big feather in the committee's cap."<sup>44</sup>

Other factors influenced Nixon's decision. There were odd instances where Hiss avoided saying whether he knew unequivocally if he had known Chambers. He always qualified his answers with "to the best of my recollection." Two anonymous people also told both Stripling and Nixon that Chambers was an alcoholic and had been in a mental institution. "This was a typical Communist tactic always employed to destroy any witness—and particularly any former Communist—who dared to testify against them," Stripling later remarked.<sup>45</sup> Finally, Hiss said Chambers's name "means absolutely nothing to me." He did not directly testify that he had never known Whittaker Chambers, or that he recognized him from the photograph ("He looks like a lot of people").<sup>46</sup> These factors convinced Nixon to press on, and he convinced the other Committee members as well.

Discrepancies alone did not influence Nixon. Psychohistorian Bruce Mazlish has said that Hiss "was everything Nixon was not." "Hiss, the embodiment of Eastern values...had treated Nixon...like dirt," or so Nixon thought.<sup>47</sup> In Nixon's eyes, Hiss was sneering at HUAC, vaguely insinuating that the Committee did not know what

<sup>42</sup> de Toledano and Lasky, *Seeds of Treason*, 153.

<sup>43</sup> Nixon *Six Crises*, 10.

<sup>44</sup> de Toledano and Lasky, *Seeds of Treason*, 154.

<sup>45</sup> Nixon *Six Crises*, 11.

<sup>46</sup> Chambers described Hiss's performance as "his practiced legal sinuousness to avoid a firm yes or no when asked to identify me." Chambers, *Witness*, 556.

<sup>47</sup> Weinstein, *Perjury*, 14.

they were doing or whom they were challenging. His flippancy gave Nixon the impression that he had much more important things to do than testify. Stripling, who supported Nixon, thought that his manner on August 5<sup>th</sup> suggested a personal animus towards Hiss. “Nixon had his hat set for Hiss from their first exchanges,” Stripling recalled. “It was a personal thing. He was no more concerned about whether or not Hiss was [a Communist] than a billy goat!”<sup>48</sup>

Sam Tanenhaus has said that Nixon “stood to lose little if proved wrong. As a freshman congressman, even one on the rise, he had no reputation to protect. He could afford to be zealous—and mistaken—in a cause his party had embraced.”<sup>49</sup> Chambers summed up the Congressman’s role succinctly: “Richard Nixon made the Hiss Case possible.”<sup>50</sup>

Pressure also came from the White House, which wanted to disband HUAC. President Truman held a press conference on August 5<sup>th</sup> and was asked whether the hearings were a “red herring” to divert attention away from other issues. The President said they were, adding: “The public hearings now under way are serving no useful purpose. On the contrary, they are doing irreparable harm to certain people, seriously impairing the morale of Federal employees, and undermining public confidence in Government.” He also asked, “What useful purpose is it serving when we are having this matter before a grand jury where action has to take place, no matter what this committee does?” HUAC, according to Truman, was “slandering a lot of people that don’t deserve it.”<sup>51</sup> The Committee knew that with a Truman victory in November, their hearings would end. Mindful of this, they were more than willing to let Nixon take the lead and continue the case. They knew that if they did not get any results from a follow-up inquiry of Chambers and Hiss, they would have little public support. Aware of this urgency and to “get results,” Nixon and HUAC questioned the two in executive session.

## ACT II

### AUGUST 7<sup>th</sup> AND 16<sup>th</sup>: CHAMBERS AND HISS TESTIMONY EXECUTIVE SESSION

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>49</sup> Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers*, 232.

<sup>50</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 557.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Government, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Harry S. Truman, 1948* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1964), 432-433. In Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 37-38.

On August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1948 in a New York City Courthouse, Whittaker Chambers appeared in executive session before a HUAC subcommittee comprised of Nixon, McDowell, and Herbert. They planned to question Chambers about his relationship with Hiss, and to use his answers to contrast Hiss’s later testimony. In session, Chambers astounded the Committee with intimate details about Hiss and his family. “For the most part...Chambers displayed remarkable familiarity with the domestic arrangements of the Hisses, considering the decade-long gap in their association,” wrote Allen Weinstein. “By the time Nixon adjourned the session, Chambers’s disclosures and the mass of detail he had provided about the Hisses had restored the Committee’s faith in his credibility.”<sup>52</sup>

Chambers provided the Committee with several important details. Hiss’s hobby was ornithology (bird watching), and he once saw the rare prothonotary warbler in the D.C. area; he had once owned an old 1920s Ford roadster; and the Hisses bought a Plymouth sedan and gave the Ford to a service station run by Communists. Chambers was also questioned about the Hiss family in general (spousal nicknames, food tastes), but there were few questions about Communist affiliation. Robert Carr stated that “in the rigorous questioning to which Chambers was subjected on the seventh, almost no effort was made to have Chambers indicate evidence of any sort of close social or intellectual companionship between the two men.”<sup>53</sup> The subcommittee could have made more headway into the men’s “working relationship” at this time.

Once again, politics tainted HUAC’s investigation. Congressman Mundt was worried the case could hurt Republican Thomas E. Dewey’s presidential hopes, so he wrote letters to Herbert Brownwell, Jr., Dewey’s campaign manager, of any developments. Mundt urged that Dewey “not commit himself in any way which might prove tremendously embarrassing...if the outcome of this tangled web of evidence should take a surprising and nation-rocking turn.”<sup>54</sup> Mundt’s cautious letter questions the Committee’s true intent.

When the Sub-committee met on August 16<sup>th</sup>, “we found a very different Alger Hiss from the confident, poised witness who had appeared before us in public session just ten days before,” wrote

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<sup>52</sup> Weinstein, *Perjury*, 18.

<sup>53</sup> Carr, *The House Committee on Un-American Activities*, 105.

<sup>54</sup> Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers*, 23.

Nixon. Hiss was now “twisting, turning, evading, and changing his story to fit the evidence he knew we had.”<sup>55</sup> Instead of answering HUAC’s questions forthrightly, Hiss decided to make Chambers and the Committee the issue:

MR. HISS: I have been angered and hurt by one thing in the course of this committee testimony, and that was by the attitude which I think Mr. Mundt took when I was testifying publicly and which it seems to me, you have been taking today, that you have a conflict of testimony between two witnesses—I restrained myself with some difficulty from commenting on this at the public hearing, and I would like to say it on this occasion, which isn’t a public hearing.

MR. NIXON: Say anything you like.

MR. HISS: It seems there is no impropriety in saying it. You today and the acting chairman publicly have taken the attitude when you have two witnesses, one of whom is a confessed former Communist, the other is me, that you simply have two witnesses saying contradictory things as between whom you find it most difficult to decide on credibility.

Mr. Nixon, I do not know what Mr. Chambers testified to your committee last Saturday. It is necessarily my opinion of him from what he has already said that I do not know that he is not capable of telling the truth or does not desire to, and I honestly have the feeling that details of my personal life which I give honestly can be used to my disadvantage by Chambers then ex post facto knowing those facts.<sup>56</sup>

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MR. STRIPLING: I listened to [Chambers’s] testimony in New York and I can assure you that there was no prearrangement or anything else with Mr. Chambers, but here is what he did. He sat there and testified for hours. He said he spent a week in your house and he just rattled off details like that. He has either made a study of your life in great detail or he knows you, one or the other, or he is incorrect.

[Hiss presented with a picture of Chambers taken by the Associated Press on August 3, 1948 and asked if he recognizes him]

MR. HISS: This man may have known me, he may have been in my house. I have had literally hundreds of people in my house in the course of the time I lived in Washington.

The issue is not whether this man knew me and I don’t remember him. The issue is whether he had a particular conversation that he has said he

<sup>55</sup> Nixon *Six Crises*, 23-24.

<sup>56</sup> *Hearings Regarding Communist Espionage in the United States Government*, 935-6, 940-41, 945-49, 952-53, 955-70; cited in Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 51.

had with me and which I have denied and whether I am a member of the Communist Party or ever was, which he has said and which I have denied.<sup>57</sup>

“The knowledge of what I had told the Committee was indispensable to Hiss,” Chambers said, “because on it hinged the question: whether he must identify me at all, or whether he could continue the simpler, less entangling tactic of failing to recognize me.”<sup>58</sup> Hiss tried to divert the issue that Nixon sought to explore: whether Chambers and Hiss knew each other. If HUAC were to focus on the broader issue of whether Hiss was a Communist, the committee would not be able to draw any substantial conclusions. Proving someone was a Communist would be a difficult, almost impossible task.<sup>59</sup> Proving someone knew a Communist, however, was much easier. Later in the hearing, Hiss would challenge Chambers’s character:

MR. HISS: Apparently for Chambers to be a confessed former Communist and traitor to his country did not seem to him to be a blot on his record. He got his present job after he had told various agencies exactly that. I am sorry but I cannot but feel to such an extent that it is difficult for me to control myself that you can sit there, Mr. Hebert, and say to me casually that you have heard that man and you have heard me, and you just have no basis for judging which one is telling the truth. I don’t think a judge determines the credibility of witnesses on that basis.

MR. HÉBERT: I am trying to tell you that I absolutely have an open mind and am trying to give you as fair a hearing as I could possibly give Mr. Chambers or yourself. The fact that Mr. Chambers is a self-confessed traitor—and I admit he is—the fact that he is a self-confessed former member of the Communist Party—which I admit he is—has no bearing at all on whether the facts that he told—or, rather, the alleged facts that he told—

MR. HISS: Has no bearing on his credibility?

MR. HÉBERT: No; because, Mr. Hiss, I recognize the fact that maybe my background is a little different from yours, but I do know police methods and I know crime a great deal, and you show me a good police force and I will show you the stool pigeon who turned them in. Show me a police force with a poor record, and I will show you a police force without a stool pigeon. We have to have people like Chambers or Miss Bentley to come in and tell us. I am not giving Mr.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>58</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 581.

<sup>59</sup> Aside from a Communist Party membership card, there was little evidence to prove Communist affiliation.

Chambers any great credit for his previous life. I am trying to find out if he has reformed. Some of the greatest saints in history were pretty bad before they were saints. Are you going to take away their sainthood because of their previous lives? Are you not going to believe them after they have reformed?

I don't care who gives the facts to me, whether a confessed liar, thief, or murderer, if it is facts. That is all I am interested in.

MR. HISS: You have made your position clear....<sup>60</sup>

As Congressman Hèbert said, the Committee was interested in “the facts,” wherever they come from, and Hèbert would believe a distinguished man, like Hiss, or one with a shadowy past, as Chambers, so long as he got the truth. During the course of this hearing, Hiss laid the groundwork for acknowledging that he had indeed known Chambers. He testified that he had known a man who resembled Chambers during the period in question. This man, according to Hiss, was named “George Crosley.” This George Crosley knew Hiss in many of the same ways that Chambers testified to in his August 7<sup>th</sup> hearing. For example, Crosley was a “deadbeat” freelance writer who lived with the Hisses for a few months (Chambers said he lived with the Hisses for a period of weeks and months). Hiss also gave his Ford roadster to Crosley along with the apartment, and loaned him \$200, which he never repaid. Nixon saw many problems with Hiss’s sudden recollection of a houseguest. “Hiss’s story was plausible. But could an argument over his failure to pay \$200 rent bill cause Chambers—thirteen years later—to risk reputation, a \$25,000-a-year job, and a prison term for perjury, in order to get revenge on Hiss? Where was the motivation?” Nixon also had difficulty believing Hiss had given Crosley his old Ford.<sup>61</sup> “Why would Hiss,” Nixon pondered, “who was not a wealthy man, give even an old car in those depression days to a ‘deadbeat’ freelance writer with whom he had only a casual acquaintance?”<sup>62</sup> These points were not lost on the Committee.

Hiss’s hobby, ornithology, became a key point in the hearing. Chambers stated without hesitation that Hiss was an avid birdwatcher, and that he had once spotted the rare prothonotary warbler. When Nixon asked Hiss what his hobbies were, he stated “Tennis and amateur ornithology.”

<sup>60</sup> Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 56-57.

<sup>61</sup> Chambers, one will recall, had testified that Hiss transferred the car to a Communist-run service station.

<sup>62</sup> Nixon *Six Crises*, 30.

MR. MCDOWELL: Did you ever see a prothonotary warbler?

MR. HISS: I have right here on the Potomac. Do you know that place?

THE CHAIRMAN: What is that?

MR. NIXON: Have you ever seen one?

MR. HISS: Did you see it in the same place?

MR. MCDOWELL: I saw one in Arlington.

MR. HISS: They come back and nest in those swamps. Beautiful yellow head, a gorgeous bird.<sup>63</sup>

This casual admission brought the questioning to a stop. The Committee members all looked up from their notepads and stared at Hiss in stunned silence. Nixon quickly moved on to break the dead air, but the point was clear: Chambers knew Hiss intimately. “A mind might figure out...how I might have known the answers to the other questions,” Chambers admitted. “But not the prothonotary warbler. The man...who knew that fugitive detail must have known Alger Hiss.”<sup>64</sup> Historian Allen Weinstein is less convinced. “Never in the investigation of espionage have so many placed so much reliance upon such an apparently minor fact, indeed upon a solitary twit of a bird, the prothonotary warbler.”<sup>65</sup> However one judges that singular fact, it was difficult for HUAC to believe Hiss had never known Chambers. At the end of the hearing, Nixon explained that Chambers agreed to take a lie-detector test. Would Hiss agree to the same?

MR. HISS: Would it seem to you inappropriate for me to say that I would rather have a chance for further consultation before I gave you the answer? Actually, the people I have conferred with so far say that it all depends on who reads, that it shows emotion, not truth, and I am perfectly willing and prepared to say that I am not lacking in emotion about this business.<sup>66</sup>

Hiss argued over the lie-detector test at length, covering two pages of testimony. He criticized the scientific reliability of the machine, its overall validity and acceptance as a sound machine, and the reliability of the person administering the test. Chambers

<sup>63</sup> *Hearings*, in Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 63.

<sup>64</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 572-573.

<sup>65</sup> Weinstein, “The Alger Hiss Case Revisited.” *American Scholar* 41 (1972): 124.

<sup>66</sup> *Hearings*, in Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 64.

answered the question in one sentence: “Yes, if necessary.”<sup>67</sup> HUAC also considered these statements in order to better judge each man.

After the August 16<sup>th</sup> hearing, Nixon told Hiss that he would testify with Chambers on the 25<sup>th</sup>, but the date was pushed up to the following morning, the 17<sup>th</sup>. “The more I thought about it,” Nixon recalled, “the more I became convinced that we should not delay the confrontation. Only the man who was not telling the truth would gain by having additional time to build up his case.”<sup>68</sup> Hiss and Chambers were notified about the reschedule, but neither man knew they would face each other for the first time. “Nixon’s stage management had worked,” writes Weinstein. The confrontation at the Commodore would prove to HUAC which man was lying.

### ACT III

#### AUGUST 17<sup>th</sup>: FIRST CONFRONTATION, EXECUTIVE SESSION

Hiss came into the August 17<sup>th</sup> hearing swinging. “From the beginning, Hiss dropped all previous pretensions of injured innocence,” Nixon writes. “He was on the defensive—edgy, delaying, belligerent, fighting every inch of the way.”<sup>69</sup> G. Edward White believes Nixon’s tactics altered the case entirely, setting up Hiss as the undeniable liar in the case. “The surprise confrontation changed the dynamics of Chambers’s allegations about Hiss.”<sup>70</sup> Since Hiss’s August 5<sup>th</sup> testimony, public opinion had been on his side. In his August 16<sup>th</sup> hearing, however, the Committee saw a wedge which it could split open with a confrontation. After August 17<sup>th</sup>, Hiss would forever be explaining, rationalizing, and justifying his testimony.

Hiss walked into the Commodore Hotel room and immediately noted for the record that he was in no mood to testify. Harry Dexter White, former Undersecretary of the Treasury, had died the night before of a heart attack, and this news had depressed him.<sup>71</sup> He also accused HUAC of leaking his executive testimony to the

<sup>67</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 573.

<sup>68</sup> Nixon *Six Crises*, 30.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>70</sup> White, *Hiss’s Looking-Glass Wars*, 59.

<sup>71</sup> Harry Dexter White had been accused by both Bentley and Chambers of having Communist ties.

press. Nixon dismissed his accusation, despite the Committee’s history of doling out confidential testimony. The Committee then brought in Chambers. “During this period,” writes Nixon, “Hiss did not once turn around to look at his accuser—the man he had said he was so anxious to see ‘in the flesh.’ He just sat in his chair staring straight ahead, looking out the window.”<sup>72</sup> Chambers was anxious as Hiss, and could hardly believe what was happening. “Until we faced each other in the hotel room, I had been testifying about Hiss as a memory and a name. Now I saw again the man himself. In the circumstances it was shocking.”<sup>73</sup> When Chambers was brought in, the two stood and faced each other. Hiss looked at Chambers quizzically, and asked him to speak.

MR. HISS: I think he is George Crosley, but I would like to hear him talk a little longer.

MR. MCDOWELL: Mr. Chambers, if you would be more comfortable, you may sit down.

MR. HISS: Are you George Crosley?

MR. CHAMBERS: Not to my knowledge. You are Alger Hiss, I believe.

MR. HISS: I certainly am.

MR. CHAMBERS: That was my recollection...<sup>74</sup>

After some time, Hiss reluctantly identified Chambers as George Crosley. This was in stark contrast to his August 5<sup>th</sup> testimony, where he claimed he did not know who Chambers was from his photograph. Still, there were more problems with his admission. He now had the burden of proving there was indeed a man named George Crosley.

MR. STRIPLING: You will identify him positively now?

MR. HISS: I will on the basis of what he has just said positively identifying him without further questioning as George Crosley.

MR. STRIPLING: Will you produce for the committee three people who will testify that they knew him as George Crosley?

MR. HISS: I will if it is possible. Why is that a question to ask me? I will see what is possible. This occurred in 1935. The only people that I can think of who would have known him as George Crosley with certainty would have been people who were associated with me in the Nye Committee.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Nixon *Six Crises*, 32.

<sup>73</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 602.

<sup>74</sup> *Hearings Regarding Communist Espionage in the United States Government*, 975-79, 984-992. In Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 73.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

Chambers took no pleasure in Hiss's performance. "I was swept by a sense of pity for all trapped men of which the pathos of this man was the center. For the man I saw before me was a trapped man. Under the calculated malice of his behavior toward me, which I could not fail to resent, under his impudence and bravado to the congressmen, he was a trapped man—and I am a killer only by extreme necessity."<sup>76</sup> Hiss felt pressure from all sides. At the confrontation, he "sensed a proprietary attitude toward Chambers, as though he were the Committee's witness and I an outsider."<sup>77</sup>

The Committee continued questioning Hiss about his relationship with Crosley, now acknowledged as Chambers. They asked about his bird-watching hobby, the subletting of his apartment, the disposal of the old Ford. The most dramatic point in the testimony came when McDowell asked if Hiss were the same man Chambers knew as a Communist:

MR. MCDOWELL: You make the identification positive?

MR. CHAMBERS: Positive identification.

(At this point, Mr. Hiss arose and walked in the direction of Mr. Chambers.)

MR. HISS: May I say for the record at this time, that I would like to invite Mr. Whittaker Chambers to make those same statements out of the presence of this committee without their being privileged for suit for libel. I challenge you to do it, and I hope you will do it damned quickly.

I am not going to touch him [addressing Mr. Louis J. Russell, Assistant Chief Investigator]. You are touching me.

MR. RUSSELL: Please sit down, Mr. Hiss.<sup>78</sup>

Through Hiss's bravado, Chambers saw a terrified man. "Not its least horrifying aspect was that it was great theater...not only because of its inherent drama, but in part because, I am convinced, Alger Hiss was acting from start to finish, never more so than when he pretended to be about to attack me physically. His performance was all but flawless, but what made it shocking, even in its moments of unintended comedy, was the fact that the terrible spur of Hiss's

<sup>76</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 603.

<sup>77</sup> Hiss, 23.

<sup>78</sup> *Hearings*, in Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 78.

acting was fear."<sup>79</sup> Nixon also saw a frightened Hiss that day. "With a look of cold hatred in his eyes, he fought like a caged animal as we tried to get him to make a positive identification for the record."<sup>80</sup> It took Hiss two weeks to make that positive identification, and when he finally did, HUAC was without any doubts that he had been lying from the beginning.

In the aftermath of the August 17<sup>th</sup> hearing, HUAC informed the press of what took place. Nixon, McDowell, and Thomas all missed dinner that evening, as they rushed to make headlines in the early edition newspapers. Nixon gave the *New York Times* its headline: "Alger Hiss Admits Knowing Chambers; Meet Face to Face." The *Times* account had a summary of the supposedly confidential hearing.<sup>81</sup> While this went against everything a closed session of Congress stood for, HUAC reasoned that they were in a fight with the President over the Committee's merit, and therefore had to garner public support. Alger Hiss, meanwhile, composed an open letter to HUAC in his defense. He sent the letter on August 24<sup>th</sup> to the press, in the hopes of bolstering his diminished credibility. "Before I had a chance to testify," Hiss wrote, "even before the press had a chance to reach me for comment, before you had sought one single fact to support the charge made by a self-confessed liar, spy, and traitor, your acting chairman pronounced judgment that I am guilty as charged..." Hiss then shifted the focus onto Chambers. "Is he a man of consistent reliability, truthfulness and honor? Clearly not. He admits it, and the committee knows it. Indeed, is he a man of sanity?...Getting the facts about Whittaker Chambers, if that is his name, will not be easy...his career is not, like those of normal men, an open book. His operations have been furtive and concealed. Why? What does he have to hide? I am glad to help get the facts."<sup>82</sup> Hiss offered to aid HUAC on getting the facts about *Chambers's* life and career. The problem with this, as Representative Hèbert explained, was that the Committee had acknowledged the sins of Chambers's past life. They were not concerned in this case with his dark past, but with what he had to say about that past. The Committee would check and verify the validity of what he had said, checkered past or not.

<sup>79</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 605.

<sup>80</sup> Nixon, *Six Crises*, 34.

<sup>81</sup> Weinstein, *Perjury*, 34.

<sup>82</sup> *Washington Post*, 25 August 1948; cited in Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 86, 89.

The closing scenes of this drama came at the August 25<sup>th</sup> public hearing. This was the first ever televised Congressional hearing, and all around the country people stopped to watch or listen to the case unfold. It was also perhaps the most important phase of the case for HUAC. Although they knew Hiss had lied as early as the 16<sup>th</sup>, this would be the first time they laid out their case for the public. When Hiss rose to testify in public for the first time since the 5<sup>th</sup>, the Committee was ready for him. Stripling had found documentary evidence that Hiss had sold his old Ford to a Communist sympathizer, just as Chambers had said. Records showed that Hiss had sublet his apartment to Chambers and his family, and Hiss himself had admitted that Chambers was the man he knew as George Crosley. The facts on Crosley, though, were absent. Hiss could not find a single witness to testify they knew a writer named George Crosley in 1934-35. HUAC also contacted the Library of Congress about any writers in their catalogue under the name "George Crosley." The Director of Reference Services said there were two references to George Crosley, neither of which could have been Chambers.<sup>83</sup> The final hearing had been a spectacular success for the Committee. Public opinion was on its side, and many who had unquestionably supported Hiss now had second thoughts. "When Alger Hiss left his first public hearing, people crowded around him. When he left the hearing room on August 25<sup>th</sup>, no one crowded him. In the nine hours of the hearing, the tide of sentiment in the room, which had run deeply for him, had turned against him."<sup>84</sup>

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, the Committee released their Interim Report of the case. HUAC first justified its procedures and methods in conducting the hearings, a point of contention for Hiss and his supporters. "It is...an established fact that in conducting public hearings...an occasional mention of some innocent citizen in connection with a nefarious practice will inevitably occur. When it does, we provide every opportunity for those mentioned to clear themselves of all suspicion in the same forum before the same

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<sup>83</sup> Chambers, *Witness*, 647-648. The two references were: G.E. Crosley, MD, who wrote a scientific paper in 1936, and G. Crosley, who wrote a book of poems in 1905. During the hearing, James Reston of the *New York Times* passed a note to Chambers that read, "Are you the G. Crosley who wrote a book of poems in 1905?" Chambers sent back a note which read, "I was born in 1901. In 1905, I was four." Reston would later accuse Chambers of refusing to answer his question.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 695.

publicity media as in the case of the original allegations."<sup>85</sup> Hiss was accused of being a Communist, certainly a "nefarious" practice, but he willingly chose to testify and clear himself "of all suspicion." The Committee then presented their findings. 1) Hiss admitted knowing the members of the Ware Group; 2) he reluctantly but definitely acknowledged that Chambers and Crosley were one and the same; 3) he could not explain how his Ford roadster came under Communist ownership; and 4) no one could support Hiss's claim that he knew a George Crosley in the mid-1930s. HUAC also noted that Hiss would be given ample opportunity to rectify his conflicting testimony, "but the confrontation of the two men and the attendant testimony from both witnesses has definitely shifted the burden of proof from Chambers to Hiss."<sup>86</sup>

The case would later move to Federal Court, where Chambers would produce his "Pumpkin Papers," a pile of sensitive State Department files, to support his accusations. After two trials, Hiss was found guilty of perjury, mainly because the statute of limitations for espionage had long since passed. But his conviction has not quieted public opinion on the case; in fact, the debate has only grown in the years since. Many have claimed that Alger Hiss was so urbane and debonair that he could not have been a Communist. "But has anyone ever claimed," asks Mathew Richer, "that Communists were incapable of affection and kindness? Even Whittaker Chambers testified that Alger Hiss had a 'gentle and sweetness of character.'"<sup>87</sup>

The Hiss-Chambers Case served many politicians, none more than Senator Joseph McCarthy. "It is a footnote to the affair," writes Goodman, "that by becoming a liberal rallying point, Hiss proved of service to the McCarthyites. His case, in the headlines for so long, made it easy for them to exaggerate the dimensions of the internal Communist menace and to whip up a storm which did not last long but left ruins in its wake."<sup>88</sup> Not more than a week after Hiss's conviction in 1950, McCarthy gave his famous Wheeling, West Virginia speech on Communism in the United States

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<sup>85</sup> *Hearings Regarding Communist Espionage in the United States Government*, 1348-49, 1352-54; cited in Ruddy, *The Alger Hiss Espionage Case*, 98.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-102.

<sup>87</sup> Mathew Richer, "The Ongoing Campaign of Alger Hiss: The Sins of the Father." *Modern Age* 46 (2004):310.

<sup>88</sup> Goodman, *The Committee*, 267.

government. McCarthy, more than any others besides Nixon, seized on the case for his own purposes.

Hiss's own view of the case, many years later, offers a perspective rooted in victimization. He claimed that the "frenzied, almost hysterical attitude of some of the press, egged on by [HUAC] and the FBI, created an emotional climate that made a fair trial impossible." Hiss also saw political forces at work against those he had worked for as well. "The purpose of the case was to smear the New Deal and FDR. It later grew into the McCarthy era. After all, the Republicans had been out of power for 16 years at that time." Hiss said he was the "fall guy" because Roosevelt was politically untouchable. "He was too popular to attack directly, but his lieutenants could be smeared, and they felt this would rub off on him and his policies. That's why, having been to Yalta and having worked on the preparation for the U.N., I was in line to be a target. I was used as a substitute."<sup>89</sup>

Many in the media have also defended Hiss, an incredulous task at best. William Reuben has wondered "How Hiss—if he was guilty—could have avoided detection over the years...is indeed puzzling."<sup>90</sup> Alfred Kazin asks whether "Hiss's possible Communist sympathies more than forty years ago matter now?" The real issue for Kazin is not whether Hiss is guilty of being a Communist spy, but why he must proclaim his innocence. "Hiss must continue to believe himself a political martyr. To repudiate his defense now would be to destroy every claim he has ever made for his reputation, for his personal loyalties, for the Roosevelt Administration itself in peace and war."<sup>91</sup> If he were to admit that Chambers, HUAC, and others were right, the liberal policies he supported and drafted in the 1930s and 1940s might be tarnished. Hiss was forced to defend himself and disparage his accusers because to not do so would be to let down an entire generation who saw him as the victim of a smear campaign.

Philip Noble puts Chambers and Nixon on trial, just as Hiss tried to do during the hearings. "The bizarre personality of

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<sup>89</sup> Arthur Unger, "Interview with Alger Hiss: 'I will be upheld' by History," *Christian Science Monitor*, 4 May 1984: 21.

<sup>90</sup> William A. Reuben, *The Atom Spy Hoax*. New York: Action Books, 1955, 173.

<sup>91</sup> Alfred Kazin, "Why Hiss Can't Confess," in Patrick Swan, ed., *Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers, and the Schism in the American Soul* (Wilmington, Delaware: The Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2003), 214, 216.

Chambers, the perfervid interest of Richard Nixon...and the lack of any witness supporting Chambers's party association with Hiss troubled many open minds."<sup>92</sup> However "bizarre" Chambers's personality may have been, Hiss still lied. Everyone who could have corroborated Chambers pled the Fifth Amendment, further supporting his charges? Nobile also admits, "I cannot conceive of a sane person perpetuating a quarter-century of deceit, jeopardizing the welfare of his family and the reputation of his friends, in a doomed attempt to reverse what that person well knows to be the truth."<sup>93</sup> Attempting to understand Hiss's motives is pointless when his testimony speaks so clearly.

