Historia

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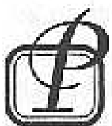
Civil Rights Reconsidered

Barry D. Riccio

Barry Riccio is an Associate Professor of History at Eastern Illinois University and wrote this review in response to the number of essays covering the topic of Civil Rights. Professor Riccio briefly examines the essays of Darrell Gordon, Christian Wresch, and Lisa Grierson and provides an interesting insight to the Civil Rights Movement in correlation with each essay.



artisans of "old" and "new" history alike long ago staked out their respective turf in civil rights historiography. Traditional political historians, not surprisingly, have been most concerned with executive actions, legislative strategies, and the role of powerful pressure groups, while those who toil in the vineyards of social history by and large prefer to examine the making of history "from the bottom up." The distinction between these two schools of thought is not hard and fast, of course, and some of our most able "new" historians (Alan Dawley immediately comes to mind here) have effectively integrated social and political history, perhaps in response to Gertrude Himmelfarb's charge that too many of the newer social histories simply left the politics out.

The eminent European intellectual historian clearly did not have the historiography of the civil rights movement in mind when she mounted her indictment. For that crusade was at once social and political. The history of that movement is very much a tale of elites, but it is also much, much more than that. In fact, when it came to putting civil rights on the legislative agenda, the power elite in the two mainstream parties largely responded to pressure from below.

Hence the justification for these three essays, all of which probe the meaning of the civil rights phenomenon from "the other side." Darrell Gordon's "Highlander Folk School" is an interesting study of the impact of the not so well-known Highlander Folk School, an alternative educational institution that came into being in the thick of the Great Depression. Not only was the founder of the HFS, Myles Horton, a friend of Martin Luther King, but much more significant is the fact that this experimental school in the hills of Tennessee provided many of the foot-soldiers for the sit-ins that spread like wildfire throughout the South in early 1960. It is interesting to note that both Rosa Parks—whose courageous defiance of a Jim Crow transportation ordinance in Alabama led to the formation of the Montgomery Improvement Association and to Martin Luther King's emergence on the national stage—and the African-American businessman who did so much to get that organization off the ground, E. D. Nixon, had very close ties to Highlander. Given the centrality of both Horton and Highlander to the nascent civil rights movement, one wonders why Gordon devotes so little attention to the man and the institution. Nevertheless, Gordon has uncovered a slice of the civil rights past that has all too often been neglected or ignored altogether.

Christian Wresch's "The Role of the Church in the Civil Rights Movement" covers some of the same ground plowed by Gordon. This piece, however, is primarily concerned with the role of religion in the hopeful days of the civil rights movement. Echoing legal theorist Stephen Carter, Wresch emphasizes just how much religion was the handmaiden of reform for civil rights organizers in the South. "The pulpit," Wresch states crisply, " became their soapbox."

Now this is a very valuable observation to make. After all, the organization founded by King and Ella Baker in the wake of the Montgomery boycott's successful outcome was called the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). But Wresch could push the point even further. For one, the religiosity of the movement was far more prevalent in the South (admittedly the focus of this study) than the North. Just what is the significance

of that? For another, just how important was fundamentalism itself to the movement? We know that King was brought up as a fundamentalist (in fact, his father hesitated to vote for Kennedy in 1960 on account of the latter's Catholicism), but at Morehouse College, in the young King's own words, "my fundamentalist shackles were removed." In some ways, King was closer to the early twentieth-century Protestant tradition of the Social Gospel, but he had imbibed a little too much of the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr's insights to be entirely comfortable in that camp.

One of the early leaders of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and young lions of the southern civil rights movement, John Lewis (now a congressman from Georgia), was a devout American Baptist (note I did not say Southern Baptist). The Baptist denomination had split in two over the issue of slavery just before the eruption of the Mexican War. Southern Baptists have tended to respond more warmly to Biblical literalism, although the fundamentalists only took control of the Southern Baptist Convention about 20 years ago. Now black fundamentalism can be every bit as conservative theologically and socially as white fundamentalism, but when poor and disenfranchised blacks finally got their chance to walk unmolested into the polling booths, they voted overwhelmingly for the Democratic party, and the left wing of the party at that.

All of this is understandable enough. But the nexus of religion and politics needs to be examined more closely, if only to understand the evolution of white fundamentalism in the last 30 or so years. It is instructive to note that Reverend Jerry Falwell's first major speech on civil rights, "Of Ministers and Marchers," was addressed squarely to fundamentalist followers of King. Properly understood, Falwell asserted, religion should have nothing whatsoever to do with politics, for politics was this-worldly and invariably corrupting. However many fundamentalists may have deviated from that position in their actions, this was the official credo until the late 1970s. At that point, an older Falwell would insist that embattled Christians had no choice but to become involved in political action, what with the specter of gay

rights legislation and the ERA, not to mention a slew of other alleged social evils.

Wresch deserves our praise for reminding us just how much religion mattered in those early days of the movement. That religion was not without content, however, and it is precisely that which requires further exploration.

Lisa Grierson's "The Success of Gender in the Civil Rights Movement" is perhaps as much about gender as it is about race. For Grierson examines four female activists, all the while making the point that Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer, to take but two of her examples, did not owe much of a debt to feminism; rather feminism owed a debt to them. This point is well-taken, for contemporary feminism was not very much in the air until after the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. Even then, it was largely a white and upper-middle-class movement, at least in its earliest manifestations. Only a decade before Friedan's work appeared, Democratic politician Adlai Stevenson, then the darling of liberal intellectuals everywhere, told a Smith College graduating class that marriage and motherhood were the only appropriate goals for the female of the species. Attitudes towards women in the early Students for a Democratic Society were only slightly less quaint. Sandra Cason and other women had a hand in the drafting of the 1962 Port Huron Statement, but most Americans (if they are familiar with this document at all) think Cason's husband, Tom Hayden, performed the feat single-handedly. In fact, radical feminism emerged first as a faction within SDS, in large measure to protest the sexist assumptions and practices of the men running that organization. I do not wish to suggest, however, that all was rosy on the other side of the racial divide. During the late 1960s, one of the Black Panther party's most able and articulate luminaries went so far as to say there was only one position for women in that party—and that was prone.

For some time now historians such as Sara Evans have documented just how much feminists of the left owed to the early, Southern-based, and largely religious civil rights organizations.

Some popular writers on the movement (Taylor Branch, for one) have not neglected the role of women, but in a 1998 CNN documentary about King in the years between Montgomery and Memphis no mention at all is made of the Women's Political Council that Grierson disusses in this paper. The women of the movement are no longer entirely invisible, to be sure, but the organizations they spawned are far more visible to the professional scholar than to the educated layperson.

There is yet another point to be made about Hamer in particular. She was, after all, one of the founding members of the Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party, a party that rose in reaction against the lily-white regular Democratic party of that state. Representing the MFDP before the Democratic Credentials Committee at the 1964 nominating convention in Atlantic City, Hamer eloquently (and tearfully) told her own story—and proceeded to make the argument that her party was more representative of Mississipians than the one which had hung a "No Blacks Need Apply" sign on itself for so many generations. That speech, it seems to me, is significant for several reasons. For one, it put her at odds not only with the President of the United States and the man who was the national head of the party with which she identified, but also with a president who had gone further than any of his predecessors on the subject of civil rights. LBJ and his trusted lieutenants Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale did not want to seat the entire MFDP delegation, for fear of driving too many white Southern Democrats from the party. Above all else, they wished to maintain a broad-based reform coalition that would last for the duration. They, too, employed rhetoric, but it was rhetoric of a fundamentally different kind from that of Hamer and her forces. The former appealed to an ethic of consequences, while the latter invoked an ethic of ultimate ends.

Sociologist Max Weber was the first to use those terms, but the contrasting sensibilities he described have ancient roots. It is hardly surprising that one rhetoric appealed more to politicians and another rhetoric appealed more to crusaders. Yet there were also politicians who made moral appeals and crusaders who

thought largely in terms of practical results. Interestingly, and sadly, Martin Luther King felt the tug of both traditions, much to the umbrage of one-time allies who thought him either too cautious or too utopian. That, however, is another chapter in the history of the civil rights crusade.

Highlander Folk School: The Sit-In Movement of the 1960s

Darrel Gordon

Darrel Gordon, is a senior history major with teacher certification. Mr. Gordon plans to teach at the high school level and to continue his studies at the graduate level in future years.

The Sit-In Movement of the 1960s came to be recognized as the movement that not only stirred the conscience of the South but the North as well. The sit-ins attracted the involvement of more people, both black and white, than any other civil rights activity. These activities had over 70,000 participants demonstrating in over 100 communities throughout the South and the North. Much of the success of these demonstrations derives from the involvement of the Highlander Folk School, headed and founded by Myles Horton. Horton established the school in the Appalachian Mountain region of Tennessee in 1932 in order to help the oppressed and poor, both black and white, combat their problems throughout the South. Highlander played a pivotal role in both the development of the civil rights leadership and the strategy those leaders implemented in the Sit-In Movement.

The Sit-In Movement of the 1960s played an important role in the civil rights movement, but the question remains who should be credited with the success of the sit-ins. Louis Lomax and Jo Freeman claim the Sit-In Movement comprised one of the two most important events of the civil rights movement. According to Lomax in his book *The Negro Revolt,* the civil rights movement comprises two "Negro Revolts" the Montgomery Bus Boycott in December of 1955 and the Sit-In Movement of the 1960s.[1]

[1] Louis E. Lomax, *The Negro Revolt* (New York, 1962), 121.

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Freeman, in his book *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies: On the Origins of Social Movements,* agrees with Lomax that the civil rights movement had two origins, the December 7, 1955, arrest of Rosa Parks that led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the February 1, 1960, sit-in at Greensboro, North Carolina.[2] Both major events, however, trace their roots back to Highlander. Many of the inspirational civil rights leaders and participants involved in both events had either attended Highlander before or during these controversial events.[3]

Historians have long recorded the first sit-in of the modern civil rights movement to have occurred on February 1, 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina, when four college students, all freshmen who attended the Agriculture and Technical College in North Carolina, used the technique.[4] The practice of sit-ins, however, had a far longer history. As early as 1871 in Louisville, Kentucky, blacks protested the institution of segregated seating in horse-drawn streetcars, later called the "ride-in" campaign of 1871. Black Kentuckians refused to accept segregation after Reconstruction and brought national attention to their cause by refusing to ride in segregated streetcars. In the end, officials of the horse drawn streetcars, due to economic reasons, gave in to the blacks' demand, and the company integrated the horse drawn streetcars with mixed seating. After Reconstruction the black population also demonstrated and protested against the segregation of theaters by taking seats in the all white sections of the theaters.[5]

The sit-in technique continued in the early twentieth century, especially in the union movements. During the 1930s, the rubber industry experienced a series of labor sit-downs instrumental in bringing about change for union workers and unions throughout America. The rubber workers initiated the sit-down strike method in Akron, Ohio, in June, 1934. Between 1936 and 1937, the rubber workers staged sixty-two sit-downs. Their pioneering efforts

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[2] Jo Freeman, ed., *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies* (New York, 1983).

[3] Aldon D Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York, 1984), 146.

[4] Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America* (NewYork, 1969), 252.11

[5] Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America*, 252.

laid the groundwork for future generations to adopt a strategy aimed at bringing about change through both unification and economic means.[6]

Myles Horton, who founded Highlander Folk School (HFS) in 1932 near the small Cumberland Plateau town of Monteagle, Tennessee, knew the importance of unification and economics in a social movement.[7] Horton, a visionary and scholar, saw segregation as hindering society as a whole. He fought bitterly to establish a school that could bring about a new social order, a color-blind society that would tear down the barriers that limited the poor and the oppressed of the South to such a meager existence.[8]

Horton originally started his school by working with labor unions with the belief that only through integration of both blacks and whites could the people overcome the injustices placed upon them by the richer white establishment throughout the South. He held workshops throughout the 1930s and 1940s, teaching and assisting labor members to confront their problems first and then to work on devising their own solutions to act upon. Horton based his philosophy on the idea that the individual or group must first identify the problem, accept its outcome, and then confront it head-on with a well organized plan formulated from within. Horton's only problem lay with the union leaders who refused to cooperate or participate with blacks and even refused to allow blacks at their workshops during the 1930s.[9]

Horton then made one of the most important decisions in the school's history. He decided to break off all labor-related workshops in the 1940s unless the unions integrated blacks into the labor workshops.[10] That move became a significant turning point for the school. The United Auto Workers Union, a member of

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[6] Daniel Nelson, "*Origins of the Sit-Down Era: Worker Militancy and Innovation in the Rubber Industry,* 1934-38," Labor History 23 (1982): 198-225.

[7] Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 143.

[8] John M. Glenn, *Highlander: No Ordinary School* (Knoxville,1996), 2.

[9] Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 143-144.

[10] Aimee Isgrig Horton, *The Highlander Folk School - A History of Its Major Programs,* 1932-1961 (New York, 1989), 196-97.

the CIO, agreed to Horton's demands of integration in 1944.[11] Paul Christopher helped bring about the change of heart in the union. Christopher, regional CIO director and a member of Highlander's board, organized the first workshop that included both blacks and whites. Horton, for the first time, saw the racial barrier start to crumble. With help and guidance from HFS, the unions came to see the importance of unification. Highlander not only helped the unions but became the rock upon which the 1960s sit-in movement would build its foundation.[12]

Highlander's role in the early labor struggles of the 1930s prepared it for the next challenge the civil rights movement. HFS played a major role in preparing leaders. HFS held numerous workshops instructing participants on the proper techniques to be used in order to achieve their goals of desegregation. Martin Luther King, Jr., a personal friend of Horton's, often called upon Horton for advice. In 1961, King asked Horton to devise a method in which the black population could be reached, educated, and mobilized. Horton recommended a strategy he had devised along with Septima Clark, Esua Jenkins, and Bernice Robinsons called the Citizenship Education Program, which had proven successful in the past. King after long deliberation accepted the Citizenship Education Program, and the Southern Christian Leadership Council took over the Citizenship Schools. The schools, which taught citizenship throughout the South, were operated by HFS.[13]

King continued to converse with Highlander officials throughout the civil rights era. He attended the twenty-fifth anniversary of the school in 1957 on Labor Day weekend and gave a major address congratulating HFS for its "noble purpose and creative work" and for giving the South sixty-four of its most responsible leaders."[14] King and the Highlander School both came under attack after the anniversary weekend. Abner Berry, a member of the Communist party and a journalist, concealed his true identity and attended the Labor Day weekend anniversary event, taking

[11]Horton, *Highlander Folk School*, 197.
[12]Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 144.
[13]Ibid., 236-237.
[14]Horton, *The Highlander Folk School*, 213-214.

pictures of key figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., Aubrey Williams, Rosa Parks, and Myles Horton. These pictures, which included Berry, later appeared on billboards throughout the South during the 1960s with the caption, "Martin Luther King at Communist Training School."[15] The billboard slogans damaged but did not destroy the reputations of both.

Leaders of the movement as well as Highlander would rebound from several such attacks aimed at bringing down the activities sweeping the South. Highlander continued to pose a threat to segregationists throughout its existence. HFS became known for its active role in major civil rights events. The school itself came under such heavy attack for its involvement in the desegregation campaign between 1953 and 1957 that HFS had its tax exempt status revoked. Later in 1960, HFS lost its charter because of its activities in civil rights.[16] Those aiming to close down the school opposed the workshops held there because they trained civil rights leaders. One of those leaders became very important in the first major event of the civil rights movement, Rosa Parks, who brought national attention to the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Rosa Parks attended HFS in the summer of 1955 at the request of Virginia Durr, a long time supporter of HFS. Durr later responded, "When she [Parks] came back she was so happy and felt liberated and then as time went on she said the discrimination got worse and worse to bear AFTER having, for the first time in her life, been free of it at Highlander. I am sure that had a lot to do with her daring to risk arrest as she is naturally a very quiet and retiring person although she has a fierce sense of pride and is in my opinion a really noble woman."[17] On December 1, 1955, police arrested Parks for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus to a fellow white passenger. She broke one of the major laws of the South the law of segregation and set the stage for the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Parks' actions and protest resembled the strategies taught at HFS work-

[15]Glenn, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, 217-20.
[16]Horton, *The Highlander Folk School*, 242.
[17]Glenn, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, 162.

shops.[18] Parks returned to HFS and continued to work with groups formulating techniques on how to dissolve segregation. She spoke specifically on the technique she had implemented at the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Parks became an intricate part of HFS after her return in 1956. Along with the HFS Executive Council members and teaching staff, she devised a radically new agenda. The new agenda included passive resistence, voter registration, transportation, housing, public facilities, church intervention, and school intergration once again signifying HFS as a leader in the civil rights movement.[19]

Highlander also tutored E.D. Nixon, president of the Alabama National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and a veteran member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Nixon, who played a major part in backing Rosa Parks, attended HFS during the 1940s and 1950s workshops. He persuaded many prominent black leaders to support Parks' actions and then founded the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). The organization unanimously elected the largely unknown Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. as its president. Horton asked Nixon during his attendance at HFS to organize black workers and black community leaders against desegregation.[20]

HFS also played a significant role in the sit-in movement itself. HFS trained over 1,000 blacks and whites during the 1950s in its residence program on integration.[21] Although HFS did not organize or implement the first sit-in, HFS became the instructional institution on which the movement depended for its tutorial guidance and survival.[22] Other organizations such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the NAACP, and the SCLC played a part in the Sit-In Movement and also came to the aid of the college students who initiated and participated in the actual

[18] Ibid., 163.

[19] Horton, *The Highlander Folk School*, 209.

[20] Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 144; and Glenn, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, 163.

[21] Glenn, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, 172-173.

[22] Ibid., 173.

sit-ins. But HFS became key to the sit-ins continued survival and played a proportional role in the eventual birth of Students Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC).[23]

The other three organizations, CORE, NAACP, and SCLC, also interacted with the Sit-In Movement, each with the intention of having the movement join its organization exclusively. All three of the organizations had come to see the importance of the revitalizing effect the sit-ins brought back into the civil rights movement, not to mention the vast amounts of energy the college students supplied.[24] If not for the intervention and input of HFS, these three organizations eventually would have unraveled the threads that held the sit-ins together because their methodologies differed.

CORE, an organization founded in 1942 by James Farmer, received a letter from Dr. George C. Simpkins, president of the NAACP chapter located at Greensboro, South Carolina, asking for assistance after the initial sit-in took place in Greensboro. Dr. Simpkins received a call for legal help from the four students after they had staged their sit-in at the Woolworth's Department Store lunch counter. Simpkins had read pamphlets on how CORE had handled segregation in Baltimore, Maryland, and had successfully desegregated a restaurant by using techniques it called "non-violent protest," later known as "non-violent direct action."[25]

CORE, an interracial, predominately white organization, had originated at Chicago University and established its headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, in 1942 and moved to New York City in 1946. CORE had tried to recruit students from the South into the organization since the 1950s.[26] It saw the sit-ins as not only an opportunity to combat segregation but also as a foot hold at gaining membership in the South, a region considered still virgin to its grasp. CORE immediately, upon Dr. Simpkins request, dispatched their field secretary, Gordon R. Carey, from New York on Febru-

[23] Ibid., 177.

[24] Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America*, 252

[25] *The New York Times*, 15 February 1960.

[26] Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America*, 253.

ary 7, 1960, to assist in the training techniques of the college students for future sit-in protests.[27]

The NAACP also responded to the sit-in movement. The NAACP had its headquarters in New York City. The NAACP, more noted for fighting the battle for equality through the legal system, sent Herbert Wright, its youth secretary, to Greensboro. Wright had conducted similar sit-in demonstrations in Albuquerque, New Mexico, several years before the 1960 sit-ins. Wright became known for instigating the first Civil Rights Ordinance to be adopted by any city in the nation. Wright backed what he called "direct mass action" even though the NAACP had not adopted this type of method as one of its own.[28] Also, documentation indicates the NAACP youth groups received credit for being one of the first to use the sit-in method. This has been attributed to the fact that all four A & T College freshmen at one time had been involved with a NAACP leader through their local churches.[29] The NAACP, much like CORE, could not organize or control the college student's sit-in movement.

The SCLC also played a role in the sit-in movement through one of its founders, Ella Baker. Baker, along with King in 1957, helped found the SCLC. She, however, opposed King's idea of having the students become a wing of SCLC. She believed the students' survival depended on their forming an independent organization. Baker helped to inspire students to create their own organization, the Students Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) at an April 15-17, 1961, Raleigh, North Carolina, conference, a meeting she set up with this purpose in mind. According to Myles Horton, the students "had begun to feel their oats."[30] Baker, as E.D. Nixon, attended HFS workshops in the 1950s. Baker knew, from HFS teachings that the students needed to break away and form their own organization in order to insure

[27] *The New York Times*, 15 February 1960.
[28] Lomax, *The Negro Revolt*, 124.
[29] Ibid., 123.
[30] Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 215-16.

their momentum and survival.[31] Baker understood that her organization, the SCLC, primarily represented the black churches and their conservative values and attitudes. She realized early on in the Sit-In Movement that the SCLC would only hinder the progression of the more liberal minded youth staging the sit-ins.[32]

Although each of the groups contributed to the sit-in movement, they each lacked what the students required most: immediate action. The students saw the NAACP as too slow to bring about change. When it won major legal battles such as Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education in 1954, the students saw no real change come about, only the continuation of segregation. The students knew the conservative approach the NAACP took would only seek to control their movement with a slow thought out process that stayed within the contingencies of the law. Although the students took the approach of nonviolent direct mass action, the law would not stop them from achieving their ultimate goal: the right to be treated with dignity and respect in public facilities.[33]

The students did not trust CORE because of so much racial fighting within its own ranks, and the organization appeared to be a predominately white northern organization who had come to their aid with the intentions of taking over and overshadowing the importance of the movement itself. Farmer, CORE'S National Director said, "There are many Negroes who will not work with an interracial organization because of their suspicion of whites.... White liberals must be willing to work in roles of secondary leadership and as technicians."[34] This idea countered the need of the black youths to take charge of their own lives and to organize and make the decisions on how to confront the atrocities that compounded their lives. The students who attended HFS had learned they would have to fight for themselves to gain their self-dignity. The students had learned the importance of Myles

[31] Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 132.
[32] Thomas R. Brooks, *Walls Come Tumbling Down: A History of the Civil Rights Movement 1940-1970* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1974), 152.
[33] Ibid., 152-53.
[34] Lomax, *The Negro Revolt*, 97.

