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ABSTRACT

The History Division of the proceedings contains the following 18 papers: "Woman as Machine: Representation of Female Clerical Workers in Interwar Magazines" (Jane Marcellus); "'So Vivid A Crossroads': The FCC and Broadcast Allocation, 1934-1939" (James C. Foust); "Cattle Barons Vs. Ink Slingers: The Decline and Fall of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (1887-1894)" (Ross F. Collins); "The Black Press, the Black Metropolis, and the Founding of the Negro Leagues (1915-1920)" (Brian Carroll); "The International Sources of Section 12 of the Radio Act of 1927" (Rita Zajacz); "Alcoholic Dogs and Glory for All: The Launch of New Communications for National Prohibition, 1913" (Margot Opdycke Lamme); "'Neither Drunkards nor Libertines': Portraying Grover Cleveland as a Threat to the Family in Political Cartoons During the 1884 Campaign" (Harlen Makemson); "Exhortation to Action: The Writings of Amy Jacques Garvey, Journalist and Black Nationalist" (Jinx Coleman Broussard); "Keep and Use It for the Nation's War Policy: The Office of Facts and Figures and Its Uses of the Japanese-Language Press from Pearl Harbor to Mass Internment" (Takeya Mizuno); "Herbert Hoover's Philosophy of the Public Service Standard in Broadcasting" (J.M. Dempsey); "A Stunt Journalist's Last Hurrah: Nellie Bly Goes Ringside to Report on Jack Dempsey Winning the Heavyweight Boxing Championship" (Mike Sowell); "Sex and Censorship on Postwar American Television" (Bob Pondillo); "Propaganda v. Public Diplomacy: How 9/11 Gave New Life to a Cold War Debate" (David W. Guth); "Pricking the National Conscience: The Early Radio Career and Thematic Interests of Charles Kuralt" (Johanna Cleary); "Deeper Than the Fictional Model: Structural Origins of Literary Journalism in Greek Tragedy and Aristotle's 'Poetics'" (Charles Marsh); "The Pulitzer and the Klan: Horace Carter, the Pulitzer, and How a Weekly Editor Stood Up to the Klan--and Won" (Thomas C. Terry); "The Newspaper Reporter as Fiction Writer: The Tale of 'Franklin W. Dixon'" (Marilyn S. Greenwald); and "'Our People Die Well': Death-Bed Scenes in Methodist Magazines in Eighteenth-Century Britain" (Richard J. Bell). (RS)

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History

Woman as Machine: Representation of Female Clerical Workers in Interwar Magazines

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Woman as Machine: Representation of Female Clerical Workers in Interwar Magazines

Abstract

While media images of women's domestic roles have been thoroughly explored, the employed woman's media portrayal has largely been ignored. Part of a larger project on representation of employed women, this critical, qualitative paper looks at depiction of female clerical workers and telephone operators in magazines during the interwar period--an important time for employed women and expanding media influence. Using critical textual and visual analysis, plus historical research, to explore editorial copy and advertisements, it seeks to identify common images and patterns of representation, exploring how femininity and machinery were interconnected in mainstream magazines. Roland Marchand's work on interwar-era advertising is used for comparison, and the work is discussed, to a lesser degree, in terms of Barbara Welter's feminist theory of the Cult of True Womanhood.

Woman as Machine: Representation of Female Clerical Workers in Interwar Magazines

One Girl and a Rotospeed will do the work of 50 Typists
--advertisement in *The American Magazine*, 1920

Complicated nothing! Why, our own girls put in this system
--advertisement in *Forbes*, 1929¹

Between 1870 and 1930, the number of female clerical workers in the United States grew from 1,910 to almost two million.² Hired primarily as stenographers and typists in the increasingly complex, newly automated post-Civil War offices, women found that their chances for upward mobility were far fewer, as Margery W. Davies notes, than they had been for the quill-laden scribes who preceded them, such as Herman Melville's "Bartleby." By the 1930s, office work, particularly typing and stenography, had become unmistakably feminized. "Woman's place," as Davies puts it, was as inevitably at the typewriter as it was at the kitchen sink.³ Even today, it usually goes without saying that secretaries are female.

This critical, qualitative paper looks at depictions of female clerical workers and telephone operators in magazines between the two world wars. Part of a larger project on representation of employed women in the interwar era, this paper seeks to identify common images and patterns, exploring how femininity and machinery were interconnected in media images during this time. This is done with the ultimate hope of comparing, in a subsequent work, the findings here with representations of employed women in later media. How, for example, were these stereotypes recycled in depictions of Della Street, Mary Richards, Murphy Brown, Ally McBeal?

¹Advertisement for Rotospeed duplicating machine. Capitalization *sic*. *The American Magazine*. October 1920: 105. Advertisement for Acme Visible Records. *Forbes*. April 1, 1929: 1.

²In 1870, women were 2.3 percent of all clerical workers; by 1930, they made up 49.4 percent. The exact figure for 1930 is 1,986,830. See Alba M. Edwards. *Comparative Occupational Statistics for the United States, 1870 to 1940*. Part of the Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943). Cited in Margery W. Davies. *Woman's Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers, 1870-1930*. (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1982). 182-183.

³Davies, 4.

This work is important for a number of reasons. First, while media images of women's *domestic* roles have been thoroughly explored, the employed woman's media portrayal has largely been ignored. Focusing on the interwar era as a starting point for this work is appropriate, for the 1920s and 1930s were a critical time in women's history. The first decade, notable for its opulence, was marked by feminist aspirations for women's expanded workplace roles in a postwar, post-suffrage world. The second decade, in contrast, was marked by the poverty of the Great Depression as well as the controversy over married women working. Often overshadowed by the media depictions of World War II's "Rosie the Riveter," the employed woman of the interwar era is often forgotten, even by feminist historians. It is important to remember her, for as Ruth Schwartz Cowan argues, the "feminine mystique" and its ideology of compulsory domesticity is rooted in the interwar years, not the 1950s.⁴ Looking at the employed woman, not just the housewife, is important to a thorough understanding of this critical transition in the cultural history of women in twentieth-century America.

The interwar years were also an era of expanding media influence as American magazines grew in popularity and influence, thanks to the rise of advertising and mass production that made them less expensive to buy. Circulation climbed during the 1920s as marketing became more sophisticated,⁵ and magazine sales rose overall during these two decades.⁶ During the Depression, magazines presented an idealized way of life that people could still dream about, even if it was beyond their reach. Moreover, as Carolyn Kitch has said, the early decades of

⁴Ruth Schwartz Cowan. "Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night: The American Housewife Between the Wars." *Women's Studies* 3 (1976): 147-172. Reprinted in *Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement, 1920-1940*. Ed Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen. (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1987), 177-196. *Passim*.

⁵Theodore Peterson. *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 30.

⁶Mary Ellen Zuckerman. *A History of Popular Women's Magazines in the United States, 1792-1995*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 103. Zuckerman notes that despite the Depression, "By the early 1940s, 41 percent more magazines were being sold than in 1929, and the average family read about seventy issues per year, up from 1919 when families had read just under twelve issues yearly."

the twentieth century were the era when “media *became* ‘mass’ and when the initial media stereotypes of American womanhood emerged in response to the ‘first wave’ of the American women’s rights movement.”⁷ In articles, in depictions on magazine covers, and in advertisements, magazines were providing “ideological symbols transmitting broader prescriptions for personal and national identity based on spending power and personal lifestyle”⁸ for middle-class as well as upper-class readers. Women’s magazines, in particular, were providing models of femininity. As historian Joan Jacobs Brumberg has noted, the 1920s were the era when women--especially young women and adolescent girls--first looked to magazine articles and advertisements to tell them how to handle issues, such as menstruation, which had previously been handled privately.⁹ In other words, magazines expanded their role in telling people, especially women, who, and how, to *be*.

Literature Review

A number of feminist writers have explored women and office work. In *Woman's Place is at the Typewriter*, Davies argues that the feminization of office work “is historically specific rather than ordained by nature.”¹⁰ Before the Civil War, the common office worker was “an aspiring businessman, apprenticed to the petite bourgeoisie or the capitalist class.”¹¹ Davies credits a combination of patriarchy and political economy with working together to naturalize new gender roles. With the invention of the typewriter and expansion of business, offices grew more

⁷Carolyn Kitch. *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: Gender, Class, and the Emergence of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media, 1895-1930*. (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1998) iv, her italics. Kitch’s dissertation was later published as a book. See Carolyn Kitch. *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

⁸Kitch, 1998, iv-v.

⁹Joan Jacobs Brumberg. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*. (New York: Vintage, 1997), 46-47.

¹⁰Davies, 6.

¹¹Davies, 5.

automated and bureaucratic.¹² The division of office labor meant that more people were needed for routine clerical procedures. At the same time, women were finishing school in greater numbers, and many were looking for ways to make an independent living as the Victorian era drew to a close.¹³ Office work, particularly stenography and typing, offered new opportunities. “By 1930 office workers were no longer apprentice capitalists,” she writes.¹⁴ Interwar-era depictions, then, reflect the cultural assumptions in place at the end of this decades-long process of change.¹⁵

Meanwhile, a similar change had taken place at office switchboards and the telephone company. In *Hello, Central?: Gender, Technology, and Culture in the Formation of Telephone Systems*, Canadian historian Michele Martin looks at “the social conditions within which the telephone system expanded” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁶ Her chapter “The Making of the Perfect Operator” explores how patriarchy, ideas about femininity, the qualities of women’s voices, and emerging ideas about perfect telephone manners worked together to feminize the telephone operator’s job during the late nineteenth century.¹⁷ (Boys and young men had been hired earlier, but they were far too undisciplined, given to wrestling on the

¹²The typewriter, though invented earlier, came into widespread use in the 1890s. See Alice Kessler-Harris. *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*. (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1982), 148. See also Davies, 58-59.

¹³According to Davies, the female high school graduates outnumbered men beginning in 1890. Men achieving this level of education, she argues, were more likely to go on to professional positions, leaving more clerical opportunities for women. See Davies 57-58.

¹⁴Davies, 5.

¹⁵Occasionally, articles during this era still advised young men who wanted to move up in business to take clerical jobs. For example, see J. P. McEvoy. “Young Man, Get Your Toe in the Door.” *Forbes*. March 15, 1941: 18-19. “Take a few months to learn shorthand and typing,” the article advises men. “Then pick out the business you would like to run or the profession you’d like to star in and get yourself a job in it as a secretary, stenographer or typist. Now you’re on the inside and you’ve got the tools with which you can chew your way right up to the top.” The article neither mentions that a woman might choose the same strategy nor suggests that a man would be demeaned by taking a “woman’s job.”

¹⁶Michele Martin. *Hello, Central?: Gender, Technology, and Culture in the Formation of Telephone Systems*. (Montreal and Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen’s UP), 11.

¹⁷Martin, 50-81.

floor between calls and cursing at customers. In contrast, women were deemed more sensitive and patient, and their voices were clearer.)¹⁸ The process brought together new technology with ideas about morality. An operator's relationship with her equipment, Martin argues, was "dialectical," i.e. "the operator was becoming more and more of a machine, and the machine was increasingly considered 'feminine' because of the indispensable mediation of the operator, which involved moral values."¹⁹ Operators were, according to one, "women who have put their femininity to the service of the community."²⁰

In another work focusing on technology, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, German theorist Friedrich A. Kittler argues that the invention of the typewriter not only led to "the convergence of a profession, a machine, and a sex"²¹ but changed both men's and women's relationship to writing itself. Before the typewriter, men controlled all stages of the writing process, particularly that of literature. "Prior to the invention of the typewriter, all poets, secretaries, and typesetters were of the same sex. . . . One's own or dictated script was processed by male typesetters, binders, publishers, and so on. . . ."²² Writing was produced in a "closed feedback loop." Women were excluded, but in the sexual division of hand-based work, they used their hands to weave fabric.²³ Industrialization "nullified handwriting and hand-based work," desexualizing writing. "When men are deprived of the quill and women of the needle, all hands are up for grabs--as employable as employees."²⁴ The male clerks of the nineteenth century clung to their hard-won

¹⁸Martin, 55.

¹⁹Martin, 74-75.

²⁰Martin, 58.

²¹Friedrich A. Kittler. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Originally published in German as *Grammophon Film Typewriter* (Berlin: Brinkmann and Bose, 1986). Translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz. (Stanford, California: Stanford UP, 1999), 183.

²²Kittler, 184.

²³Kittler, 184-186.

²⁴Kittler, 186-187.

handwriting skills, ignoring “keystrokes, spacing, and the automatics of discrete block letters.”²⁵

Many women, deprived of the education needed for more intellectual work, discovered they could get work as “typewriters.”

The fact that ‘the female clerk could all-too-easily degrade into a mere typewriter’ made her an asset. From the working class, the middle-class, and the bourgeoisie, out of ambition, economic hardship, or the pure desire for emancipation emerged millions of secretaries. It was precisely their marginal position in the power system of script that forced women to develop their manual dexterity, which surpassed the prideful handwriting aesthetics of male secretaries in the media system.²⁶

Similarly, Lana F. Rakow argues that “As typists, stenographers, receptionists, file clerks, phone answerers, and photocopiers, women have been used to complete the communication systems of men in the public sphere. These communication systems are designed so that men can talk to men while women are part of the technological ‘equipment’ for accomplishing this.”²⁷

Method

Understanding how office work came to be women’s work, however, does not tell us how those women were portrayed in the media. The larger project explores three mainstream magazines of the era: *The American Magazine*, *Ladies’ Home Journal* and *Forbes*--a general circulation magazine, the leading women’s magazine, and a business magazine.²⁸ Of the three,

²⁵Kittler, 193.

²⁶Kittler, 194.

²⁷Lana F. Rakow. “Gendered Technology, Gendered Practice.” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 5 (1988), 57-70, p. 65.

²⁸*The American* and *Ladies’ Home Journal* were published monthly. *Forbes* was published semi-monthly. *Saturday Evening Post* might have been a likely candidate for this study, given its popularity and the fact that its circulation was slightly higher than *American*’s. (*SEP*’s circulation was 2,330,088 in 1925). However, *SEP* was, like *LHJ*, a Curtis publication, and I did not want to make this study top-heavy with the products of one company, particularly since Helen Damon-Moore has already compared these two magazines. See Helen Damon-Moore. *Magazines for the Millions: Gender and Commerce in the Ladies’ Home Journal and Saturday Evening Post*. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994.) Finally, I am choosing articles from the other magazines by going through indices for all issues. While that is manageable in a monthly or even semi-monthly, it would be unwieldy in a weekly publication.

images of female clerical workers were found primarily in *Forbes* and, to a lesser extent, *The American*. Depictions of clerical workers were far less common in *Ladies' Home Journal*, where maids and nurses were plentiful. Articles advising clerical workers on workplace behavior, as the one analyzed in this paper does, were somewhat unusual in *LHJ*.

While a number of general-circulation monthlies might have been chosen, including *Cosmopolitan* (then published for both genders), *Atlantic Monthly* or *Harper's*, *The American* was chosen because of its contents and circulation. In 1925, *The American's* circulation topped all other mainstream general-circulation monthlies, with 2,215,026 issues sold. Even though that figure dipped to 1,872,489 by 1935, *American* remained one of the most popular monthlies.²⁹ *Ladies' Home Journal* was chosen because it is widely considered to have been the prototype for modern women's magazines. Finally, *Forbes*--founded in 1917 by Bertie Charles Forbes, father of Malcolm Forbes--provides a glimpse into the way employed women were represented in a magazine intended solely for business leaders, most of them men.

Critical discourse, textual, and visual analysis, frame analysis, and historical research methods are used in this study. Discourse analysis is based on the assertion that knowledge is constructed through language. As Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak have written, "discourse is socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped; it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities and relationships between people and groups of people."³⁰ For Michel Foucault, discourse is the "rules" for what can be said. The goal of discourse analysis, then, is to expose the supposed unity of knowledge systems, showing that they come about according to certain

²⁹Circulation figures are from N.W. Ayer and Sons. *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*. (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayer and Sons, published annually). Ayer's cites ABC circulation audit figures as its source for most magazines, including those listed here. I looked at circulation figures for 1925 and 1935.

³⁰Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak. "Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse as Social Interaction*. Ed. Teun A. van Dijk. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 258. Their italics.

rules.³¹ Textual and visual analysis are related to discourse analysis, but focus more closely on the particular elements of written and visual language, exploring how these elements work together to create meaning. Frame analysis is also used. As Erving Goffman writes, people make sense of the world through “frames,” the mental process of classifying and interpreting experience.³² Robert M. Entman has noted that framing involves “selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text.”³³

All issues of each magazine were examined, with articles, fiction, and ads that feature clerical workers or telephone operators selected for study. Those discussed here are representative of the most common frames. Representation in advertisements is compared with that in editorial copy. Roland Marchand’s work on interwar-era advertising is used for comparison, and the work is discussed, to a lesser degree, in terms of Barbara Welter’s feminist theory of the Cult of True Womanhood.³⁴

Depictions of Typists, Stenographers, Secretaries

“The Eleven Masked Typewriters . . . and the Mystery of No. 11,” reads the headline of a 1936 Underwood typewriter advertisement.³⁵ In the adjacent photograph, eleven women are seated in a row, their hands at keyboards that emerge from a long black curtain, their eyes fixed on papers

³¹ Michel Foucault. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 25-33.

³² Erving Goffman. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1974), 10-11.

³³ Robert M. Entman. “Framing: Toward a Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm.” *Journal of Communication* 43 (4). Reprinted in *Defining Media Studies: Reflections on the Future of the Field*. Ed. Mark R. Levy and Michael Gurevitch. (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994), 293-300.

³⁴ Barbara Welter identifies the four virtues of the “true woman” as piety, purity, domesticity, and submission. While it may seem odd to apply a theory of nineteenth-century femininity to the 1920s and 1930s, we must remember that the so-called “long nineteenth century” ended in 1918, making the previous century culturally relevant. See Barbara Welter. “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860.” *American Quarterly* XVIII (Summer 1966): 151-174. Reprinted in *The Underside of American History: Other Readings*. Vol. 1: to 1877. Ed. Thomas Frazier. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc. 1974.

³⁵ Advertisement for Underwood Standard Typewriter. *Forbes*. September 15, 1936: 27.

that have been pinned to the curtain in front of their eyes. Two men stand over them. One is positioned at the end of the row to observe their work; the other stands behind them, taking notes on a pad of paper. According to the ad copy, these women were “typists recruited at random” to operate the “mystery typewriters” and vote on their quality. The consistent winner: Number 11, the Underwood Standard Typewriter. In a small inset photo, a middle-aged man in a suit pulls back the curtain to gaze lovingly--almost sexually--at the Underwood Standard.

In a 1924 ad for Burroughs office machines, four small photographs show groups of women in offices. Each is seated at a machine, her hands at the keyboard and her eyes on her work.

Although they are seated in groups, they do not seem to interact with one another. Nor do they interact with the reader, for they are turned away, their backs facing us so that we only see a quarter or less of their profiles. Similarly, a 1927 ad for National Cash Register shows only the backs of women hunched over their machines. Similar groups of women are shown in a 1937 ad for General Electric light bulbs, a 1937 ad for Comptometer accounting equipment, and in many other advertisements for office machines during the interwar years.³⁶

A third common depiction shows a woman alone at the typewriter or other machine. Like the women in the 1924 Burroughs ad, the lone woman is often positioned so that we see her back as she works at office machinery. In a Remington Rand ad that appeared in 1931, for example, we look down across her left shoulder to see her working at an accounting machine. Her eyes are fixed on the multiple layers of paper in the machine and her hands are fixed on the keyboard.³⁷ In several variations of International Business Machines ads, a woman stands next to a large piece of equipment, her back to us. In these ads, the copy reads simply, “A Business Machine.” Given

³⁶Advertisement for Burroughs office machinery. *The American Magazine*. October 1924: 83. Advertisement for National Cash Register Company. *Forbes*. September 1, 1927: 34. Advertisement for Edison Mazda Lamps by General Electric. *Forbes*. February 1, 1937: 7. Advertisement for Comptometer. *Forbes*. April 1, 1937: 23.

³⁷Advertisement for Remington Rand Business Service. *Forbes*. July 15, 1931: back cover.

the woman's position and the copy, it is almost as if the woman and machine are one.³⁸ Even in ads where women are not seen from the back, their eyes are averted away from the reader-- usually fixed on their work or a male boss. In a 1919 Burroughs ad, for example, a woman at a calculating machine faces the reader, but her head is bent over her work and her hands are at the keys. That she is a "machine" rather than a thinking individual is reinforced by the copy, which reads, "One girl with a Calculator can easily do the work of three or four pen-and-brain clerks."³⁹

These common motifs used in interwar advertisements for office equipment naturalize two assumptions about female office workers.⁴⁰ The first is that they are machine operatives. In fact, they seem to be "as one" with their office machines, as if the woman herself is part of the machine. Her back to us, her gaze fixed on her work or her typewriter, she has no identity as an individual--only as a "typewriter"--a word that connoted both the machine and its operator.⁴¹ The second assumption is that these women are subordinate to men, who are, just as naturally, in charge. Women are almost always seated at typewriters. Men stand, are in the foreground, are in focus while the woman is blurred, or indicate by their expression or gesture that they are in charge. Women gaze either up at the men or at their machines. If more than one man is present, the men often look at and appear to communicate with one another. Again, women almost never communicate with other women; if they do, it is about the machinery.⁴² Their depictions are very

³⁸ Advertisement for International Business Machines. *Forbes*. December 15, 1939: 27. I did find one ad in which the person pictured was male, but in most, a woman was shown. For another example of this motif, see "Electrified Accounting," an advertisement for Remington Rand Business Service on the back cover of *Forbes*, July 15, 1931.

³⁹ Advertisement for Burroughs calculators. *The American Magazine*. March 1919: 62-63. Capitalization *sic*.

⁴⁰ Since most of these ads ran in *Forbes*, we can assume that "woman-as machine" was primarily a depiction aimed at men, who were *Forbes*' intended readers and who were, presumably, in charge of final decisions on the purchase of equipment.

⁴¹ The second OED definition of "typewriter" is "One who does typewriting, esp. as a regular occupation." (A third, slang definition is "a machine gun or sub-machine-gun.") *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd edition. (1989), Online. <<http://dictionary.oed.com>> s.v. "typewriter." Accessed 19 January 2003.

⁴² See, for example, the advertisement for Underwood typewriters in *Forbes*. September 1, 1937: 3 or the advertisement for Royal typewriters in *Forbes*. October 15, 1935: 19.

consistent with Welter's theory of the Cult of True Womanhood, in which the ideal woman displays the virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.

Given women's idealized subservience, it seems only natural that men would be men and girls would be girls--a distinction not surprising, but worthy of noting for its hegemonic assumption. A 1921 ad for the Dictaphone illustrates media use of "men" and "girl."⁴³ The ad's dominant copy reads, from top to bottom, "The Man, The Girl, The Business, The Dictaphone." At the top, "The Man" is E. J. Delfriasse, company head. Below him, "The Girl" is Miss Adele L. Kane, a secretary who appears to be in her late 20s or early 30s. At the bottom of the page is a coupon for one of two free publications. For "business and professional people" there is "The Man at the Desk" while "For girls there is a special magazine, '9 to 5'--for and about ambitious girls who have made their way rapidly through the help of the Dictaphone." To be a "girl" is to be outside the class of "business and professional people." Segregated, "girls" need a "special magazine."

Some female workers were "women," however. The distinction between women and girls is vivid in a 1925 *Forbes* article, "The Woman Who Manages Girls Speaks Her Mind."⁴⁴ In this article, which discusses management techniques for handling female office workers, "girls" are both problematized and described *en masse*. The photograph illustrating the article shows three young women with bobbed hair and 1920s fashions, standing in a row in front of a blank wall. The cutline explains that these particular girls are *not* office workers, but were selected from an American Legion beauty contest. Nevertheless, they are "quite typical" of office girls "whose work creates an office managerial problem of enormous magnitude."⁴⁵

⁴³Advertisement for The Dictaphone. *Forbes*. March 5, 1921: 395.

⁴⁴Philip H. Welch. "The Woman Who Manages Girls Speaks Her Mind." *Forbes*. March 1, 1925: 687-688.

⁴⁵Welch, 1925, 687.

As described here, “girls” are not only problematic, but interchangeable. In contrast, the “woman” manager is the single capable female who emerges from a mass of girls. She is “imbued with a serious purpose in life” but “still she is full of fun.” Moreover, “she must be wholesome and have character.”⁴⁶ One such woman “knows the species ‘girl’ as few psychologists know them.” She is a successful manager because she classifies girls into types: the baby, the show-off, the sensitive, and the plodder. In this *Forbes* article, “girls” are a threat, and it is only ability to manage the threat according to the needs of upper management that one is raised to the status of “woman.” In another example, “girls” are assumed to be incompetent. An ad for Acme Visible Records, an indexing system, carries the bold headline, “Complicated nothing! Why, our own girls put in this system.”⁴⁷

Moreover, assumptions about women’s sexuality are embedded in many depictions of clerical workers. As Davies points out, the female clerical worker had a “decorative function” and was sometimes referred to as an “office wife.”⁴⁸ She cites a 1931 *Saturday Evening Post* article:

A man chooses his secretary much as he chooses his wife, and for much the same reasons. She looks good to him. He sees a slim, engaging young woman with a frank smile and readiness to approve of him. . . . The alliance--shall we say business love at first sight?--works about as marriages do.⁴⁹

This pattern is illustrated in a series of Royal typewriter ads from the late 1920s. The “Debutantes of Modern Business” series is illustrated with formal portraits of young women. Neatly coiffed, wearing pearls and little make-up, the young women appear as they might in

⁴⁶Welch, 1925, 687. Despite the headline, several “women” managers are described or interviewed for this article.

⁴⁷Advertisement for Acme Visible Records. *Forbes*. April 1, 1929: 1.

⁴⁸Davies, 153.

⁴⁹Elizabeth Hilliard Ragan. “One Secretary as per Specifications.” *Saturday Evening Post* 204 (December 12, 1931), 11. Cited in Davies, 154.

newspaper announcements of the current season's debutantes. The portraits are framed in soft pastels. "Accomplished and valuable they take their places. . ." reads the copy in one of these ads. "Yet to them, business is but a passing career. Sooner or later they will leave the office for new interests in homes of their own."⁵⁰ Work as the operator of a clerical machine is thus portrayed as the place where one formally comes out to find a husband.

Images of women as machine operatives can be better understood by comparing two of Roland Marchand's advertising tableaux from the interwar period.⁵¹ The first deals with windows; the second, with technology as objects of worship.

According to Marchand, the typical American "man-on-the-make" was one of the most stereotypical tableaux of the 1920s. Pictured in an office, he was often shown in conference with other men, surrounded by practical items such as a newspaper or an ashtray. However, Marchand argues, it was the panoramic view of the city from his upper-story window that suggested his "high status" and "that ineffable sense of domain gained from looking out and down over broad expanses."⁵² In the early 1920s, the view from the window was often a factory; by the mid-1920s, it was a cityscape of highrise buildings, Marchand says. Skyscrapers were shorthand for "modern." Excluding women from window views, he argues, helped "reinforce the notion of an exclusive male prerogative to view broad horizons, to experience a sense of control over large domains, to feel like masters of all they surveyed." The window tableau thus "reaffirmed which of the sexes was truly instrumental in making the world modern."⁵³

⁵⁰ Advertisement for Royal typewriter. *The American Magazine*. July 1928: 103.

⁵¹ Roland Marchand. *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1985), 235-284.

⁵² Marchand, 238-239.

⁵³ Marchand, 239-241, 244-245.

Advertising depictions of “woman as machine” confirm Marchand’s interpretation. Moreover, women’s placement in relation to windows either illustrates their submissive role or emphasizes the man’s importance. For example, a 1936 ad for General Electric light meters show a businessman seated by the window, which illuminates his desk. Although he faces inward, he is in charge. This is illustrated by his higher position, the fact that he is in focus, and his use of the telephone--another symbol of power, according to Marchand.⁵⁴ The woman is in the foreground, but she is positioned lower on the page than he is, and out of focus. Not only is she far from the window, but her work is placed so that sunlight does not reach it. The man controls the sunlight that reaches her. The copy advocates that he use his power by buying a product to help her. “Her desk is just nine feet from yours. . . but she is lucky if she has a fifth as much light as she needs for the accurate, competent work you expect of her,” the copy reads.⁵⁵ (That they might simply move her desk closer to the window is apparently not considered.)

A 1924 ad for Royal Typewriters shows a large, elegant window in a well-appointed office.⁵⁶ Near the window is a large desk illuminated by sunlight, apparently belonging to the well-dressed businessman just hanging up his overcoat and fedora. He looks down at his secretary, who faces away from the window. Were she not looking up at the man, she would naturally face into the interior of the office and toward her typewriter. The copy reads, “What a jewel of a secretary! But she couldn’t do it without a Royal.” Though a “jewel,” she is a mere machine “operator” who does not get to gaze out into that urban vista of opportunity. His desk does not face outward, either; however, to look out, he merely has to turn around. Were she to turn around, she would find his gaze and his authority between her and the vista of success.