There are also those who support Hiss unequivocally and deny that he ever did anything wrong. David Cort writes that "Alger Hiss must certainly be vindicated. The wreckage of other reputations is inevitable. And Chambers, with that cute dimpled chuckle and the sly, friendly gleam, is laughing in the grave at his 'friends,' the priceless butts who believed him."<sup>94</sup> Many Hiss supporters agree that Chambers concocted an elaborate scheme to tarnish a friend who had scorned him many years ago. Chambers, though, did everything he could to keep his collection of State Department papers, passed to him by Hiss, from ever seeing the light of day. Only when Hiss sued him for libel after the HUAC hearings did he bring forth documentary proof.

More often than not, people have attacked Hiss rather than defend Chambers because the man was so unflattering. He never was enthusiastic about accusing Hiss, nor was he ever entirely pleased with his former life. In many respects, Chambers was a reluctant witness. Whereas Hiss's charm continued to help him well after his prison term, Chambers could never quite become the ideal Anti-Communist. Leslie Fiedler writes that "it was impossible to like [Chambers], as one instinctively liked Hiss for the boyish charm we think of as peculiarly American. Chambers seems to have worn his prepossessing air...deliberately, as if he had acquired in his revolutionary days the habit of rebuffing all admiration based on

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<sup>92</sup> Philip Nobile, "The State of the Art of Alger Hiss," in Swan, *Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers, and the Schism in the American Soul*, 203.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>94</sup> David Cort, "Of Guilt and Resurrection," in Swan, *Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers, and the Schism in the American Soul*, 137.

anything but his role in the party.”<sup>95</sup> In many ways, Chambers seemed to have been the right witness in front of the right Committee at the right time, and then left the witness stand as casually as he had eased into it when his duty was done.

Public opinion in the Hiss-Chambers Case was shaped by the big picture, not by the minutiae that formed the foundation of Hiss’s guilt. The prothonotary warbler, the evidence that George Crosley was Chambers, and the qualified answers Hiss gave were all essential parts of the case, but political ideology and conflicting worldviews have done more to make it monumental. Liberals, left-leaning moderates, and others have proclaimed Hiss innocent in the face of substantial evidence. Young men like Hiss helped form the New Deal, and if he could be guilty, then other New Dealers could be sullied by association with a traitor. At the very least, to admit Hiss was a Communist would be tantamount to justifying HUAC’s conduct, something no blue-blooded liberal could do.<sup>96</sup> Conversely, far-right Republicans and conservatives feel the need to make the case more than an isolated event, into an important example of what Senator McCarthy claimed was “twenty years of treason.” If Hiss had been the only Communist spy in government, HUAC’s record would have no defense. Thus, many on the political right see in the case an opportunity to justify “Red Scare” tactics.<sup>97</sup> In the end, public opinion has allowed the courtroom drama a half-century encore. The gavel may have fallen long ago, but Hiss and Chambers are still taking their bows.

HUAC was on a mission to establish one fact in the Hiss-Chambers Case: whether the two men had known each other. By the end of August 1948, the Committee proved that fact beyond a reasonable doubt. The tactics and methods HUAC members used in solving this puzzle were only secondary factors. What truly broke open the case were Whittaker Chambers’s and Alger Hiss’s own words. Their testimonies, a perfect script for espionage theater,

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<sup>95</sup> Leslie Fiedler, “Hiss, Chambers, and the Age of Innocence”; cited in Swan, *Alger Hiss, Whittaker Chambers, and the Schism in the American Soul*, 13.

<sup>96</sup> While HUAC asked the right questions, their conduct was indeed outrageous.

<sup>97</sup> Dr. Meyer Zeligs and Ann Coulter offer far left and far right views on the case. Zeligs, in *Friendship and Fratricide*, wrote that Chambers was a homosexual and became infatuated with Hiss. When his overtures were rebuffed, Chambers became indignant and sought to tarnish Hiss. Coulter, in *Treason*, not only claims Hiss was a Communist, but she also defends Senator McCarthy’s “smear tactics” in the 1950s.

propelled the case forward and drove it towards a conclusion. Nixon, Stripling and the rest of HUAC, not content to direct, fought to upstage Hiss and Chambers, and so pushed them to the wings. Had they allowed the actors to take the stage alone, they would have been given the performance they ostensibly sought. Hiss and Chambers would have spoken their lines, and the audience would have come away with one conclusion: Hiss lied.

## **Rural Radicals: Illinois and the Farmer-Labor Party**

**Mary Barford**

For workers of the world, the year 1919 has been called epoch-making, and electric. The Bolsheviks in Russia remained in power, the British Labor Party was rising in influence, and Eugene Debs told workers emphatically that the day of the people had arrived.<sup>1</sup> In America 1919 was the year of the steel strike, the coal strike, the Boston police strike, and the Seattle general strike. There were more workers involved in labor disputes in 1919 than in the next six years combined.<sup>2</sup> This tide of hope for workers expressed itself in several rural counties in Illinois. At the polls, Republican Warren Harding won the presidential election of 1920, easily carrying Illinois with nearly 68% of the state's vote.<sup>3</sup> Also in 1920, Socialist party candidate Eugene V. Debs made his historic run for president earning a million votes nationwide from inside the Atlanta prison system as convict #9653. Yet it was in this year that another party emerged to gain 49,630 votes in the presidential election in Illinois, 2.4% of the total votes cast. This party was called the Farmer-Labor Party, and most of the party's support, to the tune of 44, 644 votes, came from rural counties in downstate Illinois.<sup>4</sup> Senatorial and gubernatorial candidates from the Farmer-Labor Party enjoyed even higher rates of success among the rural ranks in Illinois. The ideological foundation for the Farmer-Labor Party has been called progressive unionism. As summed up by historian Nathan Fine, the platform embodied only one fundamental idea of the leaders of the new movement: all power to the workers and farmers.<sup>5</sup> This paper will illuminate the manifold reasons why it was rural Illinois coal miners who constituted the major support for the Farmer-Labor Party. Further, I will argue that for coal miners, more than for urban

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<sup>1</sup> Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in Illinois, 1828-1928* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), 377.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *Illinois Blue Book 1921-22*. 768-770

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), 378.

industrial workers, the Farmer-Labor party represented their hopes in the dynamic years following World War I.<sup>6</sup>

Coal mining was the most hazardous occupation in Illinois. In the first three decades of the twentieth century 5,337 men lost their lives in the mines.<sup>7</sup> More than half of mining fatalities were caused by collapsing roofs.<sup>8</sup> Miners had to trust wooden planks, installed themselves, for protection from roofs that easily caved in. Other causes of death for miners were collision with mine cars or locomotives, death from explosives, electrocution, and drowning.<sup>9</sup> In 1910, at Coal Company No.2 in Cherry, Bureau County, two hundred and fifty-six miners were killed in a fire caused by taking hay for mules into the mine.<sup>10</sup> Frank Stroff had been at work for only twenty minutes in a Madison County coal mine when a gigantic piece of slate fell on top of him and instantly crushed the life out of him. The year before, Nicholas Lacquet went to work in a St. Clair county mine and was crushed by a falling top; living just one more day, he died leaving a wife and son to forge without him.<sup>11</sup>

The dangers in the pits were only part of the miners' unfortunate lot; meager and uncertain wages were also tribulations. A miner's life included the double dangers of hunger above ground and death below. Many mining companies set up company towns around the mines which often magnified the miners' plight. Glen Carbon, Illinois was such a town. John Keiser describes the situation as such; miners were compelled to live in company houses, all alike, and were charged \$2.00 a month for each room, even a summer kitchen built at the miner's expense was withheld from the monthly wages. Men were paid to scrip equal to their debt at the

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<sup>6</sup> The rural counties that were most supportive of the new Farmer-Labor Party were Macoupin, Williamson, St. Clair, Saline, Sangamon, and Franklin counties. During the period 1903-1912 Williamson, Sangamon, St. Clair, Macoupin, and Madison counties were respectively the heaviest producers of coal in the state. From 1913 to 1922 Franklin County ranked first in coal production, followed by Williamson, Sangamon, Macoupin, and St. Clair. See *Illinois Blue Book*, 768-776.

<sup>7</sup> Donald Tingley, *The Structuring of a State: The History of Illinois, 1899 to 1928* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 56.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> *Donk Brothers Coal Co. v. Stroff*, 200 Illinois 485; *O'Fallon Coal Co. v. Lacquet*, 198 Illinois 126.

company store; the remainder of the pay was in cash. There was little of that.<sup>12</sup>

The quality of goods at the company store was nearly always sub par and over priced. To add insult to injury, miners were also forced to buy their own powder, oil, squibs, and other supplies from the company at inflated prices.<sup>13</sup>

In 1890 the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) formed to combat the problems facing this most unfortunate group of workers, with the belief that

Those whose lot is to toil within the earth's recesses, surrounded by peculiar dangers and deprived of sunlight and pure air, producing the commodity which makes possible the world's progress, are entitled to protection and the full social value of their product.<sup>14</sup>

Yet by 1892, the treasury of District 12 (Illinois) of the UMWA contained a grand total of \$5.40.<sup>15</sup> Due to a devastating economic depression employment was extremely uncertain during the mid-1890s, causing union membership to be very low. Companies often forced miners to sign "yellow dog" contracts, pledging that they would not join a labor organization. However, weak coal unions in Illinois were not to last forever. The infamous Battle of Virden, in Macoupin County Illinois, turned the tide for the coal miners' union, and eventually made District 12 the most powerful district in the international UMWA.

On July 15, 1897 in Mt. Olive, Illinois a group of miners led by "General" Alexander Bradley began a grand march through one coal town after another, calling miners out of the pits to protest the abominable conditions in the mines. One reporter said they "gathered strength like a rolling snowball."<sup>16</sup> The miners won broad moral support and were encouraged by a variety of people in the towns they passed. The miners enjoyed free food and drinks from miners' wives and many town officials offered city facilities to meet

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<sup>12</sup> John H. Keiser, *A Spirit-Thread of Labor History, The Union Miners Cemetery at Mt Olive, Illinois*. In *Mother Jones and the Union Miners Cemetery Mount Olive, Illinois*, ed. Leslie F. Oreor (Chicago: Illinois Labor History Society, 2002), 36.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Luis Bloch, *Labor Agreements in Coal Mines* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1931), 55.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

in. A woman in Glen Carbon was said to have given the strikers all the food in her house! The bitter, but peaceful strike lasted six months. By the end of the year the miners' efforts were rewarded and the operators were ready to negotiate. A conference was held in Chicago in January 1898. At the conference, the miners won a major victory with a higher wage scale of 40 cents per ton of coal (a one-third increase for most), an eight-hour work day, a six-day work week, pay increases for those workers not actually engaged in mining, and screening rights were regularized.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the agreement had to be upheld.

By August 1898, the mine operators had made plans to operate the mines at Virden (Macoupin County) using non-union African-American miners from the South. All spring and summer the operators recruited black miners in Alabama promising high wages and good conditions. This was a ploy to capitalize on the "incipient racism" in the area.<sup>18</sup> Although the word "Negro" became synonymous with "strikebreaker" in rural Illinois, black miners in Springfield tried to prevent the importation of the Alabama miners, and it seems clear that few if any of the workers from Alabama knew anything about the union controversy in Illinois. Undoubtedly expecting violence, the crafty mine operators built an oak stockade around the mine, hired ex-police from the Thiel Detective Agency in St. Louis, and equipped their men with new rifles.

As early as late September, Virden was filled with angry miners. A contingent of sixty miners came from Mt. Olive led by the formerly peaceful Bradley. This time the miners were carrying guns, although Bradley maintained that his mission was "peaceable."<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, violent incidents became frequent as rumors of the presence of black workers imported from the South grew. On October 10th, the president of the Chicago-Virden Coal Company wrote to Governor Tanner to inform him the mine operators were "going to operate our mines and we absolutely decline to assume any of the responsibility that the laws of Illinois place upon the executive." The Governor responded with, "If you bring in this imported labor you do so according to your own message, with the full knowledge that you will provoke riot and bloodshed. Therefore

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<sup>17</sup> Screening a lump of coal means to pass the largest marketable size of coal over a screen to separate it from smaller pieces.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

you will be morally responsible, if not criminally liable, for what may happen.”<sup>20</sup>

On the morning of October 12<sup>th</sup>, all miner “troops” were ordered to be on duty. It had been raining in Virden for days. The Mt. Olive contingent patrolled the railroad in shifts of forty while the other twenty, freezing and exhausted, sought refuge in a friendly farmer’s barn. At 12:40 a.m. a Chicago-Alton train with the imported Alabamans on board (as they neared Virden all shades were pulled down) flew past the miners at the depot going forty miles per hour. Few casualties resulted from an exchange of shots, but a bloody encounter occurred as the engineer slowed to the stockade. The shooting lasted for ten minutes. The engineer was wounded, but refused to unload the strikebreakers and continued to St. Louis. Forty miners were wounded, and seven killed. The youngest miner killed was Edward Long of Mt. Olive, age 19. The guards had the advantage of new rifles and the oak stockade. Of the guards, five were killed and four wounded. After the battle, the miners descended upon the company store, their symbol of feudalism, and nearly trampled the proprietor to death. A mine guard called the clash, “hotter than San Juan Hill.”<sup>21</sup>

For the miners, the victory was worth the cost. A month later the company granted the wage increase, and Illinois became a bastion of union power in the coalfields for decades. While John Walker was president of District 12 of the UMWA, the Illinois miners became the most powerful in the international union. To this day October 12<sup>th</sup> is Miners Day in Mt. Olive Illinois. The Union Miners Cemetery, the only union owned cemetery in the country is a national landmark, and the world renowned Mother Jones is buried next to her “boys” who died at Virden. Mother Jones wrote November 12, 1923:

When the last call comes for me to take my final rest; will the miners see that I get a resting place in the same clay that shelters the miners who gave up their lives on the hills of Virden, Illinois, on the morning of October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1897 [*sic*], for their heroic sacrifice of [*sic*] their fellow men. They are responsible for Illinois being the best organized labor state in America. I hope it will be my consolation when I pass away to feel I sleep under the clay with those brave boys.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 49.

The United Mine Workers provided an enormous benefit for miners after they were established as a force in Illinois, yet the union was still met with vigorous opposition.

Mine owners had a reputation for irresponsibility and greed. They assiduously avoided every effort to unionize. A shining example was Joseph Leiter who opened a mine in Zeigler, Franklin County in 1904. Leiter incorporated the town and the mine in Delaware, and owned nearly all the stock. The union miners struck the day the mine opened. After the strike, Leiter was to blame for several deadly incidences. The first, April 3, 1905, occurred when fifty men were killed in Leiter’s mine due to a gas explosion. Further, a state mine inspector was killed while investigating that very explosion. On November 8, 1908 the mine caught on fire again. Fire inspectors obtained an agreement from the company to seal the mine for ninety days. On January 10, 1909 the inspectors were called back as there had been another explosion which killed twenty-six men. Leiter had failed to seal the mine. This time inspectors demanded Leiter seal the mine permanently. On February 9<sup>th</sup>, less than a month later, they were called back yet again as another explosion had killed three more men.<sup>23</sup> An additional example of a mine owner with a brutal attitude towards his employees was George Baer. In 1900, George Baer, president of the mine-owning Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company made an infamous statement in which he scoffed at the ideas that miners were suffering. “They don’t suffer; why, they can’t even speak English,” said Baer.<sup>24</sup>

By 1919 the climate in the coal mining counties of Illinois was one of fierce unionism. World War I had greatly disrupted life in Illinois.<sup>25</sup> During the war Illinois enjoyed nearly full employment. Although most workers had not joined unions at the start of WWI, the industries for which unions did exist took full advantage of war problems to improve their situation. There were more strikes during WWI than before or after.<sup>26</sup> The number of labor disputes reported in the monthly bulletin of the Illinois Coal Operators Association was highest in 1917 with 1,006 reported disputes. In 1914 there

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<sup>23</sup> Tingley, *Structuring of a State*, 60.

<sup>24</sup> McAlister Coleman, *Men and Coal* (New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1969), 72.

<sup>25</sup> Tingley, *Structuring of a State*, 102.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 103.

were only 426, and in 1919, 796 disputes were reported.<sup>27</sup> Between 1915 and 1920, union membership jumped from two million to more than four million people.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, the aftermath of the war created a financial crisis for working people in America. Massive wartime inflation created a heavy burden for the working class. The overall cost of living was an average of 99% higher in 1919 than just four years earlier.<sup>29</sup> Wartime concessions to labor were viewed as mere expedients the capitalists planned to “take back” once the war ended.<sup>30</sup> The government policy of the time was in support of corporate interests in order to provide “economic stabilization.” Their idea was to cut the cost of production by slashing wages and eliminating union work rules.<sup>31</sup> This prompted a national strike wave in which coal miners were major participants.

After the war, the miners were operating under the Washington Wage Agreement which was to last during the continuation of the war but not longer than March 31, 1920. Since the Armistice with Germany had been signed November 11, 1918, the miners were faced with rising costs of living and widespread unemployment, and took the position that a new contract must be negotiated. The operators maintained that the signing of the Armistice did not constitute formal proclamation of peace, and that the miners’ strike beginning November 1, 1919 was in violation of the contract. John L. Lewis, president of the UMWA, decreed that he would not “fight my government, the greatest government on earth.”<sup>32</sup> Despite this proclamation, the miners refused to work, and many miners attributed the official “surrender” to the decline of the organization’s militancy.<sup>33</sup> It was not a complete surrender, however, and under a new agreement the workers were to return to the pits with an immediate raise of 14 per cent. The final decision was a 34 per cent

<sup>27</sup> Bloch, *Labor Disputes in Coal Mines*, 135.

<sup>28</sup> Tingley, *Structuring of a State*, 102.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), 7.

<sup>30</sup> David Montgomery, “The Farmer-Labor Party.” In *American Workers from the Revolution to the Present* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 73.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Coleman, *Men and Coal*, 98

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

increase to tonnage men,<sup>34</sup> and 20 per cent to day men to take effect in 1920.<sup>35</sup>

The southern-most coal counties in Illinois of Williamson, Saline, and Franklin—proudly called “Egypt” by natives—were exclusively mining territory. Williamson County to this day is referred to as “Bloody Williamson” as a result of the Herrin Massacre of 1922. As Paul Angle noted in his study of Williamson, “The loyalty of members of the United Mine Workers of America to their organization had a deep and durable quality impossible to overestimate”<sup>36</sup> The locals in Williamson and Franklin counties were the union’s citadel.<sup>37</sup> Half of the state’s sixty thousand miners lived there, and every miner down to the man held a union card. Investigators probing the causes of the Herrin Massacre in 1923 summed up the contrast in conditions before and after unionization in Southern Illinois. Their report explained that citizens of Williamson County believed that the union had brought them “out of the land of bondage into the Promised Land.” Miners went from having no safety, power, or dignity, to owning their own homes and automobiles. What they had of daily comfort they thought came from the union and not from the government.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> A tonnage man is a man who is actually in the pits mining (he is technically the “miner”), a day man is a man who works supplying the tonnage men or any other laborer who is not actually mining. Tonnage men were the most respected in the coalfields.

<sup>35</sup> Coleman, *Men and Coal*, 98.

<sup>36</sup> Paul M. Angle, *Bloody Williamson* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Quote from investigative report—“When mining began in that country it was upon a ruinously competitive basis. Profit was the sole object; the life and health of the employees were of no moment. Men worked in water half-way up to their knees, in gas-filled rooms, in unventilated mines where the air was so foul that no man could work long without seriously impairing his health. There was no workmen’s compensation law; accidents were frequent, and there was no common ground upon which employer and employee could meet. They had no interest in common as they regarded each other with hostility and distrust. Then came the union... Peace and goodwill and mutual respect have been the general rule since that time. [Wages increased], improvements in the working conditions was reflected in the appearance of the workmen, their families, their manner of life and their growing cities and public improvements. There are 13,000 miners in Williamson County, 62 per cent of whom own their own homes and most of them own automobiles. All occupations are unionized. They believe in the union, for they think it brought them out of the land of bondage into the promised land when their government had been careless of or

Other industries in Illinois were engaged in union battles during the post WWI period as well. Led by William Z. Foster and John Fitzpatrick, organization of the union stockyards was initiated on June 15, 1917. With Fitzpatrick as president, the Stockyards Labor Council was able to organize 40,000 workers, about half of the labor force in the yards.<sup>39</sup> The union demanded recognition, and to avoid prolonged disruption the president's Mediation Commission came to Chicago to hold a meeting. The packers were on one side of the room, and the union on the other. J. Ogden Armour's lawyers started the meeting by speaking out against any discussion with the union representatives.<sup>40</sup> In a famous story, John Fitzpatrick decided this could not go on. In his own words, he describes how he handled the situation.

So I just stood up and said, "Gentlemen, it all seems to turn on whether or not Mr. Armour is going to meet anybody, and I want to say right here that I am now going to shake hands with Mr. Armour." So I just walked across that circle, had to walk about 20 feet over to where Mr. Armour was sitting, and I stuck out my hand. He got very red and looked up at me very funny and then he stood up very courteously and shook hands and said, "Of course I'll shake hands with Mr. Fitzpatrick."...[A]fter that...we sat down and quickly arranged a conference with packers and union labor.<sup>41</sup>

The commission was able to settle some issues while the others were sent to arbitration. The arbitrator, Judge Alschuler, provided for an eight hour day, a forty-hour week with overtime pay, twenty minute lunches, a wage increase, and the same rates for women and men. This was a huge success and union membership surged after this victory.<sup>42</sup>

Also in 1919, labor made a massive attempt to organize the steel industry. Again, it was Foster and Fitzpatrick initiating organization.<sup>43</sup> A strike ensued as more than 300,000 steel workers

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indifferent to their needs. They hold themselves to be good Americans and proved it during the Great War, but what they have of daily comfort they think comes from the union and not from the government." See Paul Angle, *Bloody Williamson*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Tingley, *Structuring of a State*, 103.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> John Keiser, *John Fitzpatrick and Progressive Unionism* (Ph.D. Diss. Northwestern University, 1965), 40.

<sup>42</sup> Tingley, *Structuring of a State*, 104.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 105.

left their jobs. The workers were winning, but the tide turned when the police and army violently attacked the picket lines. Steel operators also used the press, courts, and public officers to break the strike. Workers were hungry despite commissaries set up to feed them, and eventually the strike disintegrated.<sup>44</sup> Fitzpatrick said, "When I think of those steel trust magnates and the conditions their workers live and work in and die in- why their hearts must be as black as the ace of spades."<sup>45</sup>

Although the stockyard workers had gained some ground by unionizing, eventually the agreements with the packers failed to hold up. This, along with the disappointments of the steel strike and the coal strike, buoyed a sense of class consciousness among workers in Illinois. American laborers began to think in group and class terms more than ever before.<sup>46</sup> Keiser notes that labor was increasingly self-conscious due to its economic victories and its political recognition, however superficial.<sup>47</sup> This was the climate in which union members and organizers who had formerly voted for traditional political parties began to embrace the concept of a Labor Party based on the unions.<sup>48</sup>

The growing sentiments from the rank and file for a Labor Party were staunchly resisted by the American Federation of Labor (AFL), and especially by president Samuel Gompers. Gompers thought that the politicization of the labor movement was a mistake. He argued that, "Political movements are ephemeral. The trade union movement is not for today. Its continued existence is too valuable to be gambled in the political arena."<sup>49</sup> The nonpartisan slogan was to "stand faithfully by our friends, oppose and defeat our enemies."<sup>50</sup> Critics of the policy quickly emerged, arguing that hostile interests had far more money to spend lobbying, and that even if a unionist were elected, he would have to owe allegiance to his party's bosses or be back "on the workbench," thus tying his hands.<sup>51</sup> John Fitzpatrick saw the reelection of Woodrow Wilson in 1916 as "the

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Keiser, *John Fitzpatrick and Progressive Unionism*, 42.

<sup>46</sup> Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States*, 377.

<sup>47</sup> Keiser, *John Fitzpatrick and Progressive Unionism*, 113.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 378.

<sup>49</sup> Molly Ray Carroll, *Labor and Politics* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), 171.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

realization of hope for the future of the common people.”<sup>52</sup> But his enthusiasm was quickly curbed given the administration’s record of suppressing civil liberties and by its favorable response to industrial interests. Neither party could be trusted to be a support to working people.<sup>53</sup>

John Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL), became an ardent believer that unions should work politically to achieve their ends. Fitzpatrick organized many workers in Illinois; being of the rank and file himself, he understood the necessity of a strong labor movement. In October, 1918, the CFL asked John Walker, president of the Illinois Federation of Labor (IFL) and former UMWA president, to push for a labor party. The December, 1918 convention of the IFL endorsed a party and a platform, and the Cook County Labor Party was born. This was followed by the Illinois State Labor Party (April, 1919) and a National Labor Party on November 22, 1919.<sup>54</sup> In 1919, the Cook County Labor Party nominated Fitzpatrick for mayor. The party’s platform modeled itself after Wilson’s fourteen points, fashioning “Labor’s fourteen points.” Labor wanted to increase its balance in a society dominated by private interests and government bureaucracies. Some of the fourteen points included rights to organize and bargain collectively, the right to an eight- hour day and a minimum wage, equal treatment for men and women in industry and government, representation at the peace conference, a voice in public education, and a League of Workers to supplement the League of Nations to guarantee disarmament. The state-oriented points included the abolishment of unemployment through public works projects during economic depression, lowering the cost of living by controlling “profiteering,” accident and health insurance, payment of the war debt by taxing inheritance, incomes, and land values. The restoration of free speech, assembly, and press, repressed during the war, were included. Finally, the government should nationalize, develop its natural resources, and adopt policies of public ownership of public utilities.<sup>55</sup> Fitzpatrick received 55, 990 votes, roughly eight percent. The CCLP complained after the election of bad treatment by the press; however, the CCLP did replace the Socialists as the number

<sup>52</sup> Keiser, *John Fitzpatrick and Progressive Unionism*, 117.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 120-121.

three party in Chicago.<sup>56</sup> Fitzpatrick concluded post election that the party had “established itself on the map.”<sup>57</sup> It is important to note that neither the party nor Fitzpatrick ever considered overthrowing the established system of government. It was stressed that the party was non- revolutionary. Its goal was for the exploited to recapture their government from the exploiters by peaceful political action, and begin to run it for the ninety percent who were being denied self government.<sup>58</sup> The Labor Party stood for “a pragmatic eclecticism of program, free from commitments to any integrated social philosophy.”<sup>59</sup>

The National Labor Party (NLP or LP) held its first convention November 22, 1919, and the Farmer-Labor Party succeeded it in 1920. Here it adopted a set of principles and a presidential platform which included thirty-two principles and nine planks.<sup>60</sup> The opening paragraphs of the declaration of principles read as follows:

The Labor Party was organized to assemble into a new majority the men and women who work, but who have been scattered as helpless minorities in the old parties under the leadership of the confidence men of big business.

These confidence men, by exploitation, rob the workers of the product of their activities and use the huge profits thus gained to finance the old political parties, by which they gain and keep control of the government. They withhold money from the worker and use it to make him pay for his own defeat...workers have reached the determination to reverse this condition and take control of their own lives and their own government.

In this country this can and must be achieved peacefully by the workers uniting and marching in unbroken phalanx to the ballot boxes. It is the mission of the Labor Party to bring this to pass.<sup>61</sup>

The declaration also included the nationalization of railroads, mines, forests, water, power, telegraphs, telephones, stock yards, grain elevators, natural gas and oil well, cold storage and terminal warehouses, elevators, packing plants, flour mills, and of all basic industries “which require large-scale production and are in reality on

<sup>56</sup> Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago [online] [http://66.107.4.19/mayors\\_of\\_chicago.htm](http://66.107.4.19/mayors_of_chicago.htm).

<sup>57</sup> Keiser, *John Fitzpatrick and Progressive Unionism*, 127.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 123-124.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States*, 378.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

a non-competitive basis.”<sup>62</sup> These entities were to be democratically managed. The private bank was to be abolished and laid exclusively in the hands of the federal government. Also the nationalization of unused lands appeared in the Labor Party’s declaration.<sup>63</sup> Although the platform had a socialist ring to it, the LP did not use the “phraseology of the Marxians or socialists. They spoke of industrial, political, and social democracy.”<sup>64</sup>

The post-war labor parties were neither organized nor encouraged by international union leaders. They were truly of the rank and file. The convention that launched the National Labor Party was one of the largest gatherings of rank and file workers in the history of the labor movement in America.<sup>65</sup> Most of the delegates came from local unions. Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Missouri, Michigan, Kentucky, Kansas, and Iowa contributed the bulk of support from about forty states.<sup>66</sup> Fine acknowledges, “The first two states [Illinois and Indiana] accounted for hundreds, among whom those from the coal fields were conspicuous.”<sup>67</sup> The men and women at this convention were the most militant trade unionists in the country in 1919. At their own 1919 convention, the United Mine Workers, representing 400,000 members, voted unanimously in favor of a resolution supporting the organization of the National Labor Party. However, the coal miners’ union executive board simply ignored the resolution.<sup>68</sup>

It is significant to bear in mind that the Labor Party was being seriously undermined from both sides of the political spectrum. Sam Gompers dispatched AFL officials to dismiss pro-Labor Party presidents of central federations, and “reorganize” local bodies that favored this type of political action. He was actively engaged in deflating their prospects for success.<sup>69</sup> Fitzpatrick declared that “the AFL is trying to scare everyone to death who dares rise up and oppose its political ideas.”<sup>70</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, the Socialist Party leadership refused to cooperate with the Labor Party. The Socialists felt that they were already well established and that the

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 387.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 383.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 387.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 389.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 387.