Horton's lesson at Highlander: the need to be self governed and the need for the individual to take charge of his or her own situation. The students understood the steps of Horton's philosophy: the need of the individual to acknowledge the problem that existed; the acceptance of the responsibility of the problem; taking charge and formulating a plan of action and acting upon that final solution. Horton knew that only the individual with the problem could find the right solution to his or her problem, and in order to achieve his final solution, he would have to discuss his related problems with other members of society, people fighting the same injustices of society. Horton had taught them well that they could not expect the oppressor to make right what he had done wrong for so long. Horton continued to stress the importance of non-violence as the way to combat the issue of segregation.[35] The major short-coming of SCLC that helped to lead to the formation of SNCC came about due to the financial rift between the two groups. SCLC in the early 1960s sit-ins handled all the money collected from community members who supported the sit-ins. In turn, SCLC provided bail money for the arrested student participants but failed to provide the students with the majority of the collected money. The SCLC used much of the funds gathered for the sit-in movement to support its own causes and argued they had a justifiable right to it. SCLC contended it had fulfilled its obligation by providing the bail bonds for students arrested in sit-in demonstrations. They argued that SCLC's leader Martin Luther King, Jr. speaking at college campuses across the South at the request of the college students participating in the sit-ins entitled SCLC to the majority of the funds raised around the sit-in activities, further unraveling the threads that held the students together. Reverend Wyatt T. Walker, the executive director of SCLC in 1960, said:

> *The SNCC people felt that the money that came to SCLC should have come to them. First of all, at that time, they didn't have an organization, so where was it gonna go?*

[35] Ibid., 146.

> *The students who got in jail, we went around the South bailing them out, and, you know, I never bit my tongue, but we had a right to the money. And, it was the people who made up the constituency of SCLC who were the back-up source... the kids didn't have nothing to lose but their time in school. They had no mortgage to pay, no car payments, no nothing, they'd just go out and get arrested.*[36]

This was a further indication to the more conservative attitude sustained by the SCLC.

If not for Highlander's guidance in the early beginning of the Sit-In Movement, the movement would have been stifled before it ever achieved its greatest goals brought about by the Sit-In Movement of the 1960s, the desegregation of public facilities. The other three organizations of CORE, NAACP, and the SCLC became too rigid in their ideologies for the college students. The college students tended to reject authority figures and leaders. They more related to acting on impulse, and as Emily Stoper said, the college students held "a belief in the equality of all members, which leads to the rejection of bureaucracy and of all formal leadership structures."[37] By forming their own organization that answered the needs of the student, the momentum of the movement kept rolling forward.

Highlander is rarely credited for playing a significant role in the civil fights movement. The link between the school and the momentum of the movement cannot be seen on the surface; however, most of the leaders that did have significant roles in the movement attended the school either before their involvement in the movement or during the demonstrations of the 1960s. Because these same leaders were linked to nationally known organizations such as the NAACP, Highlander's role became overshadowed by the notoriety of those organizations on the front line.

HFS not only guided the student movement, it also helped the

[36] Ibid., 214.

[37] Freeman, *Social Movements of the Sixties and Seventies*, 10.

older leaders of the movement develop their strategies. Many civil rights leaders passed through HFS's doors and attended many of the school's workshops during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, including E.D. Nixon; Rosa Parks; Septima Clark, director of workshops in 1955 and a long time school teacher who became instrumental in working with Rosa Parks while at Highlander and who worked diligently with the sit-in students; Reverend C.T. Vivian, leader of the Nashville sit-ins who brought to the attention of the students the need for conservative members of the black community to instill the use of economic pressure along with the sit-in movement; Esau Jenkins, who served as coordinator of Highlander's Citizenship School Program in the Sea Islands of South Carolina; Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, a well known pioneer of nonviolent direct action and the leader of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR); and Ella Baker, cofounder and executive secretary to SCLC who called for a conference for April 15-17, 1960, and encouraged the formation of SNCC at her old alma mater, Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. All of the above implemented strategies learned during their stay a Highlander.[38]

Highlander not only helped provide the young black leadership that evolved as sit-in leaders but as civic leaders later in life. Marion Barry, who graduated from Fisk University, attended HFS workshops in the early 1960s. Barry became the first SNCC chairman and today serves as mayor of Washington, DC. John Lewis, an American Baptist Seminary student also of Nashville, Tennessee, became the third chairman of SNCC between 1963 and 1966 and later became a congressman from Georgia. He too attended HFS in the years of 1959 and 1960. James Bevel and Bernard Lafayette, former HFS students, both attended American Baptist Seminary and then served on SNCC's steering committee.[39]

Myles Horton and the HFS staff, while attending a sit-in work-

[38]Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 146. Glenn, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, 179.

[39]Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 147.

shop two weeks before the SCLC convention at Raleigh, NC, recommended that the young leaders create their own organization. Many of the SNCC early inner leadership had attended the April 1960 HFS college workshop. HFS saw the importance of the students governing themselves in order to keep the sit-in movement alive.[40] Although CORE, SCLC and the NAACP wanted to control the students to better serve their own interests, a few gifted individuals such as Myles Horton and one of his former workshop students, Ella Baker, both saw the in-fighting between the three groups and knew this would likely be the demise of the student movement. After the founding of SNCC in 1960, HFS instructed the sit-in students in the early 1960s that they needed to formulate various kinds of new and continued action in order to guarantee the survival of SNCC for the next five years. Both SNCC leaders and the HFS staff formulated four major steps to be taken. The first was better planned sit-in demonstrations so long as they were useful. The second was participation in economic boycotts when practical. The third was picketing where most effective. The fourth was the need for a religious basis for the protest.[41] Not all activists attended HFS workshops on desegregation and sit-in strategies. Anne Moody had been one of those participants in the 1960s that received her training in the sit-in techniques from John Slater, who was in charge of the NAACP at Tougaloo. She questioned the leadership provided by the NAACP. While awaiting to be bailed out of jail for an arrest during a sit-in demonstration, she stated, "I just got my kicks out of sitting there [Jail] looking at the ministers. Some of them looked so pitiful, I thought they would cry any minute, and here they were, supposed to be our leaders."[42] However, Moody never became a leader of the movement, only a follower as thousands of others involved in the actual demonstrations.

The Sit-In Movement that began February 1, 1960, grew by the

[40]Horton, *The Highlander Folk School*, 245-46.

[41]Ibid, 245.

[42]Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi: An Autobiography* (New York, 1968), 272.

end of February to thirty cities and seven states. By mid-April 1960, 100 communities and over 50,000 blacks and whites had participated in some sort of sit-in demonstration.[43] Within 18 months, 70,000 people had participated in sit-ins, according to the Southern Regional Council.[44] The sit-ins spread to every state in the deep South and several border states including Ohio, Illinois and Nevada. Sit-ins involved more people than any other civil rights movement in its history: 70,000 blacks and whites in more than 800 sit-in demonstrations in over 100 communities.[45] No previous activities of the southern civil rights movement had generated this widespread activism among whites across the nation.[46]

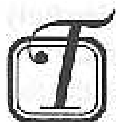
Highlander began utilizing strategies developed at its school in 1932 and remained a solid foundation on which many civil rights leaders built. HFS provided insight to the sit-in protesters and leaders. With the guidance of HFS, the sit-ins, along with the economic boycott, ended the desegregation of public facilities. Sit-ins only worked when the adult black population within the communities boycotted the same premises. This brought the white establishments to their knees. The first fell on May 10, 1960, in Nashville, Tennessee. The black population provided twenty percent of all downtown business. With ninety-eight percent of all blacks cooperating in the Nashville boycott, the white business owners opted to raise the white flag and surrender. Lunch counters also desegregated throughout Nashville. The same happened in Savannah, Georgia in 1961.[47] The sit-in movement of the 1960s achieved a major victory for the civil rights movement thanks to the guidance and help from Highlander Folk School. The driving force behind the sit-in movement, obviously, was the passionate individuals who believed skin color should not inhibit any person's rights. Although the real fire started within the people, HFS kept the embers burning.

[43] Glenn, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, 145.
[44] Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America*, 257.
[45] Lomax, *The Negro Revolt*, 124.
[46] Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, 222.
[47] Lomax, *The Negro Revolt*, 129-31

The Role of the Church in the Civil Rights Movement

Christina Wresch

Christina Wresch is a junior at Eastern Illinois University. She is a history major working towards teachers' certification. Christina's focus is in American history.



he civil rights era of the 1950s-1960s was a turbulent time for the entire United States, (but the South, as it had always been, was certainly the most tumultuous). In the early fifties, plagued by unfair voter registration practices, segregation and Jim Crow laws, African-Americans in the South began to take a stand for their rights. To do this, they looked to the one foundation which had stood strong for them throughout their entire existence in this country–the church. Though there has been little dispute that the church was an irreplaceable part of the black family's life, historians have debated the church's role in the civil rights movement. Historian Adam Fairclough contends that it was laymen rather than men of the cloth who spearheaded the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. However, many other historians disagree, putting the church at the head of most, if not all, civil rights activities. The church had been an integral part of the African-American family life from the beginning, religion being their only solace from the horror and unjust treatment they had succumbed to since slavery. The church preached freedom, liberation, and equality which is exactly what they desired, and precisely what they sought. In the fifties and sixties the church was still a driving force in the African-American agenda. Freedom had been granted, but equality stood yet unforseen as a reachable goal in the distace, but not without the help of God and the church. By instilling motivation, providing

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[43] Glenn, *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, 145.
[44] Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America*, 257.
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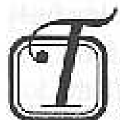

he civil rights era of the 1950s-1960s was a turbulent time for the entire United States, (but the South, as it had always been, was certainly the most tumultuous). In the early fifties, plagued by unfair voter registration practices, segregation and Jim Crow laws, African-Americans in the South began to take a stand for their rights. To do this, they looked to the one foundation which had stood strong for them throughout their entire existence in this country–the church. Though there has been little dispute that the church was an irreplaceable part of the black family's life, historians have debated the church's role in the civil rights movement. Historian Adam Fairclough contends that it was laymen rather than men of the cloth who spearheaded the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. However, many other historians disagree, putting the church at the head of most, if not all, civil rights activities. The church had been an integral part of the African-American family life from the beginning, religion being their only solace from the horror and unjust treatment they had succumbed to since slavery. The church preached freedom, liberation, and equality which is exactly what they desired, and precisely what they sought. In the fifties and sixties the church was still a driving force in the African-American agenda. Freedom had been granted, but equality stood yet unforseen as a reachable goal in the distace, but not without the help of God and the church. By instilling motivation, providing

leadership, and a usable meeting space, black churches were instrumental in the success of the civil rights movement.

In the nineteenth-century the church played a considerable role in the life of the black family. During Reconstruction, after African-Americans won their freedom, they built communities for themselves. In the cities, African-Americans seized control of their own churches, while the "invisible institution of the rural slave church emerged into the light of day."[1] Throughout the South, freedmen saw such a pressing need for a social institution-their church, that they pooled their resources to purchase land and erect the buildings. The church was the cornerstone of black family life after slavery. It was the first social setting fully controlled by black men in America and its multiple functions led to its centrality within the black community. During the Reconstruction era, not only did the church building serve as a place of worship, but churches also housed schools, social events, and political gatherings. As early as 1870, before the civil rights movement even took form, the Freedmen's Bureau saw the church provide much of its leadership-of the twenty-two black delegates, seventeen were ministers. This involvement perhaps foreshadows the church's involvement with the civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth-century.[2]

The civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth-century gained momentum in the early post-second world war period. As early as 1946, black Baptists in the South were becoming increasingly uneasy about their situation. During the convention of black Baptists held in Montgomery, Alabama in that same year, which several white men attended, J. Pius Barour noted "[the white folks] heard a plenty as those preachers made out they were talking to God but were shooting [snide comments]at those white folks."[3] Two years later black pastors in Birmingham made a public statement denouncing segregation, and announced that

[1] Eric Foner. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877.* (New York: 1988), 89.
[2] Ibid.,91-92.
[3] Andrew Manis. *Southern Civil Religions in Conflict.* (Athens, Georgia: 1987), 22.

though segregation would continue to be practiced, it was time for Christian people to take the lead in abolishing it. Southern black Baptist ministers preached on the topic of equality and addressed the social conditions of their society. Martin Luther King would later say of this practice, "in the act of faith, every minister became an advocate for justice."[4] In the south, this meant active involvement in changing the social order in every city. In many cases, the black ministers' motivation stemmed from their own personal humiliation early in their lives at the hands of Jim Crow laws. This humiliation would never be forgotten. Eventually, it would strengthen them enough to be ready to finally fight for their rights, especially with their God on their side. The pulpit became their soapbox. Vernon Johns, predecessor to Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church became a classic example of a political preacher. Routinely, Johns would preach of social injustices in the community and would put politically tense and accusatory, however true, statements on his streetside marquis, an act for which he would regularly be brought in by police to be questioned about his motives.[5] Johns encouraged his community, and instilled a pride in his parishioners that perhaps they would otherwise not have had. Johns', and this particular church's influence established great community pride and strength that would be the basis to unite first these African-Americans and then the African-American community as a whole.

The black church as a whole was the most important social institution within the black community. Black members of the church held positions in the hierarchy of church government and exclusively held positions of power, with very little interference by whites of any sort- religious or otherwise. The church was held sacred, but it also served as a place where African-Americans could come together for a common cause without being dispersed or treated like non-citizens as had been the case when they met in other public places. This was the place where not only was the Gospel preached, but the message of equality and

[4] Ibid., 17.
[5] Ibid., 22.

justice as well.[6] This was also the forum civil rights workers would seek to express their opinions and advertise the message for the necessity of the vote. For example, many SNCC volunteers, Anne Moody for one, spoke in the church setting to motivate blacks to vote or register to vote. This was the one place they could be assured an attentive wholly black audience. In the beginning, SNCC volunteers canvassed rural churches encouraging their members to register to vote, and attended workshops to learn how to utilize their rights. Soon, the church would become sole meeting ground for workshops of this kind. Anne Moody, in *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, tells of her experiences going into various churches in rural Mississippi to reach their ultimate goal. In Madison County, more specifically, Canton, Mississippi, where Anne–employed by SNCC, did much of her work, the church was their playing field. Due to the lack of enthusiasm of several of the ministers, the group decided to go right to their congregations. To the ministers' surprise, Anne and company had made serious "headway with several of their most influential members, and they put [them] right where [they] wanted to go–behind the pulpit for more than five minutes."[7] Now they could hit the churches hard, and reach the majority of the rural population whose only regular big group social gathering would be Sunday morning. The church's apparent influence could be seen even by white outsiders as noted by Deputy General Council of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Ray Terry. When questioned on how involved the church had been in the civil rights movement, Terry responded with a resounding "very!" He stated without a doubt the church was influential in all facets of the movement, especially in the leadership and coordination areas of the movement.[8]

Not only did the church serve as the court where civil rights workers could plead their cases to their peers, but even the few churches who were left untouched by civil rights workers on official business served to bring Negroes together for a common cause. Church leaders or ministers could take control and train their congregations for action. In many cases, ministers served as the leaders for boycotts, sit-ins and other rallies, and the first to be invited would be their congregations. Those ministers who were not actively involved, would still help to organize the followers for their outside Negro leaders.[9] Church leadership came to be very influential in political decisions. It was not a mystery that black churches held high political prowess. Black churches were integral in moving the people to campaign for their rights, from Reconstruction through the 1960's.[10] The church's first recognizable attempt at rocking the boat came after the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, when the push for change altered course. This Supreme Court decision which desegregated the schools opened the nationwide discussion on the validity of segregation, and allowed clergymen to form their own opinions on the matter of not only segregation, but the action for the right to vote. To that end, black ministers hoped the white churches would see desegregation as a positive idea and would support black churches in their quest for equality.

The white churches of the south, however, did little for the civil rights movement. Disappointed in the area of race relations, and trusting the Christian belief of the "brotherhood of man" would help in their fight for equality, the black church made an impassioned plea to white religious leaders. This plea fell on deaf ears. Though the rural white and black churches were quite similar in congregation, their purposes were entirely different. "The white church served a purely religious function, [whereas] the black church served social, political, and economic needs."[11] This is not to say the white church remained entirely passive throughout the civil rights movement, however, to white ministers, it seemed as though remaining neutral was in the white churches' best interest. As seen in the passing of the 1960 Church

[6] Obie Clayton, ed. *An American Dilemma Revisited: Race Relations in a Changing World.* (New York: 1996), 191.

[7] Anne Moody. *Coming of Age in Mississippi.* (New York: 1968), 305.

[8] Ray Terry, *Chief Council Of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.*

[9] Clayton, 193.

[10] Adam Fairclough. *To Redeem the Soul Of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: 1987), 32.

[11] Clayton, 192.

Property Bill in Mississippi those who were sympathetic to the Negroes' cause were not spared political discourse. This bill revoked the tax-exempt status of integrated churches, and in doing so, supported churches totally committed to segregation. Still, the church, according to Obie Clayton, was probably the source of more native white support for the civil rights cause than any other segment of southern society. He concedes that this does not indicate an accomplishment in the mission of change.[12]

The white church of the south responded to the movement with silence in most cases. Early in the movement, in February of 1955, the *New York Times* printed an article stating that Methodist Bishops in North Carolina defended segregation, arguing that segregation provided for protection of the rights and privileges of minorities. However, on that same page, Lutheran ministers were praised for their acceptance of Negroes into their congregations, and during the Division of American Mission meeting, Dr. H. Conrad Hoyer stated that indeed Lutheran churches recognized that African-Americans soon would be a part of their congregations, and many congregations were ready to accept them, and even those who were not immediately prepared had already begun educational processes which would follow for Negro integration into their congregations in the near future.[13] In Cleveland, just prior to the Lutheran's first public announcement of desegregation, the Missions Council of the Congregational Christian Churches met. During this panel discussion, Dr. Douglas Horton of New York, minister of the churches' general council, suggested the denomination set up a "standard of practice" denouncing segregation for new churches and including it in their constitutions.[14] Even before the end of the Second World War, racial tension could be seen between the churches. As D.V. Jemison, President of the National Baptist Convention stated in his address to the convention of 1943, "the difference between the white and Negro preacher is this: the Negro preacher makes the sentiment for his people, but with the white preacher, people

[12]Ibid., 195.
[13]"Methodists Attack Segregation." *New York Times.* 4 February 1955, 24:4.
[14]"Church Segregation Hit." *New York Times.* 26 January 1955, 27:8.

make the sentiment for him...because the white minister dare not preach against traditions and customs...if he does, he will lose his position."[15] Regardless of the white churches' apparent apathy, the Negro leaders recognized that if white preachers were to take a stand for the black preachers' cause, they would certainly lose not only the faith of their congregations, but their jobs as well.

The SNCC, one of the many civil rights groups working toward African-Americans' greater good had their roots in Christianity and thus, the Southern church. The SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) had many of its field workers come out of the churches of Mississippi, so that they would be educated in the religious traditions of the south. Mass meetings resembled a church service, and were grounded in the religious traditions of the Deep South, complete with gospel songs, many of which were then considered "Freedom Songs." Many of the protests the SNCC was involved in were led by ministers. In fact, Ella Baker looked to ministers to conduct and volunteer for a mass house-to-house canvassing voter registration drive. In a memo dated in 1959, she called for the recruitment of one-thousand ministers to work on this drive, in which she estimated that over 300,000 people could be reached in ten months.[16]

Surprisingly enough, however, SNCC was comprised, for the most part not of ministers or regular church-goers, but of the youth. Part of the contribution of the youth was their willingness to work with nearly all of the community. Their youthful persistence, and in some cases, obstinence made them not only known, but remembered. Arrest lent no fear to the youth of the movement. In mere hours in Canton, Mississippi, four-hundred high school students were arrested, and incarcerated at the local fairgrounds. The following day, four-hundred more high school and now college students also tried to be arrested so they could be with them.[17] In fact, to SNCC members, the contemporary ten-

[15] Manis, 20.
[16] Charles M. Payne. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle.* (Berkeley: 1995), 95.
[17] Moody, 273.

dency to assume that movement leadership was basically ministerial is laughable.[18] Matt Suarez of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) a group which worked closely with SNCC, said of the initiative of the organizers in Canton, Mississippi, "we were young and full of energy...trying to bust down brick walls by running our heads through them."[19]

The black middle class too, slowly began to make their contribution. Black business people no matter which side of the law they operated on became more and more likely to make donations of some sort, especially under the table, so as to avoid the attention of the authorities. In smaller towns, doctors had great influence as well. For example, in Greenwood, Mississippi, Dr. Mable Garner used her position as a physician to bring food to people in jail when no one else could get in.[20] Also, the visible participation of teachers surely swayed others to join or support the movement.

Similarly, due to his popularity, the introduction of Dr. Martin Luther King into the highest leadership position in the Montgomery Improvement Association led to the recognition of ministers in positions of leadership within their communities who stood up in defense of African-Americans' rights. Ministers, being another portion of the middle class, in most cases, had the most impact on the community, though any familiar face from the neighborhood had the potential to motivate more individuals to come out to meetings and join the 'freedom fighters.' After King's and other ministers' appointments to leadership positions, the church then became the heart of the fundraising machinery, the organizational atmosphere and the colloquial meeting ground for activist groups both religiously and secularly based.