⁵⁴Marchand, 238. The telephone is read by some theorists, such as Marchand, as a symbol of power, while others see it as part of what makes telephone operators (for example) “cyborgs.” The difference is that in the case of “cyborgs,” the telephone is not merely used by the person, but *becomes* part of the person.

⁵⁵Advertisement for General Electric. *Forbes*. March 1, 1936: 7.

⁵⁶Advertisement for Royal Typewriters. *The American*. March 1924: 116.

An ad that uses a window to reinforce a secretary's sexual role is a 1924 ad for the Valet Auto-Strop Razor. Here a businessman seated at a desk in the foreground.⁵⁷ He is in focus, while an out-of-focus woman gazes at him from a desk in the background. Although she is closer to the window, she faces inward, fixated on him. Not only does her gaze lead our eye to the important feature--his clean-shaven face--but we realize that she is *between* him and the window--*between* his chance to be a modern master of all he surveys. The woman (and, by implication, her sexual approval) lie between him and the ability to look out on that vista of success.

Another visual cliché is the product as liturgical icon. Although advertisers did not peddle religious goods, Marchand writes that "Advertisements were *secular* sermons, exhortations to seek fulfillment through the consumption of material goods and mundane services." They did so by identifying their products with "life enhancing moments" and "numinosity."⁵⁸ One of the most common iconic images, Marchand writes, was the refrigerator. Clean and pure, the refrigerator was a modern cornucopia around which women or couples (never men alone) gathered to admire it. "Sometimes the expressions on the faces of the women suggested that they had glimpsed through the open refrigerator door a secular revelation as spellbinding as any religious vision," Marchand writes. Ads for other home appliances inspired similar worship. Of the "annunciation" of the model 725 Hoover vacuum cleaner, Marchand writes, "Few representations of the Christ child ever depicted a more rapt or focused attention to the assembled worshippers. The new Hoover lacked only a nimbus to complete the divine aura."⁵⁹

Just as refrigerators and vacuum cleaners were the supposed objects of worship for the woman at home, so the typewriter was depicted as the icon of the employed woman. This is no more

⁵⁷ Advertisement for Valet Auto-Strop Razor. *The American*. October 1924: 123.

⁵⁸ Marchand, 264-265.

⁵⁹ Marchand, 272.

clear than in a 1935 Underwood advertisement in which four women gather in a circle to gaze adoringly at the new Underwood Special, with its clean-cut letters, cushioned typing to reduce shock, and smooth keys to preserve a manicure. The women's dresses feature high-cut necklines and heavy collars. If not blatantly suggestive of choir robes, their clothes are, at least, chaste enough for church. The copy directs our attention to the adoration taking place: "Girls," said the Head Steno, "this is a TYPEWRITER."⁶⁰ Similarly, a 1924 Remington typewriter ad shows a crowd gathered to adore a woman typing with the new Remington Quiet 12. The crowd is mostly women, who smile as lovingly at the new wonder as they might at a newborn child.⁶¹

One of the most consistent and intriguing characteristics of ads portraying typists is the focus on their backs. In ad after ad, women are turned away from the reader, their backs or only a portion of their profiles showing. In most, the women are seated, and the view is often that of a person standing. This gives the reader the perspective of a manager looking down at them as they work at their machines.⁶² In a 1919 ad for the Sundstrand Adding Machine, for example, the viewer sees nothing of the woman's face but all of the top and back of her head, including the part in her hair. Also common is the view seen in, for example, a 1928 ad for the Stenotype shorthand machine.⁶³ Here, we see the woman's profile as she works at the machine and most of

⁶⁰ Advertisement for Underwood typewriters. *Forbes*. March 15, 1935: 23. Emphasis in original.

⁶¹ Advertisement for Remington Quiet 12 typewriter. *Forbes*. October 1, 1924: 7. Men also admire typewriters, but their focus is more practical than iconographic. In a 1921 Royal ad, two men stand over a seated typist, examining some papers. The copy reads, "to Judge Typewriters, 'Compare the Work'". See *The American*. March 21, 1921: 122. A 1935 Underwood ad shows two men looking at each other knowingly. "I want UNDERWOODS..because they can Take It!" the copy reads. See *Forbes*. September 15, 1935: 21. Emphasis in original. Ellipses *sic*.

⁶² For examples, see advertisement for The National Cash Register Company. *Forbes*. September 1, 1927: 34-35; advertisement for Remington typewriters. *The American Magazine*. March 1927: 129; advertisement for Underwood Standard Typewriter. *Forbes*. September 15, 1936: 27.

⁶³ Advertisement for the Sundstrand Adding Machine. *The American Magazine*. March 1919: 146.

her back.⁶⁴ In the series of IBM ads mentioned earlier, the woman standing at a large office machine has her back almost completely to the reader.⁶⁵

Showing people from the back, of course, takes away a commonly understood signifier of human individuality—the face. It is depersonalizing. Showing groups of women from the back suggests that women, lacking individuality, are interchangeable—mere parts in the machinery of the office. It also reflects management practices of the time, designed to ensure control. Davies writes that according to these practices, desks were placed back to back so that clerical workers could not see or talk to one another. This destroyed “cliques,” according to management expert Floyd W. Parsons, who advised this arrangement. “Cliques destroy team-work and waste time gossiping. Clannish workers should be separated and placed in different parts of the office or in different departments.”⁶⁶ Another arrangement not only separated women but placed them with their backs to the door; this way, visitors could not interact with the women. Supervisors’ desks were behind the women, so that they might be watched without knowing it.⁶⁷

The depictions of female clerical workers as machines are most common in *Forbes*, a magazine aimed for men. Depictions intended primarily for female readers (i.e. in *LHJ*) relied less on the “machine” role. Two articles that appeared within a month of each other in 1920 vividly illustrate the contrast in discourses used in the way clerical work was depicted for managers and for the workers themselves. Juxtaposing the two shows two very different ways of

⁶⁴Advertisement for the Stenotype shorthand machine. *The American Magazine*. July 1928: 105.

⁶⁵Variations of this ad appeared frequently in *Forbes*. See, for example, December 15, 1939: 27.

⁶⁶Floyd W. Parsons. “Ways to Cut Business Costs.” *World’s Work* 45 (1923): 395, cited in Davies, 123. For another view of wasting time, it is interesting to compare a 1922 article in *The American Magazine* titled “Things I Wish My Employer Would Not Do.” Written anonymously “By a Private Secretary,” this article includes notes from an office conference in which men discuss golf, cigars, Prohibition and tell jokes before getting to the business at hand. “I do not mean to insinuate that all time spent in business conferences is wasted. But my observation has been that most conferences could be concluded in about one third of the time if everybody went immediately to work the minutes the door was closed.” (The writer also notes that she is tired of being called “little girl” and would like to be treated “just a little bit more like a business partner.”) See *The American Magazine*. September 1922: 28-19 and 112.

⁶⁷Davies, 123.

understanding their identity, status, and options in the office. The articles are Helen Ormsbee's "A Stenographer Should Know," from *LHJ*, and "Pays to Test Your Stenographer," by Sherwin Cody in *Forbes*.⁶⁸ Ormsbee addresses the stenographer directly ("If you are a stenographer") and compares the "profession" of stenographer to architecture. Both the good architect and the good stenographer want to go beyond the basic skills that form the "substructure" of their respective professions. To do so, a stenographer must bring to work not only accurate typing and spelling skills, but imagination, general knowledge and understanding of the business. This can be obtained by reading everything from news to literature, and by reviewing one's school history notes to remember "Benjamin Franklin, Roger Williams, Peter Stuyvesant, Davy Crockett, John Smith, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Washington and Lincoln"

The tone of this article is upbeat and encouraging. The diction is fairly high, with words like "substructure," suggesting that the author and *LHJ* editors considered female readers intelligent. Allusions to historical and literary figures (Stowe and Robert Louis Stevenson) and architecture help put stenography in a discursive field shared by the liberal arts and prestigious professions. The stenographer is assured that her job offers high status and that she will be valued for her intelligence and initiative. For example, the article tells women that if an employer says, "By the way, Miss Jones, I want to get this letter out to the men who are going to serve on the committee for what-you-may-call-it," then Miss Jones will do well to know from her newspaper reading that "what-you-may-call-it" means a particular group, who the committee members are, and how to write the letter on her own. The reward for hard work and initiative is not only a better job, the article assures women, but "the growth of intelligence and character." Although this article

⁶⁸Helen Ormsbee. "A Stenographer Should Know." *Ladies' Home Journal* (April 1920), 145. Sherwin Cody. "Pays to Test Your Stenographer." *Forbes* (May 29, 1920), 137-138. Stuart Ewen notes that Sherwin Cody operated a "School of English" that advertised for students by appealing to their fear of social ostracism if they used language improperly. See Stuart Ewen *Captains of Consciousness*. 1976 (New York: Basic Books, 2001) 43-44

doe not question that stenographers are female, bosses are male, and that a woman's job is to quietly fill in for a man's shortcomings while he gets higher pay and status, it nevertheless provides a relatively positive image of the stenographer's job. The illustration, showing a mature woman seated at a desk, writing on a pad and looking as if she is thinking, is consistent with the article's characterization of this "profession." The woman is flanked by smaller pictures showing old books and the "midnight oil" that she will go home and burn, further helping to put stenography in a discursive field with history and literature.

Cody also addresses the reader in second person (you). However, the reader here is the male employer. The focus is on how to evaluate the "girl" that he hires as a stenographer or typist using a speed and accuracy test developed by the Underwood Typewriter Company. Before getting to the Underwood test, however, Cody lists basic characteristics that a "girl" should have; these do not include historical knowledge or self-reliance. Instead, the criteria have to do with the mechanics of the job, such as "Is she accurate in typing (striking the letters right) so that her work looks clean and neat?" Speed is emphasized: "Can she write shorthand as fast as you can dictate?" and "Is she very slow, or can she get a lot of work done in a day?" The tone is cynical: "Can she get the letter out so it will be fit to mail?" and "Does she know anything at all about paragraphing?" The implication seems to be that you can't expect much from "girls."

But the criteria list is not all about job skills. The female clerical worker was not just a machine; she was a sexual machine. It is very clear in this article that sexuality was part of competence in at least some depictions of female clerical workers. "Is she a pleasant-looking girl?" Cody would have employers ask. "Has she a cheerful disposition?" Will she be "faithful and loyal?" And finally, "Is she morally of the kind you wish to have about?"--although he is careful not to specify what kind that is. Morals can be decided simply by looking at the girl,

Cody says. However, he warns, "You can't afford in these days to let an efficient-looking girl go because she is not good-looking; ability should offset looks to a certain extent."⁶⁹

The rest of the article describes the Underwood test and its application. The discourse here is mechanical and scientific. It discusses "strokes" and "uniform speed measurement" and "secret parallel tests" given to some women. Speed is emphasized a great deal; content and knowledge are not mentioned at all. It does not seem to matter here if the woman has read Harriet Beecher Stowe or the morning paper. The "girl" is valued for her ability to function as a machine-- particularly if she has the "right" morals, loyalty, and good looks.

In short, the dominant image of the female clerical worker during this period was that of a sexualized machine. Her hands at the keyboard, her eyes fixed either on her typing or her boss, she was physically bound up in a system that incorporated and nullified her individuality and her femininity, recasting her as an interchangeable, though sexual, female office part.

Depictions of Telephone Operators

The telephone operator deserves special consideration in a discussion of "woman as machine," for perhaps even more than the typist, she and her equipment were as one. "The telephone operator antedates the cyborg, a plastically gendered creature formed of electrical wiring and the organic body," writes John Durham Peters.⁷⁰ As one instructor in an early training school for operators put it, "The operator must now be made as nearly as possible a paragon of perfection, a kind of human machine, the exponent of speed and courtesy; a creature spirited enough to move like chain lightning, and with perfect accuracy; docile enough to deny herself the sweet privilege of the last word."⁷¹ Lana Rakow points out that telephone operators were depicted as "All

⁶⁹Cody 137.

⁷⁰John Durham Peters. *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 196.

⁷¹Cited in Martin., 73, and in Peters, 196.

American Girls.” Young, single, and attractive, such women “may have provided an important bridge in the increasing gap between public and private spheres” during industrialization.⁷²

These young women were to be both innocent and efficient, desirable yet unattainable, businesslike but adept at soothing the harried and demanding captain of industry of the public sphere as well as the stereotypically portrayed petty and demanding matron of the private sphere.⁷³

In descriptions overtly reminiscent of the Cult of True Womanhood, Martin writes in *Hello, Central?* that, “Apparently, . . . the woman’s upbringing in Victorian society gave her all the necessary qualities to be a perfect operator ‘gifted’ with ‘courtesy,’ ‘patience,’ and ‘skillful hands.’ In addition, she possessed a ‘good voice,’ and a ‘quick ear,’ and was ‘alert,’ ‘active,’ ‘even-tempered,’ ‘adaptable,’ and ‘amenable.’”⁷⁴ Over time, Martin writes, the operator herself became “more and more of a machine, and the machine was increasingly considered ‘feminine’ because of the indispensable mediation of the operator, which involved moral values.”⁷⁵ This feminine machine was rigidly supervised, with strict rules and constant surveillance by managers patrolling the switchboard room and listening in, at any time, to the her work. This military-like discipline, Martin writes, was “highly mechanized and scientifically managed” by 1920.⁷⁶

The operators pictured in ads for the Bell System of American Telephone and Telegraph during the interwar era are consistent with these descriptions, though in ways that change over the course of the period. All are pictured with headsets and mouthpieces, making their “cyborg” qualities apparent. In early interwar ads, the operator’s skill is emphasized. A 1919 ad draws on

⁷²Lana F. Rakow. “Women and the Telephone: The Gendering of a Communications Technology.” *Technology and Women’s Voices: Keeping in Touch*. Ed. Cheri Kramarae. (New York and London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), 213

⁷³Rakow, 214.

⁷⁴Martin, 58. She cites Bell Telephone archival material.

⁷⁵Martin, 74.

⁷⁶Martin 72.

patriotic discourse to describe the female operator's war effort. "Applied Patriotism" is the headline for this ad, and the copy reads, "Woman has made herself indispensable to the Nation's war activities. . . . The telephone operator takes her place in the front ranks of our 'national army' of women."⁷⁷ A 1920 ad shows a woman with a headset standing in front of a map, connecting the East and West coasts with telephone wires.⁷⁸ A 1923 ad whose bold headline reads, "Crossroads of Converation" tells of the special "information operators" who are "selected for their task because of quickness and accuracy, courtesy and intelligence."⁷⁹ Another ad is headlined "At Your Service." It tells of the "courteous girl at the switchboard" who is "[p]residing day and night at the busy intersections of speech. . . ." The ad goes on, ". . . little is known of the switchboard girl--of her training and supervision under careful teachers, and of her swift and skillful work."⁸⁰

During the 1930s, operators were depicted in a way that appeared more personal. "Friend and Neighbor," the operator is called in a 1933 ad, which shows a single operator sitting inside a window in small-town America. "In the truest sense, she is both friend and neighbor," the copy reads. "Ties of kinship and association bind her to those whose voices come across the wires."⁸¹ By 1939 and 1940, operators are comely visions of cyborg virtue. In a 1940 ad, a young woman in operator's headgear emerges from a mist of clouds and stars to look benevolently over the United States, which she unites with outstretched arms like a cyborg fairy godmother.⁸² An ad in November 1941 prefigures the impending war and echoes the 1919 ad. "Devotion to Duty is a

⁷⁷ Advertisement for American Telephone and Telegraph. *The American Magazine*. January 1919: 99.

⁷⁸ Advertisement for American Telephone and Telegraph. *Forbes*. August 7, 1920: 308.

⁷⁹ Advertisement for American Telephone and Telegraph. *Forbes*. November 10, 1923: 181.

⁸⁰ Advertisement for American Telephone and Telegraph. *Forbes*. April 1, 1925: 806.

⁸¹ Advertisement for American Telephone and Telegraph. *The American Magazine*. September 1933: 3.

⁸² Advertisement for American Telephone and Telegraph. *Forbes*. January 15, 1940: 7. Her expression is very reminiscent of Glenda the Good Witch in *The Wizard of Oz*, which had come out the year before.

Telephone Tradition,” reads the bold copy. This ad pictures a softly focused young woman in a headset and mouthpiece looking directly at the reader. The copy continues: “High morale, devotion to duty, ingenuity in meeting new circumstances and the ability and the will to work with each other and with the public are traditional characteristics of telephone employees.” The traits are considered important in “[t]imes like these.”⁸³

In articles and short stories in which they are the main subject, telephone operators (unlike typists) are at the center of power. Their machinery connects and disconnects people, and they can listen in on conversations (though they must do so discreetly). These powers enhance their feminine intuition and working-class plainspokenness. In “The Girl at the Switchboard,” a short story the February 1920 *American*, the first-person narrator is an operator in the “Fitz-Harlton” Hotel. “I’ve only been a year at the Fitz-Harlton, but in that time I’ve told a million people that the wires was busy-- from well-to-do millionaires which tried to kid me, to gents’ furnishin’ clerks which slipped me a quarter tip.”⁸⁴ Similarly, the anonymous first-person narrator in a 1923 non-fiction article “How the Hotel Telephone Girl Sizes You Up,” says: “I’ve been a telephone operator for ten years in New York hotels; and we don’t learn much literary style at the switchboard. But believe *me*, that’s all we don’t learn! What I don’t know about you people isn’t worth knowing.”⁸⁵ However, a slightly more sophisticated operator is found in a 1934 short story from *The American*, “Person-to-Person.” Milicent Baker has “everything that went with a tower suite, including the manner, the wide-apart eyes, the long, slim legs, and just the right way of

⁸³Ad for American Telephone and Telegraph. *Forbes*. November 1, 1941: 6.

⁸⁴H.C. Witwer. “The Girl at the Switchboard.” *The American Magazine*. February 1920: 44-47, 176, 179, 182, 184.

⁸⁵“How the Hotel Telephone Girl Sizes You Up.” *The American Magazine*. August 1923: 23, 70, 72.

saying, 'No, thank you.'"⁸⁶ The implication is that she is too cosmopolitan for a working-class job; however, night after night, she joins the others, "in deft manipulation of the controls."⁸⁷

In each of the short stories, the telephone operator discreetly listens in on conversations and uses her feminine insights to intervene between a man at the hotel and his angry employer. She then marries the man whose career she has saved, assuring his place as an up-and-coming businessman. Class plays a role in the love stories. The narrator in "The Girl at the Switchboard" intervenes for DuKane Vandergrift when she hears what his boss, Phineas Smith, says to him. "'Hmph!' I says. 'If my name was Vandergrift, I'd never work for no man named *Smith*, I'll tell the world.'"⁸⁸ In "Person to Person," sophisticate Milicent Baker helps a young man from Nebraska sell his idea for marketing soda ash to a wealthy industrial magnate in the penthouse.

In the non-fiction "How the Hotel Telephone Girl Sizes You Up," the anonymous author tells how operators categorize clients. "A telephone operator divides all you people into four classes: those that are cranky, those that are nice, those we can understand when they talk over the 'phone, and those we can't." City people are crankier than country people, she says, and women are crankier than men. "Not the business women, though! They're more quiet and reasonable than the man."⁸⁹ She dislikes helpless people, who don't know how to place a call. She also dislikes some men: "I wish I had a dollar for every man that has told me he was *lonesome*. . . . There's a flash from some room. I plug in and a voice begins, 'Say! I'm lonesome. Won't you take pity on a fellow and go have a nice little dinner?' I've heard that so many times that I know it by heart. . . . So I tell Mr. Lonesome to run along and have a nice little dinner by himself."⁹⁰

⁸⁶Stanley Paul. "Person to Person." *The American Magazine*. May 1934: 24-26 and 182-183.

⁸⁷Paul, 24.

⁸⁸Witwer, 45.

⁸⁹"How the Hotel Telephone Girl Sizes You Up," 23.

⁹⁰"How the Hotel Telephone Girl Sizes You Up," 70.

Similarly, the power to connect (and the discretion not to) is at the center of a 1935 “Interesting People” profile in *The American*. The article, “Number, Please?” profiles a White House operator. “She could write American history before it happens. But doesn’t. Louise Hackmeister, chief of the White House telephone switchboard, can listen in on state secrets any time she pleases. Holds job by keeping her mouth shut,” the copy reads. She can “locate anybody anywhere. . . . In a few minutes she finds them, puts them on the Presidential wire.”⁹¹

Discussion

In “Talking (Fairly) About the World--A Reprise on Journalistic Language,” Jean Ward reviews late twentieth-century efforts to make public language more fair to women and minorities.⁹² “Institutions and individuals were told: the way you talk and write insults, demeans and renders invisible most of the adults in the United States.”⁹³ Despite initial defensiveness, changes followed, reducing the amount of sexist and racist language in media. Nevertheless, she argues, women and minorities remained, in 1993 (and, I would argue, today), “outsiders” whose “existence can be ignored when public issues are framed and discourse arranged.”⁹⁴ One way we might view interwar-era representation, then, is as a study of the time when it was deemed perfectly natural for women and minorities to be outsiders. In fact, minority women were not represented at all in depictions of clerical workers.⁹⁵

⁹¹“Number, Please?” *The American Magazine*. September 1935: 40

⁹²Jean Ward. “Talking (Fairly) About the World: A Reprise on Journalistic Language.” *Media Studies Journal* 7 (Winter-Spring 1993), 183-196.

⁹³Ward, 183.

⁹⁴Ward, 187.

⁹⁵The larger project of which this paper is a part examines African American women in depictions of maids, the only job in which they were represented in these magazines. Clerical work accounted for only one percent of African American women’s work in 1930, compared with more than one-third of white women’s. See Teresa L. Amott and Julie A. Matthaei. *Race and Gender at Work: A Multicultural Economic History of Women in the United States*. (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 167.

In general, the discourses used to construct female clerical workers during this period were those concerned primarily with looks and subservience to men. Discourses usually concerned with domesticity were transferred into the workplace. Women were judged for their looks, their ability to function as “office wives” and, eventually, to give up their jobs to become actual wives. Within these general discourses, variations existed, as evidenced by the difference in “Pays to Test Your Stenographer” from *Forbes* and “A Stenographer Should Know” in *Ladies’ Home Journal*. While the *LHJ* article constructs the clerical worker in a discourse that blends the value of higher learning with practical skill, the *Forbes* article sees her as a comely, though probably incompetent, part of office machinery. Her lack of education is taken for granted, but she is valued for her body—including not only the shape of her figure but the speed of her fingers.

Absent were discourses about developing women’s individual talents, except when they fit the role of “machine” at work in the functionalist discourse of increasingly complex offices. In an advertisement showing women from the back, their individual identities were literally erased. Operators, similarly, were valued for supposedly innate feminine traits that made them sympathetic communicators.

In short, during the interwar era when stereotypes of employed women were still in the process of being established, clerical workers and telephone operators were portrayed as feminine machines. Because femininity and machinery had become so interconnected, it may be difficult, even now, for some readers *not* to think of “the operator” or “the secretary” as female. While the operator had the power to connect people, thanks to her connection with technology, the secretary’s power was far more limited. The idealized secretary represented the perfect picture of the Cult of True Womanhood, brought forward into the twentieth century. Her piety was directed toward her typewriter or her male boss; her purity (or lack thereof) was a requisite job

skill; her domestic skills were adapted to the role of “office wife,” and her submissiveness was apparent in her unquestioning deference. The next question to ask is: Have these depictions been perpetuated in media representation of employed women since that time, and are they still apparent in media images of employed women today?

History

**"SO VIVID A CROSSROADS":
THE FCC AND BROADCAST ALLOCATION, 1934-1939**

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**"SO VIVID A CROSSROADS":
THE FCC AND BROADCAST ALLOCATION, 1934-1939**

"In my twenty-three years of active association with almost every phase of communications," Federal Communications Commission Chief Engineer T. A. M. Craven said, "I have never witnessed so vivid a crossroads, nor have I known of such an opportunity for cooperative, constructive and intelligent planning as is before us."¹

The date was June 15, 1936, and the crossroads Craven spoke of was the first significant examination of the radio allocation structure since the advent of radio regulation in the 1920s. The existing allocation structure, which granted government permission to broadcast using specific frequencies, power, and hours of operation, had developed in fits and starts over the past decade. It was the product not of comprehensive planning but of piecemeal actions to establish order from the chaos that had resulted from broadcasting's exponential growth during the 1920s.² Now, however, the Commission was undertaking a comprehensive examination of the broadcast allocation structure that had the potential to dramatically change the broadcast band.

As this study shows, however, the FCC did not take advantage of this opportunity to re-make the broadcasting

system. Instead, it opted for a course that served merely to accommodate the existing commercial stations—especially the most powerful ones—while making few substantive changes in the overall allocation plan. Arguments from educational and other non-commercial interests who wanted to make radio into something other than a purely market-driven, advertiser-supported system either were ignored or not accepted in the first place.

McChesney has thoroughly chronicled the arguments and activities of educational and non-commercial interests during the Congressional debate over legislation to replace the Radio Act of 1927. Commercial interests, McChesney argues, were able systematically to exclude the non-commercial interests from the debate over how broadcasting should be regulated. “[T]he commercial broadcasters and their allies,” he noted, “continually postponed, eliminated, or defused any public examination of the American broadcasting system or any discussion of alternative models.”³ As a result, the legislation that finally emerged, the Communications Act of 1934, merely cemented in place the *status quo* commercial broadcasting structure, ending, McChesney notes, “whatever opportunity for legitimate opposition to commercial broadcasting had existed.” The commercial broadcasting system was now “entrenched economically, politically, and ideologically.”⁴

This study begins to look at what happened next. It examines the FCC's evaluation of the broadcast allocation structure conducted under Docket 4063 from 1934 to 1939. Using published FCC records and primary FCC documents from the National Archives, it studies specifically the contributions of the FCC, commercial interest groups, and non-commercial interest groups to the debate. In broad terms, the study addresses two major themes: 1) how the commercial interests in the industry began to fracture into individual groups, each arguing for policies advantageous to them while at the same time validating radio's commercial structure; and 2) how non-commercial interests were excluded from substantive participation in these policy arguments.

Examining the relationships between the FCC and various interest groups during this time period is especially valuable because of the dearth of existing research on the topic. Although researchers, perhaps spurred by McChesney's work, have recently focused critical attention on the development of policy in the 1920s and early 1930s,⁵ few have examined the role of commercial interest groups in the years immediately following passage of the Communications Act of 1934. Mackey's overview of the development of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), Nord's examination of educational interest groups in the policymaking debate, Foust's work on clear channel stations, and

Krasnow, Longley and Terry's overview of the communications regulatory process concentrate on interest group activities in later decades.⁶ Historical surveys, such as those by Barnouw and Sterling and Kittross, acknowledge the role of commercial interests, but examine their function and activities only anecdotally.⁷ As this study shows, the nearly immediate fracturing of the commercial industry into competing interest groups, and the subsequent exclusion of participation by non-commercial interests during the mid- late-1930s set the tone for communications policy debate that continues to this day.

Preparing for the Allocation Study

In July 1936, the FCC opened Docket 4063, announcing that it would hold a series of hearings on broadcast allocation that October. The announcement noted that the evidence gathered at the hearings would help the Commission decide what changes—if any—to make in existing regulations and determine “what principles should guide the Commission” in allocation matters.⁸ After a series of hearings held earlier that summer, the FCC had decided not to make any drastic changes in the overall radio allocation plan, which meant that the standard broadcast band would remain where it was: 500 to 1500 kHz. Docket 4063, then, would address potential changes within that band of frequencies.

From the outset, however, the Commission set expectations low and signaled that any changes that were made would be done with the approval of the commercial industry. The hearing notice pointed out that the Commission intended to proceed on the basis of "evolution, experimentation, and voluntary action" rather than costly or enforced actions. Indeed, the Commission seemed more intent on changing the regulations to fit the structure of the broadcast band, rather than vice-versa. "It is believed that one of the outcomes of the October 5th hearing will be to modify the regulations so that they will conform to the actual practice of today," the Commission noted. Finally, the Commission said it would "pursue the policy of cooperation with the industry in solving the basic radio problems confronting the nation."⁹ Craven told *Broadcasting* magazine that the overall goal of the hearings was to permit the industry "to advance its views before any changes are made."¹⁰

The allocation plan currently in place had been established by the Federal Radio Commission in 1928. The FRC's General Order 40 had created 96 "channels" in the broadcast band, dividing them among clear channel, regional, and local stations. At that time, too, regulators had set out to create a minimum of upheaval in the allocation structure that had already developed throughout radio broadcasting's chaotic 1920s. In 1928, the FCC's chief engineer pointed out that the disadvantage of

General Order 40's allocation scheme was that it was "fortuitous rather than logical or planned," noting that the Commission could have created a more efficient framework had it started from scratch.¹¹ The 1928 allocation plan had been subject to dispute from the very beginning, as stations fought amongst themselves over interference, power, and hours of operation. The most visible rift involved clear channel stations, which were given frequencies cleared of all other stations during nighttime hours. Disputes between clear channel stations and other classes of stations, especially those that were restricted to daytime-only operation, continued into the 1980s.¹²

As a prelude to Docket 4063, the Commission in late 1934 proposed a postcard survey to gauge how many rural listeners relied on various classes of stations. Efforts of educational groups to use the survey to actually discern listeners' attitudes about radio programming, however, fell upon deaf ears. Tracy Tyler of the National Committee on Education by Radio (NCER) proposed that the survey ask a series of questions:

Do rural listeners like advertising? Do they realize that a substantial percentage of radio advertising has been proven to be untruthful, misleading, and fraudulent? Do they realize that our government does not eliminate false ads before they are broadcast? What do these rural listeners want? What are they most afraid of: the censorship of their duly selected representatives or of the privately appointed representatives of selfish commercial interests?

