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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

As editors of the 2008 issue of *Historia*, we have been overwhelmed and pleased with the response to our call for papers. We received nearly seventy submissions for consideration. The quantity and quality of scholarship produced by EIU students has been impressive. For the first time ever and in the spirit of interdisciplinary collaboration, we have chosen to publish a work of economic history that was written for an economics course. It is our hope that future editions will continue to support the historical research produced across the disciplines. We believe that an interdisciplinary approach will contribute to a richer experience and set an example of excellence for others to follow. We believe that all EIU students should be afforded the opportunity to have their scholarship subject to peer review and subsequent publication within the confines of their own university. We congratulate all the authors of this edition on their academic achievement and express our gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the peer review process.

-The Editors

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Called to Death: A Case Study on the 1918 Influenza Pandemic in Coles County, Illinois

Krystal Rose

Krystal Rose, who earned a BA in History at Eastern Illinois University, is now a history graduate student at Eastern, where she is researching early twentieth century U.S. medical history. A member of Phi Alpha Theta, she has presented versions of this paper at the Midwest Junto for the History of Science and Medicine, held at the University of Minnesota, and at the West Texas A&M student research conference.

The 1918 influenza pandemic brought the issue of public health infrastructures to the attention of both rural and urban communities. Most studies, such as those by Alfred Crosby and John M. Barry, have focused on urban areas with established public health institutions. But in rural localities, a lack of this type of infrastructure required authorities to rely on the resources and institutions at hand. Lynne Curry argues that many urban-based reformers, concerned about the adverse affects rural areas could have on Chicago, attempted to address the sanitation problems in southern Illinois granting specific attention to maternal and child care. Volunteer reform efforts proved most successful in the southern regions because the lack of funding and meager political support made the development of formal public health efforts difficult. The decentralized structure of public health services outside of Chicago allowed for local residents to take health reform into their own hands.[1] This paper examines one rural community's collective response to the 1918 influenza pandemic. This collaboration of public officials, headed by medical authorities, introduced a permanent system of public welfare action in Coles County, Illinois. The 1918 pandemic provides an important look into the early stages of public health infrastructures' development in rural areas.

The historiography on the topic of the 1918 epidemic evolved from one main origin, the work of Alfred Crosby. Crosby's work touched on many aspects of this epidemic from epidemiology to public memory. Various historians have then picked apart this book and expanded on specific topics. Gina Kolata researched thoroughly the medical aspects of the influenza virus including its mutations and the various vaccines. Barry did little to advance discussion of the topic. His argument followed the same analysis as Crosby's, only differing in a more extensive look into the biology of the influenza.

Alfred W. Crosby began his search to uncover the mysteries behind the 1918 flu epidemic with his work, *Epidemic and Peace, 1918* in 1976. He created a narrative that not only recreated the events, but also traced modern medicine's search for the cure. Crosby's utilization of quantitative data helped to report the effect this epidemic had on both the military and

[1] Lynne Curry, *Modern Mothers in the Heartland: Gender, Health, and Progress in Illinois, 1900-1930* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999).

the civilian populations during all three waves. Crosby employed periodical literature, manuscript collections, medical and actuarial records, and medical journals to write this meticulous book dedicated mostly to the United States' experience of the epidemic, but also including information from across the Atlantic and Pacific. However, the United States' experience revolved around the bustling urban areas, not the rural countryside. Crosby suggested the epidemic facilitated the severity and inequalities of the peace agreement in 1918-1919. The flu affected the negotiators and their staff at Paris enough to leave an impact on the overall outcome. Crosby also offered explanations regarding the lack of public memory in the United States. He suggested that the war was a large distraction. The bodies killed overseas and brought home were the same age as those dying from influenza on the home front. Because a large portion (but certainly not all) of those inflicted with influenza were, in some form, militarily involved with the war, the obituaries of those dying of influenza and those in war were often combined and indistinguishable in the obituaries.

With Crosby's book as the take-off point for many researchers of the medical tragedy of 1918, Gina Kolata explored the mystery surrounding the lethality of the disease in *Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus That Caused It.* Kolata's work focused primarily on the scientific aspects of the influenza; however, she also discussed the social ramifications. Kolata placed the focus of her book into a historical context by taking from secondary sources such as Crosby and employing the use of contemporary literature and oral histories. Kolata predominantly covered the United States' attempts to cure the incurable, but she also included information from around the world. She covered experiments during both the epidemic and the most recent attempts made to trace the scientific path to the answer.[2] Unfortunately, this answer still has yet to be uncovered; however she has given a detailed past which both historians and the public can understand.

Crosby's narrative, tracing the path and effects of the influenza along with the subsequent response by both the military and the general public, is followed nicely by Kolata's narrative tracing the scientific response. Kolata offered detailed descriptions of the scientists performing experiments along with stories of those suffering from the deadly disease. In addition, Kolata presented a meticulous look into the pitfalls of the vaccination attempts. The collaboration of the history and genetics of the epidemic, alongside the stories of those involved, produced a scientific narrative of the 1918 pandemic.

With the SARS corona virus outbreak in 2003 and the avian flu outbreak in Hong Kong in 2004, John M. Barry added his insight to the

[2] Gina Kolata, *Flu: The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 and the Search for the Virus that Caused it* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999).

influenza outbreak among the epidemic hype in 2005. Using World War I as the background, Barry echoed much of what Crosby had to say with greater emphasis on the biology of influenza. Barry extracted information from a variety of sources including medical journals, personal stories, periodicals, and vast secondary information to recreate the medical travesty.

Barry spent the first part of the book looking at the history of medicine and its development since Hippocrates, along with the progression of American medicine and medical education. Barry then utilized meticulous data on military troops and distribution from 1917 to begin his story of the influenza in the United States. He stressed the importance of Liberty Bond drives, troop movements, as well as war related congregations to explain the spread of influenza throughout the United States. The shortage of doctors and especially nurses enhanced the medical fields' inability to combat the disease effectively. Barry conflicted with Kolata in the reasoning behind the high mortality rate among the 20-40 year-olds. Kolata concluded that a prior epidemic gave partial immunity to people above a certain age, which accounted for the age differentiation. Barry concluded that the stronger immune response amongst these younger victims led to more fluid in the lungs, which caused death after infection with the disease.[3]

The First Wave

When your back is broke and your eyes are blurred,
And your shin bones knock and your tongue is furred,
And your tonsils squeak and your hair gets dry,
And you're doggone sure that you're going to die,
But you're skeered you won't and afraid you will,
Just drag to bed and have your chill,
And pray the Lord to see you through,
For you've got the Flu, boy,
You've got the Flu.[4]

During the late spring and summer of 1918, the first wave of the influenza pandemic swept across the United States. Unfortunately, the inefficiency of federal, state, and local health departments in gathering and organizing information resulted in an inability to trace this epidemic at the time.[5] Newspapers hinted at a problem with influenza overseas, but for the most part it was ignored by the general public. However, what the general public overlooked, local authorities did not fail to recognize. Authorities in

[3] John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).

[4] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 28 October 1918.

[5] Alfred Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918 (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 18-19.

the Coles County cities of Mattoon and Charleston, Illinois feared something approaching the area, and both the county and school board took preemptive measures to combat it.

However blinded the general public was to the increase in deaths, the suspicious nature of the deaths in Coles County did not escape the attention of either the county or school boards. In Coles County, the school board began addressing the increase in deaths immediately by hiring a nurse at the April 1918 meeting. Dr. Bell, a local doctor practicing in Mattoon, attended this meeting and had suggested the addition to the school's health staff. His presence at the meeting signified the first attempts made by the authorities in Coles County to cooperate in combating the "flu" epidemic. The influx of health reformers from Chicago, specifically women's clubs and volunteer nurses, highlights the "maternalist" social welfare path that Illinois had begun to take.[6] Coles County presented no exception, with a number of Red Cross Ladies present within the area. Specifically, the Ladies began to enter a close relationship with the school board, which, at its May meeting, approved their use of the assembly room of any school.[7]

The county board's minutes also reflected an increase in attention toward the growing health problem. The health fund report for May 1918, which included the spending for April 1918, revealed an increase since the previous month not only in the amount spent, but also on what the money was used for and by whom. The April report listed the health fund expenditures for March at $40.00, this being the salary paid to the Coles County school nurse. In May, the health fund listed the expenditures at $202.00; this included not only the school nurse's salary of $40, but also the salaries of two new employees, quarantine officers, receiving $81.50 and $30.00, Dr. Bell also requested supplies totaling $90.50 for Mattoon.[8] The cemetery fund paralleled the findings of the Health Fund, its expenditures also increased from March to May respectively from $304.48 to $912.80. Much of this increase for the Cemetery Fund reflected the increase in hours for the cemetery laborers.

Though the lack of attention from the public indicates obliviousness toward the invading disease, administrators of the city began to feel the pressure of the disease, prompting preemptive measures aimed at controlling the encroaching problem. Both the school and county boards cooperated and took measures to ensure the safety of the public. Hiring a school nurse and increasing expenditures on things such as health supplies were actions implemented to prevent the spread of the disease throughout Coles County. These measures can be seen as significant given the questions surrounding the appropriate relationship between public and private responsibility with regard to social welfare provision. Though the

[6] Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1992)

[7] Coles County School Board Minutes, April-May 1918.

[8] Coles County Board Minutes, April-May 1918.

papers reported a potentially dangerous disease in Europe, doctors in Mattoon and the surrounding area (along with doctors nationwide) did not know what symptoms to look for, or how to diagnose influenza cases. The number of pulmonary-related deaths was insignificant compared to the total deaths. Because of this, the preventative actions themselves speak loudly of these physicians and county officials' awareness of the potential for an outbreak in the area.

The Second Wave

When your toes curl up and your belt goes flat,
And you're twice as mean as Thomas cat,
And life is a long and dismal curse,
And your food all tastes like a hard boiled hearse;
When your lattice aches and your head's a-buzz,
And nothing is as it ever was,
Here are my sad regrets to you-
You've got the Flu, boy,
You've got the Flu.[9]

The second wave of the flu epidemic presented itself with much more lethality than did the previous wave. Beginning in Boston, the first few cases again went under the radar of the medical profession, but as the bodies began to accumulate and hospital infirmaries became crowded with infected people, the situation could no longer be overlooked. However, even though the disease grabbed the attention of the medical world, detection could not prevent the spread of the disease. Railroads, troop movements, and civilians traveling allowed the influenza to devastate the nation.[10] Just as quickly as the influenza began its journey throughout the United States, urban areas began to report the debilitating illness. Newspapers and city officials filled their publications with influenza-related topics; smaller towns would then eventually begin to adapt to this trend.

By October, the height of public disruption occurred with the closings for Coles County rapidly accumulating; schools, beauty shops, churches, movie theaters, and Red Cross meetings were not spared. On October 10th, 1918 local news announced that, "No Jury Trials at Circuit Court" until later in the year because of influenza.[11] Obituaries accrued not only for the troops, but for the civilians as well. The civilian obituaries recounted the lives of the deceased and did not fail to include the cause of death, specifically naming "Spanish influenza," if it were the case. Advertisements began requesting the aid of middle-aged farm hands, due to

[9] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 28 October 1918.

[10] Alfred Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918 (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 45.

[11] *Charleston Courier*, 10 October 1918, p. 1.

the debilitating toll this disease took on those aged 20 to 40. This socially neutral disease called to death farm hands, doctors, sheriffs, scholars, and housewives.

As the influenza crept into the Mattoon and Charleston newspapers, many local businesses began to fill the pages with advertisements for prevention and new medical cures. Local area doctors began to create special concoctions said to hinder the spread of influenza. Dr. Baker of Mattoon created a special honey elixir which would prevent the "flu" from affecting the person who took it no matter his age.[12] Stuarts Drug Store of Charleston advertised an antiseptic oil spray stating, "To stop influenza use preventatives."[13]

The local newspapers began adding new articles, at the request of the county board, and adjusted the content of already existing pieces. The editorial "With the Sick" reached the community with a more personal connection to the sick than did the more populated cities. This section sprang to existence in late October amid the obituaries and personal sections of the *Mattoon Journal Gazette.* It focused on influenza related illnesses giving information on who was sick, businesses closings due to illness, and the conditions, whether better or worse, of those infected. The personals sections of both papers adjusted their content to respond to the epidemic. Both papers' personal sections previously contained information on the comings and goings of residents and visitors, but they now included health reports on the local residents. Instead of reporting "Mr. Jones vacationed to Chicago to visit relatives", it read "Mr. Jones had traveled to Chicago for the funeral of a relative." The epidemic infiltrated the newspapers, lives, and even the vacation time of the residents. These measures indicate the collective measures undertaken by the local authorities and newspapers to bring awareness to the community.

Among the "With the Sick" columns and the personal sections, the obituaries revealed the truth concerning the severity of the epidemic. The civilian obituaries not only noted the passing of a member of the community, but also warned citizens of the growing toll the influenza was taking on their neighborhoods. They contained information on the condition of the remaining members of the family, including whether any of the children were also infected and how long a member of the family had been ill with the "flu."

Influenza had moved from infecting the public's health to contaminating the *Charleston Courier* and *Mattoon Journal Gazette.* The *Charleston Courier* ran a section called "The Old Rounder" which contained puns, jokes, poems, and contemporary sayings. In the October 10, 1918 issue, influenza dominated this section with jokes and sayings such as, "Why is the city library closed? Because they found influenza in the

[12] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 17 October 1918, p. 3.

[13] *Charleston Courier*, 7 October 1918, p. 3.

dictionary," and puns like "Calsimine opened the door and – influenza."[14] Cartoons such as the "Doings of the Duffs" depicted the main characters Pete and Tom struggling to not catch the flu. One cartoon in this series, "Tom steps into the 'Spanish Flu'" illustrated Tom hesitating to use the phone booth after a man comes out sneezing. After waiting a moment, Tom goes in to use the phone booth covering his mouth. The last frame shows him sneezing and frustrated because he caught influenza.[15] The fact that the general public found humor in these jokes reflected the casual nature applied to the severity of this disease. A later cartoon in the "Doings of the Duffs" series, printed on October 31, mocked the public for being hypochondriacs. Tom's baby, while alone in the kitchen, pulled down the table cloth and unleashed a flurry of pepper. Tom and his wife entered the kitchen to find the baby sneezing. Simultaneously they both began to sneeze and Tom dashed to the phone. He is illustrated in the last frame on the telephone saying, "Oh, Doc. Come right over – we've all got it."[16] However, not everyone found humor in sneezing, whether real or pepper-induced, and many authorities felt the need to act hastily to prevent the situation from worsening.

The State Board of Health also began to work with the authorities in rural areas within Illinois. Alongside the closings of numerous organizations and public functions, Coles County implemented regulations on behalf of the Board of Health. One of the first precautions taken by the Board of Health required that all funerals be held in open air.[17] (Prior to this regulation, many families would keep the body of the deceased in their homes until burial.) This regulation extended not only to influenza victims but to all the dead. Due to the mystery surrounding the origin and cause(s) of the disease, authorities administered regulations without question, with no factual evidence of their effectiveness. The State Department of Public Health, on October 10th, ordered that, "the public cannot visit 'flu' patients confined in the hospital."[18] The family members of the ill, regardless of wanting to support their loved ones, could no longer be in the same vicinity. The illness now seemed to be at its peak, the epidemic appeared to have reached a crisis.

With the crisis at its believed peak, the newspapers saw a promising outlook on the horizon: "now that people realize the severity, they will be more observant of instructions." Authorities believed this would cause the end of the emergency.[19] Over the next few days this prediction seemed to be confirmed. On October 15th, the *Charleston Courier*

[14] *Charleston Courier*, 10 October 1918, p. 5.
[15] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 24 October 1918.
[16] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 31 October 1918.
[17] *Charleston Courier*, 9 October 1918, p. 7.
[18] *Charleston Courier*, 10 October 1918, p. 5.
[19] *Charleston Courier*, 11 October 1918, p. 1.

ran an article titled, "Flu Epidemic Now Abating."[20] It reported that since 5 a.m. Monday morning Dr. Ferguson, practicing in Mattoon, had reported only one death. Finally the end of the disaster seemed in sight. Unfortunately, journalists reported this glorious news too hastily. The next day an article from Springfield, Illinois reported on the severity and increase of influenza statewide. Dr. Ferguson replied, attributing the decreasing conditions to "women [who] are not responding as readily as they should."[21] With many of the male health officials in Europe, women's services were heavily relied upon. Dr. Ferguson also called on the public for help, "Miss Bowman the school and community nurse is without transportation. She is in need of a vehicle to allow her to quickly get to the ill. As of now she is walking from visit to visit."[22] While there may have been a shortage of nurses nationwide due to the need in Europe, it is no wonder the ill went untreated for long amounts of time given the poor transportation provided for the volunteer nurses. It was these private sector doctors who contributed greatly to take the responsibility of the epidemic from an individual to a public or communal level.

During the following week the newspapers reported more stringent controls to be placed throughout the county. The State Department of Public Health issued an emergency order relevant to funerals stating that, "only immediate relatives and close friends of the deceased can attend the funeral."[23] Due to the public's failure to adhere to this rule, the police were instructed to keep watch and maintain that only immediate family and invited friends attend the funerals.[24] The City Council also issued regulations, proposing a street cleaning order which instructed the fire department to wash the paved streets around the public square of Charleston biweekly.[25] Each organization of the community contributed its part in prevention with the lack of a public health infrastructure to fund and direct the activities.

The county board's funding for October also reflected the threat posed by the influenza epidemic. The board allotted $211.75 to fund health measures throughout the city of Mattoon alone. Fumigators from Central City Chem Company required $84.00 to disinfect the city. The Board also granted $45.00 to be paid to a part-time nurse for the schools when they were reopened. The October allowance also included salary for a quarantine officer and supplies again requested by Dr. Bell.[26] In addition, the December meeting minutes revealed tactics used by the county to prevent the further spread of influenza. For the month of November, the printing

[20] *Charleston Courier*, 15 October 1918, p. 1.
[21] *Charleston Courier*, 16 October 1918, p. 8.
[22] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 16 October 1918.
[23] *Charleston Courier*, 17 October 1918, p. 1.
[24] *Charleston Courier*, 19 October 1918, p. 1.
[25] Coles County Board Minutes, 15 October 1918.
[26] Coles County Board Minutes, 15 October 1918.

fund required $27.04 for pamphlets and proclamations. The county dispersed publications titled "Volunteer Women for Nurses" and "Proclamation of Mayor Swan on Influenza" were dispersed throughout the community.[27] By the end of October the threat of this lethal disease could not have been overlooked. The authorities increased the budget to afford preventative measures and treatment for the community, the responsibility had left the private realm and entered the public arena.

The school board, though not as active as the county officials, did produce some changes during the threatening times. During the January 1919 meeting, members motioned and seconded that, "a vote of thanks be given to Mrs. Gerrule for helping out in the emergency." Mrs. Gerrule assisted the teachers during the closings in attending to the children and assuring they were practicing preventative measures. At this same meeting, another motion was granted to "instruct Mr. Elwood to hire a new teacher on account of congestion at Lincoln School."[28] Though the school board seemed inactive during the height of the damage, it was well aware of the actions that should be made after the destruction to help prevent a reoccurrence of the epidemic.

With national and local authorities implementing changes, by the end of October the devastation seemed to be waning. On Monday October 28, 1918, local authorities lifted the influenza ban from Charleston, ten days later Mattoon also lifted its ban.[29] Life in small Coles County, Illinois appeared to be on the upward track to normality and the residents forgot about the influenza's destruction. Dr. Ferguson writing to the Mattoon newspaper on Monday November 4th said, "There was no epidemic in Mattoon, but there might have been one if the restrictions had not been imposed. The people of Mattoon co-operated in this instance better than at any time since I have been a resident of Mattoon."[30] A comment like this is surprising considering just a month prior the authorities compared the spread of the influenza to that of the plague.[31] So how can the very doctors fighting and advocating for its prevention dismiss such a devastating pandemic, once being compared to the plague? A look into the actual statistics of the death toll in Mattoon will be helpful for answering this question.

During the height of the second wave, the month of October, the number of influenza deaths almost equaled those from other causes. Doctors determining the causes of death had to be well aware of the devastation being wreaked by this deadly disease. Dr. Ferguson's comment that "there was no epidemic in Mattoon," is far from true. The influenza did not in fact spare Mattoon. For the months of October through

[27] Coles County Board Minutes, 3 December 1918.
[28] Coles County School Board Minutes, 2 January 1919.
[29] *Charleston Courier*, 28 October 1918 and *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 4 November 1918.
[30] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 4 November 1918.
[31] *Charleston Courier*, 7 October 1918, p. 4.

December, the deaths reflected the 'W' so often seen in national figures. The young and middle-age residents fell victim the "enza" at much higher rates than the very young or the old, which confirms that what struck Mattoon was the same mysterious disease attacking the rest of the nation. Mattoon's figures mirrored those of the nation in terms of age and number of deaths, but the national figures do not provide information on males and females in the population. An interesting side note, females contributed alarmingly high numbers to the total number of deaths attributed to influenza in Mattoon. The many calls made to women for volunteer civilian nurses might have contributed to their increased exposure and subsequently high numbers of deaths. However, Dr. Ferguson placed the blame for the spread of influenza on women's failure to respond to the call which might negate this theory. This posits an interesting topic for further research.

After the raising of the ban for Coles County, completed by November 7th, many of the articles and advertisements that the newspapers printed the previous months began to disappear. The next day "With the Sick" vanished from the *Mattoon Journal Gazette* and "Hospital Notes," replaced them, which was dedicated to all the sick, not just those affected by influenza.[32] Advertisements continued to sprinkle the local news with preventative options. However, the majority came from national companies and even those were rare. No longer did the locals attempt to take advantage of the influenza epidemic. Thus, the second wave of the influenza epidemic subsided in Coles County; it would be mid December, before talks reemerged about the enduring influenza.

The Third Wave
What is it like, this Spanish Flu?
Ask me brother, for I've been through.
It is by Misery out of Despair;
It pulls your teeth and curls your hair;
It thins your blood and brays your bones,
And fills your craw with moans and groans,
And sometimes, maybe, you get well,
Some call it Flu-I call it hell![33]

By December of 1919, the worst of the "Spanish Influenza" epidemic had finished administering its devastating blows to the United States. However, for some parts of the country a subsequent third wave would have its shot at havoc. Beginning in the early part of 1919, reports of unusually high death numbers attributed to influenza reappeared. Unfortunately, because health officials praised the preventative effects of

[32] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 8 November 1918.
[33] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 28 October 1918.

the masks, vaccines, and regulations they had imposed during the second wave, the destruction that remained unhindered by these measures left many people thinking, "what's the use?"[34] Coles County remained concerned with the influenza problem and when the "flu" announced its presence in December, discussions reemerged.

In the local news section, influenza again reappeared. Dr. Ferguson, on December 14th, announced that, "there are approximately twenty cases reported a day in Mattoon."[35] Ferguson also stated that, "there will probably be successive waves."[36] Dr. Ferguson had reason for alarm during the month of December. The number of influenza-related deaths did outnumber the "other" causes of death; fortunately however, his prediction of subsequent waves proved wrong. Coles County would not be exposed to mass devastation at these levels again. With the holiday season quickly approaching, stores also did their part to help prevent a reoccurrence of the mandatory closings instated in October. To avoid the influenza, "stores will stay open later to avoid congestion on Christmas Eve for shoppers."[37] Everyone seemed to be giving more credit to the incapacitating power of the influenza they had witnessed during October, and with that an increasing community effort aimed at prevention was visible.

Activity and preventative measures also occupied the school board and county boards once again. At the April meeting, members confirmed the building of an open playground to prevent the contagion among children during recess hours. Members also confirmed the retention of the part-time nurse, Miss Bates, "for another month and if necessary for the balance of the season."[38] The school board's preparations verified their fear of a subsequent outbreak. The textbook committee showed its interest in the matter with a proposal to add two new textbooks for the 1919-1920 academic years, *Community Hygiene* and *A Handbook of Health*.[39] The school board planned to make additions to the faculty with Nurse Bowman, the facility by adding an outdoor playground, and the curriculum which would hopefully better prepare the children to avoid a repeat performance of the influenza epidemic. County board members also increased budget expenditures for the health fund and requested the presence of a local area doctor at the future meetings.[40] Residents of Coles County prepared for the worst and hoped for the best. Luckily the unexplained epidemic left just as quickly as it came and the deadly "enza" spared Coles County of any further damage.

[34] Alfred Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918 (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 109.

[35] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 14 December 1918.

[36] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 14 December 1918.

[37] *Mattoon Journal Gazette*, 18 December 1918.

[38] Coles County School Board Minutes, 3 April 1919.

[39] Coles County School Board Minutes, 5 June 1919.

[40] Coles County Board Minutes, 10 April 1919.

This socially blind disease ripped through the nation taking the healthy, young, rich, and poor alike. The newspapers, death records, and public activities of Coles County demonstrate the level of awareness, preemptive measures, and involvement of local residents and their leaders. The school board formed a relationship with the Ladies of the Red Cross, increased the nursing staff, and updated the curriculum to include courses on hygiene. The county board's health fund increased dramatically to accommodate the many expenditures requested by local doctors for supplies and distribution materials. Local medical authorities placed immediate attention on the matter calling for volunteer nurses, distributing pamphlets, as well as inventing their own medicinal concoctions. The newspapers, working with leading authorities, generated new articles dedicated to influenza and kept the public up-to-date with the mysterious illness. Like the rest of the nation, Coles County experienced the devastation of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic, but as a small community, lacking a developed public health infrastructure, was forced to rely on the resources and institutions at hand. The area authorities employed those organizations and resources available and made the permanent transition from private to public responsibility in regards to the social welfare of the community.

Memory of Controversy and Controversial Memories: Lucy Parsons and the Haymarket Tragedy

Lori Henderson

Lori Henderson, candidate for the bachelor's degree in history, will graduate May 2008. She has been accepted to the graduate program in Historical Administration at EIU and plans to begin graduate study in the fall of 2008. Her paper was written for Dr. Debra Reid's course, Public History 4930, during the spring semester of 2007.

All the elements of a classic novel or an epic Hollywood movie can be found in the life story of Lucy Parsons. Her story is one of beauty and intelligence, passion and intrigue, mystery and violence, perseverance in the face of tragedy and sorrow, and the overriding force of controversy. In her lifetime, from her birth in 1853 to her death in 1942, she attained levels of celebrity where one could find her name reported in the Chicago papers nearly every week. Yet there exists only one substantial biography of Lucy Parsons and no memorial to her life's work as a labor activist, revolutionary anarchist, or warrior for the working class; until 62 years after her death and 118 years after the most pivotal point in her life, the riot in Chicago's Haymarket square.

In the spring of 2004 the Chicago Park District, in an effort to balance the predominantly male naming of parks with names of prominent women in Chicago's history, proposed to name a park after Lucy Parsons. According to the Chicago Tribune, out of the 555 Chicago parks only 27 are named for women.[1] The proposal was met with protest from Chicago's Fraternal Order of Police and the *Tribune* quoted FOP president Mark Donahue as saying, "they are going to name a piece of property in the city of Chicago after a known anarchist."[2] The *Tribune* also reported a story in 1996 of a Chicago artists' attempt to install a bench in Wicker Park in honor of Lucy Parsons. The artist, Marjorie Woodruff, waited two years to get approval for the installation of her tribute. Woodruff's bench incorporates tiles that tell the story of Lucy's fight for Chicago's laboring class, including provocative questions such as, "why have most of us never heard of Lucy Parsons?" and "why are people who are poverty stricken often blamed for their situation?"[3] Decades after her death the task of memorializing her life continues to be mired in controversy. I will attempt in this paper to examine the facets of Lucy Parson's life and the choices she made which contribute to the difficulty in remembering her life, as well as an examination of the memorializing of the Haymarket tragedy by the city of Chicago.

Lucy Parsons was born in 1853 in Texas. She claimed descent from a Mexican mother and a Creek Indian father. But contemporaries who

[1] *Chicago Tribune*, May 13, 2004.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1996.

saw her and modern historians who view photographs of her all agree that Lucy must have possessed African ancestry. The anarchist historian Paul Avrich writes that the "photographs of her clearly indicate a black or partly black ancestry." He also provides a report from the *Chicago Tribune* in 1886 that states, "Mrs. Parsons objects to the term 'colored' as signifying that she has negro blood in her veins. She says her mother was a Mexican and her father an Indian. But she is decidedly colored, just the same, and any ordinary observer would conclude that at least one of her parents was a negro."[4] Lucy's biographer, Carolyn Ashbaugh, discovered that Lucy used a variety of maiden names on various documents; using the maiden name of Carter on her son's birth certificate and the maiden name of Hull on her daughter's. And while she usually offered Texas as her birthplace, she listed Virginia on both of the children's birth certificates.[5] For the entry of her husband Albert Parsons in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, she listed the maiden name of Gonzalez, which Ashbaugh claims was the most frequent and Lucy's attempt "to verify a Mexican ancestry."[6] Ashbaugh's research of Lucy's origins produced a number of contradictions and conflicting stories, even Lucy's middle name is in question; on occasions she used Eldine and also Ella.

From her research Ashbaugh theorizes that Lucy may have been born a slave on the Texas ranch of the wealthy Gathings brothers. The slave schedules that Ashbaugh uncovered show that the Gathings each owned two slave girls in 1860 who were Lucy's age and that Phillip Gathings had a daughter named Lucy born in 1849. It would have been common practice for a slave child to be named for the master's daughter.[7] The exact reasons for Lucy's adamant refusal to claim her African and most likely slave origins remain a mystery, but her biographer does have a theory. Ashbaugh hypothesizes that while living in Texas, particularly in the years following the departure of the government of Reconstruction, Lucy most likely witnessed atrocities against her race which compelled her to denounce her heritage.[8] Falling in love with Albert Parsons in 1871 provided other reasons for her to deny her race.

Albert Parsons, a blue-blooded American who could trace his ancestors to the American Revolution, was raised by his older brother William Parsons. William rose from the ranks of general in the Confederacy to a Republican state senator. Before the Civil War he edited a secessionist and white supremacist newspaper and advocated reopening the slave trade. Ashbaugh contends for William the important issue had been "the purity of blood and supremacy as a distinct race of the Anglo-

[4] Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 11.
[5] Caroyn Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons American Revolutionary*, (Chicago: Charles Kerr Publishing Co., 1976), endnotes.
[6] Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 14.
[7] Ibid., endnotes.
[8] Ibid., 14-15.

American upon this continent."[9] Albert's relationship with Lucy must have horrified William and perhaps in an attempt to lesson the damage to the Parsons name, Lucy's identity as a Mexican-Indian was constructed. Miscegenation laws in Texas would also have prohibited a legal marriage between Albert and Lucy. The account of their marriage is also a mystery although both Lucy and Albert claimed to have been married in Austin in 1872. Consultation with an Austin historian by Ashbaugh failed to turn up a record of any marriage license issued to Albert and Lucy. Avrich quotes William Parsons as insisting that the wedding "was a matter of public record in that city" and that due to Texas laws regarding miscegenation, Lucy's claim of Mexican-Indian ancestry was obviously not in question by Texas authorities.[10] Whether or not Lucy and Albert's marriage was a legal union may remain a mystery but the passion, love, respect and devotion they held for one another is not. That is evident from Albert's words as quoted in Avrich's work, "I have had the earnest, honest, intelligent, unflagging support of that grandest, noblest, bravest of women- my wife."[11] Whatever Texas meant to their partnership as husband and wife it would be their departure for Chicago in 1873 that defined their lives as social reformers and revolutionaries.

Lucy's philosophies on the life of a reformer further serve to mystify her memory. Ashbaugh contends that Lucy believed that the "life of the reformer is totally insignificant…and that she practiced this principle and consistently maintained that her own personal life was inconsequential; she refused to talk about herself."[12] In the later years of her life, she remained critical of such reformers like Emma Goldman whom she felt wrote their books with too much emphasis on their personal lives. She commented that Emma Goldman's autobiography should have devoted much more space to the history of the movement and not by "beginning and ending with Emma…. I don't think it will be interesting to anybody outside the bunch that she was associating with at the time." She was horrified at Goldman's public account of her private love affair with Ben Reitman and believed that by leaving those episodes out of the book it "may have appealed to a more thoughtful element."[13] Lucy's own writings—as evidenced in her contributions to the anarchist publication the *Alarm*, her lectures, and her book on the life of her husband Albert—concentrated on the goals of class equality and freedom from wage slavery, as well as her philosophies on Socialism and Anarchism; she never published or lectured on her own condition or revealed any personal details of her life story.

[9] Ibid., 13, quotation from the announcement for William Parson's proposed book, *Negro Slavery, Its Past, Present and Future.*

[10] Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 12.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 32.

[13] Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 254-255.

Lucy's denial of her race and what appears to be a deliberate attempt to confuse and obliterate her past serve to mystify Lucy as a person and deny her a solid position in the historical record. Tributes and public memorials enable a community to record and mark a collective memory, but these memorials are often promoted by representative groups, such as African-Americans, veterans, laborers, women or groups sharing a political or religious ideology. By denying her race she alienated herself from African-American memory and by refusing to document her own past she created a challenge for any other group desiring to commemorate her life. Her choices indicate the perils of adopting anonymity and ambiguity in life and the subsequent memorializing of that life. However, there exists ample evidence to prove her contribution to the epic struggle between capitalism and labor at the end of the nineteenth century, but her story was still largely forgotten, particularly among Americans and the city of Chicago. Lucy and Albert's political evolution from socialism to anarchism, their subsequent battles with the ruling elite and the climax of the riot in Haymarket square, the unfair trial, conviction and execution of Albert and others serve to further explain the difficulties in remembering Lucy's story.

In response to the oppression and atrocities Albert and Lucy witnessed, first against blacks in Texas and then the working class in Chicago, they adopted the ideologies of socialism and embarked on efforts to unionize laborers with the intent to force the capitalists to bestow upon the working class fairer wages and working conditions. The socialists in Chicago worked within the electoral system to get names placed on the ballots in the hopes of legislating the change they knew was so desperately needed by the working class. Albert himself ran for county office on the socialist ticket in 1877 and amassed an impressive number of votes. According to labor historian James Green, the *Chicago Times* dismissed the number as a "riot vote" and summed up his political aspirations as one of those "long-haired idiots and knaves."[14] Green writes that the socialist reformers held out hope of "gaining power through the democratic process. Over the next six years, however, a series of discouraging events would dash that hope and send him down a revolutionary road."[15] Lucy followed that road with Albert to the more radical and anti-statist ideology of anarchism.

Lucy attributed her attraction to anarchism as a result of the railroad strike in 1877. The violence and repression of those striking workers by the police forces bidding the requests of the ruling elite and the failures of the socialist parties to secure representation in the legislative process led her to conclude that the only alternative was to overthrow the existing capitalist society. At the root of anarchism is the belief that all government is corrupt and that true freedom and liberty

[14] James Green, *Death in the Haymarket* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 85.

[15] Ibid.

cannot be achieved under the restrictions imposed by the few on the many. In her writings on the principles of anarchism she explains the impediment to progress that governments impose and how she arrived at this position after the railroad strike:

> I then thought as many thousands of earnest, sincere people think, that the aggregate power, operating in human society, known as government, could be made an instrument in the hands of the oppressed to alleviate their sufferings. But a closer study of the origin, history and tendency of governments, convinced me that this was a mistake; I came to understand how organized governments used their concentrated power to retard progress by their ever-ready means of silencing the voice of discontent if raised in vigorous protest against the machinations of the scheming few…governments never lead; they follow progress.[16]

Adopting the revolutionary movement of anarchism removed Albert and Lucy from the work of campaigning for political offices and union organizing and catapulted them into the more radical and confrontational world of anarchists. Lucy's abandonment of socialism and efforts to legislate change within the existing government meant that she had no use to support woman suffrage. Lucy believed that the current state of misery for Chicago's laborers was a class issue and "never considered women's emancipation as important as class struggle."[17] She attributed the oppression of blacks, women and immigrants on the fact that they were poor, not due to their race or sex. Ashbaugh writes that Lucy's brand of feminism "analyzed women's oppression as a function of capitalism… founded on working class values."[18] These beliefs, (despite the efforts of historians such as the Chicago Park District's Julia Bachrach to include Lucy in the woman suffrage movement) serve to alienate Lucy from the traditional women's movement and most certainly remove her from the woman suffrage movement, a cause that she called the "bourgeois woman suffrage movement."[19] The difficulty in placing Lucy's memory in the historical record of the women's movement illustrates another example of the difficult task of memorializing her life. As journalist Kathryn Rosenfield writes, Lucy was "unequivocal about her anarchism and her advocacy of violence as a means of self-defense on the

[16] Lucy Parsons, "Lecture on the Principles of Anarchism", accessed from the Writings of Lucy Parsons at http://lucyparsonsproject.org

[17] Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 201.

[18] Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 202.

[19] Kathryn Rosenfeld, "Looking for Lucy (in all the wrong places)," *Social Anarchism*, issue 37 June 2006, 3. Accessed on-line at: http://www.socialanarchism.org

part of the workers against the violent attacks of the police and bosses."[20] The anarchist's endorsement of violence as a response to the violent tactics employed by the police, the state, and the industrial capitalists against workers and reformers agitating for the eight hour day and improved working conditions presented perhaps the biggest obstacle to preserving Lucy's and her comrades' memories.

The Chicago summer of 1877 witnessed an uprising of laborers emanating from the striking railroad workers and spreading sympathy protests from the laboring class. Railroad barons called in state militia and police forces to convince the strikers to halt the work stoppage. On July 25 a confrontation between railroad workers, sympathetic rioters and police resulted in patrolmen opening fire and killing a railroad switchman and two boys. As crowds grew in protest of the police violence, the scene became more bloody and brawling raged all afternoon with striking butchers and meat cutters joining the melee in what became known as the 'battle of the viaduct.' Police stormed a meeting of German cabinetmakers and attacked the participants with clubs. Witnesses reported a police sergeant firing at bystanders. James Green claims that while they were "sent out to suppress rioters, the police became rioters themselves."[21] The fatalities from the violence numbered 30 men and boys, whereas the police force, including 5,000 "specials they deputized suffered no casualties."[22] With donations from Chicago's wealthiest citizen, Marshall Field, the city purchased cannons, a Gatling gun, 296 rifles and 60,000 rounds of ammunition in preparation for further uprisings.[23] A further setback for the workers' ability to protect themselves from an overzealous police force and capitalists funding weapons purchases was the Supreme Court of Illinois' decision to ban "armed marches of proletarian militiamen- a decision Parsons and Spies denounced as a clear violation of the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution."[24] For the reformers it now appeared that the Bill of Rights could no longer protect them. In the summer of 1885, the police exhibited a renewed sense of brutality under the command of Captain John Bonfield.

Bonfield and his forces set out to break a strike being conducted by the city's streetcar drivers and upon arrival in the city's west side they encountered a growing crowd of sympathizers. As the crowd threw obstacles in the way of the marching police, Bonfield and his men proceeded to club anyone including an elderly man and two men who approached to ask the captain a question, whom he beat unconscious.[25] Later governor of Illinois John Altgeld, in trying to understand the events that led up to the fateful Haymarket riot, wrote of the police

[20] Ibid.

[21] Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 78-9.

[22] Ibid., 80.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., 91

[25] Ibid., 123.

brutality inflicted upon the workers. He wrote that officers "brutally clubbed people who were guilty of no offense whatsoever" and that "some of the police under the leadership of Captain John Bonfield, indulged in a brutality never equaled before."[26] It was in this climate that Albert and Lucy Parsons realized that the reform they so passionately worked toward would take a revolution and that revolution required that the oppressed arm themselves, or at least publicize the resolve to meet violent measures with violence.

A poem Lucy composed for the anarchist publication the *Alarm* is an angry diatribe in response to the futility of union organizing, striking and reforms at improving the lot of the working poor. In the poem she titled *To Tramps*, she incites the unemployed and working poor to take up arms against the capitalists whose "mission is simply robbery." She advises them before they consider suicide in the "cold embrace of the lake" to consider the power of violence when employed by the masses. She recommends "each of you hungry tramps who read these lines, avail yourselves of those little methods of warfare which science has placed in the hands of the poor man…learn the use of explosives!"[27] Ashbaugh responds to Lucy's advocating the use of dynamite; "Lucy was more vigorous in her support of propaganda by the deed than was Albert; he tended to be a prophet of social revolution, while all the oppression which Lucy suffered for her dark skin and her womanhood went into the anger with which she encouraged the use of dynamite."[28] Despite Lucy's personal views on the use of violence, it was the anarchists' endorsement of violence that instilled fear in an already volatile atmosphere and it was an endorsement that would come back to haunt them.

In 1886, after witnessing the killing of peacefully striking workers by police at the McCormick reaper plant, fellow anarchist Samuel Fielden called for a protest meeting in Chicago's Haymarket square. The evening of May 4th, Albert and Lucy along with their two children, walked to the Haymarket where Albert spoke for about an hour regarding the eight-hour day movement to workers outraged over the latest reports of police violence against striking workers. Albert, Lucy, and the children had retired to a local saloon, when police ordered Samuel Fielden to cease speaking to the gathered crowd as he dismounted the wagon he had used as a platform a bomb was thrown into the advancing line of patrolmen killing one of them. Panicked police officers fired recklessly into the crowd inflicting injury on innocent bystanders and killing seven more of their own. An anarchist 'witch hunt' ensued and Albert along with seven other anarchists were brought to trial and convicted of conspiracy to employ the use of dynamite against law enforcement. Four of the

[26] Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 124.

[27] Lucy Parsons, "To Tramps", accessed from the Writings of Lucy Parsons at http://lucyparsonsproject.org.

[28] Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parson*, 55.

anarchists, including Albert Parsons and Sam Fielden were sentenced to hang. The trial, the later pleas for clemency and the execution itself gripped Chicago, the nation and the world with its drama.

James Green contends that the "breadth and depth of coverage devoted to the Haymarket case exceeded all others in the post-Civil War years."[29] Pleas for clemency for the condemned flooded Governor Ogelsby's office. Samuel Gompers of the newly formed American Federation of Labor warned the governor that if executed these men "would be looked upon as martyrs…thousands of labor men all over the world would consider that these men had been executed because they were standing for free speech and free press." Gompers questioned how "this country could be great and magnanimous enough to grant amnesty to Jefferson Davis, who had committed treason and led a rebellion against the government that cost countless lives, surely the state of Illinois could do as much for the anarchists."[30] All efforts at clemency were futile and the men were resigned to their fate accepting of the supreme sacrifice to the cause. The day of the executions Lucy along with her two children attempted to visit Albert to say their last goodbyes. Police refused to let her in and she exploded in anger screaming at them "you murderous villains! You forbid me to see my husband, whom you are about to kill and not let him take a last look at his children, whom you are about to make orphans."[31] While she claimed to not have any bombs with her at that moment she informed the officers that she could obtain them and use them if she desired. She was promptly arrested, and, while Albert met his fate in the gallows, Lucy and the children endured the humiliation of being strip searched by police for bombs and denied the opportunity to say goodbye to their beloved husband and father.

The funeral march for the Haymarket martyrs, as they came to be known, was witnessed by an estimated 200,000 people. According to Green, "Chicagoans had never witnessed such a massive public funeral. The crowds exceeded even those that had gathered to march behind Lincoln's coffin…however, then Chicago's citizens had walked together… united in their grief. Now, one class of people grieved while another gave thanks for the moral judgment rendered on the gallows."[32] Lucy's grief was inconsolable as she interred her husband and his comrades at Waldheim Cemetery. She would be forced to endure unbearable grief again three years later at the death of her daughter, Lulu. Albert's execution served to fuel the revolutionary spirit of Lucy and she continued to lecture on the evils of capitalism and the plight of the working class.

[29] Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 229.

[30] Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 263.

[31] Ibid., 267-8.

[32] Ibid., 275.