Tallahassee, Florida and Montgomery, Alabama shared similar leadership development experiences. Like Montgomery, Tallahassee's bus boycott was initiated by regular citizens but organized by the church. In Tallahassee, two black students were arrested for conspiring to incite a riot by sitting beside a white

[18] Payne, 196.
[19] Ibid., 199.
[20] Ibid., 177.

passenger on a bus in the last two available seats. The following day, three thousand students from Florida A&M University voted to stay off the buses. The link between this boycott and the church came from University professor and ordained minister, Dr. James Hudson. At mass meetings Hudson initiated at his home church, the Inter-Civic Council coming into being with six ministers among its nine officers.[21]

By nature, ministers are motivational speakers. Black ministers preach with an exceptional fervor at any occasion and civil rights issues were no exception. When it came to arousing an audience, the black preacher knew no rival. Vernon Johns' is a classic example of this motivational preacher early in the movement. His successor, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an obvious motivational speaker. A compelling speaker, he drew crowds in the hundreds of thousands as well as television coverage every time he spoke. Ministers who took on leadership positions within the civil rights movement were ahead of their class-the cream of the crop. Men like Rev. Ed King, Robert Parris Moses, and even women like Ella Baker, like so many other African-Americans, found their roots in the church. They grew from those roots into the encouraging and strong individuals and leaders we recognize today. It was their presence at civil rights events which stirred the crowd into a frenzy. Because of them, and others, attending civil rights oriented meetings at any church in the South could be compared to attending a religious revival complete with gospel music-Freedom Songs, impulsive "Hallelujahs", and a fired up crowd.[22]

Historian Adam Fairclough argues that the impulse which led to the civil rights movement came from outside the church and was motivated by politics. In Montgomery, in the period before the bus boycott, the leading black activists were E.D. Nixon, and railroad porter and trade-union official; Rufus Lewis, a businessman; and Jo Ann Robinson, a college teacher. Even the original idea of a boycott stemmed from outside the church-it

[21] Fairclough, 19.
[22] William Loren Katz. *Eyewitness.* (New York: 1995), 450.

came not from ministers but from laypeople. Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus was not the action of a mere seamstress with sore feet. Her action made a statement for the entire black community, and the NAACP for which she had served as secretary for a number of years. It was not until December 5, 1955, the day after the Montgomery bus boycott began, that Martin Luther King, Jr. became president of the boycott organization. The Montgomery Improvement Association voted Dr, King into the position because, as one of the women activists put it, "the ministers who didn't want the presidency of the MIA...were just chicken, passing the buck to Dr. King."[23] In fact, most preachers in Montgomery were skeptical about the boycott's chances for success. Nevertheless, the formation of the MIA brought the preachers into the forefront and there they remained for the duration. The appearance of black church leadership in movements against segregation reflected a shift in black attitudes rather than a bold initiative by black preachers.[24]

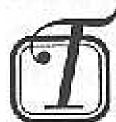
Granted, from the beginning, it may not have been ministers or church groups at the helm of the movement, but without their sustenance early on, the civil rights movement as it is now known, would have fizzled to nothing. Without the church instilling motivation, providing leadership, and a usable meeting space, fewer individuals would have been reached, and the movement would have been severely hampered. It is possible that the African-Americans' ultimate goal of whole freedom would have been reached. The African-American church in the South played such a role in the civil rights movement, that had it not been for the manpower it provided or its support financially and spiritually, the movement would have been changed immensely-for the worse. Many citizens of the South who would have otherwise allowed the "white machine" to roll right over them, stood strong with the backing of their faith and their friends against the cruelty and injustice in which they were forced to live. They had the courage and the will to change their situation, and the power to do so with the support of their peers and their church.

[23] Fairclough, 17.
[24] Ibid., 14.

The Success of Gender in the Civil Rights Movement: A Study of Jo Ann Robinson, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Anne Moody

Lisa Grierson

Lisa Grierson is a sophomore in history at Eastern Illinois University. In this essay, she analyzes the roles and the importance of personality and ethos in four women during the Civil Rights Movement.


The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s brought many people to national attention. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. went from a locally known Baptist preacher to a national hero. More tragically, the nation mourned the deaths of young Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, and the three workers during Freedom Summer. Although many women participated in the movement, few had national roles; however, no explanation has been given that completely answers why this is so. Some historians have recently argued that the Women's Rights movement was the reason some women attained national attention and others did not. For example, the press did not recognize the women of the early Civil Rights movement because of the secondary role women played in everyday society. Similarly, historians claim women attained more attention because the Women's Liberation Movement had set the groundwork. This conclusion is not completely true. More accurate is the conclusion of historian Janice Hamlet. She presents ethos and image as the reasons why some women were able to rise into the public spotlight. Ethos is produced through character, intelligence, goodwill, and charisma. It is important to note that in this instance

came not from ministers but from laypeople. Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus was not the action of a mere seamstress with sore feet. Her action made a statement for the entire black community, and the NAACP for which she had served as secretary for a number of years. It was not until December 5, 1955, the day after the Montgomery bus boycott began, that Martin Luther King, Jr. became president of the boycott organization. The Montgomery Improvement Association voted Dr, King into the position because, as one of the women activists put it, "the ministers who didn't want the presidency of the MIA...were just chicken, passing the buck to Dr. King."[23] In fact, most preachers in Montgomery were skeptical about the boycott's chances for success. Nevertheless, the formation of the MIA brought the preachers into the forefront and there they remained for the duration. The appearance of black church leadership in movements against segregation reflected a shift in black attitudes rather than a bold initiative by black preachers.[24]

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Lisa Grierson

Lisa Grierson is a sophomore in history at Eastern Illinois University. In this essay, she analyzes the roles and the importance of personality and ethos in four women during the Civil Rights Movement.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s brought many people to national attention. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. went from a locally known Baptist preacher to a national hero. More tragically, the nation mourned the deaths of young Emmett Till, Medgar Evers, and the three workers during Freedom Summer. Although many women participated in the movement, few had national roles; however, no explanation has been given that completely answers why this is so. Some historians have recently argued that the Women's Rights movement was the reason some women attained national attention and others did not. For example, the press did not recognize the women of the early Civil Rights movement because of the secondary role women played in everyday society. Similarly, historians claim women attained more attention because the Women's Liberation Movement had set the groundwork. This conclusion is not completely true. More accurate is the conclusion of historian Janice Hamlet. She presents ethos and image as the reasons why some women were able to rise into the public spotlight. Ethos is produced through character, intelligence, goodwill, and charisma. It is important to note that in this instance

intelligence is defined as knowledge of a subject matter.[1] The personalities of the female civil rights workers and their ability to articulate the goals of the movement played a role more important to their success in gaining national attention than did the growing movement for women's rights.

In the civil rights era, the Women's Political Council (WPC) played a central role in brewing up support for the movement from local blacks. The organization launched the hugely successful Montgomery Bus Boycott. Dr. Mary Fair Burks founded this organization for black women in 1946. Dr. Burks, a member of Alabama State College's English department, presided as the organization's first president, and it was she who "organized the women who would work together as leaders and followers, giving and taking suggestions, and who would never reveal the secrets of the WPC."[2] Motivated by her own suffering, Dr. Burks created the organization so it would be ready when the inevitable fight for civil rights began. Many of the early members of the WPC were educated and professional women such as teachers, nurses, and supervisors.

Jo Ann Robinson was one of these women, and she became the head of the WPC in 1950.[3] As with Burks, Jo Ann Robinson taught in the English department at Alabama State College. Robinson, the youngest of twelve children, was born in Colloden, Georgia, in 1916. After moving to Macon, she graduated as valedictorian of her high school class. Robinson subsequently received her Bachelor's degree from Georgia State College and her Master's degree in English literature from Atlanta University. In 1949, she moved to Montgomery where she taught at Alabama State College.[4]

As the head of WPC, she worked in negotiations with Mayor

[1] Janice Hamlet, "Fannie Lou Hamer the Unquenchable Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of Black Studies* 26 (1996): 561.

[2] Jo Ann Robinson, *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson*, ed. David J. Garrow (Knoxville, 1987), 22.

[3] Robinson, *Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women*, 24.

[4] Anne Standley, "The Role of Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement," in *Women in the Civil Rights Movement*, vol. 16, *Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965*, ed. Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods (New York, 1990), 187.

W.A. Gayle and the City Commissioners of Montgomery in the hopes of solving some of the "nuisance problems" that involved the numerous blacks of the city.[5] Also, at this time, the organization gained support from the black community. After numerous complaints to the WPC about the bus system, the organization visited the City Commission at which the Commission promised to look into the problem. Not long after that meeting, the bus companies requested the right to raise bus fees because of declining numbers of riders. The WPC protested this "because [they] objected to the type of service, coupled with inhuman indignities, that was being given black people."[6]

In response to failed attempts to convince the bus companies to change their policies and to the arrest of Rosa Parks, the civil rights organizations in Montgomery decided to boycott the buses. Jo Ann Robinson wrote the notice to the boycott that the WPC distributed to the black people of Montgomery. The notice stated that the WPC asked blacks to stay off buses in protest of Rosa Parks's arrest.[7] With help of students and WPC members, Robinson distributed tens of thousands of leaflets. Robinson took credit, and rightfully so, for the boycott's success. When the boycott began on December 2, 1955, she said, "I was pleased that I had such support for my involvement in the planning...of the Montgomery Bus Boycott."[8]

According to Robinson's own memoirs, she credits the Women's Political Council with, not only organizing, but instigating the boycott. While preparing the boycott, she wrote that "'On December 2, 1955, the women of Montgomery will call for a boycott, to take pace on Monday, December 5.'"[9] If the WPC was responsible for organizing and instigating the Montgomery Bus Boycott, it is reasonable to suspect that Robinson would have enjoyed some level of national attention; however, she did not attain any significant measure of fame until after her book was

[5] Robinson, Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women, 25.

[6] Ibid., 31.

[7] Ibid., 47.

[8] Ibid., 52.

[9] Ibid., 45.

published. The President of Alabama Sate College provides part of the explanation for this. Dr. Trenholm asked Jo Ann Robinson "to work behind the scenes, not to involve the college...."[10] So it is not unreasonable to assume that, due to Robinson's love of teaching and respect for her boss, she followed his wishes. This does not completely answer the question, though. Robinson also made it clear that if her work at the college interfered with her own participation in the Civil Rights Movement and with her system of beliefs, she would have left her job.[11]

Some have argued that women of the early Civil Rights Movement did not attain national attention because of sexism.[12] Denying sexism's role in the Civil Rights Movement would be incorrect. The movement toward women's rights was still in its earliest stages when Jo Ann Robinson worked with the Montgomery Bus Boycott. She did not enjoy its benefits as later women did; however, sexism alone did not deny Robinson national attention because other women of the early movement did have national roles. Although Robinson played an integral role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott she lacked the charisma that helped the women attain national attention. The personalities of the female civil rights workers played the greatest part in determining their success in front of the national forum.

Unlike Jo Ann Robinson, whose fame came after the publication of her book, Rosa Park emerged as one of the most recognizable figures of the Civil Rights Movement. Rosa Park's trial and arrest during the Montgomery Buss Boycott thrust her into the national spotlight. In the 1950s, Rosa Parks was working with the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). For several years, the NAACP had considered filing a lawsuit against the city of Montgomery because of bus segregation; however, they wanted an ideal plaintiff. As Rosa Parks explains, "The best plaintiff

[10] Ibid., 50.
[11] Robinson, *Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women*, 49.
[12] William H. Chafe, "The End of One Struggle, The Beginning of Another" in *The Civil Rights Movement in America*, ed. Charles W. Eagles (Jackson, 1986).

would be a woman, because a woman would get more sympathy than a man. And the woman would have to be above reproach, have a good reputation, and have done nothing wrong but refuse to give up her seat."[13] Moreover, E.D. Nixon looked for a person who could gain fame for the movement. A teenage girl, Claudette Colvin, was originally going to be the plaintiff; however, she became pregnant, and since she was unmarried, the NAACP feared that if the press found out the case would be over. E.D. Nixon, a prominent black lawyer in Montgomery, decided to wait for a better plaintiff. Thursday, December 1, 1955, the NAACP and E.D. Nixon found their plaintiff in the person of Rosa Parks.

The police arrested Parks after she refused to give up her seat. Rosa Parks was the perfect plaintiff and also able to handle the fame that could be expected, according to E.D. Nixon, because "'[he] knew she'd stand on her feet. She was honest, she was clean, she had integrity. The press couldn't go out and dig up something she did last year, or last month, or five years ago. They couldn't go hang nothing like that on Rosa Parks.'"[14] Rosa Parks describes herself as the perfect plaintiff because she had "worked all my life...wasn't pregnant with an illegitimate child...The white people couldn't point to me and say that there was anything I had done to deserve such treatment except to be born black.'"[15] Rosa Parks represented all the movement was meant to be. She fit perfectly into the picture that E.D. Nixon and other leaders wanted to paint of the movement. The trial and boycott that followed attained vast attention, locally and nationally. The local paper of Montgomery, *The Montgomery Advisor*, ran a copy of the leaflet Jo Ann Robinson had written.[16] Nationally, *The New York Times* covered the story. Unlike Jo Ann Robinson, Rosa Parks received coverage in *The New York Times* several times. If the sole explanation for women not attaining national attention was sexism, women such as Rosa Parks would

[13] Rosa Parks, Rosa Parks: *My Story* (New York, 1992), 110-11.
[14] Ibid., 125.
[15] Ibid., 125.
[16] Ibid., 130.
[17] New York Times (New York), 6 December 1955, p. 38.

attained national recognition.

Historians could argue, and have, that Rosa Parks was the exception from the rule of sexism. Although it is true, to some degree, that Rosa Parks was the exception, it was more than a fluke set of events or her some how avoiding sexism that allowed her to succeed. Rosa Parks's personality and ethos, along with society's beliefs, helped bring her national attention. In fact, in some ways, the sexist views of society allowed Rosa Parks to succeed. In the 1950s, the fight for civil rights was still a new movement. The nation felt uncertainty toward the movement and its leaders. With the exception of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks was among the first people, male or female, to receive any national attention for participating in a function of the Civil Rights Movement. Petite, soft-spoken, and educated, Rosa Parks broke many of the stereotypes the county had toward blacks, and more specifically, black women. In 1955, women in the United States did not have leadership roles in any field. Even though Jo Ann Robinson played a far more extensive role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, she played a far less national role in the boycott. The fact that a black woman seemed to start an entire boycott shocked the county. These seemingly extraordinary acts of an ordinary person captured the nation's attention and thrust Rosa Parks into the national spotlight.

Fannie Lou Hamer, a civil rights worker beginning in the early 1960s, also attained national fame for her work with the movement and is the clearest example of the importance of ethos. She attained the national spotlight and took a leadership role during this time. When she spoke at the Democratic Convention in 1964, Fannie Lou Hamer became a national symbol of the Civil Rights Movement; however, without the struggles and triumphs of her early life, she may not have been able to achieve the fame that she did.

October 6, 1917, in Montgomery County, Mississippi, Fannie Lou was born to Jim and Ella Townsend. The youngest of twenty children, Fannie Lou's birth "helped her family survive one more

winter."[18] After several years, the family moved to Sunflower County in Mississippi where they worked on a plantation. As a child, Fannie Lou Hamer's mother protected her children and taught them to live according to biblical teachings. In 1944, Fannie Lou married Perry "Pap" Hamer. They lived on a plantation outside of Ruleville owned by the Marlow family. Even before she became active in the Civil Rights Movement, Fannie Lou stood out. Many blacks had grown up under conditions of extreme poverty, racism, and violence that she had. Journalist Kay Mills defined five aspects in which she was different. These aspects, her mother, her faith, her patriotism, her ability to sing, and her anger over her unknown sterilization, made her the person she was.

Fannie Lou's mother endured a great deal of suffering in her lifetime, and Fannie Lou Hamer looked to her mother for inspiration. Further, Hamer's faith was highly important to her life. She was baptized in the Quiver River and joined the Strangers Home Baptist Church at the age of twelve. Fannie Lou could quote Bible scripture naturally and often used the Bible's teachings in her speeches. She considered her work in the Civil Rights Movement her 'calling' and 'mission'.[19] Her faith taught her that "hating made one as weak as those filled with hatred."[20] Andrew Young, an aide to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., describes her as an "instinctively an extremely nonviolent person."[21] This nonviolent personality and seemingly unshakeable belief in God would become central to her success in the Civil Rights Movement. Despite the atrocities to which she fell victim to because of legal racism, Fannie Lou Hamer loved the United States. John Lewis, chairman of SNCC in 1963, recalled that Hamer "really believed in America and she wanted to make it real."[22]

The fourth aspect of Fannie Lou Hamer that made her different among the impoverished of the Mississippi Delta was her

[18] Kay Mills, *This Little Light of Mine: the Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (New York, 1993), 7.
[19] Mills, *Little Light of Mine*, 18.
[20] Mills, *Little Light of Mine*, 17.
[21] Ibid., 17.
[22] Ibid., 19.

ability to sing. Singing was Hamer's tool to overcome fear and endure the suffering of life as a sharecropper. In fact, it was her singing ability that provided Fannie Lou Hamer with the opportunity to participate in her first civil rights rally. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leader James Farmer heard her singing and asked her to lead the singing at an upcoming rally. Entertainer Harry Belafonte said that Fannie Lou "always sang with a mission."[23]

The final aspect that helped to make Fannie Lou Hamer an extraordinary person was the anger and sorrow of being sterilized. In 1961, Hamer was in her middle forties and needed to have surgery to have "a small uterine tumor removed...She was recuperating" when she found out the truth about the operation: she had been given a hysterectomy.[24] Unknown sterilization of black women was unfathomably common during the 1960s and would become a national issue during the 1970s. These five apsects of her life worked in combination with each other to give Fannie Lou Hamer the strength and perserverance that would become her greatest power as a leader of the Civil Rights Movement as she made reference to them in her numerous speeches.

Fannie Lou Hamer's first personal experience with civil rights was her attempt to register to vote. In 1962, James Bevel, a minister with Southern Christian Leadership Conference, preached at a meeting that Hamer attended. At the end of the service, Bevel asked if anyone wanted to try to become a registered voter. Hamer raised her hand, and on August 31, she and seventeen other women went to Indianola to register to vote.[25] On the way home from the courthouse, a police officer arrested the driver of the bus because the bus was too yellow and looked too much like a school bus. To calm the fears of everyone on the bus, Fannie Lou Hamer began singing. As Kay Mills states, "It was the first time that Fannie Lou Hamer drew upon this well of talent in public service...the power of her voice would remain stamped in the

[23] Ibid., 20.
[24] *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), 30 May 1976, sec. B1.
[25] Mills, *This Little Light of Mine*, 36.

mind of many a Mississippian, many an American in the coming years."[26] When Hamer returned to the plantation, her boss threatened that if she tried again to register he would fire her. In response to this threat, Fannie Lou Hamer left the plantation. Eventually, in 1963, she passed the voting test and became a registered voter.

The major turning point in Hamer's life came in Winona, the county seat of Montgomery County, on June 9, 1963. The events that follow became the core of her powerful story about the evils of a black person trying to become a first-class citizen.[27] A bus carrying black passengers returning from a voter registration training session stopped in Winona so the passengers could use the restroom or eat at the restaurant; however, when they tried, local police and sheriffs stopped them. After several hours in the jail, two black inmates beat Fannie Lou Hamer at the request of the guards.[28]

As stated earlier, Fannie Lou Hamer became a national symbol of the Civil Rights Movement in 1964. When John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as President in 1961, the National Democratic Party was anything but national. As Marie Lockie explains, "Many Mississippians and Southern whites had excommunicated themselves from the national Democratic Party...Mississippi Democrats resented the attack by the national party on their belief in segregation, and felt that...a strain had been placed on their Democratic identification."[29] In response to the Mississippi Democrats' attempts to keep blacks from voting, Fannie Lou Hamer cofounded the Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party (MFDP). Mills states, "The Freedom Democrats had an immediate goal—unseating the all-white Mississippi delegation of the Regular

[26] Ibid., 37.
[27] Ibid., 57.
[28] Mills, *This Little Light of Mine*, 60; Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Women as Culture Carriers in the Civil Rights Movement: Fannie Lou Hamer," 207-8; Fannie Lou Hamer, "Fannie Lou Hamer" in Howell Raines, *My Soul is Rested: movement days in the Deep South remembered* (New York, 1983), 252-254.
[29] Mamie E. Lockie, "Is This America? Fannie Lous Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party," *Women in the Civil Rights Movement*, vol 16, *Trailblazers and Torchbearers, 1941-1965*, ed. Vicki L. Crawford, Jaqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods (New York, 1990), 29.

Democratic Party at the 1964 convention."[30] Hamer and several other black Mississippians were on the regular Democratic ballot for the U.S. Congress. After the failed attempt to work within the framework of the Democratic Party, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party held its own election. The Second District elected Fannie Lou Hamer as its representative. Thirty-five hundred people participated in the Freedom Democrat's precinct meeting against the regular Democrats. In all, sixty-eight people were chosen to represent the MFDP at the national Democratic Convention in Atlantic City.[31] While in Atlantic City, Hamer spoke on the first day of the convention. Asking "Is this America?," Hamer told the horrors blacks faced in the South, and after her speech, she wept before the Credentials Committee and "before the millions of Americans watching the proceedings on television."[32] This dramatic moment thrust Fannie Lou Hamer in to the national spotlight. The MFDP's challenge to the regular Democratic Party at the Atlantic City Convention provided a turning point for the Civil Rights Movement. The publicity of the event caused people to act. Vice-presidential nominee Herbert Humphrey "proposed a series of changes."[33] Numerous newspapers covering the Democratic Convention turned their attention to Fannie Lou Hamer and the MFDP.[34] *The New Republic* questioned the "Conscience of a Convention" and called Johnson the "keeper of a disorderly house."[35] Furthermore, *The Nation* devoted four pages to telling the story of Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.[36]

Why was Fannie Lou Hamer able to succeed in gaining national attention when people such as Jo Ann Robinson were not? As shown earlier, historian Janice Hamlet presents ethos and

[30] Mills, *Little Light of Mine*, 105.
[31] Ibid., 108-9.
[32] Lockie, "Is This America?", 32.
[33] John Dittmer, "The Politics of the Mississippi Movement, 1954-1964" in *The Civil Rights Movement in America*, ed. Charles W. Eagles (Jackson, 1986), 84.
[34] *New York Times*, 23 August 1964, p. 1; 3 July 1965, p. 6; 1 Jan 1965, p. 24; 24 August 1964, p. 17; 29 December 1964, p. 14.
[35] Murray Kempton, "Conscience of a Convention," *The New Republic*, 5 September 1964, 5, 7.
[36] Jerry DeMuth, "Tired of Being Sick and Tired," *The Nation*, 1 June 1964, 548-551.

image in public address as the reason some women succeeded. Fannie Lou Hamer's personality and very spirit filled all of the aspects of ethos. In The Nation, Jerry DeMuth painted a vivd portrait of Hamer: "Although she lacked a formal education, she was more intelligent than most about the evils of American society," but more importantly according to Hamlet, "she embodied a strong sense of character, intelligence, goodwill, and charisma, components that governed her life and the work she felt compelled to do."[37] Also, like Rosa Parks, the oddity of Fannie Lou Hamer helped her attain national attention. The typical civil rights worker during the 1960s was well-educated and young. Hamer only had a sixth grade education because she helped her family in the fields. Furthermore, when she gave her speech at the Democratic Convention, she was forty-six years old. Therefore, she was neither well-educated nor young.[38] Finally, it was not common place to have such a demonstration at a national convention. Moreover, it was probably quite a sight to see a two hundred pound black woman from Mississippi weeping on a national television. The extraordinary personality of Fannie Lou Hamer and her extraordinary actions at the Democratic National Convention played critical roles in her gaining national attention.