Labor Party would simply split the vote. They justified their stance on the grounds that the Labor Party was not specifically endorsing socialism as the alternative to capitalism.<sup>71</sup> Communists also denounced the Labor Party on the grounds that a party based on unions would impede the overthrow of capitalism. Their political strategy in the 1920 election was to boycott the ballots because voting showed a willingness to participate in the capitalist state. Interestingly the Communists, led by William Z. Foster, took over the Farmer-Labor Party in the mid 1920s, eventually leading to its demise.

Although the Labor Party convention of 1920 was dominated by local unions as in 1919, Gompers had clearly had an effect. There was a sharp decrease in the number of central bodies. These organizations were vulnerable to the AFL because their charters could easily be revoked through the AFL hierarchy.<sup>72</sup> Still, there were 171 unions present from Illinois alone.<sup>73</sup> The delegates to the 1920 convention represented a merger between the Labor Party and the Committee of Forty-Eight,<sup>74</sup> but it was the labor-progressives who dominated the convention. The first order of business was to change the name of the organization from the National Labor Party to the Farmer-Labor Party. This was done in the hope of attracting farmers who were also seeking new political alliances. By 1920 the American farmer’s Great Depression was already underway. Their wartime boom quickly turned bust. Large- scale farming also led small farmers towards defensive politics.<sup>75</sup> To illustrate, in 1919 a ton of coal could be had for the market price of six bushels of corn. One year later a ton of coal cost a farmer the equivalent of forty bushels of corn.<sup>76</sup> Economically speaking, workers and farmers had a similar struggle.

In 1920, the delegates to the convention nominated Parley P. Christensen for president. John Fitzpatrick was nominated for

<sup>71</sup> Farrell Dobbs, *Marxist Leadership in the U.S.: Revolutionary Continuity-Birth of Communist Movement, 1918-1922* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), 109.

<sup>72</sup> Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States*, 390.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> The Committee of Forty-Eight included professionals, business men, and intellectuals from every state in the union. They were the inheritors of the Progressive Party of 1912. The Forty-Eighters spoke of old fashioned American civil liberties, and were deeply sympathetic to labors’ struggle.

<sup>75</sup> Keiser, *John Fitzpatrick and Progressive Unionism*, 131.

<sup>76</sup> Kenneth Campbell Mackay, *The Progressive Movement of 1924* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966) 41.

senator from Illinois. John Walker ran for governor. When the ballots were tallied, Fitzpatrick polled only 50,749 votes. Most of Fitzpatrick's votes, 45,989, came from the progressive miners downstate. Walker polled 52,814 total votes, 49,148 from downstate. The disappointing results were blamed on the campaign being run by political novices. Trade unionists were much more adept in the field of economics than that of politics. Nationally speaking, Christensen was not an outstanding personality or a well known public figure; he was a lawyer from Utah. Also, the party had little experience in raising money. The entire campaign was funded with \$24,000.00. The most powerful problem facing the Labor Party was the opposition on either side. The AFL and other more conservative groups thought the party was far too radical; limited farmer support was thought to be caused by fear of "red" influences. Socialists, communists, and other radicals saw the party as too conservative.

However, for downstate miners, the Farmer-Labor party was a perfect fit. In Macoupin County, Fitzpatrick polled 18% of the vote. In Franklin County 11% of the vote was for Farmer-Labor. In Williamson County, Walker polled 13% and Fitzpatrick polled 14%. In Saline County Fitzpatrick polled 19%, while Walker polled 18% of the vote.<sup>77</sup> Anthony Barrett, in his master's thesis on John Walker, characterized the trade unionists who advocated progressive union policies as "men with a deep sense of humanitarianism, a feeling of urgency for legislative reform, and a dedicated commitment to the improvement of the trade union movement."<sup>78</sup>

Clearly such men would appeal to rural coal miners. Rural Illinois miners gained everything from their participation in the union. They believed it was the union that had improved their lot when the government had proven unconcerned. The union brought them higher wages to feed their families, safer working conditions, and a sense of dignity. What they knew of the comforts of daily life, as the investigator of the Herrin Massacre pointed out, they thought came from the union. Undoubtedly, with this attitude, a party based on trade unionism would be appealing. Downstate miners also worked in the most treacherous conditions imaginable. For them, collective bargaining and bargaining power meant life or death. If

<sup>77</sup> *Illinois Blue Book, 1921-1922*, 768-772.

<sup>78</sup> Anthony Barrette, "John Walker-Labor Leader of Illinois 1905-1933" (M.A. Thesis, Eastern Illinois University, 1967), 150.

they had no strength at the bargaining table it could mean any number of atrocities to bear.

The miners were also the most united group of workers in Illinois. District 12 of the UMWA was exceptional in that it often had the highest paid workers, and acted in solidarity even without the consent of the international executive board. Miners from other states would often come to Illinois to work. The nature of their unity promoted voting based on group and class consciousness. They also shared a mutual disinclination towards radical ideology. Rural miners were not socialists, and they were often violently against the idea of communism.

Further encouraging the miners to vote for the FLP was the fact that FLP leaders were labor heroes. John Fitzpatrick, described as sober and industrious, was not only of the rank and file, but he was famous for organizing the biggest labor strikes in Illinois. He was so committed to labor and progressive unionism that when he got married he searched the whole country for a union-made wedding band.<sup>79</sup> John Walker, also of the rank and file, was the former president of the UMWA, as well as the long-time president of the Illinois Federation of Labor. Walker and Fitzpatrick were both good friends of Mother Jones, the "coal miners' angel." Even Parley Christensen was known for his support of labor through his law practice in Utah. Fitzpatrick was admired for his commitment to his own beliefs and his courage in standing up to Gompers and the AFL executives.

Although largely disappointed in the practice of their government, southern Illinois coal miners were fiercely American and proud of the contributions they made during WWI. It is not surprising then that a party committed to social democracy, as opposed to a party advocating the overthrow of the government, would appeal to miners. The Farmer-Labor Party and its leaders wanted labor and working people to be fairly treated, to have a piece of what they produced, and to balance the interests of Big Business. They wanted working people to be able to take control of their own lives and their own government. The rural Illinois coal miners believed in the same principles for themselves and for their country. It was in this spirit that they, nearly single handedly, supported the Farmer-Labor Party in Illinois, in the epoch-making years following the Great War.

<sup>79</sup> Keiser, *John Fitzpatrick and Progressive Unionism*, 5.

## **Oral History: From Fact Finding to History Shaping**

Nicholas Mariner

Oral history can be seen as the earliest form of historical inquiry; it predates even the written word. However, as a specific endeavor of the recognized historical profession, oral history finds its place in a more recent approach to historical methodology, specifically the new social history. Although oral traditions existed long before organized writing methods, oral inquiries did not begin until the twentieth century. While the Progressive historians looked to oral sources as a means of support, their use of those documents was heavily anecdotal and lacked any standardization to guide the use of such sources as a legitimate historical endeavor. Oral history as a historical methodology can generally be traced back to the first oral history center in the United States coming out of Columbia University in 1948. It was in this post-war context that oral history began and evolved into the serious and widely-accepted process that it is today.

Since its inception as a craft, oral history changed its focus several times in order to reapply itself to new criticisms and concerns over its usefulness and effectiveness, changing from a “fact-finding” to a “history-shaping” process. David Dunaway and Willa Baum cite four generations of oral historians. The first generation, pioneered by such historians as Allan Nevins and Louis Starr, “conceived of oral history as a means to collect otherwise unwritten recollections of prominent individuals for future historians, for research, and as a tool for orally based biography.”<sup>1</sup> The second generation emerged after the establishment of basic archives around the mid-1960s. These historians wanted not only to account for the important historical figures, but to “employ oral history techniques to describe and empower the non-literate and the historically disenfranchised.”<sup>2</sup> This generation found its roots in the social history movement, and their work became the basis of many local,

feminist, and educational movements. The third generation, separated from earlier decades rife with extreme conservative movements or liberal countercultures, emerged in the 1980s as a highly educated and craft driven group of oral historians. This group focused on the difference between amateur and professional oral historians, and emphasized the importance of the process of oral inquiries. The third generation was in many ways a reaction to “new technologies such as computerized research aids and personal computers [making] professional oral history collections more capital intensive.”<sup>3</sup>

The fourth generation, a new generation proposed by Dunaway and Baum, marks the shift in the purpose of oral history. Not only do these historians employ the most useful technology (e.g. video or cassette recorders, computer technology, etc.), whereas many of the previous generation had no access to such materials, but they also place a different significance on oral history’s usefulness as an historical inquiry. According to this new generation, “oral interviews – and their construction – *themselves* represent history: compiled within a historical frame negotiated by the interviewer and the narrator, within contemporary trends, within certain definable conventions of language and cultural interaction.”<sup>4</sup> Such is the debate of the field to date and the purpose of this essay. Is the purpose of oral history intended to be a set of primary source documents or a process by which history is constructed from those sources? This question highlights the general debate surrounding the fields’ generational evolution, and to some degree, most of the historians discussed in this essay will address this question. This essay tracks the changing interpretations of this central question. To do so, the early arguments over the effectiveness of the field must first be explored. The early arguments against and in support of oral history will show the manner in which historians initially perceived oral history and its usefulness to the profession. Secondly, this essay will explore the subfields that have established oral history as one of its main outlets to historical inquiry. These fields, such as local and Native American history, have explored oral history with such intensity as to mark another progression in the process’s usefulness and interpretation. The most recent debate concerning historical research, that concerning the use of Institutional Review Boards for oral history, will be discussed. Not only is it the most recent issue

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<sup>1</sup> David Dunaway and Willa Baum, *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* (London: Altamira Press, 1984), 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

being debated by those in the field, but it also reflects the establishment of oral history as an historical process separate from other forms of inquiry based in other social sciences and even other historical methods. Finally, ethical issues that have not been fully addressed by the Oral History Association guidelines will be discussed in brief.

As oral history first began its progression from anecdotal support to historical inquiry, it was met with a certain amount of criticism. Though oral history has become firmly accepted as a legitimate historical practice in current scholarship, in the early stages of the field there were voices adamantly opposed to its use, questioning the validity of any such historical inquiry. In the debate to justify oral history, historians commonly respond to Barbara Tuchman's "Distinguishing the Significant from the Insignificant."<sup>5</sup> To Tuchman, the issue of oral history is not the "stuff" that comes out of the interviews, but how the interview is the inherent problem of the process from the beginning. "Taking notes on an interview," according to Tuchman, "is a crystallizing process...distinguishing the significant from the insignificant as you go along."<sup>6</sup> The problem with the interview then is the interviewer's tendency to not write down specifically what is said because the interview (recorder) does not see the significance of what the narrator (speaker) is saying. Such conscious omission affects the historical process in such a way that it questions the legitimacy of the endeavor at its very base. Not only can the interview omit what is not important as he/she sees it, but the interviewer also has the ability to create, from the narrator, a significance that was not intended. Tuchman states that the interview "has the power to create, with words, an image that was once not their in the mind of the reader."<sup>7</sup> That is to say, the interviewer, with sole access to the interviews transcription, can pick and chose the spoken word to fit an argument that may not have been the narrator's intended purpose for such comments. Tuchman, then, locates the fallacy of oral history at the role of the interviewer, or the historian. There are too many factors involved in an oral inquiry that allow the "collecting of trivia and giving what should have been forgotten new life by recording it and passing it to

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<sup>5</sup> Though Professor Tuchman is a popular historian, her comments on the field were severe enough to warrant serious academic response.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Tuchman, "Distinguishing the Significant from the Insignificant," in *Radcliffe Quarterly* 56 (October 1972): 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

others."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Tuchman's arguments have created a basis by which all other advocates of oral history would construct their theories of the field and methods for the process. Her work caused oral historians to question the purpose of their research. As a result, many transitioned from a generation that simply collected historical data by oral research to a new group of historians seeking greater significance.

In a similar fashion, William Cutler addresses the issue of oral history as a question of accuracy and reliability. Again, the problem of the inquiry lies directly in the interview process. Making the process most questionable are forgetfulness, self-delusion, reticence of narrators, the biases of interviews, and inaccuracy of human memory.<sup>9</sup> Cutler does not place fault solely in the place of the interviewer, as Tuchman does. Instead, the interview process is fallacious on the part of both the interview and the narrator, as the interview relies, at least in part, on human memory, which can be restructured and manufactured within the mind of the narrator. According to Cutler, "a respondent may deflate his role in an event or even refuse to discuss it to avoid embarrassment should his recollections ever become known to friends or associates."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the interpretation of an event relies solely on the narrator's recollection, which comes with inherent flaws. On the other side of the issue, inaccuracy can be traced to the interviewer before he/she ever takes out the tape recorder. "The internal sources of error in oral history interviews... [are] foresight in the selection of topics and respondents."<sup>11</sup> That is to say, an interview can negatively affect a study by applying biases in source selection before the interview begins. This source bias can lead to a misrepresenting study, creating yet another outlet for inaccuracy in oral history. Therefore, much like Tuchman, Cutler seeks to address the problem of the interview process as a questionable means of historical inquiry.

In response to the points raised by both Tuchman and Cutler, Alice Hoffman, a labor historian, seeks to place their concerns in context and address their concerns to offer a version of oral history that takes into account their criticisms and refines itself in order to

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>9</sup> William Cutler, "Accuracy in Oral History Interviewing," in *Historical Methods Newsletter* (June 1970): 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

continue its historical process. Reliability and validity are the two concepts addressed by Tuchman and Cutler that Hoffman deems the most important to legitimize an oral inquiry. According to Hoffman, the oral interview must be taken, and then compared to a significant body of evidence. "Without such evidence, an isolated description of an event becomes a bit of esoterica whose worth cannot be properly evaluated."<sup>12</sup> Hoffman, then, is proposing a means by which to address the concerns of Tuchman and Cutler by going beyond the interview to a general historical inquiry that allows a type of "fact checking" to assess the validity and reliability of an interview. For instance, a narrator discussing his experience in the Vietnam War can have the dates and events of his recollections verified by the existing documents. The reliability of the source and the validity of his narration can be assessed by such verification. Having proposed a new research possibility, Hoffman also asserts several advantages of using an oral inquiry: the certainty of source authorship, conversational candor not found in other brands of source inquiry and the preservation of life experiences of those not eloquent enough to express their experiences in personal memoirs.<sup>13</sup> Writing in 1974, Hoffman's statement helped to promote the usefulness of the oral inquiry, yet she clearly places oral history as "a process of collecting...reminiscences, accounts, and interpretations of events from the recent past."<sup>14</sup> Hoffman expresses the earliest opinions of the former generations of oral historians who established oral history as a fact gathering process to contribute to the historical process, but not a historical process in itself.

Ron Grele, in a similar vein, highlights the problems facing oral history, but attempts to place oral history in its historiographical context. Like the aforementioned historians, Grele recognizes data management, interpretation of source usefulness, and source bias as possible problems facing the inquiry. He goes a bit farther to assert the oral sources are a present product, not a past product, and run the risk of making "the subjects"<sup>15</sup> lives anthropologically strange." That is to say, the interview can be perceived as a product of the narrator in his/her current state, which can affect how he/she

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<sup>12</sup> Alice Hoffman, "Reliability and Validity in Oral History," in *Today's Speech* 22 (Winter 1974): 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald Grele, "Can Anyone Over Thirty Be Trusted," in *Oral History Review* (1978): 43.

recollects the past. Regardless of oral history's possible flaws, it does well to further the progress of the New Social History that was developing at the end of the 1970s. Historians can utilize oral interviews as historical fact, as long as they are verified in a manner promoted by Hoffman. Verification substantiates the historical debate by providing with further evidence.<sup>16</sup> Again, the generation in the late 1970's was still heavily in support of oral "fact finding" to support other historical inquiries.

The promotion of oral history as a beneficial endeavor for specific historical subfields marks the transition for oral "fact finding" to the regard of oral history as a "history-shaping" process. Some fields such as Native American history rely heavily on oral traditions to tell the story of their past, due to the paucity in written Indian records. James Lagrand promotes the use of oral history for Native American history because it allows historians to "discern how twentieth-century Indian peoples have understood themselves and the institutions and forces at work around them."<sup>17</sup> Lagrand concerns his work with oral traditions, which utilize both memory of recent past recollected by the narrator as well as traditions and folklore passed down by word of mouth from previous generations. Therefore, as Lagrand suggests, oral history is vital to understanding Indian history because "it is a culture so rich in oral tradition."<sup>18</sup> Lagrand's proposition for Indian history then places oral history as an active shaper of history, rather than a means of collecting data, as the previous generations of oral historians have suggested. Lagrand's essay also promotes a scientific version of the interview process which will be revisited shortly.

Native American history is not the only field to rely extensively on the use of oral traditions and oral histories to promote the construction of its past. Local history proponents have suggested the use of oral history due to the scarcity in local records to support other traditional types of historical inquiry. Within such tradition, local historians often address the relationship between local history, oral history, and folklore. Larry Danielson writes in an article examining the synthesis created by the three genres, "in literate civilizations the personal sense of history has all but vanished, save

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>17</sup> James Lagrand, "Whose Voices Count? Oral Sources and 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Indian History," in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 21:1 (1997): 23.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

for the local community...It is at this level that folk history plays a paramount role in the historical record."<sup>19</sup> Danielson promotes oral history and its relationship to local folklore as a "history-shaping" process that can construct a physical past of a community by verifying oral accounts with municipal records, as well as create an image of a community's development based on the development of their folklore. That is to say, it should not be disqualified from historical analysis because it is a folk tale. Danielson asserts that "in addition to reminding others that the investigation of subjective reality is an important goal in oral local history research, folklorists need to share their knowledge of traditional patterns of behavior." He then goes on to lament the illegitimacy unfairly placed on folklore accounts. "Sometimes folk arts and actions of the past, although verifiable as realities, are interpreted as much hokum, either grotesque fictions or conscious prevarications."<sup>20</sup> Danielson's arguments reflect the new oral history generation in which oral history actively creates history, which can be applied to local history effectively.

In a work entitled *Oral History and the Local Historian*, Stephen Caunce again turns to oral history as a means of exploring local history. His book again follows the most recent generational pattern of oral history, as he asserts "it is not just about reminiscence and description, but is capable of deepening and widening our analytical understanding of the world of the past."<sup>21</sup> His views are common among the new generation of oral historians as highlighted earlier in this essay. However, Caunce strays far from many of his contemporary oral historians when he explores the methodology used in the oral inquiry. According to Caunce, "precisely because oral history is developing all the time, there is no case for setting clear limits to what can be done and no room for dogmatism about methods."<sup>22</sup> Caunce's book supports the amateur practice of oral history, establishing no guidelines for readers and suggesting that one "might surprise [himself/herself] with innate skills for many of them are the inter-personal skills that we all use every day."<sup>23</sup> Such

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<sup>19</sup> Larry Danielson, "The Folklorist, the Oral Historian, and Local History," in *Oral History Review* (1980): 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Caunce, *Oral History and the Local Historian* (New York: Longman Publishing Group, 1994), 12.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

statements place Caunce at the end of a spectrum of debate over the scientific nature of oral history which can best be discussed now.

Caunce's remarks about the lack of methodological dogma are far from the argument made by many of his contemporaries in the field. Lagrand, although he is largely advocating oral history as a tool to inquire into the history of indigenous peoples, advocates oral history's usefulness in all fields, provided "it is done carefully and scientifically."<sup>24</sup> The debate exists within the field as to the extent to which uniformity should exist in oral history to ensure the reliability and variability of the inquiry. The Oral History Association (OHA) has set for itself a distinct and specific set of guidelines to guide those who seek oral inquiries. The guidelines promote the scientific process in oral history. The guidelines are structured along such topics:

Responsibility to Interviewees:

1. Interviewees should be informed of purposes and procedures.
2. Interviewees should sign a legal release.
3. Interviewers should use the best recording equipment possible.

Responsibility to the Public:

1. Oral historians must maintain the highest professional standards.
2. Interviewees should be selected based on their relevance to their experiences of the subjects at hand.
3. Interviewers should provide complete documentation of their preparation methods.<sup>25</sup>

The OHA goes on, after describing the responsibilities of the oral historian (those listed are but a few of the most important guidelines) to set clear standards for research material selection, objectives, and ethical guidelines that can be used to justify the legitimacy of an oral interview.<sup>26</sup> By establishing such rigid standards for the proponents of oral history, the OHA has created a scientific set of standards to guide oral inquiries. Such guidelines fall far from Caunce's approach to oral history, which eschews strict dogmatic

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<sup>24</sup> Lagrand, 25.

<sup>25</sup> OHA guidelines, Oral History Association, Pamphlet 3, 1989.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

methodology. While Caunce's opinions are shared by some oral historians, the guidelines set forth by the OHA have become standard practice in the field for historians hoping to justify their oral history research.

Beyond setting guidelines for the oral inquiry, some historians have begun suggesting the use of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) to regulate and monitor oral inquiries. IRBs are common among many of the social sciences, particularly sociology and psychology. The purpose of the IRB is to establish a council of experts whose purpose is to oversee all research involving human subjects to ensure that no harm comes to the subject by way of irresponsible testing and researching. In 1998, the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the OHA corresponded with approximately seven hundred IRBs in an effort to make such IRBs relevant to the historical procedure. They also suggested that oral history be included among those research activities that IRBs can review under an expedited procedure.<sup>27</sup> The promotion of IRBs to legitimize historical research, specifically oral history, was short lived however in the historical community. Linda Shopes points to the "tendency for IRBs to be composed of people unfamiliar with methods of historical research."<sup>28</sup> Historians' research is stifled by IRBs composed of social scientists unfamiliar with historical inquiry, making oral history research restricted by standards arbitrary to the historical process. Some problems were addressed specifically, such as structured, anonymous interviews. Shopes asserts that "while anonymity is an option in oral history, and indeed appropriate in some cases, anonymous sources lack credibility in most historical scholarship."<sup>29</sup> That is to say, oral history interviews rely on the interaction of interviewer and narrator. The questions shape themselves as the interview progresses and a specific script makes such opportunities to explore other ideas difficult to impossible. The reaction against IRBs by historians such as Shopes indicates the concern of modern oral historians in "shaping history" through an active conversation rather than "fact-finding" through a systematized, anonymous questionnaire.

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<sup>27</sup> Protecting Human Beings: Institutional Review Boards and Social Science Research, prepared by the American Association of University Professors, *Academic Freedom and Tenure*, May 2000, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Linda Shopes, "Institutional Review Boards Have a Chilling Effect on Oral History," in *Viewpoints*, (September 2000): 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

Along with the debate over the scientific process and the establishment of interview guidelines by the OHA, other concerns have been raised regarding the ethical issues still apparent in oral interviews. Valerie Yow, in 1995, proposed several ethical issues to be considered when engaging in an oral inquiry. In her essay, she identifies the relationship between the interviewer and narrator as the crux of the ethical issue in an oral interview. According to Yow, there is "an interpersonal relationship between interviewer and narrator that does not exist in the written sources."<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the narrator commonly does not understand everything established in the release forms by the interviewer, "creating confidence in the interviewer that causes the narrator to say something they did not want to admit."<sup>31</sup> Yow brings to the forefront several ethical issues that the OHA guidelines do not specifically address, but should still be present in the mind of the interviewer. Her concern with these ethical issues points to the influence of a generation of historians concerned with "history-shaping" based on reliable evidence free of bias, where the oral interview is an important device to research and create a historical picture.

The debate over oral history methodology has progressed by stages from its inception as an historical inquiry in the late 1940s. Dunaway and Baum establish four distinct generations of oral historians, where the progression of the debate goes from active defense of a method of history to refining the method once widely accepted. That is to say, early oral historians saw the use of the method as one useful in "fact-finding," though they were willing to defend it against its critics. As the generations evolved and oral history became accepted as a legitimate methodology, new generations of oral historians began refining the purpose of the oral inquiry into a "history-shaping" exercise. For these historians, oral interviews are used to create a stand-alone history, not merely as factual support. The secondary debates to come from that, such as ethical issues and IRB usage, largely reflect the transition from "fact-finding" to "history-shaping" concerns among those employing oral studies.

Concerning the debates surrounding the oral methodology, I find Linda Shopes response to IRB regulations and Valerie Yow's proposal of the unaddressed ethical issues to be the most engaging

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<sup>30</sup> Valerie Yow, "Ethics and Interpersonal Relationships in Oral History," in *Oral History Review* (1995), 57.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

arguments made. IRBs, due to their nature of regulating biological and social science research, are often restrictive to the unique historical inquiries involved in oral interviews. Shopes' article speaks specifically and effectively to these issues. Yow's ethical issues are also important for consideration because they address those issues that are ambiguously mentioned in the OHA standards. These two articles have done the best to advocate oral history research that can flourish to promote the field, but is not abused to fit the biases of the study.

Because Tuchman and Cutler have mostly become widely discredited in the debate over oral history, the most ineffective argument mentioned in this essay was Caunce's arguments for the removal of dogmatic methodology in oral history. Because oral history has come so far against critics to establish its own legitimacy as a field, removing any efforts to standardize the field would again call into question the effectiveness of the inquiry by removing any validating standards that have been created. Such standards were created in response to the questioning of oral history's reliability, and what Caunce proposes fundamentally rescinds the structures that have been so effective in promoting oral history as a historical method. Oral history has now become an accepted and popular method for historical endeavor, specifically in some historical subfields, and as the contemporary generation uses such inquiry to shape history, it is obvious that issues remain to be addressed to ensure the field continues its effectiveness and reliability.

## **Industrialization: Architecture's Resistance and Adaptation**

Sarah Hagye

Cultural change is expressed in many different ways and affects society economically, politically and socially. Architecture is often a means of personal and cultural expression and reflects the current attitudes and customs of civilization. The post-Civil War era was an especially significant time for architectural advancement and exposed a major shift in schools of thought and design. Mid-nineteenth century architecture reflected America's resistance to advancements in industrialization, the rapid population growth, and the nostalgia surrounding the resurgence of American nationalism. Many professionals, both in the field of architecture and beyond published works in response to these ideas, offering praise or criticism on the proposed ideas of progressive reformers.

With the victory of the Union North and the failure of reconstruction, America looked for ways to reunite the nation and create a unifying spirit. The American Centennial fast approached, and as Leland M. Roth wrote, "the general enthusiasm and the public attitude that change was possible, desirable, and inevitable were invigorating..."<sup>1</sup> Increased technological advancements and easier access to modern conveniences were met with both excitement and resistance at all levels of society. People felt nostalgic and wanted to return to a simpler way of life. An abundance of new architecture reflected the surge in industrialization, and many professional architects felt that returning to classic design and preserving older styles fed the public's nostalgic attitudes.

Charles Follen McKim, a nineteenth century architect who later helped establish the popular firm of McKim, Mead, and White, published an article in *The New York Sketch Book of Architecture* in 1874 that highlighted the importance of Colonial Architecture<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Roth, Leland M, *American Architecture: A History* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 211.

<sup>2</sup> The Colonial style of architecture predominated during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

McKim used example houses from Newport, Rhode Island to illustrate this style's significance. He stressed that though many people looked at these buildings as ugly, they were far more stable and desirable than the current dwellings he described as "shingle-palaces," homes characterized by the use of shingles throughout the entire exterior.<sup>3</sup> He wrote, "...there is a greater charm to be found about the front-door step of one of these old houses, more homeliness and promise of comfort within, even more interest about its wrought scraper, than in most of the ambitious dwellings of the present day."<sup>4</sup> Those modern dwellings, often built in the Queen Anne or Stick Style, reflected advancing industrialization through their elaborate designs and the newly developed shingle material used in construction.<sup>5</sup> Even though Colonial homes were simple in design and did not utilize the newest building materials, McKim argued that each was stable, comfortable, charming, and ultimately appealed to America's idea of returning to "the good ol' days." He also argued that "many of them have stood up for a hundred and fifty years...Just now, while streets are widening, and committees have full swing, is the time to make amends."<sup>6</sup> McKim used American nostalgia to promote his ideas, but many other period writings were more cynical in their critique of the built environment and its response to industrialization.

A key element of industrialization was the idea of capital gain, and nineteenth century industrialists used the advances in technology to make more money not only for their companies, but also for themselves. An increased population created a need for more jobs and industrialists responded accordingly. Simultaneously, the need for more housing grew and factory towns popped up in major urban areas, many established by industrialists who hoped "that providing amenities for their workers would forestall unionization, prevent strikes, and ultimately increase corporate profits."<sup>7</sup> They used sound construction, provided modern utilities that promoted cleanliness

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Follen McKim, "On Colonial Architecture," in *America Builds: Source Documents in American Architecture and Planning*, ed. Leland M. Roth (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc, 1983), 233.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Queen Anne was a popular architectural style during the late 1800's that was often characterized by large front porches and decorated gables. Stick Style was a popular architectural style during mid-1800's that used wood structural elements on the exterior of homes.