Lucy's activities after the executions were followed closely by the press and the police. A search of the *Chicago Tribune* alone produces numerous articles from reports of her arrests to her love life, her travels and her efforts to exonerate her husband's memory and always including the suffix "the widow of Albert Parsons". Some articles such as one in 1894 are simply four lines long just reporting that she "addressed a small audience."[33] The Tribune reported in 1896 that Lucy's house had caught fire and of the items lost were the "chair in which Parsons sat in jail, a toy boat that he carved, the knife with which he did the whittling, books from which he had gleaned his fund of arguments against the government, all went up in smoke, together with a considerable library."[34] Destruction of those types of artefacts added to the difficulty of future remembering of Lucy and Albert's ordeal, as did the confiscation of materials by the police, in what Green refers to as a "forty year ordeal of episodic jailings of Mrs. Parsons, whose activities would become an obsession with the Chicago Police Department."[35]

Remembrance of the fallen police officers in the form of a monument was pursued soon after the riot and the publisher of the *Tribune*, Joseph Medill, raised enough money for a bronze statue to be commissioned from donations received primarily from businessmen's clubs. A bronze statue designed by John Gelart of a "noble policemen with arm raised" was erected in Haymarket square on Memorial Day 1889.[36] Labor historian Lara Kelland writes that "the statue would serve as a potent symbol of police power for years."[37] However, a tradition of vandalism against the statue began on May 4, 1903 when the city and state crest were torn from the monument. May 4, 1927 found the monument knocked from its pedestal by a street car driver. In 1969 the statue was faced with its most violent abuse when someone placed a bomb under the statue. After Mayor Daley saw to the repair of the statue, it sustained more damage from another bomb the following year. Following the last round of vandalism, Daley ordered round the clock police protection for the statue at the taxpayer's expense of $67,000 a year. In 1972 the statue was permanently moved inside Chicago Police headquarter and it remains there today. Attempts at preserving the cultivated memory of victimization for the fallen police officers began immediately and while it may have persevered in certain circles it is obvious from the abuse inflicted on the monument on the anniversaries of the Haymarket tragedy, not everybody was adhering to the memory in the same manner. Memorializing the Haymarket tragedy became as

[33] *Chicago Tribune*, May 28, 1894.

[34] *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 1896.

[35] Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 195.

[36] Lara Kelland, "Putting Haymarket to Rest?," *Labor Studies in Working Class History of the Americas*, vol.2, issue 2, Spring 2005, 31.

[37] Ibid.

conflicted and mired in opposition as the battle of labor and capitalism itself.

The monument erected at the graves of the Haymarket martyrs was commissioned with funds provided by the Pioneer Aid and Support Association, a group formed to financially assist the surviving families of the accused men and to care for the grave sites. In 1893 a bronze statue sculpted by Albert Weinberg was unveiled at the grave site in Waldheim Cemetery. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that 8,000 visitors viewed the monument the day following the unveiling on June 25.[38] Samuel Fielden's final words as he mounted the gallows and the state's noose was placed around his neck, 'the day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today', are engraved at the base of the monument. Kelland writes, "Governor Altgeld's pardon, issued the day after the dedication ceremony confirmed the innocence of the Martyrs in public memory through a dramatic and lengthy statement accompanying the pardon."[39] James Green agrees that the governor's "courageous statement added enormous power to the memory of the Haymarket defendants as innocent victims of a 'judicial hanging'."[40] Despite Governor Altgeld's pardon and admission that the Chicago anarchists were deprived of a fair trial and the generally accepted view that the police officers who died were victims of their own bullets, the opposing memories of the Haymarket ordeal remained in conflict.

Perhaps it was in an effort to avoid the seeming impossibility of reconciling the oppositional views of the Haymarket tragedy that compelled Chicago to ignore commemorating the event altogether. While the rest of the world, particularly Mexico and Latin America, vigorously worked to keep the memory of the 'Chicago Martyrs' alive, Chicago did not even place a memorial in the square where the tragic events had unfolded. In an effort to avoid the radical connotations inherent in the term "anarchists," Chicago mayor Harold Washington proclaimed the month of May in 1986 Labor History month. He avoided referring to the anarchists as "men who died for their beliefs," but rather commemorated "the movement towards the eight-hour day, union rights, civil rights, human rights" and to remember "the tragic miscarriage of justice which claimed the lives of four labor activists."[41] Trading the radical label "anarchist" for the more benign "labor activist" set the stage for the Labor History Society to request that a permanent memorial be placed in the square. Mayor Washington died before the proposal became a reality. By 2002 a panel including representation from the Illinois Labor History Society, Chicago's Public Art Program and the Chicago Police Department embarked on the effort to commission a memorial in

[38] Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 291.

[39] Kelland, "Putting Haymarket to Rest," 33.

[40] James Green, *Taking History to Heart*, (Amherst; University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 132.

[41] Ibid., 143.

Chicago's Haymarket Square. The monument, unveiled in 2004, is an ambiguous and abstract work of art intended to convey the importance of free speech. The message defuses the politicized reality of the anarchists' radicalism and the corruption and violent tactics of an oppressive police force. Ironically, the president of the Chicago Fraternal Order of Police, Mark Donahue, spoke at the monument's dedication stating, "we've come a long way to be included in this…we're part of the labor movement now too, and glad to be here."[42] This is the same individual who criticized the Chicago Park District's efforts to name a city park after Lucy Parsons just a few months later. While his criticism of the park naming seems in conflict with his statement of inclusion in the Haymarket memory, Kelland believes that it "illuminates much about the ideological consensus over recent memorializing efforts." She claims that "by polarizing the meaning of the 1886 event between free speech and labor in opposition to radical social critique of government and industry, the memorial effort becomes palatable for those officially involved."[43]

Despite Lucy Parsons' efforts to mystify her past, despite the destruction of archives by two fires, the latter taking her life in 1942, and despite the disappearance of the remainder of her papers after her death, Lucy Parsons does have a Chicago public park named for her. Even though the tragic story of Chicago's Haymarket is considered to be a watershed event in the history of labor, it has taken 118 years for Chicago to officially commemorate its story, albeit a less threatening and depoliticized story. Her refusal to publicize and document her personal life allowed and continues to allow her memory to be largely forgotten.

[42] Kelland, "Putting Haymarket to Rest." 37.
[43] Ibid.

An Examination of the Causes of Wounded Knee 1973: a Case of Intra-tribal Conflict or Response to Federal Policies toward Indians?

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On February 27, 1973 the small village of Wounded Knee, South Dakota was occupied by several hundred Oglala Sioux residents, tribal elders and headmen, medicine men, and members of the American Indian Movement headed by Oglala Sioux Russell Means after many failed attempts to impeach the chairman of the Tribal Council on Pine Ridge Reservation. The Independent Oglala Nation demanded the removal of Richard "Dick" Wilson as chairman and restoration of "tribal government as per the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 by traditional Lakota structures."[1] Traditional Lakota accused Wilson of mismanaging tribal funds, failure to hold meetings that concerned tribal affairs, nepotism, civil rights violations and for inflicting terror and violence against those who offended him or challenged his leadership.[2] Firebombs, shootings, beatings, property destruction, and violent deaths had become common on the reservation under the Wilson regime.[3] Wilson also tended to favor "mixed bloods" over "full bloods" for council and government jobs and supported U.S. government and white interests over those of the people he represented, often overriding tribal council decisions.[4]

From this perspective, the occupation of Wounded Knee appears to be the outcome of intra-tribal conflict between council chairman Wilson and non-traditional, often "mixed blood" Indians and traditional, "full blood" Indians.[5] This perspective also wraps both the event and the cause in a neat, small package; the occupation caused by two opposing forces on

[1] Wilson, Raymond. "Russell Means/Lakota." In *The New Warriors: Native American Leaders since 1900.* Edited by R. David Edmunds (Lincoln, Nebraska, 2001): 155.
[2] Ibid. 154; Crow Dog, Mary. *Lakota Woman.* With Richard Erdoes. (New York, reprinted 1991): 115.
[3] Crow Dog, Mary. *Lakota Woman*, 115;
[4] Weyler, Rex. *Blood of the Land: The Government and Corporate War Against the American Indian Movement.* (New York, 1982): 71.
[5] The terms "mixed blood" and "full blood" refer to biological ancestry, as did the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 that required enrollment on reservations in order to receive land allotments impose terms. Although not historically how Indians determined clan membership or kinship, federally recognized tribes have relied on blood quantum to control access to resources provided to members. See R. David Edmund, *The New Warriors*, in his introduction page 4-5; Emma R. Gross, *Contemporary Federal Policy Toward American Indians*, Contributions in Ethnic Studies No.25, Leonard W. Doob, series editor (Westport, Connecticut, 1989), 19-20. I have also opted for the term "Indian" to describe the descendents of the first inhabitants on the North American continent as in reviewing the literature; native peoples to describe themselves most commonly use this.

the reservation in isolation from other problems Indians faced, and indeed in isolation from the historical roots that created the potential for such a situation. However, does this accurately portray the situation faced by the residents of Pine Ridge Reservation and its' origins?

Both scholars and participants in the Wounded Knee occupation have suggested that there was more than one event that occurred leading up to the occupation. Federal policies, including the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA) and termination policies of the 1940s and 1950s created reservation conflict over and in competition for limited resources and services.[6] Other events that occurred in close proximity to each other included the return of Russell Means, AIM leader to Pine Ridge Reservation, the murder of Oglala Raymond Yellow Thunder in Gordon, Nebraska, and the light sentences afforded the white perpetrators in Yellow Thunder's murder.[7]

A third perspective on the occupation provides insight into the causes of Wounded Knee; individual and collective ethnic renewal among Indians and other minority groups. A pan-Indian movement formed, organized and mobilized to address grievances against the U.S. government and other institutions. The climate of civil rights across the country inspired Indians to set aside tribal differences and produce a united effort.[8] As awareness of ethnic renewal and expressions of grievances against federal policies and issues over treaty rights seeped into the reservation via the presence of Russell Means, strength and resolve to engage in a direct confrontation with Wilson, the BIA, and those in Wilson's camp was garnered. In addition, because the U.S. government had virtually ignored Pine Ridge Reservation residents' calls for help, the Independent Oglala Nation requested the assistance of AIM to stop the violence and abuses of Dick Wilson.[9] Mary Crow Dog explained, "Wounded Knee was not the brain-child of wild, foaming-at-the-mouth militants, but of patient and totally unpolitical, traditional Sioux, mostly old Sioux ladies."[10]

Finally, the attempts of the U.S. government to suppress Indian resistance in order to gain access to tribal lands and their resources, as well as its obsession with Russell Means and AIM as revolutionaries and its

[6] Cornell, Stephen. "Crisis and Response in Indian-White Relations: 1960-1984." *Social Problems*, 32(1), Thematic Issue on Minorities and Social Movements. (October, 1984): 45-46; Deloria, Vine Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence.* (New York, 1974): 70; Crow Dog, Mary, *Lakota Woman*, 113.

[7] Deloria, Vine Jr., *Trail*, 70; Reinhardt, Akim D., "Spontaneous Combustion: Prelude to Wounded Knee 1973." *South Dakota History* 29(3). (Fall, 1999): 230, 233.

[8] Deloria, *Trail*, 27; Nagel, Joane. "American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity." *American Sociological Review* 60(6) (Dec., 1995): 948.

[9] Sanchez, John, Mary E. Stuckey, and Richard Morris. "Rhetorical Exclusion: The Government's Case Against American Indian Activists, AIM, and Leonard Peltier." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 23(2) (1999): 31.

[10] Crow Dog, Mary. *Lakota Woman*, 113.

subsequent intensive surveillance of AIM's activities, lead to a strong presence of military and FBI operatives on and near the reservation. [11] This presence ultimately did not put down the protest; rather, it served to escalate the situation that was growing more desperate and hostile.

It is apparent, given what I have described above, that the situation at Wounded Knee on Pine Ridge Reservation in 1973 was much more than an example of conflict between factions on the reservation and that there was not a single cause responsible for the occupation. I suggest that Wounded Knee was realized by a convergence of factors that included reservation politics, federal policies, race and ethnicity as defined in both Indian and Euro-American terms, supra-tribal consciousness emerging in a civil rights climate, charges of injustice against Indians, and the numerous co-existing struggles- Richard Wilson and Russell Means, AIM/Russell Means and the federal government, and national interests (i.e. access to energy resources) and Indian interests. The occupation of Wounded Knee did not fit into the larger picture of the Indian experience, but expressed the broader conflict American Indians faced and that the federal government grappled with.

In this paper, I will examine and describe how the occupation of Wounded Knee cannot be accurately described as an intra-tribal conflict, but rather must be seen in terms of the consequences of federal policies toward Indians and in terms of ethnic and cultural renewal and identity among Indians. The rise of the Indian voice in the American Indian Movement and the refusal of Indians to accept Euro-American political structures and traditions that led to exploitation and abuse on the reservation rallied the Lakota to protest.

In connecting the many and diverse issues, I will answer the following questions: 1) What was the situation on Pine Ridge reservation that created factionalism and what was the role of tribal chairman Dick Wilson? 2) What role did federal policy toward Indians play in the conflict? 3) How did Russell Means and AIM fit into the conflict? 4) Why was the federal government so interested in the activities on Pine Ridge? 5) How did supra-tribal consciousness and ethnic and cultural identity figure in to the situation?

The Situation on Pine Ridge Reservation

Demographics and Economic Disposition

Eleven-thousand Oglala inhabited Pine Ridge Reservation in the 1970s, covering approximately 4000 square miles, and was "a patchwork of

[11] Sanchez, et.al. *Rhetorical Exclusion*, 32; Roos, Philip D., Dowell H. Smith, Stephen Langley, and James McDonald. "The Impact of the American Indian Movement on Pine Ridge Reservation." *Phylon* 40(1) (1st Qtr., 1980): 91.

white and Indian-owned property."[12] Tribal government controlled one-half million acres, whites owned one million acres, and Indians owned one and one and one-half million acres with 83% of those lands leased out by the Indians because of poverty. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) controlled many of the land leases with these leases going to white ranchers.[13] Oglala Indians that sold or leased their lands were forced to move to the agency town of Pine Ridge in order to try to find jobs. Typically, outlying rural residents maintained Indian traditions, but as they moved to the towns they became separated not only from their lands, but also from their traditional ways.[14]

The unemployment rate among Indians in the state of South Dakota was 20.1% as compared to the 3.2% rate among whites leaving 54.8% of Indians living below the poverty line. It is important to note that Indians at that time made up only 5-7% of the entire population.[15] Because of high unemployment, one-third of the Indian population relied on government assistance and those who were employed often worked for the BIA or in tribal government posts.[16] The scarcity of jobs also forced many off the reservation into government sponsored training programs, urban areas, military service, and to college campuses for further education. Other problems resulted from relocation and I will provide explanation in later sections.

Non-Indians and the churches owned and operated the majority of business and industries in Pine Ridge and Wounded Knee villages. The Gildersleeve's, in Wounded Knee, owned 40 acres and the Episcopal Church owned 80 acres and, as explained by lifelong residents, Eddie White Dress and Florine Hollow Horn, assumed complete control in the villages.[17] The Gildersleeve's also owned a trading post and museum that catered primarily to tourists, making money for them and excluding the Indians whose heritage and history they put on display. Local residents also had to rely on the trading post and its high prices to purchase food and other necessities. Florine Hollow Horn offered that there was no place else to go and that "their prices were really high."[18] Eddie White Dress elaborated on

[12] Roos, Philip D., Dowell H. Smith, Stephen Langley, and James McDonald. "The Impact of the American Indian Movement on the Pine Ridge Reservation." *Phylon (1960-)* 41 (1). (1st Qtr. 1980). Accessed online 08/27/2007. Database: JSTOR; Akwesasne Notes, "Voices From Wounded Knee 1973: In the Words of the Participants." *Akwesasne Notes* (Rooseveltown, New York, 1974): 9.

[13] Akwesasne Notes, *Voices From WK*, 9-10.

[14] Deloria, Vine, Jr. *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence.* (New York, 1974): 69.

[15] Weyler, Rex. *Blood of the Land: The Government and Corporate War Against the American Indian Movement.* (New York, 1982): 67.

[16] Akwesasne Notes. *Voices From WK*, 12.

[17] Ibid. 158.

[18] Ibid. 156.

the problem with the trading post, "They [Indians] won't be able to trade there or have no credit unless they sign their whole check [welfare] to him," referring to another owner of the trading post named Czywzcynski.[19] Karen White Butterfly explained that employees of the local moccasin factory were forced to do piecework in order to make more than the $1.60 per hour wage.[20] Indians were dependent not only on the government to manage land leases, but on whites who controlled the limited access to goods and services.

With the 1960s "War on Poverty" during the Johnson administration, more funding and patronage jobs had become available to raise the economic status of reservation Indians. These jobs and the disposition of funds were under the control of the tribal chairman who assigned jobs and committee posts. According to Deloria, "Most tribal politicians tried to support the people of the back-country communities, the traditional Sioux, but almost always had to bow to the voting power of Pine Ridge village and promise extensive patronage jobs to important village people."[21] With the decreasing power of the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a result of the Nixon administration's position on Indian self-determination that grew out of Indian advocates' influence, there was increased power on the part of the tribal president, making this position more strongly contested.[22] Although this had promised to restore control to reservation Indians and the tribal governments, the decreasing oversight of programs, jobs, and funds by the BIA and increasing factionalism on Pine Ridge set the stage for a chairman of Wilson's ilk to wreak havoc on those who opposed him and his agenda.

Thus, the situation on Pine Ridge in the early 1970s was one of economic and cultural desperation for the largely rural, traditional Lakota, but was also true for "mixed bloods." Economic survival among the Lakota, regardless of blood degree, depended on the favors of the tribal chairman. Many Indians sold or leased their allotted land in order to maintain a subsistent existence. In many instances, the BIA managed the leases and lowered rates to favor whites. Dependence on a more powerful tribal council, as well as the less influential but decidedly present BIA served well to pit "full bloods" and "mixed bloods" against each other in the quest for survival.

The Problem with Richard "Dick" Wilson

Dick Wilson, with the backing of white ranchers and the largely "mixed blood" vote of Pine Ridge village residents, was elected tribal

[19] Ibid.

[20] Akwesasne Notes, *Voices from WK*, 157.

[21] Deloria, *Trail*, 70.

[22] Gross, *Federal Policy*, 36; Roos, et al. *Impact of AIM*, 95.

chairman in 1972. He defeated incumbent Gerald One Feather, a traditional and "full blood" from the remote village of Oglala. This defeat reflected the polarization between the remote villages on the reservation and those who relied on government and tribal positions at Pine Ridge.[23] Russell Means suggested that Wilson had misrepresented himself by his appearance, sporting the long hair usually worn by traditional Indian men and those involved in groups such as AIM. Means believed that Wilson used the guise of being a friend to the traditional Lakota and made statements that indicated he was supportive of AIM's goals.[24]

Wilson was able to fund his campaign by promises of housing and liquor contracts to two white men from Rapid City and received support from other whites on the reservation that either leased or owned land.[25] Ellen Moves Camp, interviewed in *Akwesasne Notes* stated, "He's just some kind of dictator that got in there. Our people must have been pretty hungry to elect him."[26] Wilson had promised to help the Indians in the remote communities and had brought food out into the districts. Moreover, his support of government access to lands made him a favorite among those who supported mining and oil contracts to improve the local economy. Unfortunately, Wilson also sought to improve his own financial interests as well as those of his friends to the exclusion of others.[27] Although support was strong for One Feather among the remote villages, Wilson was able to garner sufficient support from Pine Ridge village and the mixed bloods to win the election. Traditional Indians frequently refused to participate in Euro-American style democratic structures that they viewed as illegitimate, thus taking away support from One Feather.

After his election, Wilson remained firm in his support of government access to tribal lands by favoring handing over 133, 000 acres of reservation land to the National Park Service. He also favored "accepting Claims Commission money for the stolen Black Hills," against the wishes of traditional Lakota people who did not view that land for sale.[28] The land was used during World War II as a gunnery range with the promise that it would be returned to the reservation after the war. The government offered compensation to the Lakota in return for the land, which as already mentioned, was opposed by the people but accepted by Wilson. When Wilson accepted compensation, the U.S. Army moved onto the reservation, the Lakota decided to impeach Wilson.[29]

[23] Deloria, *Trail*, 70.

[24] Means, Russell. *Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Means.* With Marvin J. Wolf. (New York, 1995): 196.

[25] Young Bear, Severt, *Voices From WK*, in Akwesasne Notes, 17; Weyler, *Blood*, 70.

[26] Moves Camp, Ellen, *Voices From WK*, in Akwesasne Notes, 14.

[27] Cornell, *Crisis*, 50.

[28] Weyler, *Blood*, 71.

[29] Ibid. 72.

Prior to the decision to impeach because of reservation land losses, Wilson had inflicted violence and terror throughout the reservation against all opposition. With federal money, Wilson established his own private army—the Guardians of the Oglala Nation—known as the GOON squad.[30] He also used this squad to protect BIA facilities allegedly to protect them from AIM. For this, he also received BIA funding.[31] Wilson targeted his violence and terror towards Russell Means, who had returned to the reservation, members and supporters of AIM, and traditional Lakota.[32] Later, during a hearing on the violence Wilson explained to South Dakota Senator James Abourezk, "We organized this force to handle the threat of people like Russell Means and other radicals." Wilson suggested that this was necessary to protect BIA facilities from a "dance" planned by protesting Indians after the occupation of BIA offices in the Washington, D.C. protest, and stated that the money to form this "auxiliary police force" was provided by the BIA.[33]

Wilson used his GOON squad to burn homes, threaten families, make arrests, and inflict physical abuse on those who opposed him or who supported AIM. Wilson succeeded in completely terrorizing those who were his targets. An Oglala woman interviewed in Akwesasne Notes stated, when questioned whether the Indians out in the districts wanted help from AIM, "Sure. They're the silent majority. They're scared. How would you like it if I beat you up every time you said something? Would you go around voicing what you want to say? And if nobody hears you would you be able to stand up and fight?"[34]

In addition to violence, Wilson enacted numerous oppressive policies on the reservation. He "abolished freedom of speech and assembly on the reservation," according to Mary Crow Dog.[35] He also "issued a ban on AIM members speaking publicly on the reservation, or, in the case of Banks and Means, entering the reservation at all."[36] Wilson also suspended the tribal vice-president, in a unilateral move, for engaging in activities with AIM.[37] With the backing of his GOON squad, Wilson was able to override council decisions, make unilateral decisions, use government funding toward his own interests, and run the business of the reservation with totalitarian control.

[30] Reinhardt, *Spontaneous*, 231.

[31] Ibid. 235-6.

[32] Weyler, *Blood*, 71.

[33] From the film *Voices from Wounded Knee*, by Saul Landau, Institute for Policy Studios, Washington , D.C., 1974 in Weyler, *Blood of the Land*, 61.

[34] Akwesasne Notes, *Voices From WK*, 182.

[35] Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*, 115.

[36] Weyler, *Blood*, 60.

[37] Reinhardt, *Spontaneous*, 236.

Wilson's position as tribal chairman, his authoritarian control over the reservation, and his close relationship with the BIA and government agents also afforded him control over monies provided by the government for reservation programs as well as payments for leased lands on the reservation. Frequently, tribal government, under Wilson's control, withheld lease payments from traditional Lakota, including Russell Means and his brother who had not received lease money since they had joined AIM.[38] Control over the leases was a "service offered by the BIA to help Indians lease their lands."[39] This assistance with leasing was a disguise by the Department of the Interior to keep strong control over the use of tribal lands and ensured government access to lands for grazing and mining contracts. In this way, Wilson was able to influence where lease money ended up, which was frequently in his own pocket and in those of contractors and friends he favored.[40]

The examples of the corruption of Dick Wilson's tribal council and his influence over the BIA are endless. Wilson's long history of conflict-of-interest abuses and "illegally converting tribal funds" as a council member prior to his election as chairman suggests that Wilson was in no way interested in using his position to provide benefit to the people of Pine Ridge Reservation.[41] The government support that, according to Ellen Moves Camp, Wilson enjoyed was unprecedented on the reservation. She stated, "We all wonder why it is that the Government is backing him up so much, because none of our other Tribal Councilmen were ever backed up like this. Nothing like this has ever happened before, where we have guns all over the reservation, threatening people, hitting people, putting them in the hospital. You don't have no protection at all on the reservation."[42]

Wilson's history of corruption, his disdain for Russell Means and AIM, his close connections to non-Indians, their money and their interests, and his relationship with the federal government and support of government interests over those of his constituents add dimensions to the cause or causes of Wounded Knee that certainly suggest much more than an intra-tribal conflict. In fact, I would argue that the notion of an intra-tribal conflict played a minor role in the build up to the occupation of Wounded Knee. The desperate situation on Pine Ridge was about not only Wilson and a polarized reservation; it went much deeper than that.

Indian Actions to Remove Wilson and Restore Peace

Despite the violence and fear of terror on the reservations, traditional Indians reported civil rights violations, violence, and corruption

[38] Weyler, *Blood*, 71.
[39] Ibid. 70.
[40] Ibid
[41] Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*, 115.
[42] Moves Camp, *Voices From WK*, Akwesasne Notes, 14.

to Congress and the White House.[43] However, the government did not respond to the 150 complaints of civil rights violations that were filed. Instead, government attention remained on Russell Means and AIM with intensive surveillance by the FBI and the Justice Department.[44] Because of the apparent lack of interest on the part of the federal government concerning the situation on Pine Ridge Reservation, the Oglalas understood the need to organize and mobilize.

The traditional Oglalas who opposed Wilson and his regime formed the Ogala Sioux Civil Rights Organization; this included "Fools Crow and other chiefs, elder women such as Ellen Moves Camp and Gladys Bissonnette, the Means brothers, and younger supporters such as Gladys's nephew Pedro Bissonnette."[45] In order to effectively mobilize, the Civil Rights Organization understood they would need help, and they asked AIM for that help. Ellen Moves Camp explained in *Akwesasne Notes*, "We decided we needed the AIM in here because our men were scared, they hung to the back."[46]

The Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization quickly moved to file impeachment proceedings against Wilson and planned this for February 14, 1973. Wilson was able to call in the FBI and U.S. Marshals accusing AIM and the Civil Rights Organization of planning a takeover of the BIA, much like what had occurred in Washington, D.C. They responded by setting up a command post on the reservation. Wilson postponed impeachment hearings because of poor weather and dangerous road conditions, although travel was not particularly limited and several hundred people showed up for the hearing.[47]

Responding to the postponement and with the help of AIM, the Oglala Civil Rights Organization began actively protesting against Wilson. Led by women elders, a group of 300 Indians protested in front of the BIA building at Pine Ridge village and demanded that Wilson be removed as tribal chairman and Stanley Lyman as superintendent. Although Lyman, according to Ellen Moves Camp was willing to meet with them, Wilson refused and informed Lyman that, "he didn't have to face nobody."[48] U.S. Marshals arrived quickly on the scene to protect BIA property and Wilson, and it is suggested by the editors of *Akwesasne Notes*, that their presence was most likely an effort to wage "some kind of attack" against AIM.[49] Vine Deloria, Jr. suggested that U.S. Marshal and FBI presence on the reservation were a result of increasing tensions on Pine Ridge and that the

[43] Sanchez, et al., *Rhetorical Exclusion*, 36-37.
[44] Sanchez, et al. *Rhetorical Exclusion*, 31-33; Weyler, *Blood*, 73.
[45] Weyler, *Blood*, 70.
[46] Moves Camp, *Voices From WK*, in Akwesasne Notes, 31.
[47] Akwesasne Notes, *Voices From WK*, 22.
[48] Akwesasne Notes, *Voices From WK*, 23.
[49] Ibid.

government was prepared to put down any efforts by AIM to engage in the dispute between Wilson and the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization.[50]

The protest ended without incident and the tribal government rescheduled Wilson's impeachment for February 22. However, patrols by the tribal police, FBI, U.S. marshals, BIA police, the state police, and Wilson's GOONs intensified and special operations forces set up communication networks on the reservation. The FBI and local police evicted AIM members, who were meeting in a Rapid City motel, and blockaded other meetings sites.[51]

The situation at Pine Ridge had escalated and was now extremely volatile. The incredible show of force by federal and state government suggests that there was more interest in the activities of AIM than in the problem of tribal government corruption and abuses. I suggest that the government was very aware of Wilson's actions despite their silence when the Ogala Sioux Civil Rights Organization asked for help. This silence strongly implicates the governments' preference in maintaining the status quo to protect their interests rather than to address the Indians' complaints of civil rights violations. I also suggest that this preference directly relates to what lead to the occupation of Wounded Knee.

The situation at Pine Ridge Reservation alone, however, does not complete the picture of causation in its entirety, although conditions on the reservation alone certainly would have provided sufficient motivation on the part of the protesters. At this point, I depart from Pine Ridge to address the question of how the consequences of federal policies toward Indians, the resurgence of ethnic and cultural identity, and the rise of American Indian Movement contributed to and were realized in the historical event known as Wounded Knee 1973.

Federal Policies and Their Consequences

Since the late 1800s, there have been many policies that have addressed how to manage indigenous peoples in order to affect some sort of peace between Indians and non-Indians, provide land and resources for Indians and at the same time serve the interests of a growing nation with its demands for infrastructure, energy, and agriculture. These policies are numerous and complex and a full examination of their impact would exceed the parameters of this paper. My research revealed, however, that the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA), and the termination policies of the 1940s to 1950s figure prominently in what lead to the conditions on Pine Ridge Reservation. In this section, I will briefly describe these policies, and how they fit in to the story that led to the occupation of Wounded Knee.

[50] Deloria, Jr., *Trail*, 71-72.
[51] Weyler, *Blood*, 73.

The Dawes Allotment Act of 1887

S. Lyman Tyler, in a Department of the Interior publication, explained that the Dawes Act was intended to "deal with individual Indians and Indian families, and to by-pass tribal leaders and to sometimes ignore tribal groupings."[52] According to the annual report of the Board of Indian Commissioners for 1888, the act was a way to promote Indian independence as individuals, to make Indians "men" and not "wards of the Government." The act also was a step towards the dissolution of tribal organization and an end of the reservation system in order to "place the Indians on equal footing with other citizens of the country."[53] According to Emma Gross, the act "was rationalized in the name of assimilating the Indian to mainstream cultural values of the time" and was designed to "sever the reservations into allotments that could be owned and disposed of by individuals and families," thus, to "civilize" them.[54]

The Dawes Act did several things. First, it divided communally held tribal lands into small allotments to be held by individual Indians to engage in farming and eliminate traditional communal ownership. The federal government held all allotments in trust for twenty-five years, after which the Indian allottee received title to the land.[55] Secondly, the Allotment Act allowed Indians to become American citizens and, under the 14th Amendment, citizens of the state in which they resided. To receive their allotment, federal agents were to "enroll" Indians as tribe members to provide a census and determine eligibility by listing "blood quantum."[56] Thirdly, the Department of the Interior sold and leased tribal lands to non-Indians, developers, ranchers, or other interested parties if those lands were not allotted to Indians.

Frequently, Indians who did not engage in farming, or were unable to successfully use allotted lands, often became homeless and unable to make a living after they sold or leased their land allotments. The Department of the Interior purchased land not allotted and reduced reservation size.[57] Weyler suggests that it was not uncommon for the Department of the Interior to lease lands "without the consent or even the knowledge of the 'owner'" and that lease payments, usually set quite low, were submitted to the BIA-supervised tribal government.[58] Indians leasing land relied on tribal government to disperse lease payments accordingly.

[52] Tyler, S. Lyman, *A History of Indian Policy*, United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. (Washington, D.C., 1973): 95.
[53] Tyler, *A History of Federal Policy*, 96.
[54] Gross, *Federal Policy*, 20.
[55] Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy*, 96; Gross, *Federal Policy*, 20; Weyler, *Blood*, 64.
[56] Tyler, 96; Edmunds, *New Warriors*, 4.
[57] Gross, *Federal Policy*, 20; Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy*, 97.
[58] Weyler, *Blood*, 71.

Ultimately, the Dawes Act changed the character of the reservation by breaking up communally held lands, by determining degrees of "Indianness" that had not existed before, by allowing non-Indians access to tribal lands, and by attempting to force assimilation of Indians through individual ownership and mandating American citizenship. The difficulties Indians faced because of the Dawes Act included increasing poverty, cultural erosion, "problems of fractionated heirship," and loss of tribal lands.[59]

The effects of the Dawes Act continued to be apparent on Pine Ridge Reservation into the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in the factionalism that had developed between "full" and "mixed" bloods. As noted earlier, the poverty that existed on the reservation created intensified power struggles between the factions as each side struggled for economic survival. The non-Indian presence of white ranchers and contractors, as well as that of the federal government, created a rift between those Indians who relied on non-Indians for jobs and those who rejected assimilation and sought to maintain cultural identity, despite the material cost.

By the early 1900s, it was evident to those involved in Indian affairs—both governmental and non-governmental—that earlier policies had failed and that the goals of these policies were questionable. The administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal prompted a reshaping of policy toward Indians to address issues of sovereignty and replaced "direct colonial administration to a system of indirect colonial rule."[60]

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and John Colliers' Dream

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA) was the outcome of years of work by John Collier, who was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933. He had worked for ten years as the executive secretary of the Indian Defense Association and had been highly critical of policies toward Indians. Colliers' goal was to develop agriculture, native crafts, and reservation industries to allow Indian reservations to be self-sufficient, as grant money for wage-work during the depression was ending. Self-sufficiency on the part of Indians would also decrease competition for jobs off the reservation.[61] Collier also wanted to engage Indians in the decision-making process and encourage them to manage their own business affairs. He supported tribal governments styled after traditional Euro-American structures.[62]

[59] Gross, *Federal Policy*, 20.

[60] Reinhardt, Akim D. "A Crude Replacement: The Indian New Deal, Indirect Colonialism, and Pine Ridge Reservation." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6(1) 2005: paragraph 2.

[61] Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy*, 125, 133.

[62] Ibid. 134.

Collier had a long history in reform work during the early 1900s, focused on improving living conditions among the urban immigrant poor and later, working in Washington, D.C. as a political advocate for issues concerning Indians. His primary goal with the IRA was to end assimilation and instead, encourage Indian culture and expression in education and return to goals that are more agrarian. He also sought to reverse allotment and return allotted lands to tribal ownership, communally held, as prior to allotment. Reservations were no longer be controlled by agents, but rather would elect their own councils with oversight by a superintendent and the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA). In addition, Collier wanted a separate court system that would address all problems affecting Indian tribes.[63]

Colliers' plan was strongly contested by many in Congress, various missionary groups, and the first Congress of Indians. The first Congress of Indians eventually agreed to support the plan after Collier appealed to them. However, Congress eliminated many of the components of Colliers' plan accused him of being communist and anti-religion.[64] What was left of the original plan was the reversal of the allotment policy on a voluntary basis and the establishment of new, democratically elected tribal governments that, under the OIA, would be the only form the U.S. government recognized as legitimate. The superintendent would provide oversight, the tribal government would establish a constitution, and the reservation would become a tax-exempt corporation and be eligible for federal programs.[65] Indian sovereignty, under this adapted plan, was still limited and was at "the bottom of an administrative hierarchy."[66] Colliers' dream to restore Indian sovereignty and culture was, in effect, undermined by those who sought to maintain control over reservation lands and resources, who did not want to relinquish privately held lands, who continued to support assimilation and acculturation of Indians, or who opposed Indian control over Bureau of Indian Affairs local offices.[67] Vine Deloria, Jr. suggests that enactment of John Colliers' original plan would have most likely "achieved outstanding success."[68]

I included John Colliers' dream for restoration of Indian self-determination, tribal lands, and cultural practices and identities to illustrate that there was the desire on the part of some in government positions to undo at least a small part of the damage inflicted by white colonization of Indians. Still, the dominance of white, Christian, Euro-American style authority overrode Colliers' attempt to end cultural genocide and improve

[63] Reinhardt, *Indian New Deal*, paragraphs 24-25; Deloria, *Trail*, 196.

[64] Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy*, 136.

[65] Reinhardt, *Indian New Deal*, paragraph 29-30.

[66] Cornell, *Crisis*, 45.

[67] Deloria, *Trail*, 197-199.

[68] Ibid. 203.

the basic standards of living to indigenous people. Acceptance to the IRA on Pine Ridge Reservation resulted from the power of white dominance.

The New Deal and Pine Ridge Reservation

In an attempt to gain Indian approval and support for the IRA, John Collier addressed the first Indian congress in Rapid City, South Dakota on March 2, 1934. Representatives from the majority of the tribes of the Northern Plains tribes were present. There was significant argument among the Sioux who were concerned about loss of treaty rights with the IRA. According to Deloria, "One of the biggest disputes, and one that would eventually surface at Wounded Knee in 1973, was the objection by the Sioux full bloods that any governments organized under the act could be dominated by mixed bloods who had already sold their lands and simply hung around the agencies looking for a handout."[69]

The concern of the Sioux full bloods over the potential for coming under the authority of mixed bloods came out of decades of intermarriage on Pine Ridge Reservation. White men often married Lakota women and were able to get reservation land that way. Lakota women, in turn, achieved at least a small degree of financial security. Although some relationships may have been sincere, it is unclear how driven these relationships were by purely economic factors. Full-blood Lakota tended to be wary of these arrangements and termed these whites "squaw men."[70]

Traditional Indians continued to favor the 1868 Ft. Laramie treaty that Red Cloud had won and had established the treaty as "the ultimate arbiter in nation-to-nation negotiations" between the United States and the Lakota.[71] Mixed bloods on the reservation tended to embrace American ways and were of Euro-American/indigenous ancestry.[72] It is clear that factionalism was clearly established before the adoption of the IRA and that it persisted throughout the decades preceding Wounded Knee 1973.

Regardless of the disputes among the residents of the reservation, enactment was "dependent upon a referendum vote of the people on the reservation," and Deloria suggests that this was the "most devastating aspect" of the amendments to Colliers' original proposal.[73] The tribes had one year to complete the referendum vote and a majority of all eligible voters would have to reject the IRA. Those who did not vote would have their votes counted in favor of the act; therefore, abstention meant yes. Traditional Lakota opposed this rule as in Lakota culture abstention

[69] Deloria, *Trail*, 198.
[70] Reinhardt, *Indian New Deal*, paragraph 36, 38.
[71] Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* 30th edition (New York, 2001): 145; Reinhardt, paragraph 34.
[72] Reinhardt, paragraph 34.
[73] Deloria, *Trail*, 199.

equaled disapproval.[74] Many simply did not understand what exactly they were voting for or against and were suspicious of the one- year time limit.[75]

The other difficulty with the referendum vote was that there was no accurate way to determine tribal membership. There were many Indians on the reservation without land allowed to vote, and, as Deloria suggests, meant they were no longer eligible to receive federal services, yet they could participate in accepting or rejecting the IRA.[76] With the short time period to prepare for the vote, and without an accurate membership role, anyone who opted to vote did which might have affected the outcome. It has been determined, however, that 44% of those eligible to vote abstained in protest and disapproval. Thus, out of the 4,074 known to be eligible, 2,000 did not participate.[77]

In the end, despite overwhelming disapproval by traditional Lakota, and in some cases fear of what would happen if the IRA was rejected among others, those in favor of the IRA on Pine Ridge Reservation, primarily mixed bloods, won the referendum and the IRA was enacted. The IRA allowed for the election of tribal councils, these councils were considered the legitimate form of Indian government, and they would be the only government the United States would recognize and deal with. The councils would continue to be under the authority of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Interior. That the vote was won by majority vote rather than consensus that were customary in Lakota tradition would continue to provoke the traditional Oglala Lakota.

Although Wounded Knee 1973 was decades in the future, the enactment of the IRA of 1934 and the way in which it was enacted deepened the fissure between full bloods and mixed bloods on Pine Ridge Reservation. The desire of the United States government to pass the IRA by ignoring traditional Indian customs and not giving adequate time for Indians to prepare to vote, as well as the lack of understanding by the traditional Lakota that abstention from voting would have serious consequences illustrates this desire. In addition to this, the expectation that indigenous people who had been trampled upon for decades would somehow be accepting of the force and will of a dominant, colonizing body implicates the federal government. Had John Colliers' original plan remained intact, it is possible that the second Wounded Knee might have been avoided. The IRA was not the last policy to create problems on the reservation, however.

[74] Deloria, 199; Reinhardt, *Indian New Deal*, paragraph 32
[75] Deloria, 199.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Reinhardt, *Indian New Deal*, paragraph 48.

Termination and Relocation in the 1940s-1950s

During World War II, nationalism and patriotism created a climate of conformity among Americans, and included in this was the desire in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its commissioner Dillon Myer to "bring Indians into mainstream society on a massive scale."[78] Congress, during the 1940s and 1950s sought to "dissolve the trust relationship between Indians and the federal government," and to "do away with tribal recognition, break up the reservation system, and dismantle the BIA."[79] Identified tribes, over time, were to work to assume full responsibility and to be involved in decision-making. The states had differing ideas on how much federal support they required financially, and how much supervision they desired. The overall effect desired, however, was transfer of functions from the BIA to Indian communities and to improve the standard of living among Indians to that of the rest of the United States.[80]

After the war, in order to decrease reservation population and reliance on government resources, job training and relocation programs were created for reservation Indians and for those who had served in the military. By urbanization, Indians would become assimilated into mainstream America, and this would push an end to the reservation system and the "Indian problem."[81] Congressional hearings in the 1950s based on federal studies suggested that many tribes were ready for termination. Lists for determining readiness continued to be produced and proceedings were begun to terminate selected tribes.[82]

During this period, Indians left the reservations or never returned to them in order to take advantage of training programs, job placement, and educational opportunities. By 1954, however, considerable resistance to termination in Congress had erupted with concern that rapid termination would have serious consequences for Indians who were not positioned to succeed independently. Others suggested that Indians should be tax-paying citizens and assume full responsibility as American citizens. Still others viewed termination as abandonment and that this was in conflict with the values of the nation.[83]

By the end of the 1950s, efforts to terminate the reservation system and force assimilation had slowed and efforts focused on improving the conditions on reservations. Termination transitioned into relocation, and in

[78] Moisa, Ray. "The BIA Relocation Program." In *Native American Voices: A Reader*, Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot eds. (New York, 1998): 155.

[79] Moisa, *BIA Relocation*, 155.

[80] Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy*, 166-167.

[81] Nagel, Joane. "American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity." *American Sociological Review* 60(6) (December, 1995): 954.

[82] Tyler, 172-3.

[83] Tyler, *A History of Indian Policy*, 175-177.

the early 1960s from relocation to employment assistance.[84] Up to this point, as Stephen Cornell suggests, termination policy was "an almost wholly unilateral policy."[85] Facing strong criticism by both Indians and non-Indians, by 1970 termination was abandoned and instead a bilateral approach of self-determination was adopted.[86]

One of the negative effects of termination policy was that in order to survive, Indians were forced to make the decision whether or not to remain on the reservation and be subject to the control of local Indian superintendents and BIA offices. The only other decision was to leave the reservation and take advantage of federally funded relocation programs whose goal was assimilation and separation from cultural identity and heritage.[87] An unexpected result of termination, however, was the emergence of a supra-tribal consciousness that was created by the desire of urban youth to discover their Indian identity that they had been denied. Affiliations were formed between the displaced urban Indians and traditional reservation Indians as the urban Indians returned to the reservation to learn about their cultures and languages.[88]

Federal Policies and Pine Ridge Reservation

The Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, and the termination policies of the 1940s and 1950s all contributed to the factionalism that developed on the reservation as it pitted traditional full blood Lakota against those of mixed blood in the quest for survival, culturally, economically, and politically. Not only did the policies create divisiveness among Indians, they excluded Indians from the debates that surrounded these policies thus leaving Indians without a voice in their own futures. The poverty and degradation on Pine Ridge Reservation had not been alleviated by federal attempts to construct new tribal organizations, land allotments, and programs to assimilate Indians into mainstream society. Indeed, there was strong resistance to many of these attempts by traditional Lakota who did not recognize Euro-American structures or federal government authority.

Although I argue that these policies are strongly implicated in what lead up to the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973, I do not suggest that the intent on the part of the federal government was to create such a situation. In many ways, the policies were designed with the hope that Indians would realize a better life and in some instances, they did. I do suggest, however, that many legislators sought access to the vast resources

[84] Ibid. 201.

[85] Cornell, *Crisis*, 45.

[86] Ibid. 46.

[87] Edmunds, R. David ed. *The New Warriors: Native American Leaders since 1900.* (Lincoln, 2001), 2.

[88] Cornell, 46; Deloria, *Trail*, 41.

on reservation land, desired an end to the special status of Indians and the expenses involved in funding programs, and simply wanted to end the reservation system by forcing assimilation of the Indians with the hope that the "Indian problem" would gradually fade away.