It is important to look at the effects of the movement for women's rights on Fannie Lou Hamer. Fannie Lou Hamer is more responsible for helping to further the Women's Rights Movement than the movement is for furthering Fannie Lou Hamer. Fannie Lou helped in founding the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC). Fannie Lou Hamer gathered in Washington D.C. with Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, Myrlie Evers, and other activists to discuss placing "more women in elective and appointive offices to make the political system more responsive to the concerns of women."[39] Therefore, if Fannie Lou Hamer was helped by the emerging Women's Rights Movement, it was far more helped by her.

Some historians argue that, as shown earlier, the fight for

[37] Ibid., 575.
[38] Mills, *This Little Light of Mine*, 12 and 115.
[39] Mills, *This Little Light of Mine*, 275.

Women's Rights played a mjor part in determining the amount of fame a civil rights worker would attain. They conclude that women during the earlier days of the movement attained less fame because women played a supportive role in everyday society. The press and nation were not ready for a woman to lead a social movement, especially on the size of the Civil Rights Movement. Unfortunately, this argument ignores key pieces of information. The first of these pieces of information being Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer, who were both able to attain national attention before the Women's Rights Movement had a hold on the country. If one assumes that the women did not gain attention because of the secondary role women played in society at the time, one could conclude that as times progressed so did the numbers of women gaining recognition for their work with the Civil Rights Movement. This did not happen. Probably one of the clearest examples of the error in this argument is Anne Moody.

Anne Moody worked with the Civil Rights Movement during a time when the Women's Rights Movement was just making substantial steps forward. The U.S. State Department and the United Nations had been discussing the status of women for as long as a decade.[40] Also Betty Freidan's *The Feminine Mystique* published in 1963, advocated equal pay for equal work, improved day care arrangements, and preservation of abortion rights.[41] Friedan also helped found the National Organization for Women in the middle 1960s. Furthermore, President Kennedy appointed the Commission on the Status of Women which proposed the 1963 Equal Pay Act. The fight for women's rights began to take hold of the country; however, Moody still did not attain national attention before the publication of her book, *Coming of Age in Mississippi,* in 1968. When she worked in the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s, Anne Moody was young, well-educated,

[40] Lorena B. Hahn, "The United Nations and Equality for Women: Ninth Session of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women," *The Department of State Bulletin August* 1, 1955, 206-208; "Discrimination on Grounds of Sex," "International Conciliation March 1956, 311-317; Gladys A. Tillett, "A Progress Report on the Status of Women: Sixteenth Session of U.N. Commission on the Status of Women," *The Department of State Bulletin* July 30, 1962, 197-99.

[41] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York, 1974).

and dedicated to the cause of civil rights. She worked in some of the most dangerous areas of the South for many years. If the Women's Rights Movement was going to help anyone attain national attention, it would have been Anne Moody; however, it did not.

Anne Moody grew up in one of the most segregated and violent areas of the Deep South: Centreville, Mississippi. In 1963 after her junior year at Tougaloo College, she began working with the SNCC in Mississippi. Later she worked with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Canton, Mississippi. At that time SNCC and CORE worked to register black people eligible to vote. Like Jo Ann Robinson, Anne Moody played a critical role in the organization of activities for the Civil Rights Movement. In Anne Moody's case, she was one of many organizing voter registration drives. She also played an active role in searching out blacks to register.[42]

As with Jo Ann Robinson, Anne Moody's personality did not capture the nation's attention. As stated earlier, Rosa Parks was extraordinary because of her accomplishments. Her normalcy made her extraordinary in the eyes of a public that was uncertain about the Civil Rights Movement. By the time Anne Moody came onto the scene, the Civil Rights Movement had established itself in the country. To become a leader of the movement in the 1960s took an extraordinary person, male or female. The nation still viewed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the leader of the national movement. Few men took on leadership roles during this period. Although several smaller, more militant organizations, such as the Black Panthers and Black Muslims, developed during the 1960s, their leaders, excepting Malcolm X, never attained the level of national recognition that Dr. King and his SCLC did. For a woman to have gained this public attention, she would have had to be extraordinary. This is not to say that Anne Moody was not; however, she did fit the typical profile of the civil rights worker in the 1960s. She was black, educated, and young.

The Civil Rights Movement affected tens of thousands of

[42] Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi (New York, 1968), 291-292.

people. Some were affected directly because they were workers and leaders during the movement. Others paid with their lives for the cause of civil rights. Men and women both contributed to the movement. More men had positions of leadership; however, this in no way means that women did not play critical roles in the success of the Civil Rights Movement. The question of why women did not have more leadership roles resounds in recent studies of the movement. Many historians have speculated that because women, before the fight for women's rights, did not have positions of leadership in society, they did not have these positions in the Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, they present the latter Women's Rights Movement as the reason women, such as Fannie Lou Hamer, were able to attain success nationally. This conclusion is too narrow. It cannot be denied that the women's liberation had a role in the position of women in the Civil Rights Movement; however, that role has been exaggerated. The personalities and accomplishments of the civil rights workers, and their ethos, played a role more important to their success in gaining national attention that the movement for women's rights did. More important to determining a woman's national attention was her personality and extraordinary accomplishments.

Moll Flanders and the "Bloody Code's" Moral

Keith Pogue

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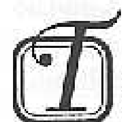

The early eighteenth century marked a period of remarkable evolution in English criminal law. While the "bloody code" and other similar pieces of legislation created more felonies, fewer people in fact were executed.[1] There was a greater concern about the pervasiveness of crime, especially in London. The literature of the time reflects a fascination in crime and punishment in works such as *Moll Flanders and The Newgate Calendar.* Historians have argued over the causes and affects crimes have on many periods, but the debate centered on the early eighteenth-century is particularly interesting, precisely because these were watershed years in English law.

E.P. Thompson and his followers, such as John Beattie, analyzed efforts to curb crime in the 1700's employing a Marxist view of class struggle. During the 1960's and early 1970's these historians classified nearly everything in terms of a proletariat struggle against a small elite upper class. They failed to explain the "bloody code" completely because they ignored the eighteenth-century moral view of crime. Most people, not just the elite, viewed crime as resulting from poverty and moral failure. The eighteenth-century English legislative efforts to curb crime

[1] John Beattie, "London Crime and the Making of the 'Bloody Code,' 1689-1718," *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750,* eds. Lee Davison, (New York, 1992), 49.

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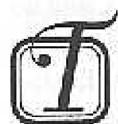

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were concerned with more than ideas to control the lower classes.[2]

A purely economic social class analysis of the criminal legislative efforts of the eighteenth century required Thompson and others to explain the "bloody code's" operation. The "bloody code" listed more felonious crimes, yet paradoxically fewer people were executed. Thompson and like-minded historians explain this dichotomy in terms of control. The legislators realized they were giving more control to the magistrate's members of their own class. These magistrates now had life and death decisions over the lower classes. Either decision enhanced the magistrate's power: if he granted mercy, the accused owed him his life, and he could always have him killed. The upper class aimed at establishing more control over the lower classes, or re-establishing control that was waning.[3]

Historians subsequent to Thompson and Beattie have recognized their contributions, but have criticized their single focus on class struggle. Some historians have asserted that the evolution of the judicial legislation actually capped the upper classes' spheres of influence in many ways.[4] These historians try to pinpoint the causes and influences that made Parliament pass these measures and have focused on motivations, and possible influences upon the legislators.

One group of authors has focused on the context of war and peace, asserting that crime received more emphasis during peacetime.[5] During war, these historians assert, many young men left the country and the government concerned itself with the waging of war, while legislative efforts to curb crime were placed on the back burner. Other historians have focused on the influence of London and the city's merchants upon parliament. Shopkeepers in London who faced shoplifters and the business of pawnbro-

[2] Joanna Innes and John Styles, "The crime wave: Recent Writing On Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century England," *Rethinking Social History: English Society 1570-1920,* (Manchester, 1993), 202-3.

[3] Ibid., 204.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Beattie, "London Crime and the Making of the 'Bloody Code,' 1689-1718," 50.

kers and fencers clamored for changes in the law.[6] Some historians point to the lawyers at bar whose influence in Parliament was felt. The attorneys and magistrates realized the privilege of clergy was not a deterrent and intermediate punishments were needed. There are several views of what motivated Parliament members to pass the "bloody codes." None of these views, however, discuss the moral aspect of crime completely.[7]

There were several reasons for the criminal legislative efforts of eighteenth-century England which culminated in the "bloody code." Popular literature, such as *Moll Flanders*, reveals the fascination eighteenth-century readers had with crime. The novel is written from a career criminal's point of view. Defoe's portrayals in Moll Flanders illustrate his own views of criminals' motivations, not just for the lead character, but other criminals characters in the novel. This novel and other such popular literature of the time portrayed crime as resulting not just from poverty, but moral failure as well. Understanding how eighteenth-century people viewed criminals through popular literature can aid in understanding their efforts to curb crime.[8]

Defoe's *Moll Flanders* reflects many of the realties of eighteenth-century London. The work, written in 1722, is supposedly set thirty too fifty years before its publication. The city London, as presented in *Moll Flanders*, is more closely akin to that of the eighteenth-century. It gives the reader an insight into how people viewed crime. The title character of Moll Flanders fell into a life of crime because of poverty, but recognized it as a moral failing. When Moll is struggling to find a bite to eat she says that she used to recite, "the wise man's prayer, 'Give me not poverty, lest I steal." This quote sums up nicely the view of criminality: when poverty affects a person, temptation comes. The relationship between temptation and moral failure is reinforced

[6] Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited,* (London, 1987), 250.

[7] Beattie, "London Crime and the Making of the 'Bloody Code,' 1689-1718," 55.

[8] Douglas Hay, "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law," *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England,* eds. Douglas Hay and others (New York, 1989), 22.

by the quote being in a prayer.[9]

Defoe's Moll does fall to the temptations of crime, but again this is couched in moral terms. The poverty brought Moll to the point of temptation, but the Devil took her over the edge: "This was the bait; and the devil,... [said]...'Take the bundle; be quick; do it this moment.'"[10] Poverty delivered Moll to this point, but moral failings caused her to maintain crime as a way of life: "as poverty brought me in, so avarice kept me in, till there was no going back."[11] Only later, when Moll has been condemned to death, does she turn back and confess all her crimes to a priest. When she does this she is delivered from a life of crime, and her life is saved. Crime, although motivated by money, is an issue of morality for Defoe.

The Newgate Calendar in many ways mirrors the presentation of *Moll Flanders*. Both works are presented as examples of what not to do, and the consequences of moral failure in criminals. The content of both written works describe crime thoroughly, but offer only cursory attention to the moral issues. The works call upon the moral example argument to insulate themselves and their readers from admitting that they are fascinated by stories of moral failure and crime. The moral used in the story recognizes both the public's fascination with crime and the view that crime can only occur as a result of moral failure. The main distinction between the works is that the confessions in *The Newgate Calendar* come from prisoners condemned to die, whereas *Moll Flanders* is fiction.

The authors of *The Newgate Calendar* often commented on the confessors' moral failings and the magnitude of their temptations. They commented about a determined criminal's restraint saying, "To religion more than to the terrors of the law do we owe our safety."[12] Crime appears as a tool of the Devil, a temptation to sin for those who are most vulnerable. The comments of a woman named Mary Adams indicates that her master was blamed for leading her down the road of sin by seducing her.[13] Many of the confessions involving women blame others for tempting the women, because women, the authors' suggest, are vulnerable to seduction. The lesson the authors draw from most of the confessions is that one must avoid situations that will lead to great temptation. Friends and spouses must be chosen carefully, church attended regularly, and the body kept busy with industry and work.

The London Gazette generally did not concern itself with crime, except occasionally to report new legislation passed in Parliament. The second page advertisements of these papers give some insight into London crime. Several assumptions can be made about an advertisement placed in a paper such as *The London Gazette*. First, the person placing the advertisement must have had some money to place an advertisement in the paper. Second, the person placing the advertisement expected it to be read by middle or upper class people. Only those of a higher class could afford the education to read and money for a newspaper.

Many advertisements in a 1716 issue of *The London Gazette* concerning crime or lost items, were dominated by soldiers who had deserted and stolen horses.[14] By the year 1719, a majority of the advertisements were concerned with servants who had stolen from their masters and fled.[15] While this seems to lend support to the theory of action against crime in peacetime, in fact the advertisements are very similar. When the nation was at war, the officers were naturally drawn from the gentry. They viewed their soldiers much as an artisan viewed his apprentice – from a patriarchal view. Some of the advertisements had an angry tone. Others, however, read like pleas for lost sheep to come home. All of the advertisements are concerned with disobedience of those of lower station. Most seem concerned with punishment of those individuals rather than return or recovery of the stolen goods.

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[9] Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* (London, 1722; New York, 1989), 9.
[10] Ibid., 142.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin, *The Newgate Calendar: Comprising Interesting Memoirs of the Most Notorious Characters Who Have Been Convicted of Outrages on the Laws of England Since the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century.* (London, 1824), 25.

[13] Ibid., 28.
[14] *The London Gazette*, 1716.
[15] *The London Gazette*, 1719.

The London Gazette advertisements were written chiefly by and for the upper class. These advertisements reflect the elites' frustration with the disobedience of the lower class. This reinforces the validity of Thompson's analysis of crime legislation of the period in terms of class struggle. The upper class is attempting to keep the lower class in line. The angry tone of advertisements found in newspapers reflect the moral outrage directed at criminals. Those advertisements that call for the servant to come home portray the servant as merely misguided. These ads reflect the upper class's desire for all men and women to follow proper moral behavior. When the law failed to punish those who did not, *The London Gazette* provided another avenue for remedy.

The Criminal Code

The eighteenth-century English criminal code culminated in the Bloody Code. The factors bringing about certain changes have been debated, and a definitive answer is perhaps beyond us at this late date. Thompson's view that criminal law was an attempt to protect the property and lives of the elite by the use of selective terror prompted Lawrence Stone to respond: "What else has the criminal law ever done?"[16] Both Thompson's statement and Stone's criticism, however, are too narrow. Beattie asserts scenario that a small group of Londoners on the Parliament bench instigated the "bloody code" legislation.[17] Moll Flanders for instance commits her crimes in the city of London. The first victim of her stealing is a shopkeeper.[18] Middle class shop owners, lawyers, and magistrates all played a role in passing these measures. Poverty stricken people were naturally faced with the temptation to commit crime, and it was this temptation that must be addressed. The authors of The Newgate Calendar make this very point at the end of several of the memoirs, that one must avoid temptations. This lesson is presented in the memoir of Thomas Estrich who was executed for housebreaking. *The Newgate*

[16]Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited*, 247.
[17]Beattie, "London Crime and the Making of the 'Bloody Code,' 1689-1718," 64.
[18]Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, 142.

Calendar author's argue that Mr. Estrich was essentially a good man, but placed himself in bad company, and therefore, in temptation. They conclude his memoir thus: "avoid every appearance of evil, and to remember ... [the]... scripture if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."[19]

Parliament members suggested in legislative debates that the rising number of incidents of shoplifting in London were attributed to the numerous fences willing to accept stolen goods. The Parliament members wanted to pass legislation making the receiving of stolen goods a felony. The underlying logic of this was not just to protect the London shopkeepers, but to remove or lessen the potential thief's temptation.[20]

Criminal reform was a priority of eighteenth-century Parliament members and providing a path to moral reform was an important consideration. Many attorneys and magistrates asserted that the practice of granting the benefit of clergy to first time offenders did not provide a sufficient deterrent to prevent crime. An offender merely had to recite a few words and was branded on the thumb. A measure was passed to have the brand placed upon the cheek, instead of the thumb. Many who were branded on the cheek could not get work and were forced back into a life of crime. Eventually, recognizing this, parliament reverted to the branding of the thumb.[21] The policy had been implemented to deter crime and to reform the criminal, but produced the opposite result. Parliament returned to the former practice to change the criminal's mindset, to provide a real opportunity to reform.

The criminal code of England in the eighteenth century, as most, attempted to provide deter crime. Punishment was offered as a counter to the temptations of crime. More than this, the code sought to reduce the temptations of crime. Parliament was guided not only by its interest in protecting property, but by its view of contemporary criminals and their motives. Reduction of temptation aided in protecting property, but also protected the moral

[19]Knapp and Baldwin, *The Newgate Calendar*, 37.
[20]Beattie, "London Crime and the Making of the 'Bloody Code,' 1689-1718," 64. This is the pattern much of the crime legislation was introduced under according to Beattie.
[21]Ibid.

welfare of those tempted by crime. Forcing, or helping, the potential criminal to do the right thing was a factor. Defoe's *Moll Flanders* is faced with execution, but the intervention of a priest on her behalf saves her. The priest is upset, however, when Moll asks to be transported, "The good minister,... mourned sincerely. I should have ended my days under the influence of [his] good instruction, [and not] turned loose again among such a wretched crew as are thus sent aboard."[22] The upper class was motivated by self-interest in their property, but the formation of a more virtuous society also concerned them.

Historians who ignore or give cursory examination to the moral motivations of parliament cannot understand why these men enacted more and more of this legislation. Douglas Hay for instance states: "Eighteenth-century lawyers were well aware that never before had the legislature passed such a mass of new capital statutes so quickly. They floundered, however, when seeking for explanations. Many men, including learned ones, blame the ever increasing depravity of the people."[23] Douglas Hay as so many other historians have missed the point. These men did not flounder as to explain why more felonies were needed. They felt that society's morals were in decline. The great number of new felony crimes introduced under the "bloody code" was an attempt in many of these men's minds to set the country back on the correct moral path.

Criminal Sentencing Procedure

The magistrate of a criminal court had enormous power in sentencing an offender. While juries often refused to convict persons of felonies, once they did the criminal's life was in the hands of the magistrate. Most first offense criminals were afforded the benefit of clergy, but as laws were reformed this practice became less available. The magistrate could still grant conditional mercy, usually under the condition that the accused either be transported to the colonies or join the armed forces in

[22] Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, 150.
[23] Hay, "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law," 19-20

times of war. This practice was eventually encoded by parliament, and transportation became a major form of punishment. Thompson and others have maintained that this discretion was used to empower the elite. The practice of most magistrates during this time does not support this claim. Magistrates often dismissed cases for the slightest technical flaw in procedure. Further, the addition of more punishments gave the magistrate a choice to sentence the offender upon a course of reform.[24]

The criminal procedure of eighteenth-century England clearly reflected the societal relationships of the time. Society was viewed in terms of patronage, the elite directing and caring for the lower classes. Perhaps all governments may be reduced to a view of a father caring for children. It is too narrow, however, to view eighteenth-century England purely in terms of people fighting for economic interests. There was also a concern for the moral welfare of the people as well. Whereas benefit of clergy was viewed as an insufficient deterrent and death as the ultimate deterrent, a magistrate sentencing a prisoner to transportation to the colonies, has given both a deterrent and a chance for reform.[25]

Conclusion

The "bloody codes" of eighteenth-century England came to be for a number of reasons. Thompson's analysis of the criminal code and procedure in terms of class struggle does shed some light on certain underlying motives behind the "bloody code." Popular literature, such as *Moll Flanders* and the *Newgate Calendar* can help in understanding criminals and their motivations. All crime portrayed in these fictional sources involved a moral failure on the part of the criminal [or society]. Poverty and class struggle are insufficient to fully explain the eighteenth-century efforts to halt crime. Failure to consider the moral implications of eighteenth-century English criminal codes is to ignore at least, an important aspect of the "bloody code."

[24] Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited*, 247.
[25] Hay, "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law," 25.

Arthur Young and His Views of Pre-Revolutionary France

Jacob Tolbert

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Arthur Young's *Travels in France During the Years 1787, 1788, 1789,* paints a picture of France immediately before the Revolution. Not only does it give a first hand, detailed description of the life of peasants, both their possessions or lack thereof and the oppression under which they lived, but he also gives a contemporary commentary on the justification of revolutionary acts. Reading closely Young's diary of his travels and the appended commentary, we can come to understand not only the motives behind the rural part of the French Revolution, but also gain insight into the English Enlightenment that watched it happen.

Young's primary purpose in traveling throughout France was not to see firsthand the causes and effects of a revolution. Rather, each of the trips was an agricultural research mission. Young was a squire from Suffolk and a well-known gentleman farmer. As agriculture was his main interest, he sought to do what he could to improve agriculture in England. To do so, he sought to bring as many good ideas from as many places as possible. Pamela Horn describes this practice as one of the major schools of agricultural improvement in Young's day, a school that sought to replace the archaic, feudal ideas of farming with new ideas derived both from experimentation and from outside England.[1] Thus

[1] Pamela Horn, "The Contribution of the Propagandist to Eighteenth-Century Agricultural Improvement," *Historical Journal* (1982), 321.

Young decided to make several journeys with the intent of gathering agricultural knowledge, journeys that took him to both Ireland and France.

According to Benjamin Sexaur, England had been in a dynamic period of agricultural growth that was peaking around the same time Young made his travels.[2] Unfortunately, Sexaur also tells us, French agriculture had been relatively static during this period. This left the common French person in a poor situation, as agricultural technology was not developed enough to provide a large enough surplus of food. Sexaur comments that the average French peasant was too close to subsistence level to save for agricultural improvement.[3] By 1789, John Markoff notes, conflicts and complaints based on subsistence were widespread.[4]

This unfortunate circumstance was compounded by several more unfortunate circumstances. First, due to the lack of surplus, agriculture for market use was scarce, only found around urban areas, particularly Paris, the only significantly large city. Sexaur claims that this lack of surplus influenced the improvement of agriculture or the lack of competition allowing farmers to be content in their mediocrity. Furthermore, the enforcement of seigniorial rights, or the rights of the local lord, kept peasants oppressed. John Markoff describes the things that, in feudalistic fashion, peasants were forced to use: the lord's mill, oven, and winepress. They were also forced to harvest on the date the lord set, have judicial cases tried in his court, and suffer the game that the lord would hunt to destroy precious crops.[5] These rights kept peasants locked into the feudal system, keeping them tied to the lord and the facilities he provided, whether or not the lord himself was present. The final things that inhibited agricultural and economic growth in pre revolu-

[2] Benjamin Sexaur, "English and French Agriculture in the Late EighteenthCentury," *Agricultural History* (1976), 491.