The Commission rejected Tyler's questions, arguing that "it is not considered well to include any questions on the matter of programs." Instead, the survey merely asked respondents whether they owned a radio, how old it was, and the call letters of their four most-listened-to stations.¹³

At the time, the FCC was being flooded with letters from listeners opposing educational interests' efforts to change the commercial system of broadcasting. "We think radio is pretty good just as it is and don't need any dictating by any so-called educators," a typical letter read. Another sought to "protest most vigorously against any interference with broadcasting by the educators who would like to give us what they think we need rather than what we want."¹⁴ These letters were no doubt prompted by the commercial interests' promotional efforts, which were designed, as McChesney points out, "to keep most Americans ignorant or confused about the communications policy matters then under discussion."¹⁵

As the Docket 4063 hearings approached, the clear channel issue was but one of several issues confronting an increasingly fractured commercial broadcast industry. In previewing the July 1936 NAB Convention, *Broadcasting* magazine noted that in the past year "more feeling and bitterness has been engendered in broadcasting ranks than at any time since organized broadcasting

began."¹⁶ The upcoming allocation hearings prompted some of these divisions, as classes of stations began to band together to fight for improved allocations, but other divisions had emerged between networks and affiliates over copyright issues, between network affiliates and independent stations, and between various classes of stations over national spot advertising. A full-page cartoon in the *Broadcasting* magazine's July 1, 1936, issue playfully illustrated several of these conflicts (see figure 1).

Interestingly, the various battles led to some odd alliances among competing commercial groups. Powel Crosley, for example, owner of clear channel station WLW in Cincinnati, formed the short-lived Associated Independent Radio Stations (AIRS) in early 1936 to oppose the networks on the copyright issue. Among AIR's most enthusiastic supporters was John Shepard III, the owner of several regional stations. Shepard, however, also had spearheaded formation of the National Association of Regional Broadcast Stations (NARBS), which bitterly opposed the Clear Channel Group (CCG) and Clear Channel Broadcasting Service (CCBS) for the next 20 years. Crosley and Shepard, then, were allies on copyright but opponents on clear channels. In an industry rapidly breaking into competing sub-groups, such conflicting alliances were becoming increasingly common.¹⁷



Figure 1

The fracturing commercial broadcast industry also attracted attention in the popular press. The upcoming Docket 4063 hearings became the focus of this attention as *Business Week* noted that the radio industry was "standing by for a revolution."¹⁸ Still, the same magazine predicted that the FCC would have to be cautious in considering any significant changes to the broadcast structure:

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[The conflicting industry factions] must certainly have reminded [the Commission] sharply of the dynamite involved in upsetting the delicate balances of power and of property rights built up around the assignments which they and their predecessors in the old Federal Radio Commission have dispensed over a period of years.¹⁹

While the commercial industry at this point had little reason to fear a broad restructuring of the broadcasting system, individual interest groups did need to be concerned that they would be outmaneuvered by other commercial interest groups. The Commission's request for "guiding principles" in allocation matters signaled that allocation might become something more than merely a technical issue. In the past, engineering had essentially driven the allocation system; clear channel stations, for example, received permission to use higher power as the technology to produce higher-power transmitters developed. Now, the Commission was asking for data on the social and economic effects of allocation. Louis Caldwell, the former Federal Radio Commission chief counsel who now represented the clear channel radio stations, cautioned his clients that the Docket 4063 hearings would likely be different from previous hearings:

From information coming to us from various sources, it is becoming increasingly obvious that economic and social issues are going to prove just as important at

the October 5th hearing as technical issues and perhaps more important.²⁰

Other groups were likely receiving similar signals from the FCC. *Broadcasting* magazine estimated that the various industry groups spent a combined \$150,000 preparing testimony and predicted a "ten day siege" on the FCC's offices.²¹

The hearings, held over a 13-day period, would represent a microcosm of the conflicting points of view of various factions of the industry. "Practically every group of broadcast stations having a particular problem that is separate and distinct from the problems facing the industry as a whole was represented," the Commission later noted. More than forty witnesses presented testimony, producing a transcript of more than 1,700 pages and contributing a veritable mountain of accompanying exhibits and other information.²² Notably absent from the list of groups presenting testimony was the NAB, which had initially committed to presenting testimony, but pulled out only days before the hearings began. The NAB, which had been so involved in debates over radio's commercial structure in the early 1930s, now felt that it was not in its best interests to get involved in the industry's internecine warfare.²³

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Docket 4063 Hearings

From nearly the moment the hearings began, the FCC made it clear that its announced desire for "guiding principles" would include only such principles that could be established within the existing commercial framework. It also became clear that engineering considerations had not taken a backseat to social and economic concerns. Chairman E. O. Sykes brought the hearings to order and quickly proscribed educational and other non-commercial interests by noting that "requests for allocation of broadcast facilities to particular groups or organizations will not be considered." He then turned it over to Craven, who asserted the primacy of technical principles in making allocation decisions. "Technical progress should be inevitable and cannot be stopped by artificial measures engendered by fear of the results," he said. "To attempt to retard progress by artificial means is unsound and leads only to confusion." Summarizing his view of the overall allocation system, Craven said, "I have faith in the engineers of the country, and in his [sic] desire to render, broadly speaking, a service." Craven not only set the tone for the hearings by being the first to testify, he also was permitted to cross-examine all witnesses.²⁴

A series of witnesses representing educational interests followed Craven. The chief engineer's dismissive questioning of

these witnesses and their placement in a group near the beginning of the hearing gave the impression that the Commission wanted to get them out of the way so it could proceed to more substantive concerns. Still, the Commissioners and Craven listened as several representatives of educational groups and non-commercial stations continued their critique of the commercial broadcast structure.

Howard Evans of the NCER began by noting that the Commission's hearing announcement "seemed to imply that the question of re-allocation involves problems of public policy as well as technical and engineering problems" and that it "suggests a totally different standard than the Commission has used hitherto in making decisions about allocation." But, Evans said, the Commission was "not aware of the full implication of that statement." Instead, the Commission continued to insist on merely tinkering with an allocation system that was based too much on the testimony of engineers and had too little regard for the needs of listeners. "I am not suggesting that the question of social use can be divorced from engineering," Evans said. "[But] in the economic practices of the industry and in the social uses to which it has been put, the Commission has allowed inequality and unfairness to develop to an extent which undermines the whole system of American broadcasting." He said

that the commercial broadcast structure was not providing educational programming that listeners needed:

[I]t is clear that the commercial broadcasters have inherent limitations which render them incapable of doing a satisfactory and effective educational broadcasting service. . . . the commercial interests could not be trusted to do educational broadcasting any more than public utility corporation[s] could be trusted to write textbooks for schools.

Evans said that the dominance of the commercial system made it impossible for educational stations to survive, and that the limited educational fare provided by commercial stations was usually broadcast at odd hours when no one could listen.²⁵

Arthur G. Crane, also of NCER, urged the Commission to "look beyond its technical decisions to the social consequences of all its acts." "A system solely dependent on advertising for its very existence is incompatible with the greatest possible public uses of radio," he said, calling for a system in which responsibility for broadcasting would be shared between commercial and educational interests. "[Educational stations] should not be forced to constantly defend themselves against the inroads of commercial interests who see a profit to be made from the educational station's licensed rights." Similarly, Edward Bennett of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) called the inequity between commercial and non-commercial

broadcasters "the gravest and most fundamental problem challenging the statesmanship of the Commission." From a maximum of more than 100, the NAEB had already dwindled to a membership of 22 as educational stations rapidly disappeared from the radio dial.²⁶

Edward N. Nockels, General Manager of the Chicago Federation of Labor's station WCFL also called upon the commission to recognize the unique nature of educational and cultural programming. "Is it that the public interest, convenience, and necessity is to be determined by noisy acclaim?" he asked. "If so, then the movies overwhelm the universities and are themselves outranked by a ball game or a prize fight. The basest sex novel would then put to shame the greatest scientific treatise." Nockels asked the Commission to either reallocate all stations based "on the greatest good to the greatest number of people," limit all stations to equally lowered power levels, or have the government take over and operate radio stations.²⁷

At the conclusion of each of the educational representative's testimony, Craven was the only Commission representative who asked questions. His questions stemmed not from any of the suggestions or issues that the witnesses had raised, but from his own desire to somewhat condescendingly

"remind" them that there were only a limited number of channels available in the broadcast band. Typically, Craven asked, "You understand that we have very little space in the band, right?" Unspoken, of course, was the fact that it was Craven's (and the Commission's) view that the space that was available should belong to commercial interests; thus, there simply was not "room" for anything but the commercial stations. To Craven, allocation was still merely an engineering issue: programming and other considerations did not matter. Later, after a union leader from Cincinnati had testified about WLW's anti-labor news programming Craven turned down the Chairman's invitation to cross-examine him. "No, sir. I am an engineer sir," Craven said. "I have no questions."²⁸

As commercial interests began to testify, the hearings turned into a sometimes-heated battle between competing interests that at the same time sought to affirm the wisdom of the *status quo* commercial system. Representatives of various classes of commercial stations asked for more power, better frequencies, and longer hours of operation. At the same time, however, they praised the overall commercial broadcasting system—they merely sought technical enhancements that would give them an economic advantage. The "knottiest problem," according to *Broadcasting* magazine, was the Commission's clear channel policy. Clear channel stations were asking for more power and

exclusivity on their frequencies, while other classes of stations asked the Commission to place limitations on the clear channels. The networks were purposely vague on the issue, not wishing to upset any of their affiliates, which were drawn from all classes of stations.

Instead, the networks used the opportunity to tout their programming prowess within the commercial system. William Paley of CBS began by congratulating himself and the Commission for their work on behalf of the listening public. "You, the members and the counsel of the Commission, and we, the broadcasters, 'are at it again'—restlessly striving to improve the standards and service of American broadcasting." NBC president Lenox Lohr called the American networks' programs "the finest in the world" because the networks "have obtained a fairly good idea. . . of what the American listener wants and what he may reasonably expect to get from his loud speaker." Still, Lohr at least admitted that NBC's concern for listeners was not "true altruism," but that the network was "concerned with being profitable for a long time." He said that the Commission and the networks could cooperatively achieve what he said were the common goals of listeners and commercial broadcasters:

[B]y exercising your regulatory power wisely, you can bring about an ascending spiral wherein the industry, built upon sound economics, supplies better programs

through better stations to a better satisfied public and thus becomes increasingly prosperous itself.

Lohr saw only one alternative to the existing advertiser supported system—"the foreign system" that would force the listener to subscribe to programming and then "discontinue it when he ceases to pay." Such a system, Lohr said, was clearly inferior to the existing "American system."²⁹

Aftermath of the Hearings

At the close of the hearings, the collected data was turned over to the Commission's engineering department, headed, of course, by Craven. In January 1937, the department released a "Preliminary Report" on the hearings, recommending several relatively minor changes in the overall allocation plan. The most substantive recommendation was changing the station classification system to include six classes rather than the existing three, and expanding the top end of the broadcast band from 1500 to 1600 kHz. The new classification system in large part would merely acknowledge technical differences that had already developed within the existing three-class system. The report dismissed the requests of "special groups" to reserve frequencies for non-commercial purposes, noting that each of these groups acknowledged there was a limited amount of space available. However, the new classification system and expansion

of the broadcast band, *Broadcasting* magazine noted, would allow the addition of up to 500 new stations.³⁰

In truth, the engineering department was nowhere near finished analyzing the data presented in Docket 4063. The Preliminary Report was designed merely to allow the United States to prepare for the North American Regional Broadcasting Agreement (NARBA) negotiations, scheduled for later that year. NARBA would eventually divide broadcast frequencies among the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. By signaling that the FCC planned no major overhaul of its broadcast allocations, the Preliminary Report allowed other countries to prepare for the negotiations.

The engineering department had, in fact, asked for additional help in analyzing the data from Docket 4063. The Commission responded by hiring Dr. Herman Hettinger, an economics professor in the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania on a 30-day retainer to report on the economic data. Hettinger was no stranger to radio, having been one of the few academics to speak out and write in favor of the commercial broadcast structure during the early 1930s. Much of his work, in fact, had been financed by the NAB. He was, not surprisingly, also no stranger to the commercial factions of the broadcast industry, having worked for NARBS and Hearst-owned

stations. Caldwell, in fact, initially complained to the FCC about Hettinger because he feared that the professor would be biased against the clear channels. Craven, however, assuaged Caldwell's fears by promising to let him see Hettinger's report and "make corrections" if necessary before it was released.³¹

In July 1937 the engineering department released its final report on the Docket 4063 hearings, encompassing Hettinger's contribution. The report, awkwardly titled *Report on Social and Economic Data Pursuant to the Informal Hearing on Broadcasting, Docket 4063, Beginning October 5, 1936*, was designed not just for internal use by the FCC, but for presentation outside the Commission. As such, it was printed in bound form by the U.S. Government Printing Office.

The report was clearly intended to affirm the existing commercial structure of broadcasting. "We have felt that it was unnecessary for us at this late date to discuss whether broadcasting is a service to the people," the report said. "We have accepted broadcasting as one of the greatest agencies of mass communication yet devised by the genius of man." The report also cautioned that the "several billions of dollars" of investment in the existing system made significant regulatory changes risky:

It is thus most essential that the Government regulatory body proceed with caution when considering matters of frequency allocation as well as other policies which have such a direct bearing on the continued successful operation of this very important industry.

Beyond the risk, the report seemed to imply that significant change was not needed now because it was not needed in the past. "It is reassuring to note that as recently as 1934, and during a period of far-reaching economic change, Congress reaffirmed the basic American policy by carrying forward in the Communications Act of 1934 the principles. . . it had established in the Radio Act of 1927," the report said.³²

Despite the report's title, the consideration of "social" and "economic" effects was at best spotty and vague. The report said that the concepts "represent with many persons intuitions rather than ideas capable of exact definition and are all too frequently colored by the interests of the persons using them rather than determined by any logic." The fact that the engineering department worked from the assumption that there should be no significant changes to the existing system substantially thwarted the serious consideration of alternatives that could have been socially beneficial. Such alternatives were dismissed as either "uneconomic" or technically inefficient. While the report presented an analysis of advertising revenues

of various classes of stations and other economic data, social reforms were dismissed as impractical:

The Engineering Department had approached the evidence given at the hearing on the basis that social factors and the interest of the public are paramount. However, when practical considerations make the accomplishment of a particular socially ideal proposal impossible or impractical, we have recognized that practicalities must control.

Completing the circular reasoning, the report seemed to say that alternatives to the commercial system were unacceptable merely because they were alternatives:

[W]e do not imply that the practical or economic factors in broadcasting tend to thwart any social ideal which could better be reached under any other than the American system of broadcasting. On the contrary it is our conviction that other systems of broadcasting would, in turn, create forces and problems which would impede public interest and social service in themselves.

While noting that some of the criticisms of commercial programming at the hearings were "undoubtedly justified," the report urged education interests and the commercial broadcasters to work together to improve them. To avoid changes that might have an adverse effect on the industry, the report urged the Commission "assume leadership and cooperate with the industry," noting that various industry groups demonstrated at the October hearings that they were "anxious" to help.³³

The end result of the Docket 4063 hearings was the commission's "Standards of Good Engineering Practice," effective August 1, 1939. The standards were, for the most part, those proposed in the initial engineering report of January 1937. Station classifications and other minor engineering changes were adopted, but the existing allocation system remained intact. "Drawn up with the cooperation of the industry and the foremost radio engineers in the country," an FCC press release stated, "the new rules and standards give the people of the United States and its possessions the technical basis for the finest radio service in the world."³⁴

Conclusion

The hearings on Docket 4063 represented a watershed event in the development of broadcasting in the United States. Although the net result of the allocation study was for the most part a further endorsement of the *status quo*, the hearings in many ways represented a sea change in the way commercial and non-commercial interests would conduct themselves before the FCC. Having vanquished whatever threat to the advertiser-supported, for-profit broadcasting system may have come before 1934, the commercial industry was now firmly in control of the terms of debate. As a result, commercial interests fractured into various competing groups, each arguing for regulations that

could give them economic advantage. This was in marked contrast to the industry's stance during the debate leading to the Communications Act of 1934, when the commercial interests "marched in lockstep" against the non-commercial interests.³⁵

Non-commercial interests, on the other hand, were relegated to only tangential importance. The Commission allowed them to testify, but ignored nearly all of their arguments. Rather than dismissing the non-commercial arguments with factual evidence after reasoned debate, however, the Commission simply rejected them because they were not compatible with the commercial system. Still, both the Commission and commercial interests felt the need to justify the existing commercial structure with platitudes—the "American" system was simply "the best." The real debate over the structure of American broadcasting was already over, but both the Commission and commercial interests took pains to remind each other (as well as the public and other government entities) that they had made the right choice.

Similarly, changes in regulation that could produce social benefit were usually rejected by the Commission on the grounds that they were not economically or technically sound. Having firmly entrenched the commercial system as "the" system of American broadcasting, the Commission had little other choice. A

system based on economic and technical imperatives left little room for diminishing those principles.

Today, we can see a similar situation in nearly any debate over communications regulation. Commercial interests will ally or oppose each other as the issue warrants, although now more often than not we see entire industries coalescing around arguments against other industries. Broadcasters, for example, will unite against threats from cable or satellite operators. What is missing is the continuing need to validate the commercial system with praise and congratulation—we are now well beyond the point of there even being an issue. The commercial interests, firmly entrenched and in control and with millions of dollars of clout behind them, create the illusion of substantive debate by their loud arguments and scare tactics. "Don't let cable take away your local stations," warn broadcasters. Beneath the surface, however, commercial interests are merely arguing amongst themselves for economic and technical advantage. If, by coincidence, the regulatory decisions create social benefit, than so be it. Docket 4063 and hundreds of ensuing policy debates have shown the commercial interests that fighting among themselves is not a threat to their overall dominance. The "vivid crossroads" has long since been passed.

NOTES

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⁴ McChesney, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy*, 3.

⁵ Bensman, *The Beginning of Broadcast Regulation*; Mark Goodman and Mark Gring, "The Ideological Fight Over Creation of the Federal Radio Commission in 1927," *Journalism History* 26, no. 3 (2000): 117-24; Louise M. Benjamin, *Freedom of the Air and the Public Interest: First Amendment Rights in Broadcasting to 1935* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001); Mary S. Mander, "The Public Debate About Broadcasting in the Twenties: An Interpretive History," *Journal of Broadcasting* 28, no. 2 (1984): 167-85.

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⁸ Press Release #17769, July 25, 1936, Volume 1, Box 993, Docket 4063, FCC Docketed Case Files, Entry 120A, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Group 173, National Archives, College Park, MD.

⁹ Press Release #17769, Volume 1, Box 993.

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¹¹ J.D. Dellinger to Broadcast Committee, August 22, 1928, 66-4 Allocation, Box 278, General Correspondence 1928-1947, Office of the Executive Secretary, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Group 173, National Archives, College Park, MD.

¹² Foust, *Big Voices of the Air*.

¹³ Tracy F. Tyler to Hampson Gary, December 7, 1934, Folder 194-3, Box 491, General Correspondence 1928-1947, Office of the Executive Secretary, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Group 173, National Archives, College Park, MD; Hampson Gary to Tracy F. Tyler, December 15, 1934, Folder 194-3, Box 491, General Correspondence 1928-1947, Office of the Executive Secretary, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Group 173, National Archives, College Park, MD; Federal Communications Commission, *Report of the Federal Communications Commission* (Washington, D.C.: 1937), 64-67.

¹⁴ L.P. Taylor to Hampson Gary, December 5, 1934, Box 497, 201-4 Allocation of Broadcast Facilities, Office of the Executive Secretary, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Group 173, National Archives, College Park, MD; Anstiss Church to Hampson Gary, December 2, 1934, Box 497, 201-4 Allocation of Broadcast Facilities, Office of the Executive Secretary, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Group 173, National Archives, College Park, MD.

¹⁵ Robert W. McChesney, "The Internet and U.S. Communication Policy-Making in Historical and Critical Perspective," *Journal of Communication* 46, no. 1 (1996): 102.

¹⁶ "NAB Faces Show Down at Chicago Conclave," *Broadcasting*, July 1 1936, 19.

¹⁷ "Big Independents Organizing Under Leadership of Crosley," *Broadcasting*, April 1 1936, 20.

¹⁸ "Going Easy on Radio Changes," *Business Week*, October 24 1936, 34.

¹⁹ "Radio Reallocation en route," *Business Week*, December 21 1935, 11.

²⁰ Clear Channel Group Report No. 11, September 23, 1936, Clear Channel Group Reports, July 1936-May 1938, Clear Channel Group Records, Wiley, Rein, and Fielding Law Offices, Washington, D.C.

²¹ "Allocation Hearings: Some Conclusions," *Broadcasting*, October 15 1936, 10; "Industry Ready for Technical Hearing," *Broadcasting*, October 8 1936, 11.

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²³ C.W. Myers to John B. Reynolds, October 2, 1936, Volume 1, Box 993, Docket 4063, FCC Docketed Case Files, Entry 120A, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Group 173, National Archives, College Park, MD.

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²⁵ Transcript, 29-31, 35, 37, Volume 1, Box 993.

²⁶ Transcript, 43, 47-48, 57, Volume 1, Box 993.

²⁷ Transcript, 1630, 45, Volume 1, Box 993.

²⁸ Transcript, 37, 55, 67, 84, 1075, Volume 1, Box 993.

²⁹ Transcript, 143-44, 886, 87, 90, 92-93, Volume 1, Box 993.

³⁰ 1936 Hearing--Docket 4063 Preliminary Engineering Report to the Broadcast Division Concerning the October 5, January 11, 1937, Box 992, Docket 4063, FCC Docketed Case Files, Entry 120A, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Group 173, National Archives, College Park, MD; Sol Taishoff, "FCC Plan Paves Way for 500 New Stations," *Broadcasting*, January 15 1937, 9.

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³³ Federal Communications Commission, *Report on Economic and Social Data*, 4, 6-7, 14, 22.

³⁴ FCC Press Release, June 23, 1939, Clear Channel Group Reports, June 1938-, Clear Channel Group Records, Wiley, Rein, and Fielding Law Offices, Washington, D.C.

³⁵ McChesney, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy*, 6.

History

**Cattle Barons vs. Ink Slingers:
The Decline and Fall of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (1887-1894)**

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I. Introduction: Cattle Speculation in the Gilded Age.

The enormous influence of the cattle industry in gilded age America reached its zenith in the 1880s cattle capital of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Money and influence from the East and overseas flowed into this upstart frontier town tied to civilization by a pair of Union Pacific tracks. It led to Cheyenne's unlikely nickname, "little Wall Street."¹ Where in Cheyenne was little Wall Street? It was, of course, Sixteenth Street, where stood the headquarters of the Cheyenne Club. That is, offices of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.

The club as a comfortable repose for association members came to life based on the fortunes of some of the gilded age's richest financiers. The economic boom of the industrial revolution left lucky families holding more wealth than they knew what to do with. Particularly they worked from the great financial centers of Britain, then the world's superpower, but also from other prosperous European cities, as well as great industrial cities of the Eastern United States. Capital looking for a home in which to grow saw potential in a newly emerging big business, the cattle trailing industry.

How could the practice of cattle-grazing in the frontier west offer potential to investors thousands of miles away? Easy: lots of money meeting a growing industry promising amazing returns within months. Who with money to burn wouldn't want to invest? For a fair comparison, think "dot-com investment" in 1999.

Like the dot-com financial bubble of our own recent memory, the cattle industry began with a good idea backed by lots of money. After the U.S. Civil War wandering Texas longhorns owned by nobody met a healthy market for beef back east. Problem: how to get those beeves to the eastern market. Solution: hire a few cowboys to drive herds north to rail heads. Cost of cattle: nothing, although rounding up feisty longhorns demanded considerable skill. Cost of feed:

nothing; cattle could graze on the open range. Cost of labor: little; cowboys could be hired for the drive, sent home for the winter. Profit: depended on whom you talked to, but 60 to 100 percent seemed optimistically reasonable.²

A burgeoning cattle trailing industry reached the northern plains by the late 1870s, finally made safe for the cattlemen after the huge tracts of semi-arid grassland stood abandoned by Indian (pent up in reservations) and buffalo (slaughtered). The railroad needed settlement along its lonely routes, and so promoted cattle as ideal in remote lands such as Wyoming Territory. Promoters like Brisbin joined in, but these would not have had the powerful voice they enjoyed far away from cow country had it not been for their partners in promotion, the newspapers. In fact frontier journalists found it among their most important first tasks as pioneer town developer. To “boom” the town and encourage settlement would assure growth and prosperity in what usually began meagerly as a few shacks by the tracks. Frontier newspaper circulations normally included larger numbers shipped back east than purchased locally. The investment potential of a growing cattle industry bled into the big eastern dailies, and from there to the press of Europe, particularly in London and Edinburgh. “The stories of vast profits to be made on the range, which these agencies spread all over the country, could not fail to cause a rush of men and capital into these new areas.”³

By the beginning of the 1880s people who barely knew a cow from a camel spent fortunes on cattle company stock, sometimes without knowing whether the on-site manager could be trusted, or whether the company even existed beyond its ornate stock certificates. The wealthiest investors, however, could do more than talk steers over sherry in Edinburgh. They could visit their investment on site by merely hopping a train in New York and hopping off in Cheyenne a few days later. Whence they would make their way to the sumptuous Sixteenth Street building of the Cheyenne Club. For the men arriving from Edinburgh, Paris, London, New York, Boston, and other great cities, stock grower association secretary William Sturgis assured that his

cow town had available a comestible supply meeting their expectations: Mumm's and Piper Heidseick champagne, sherry, Bass ale, Roquefort cheese, cigars, etc.⁴

Such could only be expected of men who moved herds in the hundreds of thousands, worth millions. Between 1870 and 1900 British investors alone poured \$40 million into western cattle operations. The largest Wyoming concern, Swan Land and Cattle Company, in 1886 owned 123,500 head of cattle, 579,000 acres of land.⁵ Great fortunes from New York and Boston were no less prominent in Cheyenne, as the lure of easy money in cattle reached a speculative frenzy. "It is doubtful whether any other aspect of western economic development held the same fascination for Americans in the 1880s as did the range cattle industry."⁶ By 1885 members of the Wyoming Stock Growers represented two million head of cattle worth \$100 million, its power reaching through the entire state and into South Dakota and Nebraska.⁷ In 1886 three Wyoming counties alone, Albany (Laramie city), Laramie (Cheyenne city) and Johnson (Buffalo city) accounted for 483,290 head of cattle.⁸

The association's power reached further than simply membership based on property. Wyoming, more than any other state in the Old West era, was built and dominated by a single industry, cattle. Its association more than any other reserved power to enforce the law as it pertained to their business. And their business was Wyoming's business. Their inspectors and detectives enjoyed the power of law, as noted in a letter from association secretary Sturgis to a new inspector dated 16 December 1885:

You are hereby appointed to the position of inspector at Deadwood, to fill the vacancy now existing at that point. I accordingly enclose you a commission and wish you to be deputized by the sheriff of the county in which Deadwood is situated....If you have occasion to make any arrest for stock stealing etc., do so without fear or favor.⁹

Association members could fine or blackball offending cattlemen and cowboys. Or worse. Its detectives hardly stood above delivering some lynch-flavored frontier justice when required. They operated in a western frontier lightly represented by legitimate law enforcement authorities beyond U.S. Army outposts. People did not become too upset at the occasional disappearance of a purported cattle thief. It was exactly that, thievery, that concerned the association most. And just that that led to its downfall. But not without the close relationship through thick and thin of the press.

This article examines that relationship. It considers not only the influence of Wyoming cattlemen on the press, but the influence of the press on their business during the time when “Old West” moved from frontier reality to American legend. The stories have grown to become America’s most enduring legend, based on stylized ideals and assumptions that often had little to do with the reality of the frontier cattle business itself. This “myth” has been widely studied.¹⁰ So too has the decaying power of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association to its disastrous final stand, the “Johnson County War” of April 1892. A century of historians and storytellers have covered the “war”: “All our contemporary preoccupation with the romance of the cowboy can be traced right back to this one conflict between ‘cattle barons’ and ‘rustlers....’ It is difficult to overstate the importance of this incident in the development of the west.”¹¹ What has not been considered is the relationship of cattlemen and journalists, and the importance of the latter to the creation of that seminal incident in Old West history. This work tries to help fill that gap, based almost exclusively on primary archival sources and contemporary newspapers.