However, the problem of the disposition of Indians did not fade away, and in the climate of civil rights in the 1960s and 1970s, Indians separated from their lands and their cultures began to find their own voice because of forced assimilation and misguided policies that set up tribal organizations. The policies that allowed Dick Wilson such powerful control over Pine Ridge Reservation with the backing of the BIA and the federal government also served to mobilize traditional Indians and lead them to strike back against decades of failed attempts to usurp their lands, their way of life, and their cultural identity. This backlash came in the form of supra-tribal consciousness and the creation of the American Indian Movement that empowered and mobilized the weary Lakota of Pine Ridge who could no longer stand by in fear while Dick Wilson inflicted his terror upon them while the government stood idly by.

Cultural Identity, the American Indian Movement, and the Return of Russell Means

The Search for Cultural Identity

Indians who were displaced by the effects of the IRA and termination policies in the climate of the 1960s and 1970s found themselves searching for the Indian identity they had been denied. For some, this search found them returning to reservations to learn the traditions and languages of the tribes from traditional Indians who had maintained traditional ceremonies and practices.[89] Many of the displaced were of mixed ancestry and understood that "loss of a specific tribal or ethnic affiliation [were] results of conquest and white dominance."[90] Jennifer Dyar suggests, "For centuries, Indians themselves have been excluded from defining Indianness, powerless to curtail or alter white conceptions."[91] It was in the climate of civil rights and ethnic renewal that Indians deprived of their heritage by relocation and forced assimilation sought to find their identity not only by returning to tribal elders to study, but also by the formation of an intertribal network and a pan-Indian culture.[92]

Prior to white hegemony over determining Indian identification and affiliation, tribes were able to "absorb aliens" freely.[93] Members of tribes

[89] Deloria, *Trail*, 41.

[90] Forbes, Jack D. "Basic Concepts for Understanding Native History and Culture." In *Native American Voices: A Reader* Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot, eds. (New York, 1998), 33

[91] Dyar, Jennifer. "Fatal Attraction: The White Obsession with Indianness." *Historian* 65(4) (Summer, 2003): 833.

[92] Nagel, *Ethnic Renewal*, 955.

[93] Forbes, *Basic Concepts*, 29.

consisted of those who "spoke a common language or a set of mutually intelligible dialects and maintained a common set of customs."[94] In colonial America, Indians often accepted non-Indians into their tribe who had learned the language and customs, and demonstrated loyalty to the tribe. A formal ceremony made adoption into the tribe official and from that point on, the adoptee was considered a member of the tribe.[95]

Allotment and the IRA changed Indian designation of tribal members from tribal control to government control. Indian ethnicity was no longer determined by the tribe, but was regulated by the government using blood quantum as a means to ascertain eligibility for services and official membership by enrollment defined individuals as tribe members.[96] In this way, tribes no longer controlled membership and dissolved traditional ways membership was determined. This helped to set up factionalism on reservations and forced "the adoption of white ways" and the loss of Indian traditions.[97] Biology now determined who was a true Indian and created a racial basis for cultural identity that had not previously existed.[98]

The pan-Indian movement grew out of the desire to reconstruct and rebuild institutions; in other words, as Joane Nagel asserts, "collective ethnic renewal."[99] Young, urban, educated Indians who had become alienated from whites saw the need to come together, create a supratribal identity, and mobilize as a united front to challenge the injustices suffered by Indians of all tribes.[100] It was out of this movement that the American Indian Movement grew to become an indomitable force.

The Rise of the American Indian Movement

The American Indian Movement (AIM) formed in Minneapolis in 1968 as an urban activist group dedicated to the protection of Indians from police brutality and injustice. In a very short time, they grew to a national organization that served as advocates for a variety of Indian concerns.[101] Two well-known actions that AIM was involved in was the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz by the "Indians of All Tribes" and the 1972 "Trail of Broken Treaties" caravan to Washington, D.C. that protested federal government abrogation of treaty rights.[102] Because AIM had occupied a BIA building in the Washington, D.C. protest, they were identified as a

[94] Spicer, Edward H. "The American Indians." In *Native American Voices: A Reader*. Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot, eds. (New York, 1998), 15.

[95] Dyar, *White Obsession*, 823.

[96] Nagel, 950; Forbes, 39.

[97] Spicer, 14.

[98] Forbes, 30.

[99] Nagel, *Ethnic Renewal*, 948.

[100] Ibid. 955.

[101] Reinhardt, *Spontaneous*, 231.

[102] Sanchez, et al., *Rhetorical Exclusion*, 29.

violent and subversive organization and were thus under constant surveillance by the FBI and other government offices. They considered AIM "armed and dangerous."[103]

Russell Means, who would later become one of AIM's leaders, was born on Pine Ridge Reservation to a mixed blood Oglala and a full blood Yankton. His family had left the reservation for California when he was a child and he received his education there.[104] Means had returned to South Dakota to participate in the sun dance in 1971 on Rosebud Reservation and to learn Lakota traditions. It was during his time here that he discovered the problems that his kin languished under and as he developed relationships with tribal elders, such as holy man Frank Fools Crow and his clan, he became more determined to help end the injustices his people faced.[105]

Russell Means and Pine Ridge

After Means returned to the reservation, the family of Raymond Yellow Thunder, an Oglala who had been murdered in February, 1972 by whites in Gordon, Nebraska, requested AIM's help to publicize the light sentences handed down to the perpetrators. They had gotten very little information from authorities and Yellow Thunder's body had been returned in a sealed coffin. AIM began a series of protests that gained national interest, "forced Nebraska officials to address the treatment of Indians in the state, and raised political consciousness on Pine Ridge." [106] Newly elected tribal president Dick Wilson, along with Gerald One Feather, the former president, stated that he supported the efforts of AIM in demanding justice for Yellow Thunder.[107]

The next problem Means confronted in the spring of 1972 was at Wounded Knee where the white owners of the trading post were making money exploiting the mass grave of Big Foot and three hundred others from the 1890 massacre as a tourist attraction. Providing back up to local residents who were for the first time protesting, AIM was accused of some minor damage to property in the press, which created some hostility towards them on the reservation. It was during this period that Means and AIM began to uncover many of the problems the traditional Oglala faced on Pine Ridge at the hands of the "so-called tribal government."[108]

During a brief departure of Means and AIM members from the reservation, Dick Wilson took office and swore that AIM would not conduct further protest on the reservation. It was during this time that

[103] Ibid. 34, 36.
[104] Wilson, *Russell Means*, 147-8.
[105] Means, *White Men*, 186, 187.
[106] Reinhardt, *Spontaneous*, 230.
[107] Means, 196.
[108] Means, *White Men*, 202-3.

AIM was involved in the "Trail of Broken Treaties" and Wilson immediately banned any AIM activities on the reservation, including dances. Wilson's hatred for Means derived from the possibility that Means would run against him in the next election.[109] Wilson's alliance with both white and government interests on the reservation intensified his determination that Means and AIM would not stop him in his personal quest to control the activities on the reservation.

The occupation of the BIA building in Washington, D.C. during the "Trail of Broken Treaties" magnified government interest in AIM as a hostile organization, ignoring AIM's primary concern over treaty rights and their desire to confront Indian concerns through negotiation.[110] And as Russell Means and members of AIM returned to Pine Ridge Reservation, the FBI began to engage in 'training' exercises with the BIA police and paramilitary groups trained in counter-insurgency tactics arrived on Pine Ridge.[111]

The ongoing violence toward traditional Lakota on Pine Ridge by Dick Wilson pushed the locals to ask for help from AIM. They asked that AIM "investigate their rights under the Fort Laramie treaty of 1868," to help the Ogala Sioux Civil Rights group to "defend the civil rights of individual Oglalas against the excesses of the tribal police," and to help end the unfair leasing policy that did not allow collective use of individual allotments.[112] Russell Means and Dennis Banks agreed to help, and the stage was set to impeach Dick Wilson. The stage was also set, unbeknownst to the participants, for the occupation of Wounded Knee.

At Wounded Knee

When the protest began on February 27, 1973 at Wounded Knee—Cankpe Opi in the language of the Lakota—those who prepared to participate understood that they were about to engage in a serious fight. This was a fight for their survival and they were no longer willing to bear the injustices in silence that was the traditional way of the Lakota.[113] In order to avoid the garrison that had been created around Pine Ridge village, this historic site was chosen.[114] The caravan of nearly 300 supporters, including Russell Means and members of AIM arrived and stood to face the years of injustice, the terror of Dick Wilson, and the possible wrath of the federal government with whom they had never quarreled, but had sought some sort of relief.

[109] Deloria, *Trail*, 71.
[110] Sanchez, et al., *Rhetorical Exclusion*, 32.
[111] Weyler, *Blood*, 72.
[112] Deloria, *Trail*, 73.
[113] Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman*, 124.
[114] Ibid.

The occupation lasted seventy-one days as the occupiers held firm to their demands that called for senate investigation of the BIA and Department of the Interior, for the U.S. Foreign Relations Committee to convene to review treaties with Indians, and senate investigation of the conditions on Sioux reservations.[115] Roadblocks were set up to stop supplies from getting into Wounded Knee and later, federal forces shut off electricity and telephone service.[116] As news of the occupation spread, nationwide protests began in support of the occupiers. Although misrepresented in the media as militant occupiers with little attention on the actual causes, new occupiers arrived on the scene and supplies from the outside entered Wounded Knee.[117]

The occupation ended May 9, with two Indians dead, numerous casualties on both sides, with Dick Wilson remaining in office, and many of the members of AIM in years of litigation, in exile, or in prison.[118] Despite minimal change in the condition on the reservation, John Mohawk states, "it did much to educate many young Indian people, and it did form at least the appearance of a leadership potential among the Indian people."[119]

Connecting The Causes Of Wounded Knee 1973

Conclusion

In examining the numerous events preceding Wounded Knee, I find no single cause that lead to the occupation; rather I see a series of decisions, situations, conflicts, and events that converged in one moment. The situation on Pine Ridge Reservation was one of quiet desperation among traditional Lakota, of factionalism that developed over time as a result of federal policies toward Indians that separated them according to blood degrees, and of terror and violence at the hands of Dick Wilson supported by white interests and federal funds. The situation was further complicated by the presence of the American Indian Movement, with whom the federal government sought to silence, and the presence of Russell Means, with whom Dick Wilson was determined to rid himself of to maintain control of the reservation.

The consequences of federal policy toward Indians lead to the emergence of a supra-tribal consciousness and the ethnic renewal among Indians living off reservations. Seeking to end white dominance and restore self-determination, the pan-Indian movement was born to address treaty rights, Indian sovereignty, and to confront injustices toward Indians. With the renewal of cultural identity, traditional Lakota garnered the resolve to

[115] Wilson, *New Warriors*, R. David Edmunds ed., 155.

[116] Edmunds, *New Warriors*, 56.

[117] Edmunds, 56; Mohawk, John, "Directions in People's Movements," in *Native American Voices: A Reader*, Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot, eds. (New York, 1998): 163.

[118] Josephy, et al. *Red Power*, 49.

[119] Mohawk, *Directions*, 163.

address concerns on the reservation and found support to have their voices heard.

I would argue that the Oglala did not seek to dissolve their relationship with the federal government, rather to restore it in ways that were just and fair. Their primary concern was to end Dick Wilson's violence towards them and to insist that the federal government honor treaty rights. What erupted into violence reflected more on the response of the federal government in their desire to end the activities of AIM, and their lack of response when the Oglala asked for help rather than the actions of the occupiers themselves.

Regardless of the intention behind federal policy toward Indians, the result of allotment, the IRA, and termination changed the character of the reservation with the influx of whites, the elimination of traditional tribal organization, and the efforts to end the reservation system by relocation and forced assimilation. These policies ended up reflecting the governments' desire to have unlimited access to natural resources on reservation land, cultural genocide in the form of assimilation and acculturation, and to solve the "Indian problem" once and for all by eliminating communally held lands among Indian peoples. This is not to say that there were not voices of dissent in the government as is evident in the end of termination. Nevertheless, these dissenting voices were not, in the end, strong enough to counter those who dominated.

The story of Wounded Knee 1973 encompasses decades of struggle and conflict between white occupiers and indigenous people. It is a rather sad story on both sides, as those involved in the occupation, and indeed those involved in decisions up to that point, found themselves faced with conflict that has no end, no truly acceptable resolution. Again and again, we are confronted with history, a history that perhaps none of us chose, but one that we must live with and find some sort of peace inside of. I understand that Wounded Knee was one of these attempts to somehow soothe the deep scars that remain from a time long ago, when no one could have anticipated what was to come.

"You are the Race, You are the Seeded Earth:" Intellectual Rhetoric, American Fiction, and Birth Control in the Black Community

Nancy Lurkins

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The social context of the birth control movement was complicated by matters of race and class, and consequently the movement affected black and white communities differently. Family planning became a hotly debated topic in the black community; indeed, the Black Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey condemned birth control as antithetical to nature while W.E.B. DuBois supported its usage as a means to improve the health of the black community. Although much has been written regarding the debate about race and birth control, other scholars have failed to look at how much attention the masses truly paid to the intellectual rhetoric of DuBois and Garvey. Discussions of black women's sexuality prove important to my study, particularly black America's responses to white views of black women as immoral, impure, and licentious. Black leaders promoted the ideal of black domesticity and moral motherhood as a counterstrategy to white attacks. Over time, appreciating and even desiring black motherhood came to be identified with black communal pride and as a result black women became responsible for upholding the entire race. Evidence suggests that individual responses to birth control are largely dependent upon the degree to which an individual internalized the rhetoric of "the true black woman." Similarly, while figures such as Garvey and DuBois promoted moral motherhood, in the end they disagreed over the use of birth control. However, their positions were more related than they appear at first glance.

Also key to this study are works of American fiction from the early twentieth century. Authors such as William Faulkner, Nella Larsen, Jessie Redmon Fauset, Djuna Barnes, and Georgia Douglas Johnson used their novels to examine issues of female sexuality in relation to the larger birth control movement. Analyses of literary works highlight the similarity between Garvey and DuBois and also show that certain female authors articulate a more complicated story of birth control, particularly within the black community.

This paper analyzes the role of intellectual rhetoric and works of early twentieth-century American fiction on the subject of birth control in the black community during the 1920s and 1930s. The historical question answered in this paper is how influential was intellectual rhetoric on the black community's response to birth control? Also significant is how works of fiction are useful to understanding the relationship between male intellectuals, such as Garvey and DuBois, and black women. Previous studies simply see Garvey's disdain and DuBois' support for contraceptive

use in the black community as representative of the split within the black community concerning birth control. As this study will show, this interpretation is far too simplistic and fails to explain why birth control was a knotty issue for African Americans.

This topic merits historical study due to the fact that understanding the history of birth control in the black community lends us to a better understanding of why birth control remains largely an economic argument to this day. The focus on public assistance and the welfare state serve as the hotbed of current debate, thus resembling key arguments from the early years of the birth control movement. As law professor Dorothy Roberts notes, "[r]ace completely changes the significance of birth control to the story of women's reproductive freedom."[1] For this reason and as this study will demonstrate, the birth control movement and its outcome have not been "universally positive."[2] The argument set forth in this paper is that both DuBois and Garvey held their positions regarding contraceptive use in the black community because they viewed the female body as a commodity. Indeed, despite their differing opinions on the topic, both held economic arguments for racial betterment that viewed the black woman as a commodity; never were their agendas based on a woman's right to reproductive freedom. Thus, Garvey's position was not entirely one based on his religious convictions, nor was DuBois' position attributable to his feminist mindset.[3]

Works of American fiction articulate the intersection of female sexuality, desire, class, and birth control. They depict "the tension between motherhood and independence, choice and biology,"[4] as the writings of black women writers demonstrate. For example, Larsen, Fauset, Barnes, and Johnson focus on women in the debate over who should have the children, unlike their male counterparts. That demographers showed the decline in the black population during the early twentieth century shows that the majority of black women did not listen to the intellectual rhetoric of DuBois or Garvey. As Jessie Rodrique explains, the decrease of African American fertility is not to be attributed to the racist argument that blacks had a high rate of venereal disease. Such an argument invokes the

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[1] Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997), 56.

[2] Beth Widmaier Capo, *Textual Contraception: Birth Control and Modern American Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 176.

[3] Historian Jamie Hart forwards the claim that Garvey's Roman Catholic religious beliefs serve as the source of his anti-contraceptive stance in "Who Should Have the Children? Discussions of Birth Control among African-American Intellectuals, 1920-1939," *The Journal of Negro History* 1994 79(1). In "Black Feminists and DuBois: Respectability, Protection, and Beyond," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 2000 568, English professor Farah Jasmine Griffin discusses black feminist perspectives on DuBois and concludes that "despite his contradictions, we ought to be grateful to him for keeping black women at the forefront of his vision," 36.

[4] Capo, 5.

stereotype of blacks as excessively sexual and immoral. Rather, the low birth rate in the black community simply shows that blacks employed methods of birth control, as had been the case since the days of slavery. Despite the insignificant impact of intellectual rhetoric on the masses, it can be safely assumed that works of American fiction shaped the birth control movement and represented the concerns of the black community more so than did the perspectives of Garvey and DuBois.

History of the Birth Control Movement and the Position of the Black Community

The American birth control movement began between 1905 and 1910. It was no coincidence that this was the same period that the campaign against "race suicide" took hold in the United States, largely due to the decades-long massive emigration of southern and eastern Europeans. In 1911 an article published in *The Outlook* by former president Theodore Roosevelt discussed the curse of American stock as the result of "coldness,…selfishness,…[and] failure in [the] sense of duty;" indeed, "wilful sterility [*sic*]" was to blame.[5] He continues, "the extent of my reverence for and belief in a woman who does her duty measures also the depth of my contempt for the woman who shirks her primal and most essential duty…so the measure of our respect for the true wife and mother is the measure of our scorn and contemptuous abhorrence for the wife who refuses to be a mother."[6]

Roosevelt's account quite accurately represented the nativist sentiment in attacking woman's "selfishness." Indeed, many contemporaries, both men and women, black and white, situated a wife's use of birth control as an explicit rejection of domesticity and mothering. The nativist concerns, as exemplified by Roosevelt, illustrate how dominant rhetoric separated birth control from women's reproductive freedom. Although not intentional, it remains plausible that the nativist propaganda that denounced the use of contraceptives among "good stock Americans" publicized the existence of birth control methods and in the end promoted it.

The black community's place within the larger, white-led birth control movement proved wrought with tension. Despite the fact that blacks had long employed methods of birth control, many were suspicious of the larger, booming white led movement due to the history of whites seeking control over blacks' sexuality.[7] As already mentioned, race and

[5] Theodore Roosevelt, "Race Decadence," *The Outlook*, April 8, 1911; quoted in *Controlling Reproduction: An American History*, Andrea Tone, ed. (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1997), 160.

[6] Ibid, 161.

[7] This history of whites seeking control over blacks' sexuality refers to the days of slavery when masters bred black men and women for the purpose of increasing the free labor force.

class issues became conflated with contraceptive matters during the early twentieth century when white birth rates decreased and talk of racial suicide appeared. Thus, when some blacks were urged to employ methods to restrict their family size, many resented what they perceived as others trying to control their sexuality. Suspicion on the part of African-Americans was not irrational; whites dominated the birth control movement and an overwhelming majority of doctors were men.

Matters of race undeniably complicate the social, political, economic, and cultural histories of birth control. The black experience remains distinct from the white due to the racist stereotype of blacks as aggressively sexual. It should come as no surprise that discussions of reproductive freedom are inherently tied to issues of sexuality. Thus, sources discussing birth control generally, too, include mention of female sexuality, even if not explicit.[8] The picture of black women possessing sexual desire and as active seekers of sexual pleasure served as an indictment of blacks everywhere in a dominant society that condemned such behavioral transgressions. Due to the stereotype of black women as sexually licentious, from the dominant white perspective, the black community was expected to behave in inappropriate ways.

The white devaluation of the black woman was rooted in racial stereotypes as well as the white belief "that notions about the 'ideal woman' did not apply to black women because the circumstances of slavery had prevented them from developing qualities that other women possessed and from devoting their lives to wifehood and motherhood."[9] As a contemporary historian has noted concerning this phenomenon, "[t]he slave master felt few compunctions to model the black family after the cult of domesticity."[10] Therefore, black women's "inherent" racial characteristics cancelled out the exceptional feminine qualities allegedly held by white women. For much of white society, what defined a black woman was first and foremost her blackness, as quite literally the classification "*black* woman" implies.

The lack of chastity among black women was thought by many to be "one of the causes of the degraded home life among blacks." Similarly, their frequent sexual deviance was perceived as having disastrous effects for the morality of the entire black race. Accordingly, women bore the responsibility for "keeping the race pure" in the minds of both blacks and whites.[11]

Some prominent black males, such as DuBois and Alexander Crummell, the Episcopalian minister and intellectual, chose to respond to the relentless white attacks on black women's sexual conduct by developing

[8] This will become clear in the following discussion of works of American fiction.

[9] Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Daughters of Sorrow: Attitudes Toward Black Women, 1880-1920* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990), 40.

[10] Quoted in Ibid, 40.

[11] Ibid, 41.

a philosophy of black communal pride and consequently promoted the ideology of "true black womanhood."[12] This new dialogue promoted by black men, especially DuBois, asserted that the because of their "'history of insult and degradation,' the black woman has emerged as a model of 'efficient' and strong womanhood."[13] Many other black male leaders shared DuBois' views and they came not to revere the black *woman* but more specifically the black *mother*. Indeed, these men "designated motherly devotion to one's own children as an opportunity and privilege, not a stifling duty."[14] Moral motherhood came to be understood as a privilege because women were responsible for upholding the morality of the family, and as a result, they were depended upon to uplift the entire black race. Using images taken from contemporary publications such as *The Crisis* and *The New Negro,* English professor Anne Stavney demonstrates the pervasiveness of the image of "a certain type of mother, a woman morally and sexually pure."[15] Although many pictures from the period portray a tranquil mother cradling her child, Stavney notes "these black, male-authored works rarely attend to the actual social and economic conditions encountered by most black women of their era."[16] To demonstrate the conflict between the ideology of true black womanhood and the realities of black women's lives, she notes blacks' recently lowered fertility rates as evidence of women's ambivalent view of motherhood.[17] As this description of black "true womanhood" reveals, a striking similarity exists between it and white true womanhood. This should come as no surprise, however, when considering the premeditation of the ideology and its *raison d'être*: it was formed as a response to white society thus it had to meet white society on the levels of respectability they determined.

Previous Studies

Histories of contraception became popular during the 1970s for several reasons, among them the mass marketing of oral contraceptives in the 1960s and the women's health movement of the 1970s. Since this time, scholars have revealed black women as active birth control users during slavery and beyond. Furthermore, scholars have condemned the larger birth control movement as racist and classist because its white, middle-class supporters largely ignored the needs of black women. Despite the decades of scholarly work surrounding the topic, many historians have overlooked the important "intersection and influence of race, class, and gender on the

[12] Anne Stavney, "'Mothers of Tomorrow:' The New Negro Renaissance and the Politics of Maternal Representation," *African American Review* 1998 32(4), 536. Not only did black men respond, but women, too. Black female authors had much to say concerning sexuality; their works are examined below.

[13] Quoted in Ibid, 537.

[14] Ibid, 538.

[15] Ibid, 543.

[16] Ibid, 544.

[17] Ibid, 551.

thought of black intellectuals" and how their discourse "reflected the larger birth control movement and yet remained unique in a number of ways."[18] This is where historian Jamie Hart picks up in "Who Should Have the Children? Discussions of Birth Control Among African-American Intellectuals, 1920-1939." Hart discusses the discourse of upper- and middle-class African-Americans concerning birth control. Her brief history of African-American intellectual discourse on birth control begins in the 1920s as this decade marks the beginning of the mass marketing of contraceptives in the United States. Extending her study through the period of the Great Depression, she notes that New Deal promises of improvement made discussions of birth control prevalent as it served as one possible way to ease peoples' economic problems. She argues that males dominated discussions of birth control in the circles of professional and upper class African-Americans with their discourse expressing both opposition to and support for contraception.[19] Members of this black elite worried that working-class blacks' continued propagation would ultimately lead to a society filled with African-Americans of lesser quality unable to fight oppression.[20] Thus, it is no surprise that DuBois became one of the foremost advocates of birth control as a "mechanism for racial progress."[21] Demonstrating the role played by gender, Hart maintains that only men opposed the practice of birth control. Few sources reveal women's opinions in favor or opposition to birth control, reflecting the male-domination of the topic. The evidence Hart uncovers also suggests that men and women supported birth control for entirely different reasons; men understood its implementation as an effort to save the race where women wanted it to save their families from both economic and domestic problems.

Hart's investigation of the birth control question among African-American intellectuals proves a very valuable study as it shows the important intersection of race, class, and gender in the birth control movement. Not only does she promote thought about the role played by black intellectuals in the birth control movement, she draws attention to the fact that these so-called "leaders" may have been out of touch with the needs and lives of working-class blacks. This is especially evident in her discussion of women's practical desire for birth control as a means for preserving the general welfare of the family.

English professor Farah Jasmine Griffin researches DuBois' intellectual agenda as it relates to both gender and race in "Black Feminists and DuBois: Respectability, Protection, and Beyond." In addressing previous scholarly works that both "applaud his efforts on behalf of black women" and note DuBois' "chivalric idealization of female sexuality," Griffin resolves the contradiction by explaining that DuBois "would have

[18] Hart, 72.

[19] Ibid, 82.

[20] Ibid, 73.

[21] Ibid, 76.

believed himself to be a champion of black women and progressive on issues of importance to their advancement."[22] At the same time as noting DuBois' limitations, she argues that he did much to advance our understanding of the oppression of black women. Of particular importance is her discussion of the politics of respectability where she says it "emerged as a way to counter the images of black Americans as lazy, shiftless, stupid, and immoral."[23] But, she notes the paradoxical nature of this politics of respectability in that its adoption exposes an "acceptance and internalization" of the very images they sought to combat. Griffin's analysis thus aids our understanding of why black true womanhood so closely resembled white true womanhood. She concludes that, while DuBois (and others, such as Crummell) sought "to protect the name and image of black women," the manner in which this was done emphasizes individuals' behavior and less so the structural forms of oppression at the root of the problem, such as racism, sexism, and poverty.

Certainly the discourse of protection materialized from genuine concerns about the situation of black people, but it also suggests the power struggle between the men of both races and the intraracial power struggle between black men and black women. According to Griffin, a promise of protection served as a component of the politics of respectability and attends to important concerns of black nationalism: it restores black men with a sense of masculinity while issuing a privilege of femininity on black women.[24] However, in the end it did not allow room for those who did not so nicely fit into the ideology. As I will show below, works of fiction show that the narrow representations of women (forwarded by the newly-emerging ideology) did not allow for their "full complexity and humanity." As historians, we can better account for black women's unique experience related to birth control and sexuality by analyzing works of fiction, especially those authored by black females.

While Hart's use of writings by DuBois and Garvey show black men dominated contraceptive debates, she parallels Anne Stavney's argument that men not only dominated discussions of black female sexuality but created the prevailing ideology. Stavney's article, "'Mothers of Tomorrow:' The New Negro Renaissance and the Politics of Maternal Representation" focuses on early twentieth-century discourses surrounding black women's sexuality and how such discussions impacted black communities. Although explicit discussion of birth control does not surface in her analysis, Stavney incorporates DuBois' writings into her study of the crucial role played by "ideological and iconographic forces" as a way to uncover the *intraracial* tensions that occurred during the period.[25] Stavney examines black women's lives during the Harlem Renaissance, with particular attention on

[22] Griffin, 30.
[23] Ibid, 34.
[24] Griffin, 35.
[25] Stavney, 534.

how black women, such as Nella Larsen, participated in this cultural movement. Works by Nella Larsen and Jessie Fauset serve as the foundation to Stavney's argument that some black women resisted their "assigned motherly roles" and that "1920s black women writers attempted to create a geographic and discursive space for sexual yet childless black women."[26] Stavney's investigation of definitions of black womanhood proves a very valuable study as she analyzes female responses to the black, male-dominated discussions of black female sexuality. She makes excellent use of sources, such as images presented on the covers of popular black publications, and Nella Larsen's novel *Passing* to show the dominance of the ideology of true black womanhood.

She analyzes a depiction from *The New Negro* of a mother holding an infant. The mother's averted eyes do not look at the viewer and maintain her reserved character, as does her tranquil, smile-free expression. She is modest, nonsexual, and a devoted mother. The September 1927 cover of *Crisis* featured a woodcut by Aaron Douglas entitled *The Burden of Black Womanhood.* The woman is shown "literally shouldering the weight of the race" as she raises the sun with her arms, symbolizing her ability to bring about a new day. This idealized image of the black woman shows her heroic strength and simultaneous duty to the race. Interestingly, Stavney discusses the figure "with head tilted back" but it appears that her head is tilted forward. With her head tilted back her face looks upward, suggesting hope. Conversely, her head hanging forward indicates despair. Stavney's reading is critical to her argument that men depicted women in a way quite different from their reality.

While Stavney employs literary analysis to explore the subject of black female sexuality, scholar Beth Widmaier Capo relies upon fiction written during the interwar years to demonstrate how American authors participated in the birth control movement. *Textual Contraception: Birth Control and Modern American Fiction* finds the public debate over birth control in fiction. Demonstrating the movement's historical impact on female sexuality and reproductive control, Capo uncovers the hidden "tension between motherhood and independence and choice and biology" in the lives of female characters.[27] Her overall purpose is to suggest that literature reveals a number of complex dynamics that may have influenced one's reproductive decision. Ultimately, through her comparative discussion of works by Theodore Dreiser, Meridel LeSueur, Djuna Barnes, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Jessie Fauset, and Nella Larsen she demonstrates that reproduction became "a public social interest rather than an individual woman's decision to become a mother."[28] This helps us to realize that DuBois and Garvey did not occupy their relative stances on

[26] Ibid.
[27] Capo, 5.
[28] Capo, 85.

birth control and women's proper role as a result of their misogyny but rather their discourse reflects a larger social concern which was presumably on the minds of everyone.

Capo's study proves invaluable to this paper as she offers an interdisciplinary approach and adds depth to historical narratives concerning birth control. Her analyses of black, female-authored fiction provides a window into the experiences of black women that otherwise would be very difficult to access. While debatable whether the experiences of Harlem Renaissance authors were similar to that of the masses, we can be confident that all black women were expected to attend to the ideology of true womanhood (whether or not they did is not the issue). The fact remains that authors such as Larsen, Fauset, and Johnson felt the societal demands pressed upon them as women and their fictional characters represented the weight and conflict experienced by all black women.

The Intellectual Rhetoric of W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey

As mentioned previously, DuBois and Garvey maintained different positions concerning contraceptive use within the black community. DuBois serves as the most notable intellectual birth control advocate within the black community. Before further discussion of his contraceptive stance, his attendant rhetoric concerning black true womanhood must be further analyzed and then compared to his positive eugenicist promotion of birth control.

DuBois promoted the ideal of black true womanhood to combat black women's continued denial of the privileges of femininity. Black true womanhood equated femininity with motherhood. This philosophy was a response to the deteriorating position of African Americans after Reconstruction; black men forwarded the notion of self-help and racial pride and added them to women's responsibility. For example, one white northerner, William Pickett, remarked that the chief cause of "the gravest deterioration in the moral standards of the community" was the black woman's lack of "personal chastity."[29] The presumed moral laxity in women, principally black women, was "more damaging than the sexual irregularities of men" because "the offense of men is individual and limited while that of women is general and strikes mortally at the existence of the family itself." Thus, women bore the burden of maintaining racial purity.[30] While such views were expressed typically by whites, the response by black leaders such as DuBois added further weight to the shoulders of black women and merely confirmed white male values of womanhood. Embedded in black male praise for black womanhood was praise for the traditionally highly-regarded feminine characteristics: purity, domesticity, and obedience.

[29] Quoted in Guy-Sheftall, 40.
[30] Stavney, 535.

Although the general expression of black true womanhood appears remarkably similar to that of white true womanhood, DuBois claimed it departed from the dominant ideal. Accordingly, he asserted that the departure remained due not to the black woman's moral failings but was the result of "her history of sexual abuse and exploitation,"[31] the fault of white society's system of slavery. In his poem "The Burden of Black Women" the theme of white men as "spoilers of women…shameless breeders of bastards" reveals his belief about the source of black women's victimization.[32] One historian has put it thusly: "despite these divergences in the thoughts of blacks and whites about black womanhood, both groups viewed motherhood as the most essential function of women, thereby seeing women as a means to an end rather than as ends in themselves."[33] Although white true womanhood was a cultural expression of nineteenth-century America, well into the twentieth century people praised its ideals. Black women came to occupy a pedestal just like their white sisters. In short, black male activists adopted nineteenth-century notions of white womanhood to construct a twentieth-century nonsexual, devoted, and submissive black female subject.

Although black men constructed black moral motherhood in order to reclaim and desexualize the black woman's body, it could not have been successful without the support of at least some black women. Indeed, prominent women such as Mary Murray Washington, Addie Hunton, Fannie Barrier Williams, and Frances Harper promoted the reformist ideology. Mrs. E. A. Hackley, who traveled around to Southern black schools to give lectures to female students, maintained it the black woman's privilege to "carve the destiny of a race" and bear "the weight of future generations of a handicapped, persecuted people."[34] What enabled a woman to "rock the cradle and rule the world"[35] largely depended on her class. Part of the problem for lower-class black women was that they occupied the position of both laborer and breeder and thus could not restrict themselves solely to the private sphere, the space the cult of true womanhood deemed appropriate for females. Despite poor women's inability to strictly follow the idealized image of Negro womanhood, intellectual rhetoric spoke to them through images, if not through words. Yes, publications such as *The Crisis* and *The Messenger* used powerful graphic images coupled with persuasive texts that reached poor blacks, even the illiterate, which conditioned the black community to see women as obligated to provide a service to humanity. To be certain, the political goals of the race depended on woman's body.

[31] Guy-Sheftall, 62-3.
[32] Quoted in Ibid, 62.
[33] Ibid, 12.
[34] Quoted in Stavney, 539.
[35] Quoted in Ibid, 538.

An excellent example of the emphasis placed upon enlightened motherhood comes from the "Little Mothers' League" which originated in 1917. Its purpose was to teach "the little colored mothers of tomorrow what so many, many mothers of today do not know;—just what is best for the little babe."[36] The participants raged from ages six to ten and pledged a three-month commitment to attend weekly lessons and demonstrations on various subjects, such as proper clothing and cleanliness. The popularity of this group, indeed, its mere existence, provides evidence of the strength of the ideology of maternal desire. Its ultimate goal was not only to groom girls to be mothers but to insist that they *want* the opportunity and privilege of motherhood.

The ideology of true black womanhood was widespread and DuBois' effort to create a new image of black women was successful in that it took root in much of the black community. But a paradox surfaces when we consider DuBois' stance on birth control, for he believed the survival of the race depended on a black woman's use of birth control. The paradox is that black women's identity and social worth depended not only on their desire for motherhood and resulting ability as capable mothers but also on their passionlessness. Passionlessness replaced licentiousness. DuBois helped to create a specific type of mother, a nonsexual, modest woman. But can a woman use birth control and be sexually pure? Can she use birth control and still extol motherhood?

Because we know that some prominent black women promoted the emerging ideology we also know that some did not. In order to determine whether any women recognized the tension between birth control and the reformist ideology, we turn to textual contraception. But before doing so it remains important to ask if contraceptive consumers thought it problematic to use birth control while identifying with moral motherhood. To begin, demographic studies show a decrease in black fertility rates at this time; therefore, we may safely conclude that the conflict was not a problem of such concern that it prevented the use of birth control. Clearly then, the reality of a woman's current situation overshadowed her accompanying desire to adhere to the ideology.

The early twentieth century was a time when many middle- and upper-class blacks deliberately limited their fertility, including the members of DuBois' "talented tenth." Members of this black elite worried that working-class blacks' continued propagation would ultimately lead to a society filled with African-Americans of lesser quality unable to fight oppression.[37] Thus, it is no surprise that DuBois became one of the foremost advocates of birth control as a "mechanism for racial progress."[38] Reconciling DuBois contradictory positions concerning female sexuality

[36] Quoted in Ibid, 540.
[37] Hart, 73.
[38] Ibid, 76.

and birth control proves a difficult task. In fact, it is too large in scope to adequately attend to in a paper of this size. Nevertheless, it remains too important an issue to entirely ignore. Simply understanding DuBois' defense of black womanhood and also his support of birth control offers one explanation as to why birth control was such a contentious issue for the black community, for they received mixed messages.

A real tension existed within the black community, largely created by one of its most prominent black leaders. DuBois encouraged black women to appreciate and desire motherhood, as it served as a way to uplift the race; at the same time, he supported birth control as it, too, could better the condition of the black community. However, because DuBois and other male leaders constructed a sexually pure black woman in response to white attacks, they left no rhetorical room for birth control. To use birth control meant one desired sexual intercourse for its own sake rather than as a means to motherhood. Black women practicing birth control lost their elevated status as modest, nonsexual women.

Another manner in which African Americans received mixed messages was that Black Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey vocalized his opposition to birth control. He opposed birth control for the same reason DuBois supported it. According to Garvey and his followers, birth control was being used to "eradicate the black race." Minutes from one meeting of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), illustrate Garvey's disdain for birth control where he urged blacks not to "accept or practice the theory of birth control such as is being advocated by irresponsible speculators who are attempting to interfere with the course of Nature and with the purpose of God in whom we believe."[39] Garvey's rhetoric shows concern with nature and not the welfare of black women. Garvey's unwillingness to acknowledge the potential of blacks practicing birth control as a pathway to their independence and self-sufficiency, a central tenant to his nationalist goals, proves myopic.

Even though DuBois' and Garvey's discourse expresses both support for and opposition to contraceptive use in the black community, common ground exists on a number of levels. First, both intellectual leaders maintained their position believing that their way was the best way to racial progress. DuBois insisted that quality and not quantity could improve the race while Garvey maintained the more blacks to fight the Negro fight, the better. But each man also viewed the female body as a tool of racial betterment. The central role of a black woman's body proves undeniable; she was a valuable commodity. The complexity of birth control within the black community remains evident. Birth control should "allow the woman to institute her own reproductive policy rather than following the dictates of racial betterment."[40] But instead of being her private issue the confluence

[39] Ibid, 75.
[40] Capo, 94.

of race, gender, and class resulted in woman's body becoming a socially contested space. To DuBois and Garvey, as well as all blacks, racial betterment meant economic, social, and political improvements. DuBois encouraged working-class blacks to employ contraceptives because fewer unplanned children meant parents could better provide for their existing family, financially and socially. Garvey's separatism depended on strength in numbers to overcome the economic, social, and political plight of the Negro. Then and now, birth control remains grounded in economics.

The role played by black intellectuals in the birth control movement highlights their idealistic view of the lives of working-class blacks. This is especially evident in women's practical desire for birth control as a means for preserving the general welfare of the family, as discussed by Hart and strengthened by statistical evidence of decreased fertility among blacks. Intraracial tensions existed within the black community concerning the true black woman and the birth control movement. Analyses of works of fiction show how male authors differed from female authors. Women writers put women at the center of the struggle over female sexuality and woman's body and challenged prevailing ideologies while male writers typically did not. Textual considerations authored by black women also highlight the inherent problems in intellectual rhetoric concerned with female sexuality and birth control (to respond to this point at the end of the Fiction section, see notes, 12).

The Role of Literature

Moral motherhood was a contested ideology within the black community. Works of fiction show that an intra-racial conflict existed between women and men. English scholars Stavney and Capo each demonstrate black, male-authored works rarely attend to the actual social and economic conditions encountered by most black women of their era. Using images taken from contemporary publications such as *The Crisis* and *The New Negro*, Stavney demonstrates the pervasiveness of the image of "a certain type of mother, a woman morally and sexually pure."[41] Comparing these images to fiction supports the argument that moral black motherhood was a contested ideology within the black community. The tension between characters Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry in Nella Larsen's 1929 novel *Passing* reflects Larsen's life and presumably the personal conflict she experienced. Larsen's novel largely concerns one woman's struggle with sexuality, sex, and mothering in response to white images of overtly sexual black women and black images of nonsexual black women. Although the novel's main character, Irene, subscribed to the ideology of true black womanhood, she lived a miserable and conflicted life because she hated mothering and desired sexual excitement. Her nemesis, Clare, behaved in overtly sexual ways and evaded motherhood. Like Care, Larsen did not

[41] Stavney, 543.

bear and raise children; she did not relate to the *true* women of her time. Larsen resembled both Clare and Irene because she suffered from male-imposed images of the ideal woman. Larsen's novel depicts the timely struggle over the black woman's body.

Jessie Redmon Fauset discusses premarital sexuality in *Plum Bun*. This 1928 novel details the life of Paulette, a woman who has sexual relationships without intending marriage. Not only does Paulette reject marriage, she views it as a burden. Similarly, Fauset's 1924 novel, *There is Confusion*, tells the story of a woman who understands the consequences of female sexuality. She says to her boyfriend, Peter, "[y]ou know perfectly well that for a woman love usually means a household of children."[42] Fauset, too, demonstrates black women's concern with prevailing ideologies as she addresses female sexuality and its relationship to motherhood and the institution of marriage.

Another work authored by Larsen, *Quicksand*, offers a pro-contraceptive narrative of motherhood and depicts "the destructive impact of maternity on a woman."[43] Through her character, Helga, Larsen illustrates the destructive impact of societal expectations related to female sexuality. "Helga married to fulfill her sexual desires" and in the end, due to her inability to access birth control, she became "trapped in a cycle of endless childbearing" that ended in her death.[44] Larsen's message in both *Passing* and *Quicksand* is clear: the successful pursuit of female sexual fulfillment depends upon access to birth control.

Author Djuna Barnes explores the themes of unmarried sexuality, abortion, and birth control in her 1928 novel *Ryder*. The female characters in Ryder understand motherhood as "biological entrapment" and engage in dialogue that alludes to the problem of infanticide. One character, Kate, describes the trap of motherhood and declares, "I'll kill it the minute it's born, but I'll bear it!...I'll stand over it like a distempered bitch before a wailing litter, and I'll stamp it into the ground."[45] As explained by Capo, *Quicksand* and *Ryder* reveal how the cultural image of the selfless wife and mother became a disputed matter within public discourse.[46] Clearly Larsen and Barnes demonstrate woman's frustration with the idyllic Madonna image and instead represent woman as a "body out of control." This relates particularly well to the situation of working-class blacks whose position within the birth control movement differed from that of whites because of their experience with infanticide. We know that despite the impression created by black male political leaders and female activists that the glorified

[42] Quoted in Capo, 54, from *Plum Bun* and *There is Confusion.*

[43] Capo, 102.

[44] Capo, 102.

[45] Quoted from *Ryder* in Capo, 103. While Capo discusses this passage as representative of the disturbing "psychological effects of uncontrolled fertility" she does not discuss it as an issue of infanticide. It is my opinion that Barnes is referring to infanticide.

[46] Ibid, 103.

maternal imagery of African-American motherhood proved out of touch with the reality of most black women. Scholar Dorothy Roberts notes that women in slavery may have implemented infanticide "in desperation to protect their children." That slave women were viewed as breeders of slaves makes it possible that they committed infanticide as a measure of last-resort for their reproductive control. It may also be that they viewed the act as "the greatest sign of maternal love."[47] Angelina Grimke's "The Closing Door," published in 1919 reveals this notion that murder can be the highest sign of maternal love and connects the tragedy of lynching with that of infanticide. Agnes and Jim Milton were a young married couple whose joy from learning of Agnes' pregnancy was overshadowed by the tragic lynching of her brother in Mississippi. Although the couple had long-lamented their childlessness, the news of the lynching made Agnes rethink the matter. Shortly after the birth of the child, she smothers it with a pillow because she saw herself as "an instrument of reproduction!—another of the many!—a colored woman—doomed!—cursed!—put here!—willing or unwilling! For what?—to bring children here—men children—for the sport—the lust—of possible orderly mobs."[48] For Agnes, indeed for Grimke herself, birth control is preferred over murder. Grimke's audience undoubtedly understood the social ills which led Agnes to her difficult decision.