[3] Sexaur, "English and French Agriculture," 498.

[4] John Markoff, "Peasant Grievances and Peasant Insurrection: France in 1789," *Journal of Modern History* (1990), 470.

[5] John Markoff, "Violence Emancipation, and Democracy," *American HistoricalReview* (1995), 364.

tionary France were the heavy taxes and tithes the peasants were required to pay. The common people struggled to raise crops. Most of what they did raise was taxed away by the state, the nobility, and the church, leaving little for the commoner to live on, let alone save in order to improve the production of his or her own farming. Guy Lemarchand describes this as a society "administered for the benefit of the minority by an absolute monarchy, which was legitimized by a religious ideology and supported by the bishops of the Catholic Church." [6] Finally, Sexaur asserts, those who were rich, who received the benefit of the taxes, who held most of the country's wealth, had no interest in agricultural improvement.[7] Thus, French agriculture, the activity that produced the food upon which most peasants lived, was ignored, taxed, and oppressed into feudal mediocrity.

This was the France in which Young traveled. The France against which he reacted so strongly within Travels, both in the diary part and his commentary on the revolution. First in the diary section of the book in which Young records his travels, he indicts French poverty with several examples. Note that it is the poverty itself that Young indicts, not the impoverished. In fact, Young places the blame on others. One example of this is the lack of shoes and stockings Young sees in the people of Languedoc. Nor is this the only such description.[8] Another such incident is one that Young himself describes as "a sign of poverty I observed." [9] This vignette places women picking weeds, putting them in their aprons, and taking them home for fodder for their cows. It is a vivid illustration of the French peasants' lack of food, as they did not have enough good pastureland to provide their livestock with adequate food, let alone have the grain to provide them with quality meal. Sexaur notes that Young describes the quantity of sheep and cattle in France as "everywhere

[6] Guy Lemarchand, "France on the Eve of the Revolution: A Society in Crisis or a Crisis of Politics?" *Science & Society* (1990), 268.

[7] Sexaur, "English and French Agriculture," 498.

[8] Arthur Young, *Arthur Young's Travels in Europe During the Years 1787, 1788,1789* ed. Betham-Edwards, 4th ed. (London, 1892), 45.

[9] Ibid., 28.

trifling in comparison to what it ought to be." [10] The final and most dramatic example of rural poverty is in the discussion he has with a peasant woman. He records what she tells him about the property her family owns: a morsel of land, one cow, and a poor little horse. He then describes the taxes she has to pay. To one lord she has to pay a *franchar*, or 42 pounds, of wheat and 3 chickens, and to another, four *franchars* of oats, and one chicken. Her body, Young says, makes her appear to be between 60 and 70 years old, yet upon her account she is found to be 28.[11] These descriptions, while not the only examples of peasant poverty in *Travels*, are dynamic examples of what Young saw on his three journeys.

From these three examples, Young's position on the poverty of rural France emerges. The very fact that these incidents are included indicates Young's perspective. Their inclusion demonstrates Young's recognition of the social strata, that the peasant's poverty was not necessarily a result of a God-given, and thus, immutable hierarchy. Furthermore, these examples do not attack the peasants themselves and are not included to demonstrate the pathetic nature of the peasant, a nature which would allow these peasants to sink into such a miserable state, as Young's commentary on the Revolution demonstrates.

Young's diary could be interpreted in an ambivalent way, supporting either the nobility or the peasants. His commentary can not. Throughout it, Young maintains that he could not justify the excesses of people as they took up arms. Yet he clearly understands and supports the motivation of the people. He inveighs against many of the French institutions. First, he attacks those that held power in particular areas, adjusting taxes as they see fit, at the expense of the peasants, for the nobility and clergy, Young bitterly notes, are exempted from this tax.[12] He refers to seigniorial rights as a "horrible law" [13] and calls the justice system "partial,

[10] Young, as quoted in Sexaur, "English and French Agriculture," 286.

[11] Ibid., 197.

[12] Ibid., 314.

[13] Ibid., 318.

venal, and in- famous."[14] Young's ideals supporting the French people are summed up in one statement: "But is it really the people to whom we are to impute as a whole, or to their oppressors who had kept them so long in a state of bondage?"[15] Thus, Young, seeing the tragedy of rural France firsthand, inveighed against the French nobility that had oppressed the peasants for so long.

Seeing this in Young, we can see a major difference between English and French societies before the French Revolution, derived, at least in part, from agriculture. Young, as with many of the other English gentry, were interested in farming and the dynamic development of English agriculture. With the gentry interested in agriculture, it became necessary for them to be concerned with the welfare of those working in the fields. Thus, as the gentry were involved in the English political scene, they acted to influence this well being in at least two ways. First, they opposed legislation that would inhibit the local farmer from being productive, or more importantly, progressive. Secondly, they were willing to act, as Young did, to improve agriculture in their country, the improvement of which would improve the welfare of those in the lower classes who were dependent upon agriculture for their financial and subsistence well-being. None of this was seen in France. The nobility was willing to live at the expense of the peasant.

Young condemns this lack of concern. He attacks the lack of justice, the nobility's exemption of taxes, and their failure not only to observe their oppression of the peasants, but to correct that oppression. In Young's *Travels*, we see an indirect yet strong case for civil rights. With the end of the medieval age and the fall of the ideal of the Great Chain of Being, and the rise of the humanistic, individualistic ideal, the value of individual people had risen and taken hold strongly in England. The oppression of the French peasant, as Young observed, was an offense to the more modern ideal. The nobility lived without qualm off of the hard work of the peasant. Such a way of life assumes that the

[14] Ibid., 320.
[15] Ibid., 322.

peasants were given a certain lot in life, a poor lot, and that the hierarchy of the day was a natural, God-given one. Young's opposition to the results of this worldview proves the difference between the more modern English and the more feudal French views.

Furthermore, because Young does not attack the French ideal, but rather attacks the effects thereof, we can see an elementary difference between the medieval and modern worlds. With medieval scholasticism, the educated people debated in terms of philosophy, and while that philosophy was often rooted in reality and the mundane aspects of life during debate, the subject was held at a sort of intellectual distance. Points were debated with the intention of refuting the philosophy of the opponents. With Young we can see this start to change. He does not attack the archaic philosophy of the Great Chain of Being that can be seen in the attitudes of the French nobility. Instead, he attacks the actions and the cruelties that derive from this attitude.

In this, we can see two things. First, the spread of education becomes obvious. In the age of scholasticism, only a few outside the clergy were educated enough to write. Thus, any works we have of that time that attack a certain behavior are intent on attacking the philosophies that drive people to those behaviors. Young, however, is neither part of the clergy, nor someone who is attacking a philosophy. In that he is part of the gentry and attacking behavior rather than philosophy, we can see the fall of scholasticism and the rise of the educated laity. Secondly, we can see the influences of the Enlightenment in Young. As a result of the despiritualization of society that was such a strong force in the Enlightenment, Young never calls the nobility unchristian or attacks its spiritual state. More importantly, Young's major reason to support the peasants in their overthrow of oppression is that he believes that it was the oppression of the peasantry that was hindering the development of more modern agricultural processes in France. John Markoff suggests "that the innovative ideas of the Enlightenment helped influence the masses

to question the status quo."[16] Young was obviously influenced by these ideals as well, being a proponet of progress, one of the main goals of the Enlightenment. In fact, the very reason he was in France was to bring new ideas to England, to help English agriculture to progress.

Thus, through Arthur Young's *Travels in France During the Years 1787, 1788, 1789*, we can see several things. First, we have a very specific, detailed, and first-hand view of not only the poverty of rural France, but the things that locked the impoverished in their condition, the poor agricultural conditions, the seigniorial rights, the heavy taxes on the peasantry, and the apathy of the nobility. Second, we see Young supporting the attack on the nobility due to their oppression of the peasants, something that lets us see not only the lack of medieval influence on Young as a representative of the English gentry, but the strong Enlightenment influence. Through Young, then, although his influence was strongly technically agricultural, we get a brilliant picture of the agricultural cultures of both France and England.

[16] John Markoff, "The Social Geography of Rural Revolt at the Beginning of the French Revolution," *American Sociological Review* (1985), 766.

The Jewish Diffusion of French Nationalism

Perry Hill, IV

Perry Hill, IV, is junior Social Science major with plans of becoming a high school teacher and administrator.

Nineteenth-century French nationalism was a force that united citizens under the mandate of homogeneity. This national unity generated beliefs of governmental loyalty and state brotherhood; however, this form of unity also created an environment in which the masses perceived non-French diversity as a threat to internal cohesion. National acceptance of French Catholicism further added to growing hostility since it justified the persecution of non-Christian people as a divine and civic responsibility. The unification brought about by nationalism offered France many positive rewards, but it also supported the alienation of citizens who refused to conform to new French ways. An example of this alienation occurred between the French people and the Jewish-French population. Many French citizens believed that willing submission to the ruling government aided in prosperity. Also, nationalistic French citizens believed France should receive priority in the lives of all its loyal citizens. Yet many French Jews refused to compromise their culture and became nonconformists to the bustling spirit of French nationalism. Unfortunately, the Jews encountered bitter resentment due to their growing affluence as well as their differing religion. The hostility grew so great that Theodor Herzl wrote *The Jewish State* to offer Jewish people a plan to create a refuge from centuries of disenfranchisement and anti-Semitic abuse. Herzl's experience with French nationalism, however, had positive repercussions as

to question the status quo."[16] Young was obviously influenced by these ideals as well, being a proponet of progress, one of the main goals of the Enlightenment. In fact, the very reason he was in France was to bring new ideas to England, to help English agriculture to progress.

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he borrowed from the French nationalistic movement. Theodor Herzl's *The Jewish State* used ideas found within nineteenth-century French nationalism and adapted these ideas to Jewish traditions in order to support his call for a united Jewish State.

French liberty, equality and fraternity shaped Herzl's outlook of Jewish treatment. Nineteenth-century France embodied the spirit of nationalism by emphasizing common links among French citizens. These links greatly helped the French army rise to success by promoting ideas of defending "the great republic" and offering a renewed hope to the French people through trust in the nation rather than a specific regime. As a result, notions of national loyalty emerged in the nineteenth century. This inclusive spirit, however, excluded the Jews. Jewish non-conformity to French culture caused much resentment and evoked great hatred. Herzl witnessed one of his friends, a Jewish officer of the French General Staff named Dreyfus, wrongfully arrested and unjustly convicted of treason. Although he later gained freedom in a second trial, the anti-Semitism displayed by the French public outraged Herzl. He wondered how a land that boasted of liberty, equality, and fraternity could resort to framing an official and rigging the first trial based on one's Jewish background.[1] This event proved to Herzl that Jews may reside in a nation, but their lack of conformity caused them to become unaccepted by the masses. Therefore, Herzl sought to engineer the creation of a state where Jews could live peacefully under the centrality of the Jewish faith.

Judaism provided Herzl with a common link with which all Jews could identify. Herzl adapted the idea of homogeneity from French nationalism. He believed this common link would persuade other Jews to support his efforts for a Jewish State. Also, the religious foundation and the traditional Jewish idea of a return to Israel generated opinions that a greater Jewish identity would come from citizenship to a Jewish nation.[2] Herzl united

[1] Ian J. Bickerton, *A Concise History of the Arab-Israel Conflict* (Englewood, NJ, 1991), 23.

[2] Hillel Halkin, "After Zionism: reflections on Israel and the Diaspora," *Commentary* 103 (June 1997): 25.

equality, fraternity, and liberty in his state by emphasizing that Jews represented a united people under the Hebrew faith. He also stated that Jews suffered numerous attacks throughout the Diaspora and that they would nurture equality for their fellow Jewish brothers by upholding the right to liberty of which most Christian nations had deprived them. He maintained that peace would ensue if every Jew relocated to the new country because persecution would stop against them in other nations. Herzl's experience in France convinced him "that anti-Semitism was an incurable Gentile pathology."[3]

The issue of assimilation caused hardships for a dispersed population. Herzl stated that assimilation remained an option of which Jews would never partake. He claimed the success of his people and the peculiarity of Jewish practices would limit the acceptance of assimilation by any non-Jewish society. Although many nations encouraged this act of achieving national homogeneity, immense jealousy and profound ignorance severed the tie of Judaism to any national authority other than a Jewish State.[4] Furthermore, Jewish tradition and the intense study of the religion restricted non-Jewish assimilation and caused conflicts.[5] Herzl believed the Jewish State must exist to unite his people under the only binding force that had helped them survive: their religion.

Herzl organized his ideal State to secure individual loyalty among the new population. He did this by enabling the State to address the needs of the citizens. Also, he began by creating two distinct organizations to manage the affairs of this State. The first group received the name The Jewish Company. This body would manage financial affairs and handle land distribution. The second group received the name The Society of the Jews. The Society of the Jews would be devoted to taking actions that would aid in governing the lives of its citizens. Although these two bodies would operate with two distinct objectives, their exist-

[3] Ibid., 26.

[4] Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, "Assimilation and Jewish Existence," *Jewish Existence in an Open Society* (Los Angeles, 1970), 71.

[5] Hillel Halkin, "After Zionism: reflections on Israel and the Diaspora," 29.

ence and actions would legitimize the authority and power of the State. The progress achieved by these two government-supported programs would appease the population and decrease the possibility of rebellion and dissension. In addition, the fact that Herzl favored rule by an oligarchy supported the notion that state incentives could suppress future opposition. Therefore, Herzl constantly reminded Jews that these groups would work for unity within Jewish progress.

The Jewish Company would force the citizens to maintain a strong reliance on the State. The Jewish Company would provide transitional aide to vital aspects of the Jewish State. This company would resemble that of a joint-stock company and would have the responsibility of securing land under the terms of international law and the legitimacy of civil law. Once territorial ownership of either Argentina or Palestine had been transferred into Jewish possession, this company would devise a method of distribution and begin work on the national infrastructure. Also, this company would implement mass production industry and serve as a major immigrant transporter to support incoming citizenship. In addition, this body would have the authority to liquidate immovable assets belonging to the incoming population within the parameters of a profit motivated market. Ultimately, the Jewish Company would provide essential services to entice more Jewish migrants and to build a society which promoted liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Herzl tied the common people to his cause by providing them with opportunities. He did this by declaring that the readiness of the state would depend on the willingness of unskilled workers to immigrate first. This order would enable poor, unskilled laborers to acquire property and possessions by working on the infrastructure of the State. Herzl also derived an idea which compared his State to a "Promised Land" whose future rested on its classification as "a land of labor."[6] Herzl initiated such propaganda to attract Jews, but also to motivate the laborers of this

[6] Israel S. Chipkin, "Judaism and Social Welfare," *The Jews: Their history, culture, and religion* (New York, 1960), 1067.

task. Under Herzl's plan, the Jewish Company would serve as the foundation for the future state by providing "material assistance." Therefore, the state would aid and benefit from poor Jews while offering them an opportunity for newfound success. He also guaranteed workers the right to work overtime to secure additional money as well as incentives like ownership of a home.

The basis for authority in the State centered on the centrality of moral behavior. Herzl believed citizens had to owe allegiance to The Society of the Jews since it represented the governmental aspect of his movement. Also, he maintained that this society would have the duty of creating a constitution based on the morality of the Jewish religion.[7] The adaptation of religious morality to the law ensured the further longevity of Judaism within all aspects of societal life. Judaism represented the strength of each Jewish citizen, and its presence within the law prompted others to never forget the past troubles and present victories of the Jews. Under the spirit of nationalism, Herzl stated that the society had an obligation to draw citizens into national unity by creating a flag which would serve as an emblem of pride and an army which would defend the nation and symbolize national power. This power would signify that Jews endured and transformed nineteenth-century French nationalism from a motivation for Jewish persecution into a motivation for Jewish perseverance.

Theodor Herzl created *The Jewish State* to provide Jews with the "Promised Land" from which they were expelled. Although Herzl perceived his actions as countering the hostile plight of Jews in France, his actions represented the central aspects of French nationalism. In his plan, Herzl united his people under Judaism and used such governmental agencies as the Society of Jews and the Jewish Company to build a belief that the upcoming government could meet the needs of Jews. Also, the homogeneity, which had disgusted Herzl in France, appeared in *The Jewish State* by connecting religion and the government to the unifying force of patriotism.

[7] Mordecai Kaplan, "A Philosophy of Jewish Ethics," *The Jews: Their history, culture, and religion* (New York, 1960), 1011.

Gendered Religion: A Sample from American Protestantism

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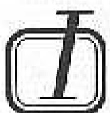

n the Christian tradition, religious institutions claim a wide responsibility in shaping the moral values of their adherents and, through them, society at large. Carrying the presumed imprimatur of divine sanction, religious institutions are powerful forces in the definition of self, of family, and of relationships among their believers. Yet these institutions are also shaped by the economic and social forces affecting their members. Since religion, viewed as a set of institutions, both shapes and is shaped by society as a whole, it is possible to examine it on the same basis as other social institutions in the context of gendered history. This essay is not intended to be an examination of the intricacies of religious doctrines. The doctrines of American Protestant denominations draw much of their gender role definitions from similar Biblical sources. Under examination in this historiographical essay is the institutionalization of gender roles within religious denominations, the renegotiations in gender roles in the period between 1880 and 1940, and the role of social and economic factors in those negotiations.

Jean Friedman's *The Enclosed Garden* examines how early nineteenth-century female gender roles were defined and circumscribed by the interplay of evangelical churches, kinship relationships, and community relations. Evelyn Higginbotham in *Righteous Discontent* shows how in the later nineteenth century gender roles within the black Baptist church were renegotiated

under the impetus of racial advancement and with the assistance of northern white Baptist women. A more conservative example of gender role institutionalization is examined by Lois Boyd and R. Douglas Brackenridge in *Presbyterian Women in America*. The negotiating of gender roles within Fundamentalism is explored by Betty DeBerg in *Ungodly Women* and Margaret Bendroth in *Fundamentalism & Gender*. Finally, articles by Karen and Pamela Nickless and Priscilla Brewer addresses issues of gender quality and economic and community authority in Shaker settlements.

Friedman characterizes Southern society as an evangelical community where kinship was the determining factor in social relationships. Geographically widespread kinship groups formed communities centered around local churches, which were the main social forum in a region generally devoid of urbanization. The few urban areas existing in the South retained this kinship social structure because their mercantile basis did not force them to face the same pressures of a large, young, and mostly single industrial class as developed in the urban areas of the North. Within this kinship structure of Southern society, the evangelical churches served both as the main source of reinforcement of social contact among kinship groups and as a major source of social discipline, aimed at intensifying family unity and control. A part of this social discipline involved the preservation of traditional rural gender roles.[1]

Given this characterization of Southern society, Friedman examines three basic ideas: the shaping of Southern white women's concepts of their social and work roles; the effect of religious conversion into a mixed race evangelical community on the self-identity of black women; and the effect of the Civil War on the Southern evangelical community. Friedman's analysis puts the church meetinghouse as a central physical and social structure of Southern communities. The church defined the community socially, by reinforcing kinship bonds and family structure, and morally, by instilling in the community a single defini

[1] Jean E. Friedman, The Enclosed Garden: *Women and Community in the Evangelical South*, 1830-1900 (Chapel Hill, 1985), ix - xii.

tion of acceptable behavior through the instrument of religious conversion. While kinship groups were racially segregated, the evangelical community was not. Those saved through the process of conversion, regardless of their legal status, shared the duty of dispensing discipline for the physical community as a whole. The process of church discipline enforced adherence to gender roles in the community. Church discipline was in itself gendered—females generally had no right to vote on disciplinary actions and female transgressions (since women were regarded as the guardians of family morals) were usually punished more severely than male sins.[2]

The evangelical church helped determine women's roles in society largely through its patriarchal nature. Society perceived separate women's religious and secular gatherings as highly improper, since they interfered with the family bonding structure and female domestic and farmstead duties. Likewise, during mixed gender religious classes, the lack of male empathy for women's spiritual problems and the habitual subordinate role women played in Southern households discouraged women from speaking. The church and the kinship structure of society, both dominated by males, tended to reinforce each other in subordinating women internally and isolating them from contact with outside influences. These fixed gender roles for women made marriage their only viable career option. Theoretically, marriage was a partnership in which women had the right to expect male assistance in her domestic sphere; however, male assistance was rarely offered on a regular and continuing basis. This tilted the burden of labor in Southern households unfavorably toward women, whose labor was expected to be offered freely to assist a husband or male relatives. A southern woman's industry reinforced her productive and her social and emotional commitment to the unequal partnership of marriage. Any frustrations or resentments with this situation tended to be internalized as personal concerns due to her relative isolation from other women in

[2] Ibid., 15-17.

the rural south. The degree to which a southern woman could resolve the internalized struggle between the desire for personal autonomy and the expectations of the community determined how well she could be integrated into the full membership of the evangelical community.[3]

Turning to the question of the self-identity of black women in relation to conversion, Friedman argues that although kinship was important in the African-American slave communities, the mothers assumed a larger share of the responsibility for the well-being of the slave family than did mothers in white families. Evangelical faith and conversion experiences played a large role in determining the values of the slave communities. The unique interpretation that slaves placed on evangelicalism and conversion served to empower females and allowed black women to achieve a group consciousness that southern white women lacked. Black conversion imagery, generally maternal in nature, reflected both the powerful feminine components of African religions and the importance of slave women in black slave society as an economic resource capable of gaining special privileges through contact with the master or the master's family. Slave communities regarded black conversions as a chronological process, recalling the generational nature of African identity, which was fundamentally rooted in the female power to bear children. Thus, black women converts gained influence in the slave communities, even among the unconverted, by tapping into the African symbology of women as the mediators between the past and present and life and death. Also, since all members of the elect community had the same spiritual rights, the church offered slave converts a measure of equality with the white community. Black women converts were subject to the same disciplinary standards as white women; however, few black women were subjected to church discipline, Friedman argues, because of the higher importance the black community placed upon conversion as a right of passage to adulthood. As youths, blacks enjoyed a relative

[3] Ibid., 18, 37, and 52.

sexual freedom, but after conversion, they were expected to adhere to the adult fidelity advocated by the church community.[4]

Although a sense of group identity evolved among the females of black slave communities, no black feminine culture arose in the antebellum period due to the demands of the slave system. Slavery blurred black gender roles and did not permit the female gender segregation necessary for the formation of female community identification. The reinforcement of familial relationships in the transmittal of work skills and the relative isolation of slave women from contact with strange females also prevented the evolution of a feminine culture among the slaves.[5]

The Civil War did not noticeably affect the kinship/evangelical social structure of the South. In some respects, Reconstruction reinforced these traditional gender roles, since families and churches served as refugee centers or structured groups seeking resettlement. The struggle for survival in the economically ruined South focused women's attentions more firmly on family and neighborhood. It was only when the South began to industrialize that community and church values changed enough to allow women into the public sphere, although traditional gender roles continued to be favored by southern women.[6]

Friedman's analysis of gender consciousness among slave women serves as a useful prelude to Evelyn Higginbotham's examination of the women's movement in the Black Baptist church, where she argues:

> *that women were crucial to broadening the public arm of the [Baptist] church and making it the most powerful institution of racial self-help in the African American community...Committed to the causes of racial self-help and advancement, the convention movement among black Baptist women contributed greatly to the church's tremendous influence in both the spiritual and secular life of black communities. But the women's movement did something more. It gave to black women an individual and group pride that*

[4] Ibid., 68-77.
[5] Ibid., 85.
[6] Ibid., 111-114.

