

# CLIO



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# CLIO VOLUME 22, 2012

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Department of History  
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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

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It is with great pride that I present the twenty-second edition of *Clio*, the student history journal by the Rho Xi chapter of Phi Alpha Theta at California State University, Sacramento. The impressive articles below reflect the eclectic interests and talents of our students at Sacramento State.

David Carpenter examines the peak in popularity of the Pacific Coast League in the 1940s and its subsequent decline that began the following decade due to the impact of television and Major League Baseball's westward expansion.

In her original research paper, Kelly Daniells explores the history of anti-gay marriage legislation and initiatives in California with a particular emphasis on the Briggs Initiative, the politicization of the gay community, the fractural nature amongst religious organizations, and the emotional rhetoric of both parental and children's rights.

Elizabeth Dukovich examines the question of genocide in Native American historiography.

Steve Estabrook shows how the United States' waging of the cultural cold war in the 1940s-1960s helped to inspire Guy Debord and his Situationist movement, ultimately leading to the Paris riots of 1968.

Carol Francis examines fifty years of historiographic change regarding black capitalism, noting its development from an economic issue in the 1960s to an identity and political issue in recent years.

Carey Galbraith reviews the historiographical trends of African American women in the West in professional careers in the early twentieth-century.

Christopher Hoganson grabs his quinine and maxim gun and sets out to explore the various historiographical approaches employed for understanding the rise of late nineteenth-century imperialism and the Scramble for Africa.

Janet Rankin shows how ordinary housewives banded together to fight nuclear testing in the early 1960s, forming Women Strike for Peace and

using unapologetically feminine tactics to successfully fight for the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963.

Tobi Shields outlines the historical significance of Napa County's last public execution.

Shameel Singh traces ethnic tensions in the Fiji Islands.

Brittney Smith explores feminist historiography according to Joan Wallach Scott.

And finally, Sarah Starke investigates the evolution of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* in American public memory by analyzing its changing role from an overnight canonical text to an identifier of mental instability, and eventually, to a symbol of literary censorship.

We wish to acknowledge our highly devoted faculty whose continued support and high expectations for academic excellence inspire the annual publication of *Clio*.

On behalf of the 2012 *Clio* staff, we hope you enjoy this volume and thank you for sharing our appreciation of history.

*Katie Healey*  
*Clio Executive Editor*

### KATIE CULLITON

Katie Culliton is a graduate student in the Liberal Arts program at California State University, Sacramento. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Davis in Political Science and worked as a lobbyist for several years. However, disenchanted by the chasm between the study and the practice of politics, she is pursuing her interest in a less hypocritical area - ancient history and culture. After receiving her Master of Arts, she plans to pursue a doctorate degree in Classics.

### CAROL FRANCIS

Carol Francis graduated with her Master of Arts in history at California State University, Sacramento in 2011 with her thesis on "The Lost Western Settlement of Greenland, 1342." Thanks to a fluency in Norwegian she translated documents found at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik and the University of Greenland in Nuuk. History was a change of field for her after completing a thirty-year career in the California Youth Authority in 2003. She received a Master of Science in counseling from the Sacramento State Education Department in 1981 and a double Bachelors in child development and psychology from the University of California, Davis in 1972. Carol specializes in medieval, Scandinavian, and world history and hopes to use this degree to travel the world as a lecturer.

### KATIE HEALEY

Katie Healey received her Bachelor of Arts in history and Deaf Studies/American Sign Language from California State University, Sacramento in 2010. She is currently a Masters student in history at Sacramento State and plans to pursue a doctorate. Her research interests include disability history, cultural Deafness, and eugenics.

### CHRISTOPHER HOGANSON

Christopher Hoganson is a graduate student in history at California State University, Sacramento. He received his Bachelor of Arts in the Humanities and Religious Studies Program from Sacramento State in 1998. Christopher's area of interest is the religions of Antiquity with an emphasis on the transition from Paganism to Christianity. The eternal student, he worries he might not earn his Master's degree before the Mayan Apocalypse.

**GORDON LADDS**

Gordon Ladds is a graduate student at California State University, Sacramento. He will receive his Master of Arts in history in Spring 2012.

**JANET RANKIN**

Janet Rankin is a graduate student in History/Humanities at California State University, Sacramento, where she also received her Bachelor of Arts in Humanities. Her areas of interest include American Cultural History, Women's and Gender History, and Public Art. Janet was honored in 2011 with the George and Eleanor Craft Scholarship. After graduation, Janet plans to teach at the university or community-college level.

**BRITTNEY SMITH**

Brittney Smith is currently a graduate student at California State University, Sacramento. Having received her Bachelor of Arts from Sacramento State in the history pre-credential program, she felt she had more to learn from their magnificent faculty and decided to remain for an additional two years of tortured scholarship. She is interested in African American women's history. After completing her graduate studies at Sacramento State, Brittney aspires to pursue a doctorate in history and teach at the university level.



**DAVID CARPENTER**

David Carpenter received his Bachelor of Arts in history at California State University, Sacramento. He plans to begin graduate school at San Jose State University this fall. After receiving his Master of Arts, he hopes to teach U.S. history at a community college.

**KELLY DANIELLS**

Kelly Daniells is a graduate student in history at California State University, Sacramento. Her primary interest lies in twentieth-century U.S. history with a focus on politics and society. Kelly earned her Bachelor of Arts in history from Sacramento State in the spring of 2010; she received the Peter H. Shattuck award and was honored by the history faculty voting her "Top Honors Student." Kelly plans to teach history at the high school level following graduation.

**ELIZABETH DUKOVICH**

Elizabeth Dukovich graduated magna cum laude from the University of California, Davis with a Bachelor of Arts in history, where she completed original research on Armenian Genocide denial. She presented her research at the Third International Conference on Genocide held in November of 2011. In Fall 2012, Elizabeth will graduate with an Master of Arts in history from California State University, Sacramento with a focus on Comparative Genocide. She hopes to continue exploring the commission and denial of genocide in future scholastic and professional endeavors.

**STEVE ESTABROOK**

Steve Estabrook is a graduate student in the History/Humanities program at California State University, Sacramento. He received Bachelor and Master of Music from Sacramento State as well. His primary area of focus is U.S. and Western European Cold-War era culture and counterculture. His thesis currently in progress explores U.S. influence in German as well as French counterculture.

### CAROL FRANCIS

Carol Francis graduated with her Master of Arts in history at California State University, Sacramento in 2011 with her thesis on “The Lost Western Settlement of Greenland, 1342.” Thanks to a fluency in Norwegian she translated documents found at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik and the University of Greenland in Nuuk. History was a change of field for her after completing a thirty-year career in the California Youth Authority in 2003. She received a Master of Science in counseling from the Sacramento State Education Department in 1981 and a double Bachelors in child development and psychology from the University of California, Davis in 1972. Carol specializes in medieval, Scandinavian, and world history and hopes to use this degree to travel the world as a lecturer.

### CAREY GALBRAITH

Carey Galbraith is a graduate student in the History program at California State University, Sacramento. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Sacramento State in History, with a double minor in government and dance. Her current areas of interest include the experiences of women in the United States, the role of art in reflecting and evoking social change, and urban issues in modern Europe. After receiving her Master of Arts, she hopes to teach history at the community-college level and inspire students to ask questions of the past and think critically.

### CHRISTOPHER HOGANSON

Christopher Hoganson is a graduate student in history at California State University, Sacramento. He received his Bachelor of Arts in the Humanities and Religious Studies Program from Sacramento State in 1998. Christopher’s area of interest is the religions of Antiquity with an emphasis on the transition from Paganism to Christianity. The eternal student, he worries he might not earn his Master’s degree before the Mayan Apocalypse.

### JANET RANKIN

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2011 with the George and Eleanor Craft Scholarship. After graduation, Janet plans to teach at the university or community-college level.

### **TOBI SHIELDS**

Tobi Shields is a graduate student in the Public History program at California State University, Sacramento. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Sacramento State in history. Her current area of interest is nineteenth-century crime in California. She is currently writing a biography of William Moore Roe and hopes to find employment at the California State Archives.

### **SHAMEEL SINGH**

Shameel Singh is a graduate student in history at California State University, Sacramento. She received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Davis.

### **BRITTNEY SMITH**

Brittney Smith is currently a graduate student at California State University, Sacramento. Having received her Bachelors of Arts from Sacramento State in the history pre-credential program, she felt she had more to learn from their magnificent faculty and decided to remain for an additional two years of tortured scholarship. She is interested in African American women's history. After completing her graduate studies at Sacramento State, Brittney aspires to pursue a doctorate in history and teach at the university level.

### **SARAH STARKE**

Sarah Starke is a graduate student in the Public History program at California State University, Sacramento. She received her Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of California, Davis in 2009. Her interests are in early American political history and museum studies. She plans to pursue a doctorate degree in American history so that she can one day land her dream job as a political history curator at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. She lives in Davis, California with her husband, Zack, and her golden retriever, Sherman Tecumseh.

NAPA'S DARK LEGACY:  
HISTORICAL TRACES OF A NINETEENTH-CENTURY  
PUBLIC EXECUTION

TOBI SHIELDS



**Introduction**

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, Californians had begun to view public hangings as barbaric events. Prolonged strangulations occurred because of improperly placed nooses. In addition, inexperienced executioners failing to soak ropes overnight to lessen the rebound effect would fail to break the necks of the prisoners as they fell through the trapdoor. To assuage critics, the Legislature passed an amendment on March 31, 1891 to the 1872 Penal Code statute regarding the implementation of capital punishment requiring all sentences of death to be carried out within the walls of either Folsom or San Quentin State Prison. Two years passed before an experienced hangman conducted an execution within a California state prison: San Quentin held its first execution on March 3, 1893 while Folsom Prison followed two years later on December 13, 1895. In the meantime, the old adage of “an eye for an eye” held by vengeful citizens, sheriffs, and even judges superseded the law within many county courts. Sheriffs continued to conduct their own executions within the confines of a jail yard or courthouse square, some well into the twentieth century.

Napa County conducted its last public hanging on January 15, 1897 when Sheriff George McKenzie executed William Moore Roe for first-degree murder. The case of the *People v. William Roe* is historically significant for many reasons. Aside from its local significance within Napa as the county's last public hanging, the case provides insight into the limited resources available to a small town sheriff in his capture of a murderer. Due to the close-knit atmosphere of the community, not to mention the promi-

nence of the victim, Sheriff McKenzie doggedly pursued Roe via wanted posters, delivered by train and stagecoach, and telegrams. When the Napa community clamped down on his travel expenditures months into the investigation, McKenzie reached into his own pockets to continue his pursuit of justice. After six years of viewing possible suspects and following false leads, the relentless sheriff finally caught his man and held him accountable for his crimes. The case of the *People v. William Roe* also serves as an example of how public opinion influenced the jury and judge to hand down a sentence of death. More important is the motion made by the judge to grant Sheriff McKenzie the responsibility of publicly executing Roe within the courthouse square, responding to the outcry by the Napa community despite the current stipulation of the Penal Code. Because Roe had committed his crimes within Napa, the populace believed he must die within Napa. In order to fully grasp the importance of this last execution within the county, it must be placed in the context of the technology, culture and economy of the time period, which gives the story more value, meaning and significance.

### **Napa County, 1848-1891**

Originally called Nappa by the local Indian population, the area that would eventually become Napa City was founded in 1847 by Nathan Coombs. The parcel of land was originally part of the Rancho Entre Napa Mexican land grant awarded to Nicolás Higuera in 1836 by Governor Mariano Chico.<sup>1</sup> Napa County is one of the original 27 counties created on February 18, 1850 and comprised of four other incorporated cities: Yountville, St. Helena, Calistoga, and American Canyon. The City of Napa is the largest city in the county and serves as the county seat. A courthouse, complete with a small jail, was erected in 1856 to enforce law and order within the growing town. The first telegraph line from Vallejo to Napa was strung in 1858; the second was built in 1867 linking Napa to Calistoga. This was followed by telephone service in the fall of 1883. Gas was used to light Napa City in 1868 and electricity in 1890.<sup>2</sup>

By 1891, the Napa County Sheriff's Office had conducted seven legal executions via hanging. Intent on safeguarding the community against crime, local law enforcement actively pursued lawbreakers. Prostitution,

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1. W. F. Wallace, *History of Napa County* (Oakland: Enquirer, 1901), 132.

2. *Napa County Record*, "Invitation Napa County," November 1962, 24.

physical assaults, arson, robbery, public drunkenness, and the occasional murder were common occurrences within the city's red light district and Chinatown. The daily newspapers of Napa County regularly reported all crimes, arrests, and trials. Despite the bucolic landscape and amenities afforded its citizens, Napa County was not free from the criminal element or racial tensions.

In 1890, the United States population census for the county recorded a population of 16,411.<sup>3</sup> Citizens included whites of English, German, and Italian ancestry as well as people of color. The towns of Napa and St. Helena each housed small Chinatowns where the county's Chinese population congregated. Whites often frequented the bordellos, opium dens, and gambling houses of these small enclaves. A minuscule number of descendants of the native population, often referred to as Wappo Indians, remained within the county.<sup>4</sup> Although discrimination against people of color occurred within Napa, as it did throughout the state and country during the nineteenth century, such individuals contributed greatly to the county's agricultural and manufacturing economies.

The Mediterranean climate of the valley provided local farmers the conditions necessary for success. Wheat was the primary crop throughout the mid-nineteenth century and was responsible for the valley's wealth as over ten percent of all grain in the United States came from Napa County. As improvements were made in transportation, it became easier for farmers to transfer grain to nationwide markets. When wheat prices began to decline in the 1870s due to overproduction, apples and peaches became the major crops grown throughout the county. By 1890, 300,000 fruit trees had been planted. Grapes had also become a lucrative crop by this time due to the phylloxera infestation that had destroyed the vineyards of France.<sup>5</sup> Napa County was also ideal for breeding and raising livestock as the valley floor provided a vegetation of natural grasses for herds of cattle and sheep. Ranchers supplied hides the local tanning industry processed into leather. Steamboats traveled up the Napa River to the tanneries in the city district of Napa to pick up cargo, which they then carried out to the San Pablo Bay

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3. Bay Area Census, "City of Napa, Napa County," <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/cities/Napa50.htm#1940>.

4. Lyman Palmer, *History of Napa and Lake Counties, California* (San Francisco: Slocum, Bowen & Co., 1881), 143-148.

5. Denzil Verardo and Jennie Dennis Verardo, *Napa Valley: From Golden Fields to Purple Harvest* (Northridge: Windsor Publications, 1986), 42-43.

for eventual distribution to San Francisco. Construction of the Napa Valley Railroad in 1864, and its eventual linkage to the Southern Pacific Railroad system in 1898, improved the distribution of Napa goods.<sup>6</sup>

During the mid-nineteenth century, as word spread of the affordable land in Napa County, the population steadily increased. Attracted to the rolling green fields of Napa, sea captain John Quinton Greenwood began purchasing property in the southern part of the county during the mid-1860s as he prepared for his retirement. Born near Calais in Washington County, Maine, on October 21, 1830, John Greenwood had followed the example set by his father and brother by becoming a sailor at the age of nineteen. After a career aboard trade ships traversing Cape Horn, Greenwood built a schooner and, for several years, engaged in trade at the Port of Stockton located on the San Joaquin River and at the Port of Sacramento. It was during his time in California that he met his future wife, Lucina Larabee.

Shortly after her birth in 1845, Lucina and her family left her native Michigan for Iowa. By the age of 17, she had settled with her family in Contra Costa County, California, where she met and married Greenwood in 1861.<sup>7</sup> Lucina's Napa neighbors would later describe her as an intuitive, gentle woman who was always willing to help a friend. She was an elegant woman who wore high-collared dresses stylish for the period and her long hair piled into a bun atop her head.<sup>8</sup> Greenwood and Lucina never had children.

The Greenwood Ranch occupied a parcel of land that had formerly belonged to General Mariano Vallejo's Suscol Rancho land grant. Located in the southern part of the county, the property was nine and one-quarter miles from the city of Napa. After borrowing \$5,500 from San Francisco's Savings and Loan Society, Greenwood built a two-story house in the Italianate style that had become popular in the 1860s.<sup>9</sup> The residence was

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6. Denzil Verardo and Jennie Dennis Verardo, *Napa Valley: From Golden Fields to Purple Harvest* (Northridge: Windsor Publications, 1986), 87-89.

7. ktaadnpb [pseud.], "John Quinton Greenwood," posting to the "Greenwood, John Quinton, born near Calais, Maine 1830; died Soscol, Napa, California 1912," public family tree, May 13, 2011, <http://community.ancestry.com/profile.aspx?mba=004a477f-0003-0000-0000-000000000000>.

8. *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Moore on Trial for His Life," November 12, 1896.

9. Napa County Recorder-County Clerk, *Index to Deeds, Grantors, vol. 1*, "John Thomas to John Q. Greenwood, 10 April 1867" (Napa: Napa County Recorder-County Clerk), 65.

constructed atop a gently sloping hill that overlooked the county road. Greenwood constructed a widow's walk atop the roof where he could stare out across his lush fields to the San Pablo Bay, reminiscing of his younger days as a sea captain.<sup>10</sup> He raised large crops of grain and rented pastureland to fellow ranchers in need of grazing land for cattle. Lucina enjoyed spending her days visiting with neighbors or tending to her flowerbeds.<sup>11</sup>

### The Napa Crime

Monday, February 9, 1891 began just like any other weekday for retired sea captain John Greenwood and his wife, Lucina. After their noon meal, Greenwood ventured outside to repair a section of fencing on his 386-acre parcel while Lucina drove her horse and buggy to a neighbor's house to retrieve the daily newspaper and flowers for a funeral wreath she was making for the coffin of a recently deceased friend. On her way to the residence of Mrs. Hannah Moore, Lucina happened upon two men walking along the road. The men asked Lucina for a ride, to which she replied she was only going a short distance to the next house down the road. Upon her arrival at the Moore residence, she related the incident to her friend. Though the men were both well dressed, Lucina explained, their presence in the area disturbed her. Hannah Moore would later recall to a reporter for *The Napa Register* that Lucina had told her that "she never had such a foreboding of impending danger come over her," and she wanted to return to the safety of her home immediately.<sup>12</sup> In less than an hour, Lucina Greenwood would discover her initial perception of the two men had been correct.

### The Strangers

One of the men, William Moore Roe, was a seasoned criminal with a penchant for armed robbery and murder. Born in Ohio during the year of 1852, Roe soon discovered how disappointing and dangerous life could be. Shortly after the birth of his son, his father left the family with relatives and headed out west to seek his fortune during California's Gold Rush. Within weeks of his arrival, the family received word he had died.

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10. Napa Landmarks, "Napa County Historical Resources," vol. 2 (Napa: Napa Landmarks, 1978), 70-71.

11. Napa County Landmarks, "Greenwood House," in *Historic Resources Survey*, vol. 2 (Napa: Napa County Landmarks, 1978), 70-71.

12. *Napa Register*, "The Murderers," February 27, 1891.



Nine years later, Roe's mother absolved herself of all parental responsibility by leaving her nine-year-old son with relatives when she remarried. She would eventually give birth to six children with her new husband as well as raise five of his children from a previous marriage. Roe must have been devastated to see his mother care for another man's children and yet ignore her firstborn. Since these were Roe's formative years, such an act of parental neglect would have left painful psychological scars on his young psyche. As an adult, he would reveal his resentment towards his mother by falsely claiming she was deceased.

Roe experienced further heartbreak at the age of fourteen when his adoptive mother passed away. Shortly thereafter, his adoptive father remarried. Roe's new stepmother was instantly jealous of his status as the only living heir to his adoptive father and began plotting the boy's death. She first attempted to poison him, but Roe saved his own life by running to the local doctor to have his stomach pumped. One month later, his stepmother enlisted a local man to shoot Roe through his bedroom window while he slept. A neighbor witnessed the attempted murder and shot the unsuccessful assassin. Aware that his life was in danger, Roe began sleeping with a pistol under his pillow. When his stepmother asked her teenage son to attack Roe with an axe while he slept, Roe shot and killed the boy. Roe was acquitted of manslaughter after it was proven he acted in self-defense while his stepmother was taken to an asylum in Dayton, Ohio.

At the age of eighteen, Roe inherited a plot of land from his maternal grandmother. He soon experienced another loss when the mother of his former paramour killed his fiancé. As Roe would later explain, "after that I went to hell altogether."<sup>13</sup> He abandoned his property and embarked on a life of crime. He traveled throughout Ohio and West Virginia, stealing horses and committing robberies. During the early 1870s, Roe was involved in several gunfights resulting in the death of his opponent. He eventually hopped a train and made his way out west to California where he resumed his career as a robber. In the mining camps, he supplemented his stolen income with gambling.<sup>14</sup>

Always one-step ahead of the law, Roe eventually landed in Napa

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13. *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Roe Talks of his Life," November 22, 1896.

14. N. W. Collins, Napa County Clerk, "The People of the State of California vs. William Rowe, Confession, Plaintiff Exhibit N," filed November 13, 1896, in the possession of the Napa County Sheriff's Office Museum, 17-19.

County where he found employment as a farmhand. He worked for Peter Lynch, a neighbor of the Greenwoods, from September 1889 to January 1891. While employed by Lynch, Roe became enamored with Greenwood's young wife, Lucina. It was during this time he somehow concluded Greenwood kept a large amount of money hidden within his home. Angry over a reprimand he had received from the older man, Roe conceived a plan to return to Napa and rob Greenwood of his money. Roe also planned to rob the Bank of Napa.<sup>15</sup>

While aboard the ferry from San Francisco to Vallejo, Roe met Carl Schmidt, a recent German immigrant. He enticed Schmidt to accompany him to Napa with the false promise of employing the man on his ranch. During their walk from Vallejo, Roe persuaded the destitute Schmidt to aid him in the commissions of his crimes. Unbeknownst to Schmidt, Roe also planned to kill his accomplice once they completed the robberies.

Unlike Roe, Charles "Carl" Schmidt was not a criminal. At 37, Schmidt had left a wife and two children in his native Breslau, Germany. He planned to send for his family once he found steady employment and could pay for their voyage. Since his arrival in the United States in 1884, he had worked as a ranch hand in Pennsylvania and Minnesota and later as a railroad section hand in Utah. In 1890, he left Ogden, Utah for California. In December of that year, he found work in Folsom pruning grapevines. After forty days, he stowed away on a train. On February 1, he arrived in San Francisco, and a week later, he met William Roe while aboard the *Amador* as it crossed the bay towards Vallejo.<sup>16</sup>

### Home Invasion Turned Murder

At five o'clock, the men reached the Greenwood Ranch. Roe and Schmidt accosted Greenwood as he walked the 75 yards from the barn to the house. Both men drew their pistols on the unsuspecting rancher as Roe hollered, "Throw up your hands!"<sup>17</sup> Greenwood did as he was told. Roe then ordered the older man to unlock his residence. Both men kept their guns pointed at Greenwood as they followed him across the yard towards the house.

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15. *Napa Register*, "Roe Held," October 9, 1896.

16. D. Shakespear, Napa County Clerk, "The People of the State of California vs. Charles Schmidt, Confession," filed May 24, 1892, in the possession of the Napa County Sheriff's Office Museum, 1-4.

17. *Napa Register*, "Murder!," February 13, 1891.

The three men walked up the front steps, across the large wrap-around porch of the Greenwood residence and into the kitchen. Roe pulled two separate lengths of bale rope from his pocket and ordered Schmidt to bind the older man's hands and feet. In a rather aggressive manner, Schmidt replied Roe should perform the task himself as he did not know how to bind a person. Roe, clearly agitated by Schmidt's sudden assertiveness, viciously told him if he ever spoke to him in that manner again, he would "kill [him] on the spot."<sup>18</sup> Like a whipped dog, Schmidt took the bale rope from Roe and attempted to bind Greenwood's hands and feet.

Once Greenwood was restrained, Roe reached into his pocket and produced a small square bottle. Obtained in San Francisco, the bottle contained an opiate with the purpose of inducing sleep. Roe was quite familiar with its effects as he nightly relied upon the mixture to silence his demons and lull himself to sleep. He poured a few drops from the bottle into a cup half-full of water and shoved the mixture towards his captive. Though Greenwood explained to Roe he suffered from heart trouble, Roe ignored his protests. At gunpoint, Roe forced the older man to swallow the liquid.

Roe impatiently paced back and forth as he waited for the drug to take effect. He repeatedly demanded Greenwood to tell him where he had stashed his money within the house. Each time Greenwood honestly told him he did not keep large amounts of money in his home, and he had already given Roe the few dollars he had. After several minutes of watching Greenwood remain unaffected by the opiate, an irate Roe told him, "It takes a longer time for this stuff to act on you than any man I ever gave it to."<sup>19</sup>

Thirty minutes after Greenwood's initial confrontation by Roe and Schmidt, Lucina returned to her residence. She left her horse harnessed to her buggy and walked up the side of the porch. Just as she reached the door leading into the kitchen, Roe flung it open. Frightened by the stranger's presence in her home, Lucina dropped the pan of flowers she was carrying. Roe lunged toward her. Startled, Lucina quickly stepped back to flee the stranger's threatening grasp, but as she struggled to free herself, she lost her footing and fell backwards over the porch railing. Roe had managed to grab a hold of Lucina just as she lost her balance, and since Roe never loosened his grip on the startled woman, he too fell backwards over the porch rail-

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18. *Napa Register*, "His Confession," January 8, 1892.

19. *Napa Register*, "Arsenic Found," February 27, 1891.

ing, falling four feet into the flowerbed below. Lucina landed on her back, cushioning the fall of her attacker. Though injured and frightened, Lucina bravely fought her assailant as he quickly pulled her to her feet and dragged her up the porch steps.<sup>20</sup>

As Roe pushed Lucina into the kitchen, a drowsy Greenwood asked his wife if she was hurt, to which she answered, "Yes, I am hurt badly." After sitting Lucina in a chair and demanding her money, to which she replied she only had \$2.50 in her purse, Schmidt proceeded to bind her hands and feet with a window cord. As Roe reached into his pocket and retrieved his opiate bottle, he told the frightened woman he was going to "put her to sleep."<sup>21</sup>

After forcing Lucina to swallow a cup full of opiate-laced water, Roe turned his attention back to Greenwood. He wanted to make sure the woman's husband was securely bound before he commenced his assault on her. As he tightened the ropes that bound Greenwood's hands and feet, he cursed Schmidt's inadequate work. Roe's aggravation intensified as Greenwood remained conscious. He then decided to administer a dose of something more lethal to incapacitate the man. Roe reached into his pocket and pulled out another bottle. This second liquid, which Greenwood would later recall as being "sweet tasting," was chloroform.<sup>22</sup>

As Greenwood nodded off into unconsciousness, Roe ordered Schmidt to stand watch over Greenwood as he took Lucina into a nearby bedroom. When Roe attempted to take her watch, Lucina adamantly stated she would rather die than hand it over to him. When her body was discovered the following day, her watch remained on her person, but it was without its fob.<sup>23</sup>

Greenwood, still bound in the kitchen, could hear Roe talking in a rough manner towards his wife and voiced his objections. Roe called the older man a few foul names and ordered Schmidt to bring Greenwood into the front hall where he gagged him with a makeshift gag from a small piece of broken broom handle and a piece of fabric he had torn from one of Lucina's white skirts. Roe then returned to the front bedroom where Lucina lay helpless on the bed. Concealed behind the bedroom door, Roe manually

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20. *Napa Register*, "Murder!" February 13, 1891.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

strangled Lucina with a window cord until all signs of life vanished from her body.<sup>24</sup>

After ransacking the residence, Roe came away from the crime with only \$4.00 (\$1.50 Greenwood had in the house and \$2.50 from Lucina's purse). Roe also stole a gold breast pin set with emeralds, a pair of matching earrings belonging to Lucina, and Greenwood's checkbook and bankbook from the James H. Goodman & Co. Bank of Napa. Unable to find anything else of value in the Greenwood residence, Roe decided it was time to enact the second part of his plan – rob the Bank of Napa.<sup>25</sup>

From the front hall, where he lay bound and gagged, Greenwood heard the men depart in his wife's buggy. He summoned the strength necessary to loosen the ropes that bound his feet with his hands still tied behind his back. Greenwood entered the bedroom and found his wife unconscious on the bed. As his hands were bound, John used his teeth to grab a hold of Lucina's clothes to pull her towards him. Before he could administer any aid to Lucina, he again passed into unconsciousness.<sup>26</sup>

After stealing Lucina's horse and buggy, Roe and Schmidt made their way through the dark wintry night toward the city of Napa. They had a drink in the saloon opposite the courthouse on Brown Street, a mere six hundred feet from the Bank of Napa. After a conversation with the bartender and patrons that confirmed Greenwood was a wealthy man, Roe abandoned his plan to rob the bank to return to the Greenwood ranch for a second ransacking.

Upon entering the Greenwood residence, Roe erupted into a fit of rage at seeing Greenwood alive. He grabbed the older man and dragged him back into the hallway where he fired two .44 caliber shots, at close range, into the left side of Greenwood's head. One bullet passed downward into Greenwood's mouth, dislodging a tooth that he spit out onto the hall floor. A third shot was then fired. It ranged upwards and imbedded itself in his skull. Greenwood feigned death to prevent further injury. Roe then entered the bedroom where Lucina lay dead and fired a bullet into her skull as he stood over her.<sup>27</sup>

Before leaving the house, Roe exchanged his shoes for a worn pair

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24. *Napa Daily Journal*, "Carl Schmidt's Trial," May 21, 1892.

25. *Napa Register*, "Murder!" February 13, 1891.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Napa Daily Journal*, "Carl Schmidt's Trial," May 21, 1892.

of Greenwood's split-leather kip boots. He left his own blood spattered shoes behind, along with his soiled underclothes. Roe also stole a black overcoat belonging to Greenwood and some food from the kitchen pantry. After extinguishing the house lights and leaving the front door open behind them, the thieves made their final getaway via Lucina's horse and buggy.

Six years later, after his capture, Roe would reveal how he had initially planned to kill Schmidt upon their return to the Greenwood residence. He was going to remove the restraints from Lucina and Greenwood's hands and feet, and plant a pistol next to each man's dead body in an attempt to make it appear as if they had shot each other. For some unknown reason, Roe decided to spare the life of his accomplice.

### The Getaway

The two men traveled together along the road leading to Sacramento. In Cordelia, they found a grove of trees where they slept undetected. Both men agreed to part ways in the morning and meet back up in Denver, Colorado later. The choice of Denver as a rendezvous point was most likely due to the city's notorious reputation. Due to a silver boom in the 1880s, the city had become a den of sin. As Clark Secrest states in his book, *Hell's Belles: Prostitution, Vice, and Crime*, Denver's vice district ranked only slightly behind San Francisco's Barbary Coast.

At 7 a.m. the following morning, Tuesday, February 10, 1891, Greenwood summoned every ounce of strength remaining in his drug-addled body as he unbound his feet and crawled from his home in search of help. He made his way down the dirt road until he reached the front gate of his property, a total of 100 yards. His neighbor, Hugh Kelly, eventually found him. Once Kelly removed the crude gag from Greenwood's mouth, the injured man, his face covered in gunpowder and dried blood, told of the atrocities that had occurred the previous night.

The two men returned to the Greenwood house. Kelly stepped into the bedroom and viewed the deceased Lucina. He told Greenwood to stay put; he would ride into Napa City, alert the county sheriff to the crime, and summon a doctor. Sheriff George S. McKenzie, accompanied by a representative of the *Napa Register*, was the first to arrive at the crime scene.

Greenwood divulged every detail of the crime, which had befallen him and his wife the previous night, to Sheriff McKenzie as a doctor dressed his wounds. The Greenwood's neighbor, Mrs. Hannah Moore, arrived to inform Sheriff McKenzie of the two mysterious men Lucina had

seen on her way to the Moore residence the previous afternoon. She recalled Lucina's detailed descriptions of the two strangers and their clothing. Other residents of the Suscol area who had seen the two strangers in the vicinity also came forward to contribute information of the men's physical descriptions. Telegraphed to law enforcement agencies and newspapers throughout the state, the descriptions read as follow:

The American is about 5 feet 9 inches in height, between 30 and 40 years of age, high cheekbones, rather narrow chin, slim build, wrinkles on his neck, dark complexion, looks like a drinking man, dark brown hair and dark mustache. He wore a gold chain with a broad, flat fob attached; also, a full suit of brown, a sack coat, black slouch felt hat with a rather high crown, and a light-colored overcoat. He is supposed to wear a ring on the third finger of the right hand, with a dark stone setting in the same. He took a pair of kip boots, well worn, No. 7, with split-leather back, and backs rough, as is often the case with split leather. He wore red socks.

The other man, who is supposed to be a Swede or German, is about 5 feet 10 inches high, 25 or 30 years old, square build, round face, small eyes, light complexion, light hair and mustache. He wore a dark-blue suit, white shirt, felt hat with low crown and round top brim, which is broad and inclined to be flat.<sup>28</sup>

Law enforcement was still in its early stages in 1891, and, coupled with the limitations of sending messages via the postal service or telegraph, Sheriff McKenzie was hampered by the time it would take to alert authorities to the fleeing suspects.

On February 10, 1891, the morning following the crime, Lucina's horse was found standing at the barn door. From Cordelia, Roe had ridden the horse to the ferry launch in Vallejo where he then abandoned the animal. He took the *Solano* across the bay to San Francisco. He checked in as William Smith at the California Hotel (as discovered later by Sheriff McKenzie), shaved and changed his clothes, and then disappeared into the city.

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28. *San Francisco Chronicle*, "The Napa Tragedy," February 17, 1891; *Napa Register*, "The Latest Description," February 20, 1891.

## The Manhunt

Two days after his wife's death, Greenwood authorized Sheriff McKenzie to offer a reward of \$1,000 for the arrest of Lucina Greenwood's murderers. Sheriff McKenzie also contributed monies, and California governor Henry Markham donated \$300 from the state coffers.<sup>29</sup>

In Napa, on Wednesday, February 11, 1891, Coroner George W. Lawrence summoned a jury and held an inquest into Lucina's death. Composed of nine prominent male Napa citizens, the Coroner's Jury ruled the cause of death as a gunshot wound to the left side of the head which occurred "about half-past 11 o'clock p.m., February 9, 1891, at her residence in Napa County."<sup>30</sup> Local physician, Dr. Edgar Haun, tested the chemicals used to drug the Greenwoods and determined them to be chloroform and arsenic. The large amount found in Lucina's stomach was enough to have killed three people, explained Dr. Haun, and Greenwood would have died if he had not vomited at some point that evening.<sup>31</sup>

Sheriff McKenzie alerted San Francisco Chief of Police Patrick Crowley on February 12, 1891 to the possibility the murderers of Lucina Greenwood may be in the city waiting to make their getaway on one of the many ships that daily passed in and out of the city's port. Chief Crowley also ordered his men to search every ship bound for a foreign destination before it was allowed to leave the Port of San Francisco. Within days, Sheriff McKenzie arrived in the city to conduct his own search. He firmly believed the unnamed murderers were hiding out in San Francisco and would eventually emerge to make their escape once the presence of law enforcement dissipated. McKenzie met with Captain Isaiah W. Lees of the San Francisco Police Department who supported his theory.<sup>32</sup> Lees would eventually gain an international reputation as one of the world's leading detectives.<sup>33</sup> For two nights, several detectives and police officers assisted McKenzie and Lees as they searched areas of the city notorious for harbor-

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29. *San Francisco Chronicle*, "The Napa Tragedy," February 17, 1891.

30. *Napa Register*, "Murder," February 13, 1891.

31. *Napa Register*, "Arsenic Found," February 27, 1891.

32. *Napa Register*, "Many Arrests," February 20, 1891.

33. William B. Secrest, *Dark and Tangled Threads of Crime: San Francisco's Famous Police Detective Isaiah W. Lees* (Sanger, CA: Quill Driver Books/Word Dancer Press, 2004), 320.



ing criminals but were unsuccessful in locating the murderers.<sup>34</sup>

While Sheriff McKenzie searched San Francisco, male citizens of Napa were keeping an attentive watch over the county. Men carried pistols and shotguns as they traveled the desolate country roads, intent on bringing the murderers to justice. Four days after the crime, the *Napa Register* reported the entire community was willing to lynch the men who had killed Lucina Greenwood. Citizens also voice their disappointment in a criminal justice system they felt was too lenient in its punishment of thieves and murderers.<sup>35</sup>

As the details of the severity of the Greenwood tragedy spread throughout the state, law enforcement officers became overzealous in their attempts at arresting the murderers. Events surrounding the Greenwood tragedy had saturated the California press and with each announcement of an increase in reward, more false sightings and arrests occurred. The Napa Sheriff's Office was besieged by telegrams, letters, and visiting sheriffs with reports of suspicious men locked in county jails throughout California.

On February 20, 1891, the day after Lucina Greenwood's funeral, the reward for the capture of her killers was raised to \$2,000. The amount included contributions from John Greenwood (\$1,200), Napa citizen Levi George (\$250), Sheriff McKenzie (\$250), and the State of California (\$300).<sup>36</sup> California Governor Markham later "signed a bill offering a reward of \$2,500."<sup>37</sup> Napa residents would continue to contribute to the reward. By May, the reward stood at the hefty sum of \$4,500.

Despite the horrific events that had transpired within his home, Greenwood continued to live there. He occasionally traveled to Napa City when officers from other counties arrived at the Sheriff's Office with photographs of possible suspects. Once his gunshot wounds healed, he began traveling to various jails in California to identify possible suspects when telegraphs arrived at the Napa County Sheriff's Office. However, all attempts proved unsuccessful.

In the months following the crime, Sheriff McKenzie's pursuit of the murderers never waned. He followed every lead that came to his atten-

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34. *Napa Register*, "Many Arrests," February 20, 1891.

35. *Napa Register*, "The Verdict," February 13, 1891.

36. *Napa Register*, "\$2,000 Reward," February 20, 1891.

37. *Napa Register*, "Local Brevities," February 20, 1891.

tion, despite the opposition he endured from local officers and political officials. Many leading officers of California dismissed McKenzie's theory the murderers were now outside of the state. Although these men did not agree with McKenzie's theories, they continued to extend their services to him when he passed through their jurisdictions. When Napa residents became concerned about the funds that continued to go towards the investigation, McKenzie began paying his own travel expenses.

### **Arrest and Conviction of Carl Schmidt**

After eleven months of false arrests, false confessions, and no leads as to the whereabouts or identities of the men who committed the Greenwood murder, the first real break in the case finally came. On Friday, January 1, 1892, while walking past a Lawrence Street saloon at 4:30 in the afternoon, Detective William Ustick of Denver, Colorado overheard a man drunkenly brag to the saloonkeeper of his participation in a murder. Detective Ustick entered the saloon and began questioning the man. The man revealed his identity as Carl Schmidt and that he had helped another man rob and murder Greenwood and his wife in Napa. He then proceeded to describe how he and his accomplice had bound and gagged the couple. The detective patiently waited while Schmidt finished his drunken confession and then placed him under arrest. After securing his prisoner in a cell of the Denver County Jail, Detective Ustick wired a telegram to the Napa Sheriff's Office. Detective Ustick later reported shortly thereafter Carl Schmidt "went violently insane" within the confines of his jail cell.<sup>38</sup>

On Wednesday, January 6, after reviewing the information Detective Ustick provided in his telegram, Sheriff McKenzie requested requisition papers from Governor Markham to bring Schmidt to Napa. Assistant District Attorney Robert K. Thompson and Sheriff McKenzie arrived in Denver a week later on January 13. From within the confines of his jail cell, Schmidt made a complete confession to Sheriff McKenzie as District Attorney Thompson recorded the confession on stationery provided by the Denver sheriff.<sup>39</sup> The confession would later prove to be only half of the story as Schmidt had yet to identify his accomplice. On Saturday, January 16, 1892, with Schmidt's confession in hand, Sheriff McKenzie and District Attorney Thompson secured their prisoner and boarded the Union

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38. *Napa Register*, "A Confession," January 8, 1892.

39. *Napa Register*, "He is the Man," January 15, 1892.

Pacific for their return to Napa.

The following morning, Sunday, January 17, Greenwood arrived at the Napa County Courthouse to view the latest suspect in his wife's murder. Earlier that morning, a large crowd had begun to gather in the hallway of the courthouse to catch a peak at Schmidt as he was marched through the building and into the Sheriff's Office. A reporter for the *Napa Register* would later recall how Schmidt's face "gives one the idea that he is not overbright [*sic*], in fact, that he is rather stupid."<sup>40</sup> In the presence of Under-sheriff George Gardner and a representative from the *Napa Register*, Sheriff McKenzie asked Schmidt to identify John Greenwood out of a group of fifteen men. He correctly identified his victim. Greenwood then positively identified Carl Schmidt as one of the men who had been present the night his wife was killed.

Schmidt was arraigned the following afternoon, Monday, January 18, 1892. His preliminary examination began that Friday morning in Justice Wilkins' court. District Attorney Henry C. Gesford represented the people. Despite his initial request to represent himself, Schmidt was appointed a defense team. The high profile case had attracted so many spectators, including citizens of neighboring counties, that many were forced to stand in the hall as the courtroom quickly became crowded.

On the morning of Friday, May 20, after twelve jurors had been chosen, the *People v. Carl Schmidt* began in Napa's Superior Court. Supreme Court Judge Daniel J. Murphy of San Francisco was chosen to preside in the case. At his trial, Schmidt admitted his participation in the robbery of the Greenwood residence but maintained his innocence in relation to the poisoning of John and Lucina Greenwood as well as the shootings. His accomplice was solely to blame for the death of Lucina and the injuries inflicted upon John, he explained, and his name was William Moore. Schmidt then requested he receive the reward once Moore was captured so that he could send it to his family in Germany. His request was denied.

Five minutes before six o'clock, on the afternoon of Saturday, May 28, 1892, the courthouse bell rang signifying the jury had reached a verdict. Carl Schmidt was found guilty of murder in the first-degree and sentenced to life imprisonment.<sup>41</sup> A judgment of life imprisonment at San Quentin

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40. *Napa Register*, "Schmidt the Man," January 22, 1892.

41. *Daily Nevada State Journal*, "The Greenwood Murderer Convicted," May 29, 1892; *Napa Daily Journal*, "Schmidt Guilty," May 29, 1892.

State Prison in Marin County, California was rendered on Thursday, June 2, 1892. The following morning, Sheriff McKenzie escorted Carl Schmidt to San Quentin where he was placed on Crank's Alley, the prison ward devoted to the mentally insane.

### **Arrest and Conviction of William Moore Roe**

Though the arrest of William Moore Roe seemed less likely with each passing year, Sheriff McKenzie continued to pursue every lead no matter how improbable it seemed. His luck finally turned in September 1896, almost six years after the Napa tragedy. Just as his accomplice Carl Schmidt had done in Colorado, William Roe had confessed to William B. Shaug, a saloon keeper in the San Fernando Valley, he was the murderer of Lucina Greenwood and there was a reward for his arrest. Under the direction of Los Angeles County Sheriff John Burr, the saloonkeeper plied Roe with copious amounts of whiskey in order to draw more information from him. For twelve days, Shaug listened to the self-professed murderer's drunken confessions.<sup>42</sup> After the deranged man left his saloon each night, Shaug would write down what he remembered from their conversations. Satisfied that Roe's confession was legitimate, Sheriff Burr sent a telegraph to Napa on Monday, September 14, 1896 informing Sheriff McKenzie that his fugitive was in Los Angeles. In his initial telegraph to Napa, Burr also asked if the reward was still available for the capture of Roe. Sheriff McKenzie promptly replied to Burr's telegram. He verified the reward was still available and gave Sheriff Burr the go-ahead to arrest the suspect at once.<sup>43</sup>

On Monday, September 21, 1896, Sheriff Burr and a deputy traveled to San Fernando Valley and placed William Roe under arrest for the murder of Lucina Greenwood. Upon searching his prisoner, Sheriff Burr found a small bottle of poison and a sharpened butcher knife. Roe was taken to the Los Angeles County Jail where Sheriff Burr secured a 15-page handwritten confession in which Roe freely admitted to being solely responsible for the Greenwood murder and his accomplice, Carl Schmidt, was innocent. He revealed his identity, William Moore Roe, as well as several aliases. Roe also admitted to having killed eleven people in his lifetime; his first murder committed at the age of fourteen. Almost as an afterthought, he added to his death toll by admitting his involvement in the

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42. *Los Angeles Times*, "Killed Many Men," September 23, 1896.

43. *Ibid.*

murders of fourteen Indians near the Payette River in southwestern Idaho during the Bannock Indian War of 1878.<sup>44</sup>

On Wednesday, September 23, 1896, Sheriff Burr and William Shaug escorted their prisoner to Fresno where they met Sheriff McKenzie and Deputy Sheriff Robert Brownlee. Burr and Shaug continued on to Napa as further security. Word had begun to spread around the counties of Napa and Solano that citizens, especially the neighbors of the Greenwoods, were prepared to lynch Roe if given the chance. The party safely arrived in Napa where over one hundred Napa residents had gathered outside the courthouse in anticipation of seeing the elusive murderer. The following day, before a packed courtroom, Justice Bradford arraigned Roe.<sup>45</sup>

Word of Roe's arrest and his lengthy criminal career spread from state to state as he awaited his trial. His family attempted to contact him after news of his arrest reached Ohio. On Wednesday, November 18, 1896, Sheriff McKenzie received a letter from Roe's estranged mother. She gave a detailed description of her son and asked Sheriff McKenzie for written verification the man imprisoned in his jail was indeed her son. She revealed she had not seen her son since he left home eighteen years ago, and she knew of two murders in Washington County, Ohio attributed to him.<sup>46</sup>

On, Tuesday, November 10, 1896, the trial of the *People v. William Roe* commenced with Judge Murphy of San Francisco presiding. Roe admitted to the crimes he had committed against the Greenwoods and even disclosed how he had followed the investigation and the trial of Carl Schmidt in the newspapers. He openly discussed his dependency on alcohol and opiates and explained how he had suffered from insomnia for the past fourteen years. In a somber tone, Roe told the packed courtroom he wished to be hanged so he would no longer have to live with the knowledge of his crimes. Since committing his first murder at the age of fourteen, he explained, he knew something was wrong with him. He wished to have his body given over to science, and he believed a scientific investigation of his corpse would reveal abnormalities that would account for his criminal behavior.

After two weeks of trial proceedings, the jury found Roe guilty of

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44. Ibid.

45. *Napa Daily Journal*, "The Right Man," September 25, 1896.

46. *Marietta Daily Leader*, "A Splendid Liar," November 16, 1896; *Napa Register*, "Thinks Moore Her Son," November 20, 1896.

murder in the first-degree on Tuesday, November 24, 1896. Defense Attorney Charles J. Beerstecher moved for a new trial on the following grounds. First, the court erred in its decisions of law arising during the course of the trial. Second, the court misdirected the jury in matters of the law. Third, the verdict was contrary to law. Fourth, the verdict was contrary to the evidence. Satisfied there had been no error committed by the court, Judge Murphy denied the motion. Before the judgment was pronounced, Roe was allowed to address the court. He commended the court on the fair trial he was granted and agreed the jury was correct in returning a guilty verdict. People were surprised both by how intelligently Roe addressed the court and by his mellifluous voice. Reporters later commented his calm demeanor, respectable attire, and ability to recite poetry by Keats proved he was not an ordinary criminal.

Despite the overwhelming consensus among the community of Napa that Roe should pay for his crimes with his life, the twelve-man jury waived its right to impose a sentence. As the current law designated, a conviction of first-degree murder was punishable by either death or life imprisonment. Newspaper reporters theorized Roe would be hanged at San Quentin State Prison, as outlined in the Penal Code. Due to the overwhelming outcry for vengeance by the Napa community and the notoriety of the case throughout the West, explained Judge Murphy, Sheriff McKenzie would be granted the responsibility of executing Roe within the walls or yard of the county jail. He then signed the death warrant, fixing the date and time of execution for Friday, January 15, 1897 at 11 a.m. As it would be Sheriff McKenzie's first execution, he took every precaution to ensure an expedient and successful hanging.<sup>47</sup>

While awaiting his execution, Roe devised various ways to escape his fate. First, he somehow managed to steal the cell keys from prisoner guard Wall Kennedy but was quickly thwarted by another inmate who revealed the theft. Shortly thereafter Roe asked an inmate, who had been entrusted to deliver meals to the jail from the restaurant across the street, to smuggle in a pistol from Sheriff McKenzie's office. Roe hid the small pistol in the trap of the water closet in his cell while he devised a plan to shoot Wall Kennedy. From his cell window, Roe watched the routines of various law enforcement officers as they hitched their horses outside of the court-

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47. *Napa Register*, "Murderer Roe: The Date Fixed for His Execution," November 27, 1896; *San Francisco Call*, "Thank You, Said Murderer Roe," November 25, 1896; *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Moore Will Hang at San Quentin," November 23, 1896.

house. After making his escape, Roe planned to steal a horse and ride to the ferry launch in Vallejo. By the time Roe had masterminded this second escape plan, the pistol had slipped down the pipes of the water closet before he could retrieve it. His third, and most desperate plan, involved the construction of a long paper tube that he intended to use to direct gas from the burner above his cell door into his cell for asphyxiating himself. Before Roe could test the paper tube, a deathwatch was placed on him until the day of execution. Authorities were unaware of his suicidal plans; they were simply ensuring he would not escape his execution. The pistol and paper tube went undiscovered until the following year.<sup>48</sup>

In early December, Sheriff McKenzie began preparations for Roe's execution. He ordered the construction of an enclosure within the rear courtyard of the courthouse square, inside of which the scaffold would be erected against the back wall of the county jail. Officers retrieved the dismantled scaffold from the courthouse attic. The 16 by 16 foot scaffold had been constructed in 1883 to hang convicted murderer John Murbach before his sentence was commuted to life in prison. It had also been painted a grim gray.<sup>49</sup>

The enclosure was built of corrugated sheet-iron, measured 34 by 40 feet, and was 16-feet high to hide the scaffold from the inevitable gawking public. A canvas was spread over the top beams of the scaffold to further conceal it from the adjacent buildings on Coombs Street. A space around the scaffold was fenced in by ropes and reserved for officers and physicians. To the north and west of the enclosure were tiers of steps on which the spectators would stand. The upper step on the west tier was reserved for newspaper reporters and a small desk was placed nearby for their use. In the back of the scaffold was a small closet in which three deputy sheriffs would be stationed to cut three ropes, one of which would release the trap. The latch which held the trap was attached to a heavy iron weight by a rope which passed over a pulley. One of the three ropes that would be cut held up this weight. The cutting of the rope released the weight, which unattached the trap, and as the trap fell, the rope held it against the wall,

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48. *Napa Daily Journal*, "A Reminder of Roe," March 15, 1898; *Napa Daily Journal*, "Roe's Ghost Walks," October 9, 1898.

49. *Los Angeles Times*, "Gallows Has Place in History – But No Home," August 31, 1979.

preventing it from swinging against the body.<sup>50</sup>

Sheriff McKenzie obtained the necessary rope and a black hood from the executioner at San Quentin State Prison. A wooden coffin, provided by coroner/mortician Daniel S. Kyser, was placed directly below the trapdoor for the removal of the corpse. Four hundred invitations to the execution, personally signed by Sheriff McKenzie, were sent out to prominent male citizens of Napa County as well as law enforcement officers and newspaper reporters from other counties. Sheriff McKenzie informed the public via the *Napa Daily Journal* that admittance into the execution would not be granted without an invitation bearing the attendee's name.<sup>51</sup>

### The Execution

On the morning of January 15, 1897, William Moore Roe woke at half past seven and ate a hearty breakfast while a crowd of people formed outside the courthouse to view the last public hanging of Napa County. As a reporter for the *Napa Daily Journal* later wrote, "the city has not had such a lively appearance since election day." Uninvited men and women crowded into nearby two-story buildings on Brown Street in an attempt to view the execution from a window. Others climbed fire escapes to reach higher vantage points from building rooftops. Although the Penal Code clearly stated underage persons could not view an execution, Napa law enforcement was too overwhelmed that day to pull all the young boys from the tall oak trees that dotted the landscape around the courthouse.<sup>52</sup> On this day, it appeared as though the hands of time had reversed and the community of Napa was reenacting an outdated form of justice.

At exactly 11 a.m., Deputy Sheriffs Rednall and Turner opened the doors into the enclosure. Deputy Sheriff Benjamin Grauss collected the passes while Marshall Chaigneau and Constable Allen escorted the

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50. *Los Angeles Daily Times*, "Roe Stretches Rope," January 16, 1897; *Napa Daily Journal*, "Expiation," January 16, 1897; *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Roe Calmly Awaits Death," January 15, 1897.

51. *Napa Daily Journal*, "Preparing for the Execution," January 12, 1897.

52. *Napa Daily Journal*, "Expiation," January 16, 1897.