African-American author Georgia Douglas Johnson's poem "Motherhood" is told from the perspective of a woman; she writes, "[d]on't knock at my door, little child,/I cannot let you in,/ You know not what a world this is/Of cruelty and sin." The woman pleads with her "spiritual children not to impregnate her body" because of the cruelty of the world. Without doubt the cruelty in Johnson's world largely concerns racism; thus, she enters the debate over racism, fertility control, and motherhood. Johnson provides more wretched tales of infanticide in the 1929 play "Safe" and the 1922 story "Maternity." In "Safe," a mother chokes her newborn to death due to the trauma of a lynching in her town. After the murder she muttered, "Now he's safe—safe from the lynchers! Safe!"[49] Infanticide resulted from a child's "mezzotint" skin in "Maternity." Because the mother believes her child is doomed by his skin color, she puts "him in the kindly grave!"[50] Grimke and Johnson successfully portray the complexity of the birth control issue within the black community and demonstrate how infanticide further removed black women from the experience of white women.

William Faulkner's 1930 novel *As I Lay Dying* is also demonstrative of the lengths to which women will go to avoid maternity. Exploring female sexuality outside the bounds of marriage, birth control and abortion

[47] Capo, 93n12.
[48] Quoted in Ibid, 94.
[49] Quoted in Ibid, from "Safe," 96.
[50] Quoted in Ibid, from "Maternity," 96.

remain important topics in the lives of his poor characters. He presents seventeen-year-old Dewey Dell Bundren with "the female trouble." Dewey seeks an abortion and "rejects the notion that childbirth constitutes the natural fulfillment of feminine collective desire." Nevertheless, Dewey is no rebel: she makes known that she does want to be a mother, just not now: "It's not that I wouldn't and will not it's that it is too soon too soon."[51] By the novel's end, she remains unable to abort the fetus or to access accurate birth control information. That Faulkner's character desires children serves as an illustration of the differences between male and female authors. Despite his exploration of sexuality and birth control, Faulkner does not question woman's desire for motherhood, thus he fails to challenge the dominant ideology of woman's place. However, Larsen attacks motherhood as a fulfilling institution in *Passing* with her character development of both Clare Kendry and Irene Redfield.

Another Faulkner novel, written in 1939, *If I Forget Thee Jerusalem* also upholds popular discourse concerning women's bodies. Harry and Charlotte are his forbidden lovers practicing birth control until the unfortunate day when her "equipment" (a douche bag) broke. The couple's geographical isolation meant that Charlotte could not replace the item and resulted in her pregnancy. The novel ends with Charlotte's death resulting from her decision to turn to the *tragic* method of abortion, performed by Harry himself. That the abortion ends in Charlotte's death makes questionable Faulkner's stance; did he intend to portray the evilness of abortion or rather its horrible reality? I maintain that he sympathized with the lovers but not their decision to have an abortion.[52]

Conclusion

Intellectual rhetoric and works of fiction coincide and tell us much about the intraracial conflict concerning birth control in the black community. Some male-authored works do not accurately depict the black woman's material reality. The discursive space occupied by black women during the 1920s and 1930s portray the tension resultant from the colliding ideologies. Nella Larsen, Jessie Fauset, and Georgia Douglas Johnson attempt "to reclaim and resexualize the black woman's body in the face of…black maternal uplift ideology.[53] Without the contribution of literary analyses, we could not so accurately access the intraracial conflict. Black women writers' tales of "the debilitating effects of uncontrolled fertility on female sexuality"[54] allow us to understand how distanced from the reality of black women was the intellectual rhetoric of DuBois and Garvey. DuBois' alignment with Margaret Sanger and the larger birth control movement is

[51] Quoted in Ibid, 153-4, from *As I Lay Dying*.
[52] I read the outcome differently than Capo who does not argue that Faulkner condemned abortion but rather than his text is not "explicit," 155.
[53] Stavney, 553.
[54] Capo, 159.

well-documented. Equally well-documented is the movement's alliance with ideologies that supported the gendered status quo. For example, Sangerites of the 1920s argued that birth control would strengthen marriage; they extolled motherhood. They did not criticize the institution but rather the conditions of motherhood. This was their method of promoting birth control to a larger audience. Birth control became a means of controlling a population, rather than a means of increasing women's reproductive freedom; without doubt DuBois' rhetoric demonstrates his agreement with such a position, as does his association with Sanger. Black women writers contest the image of selfless wife and mother. It seems that they were more realistic than DuBois, Garvey, and their intellectual cohorts because black female authors understood the complicated connection between sexuality, birth control, and material reality. In spite of their disagreement about contraceptive use in the black community, they were in complete agreement about the social role of black women: they were valuable as (re)producers. Larsen, Fauset, and Johnson focused on women as complex beings with desires, sexual desire and the desire to control their body. Unlike their counterparts, black male leaders and many female activists, these women "focused on the specific role of women in the debate over who should reproduce."[55]

This subject is significant because it suggests the importance of historical perspective to the study of birth control in the black community. Our modern understanding of birth control, arguments supporting and opposing it, largely center on economic concerns. This is not a recent development, as the history of eugenicists' growing interest in blacks during the economic crisis of the 1930s demonstrates. Eugenicists developed a program that encouraged the racially, economically, and physically "fit" to reproduce (positive eugenics) and discouraged, even prevented, the "unfit" from reproducing (negative eugenics). Initially, the eugenics movement was energized by the massive influx of unwanted immigrants; during the 1930s the movement opened its doors to the black population. Interest in poor blacks grew due to increased concern in sterilizing individuals whose children would need public assistance.[56] Evidence of eugenicists new focus is that "[t]he location of most sterilizations shifted from the West, where California led in the number of involuntary operations, to the South."[57]

This relates to the current situation in the United States because "government funding policy continues to encourage sterilization of poor women" under the Medicaid program but does not disseminate information concerning other contraceptive techniques and abortion.[58] As Molly Ladd-Taylor argues, sterilization programs' support in the United States is

[55] Capo, 143.
[56] Roberts, 70.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid, 97.

absolutely tied to "the economic rhetoric of taxpayer savings." According to Dorothy Roberts sterilization is a widespread method of birth control among black women. Current governmental policies penalize black reproduction and thus share a feature of the eugenic rationale in our recent history. They also affect the way Americans value each other and think about social problems through their devaluation of black reproduction.[59] Proposals intended to solve the problem of the welfare state offer incentives for low birth rates among welfare-moms and/or threaten to revoke welfare funds from mothers unwilling to have birth control implants and/or surgical sterilization. This affects certain races more than others while such policies run the risk of justifying an oppressive social structure. This identification of controlled reproduction as the way to improve the economic condition of the poor mainly affects the black population. Black women continue to be pushed to the margins with issues concerning their bodies. Black women who lived during the early years of the birth control movement, especially those of the working-class, like the black women of today, continue to be viewed as passive subjects to be coerced out of their reproductive freedom.

Sterilization has long been a way to punish unwed sexuality. Eugenicists added moral sin to genetic flaw by asserting sexually promiscuous individuals were mentally defective. Being a sexual woman (unmarried and sexually active) was a moral sin and easily identifiable because the sins of the flesh are written on a woman's body.[60] The fictional characters in works by Meridel Le Sueur show how the state labels a poor, young, pregnant, and unmarried woman "feebleminded" in an effort to control her sexuality. In "Sequel to Love," published in 1935, the main character finds herself in "the place where they keep the feeble-minded" and acknowledges that because she already bore one child out of wedlock "they won't let me out of here if I don't get sterilized."[61] To the narrator and reader, compulsory sterilization and imprisonment are mechanisms of power enacted upon the classed bodies of women. Therefore, the characters in the novels of the 1920s and 1930s bear resemblance to women today; all struggle for reproductive control of their own bodies. The larger economic system threatens woman's bodily autonomy. Then, as now, it is difficult to hear the voices of these women. It is the confluence of gender, race, and class that objectifies women and gives black women a unique relationship to the birth control movement.

[59] Ibid, 103.
[60] Capo, 19.
[61] Quoted in Capo, 132, from "Sequel to Love."

Comfort Women: Systems of Domination Revealed

Jonathan Stratton

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I can't live with this bitterness
Give me back my youth
Apologize and make reparation,
Japan, apologize and make reparation for
Taking us and trampling on us
Mother, father, can you hear
Your daughter crying
Now my Korean brothers and sisters help me along[1]

Episodes of pain and injustice fill humanity's recorded past, and the above lyrics encapsulate the heartache felt by one of history's victims, Yi Yang-su. A former comfort woman, Yi laments the loss of her youth and demands of her former oppressors the impossible task of returning stolen time and stolen innocence. Yi is not alone in her pain. Scholars estimate that approximately 200,000 women shared in Yi's fate and were conscripted to serve as sex-slaves for the Japanese military during World War II. Of these slaves, the majority hailed from Korea.[2] Simple explanations do injustice to Yi's anguish, and the designation of comfort women as merely the victims of Japanese military aggression ignores the vast web of oppression spun by ingrained systems of domination. War can not explain comfort women. Imperial, patriarchal, economic, and racial domination lie at the root of the systematic capture and sexual enslavement of Korean women by the Japanese government, and, unfortunately, the subsequent demand for reparations has the effect of clouding the intricate power relations at play, thus, marginalizing comfort women as merely war causalities and subjects of unrestrained Japanese libidos. World War II is over, but the culprit behind Yi's lost youth lives on in the form of unequal power systems.

A note on terminology is in order. Chin Sung Chung points out that the label "military sexual slavery" is oftentimes associated, or confused, with the Korean term *chŏngshindae* (the Japanese *teishintai*) which refers to

[1] Hyun Sook Kim, "History and Memory: The 'Comfort Women' Controversy," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 5 (Spring 2007): 98.

[2] Philip Seaton, "Reporting the 'Comfort Women' Issue, 1991-1992: Japan's Contested War Memories in the National Press," *Japanese Studies* 26 (May 2006): 99. The exact number and nationality of the 'comfort women' is contested. For instance, Hayashi Hirofumi argues that most women in China and South East Asia were recruited locally. However, most scholars would raise issue with Hirofumi's conclusions and maintain the prominence of Koreans in Japan's systematic sexual slavery. For more information see Hayashi Hirofumi, "Japanese Comfort Women in Southeast Asia," *Japan Forum* 10 (September 1998).

the Women's Voluntary Corps for Labor (also referred to as the Women's Voluntary Corps). The Women's Voluntary Corps was set up by the Japanese government to enlist women for work in war time industries. However, the boundaries of *chŏngshindae* were ambiguous and allowed for the transfer of women "war laborers" to various parts of the Japanese Empire to serve as sex slaves.[3] The problem with using the term *chŏngshindae* lies in the fact that it can also refer to women who worked for the Japanese military in non-sex-related roles. However, Chunghee Sarah Soh states, "One might suggest that the Korean practice of using the term *Chŏngshindae* to refer to comfort women is a considerate euphemism to avoid the negative symbolism of the word *wianbu*."[4] *Wianbu*, Soh explains, refers to the Korean word that implies images of "following" the Japanese army in a voluntary manner. *Wianbu* is the equivalent to the Japanese *ianfu* which probably led to the English translation of military *comfort women*.[5]

In Yang's words, the use of the term comfort women "is obviously itself a travesty."[6] The term comfort women fails to convey the sexual exploitation and slavery Korean women were forced to endure at the hands of the Japanese. Chung opts for the use of "military sexual slave/slavery", the term used by both the UN and the Korean Council.[7] However, as Kazuko Watanabe points out, comfort women "remains the way they are most commonly referred to"[8] and, despite the obvious "tragedy" of the term, this essay will here after employ the label comfort woman/women when referring to military sex-slaves "employed" by the Japanese Army during the 1930s and 1940s. This term is chosen due to its common usage among scholars and its ability to differentiate between sexual servants recruited by Japan in the mid-twentieth century and the vast pool of exploited women throughout the ages.

The next few paragraphs briefly outline the historical narrative of comfort women. "I am telling my story so that they will feel humiliated. It's true: I am an avenger of the dead."[9] Fifty years after her horrendous ordeal Mrs. Maria Rosa Henson, a native Pilipino, broke years of silence regarding Japan's practice of sexual enslavement during the 1930s and 1940s. Since Henson's revelation, many more victims have come forward to tell similar stories, initiating criticism towards the Japanese government and demands for recompense.

[3] Chin Sung Chung, "The Origin and Development of the Military Sexual Slavery Problem in Imperial Japan," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 5 (Spring 97): 220-221.

[4] Laura Hyun Yi Kang, "Conjuring 'Comfort Women': Mediated Affiliations and Disciplined Subjects in Korean/American Transnationality," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 6 (2003): 45.

[5] Ibid., 44.

[6] Ibid., 44-45.

[7] Chin Sung Chung, "The Origin and Development," 222.

[8] Laura Hyun Yi Kang, "Conjuring Comfort Women." 46.

[9] *New York Times*, 12 November 1996.

Japanese buying/thieving of women's flesh did not begin with the advent of comfort women. Diaries and military documents during the Russo-Japanese war reveal the popularity of brothels among the Japanese military during the early twentieth century. Japanese soldiers' high demand for sexual commodities continued into the Shanghai War, the Manchurian conflict, and World War II. The pre-1937 brothels, although employing military physicians, were generally privately run.[10] During the escalating war with China and the subsequent Second World War, the Japanese government took a more direct hand in the organization and operation of brothels or "comfort stations." There was logic behind their depravity. The Japanese government, in the wake of the widespread murder, rape, and rampant destruction of Nanking by Japan's military, argued that comfort stations allowed soldiers to release their pent up sexual aggressions in a controlled environment. Incidents such as the rape of Nanking, the Japanese government believed, would cause backlash and public outcry, but the systematic and covert recruitment of women as sex-slaves could go unnoticed. Comfort stations were also seen as necessary to reduce the spread of infections diseases[11] among Japanese soldiers.[12] One must be careful not to blame the sexual exploitation of comfort women solely on the horrors of war and thus create a simplistic "war equals atrocities" equation. The unequal power-relations the comfort women experienced are much more complex and deserve more in depth treatment.

The extent of the Japanese government's involvement in running comfort stations is hotly disputed. After former comfort women came forward and shared their dark experiences, Japanese officials reluctantly apologized for military mistreatment of women. In 1992, Koichi Kato, the Chief Cabinet Secretary of Japan, stated, "I would like to express the sincere apology and remorse of the Government of Japan to all those…who underwent indescribable pain and suffering as comfort women."[13] Although offering an apology, Mr. Kato refused to admit government responsibility. Mr. Kato went on to state, "We did our best. Such problems, unthinkable in a time of peace, occurred in the midst of a war in which behavior often defied common sense."[14] Mr. Kato evades government responsibility and relegates the pain inflected upon the comfort women as merely an unfortunate result of hysterical war fever.

[10] Chin Sung Chung, "The Origin and Development," 223.

[11] Just as the previous non-government managed brothels, the government comfort stations employed medical doctors who continually checked the sex workers for venereal diseases. Also, the fear of the spread of venereal disease among the Japanese military led the government to target young unmarried girls for sexual exploitation in comfort stations. See Laura Hein, "Savage Irony: The Imaginative Power of the 'Military Comfort Women' in the 1990s," *Gender & History* 11 (July 1999): 338.

[12] Ibid.

[13] *The New York Times*, 7 July 1992.

[14] Ibid.

Scholars and eyewitness accounts point to a government/military hand in the operation of comfort stations. Chung exposes official military involvement in comfort station implementation by pointing to government documents and direct military orders dealing with comfort women. Most telling is a meeting in 1938 between the Japanese Ministry of the Army, Ministry of the Navy, and Ministry of Foreign affairs at which the government took direct control over brothels employed for military use.[15] In 1992, Seiji Yoshida, a former Japanese soldier, revealed the extent of government involvement in both the capture of women and the managing of comfort stations. Mr. Yoshida stated that "we would use 5 to 10 trucks, and sweep the villages, choosing two or three young women from each who would be suitable…the screaming was terrible, but that was my routine throughout 1943 and 1944. It was just like kidnapping. It may be the worst abuse of human rights in Asia in this century."[16] The Japanese government has subsequently admitted to its involvement in the operation of comfort stations, but the issue is still sidestepped by the current Japanese regime and reparations are refused. [17] Adding insult to injury, Japanese government officials pay respect to fallen Japanese soldiers, including class A war criminals, at the Yasukuni Shrine, a shrine set up by the imperial Shinto state.[18] During a 2007 hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives, Representative Michael Honda stated that,

> Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei issued a statement of admission and apology in 1992. Prime Minister Koizumi also issued an apology in the year 2001. However, in 2006, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shimomuro Hakubun, as well as Japan's largest circulating newspaper, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, specifically challenged the validity of the Kono Statement and has led to the belief that Japan is attempting to revise its history.[19]

During the same hearing, former comfort woman Jan Ruff O'Herne stated that "When I was in Japan…I was invited to talk at high schools and colleges about what happened during the war. Not one of those students knew about the horrific atrocity that the Japanese committed during World War II."[20] The students' lack of knowledge about their country's past

[15] Chin Sung Chung, "The Origin and Development," 224.

[16] *The New York Times*, 8 August 1992.

[17] *The New York Times*, 8 August 1993.

[18] Yayori Matsui, "Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery: Memory, Identity, and Society," East *Asia: An International Quarterly* 19 (Winter 2001): 128.

[19] House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Protecting the Human Rights of Comfort Women: H.R.121*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 2007, 2.

[20]Ibid., 26.

mistakes reveals Japan's reluctance to face up to its history and make known the horrors of comfort women to its citizens and the wider world.

"I fought them the first day…but they beat me so badly."[21] These words, spoken by a former Korean comfort woman, express the feelings of helplessness and frustration that accompanied the lives of Japan's sex-slaves. One Korean woman claimed to have served up to fifty Japanese soldiers per day for seven days a week, a statistic not uncommon among comfort women.[22] The torture these women were forced to endure was not limited to acts of sexual degradation. One survivor recalled, "I was beaten by a baton, tied to a tree and hung; I was also thrown into a frozen river."[23] Forced abortions were performed during the occasion of pregnancy, women suffered severe beatings, and one survivor was tattooed on her lips and tongue after an unsuccessful escape attempt.[24] The pain did not die after freedom from the comfort stations, and one woman stated, "I could not erase those horrible images from my mind. How can they ignore me like this after trampling down on an ignorant, weak teen-ager to suffer for the rest of my life?"[25]

Hyunah Yang points out the tendency of social discourse to explain comfort women as merely another consequence of Japanese aggression and argues that comfort women are primarily viewed from a masculine "positionality" and "this interpretation of the issue…accepts masculinist assumptions in taking for granted women as sexual objects whose purpose is to foster men's psychological security."[26] Comfort women, therefore, take on the role of subject rather than an agent or player in history's performance and are demoted to mere "facts" used to prove an historical occurrence.[27] Furthermore, Western racism or "orientalism" comes into play when equating comfort women with "war casualties." This line of reasoning paints the Japanese people as degenerate beasts, thus, fostering feelings of Western superiority and Asian "otherness". The remainder of this paper argues against the simplistic "war equal atrocities" explanation for comfort women that Yang rails against.

Systems of domination resulted in the exploitation of comfort women, and these systems need exposing. Imperialism is one such domination system. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Japan recognized its need to "keep up" with the West in order to protect itself from foreign colonizers and maintain its legitimacy as a power to be reckoned with. One avenue towards power and legitimacy lay in the

[21] *The New York Times*, 10 September 1995.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Yayori Matsui, "Women's International War Crimes," 123.

[24] Alexis Dudden, "We Came to Tell the Truth," *Critical Asian Studies* 33 (December 2001): 595.

[25] *The New York Times*, 10 September 1995.

[26] Hyunah Yang, "Revisiting the Issue of Korean 'Military Comfort Women': The Question of Truth and Positionality," *Positionas: East Asia Cultures Critique* 5 (Spring 97): 52.

[27] Ibid., 53-54.

acquisition of colonies, and Japan cast its eyes westward towards Korea. Japan's lust for colonies resulted in war between the island nation and Russia over the Korean sphere of influence. Japan defeated Russia, and the 1905 Portsmouth Treaty, presided over by President Theodore Roosevelt, awarded Korea to Japan as a protectorate. Despite protests by a Korean delegation to the Second International Conference on Peace at The Hague, Korea's subservient status was upheld, and the Korean delegates were not even considered legitimate representatives of their own country, which no longer existed as a separate nation.[28]

Japan created unequal power relationships with its colonized people, and Korea was no exception. Understanding Western imperialism is paramount in any discussion of Japanese imperialism, for Japan based much of its colonial ideology on that of the West. Western powers oftentimes legitimized their "right" to dominate foreign peoples due to the "uncivilized" nature of indigenous populations. Conquering natives came with the added perks of exploiting "unused" and "uncultivated" land and resources, and such resources included the human variety. Alexis Dudden reveals the influence the West had on Japanese colonization practices and ideology. According to Dudden, Kuroda Kyotaka, Japan's Vice Minister of Colonization, was sent to the United States in 1870 to learn the tricks of the colonization trade. When colonizing Hokkaido, the Japanese used stories of the United States' acquisition of land from Native Americans as both a model and justification for Japanese expansion. Furthermore, US Secretary of Agriculture Horace Grant played an integral role in Japanese northern expansion by serving as Japan's Commissioner and Adviser to the Bureau of Colonial Affairs. Capron stated that "the people and government of Japan are in earnest about this great work and aim to a higher type of civilization than any other of the eastern nations, and are more capable of its attainment."[29]

Western ideological influence did not end with Japanese expansion into Hokkaido and continued to play a pivotal role in Japanese imperialism. Japan's appointed professor of colonial studies, Nitobe Inazo, stated that the Koreans "have absolutely no will to work. The men squat in their white clothes smoking on their long pipes and dream of the past, never thinking of the present nor hoping for the future."[30] Nitobe's rhetoric is filled with classic Western colonial notions of civilized vs. uncivilized. Furthermore, Nitobe considered colonization as a step toward modernization and progress, terms associated with the West, and stated that "our nation has become more of a Great Power (due to the annexation of Korea as an official colony) than many European countries, and you all [speaking to his

[28] Alexis Dudden, "Japanese Colonial Control in International Terms," *Japanese Studies* 25 (May 2005): 3.

[29] Ibid., 3-11.

[30] Ibid., 14.

pupils⁻] have also become much more important. Japan of a month ago and Japan of today are completely different."[31]

Due to "uncivilized" Korea's subservient role to "civilized" Japan, Japan manipulated the Korean people and treated them as both less than Japanese and less than human. Yang points out that Japanese imperialism was based upon a patriarchal household in which the Emperor of Japan served as the head of the home while the colonized functioned at the bottom rung of the hierarchy.[32] Patriarchy demands strict obedience to authority, and the Japanese Emperor used his authority to demand that his subjects, including women, participate in the expansion and continuation of the glorious Japanese Empire. Japanese women could fulfill their duty by producing children who could then serve as soldiers or leaders, but the Korean women, being of inferior stock, served the Japanese by sacrificing their bodies on the altar of sexual exploitation.[33] Domination manifested itself in the form of Japanese imperialism, and Japanese imperialism helped to spawn the horrendous practice of military sexual slavery.

At this time, a pause is appropriate. There lies a danger in attributing too much responsibility to the West for Japan's colonial actions. This type of argument ignores larger intertwined power structures and resorts to a "blame game." Forces of subjugation and domination were at the heart of Japanese imperialism, and to relegate Japan's colonial ambition to a simple cause effect equation ignores the deeper ingrained ideologies of inequality that continue to plague people all around the world.

Issues of race played a part in the subjugation of comfort women. Although not accounting for the entire population, up to ninety percent of comfort women were Korean.[34] The Japanese government encouraged their women to reproduce and kicked off the slogan "Bear ⁻children⁻] and Increase ⁻the population⁻]."[35] The role of motherhood was honored and anti-abortion laws became stricter. Korean comfort women, on the other hand, were administered forced abortions. After cutting out an unborn child from the womb of a comfort women, a Japanese soldier stated, "We don't need the *Chōsenjin's* ⁻a derogatory term for Korean⁻] baby."[36] Former comfort woman Hwang Kŭmju recalled that "those who fell pregnant were injected with 'No. 606.' They began to feel chilly, their bodies swelled, and they started to discharge blood. They were then taken to the hospital to have an abortion. After this had happened three to four times, they became barren."[37] Korean women were not valued as persons, and, as Yang writes

[31] Ibid., 14-16.
[32] Hyunah Yang, "Revisiting the Issue," 64.
[33]Chin Sung Chung, "The Origin and Development," 230-231.
[34] Ibid., 226. This figure is not universally accepted by all scholars, but a general consensus maintains that at least a majority of the comfort women were Korean.
[35] Hyunah Yang, "Revisiting the Issue," 64.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Howard, Keith, editor., *True Stores of the Korean Comfort Women*, (New York:Cassell,1995), 74.

so eloquently, "the body of the comfort woman could consequently be considered merely as a site, a 'sanitary toilet," for the disposition of Japanese sexual needs…."[38] Japanese imperialism based much of its legitimacy on unequal race ideologies, and those ideologies manifested themselves in the selection of Koreans for work at comfort stations.

Japan denied Korean women personhood. Based on racial attitudes of Japanese supremacy and Korean degeneracy, Korean society and people were deemed inferior, and the Japanese initiated a campaign of assimilation on the Korean peninsula. The Japanese suppressed Korean language, gave Koreans Japanese surnames, and forced Shinto religion upon the Korean people.[39] Japan attempted to reshape the Koreans into their own image, destroying their cultural identity and relegating them to second-class members of Japan's patriarchal family. Oppression based on ideologies of race superiority raised its ugly head and contributed to the domination of Korean women as sex slaves.

Economic oppression inflicted upon the Korean people through the unequal power structure of imperialism mingled with patriarchal ideology and racism creating a web of domination. Japan emerged out of the nineteenth century a capitalist imperial state that treated its colonies, including Korea, as avenues of capital expansion. Japan imposed a harsh economic climate upon Korea by acquisitioning prime Korean land, forcing Korean farmers to produce crops mainly for importation to Japan, and restricting industrial trade to Japan only. The Korean economy tumbled, causing up to 48 percent of the rural population to endure famine conditions and up to 12.9 percent of urban dwellers to live in poverty.[40]

The economic oppression caused by Japan's imperialism forced many Korean women to join "Japanese work force groups" that turned out to be comfort stations in disguise. Kim Tŏkchin was one such Korean woman who's attempt at escaping Korea's bleak, economic realities resulted in service to Japan as a comfort woman. Kim's father cultivated tobacco, a government-monopoly crop, and was beaten to death for the crime of "stealing" some of his tobacco leaves for personal use. The loss of Kim's father devastated the family economically, and they spiraled deeper into poverty. Kim, inundated with tales of women who had profited by working abroad, decided to take a job at what she believed to be a factory in Japan. Kim stated that "In those days people were rather simple, and I, having had no education, didn't know anything of the world. All I knew – all I thought I knew – was that I was going to work in a factory to earn money. I never dreamed this could involve danger."[41] A few days after Kim's "escape from poverty," she was raped by a Japanese officer who informed her that she would have to get used to this kind of work and assured her that after a few

[38] Hyunah Yang, "Revisiting the Issue," 64-65.
[39] Chin Sung Chung, "The Origin and Development," 231.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Howard, Keith, *True Stores of the Korean Comfort Women*, 43.

times she "would not feel so much pain."[42] Unfortunately, the pain never stopped for Kim, and years after her internment at a comfort station she stated that "the gifts of my days as a comfort women still trouble me. I have bladder infections, womb disease, a restless of mind and many other ailments."[43] Because of the economic oppression inflicted on the Koreans by the Japanese, Kim left Korea in search of a more affluent life, but instead of finding financial opportunities, she found herself caught in one of history's most destructive and extensive systems of human sex-trafficking.

Patriarchy created an atmosphere of oppression for Korean women and instructed the Korean female to "follow the way of her father before marriage, acquiesce to her husband's opinions in her marriage and then, after his death, obey her son."[44] Mun P'il-gi's story of becoming a comfort woman reveals the deep seated patriarchy living in Korea's society. Mun, who attempted to obtain an education, stated that "My father, however, was adamantly opposed to the idea of a girl studying, saying that educated girls turn into 'foxes.'"[45] Although managing to enroll in school behind her father's back, Mun stated that "My father found out within a week that I was attending school and burned all my books. His anger did not subside with that. He beat me up severely and threw me out of the house."[46] Mun, seeing no other way to escape her father's patriarchal control, accepted an offer by a Japanese recruitment agent to take a job where she could "both earn money and study." [47]Mun was subsequently taken to Manchuria where she was forced to serve as a comfort woman for Japanese soldiers. Patriarchy was not confined to the poor and down trodden of Korea, as Yi Sang-ok's story reveals. Yi's family was not poor by contemporary standards and could even afford to hire "a *mosum* [farmhand] and a wet nurse."[48] Despite her family's financial ability to send her to school, Yi's brother "objected to it, saying it was useless to educate a girl."[49] Yi fled her repressive family situation and ended up taking a job at a "factory"; a "factory" that turned out to be a comfort station.

The hold patriarchy had upon Korean women did not end with their release from sexual enslavement. Korean society held women's chastity and sexual purity on a pedestal,[50] and once their "purity" was removed, Korean comfort women lost a large part of who they were and what they believed

[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 49.
[44] Insook Kwon, "The New Women's Movement in 1920s Korea: Rethinking the Relationship Between Imperialism and Women," *Gender & History* 10 (November 1998): 391.
[45] C. Sarah Soh, "Aspiring to Craft Modern Gendered Selves 'Comfort Women' and *Chŏngsindae* in Late Colonial Korea," *Critical Asian Studies* 36 (June 2004): 187.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., 188.
[48] Ibid., 189
[49] Ibid.
[50] Insook Kwon, "The New Women's Movement in 1920s Korea," 390-392.

to be most important.[51] Song Sin-do stated that "I did not want to return home where nobody would welcome me back."[52] One comfort woman was discouraged to speak out about her ordeal and was told that "you would only bring trouble on your family and your children will be traumatized."[53]

Not only did Korean comfort women lose their "purity," many also lost their ability to bear children, and in a patriarchal society that prized women's fertility, a barren woman was second-rate at best and valueless at worst. The importance that Korean culture placed on child-bearing was so strong that Yi Yŏngsuk, after serving over four years as a comfort woman, lamented that "It was bad enough that I had to suffer what I did. But it is worse that I was made barren because of this ordeal. I am bitter when I think of this…We are finished, and our bodies are useless after so much abuse."[54] Oh Omok's bareness resulted in the dissolvent of her marriage, which in turn robbed from her the economic means for survival. Omok stated that "My only wish is to be able to live without worry about rent. And I still feel resentful that I haven't been able to have children because of what happened almost 50 years ago."[55]

The abuses wrought by Japanese men on their Korean sex-slaves left many comfort women with a distaste for men and marriage long after their liberation from the comfort station. Yi Yongsu stated, "I couldn't dare think of getting married. How could I dream of marriage?...I basically dislike men."[56] Mun P'iligi echoed Yi's sentiments when she stated, "I had no intention of getting married. I couldn't bear the thought of becoming someone's wife, not with my past as a comfort woman to haunt me."[57] With the shame of bareness and the stigma of carrying a venereal disease lurking over them, a large number of former comfort women shied away from marriage and lived their lives as poverty-stricken, social outcasts in a society in which a woman's worth was measured by the patriarchal standards of marriage, purity, and child-bearing. Those who chose to get married oftentimes did not find their lot in life any better. Kim Haksun lamented that "When he [Kim's Husband] was drunk and aggressive, because he knew that I had been a comfort woman, he would insult me with words that had cut me to the heart…My life seemed to be wretched."[58] The fact that fifty years transpired before comfort women spoke out about their mistreatment reveals the feeling of shame and humility these surviving comfort women felt about their past. In their past, they played the part of

[51] Hyunah Yang, "Revisiting the Issue," 65.
[52] C. Sarah Soh, "Aspiring to Craft Modern Gendered Selves," 192.
[53] Howard, Keith, *True Stores of the Korean Comfort Women*, 49.
[54] Ibid., 57.
[55] Ibid., 69.
[56] Ibid., 94.
[57] Ibid., 86.
[58] Ibid., 39.

the innocent victim, yet many of their peers, friends, and family members viewed them as the guilty perpetrators of their own destines.

"What now" questions regarding surviving comfort women lay heavy on the hearts of human rights advocates and government bodies. One remedy put forth by those advocating for former comfort women is the giving of reparations by the Japanese government, and one form of reparation that oftentimes takes center stage in the media and public discourse is the monetary type. Arguments supporting monetary reparations cloud the true criminals, i.e. systems of oppression and domination and relegate comfort women to the margins by insisting that they be viewed merely as war wounds that need bandaging. Demands for monetary reparations inadvertently suggests that throwing money at these former victims will bring "closure" to their pain and humiliation. Yŏngsuk stated that "It doesn't matter whether we receive compensation or not. After all, what could we do with money, with so few years left before we die."[59] As Representative Honda stated,

> I do not believe any amount of money can atone for what these women suffered and…I do not believe the Japanese Government or its citizens should suggest that a monetary payment can right a moral wrong…What is relevant is that Japan acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery…[60]

Japan needs to take responsibility for its actions, but it is not enough that Japan alone apologizes and takes all of the blame. The root causes behind comfort women lay in various systems of domination, including imperialism, patriarchy, economic oppression, and racism. As shown by this essay, the evils that plagued, and continue to plague, comfort women were not solely inflicted by the Japanese, and other perpetrators must stand up and be accounted for.

A fund was set up to provide monetary compensation for former comfort women called the Asian Women's Fund. However, it was a privately funded trust, and the money collected into the trust "came from private enterprises and private business. It did not come from the government."[61] Of the 50,000 to 200,000 comfort women, only approximately 285 women have taken advantage of the Asian Women's Fund. Many factors have contributed to the low number of women receiving compensation from the Asian Women's Fund, but one reason for the fund's failure, according to former comfort woman Jan Ruff O'Herne, is

[59] Yŏngsuk's attitude does not represent that of all surviving comfort women. Many survivors have led in the fight for government reparations, monetary and otherwise. Ibid., 57.

[60] House Committee, *Protecting the Human Rights of Comfort Women*, 3.

[61] Ibid., 26.

that "the fund was an insult to the comfort women, and they, including myself, refused to accept it."[62] The fact that money was available to surviving comfort women but rejected by them speaks for the inadequacy of monetary compensation. Many former comfort women want more. They want to their plights acknowledged and for the world to know their stories.

It is hard to imagine monetary reparations creating any real closure for the sexual objectification these women endured. The real solution to the comfort women issue is the exposure of unfair power relationships. Humanity must realize the vast interconnectedness between all of society's parts, be they home societies or those abroad, and end oppressive power structures. Sickness is not cured by treating the symptoms, and "putting an end" to the comfort women issue by covering it with monetary reparations ignores the viruses of inequality that infect the world. Reparations *are* in order, but they should be reparations of change that recognize and attempt to destroy systems that dominate, oppress, and create inequality amongst the brothers and sister of mankind. They must also be reparations of acknowledgment. As stated by Representative Honda,

> Civilized society cannot allow history to be revised or denied under any circumstances. Regardless of what bearing this, or any other issue, may have…civilized society has a moral obligation to remember, to give voice to those who have suffered, to pay living tribute to victims past and present, to defend human rights and human dignity. Otherwise we run the risk of another Holocaust or, in this case, young women being forced into sexual slavery.[63]

We must remember and give voice to the oppressed of society's past and present, lest we forget our wrongs and repeat them.

[62] Ibid., 3-26.

[63] Ibid., 3.

"Advertising would never again have it so plush": The Therapeutic Ethos and Advertising in *Good Housekeeping*, 1920-1929

Erin Crawley

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Lizabeth Cohen's provocative book, *A Consumers' Republic*, begins with an assessment of what she labels the "first-wave consumer movement." Reaching its height in the 1910s, this movement coincides with the Progressive era reform efforts of middle-class women, working for protections against false advertising and harmful products in an increasingly consumer-oriented America.[1] The birth of the "second-wave consumer movement" correlates with the response to the Depression and New Deal in the 1930s when women once again took up the cause of product and consumer safety, lobbying the national government and proclaiming their rights as citizen-consumers. Established at this point as the main consumers in America, women had the confidence necessary to evaluate the national economy.[2] Largely annoyed with this trend, businessmen struggled to pull women back into their domestic roles, while at the same time halting the passing of limiting government legislation. Businessmen and advertisers favored the idea of a purchaser-consumer – women who supported the United States economy by buying mass produced goods.[3]

But what of the 1920s? Cohen treats the middle decade of her formula almost as an anomaly. Surrounded by advocates of consumer rights and the efforts of confident women, the 1920s of her account seem rather perplexing at first. She holds that government action was minimal at this point, and advertising men had complete control over how they wished to treat the consumer. Business dominated the upper echelons of society, full of persons who could afford just about anything, and "few Americans during these years considered consumers a self-conscious, identifiable interest group…."[4] She leaves her study at this, proposing no full reasons as to why the 1920s existed in such a free-wheeling, advertising-heavy state.

Other authors, however, have taken up this issue in great detail. There are those who hold that businessmen in this particular decade were extremely tenacious, manipulative, and aggressive in their control of

[1] Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (NY: Vintage Books, 2003), 21.

[2] Ibid., 34.

[3] Ibid., 56-57.

[4] Ibid., 23.

advertising. There are others who give advertisers a gentler appearance, granting them the collective role of the sage who wanted to guide consumers, especially women, through the changes taking place in a complex, modern, and mainly urban setting. Either way, it is obvious that the 1920s was a decade apart from the years enveloping it. Women who had previously enjoyed a sense of community in group-work settings were largely confined to their homes, constructing their identities not in correlation to other women, but instead through their roles as homebound, lonely women working in isolation. Given these changing circumstances, women, although in control of their family economies, were untiringly targeted by advertisers who saw opportunities – vicious or noble? – for control and enjoyed great success as they wheedled their way into the daily lives of women consumers. Through an examination of this exchange between the woman consumer and the advertiser, and supported by a case study of advertisements in *Good Housekeeping* magazine, this paper will show how advertising from 1920 to 1929 paradoxically offered more desires, luxuries, and choices in products but increasingly sapped women of their agency as consumers.

Stuart Ewen was one of the earliest historians to address the enigma of the twenties. In his 1979 book *Captains of Consciousness*, Ewen attributes the rise of modern advertising to a "direct response to the needs of mass industrial capitalism," which exploded in the 1920s.[5] By his estimate, advertising became the most important force of modernization. Instead of allowing this force to remain in the hands of the people, businesses snatched up advertising as a smart investment, and as a control over the people they wished to persuade into buying mass-produced goods on a large scale.[6] The key to his assessment, then, is the idea of control – over and over again he talks about consumers as if they were peons to which the advertisers condescended, assuming "an expansionist and manipulative approach to the problem of popular consciousness."[7] The consumers of the 1920s, in his study, are passive, indolent, and largely irrational.

This work also makes a contribution to the study of women consumers in particular, suggesting that advertisers grafted women onto new roles in their homes. The domesticity remained, but women were now expected to treat their housework more in keeping with the factory mindset of the era. Housework became increasingly scientific, structured, and isolationist, pushed along by increasingly advanced, modern, and technological additions to the home. This in turn led to a sense of alienation from their work as women realized that although consumer technology might make their chores easier, work was no longer instilled

[5] Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979), 31.

[6] Ibid., 32-33.

[7] Ibid., 81.

with the community values inherent to the nineteenth century.[8] This viewpoint also supposes that women lost some of the public identity they had gained through Progressive era reforms in the 1910s and had not yet rediscovered the world of advocacy and consumer rights that would foment in the 1930s.

However, Ewen only hints at the idea that the American public was unsettled by these quick and complex changes happening in society. In fact, in the beginning of his essay "From Salvation to Self-Realization," T. J. Jackson Lears finds fault with Ewen for his failure to "[grasp] the complex relationship between power relations and changes in values – or between advertisers' changing strategies and the cultural confusion at the turn of the century."[9] In order to correct this shortcoming, Lears turns to what he coins as the "therapeutic ethos," discussing the ethos first as a means to finding identity and freedom and secondly as a concept behind many of the advertising techniques in the early twentieth century.[10]

First he discusses how in a shifting society, reassigning gender roles, job structures, and corporate mobility, Americans easily lost sight of their previous realities. Industry and life in an increasingly urban setting led people to feel that they were floating along in a fast-paced current, and many of the city-dwellers sought advice from doctors and psychologists. As a result, "neurasthenia" emerged as a curse to the middle and upper-middle class elites at the end of the nineteenth century, and continued well into the twentieth. Given attributes such as depression and causing such feelings as rootlessness, neurasthenia became the buzz word voiced when people complained of a lack of autonomy and meaning in their work. The doctors and psychologists began to proscribe rest cures and "abundance therapy" in order to coax these nervous Americans into a false sense of identity, coalescing around consumerism. If real life was no longer providing identity, then a new reality was the cure – one based on desire, luxury, and purchased goods.[11]

As the therapeutic ethos endorsed "growth and process as ends in themselves," Lears finds it hardly surprising that advertising agencies picked up on the psychological aspects of the ethos and implanted those into their campaigns, packaging, and advertising art.[12] Advertisers subtly began the switch from presenting text full of information to text that invoked emotion and attracted attention. Advertising became a visual environment in which masses of people were triggered to particular feelings carefully researched by psychologists working for ad agencies.

[8] Ibid., 164.

[9] T. J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears (NY: Patheon Books, 1983), 3.

[10] Ibid., 5.

[11] Ibid., 7-12. Quotation from p. 12.

[12] Ibid., 16.

Gradually, advertising came to define what was socially acceptable and unacceptable, as well as how men and women were supposed to act in each others' company, and in their respective roles. It also placed a heightened sense of importance on youth and revitalization. And although Lears is cautious in placing too much emphasis on the victimization of women in this advertising-driven society, he does allow that consumerism centered on the fact that women were the leading purchasers and the idea that women were completely irrational and easily duped by sentiment.[13]

Despite the fact that Lears began with a brief critique of Ewen, he obviously does not disagree with all of his work. For example, in 1994, Lears published *Fables of Abundance* in which he pursued a new ethos more in keeping with Ewen's assertion that advertisers wanted control over social norms. Lears' new concept is that of the "ethos of management." He proposes that by using "market research, advertisers pioneered the statistical surveillance of public life, a practice that would become central to the maintenance of managerial cultural hegemony."[14] Therefore, although advertisers would use their role as managers to assuage anxiety, Lears still places them in a much more problematic position than had his previous work by asserting that they cared little for morals and tradition in the wake of fast-paced business and city life.[15] He calls advertising, on the whole, a condescending practice in which the assumed manipulability of the mass audience was a commonplace by the 1920s.[16]

Philip Cushman pushes this idea further in his work *Constructing the Self, Constructing America.* He argues that Freud's theory of the unconscious had much to do with this transition into American consumerism – a fair assessment since it was Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, who became one of the driving forces behind psychologically manipulative ad campaigns. As a population constantly battling the "disparities between image and reality" Americans were particularly receptive to Freud's concept of the unconscious.[17] No longer was the weightlessness of Americans' lives their responsibility – forces beyond their conscious control pushed along their whims and impulses, the fragmentation of the self. This realization was not necessarily a dangerous one to make, and Freud sincerely hoped that this theory and the knowledge with which it came might help Americans adjust to their rapidly changing surroundings in a healthy, whole manner. But in 1909, the year of Freud's Clark University lectures, America had already given

[13] Ibid., 18-26.

[14] Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (NY: Basic Books, 1994), 138.

[15] Ibid., 160.

[16] Ibid., 230.

[17] Philip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), 144.

way to business as the leading social influence in society. In the hands of businessmen and savvy psychologists, "the unconscious became a vehicle for the single most important cultural dynamic of the twentieth century: the consumerization of American life."[18] The leaders in American business latched on to the idea of the therapeutic ethos, resituating the idea outside the realm of psychological treatment and in firmly in the burgeoning world of advertising and consumption. By the 1920s, advertising dictated consumer behavior, assuring producers that for as many products as they could promote, there would be a willing, gullible buyer.[19]

Gary Cross returns to a much gentler analysis of advertisers in the 1920s in his book *An All Consuming Century.* Like Lears and Cushman, Cross hints at the manipulative skill of advertisers; however, he holds that their manipulation was well-meant, intended to help people in "substituting consumer aspirations for producer dreams."[20] Commodities, he explains, "became innovative and often creative building blocks for the construction of different identities and new communities when the old ones were in decline."[21] He goes on to describe the way that purchasing consumer goods gave Americans, and especially women, a sense of liberation and identity in an ambiguous society. Yes, there were still economic strata in America, but consumers grew to enjoy immersing themselves in advertisements targeted at high class elites while dreaming of riches, luxury, and desires.