<sup>6</sup> McKim, "On Colonial Architecture," 233.

<sup>7</sup> Roth, *American Architecture*, 226.

and convenience, and offered access to cultural amenities like theatres that would, in turn, make the workforce happy and promote increased factory production. George M. Pullman, a nineteenth century industrialist famous for assembling railroad sleeping cars, established such a town twelve miles south of Chicago to house his factory workers. Though his residents eventually rioted against the company in 1893, his community served as a model for many other urban developments in the years that followed its establishment.<sup>8</sup>

Pullman's community received an equal amount of praise and skepticism. Richard Theodore Ely, a critic and economist, wrote an article for *Harpers Weekly* in 1885 that studied Pullman's town and its effect on society. "Pullman: A Social Study" explored Pullman from a social perspective and questioned the success and utilization of his ideas both in the present time and in the future. The community was picturesque and clean, with trees lining the streets and an abundance of well-kept lawns in front of each residence. He mentioned the various public squares that broke-up the monotony of the street lines and the accessibility to amenities such as markets and theatres. He indicated the housing styles "bear no resemblance to barracks; and one is not likely to make the mistake, so frequent in New York blocks of 'brown-stone fronts,' of getting into the wrong house by mistake."<sup>9</sup> He alluded that all of the rooms inside each residence had access to gas and water and the town used a sewage system to move waste away from the town. All of these ideas promoted cleanliness in the home and aspired to create a sense of comfort and well-being in the home of each worker.<sup>10</sup>

Ely ended his positive criticism here, and Roth quotes him: "the basis of Pullman was un-American: 'it is benevolent, well-wishing feudalism, which desires the happiness of the people, but in such a way as shall please the authorities.'" <sup>11</sup> Ely saw two critical societal detriments alive in the town of Pullman. One was the underlying goal of increasing revenue. He noted how much cheaper it was for the company to keep lawns well-kept and streets clean because dirt would be less likely to blow onto the houses. This helped diminish repair costs and made them last longer.<sup>12</sup> Pullman wanted to

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 226-27.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Theodore Ely, "Pullman: A Social Study," in *America Builds*, 207-8.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Roth, *American Architecture*, 203.

<sup>12</sup> Ely, "Pullman," 213.

promote clean living, but saving money and generating more revenue through increased production by his laborers was the ultimate goal. He also mentioned that everything in Pullman was owned by the company, and no one living there was a permanent resident. Ely claimed that every American strived to own a home because it symbolized the future of a successful career. He further declared that "a large number of house owners is a safeguard against violent movements of social discontent. Heretofore laborers at Pullman have not been allowed to acquire any real property in the place. There is a repression here as elsewhere of any marked individuality."<sup>13</sup> This loss of individual freedom promoted a loss of moral principles. In the end, Ely credited Pullman on his savvy business skills but felt that imitating his ideas of commercial growth through manipulation and control was detrimental to society.

Even though many Americans criticized industrialization, several found ways to adapt to the changes. One of the major arguments that surrounded industrialization was that it promoted unhealthy living and demeaned American morals and principles. Professional architects entered this debate and developed design principles that utilized new technological advancements and promoted good morals. Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe published *The American Woman's Home: or Principles of Domestic Science, being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful and Christian Homes* in 1869 as a response to increased technological advancements and how they were utilized in the American home. These two women wrote to a primarily Christian, female audience, but hoped their designs and suggestions would speak to professional architects and designers.

The two argued that women should receive the same amount of credit for their household duties, considered "professional" in a domestic sphere, as men received for their professional work outside the home. Women nursed their children, instructed and governed inhabitants of the household, including servants, and ran the daily activities of the family, providing the moral backbone of the household: "When, therefore, the wise woman seeks a home in which to exercise this ministry, she will aim to secure a house so planned that it will provide in the best manner for health, industry, and economy, those cardinal requisites of domestic enjoyment and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 215.

success."<sup>14</sup> The Beechers offered design suggestions that promoted a moral and Christian lifestyle by saving time and money and in the end created a healthy and cheerful atmosphere. They suggested that using moveable screens to separate rooms efficiently utilized space, and creating extra shelving units for easy access to everyday utensils and cleaning implements positively lent itself to the needs of female household laborers. The Beechers claimed that large rooms "...can be made to serve the purpose of several rooms by means of a moveable screen. By shifting this rolling screen from one part of the room to another, two apartments are always available..."<sup>15</sup> This not only maximized the use of each interior space but also the efficiency of time spent in each room by eliminating the unnecessary movement between rooms.

Another element that the Beechers focused on was the idea of increased ventilation and sanitation in the home. Small, dark spaces promoted disease, and the incorporation of new items such as stoves, made the threat ever more present. Their solution was "...to have a passage of pure air through every room, as the breezes pass over the hills, and to have a method of warming chiefly by radiation, as the earth is warmed by the sun."<sup>16</sup> The Beechers did try to integrate modern amenities as much as possible, however. In one design, they incorporated the use of the stove to help warm the house. They suggested, "the radiated heat from the stove serves to warm the walls of adjacent rooms in cold weather; while in the warm season, the non-conducting summer casing of the stove sends all the heat not used in cooking either into the exhausting warm-air shaft or into the central cast-iron pipe."<sup>17</sup> The Beechers used these and other such designs to show how new technological conveniences, when used efficiently, promoted healthy and comfortable living. The end result left the female household laborer with more time to create a home that reflected the Christian ideals many felt were lost in the midst of industrialization.

The adaptations of architecture to the increased threats of industrialization occur in private residential design and in city planning. In 1868 Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux, two influential nineteenth century architects, submitted a proposal to the

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<sup>14</sup>Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, "The American Woman's Home," in *America Builds*, 58.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 68.

city of Riverside, Illinois, that incorporated the increased dependency on technology with the attitudes surrounding the ideals of suburbia. The two architects submitted their "Plan for Riverside Illinois" to the Riverside Improvement Company with the idea that suburban towns be designed to combine the elements of urban conveniences while promoting the healthy, clean, and comfortable living advantages of country living. Olmstead and Vaux recognized the important role Chicago played in Riverside's existence and that many residents commuted back and forth between the cities. They also recognized that even though the idea of a suburb was to escape the urban lifestyle, the conveniences of city living need not be abandoned in light of achieving that goal.<sup>18</sup> The first idea proposed a roadway to and from Chicago that accommodated walking, riding, and driving. Trees and other shrubbery lined the drive, and various promenade grounds provided a break in the tediousness of travel: "There is probably no custom [promenade grounds] which so manifestly displays the advantages of a Christian, civilized and democratic community...there is none more favorable to a healthy civic pride, civic virtue, and civic prosperity."<sup>19</sup> In the end, people acquired the necessary access to the city but did not sacrifice the tranquility and comfort of suburban living.

Olmstead and Vaux incorporated this idea into their designs of Riverside's city streets, as well. Their designs called for roads without sharp curves and increased space that suggested leisure and comfort while traveling. The two followed the current trend of cleanliness in society and designed a system of gutters along the side of each road that collected water and other debris that accumulated on the streets.<sup>20</sup> Olmstead and Vaux claimed that the drainage system kept roadways clean and smooth and promoted their longevity and durability. The two also suggested the establishment of private driveways that led to households and implemented landscape design along roadways, adding to the picturesque setting of the suburb and comfort of the residents. Olmstead and Vaux successfully designed an urban-influenced suburb without the unhealthy and distasteful conditions so many associated with industrialization.

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<sup>18</sup> Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux, "Plan for Riverside, Illinois," in *America Builds*, 194.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

Writers such as McKim, Ely, Beecher and Beecher, and Olmstead and Vaux recognized architecture's influence on society. With the emergence of industrialization and American nationalism, it was only a matter of time before the attitudes and ideas merged their way into these professionals' designs and personal philosophies. Post-Civil War architecture experienced both an advancement in convenient design as well as a resurgence in the popularity of old styles, and proves, to this day, a vital primary source in the study of cultural and social history of the mid-nineteenth century.

## An Inadequate Ideology: Republican Motherhood and the Civil War

Annie Tock

*What do women know about war? What do they not know? What drop in all the bitter cup have they not tasted? – what ball strikes home on the battlefield that strikes not the hearthstone as well?...[women know of war] who steadily crush back the blinding tears, and whisper through white, brave lips, “Go”.... who wait in vain for the letter that never comes – who search with sinking hearts, and eyes dark with anguish, the fearful battlelists.... Let the desolate homes, the broken hearts, and the low wail of agony that God bears on his throne, make answer!*<sup>1</sup>

The Civil War experience of most women was very different from that of the men. While the men fought, the women worked, prayed, waited. In many cases, women’s roles were vastly expanded during the war years as they were called upon to assume tasks traditionally performed by the absent men. Women worked in the Sanitary Commission and other relief agencies, managed family farms and businesses, and saw battlefield duty as nurses. Perhaps women’s most critical role during the Civil War was to send their husbands, brothers, and sons to the armies. The efforts of enterprising northern women, such as Mary Livermore and Jane Hoge, who worked tirelessly for agencies like the Sanitary Commission and the WCRA have been well documented by historians as part of the Women’s Rights movement. The experiences of wartime mothers, however, have been relatively neglected. Going into the Civil War, motherhood was largely defined by the ideology of Republican motherhood and the doctrine of separate spheres. Although these two concepts remained intact throughout the conflict, the reality of Civil War motherhood, in reminiscences as well as in women’s fiction, reveal an emerging challenge to the self-sacrificing Republican mother.

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<sup>1</sup> Fleta, “Woman and War,” *Flag of Our Union*, Jan. 28, 1865, 59, in Alice Fahs, “The Feminized Civil War: Gender, Northern Popular Literature, and the Memory of the War, 1861-1900,” *The Journal of American History*, 85, no. 4 (Mar., 1999): 1461.

The historiography of Civil War mothers is largely encompassed by the debate over the role of women in general. The early accounts of women’s participation in the conflict, many published in the 20 years after the war, glorified their sacrifices. In *Women of the War* (1866), Frank Moore gushed, “We may safely say that there is scarcely a loyal woman in the North who did not do something in aid of the cause.” He continued, “They do not figure in official reports...yet there is no feature in our war more creditable to us as a nation, none from its positive newness so well worthy of record.”<sup>2</sup>

Interest in the war experience of northern women waned during the first half of the twentieth century, but was revived in the 1950s. Agatha Young, in *Women and the Crisis* (1959), argued that the Civil War brought greater freedom for women. According to Young, this was because “during the Civil War the old restrictions and conventions relating to women’s activities were lifted, as a matter of expediency, to meet the unusual demands of the war.”<sup>3</sup> In her 1976 work, *Of Woman Born*, Adrienne Rich contended that in the ideology of the mid-nineteenth century, “The mother serves the interests of the patriarchy.”<sup>4</sup> She identifies this kind of motherhood as “institutional motherhood,” the goal of which is to reinforce male control. Rich characterizes institutional motherhood as degrading to women and asserts, “If rape has been terrorism, motherhood has been penal servitude.”<sup>5</sup>

Moving away from Rich’s decidedly negative view of 19<sup>th</sup> century motherhood, Jeannie Attie instead focuses on the activities of women during the Civil War which challenged the prevailing assumptions about women’s roles. In *Patriotic Toil*, Attie suggests that the proliferation of work immediately following the war that “flattered” the sacrifices of women represented an effort by the establishment to control and define the public perception of women’s contributions to the war effort. To Attie, these works “hinted at the war’s potential to upset customary assessments of women’s unpaid labors.” She further asserts, “Because the American Civil War...expanded the space for female economic and

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<sup>2</sup> Frank Moore, *Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice* (Hartford, Chicago, San Francisco, Cincinnati, 1867), iv-vi.

<sup>3</sup> Agatha Young, *The Women and the Crisis: Women of the North in the Civil War* (New York, 1959), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (New York, 1976), 45.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

political participation, the disjuncture between the realities of women's lives and the myths embedded in the antebellum compromise threatened to become visible.<sup>26</sup>

In other recent scholarship, Lyde Cullen Sizer focuses on the northern women writers of the Civil War. She points out the inherent conflict in the two major ideologies in the North: republicanism and individualism. Sizer discusses the shift from sentimental offerings to work containing more realism in the writings of northern women and contends, "These writings demonstrated an ongoing and consistent effort to redefine in an outward motion the limits of women's sphere."<sup>27</sup> Sizer further asserts that the Civil War brought a transformation in women's definition of themselves, but not a transformation in the social reality.<sup>8</sup>

Sizer's identification of the incongruence between women's conception of themselves and their social reality is illustrated by the persistence of the ideology of Republican motherhood. The tradition of Republican motherhood, developed shortly after the Revolutionary War, was a powerful influence on the women who had children at home during the Civil War or who had sent their sons to battle. According to Linda Kerber, the idea of Republican motherhood came out of the discussion of women's rights during the Revolutionary era. While unwilling to give women equal rights with men, the founding fathers did acknowledge the importance of education for women. Alfred F. Young explains, "Mothers were endowed with the patriotic responsibility of raising their sons and daughters as virtuous citizens for the new Republic and therefore required a better education."<sup>9</sup> Thus, women's primary role in the new country would be confined to the home, and yet out of this negotiation over rights she gained greater access to education.

In addition to its status as a privilege granted to women after the Revolution, the ideal of Republican motherhood was also based on the belief that a mother had significant control over her child's development. Marilyn Blackwell asserts, "[According to Mary

<sup>6</sup> Jeannie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the American Civil War* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1998), 18.

<sup>7</sup> Lyde Cullen Sizer, *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War, 1850-1872*, (Chapel Hill & London, 2000), 13-15.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Alfred F. Young, "The Revolution was Radical in Some Ways, Not in Others," in Richard D. Brown, ed., *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791* (Boston & New York, 2000), 507.

Palmer Tyler's early writings] a mother's influence was more important than a father's not because a woman was more moral . . . but because her natural relationship to children, her tender feelings, and her reason would act in a child's and the family's best interest."<sup>10</sup> This authority still came with the serious responsibility to raise the child to be a productive member of society. Thus, the future prosperity of a community rested on the quality of its mothers' moral guidance. Blackwell explains, "Focusing attention on their sons and encouraging industry, frugality, temperance, and self-control, republican mothers would nurture virtuous citizens who served their communities; by educating their daughters, mothers would ensure the virtue of future generations."<sup>11</sup>

The importance of a mother's role in shaping her child's character was preached by the authors of the popular "self-help" books in the years before the war. Mary Palmer Tyler's 1811 tract *The Maternal Physician* exhorted mothers, "To say nothing of our duty, as *citizens*, while forming the future guardians of our beloved country, it is undoubtedly our duty, as *mothers*, to bring up our sons in such a manner as shall render them most useful and happy."<sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup> Lydia Maria Child's 1831 manual *The Mother's Book* and John J. C. Abbott's *The Mother at Home* (1834) reemphasize this civic responsibility. Abbott places upon mothers the additional responsibility of their children's salvation.<sup>14</sup>

These ideas continued to be prevalent into the 1850s. In 1851 the editor of Godey's *Lady's Book* instructed women, "Use your privilege of motherhood so to train your son that he may be worthy of this reverence and obedience from his wife. Thus through your sufferings the world may be made better; every faithful performance of private duty adds to the stock of public virtues."<sup>15</sup> The same article further asserts, "She [woman] has a higher and holier vocation. She works in the elements of human nature; her orders of architecture are formed in the soul. Obedience, temperance, truth, love, piety, these she must build up in the character of her

<sup>10</sup> Marilyn S. Blackwell, "The Republican Vision of Mary Palmer Tyler," in Rima D. Apple and Janet Golden (eds.), *Mothers and Motherhood: Readings in American History* (Columbus 1997), 37.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> John S. C. Abbott, *The Mother at Home* (London, 1834, later edition, 1972), 116-119.

<sup>15</sup> "Editor's Table," *Godey's Lady's Book*, XLII (January, 1851): 65.

children.”<sup>16</sup> L.A. Hines echoes this sentiment in the 1851 article “The Mothers of Greatness,” “It has been inferred that nearly all of goodness and greatness in human character is due to maternal influence.”<sup>17</sup> Hine goes on to catalog the accomplishments of men such as Lord Bacon, John Wesley, and King Henry IV of France and attribute their many successes to the influence of their mothers.

During the war newspapers perpetuated the idea that mother’s influenced their children’s character with touching stories from the front. *Harper’s Weekly* told of a wounded soldier who meekly asked, “What do the women say about us boys at home?” In order to make this character more sympathetic the authors described him as a boy who had been through the trials of war and yet remained faithful to his mother’s teachings. The author writes, “He had walked through rough, stony places; temptation, sin, folly had beset him on the right-hand and the left; but he felt still a mother’s influence on his soul, leading him into the June paths of old.”<sup>18</sup>

The war also brought a new emphasis to the ideology of motherhood: sacrifice. Women were increasingly called upon to send their brothers, fathers, husbands, and sons to the front. Newspapers commended these women as patriots and published accounts drawing attention to and praising their sacrifices. An article in the *New York Times* extolled, “Who can tell of that silent patriotism all over this country, which has, without a struggle or a sigh, offered up what the heart most valued for the country’s sake. Widows have sent their only and long-cherished sons, sisters their brothers, wives their husbands, and maidens their betrothed.”<sup>19</sup>

Mothers were singled out for special praise when they gave their sons to their country. *Harper’s Weekly* related the story of a German woman who traveled from Wisconsin to visit her wounded son and bring him a quilt. The author describes her patriotic sacrifice:

The old woman was intensely patriotic. She had three sons, she said, in the army; one had been killed, and this boy wounded; but she counted her sacrifices as nothing; “she’d be a soldier herself if she could.” How the sublime devotion and unselfish patriotism of this

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> L.A. Hine, “The Mothers of Greatness,” *The North Star*, 3 April 1851.

<sup>18</sup> “Hospital and Camp Incidents,” *Harper’s Weekly*, 14 February 1864, 107.

<sup>19</sup> “The Women and the War,” *New York Times*, 3 August 1862.

noble woman—and of thousands like her all through the land—  
[should shame those turning against the war.]<sup>20</sup>

This German mother was happy to give her sons to her country and was praised for her fulfillment of the Republican mother ideal. Alice Fahs points out, “Such emblematic portrayals revealed that at the outset of the war the ideology of republican motherhood shaped images of women’s participation in the war. In early wartime feminized literature, women’s appropriate role was to sacrifice their sons for the sake of country.”<sup>21</sup>

The ideal of the Republican mother and the reality of motherhood during America’s bloodiest conflict did not always coincide. Two books published immediately following the war endeavor to glorify the sacrifices made by northern women and to emphasize their important roles as army nurses and aid agency representatives. Both books are compilations of little vignettes describing the war experience of different women. Interspersed throughout these romanticized accounts of heroism are poignant glimpses of the anguish of mothers at the sacrifice they have been called to make. Mrs. Mary W. Lee served as a nurse in the Union Army and received a letter from a bereaved mother begging for details about her son’s last moments. Mrs. Mary D. Ripley wrote, “My heart is filled with sorrow; my grief I cannot express. . . . O, I shall never, never again see my darling boy in this world! Never again hear his joyous laugh! . . . I am much afflicted, and can hardly write. This is terrible!”<sup>22</sup> This mother’s heartache illustrates the reality of war motherhood which no ideology of sacrifice can assuage.

In another instance of the breakdown of the noble ideology at the reality of death Jane Hoge records her meeting with a mother sitting at her dying son’s bedside. Hoge described her interaction with the woman, “‘He is the last of seven sons—six have died in the army, and the doctor says he must die to-night.’ The flash of life passed from her face as suddenly as it came, her arms folded over her breast, she sank in her chair, and became as before, a rigid impersonation of agony.”<sup>23</sup> A southern woman, Margaret

<sup>20</sup> “The German Mother and her Quilt,” *Harper’s Weekly* (30 January 1864): 71.

<sup>21</sup> Fahs, “The Feminized Civil War,” 1466.

<sup>22</sup> Moore, *Women of the War*, 166-167.

<sup>23</sup> L.P. Brockett and Mary C. Vaughan, *Woman’s Work in the Civil War: A Record of Heroism, Patriotism and Patience* (Boston, 1867), 565.

Easterling, eloquently relates the weariness of mothers who are asked by their governments to sacrifice again and again. Easterling, who already had two sons in the army, wrote to Jefferson Davis, “I know my country needs all her children and I had thought I could submit to her requisitions. I have given her cause my prayers, my time, my means and my children but now the last lamb of the fold is to be taken, the mother and helpless woman triumph over the patriot.”<sup>24</sup> The ideology of the bravely sacrificing mother began to breakdown under the stress and reality of war and loss.

Even mothers who did not send their sons to war were relieved, rather than disappointed, that they were not called to make this sacrifice. Maria D. Brown remembered the day her husband and son went to enlist and were turned down, “I couldn’t eat that day. I felt that it was no worse for my men than for thousands of others all over the land, but, oh, how glad I was when they came home again after only a day’s absence!”<sup>25</sup> In later years when a neighbor boy said goodbye to her before marching off to World War I Brown remarked, “Isn’t it terrible that he was there to be shot at?”<sup>26</sup> Maria Brown did not seem to be enamored of the noble idea of laying her sons “on the altar of her country.”<sup>27</sup>

The ideology of Republican motherhood was also challenged by new opportunities for the expansion of women’s roles. In *Patriotic Toil*, Jeannie Attie contends that the ideology of separate spheres, of which the idea of Republican motherhood was a part, was already breaking down before the war. In these years, the separate spheres ideology was fervently promoted in an effort to delineate specific gender roles during a period in which these roles were increasingly blurred by the rise of industrialization. Attie writes that these efforts were only partially successful. She asserts, “Such ideological formulations did not so much reflect the realities of women’s lives as distort them. They hid the degree to which women of all classes engaged in market relations.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill & London, 1996), 241.

<sup>25</sup> Harriet Connor Brown, *Grandmother Brown’s Hundred Years 1827-1927* (Boston, 1929), 144.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>27</sup> “The Great Uprising of the Women of the North,” *The New York Herald*, 12 May 1863, <http://www.accessible.com/accessible/text/civilwar/00000073/00007362.htm>, accessed 2/27/04.

<sup>28</sup> Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 9.

Some of the tension over gender roles in the pre-war era was relieved by what Attie terms the “antebellum compromise.” According to Attie, in the 1854 work *A Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* Catharine Beecher “offered a political bargain to men in Jacksonian America: women would relinquish claims to political equality if in return they acquired recognition for their separate but equally important sphere of influence.”<sup>29</sup> Attie contends that during this time in American history when many new groups were gaining rights it was critical to confront the issue of women’s rights. The compromise offered by Beecher’s treatise legitimized the effort to expand rights for other groups while leaving women behind. According to Attie, the compromise was of a reciprocal nature and this crucial fact was missed by many people at the time. She writes, “If the compromise broke down, if the female sphere of influence were not inviolate, women would be entitled to abandon their end of the bargain and demand the rights accorded to men.”<sup>30</sup>

The demands on all citizens during the Civil War began to break down this compromise. Women increasingly needed to move out of their traditional domestic sphere in order to support the war effort. Some women embraced this opportunity to expand their sphere. Jeannie Attie asserts, “Although the antebellum gender divisions of labor and power meant that women would not be able to dictate either the extent of their political contributions or the measure of their sacrifices, many women nonetheless perceived that the military crisis might erase some of the boundaries that separated them from male preserves of power.”<sup>31</sup>

One of the most conspicuous new roles the war created for women was that of an army nurse. Though these women could be perceived as performing duties within the domestic sphere, their experiences of the gory carnage of battle and their rapidly growing store of practical medical knowledge inched them closer to professionalization in a traditionally male field. Lori Ginzberg explains, “The Civil War truly elevated nurses’ status in the form of pay and government authorization, nurses came to epitomize the tension between the traditional emphasis on sentiment and womanly

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

feeling on the one hand and the new values of scientific care on the other."<sup>32</sup>

Mothers with wounded sons made up a portion of the Civil War nurses. One such example is that of the German mother who brought the quilt to her son. Another woman who entered nursing on account of an injured son was Mrs. Mary Morris Husband. Initially Husband was involved in making sure the soldiers had good food while they recovered from injuries, but her participation intensified when she received news of her son. Brockett and Vaughan relate, "The time had come for other and more engrossing labors for the sick and wounded, and she was to be inducted into them by the avenue of personal anxiety for one of her sons."<sup>33</sup> While caring for her son, Husband began taking care of other soldiers as well. Brockett and Vaughan write, "As her son began to recover, she resolved, in her thankfulness for this mercy, to devote herself to the care of the sick and wounded of the army."<sup>34</sup>

More radical than mothers leaving home to nurse their sons in hospitals near the battlefields were the mothers who left their children at home to nurse other women's soldier sons. This behavior is entirely incompatible with the ideology of Republican motherhood that insists it is a mother's greatest duty to stay at home and shape her children into upstanding citizens. Despite its inconsistency with the prevailing ideology, it was not a rare occurrence.

Some mothers who left home to become nurses felt the pressure of their domestic duties and waited until an appropriate time came for their departure. One such woman was Mrs. Isabella Fogg. According to Frank Moore, Mrs. Fogg felt the call to leave her home to support the war effort, but "in the spring of 1861 the family duties by which she was bound seemed to make it impracticable for her to leave at once."<sup>35</sup> After the Battle of Bull Run in July of 1861, "changes occurred in the family of Mrs. Fogg, which seemed to release her from her pressing obligations to remain at home."<sup>36</sup> These changes included the enlistment of her son. Mrs.

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<sup>32</sup> Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence* (New Haven, 1990), 143.

<sup>33</sup> Brockett and Vaughan, *Woman's Work in the Civil War*, 288.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>35</sup> Moore, *Women of the War*, 113.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

Fogg served as a nurse throughout the entire war until she was crippled by a fall while working on a hospital boat in 1865.<sup>37</sup>

Frank Moore also records the story of Mrs. Mary A. Brady, an Irish immigrant who devoted herself to personally delivering relief packages to wounded soldiers. Though not a nurse, Brady spent countless hours traveling to the battlefield hospitals and visiting the soldiers. Moore reports, "Up to the summer of 1862 the life of Mrs. Brady was unmarked by other than the domestic virtues and the charities of the home. Her life was that of an industrious, kind-hearted woman, finding her chosen and happy sphere in the duties of wife and mother."<sup>38</sup> After seeing the wounded in a Philadelphia hospital, however, Mrs. Brady chose to give up her traditional duties, including leaving her five small children for extended periods, in favor of war service. According to Moore, Brady's devotion to the Union cause cost her her life as she died of over exertion in the summer of 1864 "while planning fresh sacrifices and new fields of exertion."<sup>39</sup>

Another woman who left her traditional child rearing role behind was Mrs. Sarah A. Palmer, known to the soldiers as Aunt Becky. She records her feelings as she left Ithaca, NY on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1862 to nurse the soldiers of the One Hundred and Ninth regiment, "As I thought of the two little girls whom I was leaving motherless, I felt a wild desire to return."<sup>40</sup> Her decision to leave her children in order to care for the wounded in battlefield hospitals was met with criticism. She reported:

Standing firm against the tide of popular opinion; hearing myself pronounced demented—bereft of usual common sense; doomed to the horrors of an untended death-bed—suffering torture, hunger, and all the untold miseries of a soldier's fate; above the loud echoed cry, "It is no place for woman," I think it was well [that she remained firm in her decision to go.]<sup>41</sup>

Throughout her service, which only ended with the war, Aunt Becky was homesick for her children, and yet felt it was her duty to be with the soldiers. While on a brief furlough her thoughts were with the soldiers. She writes, "My heart was with its work, and the

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-130.

<sup>38</sup> Moore, *Women of the War*, 38.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> S.A. Palmer, *The Story of Aunt Becky's Army Life* (New York, 1871), 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

visit which I thought would be so pleasant, was crowded with anxious thoughts of the boys, who might any day be ordered to the front, or might sicken and die, and I away."<sup>42</sup> Even toward the end of the war, when she had been apart from her children for two and a half years, Aunt Becky remained determined to stay with the men. On March 16, 1865 she confides to her journal, "The old homesickness creeps over me again—the old longing for children.... I shall some time go—when, only the Good Lord knows—not while they need me here."<sup>43</sup>

Mothers were affected by the war not only by the children the lost or left behind, but also by the children they gained. Women nurses often became surrogate mother figures to the soldiers they cared for. Charles M. Kendall, a Wisconsin soldier, recalls Mrs. Sturgis, "About this time I also became acquainted with 'Mother.' Every one called her by that name; and for me, it was easy to follow their example, for she seemed to have the feelings of a mother for all of us."<sup>44</sup> Aunt Becky became similarly attached to the soldiers of her regiment. She remembers hearing one of them was killed, "Over none did my heart yearn as a mother over her son, more than when I learned that Willie Lewis was killed.... I had taken the homesick child into my affections as a son, and now mourned him as such."<sup>45</sup>

As experience of the Civil War exposed tensions within the ideology of motherhood, these strains were subtly reflected in women's fiction. In *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers*, Lyde Cullen Sizer identifies several key characteristics of women's writings during the Civil War era. First, women were almost always the main characters of their stories and the war was defined as it was experienced by these heroines. Sizer suggests, "Women gained new social power in telling such stories."<sup>46</sup>

Second, women writers engaged in a pattern of "consent and resistance" within a society that placed them in a constricting separate sphere. Female authors developed a strategy to negotiate the difficult terrain between outright challenge and subtle suggestion. Sizer writes, "Rather than opposing the dominant culture and its ideologies of womanhood, writers manipulated those ideologies, first one way and then another, along a spectrum of cultural politics

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>44</sup> Moore, *Women of the War*, 479.