*Gallows used to hang William Moore Roe on January 15, 1897, remain on permanent exhibit at the Napa County Sheriff's Department. Photo courtesy of Tobi Shields.*

spectators to the tiers of steps on which they would stand during the execution. Eleven physicians took their places below the scaffold. Numerous newspapermen and visiting sheriffs gathered in front of the structure to await the arrival of the prisoner.

Roe sat in the corridor of the jail, outside of his cell, as he awaited his time of execution. He freely chatted with fellow prisoners and jail staff as he smoked a cigar. When Undersheriff Brownlee read Roe the death warrant, he calmly stated, "That's alright", walked into his cell, put on his coat, and arranged his toilet. He then walked back into the hallway where officers began to secure the straps that would bind his wrists to his thighs. As Roe was marched to the scaffold at 11:15 a.m., he continued to smoke his cigar but a "manner of uneasiness" began to show in his demeanor.<sup>53</sup>

Sheriff McKenzie, Undersheriff Brownlee, prison guard Wall Kennedy, Salvation Army Captain Kettle, and several deputy sheriffs escorted

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53. Ibid.

Roe onto the scaffold. After asking the audience to be silent, Sheriff McKenzie asked Roe if he had any statement he wished to make. Roe replied he had none, except he would like to thank the officers for the kind way in which they had treated him during his incarceration. He asked Sheriff McKenzie to retrieve a letter from inside his coat pocket he wrote to prison guard Wall Kennedy. Within this letter, Roe revealed his various plans to escape and how he had intended to commit suicide until Sheriff McKenzie ordered him placed under a deathwatch. He also disclosed the whereabouts of the pistol he had procured while inside the jail and the paper tube he had concealed in the ceiling.<sup>54</sup>

Roe continued to smoke his cigar until the time came to place the noose around his neck. At this point, his hands began to tremble as he discarded his cigar. After tightening the rope around his prisoner's neck, Sheriff McKenzie placed the black hood from San Quentin over Roe's head as Captain Kettle offered a prayer. Sheriff McKenzie lifted his right arm, and at the end of the prayer, he gave the three deputies behind the scaffold the signal to cut the rope. As Roe's body dropped through the trapdoor at lightning speed, his neck was snapped, causing a clean break between the third and fourth vertebrae. The rope did not rebound after the drop as it had been properly stretched prior to the execution. The body swayed gently underneath the trap, without a sign of struggle, as the execution staff descended the scaffold and took their places around the body for the final pronouncement of death.

After nineteen minutes, local physician and surgeon Edwin Z. Hennessey officially pronounced William Moore Roe dead at 11:50 a.m. Normally the coroner would record a death, which occurred in the county; this was the one instance when that procedure was not followed. Professional photographer H. H. Blakesly of St. Helena's Elite Studio was allowed to photograph the scene as Sheriff McKenzie held a knife to the rope (the knife had actually belonged to Roe and was confiscated by Sheriff Burr upon his arrest of Roe in Shaug's San Fernando Valley saloon). Spectators observed the officers placing the corpse in the wooden coffin that had been directly below the trapdoor. The hanging rope was then cut into small pieces and distributed to the spectators as souvenirs. Sheriff McKenzie took possession of the noose. Coroner Kyser took possession of the body and it

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54. *Napa Daily Journal*, "A Reminder of Roe," March 15, 1898.

was transferred to his funeral parlor in the Williams Block on Main Street.<sup>55</sup>

The following morning, Dr. Hennessey accompanied the crate containing Roe's coffin to the College of Physicians and Surgeons in San Francisco where it was dissected. Roe had been correct in his self-assessment. After careful analysis and measurements of Roe's entire body, it was revealed to be of abnormal development on the right side, including the internal organs. The left side of the body also showed a lack of development, but to a lesser degree. Measurements further revealed the left side of his head was developed far more than the right side. The depression above his left temple was far greater than normal, leading the physicians to speculate that it may have affected his brain. The brain was removed from the skull and weighed; the left side of his brain was found to be four ounces lighter than the right side. Due to the reduced weight of the brain, Hennessey determined Roe was indeed "mentally deficient."<sup>56</sup>

After the dissection, Roe's corpse was returned to Napa City. On January 8, 1898, the *Napa Daily Journal* informed the community that for the past six months the bones of William Roe had been bleaching atop the roof of the Williams Block, which housed Coroner Kyser's funeral home and furniture store. Dr. Hennessey later cleaned and articulated the skeleton for his own anatomical collection. It is unclear whether this actually occurred. The skeleton was eventually given to the Napa Valley Unified School District to be used as an instructional aid in biology classes. The last reported accounting of the skeleton was in the 1960s. As of this writing, its whereabouts are unknown.<sup>57</sup>

### Remnants of History

Within a year after the execution, the Napa County Courthouse was plagued by a series of events attributed to William Roe. A year after the execution, jailer Wall Kennedy claimed to hear sounds resembling a barefooted person walking across the floor coming from the cell Roe had occupied during his last days. Kennedy adamantly professed his belief Roe haunted the jail to a reporter of the *Napa Register*. To this day, employees of the Napa County Courthouse report strange paranormal occurrences.

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55. *Napa Daily Journal*, "Expiation," January 16, 1897.

56. *Napa Daily Journal*, "Roe's Body Dissected," January 20, 1897.

57. Michael Chegwyn, "A Killing Too Many," *True West*, November 1991, 28-29; *Napa Register*, "Slayer of Eight Was Last Man Hanged at Courthouse in 1897," July 24, 1956.

Female office personnel relate stories of hearing a man behind them say, "What are you doing?" when they remain alone in the office during the evening. When they turn around, no one is there. Other strange events within the building have been attributed to the ghost of William Roe although no one wants to officially go on record due to fear of repercussions from their superiors.<sup>58</sup>

Roe also directly contributed to the plumbing problems, which plagued the building in the year following his execution. The pistol he had secured while in jail had lodged itself in the pipes causing a series of overflows. It went undetected until March 1898 when plumbers discovered the rusted weapon in the trap. Several chambers of the small bull dog type pistol were loaded. Sheriff McKenzie was most likely aware of what was causing the plumbing problems since Roe had admitted in his letter to Wall Kennedy that he had stashed a pistol stolen from the jailhouse office in the water closet of his cell. Once the pistol was discovered, Sheriff McKenzie shared this information with the public in an article for the *Napa Register*. Whether he received any criticism from the community is unknown.<sup>59</sup>

The hanging of Roe also left indelible scars on various citizens of Napa County. Surviving victim John Greenwood remained in the home that he once shared with his beloved wife, Lucina, until his death in 1912. As homage to his late wife, Greenwood had her buggy dismantled and reconstructed in the attic of the house where he lived out his last years. He died at the age of 82 and was interred alongside his wife in the Greenwood family plot at Tulocay Cemetery in Napa.

As the generation who witnessed the case of the *People v. William Roe* passed away so did the historical significance of the county's last execution and the remaining artifacts. In July 1979, while clearing the courthouse attic for remodeling, workers discovered the dismantled scaffold. Surprised by the finding, the county placed the gallows on exhibit at the Napa Town and Country Fair that summer. It appears as though the discovery of the scaffold sparked a renewed interest in the case as items began to resurface from various sources. The hood was later discovered in a tattered paper bag at the Napa County Historical Society. Descendants of the lawmen who brought Roe to

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58. Anonymous, interview by author, Napa, CA, January 8, 2008. The name of interviewee is withheld by mutual agreement; *Napa Daily Journal*, "Roe's Ghost Walks," October 9, 1898.

59. *Napa Daily Journal*, "A Reminder of Roe," March 15, 1898.

justice contributed other items long forgotten in their attics. For the next fifteen to twenty years, these items were stored in paper bags and



carelessly passed between sheriff department personnel until Captain Gene Lyerla created a museum in the newly constructed Napa County Sheriff's Department in 2001 to house such artifacts.<sup>60</sup>

History was further altered in 1990 when the Napa County Planning Commission allowed the Greenwood house to be relocated across the highway to accommodate the construction of a medical insurance billing company. Money trumped history as local historian Michael Chegwyn pointed out in a scathing letter he wrote to the editor of the *Napa Register*. After correcting several inaccuracies that had been perpetuated by armchair historians throughout the last thirty years, Chegwyn reminded the public of the historical significance of the case – the last public execution of the county. He also claimed it was the last for the state. In his argument against relocating the Victorian home, he wrote:

The soul of this county rests in its history and one can no more take a venerable structure such as the 110-year-old

60. *Los Angeles Times*, "Gallows Has Place in History – But No Home," August 31, 1979; *Napa Register*, "Napa's Last Gallows Found in Courthouse," July 5, 1979.

Greenwood house from its setting without diminishing it than one can rip out a tree by its roots and expect it to live. As the [n]ative Americans who once freely roamed this valley understood places, ancestors, and those now living are part of the same fabric and, if separated, they cannot stand alone.<sup>61</sup>

Although local historians occasionally publish “anniversary” articles detailing the hanging of William Roe, they consistently fail to address its historical significance. This incident is an example of how public involvement and opinion influenced the jury and judge to hand down a sentence of death and order the local sheriff to conduct the execution in defiance of state law. Because this brutal crime was committed within Napa, the populace and the authorities believed it should also be the place where justice would finally be served. Important details of the case disappeared from the collective memory as the generation who had witnessed the execution passed away. Further loss accrued as county and city commissioned historiographies omitted the execution from the public record, and local agencies destroyed documents to free up office space. Gory details of the murder and an almost folkloric depiction of Roe as another “Billy the Kid” took precedence in order to entertain the public.<sup>62</sup> Articles sensationalizing the crime and execution have appeared in local publications, but all fail to place the events in a historic context or address the historical significance of the execution. Local authors resurrect the case during the Halloween season for local publications as a means of injecting the collective memory with stories of possible hauntings. While William Roe may remain in the collective memory of the Napa public as the last man hanged in the county, ongoing research shows his case is significant as it directly demonstrates the limited resources available to law enforcement and the changing enforcement of California’s death penalty.

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61. *The Napa Register*, “History Murdered,” August 31, 1990.

62. *Napa Valley Register*, “The End of the Rope,” January 13, 1997.

THE QUESTION  
OF GENOCIDE IN NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES:  
A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

ELIZABETH DUKOVICH



The question of whether or not the depopulation and mistreatment of Native Americans by the United States government may accurately qualify as genocide occupies only a small portion of Native American historiography. Most Native American history addresses questions of individual tribes, disease, depopulation, and mistreatment, issues that relate to but ultimately avoid the question of genocide. Others argue the primary importance of recognizing the injustices perpetrated against the Native Americans in order to better understand and contextualize Native American history and to better understand genocide itself.

According to the United Nations, genocide involves the commission of at least one of five different acts against a particular “national, ethnic, racial, or religious group: 1) killing members of the group; 2) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; 3) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; 4) imposing measures to prevent births within the group; 5) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”<sup>1</sup> Native American historians, even those writing before the UN officially codified the legal definition of genocide, published numerous accounts of the United States engaged in many of the criteria described above, particularly those related to killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting poor living conditions designed to bring about a group’s destruction, and forcibly transferring children to another group. From a purely legalistic standpoint, the answer to

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1. Richard G. Hovannisian (ed), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 1986), 44.

the question of whether or not the Native Americans experienced genocide is obvious: the scholastic record overwhelmingly proves that they did. The question remains both intriguing and complicated not only because of the technical question but because of the answer's political implications. What claims to moral legitimacy has a nation that committed what most commonly understand as the worst of human cruelty? The majority of Native American historiography avoids the political traps inherent in the question of genocide, instead exploring disease, warfare, and massacre as topics in their own right. The scholarship that does directly address the question of Native American genocide remains mired in the complex politics of genocide recognition. Recognizing the genocide also affects contemporary American politics, challenging narratives of America's virtue and possibly influencing government policy towards existing tribes.

Early scholarship chronicling Native American suffering expressed deep sadness and sympathy but proposed no meaningful political alternatives to upset American pride or the existing social order. In 1931, Robert Gessner's *Massacre: A Survey of Today's American Indian* presented a political argument, sharply criticizing the Bureau of Indian Affairs for leaving Native Americans and their children "...criminally neglected."<sup>2</sup> Gessner combined oral history and primary source references to situate the Native Americans he encountered in a historical narrative of brutality and defeat. He concluded by wondering which is worse, the battle at Wounded Knee, "...in which the suffering and misery were brief, in which the weariness of the living was quickly extinguished...Or today's slow, starving, heart-breaking existence...gradual dissolution through disease, poverty, and hopelessness. Today's slow, torturing massacre."<sup>3</sup> Gessner's style of overt political critique would not become prominent in Native American studies until the late 1960s and early 1970s. Until then, the field's most prominent scholar was Grant Foreman, whose combination of sympathy and optimism created an important template for sympathetic Native American history.

In his 1932 book *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians*, Grant Foreman, presents "the account of the removal of southern Indians" that he describes as "...this tragic phase in

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2. Robert Gessner, *Massacre: A Survey of Today's American Indian* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1931), 164.

3. Gessner, 418.



American history.”<sup>4</sup> Foreman informs the reader that “...this book is not written to excite sympathy for the Indians...” and extols the virtues of the officers and soldiers in charge of Indian removal, praising the way they “...devoted themselves indefatigably and sympathetically to the sad task of removing the Indians with as much expedition and comfort as possible within the provisions made by their superiors in Washington.”<sup>5</sup> Foreman’s work situates his unfortunate tale firmly in the past by emphasizing the gains Native Americans achieved since their removal, equating “the rehabilitation of these five Indian nations...with the best traditions of white frontier civilization,” and trumpeting their “recovery” as “...an achievement unique in our history.”<sup>6</sup> In the 1952 forward to a reprint of his significant work, Foreman wrote in the forward that despite continuing research, he “...discovered nothing that would substantially alter the picture presented in the first edition.”<sup>7</sup> Foreman’s optimistic narrative suggests no contemporary problems with relations between white Americans and Native Americans, allowing him to tell a tragic historical tale without generating modern political controversy. His work became the template for Native American historiography.

In 1941, Angie Debo penned *The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Indians*, another detailed chronicle of Native American suffering and decline. Debo dedicates the book to Grant Foreman (“whose work has pointed the way”), focusing specifically on the influence of the Creeks on American culture, arguing that “...their influence upon the history of the white man has been profound and permanent.”<sup>8</sup> She attributes the final decline and defeat of the Creeks to U.S. government policy, describing the policies of the Dawes Commission as a direct result of the United States “...finally determin[ing] to break down the autonomy of the Five Tribes and erect a white man’s state upon the ruins of the Indian governments...”<sup>9</sup> Like Foreman and Gessner, Debo describes mass murder

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4. Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), (np).

5. Foreman, (np).

6. Foreman, 386.

7. Foreman, (np).

8. Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Indians* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), x.

9. Debo, 347.

and suffering that correspond with the UN definition of genocide. After the Red Stick War, Debo writes that “white people continued to murder Indians with impunity...local prejudice always ran too high to punish a white man for a crime against an Indian.”<sup>10</sup> Debo contributes to Native American scholarship by expanding Grant Foreman’s influential work and presenting a chronicle of Creek history that exposes injustices done to Native Americans. Although these early works chronicling injustices towards the Native Americans were the minority in a larger body of scholarship that focused mostly on stories of manifest destiny and Native Americans as obstacles in the larger story of American victory, they helped establish the groundwork for later arguments about the question of Native American genocide.

While Ralph K. Andrist does not mention the word genocide specifically in his 1964 book, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indian*, his work foreshadows the stronger political condemnations later in the decade.<sup>11</sup> Andrist differs from earlier scholarship in his more forceful condemnation of the mistreatment of Native Americans throughout history. Gessner confines his harshest criticism for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the present while Foreman laments the suffering of Native Americans but carefully excuses the soldiers on the ground, careful to ascribe the best of motives. Debo’s narrative provides a chronicle in which she describes Native American suffering but avoids completely any political message. Similarly, Andrist avoids any overt political argument but presents a more damning case against the United States army and the process of moving west than any of his predecessors.

Andrist begins with the following clarification of the plains wars, “As in all wars, men died unpleasantly...Women and children suffered... and the Army made it a part of strategy to destroy the enemy’s food and possessions in order to leave him cold, hungry, and without the will to resist.”<sup>12</sup> Although Foreman referred to the removal of tribes in the East instead of tribes in the West, Andrist presents the opposite picture of the United States army in their dealings with the Plains Indians. Andrist later writes that the urge to “‘kill and destroy’...were the same voices that were raised everywhere on the plains, and in all our relations with our Indians,

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10. Debo, 86.

11. Ralph K. Andrist, *The Long Death: the Last Days of the Plains Indian* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964).

12. Andrist, 3.

from the Atlantic to the Pacific.”<sup>13</sup> The declaration of a sustained campaign throughout the entire nation to kill and destroy Native Americans marks the most scathing condemnation of United States policy and conduct that serious scholarship contained until this point. Such wholesale intent to slaughter entire peoples qualifies as genocide, foreshadowing the perspective adopted by later genocide scholars.

Later in the 1960s, Native American scholars began producing work about their understanding of their own historical experiences. Vine Deloria, Jr. published *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* in 1969, just before Native American scholarship would experience a significant shift in the 1970s towards critically examining the link between Native American destruction and the foundation of the United States.<sup>14</sup> Deloria’s book also represents an important escalation in political rhetoric in Native American scholarship. Whereas earlier scholarship, political in the sense that all scholarship generally belongs to the political context of its time, narrowly explored Native American decline as an amorphous tragedy or at most cautiously advocated better treatment of Native Americans, Deloria acerbically condemns both previous scholarship and Native American mistreatment. He writes that “practically the only thing the white man ever gave the Indian was disease and poverty.”<sup>15</sup> From this perspective, Deloria and other Native American scholars also criticized the scholastic institutions that produced scholarship about Native American history, with especially biting commentary about anthropologists:

“He will invariably have a thin sexy wife with stringy hair, an IQ of 191, and a vocabulary in which even the prepositions have eleven syllables... This creature is an anthropologist. An anthropologist comes out to Indian reservations to make OBSERVATIONS. During the winter these observations will become books by which future anthropologists will be trained, so they can come out to reservations years from now and verify the observations they have studied.”<sup>16</sup>

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13. Andrist, 84.

14. Vine Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

15. Deloria, 35.

16. Deloria, 79.

Interestingly, Deloria presents evidence of genocidal intent but avoids using the word genocide despite his passionate political position. In 2003, Deloria wrote the foreword for a collection of essays entitled *Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing*, in which he focuses on the cultural component of genocide by lamenting the loss of Native American culture through the process of urbanization.<sup>17</sup> His later work reveals that Deloria agrees with the classification of genocide, but his earlier work does not use the actual word, likely because of its absence from Native American scholarship generally. For example, he quotes a proclamation from 1755 that announced, “For every scalp of a male Indian brought in as evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, forty pounds. For every scalp of such female Indian or male Indian under the age of twelve years that shall be killed and brought in as evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, twenty pounds.”<sup>18</sup> Deloria advocates a historical perspective that makes the United States the culprit of the mistreatment of Native Americans in the way previous historical scholarship did not. He writes that “The country was founded in violence. It worships violence and will continue to live violently.”<sup>19</sup> This perspective would receive mainstream popular and scholarly attention the following year in 1971 with Dee Brown’s *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*.<sup>20</sup>

Dee Brown’s enduring classic uses primary records to describe United States history from the Native American perspective; its commercial success generated political controversy and transformed the scholastic landscape of Native American studies. In the Forward to the 2009 illustrated edition of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Hampton Sides declares that “...Brown’s work almost single-handedly awakened the public conscience to America’s fork-tongued plundering of her indigenous peoples.”<sup>21</sup> Sides also quotes Deloria in the forward saying, “Every Indian will wish he had

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17. MariJo Moore (ed.) and Vine Deloria, Jr. (foreword by), *Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2003), (np).

18. Deloria, 6.

19. Deloria, 255.

20. Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 2009).

21. Brown, x.

written it...I wish I had.”<sup>22</sup> Brown never uses the word genocide, but cites primary sources that allow Native Americans to speak for themselves and recount the traumas they experienced. Brown includes testimony from prominent Native Americans during a commission to convince the Native Americans to peacefully relinquish land in the Black Hills, including the following from Spotted Tail: “...This war has come from robbery – from the stealing of our land,” and from those who “...came to take our land without price, and who, in our land, do a great many evil things...”<sup>23</sup> Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee began an important transition in historical scholarship that not only examined Native American history from the perspective of Native Americans themselves, but used extensive research to place blame for their suffering directly on the United States government during a time when the American people already felt disillusioned with the government because of the war in Vietnam. In the following decade, scholarship began to appear that more explicitly equates the Native American experience with genocide.

Early scholarship in the 1980s that mentioned genocide spent little time exhausting the logic behind such an appellation and instead focused, like previous scholarship, on the specific wrongs Native Americans experienced. For example, Parker M. Nielson’s 1982 book *The Dispossessed: Cultural Genocide of the Mixed Blood Utes, An Advocate’s Chronicle* hints at genocidal experience, such as when he describes “Brigham Young’s unannounced policy towards any Indians who would deny the territory that the Mormons wanted for their state of Deseret...” as “...in a word, extermination,” but makes no direct argument about genocide itself.<sup>24</sup> More concrete arguments begin to appear later in the 1980s, like Russell Thornton’s *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History since 1492*. Thornton explains that his book attempts to remedy the lack of studies linking demographics with social and cultural history in Native American scholarship.<sup>25</sup> He compares the Native American experience to the Jewish Holocaust in the 1940s, arguing that “In fact, the holocaust of North

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22. Brown, xi.

23. Brown, 299.

24. Parker M. Nielson, *The Dispossessed: Cultural Genocide of the Mixed Blood Utes, an Advocate’s Chronicle* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 6.

25. Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), xv.

American tribes was, in a way, even more destructive than that of the Jews, since many American Indian peoples became extinct.”<sup>26</sup> Thornton explicitly links genocide with “concerted efforts to destroy Indian ways of life” such as “deliberate destructions of flora and fauna that American Indians used for food,”<sup>27</sup> battles like Wounded Knee Creek “...where several hundred old men, women, and children were massacred,”<sup>28</sup> and failure to vaccinate Native Americans “...due to a lack of interest on the part of United States Officials.”<sup>29</sup> While he tempers his argument with the declaration that disease made the largest contribution to Native American population decline overall, Thornton nevertheless reiterates the importance of genocide as the primary cause of population decline for individual tribes.<sup>30</sup> The combination of demographic statistics couched in inflammatory political rhetoric discounting the scope and importance of the Jewish Holocaust continues throughout genocide scholarship to this day, but remains a small part of Native American scholarship overall.

The same year Thornton’s study was released, a collection entitled *New Directions in American Indian History* examined scholarly trends in Native American studies and never once mentions genocide. Interestingly, however, the collection identifies Thornton’s book as an important trend in demographic studies because it “...presents a new aboriginal population size for North America.”<sup>31</sup> Like earlier scholarship, this collection reveals that academic studies of Native Americans focus largely on issues surrounding genocide but not directly the question of genocide itself. The first essay painstakingly elaborates techniques of studying demographic decline without directly examining the question of culpability such large scale decline naturally invites. Instead, the study identifies the open questions in Native American scholarship as “...Indian family life, economic activity, cultural persistence, and political change.” Quantitative methodologies, such as the aforementioned demographic question, also offer important new directions

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26. Thornton, xv-xvi.

27. Thornton, 51.

28. Thornton, 49.

29. Thornton, 101.

30. Thornton, 44, 49.

31. Colin G. Calloway (ed), *New Directions in American Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 7-8.

for Native American scholars.<sup>32</sup> A few years later, the inflammatory political rhetoric in scholarship that directly addresses the Native American genocide contrasts sharply with Calloway's collection of academic essays that ignore it.

In 1992, M. Annette Jaimes edited and contributed to a collection of essays entitled *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance* that echoes Thornton's comparison of the Native American experience to the Jewish Holocaust. In her essay "Sand Creek The Morning After," JaimesJaimes declares that "The purpose of this book is to make a contribution to the emergence of the consciousness necessary to realize the liberation of North America from the grip of its Nazi heritage."<sup>33</sup> Anachronistically declaring that the United States has a Nazi heritage encapsulates the problems with modern Native American scholarship; obviously, a country cannot have a heritage from a political movement that occurred centuries after its founding within a different country. Such political rhetoric distracts from the points Jaimes makes comparing the Native American genocide to the Nazi genocide, arguing that "...the third Reich and the United States did what they did for virtually the same reasons."<sup>34</sup> She compares reducing the Slavic population in Ukraine to the forced relocation of Native Americans and contrasts Nazi killing squads with the famine and disease that destroyed the Native American population.<sup>35</sup> Jaimes makes a stronger link between disease and genocide than Thornton does, attributing starvation to "deliberate dislocation" and disease to "willful early experiments in biological warfare."<sup>36</sup> The essays contain similar political rhetoric to Thornton's and have a particular agenda; the forward written by Evelyn Hu-DeHart explains that they intend the essays to be "...morally disturbing and intellectually disruptive" and that they should "...yank us out of our normal complacency."<sup>37</sup>

In the early 1990s, one could scarcely distinguish Native American polemics from Native American genocide scholarship. Despite its

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32. Calloway, 5.

33. M. Annette Jaimes (ed), *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 9.

34. Jaimes, 3.

35. Jaimes, 4.

36. Jaimes, 7.

37. Jaimes, x.

academic contributors, The State of Native America contains explicitly political and scholastically insupportable language, such as the reference to America's Nazi heritage. One year later, Native American activist Timothy "Little Rock" Reed edited and contributed to a collection of political essays that similarly compares the United States government and Hitler. Reed published *The American Indian in the White Man's Prisons: A Story of Genocide* to chronicle injustices against Native Americans to support his larger argument that "American Indians do not belong in the white man's criminal justice system or prisons, and that many of them who are captives of the system are political prisoners."<sup>38</sup> Reed emphasizes the connection between the Native American experience and genocide to highlight the injustice of the American prison system. Reed authored the collection's first essay in which he argues that attempts to assimilate Native Americans into white American culture through coercion and deprivation "[constitute] genocide every bit as much as Hitler's reign over Germany during the Third Reich. The systematic destruction of a people is the systematic destruction of a people. Period."<sup>39</sup> He argues that cultural genocide is the corollary to assimilation and largely focuses on systematic restrictions on practicing Native religions. For example, he criticizes the double standard created by the 1990 Supreme Court ruling that prohibits the use of peyote in religious ceremonies but notes that Christians have permission to serve wine to children during religious ceremonies despite laws that prohibit serving alcohol to minors.<sup>40</sup> Many of his essays also criticize boarding schools that remove Native American children from their families, prohibit their use of their native language, and require conformity to white American dress codes. Reed declares, "This is cultural genocide, but it kills the body, mind and heart as well as the spirit."<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, the radical political goal of removing all Native Americans from American prisons dwarfs any legitimate arguments Reed advances to support the connection between genocide and the Native American experience. That both activists and scholars address the question of genocide with political rhetoric to advance political goals creates a perception of bias that eclipses any substantive arguments. The difficulty in

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38. Timothy "Little Rock" Reed (ed), *The American Indian in the White Man's Prisons: A Story of Genocide* (Taleo, UnCompromising Books, 1993), 24.

39. Reed (ed), 10.

40. Reed, 17.

41. Reed, 38.



producing genocide scholarship lies in negotiating the politics of using the word genocide with the desire to create academic scholarship exploring Native American issues.

Today, the question of Native American genocide appears more frequently in comparative genocide studies rather than specific Native American studies. In the collection *Is the Holocaust Unique?: Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, David E. Stannard's exploration of the sensitive politics surrounding the use of the word "genocide" in scholarship explains its absence in Native American scholarship. He declares the assumption that "the attempted destruction of the Jews in Nazi-controlled Europe was unique, unprecedented and categorically incommensurable... with the sufferings of any people at any time in any place during the entire history of humanity" is "demonstrably erroneous." Stannard argues that identifying the Holocaust as the only genocide is "the hegemonic product of many years of strenuous intellectual labor by a handful of Jewish scholars and writer who have dedicated much if not all of their professional lives to the advancement of this exclusivist idea."<sup>42</sup> Whereas concerns about American identity and virtue may contribute to the absence of genocide in Native American scholarship, Stannard identifies an additional challenge from a group of Holocaust scholars advancing a political agenda to preserve the uniqueness of a particular genocide. Stannard's essay then follows the pattern of previous Native American genocide scholarship and explains the connection between the Native American experience and genocide, citing disease, starvation, and related causes "...in the wake of direct violence."<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, he also falls into the political trap of his predecessors, completely dismissing previous scholarship arguing that disease caused the majority of Native American deaths by declaring that, "there does not exist a single scholarly work that even pretends to demonstrate this claim on the basis of solid evidence."<sup>44</sup> Stannard's bias in favor of classifying the Native American experience as genocide leads him to a broad, sloppy conclusion that the larger body of evidence does not support. One can argue whether the role of disease can be directly attributed to genocide, but one cannot dismiss the enormous loss of life it caused in Native American populations.

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42. Alan S. Rosenbaum (ed), *Is the Holocaust Unique?: Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 249.

43. Rosenbaum, 258.

44. Rosenbaum, 255.

Like Jaimes, Stannard's politics overshadow the positive scholarly contribution of his work.

In more recent Native American scholarship, questions of representation and analysis carry greater importance than the question of genocide. James F. Brooks suggests genocide as a useful category of political analysis, but emphasizes that the question of genocide itself is less important than its utilization to better understand the past. He argues that "the successful 1998 prosecution of Rwandan Hutu rapists under UN genocide codes... is an important breakthrough in humanitarian law but does not solve the analytical challenge" of incorporating gendered violence into understanding the Native American experience.<sup>45</sup> Brooks' essay appears in a collection entitled *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies* and his is the only mention of genocide in the entire collection. The contrast between scholarship and genocide politics from the late 1980s and early 1990s still remains; the question of the Native American genocide is less important in Native American scholarship and heated political rhetoric still infuses any direct discussion of it.

Native American scholarship has great opportunities to examine the question of genocide in the Native American experience without inviting comparisons to the Holocaust that are fraught with political distractions.

*“Since the word genocide was introduced after the Holocaust, people identified its evil as something new, something rare, something unusual.”*

By focusing particularly on the Native American genocide for the sake of scholarly understanding rather than political advancement, scholars explore the potential for better understanding of the Native American experience as well as greater understanding of the nature of genocide. Because the term genocide connotes what

most commonly understand as the worst evil humanity can commit, scholars will still face numerous difficulties overcoming the political challenges. Since the word genocide was introduced after the Holocaust, people identified its evil as something new, something rare, something unusual. Advocates for Holocaust uniqueness correctly perceive that overuse of the

45. Nancy Shoemaker (ed), *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 191.

*“Perhaps it exposes an unwillingness to recognize that genocide is far more common than anyone would like to admit ”*

term has the potential to diminish its potency, the persistent omission of the Native American genocide from scholarship may reveal more about scholars than the Native American experience. Perhaps it exposes an unwillingness to recognize that genocide is far more common than anyone

would like to admit, and that by extension human nature is more terrifying than people care to imagine.

# A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BLACK CAPITALISM

CAROL FRANCIS



The term black capitalism became a popular concept in the late 1960s with the presidency of Richard M. Nixon. While it was basically black business ownership, it had a more powerful political meaning expressed by Stokely Carmichael (head of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) in 1966: “[Black capitalism] constituted a movement by blacks to gain control over the business development of their own communities.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, it had a much longer history dating back to slavery and Africa. Reviewing the literature in chronological order showed progression from the unrest of the 1960s to more recent reevaluation of black business problems, patterns of racism, and the still tattered reputation of President Nixon. Early authors combined sociological and economic analysis in a contemporary perspective more often than they addressed black capitalism as a historical subject, with radical or conciliatory outlooks about the American system intruding somewhat into their writings. Historical scholarship on black capitalism has changed in the past fifteen years to a synthesis of historical analysis with statistics, economics, and sociology and less focus on remedies for the ills of the day.

Initially, writers were more radical in their perspective, looking at the many problems of the American system without much hope for the future. The two books reviewed from the 1960s and 1970s were still in the turbulence of the period (and slightly dated) but provided a valuable starting point for this historiography. In 1969 Theodore L. Cross looked at the recent ghetto disturbances and the futility of anti-poverty money

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1. Juliet E. K. Walker, *The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship* (New York: Macmillan Library Reference, 1998), 271.

without an increase in owner business skills, increased credit, and start-up capital. Flournoy A. Coles Jr. looked at pervasive, systemic problems in 1975 and wondered about the possibility of black economic development in an atmosphere of racism and economic hardship. Both writers focused on economic history and compared the needs of American ghettos to similar conditions in developing countries.

Theodore L. Cross examined growing ghettos of impoverished blacks in his 1969 book *Black Capitalism: Strategy for Business in the Ghetto*. He was an author, investor, and entrepreneur who specialized in banking law and legal education for bankers and became well known for his writings on civil rights.<sup>2</sup> He started his analysis with the statement:

One million blacks live in the New York City ghettos of South Bronx, Harlem, and Bedford-Stuyvesant, yet those slums are presently operating only twelve registered Negro-owned businesses hiring ten or more people. The most deprived and undeveloped economies of Latin America have greater elements of entrepreneurial affluence.<sup>3</sup>

Acknowledging probable opposition, his basic assumption was that “the skills and benefits of entrepreneurship must be transferred to the residents of the black slums.”<sup>4</sup> Just pumping money from the Small Business Administration and equal-opportunity loan programs did little to improve ghetto business. Cross was specific in his critique: “[The aspiring ghetto businessman] cannot use the wealth-building techniques of leverage and financing unless his business is temporarily shielded by reliable markets for his production or services, and by managerial skills possessed exclusively and abundantly by the white economy.”<sup>5</sup> He proposed white assistance to black owners in production and marketing, with a temporary use of credit and skills.

Cross also examined how the 1960s riots focused business analysis

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2. New York Times, Obituary, “Theodore Cross Dies at 86, a Champion of Civil Rights,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/04/business/04cross.html> (accessed April 20, 2012).

3. Theodore L. Cross, *Black Capitalism: Strategy for Business in the Ghetto* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), viii.

4. Cross, ix-x.

5. Ibid.

on the ghettos, often by withdrawing fire insurance and financial capital from the ghettos in a further destructive cycle. Business programs focused on avoiding property damage, keeping young people busy and off the streets, and providing blacks with temporary jobs. Tougher jobs would have been rebuild the areas, develop black skills, train unemployed people, and place them in long-term, career-oriented jobs. Cross argued that anti-poverty money was wasted, and preferred a program of building power and skills for black entrepreneurs. He was a white civil rights activist who wrote from an economic point of view and recommended credit revisions, capital start-up funds, and management/business training to core areas needing rebuilding.<sup>6</sup> While avoiding a historical perspective, he provided an accurate description of both black capitalism and early government assistance in the same decade that these became important political topics.

Seeing the black community as needing the same type of assistance and economic stimulation as an underdeveloped country, Flournoy A. Coles Jr. examined the cause and effect of lagging black economic progress in his 1975 book *Black Economic Development*. Coles wrote from the perspective of economics and management and later expanded his work to international management, including black economic conditions in Africa; Vanderbilt University now honors his name with a yearly award in his memory given for outstanding performance in the MBA program of International Management.<sup>7</sup> While giving a good summary of conditions thirty-five years ago, he had many of the same comments as more modern authors, with an excellent analysis of what he called “the pervasive color-caste system of the United States.”<sup>8</sup> This system had three major effects: (1) a proscribed black enclave reinforced by the legal system and inferior to the greater society; (2) almost total isolation of this enclave and its economy, insulating it from larger economic life; and (3) maximum contributions from this enclave to the well being of the larger society’s affluence, without receiving reciprocal benefits.<sup>9</sup> While black businesses faced the common problems of “inadequate experience and general incompetence,” they also

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6. Cross, 205-07.

7. Vanderbilt University Owen Graduate School of Management, “Commencement 2010,” [http://www.owen.vanderbilt.edu/vanderbilt/newsroom/pressreleases/detail.cfm?customel\\_datapage-id\\_42488=43896](http://www.owen.vanderbilt.edu/vanderbilt/newsroom/pressreleases/detail.cfm?customel_datapage-id_42488=43896) (accessed April 20, 2012)

8. Flournoy A. Coles Jr., *Black Economic Development* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1975), 11.

9. Coles, 11.

faced specific problems: a largely black clientele, racial antipathies and socioeconomic conflicts, lack of a business tradition and success symbols, weak black ethnic institutions except for black churches, and white racism in the form of segregation of the black ghetto from white society.<sup>10</sup>

Coles wondered whether black economic development was possible within the existing economic system of the United States. He examined a number of factors: (1) the nature of capitalism as a profit-seeking venture, often penalizing blacks for marginal revenue; (2) movement of blacks into corporate America, though out-sourcing programs and franchising opportunities; (3) the small and non-competitive size of most black businesses; and (4) upward black mobility perceived as threatening to the white majority. This majority benefitted from having an inferior and depressed minority in cheap domestic and service labor.<sup>11</sup> He had three specific recommendations to help black economic development. First was capital accumulation through savings or loan-grants, with a matching arrangement a good possibility. Secondly, he supported technical progress with a mix of industrial activities, sponsored by government agencies and with research and development for innovative ideas. Lastly, he wanted black entrepreneurs to have improved managerial skills and professional training.<sup>12</sup> While he wrote on economic development, he was more pessimistic than Cross had been six years earlier on the possibility of capital accumulation and cash flow for black entrepreneurs. However, he brought in a historical perspective of racism and enforced segregation in enclaves and emphasized how black upward mobility threatened the white majority, later themes in the historiography.

By the 1980s, white backlash to affirmative action combined with an economic recession and Reaganomics to create a new political climate. The two writers from the decade took opposite stances on the same problems. In 1983, Manning Marable wrote from a radical socialist perspective and examined elements of both racism and support for black businesses. Taking a more moderate perspective in 1984, Wayne J. VILLEMEZ and John J. BEGGS looked at how black business in the wider community increased economic clout for blacks. After their respective works, scholarship on black capitalism dried up until the late 1990s. It was

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10. Coles, 112.

11. Coles, 134-44.

12. Coles, 157-165.

probably prudent to back away from a radical (and sometimes separatist) style of writing in the Reagan years, with a more conciliatory mainstream trend in the past decade for both writers and subject matter.

While Manning Marable defined himself as a socialist and used Marxist terminology in his writings, he maintained an active and successful academic career at Fisk University, Colgate University, Ohio State University, and finally Columbia University, where he served as professor of political science, history, public affairs, and African-American studies.<sup>13</sup> His long-term interest in black radical politics earned him a posthumous Pulitzer Prize in History on April 16, 2012, for his biography of Malcolm X.<sup>14</sup> Using political and economic history, as well as race relations in his analysis, he examined white racism and capitalism in his 1983 book *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society*. Many whites thought democratic rights belonged to the white majority, with greatest opposition to black civil rights among rural farmers, laborers, and working class whites. On the other hand, industrialists, bankers, and established business owners denounced extremist tactics, as did upper-class religious groups like the Southern Presbyterians and Methodists.<sup>15</sup> Marable saw white worker opposition as uniting the black movement toward a common goal of greater democracy; W. E. B. Du Bois regarded racism and capitalism as “inextricably tied together.”<sup>16</sup>

Also important for the black movement were its two trends towards integration and black nationalism. However, the capitalism of making a profit was always a part of black consciousness: “The concept of ‘black capitalism’ provides one of the rare instances of ideological consensus [*sic*] among the fractious elements of the Black Movement, from the period

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13. William Grimes, “Manning Marable, Historian and Social Critic, Dies at 60,” *New York Times* Obituary, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/02/arts/manning-marable-60-historian-and-social-critic.html> (accessed April 20, 2012).

14. Washington Post, “Late Manning Marable wins history Pulitzer; no fiction prize given for 1<sup>st</sup> time in 35 years,” [http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/late-manning-marable-wins-history-pulitzer-no-fiction-prize-given-for-1st-time-in-35-years/2012/04/16/gIQAxYQkMT\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/late-manning-marable-wins-history-pulitzer-no-fiction-prize-given-for-1st-time-in-35-years/2012/04/16/gIQAxYQkMT_story.html) (accessed April 20, 2012).

15. Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 14.

16. Marable, 14-15.



of antebellum slavery to the present.”<sup>17</sup> Both Booker T. Washington (who favored racial accommodation) and Marcus Garvey (a black nationalist leader) had detailed programs to help small black business owners. Separatists such as Roy Innis of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) favored developing “a nation within a nation,” with blacks owning factories and providing jobs for the many unemployed blacks.<sup>18</sup>

Marable looked at racial influences on economic history, with four principal vocations for what Du Bois called the black elite: politicians, educators, clergymen, and entrepreneurs.<sup>19</sup> He dated black capitalism to a small black elite before the Civil War when wealthy blacks owned considerable property in cities such as Philadelphia, Cincinnati, New York City, and New Orleans.<sup>20</sup> This prosperity engendered certain risks in a racist system due to legal restrictions and refusal by whites to do business with blacks. As racial segregation advanced in the 1890s, black businesses that counted on white support disappeared, including barbers, caterers, tailors, butlers, blacksmiths, furniture makers, carpenters, and other skilled workers. Instead, black consumers gave “self help” and racial uplift within the black community. As Jim Crow advanced, so did black capitalist success stories, assisted by the black press through both advertisement and encouragement.<sup>21</sup> Amazingly, Marable noted the “Golden Years” of black capitalism as the period between 1919-29, concurrent with the most extensive racial segregation. This was possible because independent black

entrepreneurs generally provided goods and services to an exclusively black consumer market. The market consisted of: “barbers and beauty parlors, laundries, restaurants, grocery stores, newspapers, shoeshine and

shoe repair shops, automotive service and repair, funeral parlors, insurance companies and small banks.”<sup>22</sup> Blacks gave services to other blacks in almost

“*As Jim Crow advanced, so did black capitalist success stories*”

17. Marable, 138-39.

18. Marable, 139.

19. Marable, 138-39.

20. Marable, 140.

21. Marable, 143-45.

22. Marable, 146.

every black neighborhood and town in the United States. This promoted black capitalism outside of the mainstream economic system.

As a later obstacle to black capitalism, Marable noted the white interest in controlling the black consumer market and gaining the black dollar. Whites suddenly realized that this black market had become the ninth largest in the world by 1978 with goods and services totaling nearly \$70 billion annually.<sup>23</sup> This included credit agreements, since “black debts tend to increase with income.”<sup>24</sup> The second problem was that desegregation paradoxically cut black business growth as white business attracted black customers and dollars.<sup>25</sup> Marable’s occasional Marxist stridency masked a much deeper historical analysis as he traced black capitalism from before the Civil War through Jim Crow segregation to the modern consumerism of blacks in the middle class. He also correctly identified the decline of black capitalism despite growing black prosperity.

While Marable was openly socialist in his orientation and pessimistic about black chances in America, Wayne J. VILLEMEZ and John J. BEGGS looked at black progress within the American system. The difference in their analyses was somewhat reminiscent of the historic arguments between W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington early in the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Employed in the Department of Sociology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Villemez and Beggs utilized a sociological perspective and believed that increased black affluence assisted both blacks and whites in their 1984 article “Black Capitalism and Black Inequality: Some Sociological Considerations.” Black business and black entrepreneurial activity in cities strongly influenced the well-being of the black population in general. Ministers in the 1930s had preached the “double-duty dollar” to

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23. Marable, 158.

24. Marable, 162.

25. Marable, 164.

26. Gerald C. Hynes, “A Biographical Sketch of W.E.B. Du Bois,” <http://www.duboislc.org/html/duboisbio.html> (accessed April 12, 2012). Washington focused on working within the system and making the best of things while Du Bois pushed for a more radical program of higher education and civil rights. Their arguments deepened after a 1905 confrontation. Washington was optimistic about progress in the United States; Du Bois was deeply concerned about racism and lack of opportunity, and eventually left the United States for Africa.

support the themes of “buy black” and “don’t buy where you can’t work.”<sup>27</sup> Black economic “clout” reinforced this interaction as blacks joined the middle class.<sup>28</sup>

According to Villemez and Beggs, black capitalism had four specific benefits: “enhanced group power, improved consumer welfare, increased black income, and reduction in black discontent (or increase in black pride).”<sup>29</sup> Also important were the skills and qualifications for increased job opportunity and decreased barriers to mobility.<sup>30</sup> Their analysis showed the growing progress and economic power of blacks, without much attention to the negatives mentioned by Marable. Villemez and Beggs focused on black progress in a contemporary focus, avoided deeper historical analysis, and utilized more sociological prognosis and economic statistics. They did succeed in bringing black self-help attitudes to the historiography.

The next author successfully took a balanced look at both radical and mainstream economic growth. After a long break in scholarship, Juliet E. K. Walker’s 1998 history of black business was by far the strongest analysis of the subject (updated in a 2009 edition). Her background as professor in history at the University of Texas at Austin and founder/director of the Center for Black Business History, Entrepreneurship, and Technology gave her a unique perspective on black capitalism.<sup>31</sup> She reviewed hundreds of primary and secondary sources and gave an excellent and insightful analysis regarding the roles of Black Power and the Nation of Islam in provoking the federal government to start helping black businesses.

Starting in pre-colonial Africa, Walker described a wide-spread system of marketing and trade in Africa in her 1998 book *The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship*. When blacks came to the Americas as slaves, they had long traditions as entrepreneurs and used these skills as artisans and farmers to build capital with which to buy freedom for themselves and their families.

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27. Wayne J. Villemez and John J. Beggs, “Black Capitalism and Black Inequality: Some Sociological Considerations,” *Social Forces* 63, 1 (Sept. 1984): 117, 119-20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2578861> (accessed December 14, 2011).

28. Villemez and Beggs, 117.

29. Villemez and Beggs, 123.

30. Villemez and Beggs, 139.

31. The University of Texas at Austin, “About Judith E. K. Walker,” [http://www.utexas.edu/research/centerblackbusiness/about\\_jekw.htm](http://www.utexas.edu/research/centerblackbusiness/about_jekw.htm) (accessed April 20, 2012).

Blacks succeeded best in service-sector businesses, but race and lack of capitalization determined the small nature of most black enterprises.<sup>32</sup>

Walker outlined five patterns for black business activity: (1) legal restrictions discouraged black business activity; (2) whites attempted to take over successful businesses started by blacks, whether in the trades or in catering at hotels (both large sources of black income); (3) black modern businesses received only a limited part of black spending; (4) government affirmative action programs since the Civil Rights era gave limited assistance to black business for the first time, while white businesses always had this assistance; and (5) white racism plagued black business people in both private and public endeavors.<sup>33</sup> Her main point was that blacks developed capital despite these problems. For successful businesses, blacks needed both national and international markets to overcome ongoing racism. What she called the “visible hand” of government could help gain international markets for successful black businesses.<sup>34</sup>

According to Walker, Black Power demands in the 1960s resulted in federal intervention to support black capitalism. The Small Business Administration (SBA) and Department of Commerce minority business programs gave direct support to black businesses on a limited basis in the form of loans, grants, subsidies, procurement assistance, tax breaks, and loan guarantees. However, this support lasted less than a decade before white backlash led to protests of “preferential treatment” for blacks; this ignored the reality that most financial support went to white businesses.<sup>35</sup> Walker also documented support for black capitalism from the grass-roots level and national civil rights programs after the Harlem riots of 1964, the Watts riots of 1965, and the Chicago riots of 1966. Leaders saw economic empowerment as crucial to black development; Stokely Carmichael called for Black Power and black capitalism in June 1966:

Directing business growth in the black community was considered the first step toward achieving a powerful black economic presence in the larger American economy. Black capitalism called for a new kind of social and economic contract among racial groups

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32. Walker, xi, xvii.

33. Walker, xxii-xxiii.

34. Walker, xxii-xxv.

35. Walker, 264-65.

in America - one based on mutual self-interest rather than integration.<sup>36</sup>

As Walker pointed out, black capitalism served to give blacks some control over economic development where they lived. This included new resources for entrepreneurship.<sup>37</sup>

Walker noted the successful \$80 million business empire of the Nation of Islam in the 1960s. Such success remained invisible to white America, since black leaders became more separatist in their agendas and moved away from integration. The increasingly revolutionary rhetoric of groups like the Black Panthers challenged the anti-capitalistic stance of Martin Luther King Jr., forcing him to examine the plight of poor blacks in America. King preferred that blacks find employment in white corporate America, rather than build their own businesses because of the prevalence of racism. The Black Panther economic program included self-help activities such as free breakfasts, health clinics, and head-start educational programs.<sup>38</sup>

The success of these programs provoked Richard Nixon's black capitalism proposals due to fear of radicalism and urban disorder.<sup>39</sup> Nixon's proposals in the 1968 political campaign were very similar to the program proposed by Senator Robert Kennedy in the same year. Nixon faced a choice between financial support for black businesses or resources to rebuild cities destroyed by riots, and he chose his black capitalism theme as the cheaper alternative. The Carter Administration put teeth into helping black businesses with Public Law 95-907 in 1978. Apparently reporting while the law was under consideration, the *Black Enterprise Business Report* called it "one of the biggest leaps forward ever by government in the field of minority business development."<sup>40</sup> This law required sub-contracting to minority firms; however, charges of reverse discrimination removed blacks,

36. Walker, 271.

37. Walker, 271.

38. Walker, 272-3.

39. Walker, 274.

40. "Minority Enterprise and the Carter Administration," *Black Enterprise*, June 1977: 85, as quoted in Walker, 276. As a point of interest, black capitalism was probably helped most by two southern white presidents: Lyndon B. Johnson before the popularity of the concept, and Jimmy Carter after Nixon's presidency. This broke the stereotype of southern whites being against progress by blacks.

and contracts went to white firms as usual.

While looking at efforts in the 1990s to circumvent American racism and develop markets in Africa for black business, Walker stayed within a historical perspective rather than moving to a more contemporary sociological analysis favored by many authors in this paper. Her focus remained on what had actually happened, rather than the sociological argument of what “should” happen to remedy problems except for international trade. Trade missions to five continents increased American exports by twenty-six percent; black Americans played an increasing role in shaping America’s international trade as a way to find purchasers for black products.<sup>41</sup> Black businesses lost the earlier gains from federal assistance during Republican administrations starting with President Reagan, with limits on procurements and loan development. Walker’s conclusion was that: “if black business is to have a history beyond the twentieth century and to achieve competitive growth, it will require federal assistance, as much as the railroads did in nineteenth-century America and the aerospace and semiconductor industries in the twentieth century.”<sup>42</sup> Walker rebutted white claims of preferential treatment by stating, “A better answer is that black American business should be provided federal support equal to that provided white American business;” one percent of businesses got eighty percent of the Federal purchase dollar in the late 1990s.<sup>43</sup> Essentially, she corrected the record on what happened to black entrepreneurs compared to popular perceptions of reverse discrimination.

Walker raised the bar for historical analysis in this field, as evidenced by an explosion in scholarship on black capitalism in the past decade. First, enough time has passed since the resignation of Richard M. Nixon as President of the United States to take a second more balanced look at his record beyond the traumas of Vietnam and Watergate. He was the president who invested the heaviest in black capitalism, with mixed political motives that deserve a closer analysis. Secondly, despite a significant backlash from the white majority from the late 1960s through the 1980s, blacks made significant progress in education and economic success.

The seven selections from the 2000s surpassed the four previous

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41. Walker, 278.

42. Walker, 294.

43. Walker, 294.

decades in total scholarship and reflected a shift from economic issues to a focus on black cultural identity and advancement. Andrea Smith-Hunter gave a statistical analysis in 2006 of black women entrepreneurs. In 2007, Robert L. Boyd looked at black and white institutions of higher learning, with black southern schools highly successful in moving graduates into the black business elite. Linwood Tauheed gave an insightful analysis in 2008 of the need for black leaders to support integration and avoid earlier radical styles of leadership. In the same year, Robert W. Fairlie and Alicia M. Robb examined both black and Latino businesses and compared them to white and Asian businesses. In a 2009 assessment of recent American presidents, Robert Weems looked at the role of Richard M. Nixon in supporting black capitalism and courting white voters based on their fears about blacks. He also gave a good historical analysis of how subsequent presidents handled black capitalism. David Goldberg and Trevor Griffey edited a collection of monographs in 2010 on the negative impact of trade unions on affirmative action. In one of the monographs, Griffey showed that Nixon also courted traditionally Democratic votes as the “silent majority” in opposition to black progress.

In her 2006 book *Women Entrepreneurs Across Racial Lines: Issues of Human Capital, Financial Capital and Network Structures*, Andrea Smith-Hunter documented a significant contribution of black women to business success. An associate professor in marketing Management at Siena College in Loudonville, NY, her methodology included marketing and the accumulation of capital, with an extensive search of census records. Smith-Hunter noted that blacks gave services to their own race from the 1800s due to segregation practices, especially in personal services such as hairdressing, laundering, and dressmaking.<sup>44</sup> Another trend was the lower pay for these services: in 2003, compared to white males (100%), black men made 78.2%, white women 75.6%, and black women 65.4%.<sup>45</sup> While there was less gain from these industries, they required less investment capital to start the businesses.