Tied to this theme is the idea of the democratization of goods. If consumers could not find the means to emulate the rich, then at least they could take comfort in the fact that all members of American society, even the elite members, used products like Ponds Cold Cream or Listerine – the advertisements themselves exclaimed so each time they promoted one particular brand over another.[22] Cross also holds, in opposition to Lears' later work, that advertisers took it upon themselves to provide the link between old and new values by coupling consumption of mass-produced goods with advertisements that spoke to consumers personally about their individual, personal needs.[23] Advertisers eased consumers from the old to the new by explaining technology and praising the leisure time which it would grant to those who embraced electricity, automobiles, and packaged or canned goods.

These previous concepts tie into Lears' earlier work on the therapeutic ethos. It is fair to say that of all the theories presented by the authors attempting to make sense of the twisting complexities of the

[18] Ibid., 143.
[19] Ibid., 154.
[20] Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2000), 19.
[21] Ibid., 18.
[22] Ibid., 22-23.
[23] Ibid., 24.

climb to 1920s consumerism, the therapeutic ethos is the most convincing. As a theory it combines many elements of psychology, economics, and cultural history into a multi-dimensional approach to changing societal functions, and as a practice, it is obvious in the mindsets of advertisers and in the illustrations and copy of advertisements. Therefore, the remainder of the paper will center on providing evidence of the prevalence of Lears' postulated ethos in advertising. For example, the paper will address where advertisers were the most successful in their use of this concept, how exactly ad men hooked their readers, and what the advertising agencies' preferred artistic and psychological techniques were.

Good Housekeeping is the ideal magazine for this study because of its remarkably structured focus – its founder Clark W. Bryan intended it to be a journal dedicated to the home, and since 1885 it has remained so. It also came onto the market at a higher price than other women's magazines, therefore attracting a middle- and upper-middle class readership. In fact, its full title when it first appeared was *Good Housekeeping: A Family Journal Conducted in the Interests of the Higher Life of the Household.*[24] It was also well known for attracting columns and editorials written by the readers themselves, a link that advertisers later found enticing when deciding which magazines were likely to attract invested readers. After a brief drop in price and overall page length, probably due to Bryan's illness and eventual suicide in 1898, the journal changed hands a number of times. John Pettigrew purchased the journal, but sold it to E. H. Phelps, the head of the Phelps Publishing Company, in 1900. Phelps brought the magazine back to life and then in 1911 sold it to William Randolph Hearst, who saw the great potentialities of the magazine and centered publication in New York amid the height of urban life.[25] By the 1920s, the magazine expanded to more than 250 pages, chalk full of color illustrations, advertisements, and literature from well-known authors.[26]

One of the attributes Hearst admired was the commitment previous owners of the magazine made to product testing and closely monitored advertising. The Good Housekeeping Institute, instated by 1909, assured not only safety in advertising, but also another assurance that readers watched the advertising content carefully. Even so, by the early 1930s, *Good Housekeeping* had to print retractions of a number of advertisements along with apologies for letting particularly unsafe products claim page space.[27] The Institute also printed lists of stores that supported the same

[24] Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, Vol. V, *Sketches of 21 Magazines, 1905-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 126.
[25] Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *A History of Popular Women's Magazines in the United States, 1792-1995* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 12-13.
[26] Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 136.
[27] Ibid., 171-172.

products displayed in the magazine, creating small communities of women consumers who prided themselves on their discerning taste.[28]

Still the view advertisers took toward their readership was not always deferential and approving, and historian Mary Ellen Zuckerman includes one particularly telling quotation in her discussion:

> Many traditional notions and stereotypes about the female sex came into play. Advertisers felt that women preferred little complexity or technicality; they followed commands and directions more easily than men. Appeals needed to be directed to women's feelings, not their intellects. Illustrations worked especially well. Ill-informed, emotional, and suggestible, females also paid more attention to advertisements….[29]

Although not the most enlightened view, it does provide good evidence as to why most advertising dollars went to expenditures on women's magazines. In 1927, for instance, women's magazines attracted "almost 72 percent of magazine advertising for soap and housekeeping supplies, over 70 percent for food and food beverages, over 48 percent for drug and toilet goods, and over 45 percent of all clothing and dry goods."[30] In fact, as the 1920s unfolded, the editors found that advertisements often eclipsed the literature, artwork, and editorial sections of most women's magazines. Editors started increasing page size to include more advertisements. They also grew to depend less on subscription money for revenue than they did contracts from enterprising ad agencies.[31] By the 1920s it was a well established fact in the advertising business that women were by far the most easily targeted consumers, and the editors of magazines like *Good Housekeeping* took great advantage of that fact when planning their budgets and anticipating their revenue.

Advertisers also took advantage of that fact when planning their copy and illustrations. Gary Cross asserts that by 1931, advertising made up fifty to sixty percent of the content of magazines targeting women. By his assessment, advertisements invoking youth, beauty, and pleasure were the most common, but in magazines like *Good Housekeeping*, ads also exalted innovations in home appliances, increasingly strengthening the homebound state of women tied to domestic roles.[32] Although Cross is

[28] Ibid., 63.
[29] Ibid., 67.
[30] Ibid., 160.
[31] John Tebbel and Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *The Magazine in America, 1741-1990* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1991), 146.
[32] Cross, 45-46.

relatively judicious when describing the role of advertisers, other authors such as Joel Spring are less so.

Spring tends to find that whenever women tried to assert some sort of liberation in the 1920s, it was co-opted by eager and greedy advertisers. For example, domestic scientists sang the praises of new technology that would give women more leisure time – time which these highly educated women assumed would be spent in service roles and women's reforms. Advertisers, however, as the other modernizers, took this leisure time and linked it to the therapeutic ethos suggesting vacations, shopping sprees, and of course luxurious usage of every product advertised.[33] In another example, Spring shows how cosmetics were introduced as a way for the new woman to assert herself sexually, independently, and outside of a domestic role. Once again, advertising caught the new trend and capitalized on women's sexuality in a condescending manner.[34] He agrees with Lears that "advertisements did more than stir up desire, they also sought to manage it – to stabilize the sorcery of the marketplace by containing dreams of personal transformation within the broader rhetoric of control."[35]

Equally as scathing, although perhaps with good reason, is Jennifer Scanlon in her book *Inarticulate Longings*. Attacking a one sided standard in advertising, she holds that the "female, middle class, and white" definition of unity was exclusive and insulting.[36] Furthermore, she finds that grouping women together by shared experiences with a particular brand of soap is a rather hallow way in which to build a community. Although perhaps briefly providing some sort of therapeutic release, she finds in general that the change "from concentrating on the product to concentrating on the user, created not only artificial needs for new products but also artificial relationships among women and artificial definitions of womanhood."[37] Admittedly, women did choose to embrace many of the mass-produced goods of the 1920s, but to what extent that was their choice, she is unsure.[38]

In spite of recent contributions to the debate on the role of advertisers, the generally accepted expert on the topic is Roland Marchand whose 1985 book *Advertising the American Dream* is still considered the best work on historical advertising. A strong advocate for the importance of the therapeutic ethos in advertising, he holds that ad men in the 1920s did not see themselves in a negatively controlling role;

[33] Joel Spring, *Educating the Consumer Citizen: A History of the Marriage of Schools, Advertising, and Media* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 2003), 38-39.
[34] Ibid., 44-45.
[35] Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 10.
[36] Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The* Ladies Home Journal, *Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (NY: Routledge, 1995), 198.
[37] Ibid., 219.
[38] Ibid., 9.

they saw themselves as "apostles of modernity," explaining technology to their public, helping city dwellers adjust to the pace of modern, hectic life, aiding producers as they tried to sell their surplus of goods, letting women know that relaxation, beautification, and leisure time were precious commodities, not wasteful luxuries.[39] Despite their attention to the emotions of the consumer, advertisers generally felt that the contributions they made to society were economically pragmatic, encouraging flexibility, merchandizing, and a whole new professional business in the realm of advertising.[40]

In his balanced account, Marchand does cover some of the negatives of the advertising profession, but overall asserts that at the outset advertisers could not always see the negative side of their practices. For example, Americans always appreciated advances in technology, so when advertisers began touting ready-made clothes and quickly changing styles, they did not see themselves as creating obsolescence in clothing, just offering more choices in the American way.[41] They rationalized their role in the consumer ethic by establishing their prominence as givers of advice, accepting human irrationalities with a smile, and helping people work through their anxieties by offering reassurance. The goods they advertised were often unnecessary and frivolous, but advertisers overwhelmingly thought that Americans needed them in order to survive in an uprooted society.[42]

So how, then, did advertisers promote the selling of luxuries in a society fresh from the Protestant work ethic, unnerved by industry and distrustful of change? Their techniques changed throughout the 1920s nearly as much as the brands of products did. They began by promoting the idea of "human-interest," which by the mid twenties was a commonplace in advertising. Whereas before the turn of the century advertising was meant to simply provide information, at this point appeals to human emotion helped consumers adapt to technological society.[43] An article from *Printers' Ink* asked its business-like readers in 1920, "Where Does Sentiment Belong in Advertising?" The answer was that sentiment belongs absolutely everywhere. The author of this particular article called for advertisers, above all, to humanize their copy.[44] Another author, Marion Hertha Clarke, penned "From One Woman to Another" in 1925. In this article she too exalted emotion, claiming that a "woman is first a dreamer, visionary and deeply romantic."

[39] Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 1-2.

[40] Ibid., 5.

[41] Ibid., 156.

[42] Ibid., 160.

[43] Ibid., 10-12.

[44] W. Livingston Larned. "Where Does Sentiment Belong in Advertising?: Heart-Interest Copy That Has Put Over Some Difficult Campaigns," *Printers' Ink* (January 8, 1920), 193.

She went on to suggest methods of marketing. For example, when selling vacuums, she suggests that advertisers "sell dreams of leisure hours, of rest, of happy, contented homes and simplified housework."[45]

As the 1920s progressed, Marchand proposes that advertisers noticed consumers, and especially women, adapting well to their society. As women grew more comfortable, advertisers found they needed to create a new kind of ad that would remind their public of the imperative necessity of buying commodities. Their creation was "scare copy" – advertising which "sought to jolt the potential consumer into a new consciousness by enacting dramatic episodes of social failures and accusing judgments." This technique was particularly useful at mid-decade, but continued into the later years as well. An article titled "Negative Advertising Decidedly in the Ascendency" in *Printers' Ink* from 1926 exclaims that although scare copy is increasingly more subtle, it is still one of the preferred methods of advertisers. This anonymous author seems to think that readers are in fact quite grateful when they are faced with their faults:

> Instead of being frightened into buying, the prospect is shamed and ridiculed. An appeal is made to his pride. He is told what is wrong with him. He is informed that he is unpopular and unsuccessful and is frankly told why. As a rule, this information is imparted to the prospect so indirectly, through suggestion and insinuation, that he does not take much offense.[46]

Scare copy is generally, and famously, identified with the 1920s Listerine advertisement. Fashioned by the Lambert Pharamaceutical Company, the new Listerine copy claimed that those who did not use Listerine would suffer from "halitosis" or bad breath, which in turn would ruin romances, chances at jobs, and happiness in general. And if that was not enough, they also proclaimed that even the most wary consumer would not notice this problem…they would have to be told by judgmental acquaintances. Therefore, why wait to be embarrassed when Listerine could solve all your social inadequacies?[47] Listerine advertisers also promoted the use of mirrors in their illustrations, a long standing cliché among promoters of beauty products, meant to signify leering "friends," judgmental husbands, and the eyes of cautious lovers.[48] (Fig. 1)

[45] Marion Hertha Clarke, "From One Woman to Another – Anent Copy: Ruth Leigh Is Taken to Task for Stigmatizing Certain Copy as Being Over-Feminized," *Printers' Ink* (January 1, 1925), 57.

[46] Anon. "Negative Advertising Decided in the Ascendancy: But It Is Still More Subtle Than the Scare Copy of Ten Years Ago," *Printers' Ink* (February 4, 1926), 137.

[47] Marchand., 18-19.

[48] Ibid., 175.

Other sorts of scare copy threatened personal harm, as in the *Good Housekeeping* advertisements for Fairy Soap. The top of one particular ad shows a human hand whose finger has been tied off by a string, rendering free circulation impossible. If the swelled fingertip is not frightening enough, the copy then proceeds to tell readers, "Close the pores of your skin and they cease to breathe. Then your body suffers and your health falls below par." In other words, failure to use Fairy Soap will result in failing health and terrible circulation. Inherent in this sort of advertisement is the accusation that were a reader of *Good Housekeeping* to become ill from lack of Fairy Soap, she would have no one to blame but herself. (Fig. 2)

Other advertisements for soap products were gentler, linking themselves to youth and revitalization. For example, a 1924 advertisement for Lifebuoy soap not only comes at the recommendation of a doctor, but also centers its copy directly on the idea of keeping beauty fresh throughout motherhood. Because of its readership base, *Good Housekeeping* carried many ads that spoke to mothers, but at the same time the magazine also wanted to make sure that every reader felt entitled to beauty and luxury, regardless of how many children made demands on her time. In fact, many ads in *Good Housekeeping* include maids in the illustrations, further attesting to ideals of personal freedom and luxury through the use of hired help. This particular ad, although without a maid, shows a forty-year-old woman with golf club in hand dreaming about a fancy soirée while sweeping hair back from her face. At the other corner of the advertisement is the older conception of motherhood – a Victorian woman dressed in black and content with her sewing. The ad leaves readers with the choice of which persona they might wish to adopt. (Fig. 3)

Marchand also speaks to the importance of testimonials in therapeutic copy. Women in particular wanted to know that their desires were not impersonal, or better yet, were glamorous. Advertisers found that by offering advice that seemed to come from caring professionals, they could help women become comfortable with their longing to feel young, healthful, and beautiful.[49] For example, in 1924 *Good Housekeeping* carried a line of ads called "An Interview with Mrs. O.H.P. Belmont on the care of the skin." (Fig. 4) This advertisement for Pond's Cold Cream is conversational in approach, speaking directly to women in an attempt to personalize the message. This particular ad is also constructed to appear exactly like an editorial section in the magazine would look. Two small illustrations decorate three columns of copy, and the product name is not emblazoned across the top as it is in most ads, but only subtly mentioned in the text. Marchand holds that this innovation in copy was

[49] Ibid., 14.

even more significant than the highly popular scare copy.[50] Later Ponds advertisements would combine the editorial approach with market research, responding to personal letters and answering anxious questions.

Jennifer Scanlon covers a different sort of testimonial ad also employed by the Ponds Cold Cream Company. In the same years that the company ran editorial like ads, they also ran flowery endorsements from rich and famous figures in continental Europe. (Fig. 5). The endorsement included in this paper is that of Princesse Marie de Bourbon of Spain, but others included Queen Marie of Romania, and the American equivalent, Mrs. Reginald Vanderbilt. The ads were highly successful for a long while, pandering to women's desires to emulate the rich and dream of luxury. However, the endorsement ads ran into 1927, at which point most testimonials came not from the elite, but rather from other mothers, neighbors, and college women. In that context, a testimonial from Marie de Bourbon simply seemed ludicrous – women were no longer convinced that a "Princesse" would condescend to use the same hand cream as a housewife used in the United States.[51]

After mid-decade, Marchand notes that advertisements began to emulate any trend that proved itself particularly important to popular culture – especially tabloid articles and moving pictures.[52] Keeping with the new attention to "real" figures, rather than queens, *Good Housekeeping* published a series of ads for Hoover vacuum cleaners in 1926 naming the sad looking woman with a broom in each advertisement as "THE MARTYR." (Fig. 6) With its bold type and tragic figure, the ad calls up images of tabloid press stories, but in the actual text below the picture, the advertising copy simply notes that brooms are obsolete and in order to modernize, women should own a Hoover vacuum cleaner. In spite of the tabloid image, then, advertisers remained true to their roles as "apostles of modernity" easing readers from the old into the new. A Dodge Brother advertisement from the same year shows the importance of movies to a consumer's imagination. (Fig. 7) In this advertisement, a damsel in distress bewails her state of being in front of a Dodge Brothers special Type-A Sedan, while an eager director shouts to her and the film rolls. The car is relegated to the background along with a host of stereotypical western characters.

The therapeutic ethos was also invoked to help consumers adjust to the way that individual personalities were shaped into commodities on a daily basis. Businessmen had to sell themselves at work, and the "first impression" grew to have a particular importance. Advertisers capitalized on this trend, and twisted it around to turn the first impression into what Marchand calls an advertising "parable."[53] *Good Housekeeping* had no

[50] Ibid., 103.
[51] Marchand, 14; Scanlon, 217.
[52] Marchand, 56.
[53] Ibid., 208-209.

qualms in using this particular parable to sell beauty products to women, and an ad from 1927 provides the perfect example. (Fig. 8) In this advertisement, a young man offers a beautiful, smiling woman his umbrella as shelter from a downpour. The text of the ad asks the reader, "When beauty depends solely on your SMILE…What then?" An advertisement for Dr. West's tooth brush, the message of the ad is obviously that daily brushing with this product allows a woman to make a dazzling first impression, giving her a natural, highly appreciated beauty as well as sex appeal. Without Dr. West, this unfortunate young woman would have been left cowering under a newspaper in the cold rain.

One final trend in advertising which Marchand discusses at length is that of intriguing, modern, emotional art in illustrations. Beginning in 1926, advertisers noticed how well women responded to illustrations based on their "emotional impulses" and only later rationalized their purchasing decisions. Therefore, many ads started to move away from editorial copy and toward the inclusion of a single, modern picture which belied elite style and taste. For example a *Good Housekeeping* ad from 1926 relies on the beautiful, elongated figure of a stylish woman to sell a Cadillac. (Fig 9) Her pose and expression completely overshadow the background tableau of a car driving through the city in the evening, and when combined, the two images express themes that were commonplace by the end of the decade. First of all, style is more important in this ad than function, secondly the motion of the car in the background calls up feelings of the fast-paced city life well known to urban readers, and finally, the importance of modern art over text allows the reader to move past the advertisement and fall directly into daydreams of slicked hair, mink stoles, and luxury cars.

Another example from 1928 shows the continued importance of art in advertising. (Fig. 10) In this case the advertisement for Armand Cold Cream Powder derives its modern aspect from the simple black and white, clean-lined drawing. However, the intrigue of the illustration is not so much in its two-dimensional aspect as it is in the fact that this supremely modern woman casts the shadow of an eighteenth century, genteel French courtier. Appealing to the exotic, foreign side of the cosmetic industry, this illustration, like the Cadillac advertisement, also allows the reader to fall into a reverie. As the decade ended, *Good Housekeeping* relied on the use of color advertisements to promote the stylish qualities of their products, adding yet another element to their already flashy advertisements.

By the 1930s, advertising styles were changing once again. A tongue-in-cheek assessment of advertising by Tubal Kane in 1930 lists a number of changes he sees as necessary in the guise of "New Year Resolutions of a Reflective Advertiser." He vows to be more specific in his ads, center more on the product and less on the user, and do away with scare copy entirely. Obviously, he appreciates the intelligence of his

audience more than did advertisers in the 1920s.[54] Perhaps this is evidence of a change back to consumer advocacy and the consumer-citizen of Cohen's 1930s. However, what it actually asserts is that the woman consumer lacked agency in the previous decade. She was hammered by scare copy, and advertisers continually belittled her intelligence by stereotyping her as an irrational, incompetent figure duped by pseudo-scientific appeals and pretty art.

How much this stereotype affected women consumers is a question asked by most scholars of consumerism in this era, regardless of how they view the therapeutic ethos or advertisers. There are plenty of sources of evidence, but for now, the 1920s remain just as Cohen set them up – as somewhat of an enigma.

Fig. 1. *Good Housekeeping*, July 1923, 175.

Fig. 2. *Good Housekeeping*, February 1923, 100.

[54] Tubal Kane, "New Year Resolutions of a Reflective Advertiser," *Printers' Ink* (January 9, 1930), 41.

HEALTH BEAUTY
a promise to Mothers
from the Health Doctor

Every Mother is a Health Doctor

I sign myself "Health Doctor" but the real health-doctor is yourself. It is you mothers who are the chief guardians of family health

M A MOTHER and I know a lot about
. That is why I have been retained by
kers of Lifebuoy Health Soap to write
s of talks on Health and Beauty.
er people tell me that my children are
l. What they mean is that the kiddies
e—with the bloom of health in their rosy
—sturdy bodies that have been guarded
ckness—particularly the colds and fevers
so retard a child's development.
good looking myself and proud of it.
to be attractive as long as I live—by
well. I have no patience with the
who is sweetly resigned to being old at
She should be still a girl—splendidly alive
the height of her beauty.
ecret of keeping young is to keep well
surest day in and day out protection
know of for myself, my children and
s, too, is personal cleanliness.
fit the good health and looks of my
and myself very largely to the regular
Lifebuoy Health Soap.
few words about Lifebuoy. It protects
by removing germs and impurities from
, keeps the pores open and brings out
ural beauty of the skin by keeping it

The gentle antiseptic in Lifebuoy combined with these pure vegetable oils imparts to the rich creamy lather its purifying and skin beautifying virtue.

And of course it is the antiseptic cleansing quality of Lifebuoy lather which gives real protection against colds and other illnesses. This lather cleanses every pore, removes germs and impurities, leaves the skin deodorized and *safe*.

Why skin must be purified

The unseen danger to which we are all constantly exposed—children especially—is that almost anything we touch is likely to be covered with germs deposited by other hands. Unless we constantly purify our hands these germs are apt to get into the nose or mouth, often causing colds and fevers.

Give Lifebuoy an honest trial. You will become fond of the cleanly odor, which vanishes almost instantly, it gives one such a comfortable feeling of being *safely* clean. *And it protects your children.*

Today at forty a woman is in the full bloom of her beauty

But I find that some women don't ap-
how gracious Lifebuoy is to the skin.

ifebuoy agrees with your skin

onducted a long series of tests to show
t of Lifebuoy on the skin. I speak
knowledge when I say that Lifebuoy
and pure as any soap sold at any price.
l oils of palm fruit and cocoanut are
t vegetable oils used in soap-making.
s not a trace of free alkali or any sub-
ich could irritate the most sensitive skin.

Send for this book—
"Health Beauty"

The "Health Doctor" wrote it. A wonderful book. It tells about preserving your health and good looks. Bound in stiff covers and exquisitely illustrated. It will be sent to you if you will enclose 10 cents in stamps with your request.

Lever Bros. Co.
Cambridge, Mass.

In using advertisements see page 4 107

Fig. 3. *Good Housekeeping*, April 1924, 107.

An Interview with Mrs. O.H.P. BELMONT
on the care of the skin

"A woman who neglects her personal appearance loses half her influence. The wise care of one's body constructs the frame encircling our mentality, the ability of which insures the success of one's life. I advise a daily use of Pond's Two Creams."

Mrs. I. Belmont

IT was in the beautiful great hall of Beacon Towers on Sand's Point, Port Washington, Long Island, that I first talked with Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont.

I was excited and eager for the interview because I knew that Mrs. Belmont not only has given lavishly to women's causes from her colossal fortune, has been and is a tremendous worker, but also is particularly interested in woman's special problem of how to keep her force and her charm through middle life and later.

From all this I expected to meet a very commanding woman the day I visited Beacon Towers. But Mrs. Belmont, on the contrary, is quiet and gracious and sweet. She could not have been a more charming hostess.

She herself opened the grilled iron door and I stepped into the big hall with its impressive mural paintings of the life of Joan of Arc and its wide doors opening straight onto Long Island Sound. Here, I felt instantly, is the spirit of beauty strengthened by sincerity.

After we had admired the glorious view she showed me the pictures of her two sons, and of her grandson, who will some day be one of England's dukes, and—very proudly—the latest snapshot of her very young Ladyship, a small great granddaughter.

"How fine textured and fresh her skin is," I thought. "And she has just acknowledged herself a great grandmother!"

The Library of Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont *at Beacon Towers on Long Island, where this interview was given.*

Mrs. Belmont, now President of the National Woman's Party is known all over America for her active services in securing the suffrage for women. Mrs. Belmont is also interested in better conditions for women, is strong for the abolition of child labor and for the improvement of Children's Homes. She is a trained architect; her three magnificent residences—Villa Isoletto in France, the famous Marble House at Newport, and the imposing country home, Beacon Towers on Long Island, being the products of time not devoted to politics and business.

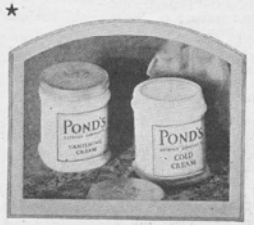
Begs Women not to Neglect Themselves

"NOW," she was saying smilingly, "I suppose you want me to tell you what I think is the relation between a woman's success and her personal appearance."

"Yes," I admitted, "just how important do you think personal appearance is?"

"It is vital. That is just as true for the woman at home or in business as for those who are socially prominent.

"Don't you know," she said, "how often the woman with an unattractive face fails in the most reasonable undertaking? Nothing is so distressing. Neglect of one's personal attractions generally comes from ignorance and as I am greatly interested in the success of women in every possible way, I urge them not to neglect themselves."



Pond's Two Creams
used by the women who must keep their charm, their beauty, their influence.
EVERY SKIN NEEDS THESE TWO CREAMS

Frenchwomen say, Cleanse and Protect

"YOU spend a part of each year in France. Do Frenchwomen use creams much?" I asked Mrs. Belmont.

"In France," she said "they have always used cleansing creams and protecting creams, knowing that water is not enough and that the face cannot stand much strain and exposure."

"Then you think women should use two creams?"

"I know they should. That is why I advise the daily use of Pond's Two Creams, so that women can keep their charm and influence as long as they need them—and that is always," she smiled.

Use this Famous Method

GIVE your skin these two indispensables to lasting skin loveliness—the kind of cleaning that restores each night your skin's essential suppleness, and the freshening that, besides protecting, brings each time the beauty of fresh smooth skin under your powder.

For this, two distinctly different face creams were perfected—Pond's Cold Cream and Pond's Vanishing Cream.

Every night—with the finger tips or a piece of moistened cotton, apply Pond's Cold Cream freely. The very fine oil in it is able to penetrate every pore of your skin. Leave it on a minute. Then remove it with a soft cloth. Dirt and excess oil, the rouge and powder you have used during the day, are taken off your skin and out of the pores. How relaxed your face is. *Do this twice.* Now finish with ice rubbed over your face or a dash of cold water. Your skin looks fresh and is beautifully supple again. If your skin is very dry, pat on more cream, especially where wrinkles come first—around the eyes, the nose, the corners of your mouth—and leave it on over night.

After every cleansing, before you powder, and always before you go out—Smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream *very evenly*—just enough for your skin to absorb. Now if you wish, rouge—powder. How smooth and velvety your face feels. Nothing can roughen it. When you get up in the morning, after a dash of cold water, this cream will keep your skin fresh and untired for hours. And it will stay evenly powdered.

Use this method regularly. Soon your face will be permanently fresher, smoother and you can count on the charm of a fresh, young skin for years longer than would otherwise be possible. Begin now. Buy both Pond's Creams tonight in jars or tubes at any drug store or department store. The Pond's Extract Company.

GENEROUS TUBES
MAIL THIS COUPON WITH 10c TODAY

The Pond's Extract Co.
347 Hudson St., New York

Ten cents (10c) is enclosed for your special introductory tubes of the two creams every normal skin needs—enough of each cream for two weeks' ordinary toilet uses.

Name_____

Street_____

City_____ State_____

In using advertisements see page 6 93

Fig. 4. *Good Housekeeping*, February 1924, 93.

PRINCESSE MARIE *de* BOURBON *of* SPAIN

tells how she cares for her flower-like skin

"The exquisite skins of beautiful women everywhere must be watchfully cared for, or like fragile flowers, they wither, they fade.

"Happily, however, no woman's skin need fade if she faithfully uses Pond's Wonderful Two Creams. They protect and keep the complexion perpetually young and beautiful."

Marie de Bourbon

AN extraordinarily lovely young woman—this cousin of the King of Spain, Princesse of the Spanish branch of the old, illustrious, royal House of Bourbon! For although in Spain she has the position and protection accorded to members of a royal house, being a democrat, she has chosen to come and live in more liberal America.

Instead of the dark beauty one associates with Spanish women, she has beauty of a rare and highly aristocratic type. Her hair is a glorious Titian red, her eyes have the green-blue lights of Mediterranean waters, and her skin the delicacy of the jasmine flower that blooms in the tangled depths of old Catalonian gardens.

Naturally this young princesse regards her jasmine-white skin as important. She knows its delicate bloom must be watched over. And in seeking the best of all ways to care for it she found the Two Creams which meet the fundamental needs of the skin.

Pond's are the Two Creams—with their gentle cleansing, their soft protection and finish—that all lovely women everywhere are using today to keep the youthful bloom of their delicate skins. For to follow this easy, simple method of skin care takes but a few moments from a busy day.

How the Princesse Marie does it

First, a daily cleansing with Pond's Cold Cream. Once a day, at least, oftener if you have been out in the sooty air, or the wind and cold, smooth it liberally over your face and neck. Its pure oils will bring to the surface the dust and powder which have clogged the pores. With a soft cloth take it all off. Repeat the process, finishing with a crisp little rub with ice or a dash of cold water. Your mirror speaks volumes now, of cleanness, of glowing health.

If your skin is very dry, use Pond's Cold Cream on retiring, too, letting a little stay on all night.

For the last glowing touch

Next, *a lovely finish with Pond's Vanishing Cream.* Smooth on a light film, not too much. This delicate greaseless cream takes away the hateful shine, gives your skin a clear, lustrous tone, makes it just satin. And how it holds your powder, which goes on next! It's a protection, too, against the weather, guarding your sensitive skin from winds, sun and dust.

So, always before powdering, and especially just before going out, for that last glowing touch of perfection your complexion requires, remember to smooth on a feathery film of this light cream.

Try, for yourself, this method which the world's loveliest, most aristocratic women are following. You may have the Cold Cream in generous large jars now and both the creams in the two sizes of jars you are familiar with.

THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA
MRS. REGINALD C. VANDERBILT
MRS. MARSHALL FIELD, SR.
MRS. LIVINGSTON FAIRBANK
MRS. O. H. P. BELMONT
MRS. GLORIA GOULD BISHOP
MRS. CONDÉ NAST
THE LADY DIANA MANNERS

are among the other women distinguished by beauty and high position who have expressed approval of Pond's Two Creams.

Charlotte Fairchild

The PRINCESSE MARIE DE BOURBON *is an aristocrat by birth. She belongs, furthermore, to that larger aristocracy of beautiful women who know that true distinction of appearance depends upon taking the utmost pains with the smallest details of the toilet, including the care of the skin.*

Every skin needs these creams used by the women of society.

FREE OFFER—

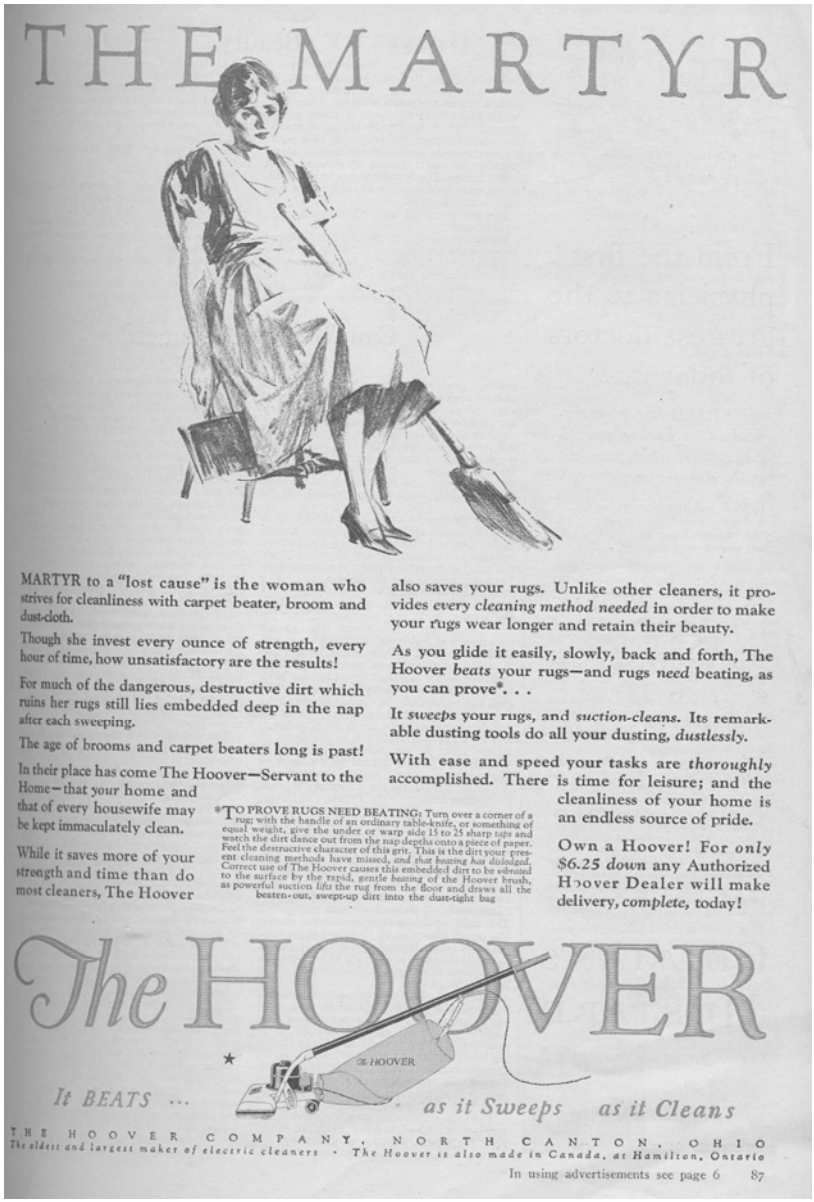
Mail this coupon and we will send you free tubes of these two creams and an attractive little folder telling you how to use them.

The Pond's Extract Company, Dept. G
135 Hudson Street, New York City
Please send me your free tubes of Pond's Cold and Vanishing Creams.

Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....

In using advertisements see page 4 101

Fig. 5. *Good Housekeeping*, July 1925, 101.



THE MARTYR

MARTYR to a "lost cause" is the woman who strives for cleanliness with carpet beater, broom and dust-cloth.

Though she invest every ounce of strength, every hour of time, how unsatisfactory are the results!

For much of the dangerous, destructive dirt which ruins her rugs still lies embedded deep in the nap after each sweeping.

The age of brooms and carpet beaters long is past!

In their place has come The Hoover—Servant to the Home—that *your* home and that of every housewife may be kept immaculately clean.

While it saves more of your strength and time than do most cleaners, The Hoover also saves your rugs. Unlike other cleaners, it provides *every cleaning method needed* in order to make your rugs wear longer and retain their beauty.

As you glide it easily, slowly, back and forth, The Hoover *beats* your rugs—and rugs *need* beating, as you can prove*. . .

It *sweeps* your rugs, and *suction-cleans.* Its remarkable dusting tools do all your dusting, *dustlessly.*

With ease and speed your tasks are *thoroughly* accomplished. There is time for leisure; and the cleanliness of your home is an endless source of pride.

Own a Hoover! For *only* $6.25 *down* any Authorized Hoover Dealer will make delivery, *complete,* today!

*TO PROVE RUGS NEED BEATING: Turn over a corner of a rug; with the handle of an ordinary table-knife, or something of equal weight, give the under or warp side 15 to 25 sharp taps and watch the dirt dance out from the nap depths onto a piece of paper. Feel the destructive character of this grit. This is the dirt your present cleaning methods have missed, *and that beating has dislodged.* Correct use of The Hoover causes this embedded dirt to be vibrated to the surface by the rapid, gentle *beating* of the Hoover brush, as powerful suction *lifts* the rug from the floor and draws all the beaten-out, swept-up dirt into the dust-tight bag

The HOOVER

It BEATS ... as it Sweeps as it Cleans

THE HOOVER COMPANY, NORTH CANTON, OHIO
The oldest and largest maker of electric cleaners • The Hoover is also made in Canada, at Hamilton, Ontario

In using advertisements see page 6 87

Fig. 6. *Good Housekeeping*, January 1926, 87.

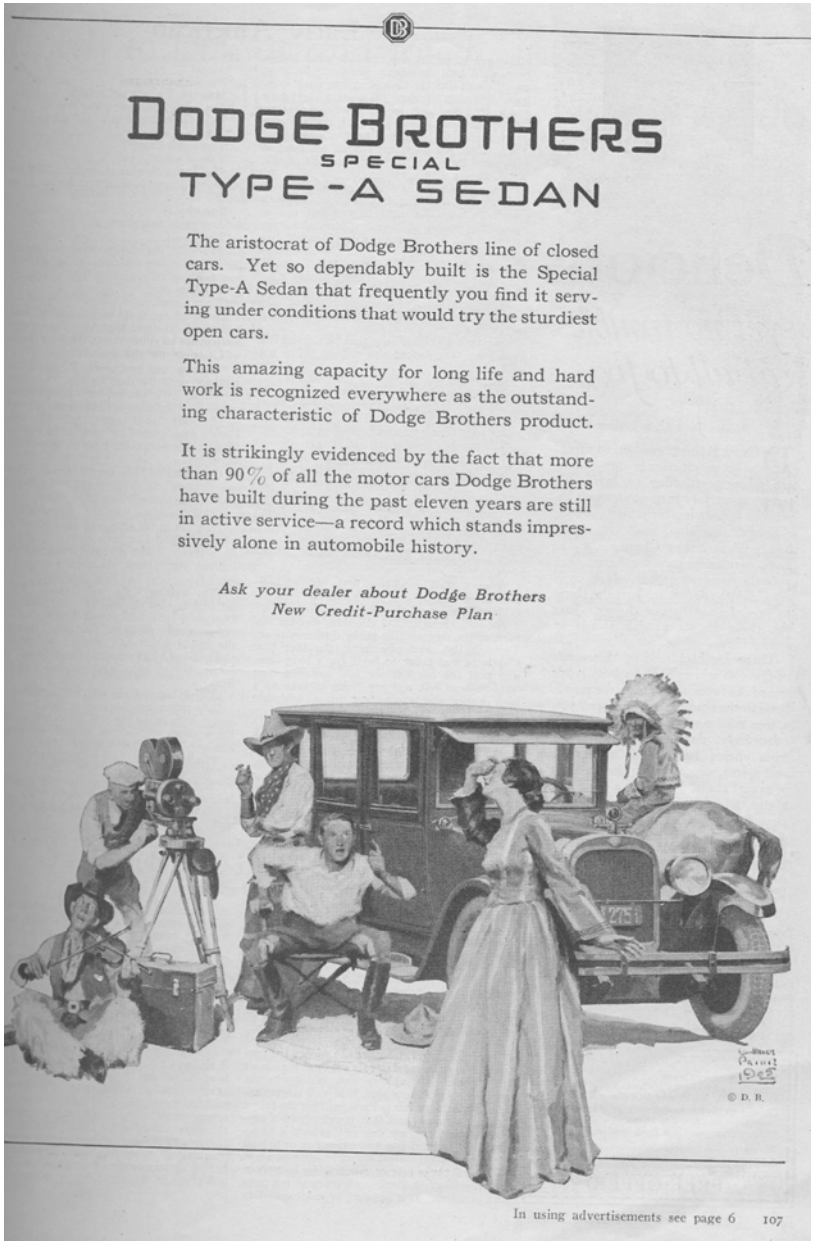


Fig. 7. *Good Housekeeping*, January 1926, 107.

Fig. 8. *Good Housekeeping*, July 1927, 143.

Fig. 9. *Good Housekeeping*, March 1926, 105.

Fig. 10. *Good Housekeeping*, June 1928, 194.

British Catholic Perception of the Spanish Civil War

Mitchel Schumacher

Mitchel Schumacher is a native of Teutopolis, Illinois. He is a Senior History major with minors in Spanish and Latin American Studies, and plans to pursue those studies at the graduate level after his graduation in fall 2008. Mitchel is enrolled in the History Honors Program and is a member of Phi Alpha Theta.

The Spanish Civil War, occurring amidst the political turmoil prior to World War II, was a story that dominated the British press, for it seemed to represent the coming war in proxy, a conflict in which a democratically elected government must defend itself from a Fascist insurgency. Absorbing every aspect of society, from the decimation of Guernica, the first case of a city being wiped off the map through an aerial attack, anti-clerical violence and the burning of churches, and stories of blood-bath executions in public bull-rings, the Spanish Civil War represented the worst character of violence made manifest, and a mere foreshadowing of the looming war with Germany. The press played on the fear of an anxious population, and all of Britain watched with bated breath through the clamped muzzle of non-intervention while reports poured in from the two Spains, Republican and Nationalist.

One British social group that was particularly invested in the Spanish Conflict, was that of Catholics. From Spain, they were hearing report after report of anti-clerical violence from "Red" and Anarchist elements, and it seemed to the educated Catholics in Britain, that the existence of the Spanish Church was at stake, a repeat of the revolution that decimated the Church in Russia. This educated Catholic literati immediately went to work publicizing the plight of the Spanish Church to its audiences. This Catholic press was a unified force for the Nationalists from the start of the war, buying the image of Crusader Franco and turning around and selling the rhetoric of insurgency, and committed itself to the Nationalist position throughout the war.

Working-class Catholics were not so quick to adopt this position. Those who were not as in tune with the internal Catholic debate, who relied heavily on reports from the secular press and institutions in conjunction with the liberal Catholic press, were much more likely to see the Franco coup in a different light. They saw the concern of the Catholic element in Spain not in terms of Crusade, but Inquisition. The encompassing ideal was that religious freedom depended on freedom from oppressive religion, freedom from the feudal, hierarchal Catholicism of the Inquisition that Franco and his Fascist allies seemed to represent. Throughout the war the Catholics associated with the Left were drawn to the Republican side through a combination of political conscience and religious justification that emphasized the humanity of democratic governments and an opposition to Fascism.

Many scholars have treated the problem of British Catholic reaction to the crisis in Spain. But, all of these scholars, with the exception of Tom Buchanan, have treated Catholics as having operated in a political and intellectual vacuum. Even Buchanan's work ignores the influence of a secular political conscience compelling British Catholics. In Thomas R. Greene's article *The English Catholic Press and the Second Spanish Republic, 1931-1936*[1] Greene draws heavily from a handful of Catholic periodicals as the only tempering force in the Catholic public perception of the emerging political atmosphere. It is his reliance on these narrow sources that he ascribes a nearly universal consensus of Catholic opinion on an issue that, in reality, was jaded across social and economic classes. James Flint reaches a similar conclusion in *"Must God Go Fascist?": English Catholic Opinion and the Spanish Civil War*,[2] and only stretches Greene's hypothesis into the next logical chronological bracket and draws largely from the same sources in reaching his conclusions. In his defense, Flint does draw significantly on the more liberal periodicals, the Dominican *Blackfriars* and the *Sower*, but is unable to arrive at a decisive conclusion, and never able to express a convincing argument in how British Catholics interpreted the information. Buchanan's treatment of the Catholic perspective in *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*[3] presents a comprehensive dialogue on the various Catholic demographics, taking in to account all aspects of the Catholic press and even incorporating the politics of Catholic Labourites[4] and the lay clergy's contributions in forming a more liberal outlook on the state of Spain's Church and government, but he still neglects the importance of the secular literary explosion that supplemented this discourse.