<sup>45</sup> Palmer, *The Story of Aunt Becky's Army Life*, 62.

<sup>46</sup> Sizer, *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War*, 6.

contained within accepted bounds."<sup>47</sup> In addition to the ideologies of womanhood, female writers also had difficulties with the ideology of republicanism. Sizer explains, "Women's relationship to republicanism was uneasy, given their subordinate status within it: as dependents, at least ideologically, their voices were not meant to be heard in a national public context."<sup>48</sup>

Within this environment of ideological tension, the work of women writers contributed to the gradual disintegration of the Republican mother ideal. Louisa May Alcott and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps each published novels in 1868 that would challenge the old ideologies while remaining familiar enough to attract a wide readership. Sizer writes, "These novels used the war to talk about the future rather than assess the past; these novelists created moral women but gave them new power."<sup>49</sup>

Louisa May Alcott's novel, *Little Women*, follows the story of the March family through the war years and afterward. The family consists of four daughters: Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. The girls are at home with their mother, whom they affectionately call Marmee, while their father serves in the Union army. Alcott's book both reflects the old ideology of motherhood and hints at a new independence for women.

Marmee represents the ideology of Republican motherhood at its best. Though she had no sons to offer her country, she willingly gave her husband. When she talked with Jo about how much she cared for and missed Mr. March, Jo wondered at the sacrifice, "Yet you told him to go, Mother, and didn't cry when he went, and never complain now, or seem as if you needed any help." Marmee replied, "I gave my best to the country I love, and kept my tears till he was gone. Why should I complain, when we both have merely done our duty and will surely be the happier for it in the end?"<sup>50</sup>

Marmee also embodies the Republican mother in her effort to guide her children to lead spiritual lives. When the girls are sad after reading a letter from Father, Marmee reminds them of a game they used to play called Pilgrim's Progress. In the game, the girls had to travel from the "City of Destruction" to the "Celestial City" all the while carrying their individual burdens. When Amy counters that they have grown too old for such games, Marmee replies, "We are

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>50</sup> Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (New York, 1868), 82.

never too old for this, my dear, because it is a play we are playing all the time in one way or another.” She further encourages, “Now, my little pilgrims, suppose you begin again, not in play, but in earnest, and see how far on you can get before Father comes home.”<sup>51</sup>

In addition to providing an example of self-sacrifice and religious piety, Marmee also instructs her children in proper feminine behavior. After losing her temper with Amy, Jo feels repentant and implores Marmee to help her control her outbursts. Marmee advises, “Watch and pray, dear, never get tired of trying...to conquer your fault.” She goes on to explain how she, too, struggled with her temper and only was able to gain control of it when Father reminded her that she set the example for her children. Marmee asserts, “The love, respect, and confidence of my children was the sweetest reward I could receive for my efforts to be the woman I would have them copy.”<sup>52</sup>

Alcott’s Marmee character epitomizes the ideal Republican mother, and yet the protagonist of the novel is Jo, a decidedly unique and independent female character. Jo, Alcott’s semi-autobiographical character,<sup>53</sup> prefers writing to visiting and romps with the boys to tea with the young ladies. Her goal in life is to write a great novel and she has no plans to get married. Despite her independence, Jo is intensely loyal to her parents and sisters and gives up writing sensational popular stories because they “desecrate some of the womanliest attributes of a woman’s character.”<sup>54</sup> Sizer writes, “While Jo is not the ‘coming woman’ of Alcott’s later imagination, she rides on the cusp of a new world while retaining much of the old.”<sup>55</sup>

Alcott’s *Little Women* is a novel bridging the gap between the receding ideology of Republican motherhood and the gradually emerging independent woman. The experience of the war rendered the old ideology increasingly untenable, and yet a majority of the population was not ready to let it go. Sizer writes, “Many have concluded that *Little Women* is a conservative compromise, particularly because all the little women, including the independent Jo, marry in the end.”<sup>56</sup> Though Jo does marry, against the original

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 80, 81.

<sup>53</sup> Sizer, *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War*, 45.

<sup>54</sup> Alcott, *Little Women*, 354.

<sup>55</sup> Sizer, *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War*, 255.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 258.

intentions of the author who acquiesced to her readers’ desire, she does not wed without qualifications. Sizer points out that Jo responds to Professor Bhaer’s marriage proposal with “I’m to carry my share, Friedrich, and help to earn the home. Make up your mind to that, or I’ll never go.” Sizer asserts, “For a mid-nineteenth-century novel, written to instruct young America, this is a strong message indeed.”<sup>57</sup>

Like Louisa May Alcott, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps wrote a novel about an independent young woman within a context that was recognizable to the prevailing ideologies about women. In *The Gates Ajar* Phelps tells the story of a young girl, Mary Cabot, who has just lost her older brother, Royal, in the war. Roy and Mary were extremely close, and he was her only close relative. His death leaves Mary devastated and angry with everyone and everything, including God.

When Deacon Quirk visits Mary soon after Roy’s death he tries to convince her that she should do her best to get over his loss. He asserts, “It’s very natural; poor human nature sets a great deal by earthly props and affections. But it’s your duty, as a Christian and a church-member, to be resigned.” Mary does not respond initially, but as he persists in preaching resignation Mary fires back, “Deacon Quirk, I am not resigned. I pray to the dear Lord with all my heart to make me so, but I will not say that I am, until I am, - if ever that time comes.”<sup>58</sup> Before he leaves, Deacon Quirk suggests that perhaps Roy is not among those elect who will gain entrance into heaven. He does hold out hope, however, because “Royal’s mother was a pious woman.”<sup>59</sup> These statements set Mary to thinking bitterly about heaven and she concludes her journal entry, “God forgive the words! But Heaven will never be Heaven to me without [him.]”<sup>60</sup>

Deacon Quirk’s complete failure in his effort to comfort Mary illustrates what Sizer identifies as a key concept in the book. She wrote, “It offered a direct challenge to religious patriarchs by bypassing their inadequate forms of comfort, assuming that only women knew best how to speak to women.” Sizer continued, “She [Phelps] later claimed...that the war and the experience of writing the novel transformed her, leading her away from the ‘old ideas of

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Gates Ajar* (Cambridge, MA, 1964), 14.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 18.

womanhood' toward an understanding and sympathy for 'the peculiar needs of women as a class.'"<sup>61</sup>

Despite her challenges to patriarchal control over women, Phelps retains some of the old ideology in her description of the relationship between Mary and her Aunt Winifred who comes to stay with her. Aunt Winifred, like the Republican mother, leads Mary and other young people of the town toward God. When Mary finally reconciles herself to God and finds that she believes in him she exclaims to her Aunt, "You, His interpreter, have done it."<sup>62</sup> While Winifred plays the familiar role of spiritual guide, she also challenges the ideology with her radical conception of an inclusive and joyful heaven. Sizer sees this assertion as a challenge to the role of men in teaching women religion. She writes, "Phelps offers another vision of heaven to her anguished readers, a heaven glimpsed through the friendship of women rather than the ministry of men."<sup>63</sup> According to Sizer, Phelps' novel is unique in that it makes little attempt to romanticize or glorify the war. She contends, "Indirectly commenting on the war's purposes, Phelps makes Mary one of the 'unconsulted' that the war has left and demonstrates her suffering to be of central importance. This legacy of grief, and not the need to defend or further the war's objectives, is the focus of the book."<sup>64</sup> In Phelps' book, part of the ideology of motherhood remains while the author attacks the usefulness of ideologies in assuaging the anguish left by the war.

The ideology of Republican motherhood played a significant role in influencing the shape of the women's sphere in the antebellum North. The experiences of women during the Civil War, however, dealt serious blows to this once mighty creed. When confronted with the cold reality of the death of their sons so nobly sacrificed for the good of the country, mothers cried out in anguish rather than stoically accept their sacrifice as part of their "role." Women like Maria Brown were thrilled when they did not have to send their sons to war rather than disappointed that they had failed their country. Many women, like Aunt Becky, defied their traditional responsibility to raise good Republican citizens when then left their own children at home in order to nurse soldiers on the battlefield. The tension between the old ideologies and the growing realization

<sup>61</sup> Sizer, *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War*, 264.

<sup>62</sup> Phelps, *The Gates Ajar*, 130.

<sup>63</sup> Sizer, *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War*, 265.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

of their inadequacies was eloquently illustrated by women writers. Authors like Alcott and Phelps tried to maintain some remnant of the familiarity of the old ideologies while pushing the boundaries for the future. In 1863, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote, "We have heard many complaints of the lack of enthusiasm among northern women; but, when a mother lays her son on the altar of her country, she asks an object equal to the sacrifice."<sup>65</sup> While most women were not willing to go as far as Stanton in demanding women's rights, after the Civil War it became increasingly clear that the ideology of Republican motherhood would no longer justify the sacrifices made by the women of the North.

<sup>65</sup> "The Great Uprising of the Women of the North," *The New York Herald*, 12 May 1863, <http://www.accessible.com/accessible/text/civilwar/00000073/00007362.htm>, accessed 2/27/04.

## Children of the Aztecs

Kelly Thoele

The society of the Aztecs is often associated with its sacrificial and warrior-like aspects. However, many people would perhaps be surprised at the loving relationship Aztec parents had with their children. This relationship began before birth and continued throughout life. The best description we have of parents and children in Aztec society are the pictographs that have been included in the *Codex Mendoza*.<sup>1</sup> This was a manuscript compiled at the request of the first Spanish viceroy in New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza. Sacrifice was an inherent part of Aztec society and did at times include the sacrifice of children. This paper will focus on the relationship between parents and children, and the various rituals, including those of sacrifice, that were a part of the Aztec life cycle.

To understand the relationship between parent and child, it is important to remember that in Aztec society infants were seen as a raw material in need of formation into a specific form. The raw materials that adults associated with children were many times maize or jewels. Throughout one's life, the refinement and development of a child continued with various lifecycle rituals. From birth to death, rituals and ceremonies enabled a person to grow with both human and divine help. Rituals, in fact, began before a child was born.

From the moment a woman was found to be pregnant, the families of both mother and father commemorated the good news. A celebration took place in which the families and the important elders of the area gathered to celebrate the upcoming birth. After a feast, there would be many speeches, beginning with the most important elder. Deceased ancestors would be called upon to protect mother and child. Each person at the celebration spoke; many times reminding the woman that the child she was carrying was a gift from the gods. The expectant mother was the last to speak, and she thanked all those who had come, and stated publicly the happiness that the pregnancy had brought to her. However, she also expressed

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<sup>1</sup> Frances F. Berdan and Patricia R. Anawalt editors, *The Codex Mendoza* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1992).

her anxiety that she was not worthy of such happiness.<sup>2</sup> This dialogue of happiness, yet apprehension, is apparent throughout much of Aztec society.

At the time of birth, a midwife was in attendance. The midwife was a woman who was very well respected in the community. There is evidence that she was a fairly prosperous member of the Aztec culture, given her role as the one who helped bring new life into the world.<sup>3</sup> The mother was looked upon as a brave warrior and the midwife chanted a cry of victory immediately after the baby was born:

My youngest one! ...Perhaps thou wilt live for a little while! Art thou our reward? Art thou our merit?... Or perhaps also thou wert born without desert, without merit: perhaps thou hast been born as a little smutty ear of maize. Perhaps filth, corruption are thy desert, thy merit. Perhaps thou wilt steal...[T]here will be work, labor, for daily sustenance....  
...May the lord of the near, of the nigh [who] is thy mother, thy father, thy revered parent, cherish thee, array thee....<sup>4</sup>

This verse relates how blessed the newborn was to be brought into the world. Yet the midwife's words clearly warn the child that there will be insecurity and grief throughout life. If the mother delivered twins, one of the babies was killed at birth, as twins were feared to be an earthly threat to their parents in Aztec society.<sup>5</sup>

A woman who died in childbirth was regarded in the same esteem as a warrior, as each had sacrificed their life so that a new life could be born. The Aztec cosmology is a subject unto itself, however in this regard it was believed that a woman who died while giving birth was to have taken from male warriors the all powerful sun at noon, where it could then be brought back to the earth by sunset.<sup>6</sup> The soul ascended to the female side of heaven, or western side of the world, emerging at times to haunt those that lived. A woman who died in childbirth was given a lavish burial. She was

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<sup>2</sup> Jacques Soustelle, *The Daily Life of the Aztecs on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), 187-8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>4</sup> Kay Read, "The Fleeting Moment: Cosmology, Eschatology, and Ethics in Aztec Religion and Society," *Journal of Religious Ethics* Spring (1986): 113-39.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Taube, *Aztec and Maya Myths* (Britain: British Museum Press, 1993), 16.

<sup>6</sup> Kay Read, *Time and Sacrifice in the Aztec Cosmos* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1998), 133.

cleansed and dressed in her finest garments. Her husband then carried the woman on his back to the place of burial. The elderly women of the community gave cries like that of warriors on the path to the burial sight, in an attempt to protect the body. It was believed that the body of a woman who died in childbirth was divine. Therefore young men would try to cut off a finger or the hair of the deceased woman. If they succeeded, these accoutrements were placed on the young men's shields during battle to give them courage and valor. The woman's remains were buried at sunset. It would be guarded for four nights in an attempt to protect anyone from stealing the body.<sup>7</sup>

Four days after the birth of a child, the midwife came again, this time for a ritualistic cleansing and naming ceremony. The baby was brought into a courtyard where many formal procedures were performed. The midwife breathed upon the water, and then gently bathed the child, saying:

My youngest one, my beloved youth...Enter, descend into the blue water, the yellow water...Approach thy mother Chalchiuhtlicue, Chalchiuhtlatonac! May she receive thee...May she cleanse thy heart; may she make it fine, good. May she give thee fine, good conduct!<sup>8</sup>

The midwife placed a symbol for what the child would become into the baby's hands. If a boy, a shield and arrows would be placed in his hands signifying that he would become a warrior. Other objects scattered about were a loincloth and cape. For a baby girl, objects included a broom, spindle, bowl, skirt, and shift. These were much-needed items in a female's life, as the ritual of sweeping was important in Aztec culture. Therefore, the gender differences began immediately after birth. After the midwife had bathed the child, she held it up to the sky declaring that the baby had been created to provide food and drink. If the infant was a boy, she also included the hope that he would become a courageous warrior. The midwife had three young boys who assisted her, and they called out the baby's name. It was then their duty to bury the umbilical cord. A baby boy's umbilicus and symbolic objects were buried in a field, representative of battle. The little girl's umbilical cord and a female symbol were buried in a corner of the house. Each of these spaces was indicative

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<sup>7</sup> Soustelle, *The Daily Life of the Aztecs on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest*, 190.

<sup>8</sup> David Carrasco with Scott Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs: People of the Sun and Earth* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 95.

of where the child would be most productive in life.<sup>9</sup>

Beautiful metaphors for children indicate the Aztecs high regard for the new life that was brought forth. Mother, father, and midwife all referred to the babies as precious feather, precious green stone, precious bracelet, etc.; all lovely references to how much this child was valued in the Aztec society. However, it was a parent's most important job to ensure that their children did not become "fruitless trees," as referred to in an Aztec saying<sup>10</sup>. The fruitless tree is again a reference to a raw material that was a metaphor of the child.

The name of a child was dependent upon the moment of birth. A wise man (*tonalpouhqui*) was summoned from the temple soon after an infant was born, who correlated the time of birth to spiritual forces of the day using a horoscope. This could also determine a child's destiny, for if it were a negative sign, it could perhaps be concluded the child would become a thief or a person who performed ill deeds. If the child were born on an unlucky day, the *tonalpouhqui* would wait for a better day to name the child, thus giving it a chance for a better lot in life. Boys were named after a male family member, while girls were given names relating to flowers, stars, birds, etc.<sup>11</sup>

A ceremony was held twenty days after the birth in which parents chose the type of education they wanted for their child. If the priesthood was desired, the parents took the child to the *calmecac*, a temple school that educated future priests. It was generally children of dignitaries who were admitted to the *calmecac*, however children of various families were sometimes permitted to attend.<sup>12</sup> Pacts were sealed when the infant had incisions made in the body. Boys had their lower lips cut by an obsidian knife, and a jewel was inserted into the incision. Girls had cuts made in the hips and breasts.<sup>13</sup> These incisions indicated that the child was entering into a lifetime educational process, which was crucial to their lives. The other educational option was the *telpochcalli*, which generally produced ordinary citizens and warriors. Children lived with their parents until the age of fifteen before beginning their formal education.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>11</sup> Victor W. von Hagen, *The Aztec: Man and Tribe* (New York, The New American Library, 1961), 69-70.

<sup>12</sup> Soustelle, *The Daily Life of the Aztecs on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest*, 169.

<sup>13</sup> Carrasco, *Daily Life of the Aztecs: People of the Sun and Earth*, 94.

Nursing infants were considered pure in Aztec society. Since the child had not yet eaten from the earth (maize), they were able to communicate to the gods directly. This correlation to corn was again observed during a growth ritual. Once every four years parents brought their children forward in a public ceremony. The children who had been born within the previous four years were held over a fire to be purified and would have their ears pierced and a cotton thread was inserted. The hole in the ear would gradually be expanded as the child grew, so that by the time of adulthood an ear ornament of up to 2 cm could be accommodated.<sup>14</sup> The growth ceremony included having an adult hold the child up by its forehead or neck. This was thought to help the child grow tall quickly, and is again another association to maize. Other stretching ceremonies included stretching the child's nose, neck, ears, fingers, and legs so as to encourage suitable development.

At four years of age, a child began to be given responsibilities. Girls were taught to weave while boys were responsible for carrying firewood, as again the gender differences are clearly evident. As the child aged, other duties were expected. Between seven and ten, boys began to fish while girls were expected to continue to cook and spin for the family. Although much loved, children were expected to observe the rules. These included such rules as walking quickly and dignified with head held high, speaking slowly with a soft voice, not being allowed to stare when speaking to another, no gossiping, eating and dressing with cleanliness and dignity, and always being obedient to elders<sup>15</sup>. These rules apparently pertained to children of all classes of Aztec society.

Children were often threatened with large, pointed *maguay* thorns for such offences as laziness, disobedience, negligence, and boastfulness. In the *Codex Mendoza*, there is a scene of a mother sticking her daughter's hands with a thorn as punishment. Another scene shows a boy being bound by the hands and feet with thorns stuck into his shoulders, back, and buttocks. Between the ages of ten and fourteen, punishments included having to breathe in chili smoke or being made to sleep on the cold, wet ground while bound.<sup>16</sup>

Fifteen was generally the age of much transition for a child. Children, whose parents had chosen the *calmecac* when the child was

<sup>14</sup> Rosemary Joyce, "Girling the Girl and Boying the Boy: The Production of Adulthood in Ancient Mesoamerica," *World Archaeology* (2000): 473-84.

<sup>15</sup> Carrasco, *Daily Life of the Aztecs: People of the Sun and Earth*, 103.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

twenty days old, began their priestly education at the temple school. Much self-sacrifice of all kinds, spiritual, mental, and physical, was included in the regimen. Fifteen-year-old boys who were not educated for the priesthood were usually sent to the *telpochcalli*. Mostly commoners, these young men were trained for military warfare. Other duties learned at the *telpochcalli* were citizenship, arts, crafts, and history. A girl not attending the *calmecac*, thus not a priestess, was generally considered of marriageable age by the age of sixteen. Men were on average twenty years old when they married.<sup>17</sup> Thus parents had done their job well of raising a child who was not a "fruitless tree."

As this paper has demonstrated, an Aztec child took part in many rituals throughout childhood. From the time a child was quite small, sacrifice had played a large part in some of these rituals. The naming ceremony at the age of twenty days involved cutting incisions in the infant's skin. Agricultural festivals in the spring involved cutting the earlobes of all infants and, if the child were a male his penis would be cut as well, as a form of bloodletting.<sup>18</sup> In a New Fire ceremony, which occurred once every fifty-two years, all the citizens would slice their earlobes with a sharp knife and flick the blood toward the new fire that had been built on a hill. This included the ears of infants and children.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, no matter how young, all were required to give some form of themselves to the gods.

The topic of sacrifice in the Aztec culture has fascinated, yet horrified people, from other cultures for hundreds of years. When it comes to the sacrifice of children, it is even more so. However, it must be remembered that the Aztec's sacrificial aspects can be correlated to the fables of the ancestral Toltecs.<sup>20</sup> Throughout time, the sun was not an old sun reborn. Rather it was a brand new sun. The new sun was created by the destruction of the old sun along with the sacrifice of a body. Therefore, without a death by sacrifice, life could not continue.<sup>21</sup> In many of the stories of Aztec creation, for something new to be born, an old thing must rot and be eaten.

<sup>17</sup> George C. Vaillant, *Aztecs of Mexico: Origin, Rise, and Fall of the Aztec Nation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, & Company, Inc., 1944), 111.

<sup>18</sup> Read, "The Fleeting Moment."

<sup>19</sup> Read, *Time and Sacrifice in the Aztec Cosmos*, 126.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>21</sup> Frances F. Berdan, *The Aztecs of Mexico, An Imperial Society* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1982), 114.

Children played a large role in the ritual dedicated to the rain god, Tlaloc, which was performed to bring needed rain for the crops. Blood from children was obligatory and this was acquired through small incisions, such as in the tongue. Actual child sacrifice was also performed at the end of the dry season. Two children were selected to be offered up to the rain gods. The tears that they invariably shed before their sacrifice were offered to Tlaloc so that he released much needed rain. In one year of a particularly dire drought, forty-two children between the ages of two and six were sacrificed. It was believed that the earth needed more than just a small sip of water, as represented by the crying children's tears. In such a dire circumstance, much water was needed; therefore the quantity of children sacrificed was greatly increased. This is the only time that such a large number of children were offered, it would never happen again.<sup>22</sup>

The Aztec practice of human sacrifice, including the sacrifice of children, is perhaps the most familiar image of Aztec society. It was widely accepted that sacrifice was necessary to feed the gods or to keep the sun on a daily course. Other theories abound for sacrifice and the eating of human flesh, of which the Aztecs did partake. Such theories include protein deficiencies, geopolitical conditions, ideological functions, environmental conscription, and so on.<sup>23</sup> It has also been theorized that the sacrifices that were initially performed as impulses, grew to become obsessions.<sup>24</sup> It was deemed an honor to be chosen as one who would feed the gods through sacrifice. Those sacrificed were believed to have a wonderful afterlife for their gift of themselves.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it must be assumed that a child that was offered in a sacrifice to the gods was extremely valued in the society in which he or she lived.

Children *were* a part of the sacrificial aspect of the society, but the blood of the children, or the sacrifice of a child, was crucial to the practice of keeping the gods appeased. It must also be remembered that this sacrifice was a minor part of the daily lives of the Aztecs. Each day brought about chores and restraint to reinforce the characteristics that the Aztecs so wanted to pass on to their

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<sup>22</sup> Read, *Time and Sacrifice*, 180.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Winkelman, "Aztec Human Sacrifice: Cross-Cultural Assessments of the Ecological Hypothesis," *Ethnology* (1998): 285-99.

<sup>24</sup> Nigel Davies, *The Aztecs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 169.

<sup>25</sup> Berdan, *The Aztecs of Mexico, An Imperial Society*, 115.

children, such as discipline, obedience, and strength. The rituals that were so prevalent throughout life and began before birth, were rituals that helped the children grow with a faith in the gods and the realization that each life was a connection to a grand civilization, a civilization of which children were an integral part.

**Jamaican Christian Missions:  
Their Influence in the  
Jamaican Slave Rebellion of 1831-32  
and the End of Slavery**

Rachel Elam

“As far as the author has observed, he must say, that the slaves who are Christians are generally more sober, steady, peaceable, and obedient, than those who are not.”<sup>1</sup> When John Stewart wrote these words in 1823, he clearly did not have any idea that the same Christian slaves that he wrote about would incite one of the worst slave rebellions in Jamaican history. The so-called “Baptist War” that occurred during the Christmas season of 1831 was an important step in Jamaica’s abolition of slavery.<sup>2</sup> The slaves involved in this rebellion were the adherents to Baptist and other Christian missions in Jamaica, and religion played a large part in their plans of rebellion. Although slave emancipation in Jamaica was ultimately decided in the British Parliament, the Parliament acted in part because of a severe slave rebellion in Jamaica—a rebellion incited by Christian missions.

At the start of colonial slavery in Jamaica, converting the slaves to Christianity was not considered a good idea. Planters feared that Christianity would make the slaves lazy and take up too much of the time that they could spend working, or even that the slaves were not intelligent enough to grasp the concept.<sup>3</sup> When slaves were finally taught Christianity, they were not allowed to officially join the Church of England. Black people, it was thought, could not be genuinely Christian.<sup>4</sup> Because of the idea that the black slaves should

not be converted to Christianity, there was not much of a Christian influence among the slaves until the arrival of the Baptist missionaries. The Baptist missionaries were in favor of freeing the slaves. They were among the first white people to care about the slaves in Jamaica.<sup>5</sup> These missionaries brought the idea of Christianity to the slaves, and in time, the ideas mixed with the religious beliefs the slaves brought with them from Africa, such as “myalism.”<sup>6</sup> The first colonial missions tried to justify slavery by using parts of Christian teaching that could fit with the concept of a slave society, so the slaves did not take to that brand of religion, but the ideas of equality and brotherhood inherent in Christian doctrine that they taught mixed with myalism’s beliefs against evil helped in the slave’s struggle for freedom.<sup>7</sup> Many of the white Baptist missionaries told the slaves to wait patiently, for emancipation would come eventually, but the slaves were spurred on by the missionaries’ subtle support of abolition.<sup>8</sup> Amongst the other white religious groups, no such support existed.

The newly combined sect of African and Christian religions provided an outlet for the slaves to express themselves. Religious meetings were the only place where slaves were allowed to gather freely, and the church services gradually transformed into meetings where political interests were discussed.<sup>9</sup> These meetings of the new church did not worry the Baptist missionaries because they believed that the Baptist teachings would prevent the slaves from entertaining ideas of rebellion; however, as Abigail Bakan succinctly stated, “The slaves interpreted Christian doctrine as a legitimization and spur to revolt; the missionaries interpreted it as a barrier against such action.”<sup>10</sup> The missionaries were not present at these religious meetings, so the slaves had no one stressing obedience. Slaves could freely discuss ideas of freedom and rebellion.

One of the instigators of the rebellious meetings of the slaves was Sam Sharpe. Sharpe was a slave in Montego Bay, and he also was a member of the Baptist church. Sharpe could read and became

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<sup>1</sup> John Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica; with Remarks on the Moral and Physical Condition of the Slaves, and on the Abolition of Slavery in the Colonies* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 284.

<sup>2</sup> Gad J. Heuman, *The Killing Time: The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Stewart, *A View of the Past and Present State of the Island of Jamaica*, 285.

<sup>4</sup> Abigail B. Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica: The Politics of Rebellion* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990), 51.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 51. Myalism was an “anti-witchcraft against the evil deeds of others,” that became a new Afro-Christian religion.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Hart, *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 249.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Reckord, “The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831,” *Past and Present* 40 (1968): 111.

<sup>10</sup> Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica*, 57.

a regular speaker and leader in the Baptist mission. Sharpe's owner apparently did not object to his position as preacher and allowed him to hold nighttime religious meetings without the supervision of whites; however, Sharpe used this trust to his advantage, and the services became a cover for rebellion-organizing meetings.<sup>11</sup> Sharpe believed that the Bible supported the slave's freedom, and his loose interpretation led him to formulate a rebellion that would lead to emancipation.<sup>12</sup> Sharpe's original intention for the rebellion was a passive resistance movement, which gained much larger support and participation among the slaves than if Sharpe had tried to raise a violent revolt.<sup>13</sup>

At the time that Sharpe was beginning to develop a Baptist following and to prepare for rebellion, talk of abolition was floating around the island. Rumors were spread that the British would soon be emancipating the slaves. Not surprisingly, the majority of these rumors were coming from the Baptist missions on the island.<sup>14</sup> Even though a royal proclamation was eventually given disputing the rumors, the island was in a political uproar, mainly because the proclamation was not widely posted around the island. The governor was under the impression that it would just increase the talk of emancipation.<sup>15</sup> When the proclamation was distributed, it only served to increase the unrest. Because of the environment of expectancy, the call for passive resistance was even more well-received.<sup>16</sup> According to recent research, slave rebellions were more likely when the slave's expectations were frustrated, as in the case with the Jamaican slaves and the rumors of freedom.<sup>17</sup> While the slave population was preparing for drastic measures, the missionaries were trying their best to convince them not to rebel and that the matter would be settled in England.<sup>18</sup>

After all of the planning and preparing by Sam Sharpe and the slaves that followed him, the rebellion began on December 27, 1831. The slaves had conducted numerous meetings under the guise of religious gatherings and had planned to stop work and commence with passive resistance, although that is not how it ended up

<sup>11</sup> Hart, *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery*, 253.