II. The Press and the Cowmen.

Stock grower associations found in the journalist a person delighted to take advantage of whatever opportunity cattlemen could offer. This was, after all, a rich collection of gentlemen. And while newspaper men (nearly always they were male, as were the cattlemen) seldom

themselves had the knowledge or capital to run cattle operations, they did show finely-honed ability to smell both a good story and a fair profit. As early as 1875, several years before Cheyenne's cattle industry would take off, stock grower associations were offering promotional trips to the most significant events of a cowboy's year, the round up. In one example, six hundred guests, "newspaper men, business men, dudes and debutantes" traveled by Kansas Pacific to a Colorado ranch to feast on a barbeque, dance to a string band, and repose for the night under the cottonwoods.¹² Later Wyoming cattlemen showed keen interest in self-publicity, and relied on journalists to convey their viewpoint.

It became clear to opportunistic Wyoming journalists that their dream of getting wealthy with a press and some ink in the western hinterlands might depend on finding a rich vein worth mining—such as the cattle industry. The first such an opportunist was publisher Edwin A. Slack. He began like most seekers who found themselves on the western frontier, itinerant, following fortune from settlement to settlement in an attempt to gain riches. Or at the least, to gain a decent living. He tried to entice Democratic favor in early Laramie, establishing the *Daily Independent* there in 1871, but found fortunes a slow flow. In 1876 he moved back east—slightly—to Cheyenne. With \$2,500 gained from selling his Laramie interests, he established beginning 3 March 1876 the *Cheyenne Sun*.¹³ It was to become the tireless voice of the Wyoming cattlemen through thick and—surprisingly—thin.

But not the cattlemen's only voice. In the 1880s the cow financiers found plenty of money to spread around the press, and more than one publisher decided to get in on the action. Asa Shinn Mercer was to become, if not the most interesting frontier cattle town editor, historically the most important one. For it was he, along with a Chicago newspaper man named Samuel T. Clover, whose journalism determined the myth of the west as many of us see it today.

Mercer's place in frontier American history would be big enough even if he'd never set foot in cow country. An indefatigable gadfly free from the pox of self-doubt, Mercer's activities spanned a huge swath of the west, from Texas to Washington State. In the sparsely populated

frontier pioneers attempting to build the civilization they left back east found few people capable of specialized tasks. To succeed they needed to be resourceful, versatile, willing to face failure, to move on, to try, try again, or give up and move back “home.”¹⁴ Mercer’s life in the west offers an example of what this meant.

Mercer moved west from Illinois first as a surveyor, in 1861. Two years later he found further sustenance from the federal government contracts so important in the frontier where jobs were few and money hard to come by. He was named a commissioner of immigration for Washington Territory. His role, as he saw it, was to be match-maker of the frontier. In 1864 and 1866 he returned to New England to recruit young women willing to move west as wives for frontiersmen. The 300 recruits became “Mercer girls” to bemused journalists of the time,¹⁵ a story that attracted national attention then and historical memory later, replayed on television and novel. Mercer also was elected to the Washington Territorial Council, founded the University of Washington, and moved to Oregon to pursue business interests. One was journalism. He established the *Oregon Granger* in 1873 before deciding to follow pastures perhaps greener in opportunity, if not in geography. Texas was bubbling with cattle money when he turned his life toward journalism.

Mercer established five newspapers in Texas. But the wealth of the longhorn trailing industry was reaching its pinnacle and cow money was trailing north into the high plains. Mercer decided to again reinvent himself based on experience gained from cow country journalism. S. A. Marney, “roving commissioner for the *Texas Live Stock Journal*” of Fort Worth,¹⁶ suggested in 1883 a partnership in journalism with the aim of serving live stock interests in what clearly had become the new capital of cattlemen’s wealth, Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory.

The first *Northwestern Live Stock Journal* appeared 23 November 1883. Fellow editors declared it a “phenomenal success,” the talk of the town, representing advertising of every cattle owner, and reaching a weekly circulation of 500, albeit “the number actually paid for was always considerably less.”¹⁷

Despite that, in 1884 the *Journal* suspended publication. Why would such a success so soon fold? As so often happened between partnerships of the frontier, the paper failed after Mercer and Marney quibbled over operations, or so later sources tell us.¹⁸ A contemporary source, however, explained the matter in considerably greater detail. It is worth recounting because it reveals Mercer's significantly pugilistic personality.

The story was related in the *Cheyenne Leader*, established in 1867 by the 26-year-old Nathan M. Baker. By the 1880s, under publisher V. S. Glafcke, it had become one of the territory's most reliable dailies. The *Leader* explained Mercer's ability to establish his newspaper based on \$3,000 (\$53,345 in today's dollars) in type and fixtures shipped from St. Louis on credit.¹⁹ While the paper was "an emphatic success," the work of the bookkeeper, Frank J. Burton, did not please Mercer. He fired Burton. Burton, however, was not any bookkeeper, but Marney's brother-in-law. The mercurial Mercer responded to his partner's protests by firing everyone in the office. Marney hired them back. Eventually Mercer succeeded in booting Burton while Marney was away soliciting advertisements. On his return, well, the newsroom witnessed an unfortunate incident worthy of a saloon brawl.

First Mercer hit Marney. "As the scuffle progressed, Mr. Mercer went over the railing with an extreme degree of sullenness. Mr. Marney followed him a close second. When the horizon cleared somewhat it was noted that Mr. Mercer was on top, clawing fiercely, while Mr. Marney was underneath, clawing just as fiercely." While office personnel tried to separate the two, Mercer's wife Annie aimed to bean Marney with "a large majolica spittoon." He managed to knock it away. Then the Mercer children, "a girl about ten years of age and a boy somewhat older," began throwing rocks. As Marney tried to block the rocks he let go of Annie, who recovered the spittoon and "dealt Marney a terrific blow on the back of the head, lacerating it in a dreadful manner and breaking the spittoon into a dozen fragments." As the blood spattered around the office Dr. J. J. Hunt was summoned to attend to Mercer's unfortunate partner. "All were horrified at the serious outcome of the situation," the story spreading "like wildfire"

throughout the city.²⁰ Principal assailants were charged with assault and battery, and fined \$10 each, although more serious legal charges eventually were dropped. Marney recovered from the beaming and demanded his share of the business, this time relying on the sheriff to seize his due. It cost Mercer \$2,000 to see Marney leave Cheyenne .²¹

III. Influence of Cattlemen on Frontier Journalism.

By July 1884 the *Live Stock Journal* was back in business under Mercer's sole proprietorship and favored bookkeeper. He claimed in an interview with the *Leader* that his newspaper made \$8,000 profit the first six months, and was worth \$30,000.²² Indeed the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, now attracting more than 400 members to its annual meetings, was rich enough to float Mercer's cow town mouthpiece, along with many other frontier newspapers. Advertising in Mercer's *Journal* cost the association \$598.44 in 1884, and numerous bills from the *Journal* in 1885 and 1886 probably totaled more.²³ As former association president John Clay recalled in later memoirs, Mercer's weekly "existed on the cattlemen's advertisements and other revenue that could be gathered from the cow interests."²⁴

Association records shows it advertised widely. Cheyenne cattlemen relied on the press to communicate round up information, meeting notices and reports, new regulations, brand descriptions, lists of strayed cattle, and other announcements to a network of cowboys and inspection staff across hundreds of miles under its jurisdiction: all of Wyoming and parts of Nebraska and South Dakota. Its 1884 account book lists payments in the hundreds to twelve newspapers in addition to the *Journal*, including the *Cheyenne Sun*, \$404.30, *Cheyenne Leader*, \$371.76, *Buffalo Echo*, \$222.65; *Carbon County Journal* (Rawlins, WY), \$206.66, and the *Laramie Sentinel*, \$203.30.²⁵ Apparently its full-time secretary kept careful track of this communication, because archives include many newspaper clippings as well as careful accounting of payments. Most newspapers also ran a job printing operation to help pay bills, and

the association spread wealth to the press through their many orders for handbills, circulars, directories and other printing needs.

Cattlemen usually did not limit their financial interests to cattle. The press often benefited—or suffered—from cattleman influence through financial investment. For example, A. H. Swan was on the board of directors of the *Cheyenne Leader*. Cheyenne's important daily had been sold by Baker to V. S. Glafcke in 1872. (Baker went to Denver, where he found greater riches in the cattle business than in journalism.) In fact, largesse always was welcomed in frontier newspaper business offices. "Small populations and magnificent distances made their financial lot difficult," recalled W. E. Chaplin, pioneer publisher of the *Laramie Boomerang*. In the 1880s W. C. Irvine, president of the stock growers association and leader of the 1892 Johnson County "war" that was to destroy the power of that group, actually held majority ownership in the *Leader*. He sold that interest to Pennsylvania investors, who placed an editor declaring loyalty to the Democratic Party. "When this came to the knowledge of Mr. Irvine, he at once proceeded to the office and his interview decided the management to again take up political neutrality."²⁶ It did not last. In 1880 John F. Carroll and Joseph A. Breckons bought the daily, and re-established a Democratic slant. Carroll as editor became the foil of the Republican *Sun* under Slack.

As for the *Live Stock Journal*, F. E. Warren was listed as a creditor. This would be Francis E. Warren, cattleman, territorial governor, Wyoming senator and, incidentally, father-in-law of World War I Gen. John J. Pershing. Warren apparently was wont to offer financial encouragement to a number of journalistic endeavors, "generally had some surplus money for any printer or publisher in distress."²⁷ But that assistance sometimes came at a price. Warren owned a number of Wyoming businesses in addition to his cattle interests, and in July 1884 pushed the sheriff to briefly shut down the *Journal's* offices for an unpaid bill of \$457.90 to F. E. Warren Mercantile Co. At that time the *Journal* claimed its circulation had climbed to 20,000. The *Leader* estimated a more reasonable 5,000, "mostly shipped out in the mails." An agreement two days later favored cattle interests of Warren and fellow cattlemen. The report noted the *Journal*

and another pro-cattle daily, E. A. Slack's *Cheyenne Sun*, "will hereafter receive extensive and elaborate reports of everything relating to the cattle industry."²⁸

IV. Cattle Speculation: A Boom and a Bust.

In 1873 Wyoming Stock Growers Association members had initially come together by necessity. Cattlemen had to defend their far-flung industry through a wild land that offered no public protection from any other corner beyond the military forts established to keep general order. But in a dozen years the association had grown to dominate Wyoming laws, politics and culture, "the most powerful of all plains stock associations."²⁹ The territory's early politicians, J. M. Carey (later senator), Amos Barber (later governor), Baxter (territorial governor) Willis Van Devanter (later U.S. Supreme Court justice) and Warren all were important cattlemen and association members. They were able to dictate nearly all issues of concern to the stock grower and cowboy who, if found to offend, could be blackballed and so unable to operate in the territory under association control. It became "the most powerful institution every organized for the promotion of the range cattle business."³⁰ And in frontier Wyoming, the cattle business dominated all business. The arrangement worked well as long as cattle was king and everyone benefited from the financial fat. But the problem of political domination by a cowman oligarchy soon drew the cattlemen to over-reaching arrogance they could not sustain after the economic balloon burst. Their territorial law of 1884 proved key measure that eventually led to crisis on the grasslands.

Even in their heyday cattlemen operated an economically challenging, risky business. Running tens of thousands of cattle over open ranges hundreds of miles in size left owners with the nearly impossible task of controlling far-flung resources. Branding was one way to declare ownership no matter where property may roam. It was not foolproof; cattle thieves could expertly re-brand cattle to their own mark. Still greater was the challenge of the "increase."

Huge herds generate new life in the hundreds. These unbranded calves become valuable resources not only to the owners, but to anyone with a hankering to run his own small herd on the side. Early stockmen declared that calves always would follow their mother, and thus their owner could be established. But cowboys—or thieves—could easily “cut out” the calf so that it would lose that connection.

Ownership over these mavericks became the lightning rod that split Wyoming and established the Old West legends that today still guide belief on what the frontier was all about, and how it relates to today’s society.

The 1884 law was designed to control theft of mavericks. It declared mavericks to be property of the association, which would round them up and auction them to high bidders, always other wealthy cattlemen. The law effectively eliminated the small operator who in fact, under later laws, was actually barred from owning his own cattle if he worked for a larger owner. Still, the regulation might have been acceptable had the optimistic economic and climatic conditions of 1884 remained. Rich cattlemen then could afford to overlook some shrinkage, and the cowboys most likely to want their own herd could still enjoy good pay for working only summers. But it took literally a matter of months of frenzied speculation to bring hundred of thousands of cattle onto a northern range that, big as it was, could not handle such a herd. Wyoming cattlemen on site reached near panic the summer of 1886 as the weather proved too dry and the cattle too numerous. Some had even written to eastern publications to warn speculators of the risk in overgrazing.³¹ Local hands who had grown up in the industry realized the business teetered on Humpty-Dumpty’s wall.

That winter it took the feared great fall. Actually, what fell was snow, and cold. The severe winter of 1886-87 blew into ranges of the northern plains already overgrazed by millions of cattle packed onto the land by speculators who borrowed more and more to fill the ranges with their investment. The spring thaw saw shocked cowboys reporting savage demise of huge herds. In fact, up to 85 percent of the cattle perished in these few harsh months. As ugly as the bloated

carcasses choking the stream beds were the account books in board rooms of Edinburgh, London, New York, Boston, Chicago, Omaha, Denver and, of course, Cheyenne. Coupled with a collapse in cattle prices, the “great die-off” drove most speculators out of the cattle business for good.

Many big operators working on borrowed capital went bankrupt—Swan Cattle Company, owned by an Edinburgh syndicate running out of Cheyenne, was only the largest to fall. The boom was over. Rich and famous around the country had lost fortunes. Theodore Roosevelt may have found inspiration from his ranching days in Dakota Territory, but he didn’t find any profit.³² In fact he lost an estimated \$50,000. That may not sound like much, until one realizes that in today’s dollars that’s nearly \$950,000.³³ And Roosevelt was not a particularly large speculator.

Glum cattlemen gathered for the association’s 1887 annual meeting at a fraction of their numbers the year before. As most overseas investment had been wrung out of the Wyoming industry, those determined to carry on represented local interests bolstered by a few hardy investors from back east. Yet the association had undertaken an obligation to protect its entire industry from disease, government regulation and, most obvious to the locals, cattle rustlers. The huge cost of maintaining this network over great distances demanded a treasury cattlemen could no longer maintain. In 1887 the association appealed to the territorial government to assume the burden of protection over their industry; it responded by establishing a commission to oversee stock growers’ interests. Members of this new commission were exactly the same as members of the association.

Survival of the cattle industry now demanded careful control over costs and inventory. No longer could mavericks be allowed to disappear into some cowboy’s personal herd. To make matters worse, cowboys themselves no longer could be kept year ’round for a seasonal job. They were expected to find other jobs over the winter—and yet were forbidden to establish herds of their own as one way to do that. Moreover, the open range of the great long drive years was falling into a patchwork of farmers and small livestock producers. These “nesters” fenced their quarter sections with new-fangled barbed wire, and greeted with rifle bullets any range cattle

daring to trample the property. Sometimes even cattle that didn't quite trample their property: at table beef beat coyote any day. A few homesteaders too wouldn't be above stealing cattle from those big "cattle barons" they had so learned to despise during the champagne years of the Cheyenne Club.

The cowboys and nesters had a legitimate beef. The association did act to protect its own while making it unfairly difficult for the little guy. On the other hand, cattle owners too found it difficult enough to cope with an industry on hard times without also dealing with persistent shrinkage due to thievery. In 1891 the association blackballed whole groups of settlers whose activities they perceived inimical to cattle interests. They still, after all, could call upon the power of their own in all the top offices of the infant state's government: governor and senators all were cattlemen. Killing of two "rustlers" in 1891—probably by association detectives who were never charged—left two opposing groups on the high edge of tension.

Members of the association at their annual meeting in April 1892 decided it was time for a showdown. Their decision would prove disastrous for Wyoming cattlemen, and decisive for the myth of the Old West as we remember it today.

V. Reporters at "War."

What came known as the Johnson County War likely would have left only a historical footnote had not been for journalists. Two in particular: A. S. Mercer and Samuel T. Clover. The latter would not even have been the sole reporter to tell the story had not the association itself believed in the power of publicity to make its case.

In early 1892 the association bought space in eastern newspapers, "started floating the big rustler scare across the country, telling the world how poor old Wyoming had fallen into the clutches of a gang of outlaw cattle rustlers who killed and slaughtered from dawn 'til dark."³⁴ The publicity attracted attention of Samuel Clover, a young *Chicago Herald* reporter who had made several expeditions west to report on military campaigns. On a hunch he presented himself at the

Chicago stockyards, ostensibly hoping to pick up “character sketches of big cattle shippers from the far west.” A friend confided that “hell’s a-popping out in Wyoming this spring.”³⁵ To find out more Clover encountered Henry A. Blair of Chicago, who had cattle interests in Cheyenne.³⁶ Blair admitted to Clover that the association planned an invasion campaign north to deal with rustlers in Johnson County. To drive them away, but not kill anybody.³⁷ Would Clover provide his services as a journalist on assignment with the invaders? It would become, said Clover, the story of his life.

After reaching Cheyenne, however, Clover found association members debating the wisdom of having an eastern reporter accompany the group of 55 “regulators,” planning the raid into Johnson County and Buffalo city. Clover said he argued, “you must admit that a tremendous hand will be raised by the newspapers inimical to your interests, and all sorts of wild-eyed stories will be afloat concerning the operation of the regulators. If I go along as a non-combatant, friendly to the interest of the expedition, it stands to reason I will not give you the worst of it in any published reports.”³⁸ Expedition leaders F. E. Wolcott and Irving decided having a large Chicago daily on their side could help their reputation, long stained by eastern criticism of the “cattle barons.”

The local press also wanted a shot at the story. Slack of the *Cheyenne Sun* persuaded the association to allow his reporter to accompany the group. As a Republican newspaper the *Sun* had shown enduring support of the cattlemen, even after they no longer could afford to be major advertisers. That support was not out of particular sentimental devotion or political principle: frontier publishers cleaved to political parties they hoped could award them government patronage and printing contracts. Cattle interests controlled the Republican Party.

In fact frontier newspapers changed allegiances as the winds of patronage blew. Sometimes their role as government representative clashed with their role as journalist. Herman Glafcke, editor of the *Sun*’s rival paper, the *Leader*, established that paper as “independently Republican.” But in March 1873 he was removed as territorial secretary by the Republican

administration under Ulysses S. Grant. He discovered that J. W. Carey, then chair of the Republican Central Committee, had mailed newspaper clippings from a Laramie newspaper indicating Glafcke's loyalty was in question. Glafcke responded he attended the meeting as a journalist, not as a participant. Nevertheless, he was not reappointed. He was, however, appointed postmaster. Finally Glafcke left journalism to a new editor, John F. Carroll, who switched horses to the Democratic Party, which he also counted on for some sideline income.³⁹

Mercer as wheeler-dealer extraordinaire also expected patronage to pay some bills, which seemed always to set him on the edge of foreclosure. It is surprising his stock grower weekly clung to business in the years between the great die-off and the Johnson County War, but he maintained allegiance to the cattle owners, and therefore the Republican Party, until July 1892. It had become an open secret that spring that association secretary Hiram B. Ijams had been assigned the task of recruiting a score of "Texas gunslingers" to accompany local cattlemen in their invasion plans.⁴⁰ It is surprising a reporter from Mercer's *Journal* was not also asked to accompany the men. While the *Leader* by 1892 supported Democrats and so clearly would not have found a friendly place in the cattlemen's public relations plan, it was the *Live Stock Journal*, after all, which in June 1884 had emphatically supported "the hanging noose" for rustlers.⁴¹

Mercer's business by this time was not as robust as his strident editorials might suggest, however. A "scrap book publication," as the *Leader* once disdainfully called it,⁴² Mercer relied mostly borrowed material from exchanges, and not on reporter-generated copy. Worse, the newspaper was near death. On 20 February 1892 the St. Louis Type Foundry obtained a judgment against it for \$1,439. The *Journal's* days seemed numbered, specifically numbered to 2 September, when the sheriff attempted to seize the entire printing works from its offices on 1713 Ferguson St.⁴³ However, some sort of lawsuit maneuver between the foundry and Mercer's wife Annie blocked sale of goods. Mercer continued to limp along until early 1893, when even a name change to the *Democrat* could not save it. Probably during summer 1892 Mercer was financially desperate, which might help explain his turncoat writing that outraged the cattlemen.

Clover and Edward Towse from the *Cheyenne Sun* joined the train that slipped out of Cheyenne toward Casper. To avoid tipping off homesteaders in Buffalo, who undoubtedly would form an armed posse in defense of the “rustlers,” the invaders cut the telegraph lines. From Casper the men rode hours in a snowstorm “that coated every horseman with a white rime of frost from head to foot.” Reaching a cattleman’s ranch, Clover found his fellow reporter could no longer continue. Towse supposedly told him, “It’s no use, Ill have to give up. You’ll have a clean swoop.”

A Philadelphia doctor visiting Cheyenne, Charles B. Penrose, was persuaded to accompany the cattlemen. Writing later he agreed Towse stayed behind with him at the ranch. He seemed to the group to have taken seriously ill. Some noticed blood stains on his back side. He recovered quickly, however, in 48 hours was a new man. “Armed with a Winchester and a notebook,” the *Sun* later reported dramatically, its man on the inside would have been on the scene had he not been laid up for “surgical repairs.” “A case of hemorrhoids,” plausibly observed the *Leader*.⁴⁴ Nevertheless only Clover stayed with the invaders.

Clover’s story became the most famous account of Old West history pitting “cattle barons” against “nesters.” It is familiar in the fictionalized versions of movies and books, but the reality was as sensationalized as Clover could make it. He had plenty of raw material to work with. The invaders, armed with a list of rustlers they planned to kill (or merely prosecute, or drive away, depending on whom you believe), began work by setting upon a shack in which were holed up two “notorious rustlers,” Nick Ray and Nate Champion. Clover tagged along on the outing, not realizing—so he later said—that he would witness a gunfight. One of the “marked men” finally appeared at the door, he wrote. “Crack! Crack! Crack! Went half a dozen Winchesters in rapid succession, and down dropped the rustler in sudden collapse....”

Ray managed to inch back to the house, but died soon after. Champion held off the invaders, who surrounded the house determined to exterminate him. Their plan to smoke him out needed only some wheels capable of carrying comestibles to the house, when a nester in a wagon

fortuitously happened past. In it was none other than Oscar O. “Jack” Flagg, blackballed cowboy and “notorious rustler,” passing 20 some yards away. He was not immediately recognized. Shouting, “Don’t shoot boys, I’m all right,” he gained a few moments before the invaders recognized him and took pursuit. But he escaped with his 16-year-old son, who cut the wagon away to make a quicker getaway. The jig, the cattlemen now knew, was up—Flagg would raise the alarm in Buffalo, and as the settlers were to a man on the side of the “rustlers,” they would form their own force to battle the invaders.⁴⁵

But not right away. Buffalo was 60 miles away. What is more, the besiegers now had Flagg’s wagon. Filling it with hay and whatever else looked torchable, they pushed the burning wagon against the house. Finally Champion emerged from the smoking cabin to a hail of bullets. “Nate Champion,” wrote Clover, “king of cattle thieves and the bravest man in Johnson County, was dead.”

The most remarkable thing about Clover’s story, most of which was corroborated later by others at the scene, was the reporter’s astonished discovery: the doomed Champion had actually kept a diary of his last hours. Clover said he spotted the diary protruding from the dead man’s vest pocket, and snatched it. Others say one of the leaders of the invasion gave it to him. However he acquired it, he did not look at it until later. Before leaving the dead man, the cattlemen asked Clover—or Cover took it upon himself, depending on the account—to attach a sign to Champion reading, “Cattle Thieves, Beware!”⁴⁶

Clover later examined the diary, “saw to his dismay that a bullet had ploughed a hole right through the center, which had admitted the heart’s blood of the victim. It was a ghastly prize!”⁴⁷ But it would prove to make sensational copy.

The invaders returned to the ranch. Clover begged off, and instead rode five hours to Buffalo, intending to file his story. He claimed he feared the diary would offer incriminating evidence, so copied its contents, ripped it to bits and threw it in a gully. In Buffalo he was indeed arrested as a confederate of the invaders. A fort commander who knew him vouched for his

journalism credentials, however, and he was set free. He rode to the closest working telegraph line, Edgemont, South Dakota, where he filed his story 15 April 1892.

Clover's transcription of Champion's remarkable diary has been reprinted in numerous histories, particularly the last paragraph:

Well, they have just got through shelling the house again like hail. I heard them splitting wood. I guess they are going to fire the house tonight. I think I will make a break when night comes if I live. Shooting again. I think they will fire the house this time. It's not night yet. The house is all fired. Good-bye, boys, if I never see you again. Nathan D. Champion.⁴⁸

Realizing the danger in Flagg's having stumbled onto their plan, the invaders determined to abandon their effort and try to escape back to Cheyenne. Too late. They were forced to make a stand at the KC Ranch 13 miles from Buffalo, against an armed party of some 300 settlers, "rustlers," and townsfolk from Buffalo, headed by Buffalo Sheriff William Angus. Hope for no further bloodshed seemed dim.

The Cheyenne newspapers knew something was up, but without telegraph or correspondent, they could not determine what. Nor could some association members themselves, left in Cheyenne. A diary of former association secretary William Sturgis reported only rumors that cattlemen were under siege, and "great anxiety abt stock men."⁴⁹ The *Cheyenne Leader* reported only of "the northern expedition" producing "a vast flood of rumors," adding, "We sincerely hope, however, for the good name of the state, that the expedition which went north last Tuesday evening had no such designs in view as are now popularly attributed to it." The editorial adds that importing armed men into the state was against its constitution.⁵⁰

The Clover report rocked Cheyenne, and no less the rest of the country. The *Leader* noted, "Information was being sent from Johnson County to the Eastern newspapers. It was of a

very sensational character.”⁵¹ In a matter of days Clover’s riveting narrative had been reprinted in newspapers around the country, focusing a nation’s eyes on the drama of Wyoming between the forces of big capital and the forces of “the little guy.” It made an compelling story in an age of rising populism and class division.

Meanwhile a now-panicking cattleman who had unwisely acquiesced to the invasion plan,⁵² Wyoming Gov. Amos Barber, sought help from the president of the United States. In a telegram dated 12 April 1892, 11:05 p.m., Benjamin Harrison replied,

I have, in compliance with your call for the aid of the United States force to protect the state of Wyoming against domestic violence, ordered the secretary of war to concentrate a sufficient force at the scene of the disturbance and to cooperate with our authorities. Benj Harrison.⁵³

By this time newspaper correspondents had begun descending on the story. The *Leader* said 300 besiegers had left for the KC ranch “with everything in their possession from dynamite to a newspaper reporter.” Outlook for the cattlemen was “very, very blue.”⁵⁴

The cavalry literally saved the day. A force from nearly Fort Russell descended on the ranch and persuaded the nesters to surrender. No one beyond Ray and Champion died; the cattlemen were marched into protective custody at the fort. No one served time; charges were dropped several months later.

Clover was not quite the peerless scribbler he claimed to be, according to Penrose. After Clover lost his own horse during the ride, “He immediately took a Texan’s horse and “insisted that it was his....The reporter was a fresh young man with a disposition to take other people’s things.”⁵⁵ Clover, on the other hand, wrote privately to Blair in a letter dated 15 May 1892, that W. C. Irvine, manager of the Oglalla Land and Cattle Company and an expedition leader, did not like his coverage after all: “[He] has already threatened me and I am not fool enough to think his

threats idle.” He concluded, “Thanks for the return of Champion’s diary pages. I shall keep them as long as I live in spite of Irvine and Wolcott.”⁵⁶ This suggests he did not destroy the famous diary as he publicly claimed. But the original has never turned up for historical scrutiny.

VI. *Aftermath: The War in the Press.*

End of the “war” marked the beginning of bitter recriminations between Cheyenne newspaper editors. The Republican *Sun* defended the cattlemen while the Democratic *Leader* accused them of going too far. Slack’s *Sun* pointed out that only six months before the *Leader* and other newspapers agreed “either the thieves or honest stockmen must go,” but now it was acting holier-than-thou about the invaders.⁵⁷

But *Leader* editor John F. Carroll had complained as early as 4 April that the cattlemens’ plans were “an assumption of power,” noting Johnson County “is said to be the hotbed of the rustling fraternity,” but that the newspaper “has determined to get at the true inwardness of the situation. Its traveling correspondent is doubtless by this time in Buffalo. He will devote sufficient time to make a thorough investigation.”⁵⁸ It subsequently declared the association “has constituted itself judge and jury for determining the honesty of the stock growers of the state.”

In response the association pulled its advertising and urged a boycott of the *Leader*, but not the *Sun*, which was “vigorously defending the commission.”⁵⁹ This action was taken despite that vice president of the association and former territorial governor Baxter also was a *Leader* stockholder. Newspapers around the state were quoted as applauding the *Leader*’s stand: “Hew to the line Brother Carroll, let the chips fall as they may.”⁶⁰

After the stockmen had been saved by the cavalry, the newspaper decried the “inflammatory reports spread abroad by certain newspapers” as misrepresenting the situation. “There is no excuse for the course now being pursued by the *Cheyenne Sun* and *Tribune* [another pro-cattlemen Cheyenne daily]. The evident purpose is to inflame and mislead the public mind....