Another pattern was that women operated businesses as extensions of their own hobbies or their roles as homemakers, mothers, and wives;

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44. Andrea E. Smith-Hunter, *Women Entrepreneurs Across Racial Lines: Issues of Human Capital, Financial Capital and Network Structures* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2006), 9.

45. Smith-Hunter, 14.

they essentially catered to the needs of other women.<sup>46</sup> From the 2002 U.S. Bureau of the Census, black women owned 365,110 firms (35% of black firms), employed nearly 200,000 employees (25% of workers), and generated almost \$14.5 billion (15% of sales) for all black businesses. Women owned three types of businesses in terms of numbers: (1) service sector firms, (2) fire, insurance, and real estate businesses (called FIRE), and (3) retail trade.<sup>47</sup> Smith-Hunter gave accurate contemporary description of the fields where black women succeeded in business, with more economic than historical analysis and extensive use of census records. She also looked at the patterns of networking in black communities that led to business success for women. Significant to the historiography of black capitalism was the much lower earning ratio she found for black female business owners compared to white males, black males, and white females.

From his position as Associate Professor in the Sociology Department at Mississippi State University, Robert L. Boyd had a long-term interest in what he called the “Great Migrations” of blacks from rural to urban environments in the early twentieth century and the changed character of black businesses and communities.<sup>48</sup> Boyd looked at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) for business success in his 2007 article “Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Black Business Elite.” These schools had a long record of moving people into the “black business elite,” particularly in southern states; this created a level of black capital for future investment and helped the economic and social progress of all blacks, due to their success.<sup>49</sup> Research reported by Boyd followed two themes: self-employment for working-class and poor blacks to avoid not getting hired in other fields and a push from black leaders to encourage middle class businesses supported by black buyers. Their efforts fit the “self-help” philosophy of Booker T. Washington to develop the jobs available in retail and personal services and gain economic resources.<sup>50</sup>

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46. Smith-Hunter, 14-15, 56.

47. Smith-Hunter, 55, 154.

48. Mississippi State University, Department of Sociology, Faculty, “Dr. Robert L. Boyd,” <http://www.sociology.msstate.edu/faculty/socfaculty/boyd.php> (accessed April 21, 2012).

49. Robert L. Boyd, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Black Business Elite,” *Sociological Perspectives* 50, No. 4 (Winter 2007): 545, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sop.2007.50.4.545> (accessed December 14, 2011).

50. Boyd, 545.



Central to Boyd's analysis was the method by which these schools promoted the rise of the black upper class. Boyd cited four factors: (1) a stepping-stone relationship between HBCUs and business success, particularly in the south even during Jim Crow segregation; (2) white schools as giving an increased success path in the mid to late twentieth century, with a growing number of blacks succeeding in predominantly white or racially mixed national consumer markets; (3) regional differences in educational paths, with black institutions playing a bigger part in the South as opposed to the North and West where blacks attended integrated schools; and (4) the outdated nature of the tradition of rare individual black success, with wide business success noted from black institutions of higher learning. He noted special efforts by the United Negro College Fund, both black and white churches, and white charities to overcome discrimination in the South.<sup>51</sup> His analysis provided a synthesis of the theories of Du Bois and Washington of attaining higher education and working within the system for black economic success. He added an interesting aspect to the study of black capitalism, ignored by earlier historians, of the success rates of black entrepreneurs in relationship to graduation rates from HBCUs.

Linwood Tauheed also documented the trend of blacks to work within the system in his 2008 article "Black Political Economy in the 21st Century: Exploring the Interface of Economics and Black Studies - Addressing the Challenge of Harold Cruse." An Assistant Professor in the Economics Department at the University of Missouri in Kansas City, Tauheed focused on African American political economy and community economic development.<sup>52</sup> He cited the book *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* by Harold Cruse for five central patterns in the black economy: (1) black leaders wanted to be seen as integrationist and feared the label of separatist or nationalist, (2) the economic programs of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois remained central, (3) pressure from black communities affected white economic forces, (4) education and black group action were both important, and (5) a return of black profits built

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51. Boyd, 557-59.

52. University of Missouri, Kansas City, Department of Economics, Faculty and Staff, [http://cas.umkc.edu/econ/\\_people/faculty\\_and\\_staff.asp](http://cas.umkc.edu/econ/_people/faculty_and_staff.asp) (accessed April 20, 2012).

future black economic growth in the community.<sup>53</sup> Of critical importance was the formation of black identity and perception of blacks by whites.

Further, Tauheed saw an increased black middle class including civil service workers, teachers, and professionals who no longer lived in traditional black communities, which he called enclaves. Distinct from urban ghettos, enclaves had wide economic activities, diverse social class levels, both employers and employees living in the area, and shared more similarities with the inner city of Vienna, Austria than a big city “ghetto.” Harold Cruse described this segregated system as a “partially autonomous economic system, constituting a distinct labor market . . . (and possibly also a consumer market) [that] supports ethnic businesses and helps them compete more successfully in the larger economic system.”<sup>54</sup> Tauheed rated these urban communities as becoming more ghetto-like since 1967 due to outward movement of the professional classes and loss of black businesses meeting black neighborhood needs.<sup>55</sup>

Tauheed’s work swung widely between historical analysis and sociological study. For example, he reviewed capitalist and Marxist economic theories and then recommended practical applications for particular communities. While he saw common causal factors such as income inequality, racism, and discrimination, he rejected radical economic theory due to differences in black community life regionally and in city/rural, North/South dichotomies.<sup>56</sup> While his analysis was more sociological and contemporary than historical in focus, he gave valuable analysis of how the emerging black middle class left once functional enclaves and how this resulted in more ghetto-like conditions for blacks without the financial resources to leave.

Robert W. Fairlie and Alicia M. Robb used statistical analysis and census records to examine racial patterns of business success in their 2008 book *Race and Entrepreneurial Success: Black-, Asian-, and White-Owned Businesses in the United States*. From the 2006b Census reports, they noted

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53. Linwood F. Tauheed, “Black Political Economy in the 21st Century: Exploring the Interface of Economics and Black Studies - Addressing the Challenge of Harold Cruse,” *Journal of Black Studies* 2008 38: 693-94, <http://jbs.sagepub.com/content/38/5/692> (accessed December 14, 2011).

54. Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Morrow, 1967), 11, as quoted in Tauheed, 727.

55. Tauheed, 727.

56. Tauheed, 725.

lower profits and higher failure rates for black and Latino firms with less sales, smaller payrolls, and fewer employees compared to white and Asian firms.<sup>57</sup> This correlated with lower wealth for minorities and less collateral for business loans. Education at the college level was another discrepancy, except for Asians who had even higher graduation rates than whites.<sup>58</sup> Lack of start-up capital was the most important factor affecting black business performance, with evidence pointing to continued discrimination in bank lending to black businesses. Another contributing factor was the lack of a successful family tradition of business ownership, with fewer blacks taking over successful businesses from their parents than among whites and Asians.<sup>59</sup> Choice of business also affected success, as retail and the service industry had a high business failure rate.<sup>60</sup>

At the time Fairlie and Robb both worked from the Economics Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz as a professor and research associate, respectively.<sup>61</sup> They examined over five hundred nonprofit organizations assisting minority entrepreneurship, as well as micro-enterprise training, loans, and assistance from the federal Department of Labor and Small Business Administration. Better access to financial capital was one type of program; another type was affirmative action contracting and procurement (with increases through the late 1970s and 1980s). Set-aside contracting seemed to help minority businesses at a rate of five to fifteen percent of total contracting, primarily in construction. The authors recommended programs to improve the performance of existing minority business owners, not just programs to start new firms. They mentioned lack of family experience as hampering future owners; potential remedies included relevant work experience and mentoring programs along with apprenticeship training and hands-on experience.<sup>62</sup> Fairlie and Robb's focus was descriptive, more sociological than historical,

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57. Robert W. Fairlie and Alicia M. Robb, *Race and Entrepreneurial Success: Black-, Asian-, and White-Owned Businesses in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), 1. The 2006b report focused on the value of a college degree, and the numbering is not a misprint.

58. Fairlie and Robb, 3-4.

59. Fairlie and Robb, 97-98.

60. Fairlie and Robb, 119.

61. University of California, Economics, Faculty, <http://economics.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php>; MIT Press, "Alicia M. Robb," <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/author/default.asp?aid=35746> (both accessed April 21, 2012).

62. Fairlie and Robb, 185-87.

and they gave solutions rather than analysis. However, they added material on family-type businesses to the historiography, as well as the efforts of nonprofit organizations to assist minority businesses.

In his 2009 book *Business in Black and White: American Presidents & Black Entrepreneurs in the Twentieth Century*, Robert E. Weems, Jr. examined initiatives supported by American presidents and designed to help African Americans gain full participation in the American economy. He specialized in African American history and economic development in the History Department at the University of Missouri-Columbia, with several other publications on black businesses.<sup>63</sup> One focus was on the traditional suspicion of the black community in taking white assistance, showing that “self-help” and initiatives from African Americans themselves had better chances of success. Weems also connected black capitalism with calming the Black Power movement of the late 1960s; both conservative and liberal presidents supported the concept because of its emphasis on black self-help and economic development. President Richard Nixon had the strongest link to black capitalism, with a pragmatic connection of black civil rights and national security.<sup>64</sup>

Characterizing Nixon as “Machiavellian,” Weems described Nixon’s political overtures to blacks through black capitalism all the while reaching out to southern whites. Secretly using Black Power advocates Floyd McKissick and Roy Innis, Nixon connected black racial pride and self-development with free enterprise to gain “domestic détente.” At the same time, he courted white voters with the “law and order” theme directed at racial insecurities about blacks.<sup>65</sup> He gained Republican votes from “conservative first- and second-generation European immigrants, southern whites, and white suburbanites” in a “new popular majority” causing a deliberate racial split in voting.<sup>66</sup> This pattern of racial sensitivities has prevailed with later presidents as well. On January 25, 2012, columnist

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63. University of Missouri, History Department, “Robert E. Weems, Jr.,” <http://history.missouri.edu/people/weems.html> (accessed April 21, 2012).

64. Robert E. Weems, Jr. with Lewis A. Randolph, *Business in Black and White: American Presidents & Black Entrepreneurs in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 5, 7-9. While the format for personal names in Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers* lists the junior form of a name without a comma between the name and the title, Robert E. Weems, Jr. consistently uses the comma, and this is honored.

65. Weems, 6, 112.

66. Weems, 112.

Leonard Pitts Jr. of the *Miami Herald* rated Newt Gingrich's comments on Barack Obama as being an appeal to racists; Gingrich called Obama "America's best 'food stamp president,'" with the code being "Elect me and I will get these black people's hands out of your pocket."<sup>67</sup> Further examples were Ronald Reagan's objection to "welfare queens" as code for "I will stop these lazy black women from living high on your tax dollars," and George H. W. Bush's use of Willie Horton as a code for "Elect me or this scary black man will get you."<sup>68</sup>

The 1968 Presidential campaign was a crucial turning point for black involvement in both politics and capitalism. All of the major candidates supported black economic development in the primaries after severe unrest in cities and on university campuses about civil rights and the Vietnam War. Many poor/minorities were drafted into the war, while white college students got deferments. After the assassination of the front-running Democratic candidate Robert F. Kennedy on June 4, 1968, Vice President Hubert Humphrey had trouble shaking his association with President Lyndon B. Johnson's Vietnam War. Both parties promised community development spending; Nixon delivered his promises on this score after the election.<sup>69</sup>

Weems's book delineated historical splits between African Americans themselves on how to assist black business owners. Amazingly, despite many public disagreements about civil rights and black political activity, W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington agreed on black business development as important for black self-help and progress. Together they convened the 1898 "Negro in Business" conference at Atlantic University. Their agreement helped stimulate an increase in black businesses and the government's interest in assisting black entrepreneurs.<sup>70</sup> Weems documented many programs from the 1920s through the 1990s, with both successes and failures. However, white scams using blacks as front men

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67. Leonard Pitts Jr., "Gingrich appeals to racists with the usual code words," *Sacramento Bee*, Viewpoints, January 25, 2012, A15. Pitts gave Nixon's code for "law and order" as "I will get these black demonstrators off the streets."

68. Pitts, A15. Pitts told a parable from one of his students: "A rich white man sits with a poor white man and poor black man at a table laden with cookies. The rich white man snatches all the cookies but one, then turns to the poor white man and says, 'Watch out for that darky. I think he wants to take your cookie.' It works every time."

69. Weems, 107-09.

70. Weems, 2.

made for better reading than success stories. Blacks lacked both managerial skills and capital. One tactic that worked well was getting large franchises to open new businesses with black managers, although training varied.

Weems also traced how white businesses got an increasing share of black business with integration. As integration progressed, whites realized the economic potential of the black market and quickly moved to pick up black clients. Paradoxically, segregation was better for all black businesses, especially in the service industries, mortuaries, and insurance companies. While blacks bought services from white businesses, whites remained

*“Paradoxically, segregation was better for all black businesses”*

hesitant to buy from all-black franchises. African American insurance companies dated back to Philadelphia’s Free African Society in 1787 and provided a “cornerstone for black economic development.”<sup>71</sup> Reflecting cumulative earlier losses, the

period between 1989 and 1999 showed the largest closure of businesses; black insurance companies declined from thirty-one to ten, a “virtual bloodbath” according to the magazine *Black Enterprise*.<sup>72</sup> Weems concluded that integration had a severely negative impact on black businesses. While whites captured black consumers, whites hesitated to purchase services from all-black businesses, which lost their share of the market and closed.<sup>73</sup> Weems had the strongest scholarship in the historiography after Juliet Walker and gave a solid historical account of how presidential policies affected black capitalism and advancement.

Looking specifically at the construction industry, David Goldberg and Trevor Griffey edited a series of monographs in their 2010 book *Black Power at Work: Community Control, Affirmative Action, and the Construction Industry*. Goldberg was an established professor in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Department at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, and focused on Black Power and civil rights.<sup>74</sup> This was an interesting

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71. Weems, 224.

72. “Black Insurance Companies,” *Black Enterprise*, June 1999: 216, as quoted in Weems, 224.

73. Weems, 225.

74. Wayne State University, Department of Liberal Arts and Sciences, “David Goldberg,” <http://www.clas.wayne.edu/faculty/goldberg> (accessed April 21, 2012).

collaboration with graduate student Trevor Griffey who as a PhD candidate in U. S. History co-founded and served as project coordinator for the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.<sup>75</sup> Their focus was on labor and race relations from both historical and political perspectives. They traced discriminatory housing and construction policies after World War II, with wealth accumulation and new home ownership benefitting the white, suburban middle class. Trapped in low paying industrial jobs with little chance of advancing into management, blacks suffered increased unemployment despite a postwar boom. In April 1963, radicalized activists in Philadelphia challenged the racism of the construction industry, transformed the northern civil rights movement, and launched a six year push for “affirmative action from below” firmly rooted in “Black Power and community control politics.” This was a central cause of the “Negro Revolt of 1963” with mainline civil rights organizations turning away from federal programs and toward community efforts.<sup>76</sup>

Unions had no prohibition against racism and had already excluded domestic and farm laborers (which included two-thirds of that era’s black workers). Through affirmative action, minorities and women entered the building trades and also sparked a backlash from the white working class toward both black civil rights and increased rights for women of all races.<sup>77</sup> Specific chapters covered the revolts in Brooklyn, Newark, the California Bay Area, Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Seattle. Other chapters included the next article by Trevor Griffey.

Trevor Griffey told a different civil rights story in “The Blacks Should Not Be Administering the Philadelphia Plan: Nixon, the Hard Hats, and ‘Voluntary’ Affirmative Action.” Griffey documented how labor unions limited the effectiveness of the federal government in enforcing civil rights laws long before the white backlash in the 1980s and 1990s. He looked at President Nixon’s choices in backing affirmative action; initially, Nixon ignored the Democratic trade unions, but when they supported his Vietnam War policies, Nixon started playing to the “silent majority” and

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75. Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, “Trevor Griffey,” <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/griffey.htm> (accessed April 21, 2012).

76. David Goldberg and Trevor Griffey, ed., *Black Power at Work: Community Control, Affirmative Action, and the Construction Industry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 1-3.

77. Goldberg and Griffey, 16-21.

reconciled the “hard hats” to the Republican Party on a racial basis.<sup>78</sup>

Goldberg and Griffey concluded with an excellent analysis of white male identity politics in labor unions and the building trades and the trade-offs that black community activists paid to gain needed urban redevelopment money. Nixon quietly started cutting earlier Model Cities and Great Society programs in the early 1970s. He also fragmented the Black Power movement by appealing to its more business-oriented and conservative sections through his endorsement of black capitalism. From a good start, politics descended into a forty-year “political, moral and spiritual ice age,” with black workers in blue-collar and service jobs having fewer resources as jobs moved away to developing nations.<sup>79</sup> The authors noted federal stimulus package money and “green technology” as currently offering hope for black businesses due to being more inclusive in opportunity to communities of color, women, and low-income workers.<sup>80</sup> They added material on labor unions and the “Negro Revolt of 1963” neglected by other writers.

The historiography of black capitalism revealed many common themes over the five decades of review. While black businesses suffered from lack of capitalization, family business tradition, and managerial expertise, they also lost black business with integration due to white hesitancy to use black firms and lack of hesitancy to take over traditionally black areas of service. White backlash started in the construction trades long before the re-entrenchment of the Reagan years almost hysterically ignored the still overwhelming white dominance of business contracts while ignoring the very real threat of outsources to developing nations. The once vibrant black community radicalism gave way to more conservative integration strategies as the entire society swung into a forty-year cycle of lesser resources and willingness to help.

Despite these setbacks, blacks achieved notable social and political advancement, much like in slave times when they braved severe hardship to amass the capital to buy freedom for family members. International trade, federal stimulus funds, and the “green economy” offered more recent hope

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78. Trevor Griffey, “The Blacks Should Not Be Administering the Philadelphia Plan: Nixon, the Hard Hats, and ‘Voluntary’ Affirmative Action, in *Black Power at Work: Community Control, Affirmative Action, and the Construction Industry*, eds. David Goldberg, and Trevor Griffey (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 134-7.

79. Goldberg and Griffey, 189-92.

80. Goldberg and Griffey, 206.



for inclusiveness for a wide range of individuals left out from the white economic success of the quite selfish “silent majority.” The historiography detailed both progress and still existing problems, with a larger black middle class leaving traditional black enclaves and providing challenges for black businesses seeking to build a wider clientele.

In terms of historical scholarship, authors started from an economic and sociological perspective in the 1960s and 1970s and focused on cash systems and economic disadvantage. The 1980s saw both a radical perspective about the Reaganomics that lowered government assistance and increasing prosperity within the system. Showing the value of a thorough historical review of black capitalism in 1998, Judith E. K. Walker stimulated further writers, with more scholarship in the past decade than in four prior decades. The sophisticated analyses of Walker, Robert E. Weems Jr., David Goldberg, and Trevor Griffey in the past fifteen years have reflected the increasing historical, economic, and political status of blacks, climaxing in the election of the first black president Barack Obama in 2008.

Instead of focusing on economic issues, recent writers have depicted black capitalism as an identity issue with blacks perceived as capable of success both in business and politics. These writers have combined historical analysis with statistics, sociology, and economics for a more accurate historical perspective, with less contemporary focus on immediate remedies. Earlier swings in the historiography between radicalism and belief in the system reflected the arguments of W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. Recent scholarship addresses both arguments and has less radical language, possibly because many blacks have achieved a level of civil rights and higher education once thought to be beyond possibility in the United States.

# “AGAINST ALL ODDS”: A BRIEF HISTORIOGRAPHY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE WEST IN PROFESSIONAL CAREERS FROM 1900 - 1940

CAREY GALBRAITH



As Lawrence B. de Graaf, an influential historian of African Americans in the West, noted in his influential work, “Recognition, Racism, and Reflection on the Writing of Western Black History,” that African Americans in the West warrant greater study. De Graaf called for in-depth studies of African Americans in the early twentieth century, which had not been done at the time of his article’s publication in 1975. Although de Graaf did not specifically encourage scholarship on African American women in the West, various historians have stepped in to fill that void since the expansion of women’s history in the 1970s. Indeed, the 1980s proved to be a period of proliferation in studies of African American women. Despite this upsurge, there remains a dearth of scholarship focused on professional African American women in the West—especially prior to World War II.<sup>1</sup>

Professional African American women in the early twentieth century merit study because their accomplishments were often made through overcoming the challenges of race, gender and class discrimination. Against all odds, these women accomplished great things, often gained an education, improved their standard of living and made contributions to the uplift of their communities. In addition, scholars have stated that these early women professionals (many who were involved with the African American women’s club movement) fueled the advancement and achievements of later

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1. Lawrence B. de Graaf, “Recognition, Racism, and Reflection on the Writing of Western Black History,” *Pacific Historical Review* 44, no. 1 (Feb. 1975): 22-51.

“Professional African American women in the early twentieth century merit study because their accomplishments were often made through overcoming the challenges of race, gender and class discrimination.”

African American women.<sup>2</sup> If this is the case, one would hope that study and analysis of these trailblazers would be fairly standard. Unfortunately, a review of the historiography reveals that much remains to be done in the study of African American women professionals. The following essay is a discussion of the development of the historiography of African American women, and more specifically, of professional

women in the West between 1900 and 1940, as well as suggestions for its future direction.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to the women's movement in the 1970s, very little historical writing focused on women. De Graaf addresses this in his article, “Race, Sex, and Region: Black Women in the American West, 1850-1920,” which was published in 1980. De Graaf suggests that the “omission [of black women in history] is partly rooted in the oversight by historians of the role of women in general, but it may also reflect an uncertainty as to the perspective from which to treat the topic.”<sup>4</sup> Essentially, de Graaf highlights the issue which Bell Hook, in her 1981 book, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, and Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith analyzed in their classic 1982 work, *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*. After discussing how black women have been excluded from women's history due to racism and neglected in African American studies due to sexism, these scholars argue that a distinct approach to African American women is needed in order

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2. Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, “‘Your Life is Really Not Just Your Own’: African American Women in Twentieth-Century California,” in *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, ed. Lawrence B. de Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001): 215-217.
  3. Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 19.
  4. Lawrence B. de Graaf, “Race, Sex, and Region: Black Women in the American West, 1850-1920,” *Pacific Historical Review*, 49, no. 2 (May, 1980): 285.

to recognize the uniqueness of their experiences: black women’s studies.<sup>5</sup>

The development of the field of black women’s studies resulted in a rapid increase in scholarship devoted to African American women. Many of the earlier works published in this period focus on the southern and northern regions of the United States and rarely discussed African American women in the West. Topics of interest from this period include slavery, emancipation, Reconstruction, family life, sexuality, racial uplift organizations and social movements.

One of the precursors to the explosion of scholarship on African American women is Herbert G. Gutman’s 1976 *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*, which focuses on the cultural and social characteristics of family life for African Americans. Gutman abolishes the misconception that African Americans did not have family ties during slavery and that family life was controlled by the slave owners. By focusing on family, Gutman was compelled to include women as at least half of the equation. As mentioned earlier, Gutman’s work is centered on the northern and southern regions of the United States.<sup>6</sup>

Darlene Clark Hine discusses the social work and progress of women in Indiana in her 1981 community study, *When the Truth is Told: A History of Black Women’s Culture and Community in Indiana, 1875-1970*. Hine’s unabashed emphasis on women is a reflection of the development of black women’s studies. Hine illuminates the social programs these women created, the facilities they built to improve women’s livelihood (such as daycare centers and hospitals) and their involvement in various community organizations like churches and racial uplift organizations. Hine’s work is pioneering, because she focuses on the mid-West rather than the South, and she also began her argument in the post-slavery period. Dorothy Salem wrote a book with a similar focus published in 1990, entitled *To Better Our World: Black Women in Organized Reform, 1890-1920*. Salem considers the work of these women throughout the United States in some prominent or-

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5. Bell Hooks, *Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1981); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave, Black Women’s Studies* (Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press, 1981); Beverly Guy-Sheftall, “Review of *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave, Black Women’s Studies* by Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith,” (Autumn, 1982): 271-272.

6. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

ganizations, such as the NAACP, NACW and the National Urban League.<sup>7</sup>

Paula Giddings, author of the 1984 book, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*, reviews African American women from slavery to the present, citing various activists to demonstrate the agency women had and their influence on their worlds. The women activists Giddings includes are generally well-known (and often upper class), such as Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary McLeod Bethune and Rosa Parks; nevertheless, Giddings' work is a great introductory reader to the field of black women's history. Giddings relies on sources that have become common to the field of black women's history, like oral histories, speeches, personal papers and interviews. These sources are beneficial because they allow the women's own voices to be heard, whereas for much of history, when women were discussed at all, it was through the voice of the (often male) historian.<sup>8</sup>

The book "*We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible*": *A Reader in Black Women's History*, published in 1995 and edited by Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed, is a critical contribution to the field of women's history. With a wide range of topics, including articles devoted to theory, like Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's foundational article, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," one cannot study the historiography of black women's history and neglect this text.<sup>9</sup>

Historical scholarship devoted to black women's labor emerged in the latter half of the 1980s, although other fields, like sociology, economics and demography published studies on black women workers prior. Works outside the field of history often cited in historical scholarship are Theophilus Oyeyemi Fadayomi's *Black Women in the Labor Force: An Investigation of Factors Affecting the Labor Force Participation of Black Women in the United States*, published in 1977, and Phyllis A. Wallace's *Black Women in the Labor Force*, published in 1980. Both of these studies investigate the demography of women workers and provide statistical evidence demonstrating correla-

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7. Darlene Clark Hine, *When the Truth is Told: A History of Black Women's Culture and Community in Indiana, 1875-1970* (Indianapolis: National Council of Negro Women, 1981); Dorothy Salem, *To Better Our World: Black Women in Organized Reform, 1890-1920* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990).

8. Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1984).

9. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed, ed., "*We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible*" *A Reader in Black Women's History* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1995).

tions between race, income, field of labor and family size. These works also analyze employment discrimination and make comparisons to the population at large. Many of the social sciences study recent phenomenon, so interdisciplinary work can be helpful to historians discussing labor in the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup>

One of the premier historical studies of African American female laborers is the 1985 book, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, by Jacqueline Jones. In this work, Jones studies the work and family life of African American women from slavery to 1984. By presenting both work and family, Jones underscores Gutman’s thesis that women had meaningful relationships with their families (even during slavery), and that family was a motivation to work as well as an outlet for overcoming the discrimination they experienced in the work force. Jones focuses on the South and North in her work, and her emphasis is on the agency women fostered despite their challenging circumstances within domestic labor, blue-collar work and clerical work. Although she discusses the greater variability in job opportunities, including professional work, for black women in the 1980s, Jones does not place this within the context of earlier women who shattered glass ceilings to enter professional employment in earlier decades, which is unfortunate.<sup>11</sup>

One of the few works that emphasizes African American professional women is *Speak Truth to Power: Black Professional Class in United States History*, by Darlene Clark Hine. Published in 1996, *Speak Truth to Power* is a compilation of essays and lectures by Hine, primarily focused on twentieth-century male and female professionals like nurses, doctors and lawyers. Hine demonstrates how these professionals had to work extensively to overcome the prejudice of racial, gender and class stereotypes. Hine declares that black women are “the country’s greatest and most total victim,” and consequently, black women who rise to the level of professionals in employment particularly warrant study. Like other historians, Hine’s work is geographically centered in the North and South.<sup>12</sup>

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10. Theophilus Oyeyemi Fadayomi, *Black Women in the Labor Force: An Investigation of Factors Affecting the Labor Force Participation of Black Women in the United States* (Ann Arbor, MI: Xerox University Microfilms, 1977); Phyllis A. Wallace, *Black Women in the Labor Force* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1980).

11. Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1985), 5.

12. Darlene Clark Hine, *Speak Truth to Power: Black Professional Class in United States History* (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1996).

Perhaps due to the small, but certainly not inconsequential, population of black women in the West, scholarship devoted to African American women in the West did not proliferate until the late 1990s and twenty-first century. Perhaps scholars of the West finally took note of W.E.B. Du Bois's commentary on the expansive women's club movement in California, or Delilah Beasley's statement that some of the brainiest women come from the West. Regardless of the reason, in the midst of increasing scholarship on African American women, Western historians are beginning to catch up. Some of the key areas of interest in studies of African American women in the West include their political activism and race work, community involvement, the black women's club movement, employment opportunities generated by World War II, lower-class women, and the Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the West.<sup>13</sup>

Shirley Ann Wilson Moore discusses employment opportunities black women garnered during World War II in her 1995 article, "Her Husband Didn't Have a Word to Say': Black Women and Blues Clubs in Richmond, California, during World War II." Moore discusses how black women were often relegated to work in domestic service industries prior to World War II and were burdened with "doing double duty, sometimes triple duty" through working both at home and in their outside jobs. Moore emphasizes that black women who migrated West in search of employment opportunities often gained independence and agency through private business ownership related to community building and cultural traditions, such as clubs and restaurants. Moore's work is an excellent contribution to scholarship on the employment opportunities of lower-class black women in urban environments in the West, and her analysis sheds light on how residence in the West itself often led these women to pursue their goals.<sup>14</sup>

Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo's *Abiding Courage: African American Migrant Women and the East Bay Community*, published in 1996, corresponds well with Moore's work. Like Moore, Lemke-Santangelo discusses the distinct roles lower-class female black migrants played in urban California communities—specifically Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond. Lemke-Santangelo primarily discusses the cultural and community organizations

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13. Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, *African American Women Confront the West 1600-2000* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 22.

14. Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, "Her Husband Didn't Have a Word to Say': Black Women and Blues Clubs in Richmond, California, during World War II," in *American Labor in the Era of World War II*, ed. Sally M. Miller and Daniel A. Cornford (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995).

these women organized, as well as how their “Southern-ness” was beneficial and central in constructing their lives in the West. Lemke-Santangelo refutes the idea that the “culture of poverty,” often associated with black women, has historical precedence in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup>

Quintard Taylor’s *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990*, published in 1998, is essentially the textbook of issues and individuals in the study of African Americans in the West. Throughout his work, Taylor inserts the unique experiences of African American women, but they are not the central focus. Although Taylor describes his work partly as gender history, the paucity of references to women is a testament to the novelty of African American women’s history, even in 1998, rather than a reflection of personal prejudice.<sup>16</sup>

Taylor devotes much of his chapter on the urban West from 1911-1940 to employment issues. Taylor shows sensitivity to the role of gender by providing statistical data on occupational categories divided by gender and emphasizing professions in which women were hired in significant numbers, such as the entertainment industry, real estate and journalism. Taylor also discusses interracial competition between Asian and Hispanic businesses, but an exploration of the challenges, competition and success amongst these various ethnicities’ women professionals would have been fascinating. Overall, Taylor provides some helpful introductory information about African American women professionals, but more is needed to fill in the narrative.<sup>17</sup>

Albert S. Broussard includes professional African American women in his 1998 work of family history on the Stewarts, an influential family of black activists entitled *African-American Odyssey: The Stewarts, 1853-1963*. Broussard expands the geographical boundaries of “the West” to incorporate places like Hawaii, Liberia and St. Thomas, where racism did not limit opportunities for African Americans as extensively as it might have elsewhere (potentially due to their smaller population sizes in such locales, which did not excite as much notice or outright responses of racism). Broussard’s work is included in this historiography because he discusses two female professionals from the twentieth century: Carlotta Stewart Lai and

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15. Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, *Abiding Courage: African American Migrant Women and the East Bay Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

16. Taylor, *In Search*, 18-19.

17. *Ibid.*, 223-225, 227, 234, 244-246, 250.



Katherine Stewart Flippin.<sup>18</sup>

In his chapter devoted to Carlotta Stewart Lai, Broussard demonstrates that for some African American women (including Lai), a professional career and the independence it could provide were worth sacrificing family and the familiarity of community. Broussard attributes her ability to work as a teacher and principal as an extension of her residence in the West; in other words, he argues that such job opportunities would probably not have been available on the mainland during the early twentieth century. This argument raises the question: What specifically about the West made such opportunities available? It is hard to track down the answer, but the evidence clearly supports the notion. Considering that the thread that weaves Broussard's work together is the family patriarch, it is commendable that Broussard's treatment of Carlotta centers around her work and the connections she made within her community as a leading professional, rather than simply her role as a daughter of a race man.<sup>19</sup>

Broussard's chapter on Katherine Stewart Flippin is not as well-researched or focused; Broussard meanders around Katherine and instead discusses her mother, Mary, and husband, Robert. After writing that "Katherine acknowledged that Robert's career took precedence over her own," it seems Broussard felt justified in dismissing Katherine's achievements in the education field and thus gave little attention to her efforts. This is unfortunate, since there is an excellent source of information in the oral history Katherine gave as part of the Black Women Oral History Project. Overall, Broussard's analysis is lacking in this chapter, but his work shows progress in the overall historiography of women's history because he devoted space to Mary and Katherine's professional careers.<sup>20</sup>

Among the strongest analyses of African American women professionals and their contributions to their communities is the 2001 article, "Your Life is Really Not Just Your Own': African American Women in Twentieth Century California," by Shirley Ann Wilson Moore. Moore frames her discussion of women's involvement in society and the labor force as a triumph over racial, gender and class discrimination. Moore utilizes census data to demonstrate population size and to distinguish the percent-

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18. Albert S. Broussard, *African American Odyssey: The Stewarts, 1853-1963* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 150-183.

19. *Ibid.*, 150-183.

20. *Ibid.*, 164-183.

ages of women engaged in various professions. She supplements her numerical evidence with newspaper articles, early histories, biographies and oral histories. Moore discusses careers ranging from those within the entertainment industry, clerical and industrial work, to professional positions like doctors, lawyers, librarians, teachers and lobbyists. Using such a broad base of source material lends credence to her work, and her discussion of professions adds both interest and breadth.<sup>21</sup>

Throughout her work, Moore provides human faces to accompany her data by citing specific women who shattered glass ceilings in their work worlds. Moore demonstrates the significance of professional women by reviewing their contributions to political and social causes. She also details some of the individual and common battles African American women faced relating to discrimination in the workplace, housing segregation and educational roadblocks. By providing these details, Moore reveals the extent to which courage, perseverance and boldness were necessary qualities in individual women and in the communities and families from which they emerged.<sup>22</sup>

Moore discusses the centrality of the African American church, women’s club movement and sororities and how these organizations paved the way for even larger numbers of later professionals. By addressing the educational outlet of the women’s club movement, Moore demonstrates that these groups provided resources for other women, which gave them the necessary skill sets to be attractive candidates in the labor force. Moore also focuses on how some groups created or lobbied for childcare resources, which allowed more African American women to enter the workforce. By framing her discussion of women this way, Moore complicates the vision of African American women as “mammies” and domestics; in reality, they did so much more for themselves and for the racial, social and gender uplift of their communities. Moore covers both the middle and lower classes in her work; this is significant because it shows that women across classes were interested in their communities and committed to improving their lives.<sup>23</sup>

One praiseworthy quality of Moore’s work is her temporal framing

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21. Moore, “Your Life is Really Not Just Your Own:” African American Women in Twentieth-Century California,” in *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, ed. Lawrence B. de Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 210-216, 226-228, 232-237.

22. *Ibid.*, 219- 223, 228-229.

23. *Ibid.*, 215-219, 228.

of the issue of women in the work force. Moore provides the foundation for modern women's involvement in the work force by providing references to nineteenth-century women, such as "Biddy" Mason and Mary Ellen Pleasant, well-known for their ingenuity and professional positions within society. As mentioned earlier, Moore extends her analysis into the African American women's club movement and argues that it was responsible for many gains by later professional women. From this foundation, Moore continues her analysis of individual women and their progress through the late 1990s. Consequently, Moore is able to trace the development over time of professions, such as those in the arts and humanities, political offices and athletics, and issues like the feminization of poverty, health problems and welfare. Moore's work is an excellent summary of the many issues and accomplishments of African American women in the workforce, but a book-length study on these issues and individuals is needed. Each of the women Moore mentions is worthy of a full-book analysis, or at least a chapter in an anthology. Moore's mention of Hettie Tilghman, who was cited as "operating a thriving family printing business," calls for additional research on the less-explored arena of small businesses.<sup>24</sup>

*African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000* is a compilation of articles and vignettes edited by Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore and published in 2003. Organized chronologically, the book is a treasure trove of black women who actively pursued economic, social and political justice and is one of the leading texts on Western black women. By gathering various articles into one location, Moore and Taylor provide readers with diversity of experience as well as continuity. Three articles are particularly germane to the historiography of professional women and they will be discussed in the following paragraphs.<sup>25</sup>

Quintard Taylor's article, "Susie Revels Cayton, Beatrice Morrow Cannady, and the Campaign for Social Justice in the Pacific Northwest," is significant because it focuses the professional and political achievements of two lesser-known women. Taylor touches on the unique professions of these women and how these jobs often allowed them a platform from which to effect change and influence others. Despite the availability of sources, Taylor does not discuss the specific details of their personal and

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24. Ibid., 210, 217, 228-240.

25. Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, *African American Women Confront the West 1600-2000* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 11-13, 17.

educational backgrounds, the pathway to their jobs or their experiences therein. Taylor’s analysis of Cannady’s professional contributions is more detailed than Cayton’s, but, like other historians, Taylor briefly acknowledges some of these issues and then quickly moves on to their family, social, religious or political work. Articles devoted to the employment and actual work of women would emphasize the importance of their professional contributions, the challenges they overcame in the workforce and perhaps provide precedent for later professional black women.<sup>26</sup>

Moya B. Hansen’s article, “‘Try Being a Black Woman!’: Jobs in Denver, 1900-1970” is refreshing in its approach to the economic challenges African American women faced in terms of job opportunities in the West. By placing her discussion of women in the context of such theories of the day as evolutionary and Victorian mores, Hansen provides meaning to job discrimination stemming from gender and race. Additionally, Hansen’s regional approach allows her to discuss the peculiarities of Colorado laws and traditions, while also making comparisons to other regions, like the South, where job opportunities for African American women outside the service industries were even more scarce. Hansen discusses the impact of World War II on job opportunities, but she does not overlook the more subtle changes related to regional trends, past employment practices and political activism. Hansen’s innovative approach should be imitated in forthcoming regional studies of professional job opportunities for African American women. Although Hansen provides a balanced perspective throughout her long time range (1900-1970), other historians could advance historiography by focusing on the pre-war period apart from World War II, as the war can too easily monopolize the narrative.<sup>27</sup>

The final article taken from *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000* is “From Peola to Carmen: Fredi Washington, Dorothy Dandridge, and Hollywood’s Portrayal of the Tragic Mulatto,” by Alicia I. Rodriguez-Estrada. Rodriguez-Estrada employs cultural and literary analysis in discussing the challenges black actresses faced in their historically-limited movie roles. Rodriguez-Estrada argues that the skin color of actresses dictated the type of roles they would be able to play (e.g. the “mammy,” Jezebel or “tragic mulatto”). Although Rodriguez-Estrada provides many interesting details and comments from newspapers and actress interviews, an analysis

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26. Ibid., 189-202.

27. Ibid., 207-223.

of the positive aspects of the entertainment industry would have made it more significant. For example, the fact that these women were able to work in the restricted environment of Hollywood demonstrates their agency, skill and determination to break open new professions for all races, but the author tends to focus on the negative aspects of their work instead.<sup>28</sup>

Also in 2003, Kathleen A. Cairns wrote *Front-Page Women Journalists, 1920-1950*. In many ways, Cairns' work accomplishes what is being called for in the field of professional black women's history in the West. By focusing on three particular female journalists, Ruth Finney, Charlotta Bass and Agness Underwood, Cairns provides a detailed approach to the specific challenges they faced in obtaining their professional positions, as well as the impact of their voices on reforming law and local attitudes. Cairns argues that the presence of these women in the workforce altered gender stereotypes and provided a precedent for later black female professionals.<sup>29</sup>

Another work discussing Charlotta Bass is Regina Freer's 2004 article, "L.A. Race Woman: Charlotta Bass and the Complexities of Black Political Development in Los Angeles." Freer frames her work as a city history and contributes scholarship devoted to the black community in Los Angeles prior to the Watts riots of 1965. In short, Freer utilizes Bass's writing to understand the issues facing the larger black community within Los Angeles. Although Freer mainly analyzes Bass as a "race woman" with a great platform via her newspaper, this work is a meaningful contribution to the growing field of scholarship on black professional women in the West because it demonstrates the agency and voice Bass was able to maintain through her professional work.<sup>30</sup>

Betti Vanepps-Taylor's community study, *Forgotten Lives: African Americans in South Dakota*, published in 2008, includes a chapter on "Strong Sisters," or black women who displayed strength of character and purpose in their contributions to the South Dakota community. Vanepps-Taylor discusses female business owners and managers, as well as professional singers and teachers, who often worked with both white and black clientele. Vanepps-Taylor describes their pathways to success, their club and church involvement and the legacy they left for other women. Vanepps-

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28. Ibid., 230-243.

29. Kathleen A. Cairns, *Front-Page Women Journalists, 1920-1950* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

30. Regina Freer, "L.A. Race Woman: Charlotta Bass and the Complexities of Black Political Development in Los Angeles," *American Quarterly*, 56, no. 3 (Sep., 2004): 607-632.

Taylor’s contribution to this historiography is mainly in her illumination of women professionals in small, rural settings.<sup>31</sup>

The historiography reviewed in this essay demonstrates that exclusively male subjects, definitions, sentiments and trends in historical writing are no longer as prevalent within recent scholarship. Historians are increasingly recognizing the need for studies of women—indeed, African American women and other minority groups—in order to construct a more accurate understanding of the past, yet much remains to be done in the field of western African American women’s history. Book-length research devoted to the experiences of African American women professionals in the twentieth century prior to World War II could provide historical precedent and context for topics such as later professional work by African American women, economic trends and class mobility, cultural and gender ideologies of work. Regional and community studies emphasizing the experiences of professional women would provide a rich context for analyzing how these women were able to enter the work force, what constituted their daily experiences and the accomplishments they achieved. Comparisons of black women professionals in urban versus rural areas could shed light on the possibilities and opportunities in both settings due to variables like population size, infrastructure and necessity. Interracial comparisons between various female minorities would also provide interesting analysis. Fortunately, there are sources ripe with information available for these studies, such as issues of the NAACP’s *Crisis Magazine* and other black publications and the extensive Black Women Oral History Project.

Based on the research conducted for this essay and the study of African American Western history in general, the historiography of African American women in the West is moving in these directions, and this is commendable. African American women who succeeded in professional positions against all odds deserve recognition for their resourcefulness, hard work and persistence; their contributions to political organizations, community life and racial activism; and above all, their agency. After all, as Skip Reynolds Crownhart said, “If you think it’s tough being a woman, you ought to try being a black woman,” and a professionally employed woman at that!<sup>32</sup>

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31. Betti Vanepps-Taylor, *Forgotten Lives: African Americans in South Dakota* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society, 2008), 129-142.

32. Taylor and Moore, 223.

“TAKE UP THE WHITE MAN’S BURDEN”:  
A BRIEF HISTORIOGRAPHY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY  
IMPERIALISM

CHRISTOPHER HOGANSON



Rudyard Kipling exuberantly welcomed the United States into the nineteenth-century’s global imperialist endeavor by writing “White Man’s Burden.” The poster-child for imperialism, Kipling saw it as the West’s duty to colonize the world. In a frenzied dash, the western powers first began the Scramble for Africa laying claim to every inch of land and then expanded their interest to the entire globe. As dawn rose over the nineteenth century, European powers held sway over ten percent of the African continent. This number had not fluctuated significantly during the previous 300 years. Until 1880, the colonization of Africa remained in the hands of private industry and individual efforts. By 1914, ninety percent of Africa was under the control of nine European nations; only Ethiopia and Liberia escaped European domination. However, Africa was not a unique case. By the twentieth century the West’s avaricious desire for new colonies became a global phenomenon. This raucous invasion of the world resulted in a confused and often belligerent situation as nations tussled with one another for domination. What driving force led to this sudden and rabid new form of imperialism? Many authors have postulated definitions of this “New Imperialism” utilizing various theories and methodological tools, but no one has developed a unifying or compelling system to adequately describe the West’s sudden desire for global domination through colonial expansion.

In researching the “New Imperialism,” it became readily apparent that no work could begin without first considering J. A. Hobson’s seminal monograph *Imperialism*. Deference to Hobson owes not only to the

simple reality that his was the first great work on the topic but also to the argument’s compelling nature. Not wishing to demonstrate irreverence for tradition, this investigation will also begin *ab initio* with Hobson. Hobson’s investigation centered on the roots of all imperialism. He did not focus solely on the colonization of Africa by Britain; instead, he tried to find universal motive forces driving the “New Imperialism.” Hobson sought universal causes to historical events and attempted to provide a methodology by which one could investigate all history. He defined imperialism as “the endeavor of the great controllers of industry to broaden the channel for the flow of their surplus wealth by seeking foreign markets and foreign investments to take off the goods and capital they cannot sell or use at home.”<sup>1</sup> The most important economic factor of imperialism for Hobson was foreign investment. An economic historian, Hobson saw imperialism as the child of market forces gone awry.

Economic determinism is a form of structural history. Without regard for individual agency, economic historians point to “the market” as the defining superstructure driving historical events. Marx, often accused of being an economic determinist, focused on a division within society between an economic base and a superstructure comprising other social institutions, values, and ideas. While struggle amongst the classes is the key to historical change and historical understanding, in Marxist theory, pure economic determinists attribute historical occurrences to the market itself without any regard for classes or agents. If pressed to reveal any agent oriented power, the economic determinist will, at best, acknowledge the influence of human acquisitive impulses. The need to secure more and greater wealth influences the market economy. Unlike Marx, for strict economic determinists, the market represents the totality of historical investigation and is sufficient for the understanding of any event. This often leads critics to dismiss the theory as structure reductionism since it completely removes individual agency from the equation.

Squarely set in economic theory, Hobson placed economic/market forces above all other interests in his investigation. All of his sources were economic in nature. Ignoring mentalities, culture, class, and geography, Hobson focused solely on the market and foreign investments. The market is composed of consumers and producers. Balancing these two groups is imperative for the market’s health. The nature of industrialized Europe

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1. J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), 91.



threw this balance out of kilter to the point where production far outstripped consumer needs. In Hobson's estimation, "the struggle for markets, the greater eagerness of producers to sell than of consumers to buy, is the crowning proof of a false economy of distribution"; to wit, "Imperialism is the fruit of this false economy."<sup>2</sup> Instead of drawing in the reins on production to balance out supply and demand, European merchants sought out new markets. Hobson surveyed the situation and realized "Everywhere appear excessive powers of production, excessive capital in search of investment . . . It is this economic condition of affairs that forms the tap-root of imperialism."<sup>3</sup> The West became too good at producing goods without balancing this production against consumer desire. In an inverse of the supply and demand curve, Hobson postulated that supply was the controlling agent that sought out demand. Instead of a system in which industry replied to consumer need, Hobson viewed the West as actively forcing its production on markets whether desired or not.

Hobson asked why the commonwealth would involve itself in an economically unsound practice and found his answer in Thomas Moore's quote: "Everywhere do I perceive a certain conspiracy of rich men seeking their own advantage under the name and pretext of the commonwealth."<sup>4</sup> While imperialism was bad for the nation, it did serve the needs and pocketbooks of certain classes and trades. These groups included foreign investors, engineers, missionaries, speculative miners, ranchers, and exporters, as well as posts for soldiers and sailors.<sup>5</sup> Hobson also attributed collusion between these parties and the government at large owing to the reality that "the accepted necessity of secrecy in diplomacy, and of expeditious, unobtrusive action, seem to favour and even to necessitate a highly centralised autocratic and bureaucratic method of government."<sup>6</sup> This return to autocracy weakened the powers of popular control. As a result, "not only is Imperialism used to frustrate those measures of economic reform now recognized as essential to the effectual working of all machinery of popular govern-

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2. Hobson, 88.

3. Hobson, 81.

4. Hobson, 46.

5. Hobson, 48.

6. Hobson, 149.

ment, but it operates to paralyse the working of that machinery itself.”<sup>7</sup> Hobson argued imperialism was an inherently dangerous mechanism that served only special interests and autocracy. It is an aberration of the capitalist system driven by forces that can only lead to a system collapse, or worse, a regression to earlier social structures like feudalism.

Hobson’s sole focus upon economic factors is the greatest weakness in his thesis. Nowhere did he offer alternative forces that might enter into play. Instead, he placed everything upon the “sinister international financiers” who he depicted controlling everything from behind dark curtains. And, in no uncertain terms, Hobson defines these financiers as foreign Jews. One envisions Hobson with a pen in one hand and a copy of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* in the other. Hobson himself acknowledged later in his *Confessions of an Economic Heretic* he was once an excessive and perhaps oversimplified advocate of the economic determination of history.

Marxist interpretation is another economically focused methodological approach that delved into the phenomenon of imperialism. In the Marxist system, imperialism represents the highest expression of capitalism. Mature capitalism suffers simultaneously from an ever-increasing accumulation of production and investment capital that outgrows the native market and investment opportunities. In this eventuality, the bourgeoisie sets its eyes on new, open markets to exploit. To achieve this goal, the capitalist bourgeoisie seize full control of the state and the military means to engage in imperialistic conquest. Imperialism is a unique form of aggression since it is tied completely to the capitalist system.

V. I. Lenin furthered the Marxist model leading to the eponymous methodology: Leninism. He defined imperialism as the partition of the world, and the exploitation of other countries.<sup>8</sup> Lenin agreed in spirit with Hobson’s assessment of the imperial situation, especially concerning the notion that it “creates the economic possibility of corrupting the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives form to, and strengthens opportunism.”<sup>9</sup> Imperialism is a necessity of capitalism since only the possession of colonies gives complete guarantee of success to the monopolies

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7. Hobson, 145.

8. V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York: International Publishers, 1979), 104.

9. Lenin, 104.

against all the risks of the struggle with competitors, including the risk that the latter will defend themselves by establishing a state monopoly through the passage of laws.<sup>10</sup>

Lenin specified five stages in the development of imperialism. First, the concentration of production and capital reach such a high stage that it creates monopolies. Second, the union of bank and industrial capital form the creation of a financial oligarchy. Third, there is a shift to the export of capital instead of the standard export of commodities. Fourth, international capitalist monopolies form, which share the world amongst themselves. Fifth, and finally, the greatest of the capitalist powers completely divide the world between themselves.<sup>11</sup> Paradoxically, these monopolies are the antithesis of free trade, the hallmark of capitalism, yet they are born from the actions of free trade.

To illustrate his theory, Lenin investigated the world banks, finance capital, concentrations of capital, and territorial division of the world amongst the great powers. Lenin used the holdings of the Deutsche Bank to illustrate the involvement of banks in world affairs. He listed all the banks dependent to the Deutsche Bank and their subsidiaries. He also cited the monetary holdings of the banks and the amounts they hold in savings. Through his evidence, he attempted to show how the banks were moving toward monopoly and a lessening of options for credit, since so many banks were in reality simply aspects of the Deutsche Bank. Lenin saw this as “the turning point from the old capitalism to the new, from the domination of capital in general to the domination of finance capital.”<sup>12</sup> His investigation into banks led him to the issue of finance capital. To illustrate the monopoly inherent in financial capital, Lenin cited the assets and stock shares of large corporations, like the General Electric Company, which held shares in between 175 and 200 other companies. For capital exports, Lenin included the figures from over a fifty year period for national gross exports from Great Britain, France, and Germany. Finally, Lenin looked at total imperial holdings of various nations. While he formulated his fiscal and numerical data well, Lenin based his key arguments mostly on Marxist presuppositions. In dealing with Britain’s colonial intents, he stated, “When free competition in Great Britain was at its zenith . . . the leading British

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10. Lenin, 82.

11. Lenin, 89.

12. Lenin, 46.

bourgeois politicians were opposed to colonial policy.”<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, he offers no details as to who these British bourgeoisie are and how he came to the belief that they were against imperialism, other than the convenience that their having done so fit his theory.

Lenin relied heavily on the Marxist model of class-oriented conflict. The monopolies captured the most important sources of raw materials, which heightened “the antagonism between cartelized and noncartelized industry.”<sup>14</sup> This animosity between both classes and nations led to open conflict since “the fact that the world is already divided up obliges those contemplating a *new* division to reach out for *any kind* of territory;” often the reason for aggression was not “directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine *his* hegemony.”<sup>15</sup> For Lenin, then, imperialism was often a willful act of spite against an economic foe.