The lenses in which these authors see a "Catholic" public opinion, assume that Catholic opinion operated insularly and that Catholics could only assimilate information in a Catholic context. These approaches neglect and ignore the literary explosion of the secular world in regards to the Spain of this period. Politicians, poets, and other popular writers were producing literature to inform and persuade the populace as a whole on the Civil War, including some that were specifically targeting Catholics. Prince Hubertus of Lowenstein's *A Catholic in Republican Spain*, a Left Book Club publication of 1937, was based entirely on a religious justification of the Republic and its government and how immediate the Fascist menace was to the Catholic Church in Spain and Catholics through out Europe. These types of popular sources have been marginalized, under-valued, or

[1] Thomas R. Greene, "The English Catholic Press and the Second Spanish Republic, 1931-1936," *Church History* 45 (1976): 70-84.

[2] James Flint, "'Must God Go Fascist?': English Catholic Opinion and the Spanish Civil War." *Church History* 56 (1987): 364-374.

[3] Tom Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[4] See Also: Tom Buchanan, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Labour Movement*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

completely ignored by many who have handled this subject and this does a great disservice to the issue. This article seeks to bridge these gaps and explain in a broader context how Catholic public perception was formed. It incorporates the Catholic and secular presses in conjunction with social and political discourse from non-Catholic organizations targeted at audiences where Catholics were a significant portion of the intended readership, or even Catholics themselves, to illustrate the disparate nature of opinion across economic, political, and social classes of Catholics in Britain.

At the onset of war, the English Catholic press was quick to jump on the Nationalist bandwagon and wrote scathing attacks on the Republican government in the form of front page articles of one of the leading weekly Catholic periodicals, *The Tablet*. On July 25, 1936, *The Tablet* began with an article entitled "Civil War in Spain," in which they described the perceived political situation in Spain. Here they portrayed the parties of the Popular Front[5] government as instigating or, at the very least, being complicit to unrest that was intended to undermine the authority of the Republic in order to incite a military reaction and consequently "persecute imaginary Fascists" in the military and allow for the creation of a "Red" Army.

The very next week in the August 1, 1936 edition of the paper, *The Tablet* took an even more polarized stance on the question of which way Catholics were to throw their political support in the Spanish conflict. They used loaded language, describing the Republicans as "Godless Marxists," in order to portray the Popular Front government as being a militant Marxist government, invoking the specter of Soviet Bolshevism and conjuring a chimeric Communist threat on the civil liberties of the beleaguered Spanish people, even though this was hardly the case.[6] This political rhetoric sought to undermine public support for the democratically elected Spanish Republic and tip the scales of public political opinion to justify the Franco rebellion in terms that would legitimate a military coup as a knee-jerk reaction against perceived tyranny. As part of this stilted claim on Republican militancy, the editorial staff of *The Tablet* refused to

[5] The Popular Front was a coalition of Leftist parties including both the Socialist and Communist Parties of Spain. It was formed in January 1936 to unseat the incumbent conservative government in the February 1936 elections. The party was immensely successful and took an overwhelming majority in the Cortes, the legislative body of Spain, with 271 seats going to Popular Front candidates and 137 and 40 going to the Rightist and Center parties, respectively.

[6] At the time of publication this was a claim that could hardly be supported. The composition of the Popular Front government included not a single cabinet member from an orthodox Marxist party. The Cortes at the date of *The Tablet*'s publication included 1 Republican, 6 Left Republicans, 2 Liberal Republicans, 3 Republican Unionists, and 1 member of the Esquerra party, all parties that were left-of-center, whose platforms were based on democratic political reform but could hardly have been considered Marxist. In fact, not a single member of a Marxist aligned party takes a Cabinet position until after Franco's insurgency and the politically fractured Left cedes 8 positions to Socialist and Communist party members in order to maintain the support of the Far-Left militias that become the backbone of the Republican Army in the wake of July's rebellion.

characterize Franco's movement in the terms of the day. Every time the word Fascist appears in the article, it appears in quotation marks, implying that even though the rest of the world labeled the insurgency as a Fascist uprising, the term is a misnomer, used only editorially, for clarification and association by the staff of *The Tablet*.

Not only did *The Tablet* attempt to polarize Catholics against the Republican Government by playing on fearsome political demagoguery, they engaged in discourse that sought to illegitimize the Republic on religious issues. Their religious criticisms included equally pointed language. They equivocated the insurgency to a crusade and even hyperbolically asserted that "her [the Catholic Church] existence as an organization is at stake."[7]

Though not as prestigious as *The Tablet*, *The Catholic Herald* was the weekly periodical most obviously in support of Franco and his forces. In 1937, nearly every issue of the *Herald* had a front-page article on some aspect of the Spanish conflict. From glowing descriptions of Franco and his character, to spurious reports of "Red" atrocities and other major aspects of the war, most notably the Nationalist bombing of Guernica, the pages of *The Catholic Herald* read like the tabloid version of the news concerning Spain, only being taken seriously by those who had already thrown their lot in with Franco and were unwilling to back down. This type of sensationalism, hyperbolic reporting, and Fascist sympathizing went a long way in alienating working-class Catholics, who were in tune with mainstream perception of the war, from the views and arguments of the Catholic press. *The Herald*'s commitment to the Nationalist cause, and their unrelenting support for Franco, came to represent an arm of Franco's propaganda machine working in the United Kingdom. *The Herald's* reports, in conjunction with similar reports in *The Tablet*, made the official mouthpieces of British Catholics seem to overtly support Fascism.

The most sensational account of *The Herald*'s wartime reporting wass their defense of the Nationalists in bombing the Basque town of Guernica. The story of the Guernica bombing broke in *The Times* of London on April 28, 1937 by the wartime correspondent in Bilbao, and remains to this day, one of the principal accounts of the tragedy. *The Times* described the bombing as having been carried out by "a powerful fleet of aeroplanes consisting of three German types, Junkers and Heinkel bombers and Heinkel fighters," who "did not cease unloading on the town bombs weighing from 1,000lb. downwards and, it is calculated more than 3,000 two-pounder aluminum incendiary projectiles. The fighters, meanwhile, plunged low from above the centre of the town to machine-gun those of the civilian population who had taken refuge in the fields." The story enraged the public everywhere and became the most important journalistic story of the Spanish Civil War. *The Catholic Herald*, in its April 30, 1937 issue, was

[7] "The Religious Issue," *The Tablet*, August 1, 1936.

quick to dispel the "Red Myth" of the Nationalist bombing of Guernica, accusing *The Times* and *Daily Express* correspondents, who were both eyewitnesses of the event, to having received the news from the official news agency of the Republican State in Bilbao. *The Herald* even went so far to accuse the Republican government as concocting the entire story to attack the Nationalists through the manipulation of the international press. There were no German aircraft, there was no Nationalist attack, and the town of Guernica was set on fire by Anarchists and Reds. In the subsequent issues of *The Herald*, they expanded on this conspiracy theory, having their Spanish correspondent visit Guernica and report that he was "satisfied that the work of destruction was essentially Marxist,"[8] while offering no evidence for his claim. And, in the June 4, 1937 issue, *The Herald* interviewed a relief worker who came in the aftermath of the "alleged bombing" who attributed the destruction to mines and dynamite rather than aerial bombing stating "my natural impression would have been that such wholesale devastation could not have been accomplished solely by aircraft."

Also, in their factionalist support for the Nationalists, *The Herald* gave a hypocritical condemnation of the French Popular Front government for the breaking of the non-intervention agreement of September 1936. In the January 22, 1937 issue of *The Herald*, an editorial ran that condemned France of "shamelessly breaking the non-intervention pact" by supplying the Republican government with arms and military support. This accusation falls short of the mark for a number of reasons. First, the French Popular Front government only supplied aid to the Republicans in July and August prior to the signing of the pact. And secondly, the accusation completely ignored the overwhelming military support Nazi Germany and Italy, non-intervention co-signers, were supplying in both man-power, technology, and munitions to the tune of, by *The Herald*'s own estimate, 140,000 Italian troops and 10,000 German troops by May of 1947.[9] *The Herald* even went so far as to say "the Church had no land in Spain,"[10] to try and separate the image of the Church with the land-holding aristocracy in Spain.

The Catholic Herald's unmitigated propagandizing for the Nationalist cause, its often implied support of Fascism, its support of Franco, and its lack of criticism projected at the other European Fascist powers, caused many working-class Catholics to become disillusioned with any type of Catholic Press. It was this type of rhetoric that came under attack from other Catholic sources, notably *Blackfriars* and *The Sower*, who used this

[8] Spanish Correspondent of *The Catholic Herald*, "Our Correspondent Visits Guernica," *The Catholic Herald*, May 14, 1937.

[9] *The Catholic Herald* Editorial Staff, "Strength of Foreign Forces in Nationalist Spain," *The Catholic Herald*, May 14, 1937.

[10] *The Catholic Herald* Editorial Staff, "Catholic M.P.'s Challenge Regarding Spanish Clergy," *The Catholic Herald*, January 8, 1937.

propagandizing as a spring-board for condemning the mainstream Catholic press as being too sympathetic to despotic governments and Fascism in general and thus bringing the principles of Catholicism under fire from the secular world for that support.

Another Catholic serial, *The Sower*, if not willing to make an overtly pro-Republican stance, emphatically criticized Franco and all of Fascism. They showed immense concern for Catholics who were willing to lend their political support to despots who claimed to wage their wars in the name of Catholicism. They described the policy decisions of a leader of this nature who will appeal to Catholics through bombastic rhetoric and who will be all to willing to describe themselves as someone who "will be inspired by Catholic ideals and will put down the Church's enemies with a strong right arm."[11] The editorial staff was quick to caution against supporting anyone with that ideological bent for it might bring about a society with far more dangerous implications than a liberal leaning, anti-clerical democracy. They cited the cases of *il Duce* in Italy and *das Führer* in Germany, and asked if English Catholics would really wish that type of government on themselves or the Spanish people.

This attack on international Fascism was all a part of a larger argument in which the editorial staff of *The Sower* was implicitly criticizing the English Catholic Press, especially *The Catholic Herald* and *The Tablet*, as being far too sympathetic of Fascism, ideologically and practically, and thus alienating their working class readers. The article title, "False Prophets," illustrates their true views in regards to these fascist leaders claiming a religious impetus to their movements, and how they were harnessing the energy of that demographic for more sinister means. They then spoke for the lay-Catholic majority by saying, "the majority of Catholics belong to the working-class and the main reason for their apathy [for a Catholic press] is that Catholic working-men are convinced that the Catholic press is given over to Fascist propaganda—and with that, like their non-Catholic fellows, they will have no truck."[12] The language and nature of their arguments, appealing to the popular opinion of Catholics at its foundation, illustrates the lack of support for Franco, and Fascism, in the largest sections of the Catholic population digesting the reports of the Catholic press on the streets. The implication was that lay-Catholics were becoming disillusioned with these reports primarily because they believed Fascism was in direct conflict with Christianity and no amount of pedantic rhetoric would convince them of a false political reality.

One orthodox Catholic periodical that was dissenting from the more conservative rhetoric of *The Catholic Herald* and *The Tablet* and not yet wholly Leftist was the Dominican periodical *Blackfriars*. Though not committed to either camp, the Dominicans characterized their position as

[11] The Sower Editorial Staff, "False Prophets," *The Sower* 125 (1937): 190.
[12] Ibid., 191.

"not neutrality, but impartiality."[13] This brought criticisms from both spheres of the Catholic presses, the pro-Franco and pro-Republican. The Dominicans grounded their argument in impartiality on the basis that judgment should not be "prompted by personal or ideological sympathy for one side or the other," for that leads to the acceptance of "simplistic shibboleths, solutions, and programmes. Too often these breed fanaticisms which, however worthy their origins, cannot be easily reconciled with a Christian spirit."[14]

The *Blackfriars* editorial staff viewed the rhetoric of the pro-Francoists and the pro-Republicans as propaganda that sought to distort the truth in the name of factionalist demagoguery. Purporting that the breeding of fanaticism was anathemical to true Christian spirit and would only breed greater problems that, as they said would "degenerate into battles of catchwords and labels which obscure rather than resolve the complexities of reality,"[15] and that the true aims of a movement, however noble, would be lost in its attainment. They defended their impartiality as a necessary stance to keep intellectual discourse honest and objective on a subject that has so easily inflamed the passions of all Catholics in Britain and on the continent.

If *Blackfriars* was slow to voice support for a side in the political sphere of the war, they were quick to show their biases in how certain types of behavior in the Catholic sphere were not to be tolerated with an implicit criticism of the Spanish Church. The editorial staff, in expositing on the status of the proletariat in the modern world, and the duties of the Church to that group, was quick to condemn any Catholic institution that would ally themselves with the rich and the elite.[16] The Dominicans even went so far as to say that episodes of violence committed against the Church because of economic means may be justified if the Church in that region has a history of oppression and mismanagement of its religious duties. In its October Issue of 1936, *Blackfriars* stated,

> And when in a riot or a revolution their [the proletariat's] inhibitions are released, they set fire to our ecclesiastical palaces, pillage our accumulated treasures, shoot us down and fling us into the blazing ruins. Those palaces, by the way, would never have been built, those stores of gold and silver and precious stones never accumulated, if we had continued to emulate the Poor Man of Galilee or His alter ego, the Poverello of Assisi. The proletariat in Umbria would not have murdered St. Francis. They knew what side *he* was on. If today the 'underprivileged' (heavens! what a wishy-washy

[13] Blackfriars Editorial Staff, "Extracts and Comments," *Blackfriars* 19 (1938): 441.
[14] Ibid., 442.
[15] Blackfriars Editorial Staff, "Extracts and Comments," *Blackfriars* 19 (1938): 441.
[16] Blackfriars Editorial Staff, "Extracts and Comments," *Blackfriars* 17 (1936): 777-785.

> word) don't know what side *we* are on, perhaps there is a reason apart from Diabolism and Bolshevistic propaganda.[17]

If not willing to lend support directly to the Republican government, *Blackfriars* was all too willing to condemn the Spanish Church and voice its support for the oppressed peoples of Spain. No matter where that oppression originated.

In addition to the Catholic periodicals and publications, there was a tremendous literary explosion regarding the Spanish Civil War from the secular press. Catholics in Britain were largely aware of these publications, and many working-class Catholics were subscribers of The Left Book Club, an organization devoted to the spread of Leftist ideals and the containment of Fascism through the printing of affordable paperback books to raise awareness on those key issues. Almost all of the Left Book publications in regards to the Spanish Civil War had sections devoted to the nature of the Catholic religion in Spain, arguments and illustrations that would appeal to Catholics, and there were even entire books devoted to generating support for the Republican government through distinctly Catholic argumentation. Even the mainstream Catholic press paid recognition to these contributions as a letter to the editor in *The Catholic Herald* of March 5, 1937, illustrates. Here Laurence Geoghegan, an overt supplicant of the Catholic mainstream press, argued that The Left Book Club and its arguments needed to be understood because those arguments were resonating in the working-class Catholics throughout England. He advocated for middle-class Catholics in sympathy with *The Herald* to subscribe to the relatively cheap club to more clearly understand the arguments of the Left and to combat their influence on lay-Catholics.

One such Left Book publication that sought to address the question of the Church's role in the Civil War was Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard's *Spain in Revolt*. The objective of the book's chapter devoted to the Church was to explain to its audience the significance of the Church as an actor in politics and in the economy, and how those roles had led the Church to become a force of reaction in the Second Spanish Republic. Gannes began by describing the nature of political protest in Spain by quoting Margarita Nelken, a Left Socialist Party deputy, who said "in other countries, the crowd, in a moment of national uprising, attacks banks and palaces, while here it burns convents and churches."[18] This statement is indicative of the state of Church in Spain for two reasons. One is that the Church was seen as the primary target of economic oppression, and secondly it illustrates the feudal nature of Spain by having a person

[17] Author's italics. Blackfriars Editorial Staff, "Extracts and Comments," *Blackfriars* 17 (1936): 777-785.

[18] Harry Gannes and Theodore Repard, *Spain in Revolt: A History of the Civil War in Spain in 1936 and a Study of its Social, Political, and Economic Causes*, (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1936), 226.

conscious of class struggle still referring to royal palaces as targets for political expression, targets that had largely disappeared as sources of political power in the rest of modern, liberal Europe. While the rest of Europe was struggling with an industrial bourgeoisie, Spain was still struggling with its feudal agrarian lords, and this type of illustration is supposed to caution Englishmen in how they were to view the structures of oppression in the Spanish theater of class warfare.

Gannes then further described the measures in which the Church had legislated its economic power through antiquated concepts such as a medieval mortmain, which was enforced through the Twentieth Century, that stated the Church "could only attain new lands, but could never surrender or lose what she once had."[19] It was through articulating these historic precedents that Gannes brought the discussion of the Church in Spain back to the Second Spanish Republic to explain the necessary legislation the Republic made to curtail the Church in a fair and equitable manner. Even though property was nationalized in agrarian reform, the Church was paid for the confiscation and still allotted the lands and property it needed to function. The Republic even allowed provisions for the Church to purchase property in the future as long as it pertained to its own private function and was not intended for profit.

Gannes was very aware of the Catholic portion of his audience and made sure to include these types of justifications in his reporting on the Civil War so that an effective argument directed towards Catholics could be constructed. His emphasis on the past despotism of the Church and how the significant difference of the status of the Church in Spain compared to the English Church, brought about uncomfortable, but necessary forms of revolution in Spain. And, the generous recognition of the Church's ability to operate independent of state structures in the Republican government and continued toleration of Catholics in the provisions of the Republican Constitution that guaranteed freedom of religion was meant to illustrate how Republican Spain meant to be incorporated as a modern nation-state, free from its religious and feudal constraints.

Another Left Book publication that contained information pertinent to Catholics was Arthur Koestler's *Spanish Testament*. Koestler traveled through much of Republican Spain interviewing citizens, militiamen, and collecting stories and letters from across Spain to give voice to the average Spanish citizen to the rest of the world. He began his discussion of the Church in Spain by immediately reiterating the position of the Church as landowner and feudal institution but gave additional insight into the workings of the Spanish Church and the character of Spanish Catholics. The most telling is his characterization of the Spanish Republic of 1931 as finally drawing Spain in to the realm of the civilized, modern state. He described the clauses in the Spanish Constitution that were just then

[19] Ibid., 227.

allowing for the separation of Church and State, secular education in state schools, all while allowing Catholics schools to exist as private institutions, permitted all churches to remain open, and nothing that would interfere from regular Catholics from participating in the observance of their religion.[20] Koestler went on to say that it was the clergy who were not satisfied with these reforms and their conservative reaction to the disestablishment of Church power was the driving force for the anti-clerical nature of the masses. He then went to the masses themselves to collect their testimonial which comprises the bulk of the chapter.

The interviewees immediately attacked the notion that the Nationalists were just in the waging of any type of holy war. Koestler cited an incident of July 19, 1936 in which machine-guns were fired on civilians from the window of a Salesian Monastery, the Cathedral of Saint Isidor, and several seminaries at the outbreak of the war, which caused many of the church burnings reported by the international press as having originated from the mob violence that was carried out on those churches as a result of their military action against civilians. Koestler interviewed a participant of those early days, a civilian living in Madrid and later a member of the Republican Militia who commented "I myself am a practicing Catholic, and go to confession twice a month, but at that moment my sympathies were with the crowd. When a man in a priest's robe shoots down a woman with a machine-gun for no reason at all, then he is no longer a priest."[21]

Not only did Koestler attempt to articulate the atrocities of the Nationalists, he used testimonial to describe the humanity of the Republicans action towards the Church. He reprinted a letter from Sister Veronica la Gasca of the Capuchine Convent in Madrid in which she lauded the restraint and noble character of the Republican militiamen by writing, "We feel we must express our thanks to the Militia for its kind behaviour and the assistance it has given us. Permit us to express in particular our grateful admiration for the way in which your Militiamen have respected the art treasures and objects of value in our chapels."[22]

Koestler eventually concluded that Franco, though claiming to represent Catholics, did not represent all Catholics in Spain, that he just represented the portions of Spaniards who "are both Catholic *and* Reactionary."[23] He claimed that Catholicism was in no way systematically being persecuted by the Republic, but in contrast that Franco's Nationalist army was systematically persecuting all those with Republican sympathies, be they Catholic or not.

In Prince Hubertus of Lowenstein's *A Catholic in Republican Spain*, Lowenstein offered a compelling first-hand view of the conflict in Spain and

[20] Arthur Koestler, *Spanish Testament*, (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1937), 103.

[21] Ibid., 106.

[22] Ibid., 109.

[23] Author's italics. Arthur Koestler, *Spanish Testament*, (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1937), 115.

he, without apology, interpreted those events through liberal Catholic lenses. In the beginning, he described how he familiarized himself with Spanish history through familial contacts in Spain and by keeping an eye on American and British papers and how they handled the reports they were receiving from their Spanish correspondents.

One thing that had disturbed him prior to his arrival in Spain, which was the primary concern of all Catholics watching the situation unfold, was the numerous reports of Church burnings and anti-clerical violence committed by Anarchist and the "Reds." In his defense of the Republican cause, which the book was at its most basic elements, he did not deny Anarchist and radical groups committing anti-clerical violence but sought to shed light on aspects of the events that the secular and Catholic presses had either mislabeled, misinterpreted, or had outright failed in reporting accurately.

While touring around the city of Barcelona Lowenstein remarked,

> In the afternoon I was shown round the city, and had occasion to see the wonderful Gothic Cathedral, which is in the most perfect condition. This was of special interest to me, since in previous months I had read at least twenty times that it had been reduced to a heap of 'smouldering ruins.[24]

Lowenstein reported numerous instances of running across this same phenomenon in his journey through Spain and he implied that the presses of the various countries reporting on the Spanish conflict had been too quick to exaggerate the extent of these Church burnings. In addition, he also described a number of instances in which the Fascist forces of Franco, with their Nazi allies, had bombed churches with no military significance indiscriminately, even turning some into fortresses and munitions depots, keeping hand-grenades and machine gun shells stacked in crates on the Holy Altar of the tabernacle.[25] He synthesized his observations and argued that the Nationalist forces and their allies in no way coincided with the principles of the Catholic faith or could even remotely claim to stand in defense of anything Holy. He noted of the Fascists "It seemed to me rather significant of Fascist methods in warfare that these Red-Cross cars should have to be painted green, brown, and yellow and covered with branches and leaves as a camouflage against attacks by hostile aircraft."[26]

Lowenstein also attempted to understand the Church burnings in an interview with Don Manuel de Irujo,[27] and posed the question of how he

[24] Prince Hubertus Friedrich of Lowenstein. *A Catholic in Republican Spain*. (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1937), 23.

[25] Ibid., 68-69.

[26] Ibid., 40.

[27] Don Manuel de Irujo, Minister of Justice in the Republican government from September 25, 1936 to August 16, 1938, Irujo was a member of the Basque Nationalist party

and his Catholic readership abroad were to reconcile the anti-clerical violence committed under accused Republican auspices, with political support of the Republican government. Irujo, in response, did not seek to defend the violence, but merely explained it by saying:

> If foreign papers ascribe the burning of Churches to 'Communist Agitators,' they simply do not know Spanish History. All times of unrest in Spain are marked by the burning of Churches. This was the case in 1823, 1835, 1868, 1873, and 1909. In 1909 the burning of the Churches was carried out by Anarchists following popular indignation against the great loss of lives in the war of Morocco eight years before there was a Communist Revolution in Russia! At the time when the other burnings took place there was hardly any 'Marxism' at all in the world.[28]

Following this, there was a prolonged discussion on the history of Church burning in Spain and its political, rather than its religious, significance. Irujo explained to Lowenstein that in modern Spain the Church was seen as a force of reaction and an extension of the landlord class. Though this should not justify the violence by any means, Irujo wanted to convey to Lowenstein's readership that this type of political activism was particular to Spain due to the sad state of the Catholic Church allying with elites and landowners, and forsaking its calling to defend the poor. Irujo and lay-Catholics in Spain regretted the violence, if possible, even more so than the rest of the world, because it represented their own individual failings as an effective body of Christ and they mourned the fact that the Church should be seen as an instrument of oppression in their own country.

In addition to defending the Republic in political and social terms, Lowenstein even resorted to the religious, quoting from a number of Papal Encyclicals that he argued defends the position of the Republican government.

> First he quoted Leo XIII's *Immortale Dei*:
>
> He who resists the [established] authority, resists the order of God, and those who thus resist bring upon themselves condemnation. And therefore, to transgress the laws of

and was a devout Catholic himself. He was instrumental in organizing the Independent Basque Party to provide the political and military assistance for the Republicans to hold on to Bilbao and remained in the government until near the final days of the Republic.

[28] Don Manuel de Irujo quoted in Prince Hubertus Friedrich of Lowenstein, *A Catholic in Republican Spain*, (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1937), 98.

> obedience and to have recourse to sedition… is a crime of treason not only human, but divine.[29]
>
> Pius X's *Gravissímo*:
>
> Let Catholic men struggle with energy and perseverance for the defense of the Church's rights, but without ever turning to sedition and violence; it is not by violence that you will succeed in the overcoming of the obstinancy of your enemies, but only by firmness and patience, protected as in a fortress by the justice of your uprightness.[30]
>
> And Pius XI's *Divini Illius*:
>
> The good Catholic is precisely because of his Catholic doctrine the best citizen who loves his country and submits loyally to the civil authority constituted in any legitimate form of government.[31]

Lowenstein then created the argument that it was in direct opposition to Catholic principles that the Nationalists have raised their insurgent banner. The democratically elected Republican government, he argued, posed no threat to the existence or function of the Catholic Church in Spain and thus never necessitated a political coup. But, the reactionary politics of Catholic elites, who feared the loss of prestige a liberal government would bring, created the religious rhetoric of crusade as a way of mustering support for their position, locally and internationally against the Republican government.

As it can be seen through the liberal conscience of Catholic periodicals such as *The Sower* and the Dominican *Blackfriars* in conjunction with popular appeals to the sensibilities of Catholics from the Leftist press, working class Catholics in Britain were not as devoted to the Nationalist coup as their middle-class contemporaries. The sensationalist reporting of periodicals like *The Tablet* and *The Catholic Herald*, only seemed to confirm suspicions that their was some arm of Fascist propaganda operating within Britain. The conservative Catholic presses unspoken underpinning of Fascist ideology and the outspoken sponsorship of the Franco regime, created tension in the minds of working-class Catholics who were being bombarded by the Leftist press with persuasive and compelling arguments

[29] Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei* qtd in Prince Hubertus Friedrich of Lowenstein, *A Catholic in Republican Spain*. (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1937), 92.

[30] Pius X, *Gravissímo* qtd in Prince Hubertus Friedrich of Lowenstein, *A Catholic in Republican Spain*, (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1937), 92.

[31] Pius XI, *Divini Illius*, qtd in Prince Hubertus Friedrich of Lowenstein,. *A Catholic in Republican Spain*, (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1937), 92.

that played on both their religious and political sensibilities. This unmitigated support of Franco, and the journalistic mismanagement of the Catholic Press eventually was just too much for lay-Catholics to handle. The ingrained working-class fear of Fascism was too strong in them, and no amount of pedantic rhetoric from the Catholic presses could alter that. Thus, throughout the conflict in Spain, with a Second World War on the horizon, working-class Catholics in Britain, though possibly reserved about their Republican support, saw it as the only alternative to another Fascist regime on the Continent and threw their lot in with the Republican cause.

Rural Midwestern Women and the New Deal

Rachel E. Kleinschmidt

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Agriculture has always been at the heart of the Midwest. Many families settled in the Midwestern United States and took advantage of the fertile and expansive farmlands. These farm families became the basis of communities that grew up throughout the area and contributed to the economic prosperity of the country. The family farm was once the center of the Midwestern community. Until the early twentieth century, women played a very important role, as wives, mothers, and economic partners in the farming business. Without women, many farms would not have survived. Nevertheless, history often forgets rural women, as many times their stories were never told. Family farms would not have been able to exist without the help and support of the farm wives, but historians often overlook their contributions.

Women's roles on the farm often overlapped between the spheres of traditional women's and men's work. While a division of labor existed between what men and women considered proper types of work, that division was often blurred on the family farm. Due to different circumstances, men often expected women to do whatever work was necessary to keep the farm going. This work, often termed "helping out," was an integral part of the workings of the farm.[1] Without this extra work at critical times, family farms would not have been able to operate. This "helping out" could also be transferred out of the farm and into the public arena.

Although this seems to have been the norm for rural women, the perception of women in public discourse was changing at this time. As some farms began to grow from small family units into larger, business-oriented enterprises, the ideal of women's place within the unit was changing. Societal norms expected women to be consumers in the home, adapting to new labor-saving and scientific devices in the home, rather than acting as producers for the farm. This idea, popularized and strengthened through the Country Life Movement and the Cooperative Extension Service within the federal government, focused on women increasing their productivity in homemaking endeavors. Rural women, however, were not interested in conforming to this role.

As technology began to separate women's and men's roles, rural life began to change. This was not always a welcome change. As the use of

[1] Linda G. Ford, "Another Double Burden: Farm Women and Agrarian Activism in Depression Era New York State," *New York History* 75 (October 1994): 375.

technology increased, the big business aspects of farming threatened to overturn the way of life for the family farmer.[2] For women, this was extremely crucial, as it redefined the importance of their roles on the farm. When technological advancements overshadowed women's economic contributions to the farm, women were forced into traditional gender roles as consumers.[3]

During the 1930s, when the country entered into the Great Depression, agriculture presented a major problem for the federal government. Issues such as overproduction dominated the political arena, and the federal government passed legislation for the regulation of agriculture and farming. Though in popular memory women were not involved in this process, farm women actually had a stake in and were interested in the political decisions made during the New Deal. The Depression exacerbated the tensions between what the government thought was best for farm families and what the families themselves thought was important.

Women were invested in the farm and believed it in their best interest to make political decisions that would affect their own families and farms. Through publications targeted to women throughout the Depression, women were encouraged to have an opinion about the state of political affairs.

The Changing Ideal of Rural Life

Rural family farms usually operated as single units, with men and women sharing responsibilities for production. While this was standard for rural families, the government had a different vision of gender roles. Rural families were seen as backward by the government, and Progressive reformers sought to educate them in modern and scientific farming and homemaking techniques. In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed a Country Life Commission to investigate problems within the rural community. This Commission "supported economic measures to promote scientific and efficient farming; educational efforts, including the funding of extension services; and social measures to increase rural prosperity and survey the conditions of rural living."[4]

Acting on the information the Country Life Commission found, the federal government took measures to improve the lives of rural families. In 1914, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act, which organized the Cooperative Extension Service through land-grant colleges. With this act, Congress allocated money to states to fund programs to educate farmers

[2] Michael W. Schuyler, *The Dread of Plenty: Agricultural Relief Activities of the Federal Government in the Middle West, 1933-1939* (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1989), 201.

[3] Mary Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 228.

[4] Ibid., 102.

and their families on issues of agriculture and home economics. The act put the impetus on rural communities to create and plan their own programs, as they helped fund them.[5] Most importantly, the Act emphasized education for the whole farm family, especially the farm homemaker, whose work was the backbone of the farm family.[6] Here the government recognized the contributions that farm women made to the family farm, but it stressed their role in the home rather than production.

Women were seen as an important element of the home, but not always for their economic contributions. Some still viewed rural women as backward, and the federal government established the Extension Service to open doors for farm wives. According to H.C. Sanders, "When extension service work began, the rural home had barely been touched by the industrial revolution. The lot of the farm wife was one of drudgery, hardship, and isolation. She had been able to develop but a few of the social graces. She dressed and looked differently from her city cousin and was uncomfortable when away from her environment."[7] This is a very narrow view of rural women, however, because not all women felt backward or uncomfortable with themselves. Most rural women recognized their importance to the farm business, and did not welcome the idea that they were drudges.

Not all farm families took advantage of the programs offered. Many farm families instead chose to participate in traditional practices of survival involving the community, rather than agricultural organizations or state sponsored groups.[8] In the May 1932 issue of *The Farmer's Wife*, a monthly periodical for rural women, the letters section contained an ongoing debate about the usefulness of the Extension Service.[9] Oftentimes, the resistance to the Extension had to do with what kinds of activities the Extension agents chose as important to women.

Examples from circulars of the Cooperative Extensions of various Midwestern states show the kinds of activities that the government thought were important for rural women. These articles, written by women, stressed homemaking activities and the scientific methods needed to increase the efficiency of these activities. With titles such as "Modern Laundry," and "Convenient Kitchens," these articles stressed new, more efficient ways to perform chores in the home.[10] Other topics included

[5] Edmund Brunner and E. Hsin Pao Yang, *Rural America and the Extension Service: A History and Critique of the Cooperative Agricultural and Home Economics Extension Service* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1949), 14.

[6] Ibid., 15.

[7] H.C. Sanders, ed., *The Cooperative Extension Service* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 6.

[8] Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 146.

[9] *The Farmer's Wife*, May 1932, 14.

[10] Michigan State College Extension Service, Extension Bulletins 184 and 185, August 1938 and March 1946.

"Household Care and Cleaning," and "Clothing Construction."[11] These articles all assume women are in charge of the housework.

The Extension promoted many homemaking activities and their scientific advantages and disadvantages. New York state, though not in the Midwest, provides an example of how these teachings were not welcomed by many farm women. The home demonstration agents were mainly single, college-educated young women who did not have the years of experience of running a home and raising children that the older rural women had.[12] This generation gap caused much tension, as the farm women did not wish to be told how to raise children and keep house by someone who was not experienced in it herself.

The rural women in New York also ran into conflict with the Extension agents over handcrafts. Most farm women at the time were more interested in productive enterprises that would earn them needed income, such as handmade crafts and products. According to Babbitt, this income could be what kept the farm in solvency.[13] The argument over what was useful for women to learn was a big issue for farm women interested in participating in the Extension. These farm women believed that their productivity was increasingly important to the family farm.

The Extension Service received opposition such as this for its purely educational stance. The Farm Bureau was another organization that was started for educational purposes, but eventually adapted to the political needs of the agricultural community.[14] Eventually, the Farm Bureau recognized the potential for political activism. With the Illinois Agricultural Association in 1916, the Farm Bureau ceased to be connected with the Extension Service when business and farm legislation became the primary concern of the group.[15]

Obviously, there were tensions between what the government felt was best for farm families and what the families themselves felt was important. The tension manifested itself in the worth of small farms versus large ones. During the Great Depression, the federal government intervened more into the lives of farmers with the Agricultural Adjustment Act. The AAA saw overproduction as a main issue of the depression and set limits on how much farmers could produce.[16] The reactions of small farmers varied as to their agreement with the AAA. Some felt that the Great Depression and the New Deal were detrimental to the family farm

[11] University of Illinois College of Agriculture and Agricultural Experiment Station, Circulars 407 and 416, May 1933 and November 1938.

[12] Kathleen R. Babbitt, "The Productive Farm Woman and the Extension Home Economist in New York State, 1920-1940," *Agricultural History* 67 (1993): 88.

[13] Ibid., 92.

[14] Christiana McFayden Campbell, *The Farm Bureau and the New Deal: A Study of Making of National Farm Policy, 1933-1940* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), 3.

[15] Ibid., 7.

[16] Katherine Jellison, *Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 72.

neighborhood.[17] Even so, the Extension Service joined with the New Deal to help with farm relief.

In the beginning days of the Depression, the Extension Service had taken on this different role. During the New Deal, the Extension was used to administer the legislated programs.[18] In fact, the A.F.B.F. (American Farm Bureau Federation) was very much in favor of using the Extension to administer programs, although the Department of Agriculture did not want so much dependence on Extension Services to spearhead the New Deal programs.[19] These programs, however, were more effective for larger farms.

Large business-oriented farms and small family farms had both operated successfully for years. Although the AAA favored large farms, it did not cause them to form.[20] The differences between large and small farms just became more apparent during this time. Before the New Deal, small farms had not had much to do with the government, but that changed with the passage of the new agricultural laws.[21] Overall, however, there seems to be the general belief that the New Deal was not doing enough for small farmers, as the New Deal programs that benefited small farmers were not the same as the ones that were to help agriculture as a whole.[22]

With these tensions between farming businesses and small family farm enterprises, the ideal role for rural woman changed drastically. Rural women, however, resisted this ideology and continued to function as they had before. Because of financial difficulties incurred by the Great Depression, rural women's contributions to the farm became more important than ever. The roles prescribed to women by government programs were not helpful to the family farm.

Women on the Farm

Women had always played a very important role on the family farm. The areas of the home and family had always fallen under the care of the farm wife. According to a 1920s survey, "more than 90 percent of farm women washed clothes, sewed family clothing, and baked their own bread," among other necessary household jobs.[23] Household work fell to women, as well as raising the children. Mothers connected very closely with their children and raised their children to be productive members of the farming community.

[17] Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 271.

[18] Schuyler, *The Dread of Plenty*, 49.

[19] Campbell, *The Farm Bureau and the New Deal*, 156.

[20] Schuyler, *The Dread of Plenty*, 206.

[21] Jane Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life: Southern Illinois, 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 146.

[22] Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 116.

[23] Ibid., 19.

Children were economically important to the family farm. Mothers taught their children the same ethic of doing work wherever necessary to which women subscribed. Based on the needs of the family farm, children often did jobs that crossed gendered lines.[24] The children born to rural families became "an efficiently produced, low-cost, highly intensive labor force."[25] Women were responsible for raising children in this way.

Traditional women's work was not all tied to housekeeping and child-rearing. Women often participated in commodity production as part of their realm of influence. Poultry production, gardening, and milk production were often part of women's jobs. Women raised chickens for eggs and meat to sell or trade in the local marketplace, and this was often a strictly female occupation. Because the henhouses were usually within the boundaries of the household, they were under the auspices of the farm wife.[26]

Poultry raising was so ingrained as a feminine occupation that women's farm periodicals often had a section dedicated to all things poultry. *The Farmer's Wife* was a monthly magazine published by *Wallace's Farmer* especially for farm women. Every month, *The Farmer's Wife* included a section on raising poultry that was written specifically for women. With articles such as "Poultry Questions Answered," women were able to get the most up-to-date information on poultry production.[27] The magazine also furnished many advertisements for the latest in feed and breeding technology.

Sometimes, the money women were able to get for their sideline businesses was a substantial portion of the household income. Although some historians have thought that women's contributions were for subsistence only, the sale of women's productive fruits often kept the family farm afloat.[28] An article in the January 1929 issue of *The Farmer's Wife* detailed how women's side work could become the main income source. The article "No Longer a Side Line" detailed how an Evansville, Indiana farmer and his wife made poultry raising their main business. Mr. Appel had planned to run a truck garden business while his wife raised chickens for their own consumption, when the garden customers began requesting to buy chickens and eggs.[29] The article gives all of the details regarding how they ran their business in case any woman might want to duplicate it. In closing the article, the author noted that the Appels enjoyed their business and that "they had not planned to turn the place over to poultry but the

[24] Ibid.
[25] Fink, *Agrarian Women*, 133.
[26] Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life*, 90.
[27] *The Farmer's Wife*, January 1930, 41.
[28] Dorothy Schweider, "Changing Times: Iowa Farm Women and Home Economics Cooperative Extension in the 1920s and 1950s," in *Midwestern Women: Work, Community, and Leadership at the Crossroads*, eds. Lucy Eldersveld Murphy and Wendy Hamand Venet (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 206.
[29] *The Farmer's Wife*, January 1929, 40.

increasing demands from customers has changed the small flock to the main business of the farm."[30] Obviously, women's businesses could be extremely influential in the workings of the family farm.

Women also participated in other types of sideline businesses. Farm women had an extensive part in dairying as butter was an important commodity traded or sold.[31] Women also made various artisanal goods like rugs or opened their homes to townspeople and schoolteachers for room and board.[32] Advertisements in *The Farmer's Wife* included seed packets, flower bulbs, and canning supplies, all potential ideas for sideline businesses.

Not all women were excited with the idea of having businesses or working outside of the household. In the March 1930 issue of *The Farmer's Wife*, a letter from "Harriet Farmer" stated, "I've yet to meet or read of a woman whose talents and energies were sufficient to cover the big task of the abundant life which is Homemaking."[33] This letter provoked a variety of responses from other readers throughout the year. Some responses said to each her own, pointing out that some women enjoyed homemaking and some needed more in their lives.[34] Others noted "the kind of work in which farm women usually engage to increase the family income does not take them from the home."[35] The letter quoted above, as well as many other responses, indicated that men and women on the farm shared duties, as "we are partners in everything, homemaking, breadwinning and ownership of the property."[36] The majority of the response letters took "Harriet Farmer" to task for her narrow view of women's roles on the farm. It would seem that many women did recognize the significance of the contributions they made to the family and farm.

Overlap of Gender Roles

Women most certainly realized their ability to contribute to the farm. No doubt, men discerned the significant work women did as well. Because of the nature of farm work, women and men often blurred the lines of what was considered proper for either gender. According to Mary Neth, "On the family farm, there were no separate spheres for women and men. The industrial division of wage and domestic work, between production for market and production for family use, had less meaning on a family farm."[37] As explained earlier, there was a difference between men and women's work. Each sex had specific roles that they were expected to fill. However,

[30] Ibid., 41.
[31] Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life*, 90.
[32] Schweider, "Changing Times," 206.
[33] *The Farmer's Wife*, March 1930, 55.
[34] *The Farmer's Wife*, June 1930, 13.
[35] *The Farmer's Wife*, May 1930, 19.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 17.

due to the nature of farm work, these definitions of proper gender roles in labor often did not mean as much to farm families.[38]

The most obvious place where this phenomenon appeared was in the fields. It appears that working and managing the farm land were specifically male spheres of labor.[39] However, men usually expected women to participate. Men were in charge of the work and delegating it, while women worked where needed. In *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940,* Mary Neth has noted several situations in which women were required to change the normal status of their roles to adapt to the needs of the farm. The daughter in an Iowa family whose father had died described the composition of the family work force:

> When her father died, the family worked the farm with her mother's bachelor brother or a hired man. As the oldest child, she took on the role of mother and cooked, washed, ironed, and cleaned. Her mother assisted in the fields, fulfilling the role of the oldest son. As the children grew older, the family ran the farm without adult male assistance. Her mother had primary field responsibility, planting and plowing, and she began to disk and drag the fields.[40]

These women obviously were able to adapt to different roles in order to keep the farm going.

Another situation involved a girl who was the oldest child, and therefore did a significant amount of field work.[41] Once she married, to the delight of her husband, she continued in this line because she enjoyed it.[42] Neth includes many more instances of men and women sharing work, and in these instances, women were able to have some control and power over their own lives and labor.[43]

No matter what women were doing on the farm, there was often an issue of power relationships between men and women. Katherine Jellison has argued that women held onto power on the family farm by rejecting the ideal of the woman as homemaker and advocating for women's roles as important producers. These farm women recognized their importance and asserted power based on their vital role as producers.

This was not a universal vision of farm women. Working in the fields was not always a liberating experience for women. Jane Adams' interviews with women from Union County, Illinois, note instances in which husbands

[38] Ibid., 18.
[39] Ibid., 20.
[40] Ibid., 24.
[41] Ibid., 25.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 26.

took advantage of or brutalized their wives. One particular woman was made to plow in the fields, after which her husband would "make her sit up till midnight reading the Bible."[44] The woman subsequently ran away from her husband. While Adams notes that this type of story is not usually mentioned in interviews, most likely there were many men who threatened violence against their wives and children to maintain their masculine authority.[45]

Deborah Fink also has identified the struggles of rural women against a patriarchal system. According to Fink, "the agrarian vision demanded a subordinate woman, usually concealed and peripheral…. Women stirred inside the agrarian system and urban reformers took note of the hardships farm women faced. Yet no one publicly questioned the assumption that farm women would interpret their lives in terms of their duties as wives and mothers."[46] She also points to inequality in farm labor in the fact that women worked all of the time and men's work was often seasonal, giving them time to participate in other activities.[47] In addition, because the husband was the head of the household, he made all decisions and his ownership of the actual property gave him legal authority over the farm.[48] In Fink's view, farm work did not give women more autonomy, but it only further emphasized the man's role in a patriarchal system.