Cock and bull stories and intemperate diatribes make up a mess liable to do harm to the very men they wish to help. The expedition was a lamentable failure.”

That cattlemen like Baxter would become stockholders in competing frontier newspapers seems incongruous. Still, all journalism was important to frontier development, to making a settlement stick and grow. Clearly, however, motives reached beyond frontier altruism. Stockholders of a company forever operating at the edge of financial embarrassment could control a publication by deciding at any time to question operations or financial stability. Cattlemen not only could influence editors through friendly chats, but through legal bullying through court judgments and creditor harassment. This, Baxter decided in June 1892, might be an excellent way to temporize the recalcitrant *Leader*.

In June Baxter and Frank A. Kemp filed a court complaint against the *Leader*. Printed in its entirety in the rival *Sun*, complainants determined that “the rustler” faction had taken control of the *Leader*, therefore hurting the business of Democratic bankers. “The *Leader* committed a grievous error in attacking the live stock interests of Wyoming, which was the chief source of revenue for the state....It is believed that had it not been for the *Leader*’s gross misrepresentation of the live stock commission that there would have been no cattle war.”⁶¹

The *Sun* summed up the complaint by contending the *Leader* was being charged with fraud, and that the paper was “hopelessly insolvent,” due to overspending and letting equipment deteriorate. Receivership would be assumed by Hiram Glafcke, former proprietor. Glafcke had by now found handsome government patronage in his appointment as Wyoming secretary of state, and as the cattle interests controlled state government, could only be expected to act in the state’s interests.

The *Leader*, however, refused Glafcke’s request to inspect its books, said the complaint was obviously brought so Baxter “can take control of the newspaper.” The amount of money in question, \$500, seemed hardly worth Baxter’s time, and in fact Baxter only controlled 10 shares of stock, Kemp, 6, while editor Carroll and partner Breckons controlled 58 and 38 respectively.⁶²

As for the *Sun*'s decision to publish in their entirety the "libelous" allegations, "We challenge the world to produce a more contemptible lot of whelps than those which vegetate about the *Sun* office."⁶³

While Carroll and Slack exchanged rants at the side of Cheyenne's major dailies, cattlemen found a second target in a weekly now limping into desperate financial quicksand: Mercer's *Northwestern Live Stock Journal*.

How the man who ran the cattleman's mouthpiece would turn into his nemesis sports no brief explanation. The editor, at least one cattleman had charged, actually took part in planning the invasion, as he enjoyed a special relationship at the Cheyenne Club.⁶⁴ Mercer himself explained his makeover by claiming the cattlemen had gone too far. He decided to defend freedom of the press against association injustice. On 8 June 1892, E. H. Kimball, editor of the *Douglas (WY) Graphic*, was arrested on a charge of libel against Baxter. Mercer tried to post bail for Kimball. That act was too much for the association. "He [Mercer] had the temerity to offer to go bail for Col. Kimball, and the very next day, pretty nearly, every stock brand in his newspaper was ordered out."⁶⁵ In an editorial Carroll noted Mercer had been "very conservative" in his criticism of the cattlemen thus far, but "the stockmen may have aroused the wrong person this time, given Mercer's temperament." Also reprinted was a report from the *Rocky Mountain News* of Denver accusing the Cheyenne cattlemen of attempting to "muzzle the press."⁶⁶

As Mercer raged against his former patrons, a cowboy up north perceived it as a fine time to get up a new voice allied with the nesters. The man was none other than Jack Flagg. And his paper was none other than the *Buffalo Voice*. That a cowboy would become a newspaper editor in the Old West is in itself rare; the two groups grew from radically different skills and motivations. But Buffalo mayor Charles H. Burritt proclaimed the "rustler" who ducked the invaders and raised the besiegers to be "certainly a very smooth writer."⁶⁷ Smooth as a business opportunist, too, apparently, for he made the pitch to buy the former *Echo* from editor T. J. Bouton. Bouton was in a bind. He had fled Buffalo in haste, apparently as he harbored pro-cattlemen sympathies.

An outraged Slack wrote in the *Sun* that Bouton was “in Cheyenne, a fugitive, and dare not return to Buffalo at the peril of his life.”⁶⁸

Happily Flagg was able to help out by purchasing Bouton’s operation to the tune of \$2,800, \$800 in cash, \$2,000 bank loan. “Flagg says he is to run a straight Democratic paper. He has absolutely no experience and I don’t think he can last more than six months after that.”⁶⁹ In 1918, however, the *Voice* still published, though under different ownership.

Flagg smartly set to work producing his own account of the Johnson County “war”: *A Review of the Cattle Business in Johnson County, Wyoming, Since 1882, and the Causes that Led to the Recent Invasion*. In true style of the quickie publications that mushroom following big news events, his account began to appear in serial form a short three weeks after the incident.⁷⁰ Flagg’s anti-stock growers account likely offered helpful source material for Mercer’s subsequent book.

Mercer’s anger had congealed—as Carroll in the *Leader* had warned. Unable to obtain Republican Party patronage, boycotted and harassed by the cattlemen, he conceived a plan to produce a thorough indictment of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. In it he was encouraged by the Democratic Party, which hoped to defeat the Republicans in the 1892 election by thoroughly discrediting their close “cattle baron” ties. Mercer’s financial peril had sunk to the point where the creditors literally bayed at his door. If the Democrats won, renewed patronage was a possibility.⁷¹ On 14 October 1892, he fired a savage indictment through publication of the “confession” of George Denning, one of the invaders. Its appearance three weeks before the election was no coincidence. Some 24,000 extra copies were slated for distribution by Democrats around the state, some 22,600 more than Mercer’s regular circulation. Republican cattleman managed to harass him out of business for a couple weeks, have him arrested briefly while on a business trip to Chicago and confiscate a good many of the “handbills.”⁷² Republican Party chair Willis Van Devanter also replied to the charges in the *Sun*, which he had temporarily

commandeered while Slack was out of town.⁷³ But some mud stuck. In 1892 the Democratic Party won a resounding Wyoming victory.

Mercer spent 1893 collecting together his final thoughts on the Johnson County “war”: *The Banditti of the Plains. Or the Cattlemen’s Invasion of Wyoming in 1892.*⁷⁴ The ringing indictment of the Wyoming cattlemen so shocked the association that legend tells a tale of theft, treachery and nearly complete suppression against Mercer, the “cow country Zola.” More recent scholarship, however, makes it clear that the association made no determined effort to suppress *Banditti*. Mercer’s son Homer Ralph Mercer in 1954 said the book was not banned, and that he indeed remembers trying to sell copies in rural Wyoming.⁷⁵ It does seem probable the association bought and burned as many copies as it could.

VI. Conclusion.

Did Mercer have an ulterior motive? Always. A Cheyenne newspaper notice suggested the connection between the Democrats and *Banditti*: “E. T. Payton of the *Leader*, who has been doing dirty work for the Democratic Party ever since his arrive in the state, started north last night with a horse and a cart, and a large number of copies of the book [*Banditti*] which he will distribute among the ranchmen and settlers who may permit his presence on the premises.”⁷⁶ (The *Leader* responded that any business Payton has in the north is purely in his capacity as circulation manager.) The book filtered into American lore even as Mercer left Cheyenne for greener patronage, in 1895 landing the state statistician’s job.

The Johnson County episode so discredited the Wyoming Stock Growers Association that it never recovered its prestige. Most of the big cattlemen who had participated pulled whatever stock they had left out of Wyoming, realizing they would not survive the angry “rustlers.” The Cheyenne Club, a shadow of its former power, no longer exists in Cheyenne, long torn down to make way for the twentieth century. No plaque marks its site. It has become, as contemporary papers suggested, an embarrassment. But in the end it was Mercer’s anti-cattleman

Banditti that set the tone for a century of stories pitting “evil” cattle barons against “good” settlers.⁷⁷ Mercer’s tale of cattlemen versus settlers most famously became the 1953 movie “Shane,” and lent a theme to countless novels and forgotten westerns. Yet it was a story constructed originally by journalists, a legend that persists even more than a century after powerful men made a last stand for an era in America that was about to come to an end.

¹ Papers of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA), archives of the American Heritage Center (AHC), University of Wyoming (UW), Box 46.

² James S. Brisbin, *The Beef Bonanza; Or, How to Get Rich on the Plains*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959 (reprint of 1881 edition).

³ Earnest Staples Osgood, *The Day of the Cattleman*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1929, 85.

⁴ Papers of the WSGA, AHC, UW, Box 195, accounting for 1881.

⁵ Vaughn Mechau, “John Bull in the Cattle Country.” *Rocky Mountain Empire Magazine*, 28 March 1948, n.p., deposited in papers of the WSGA, AHC, UW, Box 229.

⁶ Gilbert C. Fite, foreword to Brisbin, viii.

⁷ Report of the annual meeting of the WSGA, *Black Hills Daily Times*, Deadwood, SD, 12 April 1885, p. 4

⁸ “Wyoming’s Wealth,” report to the association, papers of the WSGA, AHC, UW, Box 88.

⁹ Papers of the WSGA, AHC, UW, Box 88.

¹⁰ See, for example, William W. Savage, ed., *Cowboy Life. Reconstructing an American Myth*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975; Robert G. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986; Don D. Walker, *Clio’s Cowboys. Studies in the Historiography of the Cattle Trade*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1981; Everett Dick, *Vanguards of the Frontier. A Social History of the Northern Plains and Rocky Mountains from the Fur Traders to the Sod Busters*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1941.

¹¹ Charles Hall, “Asa S. Mercer and ‘The Banditti of the Plains’: A Reappraisal.” *Annals of Wyoming* 49 (Spring 1977), 54.

¹² Lewis Atherton, *The Cattle Kings*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961; Bison Book edition, 1972, 25.

¹³ Jacobucci Collection (early Wyoming journalism), AHC, UW, Box 1, File 1.

¹⁴ Roger G. Barker, “The Influence of Frontier Environments on Behavior,” in Jerome O. Steffen, ed., *The American West. New Perspectives, New Dimensions*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979, 78.

¹⁵ Charles W. Smith, “Asa Shinn Mercer, Pioneer in Western Publicity.” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 27 (October 1936), 348.

¹⁶ “A Woman’s Weapon,” *Cheyenne (WY) Leader*, 22 July 1884, 3.

¹⁷ *Leader, ibid.*

¹⁸ Joseph Jacobucci Collection, manuscript on early Wyoming press history, AHC, UW, Box 2.

¹⁹ Hall, 56.

²⁰ *Leader, ibid.*

²¹ Hall, 58.

²² *Leader, ibid.*

²³ Account books, papers of the WSGA, AHC, UW, Boxes 46, 88.

²⁴ Recollections of John Clay, papers of the WSGA, AHC, UW, Box 195.

²⁵ Account books, papers of the WSGA, AHC, UW, Boxes 43, 46.

²⁶ W. E. Chaplin, “Some of the Early Newspapers of Wyoming.” *Miscellanies*, Wyoming Historical Society, 1919, 7-8.

²⁷ Chaplin, 16.

²⁸ “The House Divided.” *Cheyenne Leader*, 24 July 1884, 3; no title, *Cheyenne Leader*, 26 July 1884, 2.

- ²⁹ Osgood, 120.
- ³⁰ Reminiscences of W. E. Guthrie, cattle foreman, manuscript dated 1925, deposited in papers of the WSGA, AHC, UW, Box 25.
- ³¹ Letter from Arther T. Aldis, Sundance, Wyoming, published in *The Atlantic Monthly* 29 (October 1885), 360-1.
- ³² Walker, 29.
- ³³ Source: Economic History Service, on the web at <<http://eh.net/hmit/ppowerusd/>>.
- ³⁴ D. F. Baber, as told by Bill Walker, *The Longest Rope. The Truth About the Johnson County Cattle War*. Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1947 (reprint of 1940 edition). Walker was a witness on the side of the nesters, but his statement agrees with testimony of George Denning, one of the men hired to accompany the cattlemen. William Galispie Angus Papers, No. 8508, Box 1, AHC, UW.
- ³⁵ Samuel Travers Clover, *On Special Assignment*. New York: Argonaut Press, Ltd., 1965, (reprint of 1903 edition), 221-2. The book, lightly disguised, is a word-for-word copy of Clover's 1892 newspaper accounts.
- ³⁶ Charles B. Penrose Papers, in Lois Van Valkenburgh, "The Johnson County War: the Papers of Charles Bingham Penrose," Master's thesis, 1939, University of Wyoming. AHC, UW.
- ³⁷ "Caught in a Trap." *Cheyenne Leader*, 13 April 1892, 1.
- ³⁸ Clover, 223.
- ³⁹ Jonelle D. Moore, "A History of the Wyoming Press Association 1877-1944." Master's thesis, University of Wyoming, 1986, 67-8.
- ⁴⁰ Penrose Papers.
- ⁴¹ Hall, 61.
- ⁴² *Cheyenne Leader*, 24 July 1884, editorial, 2.
- ⁴³ Laramie County District Court Case papers, Burton S. Hill Collection, No. 1602, Box 2, AHC, UW.
- ⁴⁴ "Put It Out of Sight for a Moment," *Cheyenne Leader*, 26 May 1892, 2.
- ⁴⁵ Clover, 251-2.
- ⁴⁶ Clover, 256; Denning testimony, Angus papers, 35.
- ⁴⁷ Clover, 256.
- ⁴⁸ Penrose Papers.
- ⁴⁹ William Sturgis Papers, AHC, UW, Box 1.
- ⁵⁰ "The Northern Expedition," *Cheyenne Leader*, 8 April 1892, 2.
- ⁵¹ "News from the North." *Cheyenne Leader*, 16 April 1892, 1. The published date may be incorrect: likely April 11 or 12. Both the *Sun* and *Stock Grower* for these dates have been lost.
- ⁵² "The Northern Situation," *Cheyenne Leader*, 20 April 1892, 2.
- ⁵³ Telegram from Washington, D.C., Johnson County War Papers, AHC, UW.
- ⁵⁴ "Caught in a Trap," *Cheyenne Leader*, 13 April 1892, 1; "News from the North," *Cheyenne Leader*, 16 April 1892, 1.
- ⁵⁵ Penrose Papers, Valkenburgh thesis, 48.
- ⁵⁶ Herbert O. Brayer, "New Light on the Johnson County War." *The Westerners Brand Book* 9 (Chicago), February 1953, n.p.
- ⁵⁷ "An Explanation," *Cheyenne Sun*, 3 May 1892, 2. January-26 April editions of the *Sun* are lost from archives.
- ⁵⁸ "To Investigate," *Cheyenne Leader*, 5 April 1892, 2.
- ⁵⁹ *Cheyenne Leader*, 7 April 1892, editorial, 3.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, quoting the *Fremont Clipper*, indicated as Republican, despite its support.
- ⁶¹ "The Leader's Troubles," article and reprint of formal complaint, *Cheyenne Sun*, 19 June 1892, 2, 3.
- ⁶² "The Issue Is Plain." *Cheyenne Leader*, 30 June 1892, 3.
- ⁶³ *Cheyenne Leader*, 3 July 1892, 2, editorial.
- ⁶⁴ Hall, 61; Gould, 9.
- ⁶⁵ *Cheyenne Leader*, 6 July 1892, 2.
- ⁶⁶ "Another Boycott," "Bulldozing the Press," *Cheyenne Leader*, 8 Jul 1892, 2; 13 July 1892, 2.
- ⁶⁷ Letters to W. R. Stoll, Cheyenne, dated 4 May 1892 and 7 May 1892. Johnson County War Papers, AHC, UW, Box. 208.
- ⁶⁸ *Cheyenne Sun*, 28 April 1892, 2, editorial.
- ⁶⁹ Burritt to Stoll, 7 May 1892.

⁷⁰ Booklet, Burton S. Hill collection, No. 1602, AHC, UW, Box. 2.

⁷¹ Lewis L. Gould, "A. S. Mercer and the Johnson County War. A Reappraisal." *Arizona and the West* 7 (1965), 7.

⁷² Hall, 60. Most of Mercer's *Journal* after 1887 is lost from archives.

⁷³ Gould, 14.

⁷⁴ Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954. Reprint editions are common. The book is still in print.

⁷⁵ Hall, 63.

⁷⁶ *Cheyenne Leader*, 16 August 1894, 2, quoting the *Cheyenne Tribune*, editorial.

⁷⁷ Gould, 5, footnote.

*The Black Press, the Black Metropolis,
and the Founding of the Negro Leagues
(1915-1920)*

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The shared goal of integrating professional baseball by first building up the sport in the black community partnered the black press with black businessmen in founding, running, and promoting Negro league baseball. The first enduring of these leagues, the Negro National, began in February 1920 when six team owners and at least five sportswriters for the black press convened in Kansas City. The two days of meetings ended more than two decades of false starts and ushered in an era of professional organization in black baseball that would last until Jackie Robinson crashed through the color barrier in 1947.

The new league ratified in Kansas City was just one product of Chicago's Black Metropolis, a leadership movement in that city's black community that established a host of institutions on the city's south side. This coalition united the likes of Robert S. Abbott, the *Chicago Defender's* publisher, with church, civic, and business leaders, including those of black baseball. By 1915, the Black Metropolis had established banks, hospitals, a thriving Y.M.C.A.-based network of athletic and social clubs, political organizations, service networks, newspapers, and baseball teams. This uplift movement placed Chicago first among black baseball's mostly northern cities and contributed to making the *Defender* the nation's largest black weekly.

This paper documents the founding of the Negro National League and the partnership it required. The portrait that emerges is one of commercial vitality, entrepreneurial vigor, and a spirit of cooperation at odds with many if not most

stereotypes and conceptions of black ghetto life in the early part of the century. The black metropolis that mushroomed between the wars provided its members with institutions and traditions that mainstream American culture has largely ignored. In organizing baseball, this business community produced a vibrant thread in social and commercial life that has been only episodically researched. This paper is a response to that void.

The term “Negro leagues” refers only to “big league” black baseball of segregated America. It was the term used by black Americans to differentiate their Negro major leagues from the white major leagues and from the many semi-professional, city and industrial league, and independent teams that proliferated wherever there were concentrations of blacks.¹ Baseball in the twenties was more than America’s dominant sport, it was the dominant recreation.²

Scant research has been done on black press coverage of and involvement in Negro league baseball, particularly during the founding of the leagues. Still less exists in journalism and mass communication scholarship. Because members of the black press are prominent in the narrative of Negro league history, and since the mainstream press largely ignored black baseball, black newspapers provide an important primary source for scholarship on the Negro leagues and professional baseball’s integration. Rarely, however, has the black press itself been the subject of research in the context of its relationship with and intimate involvement in black baseball.

In baseball scholarship, historian Mark Ribowsky is one of the relatively few scholars to include the black press as a subject of research rather than merely as a primary source for research on some other aspect of the Negro leagues. In his work, *A Complete History of the Negro Leagues, 1884-1955*, Ribowsky identifies a wholesale and

wrenching switch in perspective on the part of the black papers vis-à-vis black baseball, from symbiosis to abandonment.³

In providing a comprehensive history, Ribowsky owes much to Robert Peterson, whose volume, *Only the Ball Was White*, broke ground in 1970. Peterson provided the first wide-ranging history of the Negro leagues in more than six decades, or since Sol White charted black baseball's early history in *Sol White's Official Base Ball Guide*. In Peterson's work, however, the black press is little more than a footnote. Peterson was more concerned with recording the first-person accounts of the Negro leaguers and did not analyze the leagues as historical or social artifacts.

As the principal founder of the Negro National League in 1920, Andrew "Rube" Foster, was a towering figure in black baseball, black business, and black community life in Chicago. He is prominent in this paper, as well, which depends in part on biographies of Foster by Charles Whitehead and, more recently, Robert C. Cottrell.⁴ Both biographies rely almost entirely upon black newspapers, and both examine Foster's lengthy relationship with and use of the newspapers. Whitehead, in particular, details Foster's friendship with Fay Young, the *Defender's* long-time sports editor. It was a critical relationship to the Negro National League's founding and, as such, it is a focus in this paper, as well.

Baseball began making the front pages of black newspapers around the turn of the century when both the sport and newspaper publishing were gaining new legitimacy as black-owned businesses. One of the first and more popular subjects for the black papers in Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Indianapolis was a pitcher-turned-manager-

turned-team owner, the son of a Texas preacher who would become the most dominant figure in black baseball during the twentieth century's first quarter.

Based on several accounts, Rube Foster amassed a loyal following wherever he went. In the late 1910s and early 1920s, many considered him the best known black man in Chicago.⁵ Almost without exception supporters included members of the black press, publishers and writers who partnered with him throughout his career. As Cottrell wrote, "The affection afforded the father of organized black baseball [Foster] demonstrated the importance of the sport and the Negro National League held for the African American community."⁶ A Negro league team owner of a later generation, Effa Manley of the Newark Eagles, described Foster in her memoirs as "one of the most revered names in Negro baseball history."⁷

Black press support for Foster began during his playing days in Chicago and continued with a campaign to enshrine him in the National Baseball Hall of Fame long after his abrupt death.⁸ When his Leland Giants swept the Indianapolis ABCs in 1907, Foster was described in the *Indianapolis Freeman*, the ABCs' hometown paper, as "one of the best pitchers in the country . . . if he were white would belong to the biggest league in America."⁹ The description points to a practice common in sports coverage of the time, which was to compare top black stars with their white counterparts, and to the insufficiency of rating first among peers in a segregated, minority world.

One of Foster's best sources of unwavering support came from the *Indianapolis Freeman's* David Wyatt, a Chicago-based sportswriter who previously played with Foster as a Chicago Union Giant and who split time by serving as the Leland Giants' official scorer.¹⁰ The *Freeman's* chief baseball correspondent from 1907 until 1920,

Wyatt was unabashedly pro-Foster in a very public battle for control of the Leland Giants, a duel that pitted Foster against Leland and Major R.R. Jackson, also an owner in the Giants and a frequent writer for the *Chicago Defender*.¹¹

Frustrated by having to share power with Jackson, Foster left the Leland Giants in 1911 to form his own team, the Chicago American Giants, which in its first year became front-page, column-one news in the six-year-old *Defender*, both because of Foster's profile and due to the Giants' success on the field.¹² According to Cary B. Lewis, a sportswriter for the *Defender* who, prior to 1911, covered sports and national news for the *Freeman*, Foster had "the confidence and respect of the press and fans . . . No man in baseball has more influence."¹³

After two years as owner and general manager of the American Giants, Foster had already become, at least from Young's perspective, the "world's greatest black ballplayer, manager and owner." If Chicago crowned Foster, Young believed, "the rest of the nation would follow." Young would remain one of Foster's most ardent and public supporters throughout Foster's life and chief protector of his memory and legacy after.¹⁴ In another sign of Foster's prominence and of his ties to the press, a stag party thrown for him in 1912 attracted "hundreds of his admirers and fans," including Elwood C. Knox, business manager of the *Freeman* and son of the paper's publisher, as well as "many leading members of the press."¹⁵

Foster turned to the *Freeman* again in 1915 and 1916 during a war of words with another powerful team owner, C. I. Taylor of the Indianapolis ABCs. Taylor would later be a businessman Foster would need in 1920 to start the Negro National League. In 1915, however, the dueling magnates traded accusations with abandon, writing first-person

rebuttals to the other's claims in the *Freeman's* and *Defender's* sports pages on almost a weekly basis for a period of three months.

Sparking the feud was a midsummer series between the Giants and ABCs in Indianapolis. Polluted with confrontation and controversy, the five-game set featured several shoving matches and at least one bench-clearing melee. For the events during the "disgraceful series of games," Foster wrote open letters to the *Freeman* and the *Defender*, accusing Indianapolis police of striking one of his players with a gun, using racial epithets, and threatening to blow out Foster's brains. He charged Taylor with stealing players and called him a "stool pigeon," "a liar and a jackal," "the Ingrate . . . of the lowest kind," and a manager for whom his own brothers refused to play.¹⁶ The *Freeman* published the letter alongside a studio portrait of a regal Foster in derby hat, tie and tails, and smoking a cigar. The portrait's caption proclaimed that the sharply dressed manager was "held high in the estimation of the base ball public all over the world by both white and colored," adding weight to Foster's case against Taylor.

Foster's "explanation" required approximately one thousand words. Taylor's response a week later, also in the *Freeman*, ran even longer, occupying all of the paper's eighth page, the *Freeman's* regular sports page.¹⁷ Taylor blasted the black papers for being "bamboozled" by Foster, for "deifying" him, and for being the means for one person to so malign the character of another. It was grounds for a "libel suit in the Federal courts," Taylor wrote, saying that he, too, deserved credit for building up black baseball.

Unlike Foster, Taylor used the occasion to describe and discuss the state of black baseball, cataloging its ills and lobbying once again for organization as their cure. As evidence of his support, he submitted and the *Freeman* printed in their entirety a pair of

letters written to Foster prior to the clash. The letters propose a league and, despite the controversy and its insults, endorse Foster as that proposed league's president.¹⁸

Later in the year, another flurry of open letters from Foster and Taylor were published by the *Freeman*, this round contesting the title of world champion. The magnates took turns stating their cases and criticizing the other's organization and newspaper of preference, the *Defender* for Foster and the *Freeman* for Taylor.¹⁹ Foster said he would not go "far enough to say that the *Freeman* and [Indianapolis] *Ledger* are not reputable newspapers, or the sport writers [*sic*] of their papers, as probably they have wrote as they have been informed by the A.B.C. management," but he claimed the paper had been "hoodwinked." Taylor admonished the *Defender* for giving Foster "cheap notoriety" and for prematurely crowning the American Giants.

Foster actively sought support in the black press, and generally he received it. He gave season passes to black sportswriters, allowed correspondents to travel with the team on road trips, and on at least one occasion presented the *Defender's* Young with the same championship belt given to the players of the American Giants.²⁰ Because of limited resources, black newspapers relied on the press releases, box scores, and other information submitted by the teams. Those organizations more opportunistic in feeding the newspapers, like Foster's Giants, not surprisingly enjoyed more coverage. Following the 1917 season, for example, the managing editor of the *Philadelphia Tribune*, G. Grant Williams, praised Ed Bolden and the Hilldales for their "business-like methods," use of publicity, and "for everything they have accomplished."²¹

Foster's and Taylor's editorial freedom in the *Freeman* and *Defender* established a precedent and a template for other baseball owners and officials, including Bolden,

another of Foster's long-time rivals both on the field and in business.²² Ed Bolden sought to generate interest in his Hilldale team and influence public opinion with first-person accounts in the *Tribune*. Later, in the thirties and forties, baseball barons and black businessmen Cumberland Posey and Gus Greenlee frequently wrote first-person accounts in and opinions for the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *Chicago Defender*.²³

When Foster took baseball into the small towns and rural communities throughout the Midwest, "spreading the gospel of blackball," the American Giants were given credit by the black press for setting the national stage for organized black baseball. On one barnstorming tour in 1916, the team logged 20,000 miles traveling to Omaha, Denver, Los Angeles, San Diego, and even Cuba. The *Defender* reported from every stop along the way for a growing national audience increasingly interested in sporting matters.²⁴ Because the *Defender* was distributed throughout the Midwest and beyond, Foster could spread his baseball "gospel" in places his team traveled and played, extending his influence from his base of power in Chicago.²⁵

Following the American Giants' epic road trip and shortly before the first pitch of the 1917 season, talks began again on organizing a "colored baseball league," this time centered in Dayton, Ohio. According to David Wyatt reporting in the *Freeman*, several veterans of black baseball appeared ready to become charter members of the new league, which planned to exclude whites from every facet, from owning the playing venues to booking the games to umpiring the action.²⁶ The proposed league would be a world of black owners, players, umpires, scorekeepers, reporters, and writers, a vision articulated by Foster and championed both by Foster and Wyatt since the latter became a journalist in 1907.²⁷

Summarizing the aims of the new league, goals that would be picked up by the Negro National League three years later, Wyatt wrote that only when the black community is able to match the all-white major leagues in terms of quality “will the colored people be able to acquire a standard that will give them a base or means of comparison in baseball, with the other race.”²⁸ An equal or superior product on the field would force integration, both Wyatt and Foster believed, though Foster felt it would occur with the major leagues adding an entire all-black team, intact, to the major leagues. He planned to be the owner and manager of that all-black major league entry.²⁹

After a very good 1917 season for the American Giants, Wyatt credited Foster with nothing less than saving black baseball through touring and by booking games with professional, semi-professional, industrial, and club teams throughout the Midwest. “We know it to be a fact that he was the meal ticket of practically every colored club making a bid for recognition for the season of 1917,” Wyatt wrote.³⁰ As a booking agent with connections in both white and black worlds, including links to the Chicago Cubs and Chicago White Sox, Foster was indeed invaluable to the health of black baseball in Chicago and beyond.