While Lenin agreed with Hobson on many points, the two differed significantly over the ultimate fate of imperialism and the capitalist system. In Hobson’s view, imperialism was an aberration of the system owing its existence to overabundant production, but this impulse towards overabundance could be stifled through controls that would invariably lead to the death of imperialism. For Lenin, this was simply impossible. Imperialism was a natural evolution of the capitalist instinct; therefore, the application of human will could not circumvent it. In the Leninist model, the only solution to imperialism was to await the proletariat revolt culminating in the communist state. While the Marxist/economic approach to the topic of imperialism reached its apogee early with Lenin, later economic historians, like Joseph Schumpeter, would reformulate the underlying forces of the economic model.

In his work *Imperialism and Social Classes*, Joseph Schumpeter paid heed to the power of class structures but broke cleanly from Marxism in three crucial areas. First, unlike Marx’s compartmentalized periods of historical revolution, Schumpeter emphasized the linearity of history chaining each epoch to another. Second, he acknowledged the power of class structures, but denied Marx’s model of historical revolution through class struggles. Finally, Schumpeter insisted that capitalism’s eventual replacement will arrive “because the achievements of capitalism are likely to make

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13. Lenin, 78.

14. Lenin, 123, 127.

15. Lenin, 91-92.

it superfluous, not because its internal contradictions are likely to make its continuance impossible.”<sup>16</sup> Schumpeter never denied the power of economics, only its preeminence, insisting that “industry was the servant of state policy to a greater extent than state policy served industry.”<sup>17</sup> He still believed in economic powers and their rôle in history, but he relegated them to lesser importance.

If not the necessities of capitalism, what then was imperialism’s driving force according to Schumpeter? The answer rests in cognitive structures that supersede pure economic drives. These atavistic drives involved war instinct, overlordship, male supremacy, and triumphant glory; all of these are inherent forces that “ultimately stem from the conditions of

“If not the necessities of capitalism, what then was imperialism’s driving force?”

production” but “cannot be explained from capitalist production methods alone.”<sup>18</sup> For Schumpeter, these cognitive structures were “a heritage of the autocratic state, of its structural elements, organizational forms, interest alignments, and human attitudes, the outcome of pre-capitalist forces.”<sup>19</sup> In many ways this is similar to Marx’s view in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of*

*Lois Bonaparte* that “the feverishly youthful movement of material production, that has a new world to make its own, has left neither time nor opportunity for abolishing the old spirit world.”<sup>20</sup> These subconscious autocratic structures survived the bourgeois cultural revolution between the medieval world and the modern era.

When dealing specifically with export monopolism, Schumpeter maintains its continued existence owes in large part to the momentum of a situation once created and not to any inherent logic of capitalism. The impersonal motive forces of imperialism are rooted in the autocratic societies of the medieval past, with Schumpeter noting, “The ancient truth that the

16. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* (New York: Augustus M. Kelly Inc., 1951), 108.

17. Schumpeter, 78.

18. Schumpeter, 129.

19. Schumpeter, 128.

20. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 602.

dead always rule the living.”<sup>21</sup> This echoes closely Marx’s claim that, “The tradition of all dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living.”<sup>22</sup> For both historians, uncontrolled structures survive from age to age influencing the nature of each subsequent generation. Where the two differed was over the question of agency and class. While Marx reduced all historical issues to class conflict, Schumpeter placed primacy on the psychological makeup of both the individual and society.

Schumpeter blends Weberian theories with Freudian psychoanalytic methodology. Max Weber sought an understanding of the meaning behind social actions. This understanding could only be found through an intuitive and empathetic comprehension based on an imaginative reliving (*erlebnis*) of historic experience which he termed *verstehen*. For Weber, neither the state nor classes possess a collective conscience. They do not act; only individuals can perform meaningful actions. To understand motives and actions, Weber posited the theory of the ideal type. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, he stated the necessity of this process exists “because of the impossibility of drawing sharp boundaries in historical reality we can only hope to understand their specific importance from an investigation of them in their most consistent and logical form.”<sup>23</sup> By creating this ideal type, and then comparing it to actual historic events, one can discern the motivating forces of change through an appreciation of the event’s deviation from the constructed ideal. Weber also aimed attention on the internalization of ideas in shaping society. While Marx ignored culture and personal agency, Weber places significant interest in them.

Understanding the psychology of the individual is the rôle of psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud developed a method by which all individuals could be analyzed and compared against a myriad of case studies. Similar to Weber’s ideal types, the case studies allow the psychoanalyst an appreciation of an individual’s psychoses by studying how they deviate from the norm. Freud further posited, like Weber, that society and the state were simply the individual writ large. Characteristics that are true of each individual find themselves replicated in the state. Therefore, if traits found in individuals can be ascribed to the state, then historians can employ the psychoanalytical

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21. Schumpeter, 130.

22. Marx, 595.

23. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons (New York: Routledge Classics, 2001), 56.

method for understanding the state and its activities in a historical context.

Schumpeter was interested in both social structures and psychological dispositions. Like Weber, Schumpeter constructed ideal types when examining the question of imperialism; his view of pure capitalism was clearly that of an ideal type and not one grounded strictly in historic reality. His three case studies resembled ideal types and functioned as models for comparison and analysis with actual historical events. His first model was Egyptian imperialism, second was the imperialism of the Salian Franks, and third was Roman imperialism. Each represented not only a historical moment but also motivational forces. Egyptian imperialism was shaped by wars of independence against the Hyksos, the Salian Franks desired more land, and the Romans were driven by political tensions and class interests. These models gain their validity from his belief that imperialisms differ greatly in detail but all share a unifying trait allowing for a singular sociological problem of imperialism in all ages. By constructing an ideal type, Schumpeter investigated each period and attained an understanding by seeking each one's aberration from the ideal.

Schumpeter utilized Freudian language when postulating that the imperialistic drive "alone arouses the dark powers of the subconscious, calls into play instincts that carry over from the life habits of the dim past."<sup>24</sup> Nations, like individuals, possess an irrational id filled with acquisitive desires and selfish needs. A core aspect of imperialism, for Schumpeter, was nationalism which he described as:

. . . the irrational which consists of belligerence, the need to hate, a goodly quota of inchoate idealism, the most naïve (and hence also the most unrestrained) egotism. . . . It satisfies the need for surrender to a concrete and familiar super-personal cause, the need for self-glorification and violent self-assertion.<sup>25</sup>

History, then, is the expression of these atavistic drives which find root in the dark territory of the Freudian id. Societies, like individuals, possess the same internal struggles between ego and id.

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24. Schumpeter, 14.

25. *Ibid.*

Schumpeter envisioned the importance of class not as Marxist competition but as cognitive forces. In language reminiscent of Weber, Schumpeter said, “[People] believe certain things to be really true, others to be really false. . . . this simplicity and solidity of social and spiritual position extends their power far beyond their actual bases . . . in a word, gives them prestige.”<sup>26</sup> Similar to Weber, Schumpeter described capitalism as rational while primitive instincts were irrational forces. Capitalism was not the revolutionary result of class struggle over relations to production. For Schumpeter, capitalist nations and peoples were “rationalized, because the instability of economic position made their survival hinge on continual, deliberately rationalistic decisions . . . Trained to economic rationalism, these people left no sphere of life unrationalized.”<sup>27</sup> Analogous in many ways to Weber’s interpretation of Protestantism as the basis of the modern

*“the atavistic drives toward militarism now found themselves imbedded within the human subconscious even though they no longer serve a rational purpose.”*

work ethic, Schumpeter argues that imperialism, while once necessary for dealing with a “vital need,” eventually became an internalized cognitive system, which although originally “created by wars that required it, the machine now created the wars it required.”<sup>28</sup> Further, these cognitive systems intertwine within social structures and traditions making them difficult to expunge. Like the modern work ethic, which continued

to exist beyond its original purpose of promoting religious ideals, the atavistic drives toward militarism now found themselves imbedded within the human subconscious even though they no longer serve a rational purpose.

Following the psychoanalytic method, Schumpeter constructed a series of three case studies. The first was a people’s desire to regain or maintain independence from foreign rule. The second was the desire for additional territory. Third, and finally, was the existence of class interests and political tensions that induce the commission of conquest and war.

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26. Schumpeter, 123.

27. Schumpeter, 89.

28. Schumpeter, 33.



From these three case studies he psychoanalyzed humanity and posited the eventual demise of this militaristic “will to war.” Schumpeter arrives at this positive diagnosis through the realization that capitalism invokes the development of rationalization, and everything that is purely instinctual is driven into the background by this development. In the face of capitalism and its rationalizing forces “traditional habits, merely because they were traditional, could no more survive than obsolete economic forms.”<sup>29</sup> Far from “the highest stage of capitalism,” imperialism became, in the theories of Schumpeter, “an atavism in the social structure, in individual, psychological habits of emotional reaction.”<sup>30</sup> Schumpeter concluded that imperialism was an aberration of the subconscious past and not an aspect of capitalism. In the not too distant future, thanks to capitalism, argued Schumpeter, the dead shall no longer rule over the living.

Situated on the far end of the causal spectrum from economic determinism is the work of Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher entitled *Africa and the Victorians*. Their investigation attempted to remove economics, at least in its deterministic form, completely from the imperial equation. Instead of economic determinants, they wished to show the mentalities of the government officials as the key factor controlling the development of British imperial drives during the late nineteenth century. In dealing with the issue of imperialism writ large, Robinson and Gallagher opted to focus exclusively upon the British involvement in the scramble for Africa. They argued, the “first task in analyzing the late-Victorians’ share in the partition is to understand the motives of the ministers who directed it, and the study of official thinking is indispensable to this”; hence, “policy making, in other words, is the unified historical field in which all the conditions for expansion were brought together.”<sup>31</sup> By looking at the major players in the British government, the “official thinking,” they hoped to discern the set of mentalities that led to furthering the empire.

Harkening back to the methodological era of Leopold von Ranke, Robinson and Gallagher focused solely upon Foreign and Colonial office records and the private papers of the Third Marquess of Salisbury for their source material. They also included five rather perfunctory tables covering

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29. Schumpeter, 89.

30. Schumpeter, 65.

31. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), 19.

import, export, revenue and expenditure for British West Africa, Nigeria, and Lagos. While limiting themselves only to these primary sources, they still insisted, “We must go deeper than the symbolism of their [the policy-makers’] conscious calculations” in order to deduce the “tone and spirit of the collective mind which more or less directed, and perhaps partly impelled the imperial movement into Africa.”<sup>32</sup> However, with no specified theoretical model for interpreting mentalities and such tightly focused sources, the reader is left wondering how they intended to justify their interpretations. Their belief in the primacy of political documents and private papers is also highly questionable. Their interpretations were no more than guesswork since they lack any objective outside references. Further, it is not clear the micro case of Britain and the African question accurately corresponds to a wider interpretation of imperialism as a whole. Despite these concerns, they did provide an interesting alternative to economic determinism.

Robinson and Gallagher turned the determinist issue on its head by insisting, “The actual powers of industry however were as nothing compared with the expansive spirit which their discovery inspired in the early and mid-Victorians.”<sup>33</sup> They saw the spirit of Victorian England wagging the dog of economics. Instead of economic forces controlling people, as per the Marxist model, the zeitgeist of nineteenth-century Europe dictated the direction and purpose of economic endeavors. They demolished the very concept of imperialism by arguing that the “Imperial Period” was essentially no different than the mid-Victorian period characterized by free trade. The difference was only one of appearance. By the late Victorian period, various local crises compelled Britain to formalize its holdings. Robinson and Gallagher argued that the “security of the routes to the East was the one interest with which British cabinets could not afford to gamble.”<sup>34</sup> Therefore, imperialism, far from finding its basis in a strong will to empire by Britain, derived from an almost involuntary reaction to African national movements.<sup>35</sup> Finally, they insisted, “It was not the pomps or profits of governing Africa which moved the ruling *élite*, but the cold rules for national safety

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32. Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, 25.

33. Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, 1.

34. Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, 159.

35. Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, 161.

handed on from Pitt, Palmerston and Disraeli.”<sup>36</sup> Where the mid-Victorian could ignore political measures, the late-Victorian demanded them. The mentality of security became the watchword of British imperialism and not economic gain.

The previous historians all shared a focus on human social structures in their various aspects (be it purely economic, purely cultural, or an amalgam of both), but others approached the topic of imperialism through purely material interests. One defining characteristic of humanity is the ability to create and adapt tools for specific needs, which begs the question, “do tools define man, or does man define the tools?” In his work *The Tools of Empire*, Daniel Headrick delved into the technological advantages available to the Western World during the nineteenth century. Headrick wished to “defy an axiom of Western historiography: that history results from the interaction of human decisions.”<sup>37</sup> Abandoning the traditional primacy of human motives, Headrick utilized an extreme materialism in his methodological approach. He sorted the unwieldy classification of ‘cause’ into the categories of “motives” and “means.” For Headrick, complex processes like imperialism result from both appropriate motives and adequate means.<sup>38</sup> Human decisions and desires fall into the realm of motives, but without means, Headrick argued, the motives would go unfulfilled. Therefore, means became the *sine qua non* for understanding history; in the case of imperialism, the means were the technological achievements of the West.

Headrick divided his work into three phases: tools of penetration, guns and conquest, and the communication revolution. The tools of penetration were steamboats and quinine. Steamboats, refitted to gunboats, allowed for deeper penetration into the African interior, and the entire imperial endeavor would have been scrapped at inception without quinine to protect the colonists from malaria. In his guns and conquest section, Headrick dwelt on the superior arms of the imperial powers, like the breechloader rifle, and the disparity it created between adventurers such as Stanley with his maxim gun and the African tribes. The communication revolution included the steam engine, railroads, telegraphs, and the ability to create such massive works as the Suez Canal. Communication and

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36. Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, 463.

37. Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire. Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 9.

38. Ibid.

transportation networks were a necessity for maintaining fiscal solvency in colonial endeavors; only the West controlled the technological innovations to make them a reality. Previous generations did not control these means and were therefore incapable of pursuing or maintaining colonial control on the scale of the nineteenth-century West. Like Schumpeter, Headrick argued that the will to dominate is an atavistic impulse within the human psyche. Headrick did not deny the power of human impulses, economics, and social structures, but he did subordinate them to means. History is no longer a question of human desire but instead an investigation of who had the means to realize those desires, which in the case of imperialism was the industrialized West.

*The Tools of Empire* is a monograph of questionable sources and thesis. Headrick relied completely upon secondary sources to develop his argument. The greatest weakness in Headrick’s thesis rests in his lack of counterfactuals (but for X, then Y). While he admits, “few of the inventions that affected the course of empire in the nineteenth century were indispensable”, nowhere did he suggest what state of affairs would actualize in the absence of these ingredients.<sup>39</sup> Finally, Headrick’s subjugation of all human will to technology is overtly reductionist if not morally questionable. The modern human seems inexorably tied to Kubrick’s depiction of jawbone wielding hominids in *2001*. In Headrick’s estimation, no sooner did humans find a new weapon than they were compelled to use it for the fulfillment of atavistic desires. Such a view, with its rigorous denial of human will, when played out to its logical conclusion would signal the end of history itself.

With so many conflicting theories and methodologies, the investigator is left to ponder what if anything is the definitive cause of the scramble for Africa and the meteoric rebirth of global imperialistic drives in nineteenth-century Europe. The Marxist approach, with its myriad of proponents, arrived early to the debate and has held a commanding presence ever since. Later historians either attempt to tweak the Marxist model in regards to the “New Imperialism” or attempt to refute its hold. Those rallied against Marxism point to the extreme expense of imperialistic endeavors. Not only did imperialism fail as a means of exploiting other countries, as per Lenin’s definition, they actually served as an economic sink to the European nations draining off far more in capital than they ever provided. Or does the truth of imperialism lie with Schumpeter in structural class

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39. Headrick, 205.

driven constructs; are the impulses of imperialism derived from the ghost of an autocratic past imposing upon the societies of Europe a subconscious yet irresistible drive to dominate and control? Or, does Western Europe owe its near embarrassing successes at global domination purely to technical innovation as Headrick purports? The wearied searcher might well ponder conspiratorially whether the very attempt to conceptualize a grandiose category such as “imperialism” is in fact a *pons asinorum* and suddenly find themselves back on page one of Hobson’s *Imperialism* where he sagaciously warned, “To lay one’s finger accurately upon any ‘ism’ so as to pin it down and mark it out by definition seems impossible.”<sup>40</sup> In the final analysis, since it is nearly impossible to disregard completely any one of these approaches the issue becomes a question of hierarchical organization of causes. Which cause deserves highest regard and which the least? The capstone investigation into the nature of the “New Imperialism” will most likely involve the amalgamation of these various methodologies into a coherent package emphasizing each in its due share. The truth of imperialism most likely exists on the ternary axes of class structures, economic forces, and mentalities.

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40. Hobson, 1.

# JOAN WALLACH SCOTT AND THE “POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION”

BRITTNEY SMITH



In the wake of the second wave of feminism beginning in the 1960s, female scholars developed a collective need to include women within historical analysis. According to feminist historian Joan Wallach Scott, it was necessary to contribute to the contemporary formation of women's identities. Scott explains that “herstory” emerged as an attempt to assert women's role and agency in history and to therefore provide women a historical identity. As she articulates, “I assume that history's representations of the past help construct gender for the present.”<sup>1</sup> As a factor in identity formation, a key facet of feminism, it was imperative that women's histories successfully integrate females into the historical narrative and provide them the historical basis on which modern women could construct their identity and therefore assert political, social, and economic equality.

Scott contends, however, that women's history was characterized by tensions of “practical politics and academic scholarship; between received disciplinary standards and interdisciplinary influences; between history's atheoretical stance and feminism's need for theory.”<sup>2</sup> That is, women's historians were torn between contemporary politics and historical scholarship. In response to the tensions that divided women's historians between politics and scholarship, feminist historians reinterpreted history to promote greater female political influence. Scott advanced women's history not only by

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1. Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) 2.
  2. *Ibid.*, 17.

integrating women into the historical landscape but also by redefining the landscape itself, repurposing it for the production of knowledge that would contribute to feminists' fight for political equality. primarily by generating gender and identity discourse. Feminist historians sought greater insight into historical constructions of gender, but it was necessary to first challenge previous historiography.

Scott often references historian Michel de Certeau and his proposition that the very creation of women's history as a separate subfield signified that the discipline and methodology of history is necessarily incomplete.<sup>3</sup> This implies that history, because it is necessarily incomplete, is also a product of contemporary knowledge, and as such, historians are obligated to consciously consider their contemporaneous influences. Certeau's theory did not go uncontested; more traditional historians disputed it "by invoking an opposition between 'history' (that knowledge gained through neutral inquiry) and 'ideology' (knowledge distorted by considerations of interest)."<sup>4</sup> The opposition of history and ideology has long been a criticism of feminist history. Certeau asserts, however, that "history" is not neutral but is, as their definition of "ideology" suggests, influenced by the interests or assumptions of the historian. Historians are therefore obligated to continuously question at least their own, if not the disciplinary, boundaries and assumptions of the field. It is the role of historians, and according to Scott, feminist historians in particular, to constantly challenge the discipline to remain relevant to the contemporary.

For Scott, the application of post-structuralist theories outlining relative linguistic and cultural meanings of gender and the processes that produce them provides feminist history a means of redefining women's history. Feminist history has successfully incorporated women not simply as additional subjects but also as "agent[s] of narrative."<sup>5</sup> Acknowledging women as "agent[s] of narrative" suggests that women shaped the historic landscape as well as their own identity, agency, and the definitions of gender.<sup>6</sup> Scott states, "I assume that history's representations of the past help construct gender for the present. Analyzing how that happens requires

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3. Joan Wallach Scott, *American Feminist Thought At Century's End: A Reader*, ed. Linda S. Kauffman (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 243.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Scott, *Gender and the Politics*, 17.

6. *Ibid.*, 2.

attention to the assumptions, practices, and rhetoric of the discipline, to things either or so taken for granted or so outside customary practice that they are not usually a focus for historians' attention."<sup>7</sup> Thus, feminist history not only seeks to inform current gender constructions but also to push the boundaries of history in subject and in discipline.

Scott has continuously redefined the boundaries and assumptions of historiography in her very unique interpretation of history, aptly identified as feminist history. In her redefinition of the historical landscape, Scott has effectively coalesced a number of epistemological and historiographical theories to generate an understanding of gender and the linguistic, political, and cultural expressions of it, as well as its influence on the formation of identity. Scott developed feminist history as "a fundamental recasting of the terms, standards, and assumptions of what has passed for objective, neutral, and universal history in the past, because that view of history included in its very definition of itself the exclusion of women."<sup>8</sup> Scott redefines gender as a socially-constructed sexual hierarchy; this challenged the previous definition of gender as the biological difference between men and women. Thus, she provides a "fundamental recasting" of women's history as one apart from men.<sup>9</sup> In a constantly evolving conceptualization of feminist historiography and gender analysis, Scott combines Derridean linguistic theory, psychoanalytic theories of identity formation, and Foucauldian power theory to form a uniquely interdisciplinary approach to history.

Scott, influenced by Michel Foucault, argues that the study of history has promoted gendered hierarchy. Foucault regarded the production of knowledge as an expression of power itself. Indeed, Scott utilizes a Foucauldian definition of knowledge "to mean the understanding produced by cultures and societies of human relationships, in this case between men and women," and as such knowledge is, "not absolute or true, but always relative."<sup>10</sup> Consequently, knowledge, produced by a culture long-defined by masculine understanding, holds meaning relative to the existing gendered hierarchy. She continues, "Its uses and meanings become contested politically and are the means by which relationships of power- of domination and subordination- are constructed... Knowledge is a way of ordering

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7. Ibid.

8. Scott, *American Feminist Thought*, 249.

9. Scott, *Gender and the Politics*, 20.

10. Ibid., 2.



the world; as such it is not prior to social organization, it is inseparable from social organization.”<sup>11</sup>

For feminist historians this meant that previous historiography acted as a tool for the subordination of women because it had largely excluded women from the historical narrative and dismissed their contributions as insignificant in comparison with those of men. Scott also appeals to Foucault’s theory that the accord of the discipline will be broken when it is challenged.

Feminist history consequently became a method of challenging history’s gendered hierarchy. Utilizing the linguistic theories of Phillip Derrida and Foucault’s constructions of power, Scott suggests that language, and the cultural meanings and interpretations attached to it, have been a determining factor in the subordination of women. Feminist historians thus challenged the hierarchy by analyzing the language historically used to express gendered concepts. In addition, they investigated the factors contributing to the identity formation of women and demonstrated that these factors are always in flux. It became a way of understanding history not in previous terms of binary opposition of male to female but instead in relational terms used to express the relative meaning of femininity and masculinity.

According to Derrida, language has been defined in the binary opposition when in fact words and their meanings are culturally relative. To Scott this suggested that words must be contextualized within time and culture in order to understand their full meanings and implications. This focus on language has been simultaneously described as one of Scott’s greatest strengths and glaring weaknesses. Some historians are concerned that the focus on language is too exclusive and overlooks other factors influencing gender including social and political theory.

Scott maintains, however, that examination of language will illuminate the constructions and processes of gender. According to Derrida, in oppositional binaries contain primary, dominant words that draws meaning from secondary, subordinate words. In terms of male/female, males have represented the dominant, while female has represented the subordinate. Feminists utilized this theory to explore the past binary definitions of man/woman as well as masculine/feminine and their relative meanings within particular historical contexts. Derrida’s theory thereby constitutes the feminist historical idea that the past must be re-considered with greater attention to the language used to express gender.

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11. Ibid.

In *Gender and the Politics of History*, one of Scott's most significant contributions, she defined gender as, "a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated."<sup>12</sup> Gender, although not the only means of articulating power, has been the most continuous and persistent means of articulating power in the Western World. Therefore, Scott's theorization of gender sought to determine the relative meaning and distribution of power between woman and man as a Derridean binary pair. As Scott indicates, "The point of new historical investigation is to disrupt the notion of fixity, to discover the nature of the debate or repression that leads to the appearance of timeless permanence in binary gender representations."<sup>13</sup> Therefore, as a historical subject, gender analysis would serve feminist aims by disrupting the idea of fixed gender qualifications. Gender consequently became a category for the explorations of the constructions of difference and the influence those constructions had on the distribution of power throughout global history.

Within her exploration of gender, however, there arose a conundrum. "Women" as a subject was problematic because of its seemingly contradictory uses in history and in political expression of feminism. The definition of women within these two contexts can be somewhat at odds. As Scott indicates, "The unresolved question of whether 'women' is a singular or a radically diverse category, whether 'women' is a social category that pre-exists or is produced by history, is at the heart of both feminist history and the history of feminism."<sup>14</sup> Scott suggests that feminist history serves a dual purpose of providing feminists a unified categorical "women" for political purposes, while historical study explores the experiences that define women as individuals within or outside the collective category. Studying women, and the different categorical intersections that define them both as individual and within the collective, has become an additional focus of feminist history. Feminist history has demonstrated that "women" as a social category pre-existed history and that it has simply transitioned in relative meaning within various historical contexts. There is an ever-present tension that seems to remain in balance within feminist history and indeed contributes to the analysis.

Feminism has lent to history its critique of the status quo, par-

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12. Scott, *Gender and the Politics*, 45.

13. Ibid., 43.

14. Scott, *Feminism & History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4.

ticularly in relation to the production of knowledge and of history as a discipline. History, in turn, has provided feminism greater insight into the diversity of the experience that defines the woman that collectively form “women” to enact political change throughout the past. Feminist historians have transitioned beyond gender, though gender remains a category of analysis, to delve deeper into this exploration of differences. Difference has itself become a key tool of analysis for feminist historians. Discourse of difference provides new direction within feminist history to explain identity formation within historical context. Additionally, it expands the purview of history and contributes to the feminist cause both politically and historiographically.

As Scott declares, “What was needed was a way of thinking about difference and how its construction defined relations between individuals and social groups.”<sup>15</sup> Gender provided an initial analysis that then turned to a more inclusive examination of the differences that contribute to the definition of women’s identity both collectively and individually. Psychoanalysis has been added to the mix in an effort to understand individual identity formation and how that contributes to women’s inclusion in the collective subject of “women.” As a study of the individual, it applies not only to the historical subject but to the historian as well. Scott, in reference to Certeau’s concepts regarding the influence of the historian on their work, or their knowledge production, suggests that they benefited from a psychoanalytic self-examination about “the investments historians [have] in the stories they produced, as well as those of the subjects about whom they wrote.”<sup>16</sup> Scott suggests that psychoanalysis provides a method of reading that is highly critical of the language for both what it expresses within a given context, as well as what it consciously does not express. For Scott, psychoanalysis has offered to return the radical expression to feminist history where gender has been essentially stripped of any radical inclination. Indeed, in what is seemingly Scott’s initial stage of the application of psychoanalysis to history, the idea is quite radical and yet remains somewhat illusive.

Perhaps in the coming years Scott will provide another sizable contribution to the discipline and again redefine the landscape with her theories on the application of psychoanalysis in history. For the time be-

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15. Scott, *American Feminist Thought*, 247.

16. Joan Wallach Scott, *The Fantasy of Feminist History* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011), Kindle E-book edition, location 46.

ing, however, gender analysis and relative linguistic meaning of gendered expression and the power it articulates has been among Scott's greatest contribution to the discipline. Even more significant is Scott's ongoing critique of history and historiography. No longer is history complicit in the continuation of gendered hierarchy. No longer are historians uncritical of the assumptions and methods applied in their discipline. Instead, historians are now enlightened and influenced by a greater degree of interdisciplinary studies and a larger purview of history. Scott and her examinations of gender and linguistic analysis have also contributed to the establishment of women's studies programs. Despite the changing meaning of feminism and, according to Scott, the diminishment of its perceived value by the greater population, women's studies programs continue to "embrace feminism, not as a set of prescriptions but as a critical stance, one that seeks to interrogate and disrupt prevailing systems of gender...one that is committed to self-scrutiny as well as to denunciations of domination and oppression, one that is never satisfied with simply transmitting bodies of knowledge but that seeks instead to produce a new knowledge. This is feminism not as the perpetuation and protection of orthodoxy but feminism as a critique."<sup>17</sup> This provides a description not only of women's studies programs but also of Scott's ever-changing discourse on history. Scott remains active in the discipline of history. She continues applying the same interrogation of gender systems. In addition, she maintains constant self-scrutiny, as is evident in her self-critical works, but also apparent in the evolution of her methods. Scott has certainly re-defined the landscape of history and provided an ever-changing, ever-critical examination of the past that seeks to empower "women," both as a collective and an individual, to enact political equality.

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17. Joan Wallach Scott, *Women's Studies On the Edge* (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 2008), 6.

OUT AT HOME:  
HOW TELEVISION AND MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL'S  
WESTERN EXPANSION CRIPPLED THE PACIFIC COAST

DAVID CARPENTER



Baseball fans living in California, Oregon, and Washington flooded Pacific Coast League (PCL) ballparks in 1947. Since no Major League Baseball (MLB) teams existed West of the Mississippi River at the time, the minor leagues provided the only form of professional baseball for the rest of the United States. Of the dozens of minor leagues in the country, the PCL distinguished itself from the others with eight strong franchises from Seattle to San Diego. The league set a new league attendance record for the fourth straight year that season and petitioned to become a third major league, joining the American and National under the MLB umbrella.<sup>1</sup> MLB elevated the PCL, also known as the Coast League, to Class AAA status in the mid 1940s. As more soldiers came home from World War Two, more fans returned to the ballparks.<sup>2</sup>

The Coast League enjoyed the same post-World War II prosperity that much of the rest of the country experienced. However, attendance fell at ballparks due to the advent of television in the late 1940s. During the 1950s, rumors of major league expansion turned true with the moves of the Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants into California cities in 1958.<sup>3</sup> Nationally televised major league games on the West Coast and the infringement of the big leagues onto PCL territory transformed the Coast

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1. Michael Lomax, "Not Quite Ready for Prime Time: The Pacific Coast League's Attempt to Become a Third Major League in Baseball," *Journal of the West* 47, no. 4 (Fall 2008): 19-21.
  2. Lomax, "Not Quite Ready for Prime Time," 18.
  3. Steve Treder, "Open Classification: The Pacific Coast League's Drive to Turn Major," *NINE: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture* 15, no. 1 (2006): 99.

League into just another minor league by the end of the decade.

Organized baseball on the West Coast began as early as 1866, but it did not evolve into the Coast League until 1903. A year later, the six-team league joined the American Association, then the governing body of minor league baseball. The game began producing star players and managers who came and went over the decades.<sup>4</sup> During the twilight of his career, the great Ty Cobb spent two seasons in the Pacific Coast Winter League as both a player and manager for the San Francisco Seals in 1920 and 1921. He later made unsuccessful attempts to buy the team in the early 1930s.<sup>5</sup> Future Hall of Famer Ted Williams played two seasons for the Padres in 1936 and 1937 before joining the Boston Red Sox<sup>6</sup>. San Francisco native Joe DiMaggio showed great potential playing for his hometown Seals. DiMaggio played with the Seals from 1932 to 1935 before leaving for New York and starring for the Yankees.<sup>7</sup> The Coast League eventually grew to eight teams and emerged as the top tier of the minor leagues by the eve of the Second World War.<sup>8</sup>

The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor two days before the MLB held its winter meetings in Los Angeles halted discussions of expanding the league to California. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "green light" letter encouraged the 1942 season to proceed, proclaiming that baseball provided Americans a diversion from the events overseas. Once the major leagues decided to continue playing, the PCL and the rest of minor league baseball followed the MLB's lead. Wartime precautions decreased the number of night games due to a fear of air raid, particularly on the West Coast. The enlistment of players and fans into the military resulted in a reduction of quality player and limited attendance in 1942 and 1943.<sup>9</sup> Leagues also faced restrictions on travel and scheduling due to wartime demands. However, by 1944 night-game restrictions were lifted and ballplayers and fans

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4. William G. Swank and James D. Smith III, "Voices of the Pacific Coast League Padres, 1936-1958," *The Journal of San Diego History* 41, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 3.
  5. Al Stump, *Cobb: A Biography* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1994), 299-301.
  6. Arthur Sampson, *Ted Williams: A Biography of the Kid* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1950), 11-13.
  7. Maury Allen, *Where Have You Gone, Joe DiMaggio: The Story of America's Last Hero* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1975), 27-31.
  8. Bill O'Neal, *The Pacific Coast League, 1903-1988* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1990), 78.
  9. Lomax, "Not Quite Ready for Prime Time," 18.

came back to ballparks from their military service. The Coast League drew more than 2.3 million fans in 1944 and more than 2.9 million the year the war ended. The PCL enjoyed a post-war renaissance through 1947.<sup>10</sup>

The growing popularity of the Coast League inspired its president, Clarence Rowland, to lobby the major leagues for inclusion. Rowland took over as the Los Angeles Angels general manager in 1942 and the PCL named him league president just two years later.<sup>11</sup> Baseball leagues across America prospered in the years immediately following the war. The PCL, however, significantly elevated itself above all other minor leagues in the country by an even wider margin than it had prior to WWII because of its location in major cities, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, and due to the athleticism of its star players. The PCL's eight team presidents met at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles in October 1945 and drafted a resolution stating their desire to become a major league.<sup>12</sup>

“Baseball leagues across America prospered in the years immediately following the war.”

A letter to MLB Commissioner Happy Chandler followed in December. The *New York Times* ran part of the resolution in a story announcing the Coast League's wishes.<sup>13</sup> The minor leagues recently added the Class AAA level and the Coast League joined with the International League and the American Association as the only minor leagues

with the AAA designation. The PCL also wished to be excluded from the major league draft so the MLB could draft its best players.<sup>14</sup>

Chandler denied the Coast League's proposition, but promised to give the idea future consideration. He contended that MLB considered the West Coast “potential major league territory” and did not believe that the

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10. Paul Zingg and Mark D. Medeiros, *Runs, Hits and an Era: The Pacific Coast League, 1903-1958* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 106.
  11. Joseph P Murphy Jr., “The Busher from Dubuque: Pants Rowland Wore Many Hats,” *Baseball Research Journal* 24 (1995): 121.
  12. California Historical Society, North Baker Research Library, San Francisco, Dick Dobbins Collection of the Pacific Coast League 1866-1999, Board of Director's Minutes 1923-1967.
  13. *New York Times*, December 5, 1945.
  14. Richard E. Beverage, *The Angels: Los Angeles in the Pacific Coast League, 1919-1957* (Placentia, CA: Deacon Press, 1981), 157, 162, 183.

PCL would be able to pay “top major league salaries.”<sup>15</sup> Seals owner Paul Fagan, also a strong advocate of the PCL turning major, emphasized that it must pay its players big league salaries. In 1946, he paid all his players at least \$5,000, the minimum major league salary. The MLB felt that Coast League ballparks did not meet MLB standards. Seals Stadium, one of the largest ballparks in the PCL, sat just 25,000 spectators, several thousand less than typical major-league parks. Seals Stadium eventually hosted the San Francisco Giants in 1958 and 1959 while Candlestick Park was being built.<sup>16</sup> PCL attendance began dipping in 1948. Though it crept back up slightly in 1949, it dropped by 15 percent in 1950 and continued a downward spiral that lasted for decades. The PCL’s dreams of becoming a major league dwindled each year.<sup>17</sup>

### Tuned In and Turned Off

The advent of television had an increasing effect on the lives of Americans in the 1950s. MLB televised games as early as the 1940s, but television’s impact skyrocketed the following decade. Television gave West Coast baseball fans another alternative; they watched the best baseball being played in the world without having to leave their homes. Television hit the consumer market in the mid-1940s and grew in popularity during the Cold War era. The popularity of TV negatively impacted attendance at baseball games. Fewer than 200,000 TV sets occupied American homes in 1947 as compared to thirty-five million by 1955. Attendance at major league games dropped from nearly twenty million to about 16.5 million and the number of minor leagues around the country decreased from fifty-nine to thirty-three during that span.<sup>18</sup>

MLB began nationally televising games on a regular basis in 1950. Prior to 1950, few games were televised outside local markets, except for the World Series and All-Star games.<sup>19</sup> Mutual Broadcast System bought

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15. *New York Times*, December 12, 1945.

16. Dick Dobbins and Jon Twichell, *Nuggets on the Diamond: Professional Baseball in the Bay Area from the Gold Rush to the Present* (San Francisco: Woodford Press, 1994), 170-171, 191.

17. Beverage, *The Angels: Los Angeles in the Pacific Coast League*, 183.

18. *America*, “World Series and Baseball,” October 8, 1955, 30.

19. Francis Wallace, “Are the Major Leagues Strangling Baseball?” *Collier’s*, March 10, 1951, 19.



the right to televise the first five World Series shown on television, paying \$65,000 to show the 1947 Series.<sup>20</sup> Gillette paid the sum of \$800,000 to be the exclusive television sponsor of the 1950 World Series. The razor company paid \$600,000 more than it did for the 1949 Series in an attempt to stave off competition from Chevrolet.<sup>21</sup> In 1948, as many as 10,000 people lined up at Boston Common to watch one of 100 televisions set up in the park and to catch a peak of the World Series.<sup>22</sup> CBS broadcasted the first major league game in color in August 1951 (the Dodgers defeated the Boston Braves eight to one). The telecast went smoothly except for the occasional streaking of colors when objects moved and occasionally a player's white uniform turned green blending in with the grassy background. Despite these minor glitches, big-league baseball on television marched on.<sup>23</sup>

Advertising and sponsorship played a significant role on televised sporting events from the beginning. *Saturday Review* writer Goodman Ace complained about the incessant camera shots of Schaefer Beer billboards shown in the ballpark during its "half" of the broadcast. If a ball hit to an area of the park showed a competing billboard in the background, the camera quickly panned off it and focused on something else to avoid upsetting the sponsor.<sup>24</sup> Early on, sponsors secured naming rights for pre-game and post-game interview shows. Large corporations spent significant amounts of currency to sponsor sporting events on television. Gillette spent \$1.5 million of its \$5 million advertising budget in 1950 on the World Series alone.<sup>25</sup>

To combat their decreasing attendance, some major league teams either cut back on televising home games or only showed road contests. Several magazines in the early 1950s ran stories speculating that television adversely affected sports attendance with headlines including, "Are the Major Leagues Strangling Baseball?" "Does Television Really Spoil the Gate?" "TV Can Kill Baseball," "TV Disrupts Sports Business," and "TV Ruins

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20. *Business Week*, "World Series Televised," October 4, 1947, 65.

21. *Business Week*, "Gillette Plays Up Series TV ... With Tears in Its Eyes?" September 16, 1950, 84-85.

22. *Business Week*, "World Series on Boston Common ... By Television," October 16, 1948, 54.

23. *Time*, "Baseball in Color," August 20, 1951, 65.

24. Ace Goodman, "3B Television: Baseball, Beer and Butts," *Saturday Review*, May 30, 1953, 31.

25. *Time*, "Bat, Beer and Camera," April 26, 1954, 104; "Gillette Plays Up Series TV ... With Tears in Its Eyes?" 85.

the Gate but Boosts the Take.” These articles blamed television for keeping people at home instead of heading out to the ballpark. The minor leagues suffered the most dramatic drops in attendance. Several teams intentionally moved to cities that did not broadcast major league games as the only way to avoid the infringement.<sup>26</sup>

Countering the theory that television adversely affected sports attendance, University of Pennsylvania graduate student Jerry Jordan conducted his own research project in 1950 in which he concluded that television only had a temporary effect on sports attendance. After the novelty wore off, he reported, fans returned to the ballparks and stadiums. He theorized that exposure to televised sporting events brought in new fans, which led to a longer-range effect of increased attendance.<sup>27</sup> The paid admissions of four teams that broadcasted home games on TV actually went up by more than 200,000 from 1950 to 1951.<sup>28</sup> However, that only represents a small sample of the overall fan base. The effects of television took further hold over attendance at sporting events for years after Jordan’s study.

### Going Rogue

By late 1950, MLB broadcasted games nationwide multiple times per week, drastically reducing the Coast League’s attendance figures. The league persisted in its quest for recognition as a third major league as the population in the western region of the U.S. continued to grow, and that growth significantly increased the number of baseball fans. Rejected again by MLB, the Coast League, led by Rowland, threatened to leave organized baseball and become an “outlaw league” if MLB did not exempt it from the player draft.<sup>29</sup> The Coast League planned to pull out of its Class AAA designation, but Rowland ultimately decided the league would not drop from the National Association, one of the minor league governing bodies.<sup>30</sup> Chandler convinced Fagan and the other PCL owners to accept an unprecedented “open” classification, meaning it elevated above the International League and American Association in status and players could opt to join the major leagues but could not be taken in the player draft. The new clas-

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26. *Business Week*, “Does Television Really Spoil the Gate?” September 27, 1952, 38, 40.

27. *Newsweek*, “Attendance: Short and Long of It,” July 31, 1950, 74.

28. *Business Week*, “Does Television Really Spoil the Gate?” 40.

29. Lomax, “Not Quite Ready for Prime Time,” 21.

30. *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 1950.

sification did not mean that the Coast League closed in on major league status, although it remained the goal.<sup>31</sup>

In the second half of 1951, the federal government began investigating the leagues. Congressional hearings were held to investigate MLB's antitrust exemption to determine if its national broadcasts constituted interstate commerce.<sup>32</sup> Legal disputes against MLB because of its ability to air its games nationally without competition and the PCL's fight to become a major league sparked the hearings.<sup>33</sup> The Supreme Court ruled in 1922 that MLB was not a business, but a sport, so it could essentially operate as a monopoly. Television, however, complicated that precedent. Congress decided that, since minor league teams acted as independent clubs with working agreements with the major leagues, MLB was not considered a monopoly and the earlier Supreme Court decision stood.<sup>34</sup>

New MLB Commissioner Ford C. Frick intended to create a third major league during the 1951 winter meetings. In December, Rowland wrote a letter to National Association President George Trautman official applying for "open" classification (at this time, the National Association shared minor league powers with the American Association). In the letter, Rowland detailed the populations of the eight PCL cities as well as attendance figures of each team from 1947 to 1951. MLB's plan included requiring that the aggregate population for the proposed eight-team league equal at least ten million, maintain ballparks that seated at least 120,000 combined, and draw an average attendance of at least 2.25 million from the previous five years.<sup>35</sup> The eight PCL cities combined for 13.6 million, according to *Editor and Publisher*. Rowland wrote, according to the 1950 U.S. Census, the populations of California, Oregon and Washington, the states that made up the Coast League, grew by forty-five percent from 1940 to 1950. Additionally, the 1952 population was projected to grow by another nine percent. Rowland also stated that the league had never and would never impose salary limits. Rowland provided revenues and assets for each of the teams based on the 1951 season. According to the letter, the

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31. Brent P. Kelley, *The San Francisco Seals, 1946-1957: Interviews with Twenty-Five Former Baseballers* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2002), 116.

32. *Business Week*, "Sports and TV: What's Next?" June 16, 1951, 24.

33. Treder, "Open Classification," 95.

34. Neil J. Sullivan, *The Minors* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 237.

35. Lomax, "Not Quite Ready for Prime Time," 23.

league made more than \$487,000 in profits that year.<sup>36</sup>

The Coast League met MLB's attendance requirements, but the continuing decrease in paid admissions spelled trouble for its wishes to become a major league. PCL attendance peaked in 1947 at 4.1 million before dropping to 3.7 million the following year. It bumped back up to 3.8 million in 1949, but decreased in 1950 when it fell to 3.2 million, and more drastically to 2.3 million in 1951. Frick refused to award the PCL major league status, but instead granted it "open" status. This gave players the option of exempting themselves from the major league draft, meaning the Coast League had some control over MLB's ability to take away its players. The PCL, however, had to raise its players' salaries to conform to its new status. In January 1952, the PCL formally accepted its "open" designation. The eight PCL presidents made it official by adopting a resolution during its league meeting that month and included it as part of its acceptance letter to Frick.<sup>37</sup>

Even if the Coast League achieved major league status, it could not afford to pay big league salaries to all the major stars. Documented examples exist of players staying in the PCL due to comparable salaries to play in the majors. Pete Coscarat, a second baseman for the San Diego Padres from 1946-1949, claimed older players would play in the PCL due to the fact that they could play a longer career due in part to the mild climate. Jack Graham, a first baseman and outfielder for the Padres in 1948 and from 1950-1952, won the league's Most Valuable Player award in 1948. He chose to stay in the PCL because getting paid to play a longer season and his MVP bonus was more profitable than his \$6,000 guaranteed salary from the New York Giants. John "Swede" Jensen, who played in the Padres' outfield from 1943-1949 and was actually Danish, remained with the PCL during the years it attempted to become a major league as he felt the competition was similar.<sup>38</sup>

### Numbers Game

Players who could still play in the majors but chose to play in the PCL tended to be past their prime years of athleticism. While the PCL's minimum salaries matched the major league's minimum, the comparisons

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36. California Historical Society, *Presidents' Papers* 1915-1972.

37. Lomax, "Not Quite Ready for Prime Time," 23.

38. Swank, "Voices of the Pacific Coast League Padres, 1936-1958," 14-15, 20-21, 27-28.

ended there. Major league salaries were generally significantly higher for most players than the PCL could afford. Players who stayed in the PCL due to their salary would have also earned the same minimum salary in the big leagues. Others had to play the longer season that the PCL schedule provided, upwards of 200 games, just to make the same amount of money playing a shorter, 154-game major-league schedule. Most players held jobs in the offseason to tide them over until they started playing again. If a Coast League player had stable employment in the West and did not want to move his family East, he had the option of staying rather than relocating and finding a new job which may not drastically improve his financial situation.<sup>39</sup>

During the “open” classification period of 1952-1957, some players took advantage of the waiver allowing them an exemption from the major league draft so they could stay in the Coast League. Marginal major league players typically earned the minimum salary, which equaled the Coast League’s requirement under the “open” status agreement. Several PCL stars, who most likely would not have played much in the majors, stayed in the West and continued to play with the PCL. Len Neal of the Oakland Oaks said that, due to the fact that he was an older player, he would have received the same salary in the majors as he earned in the PCL, but without the bonus he received from the Coast League to sign the draft exemption. Jim Westlake of the Seals faced a similar situation. He stated the Coast League offered him a \$1,000 bonus to sign the exemption in 1954. After he refused it, the league offered an additional \$1,000. He accepted the improved offer and stayed in the PCL.<sup>40</sup>

Revenue in the Coast League depended heavily on paid admissions. While the PCL drew well in the latter stages of the Second World War and through the early 1950s, attendance figures never fairly compared to those of the big leagues. In 1950, the eight Coast League teams combined to draw nearly 3.2 million fans. The same amount of teams in the American League attracted more than 9.1 million paying customers while the National League had more than 8.3 million in attendance. Year after year, major-league clubs drew approximately three times as many fans as PCL teams on average. Since the Coast League never made nearly as much as the majors

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39. Treder, “Open Classification”, 104-105, 108.

40. Dick Dobbins, *The Grand Minor League: An Oral History of the Pacific Coast League* (Emeryville: Woodford Press, 1999), 200-201.

in revenue, it would not have been able to afford to pay comparable salaries that the major league teams paid their players. The decreasing attendance also threatened the League's ability to exempt players from the major league draft as paid admissions fell below the qualifying threshold.<sup>41</sup>

Television affected attendance figures at all levels of baseball, including the majors. Attendance dropped throughout the 1950s, compared to what teams drew in the 1940s. The PCL's decline outpaced other leagues. In the second half of the 1940s, the PCL drew approximately one quarter of the fans the majors brought in per game. During the Coast League's "open" years, that figure dropped to under seventeen percent.<sup>42</sup> MLB did not purposely intend to harm the minor leagues as it needed the farm system to develop new players and several major league presidents owned minor league teams. In a November 1953 letter to the MLB's sixteen presidents, Frick outlined the league's future plans involving the minor leagues. The negative impact major league broadcasts had on the minor leagues was evident in Frick's letter. He requested "minor leagues be given fair and reasonable protection against the encroachment of Major League radio and television."<sup>43</sup>

That did not stop television from further crippling the minor leagues, intentionally or not. Frustrations concerning MLB infringing on minor league territory rights by broadcasting games turned to threats of legal action when Frank Lawrence, President of the Portsmouth Merrimacs of the Piedmont League, asked Rowland to join his pending lawsuit against MLB in September 1954. Lawrence wrote:

"There is no doubt the Majors have violated their agreement with the Minor Leagues, who have in my opinion entailed a loss of over 20 million dollars and the Major Leagues have benefitted (sic) greatly financially by disregarding the territory -- GIVING AWAY FREE MAJOR LEAGUE BALL IN OUR TERRITORIES -- they have over-run us just like Hitler, Mussolini, Japan and now Russia and Red China. The only hope we have is through civil action in the Federal Courts."

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41. Treder, "Open Classification," 105.

42. Ibid., 97.

43. California Historical Society, *Presidents' Papers* 1915-1972.

Rowland refused involvement in the lawsuit and ignored Lawrence's repeated correspondence. Lawrence wrote Rowland asking if the PCL was "gut-less" which received a curt reply stating "SORRY BUT LEAGUE DOES NOT CONSIDER YOUR PROPOSITION AS PRACTICAL -- IT IS NOT A MATTER OF GUTS BUT OF COMMON SENSE."<sup>44</sup> The minor leagues ultimately did not take legal action as it was battle they did not think they could win. They asked the major leagues to stop broadcasting games in their teams' areas, but MLB refused because television and radio brought it a rich stream of income.<sup>45</sup>

### Major League 'Manifest Destiny'

MLB's broadcast infringement on minor league territory paled in comparison to MLB's next steps in the 1950s: westward expansion. Population growth in the West gave the MLB an opportunity to expand as well. For the first time in fifty years, the MLB landscape changed. Teams moved for various reasons including aging ballparks and plummeting attendance figures. The baby-boomer population provided new fans with a renewed interest in baseball. Nearly half the seats in ballparks by the mid-1950s included women and children. Prior to that, they were mostly filled with men.

The league started its gradual westward expansion in 1953 with the Boston Braves moving to Milwaukee. The Braves were enticed by the large parking lot of County Stadium in Milwaukee, a feature absent in the team's outdated park in Boston. The Philadelphia A's crossed the Mississippi River to Kansas City. The St. Louis Browns, a decade earlier rumored to relocate to Los Angeles, represented the exception to the rule in 1954 when they headed East to Baltimore and became the Orioles. Television factored into teams' decisions to move to growing westward cities. Teams in 1957 made more than \$9 million to locally broadcast their games.<sup>46</sup>

The most significant moves of the 1950s -- those that adversely affected the PCL -- involved the Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants. Rumors that the Dodgers sought to move to the West Coast began in 1955, despite denials by Dodgers President Walter O'Malley. The Dodgers

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44. California Historical Society, *Presidents' Papers* 1915-1972.

45. *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1954.

46. *U.S. News and World Reports*, "Behind Baseball's Big Moves: Gate Receipts, Parking and TV," April 18, 1958, 94-97.

complained as early as 1947 that the team had outgrown the small and aging Ebbets Field (32,111 capacity). O'Malley claimed the team was losing money as attendance dropped over the course of the decade, despite consistently putting a winning product on the field (six American League titles in ten years from 1947-1956). He negotiated with the city of New York to pay for a new stadium in 1955. After being denied his new stadium, O'Malley secretly searched for a new site for his team in Los Angeles in 1957.<sup>47</sup> Both the Dodgers and the Giants' relocation to California in 1958 inspired a decade of additional moves and league expansion to Houston, Anaheim, San Diego, Seattle, Oakland and the Dallas-Fort Worth area by 1969. Relocations to these cities brought the game at the highest level to large cities filled with millions of fans eager for its arrival.<sup>48</sup>

Though MLB legally operated as a sport, it did not stop team owners, typically astute businessmen, from threatening to move if their demands for new publicly funded ballparks were not met. O'Malley used baseball's anti-trust exemption to argue that the city of New York should furnish a \$50 million park for the Dodgers. He contradicted himself by claiming he could move his team because it was a business. After the city refused to build a new ballpark in New York City, O'Malley moved the Dodgers to Los Angeles in late 1957. The team played in the Los Angeles Coliseum for four seasons while the city built publicly financed Dodger Stadium.<sup>49</sup>

O'Malley bought the PCL's Angels from Chicago Cubs owner Phil Wrigley for \$3 million, claiming he would make the Angels a Dodgers farm club. O'Malley also purchased Wrigley Field (not to be confused with the famed ballpark in Chicago), but found a more enticing place for his westward bound team. Los Angeles politicians provided a \$10-million, publicly financed, 257-acre spot in Chavez Ravine. O'Malley continued to deny that the Dodgers planned to move West, citing the team's lease with Ebbets Field, which did not expire until 1959, despite the purchase in California. He added that all seven of the other National League teams would have to approve the transfer of the team.<sup>50</sup> In May, the Dodgers and the Giants

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47. *Life*, "O'Malley Scouts a New Home for the Dodgers," May 20, 1957, 127-130.