<sup>12</sup> Reckord, "The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831," 113.

<sup>13</sup> Hart, *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery*, 254.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>17</sup> Heuman, *The Killing Time*, 34.

<sup>18</sup> Hart, *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery*, 248.

happening. The rebellion started with the burning of a trash house on one of the large estates. Although Samuel Sharpe did not originally mean to promote violence and property destruction, the rebellion progressed that way anyway. The Black Regiment, a group of about 150 "soldiers" was the core of the military force, but there were many separate groups that participated. Unfortunately for the rebels, these groups were disorganized and had no experience in warfare. Most of the individual estates did not participate in passive resistance, but instead reveled in destroying property, killing livestock, or participating in other acts of defiance.<sup>19</sup> The rebellion was put down by the first week in January 1832.<sup>20</sup> Much of the countryside was ruined. In St. James, one section of Jamaica, the damage was about 600,000 pounds. Altogether, the damages were over one million pounds.<sup>21</sup> Only two acts of violence by the slaves against whites were recorded, and the slaves only attacked when threatened.<sup>22</sup>

Although the rebellion did not last very long, it was a very substantial part of Jamaican history. The rebellion showed the growth that the slaves had achieved both politically and religiously and showed that the slaves could start a movement that could rock the foundation of Jamaican slave society. The religious meetings created a legitimate protest, as well as a mature spiritual group invented by the slaves.<sup>23</sup> The slaves, although not fully united, were still a large threat to the whites, and the planters were aware of this. During the period of slavery, Jamaica had a history of rebellion and resistance from the beginning through the post-slavery period.<sup>24</sup> The number of slaves in Jamaica greatly outnumbered the whites, which made the threat of any rebellion more frightening than if the whites outnumbered the blacks.<sup>25</sup>

The Christian missions were ultimately blamed by the white planters and estate owners for the rebellion after it concluded, and they were ordered by the government to end their proselytizing to the slaves. The white plantation owners accused the missionaries of planning the rebellion. Six Baptist missionaries were put in jail, a

<sup>19</sup> Reckord, "The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831," 119.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-118.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>24</sup> Heuman, *The Killing Time*, 33.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

Wesleyan missionary was tarred, and around 20 chapels were destroyed or damaged.<sup>26</sup> In the aftermath, the remaining missionaries decided to use the rebellion to illicit sympathy from the British people so that they might realize the atrocity of slavery and seek to abolish it in Parliament.<sup>27</sup> When Lord Mulgrave became Governor of Jamaica in 1832, he knew he would be greeted with hostility from the Baptist missionaries.<sup>28</sup> Mulgrave had not been sent to Jamaica to emancipate the slaves, so he had to watch the missions, especially the Baptists, very carefully because the slaves were still in a rebellious state of mind.<sup>29</sup>

In the aftermath of the Rebellion of 1831, the Baptist and Wesleyan missions sent delegates to England to plead the case for emancipation of the slaves. These missionaries were powerful allies in the fight for freedom because they could testify before Parliament as witnesses. Back in England, these missionaries joined the emancipation movement already prevalent there. The missionaries provided the last stages of the anti-slavery movement and managed to convince Parliament that if abolition of slavery was put off any longer, more and more rebellions could ensue.<sup>30</sup> The slaves were still in an expectant mode because of the talk and rumors of abolition still abounded around the island. Even Lord Mulgrave acknowledged that freeing the slaves could not be put off much longer.<sup>31</sup> In pleading their case, the missionaries persuaded the British government that slavery was more dangerous than it was profitable. Slavery was finally abolished in Jamaica on January 1, 1835, due in part to the contribution of the Rebellion of 1831.<sup>32</sup>

The end of slavery in Jamaica led the way for a smooth switch to wage labor in 1838.<sup>33</sup> The Jamaican history of rebellion and insurrection finally paid off for the slaves. After almost 200 years of slavery and oppression, the slaves, with the help of Christian missions and missionaries, were able to make a bold enough statement to the whites to help secure their freedom and future.

<sup>26</sup> K.R.M. Short, "Jamaican Christian Missions and the Great Slave Rebellion of 1831-2," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27 (1976): 57.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Wilbur D. Jones, "Lord Mulgrave's Administration in Jamaica, 1832-1833," *Journal of Negro History* 48 (1963): 46.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>30</sup> Reckord, "The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831," 124.

<sup>31</sup> Jones, "Lord Mulgrave's Administration in Jamaica, 1832-1833," 45.

<sup>32</sup> Reckord, "The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831," 124-125.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

## William Jardine: Architect of the First Opium War

Benjamin Cassan

History often overlooks the first Opium War, which was fought from 1840-1842.<sup>1</sup> Not only did this war mark a major transition in Chinese history, opening up the isolated empire to foreign markets, but it also gives insight into the foreign policy of the British Empire during the nineteenth century. Most historians who have written on the subject, however, focus largely on the controversy surrounding the opium trade, instead of on the war itself. Some have even labeled the British Empire of this period as drug pushers, and blame them for the opium addiction of millions of Chinese. John K. Fairbank, a renowned scholar on the war, referred to the British opium trade as, "the most long-continued and systematic international crime of modern times."<sup>2</sup>

Opinions like these do not look favorably upon the actions taken by the British Empire, and begs an obvious question: why would the British involve themselves in such a controversial trade, and why would they go to war for it? Historians differ on why Britain went to war in China. Some believe Britain waged war in China to preserve and expand its trading privileges there. Others theorize that the war was a result of the British wishing to defend their honor after Lin Zexu, the Imperial Commissioner, destroyed 20,000 chests of British opium.<sup>3</sup> While each of these theories has an element of truth, neither takes into account the role played by the man who, in a real sense, was the driving force behind the war: William Jardine, a British opium merchant. First, along with his

<sup>1</sup> The first Opium War was a conflict between the British Empire and the Qing Empire in China from 1840-1842. The war was fought as a result of the Chinese officials attempt to suppress the opium trade within their borders.

<sup>2</sup> John K. Fairbank, 'The Creation of the Treaty System' in John K. Fairbanks, ed. *The Cambridge History of China* vol. 10 Part 1 (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 213; quoted in John Newsinger, "Britain's Opium Wars," *Monthly Review* (October 1997): 35.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Ward Fay, *The Opium War, 1840-1842: Barbarians in the Celestial Empire in the Early Part of the Nineteenth Century and the War by Which They Forced Her Gates Ajar* (New York: Norton, 1976), 160.

partner James Matheson, Jardine owned the company that was the largest importer of opium into China, thus supplying the catalyst for the war. Also, after amassing a large fortune from the opium business, Jardine used his wealth and influence to sway the opinion of both the public and the government towards war. And finally, through meetings and correspondence with Lord Palmerston, Jardine masterminded the military strategy that would be used in a successful campaign against China. He even helped determine some of the demands that were to be met by the Treaty of Nanking. Despite this evidence, some historians maintain that Jardine's role in the war has been exaggerated. Perhaps this is because they believe the Opium War would have been fought in a similar manner without Jardine's influence, or simply because they overlooked the details of his involvement. Whatever the reasons, a close examination of William Jardine's actions leading up to the first British-Chinese Opium War shows that not only has his role been far from exaggerated, but in fact not has not been emphasized enough.

William Jardine was born in Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire, Scotland in 1784. Coming from a wealthy family, he was fortunate enough to attend Edinburgh Medical School where he studied to be a doctor. After he graduated in 1802, he took a job with the British East India Company as a ship surgeon. Besides adhering to his medical duties, Jardine engrossed himself in the trade business. Taking advantage of one of the East India Company's policies, which allowed its employees to trade in goods for their own profit, Jardine eventually learned the trade business well enough to attain a job as junior partner for several different merchant houses. By 1820, Jardine decided to go into business for himself and settled in Canton<sup>4</sup>, committing himself to trade in China. A shrewd businessman, Jardine indicated how precious his time was by not having any available chairs in his office for visitors.<sup>5</sup> His partner James Matheson, also a Scot, had entered in to the Canton trade around the same time as Jardine. Both men were staunch supporters of free trade and wanted the monopoly the East India Company had enjoyed over the Eastern market to end. In 1828 the two men joined

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<sup>4</sup> City in southern China that served as the premiere port for Sino-European trade since the early sixteenth century. Many European factories and agency houses were built in Canton and served as permanent residences for European merchants.

<sup>5</sup> Edgar Holt, *The Opium Wars in China* (Chester Springs, PA.: Dufour Editions, 1964), 37.

forces, and by 1832 they had founded Jardine & Matheson Co. The men quickly engaged in the lucrative, though illegal, opium trade and began importing the drug into Canton. In the season of 1820-1821, 4,224 chests of opium were shipped from India into China. By 1830-1831, the year Jardine and Matheson entered into the trade, the total chests shipped increased to 18,956. Jardine and Matheson alone had disposed of more opium than the entire import of 1821 in their first year.<sup>6</sup>

In 1833, Jardine and Matheson got their wish when the British Parliament abolished the East India Company's monopoly. The following year, 40 percent more tea was shipped to Britain than the year before, and as expected the sale of opium continued to soar. Between 1830 and 1836 the amount of opium chests shipped into India went from 18,956 to 30,302.<sup>7</sup> Certainly Jardine and Matheson profited considerably from this growing demand for opium. This huge influx of opium into China, however, did not go unnoticed by the Chinese Emperor, and in 1836 he issued an edict banning both opium importation and use. That same year the governor of Canton, Deng Tingzhen, arraigned nine prominent merchants on drug trafficking charges, William Jardine was among them.<sup>8</sup> Jardine simply ignored the order and went unpunished. A conflict between the British merchants and the Chinese government was beginning to heat up. Jardine continued adding fuel to the growing crisis with his involvement in what came to be known as "Napier's Fizzle."

To replace the Old Select Committee, which oversaw trade in Canton during the East India Company's monopoly, the British government appointed Lord William John Napier as Chief Superintendent of Trade. In 1834 he set out for China with instructions to directly communicate with Chinese officials. Upon his arrival in Canton, Napier was immediately met with suspicion. When he requested to meet with the Viceroy, Lu Kun, he was told he could only deal only with the Cohong, a group of Chinese merchants who dealt with all foreign traders. This treatment was not surprising since the Chinese viewed the British as barbarians, and unworthy of directly communicating with high Chinese officials. Lu Kun saw this refusal as a victory over the barbarians, and later issued

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<sup>6</sup> Jack Beeching, *The Chinese Opium Wars* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), 38.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>8</sup> W. Travis Hanes III, Ph.D. and Frank Sanello, *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another* (Naperville, IL.: Sourcebooks, 2003), 33.

an edict demanding that Napier leave Canton for Macao.<sup>9</sup> Upon hearing of Napier's dismissal from Canton, William Jardine advised resistance, believing an open affront to the Crown's representatives was likely to anger the public and sooner bring about military action.<sup>10</sup> Jardine even persuaded Napier to write a letter to Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary requesting, "three or four frigates and brigs, with a few steady troops."<sup>11</sup> Palmerston ignored his request, and while in Canton, Napier contracted a very high fever. Listening to doctor's orders he sailed back to Macao where he died only a few days later. After Napier's death, Jardine, along with eighty-five other merchants, wrote a petition to the newly appointed king, William IV, demanding that military action be taken in response to Napier's humiliation.<sup>12</sup> By the time the petition had reached home, the Duke of Wellington had replaced Lord Palmerston in the Foreign Office. Wellington, somewhat of a pacifist and an isolationist, disregarded the petition and showed no inclination toward using force in China. Though no military action ever convened in response to "Napier's fizzle," as early as 1834 Jardine's intentions to push Britain towards a war with China were made clear.

John Francis Davis replaced Napier as Chief Superintendent of trade. This appointment did not last long however, as Davis resigned after only a few months. His resignation most likely had to do with the fact that he did not want to deal with British merchants, like Jardine, whom he thought were trying to goad Britain into a full-scale war.<sup>13</sup> Davis's replacement, Sir George Robinson, also detested the British merchants. He even tried to halt the opium trade, and recommended the British stop cultivating the drug in India. For what seemed to be a noble effort, Robinson was fired in 1836 and replaced with Captain Charles Elliot. Like his predecessors, Elliot also despised the opium trade but never openly expressed his feelings. His only concern was to make sure that the tea, for which the British were trading opium, made it successfully out of China and into Britain. Despite his best efforts to keep the peace and

<sup>9</sup> Small peninsula located on the southern coast of China, colonized by the Portuguese in the 16th century, but also served as the British base for trade

<sup>10</sup> Beeching, *The Chinese Opium Wars*, 48.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Hanes, *The Opium Wars*, 32.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

maintain a steady trade, it was under Elliot's watch that the crisis went from conflict to war.

By 1837, it was clear to the Chinese government that Jardine was prominently involved in the opium trade, and they took measures to expel him and other unnamed "barbarians" from Chinese soil<sup>14</sup> Tang, the governor of Kwang tung and Kwangse, Ke Lieut, governor of Kwangtung, and Wan, Commissioner of Maritime Customs at the Port of Canton, issued an edict ordering that "Jardine and others" be expelled from the country.<sup>15</sup> Though the Chinese officials recognized that other merchants had contributed to the opium importation, and wished for their expulsion as well, they apparently saw Jardine as the biggest threat, and therefore the only one worth naming.

The Chinese government's struggle to suppress the importation and distribution of opium within their borders continued in 1838. At the time Elliot was appointed, the number of Chinese addicts was estimated to be anywhere from four to twelve million.<sup>16</sup> Some officials even began to recommend legalizing the drug, arguing that it would be profitable if it could be taxed. The Emperor took a different route, deciding that the opium trade should be completely stopped, and any offenders severely punished. To enforce this edict the Emperor appointed Lin Zexu, a well respected scholar and government official, as Special Imperial Commissioner. One of the first things Lin did following his appointment was to write a letter to Queen Victoria in an attempt to appeal to her moral responsibility in controlling her subjects' activities.<sup>17</sup> Lin seems to directly attack Jardine and the other British merchants when he writes:

There appear among the crowds of barbarians both good persons and bad...there are those who smuggle opium to seduce the Chinese people and so cause the spread of Poison to all provinces. Such persons who only care to profit themselves, and disregard their harm to others.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Barbarians" here refers directly to the British merchants.

<sup>15</sup> *Canton Free Press*, 14 February 1837; reprinted in *Times* (London), 31 March 1837.

<sup>16</sup> Hanes, *The Opium Wars*, 34.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Lim and David Kammerling Smith, *The West In The Wider World: Sources And Perspectives*, vol. 2: *From Early Modernity To The Present* (Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2003), 210.

<sup>18</sup> Lin Zexu, "Letter to Queen Victoria" (1839); quoted in Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbanks, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 24-27; quoted in *Ibid.*

Unfortunately, the Queen never received Lin's letter because it was lost in the mail. *The Times of London*, did find it, and printed it, but to no avail.<sup>19</sup> After receiving no response to his letter Lin decided to take more drastic measures. In March of 1839, while in Canton, Lin demanded that the European merchants hand over all of their opium and cease in trading it. When the merchants refused, Lin quarantined the foreign communities and had all of their factories surrounded by troops. Later that month Elliot arrived in Canton in possession of 20,283 chests of the British Merchants' opium valued at 2,000,000 pounds.<sup>20</sup> The merchants had given Elliot the opium under the assumption that he intended to safe guard it, and were appalled when they soon learned he had surrendered it to Lin. Elliot insisted he had acted on the behalf of the British community quarantined in Canton. After Lin had confiscated all of the opium, he ordered all of the merchants who had engaged in the trade to leave China. Complying with Lin's wishes, the merchants left Canton along with Captain Elliot. Once they had left, Lin had all of the confiscated opium destroyed by dumping it into Canton Bay.

After the opium had been destroyed, Elliot promised the merchants that they would be compensated for their losses by the British government. Parliament, on the other hand, never agreed to these measures, and thought that if any reparations were paid to the merchants it was the Chinese government's responsibility to do so. Frustrated with the reality that any repayment for the lost opium seemed unlikely, the merchants turned to William Jardine. Jardine, who had left Canton just prior to Lin's arrival, had been developing a plan since he received word of Lin's actions: to force compensation from China with open warfare. For his plan to succeed however, Jardine would have to sway the opinion of both the public and the British government.

Among the public, some of the biggest opponents of the war in China were the Chartists, whose movement for social reform in Britain coincided with the first Opium War.<sup>21</sup> The Chartist strongly

<sup>19</sup> Hanes, *The Opium Wars*, 41.

<sup>20</sup> Glenn Melancon, "Honor in Opium? The British Declaration of War on China, 1839-1840," *International History Review* 21, no. 4 (1999): 859.

<sup>21</sup> Workingmen's political reform movement that was started in the 1830's. "Chartist" is a name derived from *The People's Charter*, a document written in

opposed any military intervention in China, and even commended the response of the Chinese government toward the illegal opium trade.<sup>22</sup> Chartists printed articles in pamphlets and newspapers to inform the public of the injustices of the British foreign policy in China. Taking up the cause in Parliament was Sir Robert Peel. Peel, who was the leader of the Tory opposition to the war, attempted to gain support for his position by reminding Parliament of the fiasco created by Lord Napier, as well as criticizing Lord Palmerston, who by this time had returned to his duties in the Foreign Office, for his mismanagement of the situation in China thus far.<sup>23</sup> With strong opponents to the war influencing both the public and the government Jardine's plan would not go unchallenged. To successfully combat these anti-war factions Jardine would have to carefully formulate a plan that would make a war in China appear to be both just and beneficial to the British Empire.

Aware of this strong opposition, Jardine would first attempt to get the ear of the Foreign Office. To accomplish this he needed the help of John Abel Smith, a MP for Chichester. Smith, who had done banking in London for Jardine & Matheson Co., happened to be close friends with Lord Palmerston. Jardine wrote to Smith asking if he could set up a meeting with the Foreign Secretary upon his arrival home. Smith contacted Palmerston and he agreed to the meeting telling Smith that, "he was desirous of seeing Mr. Jardine, as he had many questions to ask." In reference to Jardine he also added, "I suppose he can tell us what is to be done."<sup>24</sup> In October 1839, Jardine met with Palmerston and presented his ideas on the actions he felt should be taken in China. First, he suggested the blockade of all the principle ports along the Chinese coast. Once this was done the British could dispatch their fleets, which would easily put down any Chinese resistance to the blockade. After an easy victory the British could then force the Chinese government to sign a treaty that would ensure the repayment for the destroyed opium, as well as guarantee the opening of additional ports for foreign trade. The ports Jardine suggested to Palmerston were Foochow, Ningpo, Shanghai, and Kiaochow. Jardine also supplied Palmerston with a

1938, which called for universal male suffrage, no property requirements for members of Parliament, equal electoral districts, and secret ballot.

<sup>22</sup> Shijie Guan, "Chartism and the First Opium War," *History Workshop Journal*, n.s., 24 (1987):

<sup>23</sup> Beeching, *The Chinese Opium wars*, 108.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

memorandum that outlined the size of the force that would be needed to enforce these demands.<sup>25</sup> The following month several influential merchants, along with Abel Smith, sent a letter to Lord Palmerston elaborating on the details that had been already presented by Jardine. Every detail on the proposed expedition into China had been worked out, only an okay from parliament remained.

After having expressed his ideas to the Foreign Office, Jardine then turned some of his efforts toward presenting his case to the British public. After all, the sentiments felt by the people regarding the situation could directly effect how parliament would vote on the matter. Seeing how successful the Chartist had been in presenting their views, James Matheson wrote to Jardine suggesting that he, “secure the services of some leading newspaper to advocate the cause,” as well hire some “literary men” to write up “the requisite memorials in the most concise and clear shape.”<sup>26</sup> Jardine took Matheson’s advice and immediately had his views expressed in many British newspapers. These articles told a much different story than those supplied by the Chartist newspapers, claiming that the Chinese had wrongfully destroyed property which was not theirs, and in the process had directly insulted the British Crown. Further acting on Matheson’s advice to hire some “literary men”, it was probably Jardine himself who commissioned Samuel Warren, a best-selling British author, to compose a pamphlet in favor of the British merchants.<sup>27</sup> In early 1840, Warren produced *The Opium Question*, in which he criticized both the Chinese emperor and Commissioner Lin, and threatened that after the Naval and military force of Great Britain crushes the “Ancient Fooleries” of their nation the Emperor would have a “new and astounding view of the petty barbarians, whom he has insulted, oppressed and tyrannized over so long.”<sup>28</sup> The tone in both the newspaper articles and *The Opium Question* clearly show the manner in which Jardine intended to present his side of the argument to the public. Unlike the Chartist, Jardine steered clear on discussing the actual morality of the opium trade

<sup>25</sup> Hsin-pao Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium Wars* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 193.

<sup>26</sup> Matheson to J.A. Smith, 6 May 1839 (enclosing Matheson to Jardine, 1 May) *James Matheson Private Letter Books*, vol.4, JM; quoted in Peter Ward Fay, *The Opium War*, 191.

<sup>27</sup> Lim and Kammerling Smith, *The West In The Wider World*: vol. 2, 214.

<sup>28</sup> Samuel Warren, “The Opium Question”, London: *Ridgway*, (1840), 61, 64, 72-77, 114 -15, 117-18; quoted in *Ibid.*, 217.

when presenting his side of the debate. Instead he attempted to appeal to people’s sense of patriotism, and called them to rally around the British flag in retaliation for the injuries that had been inflicted by the Chinese. The impact this technique would have on the public, however, remained to be seen.

In March, Parliament met to debate the question of whether or not to send a naval force to China. During the next few days, both sides of the debate clearly outlined their stance on military intervention. Those opposed to war continued to bring up what had happened during “Napier’s Fizzle” as well as discussing the moral ramifications that accompanied the illegal importation of harmful drug into China. Those in support of war presented their case in much the same manner as Jardine, insisting that it was Britain’s patriotic duty to defend her honor against the insults perpetrated by China. The debates closed with Lord Palmerston reading a petition that had been signed by representatives of important British trading firms in China. In the petition the merchants declared that, “unless measures of the government are followed up with firmness and energy, the trade with China can no longer be conducted with security to life and property, or with credit or advantage to the British nation.”<sup>29</sup> This petition, not surprisingly, was headed with the signature of William Jardine. In the end patriotism defeated isolationism and the proponents of sending a naval force to China won with a vote of 271 to 262.<sup>30</sup> Jardine’s efforts had no doubt contributed to this decision and he had finally gotten the war he had spent so much time promoting.

The war that ensued flowed with little difficulty for Britain. Closely following Jardine’s suggested strategies, and armed with overwhelming technological superiority; the British military easily turned the war into a one-sided affair. They effortlessly captured the port of Tin-hai in October of 1841, in a battle in which they lost only three men compared to the Chinese’s loss of over 2,000.<sup>31</sup> Other battles with similar outcomes followed as the British systematically massacred the Chinese army in route to victory. Final death tolls at the end of the war have been estimated at only 500 for the British and over 20,000 Chinese troops.<sup>32</sup> One British officer

<sup>29</sup> Beeching, *The Chinese Opium Wars*, 111.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Newsinger, “Britain’s Opium Wars,” 38.

<sup>32</sup> Foster Stockwell, *Westerners in China: A History of Exploration and Trade, Ancient Times Through the Present* (Jefferson, NC.: McFarland & Co., 2003), 75.

remarked on these lopsided numbers, “The poor Chinese had two choices, either they must submit to be poisoned, or must be massacred by the thousands, for supporting their own laws in their own land.”<sup>33</sup>

In 1842, the Chinese were forced to sign the Treaty of Nanking. Some of the stipulations included in the treaty were the cession of the island of Hong Kong to the British, the opening of several ports for foreign trade, (including Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai: the exact ports Jardine had suggested to Palmerston) and finally the payment to the British government for the cost of fighting the war, and the price of seized opium.

The signing of the treaty of Nanking concluded the first Opium War, but continued tensions between the British and Chinese would lead to war further down the road. The second Opium War, fought in 1856, was another British victory and further opened China to foreign markets. William Jardine, who died in 1843, was not around to see the results of the second Opium War. An outcome he likely would have deemed satisfactory.

Though it is hard to ignore the fact that William Jardine played at least some role in the first Opium War, historians have differed on how much of an impact he actually had. In J.W. Wong’s, *Deadly Dreams: Opium and the Arrow War (1865-1860) in China*, Wong gave a detailed account of the second Opium War. However, Wong also briefly mentioned the causes of the first Opium War and in reference to Jardine wrote that, “he [Jardine] saw Palmerston and literally masterminded the government’s approach towards China and the Opium War, down to the details such as the size of ships to be deployed and the terms of the treaty to be proposed to China,”<sup>34</sup> Hsin-pao Chang, author of *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War*, also feels that Jardine greatly influenced the British decision to go to war, but points out that it was Lord Palmerston who had the final say.<sup>35</sup>

Other historians, however, would disagree with both Wong and Chang’s assertions claiming the decision to go to war was not influenced by the British merchant’s, but was solely a decision to defend national honor. For example, in his article *Honour in Opium? The British Declaration of War on China 1839-1840*, Glenn Melancon writes, “the influence of William Jardine and James Matheson on

<sup>33</sup> Newsinger, “Britain’s Opium Wars,” 38.

<sup>34</sup> J.W. Wong, *Deadly Dreams: Opium and the Arrow war (1856-1860) in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1998), 311.

<sup>35</sup> Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War*, 194.

British policy has been exaggerated.”<sup>36</sup> Melancon even directly criticizes Chang in his article for placing too much emphasis on the recommendations Jardine made to Palmerston and writes that, “Palmerston had developed his plans for China before he had met with Jardine.”<sup>37</sup> In fact, according to Melancon, Palmerston was already openly in favor of forcing compensation from the Chinese with open warfare by September 1839, the month before he had even met with Jardine.<sup>38</sup> His reasons for wanting the war, however, were not economic, but were instead driven by the desire to defend Britain’s honor in the face of defeat, and to regain its moral and military superiority over China after the embarrassment of “Napier’s Fizzle” and Commissioner Lin’s edict. Though Palmerston likely did wage war for these reasons, completely ignoring Jardine’s role in the matter seems short sighted. In fact, when Melancon states that Palmerston had already developed a plan before meeting with Jardine he seems to overlook how closely Jardine’s suggestions corresponded with the actual events of the war. Though Palmerston may have already been in favor of the war, and may have even had a rough idea of the military strategy to be used, the evidence shows that he must have at least incorporated some of Jardine’s suggestions into his plan. Not only did the British blockades match Jardine’s plan, but also the actual size of the military force sent closely matched his suggestions as well.<sup>39</sup> Melancon also seems to have thought it just a coincidence that many of the stipulations written out in the Treaty of Nanking had been presented to Palmerston by Jardine three years before the actual treaty was even written. Though this evidence does not prove Palmerston relied only on Jardine’s advice, it shows that he at least found his recommendations valuable enough to write John Abel Smith:

To the assistance and information which you and Mr. Jardine so handsomely afforded us it was mainly owing that we were able give our affairs naval, military and diplomatic, in China those detailed instructions which have led to these satisfactory results ... There is no doubt that this event, which will form an epoch in the progress of the

<sup>36</sup> Melancon, “Honour in Opium?,” 856.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 868.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Beeching, *The Chinese Opium Wars*, 105.

civilization of the human races, must be attended with the most important advantages to the commercial interests of England.<sup>40</sup>

In this letter Palmerston himself clearly acknowledges that Jardine supplied him with some useful information that was incorporated into the naval and military strategy that was successfully executed in China.

Beyond Jardine's role in developing some of the military strategies used during the first Opium War, it is also important to understand his role as an opium importer. Since the early 1830's Jardine & Matheson Co. had made a fortune as one of the premiere opium smugglers into China. The perfect way to expand the already growing trade was to have more Chinese ports opened, and therefore accessible, to the highly addictive drug. With the Chinese hesitant to open their Empire to further foreign influence an open affront was the only way to increase the expansion of free trade. Recognizing this, Jardine began pushing for war as early as 1834. By the late 1830's he was a huge contributor to a media campaign that promoted the war, and by 1839 he had met with Lord Palmerston, and made his suggestions to the Foreign Office.

So what was William Jardine's role in the First Opium War? Was he only a wealthy merchant whose influence in the matter has been exaggerated, as Melancon asserts? Or was he one of the main forces in promoting the war, whose role has not been emphasized enough? When looking at how closely his recommendations on foreign policy and military tactics were followed it is hard to accept it as only a coincidence. Couple this with how much Jardine stood to benefit from the war and his impact seems undeniable. Though it is true that British motivations to go to war included a significant component of national honor, that honor would never have been threatened had it not been for the actions of the British "barbarians," especially the actions of Jardine, who forced the Chinese to expel him for drug trafficking, and then played on British honor to restore his business. As the Chinese implicitly stated with their expulsion edict, without Jardine, and the lesser merchants who took their lead from him, there would have been no need for war.

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<sup>40</sup> John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast, 1842-1854* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University press, 1964), 83; quoted in Hsin-pao Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War*, 194.