Foster once again lobbied for a baseball association in 1919, and he used the black press as his primary channel of influence.³¹ His efforts could not have come at a better time. After World War I, the nation needed diversion, and it plunged itself into sport to forget the conflict’s miseries. Sports programs initiated in army training camps helped to engender “a more truly national appreciation of sport” during the twenties.³² Postwar prosperity and a shorter work week that created more leisure time pushed professional baseball’s attendance to record highs in 1919. But the war also put

America's hypocrisy on vivid display. Fighting for freedom in Europe in a war during which blacks served with distinction both as soldiers abroad and in factories at home, America did little to prevent a hardening of the racial divide on its own soil.

Unrest uncoiled throughout the country in 1919, serving to unite black communities around their own businesses and ventures. Approximately twenty-five race riots broke out in many American cities during that "Red Summer," with the worst violence sweeping through Chicago. Shootings, bombings, looting, and arson scorched the city's south side in riots that killed thirty-eight, wounded five hundred and left several hundred more homeless.³³ No city in America was so afflicted by "political trickery, chicanery and exploitation" than was Chicago, wrote the NAACP's secretary, Walter F. White, who pointed to a new spirit aroused in blacks by their wartime experiences.³⁴

Amidst increasing tensions caused by crowded, segregated city life, black newspapers "helped many a team to survive [and] increased local support of black baseball," historian Leslie Heaphy wrote. Relying on coverage by the white dailies would have prohibited fans from following their teams and favorite players. And the teams got no publicity for or notice of upcoming games in the white papers.³⁵ The three major white Detroit dailies of the period – the *Detroit News*, *Free Press*, and *Times* – either selectively published box scores of Detroit's professional black team, the Stars, or not at all.³⁶ In fact, much of the history of the Stars is lost because only a few scattered issues of the black weekly *Detroit Contender* survive from the twenties.

In contrast, extensive press coverage in the *Defender* and the *Freeman*, among other newspapers, helped teams such as the Leland Giants, the Chicago American Giants, and Indianapolis ABCs become sources of pride, uplift, and solidarity for their

communities. The teams united black businessmen, community leaders, and a growing urban working class behind a vision of job creation, financial success, and athletic achievement that rivaled that of whites.³⁷ They helped to bridge class distinctions and, in the Negro National League, to create an institution that ultimately would prove vital in the campaign to integrate the major leagues. The team owners pursued baseball both as an entrepreneurial endeavor and as a response to discrimination and segregation.

The newspapers provided vital link between the teams and their fans, as well. In his autobiography, longtime Negro league veteran John “Buck” O’Neil wrote that he “read about [black baseball] in the *Chicago Defender* or the *Amsterdam News* or the *Pittsburgh Courier*; my father subscribed to those weekly papers mostly so I could learn about the Negro baseball teams. When the mail arrived on Monday [most weeklies published on Saturday], all the kids were at my house, reading about Dick Lundy . . . or the legendary John Henry Lloyd.”³⁸

Baseball at this time was establishing itself as the nation’s premier game of preference. Factors included expanding press coverage, a growing playground movement and an expansion in school athletic programs and park programs, growing interest among women to signify the game’s propriety, popular songs and humor devoted to the sport, and the automobile. Movie houses began showing World Series films in 1916, while the telegraph and electric scoreboards kept fans in America’s cities updated on game action.³⁹

Sensing the time was right, Foster pleaded his case for league organization to other club owners in an April 1919 issue of the *Defender*, urging them to unite in “not allowing white men to own, manage, and do as they feel like doing in the semipro ranks

with underhand methods.”⁴⁰ Though Foster himself would court white partners, such as J. L. Wilkinson, owner of the Kansas City Monarchs, he crusaded in concert with Wyatt against what he described as the corruptive “white” influence, a reference mainly to the white booking agents operating out of New York City and Philadelphia.

Beginning in November 1919 and writing weekly in the weekly *Defender* through January 1920, Foster explained in installments why a league was the only solution to the difficulties facing black baseball. If club owners wanted to stop players from jumping for even the smallest of salary increases, if they wanted to have any kind of bargaining power with the parks and stadiums they leased for their games, if they wanted to turn a profit, they would have to join him in organizing.⁴¹

In addition to the space allotted him for a weekly column, “The Pitfalls of Baseball,” the *Defender* provided editorial support from its own writers and published Foster’s address so interested owners could contact him. *Defender* writer Ira Lewis wrote about the need for a segregated league that would make and keep money within the black community.⁴² For the *Defender*, uplift equaled gaining and keeping control of an enterprise by and for blacks.

The space turned over to Foster for his blend of opinion, history, advice, and political spin was remarkable both in its abundance and for the editorial freedom Foster had in filling it. It was not altruism, however. The *Defender* benefited from the exclusives due to Foster’s stature in baseball and in Chicago’s black community, and because of the popularity of Foster’s standard-setting American Giants.

The *Defender* was not baseball’s only friend. Robert L. Vann allotted generous space in his new magazine, *The Competitor*, a monthly published in Pittsburgh to

complement Vann's weekly *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper. The magazine offered a general interest mix of features and stories, and each issue included a longish feature piece on baseball, boxing, basketball, or football.

The Competitor would publish for only two years, quickly becoming one of many victims of the savage competition among magazines, competition that included *The Crisis*, *The Colored American Review*, *Upreach Magazine*, *Half Century*, and *The Crusader*, among others.⁴³ During its brief run, however, the publication supported black baseball without qualification, turning over its pages to magnates such as Taylor and Foster in about half its issues.

In the February 1920 *Competitor*, which coincided in publication with the Negro National's organizing meetings, C.I. Taylor argued for baseball's organization as the "intelligent beginning of all things" as an issue with ramifications far beyond the confines of ballparks and league offices. Baseball was but a showcase for the accomplishment of the race, Taylor wrote, "and the sooner we as a race recognize this fact, the quicker will we be acknowledged by other people; and the greater will be our strides in the game of life."⁴⁴ The four-page magazine article included economics as an argument for support, a recurring theme in articles aimed at putting more fans in the parks. Taylor estimated that had his team, the Indianapolis ABCs, been white instead of black, he could have sold it for \$100,000. As a black team, it did not "net me a single penny," he wrote.⁴⁵ Taylor's argument implied that it was up to the race to help the race.

The new league would need credibility and propriety, and the newspapers obliged. When the founding owners were announced, the *Defender* described Detroit's John "Tenny" Blount as a "typical" black businessman.⁴⁶ As many black baseball club

owners did during the century's first half, Blount ran rackets in prostitution and gambling, vocations the *Defender* conveniently overlooked.⁴⁷ Other than these vocations very little is known about Blount. At the time of the league's founding he was a man in his thirties with "an unremarkable past."⁴⁸

Since Blount's ownership stake in the Stars is unknown, it is possible Foster had a controlling interest and installed Blount merely as his agent. This would explain why Foster stocked the Stars with his own players, a move Foster publicly described as an effort to help the Stars be competitive and the league to achieve parity.⁴⁹ The press also helped the new league by pledging to place correspondents in every city in the new league in order to report and promote its "comings and goings."⁵⁰

A spirit of regeneration among black Americans swept through Northern cities in the 1920s, as was evidenced by the expansion of the black church, and a proliferation of labor-based brotherhoods. A shared desire for uplift and racial pride gave rise to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, the Urban League, and the African Blood Brotherhood, among other organizations.⁵¹ Literature, entertainment, and sports, too, were fertile fields for the new optimism.

The Harlem Renaissance and New Negro Movement, with their promises of rejuvenation, resurrection, and rebirth, were emblematic of this post-war period. In one of the recurring themes of Harlem Renaissance literature, especially among its female writers, heroes and heroines found happiness only after surrendering a search for identification that hinged on achievement in a white man's world.⁵² In this context, a new black baseball league can be seen as one of several conscious attempts at indigenous

cultural expression, as part of a flowering of black culture, including literature, poetry, and music.

In sharp contrast to the diversity of sports, amusements, and leisure activities parading in twenty-first century American life and competing for disposable income, by 1920 baseball had established itself as the national game. Newspapers were among the sport's biggest boosters in what was very much a symbiotic relationship. Another mass medium crucial the sport's success arrived on the scene that year with the nation's first radio station, Westinghouse's KDKA in Pittsburgh.⁵³ As one historian described baseball's importance, the sport had become associated with "local and national prestige and with democratic society," giving autoworkers in Detroit a common interest with farmers in Missouri. The lingo of its games was spoken in barbershops, hotel lobbies, barrooms, churches, and schools.⁵⁴

Baseball filled in the lobby of the Street Hotel in Kansas City in February 1920. A first-rate hotel catering to the black community, the Street hosted dignitaries in town for the Negro National League's founding, including at least six team owners and five sportswriters from the black press.⁵⁵ In addition to Foster, founding owners included the ABCs' C.I. Taylor; Detroit's Blount; Joe Green of the Chicago Giants; Lorenzo Cobb of the St. Louis Giants; and J. L. Wilkinson of the Kansas City Monarchs, who was repeatedly identified in the *Defender* as J.W. Wilkerson.⁵⁶

Journalists known to have attended and participated were David Wyatt of the *Freeman*,⁵⁷ Elwood C. Knox, business manager of the *Freeman* and son of its publisher, Cary B. Lewis of the *Defender*, Q.J. Gilmore of the *Kansas City Call*, and J.D. Howard and A.D. Williams of the *Indianapolis Ledger*.⁵⁸ During first day of meetings, Lewis was

elected secretary of the new league, a development which the *Defender* trumpeted the appointment in its sports pages.⁵⁹

Further underlining the collaboration of newspapermen and baseball, writers from the St. Louis *Argus* and Kansas City *Call* served as the founding meetings' official hosts.⁶⁰ According to items in the *Defender's* social pages, the Monarchs' Wilkinson hosted a ten-course dinner one night, while the *Call's* sports editor, Q. J. Gilmore, hosted a banquet and smoker the following night.⁶¹ Speakers during each evening's entertainment, in addition to Foster, included the *Defender's* Lewis and the *Freeman's* Wyatt.⁶²

Perhaps most importantly, it was the sportswriters who drafted the league's constitution. Effa Manley, co-founder and, with her husband, Abe Manley, co-owner of the Newark Eagles, credited Lewis and Wyatt, as well as attorney Elisha Scott of Topeka, Kansas, with the league constitution's drafting.⁶³ The *Defender* gave credit for the constitution and bylaws to Lewis, Wyatt, Scott, and Knox, reporting that the four "were up all Friday night and part of Saturday morning framing the baseball 'bill of rights' to guide the destiny of the future league."⁶⁴ According to one veteran of the black press, the owners perhaps felt comfortable yielding so much responsibility to the sportswriters because the magnates had such an abiding respect for blacks who proved competent and intelligent wordsmiths.⁶⁵

Journalists determined club rosters and the structure of the league, feats difficult to imagine with twenty-first century notions of journalistic ethics and the big business environment of sports. The managers and owners had little input, at least according to the *Defender*, which reported that "the newspapermen had the day at the meeting . . . No

manager had ought to say about players. They were selected on account of their RELATIVE STRENGTH to each team. The newspaper men will form an arbitration board to settle all disputes and act as publicity agents for games.”⁶⁶ There is no evidence of such a board ever meeting to arbitrate. Foster’s own accounts of player selections, as recorded by his biographers, offer a quite different view, one that not surprisingly has Foster functioning as league architect.⁶⁷

According to the *Defender*’s reports, which largely came from Cary B. Lewis, Foster stated the aim and purpose of the meetings, then stepped aside and allowed “the newspaper men” to “decide all questions,” including player selection, league structure, rules and bylaws, and a schedule for organizing. According to the *Defender*’s account, this delegation of authority by Foster to the sportswriters was quickly assented to by Taylor and Blount.⁶⁸

Despite the *Defender* claiming some of the limelight, plenty still remained for Foster. Reporting on the meetings from Kansas City, the *Freeman*’s Wyatt called Foster “the Moses to lead the baseball children out of wilderness.”⁶⁹ This boosterism helps to explain why the black press was such a full partner in the Negro National League’s assembly, as does the fact that some of the writers, like Wyatt and Arthur D. Williams of the *Indianapolis Ledger*, had other ties to the league’s teams. A former player, Wyatt was the Giants’ official scorer, while Williams would later serve as an officer of the ABCs.⁷⁰ Lewis operated in baseball’s inner circles since 1907 or before.

Vann’s monthly magazine, *The Competitor*, trumpeted the league’s formation, devoting a two-page feature on the critical reconciliation of Foster and Taylor, and on the sacrifice Foster was making by joining his profitable American Giants with weaker

teams. After all, Foster “controlled the situation pretty much not only in Chicago, where baseball is the fourth meal of the day, but in the Middle West,” Lewis wrote.⁷¹

Lewis saw that the league could field better product and provide a more nutritious fourth meal of the day. He also viewed baseball as a model for other black-owned businesses. “The workings of this league will be watched with more than passing interest by everyone,” Lewis wrote. “If it is successful, as we all hope, look for a further merging of colored business interests on a national scale.”⁷² Because all eyes were watching, the players shouldered huge responsibility. Unstinted loyalty and “100 per cent effort will be required of them on and off the field,” he wrote, arguing that gentlemanly conduct was every bit as important as athletic competition in making the new league a success.

In another 1920 issue of *The Competitor*, Dave Wyatt provided a two-page, team-by-team preview of the season and introduced readers to each of the team owners.⁷³ Uncritical support continued in the magazine’s July issue in the form of an energetic attack on other Midwest black newspapers for failing to give their full support to the new league. “It is almost inconceivable and unbelievable that an effort to promote the colored baseball league would awaken only half-hearted interest and support from the colored press,” stated the unbylined article.⁷⁴ It is possible that one of the team owners wrote the piece, which might explain the absence of a byline. A leading candidate is Foster, since he is described in the article as “that indomitable leader.”⁷⁵ The *Competitor* article also celebrated the “wonderful progress” made by the league three months into its first season.

Perhaps the biggest difference between the prior and unsuccessful attempts to start a league and Foster’s organization in 1920 had to do with America’s shifting black population and a growing solidarity among blacks. The migration of southern blacks after

World War I provided the population base necessary to fill stands of the black communities' ballparks. African American communities were thriving by 1910 in Chicago (44,000 blacks), New York (92,000), and Philadelphia (85,000). Philadelphia's black population multiplied fifty-nine percent between 1910 and 1920 to 134,229. Between 1910 and 1930, one and a half million left the South and headed for northern cities.⁷⁶

This migration and expansion fueled the establishment of separate businesses, including banks and newspapers, hospitals and funeral homes, hotels and restaurants, ballparks and theaters. By 1906 in Philadelphia, for example, there were nine professional black baseball teams operating within one hundred miles of the city.⁷⁷ The rapid growth provided unprecedented business opportunities, such as Philadelphia's Hotel Dale, Dunbar Theater, and the Brown and Stevens Bank, all black-owned. The Hilldales' Ed Bolden was a member of the Citizens Republican Club, one of several elite organizations and cooperatives of local professionals and businessmen, as well as the Elks and Shriners. These business alliances helped forge development where capital was scarce.⁷⁸

Chicago, too, was becoming a "Mecca of Negro business enterprise," with the establishment of the Douglass National Bank, the Binga State Bank, Liberty National Insurance Co., and the Arcade Building.⁷⁹ Robert S. Abbott, the *Defender's* publisher, was a stockholder and director on the board of the Binga State Bank, and he served with the bank's president, Jesse Binga, in several associations and clubs. Not surprisingly, the *Defender* celebrated the bank as a commercial center by and for black Chicagoans, the signal of a new era for black businesses.⁸⁰

In addition to running the American Giants and the agency that booked all of the Negro National League's games, Foster managed Schorling Park and co-owned the American Giants Garage, "South Side's Finest Public Garage" and repair shop, a regular advertiser in the *Defender*.⁸¹ Foster also owned the lease to Detroit's Mack Park, home to the Detroit Stars for most of that team's league membership.

Three months after the founding meetings, C.I. Taylor's ABCs beat Foster's visiting American Giants four to two in front of eight thousand fans in the Negro National League's inaugural game.⁸² Effa Manley would later write that it was this league's beginnings that marked Negro baseball "coming into its own" as a black-owned business.⁸³ In his report, Wyatt wrote with the enthusiasm of a former player that the game was "the most important and far-reaching step ever negotiated by the baseball promoters of our Race."⁸⁴

A month later, a game at Chicago's Schorling Park between the American Giants and the New York Cubans drew more than ten thousand. The American Giants went on to shatter attendance marks at several parks, including Kansas City's American Association Park and Detroit's Navin Field. For the season, about one third of the league's total attendance saw games at Schorling Park, pointing both to the phenomenal success of the Giants and the relative weakness of the rest of the league's teams and baseball markets.⁸⁵

Though Foster's blueprint for baseball was being realized, he had grander visions still, including a new league in the South and with it a two-circuit organizational structure similar to the major leagues. According to the *Defender*, Foster was considering a trip in March 1920 to Atlanta to consult on the new Southern Circuit. David Wyatt and Cary B.

Lewis also were scheduled to help form the new league, but the trip never took place. It is not known what prevented Foster from taking the next step since during an earlier meeting in Atlanta, all seemingly went well.

“All of the baseball magnates who attended had great praise for the sport page of the Chicago Defender,” according to the report on the earlier meeting sent into the *Defender*.⁸⁶ The newspaper did not report on the plan for a southern circuit again. The Southern League flourished as a stand-alone league, albeit at a less-than-major-league level, but with no ties to the Negro National. Because of the size of its towns it retained semi-professional league status.⁸⁷

Other than the American Giants, teams struggled to make a profit. These fiscal realities and perhaps prodding from Foster led David Wyatt to write an article for the *Defender* imploring fans to support the Negro National and to prepare for a ticket price increase. Lionizing Foster as having made “more sacrifices for the good of the game than all the [other] managers together” and for breaking up his own team in order for Detroit to field one, Wyatt called the still young 1920 season a realization of Foster’s “life’s dream.”⁸⁸ But if salaries and travel and operational expenses were to be borne, Wyatt wrote, an “increase in the price of admission must be met by the public.”

Through Wyatt the *Defender* was justifying a ticket price increase before it was levied. This signals at least extraordinary influence by Negro league baseball officials and perhaps access by the press into the financial records of the clubs. It was not the first time the paper had defended ticket price increases. Following the close of the 1913 season, Foster and the American Giants announced an increase for 1914 that angered its

fans. The *Defender*'s response: Fans will "have to pay for quality and they have certainly got their money's worth lately, referring to the colored championship."⁸⁹

The *Defender* also came to the rescue when the league faced its first public relations crisis. In an August 1920 game between the Bacharach Giants and an unidentified Negro National League team, a Bacharach pitcher uncorked a wild pitch, sparking a series of protests and near fist-fights. The game was delayed on four different occasions, according to an unbylined article in the *Defender*.⁹⁰

Possibly written by Foster or by Young for Foster, the report warned players against such behavior and advocated that fighting players be barred from the league.⁹¹ At the very least, such players should be banned from playing in Chicago. For the black press, the article previewed a theme in baseball coverage from the twenties through the late fifties – fan behavior and propriety at games. It also demonstrated that the black press would be available to owners and managers with a message for their team's fans, access routinely taken advantage of by baseball's officials throughout the history of their leagues.

After the 1920 season, the Negro National League owners gathered in Indianapolis for annual meetings. During the proceedings, according to the *Freeman*, Hilldale was admitted into the league, bringing Ed Bolden into the fold, and the Dayton franchise was moved to Columbus and under the control of the legendary Sol White. More importantly, the league approved a reserve clause, prohibiting players from jumping teams and teams from taking the field against clubs who had pirated players.⁹² Player jumping would remain a nettlesome issue throughout the Negro leagues' existence.

During most of its twelve-year run, the Negro National League struggled for survival. The first few campaigns were particularly difficult, with only the Kansas City Monarchs and Foster's American Giants showing a profit for the first two seasons.⁹³ Weather and a down economy were contributing factors to a league-wide dip in attendance of twenty-five percent during the second season compared to the first.

Another challenge, equal to if not surpassing the potential in any economic downswing, came in the form of a rival league, one run by white booking agents in the Northeast. Foster penned and published in the *Defender* attacks on the Philadelphia-based Eastern Colored League, complaining that the rival league's teams were raiding Negro National teams of players and that the league enabled "racially impure" influences – the white booking agents – to corrupt black baseball. Foster's public relations campaign against the ECL continued throughout the early 1920s.

His exclusive columns, which regularly occupied roughly a third of the *Defender's* opening sports page, provided Foster with a tool with which to burnish his reputation and recast the past. He took credit, for example, for organizing the league and for sacrificing personal success for "the good of the Race." He claimed responsibility for making baseball socially and professionally reputable.⁹⁴ He criticized his fellow owners and prodded them to pay their league dues.⁹⁵ He accused players of "ruining the game" by jumping from teams, leagues, and even countries, for higher pay.⁹⁶

He also used the column to defend himself against charges that the Negro National was unwilling to hire black umpires, a recurring criticism heard during the league's first several seasons.⁹⁷ Before black umpires were reluctantly hired by the league in 1922, all league games were officiated by white umpires. Foster's defense is eerily

similar to that used by major league baseball in the forties regarding its failure to integrate. The necessary “qualifications are sadly missing in the [black] umpires that I have seen perform,” Foster wrote, providing a template for the case many major league managers and owners would make when declining to sign or even grant tryouts to black players.⁹⁸ Several major league team owners, including Clark Griffith of the Washington Senators and Larry MacPhail of the New York Yankees, would claim in the mid- and late-forties that they would integrate if they could, if only there was talent to justify it.

The *Defender* broke ranks with Foster on the issue of umpires. In a news story in October 1920, an op-ed piece in the paper proclaimed that the “public demand for umpires of color will get all the support of this paper.”⁹⁹ The *Defender* began raising the issue in June 1919, even before the league was formed, and periodically addressed it until 1922, when Foster hired one-half dozen black umpires. In the October 1920 editorial, the newspaper protested that it was not right to watch a game between “two teams of Race . . . and have two white men umpiring our games crammed down our throats.” The White Sox would never hire black umpires, the unbylined article argued.¹⁰⁰

The *Defender*’s protest against white umpiring is consistent with the paper’s advocacy of self-help and of the rights of blacks to administer their own affairs. What is implicit in the protest, however, is an acceptance of an all-white major league baseball. The White Sox’s refusal to hire “one or two gentlemen of color” as umpires is not challenged, nor is the segregated state of professional baseball. For the *Defender*, white baseball is the standard black baseball was endeavoring to achieve. Only later would the black press’ role become more of an activist one, challenging the sport’s segregation rather than affirming it with silence and by focusing exclusively on the Negro leagues.

Emblematic of the coverage was that of an October 1919 clash between Bolden's Hilldale team and a collection of major league all-stars, including Babe Ruth. It provided the *Defender* with an opportunity to challenge baseball's segregation, particularly since Hilldale came out on top. The newspaper declined the opportunity, however, instead remarking on the crowd's disappointment that Ruth had failed to hit one of his famous home runs.¹⁰¹ Ruth's presence and performance took precedence over the achievement of the Hilldale nine.

Hilldale's victory was not celebrated as blacks over whites. That a case had been made to include black players of equal merit in the major leagues was not mentioned. Ruth's prominence in the story and its headline points to his stature in the black community, in this instance at the expense of the Hilldale players. As Bruce Lenthall has pointed out, the great Negro league ballplayers were considered great based on what they accomplished against white major leaguers.¹⁰² The conservative coverage reflected as much the philosophy and politics of the *Defender's* publisher, Robert Abbott, as the state of protest within the black community against segregated society.

The close ties and symbiotic relationship fostered and enjoyed by the press and baseball's hierarchy in the forming of the Negro National, ties that have been largely ignored in scholarship, held until shortly before Jackie Robinson broke professional baseball's color barrier in 1947. This partnership had the black newspapers and their writers and editors performing the duties of league governing body, public message board for owners and managers, statistics and standings bureau, and as advocates or referees of fairness, sportsmanship, and professionalism. The black press connected the teams with their fans, especially when those teams played on the road. Ultimately, the black

newspapers provided perhaps the most important source documents for histories of Negro league baseball and, therefore, snapshots of a time, a place, and a people.

It should not surprise that the press and baseball's businessmen were welded together by ambition and mission. Many sportswriters were themselves former baseball players, familiar to if not friends with team owners and managers, especially in the first half of the decade. Some served as league officials. Newspaper publishers, like the team owners, were black entrepreneurs and community leaders striving for personal gain as well as for the uplift and achievement of the race. The partnership was a natural one.

For the black press, which at the time of the Negro National League's founding was largely a local press, coverage of and involvement in the locally owned black businesses, including baseball teams, were natural dimensions to the newspapers' relationship with the communities they served. This changed over time, as the audiences and, therefore, the agenda of the black press became more national in scope. Helping to build leagues on a segregationist model also was natural, both for the time period and for newspapers subscribing to Booker T. Washington's philosophy of self-help and acceptance through achievement.

¹ For more, see Donn Rogosin's Ph.D. dissertation, "Black Baseball: The Life in the Negro Leagues," University of Texas at Austin, 1981, 2. The dissertation served as the basis for Rogosin's book, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* (New York: Kodansha International, 1995).

² John Rickards Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage 1850-1950* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1974), 181

³ Mark Ribowsky, *A Complete History of the Negro Leagues, 1884-1955* (Seacaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1995).

⁴ Charles E. Whitehead, *A Man and His Diamonds* (New York: Vantage Press, 1980); and Robert C. Cottrell, *The Best Pitcher in Baseball: The Life of Rube Foster, Negro League Giant* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

⁵ Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White: A History of Legendary Black Players and All-Black Professional Teams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 104.

⁶ Cottrell, 4.

⁷ Effa Manley and Leon Herbert Hardwick, *Negro Baseball . . . before Integration* (Chicago: Adams Press, 1976), 6.

⁸ The campaign finally met success in March 1981.

⁹ "Giants Take Three-Game Series," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 31 August 1907, 7. The ABCs were named for the American Brewing Company (Debono, 18).

¹⁰ From a 21 September 1907 game account by Wyatt in the *Freeman* ("Booker T. Washington or the Fifteenth Amendment," 7): "Only praise for the Giants was heard, with Foster, hardly surprising, coming in for the lion's share." Foster and Wyatt played together in Chicago in 1902 and with the Cuban X-Giants in 1903, according to James A. Riley, *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the Negro Baseball Leagues* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1994), 290.

¹¹ See Jackson's letter to the editor, "No Baseball War in Chicago," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 18 December 1908, 18. Wyatt responded by calling Jackson a "has-been who has out-lived his usefulness." Jackson would outlast both Foster and Wyatt, becoming Negro National League president in 1937.

¹² Whitehead, 37.

¹³ *Defender*, 4 October 1911, 11. In the same article, Lewis wrote how important he felt it was that any new league be owned and controlled by "race men." From Louisville, Kentucky, Lewis also was based in Chicago.

¹⁴ Cottrell, 41, quoting Young's column in the *Defender*. In 1916, Young wrote that Foster and his American Giants had "done more to put Chicago on the baseball map than the three 1916 major league teams in Chicago," a reference to the National League Cubs, the American League White Sox, and the Federal League Whales.

¹⁵ "Rube Foster to be Honored with Stags," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 14 September 1912, 7.

¹⁶ Rube Foster's Explanation to the Base Ball Public of the United States," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 7 August 1915, 11. He signed the letter, "Yours for the Good of Colored baseball." Taylor's baseball-playing brothers were Ben Taylor and Candy Jim Taylor.

¹⁷ C.I. Taylor Standing Up For His Baseball Integrity," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 14 August 1915, 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* The letters were dated 5 May and 17 May 1915.

¹⁹ "Rube Wants Championship Without Fighting For It," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 11 November 1915, 7.

²⁰ Neil Lanctot, *Fair Dealing and Clean Playing: The Hilldale Club and the Development of Black Professional Baseball, 1910-1932* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1994), 41. Players on championship teams routinely got gold belt buckles in a ritual similar to the championship ring ceremonies for professional sports champions in the twenty-first century.

²¹ *Philadelphia Tribune*, 13 October 1917, cited in Lanctot, 48. The Hilldales fielded perhaps Philadelphia's most successful professional and semi-professional clubs. Like Leland, Bolden was among his community's more active members. He was a member of several black fraternal organizations, including the Elks, Masons, and Shriners, a member of the Citizen's Republican Club, a local black business and professional group, and he frequently delivered speeches on race consciousness. His Hilldale

club, which was incorporated, donated to black causes, participated in charity events, and advertised heavily in the *Tribune*.

²² The 9 November 1918 *Chicago Defender*, for example, includes an announcement from Foster imploring fans to behave, part of Foster's broader effort to get the Chicago Cubs to agree to an exhibition game. The announcement ran after Foster banned an unruly fan from American Giants games (Whitehead, 64).

²³ Posey, who served at one time as president of the *Courier*, owned the Homestead Grays in Pittsburgh and wrote the *Courier's* column, "The Sportive Realm," a column picked up by other black papers. Greenlee, who according to his son bailed out the *Courier* at least once financially, owned the Pittsburgh Crawfords (Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh*, 135 and 151. Ruck interviewed Charles Greenlee in 1980).

²⁴ Whitehead, 51.

²⁵ Cottrell, *Blackball, the Black Sox, and the Babe: Baseball's Crucial 1920 Season*, 65.