48. Ron Briley "More Legacy of Conquest: Long-Term Ramifications of the Major League Baseball Shift to the West," *Journal of the West* 36, no. 2 (April 1997): 68-75.

49. David Cort, "O'Malley's Double Play," *The Nation*, June 22, 1957, 548.

50. *New York Times*, February 22, 1957.



received league approval to move West with an eight to zero vote in favor of the moves.<sup>51</sup> The Dodgers planned to split games between Wrigley Field and the Los Angeles Coliseum while the city built Dodger Stadium.<sup>52</sup>

Giants President Horace Stoneham said his team left New York for San Francisco because of a lack of fan support, and he expected to make \$3 million from paid admissions in his first year in the Bay Area.<sup>53</sup> After reaching the World Series in 1954 and drawing more than 1.5 million fans that year, the Giants attendance dwindled to just over 824,000 the following season and 629,179 in 1956. Stoneham announced his intentions to move the Giants in August 1957, despite holding a lease on the Polo Grounds in New York that extended through 1960. Only 11,606 fans<sup>54</sup> attended the Polo Grounds for the Giants final game. Stoneham began negotiating with the new PCL President Leslie O'Connor to buy the Seals, who were then owned by Red Sox, and move them to another city while continuing to operate the team.<sup>55</sup>

Prior to the announcement, O'Connor expressed fears that MLB moving two teams to PCL cities would cause the latter league to fold.<sup>56</sup> Previous westward moves served as successful precedents for the Dodgers and Giants. By 1957, the Braves thrived in Milwaukee with attendance eclipsing the two million mark for the fourth straight year while the Dodgers drew only 700,000 in their last year in Brooklyn.<sup>57</sup> The first positive sign that the New York teams received prior to their move to California occurred when the Giants sold more than \$1 million worth of season tickets before their inaugural campaign in San Francisco even began.<sup>58</sup> The Dodgers and Giants paid the PCL a \$900,000 indemnity fee for the loss of three franchises: the Seals, Angels and Hollywood Stars. PCL's remaining team, the Seattle Rainiers, Portland Beavers, Sacramento Solons, Vancouver Mounties and Padres, continued to operate within the league. The Dodgers moved

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51. *New York Times*, May 29, 1957.

52. *Life*, "O'Malley Scouts a New Home for the Dodgers," 130.

53. *Newsweek*, "The Gold Rush West," September 2, 1957, 84.

54. Art Rosenbaum and Bob Stevens, *The Giants of San Francisco* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1963), 50-51, 53, 56.

55. *New York Times*, September 24, 1957.

56. *New York Times*, August 13, 1957.

57. *Newsweek*, "The Gold Rush West," 84.

58. Rosenbaum, *The Giants of San Francisco*, 71.

the Angels to Spokane, Washington. The Giants purchased the Seals and moved them to Phoenix, Arizona. Stars owner Bob Cobb sold the team to a Salt Lake City businessmen and the team moved there<sup>59</sup>, returning after a thirty-two years absence from Utah. The Oakland Oaks, one of the original six PCL teams, moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1955. The Coast League lost many of its teams and its Class AAA designation, which ended the “open” classification era, but did not fold as O’Connor feared.<sup>60</sup>

The first major league game played on the West Coast occurred on April 15, 1958, when 23,448 fans witnessed the San Francisco Giants shut-out the Los Angeles Dodgers eight to zero at Seals Stadium. Ruben Gomez pitched for the Giants and received assistance from Hall of Famers Orlando Cepeda and Willie Mays. Cepeda hit the first major league home run on the West Coast and Mays drove in two runs. The day before, an estimated crowd of 300,000 welcomed the Giants in a parade along Market Street in the Financial District of San Francisco. “I have been tremendously impressed ... by the enthusiasm and interest shown by people here and in Los Angeles relative to major league baseball ... I have a feeling that when we get to Los Angeles for Friday’s opener it will be like another World Series as far as the atmosphere is concerned” O’Malley said. In their first year in San Francisco, the Giants drew twice as many fans as they did in their final season in New York. The Giants played in Seals Stadium for two seasons after the rejection of their proposal for a downtown park. They secured Candlestick Park on the southern outskirts of San Francisco in 1960 and played there for forty years. The Dodgers moved into their new stadium in 1962 and continue to play at Dodger Stadium.<sup>61</sup>

### **Conclusion: Beyond 1958**

MLB stepped in when the American Association folded in 1962, threatening the future of minor league baseball. In November of that year, the minor leagues realigned. MLB designated A, AA, or AAA classification to each minor league team and maintained player development contracts with MLB, which remains the current system. Minor league teams function as independently owned franchises. The PCL became a ten-team Class AAA league by gaining Denver, Oklahoma City and Fort Worth-Dallas, but los-

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59. Beverage, *The Angels*, 235.

60. Zingg, *Runs, Hits and an Era*, 141-142.

61. Briley, “More Legacy of Conquest,” 72.

ing the Vancouver franchise.<sup>62</sup> The International League, consisting mainly of East Coast teams, comprised the only other league with Class AAA status. The following year, the PCL expanded to twelve teams, gaining Little Rock, Arkansas and Indianapolis, Indiana, and stretched 4,500 miles West to Hawaii.<sup>63</sup> In 1961, Hawaii welcomed the former Sacramento Senators, a PCL team originating from 1918 then known as the Solons. The Padres moved from San Diego to Eugene, Oregon, in 1968 as an MLB expansion team with the same name began playing in San Diego.<sup>64</sup>

The current PCL includes four divisions with four teams in each for a total of sixteen teams, and extends from California to Tennessee. Franchises sign two and four-year player developmental agreements with major league teams while maintaining independent ownership and operations. Teams occasionally move and change affiliations, but the PCL remains a stable minor league. Attendance among the sixteen teams has consistently remained around seven million in recent years.<sup>65</sup> The PCL, free of its previous problems, has no designs of ever attempting to become a major league again<sup>66</sup> and it remains just another minor league.

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62. Robert Obojski, *Bush League* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1975), 138.

63. *New York Times*, December 3, 1963.

64. Obojski, *Bush League*, 157.

65. *Ballpark Digest*, [www.ballparkdigest.com/201009113058/attendance/news/2010-affiliated-attendance-by-league](http://www.ballparkdigest.com/201009113058/attendance/news/2010-affiliated-attendance-by-league) (accessed October 21, 2011).

66. Treder, "Open Classification," 100.

# PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN: HOW THE BRIGGS INITIATIVE PROPAGATED THE RHETORIC OF FAMILY VALUES IN THE GAY RIGHTS DEBATE

KELLY DANIELLS



On November 7, 1978, 6.7 million Californians went to the polls to determine whether school boards should be required to fire public school teachers for “advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting” homosexuality to their young students.<sup>1</sup> California State Senator John V. Briggs claimed that he introduced the initiative in an attempt to save the country from the imminent moral decay that he believed homosexuality caused by increasing the murder rates, furthering a reliance on welfare, and contributing to the deterioration of the family unit.<sup>2</sup> Proposition 6 – also referred to as the Briggs Initiative - set off a massive debate across the state of California about the preservation of family values, the balance of majority and minority rights, and parental control over children’s exposure to controversial issues. Many Californians looked to the outcome of Proposition 6 as a barometer for society’s repudiation or acceptance of homosexuality as a tolerable way of life. For this reason, homosexuals and religious groups represented two of the blocs most invested in the campaign and the results of Proposition 6. Each faction was

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1. John V. Briggs, D. Ray Batema, and F. La Gard Smith, *Proposition Six: School Employees. Homosexuality*, in the Hastings Law Library California Propositions Database, <http://holmes.uchastings.edu/cgi-bin/starfinder/26211/calprop.txt> (accessed March 25, 2011).
  2. Robert Scheer, “A Times Interview with Sen. John Briggs on Homosexuality,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1978.

just beginning to become politically active in the mid-1970s, and the

*“Many Californians looked to the outcome of Proposition 6 as a barometer for society’s repudiation or acceptance of homosexuality as a tolerable way of life.”*

Briggs Initiative played an important point in their growth as politicized special interest groups since it both helped the gay community to coalesce politically and showed the religious community their failures as a political faction.

Voters passed four anti-gay initiatives across the country

before California rejected the Briggs Initiative with fifty-eight percent of the vote. Why is it that these anti-gay initiatives passed in places like Eugene, Oregon and Dade County, Florida but failed in California? A variety of important factors led to the defeat of Proposition 6, including: division amongst traditional conservative factions and the opposition of former governor Ronald Reagan, the cohesion of homosexuals and their allies as a functioning political entity, the ambiguity of the written legislation that provided little direction as to what the proposition actually would call for, and the political liability of a disliked politician in Senator Briggs himself. Despite the fact that the Briggs Initiative failed in 1978, it carries the important legacy in California politics of introducing the rhetoric of parents’ and children’s rights when creating and advocating for anti-gay legislation and initiatives. The salient and lasting effect of Proposition 6 in California is that it helped to solidify the newly formed rhetoric utilized by conservatives regarding the dangers of homosexuality: the protection of family values. The rhetoric of family values has formed a political chain connecting Proposition 6 to Proposition 22 (2000) and Proposition 8 (2008), which both succeeded in making homosexual marriage illegal through initiatives that utilized the language and ideas first introduced to Californians by John Briggs in 1978.

California’s anti-homosexual initiative was just one instance in a wave of attempts across the country that would legally allow for the discrimination against gays and lesbians. During the 1970s, many Americans began to recognize homosexuality as a viable alternate lifestyle through the acceptance of the repeal of sodomy laws and the passage of legislation that protected gays and lesbians against discrimination in housing and hiring by local governments. Between 1972 and 1976, twenty-nine cities and coun-

ties across America created anti-discrimination legislation that benefited homosexuals. By 1978, thirty-seven cities had passed protective legislation. Liberal local governments often produced these protective laws with little prodding from the homosexual community; instead, city councils quietly amended their already existing anti-discrimination legislation to include sexual orientation as an acceptable reason for protection. By passing these laws without significant encouragement from the oppressed group and, more importantly, with relatively little opposition from conservative groups these local governments were able to manifest the growing acceptance of homosexuality through protective legislation.<sup>3</sup>

The debate over homosexual rights grew as the decade continued and approval of anti-discrimination laws for homosexuals faced a number of obstacles throughout the country, especially in the Northeast where some of the greatest opposition came as Catholics actively sought to stifle the protective legislation. The front-page editorial of the Roman Catholic Diocese of New York's official paper, *The Catholic News*, came out firmly against proposed gay rights legislation, called Intro 2, in New York City in 1974. They wrote, "Homosexuality is an increasing threat to sound family life in our society today. We must take every effort to promote the principles and values of the family as the basic unit and foundation of society."<sup>4</sup> Gay rights activists fought back by banding together as a political group to attempt to push through Intro 2, yet the city council eventually defeated it by a twenty-two-to-nineteen vote in 1974.<sup>5</sup> Notably, gay rights groups initially lobbied city council members for the creation of Intro 2 in 1971, which suggests that amendments introduced organically by city council members were much more likely to pass than when activists played a significant role in the introduction and passage of new legislation. Politicians could enact these new protections with little fanfare and, subsequently, little opposition. Yet, by 1977, religious groups became increasingly alarmed at the burgeoning number of homosexual protections and attempted to push back through the use of the initiative. They capitalized on the swell of grassroots support from their religious constituents. Between 1977 and 1978, reli-

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3. Fred Fejes, *Gay Rights and Moral Panic: the Origins of America's Debate on Homosexuality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), ch.3.

4. "The Furor Surrounding the Bill Known as Intro 2," *New York Times*, May 5, 1974.

5. Tom Wicker, "New Fight on an Old Front," *New York Times*, May 14, 1974; Maurice Carroll, "Council Defeats Homosexual Bill By 22-to-19 Vote," *New York Times*, May 24, 1974.

gious groups and politicians introduced six different initiatives across the country that would allow for legal discrimination against homosexuals.

The first successful counter measure against homosexuals took place in Dade County, Florida in 1977. In January of 1977, the Dade County city council passed a gay rights ordinance by a five-to-three vote that protected homosexuals from discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodation.<sup>6</sup> Religious groups were appalled at the passage of the ordinance and demanded its immediate repeal to no avail. Former Miss America contestant, Florida orange juice spokeswoman, and Southern Baptist Anita Bryant led the charge against the gay rights ordinance. According to Bryant and her supporters, homosexuality went directly against God and the Bible and lead to the moral decay of society; therefore, it must not be allowed in America. She wrote in her 1977 book, *The Anita Bryant Story*, "We need to listen to the voices of history, for it confirms the warnings in God's word. We know that the once-powerful Roman Empire gradually rotted from within and fell to barbarian invaders; just so, our civilization is headed for destruction unless we change our present course."<sup>7</sup> In an attempt to save society from moral decadence, Bryant and her religious allies successfully gathered the 10,000 signatures required to place a referendum repealing the gay rights ordinance on the June 7 ballot in Dade County. In an effort to show how greatly the community supported their beliefs, Bryant and her religious allies collected over 60,000 signatures, mostly from church members and concerned parents.<sup>8</sup> On June 7, Bryant and the religious community succeeded in repealing the ordinance by a two-to-one margin.<sup>9</sup>

While Bryant and her organization, Save Our Children, Inc., relied heavily on their religious and moral arguments against homosexuality, they also utilized the rhetoric of parental rights and family values consistently throughout the campaign.<sup>10</sup> Those who advocated for the anti-gay legisla-

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6. "Bias Against Homosexuals Outlawed in Miami," *New York Times*, January 14, 1977.

7. Anita Bryant, *The Anita Bryant Story: the Survival of Our Nation's Families and the Threat of Militant Homosexuality* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1977), 42.

8. B. Drummond Ayers, Jr., "Miami Debate Over Rights of Homosexuals Directs Wide Attention to a National Issue," *New York Times*, May 10, 1977.

9. B. Drummond Ayers, Jr., "Miami Votes Two to One to Repeal Law Barring Bias Against Homosexuals," *New York Times*, June 8, 1977.

10. Bryant, 21.

tion generally believed that homosexuals *chose* to be gay and rejected the idea that sexuality was an innate biological feature. For this reason, they thought that homosexuals did not deserve to be added to antidiscrimination legislation with other protected minorities. As evident from the name of Bryant's organization, the focus during the campaign was on children. Bryant and her religious allies consistently heralded the fact that homosexuals could not reproduce; therefore, to increase their numbers the recruitment of children was a necessity. The assumption of this argument centered on the fact that if homosexuals had their own children, they would force their gay lifestyle and sexuality upon them. Bryant asserted that she was not discriminating against homosexuals by demanding a repeal of the gay rights ordinance; if anything, *she* was being discriminated against. "If this ordinance amendment is allowed to become law, you will, in fact, be infringing upon my rights and discriminating against me as a citizen and a mother to teach my children and set examples and to point to others as examples of God's moral code as stated in the Holy Scriptures."<sup>11</sup> Bryant framed the debate over gay rights in Dade County using a pro-family, pro-religion rhetoric that brought focus to the rights of parents and detracted attention from the rights of homosexuals for protective legislation.<sup>12</sup>

As the Dade County referendum was the first anti-gay measure in any major city, it had serious implications, and the rhetoric that came out of the battle is one of the most important and lasting effects. Bryant and other religious figures were always quick to state that they did not hate homosexuals nor did they advocate explicit discrimination. They downplayed the issue of gay rights and instead emphasized the rights of the parent and the child. One pamphlet that they widely distributed read: "The overwhelming reason is that Metro's prohomosexual ordinance is an open invitation to recruit our children! Vote FOR children's rights. Vote FOR repeal."<sup>13</sup> This rhetoric of parental rights and child protection was used overwhelmingly to address the role of homosexual teachers in the schools, a concept that anti-gay rights activists carried with them throughout the battles of the 1970s. Parents who were against these ordinances believed that public schools would be required to hire homosexual teachers, and

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11. Bryant, 16.

12. Anita Bryant Ministries Pamphlet, Harvey Milk Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

13. Bryant, 89.



they would have no protection for themselves or their children if they did not want them taught by a gay man or lesbian woman. This fear was exacerbated by the idea that children would not be safe from homosexuals in parochial or private schools either since they would also be required to hire homosexual teachers.<sup>14</sup> Many parents believed that, through their position as a role model, gay teachers could influence a child to veer from the acceptable heterosexual norm. This anxiety fueled the drive against homosexuals and colored the rhetoric surrounding the gay rights debates of the 1970s.<sup>15</sup>

Following the success of the anti-gay rights referendum in Dade County, religious leaders and activists introduced anti-gay ordinances across the country. On April 25, 1978, St. Paul, Minnesota voted overwhelmingly to repeal a gay rights ordinance that prohibited discrimination based on “affectional or sexual preference.”<sup>16</sup> Borrowing the rhetoric of the Dade County campaign, the overwhelmingly religious supporters of the repeal stated that their success was “a victory for decency and the rights of parents.”<sup>17</sup> Religious leaders in Wichita, Kansas, used similar tactics as the anti-gay groups in Dade County and St. Paul as they linked homosexuals to child molesters and espoused the necessity of parental rights. They succeeded in repealing the ordinance by an overwhelming five-to-one margin.<sup>18</sup> In Eugene, Oregon, anti-gay activists downplayed their religious affiliations and focused on the fact that the government was granting homosexuals additional protections that they did not need, which gave them advantages over heterosexuals. They maintained that this was a choice between homosexual rights and children’s rights. The slogan of the repeal committee was: “Keep it Straight. Our Children Come First.”<sup>19</sup> The non-religious, pro-family rhetoric proved successful for the repeal of the ordinance, which voters

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14. Fejes, 75-80.

15. William Raspberry, “Could Gay Rights Be Wrong, After All?” *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 1977.

16. Nathaniel Sheppard Jr., “Law on Homosexuals Repealed in St. Paul,” *New York Times*, April 26, 1978; Citizens Alert for Morality pamphlet, Harvey Milk Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

17. Sheppard.

18. Bill Curry, “Wichita Gay Rights Vote Today,” *Washington Post*, May 9, 1978.

19. Fejes, 177.

approved by a two-to-one margin.<sup>20</sup>

These four referenda showed that the vast majority of voters were not as willing to accept homosexuality as many political leaders had initially thought. The religious community banded together across the country to defeat gay rights ordinances passed by local city councils. While these same groups fought the battle over the Briggs Initiative, the California proposition carried with it a much deeper meaning, as it was the first *statewide* initiative to remove protections from homosexuals in the new cultural climate of the late 1970s. Senator Briggs took part in the Dade County repeal process when he flew to Florida and campaigned with Bryant. California gay rights activists flocked to Dade County in the weeks leading up to the vote to provide support and expertise to the fledgling politically active gay community. Briggs wanted to send the message that not all Californians supported gay rights and flew to Miami on his own dime because he wanted to help “save the children of Miami.”<sup>21</sup> He also saw the success that Bryant had in Miami. Was his support of Bryant’s repeal a political ploy? It is difficult to tell, but it is clear that Briggs used the success of the Dade County repeal as a springboard for his own initiative. Just weeks after the Dade County repeal passed with almost seventy percent of voters in support, Briggs announced his intention to create the Briggs Initiative while standing on the steps of San Francisco City Hall. Homosexuals shouted “Nazi” and “bigot” in response to his press conference. Newspapers demonized the senator for choosing the center of the gay rights movement to introduce this anti-gay proposition. He justified his decision to come to San Francisco by saying that he was unaware that his decision would set off the amount of anger and opposition that it did.<sup>22</sup>

Born in South Dakota in 1930 to a fundamentalist Pentecostal preacher, John Briggs moved to California in 1935 during the “Oakie” migration of the Great Depression.<sup>23</sup> Raised by a single mother in a religious household, Briggs eventually went on to earn his Bachelor of Science degree at California State University, Long Beach and served in the Air

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20. Jerry Carroll, “Eugene’s Big Squabble Over Homosexual Rights,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 19, 1978.

21. “California Senator Joins Fight Against Gay Rights in Florida,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 8, 1977.

22. David Johnson, “Briggs in Clash with Homosexuals,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 15, 1977.

23. Jerry Burns, “Briggs Reveals He has a Secret Weapon,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 20, 1978.

Force during the Korean War. After his honorable discharge from the Air Force, Briggs turned his eye to politics. He unsuccessfully ran for California State Assembly three times before being elected in 1966. While in the State Assembly, he came to advocate for a host of conservative causes. Briggs continued to do so once he entered the California State Senate, in 1977.<sup>24</sup> During his tenure in the State Assembly, he pushed for laws maintaining the criminal nature of sodomy, essentially making homosexuality illegal. On May 13, 1975, Briggs announced that he would introduce legislation to repeal AB 489, which made private sodomy between two men legal according to the state of California. Briggs' bill, AB 2347, stated that "every person who is guilty of the infamous crime against nature, committed with mankind or with any animal, is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison not less than one year. This section is not applicable to sodomy committed by man and wife."<sup>25</sup> Briggs believed that sodomy must remain illegal to ensure that employers had the right to fire homosexuals because of their lawless behavior. He especially believed that AB 489 granted homosexuals "a legal haven to deprive public employers, including schools, law enforcement agencies and all public agencies, as well, from having the authority to hire (as well as fire) sexual deviates."<sup>26</sup> Most notably, Briggs began to frame his argument in terms of parents' rights as he contended that parents had the "right of freedom from anxiety and fear as to who is going to be influencing their children's development."<sup>27</sup> AB 2347 was killed in committee before it ever had the opportunity to reach a vote on the assembly floor.

Once it became clear to Briggs that the anti-gay legislation would not pass a vote in the Senate, he turned his attention to the initiative process. He believed that the vast majority of Californians were against the deviant homosexual lifestyle and that his initiative would pass overwhelmingly. The *Los Angeles Times* quoted Briggs as saying, "You know normal people in the majority have a right to keep their children from the influence

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24. Campaign Literature for John V. Briggs for State Assembly, John V. Briggs Papers, LP 161. California State Archives, Office of Secretary of State, Sacramento, CA.

25. Bill AB 2347, John V. Briggs Papers, LP 197, California State Archives, Office of Secretary of State, Sacramento, CA.

26. Briggs Notes, John V. Briggs Papers, LP 197, California State Archives, Office of Secretary of State, Sacramento, CA.

27. Briggs Notes.

of homosexual teachers.”<sup>28</sup> Briggs initially planned to gather the sufficient amount of signatures necessary for the proposition to be on the June 1978 ballot, which would also be the ballot that voters chose the Republican gubernatorial candidate. Many journalists quickly latched onto the idea that Briggs did not have an ideological bent against homosexuals; instead, they posited that he believed coming out against homosexuality would allow him maximum exposure leading up to his attempt at capturing the Republican nomination. Randy Shilts, a freelance reporter, homosexual, and eventual friend of Briggs, certainly believed that he was using voters’ emotional investment regarding homosexuality to his advantage. He wrote, “John Briggs, in the eyes of John Briggs, is just a politician, riding a popular cause. The private Briggs even counts gays lucky that this crusade is led not by a zealot but by pragmatic politician.”<sup>29</sup> Journalists from the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Los Angeles Times* shared Shilts’ views of Briggs as an opportunistic politician looking to increase his name recognition among voters and using the attack on homosexuality as the perfect way to achieve such an aim.

By early May 1978, Briggs had gathered over 110% of the required signatures to qualify the Briggs Initiative for the November 1978 ballot. At the same time, he never earned more than 3% of potential votes for the Republican gubernatorial candidacy according to polling data, which showed that his strategy of increased media coverage failed to work.<sup>30</sup> Claiming that he did not want to take away votes from the other traditional conservative running, Sherriff Ed Davis, he pulled out of the race for governor and turned instead to focus his attention almost entirely on Proposition 6. Briggs also introduced another conservative initiative to the ballot: Proposition 7, which would reintroduce the death penalty, widen the array of crimes punishable by death, and lengthen jail sentences for criminal offenders.<sup>31</sup> Much to the delight of supporters of the Briggs Initiative, in July of 1978, a Gallup poll revealed that 65% of Americans did not believe that

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28. Johnson.

29. Randy Shilts, “A Gay Journalist’s Friendship with Briggs,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 31, 1978.

30. Kenneth Reich, “Cites Media Attention, Briggs Optimistic on Gubernatorial Bid,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1977.

31. John V. Briggs, *Murder Penalty*, in the Hastings Law Library California Propositions Database, <http://library.uchastings.edu/cgi-bin/starfinder/29389/calprop.txt> (accessed April 15, 2011).

homosexuals should be allowed to work as elementary school teachers.<sup>32</sup> Yet, as the battle over the Briggs Initiative continued, Californians became less interested in supporting the ballot initiative. In late August, 61% of voters supported the Briggs Initiative. By late September, only 45% of voters were in favor of the proposition.<sup>33</sup> Why such a shift in opinion by these voters who politicians believed had strong ideological and emotional views regarding homosexuality?

The ideological and emotional stances of groups both for and against Proposition 6 are an important factor to consider in an examination of the political battle surrounding the Briggs Initiative and the implications of its defeat. Those who strongly advocated for the passage of the Briggs Initiative tended to be members of conservative religious groups. Fundamentalists and evangelicals provided much of the leadership and grassroots support surrounding the “Yes on 6” campaign.<sup>34</sup> Anchored in their religious faith, Fundamentalists strongly believed that homosexuals had no place in the classroom because their perceived deviant lifestyle might sway young children from being heterosexual to homosexual. By holding positions of power and acting as role models to children, conservatives argued that gays and lesbians had a real ability to present homosexuality as an acceptable way of life to young, impressionable children. If a greater number of people became homosexual because society considered it a suitable alternate lifestyle, the entire country would crumble. Briggs brought this concept up in an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, saying, “Homosexuals don’t have families . . . and that is really what the entire thread is throughout everybody’s argument throughout the country, about homosexuality - it weakens the family unit and ultimately has led, according to everything I have ever read, to the ultimate destruction of that civilization as functioning.”<sup>35</sup> He continued to use the rhetoric of pitting homosexuals against the family unit when he constantly called homosexuals “anti-family” in interviews,

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32. “65% in Poll Oppose Gays as Teachers,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 17, 1977.

33. Mervin D. Field, “California Poll – A Major Shift to No on Prop. 6,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 5, 1978.

34. Personal Notes, 1980, Robert McAfee Brown Papers, box 13, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA.

35. Robert Scheer, “A Times Interview with Sen. John Briggs on Homosexuality,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1978.

speeches, and written articles.<sup>36</sup> The hypothetical increased potential of gay molesters proved even more disconcerting to many fundamentalists and other Proposition 6 supporters. The belief that homosexuals had a real desire for sexual contact with young children ran rampant throughout the conservative religious community. Bryant and other religious figures cited it constantly throughout the battle in Dade County, St. Paul, and Wichita. Briggs and his supporters did the same. Briggs said, “Everyone knows that homosexuals are child molesters.”<sup>37</sup> By emphasizing this point while simultaneously advocating for parental rights, Proposition 6 supporters were able to reframe the debate regarding the initiative from being about homophobia and hatred of gays to being about parents’ rights in determining who would teach their child in an attempt to ensure their protection.

Those against Proposition 6 also wanted to turn the debate away from gay rights and instead focus on civil rights for all teachers. Briggs and his allies wrote the proposition so broadly that many believed that if a heterosexual teacher acknowledged that homosexuality was a viable lifestyle they could be fired. Some “No on 6” supporters even went so far as to say that if a teacher voted no on Proposition 6, s/he could be fired. This inspired many people to support the efforts to defeat the proposition. The broad language of the initiative caused many libertarians to think that the proposition was too intrusive into people’s personal lives and that sexuality was not something that the government should regulate. Again, those against Proposition 6 framed the debate to be about government intrusion into everyone’s lives, not just homosexuals.<sup>38</sup> It infringed on teachers’ rights to free speech because many argued that teachers who marched in a gay rights rally outside of the classroom could be penalized under the Briggs Initiative. Many labor unions were against the Briggs Initiative because they believed that it weakened their power. The teachers union would not be able to advocate for their members who were singled out for being homosexual under the Briggs Initiative. This mixture of ideology brought together an eclectic group to advocate for the defeat of Proposition 6; gay rights activists, libertarians, and labor unions banded together to ensure that the

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36. Various Briggs Articles collected by Hannaford, 1978, Box 9, Peter D. Hannaford Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford, CA.

37. Doyle McManus, “Confusion Compounds Prop. 6 Controversy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 18, 1978.

38. Speech by Mrs. Milton Marks, Harvey Milk Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

Briggs Initiative would not pass on November 7, 1978.<sup>39</sup>

This diverse group of people represented those that possessed an ideological difference from what the Briggs Initiative called for. Libertarians did not support the initiative because they believed that it would give the government much more power than it required and would infringe on homosexuals' liberty. Proposition 6 would allow government probing into people's sexuality, whether homosexual or heterosexual, and create an undesirable precedent. California's most famous politician with libertarian leanings, former governor Ronald Reagan, certainly believed that the Briggs Initiative could prove harmful to the sanctity of the civil liberties of American citizens. In late September Reagan came out with his stance on the proposition – firmly against its passage. He said that the Briggs Initiative, “Has the potential of infringing on basic rights of privacy and perhaps even constitutional rights.”<sup>40</sup> After Reagan came out with his statement against the proposition, poll numbers in support of the Briggs Initiative plummeted. Many historians and sociologists have linked Reagan's opposition with the eventual defeat of Proposition 6. Just days after Reagan's stance was made public, the poll numbers dropped by sixteen percent. Even Senator Briggs looked to Reagan's opposition as the reason his proposition failed. When asked why he thought the proposition failed he cited a handful of reasons, but the most prevalent reason was “that one single endorsement - Ronald Reagan's – [which] turned the polls around.”<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Reagan and other potential voters saw the initiative as superfluous and unnecessary since laws already protected children in the classroom. The *Los Angeles Times* adopted the libertarian position in their own editorial rejecting the Briggs Initiative. “If Proposition 6 were simply legally unnecessary - and it is - then it would be no more than a waste of the public's time and money. But Proposition 6 is also vindictively persecutorial against people in education, an invasion of privacy, a denial of civil rights, a sham that first creates an artificial threat and then with gross injustice attempts to dispose of it.”<sup>42</sup> Many Libertarians shared the view of the *Los Angeles Times*.

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39. Letter to Supporters of Workers Conference Against Proposition 6, August 22, 1978, Box 107, Lyons and Martin Papers, GLBT Historical Society.

40. Reagan Form Letter, 1978, Box 9, Peter D. Hannaford Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford, CA.; “Reagan Sees it Right,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 1978.

41. Doyle McManus, “Briggs to Try Antigay Move Again in 1980,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1978.

42. Editorial, “Prop 6: It's an Insult,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1978.

Libertarians might not have taken such an issue with the Briggs Initiative if the actual legislation had been written with a more narrow focus. Briggs and his allies wrote the proposition so broadly that very few people were actually aware of what it meant in reality. Some thought that it could fire anyone at all if they even mentioned homosexuality. Others believed that a teacher could only be fired if a sexually active homosexual told his students about his sexual life. This ambiguity concerned many potential voters because it could dramatically widen the scope of those affected. Briggs constantly informed reporters that the initiative would remove any homosexual from the schools regardless of how open they were with their sexuality. His chief legal advisor F. La Gard Smith, a law professor at Pepperdine University, took an entirely different view on how the proposition would be read and implemented. He claimed that homosexual teachers would have to openly advocate for homosexuality “in a willful and wanton manner.”<sup>43</sup> It also concerned California’s chief legal counsel, which deemed that because of its broad nature it very well could be unconstitutional. Unlike the grassroots efforts in Dade County, Eugene, St. Paul, and Wichita, which attempted to remove special protective legislation for homosexuals, the Briggs Initiative would openly discriminate against homosexuals and anyone who advocated for their rights.<sup>44</sup>

The anti-gay rights movement surrounding the Briggs Initiative varied from other anti-gay rights movements around the country because there was a significant lack of mobilization of the fundamentalist religious community in California. Briggs worked diligently to gather enough signatures to qualify his proposition for the ballot but then his grassroots efforts seemed to fade. Fundamentalists wanted to work to ensure the passage of the initiative, but without a clear leader they were unsure of how to proceed.<sup>45</sup> They lacked a cohesive political organization and relied heavily on prayer and unfocused grassroots efforts. Reverend Ray Batema, a cosigner on the Briggs Initiative, thought that the best political strategy was to get “ten righteous men to support morality. And they’ll find ten righteous men

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43. McManus, “Confusion.”

44. Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative pamphlet, Harvey Milk Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

45. Katy Butler, “Deep in the Heart of Briggs Country,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 9, 1978.



and *they'll* find ten more."<sup>46</sup> It appeared that this method was neither successful nor was it properly explained to the masses of Fundamentalists who wanted to campaign; therefore, they failed to convert many outside of their own ranks. The Fundamentalist organizers relied on large revival-type rallies led by popular religious figures, like Jerry Falwell and Tim LaHaye, that catered to those who already espoused Fundamentalist beliefs and rhetoric.<sup>47</sup> Briggs lacked any real political following within the Republican Party, which caused him to focus the vast majority of his attention on fundamentalist congregations for his support. Unfortunately for Briggs and Batema, they were preaching to those who would support the Briggs Initiative under any circumstances. The religious community needed to expand outside of the safe haven of their churches to convince those who lacked their religious fervor that the proposition needed to be passed. Because of their lack of organization and leadership, there is no evidence that this ever happened during the campaign.

Perhaps even more damaging for the Briggs campaign was the split in the religious community over Proposition 6. Whereas Catholics and Jews had banded together with Fundamentalists, Mormons and Protestants in other anti-gay rights battles, that was generally not the case in California. Catholics believed strongly in loving the sinner and hating the sin; therefore, they believed that if a homosexual chose not to engage in same-sex sexual activities, s/he should not be punished.<sup>48</sup> They saw the proposition as too vague to ensure that non-sexually active gay men and women would not be fired; this belief influenced many Catholics to reject the Briggs Initiative. Catholics still condemned the homosexual lifestyle but believed those that lived a chaste life should not be harmed.<sup>49</sup> In the Bay Area, both the Catholic bishop of Oakland, John S. Cummins, and Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco came out against the proposition because of its attack on the civil rights of homosexuals.<sup>50</sup> As the battle surrounding the

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46. Shilts, 247.

47. Russell Chandler and John Dart, "Many Church Leaders Oppose Prop. 6," *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1978.

48. "Archbishop Takes a Stand vs. propositions 6 and 7," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 12, 1978.

49. Press Release by Archbishop John Rafael Quinn of San Francisco, Harvey Milk Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

50. *America Editorial*, no. 139 (November 1978), 325 – 326.

Briggs Initiative waged on, many compared the proposed treatment of homosexuals to the persecution of Jews in Hitler's Germany. The similarity between the two groups was not lost on many California Jews and propelled many of them to reject the proposition. Jeffrey M. Ellis, a student of the Jewish Institute of Religion at Hebrew Union College, wrote into the *Los Angeles Times* editorial page expressing his concerns with the initiative. "As we expect and applaud action taken by non-Jews to thwart anti-Semitism, we regard it as a mitzvah (commandment) and a privilege to firmly reject and censure State Sen. John Briggs and his philosophy of bigotry."<sup>51</sup> While Catholics and Jews were outspoken regarding their opposition to Proposition 6, many other religious groups chose to remain silent. Briggs could not rely on religious organizations, such as the Seventh-Day Adventists, who failed to voice an opinion on the proposition.<sup>52</sup> This fracture within the religious community proved damaging for the success of the Briggs Initiative as it became clear that political and not religious organization marked a key element in the battle's outcome.

The gay community banded together to form a fully functioning political group once Briggs introduced his proposition. The downfall of the Dade County vote for the homosexual community was due to a lack of cohesion and focus in their political organization. The California community learned from that mistake and worked hard to ensure that they would be able to advocate strongly for their own rights. California gays and lesbians had an advantage over their peers in Dade County because there were two mature gay communities in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Networks were already formed and a large number of homosexuals were out of the closet, which allowed them to actively support the fight against Proposition 6.<sup>53</sup> Their indignation toward the proposition allowed these groups to coalesce to an even greater degree. David Goodstein, the publisher of the première gay newspaper *The Advocate*, acknowledged this when he said, "For every gay person Briggs pushes back into the closet, there are two people he's pushing out. He has united the gay community as nothing else could."<sup>54</sup> Voters elected Harvey Milk to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in

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51. Editorial, *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1978.

52. Chandler and Dart.

53. Personal Notes, Lyon and Martin Papers, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, CA.

54. Victor F. Zonana, "California Is Roiled by a New Initiative, Over Homosexuals," *Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 1978.

1977 as the first openly gay politician, which showed the growing presence and acceptance of homosexuals in San Francisco.<sup>55</sup> Milk became widely known throughout the state of California during the battle over Proposition 6 and engaged in many heated televised debates with supporters of the initiative, including Briggs himself. During a television interview, Milk outlined the organized effort of the gay community to defeat the Briggs Initiative. At the statewide level, the “No on 6” organization coordinated the media blitz for the defeat of the initiative. Locally in San Francisco, “Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative” and “San Franciscans Against Prop. 6” focused on grassroots strategies to ensure the defeat of the proposition, including voter registration and the attempt to demystify homosexuality through door-to-door conversations.<sup>56</sup> The Briggs Initiative provided the impetus for this traditionally disjointed group to form as an active and coordinated political faction.

Even with the newly acquired cohesion of the gay community, there was still division regarding the best way to ensure the defeat of the Briggs Initiative. Throughout the 1970s, the customary schism within the gay community came between the conservative and radical elements of the movement. Conservatives believed in using conventional methods and working within the liberal political avenues to slowly acquire equal rights. Radicals desired rapid change and wanted to utilize innovative tactics to earn those rights.<sup>57</sup> While the gay community found common ground during the campaign against the Briggs Initiative, their differences were manifested in determining the best approach to defeat the proposition. More conservative leaders believed that downplaying the homosexual aspect of the initiative and capitalizing on the possible attack on all minorities was the best way to fight for success.<sup>58</sup> Liberal and radical gay rights activists wanted to utilize homosexual outrage to a much greater degree.<sup>59</sup> This difference in preferred strategies engendered significant resentment among the

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55. Shilts, 276-300.

56. Harvey Milk, interview by Juana Samayoa, *News Talk*, 1978, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xv1xq7wqgeu> (accessed May 1, 2011); “Witch Hunt: Everyone’s a Suspect,” *Mother Jones* 111, no. ix (November 1978).

57. Shilts, 100-175.

58. Peter Goodman speech at the California Commonwealth Club on August 1, 1978, Lyon and Martin Papers, GLBT Historical Society, San Francisco, CA.

59. Jerry Burns, “The Move to Ban Gay Teachers,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 12, 1978, in Shilts, 250-265.

gay community. Amber Hollibaugh, an active lesbian in the efforts against the Briggs Initiative, believed that the conservative homosexuals wanted to use gay money and straight power to stop Briggs.<sup>60</sup> She said that these gay men thought that if heterosexual voters saw the Briggs Initiative as a gay rights issue and a homophobia issue, they would automatically vote for it. Hollibaugh, Milk, and other radical homosexuals believed that framing the issue in the light of gay rights was the only viable option. They strongly believed that if voters realized that people they knew and loved were homosexuals, they would reject the initiative.<sup>61</sup> This division over political strategy plagued the campaign against the Briggs Initiative and the animosity between the two groups was palpable. During a television interview, Milk went off on a diatribe regarding the jealousy and hostility within the movement.<sup>62</sup> The tumultuous interworkings of the gay rights movement in the 1970s, however, did not prove to be a great liability during the 1978 campaign season. If anything, the gay community was able to utilize the best portions of both strategies to form an effective campaign and cohesive politicized group.

The Briggs Initiative had one more major problem with its campaign that stood in the way of its passage: Senator John Briggs. Journalists, voters, and politicians overwhelmingly saw him as an opportunistic man who would do anything to get the name recognition that would enable him to climb to higher office. Just one of many quotes about Briggs' attempts to parlay his stance against gay rights into political success: "I'm the guy leading the fight on those gay issues. What we're going to try to do is convert the support for those issues into support for me. Can we do it? I don't really know, but we're going to try."<sup>63</sup> Many did not believe it was a coincidence that Briggs introduced his initiative at the same time that he hoped to earn the Republican gubernatorial nomination. Opponents of Briggs were quick to latch onto his apparent self-serving push for the anti-gay initiative. Harvey Milk promoted this view of Briggs during many of his television

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60. "Sexuality and the State: the Defeat of the Briggs Initiative and Beyond (Interview with Amber Hollibaugh)," *Socialist Review* 9, no. 3 (May/June 1979).

61. Bay Area Committee Against the Briggs Initiative pamphlet, Harvey Milk Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

62. Harvey Milk, interview by Juana Samayoa, *News Talk*, 1978, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xv1xq7wqgeu> (accessed May 1, 2011).

63. Jerry Burns, "Briggs Reveals He Has a Secret Weapon," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 20, 1978.

appearances and speeches by claiming that he planned to run for the State Senate and publish a book.<sup>64</sup> The vast amount of coverage that his controversial initiative earned Briggs was a cheap and easy way to keep him in the public eye, while allowing him to increase his exposure and name recognition.

In the vast majority of newspaper stories about Briggs, journalists pointed out that he was an opportunistic politician. When journalists asked Briggs how his campaign was progressing, he would pull out a list of the number of interviews he had done. He was proud of the fact that if he called a press conference, he would have a room full of reporters waiting to hear his every word. In contrast, Anita Bryant always claimed that she detested the national attention she received for her work in Dade County against homosexuals. She said that she only did the work of God, and, if anything, her crusade had a negative impact on her own life. Journalists painted Briggs as the exact opposite. He delighted in the attention. One journalist wrote of Briggs: "Because of those initiatives, Briggs says, his name recognition among California voters - a key to electability - went from around two percent before last spring's primary campaign to about 80 percent today."<sup>65</sup> This opportunistic feature of Briggs' campaign was not lost on voters. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, after Briggs gave an interview on October 6, 1978, 139 letters came in about the interview – 133 argued against Briggs and his views and only six were in favor of his views.<sup>66</sup> The vast majority of what the *Times* chose to print commented on the fact that it was because of Briggs and his bigoted views they would be voting No on Proposition 6. Mr. and Mrs. Dwight D. Davis of Cerrito wrote, "Before this interview, my wife and I were one among the thousands of Californians who were in favor of this proposition because of our two teenage sons. But after carefully reading the interview, we were convinced that this proposition is really a personal war of Sen. Briggs against the homosexuals."<sup>67</sup> M.J. Murphy from Los Angeles wrote, "Sen. Briggs in this interview has persuaded me in good conscience to vote against Proposition 6."<sup>68</sup> The decision

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64. Milk Notes for Briggs Debate, Harvey Milk Papers, Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco, CA.

65. Ron Javers, "John Briggs Models a Role," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 16, 1978.

66. "Letters to the Times," *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 1978.

67. "Letters to the Times."

68. "Letters to the Times."

of major newspapers to portray Senator Briggs as a self-serving politician factored significantly in turning public opinion against both himself and his initiative and contributed to its defeat.

The failure of the Briggs Initiative to pass should not overshadow the significance of this battle because of the rhetoric that Briggs and his proposition introduced into the political dialogue of California. Prior to the Briggs Initiative, homosexuals were not considered a salient political topic throughout much of California. While it is true that the gay community was becoming a bigger political faction throughout the 1970s, many people outside of major metropolitan areas did not know or care to know homosexuals. The fight over the Briggs Initiative brought the battle over gay rights into California's political arena *and* dictated the terms that it would be discussed for decades to come. The rhetoric used to debate Propositions 6, 22, and 8 would not specifically center on granting or deny civil rights to homosexuals. Instead, those against gay rights would couch their discriminatory views in the rhetoric of family values and the protection of children. Conversely, gay rights advocates chose to focus on the issue of civil rights for *all* minorities, not just homosexuals, and utilized the rhetoric of majority rule versus minority rights. Through the successful use of family values rhetoric, both Proposition 22 and Proposition 8 succeeded in solidifying that the state defines marriage as one man and one woman, effectively making gay marriage illegal.

Introduced by Republican State Senator William "Pete" Knight of Palmdale in 2000, Proposition 22 – also referred to as the Knight Initiative – sought to "add a provision to the Family Code providing that only marriage between a man and a woman is legal or recognized in California."<sup>69</sup> Following on the heels of pro-gay action by the courts and legislatures of Vermont and Hawaii, proponents of Proposition 22 believed that they needed to protect California from the influx of homosexuals who would obtain a marriage license in Vermont and then choose to live in California. Opponents of the initiative stated that this was unnecessary as neither Vermont nor Hawaii was nearing any real possibility of legalizing these rights for homosexual couples.<sup>70</sup> Similar to the Briggs Initiative, opponents

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69. Senator Pete Knight, *Limit on Marriages* in the Hastings Law Library California Propositions Database, <http://library.uchastings.edu/cgi-bin/starfinder/29389/calprop.txt> (accessed May 9, 2011).

70. Evelyn Nieves, "Ballot Initiative That Would Thwart Gay Marriage is Embroiling California," *New York Times*, February 25, 2000.

of Proposition 22 centered on the idea that the proposition was superfluous as there were no court cases or legislation pending that would introduce gay marriage into the social framework of the state. They maintained that heterosexual marriage did not need protection from homosexuals. Regardless of the necessity of the initiative, supporters framed the debate surrounding Proposition 22 around the need for California to solidify the state sponsored definition of marriage and to ensure that a state like Vermont could not force Californians to accept gay marriage.<sup>71</sup>

Pro-Proposition 22 forces claimed that this addition to the California Family Code was necessary because of the need to protect the traditional family unit, not because of their desire to discriminate against homosexuals.<sup>72</sup> “Yes on 22” supporters circulated twenty-year-old Miriam G. Santacruz’s letter, which declared that she would vote in favor of the proposition because “it’s tough enough for families to stay together these days. Why make it harder by telling children that marriage is just a word that anyone can re-define again and again until it no longer has meaning? *Please, for all future generations, vote “Yes” on 22.*”<sup>73</sup> Those in favor of Proposition 22 were reticent to focus on homosexuality in their literature, an indication that they learned from the mistakes of the Briggs campaign. In 1978, voters rejected the Briggs Initiative because they saw it as unnecessary, discriminatory of a specific group, and as part of a power play by one politician. The forces behind Proposition 22 appeared to understand the advantage behind utilizing a rhetoric based exclusively on the rights of Californians, the rights of parents, and the rights of children. Through the application of this rhetoric and the assurance that by voting “Yes” on Proposition 22, voters would “send a clear, positive message to children that marriage between a man and a woman is a valuable and respected institution, now and forever.”<sup>74</sup> Unlike the battle over gay rights in 1978, the initiative passed with sixty-one percent voter approval and solidified the belief for conservatives that the rhetoric of family values played an important role in ensuring that Califor-

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71. Letters to the Editors, “Time for Change,” *The Press Democrat*, March 1, 2000.

72. Carol Ness, “Prop. 22 Hurts Kids,” *San Francisco Examiner*, December 16, 1999.

73. Miriam G. Santacruz, *Argument in Favor of Proposition 22*, Hastings Law Library California Proposition Database, <http://library.uchastings.edu/cgi-bin/starfinder/29389/calprop.txt> (accessed May 9, 2011).

74. Santacruz.

nian voters overwhelmingly supported traditional, heterosexual marriage.<sup>75</sup>

Eight years later, the issue of homosexual marriage was back on the ballot after San Francisco judges overturned Proposition 22, claiming it was unconstitutional because it denied a specific group equal rights. Traditional marriage supporters were incensed and attacked the “activist judges” in San Francisco, claiming that they were destroying the democratic process in America.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, they saw the overturn of Proposition 22 as a threat to all marriages because “children should not be deprived of a mother or a father.”<sup>77</sup> Proposition 8, which came to be known as the California Marriage Protection Act, would amend the California constitution to allow legal and recognized marriages to be between one man and one woman only, again solidifying the illegality of homosexual marriage.<sup>78</sup> By introducing Proposition 8 as a constitutional amendment instead of a normal statute, the supporters of the initiative ensured that overturning it would be far more difficult than was the case with Proposition 22.<sup>79</sup> Similar to Proposition 22, the supporters of Proposition 8 claimed that their amendment was necessary because of outside forces removing the right of Californians to determine how their own society would function. This time, instead of “activist judges” in Vermont infringing on the people’s right to democracy, the “activist judges” in California violated their constitutional rights. Following in the tradition of both the Briggs Initiative and the Knight Initiative, the California Marriage Protection Act relied on the rhetoric of family values and the protection of children to introduce and advance a discriminatory initiative.

During Proposition 8, organizations like ProtectMarriage.com capitalized on the emotions generated by the rhetoric of protecting children and traditional family values through their use of “Yes on 8” ads on

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75. Evelyn Nieves, “Those Opposed to 2 Initiatives Had Little Chance From the Start,” *New York Times*, March 9, 2000.

76. Protectmarriage.com Press Release, “Victory for California Protect Marriage Act Today,” July 16, 2008.

77. Family Research Council Press Release, “California Supreme Court Imposes ‘Same-Sex Marriage,’ Overturning Prop. 22,” May 15, 2008.

78. *Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry* in the Hastings Law Library California Proposition Database, [http://appellatecases.courtinfo.ca.gov/search/disposition.cfm?dist=0&doc\\_id=544632](http://appellatecases.courtinfo.ca.gov/search/disposition.cfm?dist=0&doc_id=544632) (accessed May 11, 2011).

79. John Wildermuth, “State Loves to Change Law of the Land; 4 New Amendments on November Ballot,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 26, 2008.



television. ProtectMarriage.com and other pro-Proposition 8 organizations campaigned on freedom of religion and the right of California's voters to the democratic process, but to garner the support of the average voter they pushed the emotional issue of children's and parents' rights. Television ads introduced the seemingly terrible circumstance that would arrive when Proposition 8 failed and children were required to learn about gay marriages in schools. They maintained that it should be the right of the parent to determine whether they wanted their children to learn about homosexuality or not and that parents had no power against the public school system "because the courts said that [parents] had no right to pull [their children] out of the class."<sup>80</sup> By allowing homosexuals to marry, schools would be required to teach second graders it is socially acceptable for boys to marry boys.<sup>81</sup> Even the symbol of the "Yes on 8" forces capitalized on the family values rhetoric introduced to California by Briggs. It very clearly shows one mother, one father, one son and one daughter – the perfect traditional family.<sup>82</sup> The leaders of Proposition 8 understood that to appeal to the large group of voters they would need to focus on the most universal theme: the rights of children and of the parents. Proposition 8 passed by a narrow victory of only fifty-two percent and opponents are currently challenging the proposition in federal court.

Many historians disregard Proposition 6 because of its significant defeat in 1978. Many important factors contributed to its defeat, including: Libertarian opposition, the schism within the religious community, the politicization of the gay community, and the liability of Senator Briggs himself. The Briggs Initiative was the first statewide attempt to limit the rights of homosexuals in the country during the 1970s, yet historians negate the significance of it because they regard Briggs as a dogmatic politician. Few, if any, have acknowledged the real legacy of Briggs in the California political arena. The rhetoric surrounding gay rights in California has been decidedly centered on family values since the 1970s and the Briggs Initiative. While groups advocating for the ban of gay marriage through Propositions 22 and 8 appear to have learned from the mistakes of Briggs,

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80. Yes on 8 Television Ad, "It Has Everything to Do with Schools," Protectmarriage.com, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7352ZVMKBQM>.

81. Yes on 8 Television Ad, "It's Already Happened," ProtectMarriage.com, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PgcgqFYP4>.

82. Yes on 8 Campaign Yard Sign, "Restore Marriage," ProtectMarriage.com, <http://www.protectmarriage.com/action/yard-sign>.

*“Anti-gay activists have also adopted the emotional rhetoric of protecting children and advocating for parental rights.”*

they have also adopted the emotional rhetoric of protecting children and advocating for parental rights. Briggs brought this rhetoric into the political dialogue during the 1970s and provided a facade for those that wanted to enact discriminatory legislation during the early

twenty-first century. It is impossible to determine whether this rhetoric would have eventually found its way into California politics without the Briggs Initiative. Regardless, the battle surrounding Proposition 6 must be appreciated and acknowledged for its significant role in shaping the rhetoric surrounding the fight over gay rights today.

*I*NTERNATIONALE *S*ITUATIONNISTE:  
COUNTERING *A*MERICAN *I*NFLUENCE IN  
*P*OST-WAR *F*RANCE

STEVE *E*STABROOK



**Introduction**

The United States attempted to enforce cultural hegemony throughout Western Europe in the aftermath of World War II. The United States attempted to create the artistic equivalent of the Marshall Plan as a bulwark against the threat of communist influence. Through the promotion of avant-garde styles like Abstract-Expressionism,<sup>1</sup> it wished to present another face of the capitalist world, one that showed an acceptance of artistic liberty ostensibly lacking in the nations of the Soviet bloc. These actions collided with Europe's own artistic trends as well as with a multifarious collection of cultural and economic philosophies, some of which were distinctly opposed to the capitalistic and consumer-based economies that the United States encouraged. The rejection of the American and Soviet artistic ideals and influences is connected to the multiple countercultural movements in Western European countries during the post-war period.