## Charles Spurgeon: The Prince and the Paupers

Robyn Carswell

Charles H. Spurgeon was one of the most admired preachers in Britain during the nineteenth century as well as one of the most popular. On many Sundays, crowds that numbered over ten thousand attended his sermons. However, Spurgeon was not without his critics. The press, Anglican ministers, and even members of his own denomination took many opportunities to disparage the young Baptist minister. They thought his technique and style were vulgar and base, and antithetical to proper worship and religious decorum. Despite his detractors and their frequent and malicious attacks, Spurgeon's success escalated. When the Anglican clergy realized they could not compete with his widespread success, they began to attack him on a theological and spiritual level, questioning biblical knowledge as well as his sincerity as a Christian. Not only was Spurgeon a frequent object of scorn and criticism, he also had to deal with societal backlash: the fear and jealousy of the religious elite toward a minister whose popularity and influence outstripped their own. Historians have centered their focus on Spurgeon's career, his life, or his ministerial efforts outside the pulpit. Previous scholarly works have been either biographic in nature or dealt solely with the major doctrinal controversies that occurred during the course of his ministry. What these historians have neglected to do is examine the factors that prompted attacks from the Anglican clergy, the press, and at times his own fellow Baptist ministers. This essay will address those issues and demonstrate that Spurgeon's critics were alarmed at the success of a young, untrained minister whose homespun methods reflected an undercurrent of change in the Victorian era.

In the Victorian era, the Church of England was an intricate hierarchy of governance, having derived its origins from the Roman Catholic Church. Due to its role as the official state church, it enjoyed a unique influence over English society. The church maintained its own court system and was the final authority on wills,

marriages and divorces.<sup>1</sup> The head of the church was the archbishop of Canterbury, who along with the archbishop of York occupied two of the twenty-four Parliamentary seats reserved for Bishops in the House of Lords.

Archbishops, bishops, priests and deacons were part of the ordained clergy of the church and were required to follow a set of strict guidelines that were contained in a rubric outlined in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). The BCP detailed the many church doctrines, from order of service to the requirements and beliefs to which the ordained were to adhere.<sup>2</sup> Within the BCP were the Thirty-nine Articles, which contained a list of requirements for clergy. The Church would only accept candidates for ordination that completed a university degree, outlined and referred to in the Articles as a “Faculty.”<sup>3</sup> The Anglican clergy was not only university educated, but often times, they attended the finest schools in Britain. Cambridge and Oxford turned out more theology graduates than all other disciplines combined. For many years, a large number of graduates from both institutions became Church of England clergy. According to one source, even as late as 1851, eighteen of the nineteen heads of colleges at Oxford were clergymen, while 349 of the 542 fellows and 215 undergrads were also ordained into the ministry.<sup>4</sup>

Anglican clergy also held an esteemed place in British society. Bishops were afforded the title “My Lord”, held seats in the House of Lords, the upper chamber of the British Parliament, and referred to their primary residences as “palaces”.<sup>5</sup> Priests, who were the local church officials, were also entitled to several benefits. Their role was to conduct services, officiate over baptisms, weddings etc. and in lieu of a regular salary they were entitled to all or part of the parish tithes

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Pool, *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 112-113.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>3</sup> The Church of England, “The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, According to the Order of the Church of England,” *The Book of Common Prayer and the Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the Use of The Church of England: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David, Pointed as they are to be Sung or Said in Churches.* (n.p. accessed 6 November 2004); available from <http://www.vulcanhammer.org/anglican/bcp-1662.php>; Internet.

<sup>4</sup> Pool, 123.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

which afforded many priests with quite a handsome lifestyle.<sup>6</sup> This position of status and influence was not available to their priestly counterparts of the other churches in England.

The segregation of attendance between the Anglican Church and the other churches (known collectively as the dissenters) was almost strictly across class lines. The wealthy upper classes and the politically powerful were members of the Anglican Church and were largely behind its funding. In gratitude for their large donations, many cathedrals contained reserved pews for its members, which were available only to them or their families.<sup>7</sup> Middle or lower class worshippers often were limited to standing or floor-sitting. In addition to the embarrassment of sitting in the back or on the floor, wearing one’s “Sunday best” further separated the classes. The middle and lower classes had sacrificed this luxury for things more vital to daily living.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the dissenting churches practiced a simple, more colloquial style of worship. The ministers were more plainspoken and talked on a level their congregations could understand.<sup>9</sup> The middle and lower classes felt naturally drawn to a denomination that accepted them without the adornment of the more genteel.

It is also important to understand that in the nineteenth century, the Victorian elite considered attending services, other than at one’s own church, entertainment. Without the pastimes that would become available to the twentieth century world, the Victorians would seek entertainment wherever they could find it. Many of the Victorian elite<sup>10</sup> took the Sabbath quite seriously, putting away all toys, games and secular books.<sup>11</sup> Without other diversions, attending additional worship services would have been quite appealing. In addition to attending the two and sometimes three sermons preached at their own churches, worshippers would engage in what some have referred to as “sermon-tasting”. This act of

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Jimmy Yi, “The Religious Climate of Victorian England” (accessed 6 November 2004); available from <http://www.gober.net/victorian/reports/religion.html>; Internet; accessed 6 November 2004.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Those who were church attendees: the wealthy, the aristocracy, nobles, landed gentry, etc. The working classes often times were unable to attend Sunday worship.

<sup>11</sup> L.E. Elliott-Binns, *Religion in the Victorian Era* (Greenwich: Seabury Press, 1953), 416.

trying on sermons, churches and pastors gave the upper class the opportunity to see how the “other-half” was worshipping. Much to the vexation of the Anglican ministers, many of their elite members would not return to their reserved pews.

It was this England of Anglican aristocracy and class divisions into which Charles Spurgeon was born. In 1834, in a lower-middle class cottage in rural England, Charles Spurgeon became the first of seventeen children born to John and Eliza Spurgeon. His father was a part-time Congregationalist minister and clerk in a local coal yard, but it was his grandfather that first introduced the young Charles to the ministry. Before Charles reached his first birthday, the family moved to Colchester. However, due to unknown circumstances,<sup>12</sup> the parents of baby Charles sent him to live with his grandparents in Stambourne. He lived with his grandparents until he was seven years old and was deeply devoted to his grandfather, who had been a preacher and instructed him often in biblical truths.<sup>13</sup> After he returned to Colchester, he visited his grandparents for summers where he furthered his knowledge of the Bible and church doctrine.

It was during one of these summer visits that a family friend gave an interesting prophecy. Spurgeon was ten years old and had become a very inquisitive youth, asking his grandfather many thought-provoking questions about Scripture. On one such occasion, the Rev. Richard Knill<sup>14</sup> was visiting Spurgeon’s grandparents, when young Charles began to plead with the man to discuss biblical matters. The reverend relented and over the course of his visit the two became inseparable. Upon leaving, the reverend called the family together, pulled the youth onto his knee, and said, “I do not know how it is, but I feel a solemn presentiment that this child will preach the gospel to thousands, and God will bless him to many souls. So sure am I of this, that when my little man preaches in Rowland Hill’s chapel, as he will do one day, I should like him to promise me that he will give out the hymn commencing, - ‘God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.’” Spurgeon

<sup>12</sup> Ernest W. Bacon, *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans* (Grand Rapids: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1967; Baker Book House, 1982), 12. The author notes that this may have been due to bad housing.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> An apparently well-known dissenting minister of the time, although little is known about him today.

made the promise and when he preached in Mr. Hill’s pulpit at Wootton-under-Edge, the hymn was sung and the promise kept.<sup>15</sup>

Spurgeon thought that Rev. Knill’s words had a self-fulfilling quality; he had believed them and yearned for the day that he might be able to keep his promise. However, he strongly believed that no person should dare preach the word of God unless he had converted, but at that point in his life he was convinced he was unworthy of the honor. When discussing his view of himself prior to conversion he was quoted as saying “I lived a miserable creature, finding no hope, no comfort, thinking surely God would never save me.”<sup>16</sup> At a small chapel on a side street in Colchester, Charles Spurgeon stated he found what he was searching for. There, at a primitive Methodist Church, a fifteen-year-old Spurgeon was converted. According to Spurgeon, that day was the happiest of his life, saying, “I thought I could dance all the way home.”<sup>17</sup>

Following his conversion, he enrolled in a local school, where he served as an usher<sup>18</sup> and taught Sunday school to the younger pupils. The school and its associated church were Baptist. Spurgeon had already decided upon a Baptist future prior to his conversion, partly due to his study of the New Testament. He believed that the act of Baptism, although not required for salvation, was in fact fundamental following conversion.<sup>19</sup> At the school Spurgeon so impressed the faculty and staff during his many theological debates that they admitted him to the “Lay Preachers’ Association” despite his young age. His first opportunity to address a congregation occurred shortly thereafter. The association asked him to go to the village of Taversham (a four-mile walk) to accompany a young man who Spurgeon had assumed was the preacher for the service. On the way, Spurgeon expressed to him that he was sure God would bless him in his efforts. The man told Spurgeon that he was not the preacher and in fact had never preached and was only supposed to walk with Spurgeon. Spurgeon arrived to find the congregation assembled and without another qualified minister to deliver the

<sup>15</sup> Geo. C. Needham, ed., *The Life and Labors of Charles H. Spurgeon* (Cambridge: University Press: John Wilson and Son, 1881), 31.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>17</sup> Bacon, *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans*, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Not the traditional church usher we think of today, but rather a student teacher.

<sup>19</sup> William Young Fullerton, *C.H. Spurgeon: A Biography* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1920), transcribed by Dan Carlson; available from <http://www.spurgeon.org/misc/biopref.htm>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005.

message, he took the pulpit and at sixteen delivered his first public sermon.

He then spent the next three years at a school in Cambridge where he was a ministerial assistant and preached intermittently at local churches. He had already become quite popular and had been receiving invitations to preach special sermons, even some at a considerable distance. It is worthy to note that Cambridge was the Puritan intellectual center: Emmanuel College (known at the time as "The Puritan College") was located there and many famous Puritan Evangelicals attended. This proximity to such a learned institution would no doubt have had a positive effect on the young Spurgeon. Spurgeon did not stay in Cambridge long however. In 1854, he began his professional career when New Park Street Baptist Church called him to London.

New Park Street Baptist Church had been looking for a pastor for over three months and although several candidates had come to the pulpit, none had been asked to preach for a second time. The church was large as well as historic (over 200 years old), and boasted a seating capacity of over 1,200. It had great preachers in its history, but in the years before Spurgeon's arrival the pastors had lacked the abilities to maintain a large congregation and by 1854 the membership was only about 200. Another contributing factor to its low enrollment was its location - a repellent area of London, which was often river-flooded. Direct access to the Church was via the Southwark Bridge, which charged a toll.

Spurgeon arrived at New Park Street to preach his first sermon on Sunday December 18<sup>th</sup> to a congregation of eighty persons. The parishioners were so impressed that they called upon their family, friends and neighbors and urged them to attend the evening service. His sermons was so powerful and moving, the deacons resolved themselves to instill him as pastor no matter the cost. Their only complaint was his gesticulation of a blue handkerchief with white spots, which was apparently a mannerism to which they were not accustomed. The congregation handled the situation delicately by a gift of a dozen white handkerchiefs.<sup>20</sup> New Park Street Baptist immediately offered Spurgeon the pastorate, although he insisted upon a three-month probationary period, saying he wanted to ensure a beneficial relationship between himself and the church and said he did not wish "to be a hindrance if I cannot be a help."<sup>21</sup> Without

<sup>20</sup> Bacon, *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans*, 37.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

waiting for the three months to conclude, the deacons met and passed a resolution requesting a waiver of the probation period and Spurgeon retained as the permanent pastor, Spurgeon agreed and asked for their prayers of support. This union lasted for over thirty-eight years, until Spurgeon's death in 1892.

Charles Spurgeon was a runaway success from the very beginning, largely due to his technique. He was often spoken of as the "People's Pastor" and frequently used plain language and a conversational style, making him the complete antithesis of the more staid Anglican priests. Spurgeon's method of delivery was simple and direct; he used illustrative sermons and gave his listeners one simple choice, heaven or hell. One of his earliest sermons at New Park Street Baptist Church illustrates this description quite effectively,

Since last we met together, probably some have gone to their long last home; and ere we meet again in this sanctuary, some here will be amongst the glorified above, or amongst the damned below. Which will it be? Let you soul answer. If to-night you fell down dead in your pews, or where you are standing in the gallery, where would you be? in *heaven* or in *hell*? Ah! deceive not yourselves; let conscience have its perfect work; and if in the sight of God, you are obliged to say, "I tremble and fear lest my portion should be with unbelievers," listen one moment, and then I have done with thee. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."<sup>22</sup>

An attendant to one of his earliest sermons describes him as follows, "His voice is clear and musical; his language plain; his style flowing, but terse; his method lucid and orderly; his matter sound and suitable; his tone and spirit cordial; his remarks always pithy and pungent, sometimes familiar and colloquial, yet never light or coarse, much less profane."<sup>23</sup>

Another attendant was also captivated with the new preacher. Miss Susannah Thompson was among the congregation on the first occasion of his ministry at New Park Street Baptist. Although she was not particularly impressed with the young preacher, evidently something drew her to him. Within a few months, they were spending quite a bit of time together and the following year he

<sup>22</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, "The Comforter" (delivered at New Park Street Baptist Church in London on 21 January 1855), available from <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0005.htm>; Internet; accessed 26 March 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Needham, *The Life and Labors of Charles H. Spurgeon*, 58.

proposed. They were married on January 8, 1856. In September of the same year, the couple welcomed a set of twins, Charles and Thomas. Spurgeon's wife was extraordinary in her support of her husband and his ministry and Charles adored her for it. He expressed his love and devotion in a letter written to his wife in 1889: "You are as an angel of God to me...Bravest of women, strong in the faith, you have ministered unto me...God bless thee out of the Seventh Heaven!"<sup>24</sup>

Just as Spurgeon's family had so quickly doubled, so did the growth of his ministry. As word of Spurgeon's power as a preacher spread, the growth of the church was nearly exponential. People had come to hear Spurgeon solely due to word of mouth. Unlike the evangelists of today, there were no billboards with Spurgeon's likeness splashed across them, no television ads or media craze. The crowds came in throngs and within one year the church enlarged the Chapel, with a new seating capacity of 1,500, but even that eventually proved inadequate. By 1856, a mere two years after the start of his ministry, it was decided a new building was needed to accommodate the ever-expanded congregation. The church started a fund for a building later known as The Metropolitan Tabernacle, but during construction an alternate meeting place was required. They decided that the interim meeting place would be Surrey Music Hall, a building capable of holding 12,000 people. Many of the members of New Park Street Baptist voiced concerns about the building. Some were of the opinion that it was improper to hold church services in a place of worldly amusement. Others were concerned the building would be too large. The morning of the first service discounted the latter view. Surrey Music Hall was completely full and an estimated 10,000 people waited outside.<sup>25</sup>

Spurgeon's popularity drew larger crowds, but it also drew contempt and mockery by Anglican ministers. Bishop Wilberforce was perhaps one of the most vicious toward Spurgeon. When asked if he was jealous of Spurgeon's popularity, he replied, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's ass."<sup>26</sup> Although the Bishop's attack was

<sup>24</sup> Bacon, *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans*, 46.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>26</sup> William Young Fullerton, *C.H. Spurgeon: A Biography* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1920), 125; quoted in Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1992), 254; quoted in Robert H. Ellison *The Victorian Pulpit, Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1998), 73.

undoubtedly blunt and demeaning, it was not the first, nor the last. Many of the ministers within Spurgeon's own denomination were equally as cruel. A fellow Baptist minister, Rev. Sutton of Cottenham once referred to Spurgeon as the "sauciest dog that ever barked in a pulpit."<sup>27</sup>

Neither Spurgeon's pastoral peers nor the press could understand how a man, without University preparation and born of lower-middle class stock could be such a raging success in the pulpit. An inordinate number of journalists made much ado of his success, which in their opinion, would be fleeting. Across the Atlantic, A.P. Peabody of the *North American Review* was one of the few writers who did not attack Spurgeon's success outright. In the January 1858 edition he wrote, "His acquaintance with the Bible is surprising; and we have often, when reading his works, said, 'Whence hath this man this knowledge?'"<sup>28</sup> An unnamed author writing for *Fraser's Magazine* did not possess the same reserve asking, "by what means a youth of twenty-two years of age, of scanty educations, with a bold and brassy style of speech...has attracted congregations exceeding, we believe by the thousands, the largest known in the present century."<sup>29</sup> Spurgeon was unflappable. His goal was not to be popular, but to save souls. In the same article, Spurgeon was quoted as saying "we have most certainly departed from the usual mode of preaching, but we do not feel bound to offer even half a word of apology for so doing, since we believe ourselves free to use any manner of speech calculated to impress."<sup>30</sup> Spurgeon however, in a sense had drawn the first blood by preaching an uplifting message to the poor and lower classes; that they were not the rabble they had been told they were, but sons and daughters of the King of Heaven, to whom pedigrees and lineage mattered not. In a sermon delivered during his first month as minister at New Park Street Baptist, Spurgeon explains the Heavenly Royalty afforded to all believers regardless of station in the present life.

<sup>27</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, *C.H. Spurgeon Autobiography* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1962), 1:272; quoted in Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel publications, 1992), 177; quoted in Robert Ellison *The Victorian Pulpit, Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1998), 73.

<sup>28</sup> A.P. Peabody, "Spurgeon," *North American Review* 86 (1858): 276.

<sup>29</sup> "Sermons and Sermonizers," *Fraser's Magazine* 55 (January 1857): 84-85.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 85. He uses 'we' here to include his deacons and church members in order to illustrate the unity behind his style.

What a fuss some people make about their grand fathers and grandmothers, and distant ancestors...[a] pedigree in which shall be found dukes, marquises, and kings, and princes. Oh! what would some give for such a pedigree? I believe, however, that it is not what our ancestors were, but what we are, that will make us shine before God... But since some men will glory in their descent, I will glory that the saints have the proudest ancestry in all the world. Talk of Caesars, or of Alexanders, or tell me even of our own good Queen: I say that I am of as high descent as her majesty, or the proudest monarch in the world.<sup>31</sup>

Sermons of this nature were common from Spurgeon's pulpit and fell on eager ears. However, Spurgeon's critics were unrelenting in their ridicule of his lack of theological training, a hallmark of the upper class and the established clergy. This charge of his lack of education was true only in that Spurgeon did not attend a seminary. Spurgeon's family was strict Calvinists as well as ministers and as a result, Spurgeon grew up entrenched in the gospel. He had planned on a college education and had arranged to meet with Dr. Angus, the tutor of Regent's Park College at the home of a local businessman to discuss possible University admittance. Unfortunately, the maid botched the appointment and did not inform the tutor of Spurgeon's arrival. After a time the doctor left to return to London. After leaving the house, feeling not a little disappointed, Spurgeon stated he heard a voice say to him "Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not!" Spurgeon stated at that point he knew God had intended for him to begin his ministry immediately and forgo collegiate instruction even though he was convinced that this would lead to a life of "obscurity and poverty."<sup>32</sup> Based on this assertion, one could assume that Spurgeon was convinced his ensuing success had been a blessing directly from God. He never regretted his decision and when offered honorary titles he always refused, once saying, "I had rather receive the title of S.S.T. [Sunday School Teacher] than M.A., B.A., or any other honour that ever was conferred by men."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, "The Kingly Priesthood of Saints" (delivered at New Park Street Baptist Church in London on 28 January 1855), available from <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0010.htm>; Internet; accessed 26 March 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Needham, *The Life and Labors of Charles H. Spurgeon*, 46.

<sup>33</sup> Carl F.H. Henry, foreword to Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers, by Lewis Drummond (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1992); quoted in Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel

The press and the Anglican clergy were not interested in Spurgeon's personal revelations. They were perplexed and offended at the reality that an upstart, lower class, "boy preacher"<sup>34</sup> could command such respect and fame, some of which was now coming from the upper class. In order to curtail the exodus of their wealthy congregations the ministers, largely through the influence of the press, devalued Spurgeon's congregation as well. They categorized Spurgeon's flock as common and simple. The January 1857 edition of *Fraser's Magazine* grudgingly conceded that Spurgeon had "leaped to the very pinnacle of popularity" adding for clarity, "among the lower classes."<sup>35</sup>

The belittling of Spurgeon's congregation by some historians has unfortunately survived the years. Horton Davies, a Princeton Historian, initially compared Spurgeon's style to the successful Anglican priest George Whitefield, but later argued that while Whitefield was successful with rich and poor alike, Spurgeon's success was limited to the lower middle class and artisans.<sup>36</sup> In fact, Spurgeon's success was with the privileged as well as the penniless. The list of the attendants to his sermons reads like a list of England's Who's Who, it included "Lord Chief Justice Campbell, the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London, Earl Russell, Lord Alfred Paget, Lord Manmure, Earl Grey, the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Marquis of Westminster, Lord Carlise, the Earl of Elgin, Baron Bramwell, Lady Rothschild and Miss Florence Nightingale."<sup>37</sup>

While one could argue that although most early dissenters had indeed preached to a congregation who were not representative of the wealthy upper class, this was evidently not the case with Spurgeon. Peabody again, in the *North American Review*, writes that many Sundays the audiences were too large for even the largest gathering rooms, "embracing persons of all ranks, of every degree of culture, and of all varieties of sentiments, and has never failed to rivet their attention."<sup>38</sup> This ability to captivate a congregation was

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Publication, 1992); quoted in Robert H. Ellison, *The Victorian Pulpit, Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1998), 61.

<sup>34</sup> Bacon, *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans*, 50.

<sup>35</sup> "Sermons and Sermonizers," 84.

<sup>36</sup> Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*. Vol. 4, *From Newman to Martineau, 1690-1900*. Princeton University Press, 1961-1962; Combined Edition, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 335-336.

<sup>37</sup> Bacon, *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans*, 56.

<sup>38</sup> Peabody, "Spurgeon," 276.

unique to Spurgeon, but his success was beginning to increase anxiety that was already present within the Establishment.

While the Anglican clergy mainly focused their attention on Spurgeon, they were really using him as a scapegoat for a much larger problem. The Anglicans had been instructed in theology, foreign languages, mathematics, science and the humanities, but even with those tools, abilities and talents in their possession their congregations, wealthy and powerful, were dwindling and being drawn in by the dissenters, most notably Spurgeon.

The ecumenical census of 1851 made this fact well known among the Anglican clergy. The census was taken across the whole of England and Wales with a stated purpose to discover “how far the means of Religious Instruction provided in Great Britain during the last fifty years have kept pace with the population during the same period.”<sup>39</sup> The results of the census were, in essence, to determine the number of church buildings (as well as the time of their construction) and the number of persons attending them. The Anglican clergy attacked the proposal even before it was on paper.<sup>40</sup> After the returns were published, the clergy, Anglican and dissenters alike, used them as fuel. The Anglican distrust of the dissenters worsened when the reports “showed an unexpected degree of support for them.”<sup>41</sup> The Anglicans justified the surprising results by declaring the non-conformists had made a concerted effort to draw people on the Sunday of the census, although the newspapers for the preceding weeks did not evidence any such conspiracy.<sup>42</sup> Many of the Anglicans even spoke publicly concerning the results. The Rector of Morcott wrote a letter which stated, “I would suggest that many of the Dissenting statistics should be received with great caution for I can [believe?] their determination to make every effort to swell their numbers: and it should invariably be remembered that comparatively few of those who attended their chapels are *bona fide* Dissenters, the numbers of those whom they call Church Members

<sup>39</sup> Frances Coakley, ed. “General Background to 1851 Religious Census,” *A Manx Note Book: An Electronic Compendium of Matters Past and Present Connected with the Isle of Man*, available from <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/methodism/rc1851/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 30 January 2005.

<sup>40</sup> David M. Thompson, “The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities,” *Victorian Studies* 1967 11 (September 1967): 87.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

being very small.”<sup>43</sup> The statement by the rector is important because the Anglican clergy wanted to include persons who were members of the Church of England even if they were attending at a Dissenting church.<sup>44</sup> When these contentions did not obtain their desired results, which was most likely a complete scrapping of the data collected from the census, the Anglicans decided on a different approach. Bishop Ely was convinced his numbers were low due to the inclement weather, “it was a very rainy day, and the congregation which ordinarily numbered between 400 and 500 did not consist of more than 60. But as it was a large parish, it was dotted over with Dissenting chapels, and *accordingly* people went there.”<sup>45</sup>

The press also had their opinion concerning the census results and offered this explanation: “taken as a whole, the preaching of the English clergy is not so attractive or so effective as it might and ought to be.”<sup>46</sup> The Church of England responded to its declining membership by building more churches and increasing educational demands for its clergy.<sup>47</sup> To judge from Spurgeon’s success, the endeavor missed the point entirely.

Rather than admitting a need to update the Anglican sermons, the press and others decided to continue their harassment of Spurgeon. One of the most malicious attacks concerned the one singular event that had the ability to unnerve the preacher. The incident occurred during building of the Metropolitan Tabernacle while services continued at Surrey Music Hall. The year was 1856 and Spurgeon’s popularity was greater than ever. As already stated, 12,000 people filled the hall. Within moments of beginning the services, there was a commotion. Someone shouted “FIRE! The galleries are giving way, the place is falling!” In a panic, the crowd swarmed to evacuate and caused the balustrades to break, along with many staircases. Seven persons perished in the mêlée and another twenty-eight were seriously injured. Spurgeon was so undone that

<sup>43</sup> Home Office Papers (H.O.) 129: 440-4; quoted in Thompson, “The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities,” 95.

<sup>44</sup> Thompson, “The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities,” 95.

<sup>45</sup> *The Times* (London), 7 July 1870, (italics are Thompson’s), quoted in Thompson, “The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities,” *Victorian Studies* 1967 11 (September 1967): 96.

<sup>46</sup> “Sermons and Sermonizers,” 84.

<sup>47</sup> Jimmy Yi, “The Religious Climate of Victorian England”; available from <http://www.gober.net/victorian/reports/religion.html>; Internet; accessed 6 November 2004.

his associates had to carry him from the pulpit. Although the instigator or purpose behind the “fire incident” was never identified, the press was nonetheless merciless and seized upon the opportunity. They blamed Spurgeon and asserted that he should be run out of town on a rail. The following appeared in the *Saturday Review* within days of the incident:

Mr. Spurgeon’s doings are, we believe, entirely discountenanced by his co-religionists. There is scarcely a Dissenting minister of any note who associates with him... This hiring of places of public amusement for Sunday preaching is a novelty, and a painful one. It looks as if religion were at its last shift. After all, Mr. Spurgeon only affects to be the Sunday Jullien... but the old thing reappears when popular preachers hire concert-rooms, and preach Particular Redemption in saloons reeking with the perfume of tobacco, and yet echoing with the chaste melodies of Bobbing Around and the valse from Travita...<sup>48</sup>

*The Saturday Review* formulated a panacea for this event and the prevention of others like it. In their opinion, society should “place in the hand of every thinking man a whip [with which] to scourge from society the authors of such vile blasphemies as on Sunday night, above the cries of the dead and dying, and louder than the wails of misery from the maimed and suffering, resounded from the mouth of Mr. Spurgeon in the Music Hall of the Surrey Gardens.”<sup>49</sup> The unpleasant incident along with the assault by the press caused Spurgeon to fall into a deep depression. In time, he was able to recover but rarely discussed the tragedy again. Eventually the scandal died away as did the *Saturday Review*. The Tabernacle was finally completed and worship began in March of 1861. Ironically, the notoriety of the tragic event at the Surrey Music Hall transformed Spurgeon from a local phenomenon into an international persona. Travelers from America to England upon their return were asked, ““Did you see the Queen” and next, “Did you hear Spurgeon?””<sup>50</sup>

Despite the demands of preaching, sometimes four times a week, Spurgeon was able to have a very productive ministry outside of the pulpit. He established the Pastor’s College, an institution for young men who were unable to attend other Baptist colleges, either

<sup>48</sup> Iain H. Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), 29.

<sup>49</sup> Bacon, *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans*, 54-55.

<sup>50</sup> Peabody, “Spurgeon,” 275.

for financial reasons or because they lacked the appropriate educational pre-qualifications. The only criteria placed upon them was that they were to have been soundly converted and been preaching for two years. In Spurgeon’s opinion, he did not want to create new ministers he wanted to “help those already called.”<sup>51</sup> In 1867, through a large donation, he was able to erect the Stockwell Orphanage. These two projects began a list of auxiliary organizations of the Metropolitan Tabernacle that would make most ministries today pale in comparison. Spurgeon somehow found the energy to be involved at some level with them all. These affiliations, his sermons and his congregation would be enough to make the most organized preachers’ head swim. Nevertheless, Spurgeon’s commitment to spreading the gospel was not complete.