²⁶ David Wyatt, "The Annual 'Chestnut' Negro Base Ball League," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 27 January 1917, 7. Wyatt wrote that "[n]o white men are to have anything pertaining to a controlling interest. The white man who now and has in the past secured grounds and induced some one in the role of the 'good old Nigger' to gather a lot of athletes and then used circus methods to drag a bunch of our best citizens out only to undergo humiliation, with all kinds of indignities flaunted in their faces, while he sits back and grows rich off a percentage of the proceeds."

²⁷ See Wyatt's impassioned treatise on why baseball had to succeed for the black community in the 5 October 1907 issue of the *Freeman*, 6. In the piece, "No Means of Comparison Between Colored and Best White Clubs," Wyatt protests that there is "no way of measuring in a satisfactory manner, the strength of our colored players," since blacks were banned from the major leagues. This theme of benchmarking achievement against white culture was common. And the inability to make such comparisons was unique to baseball. Bicycling, boxing, racing, running, and "foot-ball" were all integrated, according to Wyatt.

²⁸ David Wyatt, "The Annual 'Chestnut' Negro Base Ball League," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 27 January 1917, 7.

²⁹ Cottrell, *Best Pitcher*, 34.

³⁰ David Wyatt, "Baseball," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 13 October 1917, 7.

³¹ Quote ("plunging into sport") from a 28 June 1919 editorial in the *New York Times*, "The Revival of Sport."

³² Betts, 181.

³³ Richard Bak, *Turkey Stearnes and the Detroit Stars* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 63. Bak points out that Detroit somehow escaped the violence. In Chicago, a black youth swimming in the segregated waters of Lake Michigan was hit with a rock thrown by an angry white. He drowned, touching off several eruptions of racial and ethnic conflict. Members of an Irish athletic club, Ragen's Colts, were chief instigators in the violence.

³⁴ In Cottrell, *The Best Pitcher*, 139.

³⁵ Leslie Heaphy, "Shadowed Diamonds: The Growth and Decline of the Negro Leagues," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Toledo, 1995), 50.

³⁶ See Bak's chronicle of the Stars and of professional black baseball in Detroit, *Turkey Stearnes and the Detroit Stars*, 19.

³⁷ An example of this solidarity is an April 1918 letter from Bolden to white booking agent Nat Strong published in its entirety by the *Tribune*. In the letter, Bolden rebuffs Strong's attempts to dominate black baseball and intimidate its team owners. "The race people of Philadelphia and vicinity are proud to proclaim Hilldale the biggest thing in the baseball world owned, fostered and controlled by race men," Bolden wrote. "To affiliate ourselves with other than race men would be a mark against our name that could never be eradicated" (*Tribune*, 13 April 1918, cited in Lanctot, 74).

³⁸ Buck O'Neil, with Steve Wulf and David Conrads, *I Had It Made* (New York: Fireside, 1996), 22-23. Dick "King Richard" Lundy played more than twenty years and is considered to have been the best shortstop of the twenties. Lloyd played a quarter-century and is considered by some to have been the greatest Negro leaguer of all time (Riley, 486-496).

³⁹ Betts, 123.

⁴⁰ Rube Foster, "Pitfalls of Baseball," *Chicago Defender*, 26 April 1919, 14.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3 January 1920, 9; 10 January 1920, 9; 17 January 1920, 9; 31 January 1920, 9.

⁴² Ira Lewis, "Baseball Circuit for Next Season," *Chicago Defender*, 4 October 1919, 10.

⁴³ For more on black magazines at the time, see Charles S. Johnson, "The Rise of the Negro Magazine," *Journal of Negro History* v. 13, no. 1 (January 1928), 7-21.

⁴⁴ C.I. Taylor, "The Future of Colored Baseball," *The Competitor*, February 1920, 76.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁴⁶ "Detroit Stars Ready For Next Season," *Chicago Defender*, 14 February 1920, 11. The article describes Blount (erroneously spelled in the newspaper as Blunt) as "one of the most popular and best liked sporting men in the country. Mr. Blunt is well known from coast to coast, having been manager of the famous Keystone Hotel and buffet of Chicago." The *Defender's* Fay Young wrote an entire column on Blount, "A Case of Good Judgment," describing the way he ran his businesses as "the example for all managers to follow." In the article, Young put the Detroit Stars' profits for the 1920 season at \$30,000 ("Sport Editorial," *Chicago Defender*, 12 February 1921, 6).

⁴⁷ Associations with gambling and rackets were among the black leagues' thornier issues, dependent as they were on successful black businessmen, which often meant "numbers" games runners and racketeers. Numbers games were simple, inexpensive amusements in which a bettor put down a penny or nickel on a specific three-digit number. Gambling kingpins also owning black baseball teams included Gus Greenlee of the Pittsburgh Crawfords, Cum Posey and Rufus Jackson of the Homestead Grays, also in Pittsburgh, Abe Manley of the Newark Stars, Ed Semler of the New York Black Yankees, and Alex Pompez of the New York Cubans. According to Lanctot (252), black vice leaders invested in baseball as a money-laundering scheme and to avoid paying income tax. These men virtually dominated the Negro leagues during the 1930s. Of baseball's chief figures in the 1920s, however, only Blount, the Stars' Pompez, and Philadelphia promoter Ed Gottlieb were involved in numbers games and gambling.

⁴⁸ Bak, 56.

⁴⁹ Blount was referred to as owner of the Stars on several occasions by the *Defender* (see "Magnates To Meet Here Last of January," 7 January 1922, 10). The parity plan did not work. Foster's American Giants won the Negro National League championship its first three seasons. The Stars were a second-tier team throughout the league's existence.

⁵⁰ In Whitehead, 74.

⁵¹ Gregory Holmes Singleton's "Birth, Rebirth, and the 'New Negro' of the 1920s," *Phylon* 43, no. 1 (First Quarter 1982), 29-42). The article focuses on the Harlem Renaissance, particularly its literature, which differed from white literature of the time in its "thematic optimism" (43).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 87. Examples include Jessie Redmon Fauset's *The Chinaberry Tree* (New York: Frederick Stokes, 1931) and *There is Confusion* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924).

⁵³ KDKA was joined by three more Westinghouse stations the next year. General Electric and RCA added stations in 1922 and 1923.

⁵⁴ Betts, 191 and 271.

⁵⁵ Most accounts put the founding at the YMCA on Kansas City's Paseo Street (see "Baseball Magnates Hold Conference," *Chicago Defender*, 14 February 1920, 11; and Thomas C. Palmer, Jr., "Kansas City cultural center pays tribute to the music and the Negro leagues; A sweet celebration of jazz & baseball," *Boston Globe*, 16 May 1999, M1). This location is just blocks from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, which opened in 1997. Ribowsky, however, wrote that the owners ratified the league's creation at the Street Hotel, which was one of the few hotels in the city that served the black community (100). The *Defender* called the location of the founding meetings the "Community Center," probably referring to the YMCA ("Baseball Writers and Mgrs. Are Royally Entertained," *Chicago Defender*, 28 February 1920, 11).

⁵⁶ Secretary for the Giants, Cobb later also served as secretary to the ABCs and Cleveland Hornets and an official in various capacities in the Negro leagues from 1920 through 1934. As secretary of the Southern League in the thirties, Cobb wrote regularly for the black papers.

⁵⁷ By June of that year Wyatt had joined the *Defender*.

⁵⁸ J.D. Howard was publisher of the *Ledger*; A.D. Williams was the paper's chief sportswriter.

⁵⁹ "Baseball Magnates Hold Conference," *Chicago Defender*, 14 February 1920, 11. The subhead for the article was, "Sporting Editor of Defender Elected Secretary," and the only photo that ran with the story was Lewis' head shot. Lewis also had been elected secretary of the failed league in 1907. A.D. Williams would be elected secretary of the Eastern Colored League later in the decade.

⁶⁰ "Kansas City Selected for Meeting of Baseball Magnates," *Chicago Defender*, 7 February 1920, 11.

⁶¹ "Baseball Writers and Mgrs. Are Royally Entertained," *Chicago Defender*, 28 February 1920, 11. In the 5 June 1920 issue of the *Defender*, Gilmore is described as a "lieutenant" to Wilkinson and the Monarchs, implying some degree of editorial control of the *Call's* sports pages wielded by Wilkinson and his Kansas City team ("Kansas City Notes," *Chicago Defender*, 9).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Effa Manley and Leon Herbert Hardwick, *Negro Baseball ... Before Integration* (Chicago: Adams Press, 1976), 6. Manley's referred to Wyatt as Dave Wright. A "Dave Wright" is mentioned in no other account of the founding, and Wyatt was the *Freeman's* chief baseball correspondent and a former player of the Chicago Union Giants baseball team (1896-1902). His reporting of and commentary on the Negro leagues appeared in the *Freeman* from 1907 to 1920, when moved over to the *Defender* (see Debono, p. 48).

⁶⁴ "Baseball Magnates Hold Conference," *Chicago Defender*, 14 February 1920, 11. The four writers would later form the core of the National Sportswriter Association, which black press writers organized in 1922 during Negro National League meetings in Chicago that December. The association's first president was the *Defender's* Fay Young. Also joining was Arthur D. Williams of the *Indianapolis Ledger* (see Debono, 49).

⁶⁵ Personal interview with Chuck Stone, former editor of the *Chicago Defender* and Washington *Afro-American*, among other newspapers, 28 August 2002.

⁶⁶ "Baseball Men Write League Constitution," *Chicago Defender*, 21 February 1920, 9.

⁶⁷ See Whitehead (1980) and Cottrell (2001).

⁶⁸ "Western Circuit Organized; to Become Effective April 1, 1921," *Chicago Defender*, 21 February 1920, 9.

⁶⁹ In Ribowsky, 104.

⁷⁰ Riley, 844. Williams was an officer in certainly in 1925, the ABCs' last year.

⁷¹ "National Baseball League Formed," *The Competitor*, March 1920, 66.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁷³ Dave Wyatt, "National League of Colored Clubs Prepare for Season's Opening," *The Competitor*, April 1920, 73-74. Wyatt referred to Blount as the Stars' owner.

⁷⁴ "Big League Making Progress," *The Competitor*, April 1920, 69.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Heaphy, 51. Two good studies of the exodus from the South are Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) and Carole Marks, *Farewell, We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration (Blacks in the Diaspora)* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, 1989).

⁷⁷ Lanctot, 28.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁷⁹ Carl R. Osthaus, "The Rise and Fall of Jesse Binga, Black Financier," *Journal of Negro History* v. 58, no. 1 (January 1973), 46. The Binga State Bank sponsored several athletic teams in Chicago's city leagues, including a baseball team. See *Chicago Defender*, 18 March 1922, 10.

⁸⁰ *Chicago Defender*, 14 February 1920, 16.

⁸¹ Advertisement in 7 June 1924 *Chicago Defender*, 13. Foster co-owned the garage with Clifford O. Stark.

⁸² "League Game Sunday," *Chicago Defender*, 8 May 1920, 9.

⁸³ Manley and Hardwick, 12.

⁸⁴ Dave Wyatt, "A.B.C. Triumph in First Home Games," *Defender*, 8 May 1920, 9.

⁸⁵ In Cottrell, 155.

⁸⁶ "Ten Cities Are Represented at the Meeting; Circuit Is to Join the National League in 1921," *Chicago Defender*, 6 March 1920, 11.

⁸⁷ Teams were in cities such as New Orleans, Atlanta, Chattanooga, and Montgomery. That the Negro Southern League would flourish should not be a surprise. A precursor, the Southern League of Colored Base Ball Clubs, organized in 1886 as perhaps the first semi-professional Negro league. It united teams in Charleston, S.C.; New Orleans; Savannah; Jacksonville, Fla.; Atlanta; and Memphis.

⁸⁸ Dave Wyatt, "Success of the League Is Up To The Fans," *Chicago Defender*, 3 April 1920, 9.

⁸⁹ "Here and There," *Chicago Defender*, 9 August 1913, 7. Much later, *Pittsburgh Courier* sportswriter Wendell Smith took fans to task in 1930 for failing to offer up enough money when a hat was passed on behalf of the Pittsburgh Crawfords, blaming fans in his weekly column for "poor sportsmanship." He advised readers to "pay for what you see . . . Let's vindicate our inherent faith in humanity" (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 July 1930, 5).

⁹⁰ "Rough Stuff! Actions on the Baseball Field That Should Be Immediately Stopped!," *Chicago Defender*, 14 August 1920, 6.

⁹¹ In another example, the 9 November 1918 *Defender* includes an announcement from Foster imploring fans to behave, part of Foster's broader effort to get the Chicago Cubs to agree to an exhibition game. The announcement ran after Foster banned an unruly fan from American Giants games (Whitehead, 64).

⁹² "Annual Meeting of the National Association," *Indianapolis Freeman*, 27 November 1920, 7.

⁹³ Mister Fan, "NL Circuit Will Be Changed at January Meeting," *Chicago Defender*, 26 November 1921, 10.

⁹⁴ Rube Foster, "Rube Foster Tells What Baseball Needs to Succeed," *Chicago Defender*, 10 December 1921, 10.

⁹⁵ Rube Foster, "Rube Foster Tells What Baseball Needs to Succeed," *Chicago Defender*, 17 December 1920, 10.

⁹⁶ Rube Foster, "Rube Foster Tells What Baseball Needs to Succeed," *Chicago Defender*, 24 December 1920, 10. Mexico, Cuba, and Latin America welcomed black players, providing a sometimes lucrative alternative to the Negro leagues in societies devoid of Jim Crow policies and practices.

⁹⁷ Rube Foster, "Rube Foster Tells What Baseball Needs to Succeed," *Chicago Defender*, 31 December 1920, 10.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ "Demand for Umpires of Color is Growing Among the Fans," *Chicago Defender*, 9 October 1920, 10.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ "Hilldale Beats Babe Ruth," *Chicago Defender*, 16 October 1919, 10.

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¹⁰² Bruce Lenthall, "Covering More than the Game: Baseball and Racial Issues in an African-American Newspaper, 1919-1920, in *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture (1990)*," ed. Alvin Hall (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland Press, 2002), 62.

The international sources of Section 12
of the Radio Act of 1927

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Introduction

The Radio Act of 1927 is one of the better understood aspects of communications policy history, with researchers investigating both the history of certain sections and the overall intellectual environment which left a mark on specific provisions of the act. Yet, the fascination with broadcasting that had gripped the public in the 1920s seems to have influenced policy research as well. Research concerning the Radio Act of 1927 tends to focus exclusively on broadcasting, ignoring point-to-point uses of radio technology which continued to coexist with the new 'radio broadcast craze' during this time period.

This paper connects foreign ownership regulations to radiotelegraphy rather than broadcasting and analyzes the history of these regulations in the context of international relations and international history.¹ This approach reveals that cooperation between business and industry was not simply a characteristic of this time period, but can be traced to different incentives in domestic and international communications. In the latter case, American corporations and the Navy Department were brought together by the Navy's geopolitical interests. The importance of communications technologies for national security and fears of British dominance prompted the Navy to seek out cooperation with American corporations. After a failed search for appropriate companies to back, the Navy was instrumental in creating "a 100% American" corporation and in shepherding through the foreign ownership restrictions of the Radio Act.

The legislative history of Section 12 of the Radio Act of 1927 investigated here is an inherent part of the Navy's drive for a significant role in international communications. As such, it is a crucial link in the chain of events which connects the Radio Act of 1912, the Navy's bid for government ownership and the creation of the Radio Corporation of America. Given the primary interest of the Navy in international point-to-point communication and the presence of sections in the Act that primarily targeted such communication, we would do well to reinterpret the Radio Act of 1927.

Rather than simply a long-awaited necessity for the regulation of broadcasting, the Act is better understood as a hybrid legislation, striving to accommodate two different uses of radio technology.

Literature review

Historically informed policy research has produced both detailed studies of specific aspects of communications legislation and overarching frameworks with which to understand communications policy in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Among the specific studies, David Ostroff (1980) and Louise Benjamin (1987) look at the origins of the equal time rule (Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934) in the debates leading up to the Radio Act from the perspective of politicians and industry participants, respectively, meanwhile Steven Phipps (2001) studies the historical basis of the doctrine of channel scarcity. Benjamin's (1998) more recent work takes up the topic of government-industry relations in the 1920s and shows the roots of current practices at work in the tenets of Hooverian associationalism, a social reorganization characterized by business-government cooperation, in the process of license allocation and station assignment.

Like the articles analyzing specific aspects of legislation, this paper will cover one section of the Radio Act of 1927: Section 12 of the Act bars foreign nationals from possessing radio licenses and limits direct foreign ownership of corporations with such licenses to twenty percent of the licensee's capital stock. This section was incorporated in the Communications Act of 1934 word for word, its scope was broadened to restrict investment by holding companies and passed into the Telecommunications Act of 1996 with hardly a scratch.² My analysis of the legislative history of this section is based on published government documents, such as congressional hearings, and the private papers of the sponsors of the legislation, Senator Frank B. Kellogg and Representative Wallace White, respectively. For the views of policymakers, I have relied on the papers of Stanford C. Hooper, a well-known expert on radio matters in the Navy Department, and the early records of the Department of Commerce from the National Archives of the United States.

While focusing on one section of the Radio Act, this paper shares the interest of communications historians such as Susan Douglas, Thomas Streeter and Robert McChesney in the relations between government and business. Douglas (1987) argues in *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922* that, after initial acrimonious relations between the military and early radio firms, both sides realized the value of cooperation and created the institutional framework which later came to include broadcasting. Streeter's (1993) *Selling the Air* builds on Douglas' research and presents the development of broadcasting as a case study of corporate liberalism, of the ways in which a liberal polity accommodated the rise of the large corporation and the subsequent transformation of capitalism. Robert McChesney's (1993) *Telecommunications, Mass Media and Democracy* also views the relationship between the state and large corporations as fundamentally cooperative, if not always harmonious, but he argues that the structure of the broadcasting industry was not solidified until the defeat of its major challenge, the Wagner-Hatfield amendment.

The analysis of the development of foreign ownership regulations presented in this paper adds a new element to our understanding of the relationship between policy formation and business-government relations in the communications industry. While the scarcity doctrine and the subsequent marginalization of amateurs can be understood in the context of contemporary American history alone, interpreting foreign ownership regulations requires attention to international relations. Historian Michael Hogan contends that during this period Hooverian associationalism was replicated on the international level. As a result of conscious policy decisions on the part of the government in the radio industry among other areas, "public policy became largely a private responsibility" (1977/1991: 9). Yet, this paper argues that the similarity between government-industry collaboration on the domestic and international levels is superficial at best. While domestic collaboration may result from the state's desire to serve the long-term interests of capital, collaboration in the international realm is driven by the state's geopolitical interests.

As the books discussed above suggest, the topic of most interest to communications historians of this period is undoubtedly the development of the structure of the broadcasting industry. As a result, most of what we know about government-business relations and policymaking in the 1920s is based on research about broadcasting. Even Robert Horwitz's (1989) comprehensive study about communications regulation during much of the twentieth century has broadcasting in mind when it interprets the Radio Act of 1927. Yet, if we turn our attention to the development of international communications in this period, we find that the 'pre-history' of broadcasting in the form of radiotelegraphy did not end with the broadcast boom. Instead, telegraphy and broadcasting coexisted during the 1920s as two different uses of radio technology.

While Susan Douglas's comprehensive work on radiotelegraphy ends with the onset of broadcasting, Hugh Aitken (1985) captures the complexity of the following years when the radio broadcast craze swept through the population resulting in frantic efforts to meet the demand, to reorient corporate agreements and to regulate 'the new technology.' His work is one of the few that keeps telegraphy in focus as broadcasting burst on the scene, but its main concern with the management of technology prevents it from according a great deal of attention to legislative developments. Telegraphy and government policy also play an important part in James Schwoch's (1991) and John Rossi's (1988) research. They are primarily interested in the international operations of American corporations and U.S. - Latin American or U.S.-Chinese relations, respectively, and do not address legislative developments in the United States tied to international communications.

As Schwoch's (1991) and Rossi's (1988) work demonstrates, telegraphy played an important part in the communications industry of the transitional twenties, most importantly because radiotelegraphy in the United States during these years was synonymous with international communications. A point-to-point medium whose primary market was the military and shipping companies, radiotelegraphy was a direct competitor to the submarine cables and provided the

United States with the opportunity to free its communications from British dominance. The cable industry was weak in the United States, and its participants were too embedded in the British world-wide cable network to suit American geopolitical interests.

The origins of foreign ownership regulations can be traced back to the Radio Act of 1912 and the immediate years thereafter, and they represent an important point in American policymakers' efforts to control the communications traffic of the country. Foreign ownership regulations, which are still valid law today, are tied to a specific point in American history when the United States played second fiddle to Great Britain in international communications. These regulations inherently belong to the story of the U.S. Navy's bid for government ownership of radio and the creation of the Radio Corporation of America and as such represent a badly misunderstood element of policymaking.

Since the primary impetus for the passage of the Radio Act of 1927 was the growing pains of broadcasting, researchers have tended to analyze the aspects of the legislation most salient for the development of broadcasting. Communications scholars have paid little attention to foreign ownership regulations ever since, unlike legal scholars who participated in the debate over the reform of the regulations in the proposed Telecommunications Act of 1996. Given legal and policy researchers' main focus on contemporary developments, historical accuracy left a lot to be desired. Nevertheless, a cardboard cutout version of legislative history played a key part in the arguments as it was used to support the view that times had changed and that regulations needed to be abandoned. On the basis of the information provided, today the legal profession, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) all seem to believe that the main national security justification behind the passage of Section 310 was a concern with propaganda (NTIA, 1993, p. 85; FCC 1995, p.4844; Rose, 1995: 1213; Hastings, 1996; Paladini, 1996, p. 369).

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By far the most sophisticated work in this line of research is J. Gregory Sidak's (1997) law and economics approach to foreign ownership regulations. Sidak, a former deputy general counsel at the FCC, strives to advise Congress on how to reform foreign ownership restrictions given that they have failed to protect America's national security but succeeded both in denying savings to American consumers and as a protectionist trade policy (3, 76, 26). The historical section in Sidak's work provides a useful corrective to the preoccupation with broadcasting. Yet, his focus on the Navy's intent to slow the growth of civilian radio, domestic or foreign, prevents him from analyzing the policies of the American Navy toward foreign corporations in the context of international relations.

The received wisdom just cited tells us that, although legislative histories are clearly important in formulating policy arguments, few participants in the policy process will seriously immerse themselves in them. Therefore, it is up to communications policy historians to investigate problems without an immediate payoff in the policy process. The study of foreign ownership regulations sheds light on business-industry relations and prompts us to reinterpret the Radio Act of 1927 as a hybrid legislation designed to deal with the domestic broadcast craze and the desire of American policymakers for a larger role in international communications.

In historical analyses, interpretations of the Act abound. To some it is a solution to the chaotic conditions resulting from self-regulation, while others understand it as a legitimization of existing practice (Krasnow and Longley, 1973: 11, Streeter, 1996: 95). Those who view it as an emergency legislation whose provisions nobody expected to be final have little in common with those who discern a response to a conscious effort by the Department of Commerce to block the operations of the free market (McChesney, 1993: 253, Hazlett, 1990 cited in Sidak, 1997, 58-60). While the Radio Act may have been any or all of these, it also represented an answer in national regulation to the changing role of the United States in international relations.

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A preventive measure: foreign ownership in the Radio Act of 1912

When the administration sent its bills to Congress in 1912 in order to obtain ratification of the 1906 Berlin international convention for the regulation of wireless telegraphy, it primarily intended to bring a point-to-point service under control. The service found its most appreciative customers in the navies of different countries, shipping companies and some innovative large corporations. In contrast to propaganda, the communication sent by wireless was not intended for outside use. The United States Navy, for example, used wireless to coordinate movements of the fleet and communicate with its outlying possessions such as the Panama Canal Zone.

Yet, the technology did not respect its users' wishes: spark transmitters, introduced by the British Marconi Company, sent in all directions and their signals took up a large slice of the spectrum (Aitken, 1985: 5-6). Although amateurs were delighted at the dots and dashes they received from other parts of the country, broadcasting, as it was understood later, was little more than a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Research about early broadcast experiments by Lee De Forest and others reveals that broadcasting coexisted with radiotelegraphy even at this early stage, but it was clearly the junior partner in the competition for the primary users and markets of early radio technology (Douglas, 1989: 172, 293). No known reports of the use of radio for propaganda exist before World War I, and even during the war, as we will see, concerns about radio as a potential weapon of war far surpassed concerns about propaganda.

Since 1904, when the Roosevelt board placed wireless telegraphy under Navy control, the department had been successfully arguing that, as the largest governmental user, it had the most serious interest in radio technology.³ Naval officers represented the American government at international conferences and strongly supported regulation of wireless telegraphy. The Navy Department believed that 'the greatest use' for wireless telegraphy lay in its military features. Lieutenant Commander Todd, the representative of the Department, argued in 1912 that the

'legitimate field' of the technology was communication between the shore and vessels at sea, and messages that could be sent overland should be sent that way.⁴

The Navy seems to have suggested the foreign ownership provisions of the Radio Act of 1912 as a preventive measure. An identical version of the House bill, H. R. 15357, had already been passed by the Senate and recommended by the House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries in 1910 without any foreign ownership provisions. Lieutenant Commander Todd brought up the issue during the committee hearings in January 1912 and recommended both that licenses should only be issued to citizens of the United States and that wireless operators should be American citizens. In addition, he expressed concern that there was "nothing [in the bill] to prevent a foreign corporation by its agency in its country, organizing under the laws of some State and setting up a powerful station in the limits of the country."⁵

While Todd listed specific problems from past experience in order to underscore, for example, the importance of limiting interference, the argument mentioned in support of the foreign ownership provisions was entirely hypothetical. Regarding interference, Todd complained to the committee that the Wanamaker company had more powerful Marconi transmitters than the nearby navy station and, although the messages transmitted could have been sent by land wire, the company used wireless to save money.⁶ By contrast, he backed up his recommendations for the foreign ownership provisions with the argument that the powerful transmitters operated by foreigners "may be able to cross the Atlantic or communicate with some other nation with which we may be on more or less friendly terms."⁷ Moreover, if the United States had strained relations with the foreign country in question and decided to replace foreign operators with Americans, Todd continued, the country would interpret it as a "warlike act."⁸ From Todd's statement it appears that the Navy Department anticipated war and disloyal acts by foreign corporations and their operators and intended to prevent them by placing wireless corporations under American control.

Key policymakers at the time also shared the Navy's concern about the operations of foreign corporations. Between the January hearings and the passage of the Radio Act in August, some members of Congress were alarmed at the prospect of a Japanese corporation acquiring land in southern California. As the land seemed to be of little commercial value, but all the more important from the standpoint of security, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee concluded that the Japanese wanted to establish a naval base on American soil. The Committee, which also had jurisdiction over wireless, passed the so-called Lodge resolution on August 2 with an overwhelming majority.⁹ The most peculiar feature of the resolution was that it extended the Monroe Doctrine to private corporations. Its sponsor, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, argued that the menace of foreign corporations had not been foreseen in 1823 when the Monroe Doctrine was first formulated, but these corporations might serve an entering wedge for foreign governments (Bailey, 1933: 222).

A week later the foreign ownership provisions of the radio bill were challenged on the House floor. By this time the House had replaced H.R. 15357 with S. 6412 as the basis of floor debate. The bill, which later became the Radio Act of 1912, was drafted by the Department of Commerce and Labor, cooperating with the Navy and War Departments, and required corporations wishing to operate radio stations to obtain a license from the Secretary of Commerce and Labor. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee was sympathetic to the Navy's needs, except in relation to the latter's concern about foreign firms operating in the United States through their subsidiaries. Thus, Section 2 provided "that every such license shall be issued only to citizens of the United States or to a company incorporated under the laws of some state of the United States." Section 3 added that "every person so licensed for the operation of any radio apparatus on shore shall be a citizen of the United States."¹⁰

However, on August 8 the House voted to strike out the provision requiring that all licensed operators of radio stations be American citizens.¹¹ According to a letter in the files of a Navy official,

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Congressmen viewed the suggestion as "a purely military feature of slight importance" (Bureau of Engineering report, 2 June 1913 quoted in Aitken, 1985: 284). In addition, Representative James R. Mann offered an amendment to remove the entire foreign ownership provision altogether. His argument was often repeated in the following years and has just recently been advocated by the NTIA: why worry about the ownership of stations when the President is authorized to seize all stations in time of war? (NTIA, 1993: 86)¹²

By contrast, the Navy considered peace to be the time to prepare for war, and argued that all systems and organizations had to be complete at the moment war was declared. "If we have no regulation whatever of wireless telegraphy at the time war breaks out," stressed Lieutenant Commander Todd, "it will be too late to hustle around and try to shut up commercial wireless companies, or to get authority to limit their sending to certain hours, so as to give us a chance to control the fleet."¹³

While the bill was debated in the House, the Navy Department grew increasingly suspicious of the Atlantic Communications Company, a subsidiary of the German Telefunken concern. Rumors abounded that the German Government influenced the company's actions. The support for the Lodge resolution in the Senate and the administration's concern about foreign control of wireless reveal a key aspect of the problem. In a series of inadequately supported conclusions, American policymakers at the time identified subsidiaries of foreign corporations with their parent company, and both with the company's home state.