The Situationist International in France was one such movement. Organized by writer and filmmaker Guy Debord in 1957, the Situationists grew out of the Lettrist movement of the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Situationists were principally Marxist in their philosophical leanings but carried their influence beyond economics into the cultural realm. They inherited, with reservations, the philosophical line carried over from the Dadaists and the Surrealists. They protested the culture of consumption

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1. Francis Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999), 254.

that they believed overtook Europe through the promotion of “spectacle” and a self-conscious Avant-Garde at the expense of a more direct creativity.<sup>2</sup> Their influence culminated in the Paris riots in 1968 when student protesters at the Sorbonne precipitated a massive general strike throughout France. The Situationist International movement officially ended in 1972 but its influence reaches beyond, first into the nascent punk scene of the mid-1970s England and by extension into “culture-jamming” movements of today.<sup>3</sup>

This essay will identify the Situationist movement as a reaction to American cultural influence in post-war Europe. While existing scholarship recognizes the Situationists’ place in the continuum of the European Avant-Garde and the Situationists’ rejection of native consumer trends, the current historiography fails to connect a similar rejection of American cultural hegemony. Using the writings of proto-Situationists Henri Lefebvre and Isidor Isou, Situationists Guy Debord, Raoul Vaneigem and others in the movement as well as newspaper and journal accounts, this essay will first position the Situationist movement within the specifically European artistic and philosophical context of its precursors, Dadaism, Surrealism and Marxism. Drawing from the many Situationist writings, as well as secondary source material like Frances Stonor-Saunders’ *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, the Situationists’ reactions to post-war European economic and cultural trends, particularly those shaped by American influence, will be analyzed. In conclusion, current examples of the Situationists’ continuing influence in what is broadly termed “counterculture” will be argued. Greil Marcus’s *Lipstick Traces* provides an in-depth history of the Situationist movement and considers its influence on modern artistic trends, while Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter’s *Nation of Rebels* takes a critical look at how such causes have in turn affected more recent Western political change.

### Political and Cultural Background

As the Cold War developed in the aftermath of World War II, elements within the American government deemed it necessary to project

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2. Timothy Clark, “The Revolution of Modern Art and the Modern Art of Revolution,” *Situationist International Online* <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/modernart.html> (accessed Oct. 18, 2011).
  3. Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *Nation of Rebels: Why Counterculture Became Consumer Culture* (New York: Harper Business, 2004), 1.

specific cultural ideals both domestically and internationally. This effort at cultural imperialism resulted in interesting bedfellows as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) became a de facto Ministry of Culture in the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>4</sup> The CIA and the United States Department of State supported film projects, art exhibits and concerts designed both to project a favorable image of America abroad and to depict capitalism in a positive light.<sup>5</sup> With the encouragement of politicians and intellectuals like Nelson Rockefeller and Arthur Schlesinger, the government provided support to certain types of art not normally associated with the conservative elements prominent in the federal government at that time, such as Abstract-Expressionism<sup>6</sup> and modern jazz.<sup>7</sup>

The Situationists developed and operated within a cultural milieu increasingly subject to the influence of the United States. They recognized the cultural infiltration and both rejected the economic and commercial pressure that the United States placed on Western Europe and rejected much of the Western Avant-Garde art.<sup>8</sup> They viewed the modern avant-garde as inherently susceptible to appropriation by the consumer market, becoming both “desirable and ineffectual” to the populace.<sup>9</sup> The Situationists viewed themselves as continuing on the path set by the Dadaists and to a lesser extent the Surrealists, who in the aftermath of two immensely destructive world wars viewed art and life as requiring a more anarchic and at the same time a more playful and intuitive approach.<sup>10</sup>

The Dadaist movement, led by writers Hugo Ball and Tristan Tzara and sculptor Hans Arp, became prominent in 1916. Influenced by the Italian Futurists to a degree, they did not share the Futurists’ enthusiasm for machines, technology or warfare. Indeed, it was the Dadaists’ repul-

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4. Michael Kammen, “Culture and the State in America,” *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 3 (December 1996): 798.

5. Saunders, 1.

6. *Ibid.*, 257-258.

7. Walter Hixton, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1998), 117.

8. Guy Debord, “Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency’s Conditions of Organization and Action,” *Situationist International Online* <http://cddc/vt/edu/sionline/si/report.html> (accessed Sept 29, 2011).

9. Helmut Sturm, “The Avant-Garde is Undesirable,” excerpted, *Situationist International Online* <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/undesirable.html> (accessed Dec 12, 2011).

10. “The Meaning of Decay in Art,” *Internationale Situationniste* 3 (December 1959): 3.

sion at the slaughter of World War I that led to their rejection of much of what modern society offered. They recognized that a civilization capable of such destruction required a rethinking of its very basic philosophical, and by extension, artistic beliefs.<sup>11</sup> They argued against poetry that extolled the beauty of “flowers and vases” under such conditions<sup>12</sup> and developed the concept of “anti-art” whereby artists directed their media towards a radical deconstruction of everything modern society stood for: its religion, politics, even – excepting themselves – its art.<sup>13</sup> Influenced by writer Alfred Jarry, the Dadists utilized humor in their art, but in contrast to the aloof irony found in the Romantics, it directly manifested itself in “the heroic attitude of those who are unwilling to compromise.”<sup>14</sup>

In the midst of a clash with Tzara, poet/writer André Breton and fellow poets Paul Éluard and Benjamin Péret broke with Dadaism in 1922. They became the founders of Surrealism, a movement that recognized that recent political and scientific developments required the imposition of “a new point of view” in order to further the aims of Dadaism.<sup>15</sup> The uncertainties of the post-World War I civilization that led to the Depression and the Second World War, along with the implications of scientific discoveries such as general relativity<sup>16</sup> precipitated a different direction than the “destructive anarchism” of Dada. The surrealists wanted to explore the unconscious and the hallucinatory and to circumvent traditional reason and logic. They held the traditional novel in special disdain as its internal logic merely fulfilled the expectations of the reader and yet at the same time reflected a mechanistic worldview no longer tenable. It its place the Surrealist writers

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11. Robert P. Morgan, *Twentieth-Century Music: A History of Musical Style in Modern Europe and America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 152.

12. Maurice Nadeau, *The History of Surrealism* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1965), 44.

13. *Ibid.*, 62-63.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, 79.

16. Einstein's Theory of General Relativity demonstrated, among other things, the equivalence between acceleration and gravity, and the fact that time is variable with respect to the relative motion of the observers. This completely changed the popular concept of time as an unalterable aspect of existence. Einstein, Albert *The Meaning of Relativity*, Fifth ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956), 56-57.

substituted techniques like automatic writing<sup>17</sup> which bypassed the rational mind and revealed truth (they believed) in its purist sense.<sup>18</sup>

Both the Situationists and the Lettrists, recognized Dada and Surrealism as important influences to their own movements. However, they viewed them both, and Surrealists in particular, with varying degrees of ambiguousness. Michèle Bernstein, a member of both the Situationists and the Lettrists, stated “everyone is the son of many fathers. There was the father we hated, which was Surrealism, and there was the father we loved, which was Dada.”<sup>19</sup> Influenced by Dadaism’s anarchic tendencies, the Situationists and their precursors believed that the Surrealists over-internalized the movement and never overcame the same “class culture” infecting modern society, rendering its art politically impotent.<sup>20</sup>

### The Founding of the Situationists

Guy Debord founded the Situationists in 1957 as a former member of Isidor Isou’s proto-deconstructionist association, Lettrist International movement. Anticipating some of the ideas that Jacques Derrida later codified, the Lettrists stripped literature to its most basic element, the letter.<sup>21</sup> By focusing on the sound of the letter, Isou believed that the artist could bypass language and meaning and speak directly to the imagination.<sup>22</sup> Isou’s philosophy was not merely a literary affectation but an act of subversion demonstrated by his disruption of a play by Tzara on January 21, 1946, after which he expounded on his Lettrist theories to the subsequently nearly empty house. The Lettrists created further disturbances by announcing

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17. *Automatic writing* is a technique whereby the writer produces unconsciously often under a trance or some other kind of altered state; Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Ghosts and Spirits* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2007), 31-32.

18. Nadeau, 81-83.

19. Marcus Greil, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth-Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1991), 181.

20. Manifesto,” *Reflex 1* (September-October 1948), *Situationist International Online* <http://cddc/vt/edu/sionline/presitu/manifesto.html> (accessed Sept 28, 2011).

21. Thomas Hecken and Agata Grzenia, “Situationism” in *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956-1977*, ed. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 23.

22. David W. Seaman, ed., “Selections from the Manifestos of Isidore Isou” *Kaldren Lettriste Page-Isidore Isou Manifestos*, <http://www.thing.net/~grist/l&d/lettrist/isou-m.htm> (accessed Sept 28, 2011).

the death of God at a mass in Notre Dame<sup>23</sup> and by starting a publication called *Le Dictature lettriste* (The Lettrist Dictatorship) which the public, hostile to such a title in the immediate aftermath of the fascist domination of Europe, received dubiously.<sup>24</sup> Those involved in the movement reasserted and surpassed the artistic and politically anarchist qualities of Dadaism that they believed lost.<sup>25</sup>

With the formation of Situationism, Debord expanded upon Isou's theories and applied them to the realm of cultural critique. Debord recognized post-war European society's failure come to terms with the psychological and political issues of the Dadaists and the true Marxists<sup>26</sup> as well as the influences of consumerism.<sup>27</sup> In the years following the Second World War, the United States felt the need to assert a strong capitalist presence as a buffer against further communist influence in Western Europe. In order to sustain growth and profitability in consumer-based economies, an ever-increasing acquisition of goods and services would be required in post-war Europe. In 1947, amidst an extremely bitter winter, economic collapse threatened Europe. Currency was almost worthless; there were widespread strikes and a flourishing black market. On June fifth of the same year, Secretary of State George Marshall announced a plan for American aid to Western Europe, which came to be known as the Marshall Plan.<sup>28</sup>

### **The Marshall Plan**

The Marshall Plan's purpose was to fund the general reconstruction of Europe. As part of this strategy, administrators used it to invite comparisons between French workers and their counterparts in the United States, both in terms of their productivity and, as a natural consequence, their purchasing power. It was important to demonstrate, for example, that an American car cost the average American worker nine months' wages while

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23. Hecken and Grzenia, 23.

24. Greil, 252.

25. *Ibid.*, 251-253.

26. "The Meaning of Decay in Art," *Internationale Situationniste* 3 (December 1959), <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/decay.html> (accessed Oct 18, 2011).

27. Guy Debord, "Perspectives for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life," *Internationale Situationniste* 6 (August 1962), <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/everyday.html> (accessed Oct 18, 2011).

28. Saunders, 24-25.



a French car cost a French worker two and a half years' pay.<sup>29</sup> By the early 1950s Americans established "productivity centers" in France. These centers and their business consultants showcased American factory equipment in order to increase French economic output and subsequently, the standard of living and the resources to support a military defense.<sup>30</sup> The United States ran into opposition from the French Communist party and its affiliated trade union, the *Confederation generale du travail*. Although many saw the virtue of such an industrial reconstruction due to the fact that workers often described French industrial units as "dark, dingy factories with filthy floors and horrible noise"<sup>31</sup>, the union opposition caused even those not directly affiliated with the Communist party to reject the American efforts.

Concurrently, the CIA began secretly funneling money to conservative parties in France (as well as Italy) in order to thwart the efforts of their respective Communist parties.<sup>32</sup> Despite continued resistance to the Marshall Plan and other forms of perceived American interference, by the mid-1950s the French economy had made substantial gains. Various events during this period led France to align itself with the U.S. and the rest of the NATO countries.<sup>33</sup> Anti-American sentiment lingered, however, especially among the "intelligentsia". Their arguments were represented by mainstream publications like *Le Monde*<sup>34</sup> who warned of an encroaching consumer society similar to the United States' "joyless materialism", characterized by "sidewalk preachers, poor blacks and flag waving crowds"<sup>35</sup> and ultimately, the death of culture.<sup>36</sup>

### American Cultural Influence

The American attempt at exerting cultural influence in Western Europe developed in the context of the early Cold War. The Soviet Union em-

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29. Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 71.

30. *Ibid.*, 72.

31. *Ibid.*, 81.

32. Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans have Loved, Hated and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 54.

33. Kuisel, 103.

34. *Ibid.*, 108.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Kuisel, 111.

barked on a campaign of influence right after the war's end beginning with staged opera performances in Berlin and culminating in 1947 Berlin with the opening of their "House of Culture".<sup>37</sup> The West had nothing comparable to offer and were thus exposed to the Soviet propaganda that Americans were "gum-chewing, Chevy-driving, Dupont-sheathed philistines."<sup>38</sup> The institution of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) represented the inauguration of American cultural influence. The CCF represented itself as an ostensibly benign governmental organization established to showcase American art, literature and music. In reality, however, it was an operation backed by the CIA.<sup>39</sup> Initially known as the Berlin Congress, the CCF came in to being early in 1950 as a meeting of anti-Stalinist and ex-communist intellectuals. With the support of Frank Wisner, a former head of secret intelligence of the Office of Strategic Services (a precursor to the CIA),<sup>40</sup> the Berlin Congress changed its name to the Congress for Cultural Freedom and moved its offices to Paris at the end of 1950.<sup>41</sup>

The ineffective way America combatted the pro-communist elements in France concerned Wisner. French ignorance about, and apathy towards, American culture at the time exacerbated the problem. Post-war popular sentiment in France was neutralist and not interested in aligning economically, militarily or otherwise, either with the United States or with the Soviet Union. Not a satisfactory position to Washington, officials felt that unless they adequately clarified American "diplomacy" and culture to European intellectuals, America was in danger of losing ground in the Cold War.<sup>42</sup> By obtaining Marshall Plan funds from the CIA, the CCF was assured of all the financing it would need to promote its agenda.<sup>43</sup> Within twenty years, CCF had offices in over thirty countries.

In Paris in 1951 under the direction of composer Nicolas Nabokov, the CCF published its first magazine, *Preuves* (meaning *Proof*). Nabokov designed it to compete with neutralist newspapers like *Le Monde* and pro-communist journals like *Les Temps moderne* by presenting a pro-American,

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37. Saunders, 18.

38. Ibid., 19.

39. Tony Shaw, *Hollywood's Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 79.

40. Saunders, 40-41.

41. Ibid., 86.

42. Pells, 67-69.

43. Saunders, 71-72.

pro-“freedom” alternative, and to draw followers away from popular French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, a supporter of the Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup> Much of the French public immediately viewed *Preuves* with suspicion, questioning its legitimacy as well as its source of funding. The French public could easily associate American “freedom” with American capitalism.<sup>45</sup>

Rather than view the conflation of culture, capitalism and consumerism in post-war Europe as merely a CIA fueled conspiracy theory, the actions of the of the United States’ government through its programs to minimize further Soviet influence is well documented. The Situationists recognized that consumer culture worked hand in hand with the capitalist economy. They also understood that culture and entertainment often comprised the largest expenditures by private citizens in modern nations outside of economic necessities. Based on these facts, the Situationists believed that such a society would ultimately reach a point where entertainment comprised the main focus of both individuals and the public at large. The creation of and participation in this “spectacle” would ultimately leave humanity with neither true freedom nor a means to fully participate in the political structure of their respective countries. The promise of greater “spectacle” would reduce people to mere “production machines” led by and further indoctrinated into maintaining the status quo by the messages thus projected.<sup>46</sup>

To Debord and the Situationists the promotion of American cultural influence throughout the 1950s and 1960s validated the dangers they believed France and Western Europe faced. Not only did they perceive the forcing of American ideals upon the French as cultural imperialism, but also as a direct attack on true creativity.<sup>47</sup> In his book *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, Situationist Raoul Vaneigem called this society the “dictatorship of consumer goods,”<sup>48</sup> quoting president Eisenhower who said “to save the economy we must buy, buy anything,”<sup>49</sup> Vaneigem saw modern

44. Ibid., 101.

45. Kuisel, 46.

46. Guy Debord, *Ingirum imus nocte et consumimur igni* (Stirling: AK Press, 1991), 3-7.

47. Guy DeBord, “Report,” 13.

48. Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, The Situationist International Text Library (1967), <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/66> (accessed December 10, 2011): chapter 20.

49. Vaneigem, chapter 7.

“Not only did they perceive the forcing of American ideals upon the French as cultural imperialism, but also as a direct attack on true creativity.”

societies' comforts and entertainments merely as self-perpetuating drugs which had little more to offer than boredom, a boredom borne out by the fact that for all their collective efforts and experiences, people are in reality more isolated than ever. They have acceded to the consumerist vision of society even against their own interests.<sup>50</sup>

### Situationism

According to Debord and his followers, the alternative to such a society was, Situationism, a word that refers to the idea that specific moments in life must reflect a perpetual quality of passion. Each “situation” must be inspired by the purpose of the specific moment in time and not by the arbitrary molds of identification that people unknowingly accept as a component of contemporary culture. “In a classless society there will no longer be ‘painters,’ but only situationists who, among other things, sometimes paint.”<sup>51</sup> Here Debord is reacting in part to the “US avant-garde” colony in Paris and worked “in the most tame, insipidly conformist manner, isolated ideologically, socially and even ecologically from everything else going on” as well as all those of the West who in continuing acts of cultural imperialism appropriated artistic ideals from the Third World.<sup>52</sup>

We should not however, view the Situationists' focus on art as merely an exercise in aesthetics. They carried a definite revolutionary context along with their denunciations. One of Situationist criticisms of Dada was that “it painted pictures on the Mona Lisa instead of razing the Louvre”<sup>53</sup> and ever after art has solely been an appendage to the “spectacle,” an integral part of... modern capitalism.”<sup>54</sup> This spectacle includes Abstract-Expressionism, Andy Warhol's Pop Art, and everyone involved in the “CIA-

50. Debord, *Ingirum*, 9-11.

51. DeBord, “Report,” 13.

52. Ibid, 8.

53. Clark, 2.

54. Ibid., 7.

subsidized torpor of the latest New Left.”<sup>55</sup> Any true art, must therefore must be both an outgrowth of and a catalyst for the “social disruptions” that the Situationists wished to bring about.<sup>56</sup>

The Situationists inherited this revolutionary ethos from Marx via Henri Lefevre, a French theorist of critical Marxism and urban sociology.<sup>57</sup> In concurrence with Lefevre, the Situationists believed that recent followers of Marx always “dropped the chestnut when it got too hot for them”<sup>58</sup> and never followed Marx’s paradigm through to its logical end. Thus Debord stated that the revolution represented by the Situationist International is not merely for the purpose of “determining the level of industrial production” or “who is to be the master of such production” – as representatives of the New Left would have it – but is meant to address the very “desires” of society in order to understand them as products of the current political/economic system.<sup>59</sup> They also broke with traditional Marxism by recognizing that socialism’s appropriation of all private property leads to greater insularity of private “human qualities,” depriving society of individual creativity and rendering humans “useless and socially non-existent.”<sup>60</sup> These criticisms illustrate that the Situationists recognized American-style capitalism and Soviet-style communism as equally invested in the annexation of private wants and creativity for the purpose of maintaining power and the spectacle.

Debord outlined the Situationist views in his most famous book *The Society of the Spectacle*. Published in 1967, the book consists of 221 numbered paragraphs where Debord delineates how life under “modern conditions of production”<sup>61</sup> inevitably leads to a society ruled by spectacle. He states that production requires consumption in order to maintain itself

55. Ibid., 11.

56. Ibid., 12.

57. Lefevre worked to establish Marxism as a cultural theory and in volume 1 of his *Critique of Everyday Life* (originally published in 1948) stated that “subverting the everyday will open the way to. . . the real life.”

58. Attila Kotanyi, “The Next Stage,” *Internationale Situationniste* 7 (April 1962), *Situationist International Online* <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/nextstage.html> (accessed October 18, 2011).

59. DeBord, “Report,” 9.

60. Asger Jorn, “The End of the Economy and the Realization of Art,” *Internationale Situationniste* 4 (June 1960), *Situationist International Online* <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/economy.html> (accessed October 18, 2011).

61. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983), paragraph 1.

“According to Debord, the growth of consumerist society has led to the increasing fragmentation of time and life in general.”

and consumption requires advertisement (propaganda) in order to promote itself; therefore the entire socio-economic system is geared towards the provision of continual enticement for the population at large.<sup>62</sup> According to Debord, the growth of consumerist society has led to the increasing fragmentation of time and life in general. Society has divided time and life into segments representing

production and leisure, and the divisions into social classes further reflect this fragmentation. Debord further connects “consumable time” to the United States and its populations’ average television viewing of up to six hours a day. This particular medium’s “advantage” allows for the consumption of image as well as time thus reproducing the “spectacle” with ever more intensity.<sup>63</sup>

There is a Marxist thrust to Debord’s arguments within *The Society of the Spectacle*, however he intended to completely distinguish his Situationist ideas from Leninist/Stalinist modes, which he recognized as equally insidious in their effect on individuals and greater society. Debord in turn recognized progressive politics as essentially inadequate to the needs of the modern populace. He believed that progressive movements realized only a few local successes in their attempts to “overthrow the economic infrastructure of exploitation.”<sup>64</sup> This stance is something that intellectuals, in particular elements of the New Left<sup>65</sup>, often criticized the Situationists for, accusing them of having abandoned art for politics to the detriment of both. T.J. Clark and Donald Nicholson-Smith refute this charge by stating that the Situationists’s actions were to realize through political action “fifty years of modernist experiment on the borders of the category.”<sup>66</sup> In other words, ideas regarding representation are just as applicable to politics as to art.

Clark and Nicholson-Smith additionally view the critics from the

62. Ibid., paragraph 6.

63. Ibid., paragraphs 152-153.

64. DeBord, “Report,” 1.

65. Klimke, 3.

66. T.J. Clark and Donald Nicholson-Smith, “Why Art Can’t Kill the Situationist International,” *October* 79 (1997): 29.

New Left, and its publication the *New Left Review*, as apologists for the most nefarious aspects of communism such as the Great Terror, forced collectivization, and suppression of the East German and Hungarian revolts,<sup>67</sup> facets that “left the Situationists cold.”<sup>68</sup> That the Stalinist leanings of such groups were, as with capitalism, promoted and allowed to flourish due to their own uses of the “spectacle” and likewise a problem for the Situationists. This gave lie to the Communist Party’s assertion that they embodied the working classes and their interests within.<sup>69</sup> Under these modern communist regimes, man is still a “commodity”<sup>70</sup> According to Debord, as of 1958, the old cultural “superstructures” are still in place and at odds with the “progressive individual” who is still treated as a tool of production due to the lack of a true communist revolution.<sup>71</sup>

Critics pointed to the Situationists’ practice of expelling members for association with bourgeois society, much like the New Left Communists.<sup>72</sup> However, this was not necessarily due to political considerations but to the Situationists’ desire to keep art and other cultural trappings from becoming fodder for the “commodity economy.” They promoted the recycling of cultural cast-offs into new forms with new meanings and contexts.<sup>73</sup> Not only is art saved from commodification (or becoming part of the “spectacle”) but the very ideological symbols of modern civilization, both communist and capitalist, are subverted. This subversion refers to the Marxist theory of *reification* in which societal abstractions become concretized into notions of permanence. Thus the United States turned the concept of the “free market” into a general and protected ideal in the service of the commodity system.<sup>74</sup> The Situationists believed that reification and commodification were both inextricable aspects of modern society to which some of their members could potentially succumb. However, through the creation of “situations” and techniques such as the *dérive*, people could neutralize

67. Ibid., 17-18.

68. Ibid., 20.

69. Ibid., 25.

70. Guy Debord, “Theses on the Cultural Revolution” *October* 79 (1997): 90.

71. Ibid., 91.

72. Hecken and Grzenia, 26.

73. Edward Ball, “The Great Sideshow of the Situationist International,” *Yale French Studies* 73(1987): 25.

74. Ibid., 26.

the power of these forces.<sup>75</sup>

*Dérive* is one of the terms the Situationists used to refer to the creation of self-referential moments in life unmoored from the roles determined by consumer society. The *dérive* is an exercise used to explore the hidden aspects of a city, in both the physical and psychological sense. It is a walk, but one that involves “playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and [is] thus quite different from classic notions of journey or stroll.”<sup>76</sup> Its purpose is to discover the “gravitational” forces within a city and thus abandon oneself to them. Random meetings are prearranged in which the participants know neither where they will take place nor who is participating.<sup>77</sup> In this way the participants “drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action”<sup>78</sup> and, at least for a while, are free from the directives of the consumer culture.

Isou’s seemingly benign Lettrism, in reality an act of revolution, should be viewed as one would view the *dérive*. A similar and equally important Situationist tactic is the *detournement*. The idea of *detournement* is to disrupt, even minimally, the homogeneity of everyday life and hope that such “offences” would cause a chain reaction. This chain reaction will then cause a reversal of society’s trajectory toward the “spectacle.”<sup>79</sup> An example is Debord and fellow Situationist Asger Jorn’s book *Memoires*, which exploited previously copyrighted material printed in fragments and physically bound in sandpaper in order to ruin any books next to it on the shelves.<sup>80</sup> By these attempts at realigning one’s relationship to society, the Situationists’ wished to go beyond even Karl Marx and actually reinvent society from the ground up by taking themselves outside of the capitalist consumer machine represented in its most obvious form by the United States, to reject the enforced conformity of the communist countries, and to undermine the very ideals of production as held by both economic systems.

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75. Ibid., 27-28, 31.

76. Guy DeBord, “The Theory of Derive,” *Les Livres Nues* 9 (November 1956), *Situationist International Online* <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/theory.html> (accessed October 15, 2011).

77. Ibid., 3.

78. Ibid., 1.

79. Ball, 32.

80. Ibid.



## Revolts and Riots

These superficially non-threatening attempts at cultural destabilization had very real consequences in the mid-to late 1960s, leading to revolts across Europe and the United States. In 1968 a student revolt at the Sorbonne University of Paris, further precipitated a huge general strike across France. In addition to the many pamphlets and manifestos published by the Situationists, they also disseminated their ideas through posters and comics. By these means radical student groups, including those at the University of Strasbourg, adopted much of the Situationist philosophy. In 1966 the elected student representatives created a scandal and a minor revolt when they used university funds to distribute an essay called "On the Poverty of Student Life" co-written with the Situationist International.<sup>81</sup> This essay portrayed the supposed worldwide "rise of the students" then heralded by leftist intellectuals as an important progressive movement, as merely concomitant with "overdeveloped capitalism"<sup>82</sup> The students portrayed their financial poverty as rivaling that of the lowest of the working classes, and what awaited them after having suffered through their school years was the life of a "low level functionary" in service to the consumer oriented society.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, according to the Situationists, the unrest of the mid-1960s was just an attempt to glean some form of meaning out of their condition. The political action of the students was yet another application of the "spectacle" through which, for all their criticism of the then current French DeGaulle regime, they merely aligned themselves with the crimes of Stalin, Mao et al. And the Left's desire to therefore "reintegrate the university into social and economic life" is simply another means of serving the commodity system.<sup>84</sup>

According to the Situationists, the only way for students to truly institute a revolution was to rebel against their studies, which were by definition creations and servants of capitalism. Using the Paris Commune

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81. Hecken, 27.

82. Members of the Situationist International and Students of Strasbourg University, "On the Poverty of Student Life: Considering its Economic, Political, Psychological, Sexual, and Especially Intellectual Aspects, With a Modest Proposal for Doing Away With It," <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/poverty.htm> (accessed December 12, 2011), chapter 1.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

of 1871<sup>85</sup> as a positive example; Debord's essay indicated that without that kind of commitment to a change in the social order no revolution would have any worthwhile meaning.<sup>86</sup> The students at Strasbourg did revolt and occupy the University for a time, and this had important ramifications two years later in May of 1968 when students occupied the Sorbonne at the University of Paris. This spawned further occupations of other universities and led to a widespread general strike of ten million workers, some of whom took over factories. Ultimately, the Situationists pulled their support from the movement due to the lingering "Stalinist illusions" of some of its leaders.<sup>87</sup>

The Situationists gave full support in the Los Angeles Watts' riots of 1965. In an article entitled "The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy" published in 1965, Debord put forth some of his strongest and most pointed arguments regarding modern capitalism. In this essay he apprehends the impetus behind the Watts' riots, seeing them as a justified reaction against "the world of commodity," "the spectacle" of which inner-city minorities had no chance of being a part.<sup>88</sup> Both the looting and the arson brought into focus the ultimate contradictions of the American economic system. Debord interprets the theft of appliances by those who can't afford to pay their electric bill and the burning of their own neighborhood as the ultimate ironic display of the failure of the "affluent society."<sup>89</sup> These actions uncovered the underlying structure of said society: "the army, the police and the other specialized detachments of the state's monopoly of armed violence."<sup>90</sup> Debord turns on its head the criticism that the people involved in the riots betrayed "animal behavior."<sup>91</sup> He states this accusation is levied by a society that has treated humans as objects of commerce and conversely infuses objects with human qualities,

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85. W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Sociability among the French Working Class, 1789-1914* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 219-221.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Hecken, 27.

88. Guy DeBord, "The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy," *Internationale Situationniste* 10 (March 1966), *Situationist International Online* <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/decline.html> (accessed September 28, 2011).

89. *Ibid.*, 3.

90. *Ibid.*

91. DeBord, "The Decline," 6.

resulting in an overreaction to the destruction of such objects.<sup>92</sup>

The African-American population in Los Angeles was responding as the group who suffered most from the alienation inherent in modern society. Surrounded by the real and implied opulence of Southern California, their fate was to aspire to the commodity, but never to attain it, and thus represent the lowest rung of the hierarchy required by the present system. The racism they faced was merely a never-ending aspect of this arrangement. Of this Debord wrote, “This is why *this American society itself must disappear* — in America and everywhere else in the world.”<sup>93</sup> The spectacle’s greatest representation is in the United States, and economic and cultural forces had disseminated the specifically American facets of it worldwide.

### Conclusion

The decades following World War II found the United States in a constant struggle to maintain its cultural and economic hegemony over Western Europe and to keep its NATO allies firmly in the capitalist camp. Neutralism and non-alignment were unacceptable. In addition to providing economic support under the guise of the Marshall Plan, the U.S. State Department created organizations like the Congress for Cultural Freedom in order to promote America as a country of cultural import, and to support those types of art not directly linked to radical propaganda. Backed by the CIA, the CCF organized concerts and art exhibits and produced publications throughout Europe and the rest of the world. These would directly combat the similar policies that the Soviet Union incorporated.

France became one of the most important battlegrounds in this cultural war. Many of the French expressed the desire to remain neutral with respect to the developing Cold War, and many others openly joined the French Communist Party and were outwardly sympathetic to the USSR.<sup>94</sup> Thus, with the help of Marshall Plan funds, the CCF maintained a strong presence in Paris, promoting the ideal American life to the French people.<sup>95</sup> This involved a restructuring of France’s industrial system to

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92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Kuisel, 74-75.

95. Hixton, 12.

reflect the more efficient American model and, more importantly, instilling a desire for mass consumption in order to keep the economic engines moving.

Led by Guy Debord, the Situationists believed that as this consumer culture increased its hold over France it would result in a greater loss of individual freedom. They believed that people would become absorbed into the “spectacle” and would thus never question their place in the line of production. Likewise, all art produced in such a society would only be made at the behest of capitalist forces which would drain it of all real meaning. Consequently, it was through writing, art and certain kinds of play like the *dérive* that they could trigger a true revolution that would in turn affect the economic systems under which they lived. This conviction borne out in part by the student revolt and general strikes that took place in 1968.<sup>96</sup>

Although the Situationist International officially disbanded in 1972, their legacy would surface a few years later when a former member, Malcolm McLaren, put together a band called the Sex Pistols who created much the same kind of artistic disruption that Debord and his followers had.<sup>97</sup> The punk movement, initially a small culture dedicated to the deconstruction of cultural artifacts, created a revolution with an artistic reach extending beyond that of the Situationists and it remains controversial. Reflections of Situationist ideals are also found in the anti-globalization movements like the 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle<sup>98</sup> and in books such as Naomi Klein’s 2000 book *No Logo* in which she criticizes the selling of lifestyles linked to brand names like Nike and Starbucks.<sup>99</sup> The latest incarnation of the Situationists’ ideal is found in the Occupy Wall Street movement. While not associated with any concurrent artistic sensibility, the Occupy Wall Street participants are defiantly putting a public face on the failures of the commodity system.

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96. Hecken, 27.

97. Marcus, 19.

98. Heath, 5.

99. *Ibid.*, 328-330.

PERFECTLY ORDINARY:  
WOMEN STRIKE FOR PEACE IN EARLY 1960S AMERICA

JANET RANKIN



What would make ordinary housewives put down their pot roasts and pick up a poster? What would make women meet in living rooms and then march in protest? What would make mothers write letters, talk to congressmen, and join a movement? Fear. Women joined Women Strike for Peace because they believed the escalation of the nuclear arms race threatened their families. These women had been born around the time of the Great Depression, lived through a war fought a world away, and now their lives and the lives of their children were threatened in their own backyards. In the early 1960s national and international events converged that called women to action. Ruth Gage-Colby stated, “Women from the beginning of time have always hated war and longed for peace and all that is new is the *kind of war* we face.”<sup>1</sup> Women felt compelled to strike for peace; for themselves, for their families, and for the world. Their motivation was maternal and their tactics were unapologetically feminine in nature.

Some of the fear that women felt had been years in the making. The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki might have ended a war, but they left the world in fear of a surprise attack and nuclear destruction. The Federal Civil Defense Agency (FCDA) distributed sixteen million copies of its 1950 booklet *Survival under Atomic Attack*.<sup>2</sup> The FCDA enlisted televi-

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1. Ruth Gage-Colby, “Women Strike for Peace,” *New World Review* 31 (June 1963): 6. <http://illiad-csus-edu.proxy.lib.csus.edu/illiad/illiad.dll?Action=10&Form=75&Value=176404> (accessed October 24, 2009).
  2. National Security Resources Board, *Survival under Atomic Attack*, Civil Defense Office (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950).

sion, newspapers and magazines to cooperate in minimizing the perception of atomic danger to the public. The media showed happy, smiling families as they emerged from fallout shelters after the “all-clear” signal was given. Mothers were advised in pamphlets to calm their children by making a

“*Women felt compelled to strike for peace; for themselves, for their families, and for the world. Their motivation was maternal and their tactics were unapologetically feminine in nature.*”

game out of an air raid or attack. The stated intention of “duck and cover” school drills was to “alert, not alarm” school children.<sup>3</sup> Magazines printed pieces on how women could properly outfit the pantry of a bomb shelter.<sup>4</sup>

Not everyone was fooled into complacency by the propaganda. Radiation fallout was, quite literally, everywhere. By

1960, the United States and Russia had performed over 200 nuclear bomb tests.<sup>5</sup> There were thirty-one nuclear tests in 1961 alone. The Soviet tests were said to be responsible for creating more fallout than all of the other nuclear powers combined.<sup>6</sup> The public was bombarded with books, newspaper accounts, and magazine articles on the danger of radiation contamination in the food supply. In 1958, Linus Pauling, a noted chemist, published the book, *No More War!* with chapter titles such as “Radiation and Heredity,” “Radiation and Disease,” and “What Are the Facts about Fallout?”<sup>7</sup> He outlined the link between radiation exposure and leukemia, strontium-90 and bone cancer, iodine-131 and thyroid cancer, and cesium-137 and genetic mutations, in graphic detail.<sup>8</sup>

Newspapers were a daily reminder of dangers at home and abroad. A perusal of *New York Times* headlines in November 1961 found articles on

3. Dee Garrison, “Our Skirts Gave Them Courage: Civil Defense Protest Movement in New York City, 1955-1961,” in *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 205 -206.

4. *Ibid.*, 206.

5. Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 207.

6. *New York Times*, November 9, 1961.

7. Linus Pauling, *No More War!* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1958), 9.

8. Pauling, 77-111.

the tensions between the United States and Russia, nuclear testing, radiation fallout, and radiation disease.<sup>9</sup> The paper printed the speech President Kennedy made to the United Nations on November 9, 1961, where he acknowledged that there may be genetic damage from fallout to children. As president, he said he must balance the risks of damage with the “responsibility that this country has to preserve the freedom of hundreds of millions of people.”<sup>10</sup> The *Sacramento Bee* printed a three-part story on the effects of radiation fallout, the possible damage to current and future generations of children, and the dangers of strontium-90, iodine-131 and cesium-137 in the food chain.<sup>11</sup> A subsequent front page headline announced: “JFK says US to resume atmospheric nuclear tests as necessary for US security.”<sup>12</sup> That same issue contained articles on fallout over Alaska from Russia’s latest test, birth defects caused by fallout, and the announcement of underground testing to begin in Nevada.<sup>13</sup>

Magazines were no exception to the building climate of fear. *Time* magazine published an article on the atomic bomb with a section entitled: “Ten Questions and Answers about Fallout” which declared, “Scientists agree that it can cause cancer, leukemia, sterility, and mutations in future generations.”<sup>14</sup> *Consumer Reports* published a series of articles on the effects of radiation over several years. It published a ten-page article on strontium-90 in milk in March of 1959. Strontium-90, a byproduct of nuclear testing, replaced calcium in bone and released radiation into the body.<sup>15</sup> The magazine published a follow-up study on strontium-90, and later detailed the health hazards of iodine-131 in the milk supply which caused thyroid cancer in children.<sup>16</sup> As a result of those dangers, many mothers chose not to serve milk to their children. This alarmed the dairy industry which outlined in a *Farm Journal* article ways in which dairymen could feed

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9. *New York Times*, November 1961.

10. *New York Times*, November 9, 1961.

11. *Sacramento Bee*, November 1, 1961.

12. *Sacramento Bee*, November 2, 1961.

13. *Ibid.*

14. “The Nation,” *Time*, November 10, 1961, 21.

15. “The Milk All of Us Drink – and Fallout,” *Consumer Reports*, March 1959, 152.

16. “A Follow-up Study on Strontium-90 in the Total Diet,” *Consumer Reports*, October 1961, 546; “Iodine-131 in fallout: a Public Health Problem,” *Consumer Reports*, September 1962, 446.

their cows to limit contamination of the milk.<sup>17</sup>

The *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* dated March 1961 – February 1963 listed articles on similar topics that women across America read in the magazines in their homes, in line at the grocery store, or at their local library. In these two years there were several articles on radioactive “Food Contamination,” multiple reports exposing the dangers of “Iodine” and the radioactive contamination of “Milk,” dozens referring to “Radioactive Fallout” and “Disarmament,” and over one hundred articles dealing with “Atomic Bomb Shelters.” Some of these articles appeared in more obscure publications like *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *Science*, and *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*; however, many appeared in mainstream publications like *Reader's Digest*, *US News and World Report*, *Today's Health*, and *Popular Mechanics*.<sup>18</sup> Typical was a *Redbook* article by Ruth and Edward Brecher titled, “What We Are Not Being Told about Fallout Hazards.”<sup>19</sup> It described the unpredictability of nuclear tests as well as each radioactive substance, its risk assessment, and possible precautions to minimize the danger. The most striking thing about reading news accounts and magazine articles was that the reporting of these facts and frightening statistics was devoid of all emotion or commentary. The barrage of information was itself a call to action to those who would form Women Strike for Peace.

Housewives and mothers will venture outside the home when it involves championing a better life for their children. Historian Glen Jeansonne noted that “humanitarian women have organized to promote social reforms including peace, abolition, temperance, education, and improved living and working conditions,” although these progressive reforms were not the only reasons women have organized.<sup>20</sup> While women have often been consumed with the never-ending care of home and family, specific issues could move them to act. Perhaps because of these family responsibilities, women were less likely to be a part of formal politics and more likely

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17. “Dairymen Take Action against Fallout,” *Farm Journal*, October 1962, 31.

18. Sarita Robinson and Zada Limerick, eds., *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, March 1961-February 1963 (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1963), 23:1-2120.

19. Ruth and Edward Brecher, “What We Are Not Being Told About Fallout Hazards,” *Redbook*, September 1962, 50-51; 102-106.

20. Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.



to be spurred to action in social protest.<sup>21</sup> Harriett Alonso stated, “When women mobilize as mothers on behalf of their families, they become a potent political force.”<sup>22</sup> The women of Lysistrata in Ancient Greece went on a “sex strike” to get their husbands to end the Peloponnesian War.<sup>23</sup> Parisian women with hungry children in 1795 fought for “bread and the Constitution.”<sup>24</sup> European women formed the Women’s Peace League in 1854 in response to the Crimean War. More recently, women formed the Women’s Peace Party in 1915 in response to World War I.<sup>25</sup>

The Women’s Peace Party joined with the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace to become the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in 1919.<sup>26</sup> This was a group run by and mainly composed of women. The creativity and energetic participation in the WILPF progressed between the world wars in an effort to reduce armaments worldwide.<sup>27</sup> During WWII, the WILPF chose “to acknowledge the fact of war, to work for the protection of civil liberties, and to plan for the peace to follow,” but not to protest the war directly.<sup>28</sup> The fiftieth anniversary retrospective *Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom* outlined an organization that evolved from grass roots peace work to one with layers of leaders, committees, and chapters. Membership dwindled during the WWII years and those that followed; however, the WILPF continued to work for peace, freedom, and a safe environment for women and children throughout the world.<sup>29</sup>

Another group working during the Cold War was the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) that emerged in the summer of 1957

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21. Carolyn Strange, “Mothers on the March: Maternalism in Women’s Protest for Peace in North America and Western Europe, 1900-1985,” in *Women and Social Protest*, ed. Guida West and Rhoda Lois Blumberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 209.

22. Strange.

23. Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, ed. Harold Bloom (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2002), 89-92.

24. Strange, 209.

25. Alonso, 57.

26. Alonso, 90.

27. Amy Swerdlow, *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 35.

28. Alonso, 144

29. Gertrude Bussey and Margaret Tims, *Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom* (London: George, Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 1965), 188.

“as the first mass organization in opposition to the nuclear arms race.”<sup>30</sup> Not only mothers were concerned with nuclear war; the diverse sponsors of SANE’s policies included such intellectuals as Norman Cousins, Linus Pauling, Bertrand Russell, Albert Schweitzer, and Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>31</sup> As Americans became more aware of the implications of a nuclear war, SANE membership and influence grew. It incorporated a structure of hierarchical leadership and numerous committees to arouse the public, politicians, and international organizations to work towards a worldwide ban of nuclear testing.<sup>32</sup> While women were allowed to participate in SANE meetings and sign petitions, men dominated the organizational leadership.

Many events converged in the summer of 1961 which brought women together to fight for peace. Fallout shelters were nothing new, but in 1961 Kennedy expanded the Civil Defense program, transferred it to the Pentagon, and Congress appropriated millions of dollars for its implementation.<sup>33</sup> This meant that the government was anticipating an expanded need for such protection. Increased tension between Western powers and Russia led to the construction of the Berlin Wall beginning August 13, 1961 which heightened the rift and threat of war between East and West. The Russians broke a 1958 voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing and began atmospheric tests on August 31, 1961. Contamination by radioactive fallout in the food chain gained exposure in the media and public awareness of the hazards grew as the fallout radiation from these tests was detected in the United States.<sup>34</sup> All of these events contributed to a climate of fear for those who were listening.

Dagmar Wilson, a mother of three and a children’s author and illustrator, received credit for being the mother of Women Strike for Peace. The movement came to life in her living room with like-minded friends who were concerned that these current national and world events would lead to

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30. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 44.

31. Milton S Katz, *Ban the Bomb: A History of SANE, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, 1957-1985* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1986), 28-35.

32. Katz, 24-25, 42.

33. John Whiteclay Chambers II, “Civil Defense,” *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, Oxford University Press (2000) Encyclopedia.com, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O126-CivilDefense.html> (accessed November 11, 2009).

34. Dagmar Wilson, “HUAC and the Irrepressible Women Strike for Peace,” in *The Price of Dissent: Testimonies to Political Repression in America*, ed. Bud and Ruth Schultz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 283-284.

nuclear escalation. She read in the newspaper about a Quaker Peace March across the United States and admired the willingness of these marchers to take some action, any action, in the face of world events. When Bertrand Russell, a British philosopher and pacifist was arrested at a London peace rally, Wilson was outraged by his arrest and the fact that SANE had chosen not to issue a response. All of the events of 1961 converged to cause her to gather friends, leave her kitchen, and take to the streets in protest.

Wilson was not the only woman who felt an urgency to act and felt compelled to “do something.” A woman who picketed a Nevada test site recounted reading the book *Atom Bomb Children* about the aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then looking at her own five sleeping children: “I said to myself, I must do something more forceful than just stay home in the kitchen.”<sup>35</sup> Dr. Frances Herring, founding member of Women for Peace in San Francisco, noted that “respectable middle-class women came out of their kitchens, off their jobs, to stir their communities to some kind of action . . . ; against the threat of nuclear war; against the contamination of milk . . . ; against the deceptive promise of survival from backyard shelters.”<sup>36</sup> Wilson thought about how people had said WWII could never happen and did nothing: “I decided there are some things the individual citizen can do. At least we can make some noise and see.”<sup>37</sup> And make noise they did.

Wilson gathered together five women she had met through SANE in her Georgetown home on September 21, 1961. They discussed world events and concerns they shared about nuclear bombs and radiation fallout. Wilson remembered, “We were worried. We were indignant. We were angry.”<sup>38</sup> They decided at this meeting to have a “strike for peace” on November 1, 1961. They called themselves Women Strike for Peace (WSP) with the intention that this was to be a one-day event to call attention to the resumption of nuclear testing. The following day these women started contacting friends and neighbors about the strike. Their call was: “We strike against death, desolation, destruction and on behalf of

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35. Dr. Francis Herring, KPFK Commentary, May 1969, *Herstory*, (hereafter, *Herstory*) Reel 23, Women’s History Research Center, Berkeley, CA (Wooster, OH: Micro Photo Division, Bell and Howell, 1972-1976).

36. Herring, *Herstory*.

37. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 284.

38. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 17.

life and liberty.”<sup>39</sup> Amy Swerdlow, an historian and WSP activist in New York, recalled that “using personal phone books, Christmas-card lists, and contacts in PTAs, church and temple groups, women’s clubs, and old-line peace organizations,”<sup>40</sup> the original planners rallied women from all over the country.

The estimates varied, but roughly 50,000 women protested in some way on the first of November in approximately sixty cities.<sup>41</sup> *Newsweek* reported: “They were perfectly ordinary-looking young women, with their share of good looks. It was these women, by the thousands, who staged demonstrations in a score of cities across the nation last week, protesting atomic testing. A ‘strike for peace’ they called it.”<sup>42</sup> Sophie Wyatt of Los Angeles remembered that a friend wanted to send her “literature which was the most exciting thing she had ever read. No names, no organization; would I just read it and come.”<sup>43</sup> One sentence in the WSP pamphlet stood out to Sophie: “We don’t make foreign policy, but we know to what end we want it made: the preservation of life on earth.”<sup>44</sup> Sophie decided to attend the rally in Downtown Los Angeles with her friend and each woman brought a friend in turn. She was amazed to see women of all ages, colors and races, babies in buggies, and a line of chartered buses full of women going to the old State Building on Spring Street.<sup>45</sup> Dagmar Wilson said, “Let it not be said that we participated or approved or that we accepted nuclear warfare passively.”<sup>46</sup> These women were anything but passive.

The women devised picket signs to proclaim their protest and inspire participation. The most potent slogan conceived in Dagmar’s living room was “End the Arms Race – Not the Human Race.”<sup>47</sup> Signs of protest in New York City included, “Clean Milk and Dirty Bombs Don’t Mix,” “Save My Children,” and a collie wearing the sign, “Please no More

39. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 18.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 1.

42. “National Affairs,” *Newsweek*, November 13, 1961, 23.

43. Sophie Wyatt, statement reprinted from the *Manchester (UK) Guardian*, April 12, 1962, *Herstory*.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Alvin Shuster, “The Peace Ladies,” *New York Times Magazine*, May 6, 1962, 64.

47. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 1.

Strontium-90.”<sup>48</sup> Posters in other cities proclaimed, “Peace is Patriotic,” and “Let Children Grow.”<sup>49</sup> The signage had the desired effect. Elizabeth Moos remarked, “Whenever I saw a crowd of women with signs saying ‘We don’t want any more poison in our babies’ milk,’ I would drop whatever I was doing and join them.”<sup>50</sup>

The protesters sought to attract the attention of the media. The *New York Times* reported on the protests in the city and all over the country. The New York demonstrations focused their efforts in response to Soviet testing and U.S. proposals to renew tests of nuclear bombs and marched in front of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations. The women were equal opportunity strikers. In Washington D.C., the marchers brought letters to the Soviet Embassy for Mrs. Khrushchev and the White House for Jackie Kennedy asking the wives to intervene with their husbands on behalf mothers all around the world. Petitions of peace were delivered to the Soviet Embassy, the White House, and the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).<sup>51</sup>

Women not only protested in metropolitan cities, but also in small towns. Both the *Sacramento Bee* and the *Sacramento Union* reported on the local protest that brought about sixty-five women with small children to the Capitol to meet with Governor Pat Brown to ask him to help stop nuclear war. These women sent telegrams to Mrs. Khrushchev and Mrs. Kennedy appealing to their motherhood. The *Sacramento Bee* quoted Mrs. Norma Clevenger as stating, “We are a group of women who believe our children and future generations have a right to grow-up without the fear that humanity will be destroyed.”<sup>52</sup> The *Sacramento Union* printed a detailed account of the strike the next day which stated that “peace pleas” were delivered to Sacramento Mayor McKinney and Congressman Moss. It described the strikers as being “housewives, working mothers, widows and teachers.”<sup>53</sup> The paper gave an account of the numbers of women who protested in other cities: two thousand in Los Angeles, two hundred at the Civic Center

48. *New York Times*, November 2, 1961.

49. Alonso, 207.

50. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, *Communist Activities in the Peace Movement (Women Strike for Peace and Other Groups): Hearings* (hereafter HUAC), (87<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 11-13 December 1962, 2156.

51. *New York Times*, November 2, 1961.

52. *Sacramento Bee*, November 1, 1961; *Sacramento Union*, November 2, 1961.

53. *Sacramento Union*, November 2, 1961.

in San Francisco, three hundred at Berkeley's city hall, and sixty each in Ann Arbor and Detroit, MI.<sup>54</sup>

What was envisioned as a one-day strike to call attention to the resumption of testing and the dangers of nuclear fallout morphed into a movement. The women were so energized by the participation, the media coverage, and the feeling of accomplishment that like-minded-women in large cities and small towns across the nation formed local networks as future protests were planned.<sup>55</sup> After the first strike in front of the United Nations, each of the two hundred women was encouraged to bring ten friends to the next demonstration, and the following week two thousand marched in protest.<sup>56</sup> A WSP letter stated: "We believe a lot of people across the country feel just as we do – but thinking they are alone, do not speak out. We believe it is the special responsibility of women – who bear the children and nurture the race – to demand for their families a better future than sudden death."<sup>57</sup>

Women Strike for Peace kept up the pressure on the White House. On January 15, 1962, President Kennedy gave a news conference on "World and Domestic Affairs" during which two thousand women demonstrated in the pouring rain in front of the White House, the Soviet Embassy, and the AEC, on behalf of disarmament and peace. When a reporter asked what he thought of the protesters, Kennedy haltingly replied, "these women are extremely earnest . . . they are concerned . . . at the possibility of nuclear war. . . . I understood what they were attempting to say, therefore, I considered that their message was received."<sup>58</sup> Women took the "Peace Train" from New York, Philadelphia, and Trenton, NJ, to join the protest. One woman brought her three children aged four years, two years, and ten months. On that day WSP women marched in cities throughout the nation and were joined by women from forty countries around the world.<sup>59</sup> While some denounced the women for protesting White House policies, Dr. Carl Kaysen, the Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, stated that the President welcomed "concrete and responsible criti-

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54. *Sacramento Union*.

55. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 15-16.

56. *New York Times*, April 19, 1962.

57. Mary Clarke, KPFK Commentary, May 1969, *Herstory*.

58. *New York Times*, January 16, 1962. Extraneous words have been omitted.

59. Ruth Gage-Colby.

cism and is anxious to know what people think.”<sup>60</sup> The women of WSP told anyone who would listen what they thought about nuclear war.