Although there were instances in which women faced challenges stemming from a dominating male, it seems that many women were able to have a certain amount of autonomy. One woman in particular, Anna Pratt Erickson, actually ran a farm on her own for a number of years and recorded her experiences in a daily diary. Due to availability problems, I was not able to obtain this diary and analyze it myself, but Mary Neth provides an analysis of its content in *Preserving the Family Farm.*

Anna Pratt Erickson acquired her own land from her first husband after he passed away and continued to work it after her divorce from her second husband. Erickson notes in her diary how she and her first husband shared labor: "Conrad frequently assisted Anna with berry picking, laundry, childcare, churning, and garden and vegetable production. Anna assisted Conrad with haying, shocking wheat, and other field tasks that demanded more labor."[49]

After separating from her second husband, who did not treat her as well as her first husband did, "Erickson's independent control of land as a widow gave her the economic resources to continue farming without a husband, and the labor of her children and neighbors enabled her to keep

[44] Edith Rendleman, "The Story of My Life," quoted in Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life,* 97.
[45] Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life,* 97.
[46] Fink, *Agrarian Women,* 28-29.
[47] Ibid., 62.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm,* 34.

operating the farm until her son took over following World War II."[50] Neth notes that equality on the farm came from a sense of mutuality among family members, even though the necessity of women's work did not automatically lead to this sense of equality.[51]

Although Erickson's situation was unusual, it was not a singular case. According to information about Illinois from the 1930 United States Census, 5,994 women were farm owners or tenants, with 1,088 female farm wage workers and 1,232 female unpaid family laborers.[52] For Richland County, Illinois, a county in southern Illinois, there were 29 female farm owners.[53] While the census does not tell us anything specifically about these women, it does convey that there were other women in situations like Anna Pratt Erickson's.

Women's work on the farm was so integral that, although some men took advantage, most farm families looked at marriage and family in terms of how it would affect the farm enterprise positively or negatively. Because equality in work led to greater productivity, it would make sense that family farms would be better off embracing the equality.[54]

Stemming from this equality in work, women had a stake in making sure the farm was successful. In the Great Depression, the government passed many laws affecting how farmers were able to produce their crops and goods. Many women felt it important to either support or protest against the legislation dealing with agricultural matters. Women were interested in the New Deal programs, and made their opinions known in publications such as *The Farmer's Wife*. There was also literature directed at women through the Cooperative Extension that women were able to weigh in on and be active politically in an economically trying time.

Women and the New Deal

Farm women were dissatisfied by the political situation regarding agriculture in the Depression. To some women, it intensified the problems they already faced, as they continued to be powerless in the face of the problems of the agricultural community where men still made the major decisions.[55] Others were not willing to accept any help offered because they looked on it as charity, something not done in their society.[56]

Women did not collectively sit back and let men make decisions about the future of family farms, however. Rural women were deeply invested in the family farm and had a stake in the political decisions made

[50] Ibid., 35.
[51] Ibid., 38.
[52] United States Department of Commerce, 15th Census of the United States: 1930, Population Bulletin, 2nd Series Illinois: Composition and Characteristics of the Population (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931), 13.
[53] Ibid., 64.
[54] Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 39.
[55] Fink, *Agrarian Women*, 165.
[56] Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life*, 148.

regarding agricultural production. As early as the World War I era, there are examples of women taking an interest in politics. Martha Treadway, an Illinois woman, eagerly raced to the polls to vote after Illinois gave women the vote in 1913.[57] Treadway exemplifies a typical rural farm woman with "her private domestic responsibilities, her economic contributions to her family's welfare, and her new public role as voter."[58] Although her political decisions did not include agricultural issues, she nevertheless is an example of how farm women could be involved in the political process.

Another example of women's political action, this time in the agricultural field, is the 1939 Dairy Farmers Union strike in New York State. Linda Ford noted how during the trying time of the Depression, women's role of "helping out" expanded to the political arena, as women were needed to fill in for their husbands either on the farm or in protest activities.[59] Women who helped protest were doing so within their traditional roles, but at the same time had helped the farm survive.[60]

In a similar situation, William Pratt has analyzed the role of women in the farm revolt of the 1930s. Pratt focuses on three specific women, whom he admits are unrepresentative, but nevertheless received much attention from the press for their roles.[61] Edith Pearson, one such woman, was responsible for organizing and orchestrating several demonstrations against foreclosures and was the vice-chairman of the county Holiday association.[62] Although not many women were so prominent in political activism, many tried their best to make their voices heard, as they felt their contributions were worthwhile.

Women used a variety of techniques to express their views and attitudes. *The Farmer's Wife* magazine was instrumental as a forum for women to learn about issues and speak their opinions freely. Throughout the 1930s, *The Farmer's Wife* was generally favorable to the government and New Deal programs, but women still weighed in on what they thought was important. Voting for candidates who offered the best ideas for how to improve the economic situation dominated much of the discussion. According to one letter, "we women must scrutinize as never before the candidates for state and national legislative offices, for only through proper laws and their effectual enforcement can we hope for any real security."[63] Other letters urged women to vote as well. In writing about the farm

[57] Virginia R. Boynton, "'How I Hate This Hateful War!' An Illinois Farm Woman faces World War I," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 93 (2000): 291.
[58] Ibid., 292.
[59] Ford, "Another Double Burden," 376.
[60] Ibid., 396.
[61] William C. Pratt, "Women and the Farm Revolt of the 1930s," *Agricultural History* 73 (Spring, 1993): 214.
[62] Ibid., 216-217.
[63] *The Farmer's Wife*, April 1932, 27.

woman, one letter noted, "she should be working for things that offer improvement for farm conditions."[64]

The editorial board of *The Farmer's Wife* also encouraged political activism. In the July 1933 issue the editorial exclaimed, "Is it not clear, therefore, that every farm woman should inform herself as to what the new law means, how it will operate, how it will affect her own family? What better club study project could there be than a study of these questions?"[65] The magazine then encouraged all farm women's clubs to purchase an outline of questions to discuss as to the state of political affairs.[66] Another editorial proclaimed, "As never before farm women throughout the United States are taking interest in and studying the larger social and economic aspects of farming. Moreover, they are doing it without neglect of their farm home interests."[67] This particular editorial even emphasized the dual responsibilities women had as productive farmers and keepers of the home.

The magazine made a concerted effort to include important political issues as well as advice for the home. In July 1933, *The Farmer's Wife* published an article about first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and in April 1934 had one about Frances Perkins. Farm women often identified with women political figures. Women who wrote letters directly to Eleanor Roosevelt did so because they believed Roosevelt more keenly felt the plight of the farm woman as producer than did male politicians and would empathize more with their situation.[68]

While many women were getting involved in the political process and supported the New Deal, some rural women were not pleased with the new vision of the farm woman that was proposed. As discussed earlier, throughout the early twentieth century and into the New Deal, there was a shift in the ideal of the urban housewife, which was expected to travel to the rural areas as well. As farming equipment modernized, the role of the woman was supposed to shift from producer to consumer. This proved to be a much different situation in rural areas than in urban ones. These issues of modernization were evident in the technologies produced. Male farmers were expected to buy tractors and other labor saving devices, while women were supposed to want the latest in household technology to lessen their domestic burdens. In this way, "farmers became businessmen who managed farms with brains and technology rather than working their farms with brawn. Farm women became professional homemakers relieved of the 'drudgery' of farm labor by new home technology."[69]

This ideology did not hold true for many farm women. According to Katherine Jellison, women who expressed their agricultural goals in letters

[64] *The Farmer's Wife*, April 1933, 25.
[65] *The Farmer's Wife*, July 1933, 3.
[66] Ibid.
[67] *The Farmer's Wife*, September 1933, 3.
[68] Jellison, *Entitled to Power*, 76.
[69] Ibid., 215.

to the Secretary of Agriculture were obviously focused on much more than the modern consumption ideal.[70] Women were still concerned with their roles as farm producers and were not always favorable to the modernizing message sent by the federal government during the New Deal.

Women did seem to make the best of the situation. Owning new household technology did give women a sense of economic security, as many women's basic concerns during the Depression had more to do with making ends meet.[71] Electricity as well was a modern convenience that was favorable to women. When the Rural Electrification Administration was established in 1935, some farm homes began to get electricity.[72] Some women were very pleased with the REA, as one particular woman noted that electricity eased her household burdens by automating the chores of drawing water and doing laundry[73] Though women strove for a place as an economic partner in the family farm, modern conveniences designed for the homemaker eventually became important parts of their lives.

Conclusion

Women played a very important role on the family farm. In rural areas, women were responsible for many aspects of life, including but not limited to the home, the children, and productive farm work. Without the contributions of women, many family farms would not have survived. Women confirmed the importance of their roles by their interest in politics and agricultural legislation, as they realized that what they did affected the workings of the farm. As women could vote at this time, the political decisions they made had a real impact on the outcome of elections and farm legislation.

Although the federal government pushed women's roles as consumers separate from the workings of the farm, not all farm people subscribed to this ideology. Throughout the 1930s, women continued to write into *The Farmer's Wife* and discuss the issues facing farm families as equal partners. As one writer noted, 50-50 marriages are the ones that succeed the best.[74] Rural families continued to support the idea of a partnership with both men and women contributing equally to the economic business of the farm.

Perhaps most telling about this attitude is a letter from a farm husband in the February 1937 issue of *The Farmer's Wife*. Due to the hardships of the Depression, in this particular farm family, the wife worked outside the home and the husband kept the house and the children. After describing that it had been hard to adjust to the lifestyle, this husband was now happy with his situation. According to him, "hard as it seemed at first,

[70] Jellison, *Entitled to Power*, 73.
[71] Ibid., 104.
[72] Ibid., 98.
[73] Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life*, 151.
[74] *The Farmer's Wife*, December 1934, 3.

I am proud that I could qualify as a 'farmer's wife.'"[75] Whether or not this was a representative situation, it does show that rural families subscribed to an equal way of life, where the wife's contributions were just as important as the husband's. Through the Great Depression and the New Deal, farm families tried to hold onto that way of life.

[75] *The Farmer's Wife*, February 1937, 14.

Avocational Furniture Making in the Mid-Twentieth Century

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Introduction

The mid-twentieth century was a period in which Americans looked forward, adopting new technology, vocations, and lifestyles. Much of the material culture of the period matches this affinity for the latest innovations, including the modern, factory-produced furniture dominating homes in the post-war period. Yet, some craftsmen continued the tradition of making furniture in the home workshop. Was this trend the product of a need to express oneself, to reconnect with the material world through this traditional hand-made form of expression? Was it nostalgia for farm life in an era of suburbanization? Did men make furniture to reclaim their masculinity, which had been challenged as women took their places on the home front during World War II? Were some so frustrated with low-quality, factory made furniture that they preferred to make their own? Did the increased availability of plan books, power tools, wood and other materials finally fulfill a need that had existed all along? Perhaps it was simply a way to fill time in the evenings. Or, was producing their own furniture a necessity for families who did not share in the post-war prosperity? This paper will investigate the pastime of furniture making in the 1950s, and the reasons hobbyists undertook this endeavor. It will argue that both societal and personal factors contributed to individuals taking up furniture-making. Mid-twentieth century American society's influences on the reasons individuals adopted this hobby will be examined through social history, the comments of plan book authors, and a case study of woodworking hobbyist Ervin Dihlmann, great-grandfather of the author. His social beliefs, socioeconomic realities, and personality make Dihlmann quite representative of individuals involved in the amateur furniture-making movement. The furniture he produced, sources he used, and family oral histories regarding his personality, life experiences, and avocation will be used to investigate Dihlmann's hobby. Lastly, the paper will examine the legacy of amateur-made furniture through the example of Dihlmann's family.

Conscious Factors

As the American consumer culture developed during the mid-twentieth century, it was easier than ever to satisfy one's desires for furniture quickly, easily, and relatively inexpensively. Yet, purchasing

mass-produced furniture from a catalog or department store left an unsatisfied desire: the urge to create. The introductions to instructional furniture plan books reveal that the satisfaction of making something with one's own hands was the most often cited reason for choosing this particular hobby. Their glowing language exposes the intensity of the authors' convictions about furniture making. Author Emmanuele Stieri described the feeling of constructing his own things from wood as "a real thrill of accomplishment" and declared the hum of a circular saw or joiner to be "real music to the handy man or boy."[1] He also related that the craftsman "is achieving something really worthwhile."[2] Why did this particular accomplishment, making one's own wood furniture, seem "really worthwhile"?

The nature of the other accomplishments a man at this time might achieve, especially those at his regular job, the activity in which he spent the majority of his time, was that of a group effort, not solitary. Production jobs had become specialized. Each person contributed a small piece, determined by management, to the product. Thus, items were produced quickly and inexpensively. However, industrialization had negative effects. Particularly pertinent to this study are the lost opportunities for creativity and involvement in the entire production process. Author Rolf Shütze observed that while the economic necessity of the home workshop disappeared, "the joy of creation, which was the motive power of the workshop, remained. Unable to find expression in handiwork, the individual felt stifled."[3] Thankfully, there was a solution, as Whitney K. Towers noted in the introduction to his 1957 *Cabinetmaker's Manual for Amateurs and Professionals*: "… the great majority of production jobs has become so specialized as to be boring to a large proportion of the employees. Thousands of these men whose jobs make no provision for the creative urge with which most people are imbued have turned to woodworking as a hobby."[4] It wasn't only the men who worked in a factory, adding screws to the automobile body passing by the assembly line, who fulfilled their desire to create by making furniture. Author W. Clyde Lammey noted that "people in widely diversified professions find a common interest in their home workshops and share alike a desire to acquire manual skills they cannot find outlet for in their regular vocations."[5]

[1] Stieri, Emmanuele, *Woodworking as a Hobby* (New York: Harper and Bros., Publishers, 1939), 1.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Shütze, Rolf. *Making Modern Furniture* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corp., 1967), 8-9.

[4] Towers, Whitney K. *Cabinetmaker's Manual for Amateurs and Professionals.* (New York: Home Craftsman Publishing Corp., 1957), 5.

[5] Lammey, W. Clyde. *Power Tools and How to Use Them.* (Chicago: Popular Mechanics Press, 1950), 4.

In the post-war period, young people left family farms in droves. Their help was no longer necessary as rural electrification and the mechanization of farming and farm homes spread. One thing, however, had not changed: the proliferation of the home workshop, now "popping up again in every suburb" after it "lost its importance in running the farm." [6] Woodworker and author Rolf Shütze hinted at the nostalgia he felt for that time one hundred years ago: "Here large numbers of people, as their forefathers did, have arranged a place in their own homes where they can satisfy the desire to fashion something both useful and decorative with their own hands."[7] The Arts and Crafts movement in the (late nineteenth and?)early twentieth century first produced handmade furniture as a reaction against industrialization. By the mid-twentieth century, this philosophy seems to have trickled down to the general public, at least if one can speculate that home craftsmen shared the views expressed by furniture plan book authors. The desire to express creativity with manual skills was one (of many) factors in taking up this hobby.

Ervin Dihlmann was just such a man, who found creative outlet in making his own furniture. During the 1940s through mid-1960s, he worked in the Mason City, Iowa post office, and sometimes also worked a second job at an area sugar beet processing plant.[8] While he liked his work at the post office and found it as fulfilling as that type of job could be, it was not an outlet for creativity.[9] Dihlmann expressed his artistry by making furniture, which was then used by his family. Furniture plan books seem to have provided a basis for his work, but he personalized it and made it his own. For example, the largest piece Dihlmann produced is a sectional, wood-framed sofa (fig.1 and 2). A plan for this piece is given in B. W. Pelton's *Furniture Making and Cabinet Work: A Handbook* (fig.3 and 4). The dimensions of Dihlmann's piece are slightly different than Pelton's plan.[10] This may have been to best use the space in his living room, or it might have been planned to better fit the grain of the beautiful bird's eye maple wood of the piece. This flexibility demonstrates Dihlmann's skill and creativity. Dihlmann added his own flair to the sofa by shaping the skirt to reach lower to the floor, with his own graceful curve. He also altered the arm supports, substituting a flat piece with a turned support (fig. 5). Dihlmann's only power tool was a lathe, and much of the furniture he made featured some turned pieces.[11] Dihlmann took great pride in the furniture he created. His daughter Kathy remarked, "He would probably roll over in

[6] Rolf Shütze. *Making Modern Furniture.* 8-9.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Myers and Wild, interview.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Pelton, B. W. *Furniture Making and Cabinet Work: A Handbook.* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1949), 110-114.

[11] Myers and Wild, interview.

his grave if those pieces left the family."[12] This attitude illustrates that, like the plan book authors, Dihlmann placed great value on his creations.

Dihlmann would not have been familiar with the farm workshops of his forefathers that Shütze had emphasized. Dihlmann, the son of a meat processing plant worker, grew up in a small city, with parents who had emigrated from Germany before he was born. Dihlmann and many other woodworkers who did not personally experience the farm workshop were instead fostered in their youth by the educational approach of handwork. Handwork was considered an important part of one's education, likely due to the influence of the flourishing Arts and Crafts movement. Dihlmann, born in 1912, graduated from high school in 1929, and like many other men of his era, took "shop" class in school Here, he built his first piece of furniture, a plant stand (fig. 6). Education in creating "plain, square, Mission type furniture" such as this plant stand ingrained in students both the skills necessary to make furniture and the "aesthetic dictum" that form should follow function.[13] As adults, many of these men, including Dihlmann, created furniture in the modern style, likely because they learned as children that the intended use of an object should determine its shape. In the first decade of the twentieth century, a contemporary source noted that "some form of handwork is to be found nearly everywhere, even in small towns and little country schools."[14] Is it any wonder that as these boys came of age, furniture-making became a popular hobby? As these boys grew into men making their own furniture during the mid-twentieth century, they generally created furniture in two different styles. The Colonial Revival style continued to be popular. Making one's own furniture was particularly appropriate to this style, which exemplified the nostalgia Americans felt for a "simpler, slower" time. Like many of his era, Dihlmann harbored some nostalgia for the past, as demonstrated by his creation of two Colonial Revival pieces, a tea cart (fig. 7) and a cobbler's bench (fig. 8). A popular project during the mid-twentieth century, the cobbler's bench was used as a coffee table and conversation piece. B. W. Pelton included a plan for a cobbler's bench in *Furniture Making and Cabinet Work: A Handbook*. In his description of the piece, he noted a recent "vogue for artisans' workbenches" including milk benches used as bars and sideboards, blacksmiths' tool boxes "dramatized" into magazine racks, and the "eye-arresting," "lowly" cobbler's bench, which became a coffee table.[15] Pelton encouraged the modern craftsman to choose maple, as the cobbler or village carpenter would have used for its availability and hardness.[16] Dihlmann did choose this recommended wood when he crafted his own cobbler's bench.

[12] Myers and Wild, interview.
[13] Gelber, Steven M. *Hobbies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 202.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] B. W. Pelton. *Furniture Making and Cabinet Work: A Handbook*, 83.
[16] *Ibid.*

The bench was used as a coffee table in the family's living room, as part of the same furniture set as the sectional sofa. The old-fashioned cobbler's bench demonstrates that Dihlmann harbored some nostalgia and interest in woodworkers of the past. However, the majority of the pieces he created were of the modern style, which was the other popular style among woodworkers of the time.

Contemporary design in the mid-twentieth century, was focused on the new, the modern. In his plan book *Contemporary Furniture*, A. F. Bick described this style as "spontaneous, clean, and new, and giv(ing) the impression of honesty and sincerity." [17] The reason for this style was the nature of the society itself: " The era for which it is a symbol is great in its own right as an age of strength, self-confidence, inventive ability, and engineering skill. "[18] Wood, a favored material of the modern style, had the ideal qualities for furniture symbolizing this era: "In wood, these qualities appear in the form of fitness of the material, lightness of structure and tone, simplicity of surface, excellence of line and proportion, and faultlessness of finish."[19] These simple design tastes and needs of the mid-twentieth century spurred handy people to think they could create furniture that met these requirements. Rolf Shütze noted this phenomenon, and the small disasters that could result, saying, "One of the reasons for this development must surely be our present-day desire for simple lines and simplified construction, and this tempts even the amateur to feel he can take on such projects. The beginner, however, who attempts to make useful furniture will often run into unforeseen problems."[20] The author does not go on to enumerate these unforeseen problems, but one can imagine they might include frustration, wasted money, injuries, and perhaps even marital discord. Jerry Lammers, who has been an active woodworker since the 1940s, noted that members of the St. Louis Woodworkers Guild often arrive at meeting with injuries, and that he himself had an accident which resulted in an unplanned shortening of one of his fingers.[21]

In his work, Ervin Dihlmann also tended toward simple lines, simplified construction, and undecorated surfaces, allowing for appreciation of the beauty of the wood. His sectional sofa is a perfect example of this. He uses a concave curve in the skirt of the chair to contrast with the straight lines of the stiles and stretches (see fig. 1). Following the design plan, the arm of the chair appears to be a straight, plain line when viewed horizontally, but when viewed from above, the arm gracefully curves outward beyond the piece of furniture (fig. 9). The skirt and arms are made of beautiful bird's eye maple (see fig. 9). Dihlmann's daughters remembered

[17] Bick, A.F. *Contemporary Furniture.* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1954), iii.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] A.F. Bick. *Contemporary Furniture*, iii.
[20] Rolf Shütze. *Making Modern Furniture*, 9.
[21] Lammers, interview.

that he loved bird's eye maple.[22] Little additional decoration was needed on the sofa because of the carefully chosen lines and wood. Dihlmann did choose to use the turned arm support, not typical of modern furniture design (fig. 5). However, perhaps because of the simplicity of the piece's construction, he had the option of making his own changes. Thus the modern designs and tastes not only encouraged the craftsman to make his own furniture, they also allowed him more space for creativity.

While school boys were learning the old traditions of producing quality furniture with their own two hands, the new "science" of Taylorism was sweeping American industry; this often resulted in lower quality products. The materials used contributed to this development. For example, rather than wood, or plywood, wooden furniture was often made of engineered wood products made of wood fibers, held together with adhesive. The method of production could also impact the products' quality. The assembly line process decreased the personal pride the workers took in their products, as the product resulting from the contributions of so many did not seem like one's own accomplishment anymore. With less personal investment in the piece, and with the additional challenge of sped-up work, workers did not produce the high quality furniture they might have in a small cabinet shop. Some consumers were pleased to have this inexpensive option for furnishing their homes, regardless of the quality of the product. Ella Moody, in analyzing modern furniture in her book of the same title, explained that "no longer is furniture simple to recognise as good – or bad. Expendable, laminated fibreboard which is gay today and something else tomorrow, can be just as good in its own way as teak or rosewood cabinet-made in a small workshop or under an architect's eye in a factory."[23]

Dihlmann, and others, did not agree. They found that making their own assured them of having quality furniture. And Dihlmann's furniture was high-quality; it has been used heavily for twenty-five (non-consecutive) years by his, his daughter's, and his grandson's families. Of the living room set, which included the sectional sofa, cobbler's bench, book-shelf end table (fig. 10), "butler's chest" possibly used as a TV stand (fig. 11), end table, and coat rack (fig. 12), only the sofa's legs have needed repair, which "took a beating" according to Dihlmann's grandson, Randy Carman.[24] Carman noted that his grandfather would not own anything junky, that it should be good and of lasting quality. Items of inferior quality weren't acceptable. If he couldn't afford to buy a piece of quality furniture, he made it.[25] His daughters also noted that Dihlmann felt quality was very important and

[22] Myers and Wild, interview.
[23] Moody, Ella. *Modern Furniture.* (London: Studio Vista Ltd., 1966), 6.
[24] Carman, interview.
[25] *Ibid.*

that his work had to be perfect.[26] Dihlmann's pursuit of perfection brought him to spend many evenings and weekends sequestered in his basement workshop. For Dihlmann, and perhaps for other craftsmen as well, it was not only a matter of having quality furniture that would last for generations. For him, it was as if the quality of the furniture he owned, especially that which he himself made, reflected his personal worth. Excellence in one's personal and material achievements became an imperative in the family, one which sometimes generated feelings of inadequacy in Dihlmann's descendents.

In addition to his needs for creativity and a reminder of the past, making furniture fulfilled social needs, both to socialize and to be alone. Rolf Shütze noted that "the local lumberyard has become a popular community meeting place as well as a new industry catering to the hobbyist."[27] The home workshop could also be serve as a location for men to bond over their shared interest. Steven M. Gelber examined media representations of the home workshop in the 1950s, including a 1954 advertisement for Corby's whiskey featuring five men who seem to have just stepped away from a social gathering into the host's garage workshop, probably leaving their wives in the house. They smoke pipes and drink whiskey, served from a home-made cart, and admire the host's Windsor rocking chair project. Gelber also located a feature on the "Do-It-Yourself Man" in a 1954 issue of Look magazine, which modeled appropriate "white-collar work clothes" styles for the new "unhired man" to wear "when he stops to boast with neighbors at cocktail time."[28] These documents suggest that proving one's manliness through his woodworking was an important component of the social encounter. Some craftsmen, including Dihlmann, took classes in the evenings, which provided them the opportunity to socialize, learn about new projects, and perfect their craft. Overall, though, Dihlmann was a man who kept to himself. He enjoyed the peace, quiet, and privacy of his basement workshop. Because this hobby accommodated sociable and loner personalities, many craftsmen were able to in part fill their social needs through making furniture.

In addition to providing an opportunity for socializing and learning, evening classes also allowed craftsmen to share tools. One might expect that mid-twentieth hobbyists spent large sums of money on outfitting their workshops with power tools, as many woodworkers in the twenty-first century do. No doubt, some did purchase many tools for their hobby; Emmanuele Stieri noted that "The development of fine hand and power tools has contributed in no small measure to the present-day popularity of

[26] Myers and Wild, interview.
[27] Rolf Shütze. *Making Modern Furniture,* 9.
[28] Steven M. Gelber. *Hobbies,* 288-289.

woodworking as a hobby and an art."[29] Magazine articles featured and were aimed at middle-class do-it-yourself types, but Gelber notes that subsequent studies showed that blue-collar men were just as likely to work around the house.[30] Many craftsmen were pursuing this hobby in part due to financial necessity, and were unable to purchase these tools, even though they had been developed and were available to homeowners through the Sears catalog.[31] Lacking these tools was not to be considered a problem, though. Michael Rothman encouraged these poorer craftsmen in this way: "Timid people will say that you must have lots of tools to produce many of the things that make your home a pleasant place to live. If this were true, a furniture factory full of such tools would prove insufficient if you refused to be patient and accurate. As a matter of fact, everything about you can be duplicated with the simplest of tools."[32] Even in a book titled *Getting Started with Power Tools*, readers were encouraged to "economize without sacrificing quality" by, for example, purchasing attachments for a circular saw which could perform the work of a jointer, sander, and shaper. [33]

For Dihlmann, economizing was a necessity, as the family struggled financially. Dihlmann and his wife, Katherine, had three daughters, all of whom came of age during the 1950s. He held down two jobs at times. The family saved money in many ways. Katherine canned vegetables from her garden. Dihlmann built a pit in the backyard, in which they buried carrots and apples to keep through the winter. They ate meat only about three times a week. Katherine made clothing and quilts for the family. For two years, the family went without a car because they did not buy things on credit. Dihlmann had the attitude that one did not buy new things unless it was really necessary. Things were fixed as often as possible, not thrown away.[34] This philosophy was probably greatly influenced by his parents, immigrants from Germany, who were much poorer than he. Making his own furniture was one way for Dihlmann to save money, so he adopted various strategies to decrease the cost of this hobby. Rather than purchasing his own power tools, Dihlmann took a night class held at a local junior high school, and had access to power tools through the class.[35] For at least one project, he obtained his wood for free. On the Greimann farm, which neighbored his wife's childhood home, a large walnut tree was cut down. Dihlmann made a hall tree for Mrs. Greimann with the wood, who

[29] Emmanuele Stieri. *Woodworking as a Hobby.* (New York: Harper and Bros., Publishers, 1939), 1.

[30] Steven M. Gelber. *Hobbies*, 275.

[31] Lammers, interview.

[32] Michael Rothman. *Build It Yourself: A Hundred Good Ideas for Making Your Home More Comfortable.* (New York: Greenburg, 1943), v.

[33] *Getting Started With Power Tools.* (Chicago: Popular Mechanics Press, 1956), 4.

[34] Myers and Wild, interview.

[35] Myers and Wild, interview.

liked it so much that the rest of the wood was given to Dihlmann. He made dining tables for each of his daughters with the wood.[36]

Dihlmann's furniture allowed him to pass on his values of thrift and care for one's belongings. As his daughter Avis's family moved into their first home of their own, Dihlmann gave them the living room furniture he had made. While it was not a fancy or expensive housewarming gift, undoubtedly Avis and her family were happy to receive this assistance. Avis later did the same for her children and grandchildren by passing down furniture and household goods she had accumulated over the years, including the living room set. That Dihlmann recognized value in material goods was evidenced by his careful care of his home and furnishings, and especially of the pieces he had made himself. This sometimes caused divison in the family. The long-term resentment that followed a rambunctious cousin's climbing on and breaking a small table went down in Dihlmann family history. Those relatives were rarely invited over again. [37] However, for the Dihlmanns, recognizing value in material goods was not equivalent to being materialistic and coveting more and more possessions; rather it was about being a careful steward of what one had acquired. Dihlmann's "training" of his daughters to be stewards of their possessions, as well as his family's pride in Dihlmann's work, has now led his whole family to take special care of the pieces he created.

Furniture plan book authors focused on certain personality traits and values necessary for a successful craftsman, including not only thrift, but also carefulness. Michael Rothman impressed this on his readers, warning them that "Lumber, though fairly inexpensive, has financial value. Its waste through carelessness will prove destructive to your feeling of craftsmanship. Here and now, make a promise never to cut a piece of wood unless you're sure of your mark."[38] Producing an attractive piece of furniture required attention to detail, particularly with the modern designs that emphasized the natural wood and were devoid of decoration that could cover up mistakes. Thus, this hobby required a certain type of personality. Dihlmann's personality was well-suited for a home craftsman. As noted previously, thrift was of great importance to Dihlmann. He was a quiet and private individual, who enjoyed the peace and quiet of his basement workshop. Known as being a perfectionist, Dihlmann poured his energy into his work. He found his relaxation in being productive; most of his hobbies helped his family in some way, as Dihlmann also spent time fishing and later in his life, restoring antiques. This philosophy is precisely what George A. Raeth described in his introduction to *Modern Homecraft:* "All

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] Michael Rothman. *Build It Yourself: A Hundred Good Ideas for Making Your Home More Comfortable*, vi.

mental and physical expressions and activities must be wisely directed for useful living. Profit, pleasure and relaxation are the benefits to be derived from a home workshop."[39]

For most home craftsmen, "profit" resulted from producing furniture for their family to use, not from a sale. Making furniture for use in one's own home contributed to the family's good. Dihlmann contributed to family's good by providing generations with furniture. For his own family, he produced an entire living room set. He also created pieces specifically for his daughters' young families to use, including the walnut dining room tables from the Greimanns' tree, and a rocking horse for his first grandson. When the living room pieces were no longer used in his own home, they were passed to his daughter Avis. Dihlmann's grandson, Randy Carman, recounted childhood memories of his dog hiding from him under the sectional sofa, removing the sofa cushions to set up a comfortable television-viewing station on the living room floor, and storing his crayons in the cobbler's bench coffee table.[40] During the 1980s, the living room pieces ended up in Avis's basement, and suffered humidity damage (visible in fig. 8 and 9). In the early twenty-first century, Avis gave the living room set to her son Randy. At first, the family had little appreciation for the pieces, as they were so strongly reminiscent of the 1950s, particularly in their orangey finish. They did not really fit in with the décor of the 2000s. However, sharing family stories regarding the furniture has engendered pride, and the pieces are slowly but carefully being lovingly restored by Randy.

Helping his family by making them furniture also provided an opportunity for Dihlmann to express his feelings for them. Although both he and his wife found it difficult to verbally express love, providing for their daughters served as evidence of their affection. Dihlmann actively showed his feelings by making furniture for his daughters, while his wife Katherine accomplished this through cooking. And so, he left a legacy of handmade, quality furniture to be passed down through generations of his descendents.

Subconscious Factors

The reasons so far enumerated for making one's own furniture were voiced proudly by hobbyists and plan book writers in the 1940s-1960s. In addition to these, other reasons, more subconsciously ingrained by American popular culture, also exerted a pull on hobbyists toward furniture-making.

While plan books often cited the boredom in the workplace due to industrialization as motivation for furniture-making and hobbies in general, they ignored other influences of industrialization upon the development of

[39]George A. Raeth. *Modern Homecraft.* (Chicago: Frederick J. Drake & Co., 1941), 10.

[40] Carman, interview.

hobbies. Industrialization moved for-profit production from the home into the factory, as items could now be purchased for less than the price of making it oneself. This was sometimes the case with making furniture, although working-class craftsmen like Dihlmann found ways to make the hobby more economically sound. With the end of most at-home production, time at home was more often leisure time than it had been before industrialization. This was especially true for men, whose job had to be left at the factory. This increased leisure time allowed men the opportunity to develop hobbies. Many found that they missed the opportunity to construct items at home, and chose to take up a productive hobby, for example, furniture-making. This home production differed from pre-Industrial home production in that it was voluntary. Thus, industrialization was a multi-front force upon the hobby movement in the 20th century.

Industrialization also spurred the growth of consumer culture in the United States. Not only were the modern styles "tempting" handymen to make their own furniture, but the modern desire to have more fueled the attraction. In his introduction to *How to Make Tables Chairs and Desks*, Milton Gunermen focused particularly on the "need" for more tables in order to persuade his reader to attempt his table designs. He suggested the reader may need a new dining table, coffee table, end table, lamp table, and "occasional tables to enable each member of the family to keep his personal books, magazines, smoking accessories or sewing materials conveniently at hand."[41] Making one's own furniture allowed the family to keep up with the Joneses, and perhaps even outdo them, having accomplished the feat of directly supplying all the tables with the work of one's own two hands.

Business realized that a profit was to be made from the newfound interest in hobbies, and commercial products aimed at hobbyists soon followed. Kit projects, most commonly models and handicrafts, were highly popular during the 1950s. Commercial influence on furniture-making was less strong, but existed nonetheless. To learn about making furniture, a hobbyist could purchase one of numerous plan books, or subscribe to *Popular Science* or *Workbench* magazine. Materials used in furniture making became more widely available. As more types of power tools were manufactured, more were purchased for home use. In 1952, there were about one hundred different types of power tools made for the home market. Ten years earlier there had been only twenty-five.[42] $95 million was spent on portable power tools in 1953, up from $6 million in 1946.[43] Publications and materials worked hand-in-hand. Newspapers and

[41]Milton Gunerman, ed., *How to Make Tables Chairs and Desks* (New York: Home Craftsman Publishing Corporation, 1954), 2.

[42]Steven M. Gelber. *Hobbies*, 279.

[43] *Ibid.*, 278.

magazines began to run do-it-yourself sections that featured projects and advertisements for products to use on the projects.[44]

This commercialization impacted economic classes differently. While the middle-class man may have spent great sums of money outfitting his workshop with power tools, or purchasing the best quality wood, or even the small sum of money to purchase a plan book or subscribe to a magazine, the working-class hobbyist did not enjoy this disposable income. The working-class man was more likely to engage in furniture-making in an effort to save money than the middle-class man. As "spending to save" was not part of these men's economic strategies, working-class men invested in their hobbies differently. Dihlmann's only power tool was a lathe. For at least one of his projects, wood was given in exchange for completion of a small project, rather than purchased. Dihlmann did not subscribe to magazines or purchase books in the 1950s; he likely had access to these materials through the public library. While working-class craftsmen like Dihlmann might have been influenced to pursue certain projects as a result of commercialized consumer culture, they necessarily spent little of their more meager incomes to feed the consumption machine.

Making one's own furniture was also a reaction against consumer culture and industrialization. The independence one had demonstrated in the past by producing goods to meet his own needs was replaced by a growing dependence on others to make the goods he needed to survive. One was now at the mercy of the furniture manufacturers, who chose the designs and materials, and set the price of the dining room table the family had to have in order to eat a meal together. The craftsman of the 1950s demonstrated his independence by making his own table rather than depending on furniture manufacturers. Dihlmann's self-reliance was exemplified in his ability to build his own furniture. The family's self-reliance (likely due in part to financial realities, as well as philosophical beliefs) was also illustrated by the clothing his wife sewed for the family, the canned vegetables from her garden, and the family's makeshift root cellar. Avocational furniture-making was both a product of industrialization, as leisure time and a cultural desire to consume developed, and a reaction against it, as people returned to start-to-finish home production through the hobby, demonstrating independence and perhaps even saving money in the process. Thus, industrialization was a multi-front, largely subconscious front upon furniture making in the mid-twentieth century.

Gender played a subconscious role in the hobby. Traditional gender roles had changed during World War II, with women working in factories while men were away fighting. While many women returned to working full time in the home when the men came back from the war, gender roles

[44] *Ibid.*, 276.

continued to be challenged, as men were now expected to take more of an active role in the family life and home. Men also had to fulfill the post-war male role as a "handyman." These expectations worked hand-in-hand to give men a separate sphere of domestic work, thus enabling them to be home with the family and yet preserve some masculine privilege. The masculine household duties commonly included car care, lawn care, barbecuing, supervising boys' sports, taking out the trash, home maintenance, and do-it-yourself projects.[45] Dihlmann and his wife, Katherine, divided their work along traditional gender lines. His daughters remembered that each did his or her part.[46] Dihlmann's masculine sphere included many of the accepted household duties, even performing perhaps the ultimate feat of domestic masculinity, building his own barbeque in the backyard he kept perfectly manicured. His basement workshop also provided a physical masculine sphere, a haven from a family of women. Some fathers spent quality time teaching their sons woodworking skills in the workshop, but probably due to his belief in traditional gender roles, Dihlmann's daughters did little more than watch their father work. As Dihlmann and Katherine maintained traditional gender roles, his daughters took up the feminine productive hobbies of knitting and sewing. His grandson Randy took up the masculine hobby of home maintenance. Likely, Dihlmann's handiness was in part a product of this midcentury need to assert one's masculinity in the home rather than a continuation of gender traditions of an earlier era. He did not learn his skills from his father; Dihlmann's daughters did not remember their grandfather as being handy at all.[47]

For some hobbyists, furniture-making was an opportunity for the male and female domestic spheres to meet. Some couples used furniture-making as a shared activity. Wives would suggest projects for their husbands; by one estimate, 80 percent of do-it-yourself patterns were purchased by wives for their husbands.[48] Plans for Dihlmann's sectional sofa included instructions for making its cushions. It is possible that Katherine Dihlmann made the cushions, although her daughters believe they were more likely made by a local upholster.[49] The exact arrangement between Dihlmann and his wife Katherine in regards to choosing projects is unknown, but his daughters suggested that "he probably just asked for as little advice as he could get by on" as Katherine was one to make her opinion known, whether asked or not. Later, the couple did bond through a

[45] Steven M. Gelber. *Hobbies*, 268-269.
[46] Myers and Wild, interview.
[47] Myers and Wild, interview.
[48] Steven M. Gelber. *Hobbies*, 287.
[49] Myers and Wild, interview.

shared hobby of antique purchase and restoration, utilizing skills Dihlmann had developed by making furniture.[50]

Generally, though, the home workshop was a retreat. It provided sanctuary from the fear produced by nightly news of the Cold War, the changing social structure engendered by new gender roles and the Civil Rights movement, the loss of personal power at work, and the day-to-day difficulties of family life. Dihlmann took up his hobby during the height of the Cold War. Also at this time, the Dihlmann family was going through a period of changes. His daughters were teenagers, and he had the usual concerns a father has about his teenage daughters' decisions and futures. His wife could be a rather dominating woman, and his workshop provided a bit of a break from her, as well. The set-up of Dihlmann's workshop showed his desire to lead a structured life, one which was being threatened by the factors outlined above. The workshop was a highly organized room. His grandson Randy remembered visiting his grandfather and going down into the basement to see his grandfather's workbench. Dihlmann's tools were all hung on pegs in a particular order. He organized screws and nails into small jars, which each screwed into its own specific spot on the wall. As Randy's father did not own many tools, this image persisted in Randy's mind as the ideal workbench. His own work areas are, like his grandfather's, quite orderly affairs.[51] Also like his grandfather, Randy prefers a structured, routine life, and is known to retreat to his garage or workshop when his house becomes boisterous and busy during his adult children's visits.

Dihlmann expected his hobby to benefit to his family materially, and his work to be passed down through generations (see fig. 13). The passing down of his personality traits and values to his descendents was one unexpected benefit of furniture-making through these tangible remnants of his life and the family stories surrounding them.

Conclusion

Amateur furniture makers proudly boasted about some of the personal and societal factors that led them to choose their hobby. But other factors, deeply imbedded in mid-twentieth century American culture and the personalities of the culture's men, were also important in how they spent their free time. It is impossible to measure if the conscious or subconscious factors held more sway in some men's decision to spend countless hours in their workshops, toiling over tables and chairs from the wood-cutting stage to the staining stage. Each craftsman certainly held different reasons to different degrees. Yet, all who finished a piece of furniture likely felt that "real thrill of accomplishment," that "joy of

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] Carman, interview.

creation," which encouraged a return to the workshop for more. The emotions experienced by the furniture-makers are also felt by those who admire and continue to use the products of these hobbyists' evening-and-weekend sweat. As long as the reminders of mid-twentieth century avocational furniture-makers remain, through family histories and the physical remnants of plan books, magazines, tools, and the furniture itself, the pride of giving birth to a useful and hopefully beautiful piece after a long labor from the wood-cutting stage to the staining stage, will be remembered.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

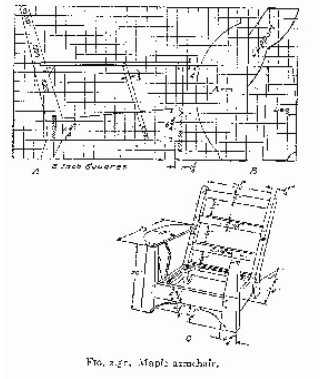

Fig. 3

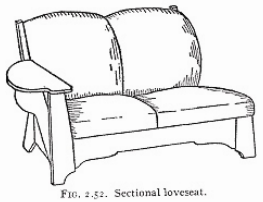

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

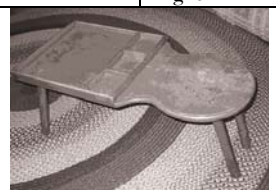

Fig. 8


Fig. 9


Fig. 10


Fig. 11


Fig. 12


Fig. 13

The History of Economic Thought Surrounding the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935

Dena Reavis

Dena Reavis, from Humboldt, Illinois, earned her B.A. in Economics from Eastern Illinois University, and is currently a graduate student in Economics. She wrote this paper for Dr. Eric Hake in ECN 5421, Recent History of Economic Thought, in the spring of 2007.

This paper answers the question, what was the history of economic thought surrounding the Public Utility Holding Company Act? More specifically, how did it come about; what problems did it solve? What was the mood of the country and was it a threat to the laissez-faire government-business relationship? What economic theory was applied to rationalize the radical restructuring of public utility ownership in the mid 1930s?

William H. Emmons, III, discusses the contributions of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal on the electric utility industry, specifically its impact on competition. Roosevelt's policies toward electric utilities forced them to compete directly and indirectly. Emmons' research finds statistical evidence that Roosevelt's pro-competition policies actually produced better results than the traditional "natural monopoly"[1] method of regulating electric utilities.[2]

During the 1932 presidential campaign, Franklin D. Roosevelt targeted U.S. investor-owned electric utility industry for abusing ratepayers and "slowing national economic development through monopoly pricing practices, facilitated by ineffective state-level regulation." As the nominee for the Democratic Party, he denounced the growth of economic power, political influence, and alleged financial abuses of utility holding companies, which then owned more than 75% of total electricity generating capacity in the United States. Roosevelt promised a solution to what he called the "utility problem." The solution was New Deal legislation, which was designed to pay for major federal power projects, support municipal competition as a viable threat, and dismember holding companies.[3]

Roosevelt was no stranger to conflicts with the power crowd. As Governor of New York, Roosevelt swept to victory on a referendum to begin a public power project on the St. Lawrence River. For fifteen years, New York's Republican legislature had been controlled by members supported by the private investor-owned utility companies. They finally surrendered to Governor Roosevelt, granting him authority to commission

[1] A natural monopoly is a monopoly that exists because a market can be better served by one large company (who does not have to compete with other firms) than by many smaller competitive firms. This large firm becomes a monopoly producer "naturally," because no small firm can achieve the same efficiencies production, and thus lower operating costs.

[2] William M. Emmons III, "Franklin D. Roosevelt, Electric Utilities, and the Power of Competition," *The Journal of Economic History* 53, no. 4 (Dec. 1993) : 881.