> *resisted ideologies and institutions upholding gender subordination. The movement gave them the collective strength and determination to continue their struggle for the rights of blacks and the rights of women.*[7]

In Higginbotham's analysis, after black men were disenfranchised by Jim Crow laws in the 1880s, the black churches, as the strongest institutions in black communities, became the logical institutions to act as agencies of self-development, coordination of economic resources, dissemination of information, and as the community arena for public discussion of social and moral issues. Since women made up roughly two-thirds of the congregants, the "public sphere" function of the church served as a forum for critical discourse on the subordinate role of women in the Baptist conventions [denominations].[8] The general pattern of social and economic unrest at the end of the nineteenth-century affected the struggle against the limitations of Victorian gender roles by black Baptist women. Their feminism intertwined with the social reality of segregated society. The necessity of combating both gender and racial inequality forced black women to assume multiple, seemingly contradictory, relationships—with white women against black men, with black men against white men and women, with the white middle class against the black lower class, with the black lower class against white society. Higginbotham sees this multiplicity of roles as the key to understanding the feminine black Baptist movement.[9]

The feminist movement in the black Baptist church tied itself strongly to the concept of racial self-help. Blacks viewed education and religion as the keystones of their advancement in society, but they also viewed education not only as individual achievement but in terms of collective empowerment for African-Americans. The growth of the black church women's movement related directly to the increase of educated black women [the Female Talented Tenth]. The Female Talented Tenth played a cru-

[7] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church*, 1880-1920 (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 1 and 18.
[8] Ibid., 5, 7, and 10.
[9] Ibid., 14.

cial role in both the fight for racial uplift and for gender equity in the church. Ironically, the large presence of women in the educational uplift program was a result of gender inequity in the black schools. Women students were routinely steered into teaching programs, while black males entered primarily ministerial or medical programs. Although uplift represented the positive aspect of the racial mission of the Talented Tenth, the program was essentially racist in its origin and original intent. Racial uplift began as benevolence on the part of northern white women Baptists, an attempt to develop a black middle class to act as a buffer between white society and the black masses. It offered blacks a measure of social progress without the possibility of social integration with white society. Despite this racial intent, Black Baptist women maintained regular social and fiscal contact with their northern white counterparts. This contact functioned as a crucial conduit in promoting racial understanding and in forming a national Baptists women's network. The interracial cooperation of Baptist women exposed another of the gendered roles of the Female Talented Tenth. The alliance of black and white Baptist women was formulated partly on shared Victorian middle class values and ideals, which both parties wanted to convey to the black lower class.[10]

Higginbotham theorizes that as the level of literacy rose among blacks, conflicts with the white northern Baptists over race consciousness and control of the black schools caused southern blacks to split off from the main Baptist convention. The prominent position of women as educators in the black church generated considerable gender friction. Black women sought to carve out their own sphere of influence within the Baptist church by establishing a fiscally independent women's convention as a part of the national convention. Male black Baptists opposed this for social, doctrinal, or fiscal reasons. They feared that educated black women would challenge the exclusive male domain of the pastorate not only by seeking ordination for themselves, but by asserting their right to judge the literacy and training of male

[10] Ibid., 19-20, 26, 41-43, 95, 102, and 110.

ministerial candidates. Black male Baptists perceived that their educated female counterparts comprised a direct threat to their control of the business and governing aspects of the church structure. Through their independent educational and philanthropic pursuits and organized fund-raising activities, black Baptist women pursued a powerful strategy of building separate female church institutions which were capable of maintaining alliances with both white women (to seek gender equality) and black men (to seek racial equality). The institutional power of black Baptist women eventually led to a reformation in traditional Baptist doctrine that embraced more gender equitable practices.[11]

The relative intradenominational power of women in the black Baptist church can be contrasted with the much more subordinate role played by women in the Presbyterian church of the same period. Lois Boyd and R. Douglas Brackenridge portray the role of Presbyterian women as fitting the very traditional model of the late nineteenth century: active lay volunteers but silent in church governance and ministry. The female organizations of the Presbyterian church began as offshoots and support for male organizations. Although their activities were firmly within the domestic realm, such groups always sought at least to appear to be under male guidance, due to clerical opposition to female organizations.[12] They continued in this fashion until the decline in the Presbyterian clergy and rise of female congregants in the 1870s, when women first entered into missionary work. During the Church Woman's Decade [1870s], the church's official position remained that women were to have no voice in church affairs; however, the prominent role Presbyterian women played in home and foreign missions naturally led to the formation of national organizations to oversee these concerns.

Boyd and Brackenridge characterize the formation of women's executive boards as reluctant actions on the part of Presbyterian women. These boards, while handling large budgets, remained

[11] Ibid., 71, 79-80, 121.

[12] Lois A. Boyd and R. Douglas Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women in America: Two Centuries of a Quest for Status, 2d ed. (Westport, CT, 1996), 6.

firmly accountable for their finances and actions to the male administrative structure of the church. Boyd and Brackenridge examine the status of women employees of the Presbyterian church by considering the development and professionalization of missionaries. The first female missionaries were the wives of male missionaries. They performed all the domestic duties of the mission home plus actively assisted in their husband's ministry. As missionary wives they received no salary from the church. The demands on the missionary couple's time led the denomination to authorize the hiring of domestic help. Boyd argues that this was the first step toward professionalization, since it removed the missionary wife from the domestic sphere (although she does not indicate who supervised the domestic help). Single women began entering the missionary field by the 1870s as women professionals became respectable and pay was offered by the church. Nevertheless, women missionaries were still seen as functioning in the domestic sphere, and they had no vote in any local mission council until 1920, due to the hostility of male missionaries. Housing was of special concern for single female missionaries. Single female missionaries were not paid well enough to set up separate homes, so they were housed with the family of the head missionary, or else groups of single female missionaries were housed together. The male executive board viewed this latter practice suspiciously in the belief that it led to "unnatural, uncongenial marriages". Deliberately low salaries and strict rules of service, which forbade marriage for three to five years, discouraged the entry of single women into Presbyterian missions. In Boyd's analysis, the recruitment of single women physicians to missionary service provided the vital element in the transformation of the foreign missions into professional medical establishments, which required trained nursing and pharmaceutical specialists, further eroding domestic work restriction on female missionaries.[13]

Christian educator was the only other major religious occupation open to women. This path also presented gender difficulties. While the opportunity for seminary education was available to women, the jobs available to them upon graduation paid poorly. In addition, they were subjected to clerical suspicion and disapproval concerning their qualifications and attempted curricula innovations. These factors contributed to the failure to establish a professional status for college women in church positions. These problems with women in Christian education continued even after the ordination of women became possible in 1981. Nevertheless, a career in Christian education did have some potential for promotion as a professional into the administrative structure of the church. Christian educators provided the candidates for directors of Christian education appointments, and eventually ministers of education, although males continued to be favored for pastoral appointments. Boyd and Brackenridge describe the women's movement as conservatively following the lead of the secular feminist movement. Presbyterian women generally respected the church policy against females addressing public assemblies. When women began to participate in temperance and reform movements, their public participation did not evolve into a general movement for doctrinal or church governance reform but remained confined to organizations addressing specific social concerns.[14]

The issue of women's activism in church and society is a primary factor, according to the thesis of Betty DeBerg and Margaret Bendroth, in the rise of fundamentalism in the late nineteenth century. They argue that fundamentalism arose primarily as a cultural reaction to the rapid changes in American society, which caused the breakdown of the Victorian separate sphere ideology. Neither author believes that this cultural explanation is totally adequate to explain fundamentalism's popularity because it examines the movement only in relation to exterior forces, not its own literature and practice.

DeBerg analyzed the fundamentalist rhetoric as published in

[13] Ibid, 13 and 71-75.

[14] Ibid., 78-80, and 94.

the popular religious press, in the theory that these were the materials most widely available to the public and the most clearly designed to persuade non-fundamentalists to a new point of view. She argues that a close analysis of this literature reveals that fundamentalists were reacting primarily to disruptions in dominant middle-class gender ideology and social behavior, so matters relating to sexuality identity and behavior were central to their moral and religious instruction.[15]

DeBerg sees Victorian separate sphere ideology as a set of cultural mores used by men in an industrializing society to reassert preindustrial gender roles of the male aggressive provider and the female passive refuge. Under this delineation of gender roles, religion was ceded into the female sphere of influence. This feminization of Christianity accompanied women moving into the public sphere through temperance and moral reform movements, so men perceived themselves as losing the idealized feminine refuge. Even if women did not leave the home, the pressure of the male provider gender role required the male absence from the home, leaving the wife to gain power as the sole resident parent, thereby threatening the patriarchal structure of the family. Alternatively, the woman asserted more control over sexual relations and childbearing, thereby threatening the male concept of marriage. Fundamentalist rhetoric, according to DeBerg, is "full of separate-spheres ideology supported by religious commandment and taboo".[16] Fundamentalists were unwilling to surrender the Victorian ideal of gender-specific traits, which made the compartmentalization of gender tasks a part of the natural order. Their rhetoric reveals that anything that pulled women out of the private domestic sphere was considered a threat to the Christian home.

The Christian home takes on a paramount importance to fundamentalists. Since the Victorian family structure was ordained by God (a monogamous marriage, for the intent of having chil-

[15] Betty A. DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American fundamentalism* (Minneapolis, 1990), 7-12.
[16] Ibid., 58, See also 36-37

dren to be raised in an evangelical Protestant environment), domesticity was moved into the realm of the divine. The home in fundamentalist rhetoric replaces the church as the primary location for religious training and as the cornerstone of Christian civilization. Given the primacy of the home in fundamentalist Christianity, any social or cultural changes in the makeup or importance of the family necessarily changed Christianity itself. Since fundamentalists believed in biblical inerrancy, in their view corruption of the family was inevitably the corruption of Christianity itself. For fundamentalists of the nineteenth century, the only proper course was to reclaim the Christian church for the male sphere. This reclamation involved reducing women's influence in church by limiting her ability to speak, hold office, or engage in independent church work and by replacing feminized Christianity with a religion based on masculine rhetoric and ideologies.[17]

Margaret Bendroth's *Fundamentalism & Gender* agrees with Betty DeBerg's characterization of fundamentalism as a masculine-oriented effort to reclaim religion. She argues that the fundamentalists' attitudes about gender provide the key to understanding the internal development of the movement and its interaction with dominant American culture. Bendroth is concerned with the difference between the rhetoric of fundamentalism (as examined by DeBerg) and the realities of how fundamentalism was instituted and practiced. Her examination of protofundamentalist revivalism in the mid-nineteenth century reveals its essentially masculine character, but she does not argue that this early fundamentalism was anti-feminist. Rather, she attributes its masculine characteristics to a deliberate effort to appeal to possible male converts. In this context, early fundamentalism was not anti-feminist, but served as an opportunity to air masculine grievances against the feminization of religion. Further than this, Bendroth asserts that nineteenth-century revivalism was essentially egalitarian in matters of social class and sex roles, and its millenialist message tended to overshadow or

[17] Ibid., 61, 68, 80-84, and 91-95.

negate rules of social conduct and gender behavior.[18]

Conversion to fundamentalism solved a gender role problem for men. Male religious conversion into feminized Victorian churches required the surrender of the masculine gender ideal of the independent, aggressive sinner. Fundamentalist conversion allowed a man to surrender the old masculine gender ideal for a new one—that of a victorious warrior, aggressively pursuing salvation for himself and the world. Fundamentalist Christianity emphasized the power to serve (which was gender neutral) instead of self-sacrifice (which was feminine-specific).[19]

Early fundamentalism retained some holdovers from feminized religion—women speakers, organizers, writers, and missionaries—but did not encourage these activities. They did not permit the existence of independent women's auxiliaries, although the preponderance of female congregants made it practically impossible to exclude women from support positions. Bendroth presents the tension inherent in the contradiction between the pragmatic necessity of women's public participation in the expansion of fundamentalism with the strict doctrine of feminine subordination as the primary shaping force of early fundamentalism.[20]

The anti-feminine aspects of fundamentalism belong to two "root" movements of fundamentalism: dispensational premillennialism, which traces all sin to Eve's disobedience in Eden (making all women inherently untrustworthy), and biblical inerrancy (Eve was created second and therefore subordinate, as were all women after her). Before fundamentalism was institutionalized (ca. 1900) these two strains of anti-feminist thought were not emphasized and could not have been enforced. The practical necessity of filling positions in the church took precedence. After fundamentalism developed institutional structures, stricter practice in the control of women was enforced. Despite this, Bendroth argues that it is an oversimplification to classify fundamentalists as misogynists:

[18] Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism & Gender, 1875 to the Present* (New Haven, CT, 1993), 5 and 13-14.

[19] Ibid., 22-23.

[20] Ibid., 30.

> *The roots of fundamentalist opposition to feminism lie deep within the culture of its origin. They grew from specific doctrinal points within fundamentalism that placed it squarely in opposition to the optimistic, ameliorative tradition of mainstream religion. But to carry the metaphor a bit further, these ideals did not bear fruit as one might expect; the progress of antifeminist attitudes among fundamentalists was always hesitant and slow, normally held in check by the feminine substructure of a religious culture that fundamentalists could never entirely escape. Indeed...antifeminism found its sharpest expression during periods of stress and transition, especially in the 1920s and 1940s.*[21]

Bendroth does not satisfactorily explain why fundamentalism was popular among women, and why they did not rebel against the imposed restrictions on their activities. The women most attracted to fundamentalism would be those who felt comfortable confined to the domestic sphere, but this does not adequately explain the lack of reaction on the part of women to the anti-feminine literature published and preached or their acceptance of losing access to occupations they had traditionally held for decades.

The fundamentalist family was not a replica of the Victorian ideal. It retained and emphasized the basic patriarchal control but further restricted the domestic role of the mother. Her role was carefully delineated to prevent the expansion of domesticity into social welfare. The ideal of home was insular. The role of motherhood also contained inherent conflicts for the fundamentalist woman. She had the primary responsibility for religious training of the children, but fundamentalist beliefs did not include the concept of religious perfection gained through instruction. The responsibility for the child's salvation lay with the child, not in the training given by the mother. In addition, the male distrust of women discouraged any approval or celebration of her motherhood, thus undermining her self-worth in the primary role assigned to her by fundamentalist belief.[22]

[21] Ibid., 52.

[22] Ibid., 103.

The father's role in the fundamentalist home held theological significance, being an extension of the idea of God as the absolute authority over creation. Fathers dispensed punishment and mercy, but never indulgence. Paternal love was ideally expressed through discipline and sacrifice. Men were also responsible for maintaining the proper order of society. One aspect of this was the careful hierarchical arrangement of fundamentalist families, but equally important was the onus for sexual self-control that resided with fundamentalist men. Unrestrained lust caused disorder in the world, and fundamentalists believed that avoiding undue mingling of the sexes was thus the best method of preserving order in society. Sexual self-control was rooted in the individualism and concept of manly achievement inherent in fundamentalism's masculine gender definition. This had the effect of making fundamentalists more comfortable with those of their own gender. Male camaraderie was fine, but fundamentalists discouraged exclusive female friendships as unnatural and leading a woman away from her proper focus on her husband and family.[23]

As a contrast to the mainstream denominations so far discussed, a consideration of one that lies outside the mainstream, Shakerism, proves interesting in relation to gender role analysis. Conventional historical thought on the Shakers describes their beliefs and lifestyle as gender-equal. This has generally been deduced from their doctrinal tenet of dual male/female components to the godhead, and the establishment of a dual system of gender-separate government within their settlements. Karen and Pamela Nickless' article "Sexual Equality and Economic Authority" challenges this assumption, arguing that:

> *...the Shaker commitment to sexual equality was not an early feature of Shaker life. Shakers acquired a women's rights ideology only when converts from other utopian movements began to influence Shaker practice in the last decades of the nineteenth century...We find that for most of the history of the church, economic authority in Shaker business affairs rested with the male authority.*[24]

[23]Ibid., 104-105 and 116.

In the Nickless' argument, analysis of the first generation of Shaker documents shows that Mother Ann Lee maintained the standard male dominant hierarchy for family structure. Even after the sect began to live communally, the documentation does not indicate female gender equity. In the dual principles of the godhead, the female principle is referred to as subordinate.[25] The earliest reference to gender equality among Shakers is traced to Frederick Evans, a recruit from a failed Owenite utopian community. Evans' radicalization of a part of Shaker leadership was in step with the general reassessment of gender roles in society at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Nickless' examined the economic institutions and division of labor in Shaker communities to determine if power was shared and labor valued equally. The occupational division of labor in Shaker communities tended to conform to traditional gender roles seen in agricultural communities and did, in fact, confine women more closely to domestic tasks, since communal male farming tended to obviate women's role in agricultural tasks. Similarly, the Nickless' examination of extant records indicate that the economics of production—capital accumulation and outlay—were controlled by the brethren. In both the Nickless and Brewer analyses, women formally were allowed to handle community finances only when the communities exhibited a significant gender ratio imbalance and the value of the agricultural production was overtaken by the prosperity of the women's domestic industries.[26]

Priscilla Brewer reached similar conclusions in her article "'Tho' of the Weaker Sex". Brewer theorizes that the Shakers did

[24]Karen K. Nickless and Pamela J. Nickless, "Sexual Equality and Economic Authority: The Shaker Experience, 1784-1900," in *Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the United States*, ed. Wendy E. Chmielewski, Louis J. Kern and Marlyn Klee-Hartzell (Syracuse, 1993), 119.
[25]Ibid., 124.
[26]Ibid., 130.

not intend to create a social system of gender equality. Authority within the Shaker sect was gender specific to males, and Shaker attitudes about gender traits were traditional for the time. In Brewer's analysis, the spiritual equality of the Shakers stemmed from their commitment to celibacy. As the sect became more committed to worldly concerns the spiritual equality of men and women became less important. As Shaker men were exposed more to the world, they were judged to be more spiritually unsteady. Thus, as in other Victorian religions, women became the guardians of spiritual purity.[27]

The greater spiritual authority of the Sisters did not translate into greater temporal power to enforce their spiritual authority. Brewer interprets the 1837 revival known as Mother's Work as the Sisters seeking alternative power structures to effect change in the community. This revival failed when the Brethren gave it little credence, but Brewer speculates that the Brethren may have retaliated for this attempted usurpation by identifying the Sisters with some typical feminine stereotypes of the period such as emotional frailty and a propensity for vindictiveness.[28]

This essay has explored a cross-section of the gender experiences in American Protestantism. The cases examined here suggest that the institutionalized gender roles within religious denominations are to some degree dependent on the economic and social status that religious women established in society as a whole. The evidence also suggests that the denominations which evidenced the greatest gender role redefinition were also those that provided the greatest agency in the improvement or detriment of the general economic and social status of their members. This reciprocal dynamic is exemplified by the black Baptist women where the church actively promoted the professionalization of women, thereby giving them the tools to establish and effectively maintain powerful women's Baptist con-

[27] Priscilla J. Brewer, " 'Tho' of the Weaker Sex': A Reassessment of Gender Equality Among the Shakers," in *Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the United States*, ed. Wendy E. Chmielewski, Louis J. Kern and Marlyn Klee-Hartzell (Syracuse, 1993), 136-137.

[28] Ibid., 140.

ventions. Less dramatic, but equally telling, is the renegotiation of gender roles in Shaker communities once the balance of economic power had shifted in the women's favor. These two examples must be contrasted with the slow and relatively conservative negotiations over gender roles within the Presbyterian denomination where gender equity in the organizational structure was still not established by 1950. The centrality of religious organizations to the black Baptists and the Shakers, and their relative social isolation, by racism or religious intent, appears to have acted as an accelerant to gender negotiation in the period between 1880 and 1940. Presbyterian women did not experience this same social isolation and so did not have the same impetus to change their status. Fundamentalism functions under an impetus for change similar to that which drove the black women Baptists and Shakers. The difference in Fundamentalist gender negotiation is the emphasis on the reestablishment of male gender role dominance. Although the emphasis was different, the establishment of Fundamentalist gender roles was also dependent on the economic and social status of Fundamentalist women. The clear intent of the Fundamentalist denomination was to both limit the economic resources independently available to women and to limit their social role to a secondary status within the domestic household. The establishment of this sharp differentiation of gender roles, although explicitly stated in religious doctrine, could not accomplished immediately due to the preponderance of women in Fundamentalist congregations. Nonetheless, throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Fundamentalists continuously renegotiated gender roles to restrict the public activities of women members in order to reestablish their ideal of masculine control of the family and society as a whole. Fundamentalist women were therefore being slowly moved toward positions of isolation just as black Baptist and Shaker women were moving into more public roles. Religious institutions can thus be considered as serving as both a matrix and agent for social change, but also as reflective of social and economic changes occurring in their surrounding society.