Women Strike for Peace emerged so quickly that many debated the background of the participants.<sup>61</sup> WSP member and sociologist Elise Boulding conducted a study of the group with the Center for Research on Conflict Resolution in Ann Arbor, MI, in the summer of 1962.<sup>62</sup> She wondered who participated in WSP and why they chose this moment in time to protest. She found that the women of WSP were an educated group with 65% holding a bachelor's degree or higher compared with only 6% in the general female population at that time. Seventy percent of the women had husbands with professional careers. Boulding learned that women were selective as to the WSP activities in which they participated which resulted in the unique nature of each WSP group and individual experience. The women were almost evenly divided between what they considered “very active” and “not active, or slightly active” participation. She was surprised to discover that the preferred method of participation in WSP was letter writing, not marching, since marching received the most attention. Almost three quarters of the women lived in cities or suburbs where it was relatively easy to gather for meetings or protest.<sup>63</sup>

The common goal of nuclear disarmament brought together women of various family situations. Whereas a small percentage of WSP participants had never married, most of the women were housewives and mothers. Nearly half of the protesters had children under the age of eighteen and half of this group had children under age six. While the women who participated ranged in age from eighteen to over ninety, two thirds of the women were ages twenty-five to forty-four. Since a majority of these women did not work outside the home, they felt they had available time to devote to the peace movement. One factor that supported these women was that almost two thirds of them had husbands who equally participated in the peace movement. There were various reasons women gave for joining WSP, but the most common responses were to educate their community about

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60. *New York Times*, January 16, 1962.

61. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 66.

62. “*Who are these Women? A Progress Report on a Study of Women Strike for Peace*,” March 5, 1963, 1-21, Box 4, Folder 6, Third Accession, Elise M. Boulding Collection, University Libraries, Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder.

63. Boulding.

nuclear fallout and to work for disarmament. Most of the respondents reported that it was the urgency of the world situation and the resumption of testing that prompted them to join WSP in the first place.<sup>64</sup>

They chose Women Strike for Peace instead of more established peace organizations precisely because it was different. In the general sense, Glen Jeansonne in *Women of the Far Right* correctly summed up the feelings of many women: “As mothers, they believed they possessed assets that made them different from men – indeed, far superior to men.”<sup>65</sup> Amy Swerdlow felt that women of WSP “shared a conviction that the men in the peace movement and government had failed them.”<sup>66</sup> Ordinary housewives and mothers felt the need to take action because men of the Left and the Right could not be counted upon to avert a nuclear disaster.<sup>67</sup> Historian Robbie Lieberman asserted that “women who found offensive SANE’s exclusionary politics and its lack of interest in women’s issues – such as milk that was contaminated due to nuclear fallout – or who found the WILPF too intimidating, bureaucratic and cautious, flocked to WSP.”<sup>68</sup> WSPers (as they called themselves) rejected the WILPF’s approach to educate and legislate, and SANE’s male dominated hierarchy, in favor of WSP’s “direct action tactics.”<sup>69</sup>

One of the reasons women left both the WILPF and SANE was because of the issue of Communist infiltration. With the rise of McCarthyism, concerns about Communist participation in the WILPF came from within as branches requested that policies by the leadership to exclude Communists be established. When the national board, which rejected exclusionary policies, did not issue a Communist policy, many branches

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64. Boulding.

65. Jeansonne, 6.

66. Lawrence S. Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954-1970* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 21.

67. Amy Swerdlow, “Pure Milk, Not Poison: Women Strike for Peace,” in *Rocking the Ship of State: Toward a Feminist Peace Politics*, ed. Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 228.

68. Robbie Lieberman, *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945-1963* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 165.

69. Amy Schneidhorst, “Little Old Ladies and Dangerous Women: Women’s Peace and Social Justice Activism in Chicago, 1960-1975,” *Peace & Change* 26, no. 3 (July 2001): <http://proxy.lib.csus.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=4687427&site=ehost.live> (accessed October 25, 2009), 376.



could not withstand Communist suspicions and folded.<sup>70</sup> SANE handled the threat of communism in a completely different way, but no more successfully. Its leadership was strongly anti-Communist and issued formal policies that stated that Communists would not be tolerated. When Senator Thomas Dodd, of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, held hearings on Communism in the nuclear test ban movement, SANE leader Norman Cousins initiated his own internal investigations. Cousins suspended Henry Abrams, co-chairman of a New York chapter of SANE, when he refused on principle to state that he “was not a Communist.”<sup>71</sup> This caused a rift in the organization and many members left the movement or formed new groups.<sup>72</sup>

It was because of the hierarchical nature of SANE and the WILPF that Women Strike for Peace was formed as a movement and not an organization. A call-to-action by organizers in September of 1961 stated: “We don’t want chairmen, committees, long serious meetings. We just want to speak loudly, to tell our elected representatives, that they are not properly representing **US** by continuing the arms race and increasing the threat of total destruction.”<sup>73</sup> Dagmar Wilson described their methods as effective despite being unconventional by design. From the beginning, WSP decided not to let the insidious nature of “the communist question” infiltrate the movement.<sup>74</sup> At their first conference, WSP leaders issued a statement: “We do not question one another about our religious beliefs or other matters of conscience. If people with political differences cannot learn to live together, how can nations?”<sup>75</sup>

Women were attracted to WSP because of this fluid style of membership that included any and all who would work for peace. WSP was intentionally formed to be non-hierarchical, with no formal membership, and with all decisions agreed to by the whole. Issues were discussed and hotly debated, sometimes ad nauseam, and always until a consensus was reached.<sup>76</sup> Jean Bagby wrote, “It seemed to us that other organizations

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70. Lieberman, 122-133.

71. *Ibid.*, 147.

72. *Ibid.*, 136-154.

73. Swerdlow, “Milk,” 228.

74. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 283.

75. Clarke, *Herstory*.

76. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, Summer 1962, *Herstory*.

invariably suffered from hierarchical, formalist impediments we so briskly ignored. Our naïve, disorganized methods seemed to annoy men of all ages.”<sup>77</sup> This “un-organization” allowed for spontaneity.

WSP was ready to act at a moment’s notice. One phone call could mobilize women nationwide in the following actions: write Congress; picket the White House, UN, or stores selling war toys; set up peace petition tables; or distribute leaflets to raise awareness of the dangers of fallout in milk.<sup>78</sup> Mary Clarke noted that “WSP’s flexibility has been its strength.”<sup>79</sup> Each local group was free to decide how it would protest and each woman was free to decide if she would participate. All over the country WSP “managed to establish a loosely structured communications network capable of swift and effective direct action on a national or international scale.”<sup>80</sup> Clarke commented that “local groups were autonomous with some ‘even rebellious’ at the thought of receiving plans of action from national leaders. Our credo is let us communicate, and even cooperate, but let us never ‘corporate.’”<sup>81</sup>

Local groups took on different names to reflect their regional differences. Women Strike for Peace (WSP) was the original name which many kept the entire time they were active. Some groups formed Women’s International Strike for Peace (WISP) when they joined forces with peace groups in the Soviet Bloc and Europe to lobby the United Nations and world powers for nuclear disarmament.<sup>82</sup> The Los Angeles WISP chapter chose *La Wisp* as the title of its newsletter. In the Bay Area, San Francisco stayed WSP, but the East Bay and Sacramento groups chose to be Women for Peace (WFP), as did Chicago and many other Midwest groups.<sup>83</sup> Some believed that “strike” did not adequately describe their mission; thus Seattle women allied under the unique moniker of Seattle Women Act for Peace

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77. Swerdlow, “Milk,” 232.

78. Shuster, 46.

79. Clarke, *Herstory*.

80. Amy Swerdlow, “Motherhood and the Subversion of the Military State: Women Strike for Peace Confronts the House Committee on Un-American Activities,” in *Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory*, ed. Jean Bethke Elshtain and Shelia Tobias, (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990), 10.

81. Clarke, *Herstory*.

82. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 192-193.

83. Berkeley Women for Peace Newsletter, February 1963, *Herstory*; Schneidhorst, 378.

(SWAP).<sup>84</sup>

Women Strike for Peace had no formal members and collected no dues. It used “housewifely techniques”<sup>85</sup> like bake sales, rummage sales, and picnics to raise funds that were used to pay for mailings, leaflets, or advertisements in newspapers or on buses.<sup>86</sup> Ethel Taylor, of Philadelphia WSP, recalled that at meetings at her home she put out a sugar bowl for donations. Some women contributed birthday money, leftover grocery money, “beauty parlor allowances,” and one woman “sold her blood to the Red Cross” because she didn’t have extra cash to donate.<sup>87</sup> A chapter in Berkeley voted to send twenty-five dollars it had collected to the national office which was short on rent money.<sup>88</sup> The Los Angeles chapter produced a cookbook they named, “Peace de Resistance,” because they needed to raise money for stamps, printed material, and ad space.<sup>89</sup>

Women Strike for Peace had an unorthodox system for communication and outreach. Rather than have a formal publication, WSP printed the “National Information Memo,” a “clearinghouse for ideas for future action which are sent in by any subscriber,” whenever enough material accumulated.<sup>90</sup> The Washington, D.C. branch of WISP issued a “United Nations Newsletter” and the New York branch mimeographed the “WSP Bulletin” of recent peace activities submitted by local groups. These national newsletters were distributed to one member of each local group who saw that the information was disbursed to the whole. Some local chapters focused on disarmament, some protested nuclear fallout, and some endorsed political candidates.<sup>91</sup> The Disarmament Committee of the Washington, D.C. Women Strike for Peace published a ninety-six page booklet *The Story of*

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84. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 74.

85. Swerdlow, “Milk,” 231.

86. Berkeley Women for Peace Newsletters, 1962 - 1964, *Herstory*.

87. Ethel Barol Taylor, *We Made a Difference: My Personal Journey with Women Strike for Peace* (Philadelphia: Camino Books, 1998), 1.

88. Berkeley Women for Peace, Minutes of the Coordinating Committee, February 4, 1964, *Herstory*.

89. Reprint of an article in the *Seattle Times*, 18 September 1966, *Herstory*.

90. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, Summer 1962, *Herstory*.

91. Schneidhorst, 377.

*Disarmament 1945-1963*.<sup>92</sup> Women in other groups became experts about the dangers of radio isotopes and many knew more than “men in Congress and even in the Atomic Energy Commission.”<sup>93</sup> Local groups shared information and activity updates with one another to inspire and encourage one another.

Mothers of WSP rallied around issues of most importance to them. Amy Swerdlow recalled that “WSPers viewed motherhood as more than a responsibility to the private family. They saw it as a service to the world community and to social progress.”<sup>94</sup> A major issue of concern for mothers was the radioactive fallout from the testing that was poisoning milk. Mothers had their children’s baby teeth tested for strontium-90 and sent the results along with the teeth to their Senators to raise awareness.<sup>95</sup> The prevalence of these substances led some mothers to switch to dry milk which had been collected in non-fallout areas, during times of no testing, or to ban milk drinking completely. This prompted the U.S. Public Health Service to issue a warning not to stop serving milk to children in light of nuclear test resumption.<sup>96</sup>

Other issues of importance to mothers included fallout shelters and toys. On February 1, 1962, WSP encouraged members to participate in “Operation Mailback” which requested that members mail back to Washington, D.C. the government booklet “Fall-out Protection.”<sup>97</sup> As Ethel Taylor described it, “WSP felt that the whole shelter idea was ridiculous, and we set out to inform the American people.”<sup>98</sup> Her Philadelphia group went as far as to rent a fallout shelter, haul it to a shopping mall, convert it into a “Peace Shelter,” and pass out peace literature.<sup>99</sup> Mothers were also concerned with war toys. Minutes from a Berkeley WFP meeting noted that the Toy Committee decided not to march against war toys, but opted in-

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92. Disarmament Committee of Washington D.C. Women Strike for Peace, *The Story of Disarmament 1945-1969* (Washington D.C.: Women Strike for Peace), 1963.

93. Swerdlow, “Milk,” 231.

94. *Ibid.*, 229.

95. Alonso, 207

96. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 84.

97. *New York Times*, January 8, 1962.

98. Taylor, 11.

99. *Ibid.*, 12.

stead to pass out leaflets to Christmas shoppers.<sup>100</sup> A New York WSP newsletter congratulated a letter-writing campaign that succeeded in the discontinuation of the Amaco Toy Manufacturing Company's Combat Medical Kit with adhesive "battle wounds."<sup>101</sup> Women Strike for Peace printed the alarming "Disarmament Coloring Book."<sup>102</sup> Rather than a warm and fuzzy publication, pictures included generals and tanks. One page depicted a mushroom cloud from a nuclear test that read, "But if we don't ever stop the Arms Race, the final explosion is inevitable. Color it a fiery red."<sup>103</sup> Amy Swerdlow made the observation that WSP helped "change the image of the good mother from passive to militant, from silent to eloquent, from private to public."<sup>104</sup>

In the summer of 1962, WSP Ann Arbor, MI, invited all WSPers to meet one another. It was at this meeting that a National Policy Statement was adopted. The New York area newsletter stated, "Long and earnest discussion resulted in unanimous approval of the following statement of policy for use and adaptation as local groups see fit."<sup>105</sup> Fitting with the movement's non-organizational philosophy, this statement was merely offered to the local groups to tailor to their group without expectation that it would be adopted word for word. The statement read: "WSP represents a resolute stand of women in the United States against the unprecedented threat to life from the nuclear holocaust. We are women of all races, creeds, and political persuasions who are dedicated to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control."<sup>106</sup> It went on to proclaim the right to democratic protest, to demand nuclear disarmament and the end to nuclear testing, to urge planning for a peacetime economy, and to pledge to work with women around the world for peace.<sup>107</sup> The sentiment in this statement would prove to be instrumental in

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100. Berkeley Women for Peace, Minutes of the Coordinating Committee, December 4, 1963, *Herstory*.

101. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, October 1964, *Herstory*.

102. *The Disarmament Coloring Book*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Washington, D.C.: Women Strike for Peace, 1996).

103. *Coloring Book*, 8.

104. Swerdlow, "Milk," 234.

105. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, Summer 1962, *Herstory*.

106. NY WSP.

107. *Ibid.*

successfully navigating future threats to the movement.

In November 1962, members of Women Strike for Peace were subpoenaed to appear before The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) from December 11-13 of that year. The women believed this was an attempt to intimidate the movement, and after seeing what had happened to other peace groups, chose to go on the offensive. The decision was “made by the New York and Washington women not ‘to cower’ before the committee, to conduct no purges, and to acknowledge each woman’s right to work for peace.”<sup>108</sup> They sent out telegrams throughout the country asking women to volunteer to appear before the committee. The reasoning was that fourteen women were not a representative sample if the committee truly wanted to understand WSP. Over one hundred women expressed their desire to be called as witnesses, but none were invited.<sup>109</sup> Oddly, some of the women asked to testify were not WSP members. The decision was made to treat them equally, and to offer support and legal assistance to all the women subpoenaed “regardless of their past or present affiliation.”<sup>110</sup> Women Strike for Peace issued a preemptive statement to the press: “With the fate of all humanity resting on a push button, the request for peace has become the highest form of patriotism. We do not ask an oath of loyalty to any set of beliefs. Instead we ask loyalty to the race of man.”<sup>111</sup>

The hearings were called “Communist Activities in the Peace Movement (Women Strike for Peace and Certain Other Groups).”<sup>112</sup> Clyde Doyle (Democrat) of California, Sub-committee Chairman, in his opening statement expressed that while many countries and individuals “cry for peace – they foment war and unrest.”<sup>113</sup> The Chairman claimed that peace talk served Communism because it was really just another way to “destroy capitalism” and “prevents adequate defense preparation.”<sup>114</sup> Women Strike for Peace was under investigation to determine the extent to which Com-

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108. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 98.

109. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 281.

110. Swerdlow, “Motherhood”, 13.

111. Berkeley Women for Peace, Letter, December 4, 1962, *Herstory*.

112. HUAC, 2063.

113. HUAC, 2064.

114. HUAC, 2065.

munists had infiltrated the group.<sup>115</sup>

Thirteen women testified over three days employing unconventional tactics on the witness stand and in the gallery. Compatible with the traditional roles of most WSP members, all but three responded to the question about occupation as “housewife or mother.”<sup>116</sup> Blanche Posner of New York WSP was the first to testify. Committee Counsel Alfred Nittle tried to get Mrs. Posner to state her position with WSP through a series of exhibits on committee structure. She declined to answer those questions, but went on to make a speech, frequently interrupted by Chairman Doyle and Counsel Nittle, representative of WSP beliefs:

I don't know, sir, why I am here, but I do know why you are here. I think because you don't quite understand the nature of this movement. This movement was inspired and motivated by mothers' love for their children. When they were putting their breakfast on the table, they saw not only wheaties and milk, but they also saw strontium-90 and iodine-131. They feared for the health and life of their children. That is the only motivation. If you gentlemen have children or grandchildren, you should be grateful to Women Strike for Peace or whatever peace movement is working to stop nuclear testing. Every nuclear test has resulted in malformation, has resulted in still births, has resulted in leukemia, has resulted in cancer, has resulted in the possibility of nuclear holocaust.<sup>117</sup>

The rest of the questioning about her participation in WSP resulted in Mrs. Posner politely and repeatedly invoking her Fifth Amendment rights. Bored with the committee harping on the subject of her participation, Posner dug in her purse for a cigarette and asked for a question to be repeated because she “was busy hunting for a match.”<sup>118</sup> Blanche Posner was not about to be bullied or intimidated by the committee.

The other women called upon to testify had similar questions and responses. The committee time and again asked the women about “the

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115. HUAC, 2066.

116. HUAC 2073-2201.

117. HUAC, 2074. Multiple interruptions by Doyle and Nittle have been edited out of Mrs. Posner's speech.

118. HUAC, 2083.

organization” of WSP. To this line of questioning the women had comparable answers. Ruth Meyers stated, “Women Strike for Peace has no membership.”<sup>119</sup> “I just repeat again that Women Strike for Peace is not a membership organization, so we don’t have members. We have a communication system,” confirmed Lyla Hoffman.<sup>120</sup> Miriam Chesman explained, “You know, I think one of the difficulties here is that it is hard for men to understand that women can work in a very vague and nebulous way, and I think I am very sympathetic to you in that.”<sup>121</sup> The witnesses would not, no matter how many times they were asked, discuss other WSP members nor would they talk about past affiliations. They considered this line of questioning irrelevant and invoked their Fifth Amendment right each and every time.<sup>122</sup>

By the time Dagmar Wilson was called to testify on the third day, the hostility of the committee had been eroded by the stalwart witnesses, the gallery of supporters, and the favorable press which resulted in a line of questioning that took on a decidedly friendlier tone. They shifted the focus from Communist infiltration to one of understanding the workings of Women Strike for Peace. When asked if she was “the leader” of WSP, Wilson answered that it was merely an honorary title with no real function.<sup>123</sup> When asked about who “controlled” the movement, she answered, “Well, nobody is controlled by anybody in Women Strike for Peace. We do have, however, communication with each other constantly, and I can explain how we do that later if you would like me to.”<sup>124</sup> When Counsel Nittle tried to confirm that “the New York group played a dominant role in WSP activities,” Wilson replied, “Heavens, I think the women in other cities would be mortified if I said that.”<sup>125</sup> Wilson would not state that there were any leaders in the group. Nittle asked Wilson if she had ever “exercised direction or control?” “Never any direction or control, only suggestions,” was

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119. HUAC, 2095.

120. HUAC, 2106.

121. HUAC, 2169.

122. HUAC, 2072 – 2200.

123. HUAC, 2188.

124. HUAC, 2188.

125. HUAC, 2191.



her reply.<sup>126</sup>

At the end of the questioning, Counsel Nittle asked Wilson about Communists in the group. Her reply was quoted more often in newspapers than any other portion of the hearing testimony: “Well, my dear sir, I have absolutely no way of controlling, do not desire to control, who wishes to join the demonstration and the efforts that the women strikers have made for peace. In fact, I would also like to go even further. I would like to say that unless everybody in the world joins us in this fight, then God help us.”<sup>127</sup> Nittle asked Dagmar if this included Nazis and Fascists. The hearing transcript records her answer as, “Whether we could get them or not, I don’t think we could.”<sup>128</sup> The transcript included a footnote that newspapers, committee members and staff recalled the answer as, “If only we could get them on our side.”<sup>129</sup> Dagmar Wilson was thanked for her helpful testimony and promptly dismissed.

The hearing transcripts recounted the testimony of the witnesses, but not the tenor of the courtroom or the response to the proceedings. Amy Swerdlow stated that at the HUAC hearings, the women “stressed their role as mothers because it was that role that was being threatened both by the government’s atomic policies and by HUAC.”<sup>130</sup> Women Strike for Peace invited women to Washington by telegram: “Come if you can. Hospitality provided. Bring your babies if necessary.”<sup>131</sup> Estimates varied, but somewhere between three hundred and five hundred women with their children crowded into the gallery until it was overflowing. Dagmar recounted, “It was more like an enlarged PTA meeting than a congressional hearing.”<sup>132</sup> *Newsweek* noted, “For the women – some of them impeccably tailored, some of them old ladies wearing long wool socks to fend off the winter chill, some with babes in arms who punctuated the proceedings with crying fits – were formidable adversaries.”<sup>133</sup> The women presented a unified front

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126. HUAC, 2197.

127. HUAC, 2200.

128. HUAC, 2200.

129. HUAC, 2200.

130. Swerdlow, “Motherhood,” 23.

131. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 281.

132. *Ibid.*

133. “National Affairs,” *Newsweek*, December 24, 1962, 12.

at the hearings.

The women decided ahead of time that whenever one of them was called to testify, the whole room would stand with her.<sup>134</sup> HUAC Chairman Doyle promptly outlawed standing. Spontaneously, they applauded the next witness, and Doyle outlawed applause. The next day, they greeted each witness with a bouquet of flowers and kisses.<sup>135</sup> The *Vancouver (B.C.) Sun* recounted that by “the third day the crowd was giving standing ovations to its heroines with impunity.”<sup>136</sup> In general, the movement received favorable media coverage. Newspapers around the country displayed supportive headlines. The *Vancouver (B.C.) Sun* stated, “It’s not Un-American to Giggle.” “It’s Ladies Day at the Capitol: Hoots, Howls – and Charm,” trumpeted the *Chicago Daily News*. The *Pennsylvania Guardian* reported that “Peace Women Baffle HUAC’s Masculine Minds,” and the *Toledo (Ohio) Blade* queried, “Un-American Motherhood?”<sup>137</sup> In response to Daggmar’s testimony, the *Washington (D.C.) Evening Star* remarked that no man would ever admit that they were “not a leader of anything” or didn’t know exactly how things worked in an organization.<sup>138</sup> Amy Swerdlow observed that WSP’s performance at the hearings “was so original, so winning, and so unexpectedly ‘feminine’ that it succeeded in captivating the media.”<sup>139</sup> *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker commented that the women of WSP were so enthusiastic that American housewives were a force for peace with which politicians would have to reckon.<sup>140</sup> Contrary to the outcome of other HUAC investigations, WSP emerged from the hearings stronger and more unified than ever before.

After the hearings, Women Strike for Peace took on the monumental effort of working for a Test Ban Treaty signed by the United States and the Soviet Union. There had been disarmament talks in Geneva, Switzerland for years, and many countries had come to partial agreement, but the super-powers could not find consensus. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, the

134. Amy Swerdlow, KPFK Commentary, May 1969, *Herstory*.

135. Wilson, “Irrepressible Women,” 282.

136. Women Strike for Peace National Information Clearing Office, Washington D.C., January 1963, *Herstory*.

137. WSP, WDC.

138. *Ibid.*

139. Swerdlow, “Motherhood,” 15.

140. Women Strike for Peace National Information Clearing Office, *Herstory*.

clamor from the populace of both countries was for disarmament.<sup>141</sup> WSP, along with other groups including the WILPF and SANE, put pressure on the White House, worked with the United Nations, and lobbied Congress for nuclear disarmament throughout 1963. On August 5, 1963, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty. It gained Senate approval in September and went into effect on October 10, 1963. The treaty banned the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, in space, and under water.<sup>142</sup> It did not ban underground testing. WSP called the treaty the “first step to disarmament.”<sup>143</sup>

Supporters said that legislators signed the treaty because the “fall-out from mothers” might have been worse than the fallout from radiation.<sup>144</sup> Senator Maurine Neuberger of Oregon commented that the “mother’s vote” was not sentimental: “It is a vote that flows from rational concern of any mother for the welfare of her children, and her natural and acute sensitivity to the survival of future generations in recognizable form.”<sup>145</sup> Women were instrumental in raising awareness and getting the treaty signed. The magazine *Science* reported that Jerome Wiesner, who was President Kennedy’s Science Advisor, “gave the major credit” to the passage of the treaty to “Women Strike for Peace and to SANE and Linus Pauling.”<sup>146</sup> In a speech made while Congress debated the treaty, John F. Kennedy stated that the United States and Russia must “concentrate less on our differences and more on the means of resolving them peacefully.”<sup>147</sup> Peace was on the horizon at long last.

The achievement of the test ban treaty was not the end of WSP which put out a call that women could not “retire to our kitchens and job. We ‘need a peace sentiment.”<sup>148</sup> On the same day that the Senate passed

141. Taylor, 15-17.

142. Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, July 26, 1963; Treaties and Other International Agreements Series #5433; General Records of the U.S. Government; Record Group 11; National Archives. [http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php? flash=old&doc=95](http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=95) (accessed November 15, 2009).

143. Berkeley Women for Peace Newsletter, October 1963, *Herstory*.

144. Taylor, xi.

145. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, October 1963, *Herstory*.

146. Swerdlow, “Motherhood,” 11.

147. *New York Times*, November 21, 1963.

148. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, October 1963, *Herstory*.

the Limited Test Ban Treaty, the Senate approved a 47.3 billion Arms Budget and the House approved 175 million for a Fallout Shelter Program.<sup>149</sup> WSP now concentrated its forces to fight the shelter program and underground testing, which leaked toxins into ground water and surrounding areas. In 1964, it began a decade-long protest of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War with a banner hundreds of feet long, made from dish towels, hung from the fence in front of the White House that read: “Mr. President—make 1964 the year the world turns away from war.”<sup>150</sup>

WSP continued in the 1970s and 1980s to champion nuclear disarmament, but also fought against the Star Wars program and clamored for the cleanup of toxic waste sites. At its height, the participants in Women Strike for Peace numbered in the hundreds of thousands, perhaps as high as half a million.<sup>151</sup> The lack of organization of the movement prevented an accurate count from ever being conducted. Ethel Taylor, a founding WSP member in Philadelphia recalled, “Our hopes that our daughters would follow in our footsteps did not materialize.”<sup>152</sup> Over the years, women joined women’s rights organizations instead of peace groups and many more entered the work force, which resulted in fewer women available or willing to work for peace.<sup>153</sup> WSP continued the fight, in some form, until the early 1990s when the last of the surviving branches of Women Strike for Peace folded and turned the bulk of their papers over to the archives of the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.<sup>154</sup>

Women Strike for Peace responded to the mounting fear that was posed by radiation fallout and nuclear annihilation. Mothers were afraid for their families, their neighborhoods, and the world by what they read in the papers and magazines, and saw on television. These women did the one thing they knew how to do, act to protect their families. Cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote an article praising the peacekeepers and equating peacekeeping to housekeeping: “Men speak of ‘making peace’ or ‘waging peace.’ It fits the masculine idea of winning something. Peacekeeping demands the patience, the fortitude and the endless, unremitting efforts

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149. NY WSP.

150. New York Women Strike for Peace Newsletter, March 1964, *Herstory*.

151. Joseph Roddy, “The Big March for Peace,” *Look*, July 17, 1962, 15.

152. Taylor, 153.

153. *Ibid.*

154. Swerdlow, *Women Strike*, 283.

that are so much more characteristic of a woman's than a man's role in society."<sup>155</sup> The women of WSP did not forsake their traditional roles in their fight for peace; they used these roles to create a movement that was a uniquely feminine force for change. Some victories were small: a housewife and mother realizing she had something to contribute to society. Some vic-

*“The women of WSP did not forsake their traditional roles in their fight for peace; they used these roles to create a movement that was a uniquely feminine force for change. ”*

tories were monumental: the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963. Each victory was won by individual women, joining together by the thousands, to speak with one mind, to save their children, their homes, and ultimately the human race.

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155. Margaret Mead, "Peacekeeping: What Every Woman Knows," *Redbook*, October 1962, 31.

# ETHNIC TENSIONS IN THE FIJI ISLANDS

SHAMEEL SINGH



The events of May 14, 1987 have been etched into Fiji national history as a day in which the long standing racial divide of its inhabitants came to a critical head. On this day Lieutenant Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka led the Indigenous Fijian<sup>1</sup> military staging a coup d'état against the Fijian Coalition Government. Some Fijians believed the Coalition government instilled too much political power to the Indo-Fijians<sup>2</sup> populous. The political power in essence usurped Fijian authority, which was a major issue within Fijian society and politics.<sup>3</sup> The coup d'état ended a "century-old experiment on multiracialism" which was comprised of both Fijian and Indo-Fijian citizens. For three days, the Fijian and Indo-Fijian Coalition parliamentarians were held captive until being released at 10pm on Tuesday, May 19, 1987.<sup>4</sup>

Following the coup d'état, the newly deposed Prime Minister

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1. "Fijians" is the appropriate term for the largest indigenous Fijian population and from this point they will be referred to as simply "Fijians." The Fijians are ethnically Melanesian society that arrived on the islands approximately circa 1500 B.C.E. Other ethnic groups in Fiji include Indo-Fijians, the Rotuman people, and minority communities, which include Caucasians, Chinese, and other Pacific Islanders.
  2. "Indo-Fijians" refers to the Fiji-born Indians who permanently reside in the Fiji Islands. These Indo-Fijians could be referred as Fiji Islanders per their nationality but for the purpose of this discussion they will be referred to "Indo-Fijians". The term Indo-Fijians will denote a different culturally identified group of Indians while the terms "Indians", "laborers" and/or *girmit* will denote the Indians who still identified as nationally India.
  3. John Wesley Coulter, *Fiji: Little India of the Pacific* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1942), 42.
  4. Brij V. Lal, *Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 280.

Timoci Bavadra traveled to Great Britain wanting an audience with Queen Elizabeth to discuss Fiji's recent political turmoil. Bavadra was under the false pretense that she was the Queen of Fiji and therefore obligated to listen to him.<sup>5</sup> Upon arriving in Great Britain, Bavadra was met by the Queen's assistant, not the Queen. The Queen felt no need to meet Bavadra on the issue, as it was not in her best interest to interfere with Fiji's politics.<sup>6</sup> Rather, the Queen's message asserted that the regional government of Fiji would deal with the situation themselves. The Queen of England, on behalf of her nation, simply turned her back on the multi-racial issues in the Fiji Islands, which the British Imperialists created 108 years prior.

The Age of Imperialism was a period of expansion for the European powers, but no other European power expanded as much territory as the British Empire. Successful global hegemony was necessary for the British to establish world economic control and racial stratification based on their own status of superiority. Though many of their policies altered the landscape of their colonies, the most dramatic policy was that of the indentured servant program. From 1879 to 1916, 60,537 Indian indentured laborers arrived to supply the cheap labor force to establish the cash economy in the Fiji's new sugar industry.<sup>7</sup> The intention was not to create a multiracial society. But the British Empire's neglect with dealing with potential consequences caused the Fiji colony to create an ethnically polarized society with constant simmering friction.

The Indian population in Fiji both voluntarily and involuntarily joined into *girit*<sup>8</sup> with the expectation of achieving economic prosperity and the desire to break the chains of a stagnate caste based society.<sup>9</sup> The majority of indentured servants chose to remain in Fiji at the end of their contracts and began to identify themselves as Indo-Fijians. The decision to remain, as was their right as British subjects, established a permanent multiracial society that would maintain conflict until present day.<sup>10</sup> From the very beginning, several individuals noticed the potential issues regard-

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5. Ibid, 281.

6. Ibid.

7. Ahmed Ali, "Indians of Fiji: Poverty, Prosperity and Security," *Economic and Political Weekly* 8 (1973): 1655.

8. *Girit*-contract of labor

9. Ali, "Indians of Fiji," 1655.

10. Ibid, 1655.

ing racial divisions in Fiji;<sup>11</sup> however, potential issues were ignored over and over again due to a lack of understanding of Fijians and Indians in the Fiji Islands. This issue was paramount in 1987 when their fears of Indo-Fijian social and political superiority began to grow into fruition.

The discussion of the ethnically based relationship between Indians, Fijians and the British is not a new study; however, it is a progressive history that has been studied from the colonial period and the introduction of the *girmityas*. In researching this topic it has come to the author's attention that a great majority of source material is housed in the Fiji National Archives and Australian universities and is not readily available to those outside the two countries without a fee. For this reason, a portion of the primary source material that is used throughout this paper is found in the secondary source materials. Many of the secondary sources, primarily from historian Brij V. Lal, provide a vast array of photographs, source documents, etc., that have come from the Fiji National Archives. Although they do not stand alone, this should not discount their legitimacy and importance within the discussion. Taking this into account, the discussion at hand will continue chronologically providing the reader with a full understanding of the formation of a society based on ethnicity and race and how it erupted into political disruption thus creating a cycle of coup d'états that still plague the Fiji Islands today.

### Pre-Colonial Fiji

The Fiji Islands is an island nation in Melanesia in the South Pacific Ocean. The Fiji Islands are comprised of 332 islands and was first encountered in 1643 by Abel Jans Tansman and soon became regularly visited by Europeans in 1820.<sup>12</sup> The Fijians prior to colonial Fiji had their own stable social, political, religious and economic organization that was not understood by missionaries and other Europeans.<sup>13</sup> Fijian society was organized into smaller communities, but under the control of a powerful chief and each community within the kingdom was self-sufficient. All things were considered common within the community; therefore Fijians were not

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11. John Wear Burton, *The Fiji of To-Day* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1910), 267 and Coulter, *Fiji*, 3.

12. Coulter, *Fiji*, 19.

13. *Ibid.*, 20



accustomed to individual progress.<sup>14</sup> The native Fijians did not possess a written language, but with the help of Christian missionaries a written language was established based on the phonetic understanding of the Fijian language.<sup>15</sup> Many Fijians readily converted to Christianity yet still maintained much of their native culture and practices, which was fostered by their European rulers.<sup>16</sup>

### Colonial Fiji

The Fiji Islands was officially recognized as a nation when the *Deed of Cession* was signed into effect on October 10, 1874. The *Deed of Cession* was a crucial document that was the basis of the ethnic conflict and confusion between the Indo-Fijians and Fijians because of its intent to protect the paramount interests of the Fijians and the Europeans.<sup>17</sup> The agreement between Sir Hercules Robinson, Lieutenant Governor of New South Wales, and the Fijian Chiefs indicated that the Fijians had “determined to tender unconditionally” their sovereignty to Queen Victoria and her successors. Robinson promised, on behalf of the crown, “the rights and interests of the said Tui Viti<sup>18</sup> and other high chiefs the ceding parties hereto shall be recognized so far as is and shall be consistent with British sovereignty and colonial form of government.”<sup>19</sup> “The Fijians had hoped to promote a stable government for all its residence, native and white.”<sup>20</sup> The *Deed of Cession* did in fact do so for the two parties outlined; however, this would provide conflict upon the arrival of the Indian indentured laborers.<sup>21</sup>

Sir Arthur Gordon, Fiji’s first Colonial Governor (1876-1880), wanted Britain to look proudly upon at least one of its colonies where its subjects were treated with justice and fairness. Gordon had pushed for a system of indirect rule, which called for the prohibition of Fijian land sale

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14. Burton, *The Fiji of To-Day*, 54.

15. *Ibid.*, 56.

16. Walter Gill, *Turn North-East at the Tombstone* (Rigby, 1970), 130.

17. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 85.

18. *Tui Viti*: the term used by the Indigenous Fijians to refer to themselves -- literally meaning “people of Fiji.”

19. *Deed of Cession of Fiji to Great Britain*, Fiji Memory, <http://www.fijimemory.org.fj/about.aspx> (accessed November 7, 2011).

20. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 11-12.

21. *Ibid.*, 12.

as well as the preservation of the Fijian way of life by institutionalizing and codifying their social structure and initiated a tax system that did not require the Fijians to work.<sup>22</sup> The British meant to preserve the Fijian way of life by sheltering it from the common British practice in their colonies—putting the natives to work. The use of Indian indentured laborers was already the main labor source in the British Caribbean Islands with the discontinued use of slave labor. Gordon was very much aware of this new labor source provided by Indians and interested in bringing this work force to the Fiji Islands.<sup>23</sup>

Gordon recognized a need to establish some sort of capital in Fiji, which was found to be the sugar industry. Gordon invited the Australian sugar manufacturer Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) to extend its operations into the Fiji Islands. Accepting this invitation, the CSR began its operations in Fiji in 1882 up until 1973. The capital industry recognized and forged by Gordon and CSR quickly became the backbone of the Fijian economy until modern day.<sup>24</sup> In an effort to establish this sugar industry the British needed to obtain cheap labor, but did not want to use the Fijians for such difficult labor.<sup>25</sup> The approach to protect the Fijians from becoming the labor source within its own country was a unique aspect of British colonialism in the Fiji Islands.

The British colonial efforts in the Fiji Islands are unique because it would set the stage for future multi-ethnic conflicts between Fijians and Indo-Fijians. First, the method of colonization was the lack of violence in obtaining the colony, which did not cause an overwhelming loss of life, liberty and least of property on the part of the Fijians. Second, Gordon's actions to preserve the Fijian customs by avoiding using them as a labor source saved them from a common fate for native populations within European empires.<sup>26</sup> The British chose not to make the Fiji Islands a settler colony, which is how they colonized Australia and New Zealand. In this ac-

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22. Nicholas Thomas, "Sanitation and Seeing: The Creation of State Power in Early Colonial Fiji," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32 (1990): 147.

23. As the governor of Trinidad and Tobago, Gordon had first hand knowledge of the use of Indian indentured laborers where it was introduced in 1839. *Ibid.*, 148.

24. *Ibid.*, 165.

25. *Ibid.*, 166.

26. Brij V. Lal, *Girmitiyas: The Origins of the Fiji Indians* (Lautoka: Fiji Institute of Applied Studies, 2004), 36.

tion, they changed the colonial approach.<sup>27</sup> It was a common belief held by Europeans that the Tropics were not a desirable place and caused degeneration for the white races.<sup>28</sup> The British instead believed the Indians were well suited for such labor under such conditions.

Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, agreed upon the conditions of labor with the expectation that the laborers be treated fairly and to promote their overall well being. In Lord Salisbury's last paragraph from his dispatch, as quoted from Brij V. Lal's *Grimityas*, states the following:

Above all things we must confidently expect, as an indispensable condition of the proposed arrangements...the Colonial laws and their administration will be such that Indian settlers who have completed their terms of service to which they are agreed as return for the expense of bringing them to the Colonies, will be in all respects free men, with privileges no whit inferior to those of any other class of her Majesty's subjects resident in the colonies.<sup>29</sup>

Lord Salisbury's statement was written with the Indian labor emigration in mind. This was written before the Government of Fiji had started participating in Indian labor emigration. However, the statement has been perceived as speaking on behalf of all Indian laborer emigrants from that time forward. This is a significant statement because it affords all Indians with equal rights within the British Empire, as they were recognized British subjects. Lord Salisbury's statement contradicts the "expressed" superiority of Fijians interests as outlined in the *Deed of Cession*.<sup>30</sup> The political discourse surrounding the implied and stated meanings of the two contradictory sources continued to play a critical role in the future political relationship between the two major ethnic groups.

### **Indian Indentured Labor**

In 1879 The Government of Fiji established their contract with the Government of India for laborers. The conditions of emigration for Indian laborers required the following: the free passage to the colony; a five year

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27. Burton, *The Fiji of To-Day*, 93.

28. *Ibid.*, 93.

29. Lal, *Grimityas*, 46.

30. *Ibid.*, 46.

labor contract; upon completion of the five years an opportunity to continue working under contract or to return to India or another British colony at his or her own expense; if a total of ten years of labor was completed then the return passage would be provided back to India or another British colony at no expense to the laborer. Regardless of the future opportunities to migrate to other colonies, each laborer reserved the right to remain in Fiji as a permanent resident as British subjects.<sup>31</sup> Indian immigration into Fiji under the *girit* continued from 1882 until 1916 when it was finally abolished. The total number of *girit* totaled 60, 537, but this figure did not include immigrants from Punjab and Gujarat who migrated between 1928 and 1930.<sup>32</sup> To further support the Indians emigrant's rights as British subjects and to ensure that their rights were never waived the Government of India established a specific method of documenting their persons and origins.

The *Emigration Pass* that was provided for each Indian emigrant contained the following information: depot number, sex, caste, name, father's name, age, district of origin and registration. The information was necessary to provide the emigrants with the ability to return home and to be able to find the next of kin.<sup>33</sup> The Emigration Pass was the document given to the migrating Indian labor as a form of identification and passage to travel and employment in Fiji. This pass is a valuable source of information for families wanting to locate their kin in India for the past fifty years. Often times a person's caste was altered because the *arkathis*<sup>34</sup> felt that Hindus of higher castes would not be accepted for migration.<sup>35</sup> This perpetuated the misconception that the Hindus that traveled to Fiji were less educated, less civilized and less cultured which would pose a lasting racial stereotype.<sup>36</sup>

The rate of immigration into the colony was determined by the

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31. "Conditions of Service and Terms of Agreement Which the Recruiters is Authorized to Offer on Behalf of the Agent to Intending Emigrants," in *Girit: The Origins of the Fiji Indians*, Brij V. Lal (Lautoka: Institute of Applied Sciences, 2004), 64-65.
  32. K. L. Gillion, "The Sources of Indian Emigration to Fiji," *Populations Studies* 10 (1956): 139.
  33. "Emigration Pass," in *Girit: The Origins of the Fiji Indians*, Brij V. Lal (Lautoka: Institute of Applied Sciences, 2004), 29.
  34. *Arkathis*-Indian recruiters.
  35. Totaram Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years in the Fiji Islands and the Story of the Haunted Line* (Suva: Fiji Museum, 1991), 59.
  36. Ali, "The Indians of Fiji," 1655.

demand for labor, which in turn was controlled by the sugar prices. The CSR, as the leading sugar producer, often sent requests to the Government of Fiji, which transmitted their request to the Fiji Government Emigration Agent in India.<sup>37</sup> The method in which the *arkathis* obtained recruits to fill this demand has been considered morally questionable. Their tactics varied from promising great fortunes to tricking the Indians under false pretenses to go to the boat depot. Often, the *arkathis* lied about actually leaving India because many Hindus were fearful of *kala pani*<sup>38</sup> because it caused a person to become impure and lose their caste status. Regardless of the trickery that took place by the *arkathis* there were other factors that either encouraged or discouraged migration. Many people volunteered to escape the caste restrictions in India that required that they remain in the same economic trade forever. But indentured labor would provide, after five years, an opportunity to earn money and change their lives.<sup>39</sup> Another reason for migration was the numerous famines plaguing India and most countries in the southern hemisphere causing the complete destruction of life due to British mismanagement.<sup>40</sup> Regardless of the primary reason or method for migration, many of those who left never returned to India.

Upon arrival to Fiji laborers had to quickly adapt to their new environments and their new social situations. They could no longer apply stringent caste restrictions to their new lives. The caste lines established by hundreds of years of understanding in India could not be maintained in a country that was not their own with the loss of religious and social leadership.<sup>41</sup> During the journey to Fiji they were forced to drink from the same bowl and to sit within each other's company and work together.<sup>42</sup> This sort of interaction and the crossing of the *kala pani* without the ability to perform the necessary rituals had caused permanent impurity. The journey to the Fiji Islands and the journey as laborers had almost completely erased caste notions. That which remained was traditional rituals, traditions

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37. Gillion, "The Sources of Indian Emigration," 140.

38. *Kala pani*: black water.

39. Lal, *Girmitiyas*, 65.

40. Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2000), 271.

41. Lal, *Girmitiyas*, 71.

42. Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years*, 62.

and religion, which remained to be the backbone of Indian society.<sup>43</sup> Few *girmityas* were able to document their journeys at the time, but missionaries often recorded oral histories for later generations.<sup>44</sup> One source from a *gimit* survives today written by Totaram Sanadhya.

Totaram Sanadhya, a Brahmin who migrated from India to Fiji, worked as a *girmitya* for five years and later became a leader amongst the laborer population. Several notions regarding the social structure within the Indian community can be seen in his memoirs, which were written when he returned to India. He often referred to other Indians as his brothers and sisters and made little mention of caste distinction unless speaking of its erasure.<sup>45</sup> The information he provides gives the reader insight into the lives of the laborers, but also provides snippets of information regarding the relationship between the immigrant Indian population and the Fijians, which is extremely rare.<sup>46</sup>

Relationship between the Indians and Fijians were limited in the early years. "Fiji's true inhabitants cannot do the work of a labourer well. Their nature is wholly unsuited to this activity. In the cane fields, has to do the very same work every day...the Indian coolies are utterly well suited..."<sup>47</sup> He was referring to the Fijians way of communal living which did not require constant laboring. Totaram had a unique relationship with Fijians because he fluently spoke the Fijian language, which was not common. It is also noted in other source materials that the Indian laborers had arrogance and an attitude of superiority against the Fijians who they viewed as savages regardless of their own current status.<sup>48</sup> This unhappy feeling towards each other was mutual as "Fijians saw Indian as usurpers likely to take away their land which for them was the source of their existence and survival"<sup>49</sup> The British wholly supported these stereotypes and often placed the Fijians in a higher position and warned them not to come in contact with Indians and

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43. Ahmed Ali, "Indians in Fiji: An Interpretation," in *Indo-Fijian Experience*, ed. Subramani (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), 8.

44. Lal, *Girmityas*, 30.

45. Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years*, 44.

46. *Ibid.*, 44-47.

47. *Ibid.*, 59.

48. Ali, "Indians in Fiji," 4.

49. *Ibid.*, 4.

to not provide them with any shelter in their villages.<sup>50</sup> Indians and Indo-Fijians would establish themselves in Fiji under the following notion of their role in the Fijian Islands:

Fijians were saved by government sympathy from a typical fate of colonized people – being made plantation typical fate of colonized people – being made plantation collies in their own country. But this salvation had a cost, and the cost was paid not by Fijians, but by the Indians brought in and made coolies in their place...they perceive that Indians owe them a great debt for being allowed to profit off Fijian lands. But in general they do not comprehend the great historical debt that they owe Indians.<sup>51</sup>

This dynamic relationship is often times skewed to make one group superior to the other for it was often misconstrued that the British favored the Fijian way of life over others and that is why they preserved it and the Indians felt that they suffered to protect the Fijian laziness that the British could not break.<sup>52</sup>

### **Abolition of the Indentured System**

In 1920 the indentured labor system had been abolished and all existing contracts were canceled. With the end of the indentured system, came a whole new Fiji that was completely different from the earlier colonial period. The question remained as to whether or not free Indians were going to function within a system that allowed them to be permanent residents, yet still consider them second-class citizens. Several Indians left India with the intention of earning money and returning to India after their five year contract; however, many Indians did not return home.

There were several reasons that prompted the stay of those Indians at the end of contracts, but the two main reasons were the fear of not being accepted in their native villages due to lose of caste status and because they have had become disassociated with their lives in India. Prior to the 1920's, "Indo-Fijians tended to be socially isolated, economically depen-

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50. Ibid.

51. Sanadhya, *My Twenty-One Years*, 28-29.

52. Ibid., 29.

dent, culturally disoriented, and politically disorganized and voiceless".<sup>53</sup> The Fiji born Indians were learning from their parent's generations and had a different outlook on the social organization and economic environment of which they were very much involved. The Indo-Fijian population had now become removed from their romantic ideals of India and they prepared to establish themselves in Fiji.<sup>54</sup>

Prior to the independence of the Fiji Islands, the dominant political and social question that lingered were how the three main groups would be able to interact. The European population wanted to ensure their privileged position and the Fijian leaders, who at this point had more in common with the Europeans, also wanted to maintain their ultimate control on Fijian society.<sup>55</sup> In 1928, the first secretary of Indian Affairs, J.R. Pearson, said "the problem was that Indo-Fijians were impatient for change, Europeans too resistant to it, and Fijians too willing to side with the Europeans in order to restrain the Indo-Fijians".<sup>56</sup> As the Europeans and Fijian controlled the political climate and land rights the Indo-Fijians still provided the backbone of the cash economy focused on sugar cane production.

CSR had become the sole milling company on the island when it had recently established a monopoly in the sugar industry. A mass labor shortage occurred with the end of *girit* immigration in 1916 and the end of the program in 1920. CSR chose to transform their industry from full-production to simply leasing land to Indo-Fijians, as independent contractors, for production. The CSR made efforts to ensure control over their contracts by establishing specific provisions that restricted the method of planting and harvesting and reserve the right to control sugar prices based on government imposed increases on production.<sup>57</sup> Regardless of the tight constraints, Indo-Fijians had become more independent economically and would continue to play an important economic role in the coming years.

The end of the indentured laborer program did not discontinue immigration, but instead saw an influx of Indians from Punjab and Gujarat during the late 1920s and 1930s.<sup>58</sup> The Punjabi immigrants primarily

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53. Ibid., 74.

54. Ibid.

55. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 60.

56. Ibid., 87.s

57. Ali, "The Indians of Fiji," 61.

58. Gillion, "The Sources of Indian Emigration," 140.



focused on agricultural, but were not often recruited because of negative stereotypes of being troublemakers.<sup>59</sup> The Gujarati immigrants were primarily business orientated and today own the largest handicraft and other retail chains in the Fiji Islands.<sup>60</sup> Both the Gujarati and Punjabi populations continued to limit their integration with the general Indian population, which descended from *girmitiyas*. As the Indian and Indo-Fijians population increased so did their need for political recognition and representation.<sup>61</sup>

The Indian laborers often felt removed from India, but as laborers they were not removed from their privileged position within the Government of India. This therefore caused a point of contention between the ethnic parties. Indian laborers often communicated their grievances about the conditions of employment and of life in the islands directly to the Government of India instead of the colonial government of Fiji. Indian laborers felt their position in the islands as subordinate and thus found their only recourse to communicate with the one government that recognized them as British subjects. This approach only continued to maintain a divide between Indian laborers and the European/Fijian government.<sup>62</sup>

### Social Interactions

Although the Indo-Fijians and Fijians lived in the same country there was little social blending amongst the two populations. Often there were misconceptions of the two ethnic groups that affected their ability to work together. Indo-Fijians continued to view Fijians as backward natives who represented nothing more than a bunch of lazy savages. Whereas Fijians had the preconception that the Indians who migrated were of the lowest ranks of Indian society and were always inferior to Fijians.<sup>63</sup> As Indo-Fijians continued to gain higher economic ground in 1940s and 1950s wartime economy, they were perceived to be greedy, conniving and isolationists.<sup>64</sup>

The British-Fijian relationship was a two sided relationship in

59. Lal, *Girmitiyas*, 43.

60. Ali, "The Indians of Fiji," 1657.

61. Subramani, "Introduction," in *Indo-Fijian Experience*, ed. Subramani (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), ix.

62. *Ibid.*, 87.

63. Karen J. Brison, "Imagining Modernity in Rural Fiji," in *Ethnology* 42 (2003): 338.

64. Ali, "The Indians of Fiji," 4.

which the British did not relinquish their position of superiority and did not divulge this information to the Fijians. The British utilized the method of placing one ethnic/racial group above the other by using positive racism to ensure friction between the lesser races to their own advantage. The British sheltered the Fijians from undergoing common fates of colonized peoples, which only further strengthened the mirage of Fijian superiority in the colonial context.<sup>65</sup> On one hand, the Fijian community held a stronger connection with the British method of government. On the other hand, Indo-Fijians had a longer history with the British form of government and often held strong anti-British sentiments.<sup>66</sup> The Fijians could not understand this anti-British sentiment because they had never experienced the method of colonialism as the *girmitiyas* and Indo-Fijians had experienced.

During World War II the socio-economic divide between Indo-Fijians and Fijians became a large gap. During war-time, Indo-Fijians had the option to either join the military forces and support the British Empire or continue working as agriculturalists and abstain from war-time efforts. The former would legitimize the British colonial position and subsequently the Indo-Fijians subordinate place in the Fiji Islands. The latter, allowed the Indo-Fijians to maintain their work as CRS contractors as opposed to abandoning their only source of income. At this point the choice was obvious—most Indo-Fijians refused to participate in the war effort.<sup>67</sup> Indo-Fijians would not fight against oppression when they themselves could not overcome the oppressive nature of the British Empire. The British propaganda and the Fijian war effort had painted the Indo-Fijians as disloyal and Japanese supporters although there was never any evidence to substantiate this claim.<sup>68</sup> This continued misunderstanding between the Fijians and Indo-Fijians only perpetuated the social divide.