[3] Ibid., 882.

a study to gauge the feasibility of a state-owned water power development on the St. Lawrence[4].

Candidates in the elections across the country were frequently divided into two groups: pro-public or pro-private development. There were many examples of pro-public development candidates defeating their opponents in Oregon, Washington, Nebraska, New York, and Wisconsin.[5]

Electricity Industry 1882 to 1932

From 1882 to 1932, electricity production and consumption grew considerably. The electricity industry in the United States began its life as a novel luxury service to a few wealthy customers growing to $12.7 billion in capital assets and equipment by 1932, providing service to approximately 25 million customers. From 1902 to 1932, the growth of electricity output was 12.2% compounded annually, compared to the growth of GNP during the same period of only 1.7% per year.[6]

In the late 1880s and 1890s, technological limitations supported competition. Most utilities were using Thomas Edison's direct current (DC) systems which limited distribution to about one mile surrounding the generation site. Municipalities could grant exclusive rights to electric utility companies to serve all territories. Exclusivity would never need to be enforced because technology so limited the distribution. Companies simply could not physically reach all customers, and, more importantly, one another's customers. In many cases, municipalities granted general franchises to any company aspiring to supply electricity.[7]

Structure and Regulation

Beginning in the 1900s, advances in technology permitted companies to generate more electricity and transmit it further using alternating current (AC). Suddenly, companies were able to reach into the unrestricted territories and compete with one another. This competition was not necessarily beneficial to a company's bottom line. Competition would drive prices down, although costs to produce electricity were relatively steady. The decreases in revenue were incentive enough for companies to start consolidating[8] and selling to new customers.

New developments in business, namely the corporation, gave businesses a new means to organize in the form of corporations. The corporation was modern mechanism designed to coordinate existing assets. The late nineteenth century saw a rise of excess production capacity, in all industries including the electricity industry, resulting in destructive pricing

[4] Ibid., 885.

[5] F. G. Crawford, "Public Power Control—Discussion," *The American Economic Review* 21, no. 1 (Mar. 1931): 260-261.

[6] Emmons, "Franklin D. Roosevelt," 882.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

competition. Individual firms had used retained earnings to invest in new technologies, which they then used to create larger markets, which ultimately caused excess capacity. The old solution for companies finding themselves in this state was bankruptcy and liquidation of individual firms.

The evolution of corporate laws made corporations more attractive to businesses. In 1896, New Jersey, in an effort to attract businesses to the state, changed their laws to allow corporations to use shares to acquire shares of other corporations. The key attraction was that corporations set the value of the shares used to buy other shares, effectively enabling the corporation to pay nearly any price because they valued their own currency. This feature was so attractive that between 1895 and 1904, 400 corporations were created from 3,000 constituent firms combined primarily through equity swaps. The newly created companies comprised the assets of former competitors.[9]

Manufacturing and industry primarily used gas- or oil-powered engines and equipment. It was difficult to sell electricity to such firms because DC current had been less reliable and could only be supplied over short distances. Electricity companies had to assure quality continuous electric service before they could promote themselves as a feasible alternative to gas or oil. Alternating current technology made it possible for generating stations to connect to one another. Electricity providers could connect to each other, and most importantly, redirect supplies in the event of electricity supply failures. Industry could now count on reliable power supplied by companies who could assist each other in the event of an emergency.[10]

When AC electricity distribution made it possible for power companies to compete *and* cooperate with each other, mergers became quite common. Actually, mass mergers were occurring in the largest markets. With the increase in concentration in these large markets came increased attention from politicians. They pushed for the establishment of state-run regulatory commissions for reform. These commissions negotiated regulation in exchange for monopoly franchises granted to electricity utilities. Theoretically, consumers would be protected from monopoly pricing and guaranteed a reasonable quality of service. Companies would be protected from destructive competition. By the early 1930s, thirty-seven states had commission-based regulation of their electric utilities.[11]

This time period also revealed a substantial problem facing electric utility companies. With the rapid expansion of markets, companies needed greater investment in production and distribution facilities. Interest rates

[9] Eric R. Hake, "Capital and the Modern Corporation," in J.T. Knoedler, R.E. Prasch & D.P. Champlin, eds., "Thorstein Veblin and the Revival of Free Market Capitalism" (Massachusetts: Edward Elgar, 2007), 40-41.

[10] C.O. Ruggles, "Regulation of Electric Light and Power Utilities," *The American Economic Review* 19, no. 1 (March 1929) : 179-180.

[11] Emmons, "Franklin D. Roosevelt," 882.

for borrowed capital were high and many companies simply could not finance new development, especially in rural or "marginal" areas.[12]

Holding companies were a solution to financing and organization problems. In the late 1890s changes in state laws had opened doors for new forms of business organization and capitalization. In 1893, New Jersey changed its laws to allow for corporations to use shares to acquire shares of other corporations. In 1896, this law was "extended with the provision that the director's valuation of assets acquired would be accepted, except in the case of fraud." States including Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New York made similar adjustments to their corporate laws but not as extensively as New Jersey.[13]

The rapid expansion of the electricity industry got the attention of economist C. O. Ruggles, of Harvard University, which was a stronghold of classical economics. Ruggles wrote that the proposed regulation of public utility companies was subject to two extreme views. One view was that the state regulatory commissions had failed. The other was that the commissions had done an adequate job regulating and there was no need for intervention on a federal level.

According to Ruggles, there was no rhyme or reason to the arrangements of state commissions. They were ideal examples of uniformity and haphazardness. There was no uniformity to the type of problems that confronted the commissions individually, but almost all comprised three members. The commissions were, however, uniformly understaffed, underpaid, and inexperienced. In some cases, jurisdictional issues circumscribed their power, an issue that would be resolved by federal-level regulation. Ruggles concluded that state commissions had to be strengthened *and* that a federal system of regulation should be organized, one over which states would have no jurisdiction. Regulation on state and federal levels would encourage initiative in management and give some free reign. He wrote that

> both operating companies and parent organizations should be held responsible for results and allowed a rate of return in accordance with the contributions which they make toward efficiency in management and toward the maintenance of satisfactory service.[14]

State commissions were often unable to enforce competition. In Crisp County, Georgia, when a publicly owned utility began supplying electricity to county residents, it did so at prices 10-15% lower than the investor-owned Georgia Power Company serving the same area. Shortly after the

[12] W.S. Nelson, "The Private Companies and a Public-Power Paradox," *The Business History Review* 35, no. 4 (Winter 1961): 537.

[13] Hake, "Capital and the Modern Corporation," 40.

[14] Ruggles, "Regulation of Electric Light and Power Utilities," 185.

new utility opened, it ran full-page ads in local newspapers announcing it was slashing its rates by 50%. Georgia Power Company accused the public utility of "unfair competition" but the state utility commission ordered Georgia Power Company to "show cause why it should not reduce rates by the same percentage all over Georgia." The company was able to circumvent the instruction by winning a court injunction to prevent the new rates.[15]

According to Crawford, there was too much variation in state commission laws and authority. In 1930, in at least sixteen states, local-rule over utilities was subject to state authority and approval. Some states' laws already favored municipality rights. In Ohio, Illinois, and Colorado, cities or municipalities had the right to buy, build, and operate utilities in competition with investor-owned firms. Despite the few states with working utility commissions and laws, too many were virtually defunct. Federal-level laws would be the only uniform solution.[16]

Ownership and Control

Private investors and local governments undertook development of electric utilities. In some cases, small towns' primary or only demand for electricity was to supply street lighting. Some municipalities established utilities specifically to compete with an established investor-owned utility that was perceived to be charging exaggerated rates.

By 1932, approximately half of all electric utilities in the U.S. were municipally owned but they accounted for only 5% of total electricity generation. On the private side, investor-owned public utility holding companies orchestrated the growth and integration of formerly independent firms.[17]

The following is an example given by Stuart Nelson of the convoluted structures of public utility holding companies and of the use of new business laws in New Jersey, Delaware, and other states. This example also highlights the jurisdictional limits faced by state-level regulation commissions:

> The Nebraska Light and Power Company was chartered under Delaware law in 1924, and served the McCook area in southwestern Nebraska. Nebraska Light and Power Company was controlled by Consolidated Power and Light Company of South Dakota, which also controlled the Gothenburg Light and Power Company operating southeast of North Platte, NE. Consolidated Power and Light Company was controlled by General Public Utilities, part of the still larger American Power Company. The Interstate Power

[15] Crawford, "Public Power Control—Discussion," 261.

[16] Ibid., 263.

[17] Emmons, "Franklin D. Roosevelt," 883.

> Company of Nebraska, operating along the northern border of the state, was absorbed by the Interstate Power Company, a large holding company. The Interstate Power Company, in turn, was under the Utilities Power and Light Corporation, a Virginia enterprise controlling scattered properties from Maine to Oklahoma. In the Panhandle area of Nebraska, the Western Public Service Company was created in 1929 to consolidate municipal and other properties there. It also acquired scattered properties in Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa. This company was a constituent of the Eastern Texas Electric Company. Both of these companies were constituents of Engineer's Public Service, and all were under the control of the Stone and Webster interests in New England.[18]

Holding companies were attractive as a form of business organization because they offered the opportunity for larger profits and allowed for the application of the financial principal of "trading on equity" also known as the equity swap. This was important in the early days of the electricity industry because it was difficult to secure the large amount of capital needed to fund such a capital-intensive endeavor.[19]

Holding companies solved the efficiency problem facing the industry but in 1927, the Federal Trade Commission revealed gross financial abuses committed by these holding companies. The abuses included

> asset overvaluation, transfer price manipulation, expense padding, and the development of leveraged capital structures that enabled a small number of individuals to control vast utility properties with a tiny equity stake. By 1932 the three largest holding company groups controlled 44.5 percent of investor-owned utility output, and the remaining holding company systems controlled an additional 34.3 percent.[20]

Public Utility Policy Reforms and the New Deal

Roosevelt had had experience with electric power issues while he was state senator and governor of New York. By the late 1920s he believed that state electric utility regulation had been rendered ineffective for several reasons. The state commissions had lacked standards for valuing rate bases and necessary returns. Additionally, the commissions lacked the resources to handle the complicated nature of utility operating companies and the holding companies who owned them. Canadian electricity prices were much

[18] Nelson, 539.

[19] Norman S. Buchanan, "The Public Utility Holding Company Problem," *California Law Review* (July 1937): 517.

[20] Emmons, "Franklin D. Roosevelt," 883.

lower and consumption was much greater. Roosevelt used the Canadian statistics to support his position that the U.S. electric utility industry was contributing far too little to national economic development.

During his campaign, Roosevelt promised reforms of the electricity utility industry. He said that "where a community…is not satisfied with the service rendered or the rates charged by the private utility, it has the undeniable basic right…to set up, after a fair referendum to its voters has been had, its own governmentally owned and operated service." He branded his actions as the "birch rod" that would be used, "only when the 'child' gets beyond the point where a mere scolding does no good."[21]

During the 1932 campaign, Roosevelt cited the numerous and well documented holding company abuses and attributed them to twelve years of "laissez-faire Republican leadership." According to Roosevelt, President Hoover avoided any regulatory reform and blocked proposals for public utility projects, including building publicly-owned hydroelectric plants on the St. Lawrence and Tennessee Rivers. Roosevelt's opponents warned that government intervention would cause lower efficiency, higher rates, and great losses to investors.[22]

Electricity Industry Reforms

The general sentiment of the country was revealed when Roosevelt was elected president. He moved quickly to design plans to reform the electric utility industry as a part of his larger New Deal program for economic recovery. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), created in 1933, was a major step toward publicly-owned electricity production. To encourage consumption and boost economic development, the TVA's electricity was priced at cost, or roughly 2.75 cents per kilowatt hour (kwh) compared to the national average price of 5.5 cents per kwh. This did increase consumption and forced investor-owned generators to reduce their price. Roosevelt established 'yardstick' programs—such as mandating the reporting of annual survey data including rates charged, quantities generated, and plant capacities—which were all published each year by the Federal Power Commission, for public inspection.

Roosevelt's "birch rod" was implemented by the Public Works Administration established in 1933. The PWA made low-interest loans to local governments to create jobs. Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, and head of the PWA, "encouraged cities dissatisfied with the rates charged by monopoly investor-owned electric firms to apply for PWA funding to construct competing facilities." They followed his advice. In some locations, the application alone encouraged local privately owned utilities to lower their rates voluntarily. In other locations, the funding received from the PWA was used by rural communities to purchase the local privately owned

[21] Ibid., 884.

[22] Ibid., 885.

electric company. Many rural electric cooperatives were established using capital from the PWA and the Rural Electric Administration. Rural areas could build their own plants to generate electricity rather than wait for investor-owned utilities to offer service at some indefinite future date. [23] Electricity flowed where once there was none.

Public utility holding companies received their "death sentence" in 1935 when the strongly contested Public Utility Holding Company Act (PUHCA) was passed by Congress.

> Title I, the Public Utility Holding Company Act, placed the capital structure of interstate public utility holding companies under the supervision of the Securities and Exchange Commission and required these companies to confine their operations to utility service in a single state or in contiguous states. Title I subjected wholesale interstate electric rates to Federal Power Commission (FPC) approval.[24]

Investor-owned utilities fought fiercely against the PUHCA in Congress and later in the courts. Ultimately, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Act. Despite this success, the full effectiveness of the reforms was burdened by the "birch rod" and "yardstick" areas of the Act. Regarding the "birch rod," when the PWA offered funds to cities to build plants that would compete with investor-owned utilities, investor-owners called it extortion.

Congress succumbed to pressure and commanded the PWA to reject applications for funds "unless the applicant offered without success to buy the private facilities at a reasonable price." The 'yardsticks' faltered as well. By 1938, attempts to develop more TVA-like projects failed due to differences with Congress and between it and President Roosevelt. Despite these troubles, the core and intent of Roosevelt's solution to the utility problem survived.

In Emmons's research, he investigated how accurate Roosevelt's diagnosis of the U.S. electric utility sector was, and how appropriate his "corrective" policy initiatives were. His results suggest a largely favorable verdict on Roosevelt's approach to reforming the electric utility industry. "Roosevelt," he concludes, "basically got it right." Specifically, Emmons concludes that by harnessing the power of competition, both direct and indirect, Roosevelt's policies induced reductions in rates consumers paid for electricity and monopoly rents earned by investor-owned utilities. Emmons also found that although Roosevelt's holding company policies had no measurable impact on electric rates, the policies seem to have lowered

[23] Ibid., 885-886.
[24] Ibid., 886.

holding company returns without disserving those who invested in operating company stocks. Emmons writes that there is

> a certain irony in the fact that Roosevelt, branded a socialist by the investor-owned utility community, relied heavily on the principle of competition in designing his New Deal reforms for the electricity sector. It would appear that ultimately, Roosevelt perceived a dual nature in the power of competition: in certain instances, an indispensable tool for industry reform and renewal. [25]

It would be fair to characterize the Public Utility Holding Company Act as an attack on laissez-faire attitudes toward businesses. It came at a time when the public was frustrated with twelve years of Republican rule, and still reeling from The Great Depression. The New Deal, the Public Works Administration, and the PUHCA were all attempts to get the country back on track, help the economy recover, and put people to work. Roosevelt's progressive solution was a victory over what was at the time perceived as laissez-faire run amok.

[25] Ibid., 901.

When The Levee Breaks: Race Relations and The Mississippi Flood of 1927

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If it keeps on rainin', levee's goin' to break
And the water gonna come in, have no place to stay

Well all last night I sat on the levee and moan
Thinkin' 'bout my baby and my happy home

If it keeps on rainin', levee's goin' to break
And all these people have no place to stay

Now look here mama what am I to do
I ain't got nobody to tell my troubles to

I works on the levee mama both night and day
I ain't got nobody, keep the water away

Oh cryin' won't help you, prayin' won't do no good
When the levee breaks, mama, you got to lose

I works on the levee, mama both night and day
I works so hard, to keep the water away

I had a woman, she wouldn't do for me
I'm goin' back to my used to be

I's a mean old levee, cause me to weep and moan
Gonna leave my baby, and my happy home.[1]

These words come from the husband and wife blues singers Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe McCoy's song, "When the Levee Breaks." First recorded in 1929, their song captured the turmoil, upheaval, and hopelessness that black people in the Mississippi Delta experienced as the river overflowed its banks in 1927. With the forced labor and oppression that the song's verses describe, it seems that black flood victims had nothing to win and plenty to lose. But the flood was not entirely a loss for the advancement of racial justice in the Delta. It also provided an

[1] Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie, "When the Levee Breaks" (Columbia Records, 1929).

opportunity for black men and women to win several concessions toward recognition and equality.

The Mississippi Flood of 1927 is the most destructive American flood of the twentieth century, but it has received surprisingly little coverage in the historical community. This flood warrants further examination, not only because of the economic and psychological effects it precipitated, but also for its role as a prism through which historians can view the racial atmosphere of 1920s America. The flood brought out the best and the worst in both white and black Delta folks. Many of the time-tested tools of the racist and paternalistic white elites were reinvigorated by the state of emergency that the flood provided. But there was also opportunity for and instances of black agency and resistance that would have been impossible at any other time in history. This essay will examine the Mississippi Flood of 1927 in the context of a decade where notions of racial hierarchy were constantly challenged and re-affirmed. While one might expect the existence of racial injustices in the ostensibly conservative climate of the 1920s, there are also instances of black resistance and agency along with white progressivism in response to that injustice. The flood provides a unique opportunity to assess the progression of race relations in one of America's most transformative decades.

As mentioned above, despite the transformative nature of the 1927 flood, historians have paid surprisingly little attention to it. Two fairly early, but well-received histories barely discuss the event at all. George Brown Tindall's *The Emergence of the New South 1913-1945* only treated the flood in passing. He mentioned the valuable contributions that Red Cross relief workers made to the alleviation of pellagra when "in 1927, a great Mississippi River flood and an attendant famine brought the 'red horror' before the eyes of Red Cross volunteers."[2] His description of "*a*" rather than "*The*" great flood, and his discussion of the flood as an aspect of a greater story of pellagra eradication indicates that Tindall, like many early historians, failed to see the importance of the flood in the larger narrative of American history. Similarly, in Richard Aubrey McLemore's edited volume, *A History of Mississippi*, which covers the years between 1890 and 1970, the flood is only briefly discussed. After quoting the Red Cross report that called the flood the "greatest disaster this country has ever suffered," McLemore ironically only spends a handful of paragraphs describing the disaster.[3] To be fair, McLemore's work focuses largely on political history, but it is difficult to accept such a terse treatment of what was arguably one of the more psychologically and economically upsetting events in Mississippi's early twentieth century. Needless to say, these early works

[2] George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 279. Pallegra is a disease brought on by vitamin deficiency.

[3] Richard Aubrey McLemore, *A History of Mississippi*, Volume II, (Hattiesburg: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1973), 83-84.

provide disappointing and superficial discussions of the flood. No real comprehensive treatment of the flood would appear for several more years.

Pete Daniel's *Deep'n As It Come: The 1927 Mississippi River Flood* offered the first attempt at a complete analysis of the flood.[4] This book provided an engaging and well-researched examination with a decidedly bottom-up perspective. Daniel relied heavily on oral interviews with the men and women, both black and white, who had experienced the flood firsthand. In addition to these oral sources, Daniel examined more traditional sources like personal papers, newspapers, and the official Red Cross reports and correspondences. The book is also well illustrated with nearly 150 photographs. But this plethora of illustrations and the book's relatively short length (only 151 pages), indicate that Daniel's work is more of a popular history than a work of professional historical analysis. Pete Daniel has published several insightful and deeply analytical works of Southern history, but this particular book falls short of achieving that same analytical success. His book poses more questions to the serious historian than it answers, but he makes a handful of intriguing assertions. It appears that Daniel's true purpose behind writing this book was not to discuss the social, political, and racial implications of the flood, but to use it as a didactic story of environmental awareness. His primary agenda is to show the folly in the Army Corps of Engineers' "levees only policy" for flood control, and the greater folly of trying to control the river at all.[5] But along with this environmental narrative, Daniel has carefully woven a story of oppression and abuse, coupled with instances of mutual assistance between the races. He concedes that "there were irregularities, exploitation, peonage, pilfering, sexual problems, and other abuses," but ultimately concludes "that during the emergency people rose above the restricting customs of race and caste."[6] This conclusion is admirably balanced, but it appears somewhat naïve. One must ask if the races united out of the goodness of their hearts or if both blacks and whites had ulterior motives in the civil treatment of one another. It is this issue of race relations, rather than Daniel's environmental agenda that provide the more fascinating aspect of the 1927 flood.

The second and more recent attempt at analyzing the flood is John M. Barry's *Rising Tide: the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America*. Although Barry is essentially a journalist and not a professional historian, much of his work, including this book and another influential volume on the 1918 influenza epidemic, exhibits a disciplined and engaging perspective on historically important concepts. Unfortunately, like Daniel, Barry fails to provide the deep historical

[4] John M. Barry, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America* (New York: Touchstone, Simon and Schuster, 1997), 300.

[5] Pete Daniel, *Deep'n As It Come: The 1927 Mississippi River Flood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 50-51.

[6] Ibid., 11.

analysis that the flood requires. *Rising Tide* tries to make several grand assertions concerning the flood. First, Barry argues, that the flood destroyed the sanctity of "levees only" flood control, but in reality a rich and powerful debate over control practice had thrived in the Delta almost from its first years of settlement. Barry also sees the flood as the catalyst for the political career of Huey Long and the key to Herbert Hoover's presidential election. While the flood may have played a role in creating these popular politicians, there were undoubtedly other factors involved. Finally, on the issue of race relations, and most importantly to this paper, Barry contends that the betrayal and oppression experienced during the flood drove many blacks to abandon the Delta and move to northern cities. He argues, "the Delta, the land that had once promised so much to blacks, had become, entirely and finally, the land where the blues began."[7] It is difficult to believe that the Delta ever really "promised so much to blacks," and indeed the migration to the North had slowed greatly by 1927. Contrary to the historical consensus, expressed most comprehensively in John R. Grossman's *Land of Hope*,[8] Barry ignores the role of World War I, and points to the flood as the catalyst behind a migration that had largely ended by the time the deluge occurred.

Like Daniel, Barry's larger narrative treats the story of race relations superficially. He is concerned mainly with the story of the great men involved in the disaster including Huey Long, Herbert Hoover, and the Percys of Mississippi. From this perspective, any analysis of race relations takes place in the context of a section that focuses on the role of William Alexander Percy. Ultimately, black refugees become unwilling pawns in a great political scheme, providing a disappointing assessment of race relations during the flood. Despite the criticisms mentioned above, Barry's connection between black refugees and the larger political narrative of the 1920s provides insights for the analysis that this paper seeks to achieve.

The final and most insightful work of historical scholarship to emerge on the flood is Robyn Spencer's article "Contested Terrain: The Mississippi River Flood of 1927 and the Struggle to Control Black Labor."[9] Unlike Barry, who found the flood to be a major cause of the Great Migration, Spencer places the flood in the context of that migration. She argues that "growing labor scarcity due to out-migration of black laborers provided a context for increased determination on the part of planters to hold their laborers on the land."[10] Spencer sees much of the same abuse and oppression of flood refugees as an outgrowth of white elites' increased anxiety over the loss of their labor force. Spencer's article is the first to

[7] Barry, *Rising Tide*, 334.

[8] John R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners and the Great Migration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).

[9] Robyn Spencer, "Contested Terrain: The Mississippi Flood of 1927 and the Struggle to Control Black Labor," *The Journal of Negro History* 79, 2 (Spring 1994): 170-181.

[10] Spencer, 171.

truly place the flood in the context of the social upheaval of the 1920s, and thus is helpful for the purposes of this paper. But Spencer's article also has some flaws. She relies heavily on black newspapers like the *Chicago Defender* and the Baltimore *Afro-American* as primary sources. These papers give a somewhat problematic perspective because both worked hard to entice blacks to leave the Deep South for the more progressive urban North. Spencer's work is based on the assumption that black refugees were forcibly contained in the Delta during the flood. While it is true that white elites hoped to keep as many black laborers in the Delta as possible, it is also true that many black refugees did not want to leave. This source bias is common in works of Southern history; this essay seeks to achieve a more balanced depiction of why black flood victims stayed on in camps in the midst of floodwaters rather than leaving for the North.

It is clear that the historiographical literature concerning race relations and the Flood of 1927 is relatively sparse. Those works that do exist provide incomplete depictions, but they have raised several issues that will be examined further in this essay. First, it has become apparent that the events surrounding the flood must be properly placed within the context of the political and racial climate of the 1920s. It is also necessary to provide a more nuanced and balanced treatment of race relations. Daniel and Barry have largely glossed over the issue of race in the flood while pursuing a separate agenda. Robyn Spencer has insightfully examined race relations and correctly linked it to anxiety over labor shortages, but her analysis appears lopsided and allows for little agency and choice on the part of black refugees. These problems and questions warrant a deeper and complex analysis of race, society, and politics in the Mississippi River Flood of 1927.

Flooding was no rare occurrence in the Delta; the years when the river did not flood were the real unnatural occurrences. William Faulkner eloquently explained, in his short novel that takes place during the flood, "the river was now doing what it liked to do, had waited patiently the ten years in order to do, as a mule will work for you ten years for the privilege of kicking you once."[11] Like Faulkner's mule, the Mississippi River delivered one swift kick to Delta dwellers in 1927 that they would not soon forget. Unusually heavy rain began to fall in the Midwest in the summer of 1926. Rivers in Kansas, Iowa, and Illinois began to reach flood stages by September of 1926. Throughout the fall and winter of 1926 and 1927, heavy rains continued in the nation's midsection and Mississippi tributaries in the South began to overflow. By early spring, unusually high rainfall continued, until eventually the levees, which the Delta's white elites had so painstakingly constructed to protect their cotton empires, began to strain under the pressure. At Mound Landing, eighteen miles north of the Delta's "Queen City" of Greenville, Mississippi, the levee broke open on April 21,

[11] William Faulkner, *Three Famous Short Novels*, "The Old Man" (New York, 1961), 115-16.

1927. In Greenville, church bells rang and fire whistles howled as white and black Delta dwellers, along with droves of automobiles, mules, and livestock, flocked to the synthetic high-ground of the levee tops. On April 22, the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* carried the headline, "Greenville Flooded; People Flee For Lives; Levees Snap Under Strain Leaving Path of Death and Destruction in the Wake of Worst Flood."[12] Greenville was the first city to be inundated and it would remain under the lens of national media scrutiny for the duration of the disaster.

Mississippians often remember those early days of flood relief with rose-tinted nostalgia. Mississippi senator John Sharp Williams remarked, "I sometimes think God lets great calamities fall on us in order that we may see, realize, and *remember*…that we are all, after all, *one*—in spite of differences of section, politics, religion, and race."[13] This was the time when Daniel argued that "people rose above the restricting customs of race and caste," when regardless of skin color, the "first concern was to rescue the perishing."[14] Black and white refugees were plucked from rooftops and carried to safety in integrated boats. The United States Coast Guard reported, "[T]he negro and the whites were cared for the same, all having the best of care that could be given on a small boat."[15] But the racial honeymoon would soon be over as the flood waters lingered and old racial strictures re-emerged. Greenville's chairman of the Flood Relief Committee was faced with the brutal reality of a lengthy disaster and he penned, "[W]hatever we had accomplished, recklessly and chaotically, those first few days of the flood, one problem…had not been solved: how could we feed the whites and blacks?"[16]

After the first few days, the National Red Cross took up the unenviable task of providing relief for the displaced flood victims. The intrusion of a national organization into the closed terrain of the South might, at first, appear to engender hopes of racially progressive relief policies. But the very structure of the Red Cross meant that such hopes would be stymied from the beginning. As Robyn Spencer noted, "The National Red Cross's commitment to grass roots mobilization and voluntarism allowed Southern whites to operate relief camps with almost total autonomy." [17] Total Southern white autonomy meant that the grip of racism, even under the guise of paternalism would be difficult to shake. The Red Cross argued that they "did not create the social conditions in the South…it is not their function to reform them."[18] The structure of the Red

[12] *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 22 Apr. 1927.

[13] *Red Cross Courier*, 1 May1928, 15.

[14] Daniel, 11.

[15] "Remark Sheet, Mississippi Flood Relief, 1927," U.S. Coast Guard, quoted in Daniel, 79.

[16] William Alexander Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 255.

[17] Spencer, 172.

[18] "The Flood, the Red Cross, and the National Guard," *Crisis* 35 (January 1928): 5.

Cross allowed for the ruling planter elites to dictate the nature of flood relief for black victims.

In Greenville, the ruling family was the Percys. LeRoy Percy was a well-respected former United States senator and constant advocate of old paternalistic approaches to race relations, which although racist, were often humanitarian. LeRoy Percy was a model Southern Progressive, a true exemplar of the values of the New South. He fought to raise the standard of living for Delta blacks by maintaining voting rights, raising wages and leading the Southern wing of anti-Ku Klux Klan forces. As his son explained, "He felt the Klan was the sort of public evil good citizens could not ignore."[19] Like all Southern Progressives, however, "all this he had done not simply because it was right and good; self-interest had operated too. He had needed their strong backs."[20] Although modern observers might scoff at Percy's self-serving paternalism, for all intents and purposes he had created in Greenville an island of dignity and respect for blacks in the sea of oppression that was the Delta. It is this perceived dignity and respect among the races that existed in pre-flood Greenville that would make the abuses to come even more unbearable.

LeRoy's son, William Alexander Percy, would have made an excellent Faulkner character. He constantly dwelled in his father's shadow and hopelessly longed for the type of glory his father had achieved in the construction of a Delta empire. John Barry notes, "Will was known only for being his father's son."[21] Indeed, his memoir, *Lanterns on the Levee*, is subtitled, *Recollections of a Planter's Son*. William Alexander Percy received his chance to emerge from the shadows and match his father's achievement when he took on the responsibilities of leading the relief efforts in Greenville.

With all of the drama and occasional stream of consciousness of a Faulkner novel, John Barry focused on W. A. Percy's struggle to live up to his father's reputation. In this context, Barry concludes, "Will Percy had failed." Not only did Percy fail to live up to his father's standard, Barry argues, he also managed to make a fiasco of the relief process, force Greenville blacks to move North, and ultimately dissuade black voters from Hoover's Republican party to F.D.R.'s Democrats. Barry, I believe, has placed too much blame on the shoulders of Will Percy. A closer examination of his relief work reveals good intentions and occasional racial progressivism, but ultimately the situation in Greenville thwarted any good intentions. As mentioned above, after assembling thousands of whites and blacks from both the city and the countryside on the levee and in the second stories of commercial buildings, Will Percy was faced with the dilemma of what to do next. For one group the choice was clear: "For the whites we

[19] Percy, 235.
[20] Barry, 308.
[21] Ibid, 302.

chose evacuation."[22] The question of "What should we do with the Negroes?"[23] was more difficult to answer. But despite Spencer's depiction of a story of premeditated and purposeful abuse from the beginning to the end of the relief experience, Percy decided that for black refugees, "Obviously for them, too, evacuation was the only solution."[24] In the Delta, the notion of removing black labor was blasphemy. Early on, Percy stood up to the planter opposition by taking the moral high ground, but his position would not remain high and dry for very long.

Despite Barry's contention that "Will had less tolerance for racial differences than his father," and the *Chicago Defender*, which characterized Percy as a man "whose prejudice against members of our Race is as bitter as gall,"[25] his original relief policies reflected a racially progressive point of view. He saw evacuation as the most humane method for providing relief to flood victims, but he immediately met with backlash from the planter elites. Will responded to such backlash with, "I insisted that I would not be bullied by a few blockhead planters into doing something I knew to be wrong—they were thinking of their pocketbooks; I of the Negroes' welfare."[26] With steamers waiting to carry the black refugees to higher ground at Vicksburg, LeRoy Percy convinced his son to reconsider evacuation and reconvene the committee to discuss the notion once again. The relief committee had unanimously approved Will's decision to evacuate, and there was no reason to believe that they had changed their minds. Unbeknownst to Will, his father and other influential planters had employed classic Southern politics and convinced the committee members to reverse their decision. Will Percy remembered, "At the meeting of the committeemen I was astounded and horrified when each and every one of them gave it as his considered judgment that the Negroes should remain and that we would provide for their needs where they were."[27] In conceptualizing race relations in the Flood of 1927, it is important to remember this incident. It shows the beginning of a change in racial thought even among Southerners. By 1927, many were almost willing to treat their black neighbors as human beings, but that humane treatment would always stop short of threatening the labor supply.

It is also important to mention that, in addition to "a group of planters, angry and mouthing,"[28] blacks themselves resisted evacuation. Will Percy explained, "At last the innumerable details for their exodus were arranged and the steamers, belching black smoke, waited for them restlessly at the concrete wharf. It was at this juncture that the Negroes

[22] Percy, 255.
[23] Ibid., 256.
[24] Ibid., 257.
[25] *The Chicago Defender* 24 June 1927.
[26] Percy, 257.
[27] Ibid., 257-58
[28] Ibid., 257.

announced they did not wish to leave."[29] Coming from Percy's memoir, one must examine this information critically, but it is indicative of a major problem with the historiography surrounding the flood and much of Southern historiography in general. For the most part, historians like Robyn Spencer, insisted that blacks in the South were always *forced* to stay in the Delta, few historians take into account that many black Southerners actually wanted to be farmers in the South. One influential text which discusses the Great Migration, James R. Grossman's *Land of Hope*, is among the few that removes itself from the narrative of forced and hapless action to one that reflects black agency. When historians list "push and pull factors" black migrants often become mindless pawns dragged around a map. Grossman argues that, for the story of migration "No list can implicitly weave together its various components to compose an image of the fabric of social and economic relationships which drove black Southerners," to leave their homes in the South. "Nor can lists communicate the fears, disgust, hopes, and goals that combined to propel blacks from the South and draw them northward."[30] Blacks in the Delta had a complex love-hate relationship with their homeland. They resisted leaving Greenville because, in a time of crisis they had historically looked to the community, both the black and the white community, for the support needed to weather hard times. Even if their white neighbors were racists, at least in Greenville they knew they were racist. To be transplanted into another community meant that blacks would have to deal with a new set of alien white oppressors. Barry and Spencer largely overlook the complex relationship that blacks had with their homeland, and thus they see any instance when blacks did not abandon the Delta as an instance of white-enforced immobility. It is important to keep this concept in mind while examining the resistance black refugees instituted against white abuses.

Stories of abuse emerged almost immediately after black refugees were contained in relief camps. There were incidents of inconsiderate taunting, for instance, "Whenever the steamer *Capitol* pulled away from the dock, its calliope routinely played 'Bye Bye Blackbird.'"[31] But there were also instances of severe curtailment of rights and liberties. For example, although he argued that it was for the sake of efficiency in food and aid distribution, Percy ordered that all blacks in Greenville move into the camps on the levee. At the same time, however, white residents were allowed to stay in their homes and had aid delivered to them, often by the black men who had been contained on the levee. In addition, unlike other camps where Red Cross aid was distributed with no strings attached, in Greenville, Percy declared, "No able-bodied negro is entitled to be fed at all unless he is tagged as a laborer."[32] But aside from these curtailments of

[29] Percy, 257.
[30] Grossman, 18.
[31] Barry, 312.
[32] *Greenville Democrat-Times*, 9 May 1927, quoted in Barry, 314.

mobility, liberty, and human rights, black refugees also experienced physical abuse in the camps.

The Mississippi National Guard troops that guarded the Red Cross camp in Greenville received the most criticism from both black and white critics. A white woman recalled, "The Guard would come along and say, 'There's a boat coming up. Go unload.' If they didn't hurry up, they'd kick them. They didn't mind taking their guns, pistols out, and knocking them over the head."[33] A black man, John Butler, reported similar abuse, "negroes…were caught slipping out of camp and were…whipped, the men using a strap taken off one of their rifles."[34] In the eyes of many black and white Greenville residents, most of these crimes were committed by outsiders. The most notorious companies of National Guard troops were from Corinth and Lambert, Mississippi; they were not from Delta towns. Will Percy sent these two companies out of Greenville, admitting that they were, "guilty of acts which profoundly and justly made the negroes fear them."[35] The racial order in Greenville was steeped in the virtues of the New South. These ideals, instituted by LeRoy Percy in his struggles against race-baiters like James K. Vardaman, the Ku Klux Klan, and indignity among black Greenvillians, would not tolerate the type of racism instituted by National Guard troops. This is not to say that the white elites of Greenville were not racist, but to lump them in ideologically with the brutal racists found among the National Guard troops or the Ku Klux Klan is simply disingenuous. The legacy of these New South ideas made the abuses in Greenville even more painful for blacks who had remained loyal to that system.

Greenville blacks and the national media actively resisted much of the abuse discussed above. Despite the picture of forced encampment painted by Spencer and Barry, black men and women did not always obey. Evidence shows that many blacks resisted the order to move out of private residences and into camps, but critics of the flood have taken little notice. One case, in June, long after the order had been issued, Percy remembered, "The police were sent into the Negro section to comb from the idlers the required number of workers."[36] This shows that despite Percy's best efforts, black people in Greenville continued to occupy their neighborhood in the partially-flooded city. The racially progressive atmosphere of pre-flood Greenville had also allowed for the growth of a well-educated group of minister-leaders in the community. The Reverend E. M. Weddington was the pastor of the influential and physically imposing Mt. Horeb Church that stood at the center of black intellectual life in Greenville. Weddington is most likely the anonymous black minister who wrote President Coolidge saying, "All of this mean and brutish treatment of the colored people is

[33] Oral history of Mrs. Henry Ransom, quoted in Barry, 315.
[34] Mississippi National Guard, *Report of Flood Relief Expedition* quoted in Barry, 315.
[35] Letter from William Alexander Percy to Johnston, quoted in Barry, 316.
[36] Percy, 266.

nothing more but downright slavery."[37] Eventually Herbert Hoover, the executive branch's director of relief asked Robert Moton of the Tuskegee Institute to head up a Colored Advisory Committee to investigate the problems and abuses that black refugees presented to the Red Cross and the President's office. Greenville's racial atmosphere and the re-conceptualization of racism in America at large in the 1920s produced men like Weddington, and also created a powerful national outcry.

Black papers like the *Chicago Defender* carried sensational headlines like, "Refugees Herded Like Cattle to Stop Escape from Peonage,"[38] and "Deny Food to Flood Sufferers; Relief Bodies Issue Work or Starve Rule."[39] The *Pittsburg Courier* added, "Conscript Labor Gangs Keep Flood Refugees in Legal Bondage."[40] Robyn Spencer's article examines many of these black newspapers for insights on the racial situation in inundated Greenville. But as mentioned earlier, such a reliance is problematic. After carefully examining the policies and behavior of William Alexander Percy and his fellow Greenville whites, it has become increasingly clear that these papers may have exaggerated the degree of racial injustice in that city. While it should not be surprising that northern black publications took a special interest in the events in Greenville, some northern whites also focused their attention on the flood.

The Red Cross depended on donations to fund its relief efforts. It employed the young but extensive mass media system of the 1920s to orchestrate one of the largest funding drives in American history. The Official Red Cross Report took time "to remark upon the great services of the press—great in volume and in spirit—in behalf of relief work throughout the flood."[41] In addition the report noted, "Several chapters reported having raised almost their total fund through radio broadcasting alone."[42] The national media played an important role in raising awareness of the flood and thus opened Greenville's race policies to national criticism. One of the more unexpected critics that came into the fore was a white politician from Chicago.

On June 9, 1927, as William Alexander Percy struggled to curtail black liberties in Greenville, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* carried the story, "Charge of Short Rationing Negro Flood Victims Probed."[43] The article credits the *Chicago Defender* for exposing corruption and abuse in the distribution of Red Cross aid, but it mainly worked to ease the fears of local

[37] Anonymous letter to Coolidge, May 9, 1927, Red Cross Papers, box 734, quoted in Barry, 320.

[38] *Chicago Defender*, 6 May 1927

[39] Ibid., 4 June 1927.

[40] *Pittsburg Courier*, 14 May 1927.

[41] The American National Red Cross, *The Mississippi Valley Flood Disaster of 1927: Official Report of the Relief Operations* (Washington: The American National red Cross, 1929), 14.

[42] Ibid., 15.

[43] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 June 1927.

blacks and whites who were infuriated over the news. The article cites the director of the Chicago chapter of the Red Cross, M. R. Reddy in saying, "the Negro colony of Chicago had been very generous in its contributions to relief funds, and the individuals were justified to ascertain that their offerings reached the proper donations."[44] The black community had grown increasingly influential in Chicago, and overall in the 1920s, urbanized blacks began to exert more political power than ever before. The fact that the Chicago chapter's executive secretary investigated the complaints of black donors indicates that organizations in northern cities played increasingly closer attention to the demands of a vocal and organized black community.

The increased political pull of urban northern blacks is further demonstrated in the involvement of Chicago's mayor William Hale "Big Bill" Thompson in the debate surrounding flood control in the months that followed the flood. In July of 1927, the *Tribune* wrote, "Thompson Calls Hoover Flood Control Plan Half Baked; Seeks Many Minds for Problem."[45] The article quotes the mayor as saying, "It will be a severe disappointment for the American people to find that after the horrors of 1927 we are but to return to the policies that made those horrors possible."[46] This begs the question, why does the mayor of Chicago care about flood control on the Mississippi River? Big Bill Thompson was one of the most notoriously corrupt politicians, not only in Chicago's history but in the nation's history. Under his reign, Chicago descended into the crime-ridden era of gangster rule that produced such events as the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929. Thompson, Chicago's last Republican mayor, achieved success against the city's Democratic political machine by joining forces with Al Capone. But as a Republican, Thompson also owed much of his political success to the influx of black and largely Republican voters into the city. Although Thompson would have his contemporaries believe that "There Will Be No Politics,"[47] in his nationwide push for flood control and relief, in fact it was all politics. Thompson had presidential ambitions, and just as John Barry argued that Hoover used the flood to court black and racially progressive white voters, Thompson did the same. The involvement of such an out of place entity as Big Bill Thompson in flood debates is linked to the increased political influence of black voters and racial issues in the late 1920s.

By 1928, the communities of the Mississippi Valley, including Greenville, were drying out and on their way to recovery. Little did they know that a much larger economic levee was about to break in the stock market crash of 1929. The height of the flooding lasted only four months in the spring and summer of 1927, but that short period can provide valuable insights into the racial climate of the 1920s. First, the emergence of the Ku

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 27 July 1927.

[46] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 27 July 1927.

[47] "Mayor Will Tour U.S. With Appeal for Flood Relief," Ibid., 9 Aug. 1927.

Klux Klan earlier in the decade and the institution of nativist immigration policies provide the image of a deeply racist society. But upon closer examination, especially in the case of the policies of the Percy family and Hoover's creation of a Colored Advisory Committee, race becomes a far more complex concept. The Percy family's New South paternalism demonstrated a variety of racism that directly opposed that of the Ku Klux Klan. The executive branch's creation of the Colored Advisory Committee, although they represented some of the most conservative black men and women in the nation, represented a growing recognition on the part of the federal government to the needs of the black population. The willingness to recognize black political influence was also made clearer through the lens of the Mississippi Flood. William Alexander Percy, the federal government, and even the mayor of Chicago exhibited increased interest in the political power of black Americans. The decade of the 1920s appeared to be a racially conservative period, but with the arrival of jazz and blues music into the white mainstream and the increased acknowledgement of black political power, it was also a period were Americans reformulated notions of race.

Returning to the blues that Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe McCoy provided in the opening of this essay, it is necessary to ask if the levee really did break in 1927. A physical levee broke at Mounds Landing, Mississippi, but the metaphorical levee, it seems to have remained largely intact. The levee that held back the torrent of outrage over black oppression held for the time being, but it was severely weakened. Despite the disparities outlined in this paper, the Red Cross, and on a more local level, the Percys, were largely successful. They saved countless lives and when the flood waters receded, life in the Delta went back to normal. Men like Percy were able to patch the old levee of paternalism so it could last at least one more generation. But if it had kept on raining, so to speak, if the flood would have lasted longer, would the strains of racist relief policies forced black refugees to reach a breaking point? Could there have been a Civil Rights Revolution in 1927? It appears that both black and white society had moved much closer to that revolution, but in 1927 the chains of racism were just strong enough to keep it restrained.