His Majesty's Seven Year Passengers

Ronald Peters

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> *Her application to a sober life and industrious management, at last, in Virginia, with her transported spouse, is a story fruitful of instruction to all the unfortunate creatures who are obliged to seek their re-establishment abroad, whether by the misery of transportation or other disaster.*[1]

After the French and Indian War, colonial Americans voiced bitter protests against certain Acts of Parliament. Their protests eventually resulted in armed rebellion against the crown. Colonial resentment toward royal and Parliamentary authority existed long before the problems that arose as a result of the wars for empire. The Transportation Act of 1717 provided the American colonials with yet another reason to protest crown policy. The English devised the Transportation Act in an attempt to overhaul the criminal justice system. American colonials began to use an increasing number of convicts to supplant the diminishing availability of bond servants and the rising prices of slaves. The focus of this paper is the colonial American convict trade and the reason behind colonial resistance to it.

The transportation of convicted felons and other individuals deemed undesirable to society existed prior to the Transportation Act of 1718. The French first thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that convicts and vagrants could best serve the crown by populating Canada.[2] The French attempt failed and transported individuals were repatriated to France. In contrast the English succeeded in its endeavors to transplant the undesirable element in the American colonies. The English success resulted from its goals in comparison with France. France hoped that transported individuals would civilize and christianize the Native American population, whereas the English wanted only to rid itself of the undesirable elements of society. Prior to 1718, English transportees had been convicted of state crimes for religious dissent or political unrest. The Transportation Act modified and expanded the focus of transportation.

Prior to the Transportation Act of 1718, individuals received conditional crown pardons. These people accepted transportation to the American colonies in exchange for a pardon from the death penalty. The Transportation Act made banishment a court sentence. Consequently, the Act modified the criminal justice system of England. The magistrates received a judicial power to convict many individuals that may have escaped conviction from juries unwilling to impose the death penalty. As Alan Atkinson asserts, "by legislative slight of hand, servile bondage was thus added to the common armoury of the penal law."[3]

The banished convicts worked at occupations similar to those of indentured servants. Chesapeake area individuals purchased convicts for skilled and semiskilled tasks. Convicts worked at the Maryland iron furnaces and forges, in the construction trades, in the cottage craft trades, and as seasonal agricultural laborers. Atkinson refers to the freedom dues contained in the Act of Queen Anne.[4] According to the freedom dues statute, each freed indentured male servant received a musket, ten bushels of corn, and thirty shillings from his or her master. Initially, convicts received the same freedom dues, but not after 1740. Attitudes changed

[1] Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, (New York, 1989), vii-viii.

[2] William R. Kennan and James Axtell, *Invasion Within: The Conquest of Cultures in Colonial North America*, (New York, 1985), 28-31.

[3] Alan Atkinson, "The Free Born Englishman Transported: Convict Rights as a Measure of Eighteenth-Century Empire," *Past And Present* 144 (1994): 93.

[4] Ibid., 101.

toward convicts. What caused the reversal of colonial American attitudes?

> *Many a Newgate-bird becomes a great man, and we have, ... several justices of the peace, officers of the trained bands, and magistrates ... have been burnt in the hand.*[5]

Before the 1718 Act, many individuals were transported to the colonies, but these individuals were sentenced for crimes involving religion or politics. David Dobson's genealogical work, *The Original Scots Colonists of Early America*, lists many transported Scots guilty of being Covenanters.[6] Other dissenting religious sects received similar treatment from the English courts. The full details of religious banishment eludes analysis due in part to insufficient records prior to 1718. These records listed those convicted of political crimes as well. Cromwellian soldiers, Monmouth's supporters, Jacobites, and others received transportation sentences. In 1716, fifty-five followers of the Stuart Pretender landed at Yorktown.[7] Transportation for crimes prior to 1718 did not encompass large numbers of people. The Transportation Act modified the English criminal court system. The Act allowed the court, in cases within the benefit of clergy, to sentence the defendant for transportation.[8] This produced a drastic increase in the number of individuals deported to the American colonies. Oscar Barch and Hugh Talmage estimate that 40,000 to 60,000 transported convicts disembarked on American soil.[9] This remains a substantial number of individuals and raises a question of where these convicts went? As Richard Dunn explains, "The recruitment of labor for the American Colonies was

[5]Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, 61.

[6]Dobson's early work comprises a roster of the names, dates, reason for emigration, and occasionally the name of the transport ship. David Dobson, *The Original Scots Colonists of Early America, 1612-1783* (Baltimore, 1989).

[7]*Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts*, 1652-1781, ed. William P. Palmer (New York, 1968), 185.

[8]Marion Kaminkow and Jack Kaminkow, *Original Lists of Emigrants in Bondage From London to the American Colonies, 1719-1744* (Baltimore, 1967), 207.

[9]Oscar Theodore Barch and Hugh Talmage Lefler, *Colonial America* (New York, 1958), 302.

a vital issue from the 1580's to the American Revolution. From the out set, the promoters of colonization, particularly in the Chesapeake and the Caribbean needed servile laborers".[10]

The American colonies experienced a rapid economic expansion during the eighteenth century. Commercial enterprises, such as the tobacco plantations and the Maryland iron works, needed a source of cheap labor. The economic situation in Europe improved with the onset of the eighteenth century, thus diminishing the numbers of the indentured servants available in the Chesapeake area. In response, the English government dumped felons upon the shores of the Chesapeake Bay, and the planters eagerly bought them.[11] The convicts were a commodity cheap in price and dependable in supply. Slave prices doubled in this same time period, which added to the convict servant dependency.[12] Duncan Campbell reported in 1779 to the House of Commons that male convicts sold for 10 £, female convicts for 8 to 9 £, and artificer convicts for 15 to 20 £. Campbell shipped, in twenty years, an average of 473 convicts per year on ships carrying one-hundred to two-hundred individuals.[13]

The transported convicts came from all areas of the British Isles, but the majority were native Englishmen, where over fifty percent came from the London, Middlesex, and Home counties. These individuals committed non-capital crimes. Three-fourths of all the transports were fifteen to twenty-nine years of age. One-half of all the felons were unskilled laborers, whereas low-skilled and skilled craftsmen made up most of the remainder. On average, eighteen percent of all transported felons were female.[14] These were mostly people down on their luck and not career criminals.

Not all transported felons were lower class or petty criminals,

[10]Richard S. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era, ed. Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole (Baltimore, 1984), 158-159.

[11]Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," 164-71.

[12]David W. Galeson, White Servitude in Colonial America, (Cambridge, 1981), 160.

[13]"Transportation of Felons to the Colonies," Maryland Historical Magazine 27 (Dec., 1932): 265.

[14]Roger A. Ekirch, "Bound For America: A Profile of British Convicts Transported to the Colonies, 1718-1751," The William And Mary Quarterly 42 (1985): 186-94.

for a few were upper class or professional criminals. Henry Justice received a sentence of transportation for stealing books from the libraries of Trinity and Cambridge Universities. The court allowed Justice a coach ride from Newgate to the ship.[15] A band of smugglers, commanded by John Grayling and known as the "Hastings Outlaws" or the "Transports," terrorized the Sussex Coast. This smuggling band incorporated transported felons that returned early from their sentences in their smuggling operations, hence the name "Transport."[16]

Once the individual received his or her sentence of transportation, he or she waited in prison several months.[17] Many convicts contracted smallpox or "Goal Fever."[18] Once on board the ship, the trip took two months or more. Most of these transport vessels were tobacco ships that traded in the Chesapeake Bay area.[19] During the crossing, most convicts were forced to stay below decks. When a storm blew, the effects below decks produced "spewing ... damning ... blasting their leggs and thighs" or cursing "Father, Mother, Sister, and Brother.[20] The convicts dined on the following (given in ounces): [21]

Day	Bread	Oatmeal	Molasses	Peas	Pork	Beef	Gin
Sunday	11			8	8		
Monday	11	5 2/3	4				
Tuesday	11	5 2/3	4				
Wednesday	11	5 2/3					
Thursday	11			8		10 3/4	
Friday	11	5 2/3	4				
Saturday	11	5 2/3	4				1

[15] *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), 19 November-26 November 1736.

[16] Cal Wilson, "Sussex Smugglers," in *Albion's Fatal Tree*. ed. Douglas Haye. (New York, 1975), 124.

[17] Fredrick Hall Schmidt, "British Convict Servant Labor in Colonial Virginia," (Ph.D. College of William and Mary, 1976), 42.

[18] Testimony of Duncan Campbell estimated one-seventh of the convicts died in prison. More died from smallpox than "Goal Fever" or typhus. Quoted in "Transportation of Felons to the Colonies," 265.

[19] Schmidt, "British Convict Servant Labor in Colonial Virginia," 44.

[20] John Harrower, *The Journal of John Harrower, an Indentured Servant in the Colony of Virginia*, 1773-1776, ed. Edward Miles Riley (Williamsburg, 1963), 24-25; quoted in Schmidt, "British Convict Servant Labor in Colonial Virginia." 57.

[21] Schmidt, "British Convict Servant Labor in Colonial Virginia," 63.

In addition, four days of the week 2 2/3 ounces of cheese were issued. If the convict survived disease, malnutrition, and seasickness, he faced the final degradation: the public sale of himself as a commodity. The convicts were examined for health and skills.[22] The convicts experienced themselves as a commodity at a public auction. In England's goals, a person with money expected and received better treatment or could purchase his freedom once in Virginia. Defoe writes in Moll Flanders, "He brought a planter to treat with him...for the purchase of me for a servant...the planter gave us a certificate of discharge...and I was free ... to go...For this service the Captain demanded of me 6000 weight of tobaccoand made him a present of 20 guineas besides."[23] Henry Justice, as the fictional Moll Flanders, bought his freedom. William Eddis wrote in his *Letters from America*, "if they are able to pay the expense of passage, they are free to pursue their fortune agreeably to their inclinations or abilities. Few, however, have means to avail themselves of this advantage."[24] Duncan Campbell stated to the House of Commons that families of the convicts conveyed money, through Campbell, to Virginia for the felons' use in purchasing their freedom.[25]

Considering the convict's ordeal, one would expect many runaways. Kenneth Morgan suggests that the convicts main impulse in fleeing existed in escaping the social stigma associated with convict indenture. Morgan offers thirty-eight percent as a low figure for the number of runaways.[26] Some convicts, in order to gain their freedom, were willing to kill. One William Marr, with three accomplices, murdered a man in escaping. Marr surrendered himself, the others were apprehended, and all were sentenced to hang.[27] In many respects, the convicts endured a life

[22] Ibid., 106-107.

[23] Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, 242.

[24] William Eddis, *Letters From America, Historical and Descriptive*, 1769-1777. ed. Aubrey C. Land (Cambridge, 1969), 36; quoted in Kaminkow, Original Lists of Emigrants in Bondage, ix.

[25] Schmidt, "British Convict Servant Labor in Colonial Virginia," 112.

[26] Kenneth O. Morgan, "Convict Runaways in Maryland, 1745-1775," *Journal of American Studies* 23 (1987): 255-58.

[27] *Virginia Gazette*, 9 September to 16 September 1737.

similar to the life of an indentured servant. Neither fared well. A French traveller wrote in 1765, "At least ten thousand Convicts and ... indentured Servants, imported yearly ... serve like slaves or convicts and are on the same footing ... being endured to hard labour and fatigue, accustomed to live hard."[28] Slaves, indentured servants, and transported felons expended themselves for the economic gains of others. They were a lowly class.

> *There are now in Publick Prison, no less than 10 Criminals; most of them Convicts, who, poor unhappy Wretches, cannot leave off their old Trade, tho' they have had fair Warning, and some of them narrowly escap'd the Gallows before.*[29]

Perception of convicts and the realities involved with convicts offer contrasting views. Richard Dunn summarizes Abbot Smith's conclusion that only rogues, whores, vagabonds, paupers and other undesirable rabble made up the contract labor class of colonial America.[30] Smith's conclusion echoes colonial America's sentiments on convicts. Kenneth Morgan states the opinions of Robert Beverly and Hugh Jones, "[that] murders and robberies perpetrated by felons ... very injurious...loose villains [committed] many burglaries and felonies ... chiefly by imported convicts."[31] Crime in Virginia encompassed all elements of society. *The Virginia Gazette* reported on 16 September 1737 that two robberies took place: one robbery in Prince George County and the other in Surry County, where 70 £ and 20 £ were stolen.[32] Crime existed in Virginia, with or without convicts. As Frederick Schmidt states "[a]ny certain conclusions about the level of criminality, of those transported convicts, however, must await a comprehensive as-

[28] "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765, II," *The American Historical Review* 27 (1921): 84

[29] *Virginia Gazette*, 9 to 16 September 1737.

[30] Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," 161.

[31] Kenneth O. Morgan, "English and American Attitudes Towards Convict Transportation, 1718-1775," *History* 72 (1987): 424.

[32] *Virginia Gazette*, 9-16 September 1737.

sessment of eighteenth-century criminal records."[33] Fear that convicts perpetrated crime relates, in a similar manner, to the way colonials feared slave revolts or servant insurrections. Some of this fear can be traced to Bacon's Rebellion. Governor Berkeley wrote in 1676, "how miserable that man is, that Governes a People when six parts of seven at least are Poor Endebted Discontented and Armed."[34]

Conversely, Crévecoeur writes how safe the colonies were from crime. He states "[the] apparatus of law, its coercive powers are seldom wanted or required. Seldom is it that any individual is [arrested] or punished; their jails conveys no terror."[35] Boston either existed as an anomaly in colonial society or Crévecoeur mistook fact for fancy. He writes that transported felons rehabilitate through industrious labors yielding "exemplary" and "useful citizens."[36]

Another aspect, that of self-perception, clouds the views on convicts. Dr. Samuel Johnson called America "a race of convicts."[37] This statement raised an outcry in America. Johnson made this comment during the American Revolution. This at a time when America, at war with Britain, actively sought support and allies on the European continent and would be sensitive to criticism.

If convicts did not produce massive crime waves, and they were eagerly bought-up as a source of cheep labor, then what caused Americans, such as Benjamin Franklin, to oppose convict transportation? Transportation, even in England, had sustained opposition. Many in England viewed transportation as ineffective and that there existed a need for a system of secondary and proportional punishments.[38] Colonel Landon Carter prepared a bill for the House of Burgesses that made masters liable for con-

[33] Schmidt, "British Convict Servant Labor in Colonial Virginia," 3.

[34] Wilcombe E. Washburn, *The Governor and the Rebel*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1957), 31; quoted in Greene and Pole, ed., *Colonial British America*, 167.

[35] J. Hector St. John de Crévecouer , *Letters From an American Farmer and Sketches in Eighteenth-Century America* (New York, 1986), 124.

[36] Ibid., 88.

[37] Morgan "English and American Attitudes Towards Convict Transportation," 416.

[38] Ibid., 422.

victs' good behavior, which appears as contradicting behavior for a man who used convict labor and considered them the best servants.[39] During the French and Indian War, Governor Fauquier directed Colonel William Byrd, III to purchase two ship loads of convicts for use as soldiers in the Virginia Regiment. The Governor thought convicts would make excellent soldiers.[40] But the answers pertaining to colonial attitudes against convicts remain unanswered. Could the answers lay elsewhere?

In 1718, when the Transportation Act passed into law, something began and something ended. This first half of the eighteenth century witnessed England's tightening of control over the American colonies and ending the era of "salutary neglect." Beginning with King William and his Parliament, the colonies experienced greater restrictions on their self-determination. Some of these controls revolved around immigration to America. England possessed an enlightened attitude in foreign immigration to America. The colonies passed naturalization laws, both special and general, and assumed the right of issuing letters of denization. These letters were forbidden by the Privy Council in 1699.[41] When the colony of Pennsylvania tried to prevent German immigration, the Crown disallowed this.[42] The outcry against convict transportation existed in colonial resistance to all immigration. When the colonies of England passed anti-transportation laws and anti-immigration laws, were these a symptom of rebellion at a perceived loss of self-autonomy? The escalation of English control and American resistance eventually created a war. The transportation of convicts produced one more grievance against Crown authority and led to claims for further right of self-rule in the colonies. The convicts lived their lives at society's feet, produced labor for others gain, and existed as an object of

Landon Carter, *The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778*, ed. Jack P. Greene (Charlottesville, 1965), 79-80.

James Titus, *The Old Dominion at War: Society, Politics, and Warfare in the Late Colonial Virginia* (Columbia, 1991), 135.

Edwar E. Proper, *Colonial Immigration Laws: A Study of the Regulation of Immigration by the English Colonies in America* (New York, 1967) 74-75.

Ibid., 49-50.

loathing and distrust. America voiced its opinion against transportation not on moral grounds nor for the betterment of society nor in preventing crime, but as a point of contension between themselves and the crown. Americans disliked the Transportation Act, not so much from having convicts dumped on their shores, but hated the law because it forced them to take the convicts.

The Leroy Wiley House: A Study in Domestic Architecture

Doug Dammann

Doug Dammann is a graduate student in the Historical Administration program at Eastern Illinois University. This essay examines American domestic architecture through the example of the Leroy Wiley house of Charleston, IL and its representation of American social and cultural trends.

"Relative beauty, in architecture, is the expression of elevated and refined ideas of a man's life."[1] This quote from Andrew Jackson Downing's The Architecture of Country Houses expresses the crucial issue in studying domestic architecture. The house is essentially a social expression of the inhabitants and the builder. As Nancy Shick and Douglas Meyer argue, a home is an autobiography that reflects a family's financial resources, values, tastes, aspirations, and cultural heritage.[2] If read carefully, the exterior forms and internal details of a house illustrate something of the daily life of the family that inhabits it. These authors illustrate how a home represents something deeper than just a structure that provides shelter from the elements. It is a social construction built to mirror the thoughts of those living within its walls. The persistence of certain social themes within American domestic architecture from the founding of the English colonies to the present makes the built environment an important source of evidence for the course of American history. A detailed study of one house, in this case, the Leroy Wiley house of Charleston, Illinois, can demonstrate important trends in American social history and thought.

[1] Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses.* (New York, 1850), 5.
[2] Nancy B. Shick and Douglas K. Meyer, *Pictorial Landscape History of Charleston, Illinois*, (Charleston, IL., 1985), 99.

There existed a long building tradition within the Wiley family, and the home located at 814 Fourth Street clearly manifests their grasp of what the built environment meant in society. By studying the abstract of the house, the floor plan, an architectural history of Charleston, census records, family histories, architectural sources, and the same nineteenth-century style books the Wileys had at their disposal the values and ideals that the builders hoped to illustrate through the home's construction becomes evident. Leroy Wiley, the man responsible for the construction of the house, built in accordance with the designs and styles advertised by the plan-books and promoted by the social reformers of the mid-nineteenth century. Leroy Wiley did not, as many other American builders did at the time, construct the exterior of the house according to the new Italianate style and then use a traditional eighteenth century floor plan for its interior. Instead, the interior and exterior of the house illustrate how the Wileys followed the urgent pleas of the plan-book writers, who insisted that the construction of their total designs offered the best way to reform the nation and perfect society.

The plan-book authors of the mid-nineteenth century promoted the new "Picturesque" architecture and helped to supplant the older, more traditional Georgian and Greek Revival structures. The new houses of the Gothic, Italianate, and bracketed styles represented the order and self-discipline that became the image of the ideal middle-class Victorian family.[3] The American Picturesque movement in architecture began in America a decade before the Civil War as more and more classical revival homes began to be replaced by Gothic style cottages and Italianate villas. The shift in style represented the results of a crusade that became a major reform movement in the era. During this time of change and reform, the emotional effect that was given off by the building through its plan, paint, and landscape became very important. Architects believed that an ennobling landscape or an exalting environment could improve society by radiating posi-

[3] Clifford E. Clark. *The American Family Home.* (Chapel Hill, 1986), 37.

tive values and feelings to the inhabitants of the residence. Their views paralleled how other forms of art were looked at in moral terms during this period. Therefore, architecture became a social tool which could be used to tame men as well as nature. The architects used their work to contribute to the moral improvement of America through the three-dimensional pieces of art they produced on the landscape.

One of the main goals of the architects and their plan books was to design houses that could illustrate the moral character of the owner. As their ideas became more popular, architects became as interested in the psychology of the house as they were in the bricks and mortar. The architect who became the catalyst for this movement in the 1840s was Andrew Jackson Downing. He helped to create the reform aspects of architecture with his two works, Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening and Cottage Residences. The books, published in 1841 and 1842 respectively, defined the aesthetic theory of the new moral movement and provided plans for the different kinds of revival houses that could be built. Downing's publications not only contained architectural drawings and theories behind the designs, but they also set the standard for beauty and order in the second half of the nineteenth century. The new volumes of house plans transformed the nature of architectural manuals and created a revolution in the styles of rural building.[4] A flood of new publications featuring plans and elevations were written steadily until 1870 when professional architects began to control the entire construction of private homes.

Downing's writings helped builders to envision houses as living things. He asserted that each style had a face, and on those faces were expressions that directly reflected how other people would perceive the moral attitude of the owner. He strictly argued, however, that the Picturesque house could not be used as a mask to misinterpret any immoral behavior by the owner. These designs were only to be used by those people who were prepared

[4] James Early, *Romanticism and American Architecture.* (New York, 1965), 60.

to make the "outward form...express our best ideal in life." People interested in building a house, Downing wrote, had to be careful to select true architectural forms. Home owners were not to build a lie, for it was easily seen if the house became "foreign to our habits, education, tastes and manners." Italianate houses became one of Downing's favorite Picturesque forms. He praised the Italianate style of house for its originality, boldness, energy, and variety of character.[5] He felt that houses of this kind "expressed not wholly the spirit of the country life nor town life, but something...as mingling of both." Therefore, this style of house became very popular with owners who wished to build on rectangular suburban lots because the structure represented the fine contrast between rural retreat and urban bustle. Although his work has been criticized for its emphasis on the elite classes of society, Downing's work caused radical changes to the shape and plans of ordinary American houses. These changes were the first since the introduction of classical principles in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.[6]

A second influence on the new Picturesque housing types was the shift in attitudes toward the concepts of taste and beauty that grew out of the romantic movement of the 1830s. Classical revival architects had accepted the theory that forms were beautiful because they displayed principles of harmony and simplicity. Change came later in the nineteenth century as Downing and others argued that real beauty rested only in the thoughts that the buildings raised in the mind of the viewer. Such writing created an aesthetic theory that combined architectural forms and spiritual ideals. Later, the American reformers added an ethical dimension to Picturesque architecture. The result of this movement was that taste and the perception of beauty were interrelated to help further the moral development of the individual. It followed from this theory that the environment a person was surrounded by was a crucial factor in shaping his or her personality.