During the wartime economy many Indo-Fijians remained in business and agriculture and reaped much of the benefits. The Indo-Fijians community had become the new bourgeois while most Fijians continued to live off of subsistence farming. Indo-Fijians had luxury-imported vehicles and large luxurious homes in towns while the Fijians continued living

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65. Anuradha Kumar, "Deepening Divides: Ethnic Conflict in Fiji," in *Economic and Political Weekly* 35 (2000): 2387.

66. Ibid, 2387

67. Ibid, 2389.

68. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 135.

communally within the traditional villages despite owning eighty-three percent of the land.<sup>69</sup> Due to the increase in the Indo-Fijian presence both in numbers and in financial strength many Fijians began questioning their authority in the colony.

A survey in the 1950's found that sixty-three percent of Fijians were intolerant of the Indo-Fijians presence while twenty-five percent wanted them to remain in the country, but only as long as they remained under terms that were favorable for Fijians.<sup>70</sup> Although Indo-Fijians and Fijians lived side by side throughout their daily activities, there remained a constant power struggle.<sup>71</sup> It is in this context that politicians began revisiting the *Deed of Cession* and the Lord Salisbury's statement to understand the true position that each party held within the colony. Both statements are vague and make assertions as opposed to clearly stated intent. This therefore made the discussion quite theoretical at a time when both groups were in need of a real solution.

### **The Deed of Cession vs. Lord Salisbury's Promise**

Indo-Fijians always sought full enfranchisement; however, they had settled for partial representation with the hope that one day they would obtain full rights as Fijian citizens as written in Lord Salisbury's statement. The statement was made during the beginning of the indentured program, at a time prior to the agreement with Fiji. This claim has been negated due to the agreement between the Fijians and the British in the *Deed of Cession*. The *Deed of Cession* does not clearly indicate that Fijians would always remain superior, but it has been instead inferred to as a gentlemen's agreement of such an act.<sup>72</sup> The British approach to leave many issues ambiguous without providing clarity has often played to their imperial advantage by informally and formally favoring one group over another.<sup>73</sup> In an effort to reconcile the situation, the Government of Fiji commissioned an independent review of the state of affairs in the Fijian society.

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69. Ali, "Indians in Fiji," 16.

70. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 146.

71. R. G. Ward and O. H. K. Spate, "Thirty Years Ago: A View of the Fijian Political Scene—Confidential Report to the British Colonial Office," *The Journal of Pacific History* 125 (1990): 106.

72. Ibid, 104.

73. Ibid, 103.

In 1957 the Government of Fiji commissioned Professor O. H. K. Spate to review the socio-economic relationship between Indo-Fijians and Fijians and determine how this relationship could hinder the development for both parties. The confidential report was released to the public thirty years later after the thirty-year period of confidentiality passed. The report titled *Thirty Years Ago: A View of the Fijian Political Scene: Confidential Report to the British Colonial Office, September 1959* was released in June 1990 in the *Journal of Pacific History*.

Spate argued that the day-to-day “relations between the various races are friendly enough, and although there are symptoms, both amongst Indians and Fijians, of political and social dissatisfaction, it could hardly be said that these are as yet very acute”.<sup>74</sup> However, this equilibrium is quite unstable. The Fijian leaders and the European businesses tend to deny that there is any racial disharmony when addressing the Indian challenge.<sup>75</sup> In the same breath, Spate also points out one of the many causes of a potential problem.

At the same times as Fiji is passed off as a Model Colony (characteristically, this does not imply any credit to the Government!), where everybody loves everybody else and there is nothing to learn from outside, no opportunity seems to be missed of rubbing in the alleged superiority of Fijian culture and *mores*, until it is almost implied that the ‘alien’ and immigrant Indian community (85 percent Fiji-born, against 20 percent for Europeans) is in Fiji only on sufferance.<sup>76</sup>

Further in his observations, he recommends that the educational system be a multi-racial system fostering both Fijians and Indians. All children should be educated together in primary school and learn from each other.<sup>77</sup> This potential solution could close the divide of animosity that is forced upon the generations by the government, European businesses and notwithstanding the Indian elites. The Indians and Fijians were in a locked situation—that was not necessarily created by them—however it was their responsibil-

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74. *Ibid.*, 104.

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*, 105.

77. *Ibid.*

ity to settle things between them.<sup>78</sup>

Spate acknowledges that although Indians and Fijians continue to function quite harmoniously in day-to-day functions, there is a constant state of friction that will most likely disrupt the situation in the foreseeable future. Indians and Fijians are able to generally cohabitate because they do not often cross paths with one another due to forced or recommended separation.<sup>79</sup> Indo-Fijians were restricted from living in Fijian's villages. If they were accepted in Fijian villages, the colonial officials removed them. Indo-Fijians and Fijians were not allowed to go to the same schools, regardless if they were neighbors. Although these fundamental restrictions limited the ability for the two societies to live on the same footing, they still engaged in cultural borrowing and adaptation, yet inter-marriage continued to be disallowed.<sup>80</sup>

Ethnic divisions based on labor were codified based on the assumption that Fijians were bearers of true cultural traditions and therefore held a propensity for political leadership and guidance while Indo-Fijians, lacking this traditional background, were more appropriately accustomed for economic enterprises.<sup>81</sup> These ethnic stereotypes were adopted by both groups and embraced as a symbol of pride. Fijians felt their culture made them more superior and their job was to continue to foster their traditions and the Indo-Fijians embraced the belief that they were true bearers of modernity and individualism.<sup>82</sup>

Spate recommended that inclusionary actions should be taken to provide Indians agency within the Fijian Islands. He noted that the Indian population was the majority in Suva and Lautoka, yet there are no street names with Indian names to politically and culturally acknowledge their impact. The Indian community was extremely prominent, but the only religious holidays that are nationally observed are Christmas and Easter, but not *Eid* and *Diwali*.<sup>83</sup> In recommending the adoption of these holidays he

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78. Ibid., 117

79. Ibid.

80. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 107.

81. Brison, "Imagining Modernity in Rural Fiji," 338.

82. Ibid.

83. *Eid*: A Muslim festival that takes place at the end of Ramadan; *Diwali*: known as the "festival of lights" celebrated across Indian and amongst Indian communities between mid-October and mid-December. What are they celebrating? Spate, "Thirty Years Ago," 118-119.

indicates that it “is a small thing and one easily remedied, but not without its importance; the holiday has religious significance for those who want it, but is an occasion for enjoyment and cordiality for all...this is a very valuable social lubricant in a multi-racial community.”<sup>84</sup> Today the Prophet Mohammad’s birthday and Diwali are national holidays.

### **The Road to Self-Government and Independence October 10, 1970**

In 1929 Indians were afforded three representatives, Europeans afforded five representatives and Fijians seven representatives to the Fiji legislative council. The Indians gained their right to representation at the behest of the Government of India who supported their rights as British subjects.<sup>85</sup> Although the Government of India did not dictate to Government of Fiji how to manage its colony, they did hold political weight within the larger colonial context. However, as expected Indo-Fijians were not completely content with minimal representation and continued to strive for full representation regardless of European and Fijians fears.<sup>86</sup>

In response to the growing Indo-Fijian demands, the Great Council of Chiefs<sup>87</sup> stated that “the immigrant Indian population should neither directly nor indirectly have any part or direction of matters affecting the interests of the Fijian race.”<sup>88</sup> The dialogue was further quieted by Ratu Sukuna, a prominent Fijian leader, who stated the concept of democracy was not natural within Fijian society, who put all their faith of proper leadership in the Great Council of Chiefs, which “was best suited for the temperament of the Fijian people” and “above the influences of local interests and prejudices.”<sup>89</sup> The Great Council of Chiefs’ position on Fijian government is contradictory to the concept of modernity and of democracy, which would be the only effective way of running a multi-racial society.

The Office of Fijian Affairs Board sent a letter called *The Wakaya Letter*, which clearly stated that the Board would be prepared to move to-

84. Ibid., 118-119.

85. Brij V. Lal, *Politics in Fiji: Studies in Contemporary History* (Hawaii: Brigham Young University, 1986), 35.

86. Spate, “Thirty Years Ago,” 120.

87. Great Council of Chiefs-*Bose Levu Vakaturaga* in Fijian was established in 1876 by Governor Sir Arthur Gordon to be the governing body over the indigenous population in Fiji.

88. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 92.

89. Ibid.

wards internal self-government if there was a constitution that “would make provision for the safeguarding of Fijian interests, building on and strengthening the spirit and substance of the Deed of Cession”.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, the Board requested that there be no deviation from the *Deed of Cession*, a guarantee of Fijian land ownership and only under these requirements would they co-operate with other “principle races” to establish self-government.<sup>91</sup>

In 1963 all Fijian citizens, including other “principle races”, were enfranchised therefore establishing a Fijian electorate, which focused much of its attention on the Indian problem. In 1965, the Indian population had reached fifty-one percent, but less than ten percent of the electoral category. “The elections that soon followed the new constitution saw the emergence of party politics as well as the establishment of race as the crucial factor in political behavior.”<sup>92</sup> “The 1963 elections caused a euphoria of bipartisanship, especially between the two leaders; Ratu Sir Kaminese Mara and Mr. Siddiq Koya...with the departure of the British, Indians and Fijians would live in harmony and trust with equal opportunities for all.”<sup>93</sup> This harmony between the two leaders would be short-lived and cause disconnect within the multi-racial political organization following into independence.

The Fiji Islands was declared independent from the British Empire on October 10, 1970, which came and went without affecting the political issues that prevailed. Independence provided leaders an opportunity to propose sweeping decisions that would address the multi-racial problem once and for all. Sakiasi Butadroka, a parliamentarian, had proposed a motion to repatriate Indians back to India. Butadroka argued that the Indian population was the main problem in Fiji and they did not need their skills and they could return to their backward country and assist in developing their own nation.<sup>94</sup> Kaminese spoke out against the statement, but not to the extent that Koya wanted, which caused discontent within the government and amongst the two racial groups in general. For the next seventeen years the Alliance party, ethnically Fijian based, would dominate politics and the issues at hand until the 1987 elections that truly reflected the demographics

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90. Lal, *Politics in Fiji*, 54.

91. “The Wakaya Letter,” in *Broken Waves: A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*, Brij V. Lal (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1992), 189.

92. Ali, “Indians in Fiji,” 17.

93. *Ibid.*, 19

94. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 235.

of Fijian and Indo-Fijian society.<sup>95</sup>

The 1987 elections ousted the pro-Fijian Alliance party and inaugurated the pro-Indian National Federation Party (NFP). The NFP took a bipartisan approach by accepting an ethnic Fijian, Dr. Timoci Bavadra to lead the Coalition. It was the first time that a democratically elected multi-racial/bipartisan coalition was in power; however, this coalition would be dismantled by Lt. Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka who on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1987, staged a bloodless military coup, “ending not only the life of a month old Coalition government, but an era in Fiji’s history.”<sup>96</sup>

### **The Cycle of Coup D’états**

The coup had altered the political and social relations between Fijians and Indo-Fijians in the Fiji Islands, which continues to persist into present day. On September 25, 1987, the constitution had been revoked and the pro-Fijian government ruled the country with the military’s force. The Republic of the Fiji Islands, as it was referred to after the coup, had been expelled from the British Commonwealth and was not recognized as a legitimate government by many leading nations including Australia and New Zealand.<sup>97</sup>

The results of the 1987 coup caused obvious developmental challenges within the new Republic and only continued to disintegrate the fragile ethnic/racial relations. In an effort to support a pro-Fijian environment most public positions required the forced resignation of Indo-Fijians and filled the vacancies with unqualified Fijians, which caused mismanagement on all levels of the government. The political, economic and social impact of the coup caused many Indo-Fijians to flee the country over the next two years, causing a major drain the Republic’s economic stability. The mass exodus to Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America allowed Fijians to gain a majority representation and to legitimize their claims to political control.

The 1987 coup established precedence by legitimizing military control by force, which only continued to control the Republic’s political scene. The September 1987 coup was carried out of frustration for the lack of movement towards a pro-Fijian government, but by July 1990 the Fijian

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95. Ali, “The Indians of Fiji,” 1659.

96. Lal, *Broken Waves*, 275.

97. Lal, *Politics in Fiji*, 75.



majority was able to make strides to establish complete control over the government.<sup>98</sup> However, due to international scrutiny the constitution was ratified and elections took place in May 1999 electing the first ethnically Indian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry. Subsequently the Republic was readmitted into the British Commonwealth in October 1999. In May 2000, George Speight, an ethnic Fijian civilian, took the Prime Minister and his entire cabinet hostage. Power was handed to the military, the Great Council of Chiefs and the President, Ratu Josefa Iloilo on July 28, 2000.<sup>99</sup> The pro-Fijian forces felt the need, for a second time, to assert primacy by force. Although the military supported the civilian government, internal squabbles caused the military to ignore the government and take matters into their own hands in 2006.

“On 5 December 2006 Fiji’s military leader, Voreque “Frank” Bainimarama, seized power from Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase in a coup”<sup>100</sup> Bainimarama argued that Mr. Qarase was corrupt and heavily biased toward the ethnic Fijian community. At that time he indicated that the take-over was not permanent; however, up until now there has not been a scheduled election. Fiji is currently under military control and according to Bainimarama undergoing the construction of a new constitution that will encompass all citizens of Fiji regardless of ethnicity. He indicated he would “abolish the system in which Fiji’s majority indigenous population and minority Indians vote for candidates of their own ethnicity”.<sup>101</sup> Commander Bainimarama, an ethnic Fijian, has instituted martial law on the Island and censored any negative press.<sup>102</sup> The international community has spoken against the illegal methods of obtaining control and asks for a return to democracy.<sup>103</sup>

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98. Ibid, 78.

99. Ibid, 82.

100. “Deep Divisions in Post-Coup Fiji,” *BBC News*, December 15, 2008, accessed October 4, 2011, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7746519.stm>.

101. “Fiji Constitutional Unveiled,” *BBC News*, July 01, 2009, accessed October 3, 2011, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/8128211.stm>.

102. “Climate of Fear under Fiji Army,” *BBC News*, April 20, 2000. Accessed October 3, 2011. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8007615.stm>.

103. Ibid.

### Conclusion

The problem that persists in the Fiji Islands is the contradiction between traditional Fijian life and the concept of modernity. Forced modernity, a colonial construction, is necessary to function within a global cash economy. If traditional Fijians cannot overlook the stagnation of rural life then they will never be able to compete within this global economy. To do this, they must embrace the Indo-Fijian presence. The British colonial approach in Fiji did not consider the consequences of sheltering the Fijians from modern development all the while forcing immigrant Indian laborers to work on their behalf. Indian laborers and Indo-Fijians had many years of experience to learn to adapt to their environments and to adjust within the larger colonial context, which probably puts them at an advantage. However, for Fijians to adjust in their current economic and political climate they too must be willing to relinquish the naivety of traditional society within a non-traditional country. Both parties feel a sense of entitlement for their own reasons, but the only people who suffer are those who live in a society that will not politically and socially accept its neighbors. Can either group be blamed for such a thing? There are several arguments that can be made to place blame on the British, Fijians and Indo-Fijians, but to whom does it benefit to pass blame. The period of decolonization is not complete and many former colonies are establishing national identities, but to ignore the affects of imperialism is simply ignorant. For this reason, both Fijian and Indo-Fijians will continue playing their roles in a game established by the British many years before.

# AMERICA'S EVOLVING DIARY: FLUCTUATING MEMORY OF *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE*

SARAH STARKE



## Introduction: *The Catcher in the Rye* as a Memory Site

J.D. Salinger's iconic novel *The Catcher in the Rye* is widely regarded by scholars, critics, and the American people as the quintessential "American" novel. It is a member of an elite literary group along with classics such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* that define a specific period in American life through the written word. Unlike many of its companions, America's memory of *Catcher* is constantly in flux and its place in society as a defining cultural device is regularly debated. While some encounter censorship controversies, most iconic American novels enjoy relative stability in their cultural position; however, American memory of *Catcher* is volatile, erratic and mythical.

Pierre Nora introduces memory scholars to a concept called "memory sites" or *lieux de memoire*.<sup>1</sup> Memory sites are both material and non-material, but most academic scholarship reviews the physical locations of memory such as battlefields, monuments, cemeteries, memorials, and museums. Material memory sites are easier to study because their change over time is visually measurable, which can be assessed by in-depth research contained in archives, museums, and other repositories. Yet some of the most important agents of national memory exist in the form of non-material items in literature, film, and other Americana which must be observed

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1. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*," <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/201/articles/89NoraLieuxIntroRepresentations.pdf> (accessed March 23 2011), 7.

through less clinical approaches to research. These memory sites are much harder to evaluate because such memory often does not end at the completion of its production or its initial reception. Non-material memory sites are perpetually changing and are used by university scholars, critics and the American public to fit the current political, cultural, and economic needs, making non-material memories harder to document and assess. *Catcher* is a prime example of such non-material memory sites, and the national memory of the novel, its protagonist Holden Caulfield, and its author J.D. Salinger constantly evolves.

Social histories of the novel are commonplace in academic literature, yet few attempt to explain *Catcher's* role in American memory. This essay explores the changing memory of *Catcher* in America, its reception at its publication, the "age of the teenager" that resulted from its publication, and the later interpretations and reactions that shaped the controversies the book encountered in school boards across the country. Additionally, the

“Yet *Catcher* is regularly reevaluated by the public to find new meaning and interpretation, a fact that makes the study of its role in American memory both fascinating and difficult to decipher.”

essay looks at the major “shapers” of *Catcher's* memory, primarily Salinger himself. America's memory of *The Catcher in the Rye* was constantly torn between reverence and revulsion since its publication in 1951. Much of the public's intrigue with the novel comes from its mysterious background and Salinger's legend, and in recent years the prevailing

opinion on *Catcher* is mythical and at times, even negative. Yet *Catcher* is regularly reevaluated by the public to find new meaning and interpretation, a fact that makes the study of its role in American memory both fascinating and difficult to decipher.

### **Publication, Reactions, and the Immediate Canonization of *Catcher***

J.D. Salinger's characterization of Holden Caulfield was an immediate success. Salinger spent a majority of his army years in World War II perfecting the Caulfield family by writing several short stories involving Holden and his brother. It was not easy for Salinger to find a publisher at first; the *New Yorker* refused to print it, stating that they found the characters

“unbelievable and the Caulfield children, in particular, too precocious.”<sup>2</sup> He eventually found a partner in Little, Brown & Company which published *The Catcher in the Rye* in 1951 and resulted initially in shining reviews. *Time* magazine wrote “the prize catch in *Catcher* may well be Novelist Salinger himself.” *The New York Times* called it “unusually brilliant” and the *Saturday Review* described it as “remarkable and absorbing.” The *San Francisco Chronicle* called it “literature of a very high order.” Salinger’s dedicated fans fell in love with Holden. Critical reviews followed shortly after the praiseworthy ones. *Catholic World* and the *Christian Science Monitor* found the novel “repellent” and “vulgar,” and some literary critics and writers expressed physical revulsion to the story and its protagonist.<sup>3</sup> Most accounts of physical revulsion came from the implicit themes and images of death, rot, and decay. One such example of the disturbing images that upset many critics: “I pictured myself coming out of the goddam bathroom, dressed and all, with my automatic in my pocket, and staggering around a little bit... then I’d walk downstairs ... I’d hold onto the banister and all, with this blood trickling out of the side of my mouth a little at a time... what I’d do, I’d walk down a few floors-- holding onto my guts, blood leaking all over the place ....”<sup>4</sup> Gerald Rosen explains that, “disgust is our culturally conditioned response to these natural data,” and when the book appeared on the national scene in 1951, many teachers and reviewers or “people who are successfully functioning within the culture’s institutional system... did, in fact, respond to the mention of these matters in the text with disgust.”<sup>5</sup> Many critics did not appreciate Salinger’s raw depiction of a teenager dealing with adult situations, such as drinking in a bar and hiring a prostitute. At first, these opinions were muted by the public’s fascination with the novel.

The book was immensely popular among the masses for a variety of reasons. *Catcher*’s initial popularity was due in part to its use in Book-of-the-Month clubs, a popular pastime for many Americans that usually delivered avant-garde and obscure books each month to patrons’ doorsteps during the 1950s and 1960s. Several unofficial biographical sketches un-

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2. Kenneth Slawenski, *J.D. Salinger: A Life* (New York: Random House, 2011), 195.

3. *Ibid.*, 203.

4. J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), 104.

5. Gerald Rosen, “A Retrospective Look at *The Catcher in the Rye*,” *American Quarterly* 29, no. 5 (1977): 550.

covered that Salinger spent much of his own life on the busy streets of New York City, prompting many readers to draw conclusions about the autobiographical nature of Holden Caulfield. At this point, readers began to accrue a strong interest in the author himself. These early biographical inquiries were a crucial introduction to the mysterious life of Holden's creator and initiated a firestorm of inquiries into the author's personal life from journalists and fans.

Aside from the growing interest in the author's life, his intentions regarding the novel, and the mystery surrounding Holden, the book was headed to surefire canonization, and there was little doubt among Americans and critics that *Catcher* would be considered a landmark novel in American history. Immediately after its publication, people compared it to older classics. Continuing themes from Charles Dickens' masterpieces that were "welded to American culture by Mark Twain," critics and readers constantly compared the style, themes, plotline, and protagonist to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.<sup>6</sup> Critics immediately identified *Catcher* as a "coming of age" novel, but did note an important distinction between Holden and his literary peers. Specifically, one theme critics reported was readers' initial reaction to Holden's disconnection from his society, which is not a theme in other great American coming of age novels such as Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. While *Catcher* was immediately identified as a literary highlight, readers and critics were able to decipher a notable distinction between it and the other literary landmarks.

After it was published, the book sparked emotions and interpretations among several different cultural groups in America, which resulted in many different reactions and definitions of the *Catcher* memory. While many people praised Salinger for his honest portrayal of adolescent experiences, many groups did not appreciate the novel's frank depiction of adult themes and situations like drinking, especially as experienced by a teenager. Holden describes his experience this way: "... there were very few people around my age in the place .... they were mostly old, show-offy-looking guys with their dates... there were these three girls around thirty or so .... the blonde one, wasn't too bad... I started giving her the old eye a little bit, but just then the waiter came up for my order. I ordered a Scotch and soda, and told him not to mix it-- I said it fast as hell, because if you hem and haw, they think you're under twenty-one and won't sell you any intoxicating

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6. Slawenski, 205.

liquor.”<sup>7</sup>

Unlike many other American classics, *Catcher* did not take years to develop in prominence among the population—it was almost an overnight classic, due to the varied effect on its readers. But even more important than its reception, the novel introduced an entirely new concept in American culture by ushering in the “age of the teenager.” Most Americans could identify with the novel’s themes, but an even stronger identification with Holden Caulfield was brewing among America’s youth. Adults—critics, schools, and parents—evaluated it from what it offered as a literary entity; however, teenagers read an entirely different novel: an account that could have been a personal memoir or private journal. For the first time in American literary history, *Catcher* gave a voice to a growing social group in America. Slawenski explains that in the years after *Catcher*’s initial publication, the “youths of America suddenly seized upon the character of Holden Caulfield as the spokesperson of their generation.”<sup>8</sup> It is this identification that has primarily permeated the memory of *Catcher* in America.

### **The Age of the Teenager: Holden as a Spokesperson for American Adolescence**

Salinger’s ability to perfectly describe what it’s like to be a teenager is one of the reasons readers were drawn to *Catcher* throughout its history. Jonathon Yardley claims that *Catcher* “created adolescence as we now know it.” While older adolescents existed in every previous generation, it was in the 1950s that a new political, economic and cultural outlook regarding teenagers developed. Literary historians, writers and critics all note that *Catcher* not only created a new social category, the “newly economically empowered;” that were “hungry for culture” and fed by music, films, and novels, but it gave a voice to this emerging socially important group.<sup>9</sup> To teenagers, Holden captured the attention of adults that were beginning to see their group as a legitimate developmental stage. To its adult readers, *Catcher* exposed the precarious position between childhood and adulthood. Late adolescents respond to *Catcher* “...because they recognize themselves in

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7. Salinger, 69.

8. Slawenski, 307.

9. Jonathon Yardley, “J.D. Salinger’s Holden Caulfield, Aging Gracelessly,” *Washington Post*, October 19, 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A43680-2004Oct18.html> (accessed March 23, 2011).

the character of Holden Caulfield...Salinger is imagined to have given voice to what every adolescent, or at least, every sensitive, intelligent, middle-class adolescent, thinks but is too inhibited to say."<sup>10</sup> From its publication to present day, *Catcher* is consistently remembered as a memoir of teenage life. It addresses issues that teenagers experienced in the 1950s and continue to face today. It creates the feeling among teenagers that their emotions, their feelings, and their sentiments are normal. It exposes the unstable and unpredictable conditions that face American youth.

Similarly, reminiscence of the teenage years prompts adult readers to create their own memories of *Catcher* because of the nostalgia for the innocence of childhood and the lack of responsibilities and restraints that accompany youth. When adults re-read *Catcher* in 2012, many do so as a way to recapture youthful thinking. Maurice Halbwachs contends that this yearning is "that faraway world where we remember that we suffered... [that] nevertheless exercises an incomprehensible attraction on the person who has survived it and who seems to think he has left there the best part of himself, which he tries to recapture."<sup>11</sup> Part of the reason reading *Catcher* as an adult is so appealing is this sort of contemplative memory helps readers escape from society. Yet it is ironic that this confusing, lonely stage in development appeals to some adults as an escape. Child development specialists note that in late adolescence (fifteen to seventeen years old) teens are able to think about their future and understand the long-term effects of their decisions.<sup>12</sup> Although it is premature, the teenager develops long-term conceptualizations which place him or her in a larger world-view. This forward-thinking cognitive skill enables teenagers to face the concept of life and death in a meaningful way for the first time in their development. Because Holden deals with death directly (of his younger brother, Allie) and abstractly (of truth and reality, in contrast to "phoniness"), he appeals to those who are learning the same lessons. Additionally, older adolescents have a higher mortality rate than those of any other developmental stage due to motor vehicle accidents and suicide. Holden draws parallels to teenagers across generations when he explains that "...life is a game... Game my

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10. Louis Menand, "Holden at Fifty: *The Catcher in the Rye* and What it Spawned," *The New Yorker*, October 1, 2001, [http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2001/10/01/011001fa\\_FACT3#ixzz1IofZRT9b](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2001/10/01/011001fa_FACT3#ixzz1IofZRT9b) (accessed March 23 2011).

11. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1992), 49.

12. "Adolescent Development," *University of Maryland Medical Center*, <http://www.umm.edu/ency/article/002003.htm> (accessed November 2011).



ass.”<sup>13</sup> Holden’s reaction to the game is that it is only fun for the winners, and in life there are no winners- only corpses.<sup>14</sup> Holden’s viewpoints give a voice to the experiences and feelings of teenagers of every generation, which adults can revisit when they reread *Catcher*.

Teenagers could easily grasp other themes that emerge throughout *Catcher*. Feeling disconnected from both parents and religion is detailed throughout the pages of the novel and is a major theme in adolescent development. Teenagers can identify with Holden’s anguished isolation from family, the lack of role models to emulate, and the unknown status among peers. The ability of Holden to capture the hearts and minds of so many adolescents coincided with the creation of a brand new “youth culture.” It was a culture aimed at this specific group of teenagers, the ones who identified most with Holden Caulfield. Movies such as *Rebel Without a Cause*, books such as *Lord of the Flies*, and musical artists such as Elvis Presley played off of what Holden made so successful in the 1950s by appealing to teenagers’ sense of detachment from adults and cynicism. Menand explains that a great deal of “youth culture” played to the feeling of loss, a feeling present in current youth culture as well.<sup>15</sup>

Menand argues that Holden Caulfield is a “prodigy” and not a typical teenager who “seems to have something that few people ever consistently attain: an attitude toward life.”<sup>16</sup> Holden’s youthful attitude was cynical, although he strived to see the good in people and wanted to protect others from falling prey to what he saw as a disintegrating culture. Many older readers critique Holden as being too self-involved. This is not surprising, considering child development specialists pinpoint the years between fifteen and seventeen as some of the most self-involved years in a child’s development, a time when an individual feels they are mostly alone and can do things alone<sup>17</sup> Salinger gave this developmental stage a voice in Holden, but that does not imply that it was beneficial to the teenager. Yardley explains that “...*Catcher* can be fobbed off on kids as a book about themselves...it is

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13. Salinger, 8.

14. Rosen, 550.

15. Menand.

16. Yardley.

17. American Psychological Association, *Developing Adolescence: A Reference For Professionals* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2002), <http://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/develop.pdf> (accessed April 23, 2012).

required reading as therapy, a way to encourage young people to bathe in the warm, soothing waters of resentment (all grown-ups are phonies) and self-pity without having to think a lucid thought.”<sup>18</sup>

The voice of the teenager is the main reminiscence of *Catcher* in American memory. Many readers “feel sorry” for Holden during several of his encounters; for example, when he buys a record for his younger sister and it shatters before he is able to give it to her this characterizes his despair and loneliness in his journey and in his adolescence. While many teenagers may interpret Holden differently, the most prominent response is the identification with Holden’s age and anguish. This echoes national sentiment toward the book: it is a story about being a teenager first, and any other themes fall by the wayside.

### Historical Context, Interpretations and Later Reactions

*Catcher* eventually evolved in public memory as an enigma. Salinger’s silence and obstinate protection of the intellectual rights to *Catcher* shaped the way it evolved in public memory and heightened interest in readers to figure out his underlying intentions. The strict boundaries of the text and Salinger’s unwillingness to be more forthcoming or self-revealing caused the memory of the novel in the following years to fluctuate wildly and instigated many different interpretations. A closer look at the historical context of novel’s publication and the following decades reveals this evolution.

Family structure and roles began to shift dramatically in the early 1950s which coincided with the 1951 publication of *Catcher*. Teenagers no longer worked in the family business instead of attending school, as they did in the Depression during the late 1920s and 1930s. Similarly, after World War II ended young adults returned to the United States and resumed their lives as part of a nuclear family that was deemed critically important for the survival of the nation. Rosen asserts that the Cold War exposed deep rifts in Americans, especially during the McCarthy era when *Catcher* was “given final shape... and it is basically a novel of disillusionment.”<sup>19</sup> Salinger’s experience in World War II traumatized him, and it seemed as if the country was traumatized as well. During this period, Salinger’s uncovering the country’s general unhappiness resonated with

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18. Yardley.

19. Rosen, 548.

many Americans. Menand interprets *Catcher* as “...the purest extract of that mood... Holden Caulfield is their sorrow king... Americans who grew up in later decades still read Salinger’s novel, but they have their own versions of his story.”<sup>20</sup> The tone of unhappiness and disillusionment was especially intense among the teenagers. Its reception as “...some sort of important cultural statement didn’t happen until the mid-fifties, when people started talking about ‘alienation’ and ‘conformity’ and the ‘youth culture.’”<sup>21</sup>

Some saw Holden’s obstinate revulsion to conformity as Salinger’s statement on capitalism’s negative effects on culture and society. Several examples from *Catcher* lend credibility to this interpretation. One example occurs in chapter 17, when Holden advises that, “you ought to go to a boy’s school sometimes... it’s full of phonies, and all you do is study so that you can learn enough to be smart enough to be able to buy a goddam Cadillac some day.”<sup>22</sup> Holden also states his distaste for “Goddam money... it always ends up making you blue as hell.”<sup>23</sup> Writer James Miller believes that *Catcher* is “...defined in essence as a ‘serious critical mimesis of bourgeois life in the Eastern United States circa 1950- of snobbery, privilege, class injury, culture as a badge of superiority, sexual exploitation, education subordinated to status, warped social feeling, competitiveness, stunted human possibility, the list could go on.’”<sup>24</sup> He claims that the novel draws readers in with its ability to illustrate a “powerful longing for what could be,” and offers that “...Holden’s (and Salinger’s) main failure is in choosing only between rejoining or dropping out from this bourgeois, capitalistic society instead of opting for radical—that is socialist—change.”<sup>25</sup> By focusing on the novel’s “universal elements,” such as depression, isolation, loneliness, teenage angst, and others, it removes the novel’s relation to its moment in time, which many critics felt was just as important to the story.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the years, the book and its protagonist have taken many shapes and interpretations, mostly because of the aura of mystery it has produced in the years following its publication. There is no clear answer

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20. Menand.

21. Ibid.

22. Salinger, 131.

23. Ibid., 113.

24. James Miller, “*Catcher* in and out of History,” *Critical Inquiry* 3, no. 3 (1977): 600.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

to what Holden's story means, what it means today, or what Salinger even wanted it to mean. Many people have recently reevaluated its unique voice of the "outsider," since so many people do not meet Holden's expectations (so many people are "phonies") that often the reader feels as if he or she is the outsider.<sup>27</sup> It has also led to numerous negative reviews in the later 20th century and early twenty-first century. Yardley points out that the criticism upon reading *Catcher* as an adult in later years is that Holden seems to be "just about as phony as those he criticized" as well as an "unregenerate whiner and egoist."<sup>28</sup> Critics continually question why teachers insist upon teaching it in schools, where it is often part of state-mandated curriculum. "Why do English teachers," Yardley asks, "whose responsibility is to teach good writing, repeatedly and reflexively require students to read a book as badly written as this one?" Other critics in recent years have claimed it to be "flagrantly manipulative" and an "easy exploitation of the reader's emotion." Yardley attacks its "...utter, innocent sincerity with which it was written," noting that "...a better, more cynical writer than Salinger easily could write a book about a troubled yet appealing teenager, but its artifice and insincerity would be self-evident and readers would reject it as false."<sup>29</sup> It is overlooked by American critics today because of its "pedestrian content."<sup>30</sup> And in recent years, students themselves have asserted their stance on Holden as an incessant complainer who uses too much salty language, such as "god-dam," "hell," "ass," and "sonovabitch."

The recent negative interpretations and reviews contrast the novel's enduring popularity among the American population. Louis Menand's theory is the novel's role as a cultural rite-of-passage. Many people who read *Catcher* for the first time are teenagers, he explains. The appeal of *Catcher*, "...what makes it addictive, is that it provides you with a reason... it gives a content to chemistry." Reading *Catcher* as a teenager helps explain feelings during a confusing time in development. Adults remember this feeling and identification, their memory of the book is one of comfort and warmth during a turbulent time in development; when adults eventually have their own families with teenagers, they are more likely to pass *Catcher* on as a

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27. Charles Taylor, "The Ballad of John and J.D." *Nation* 292, no. 7 (2011).

28. Yardley.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Danielle Roemer, "The Personal Narrative and Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*," *Western Folklore* 51, no.1 (1992): 5.

“rite-of-passage.”<sup>31</sup>

As the novel aged and the generation that was empowered by its initial publication grew into adulthood, retirement, and old age, the initial meaning of the story was obscured once it was removed from its historical context through the culture’s emphasis on its universal elements. Different interpretations proliferated, obscuring its initial meaning further. The obscurity of its message and meaning was aggrandized by the mystery surrounding the details of its author, his intentions, and its publication. While the material limits to the book are clear and measurable, and to many readers insufficient, *Catcher’s* meaning and interpretation were what Americans ultimately could grasp onto. It was Salinger’s tight control over the memory of *Catcher* that prolonged the mystery until his death in 2010.

### **Shapers of Memory: Salinger, Schools, and *Catcher* in the News**

From 1951 until his death, J.D. Salinger was the single most important “shaper” of America’s memory of *Catcher*; in addition to shaping the novel through his authorship, he exhibited strict control over it in every way possible. In 2004, Yardley noted that “...Salinger seems to have been totally undone by the fame that *Catcher* inflicted upon him.”<sup>32</sup> Salinger’s tight grasp on intellectual and reproduction rights to the story shaped the way America has recreated the original 1950s nostalgia for Holden. Additionally, previously unknown information about Salinger’s life display a much more vivid correlation between Holden and his author, influencing the way America now sees both. It is almost as if readers cannot identify *Catcher’s* narrator as Holden or as Salinger, but rather as “...the author imagined as J.D. Salinger imagined as Holden Caulfield.”<sup>33</sup> Salinger’s tight hold onto his privacy mixed with his strict control over *Catcher’s* reproductions makes him the largest “shaper” of its memory in American culture.

Throughout his life, Salinger was a very private man. It was his reclusiveness later in life that sparked rumors about the novel, previously unpublished “Salingeriana,” and possible sequels to the classic. Yardley asserts that rumors repeatedly “...made their way across the land that Salinger [was] busily writing at his writing table, that his literary fecundity [remained] undiminished, that bank vaults in New England contain vast

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31. Menand.

32. Yardley.

33. Menand.

stores of unpublished Salingeriana.”<sup>34</sup> People eagerly awaited more information about their favorite literary character. Salinger’s reclusiveness created a public atmosphere that Yardley also explains “heighten[ed], rather than diminish[ed], the mystique of *Catcher*... it isn’t just a novel, it’s a dispatch from an unknown, mysterious universe, which may help explain the phenomenal sales it enjoys to this day.”<sup>35</sup> Salinger’s solitary nature made many of his fans, readers, critics, and observers question his intentions with the book, and because he was practically inseparable from Holden Caulfield, they began to reevaluate Holden’s outlook on life that was portrayed to the 1950s “youth culture” generation. “Salinger’s withdrawal,” Menand explains, “is one of the things behind... Holden Caulfield’s transformation from a fictional character into a culture hero: it helped to confirm the belief that Holden’s unhappiness was less personal than it appears—that it was really some sort of protest against modern life.”<sup>36</sup> It also helped to confirm that there was no distinction between Salinger and his characters. In Holden, Salinger increasingly seemed as if he was generalizing his discontent with American society and culture. His reclusiveness was a snub at sensationalist and gossip journalism, paparazzi, and the celebrity culture that arose from Elvis Presley and was amplified by the generation infatuated with the Beatles. The more time that passed from the 1951 publication, the more impossible it was to read *Catcher* and not draw conclusions about its author’s intentions.

Salinger’s seclusion was a controversy in itself. People were drawn to *Catcher* for many reasons and because there was so much room for interpretation it was only natural for people to reach out to the author for explanation; however, Salinger was unwilling to expound. Salinger’s seclusion was seen as a snub to his fans, who thought his silence was rude and unappreciative. To the outside world, Salinger’s withdrawal was a frustration, and it created a “mysterious void” that many determined readers demanded replenishment despite his pleas to be left alone. According to Kenneth Slawenski, Salinger’s isolation “...allowed his legend to grow without contest,” subsequently heightening popular fascination with Salinger himself instead of appreciation for his work.<sup>37</sup>

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34. Yardley.

35. Ibid.

36. Menand.

37. Slawenski, 373.

While his reclusiveness indirectly shaped America's memory of *Catcher* in the decades following its publication, Salinger exhibited direct control over this memory by severely restricting replicas, reproductions, fan fiction, or any adaptations of his work. Salinger famously stated, "There's no more to Holden Caulfield... read the book again... it's all there... Holden Caulfield is only a frozen moment in time."<sup>38</sup> He intended on ending the memory the same as Holden's insistence of "...don't ever tell anybody anything... if you do, you start missing everybody."<sup>39</sup> When Hollywood executives approached Salinger with generous film offers, he refused every time, stating that he would not participate in the adaptation of his work. Broadway playwrights wanted to turn *Catcher* into a play, but Salinger refused because he feared it would displease his protagonist. He restricted access to *Catcher's* content for the rest of his life: in 2009, Salinger emerged from isolation to stop an unauthorized sequel to *Catcher* called *60 Years Later* and the lawsuit demanded that all sales be halted and that books already distributed be recalled and destroyed.<sup>40</sup>

Movie executives, playwrights, and authors soon learned that recreating Holden Caulfield would have to be done stealthily and creatively. Many of the film reproductions attempt to characterize Holden by setting him in the present time. Films such as *Charlie Bartlett*, *The Graduate*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Tadpole*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *Igby Goes Down*, and *Mean Girls* are all considered "Holden films" because they include cynical young adult protagonists attempting the transition between childhood and adulthood. Katrina Onstad explains that they are often in conversation with each other, delving slightly deeper into the heart of Holden Caulfield.<sup>41</sup> The movies are considered "coming of age movies," a genre that expanded during the age of the teenager with films such as *The Outsiders* and *Rebel Without a Cause*. In addition to films, many book adaptations attempted to pick up where Salinger left off in 1951. Sylvia Plath is one of the most famous examples of this creative imitation. Critics often consider Plath's novel, *The Bell Jar*, the "female version" of *Catcher*; the novel's protagonist is an aspir-

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38. Doug Gross, "Lawsuit Targets 'Rip-off' of 'Catcher in the Rye,'" *CNN*, June 3, 2009, [http://articles.cnn.com/2009-06-03/entertainment/salinger.catcher.lawsuit\\_1\\_holden-caulfield-john-david-california-flick-book?\\_s=PM:SHOWBIZ](http://articles.cnn.com/2009-06-03/entertainment/salinger.catcher.lawsuit_1_holden-caulfield-john-david-california-flick-book?_s=PM:SHOWBIZ) (accessed March 23 2011).

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Katrina Onstad, "Beholden to Holden," *CBCNews.ca*, February 22, 2008, <http://www.cbc.ca/arts/film/bartlett.html> (accessed March 23 2011).

ing magazine writer in 1953—which was considered very “Salingeresque” at the time of its publication since Salinger himself was a writer for the *New Yorker*, a prestigious magazine that showcased the latest up-and-coming literary talent. Each generation has experienced “rewrites” of *Catcher*, and “each one seemed to hit a generational nerve, as though no one has ever told that story, or sounded those notes, before.”<sup>42</sup> Subsequently, each new facsimile struck a nostalgic chord in its readers and critics, and many books that feature unhappy young people were written by authors who “no doubt regarded Salinger as a model and influence,” but cannot be considered rewrites because “the bar is set a good deal higher than that, and the reason has to do with the Salinger mystique.”<sup>43</sup> People can try to recreate Holden, but it is distinctly because of Salinger’s mystery that none of them will ever come close.

Schools and parents were also major shapers of the memory of *Catcher* throughout its sixty years of existence. Today, *Catcher* is required reading for many sophomore and junior English students and often taught in conjunction with a United States history course. To some American cultural scholars, it is perceived to be a “rite-of-passage” novel along with *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and other novels that portray young adolescents surveying adulthood and encountering adult situations. While the school curriculum ensures its perpetuation in American memory, the efforts to ban the book by many school boards have also significantly shaped its image in the American narrative. The attempts to ban the novel from academic settings have been mostly counterproductive, as many scholars, journalists and critics found that restricting access to it in high school only heightens interest in the book. In 1989, the small conservative town of Boron, California, placed *Catcher* on the banned book list, but the local librarian told *The New York Times* that she had a waiting list of fifteen people for the book that had been “sitting on the shelf all these years pretty much unnoticed.”<sup>44</sup>

The first attempt to ban the book was in 1954 in California. Salinger remained mostly silent when the novel was opposed by libraries, school

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42. Menand.

43. Ibid.

44. Seth Mydans, “In a Small Town, a Battle Over a Book,” *NY Times*, September 3, 1989, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C0CE1D7103CF930A3575AC0A96F948260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=1> (accessed March 23 2011).



boards, and faculties in the 1950s, making only one comment on censorship before it even threatened his work: Salinger “lamented” that it could possibly be censored for language and content, saying “all my best friends are children... it’s almost unbearable for me to realize that my book will be kept on a shelf out of their reach.”<sup>45</sup> Parents objected to Holden’s vulgar language, his adult encounters, and his disobedience to authority; many religious people disapproved of the “blasphemous and irreligious” content, the disobedience to adults and family values, and the fact that Holden is not a good role model for children. Offended parents disapproved of Holden’s stance on religion and Christianity, particularly in chapter 14 where he claims:

“I’m sort of an atheist. I like Jesus and all, but I don’t care too much for most of the other stuff in the Bible. Take the Disciples, for instance. They annoyed the hell out of me, if you want to know the truth. They were all right after Jesus was dead and all, but while He was alive, they were about as much use to Him as a hole in the head. All they did was keep letting Him down. I like almost anybody in the Bible better than the Disciples. If you want to know the truth, the guy I like best in the Bible, next to Jesus, was that lunatic and all, that lived in the tombs and kept cutting himself with stones. I like him ten times as much as the Disciples, that poor bastard.”<sup>46</sup>

Parents refused to let Salinger’s supporters, and the book’s supporters, rise in *Catcher’s* defense. According to the *New York Times* article on Boron, California, an English teacher who proposed teaching the novel was asked not to speak at a parent meeting where they discussed banning the book. Jim Sommers, the head of the school board at Boron, said the students would “...get a full and complete education without that book.” Additionally, even though the book’s contents are no longer as shocking as they once were, Boron parents still felt that they “didn’t have to accept” them, “just the same as we don’t have to accept the narcotics that are in the streets and the murders that are happening all over the country.”<sup>47</sup> To the

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45. Slawenski, 344-345.

46. Salinger, 99.

47. Mydans.

parents of Boron, like parents in similar settings throughout the country, exposing their children to the “disobedience, blasphemy and vulgarity” of Holden Caulfield was equivalent to criminal activity. Like Holden Caulfield, the parents of Boron—a case study in the efforts of parents to ban the book from school curriculum—are acting as catchers in the rye, attempting to salvage the little innocence left of their children by keeping them far away from it, even though these attempts have only propelled the interest in the book and have kept it on several bestseller lists from the day it was published.

Decades after it was first published, *Catcher* retained its newsworthiness, yet for entirely different reasons than censorship and Salinger's mystique. A few events would “forever stigmatize” *Catcher* and would associate the novel's fans with emotional instability. Twenty-five-year-old security guard Mark David Chapman convinced himself that he would write the last chapter of *Catcher* in “John Lennon's blood:” Chapman considered himself the modern-day Holden Caulfield attempting to save Americans from the phoniness of Lennon, whom he felt was trying to steal the title of “modern-day Holden Caulfield” away from him.<sup>48</sup> On December 8, 1980, Chapman assassinated Lennon; when Chapman was apprehended later he was discovered reading his copy of *Catcher*, which contained his signature “Holden Caulfield” under the words, “This is my statement.”<sup>49</sup> Later at his sentencing hearing when the judge asked Chapman if he wanted to give a statement, he replied with a passage from *Catcher*, perhaps the most famous from the book: “...Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all... what I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff... that's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all.”<sup>50</sup> Only a few months later, on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1981, John Hinkley, Jr. shot President Ronald Reagan, his press secretary, and his bodyguard; when police searched his hotel room, they found ten books on his nightstand. Among them was a book on insanity pleas and *Catcher in the Rye*. The press exploited the discovery which had come less than four months after Lennon's assassination, and the book was often viewed as mentally unstable and dangerous, as were its fans. In the 1997 film *Conspiracy Theory*, even the purchase of the book from a book-

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48. Taylor, 33-36.

49. Ibid.

50. Salinger, 173.

store would fictitiously raise a red flag to the computers of an unnamed government agency.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, the memory of *Catcher* in the 1980s shifted to represent social outcasts who were capable of harm to themselves or others. Salinger never commented on this evolution, instead retreating deeper into isolation. Tinged with controversy, the memory of *Catcher* in the 1980s through 1990s was associated with disorder and decay. There was little to anchor its memory until decades later in the 2000s when physical memory sites began materializing.

### **The Role of Memory in *Catcher's* Past: Pierre Nora, Memory Sites**

The study of history is the study of past events and change over time; to study *Catcher's* history would encompass a chronological description of major events that have occurred in its sixty year lifetime. The study of memory, on the other hand, is more applicable to *Catcher's* readers and fans, as it constantly changes to fit society's need. The history of *Catcher* is far from complete, especially since the author's death in 2010 has opened new questions regarding the intellectual rights to the book and the characters. In the context of *Catcher*, as well as other persistent significant non-material cultural items, memory is far more appropriate. Even though there is no end to the book's evolution in time because there is no threat of physical deterioration, studying collective memory is to make the book's evolution more relevant and dynamic, and to incorporate its past into the present.

Pierre Nora explains that "memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting... history, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer."<sup>52</sup> Memory is the human side of history— it is organically produced in each individual to form a collective narrative that serves different functions throughout time. Nora introduces the concept of "lieux de memoire," or memory sites, to enlighten his readers that while memory is dynamic, it is not spontaneous, and certain material objects, locations, and cultural ephemera allow people to "feel a visceral attachment to that which made us what we are."<sup>53</sup> *Catcher* is certainly one of those memory sites; the mention of *Catcher*,

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51. Taylor.

52. Nora, 8.

53. Ibid., 9.

Holden, or Salinger himself is enough to conjure memories in every American who has read the book or encountered it in popular culture and current events. Nostalgia for the book's historical "feeling" guides much of the way it is remembered in collective memory. It also contains timeless topics that make it hard for critics and scholars to pinpoint an end to the book's history and memory, since it is always evolving and is still as pertinent to American literature as it was in 1951. The book's underlying themes; primarily teenage angst, childhood innocence, depression, "phoniness," urban commotion, and loneliness, ensure that *Catcher* is always relevant, and therefore the memory is constantly in flux.

The desire to turn a part of the past into a physical memory site of the present is apparent in Ursinus College's effort to capitalize on the fact that Salinger was a student there for one semester in the fall of 1938. At Ursinus College, creative writing students are able to apply for a \$30,000 scholarship (officially called the Ursinus College Creative Writing Scholarship, but unofficially referred to as "Not The Salinger Scholarship") and the chance to spend the year in the famous "Salinger room," the dorm room that Salinger occupied.<sup>54</sup> Although the room is "pretty tiny," the carpets "threadbare" and the walls peeling and yellowed, the chance to stay in a room that housed one of America's favorite authors prompts intense competition among students who wish to partake in the physical memory of Salinger and one of the college's main sources of pride. The students are not the only ones to place a heavy importance on the physical memory site, the school itself indicated they knew they owned a piece of history by owning Salinger's old room, and sought to give students something no other college could offer. As a professor explained, "...any college could offer money, nobody else could offer Salinger's room."<sup>55</sup> His dorm room has turned into a *lieu de memoire* itself, because it has a unique ability to revive old meanings and create new ones while creating new connections between person and place. Journalist Michael Winerip describes a plaque in the hallway that identifies the room, and the carpet and paint on the walls which look so old, that "it does seem possible that Salinger walked on it."<sup>56</sup> The college's

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54. Michael Winerip, "J.D. Salinger Slept Here (Just Don't Tell Anyone)," *The New York Times*, March 20, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/21/education/21winerip.html?ref=j> (accessed March 25, 2011).

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

insistence on retaining the room's original historic integrity indicates that the room itself is a cultural identifier for Ursinus. For a novel with such elusive meaning and interpretation, this physical site of memory is welcomed as one of the few places the past can be observed in the present.

### Conclusion

*Catcher's* quick canonization prepared it for long-lasting intrigue in American culture; the reactions at first were torn between celebratory and disgust. The novel introduced a new social group; American teenagers, which were yearning for their own "youth culture" to anchor themselves and give meaning to their new responsibilities in society. At first, *Catcher's* canonization and social consequences prompted people to draw conclusions about the protagonist and his creator, J. D. Salinger, but the more fans, journalists and scholars inquired, the more he pushed back. In later years, Salinger's silence regarding the novel, his intentions and the meaning of the book, the several controversies that surrounded it, and his intense desire to shut down any unofficial reproductions or adaptations, were a major factor in the evolution of its memory. Like it did among the public, it prompted many writers, filmmakers, and artists to interpret Holden Caulfield and the book in wildly creative ways, careful not to cross the delicate line of copyright infringement. The character of Holden may have finished at the last page of the novel, but many later efforts to bring him back to life have only resurrected his raw sincerity, innocence, and cynicism in different adolescent characters; characteristics that resonate with late adolescents and nostalgic adults alike. The novel is still seen today as a memoir of teenage life, a how-to manual for sixteen-year-olds on the brink of adulthood while they navigate the uncertain world.

Like other memory sites, *The Catcher in the Rye* is a symbol of American history. It links the present to the past by evoking memories among spectators. It defines a piece of American heritage and is constantly reevaluated to find new meaning with each generation. Part of *Catcher's* cross-generational appeal is its enduring ability to speak to a certain time in everyone's life, and each individual who reads it is filled with unique memories of their own experience and can relate it to the content on its pages. Halbwachs explains that in our present society "we occupy a definite position and are subject to the constraints that go with it," but when we recall memories we are given the illusion of "living in the midst of groups which do not imprison us, which impose themselves on us only so far and so

long as we accept them.”<sup>57</sup> For all of its controversies and negative reviews, *Catcher* certainly is an escape for readers because of this unique ability. The memory of the novel does not end here; it is still assigned in sophomore and junior English classes nationwide, it is still regularly contested by school boards and remains one of the most highly banned and censored books in America, and it is still used to craft characters and themes in movies, books, and art. *Catcher* is very prevalent in American consciousness, and luckily for historians and scholars of memory, it always will be.

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57. Halbwachs, 50.