Spurgeon wanted a way to communicate his ideas to his correspondents, his friends and his associates. Out of this need he created *The Sword and the Trowel*, a magazine filled with expositions by Spurgeon and others. The magazine was also a means to inform the readers of the progress of the causes he held close to his heart. For those people who were more comfortable with plain-talk he created *John Plowman’s Talk*, and its sequel *John Plowman’s Pictures*.<sup>52</sup> Both books were immensely popular. Spurgeon went on to write numerous other books and articles, but perhaps his greatest literary achievement would be the seven-volume set of *The Treasury of David*. Contained within the volumes are Spurgeon’s exhaustive commentaries on the Psalms. He commented on every verse as well as citing the comments of others. He toiled at the volumes for no less than twenty years, contributing to it in his spare time.<sup>53</sup> Through his writings, multitudes of people were able to ‘hear’ the words of Spurgeon. His extensive writings outside of the pulpit undoubtedly had a great impact on his popularity.

Late into the nineteenth century, it became abundantly clear that Spurgeon’s success was permanent and life-long. Times had changed; the industrial revolution was in full swing and high society, in general, lessened its attachment to formality and looked more to secular pastimes, resisting the pressure of puritanical ideals.<sup>54</sup> The press reflected a similar tolerance and although it was still reluctant

<sup>51</sup> Bacon, *Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans*, 91.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 260.

to endorse Spurgeon fully, it became less brutal. In December 1870, Spurgeon's caricature appeared in *Vanity Fair*. To appear in the magazine was considered quite an honor even though their articles were typically tongue-in-cheek and lampoonish. Despite this fact, the writer found a way to compliment the pastor saying he was "sound in his theology... [he has] a clear intellect, and a vivacity of diction but too rarely met with among popular preachers." The article ends with a tease for the Anglican Church, which suggested that Spurgeon be made Bishop of Southwark and St. Giles "if he would stoop to the office."<sup>55</sup> The mainstream press was also inclined to afford Spurgeon at least a margin of respect. An article that appeared in the July 1884 issue of *The Critic and Good Literature* describes this change as more a sign of the times than a testimony of Spurgeon's abilities.

It is not only that religious acrimony has decreased – though twenty years ago Bishops would not have asked after Mr. Spurgeon's health, or dignitaries of the Church have attended his sermons, and although this side of the change naturally strikes Mr. Spurgeon himself most forcibly...the disposition to ridicule or depreciate successes like his [has] entirely died away.<sup>56</sup>

With the clarity of a century, one may well assume that today's historians could finally concede that Spurgeon was a great orator and spiritual leader without attributing his popularity to shock value or the needs of an earthy congregation, but this is not the case. Davies, while admitting that Spurgeon's sermon technique had an "orderly structure with sub-divisions that could easily be remembered"<sup>57</sup> and had "striking beginnings...and illustrations to hold the attention," he still chose to describe Spurgeon's exegeses as "capricious, idiosyncratic, and even grotesque."<sup>58</sup> While his style could certainly be considered unorthodox, one would be hard pressed to view it as capricious or grotesque. Davies did not cite any specific examples of quotes made by Spurgeon as support of his remarks, thus making it difficult to refute them.

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<sup>55</sup> "Men of the Day No. 16," *Vanity Fair* (10 December 1870); available from <http://www.spurgeon.org/fls/wf.htm>; Internet; accessed 23 September 2004.

<sup>56</sup> "Mr. Spurgeon at Fifty," *The Critic and Good Literature* 5, no. 28 (12 July 1884): 21

<sup>57</sup> Davies, *From Newman to Martineau*, 337.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

From the outset of his ministry, Charles Spurgeon was novel, innovative and rather anarchic in his preaching. He lacked University training, he never served as an associate pastor and he was not a member of the Establishment. As a further conundrum, he was a complete and immediate success in the pulpit, preaching to crowds numbering in the thousands. The clergy as well as the press could not accept his unprecedented success and thus tried to degrade him in any way they could imagine. Attempts were made by the aforementioned to undermine his theological training, his upbringing, his age, his manner, and failing all of those, finally questioned his genuineness as a Christian. The Anglican Church was perhaps frightened, unable, or unwilling to adapt to the changing times and sat dumbfounded as great numbers of wealthy members flocked to a lower class, and in their opinion, feral venue to worship. The whole state of affairs flew in the face of Victorian standards. The Anglican clergy found themselves at an ecclesiastical crossroad trying to make sense of their crumbling world. Their members migrated in droves toward a message that left them feeling somehow better about themselves and the world in which they lived. Attendees at New Park Street Church increasingly felt they had been to something much greater than a mere public display of religious formalities.

Charles Spurgeon had what virtually every other preacher to his day had lacked: charisma. Perhaps more dramatic than Spurgeon's amazing success, however was the underlying motives behind his critics. At the time, Spurgeon was on the cusp of the mass changes waiting in the wings of the Victorian Era. His less formal style and universal appeal were harbingers of the rise of the working class and more liberal thinking, both in religion and society.

Charles Spurgeon continued to preach until the end of his life in the same way he had done from the beginning, with conviction, fervor and a white handkerchief. He brushed off his critics, and continued to do what he did best. His popularity did not wane during his thirty-eight years in the pulpit when he died on January 31, 1892 at the age of fifty-seven after delivering his last sermon just days before.<sup>59</sup>

Spurgeon, who had at one time believed his lack of formal training would be his undoing, had succeeded because of the lack

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<sup>59</sup> Curiously, Spurgeon died at exactly the same age as many other great Christian ministers—John Calvin, William Tyndale, Jonathan Edwards, Jeremy Taylor, and Spurgeon's personal favorite, George Whitefield.

thereof. By being un-tethered to religious formality, his success was in his simplicity and by appealing to commoners like himself. Spurgeon had reached out to the masses with a message of hope, humor, and inspiration not found in the other churches. By appealing to the common man, he found himself and his ministry awash in uncommon success.

## **Liberal Nationalism's Role in the Development of the German Nation-State**

**Matthew Burke**

In German history, nationalism is the key to understanding the people and their history. The problem is that many see German nationalism as the events leading up to and following National Socialism, or Nazism. Others ignore the other major events in Germany's history or see them as insignificant in comparison. It is true that Hitler and the Nazis were a major component in German history and it is impossible to overlook their role in history, not just in Germany but in the world. But to see the development of Germany, and more specifically German nationalism, as only revolving around National Socialism is to ignore the other factors that influenced their history as a nation. Throughout German history, other possibilities existed as alternatives to the imperialist and chauvinist nationalism displayed in the Wilhelmine Era and later under National Socialism. In contrast, liberalism, the most influential alternative, had an important role in the development of German history. The German liberal and progressive tradition formed the development of a German nation-state in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Liberal and progressive nationalism pervades German history and its importance cannot be overshadowed by the typical nationalism mentioned when discussing the development of a unified German nation-state.

The German national sentiment began when Napoleon united the German principalities from just under 400 to around 40 territorial units, destroyed the fading Holy Roman Empire, and brought an idea of a similar enemy to these newly united territories.<sup>1</sup> It was not until 1848 however, that a serious attempt at unification was made. The Springtime of Nations in 1848 sparked revolutions throughout Europe, beginning in France. Liberals in the German-state revolted as well, although they were eventually unsuccessful. This led many to believe that the outcome of the 1848 revolution was the liberals' only chance to vastly influence German history, but no revolutions in

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<sup>1</sup> Edgar Feuchtwanger, *Imperial Germany, 1850-1918* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1.

Europe succeeded in 1848. Liberals believed in constitutionalism, an overall goal of unification, civil equality, the rights of smaller states over rights by birth, and were opposed to absolutism.<sup>2</sup> Liberals had a very strong belief in individual freedom. This value was demonstrated by all liberals, including the Progressives and the National Liberals.

The inability of the newly established Frankfurt Parliament was displayed by the conflict over Schleswig-Holstein when Prussia sued for peace without the approval of the newly formed, liberal based Frankfurt Parliament.<sup>3</sup> The Frankfurt Parliament had been abolished by 1849, just one year after its creation. There were many other factors involved in the failure of the Frankfurt Parliament, which led to the failure of the liberal revolution.

The largest obstacle to the success of the liberals was the crisis over the Grossdeutsch or Kleindeutsch solution to uniting Germany. The Grossdeutsch solution proposed to unify Germany including Austria while the Kleindeutsch solution was the opposite, a united German state without Austria and consequently led by Prussia. The price of excluding Austria was too high for many and by the time the liberals had realized this, it was too late. The power of the Hapsburgs and the refusal of the crown of a unified Germany that the liberals had offered first to Austria and then Prussia, ultimately led to the end of the revolution.<sup>4</sup> This idea of the Grossdeutsch or Kleindeutsch Germany did not see resolution until the Crimean War in 1854, which ended with Prussia emerging as the likely leader in a future unified Germany. The idea of unification was more accessible after the outcome of the Crimean War and could be one reason why Bismarck succeeded in uniting Germany two decades after the liberals' attempt failed. Although the liberals' attempt at unification in 1848 ultimately failed, liberal ideals were not defeated. These same ideas were an influential factor throughout German history. Many in Europe were not ready for Germany to become a major player in European politics. Historian Edgar Feuchtwanger stated that the British and Russians both had some influence over the failure of the liberal revolution. Both were very interested in the conclusion of the Schleswig-Holstein issue since they wanted the balance of power in

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher Clark, "Germany 1815-1848: Restoration or pre-March?" in *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 49.

<sup>3</sup> Feuchtwanger, *Imperial Germany*, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

Europe to remain as it was. Russia also supported the resurgence of the Hapsburg Empire as protection against revolution. This relationship changed with the outcome of the Crimean War, which led to a more favorable setting for German unity.<sup>5</sup>

Feuchtwanger suggested that outside factors aided in the failure of the liberal revolution, not the actual beliefs of the liberals. This reinforced the idea that the liberals, not their ideas, failed in 1848. Because of this, their influence in German history should not be weighed exclusively on this event. Those that write about Germany and its history seem to forget the achievements that the liberals achieved during the revolution. These accomplishments influenced later attempts at unification. Some of these include constitutions being left in place after the revolution, the idea of non-absolute monarchies, a three-tier voting system in Prussia, and the idea of providing direct suffrage.<sup>6</sup> Feuchtwanger said that among the liberals "the prevailing mood was that in 1848 only a battle, not the war, had been lost... Liberalism retained the potential to prevail in the future,"<sup>7</sup> and as will be demonstrated, it does prevail and is a major shaping factor on the rest of nineteenth and twentieth century German history.

The unification of Germany in 1871 by the conservative, Prussian Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck could be seen as a failure for the liberals and could also signify their decline in politics. The unification wars were more of a success than a failure, though, when examined thoroughly.

Often described as the revolution from above, the unification of Germany was hardly achieved solely by Bismarck and the conservatives. The idea that Prussia would be the one to unite Germany developed before Bismarck. After the Crimean War, many saw Prussia as the leader in German affairs. The *Nationalverein* also helped the idea of a Kleindeutsch solution develop. "The *Nationalverein* was founded in 1859, bringing together liberals and democrats, whose aim was to revive the project of forming Kleindeutschland under Prussian leadership that had foundered ten years earlier"<sup>8</sup> This movement emerged before Bismarck had ever become Prime Minister of Prussia, meaning that the liberals must have helped in the national sentiment of unification under Prussia.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

Bismarck, when he first came into power, immediately began talks of German unification, and on September 30, 1862 he described to the people of Germany how he was to deliver unification:

Germany does not look to Prussia's liberalism, but to her power; Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden may indulge their liberalism, but they cannot play the role of Prussia; Prussia must gather her strength and preserve it for the favourable moment, which has been missed several times...the great questions of the time will not be decided by speeches and majority resolutions-that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849-but by iron and blood.<sup>9</sup>

Bismarck acknowledged that liberalism was everywhere in Germany and drew on the reasons that the liberals failed in 1848, mainly the idea of Germany being unified without Austria. He specifically acknowledged in his speech the influence of the liberal revolution and the need to focus on a Kleindeutsch solution. He also drew on the liberal idea of becoming less ideological and more focused on realism, also known as *Realpolitik*. Although the wars of unification were a conservative "revolution from above," the liberals played a prominent role in shaping the process that Bismarck used to unify Germany.

In 1861 many old liberals returned to politics with the creation of the German Progressive Party, a left wing liberal group in opposition to both the indemnity law and the new constitution. They claimed 104 out of 352 seats in the elections for a new chamber in December 1861. This was in contrast to the Conservatives who claimed only 14 seats. The Old Liberals, a traditional group that believed their power resided in the monarchy, still had a strong hold as well, although they did lose some footing, going from 195 to 91 seats. When the King of Prussia dissolved this chamber and called for new elections in 1862, the Progressives strengthened their position, holding over forty percent of the chamber.<sup>10</sup>

In regards to the actual wars of unification, many liberals were against Bismarck's actions and were only swayed by convincing victories. After the war against Denmark for Schleswig-Holstein a stalemate between Bismarck and the liberals remained. "Years later in retirement he (Bismarck) referred to those days as a time when he was 'almost as close to the gallows as to the throne'. Even after the successful war with Denmark, Bismarck's dismissal and replacement

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

by a more liberal ministry was still widely predicted."<sup>11</sup> Bismarck, though, learned from the liberal mistakes of 1848, and although he felt unification would be achieved only through "iron and blood," he knew the support of the liberals was necessary. After the defeat of the Austrians in the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, numerous liberals began to side with Bismarck and believe in the coming unification. This victory also led to the establishment of the North German Confederation, which drew on the influences of the liberals, specifically the idea of universal suffrage. "He (Bismarck) wanted a parliament elected on universal suffrage, such as he had already proposed earlier in the year and as had figured in the constitution that finally emerged from the Frankfurt Parliament in 1849."<sup>12</sup> Many liberals did not accept Bismarck's actions, though, as disagreement over the Indemnity Law of 1866 demonstrated. This controversy split the liberals into two parties, the National Liberals, those who accepted the indemnity law, and the Progressive Party, which eventually became the Catholic Centre Party.<sup>13</sup> Many believe this split led to their decline. In the years directly after unification, though, the two liberal parties were the major parties in the Reich. This split was one of the main reasons that unification by Bismarck was seen as a failure for the liberals, when in fact many liberals were willing to support Bismarck because it would lead to the achievement of their goals. As previously mentioned, the main goal for liberals both in 1848 and in 1871 was unification. Thus, the unification of Germany under Bismarck was a success for the liberals. Even though it was not under their terms, many of their values and beliefs were represented in the newly formed society.

The Prussian Liberals who made their peace with Bismarck, the National Liberals, could feel that much of what they had wanted had been achieved. Unity had come before freedom, but freedom could only be achieved in a unified country, not in the dwarf states into which Germany had hitherto been divided. Much could still be achieved under the new dispensation and was indeed achieved, especially in the social and economic sphere. A genuinely unified system of law would emerge from the collaboration of the National Liberals with the Bismarck government in the next decade.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 47.

The creation of the Second Reich in 1871 with the defeat of France should then be seen as a success for the liberals, particularly the National Liberals. It accomplished many of their goals, including the unification of Germany, universal suffrage, and the economic amalgamation of the Reich. "A unified currency, the mark, was introduced, and in 1875 a central bank, the Reichsbank, was established."<sup>15</sup> The *Kulturkampf*, the cultural battle against Catholics waged by the National Liberals and Bismarck, was also seen as a demonstration of the liberals' power, as was the unofficial holiday of Sedan, celebrated by liberals until 1895.<sup>16</sup> The liberals were not only very involved in the unification of the second Reich but also in helping it develop in the years following its creation. The economic depression that started in 1873 began the liberals' gradual loss of power, although they were still a force in German politics. Bismarck's break with them solidified their downfall, but "a major reform of the Reich's finances still required the cooperation of the Liberals."<sup>17</sup> The liberals played a pivotal role in the unification of Germany, although their power did begin to decline by 1873 and continued to do so well into the Wilhelmine era.

The pivotal period in German history was the Wilhelmine era. This was a low point for liberal nationalism, due mainly to the rise of the new nationalism associated with chauvinism, imperialism, anti-Semitism, and anti-socialism that was prevalent throughout the rest of German history. This change began to take place before the Wilhelmine era in the 1870s and 1880s and continued throughout the periods following it. Liberals still had influence during this time, but it was a low point in their history. There was only one liberal prime minister during the Wilhelmine period, Hohenlohe Schillingfurst, a Bavarian Liberal Catholic, ruling from 1894 to 1900.<sup>18</sup> Otherwise all other prime ministers during this time were Prussian conservatives and this was another factor in the decline of the liberals.

The decline of liberalism beginning with the depression of the 1870's and the change of course on 1879 eroded their ideology. The National Liberals became almost indistinguishable from the Free Conservatives and to some extent even from the Conservatives proper. They

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>16</sup> Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor, Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 35.

<sup>17</sup> Feuchtwanger, *Imperial Germany*, 74.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 105.

supported the new German nationalism, a strong army and navy, colonial expansion and *Weltpolitik*. They were a Protestant party and therefore competed for the same voters as the conservative groups...They were strongly anti-socialist, but opposed the more extreme proposals for the suppression of socialism...The position of the left liberals was even more difficult.<sup>19</sup>

The National Liberals went along with the idea of new nationalism mainly so they would not be left behind in domestic affairs, which would lead to their complete loss of power. Another liberal faction, the Old Liberals, did not follow the ideas of imperialism and *Weltpolitik*, which was seen as a reason for their decline. In 1879, Bismarck signed an alliance with Austria, mainly to protect Germany from Russia. This idea of getting involved in international affairs influenced Wilhelm's development of new nationalism. The scramble for Africa in 1884, the creation of the Schlieffen plan, the Navy League, and the Pan-German league were seen as examples of this growing idea of increasing Germany's influence around the world.

The decision to build an ocean-going fleet and the Schlieffen plan are the two most notorious examples of decisions affecting fundamentally the course of German policy...German policy therefore became more militaristic in the direct sense under William II than it had been under Bismarck...After the victories in the three wars of unification the prestige of the army had rocketed sky-high, but it took time to overcome the distrust of the army that was evident in the Prussian constitutional conflict and in the aversion to Prussian militarism in southern Germany. Little of these negative attitudes were left by 1890.<sup>20</sup>

This process of a changing new nationalism seemed to follow a steady path of radicalization stemming from Bismarck and continuing to grow until the outbreak of war in 1914, when the Wilhelmine era came to an end due to this new nationalism. Anti-Semitism was institutionalized by Bismarck in Germany, but can also be traced further back in Germany's history. The rapid industrialization of Germany, which the liberals helped bring about, also increased the separation between Germans and Jews. The ideas of industrialization, imperialism, anti-Semitism, anti-socialism, chauvinism, and militarism were all interrelated in the growth of new nationalism that developed. What role did liberal nationalism play in a society dominated by this

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 107.

new nationalism? The liberals' power obviously declined greatly during this period, but they did not lose all of their influence in German politics. The Social Democratic Party, or SPD, was a socialist progressive party that was influential during this period, starting after the anti-socialist laws were not renewed in 1890. The SPD was frequently linked to the rise of trade unions, but they were socialist, and the nationalism that developed in this period was not supportive of socialism.

The rise of the SPD and of the trade unions runs like a red thread through the history of Wilhelmine Germany. The fear and panic this inspired among their opponents explains a great deal. Repression and failure to integrate this huge labour movement positively into the political and social structures tied the party to a revolutionary rhetoric which disguised the non-revolutionary reality, but the rhetoric helped to freeze the defenders of the system into a rigid policy of exclusion.<sup>21</sup>

The development of the SPD could have helped the political structure of the Wilhelmine era, but instead labeled itself as a revolutionary group. The SPD applied pressure to rid the political system of the three-tier voting system and install universal manhood suffrage, a staple of the liberal party.<sup>22</sup> It also gained 75 percent of the vote in a town like Berlin and gained one third of the voters in 1912.<sup>23</sup> The liberals were not extinct, but they did not experience the success they once had in the early stages of unification.

Overall, liberals of all persuasions could not recapture the position the movement had held in the early years of the Reich, let alone the dominance they had once aspired to. They remained strong, however, in German towns, helped by the restrictive electoral laws that continued to prevail there, especially in Prussia...Given the spread and vigour of municipal activity, it was an important presence.<sup>24</sup>

Had the advocates of liberal nationalism been more influential during this time, it could have posed another option to the imperialist, nationalist sentiment that can be attributed to the outbreak of World War I and consequently, the end of the

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 108.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>23</sup> Katharine A Lerman, "Wilhelmine Germany," in *German History since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 206-207.

<sup>24</sup> Feuchtwanger, *Imperial Germany*, 112.

Wilhelmine era. The struggles of liberal nationalism do not end after the Wilhelmine era, however.

The Weimar Republic was established at the end of World War I and is remembered as the government that led to the rise of Hitler, but it should also be remembered as a period of democracy with influence from both the left and right wing political groups. The Weimar Republic was burdened with problems from the beginning, such as the problem of legitimacy, the "stab in the back" theory, and the strain on Germany economically and politically from the Treaty of Versailles. The Weimar Republic lasted until 1933 nevertheless, although the problems of the Great Depression began the collapse of the Republic and led to extreme right wing nationalism, most notably Hitler and the NSDAP.<sup>25</sup> Liberal influences were seen throughout the period of the Weimar Republic. Many say that had it not been for the Great Depression, liberalism may have actually prevailed and saved the Republic.

After World War I, Prince Max von Baden assumed the chancellorship of Germany and implemented reforms that were influenced greatly by progressive and liberal ideas.

Most notable among the reforms were the introduction of ministerial responsibility to parliament, the control of the armed forces by the civilian government, and the abolition of the iniquitous Prussian three-class voting system. The removal of this system, along with the other reforms, constituted a progressive move in the eyes of democratic forces.<sup>26</sup>

Not only were liberal reforms implemented, the Republic itself was formed by liberals. The Weimar Republic was a coalition of the progressive SDP, the liberal German Democratic Party, or DDP, and the Catholic Centre Party, with Friedrich Ebert, a Social Democrat, as the first President. The constitution, which was very progressive, was drafted by a left-wing liberal, Hugo Preuss.<sup>27</sup> The Weimar Republic was thusly created by the liberals, and despite its flaws, lasted for 15 years. For comparison purposes, the period of National Socialism, including World War II, lasted only 12 years.

<sup>25</sup> Detlev J.K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic, The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 249.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation, a History of Germany, 1918-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 24.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 28-29.

The period of the Weimar Republic accomplished much, including universal suffrage for both men and women over 20 years old, an idea of straight ticket voting, and proportional representation of parties. As historian Mary Fulbrook stated, though, "it was not so much the rules of the game, as the nature of the parties playing the game that rendered proportional representation a serious liability for Weimar Democracy."<sup>28</sup> The Weimar Republic was brought down by the people in the positions of authority, not by the inefficiencies of the system.<sup>29</sup> The liberal Republic could have survived had it not been for the authority figures in the position of power and for the Great Depression of 1929, which led to a revival of the new right wing nationalist radicalism that was exhibited by Hitler and the Nazis. An example of the people's role in the failure of the system is Fulbrook's point that, "the two parties with the most progressive views on women's issues, the SPD and the KPD (Communist Party of Germany), failed to attract a proportional share of the votes of women."<sup>30</sup> This can also be exemplified by Paul von Hindenburg's rise to power, which undermined the democracy of the Weimar Republic, paving the way for Hitler's rise to power following the Depression of 1929.

The liberal system was not the problem of the Weimar Republic, but the steadying force in it. The people in place and the inability of the parties to cooperate and establish a coalition were the reasons for the failure of the Weimar Republic, not the liberal Republic.

The Left has often come into criticism on a range of counts. The bitter hostility obtaining between the KPD and the SPD has often been remarked on as a fateful split among those who should have been united in opposition to the greater evil of Nazism...The Social Democrats had faced a difficult enough task in guiding the Republic through its early stages...when pro-Republican forces were joined by a new, popular and virulent right-wing radicalism in the shape of the Nazis, there was even less possibility for democrats of the moderate left or centre to control developments.<sup>31</sup>

Even after the NSDAP's big electoral breakthrough, it was still second to the SPD.<sup>32</sup> The SPD and the Liberals still displayed power until the Weimar Republic collapsed. But their power had been

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 63-64.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 55.

reduced by new nationalists, their ensuing parties' lack of focus, and the influence of diverse political parties in the 1930s.

The twelve years of Nazi rule were an obvious blow to liberalism, along with all other types of nationalisms and political groups. The Nazis captured a majority through political maneuvering, but once a majority was established, Hitler institutionalized extreme right-wing nationalism. By doing so, all other political groups were severely limited, including all liberal parties. He did this by taking advantage of article 48 of the Weimar constitution, which granted the president emergency powers and permitted military intervention in local states.<sup>33</sup> Hitler's plan of *Gleichschaltung*, or the coordinating of power to "consolidate his hold on German politics and society,"<sup>34</sup> began the elimination of liberal opposition. Hitler eventually established a one party system and completely eliminated liberal resistance. The passing of the Enabling Law due to Nazi force led to the absolute destruction of democracy and the establishment of the Third Reich. The Social Democrats were the only party to vote against the Enabling Law, though it made little difference as it passed anyway.<sup>35</sup> Hitler implemented authoritarian rule and for twelve years, until the end of World War II in 1945, liberal nationalism, like every other political philosophy was non-existent in German politics. Had the liberal nationalism of the Weimar Republic succeeded, the brutal and shocking period of the Third Reich may never have happened.

Post war Germany was divided, but which Germany was the "true" Germany? The partition with the most liberal influences was the true Germany, because it best exemplified Germany's long history and was the Germany that united the two. The liberal influence throughout history, specifically through the example of the Weimar Republic and the liberal revolution of 1848, shaped West Germany and was a major factor in the eventual unification of the two Germanies. East Germany also drew on liberal influences from German history as well, but not as obviously as in West Germany.

West Germany was the more liberal of the two states. It focused on capitalism, which in turn led to a focus on individualism, while the East was socialist and opposed to individualism. Denazification was handled differently in East and West Germany. The United States and Britain followed the ideas of *Realpolitik* and focused on West Germany's economy.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 68.

Although the major war criminals were brought to some kind of justice at the Nuremberg Trials, the more general denazification policies were of little long-term effect. By March 1946, denazification had been reduced to a matter of individual self-justification, and the process was essentially wound up with few long-term effects by the early 1950s. Similarly, by 1946 Britain and the USA had come to the view that it was in their interest to rebuild the West Germany economy. The announcement of the Marshall Plan in June 1947, and the introduction of the currency reform on 20 June 1948, consolidated this shift.<sup>36</sup>

When the western zones stabilized the currency in West Germany in 1948, the Soviets responded with their own currency reform and implemented the Berlin Blockade, which after almost a year was removed and strengthened the division of Germany.<sup>37</sup> Following in the footsteps of the liberals, whose overall goal in the nineteenth century was unification, the western sphere prepared West Germany to survive on its own and sequentially for unification. The Eastern sphere on the other hand, seemed like the reason that the two remained divided. They repressed the people of East Germany and took heavy reparations, which hurt East Germany's productivity. The Berlin Wall, erected in 1961, also solidified the separation of West Germany, then called the Federal Republic of Germany, and East Germany, referred to as the German Democratic Republic, or the GDR.

Another example of liberal influence and its success for the Federal Republic was the construction of the Basic Law. This informal constitution was written to avoid the problems that the liberals of the Weimar Republic suffered from.

The writers of the constitution in 1948-9 had an ever present regard for the failures of the Weimar Republic, and although the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) was the result of many positive considerations, it was also a document written with an eye to perceived weaknesses in the Weimar constitution...The constitutional framework could not in itself guarantee the success of Germany's second attempt at democracy, but it at least provided certain safeguards and provisions to protect the new democracy against some of the problems experienced on the first attempt.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Mary Fulbrook, "Ossis and Wessis: the creation of two German societies," in *German History Since 1800*, ed. Mary Fulbrook (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 413.

<sup>37</sup> Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, 157-158.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 168-169.

The Basic Law was not the only reason that the Federal Republic of Germany thrived and eventually accepted the GDR, but as Mary Fulbrook stated it protected it from the weaknesses that the Weimar Republic experienced. The liberals had believed in constitutionalism since 1848. This constitution was crafted according to the failures of the Weimar constitution and the basic ideas of liberal nationalism. The writers tried to balance the power between small and large parties by giving each voter two votes, one for the party and one for an individual. "The Federal Republic was to be, as its name implies, a federal state: the separate regional states were to have considerable powers over their own internal affairs. Locally elected land parliaments (*Landtage*) were to control such matters as cultural policy and education."<sup>39</sup> The Basic Law also guaranteed civil liberties and individual rights, but also made sure no individual could overthrow the government, as Hitler did in 1923.

The success of the Federal Republic's government in the unification process in 1990 and their emergence as the true German government drew from the influence of nineteenth century liberal nationalism. They continued their liberalist ideals, but for the first time in German history, the liberal nationalists were the dominant party and successfully unified the country.

The story of Germany developed parallel to the development of nationalism, but it was not only the familiar right wing nationalism. From the failed attempt at unification in 1848 to the successful unification almost one hundred and fifty years later, liberal nationalism was present throughout German history. It has been overshadowed by the extreme nationalism of the Nazis or Bismarck's conservative nationalism, but liberal nationalism was a key component in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, specifically in the Weimar Republic and in the post World War II period. Had it been a greater influence, Nazism may never have left such a huge impact on German and world history. Nazism and other right wing nationalism had an unfathomable impact on German history, but liberalism as an alternative nationalism and its role in creating a united German nation was just as impacting. Liberal nationalism played an intricate part in the development of the present strong democratic Germany.

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.