[5] Roger Kennedy, *Architecture, Men, Women and Money in America,* 1600-1860. (New York, 1985), 459.

[6] *Early, Romanticism and American Architecture,* 67.

These ideas, however, did not fully separate the Picturesque movement from the Classical reform builders. Instead, what separated these two groups was the Victorian movement's concentration on creating a new, private, domestic life style for middle class Americans. The new reform movement focused on revitalizing self-control within the home rather than fostering republican virtue in the public order.[7]

A shift in the belief structure of the Protestant population became an important factor that linked Picturesque architectural styles to the reform movement. Religious leaders argued in the 1850s that the best way to promote Christianity in society was to create a home atmosphere that bred obedience and responsibility. Increasingly, raising children in the proper Christian manner relied heavily on the home environment. Protestant religious leaders believed placing a child in a Christian home with God fearing parents set the stage for proper development. As authors such as Downing popularized a new arrangement of interior spaces, editors of the architectural journals began to promote their house designs by linking them with the Protestant ideals. These new plans differed from the regularity and simplicity that had dominated American building during the Classical reform movements. Designs specifically marketed as being Christian became increasingly popular because a home, which contained both beauty and order, provided the best atmosphere for a mother and father to instill proper discipline and morals upon their children. The layout of the rooms and the arrangement of the interior spaces were advertised to enhance the development of family life and build interaction, exploration, and cooperation.[8] Evidence of such thinking is seen in the creation of specialty children's spaces such as bedrooms and nurseries. These added features allowed children to develop a sense of individualism, although it was carefully confined to the limits of the home. The inclusion of these

[7] Clifford E. Clark, "Domestic Architecture as an Index to Social History: The Romantic Revival and the Cult of Domesticity in America, 1840-1870," in *Material Life in America*. Ed. Robert Blair St. George. (Boston, 1988), 539.

[8] Clark, *The American Family Home*, 37.

children's rooms indicates the importance that the mid-nineteenth-century Americans placed on the early years of life.

Plan-book writers and reformers expanded Downing's ideas to create room arrangements and functions that carefully took the new middle class family ideal into consideration. Gervase Wheeler argued in his writings that "a building is, in fact, as it were a human body; its parts are all dependent upon one another, and progressive in degree, and yet they are members of one united whole-imperfect if one be removed or not fully developed."[9] Wheeler and other reformers wished to see the unity of the whole family reinforced by the arrangement of rooms while also providing spaces for the pursuits of the individual members. To meet these needs, each room in the house was given a specific function. Space was provided for the scholarly upper-middle class gentleman by including a library or study. This room was often placed near the back of the house in a quiet room lending itself to reflection and reading. Specialized spaces were also included in the planning of the second floor. As was already mentioned, this floor included spaces specifically designed to encourage the moral development of children. An equally important function provided by the second floor were rooms for women and young girls. Architects who designed in the reform tradition recognized the importance of giving the women of the house their own private spaces away from the pressures of the kitchen and laundry rooms. These relaxation spaces, placed far away from the domestic spheres of the house, allowed women to sit and follow their own literary or creative interests. Each of these specialized rooms was designed to help all members of the family feel a true spiritual connection to the home.

As rooms began to take on specific functions for individualism, the plan-book drawings also included space for family interaction and communication. Two rooms in the house, the front parlor and the dining room, were specifically designed for activities that would bring the family together. The front parlor was

[9] Clark, *The American Family Home*, 40

meant to be a showcase for the family. It was the formal gathering place in the house because here the success of the family was shown to visitors. It was also to be a direct reflection of the elegance and appearance of the women who lived in the house. The dining room was laid out with more interest in function, rather that formality. It was meant to be attractive, but its location near the pantry or kitchen encouraged its daily use. Of all the rooms in the houses envisioned by the architects and reformers, the dining room was to be the one in which the family members spent the largest amount of time communally and had the most interactions.[10]

The designs the architects used to emphasize the domestic reform also differentiated heavily between the public and private spheres of the home. This division was not new to American society as the hall and parlor designs of the eighteenth-century attempted to perform the same function. What makes mid-nineteenth-century plans different was the degree to which the divisions were carried out. By the time the Wiley house was constructed, the divisions had become an obsession in the reform literature because of the new codes of social interaction defined by the etiquette books. Often, the most segregated room in the house was the kitchen. Because of the nature of cooking and preparing food, the kitchen was almost always placed at the rear of the house. Sometimes, these food preparation areas were even placed in the basement. In the case of wealthier families who could afford servants, separate rear entrances accompanied the kitchen spaces. This allowed these people to arrive at and leave the house without disturbing the more elegant front areas of the home.

The architects and plan-book writers were also consistent in their calls for the functions of the front entrance hall and the parlor. Divisions caused by these spaces reveal that they were critical to controlling social behavior. Elaborate furnishings of the parlor clearly indicated that this room was to be a showplace

[10] Clark, "Domestic Architecture," 543.

where guests could be entertained. The room did not radiate an atmosphere of relaxation, rather it presented an appropriate area to hold subdued and dignified receptions for friends and acquaintances. The hall was an intermediate space that separated the front entry from the parlor and dining room. Its main function was to hold guests and preserve the privacy of the other rooms. Again, etiquette manuals and the house pattern books influenced architecture by spelling out the specific functions of each room and helping to create a more formal set of social relationships. They also created architectural styles, which included a hierarchy of rooms, and established which rooms were more formal than the rest.

Historians have had some difficulty establishing the relationship between the reform movement and domestic architecture. In his study of domestic architecture, Clifford Clark makes heavy use of direct quotes from a variety of reform writers. He shows the progression of the reform movement as it evolved from a shift in architectural style to a major reform crusade of the time.[11] His evidence of a sweeping reform movement, however, falls short because he is not able to identify the extent to which the builders of homes implemented the reforms within the walls of their homes. Neil Harris was one of the first historians to comment on the social importance of the crusade in domestic architecture. He states that architects recognized that Americans needed good houses because their architecture was an instrument of civilization and awakened the desire for refinements.[12] His arguments, however, overemphasize the upper class origins of the movement because he concentrated heavily on the works of Andrew Jackson Downing.

The architects and reformers worked hard to convince the American public during the mid-nineteenth century of the merits of their house plans. But to what extent was the ideal plan carried out in everyday life? Clifford Clark expanded on his earlier

[11] Clark, "Domestic Architecture," 543.
[12] Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society* (New York, 1966), 208.

work and studied houses built using the Picturesque ideals in three American cities to answer this question. His book, The American Family Home, gives strong evidence that although the Italianate and other plan-book designs were immensely popular with the American people, the appearance of their universal acceptance in American building is deceptive. He argues the fashionable plan-book homes were built first by members of the upper class and then were taken up by the middle class. The conservatism of the middle class however, insured that the strong continuities of vernacular architecture would persist. The houses Clark uses as examples show that builders were quick to change the exterior of their houses to meet the trends set by the plan books. Nevertheless, the acceptance of the exteriors had little to no impact upon the interior layout of the house. Traditional living arrangements persisted in the groupings of the interior rooms, especially in the eastern part of the United States. Clark argues that the reason behind that was "few individuals or families could exercise the continuous self-control within the context of the copious affection that was demanded by the middle-class home ideal." His evidence reveals that the American population was apprehensive about incorporating the sweeping social changes called for by the plan-book authors.

The evidence presented by the built environment created by Leroy Wiley and his family, in the form of floor plans and room usage, presents different conclusions. A careful study of the floor plan and arrangement of space within the house shows that this home was built in compliance with the moral standards of the reform movement.

Clark argues that the acceptance of the plan-book houses proceeded much faster in the Midwest than in the older, eastern areas of the United States. The citizens of new towns such as Charleston were more willing to accept the new housing designs because their towns had grown quickly and before the power of tradition was firmly established.[13] Immigrants from the Upper

[13] Clark, *The American Family Home*, 52.

South settled in the Charleston area in the late 1820s, and a small cluster of families formed a village prior to the establishment of Coles County on December 25, 1830.[14] Charleston was established as a crossroads community that was linked to other east-central Illinois towns by a system of early road trails, and rivers. The settlement grew into a town in 1839 as the plat was resurveyed and a uniform grid with the town square as its central focus was established. Lots of standard size were created and sold along the uniform streets. The arrival of the railroads, known as the "Big Four," in the 1850s brought immediate population growth to Charleston. Its original block grid was expanded and new subdivisions were surveyed and attached to the first town plan.

Such was the atmosphere within the city limits of Charleston as Leroy Wiley and his brother Eli were financing the purchase of the ten acres of land on which the Wiley house was built. In April and May 1863, Leroy Wiley and his wife Rebecca purchased a part of the land from Eli and began preparations for the house which now stands at 814 Fourth Street. The property was originally part of an 80-acre tract that the United States Government sold to Benjamin Parker in 1831. In 1833, Parker and his wife sold it to Charles Morton for $1000. In 1847, Aaron and Susan Ferguson bought 10 acres of the property at a "Sheriff's Sale." It was from the Ferguson's that the Wiley brothers bought the ten acres of land for $1,000. Census records from 1860 indicate that Leroy and Rebecca Wiley were comfortably set in the upper middle class of Charleston society. Leroy Wiley listed his occupation as that of a stone merchant with an annual income resting around $3,500 per year. Shortly after the home's construction, Wiley left the masonry business to became one of two partners in what was to become the principal manufacturing establishment in Charleston. The Merkle-Wiley Broom Company's plant began its career with the name of Wiley & Traver in 1868. Leroy Wiley and his partner started the business and located it in the rear of their grocery on the south side of the town square. As

[14] Shick and Meyer, *Pictorial Landscape History of Charleston, Illinois*, 13.

the name implies, Wiley and his partner began the business for the wholesale manufacture of brooms. Later, Leroy Wiley's son Clifford took over the business from his father and operated it until the "Charleston Broom Company"was finally established.[15]

Local records and photographs indicate that the Italianate style house was built by Leroy Wiley and his wife in 1867.[16] There are several exterior features which tell of the Italianate construction. The original plan of the house was shaped as a cube. It was not until three years after the original construction that the shape was broken by the addition of a back kitchen. The house also had a low-pitched roof, with ornamental brackets supporting it from the underside. The exterior of the home contained the long, narrow windows characteristic of the Italianate style. Each of these windows were ornamented by arches that swept over the top surface of the glass. The final characteristic which made the Wiley home an unmistakable member of the Italianate style was its masonry construction. What makes the brickwork special for this home was the fact that the bricks were handmade, presumably by the Wileys, from clay which came from a small pond located about fifty yards south-west of the house. The use of the popular Italianate style for this home indicates that the family had a familiarity with the ideas promoted by the plan-book authors; however, as the Wiley family history illustrates, a familiarity with this style of building precedes the construction of the home at 814 Fourth Street.

Leroy and Eli Wiley's father, James Wiley, brought his wife and four children to Charleston from Bracken County, Kentucky, sometime in the 1830s. The family first settled on Big Creek, Edgar County, then moved to Paris, and finally on to Charleston. It was here that the family stayed for the rest of their lives. James and his wife, Rebecca, had a total of eight children during the course of their marriage. He was employed as a contractor in brick construction and was involved in the building of some of

[15] Charles E. Wilson, ed., *History of Coles County* (Chicago, 1906), 693.

[16] Shick and Meyer, *Pictorial Landscape History of Charleston, Illinois*, 119.

the first houses in Charleston. One of the most important local structures for which James Wiley acted as contractor and supervisor was the construction of the first brick residence in Charleston. The home was built for Colonel H. R. Norfolk around 1835-36. It was built in the Italianate style and held many of the same features which were to be found in the Leroy Wiley home thirty years later. Records indicate that one of the home's most striking features were the simple rope-like designs that ran around the hood of each window.[17] This construction is significant because it shows that James Wiley was constructing Italianate houses in Charleston before their appearance in the most popular stylebooks. Andrew Jackson Downing's groundbreaking works were not published until 1841. The Norfolk house illustrates James Wiley's competence as a builder and his early understanding of the social function of plan-book designs.

James Wiley was able to pass his knowledge of brick construction on to his sons before he passed away in Charleston on April 13, 1865. He was still alive at the time the property for Leroy Wiley's house was purchased, and most certainly his sons sought his expertise on what style of building would fit the property. James Wiley's oldest son, Eli, was trained as a brick mason by his father during the early years of his life. Eli Wiley had also been a stone merchant nearly up until the time the ten acres of land located was acquired. In 1860, Eli Wiley finished a study of law and began a long and successful career as a lawyer in Charleston. Nancy Shick and Douglas Meyer identify Leroy Wiley as the builder of the house at 814 Fourth Street. The brick construction is evidence that Leroy Wiley looked to the Wiley tradition concerning the construction and design. Also, with all the masonry and construction experience in the family, each of the Wiley men had to be acquainted in some way with the plan-book designs that was being promoted by the reformers. The real proof of their knowledge lies in the interior and exterior features of the Leroy Wiley house.

[17] The Charleston and Mattoon Bicentennial Commissions, *History of Coles County, 1876-1976*. (Dallas, 1976), 46.

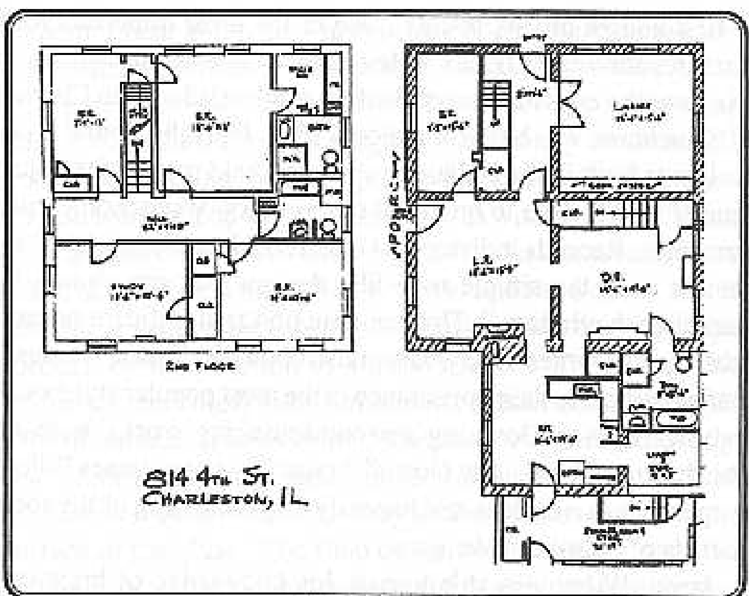

Figure 1.
Floor Plan
Leroy Wiley House

The arrangement of the rooms in the house as evidenced by the floor plan, illustrates several of the main features recommended by the reform writers (Figure 1). Starting with the layout of the entryway, the whole first floor of the home effectively achieves the separation of public and private spaces. Upon entry, a guest to the Wiley home found himself or herself greeted in a large entry hall. As is shown by the floor plan, the hall controls the movement within the house. It allowed for formal entry into the house without infringing on any of the more private family spaces of the home. Thus, the hall served as a space to manage the social relations of the Wiley family. It was built to be large enough to accommodate several visitors while giving them a sense of the overall grandeur of the home.[18] Because of the hall's close location to the front entrance, it served the Wileys as a space that

[18]Clark, *The American Family Home*, 45.

was neither interior nor exterior. Rather, it was a proving ground through which unwanted guests never passed.

Also consistent with the plan book designs is the placement of the most formal room in the house, the parlor. True to the formality of the space, the Wileys designed this room to be near the front of the house. The floor plan shows the parlor's direct relationship to the front entry of the house. The parlor only had one doorway, which served as its entry and exit point. It did not allow contact, physical or visual, with any other portion of the house. Again, this design illustrates the formal nature of the room. The fact that the room has three large windows is also an indication that this space was used to entertain guests. Each window would let a significant amount of sunlight into the room during the day to create a warm atmosphere for conversation for Mrs. Wiley and any female guests who called at the house. Both the location and the function of the hall and parlor in the Wiley house are consistent with the descriptions for these rooms in the nineteenth-century plan-books. These rooms represent the first piece of evidence that links the home to the designs of the reform movement.

The kitchen of the home is also placed at the rear of the home in accordance with the popular designs of the mid-nineteenth century. Such an arrangement allowed the work of the kitchen to go on and still be hidden from the eyes of any visitors. As was indicated earlier, the present rectangular kitchen was not built at the same time as the rest of the house. It was added by the Wileys three to five years after the initial construction of the rest of the home. Due to the lack of any other structures connected to the house, the first space used for the preparation of meals was likely the basement. The stairs leading to the basement are in close proximity to the dining room, which would have helped make the feeding of the family efficient and sanitary. If this were the case, the placement of the kitchen in the basement would have also been in accordance with the plans recommended by the reform movement. The above ground room presently used as a kitchen was also built according to several reform features. It

also offers direct entry into the specialized dining room. The present owners of the house, Dr. and Mrs. Roger Beck, uncovered a second door leading outside from the kitchen while remodeling. The door was located on the south wall of the kitchen, near the space where the sink is located on the floor plan. Two doors in the kitchen allowed for easy access into and out of the house for any people who were involved with the upkeep of the home.

The first floor of the home features the specialization of room function that was so important to the Picturesque movement. Each room can be linked to a special activity of the family as interaction with other members of the family took place in specifically defined areas. Within the Wiley house, the dining room and the living room provided the family spaces. Here, interaction between children and parents took place centered on a well-known code of rules, such as dinner table manners. Therefore, the first floor of the house contained a structure of rooms that promoted the development of each of the members of the house.[19]

The plan for the arrangement of the rooms of the second floor give further insight into the Wiley's understanding of the reform functions of the Picturesque home. The greatest emphasis placed on the second floor was the creation of separate spaces for the members of the family. As has been indicated, most reformers argued that this was particularly important for the development of children. At the time of the 1860 census, Leroy and Rebecca Wiley had been blessed with three children with two more yet to be born. As the upstairs floor plan indicates, there were a total of four bedrooms available on the second floor of the home. This arrangement allowed for each of the children to have his or her own space at the time of construction. Therefore, the construction of the second floor shows that the Wileys adapted these ideas into the design of their home. The plan provided additional space for the children so that they could pursue individual activities.

Christian reformers also published views indicating their de-

[19] Clark, "Domestic Architecture," 544.

sire to see every house include spaces designed for children. The new Protestant movement was lead by ministers who believed the best religious training for children was for them to grow up in a Christian home surrounded by Christian parents. They believed that children absorbed the spiritual atmosphere provided by the attitude of the parents and the home. Therefore, taste and morality became mutually dependent on one another. Evidence shows that Leroy and Rebecca Wiley were parents who would have been very interested in creating the proper Christian atmosphere for their children. Leroy was described by friends as being a kind parent and affectionate husband.[20] He was actively involved in the Heritage Chapel Church of Christ in Charleston from its inception. Church records indicate that James Wiley and his wife were two of the twelve charter members of the congregation in 1840. Leroy Wiley was also very active in sharing his faith with the Charleston community. As the church began to flourish in the 1850s and 1860s, Leroy organized and taught Sunday School classes with a woman named Susan Dunbar starting in 1856.[21] From these record we see the Wiley family's desire to share their Christian beliefs with the outside community. This faith, combined with their skill as builders, indicate that the Wileys would be the type of people who would have been very interested in building a home which radiated Christian values.

The exterior forms and features of the Wiley home also illustrated the family's use of ideas described by the professional architects. Andrew Jackson Downing promoted the use of the Italianate style as being perfect for a rectangular, suburban tract of land. He encouraged Americans to take the Picturesque movement to the suburbs, as long as their personal lives fulfilled the boldness and energy of the stylistic features.[22] A residential map of Charleston, IL, in 1869 shows that the Wiley properly was located southwest of town. Very few houses existed around the

[20] *History of Edgar County Illinois.* (Chicago, 1879), 608.

[21] The Charleston and Mattoon Bicentennial Commissions, *History of Coles County, 1876-1976.* (Dallas, 1976), 271.

[22] Kennedy, Architecture, *Men, Women and Money in America*, 1600-1860, 461.

Wiley residence, so the land around the house still held a wooded, country feel. The house was set far back from the street and the front yard contained a large number of elm, oak, and maple trees. All of the trees helped to separate the house from the public street. However, the residence was closely located and within walking distance to the downtown area of Charleston where Mr. Wiley had his grocery store. The use of the Italianate style on such property fits Andrew Jackson Downing's instructions perfectly. Such a location made it possible for the Wileys to enjoy some of the conveniences associated with living in town. Again, the evidence supports the theory that the house was built in strict accordance with the ideas put forth by the plan book authors.

The final way the home fulfilled the true character of the Wiley family and echoed the writings of the reform authors was by properly displaying the economic status of the family. Andrew Jackson Downing clearly states his opinion in *The Architecture of Country Houses* that the cost of building should not exceed the means of the occupant or owner.[23] The census records of 1860 indicate that Leroy Wiley had a real income of $3500, a figure that placed his family comfortably in the middle to upper middle class of Charleston society. The fact that the house is located on Fourth Street shows that Wiley had no interest in constructing a house that was beyond his means. At the same time the Wiley house was built, south Sixth Street and south Seventh Street became the showcase streets where the towns most impressive and pretentious houses were erected.[24] The architectural knowledge of the Wileys, however, helped them to exercise restraint and avoided any attempt to build a house above their social status. Instead, the Wileys built a house that was truly an expression of the values that they held most dear.

The physical exterior and interior plan of a house reads like a biography of the builder. In the case of the Wiley home, the home acts as an autobiography because Leroy Wiley played such

[23] Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 5.

[24] Shick and Meyer, *Pictorial Landscape History of Charleston, Illinois*, 99.

a large part in its construction. The evidence supplied by the house helps to illustrate what kinds of morals and values the owners wanted to communicate to their children and the outside society. In the case of the Wiley residence the floor plan, building materials, grounds, and ornament show a family who believed that the new innovations provided by the plan- book authors could help to perfect society. They understood the importance of the reform movement, and built a house in strict accordance with its rules.