The Navy and the Commerce Departments had every intention of preventing the operation of the German company's new transmitter at Sayville, Long Island. In their search for authority to do so, policymakers weighed three alternatives: the pending radio bill, the Lodge resolution and, the possibility of comparing wireless to cables and arguing that it needed a license from the United States government ("Watch on wireless plant...").

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The same day that a Navy official was dispatched to report on the new construction, the House passed the administration bill ("Watch on wireless plant...", "Wireless bill..."). Although the bill's sponsor did a terrible job in restating the Navy's position for the House, the committee voted against the Mann amendment 40-15. Therefore, the final version of the Radio Act of 1912 included the truncated foreign ownership section, whose scope was extended to citizens of Puerto Rico.¹⁴ In contrast with the Navy's desires, the Act failed to restrict the ownership of American subsidiaries of foreign corporations and the nationality of licensed operators.

The administration soon found out how important the aspects of the section were that they had failed to secure. The Secretary of Commerce and Labor sought advice from the Attorney General about whether it could refuse the license for the Sayville installation on the ground of foreign investment. Attorney General Wickersham concluded that the statute gave the Secretary no discretion in granting a license if the applicant qualified. Since the Secretary of Commerce was unable to refuse a license to a corporation incorporated in the State of New York, the German subsidiary received its license.¹⁵

In a couple years, the administration faced the consequences of the failure of having its preventive measure adopted in its entirety. The same day that Britain declared war on Germany, the British Ambassador protested the "unneutral" acts of the German-owned Sayville and Tuckerton stations. Specifically, the Ambassador argued that the German government used the Sayville station to convey messages from Berlin to their warships the *Dresden* and the *Carlsruhe*. Ambassador Barclay complained that the stations were subsidized by the German government, and served as "intelligence bureaux" for that government. He suggested that the United States place its own officers in charge of the stations.¹⁶ The administration accepted the Ambassador's argument that continued operation of the German stations would violate the 1907 Hague convention, and entrusted the station to the U.S. Navy.¹⁷ Naval officers told the *New York Times* that the Department had to assume control

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because the German military had been involved in the operation of Sayville and that the American money involved in the Atlantic Communications Company was "infinitesimal" (Douglas, 1987: 273).

A failed solution

The most immediate reasons for correcting the flaws of previous efforts to regulate foreign ownership were clearly the alleged activities of two German stations, Sayville and Tuckerton. Wireless could be used as a potential weapon of war and the American government wanted to control this weapon. In fact, according to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, complete government control provided the only effective form of censorship (Douglas, 1987: 274). Commander Todd, now head of the Naval Radio Service, testified before Congress that the American government was determined to avoid the "unfortunate experience" of the two stations in the future.¹⁸ But behind the immediate reason lay a more general goal of improving the position of the United States in international communications, and, in the eyes of policymakers, this required breaking the hold of another foreign corporation, the Marconi Company, over American radio.

By the time the interdepartmental committee on radio produced its revision of the 1912 Act to gently nudge the nation toward government ownership, the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America had become the dominant private corporation in the United States. In a matter of a few years, the managing director of the parent company successfully leveraged the company's patent rights against the United Wireless Telegraph Corporation, bought the company out and took over its tangible assets which "covered practically the whole of wireless business of America" (*Wireless World*, cited in Hugill, 1999: 99). In 1917 the company operated ninety-eight percent of all ship stations for the merchant marine, and all but three privately-owned high power transmitters.¹⁹

The Navy Department assumed strong ties between the British parent company and its American affiliate. Secretary Daniels advocated against providing diplomatic support to American

Marconi abroad. It would only assist the British company, he argued, since "to all intents and purposes they are but one company with two names."²⁰ The Navy was convinced that British Marconi was trying to achieve a world-wide monopoly of radio communications. Yet, the company concerned government officials not because it was nearing a monopoly, but because it seemed to be under the control of the most powerful government of the time.²¹ Smaller radio corporations, such as the Federal Telegraph Company, did not hesitate to fuel this suspicion. Marconi Wireless control, wrote the president of the company to the State Department, was "but another name for 'British Government Control.'"²²

Playing host state to an affiliate of the British Marconi Company constantly reminded officials of the inferior position of the United States in international communications. By the time World War I broke out Britain had passed the zenith of its power, but the more obvious signs of this were yet to show (Thompson, 2000: 181-85). To a superficial observer, the country was as powerful as ever, controlling the vast submarine cable network of the world, which provided it with secure military communications and the ability to monitor the communications of its enemies. In cable communications, this was indeed the case, and the Standing Committee of Imperial Communications before the war was justified in its satisfaction with the British network (Headrick, 1991: 99). In wireless, however, large cracks were appearing in the dominance of the Marconi Company, once supreme in the field. By 1914, the United States developed continuous wave radio and achieved a technological lead over other countries (Aitken, 1985: 250).

In hindsight, navy officials gleefully commented that the Marconi Company "had been asleep as regards research," but at the time the company seemed to be a formidable opponent.²³ Concessions for erecting high-power transmitters and traffic agreements all over the world furnished it with a strong operating base. For example, the parent company was dominant in South America, where the United States had been trying to extend its influence. British preoccupation with World

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War I provided a welcome opportunity, which the Navy and State Departments used to promote government ownership of radio facilities in the Western Hemisphere.²⁴

As a result of its involvement in long-distance radio work and the first international radio conferences, the Navy Department understood the geopolitical significance of the technology and wanted to use it as an alternative to the cables in international communications. Yet, before the United States could create a world-wide wireless network to compete with the British cable network, policymakers had work to do at home. The interdepartmental committee working on the problem became convinced that, in the long run, government ownership of radio stations was the answer.²⁵ Government ownership of stations in the United States and in the Western Hemisphere under American guidance would mark the ascendance of the United States as a major force in international communications.

With one or two objections, primarily over who should run the system, the various government departments all rallied behind H. R. 19350 designed to institute limited government control. The bill was introduced in December 1916 and its crucial provision, Section 6, allowed the Navy Department to compete for commercial traffic with the wireless companies and purchase their stations for a fair price within five years.²⁶

While easing 'the commercial companies' which by this time mostly meant the Marconi company into government ownership, the administration also wanted immediate results in reducing foreign control over radio stations. H. R. 19350 contained all the essential features of the foreign ownership provisions later codified in the Radio Act of 1927, and then some. Of the thirty-one sections of the bill, three regulated foreign ownership. Section 7 declared aliens, foreign governments and their representatives, foreign companies and subsidiaries of foreign corporations incorporated in the United States ineligible for a license. American subsidiaries of foreign corporations were excluded if more than one-third of their directors were aliens or more than one-

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third of their capital stock was owned either by a foreign government or a foreign corporation. Section 8 required corporate applicants for a license to provide information regarding what proportion of the capital stock was owned or controlled by aliens, foreign governments or foreign corporations. In addition, the corporation was to report the place of birth and citizenship of each director and officer. Finally, section 12 barred aliens and representatives of foreign governments from obtaining an operator's license.

The provisions of H.R. 19350 embodied by far the most restrictive foreign ownership regulations before the Communications Act of 1934. By setting the limit on foreign investment at thirty percent, the administration targeted the Marconi Company. John W. Griggs, president of the company, acknowledged that the administration correctly estimated the percentage of their foreign stockholders, and protested that the provision so directly aimed at the Marconi company as if "it was the bull's eye at which they were shooting."²⁷ Predictably, the company argued that the Marconi Company was an American corporation and all of its policies were formulated and executed in the United States. The company was perfectly satisfied with the Radio Act of 1912 and wanted no change in it.²⁸

By this time propaganda had emerged as a use of radio technology, as German, British and French stations all transmitted their version of the war. As Susan Douglas's work reveals that the press was extremely concerned about foreigners gaining access to the airwaves to sway public opinion (1987: 274-76). Yet, these considerations did not figure into the debate about H.R. 19350. In any event, Congress did not have a chance to give full consideration to the bill, because the United States severed diplomatic relations with Germany even before the hearings could be completed (Howeth, 1963: 316).

Upon the entry of the United States into World War I, the President took over all commercial stations and placed them under Navy control.²⁹ The Navy Department operated them

with great success and was confident that after the war its proposal of government ownership would be well received. The proposal mainly targeted high-power, long-distance radio stations. The Secretary distanced the department from "internal communication," which after the war still meant primarily telegraphy for communication with merchant ships and amateur experimentation.³⁰ "Radio communication should be considered," Daniels wrote in 1919 to Congress, "chiefly from the point of view of the best interests of the United States in its international relations." Government ownership of high-power, long-distance radio was desirable because it alone could successfully counter the British cable monopoly.³¹

Government ownership was especially important for Secretary Daniels since he regarded the return of high-power stations to their original owners as tantamount to handing them "a military instrument within our borders" (*cited in Aitken, 1985: 282*). The Navy's position supporting government ownership was indeed an alternative to private control, not because the Navy had any interest in state-controlled mass media, but because it had all the interest in controlling international communications. The Navy's goal of extending military power across the oceans made geopolitical sense, without being "part and parcel of a larger economic vision" (*Streeter, 1996: 69*).

Despite the arguments advanced by the Navy Department, Congress was dissatisfied both with government management of public utilities during the war and Daniels' particular strategies of circumventing congressional reluctance to earmark the funds to purchase the Federal Telegraph Company. Consequently, the Navy's attempt to continue its wartime authority over communications was rejected (*Douglas, 1987: 280-84, Aitken, 1985: 287, Horwitz, 1989: 109*).

After Daniels' bill was tabled, the Navy Department worked through the uncomfortable fact that "no comment favorable to continued Naval operation has come from any source but the Navy itself."³² Given its own persistent international ambitions, the resistance of Congress to government ownership and the dominant presence of the Marconi company in American industry, the Navy

Department had a problem. It had been searching for appropriate domestic corporations to back for a while, but to no avail. In 1916, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt suggested that American diplomats "lend their support to corporations which have no foreign connections" and discouraged them from assisting American Marconi abroad.³³ Both Secretary Daniels and the State Department supported the Federal Telegraph Company, and the reasons why the company failed as a chosen instrument of American national interests remain to be explained.³⁴

Officials in the department were convinced that the proper organizational form for long-distance wireless telegraphy was a monopoly. If it could not be a government monopoly, it had to be a commercial one, closely supervised by the government (Aitken, 1985: 342).³⁵ Finally, the Navy Department struck gold with the idea: if existing American corporations were unable to fulfill its vision, a new company had to be formed. The arrangement suited the interests of General Electric (GE) because it secured a market for its high quality but soon-to-be obsolete alternators (Aitken, 1985: 363-366). Thus, in 1919 the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) was created to serve American interests in international communications.

RCA, direct foreign ownership regulations and the broadcasting boom

RCA represents the link between prewar concerns with foreign influence and the legislative solution to the problem in the Radio Act of 1927. Among others, the ownership structure of the new corporation appeared as a sticking point in the negotiations between GE and British Marconi. Managing director Godfrey Isaacs expressed an interest in a minority ownership of the new corporation's stock and could not understand why Washington opposed it (Aitken, 1985: 394). Vice President Nally's suggestion that American Marconi buy out the British Company was rebuffed, and the Navy resisted his appointment as president of the new corporation (Aitken, 1985: 371-72, 385). Naval officers wanted a clean slate and attempted to wipe out continuity between American Marconi and the new corporation as much as possible.

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In order to ensure "the thoroughly American character" of RCA, the spirit of the 1916 interdepartmental bill was carried forward into RCA's by-laws. Specifically, only American citizens could be elected as directors and officers of the company and eighty percent of the stock at any time had to be voted by American citizens or corporations "formed under the laws of one of the States of the United States free from foreign control or domination and not in any foreign interest." Although the wording did not exclude American subsidiaries of early multinational corporations, the qualifying clause was broad enough to save this formulation from the pitfalls of the 1912 Act.

The Navy further protected RCA from foreign influence by taking two precautions. First, in the Preliminary Agreement between GE and British Marconi, the latter company agreed not to acquire, prior to January 1, 1945, any shares or interest in the Radio Corporation without the latter's written consent (Aitken, 1985: 405). Second, the representative of the Secretary of the Navy was allowed to participate in corporate policy formation and had the power to challenge the votes of any shareholder if he suspected that the shareholder voted them in the interests of foreigners.³⁶

While working on creating a "purely American" corporation, the Navy Department was also pursuing the legislative route to ensure American control of radio communications. The foreign ownership restrictions were incorporated in bills designed to update the Radio Act of 1912. Between 1921 and 1927, fifty-one bills were introduced to regulate radio communications (Bensman, 1975: 549 *cited in* Streeter, 1996: 96). Table 1. on p. 27 provides a selection of these bills with a brief summary of their foreign ownership provisions. The selection skews towards the early years when the final version of Section 12 was negotiated.

In the aftermath of the war, radio legislation strove to meet changed conditions in radiotelegraphy. Policymakers in the Department of Commerce regarded the Radio Act of 1912 outdated because it barely provided for transoceanic wireless and left very little discretion for the Secretary of Commerce.³⁷ S. 4038, drafted by the Navy Department, proposed to remedy the

situation by setting up a National Radio Commission which would have issued regulations and enforced them through the Department of Commerce. The bill would have appointed a Navy officer as secretary of the Commission and would have delegated important responsibilities to a representative of the Secretary of the Navy in foreign ownership matters as well.

As with other bills of the postwar years, S. 4038 relied on the work of the interdepartmental committee in 1915-16. Section five of the bill excluded aliens, foreign governments and their representatives, foreign companies and American subsidiaries of foreign corporations from eligibility for a license. In addition, the new Navy Department measure tightened the screws on American subsidiaries of multinational corporations: instead of thirty percent foreign capital, it only allowed twenty percent and gave the Commission discretionary powers to revoke the license.

To protect companies from an automatic revocation, the bill made two exceptions. First, if the violation was not the licensee's fault the company had to be given a chance to correct the problem, subject to evaluation by the Commission. Second, the company could violate some of the provisions of the proposed legislation, provided it had other mechanisms in place to deal with foreign influence. Specifically, the bill listed the conditions that had to obtain in the company's by-laws: a 20 per cent limit on foreign capital, an all-American executive line-up, and opportunity for a Navy Department representative to attend stockholder meetings. The naval officer could pose a challenge to any suspicious votes and there had to be procedures for dealing with such a challenge.

S. 4038 clearly connects RCA to foreign ownership regulations, but the nature of this connection requires more research. On the one hand, the first part of its foreign ownership provisions proceeds in a direct line from the 1916 interdepartmental bill through RCA to the Radio Act of 1927. On the other hand, this is the first time when the section includes a threat of revocation and exceptions to the threat. No bill in the future will return to either of these

exceptions. Therefore, it is unclear why they were incorporated and how significant their inclusion was.

Nevertheless, a brief comparison between the 1916 interdepartmental bill, RCA's charter and early 1920s foreign ownership draft can highlight both continuity and change in policymakers' thinking. They clearly wanted to correct the problems with the 1912 act and bar subsidiaries of foreign multinational corporations from obtaining a radio license if these subsidiaries seemed to be dominated by their parent. All three approaches contain restrictions on subsidiaries of multinational corporations, but the government had grown less tolerant over the years. Between 1916 and 1920, however, they reduced the level of acceptable control from thirty to twenty percent.

The most important difference between RCA's charter and the proposed foreign ownership regulations before and after the company's creation is direct governmental supervision. The Navy Department was instrumental in the creation of RCA, and its continued presence was woven into the life of the company. However, before RCA came into being no such close supervision was contemplated and any attempt to transfer direct governmental supervision to other companies failed. H.R. 4132, would have conditioned licenses on the presence of the Secretary of Commerce, not the Secretary of the Navy, but this provision was never included again in any later bill.

Although the proposed shift in the supervising body from Navy to Commerce does reflect the struggle between the two departments for the control of radio regulation, the rivalry had no impact on foreign ownership regulations. The two departments disagreed on the identity of the licensing authority, but the Department of Commerce also placed foreign ownership regulations at the top of the list of powers that that authority now needed.³⁸

As Table 1 shows, Section 12 of the Radio Act of 1927 was hammered out by 1921. On reviewing published documents on the legislative history of foreign ownership rules, Sidak concludes that "it is unclear whether foreign ownership restrictions in the Radio Act of 1927 were

originally conceived to apply broadcasting" (1997: 63). Archival research allows us to answer in the negative. Section 12 is one aspect of the Radio Act, and by no means the only one, which was designed to regulate point-to-point long distance radio.

After the elimination of the Marconi Company, the foreign ownership provisions proved to be uncontroversial and met with no resistance. The sponsor of the radio bills in the House, Representative Wallace H. White, saw them as specifying the scope of the Radio Act of 1912, defining "in some detail who an alien is."³⁹ The Navy Department found them crucial, Commerce did not object and representatives of private industry also supported it. In late 1921 Owen D. Young, chairman of RCA, complained to Secretary of the Navy Denby that the lack of foreign ownership regulations diminished his bargaining power in Germany.⁴⁰ As long as German companies had the option to open stations in the United States, they had no incentive to agree to Young's terms. Commander Hooper, by now a recognized expert on radio matters in the Navy Department, assured Young that in due time "satisfactory regulation will be obtained."⁴¹

These hopes were frustrated in the near term. By 1921, the confluence of technological change and cultural reorientation brought about a new use of radio technology. Broadcasting could not have been possible without either the vacuum tube or the intellectual shift that transformed the lack of secrecy, wireless's major shortcoming, into the cornerstone of a new industry (Aitken, 1985: 552, Streeter, 1996: 61). Over the years, the popularity of broadcasting changed the balance between the two different uses of the industry.

That radiotelegraphy carried through into the immediate postwar years does not surprise anybody. It is less obvious, however, that three of the four items on the agenda at the first radio conference in 1922 addressed point-to-point uses of radio. Secretary Hoover's "radio telephony" conference is best known for its work on broadcasting, yet broadcasting was only one of the "fields of use of radio telephony" that the conference convened to discuss. "Communication with places

inaccessible to wire lines," "transoceanic communication" and "general point-to-point communication on land" were listed as the other three uses.⁴²

Although regulation of point-to-point uses was as important as that of broadcasting, it was far less controversial. Given the growing importance of broadcasting for the public and the controversy surrounding several key sections, the provisions related to broadcasting were primarily responsible for the delay in passing the law. Lawmakers did not see eye to eye on several critical issues such as the appropriate regulatory body, vested rights or the question of monopolies in the radio industry. Most bills were substantially the same, but no result was possible until court decisions denying the Secretary of Commerce discretionary powers in license allocation provided Congress with a *fait accompli* to resolve the key problems. As the research in this section has illustrated, certain sections of the Radio Act do not date to 1927, but to much earlier and were formulated with a different industry in mind.

Telegraphy after the Radio Act of 1927

During the 1920s broadcasting gradually emerged as the senior partner, intensifying the challenge to the primacy of naval interests in the regulation of the industry (Aitken, 1985: 495). Although the formation of RCA was clearly a watershed event, it was far from "the end of the wireless era" (Douglas, 1987: 284). Long distance point-to-point communication did not disappear, but its users were looking for a way out of the regulatory structure dominated by concerns over broadcasting.

Companies involved in long-distance radio worried that provisions of the legislation primarily targeting broadcasting would influence their operations. Presenting their views on H.R. 5589, a late 1925 memorandum by the Covington & Burling law firm implied that separating "radio broadcast legislation from radio communication legislation" would safeguard the position of the United States in international communication. For example, discouraging vested rights in broadcast

frequencies may be good national policy, but it would undercut the efforts of the United States in the international arena, which are aimed exactly at securing such vested rights in wavelengths so that other countries could not claim them.⁴³

Not surprisingly, the Navy Department maintained active interest in international radio and was equally vexed about the emergence of broadcasting. Six months after the Radio Act passed, a controversy over a merger between the Postal Telegraph Company and the Federal Telegraph Company highlighted for the Department the inadequacy of the recently appointed Federal Radio Commission (FRC). In the summer of 1927 Postal Telegraph, a land telegraph company with holdings in companies involved in the submarine cable business, suggested buying out Federal Telegraph to obtain its patents and enter the radio field. The proposal immediately raised a red flag for Hooper, an influential policy maker in the Bureau of Engineering. The merger would combine radio and cable interests, which alerted the Navy Department to British control, considering that during congressional hearings in 1921 American cable companies had admitted to clandestine British investment in their facilities (Headrick, 1991: 179).

Throughout the 1920s Hooper advocated a separation of the cable and wireless interests, in order to maintain the independence of the American radio system. Section 17 of the Radio Act of 1927 prohibited mergers between cable and wireless firms, which codified Navy Department concerns into law and provided another example of regulation aimed at point-to-point communications. In a memorandum for the Director of Naval Communications, Hooper suggested using both the foreign ownership provisions of the Radio Act and Section 17 to block the merger.⁴⁴ However, the Mackay Company, owners of Postal Telegraph, won the fight in the Commission, although Hooper succeeded in separating their radio operations from the cable company.⁴⁵

The controversy convinced Hooper that the newly appointed FRC would never be the appropriate agency for administering long-distance radiotelegraphy. "I did my level best to interest

the Radio Commission in the general subject of International Communications," he confided to the Navy's Pacific Communication Officer, "but it was all over their heads." "They are only interested in broadcasting," Hooper continued, "and now I hope they will stick to the latter and that the International Communication Situation will revert to the Government Departments as it was before the Commission was established."⁴⁶

After his promotion to Director of Naval Communications, the key decisionmaker in the Navy Department on communications policy, Hooper was asked to testify before Congress on the subject of the proposed Communications Commission, which would regulate radio and telegraph matters. Hooper advised Congress that the Commission should have jurisdiction of licensing radio broadcast stations only.

There are sound political reasons which make it desirable that radio broadcast licenses be issued by a group of men assigned to look out for specific geographical zones in the United States. Broadcasting is an art in itself, quite dissociated from other uses of radio. International communications, marine communications, airway communications, weather broadcast, time signals, and so forth, on the other hand are closely related to and intertwined with departmental functions and must be considered from an international and economic standpoint, and be quite dissociated from the internal radio broadcast considerations.⁴⁷

In addition, Hooper argued that commissioners who were qualified for administering broadcasting were not similarly qualified to handle other communication subjects. Moreover, the pressure from broadcasters and listeners required that they devote most of their time to broadcasting, "to the disadvantage of these other equally if not more important services."⁴⁸

In addition to illustrating the continued importance of radio telegraphy in the 1920s, the controversy over the radio-cable merger also shows that even though the foreign ownership provisions were agreed upon by 1921, they did not lose their significance. The Navy Department

could have withdrawn support and Congress could have eliminated Section 12 between 1921 and 1927. Not only did policymakers try to use the section in the late 1920s, it would soon require a major revision. The story of further restricting foreign ownership by Section 310 (b) of the Communications Act of 1934 is also related to radiotelegraphy and the geopolitical interests of the United States, but it falls beyond the scope of this research.

Conclusion

The foreign ownership provisions of the Radio Act are but one example of a neglected aspect of communications history and policy. Although it ceased to be the only use of radio technology, radiotelegraphy remained a vitally important use of the technology in the 1920s. If our attention remains fixed on broadcasting then we fail to grasp the complexity of the communications industry and communications policy during this period.

Today, one aspect of communications history and policy history stands in stark relief, while the other, equally important aspect, is hiding in the shadows. Yet, we would better understand policymaking if we perceived the two uses of the same technology in relation to each other. Like in other times in the nation's history, throughout the 1920s there was a palpable tension between domestic problems and domestic solutions on the one hand, and international problems and international solutions on the other. How the domestic and the international were intertwined, how broadcasting and telegraphy shared the same space is for future research to explore. Such work would add nuance to our understanding of government-business relations, since in international communications at this time both the key government players and the structure of the business differed markedly from domestic arrangements.

In addition to better understanding the past, historical policy analysis is absolutely necessary to see the similarities and the differences between the past and the present. On the basis of such

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understanding, policymakers can decide whether times have truly changed or whether legislation passed long ago still fulfills a useful purpose. The research presented in this paper shows that, on the most literal level, foreign ownership regulations are inapplicable to broadcasting. The Navy Department, primarily responsible for guiding foreign ownership restrictions through Congress, simply had no interest in broadcasting. On a more general level, however, Section 12 addresses the relationship between a host state and multinational corporations operating on its territory. Policy analysts would do well to examine what, if any, dangers ensue to the United States today from such operations. To judge this, analysts also need a broad approach, similar to the one taken by policymakers in the 1920s. Such an approach would evaluate communications in the context of international relations and the role of the United States in both.

During the early twentieth century, American policymakers felt inferior in international communications and took every defensive measure they could to redress the balance. Although fraught with unexamined assumptions, foreign ownership regulations seemed like one possible solution to the problem. They will seem justified again when the country again feels inferior to other nations or corporations.

During the rise of the United States to prominence, these regulations lost their *raison d'être*. This is why they were not extended to more recent industries, such as cables or direct broadcast satellites, and this is why they were being dismantled gradually in wired communications. As a result, today we are witnessing the odd turn of events that the industry that was ignored when foreign ownership regulations were hammered out, is the most strictly regulated of all in this respect.

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Table 1. Compiled from copies of the original bills in the papers of Wallace H. White (Library of Congress) and Frank B. Kellogg (Minnesota State Historical Society)

Bill number	Date	Sponsor	Foreign ownership provisions
H. R. 11770	1/15/1920	Wallace White	None
S. 4038	3/8/1920	Miles Poindexter	Sec. 5: aliens, foreign governments, foreign corporations, American corporations with more than 20% foreign capital or any alien directors, companies "dominated or controlled by alien interests" and the representatives of all of the above are forbidden a license. Exception 1: if violation occurred through no fault of licensee, licensee should be provided an opportunity to correct any violation before the National Radio Commission Exception 2: if the by-laws of the corporation a) prohibit alien officers and b) more than 20% foreign capital and c) provide that a representative of the Secretary of the Navy may attend meetings and challenge suspicious votes d) finally, by-laws also outline a procedure for adjudicating such a challenge
H. R. 4132	4/18/1921	Wallace White	Sec. 6: aliens, foreign governments, foreign corporations, American corporations with more than 20% foreign capital or any alien directors, companies "dominated or controlled by alien interests" and the representatives of all of the above are not eligible for a license. In addition, companies are barred from receiving a license unless they agree that the Secretary of Commerce may attend any meeting of its stockholders or directors. License may be revoked upon violation of this section.
H.R. 5889	5/6/1921	Wallace White	Sec. 3. Only citizens and companies incorporated under some state or territory of the U.S. are eligible for a license
H.R. 11964	1921	Wallace White	Sec. 2B. "The station license required hereby shall not be granted to or after the granting thereof such license shall not in any manner either voluntarily or involuntarily be transferred to a. Any alien or the representative of any alien; b. Nor to any foreign government or the representative thereof; c. Nor to any company, corporation, or association organized under the laws of any foreign government; d. Nor to any company, corporation or association of which any officer or director is an alien or of which more than one fifth of the capital stock having voting power is owned or controlled by aliens or their representatives or by a foreign government or representative thereof, or by any company, corporation or association organized under the laws of a foreign country.
S. 3694	4/20/1922	Frank B. Kellogg	Foreign ownership provision same as above
H.R. 13773	1/11/1923	W. White	Sec. 2B unchanged
H.R. 7357	2/28/1924	W. White	Sec. 2B (d) slight change [capital stock may be voted] vs. [capital stock having voting power is owned or controlled]
H.R. 5589	12/15/1925	W. White	Sec. 2B unchanged
S. 1754	12/16/1925	Clarence Dill	Sec. 5 is the same as Sec. 2B in the House
H.R. 9971	3/3/1926	W. White	Sec. 2B unchanged
S. 4157	5/3/1926	Clarence Dill	Provision is now Sec. 2B in the Senate as well, unchanged
Confidential conference draft, 1927			Sec. 9, crossed out, renamed Sec. 12
H.R. 9971, passed February 23, 1927			Radio Act of 1927, Public Law No. 632, Sec. 12 unchanged.

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"Watch on Wireless Plant." *New York Times* Aug. 10, 1912: 7.

"Wireless bill is passed." *New York Times* Aug. 10, 1912: 3.

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Notes

¹ This paper uses both the APA citation style for scholarly works and endnotes for archival sources and published government documents.

² Communications Act of 1934, 47 U.S.C. § 310 (b)(3), § 310 (b) (4); Telecommunications Act, Public Law 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996). The Telecommunications Act repealed the restrictions on the nationality of officers and directors (Sidak, 1997: 81).

³ Statement of Lieutenant Commander David W. Todd. United States Congress, House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Radio Communication: Hearings Before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 15357, a Bill to Regulate Radio Communication January 18 1912*. 62nd Cong., 2d. Sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1913) 41. [hereinafter "Statement of Lt. Cmdr. Todd, 1912"]

⁴ Id. 43.

⁵ Id. 70.

⁶ Id. 45.

⁷ Id. 70.

⁸ Id. 70.

⁹ The resolution read: "Resolved that when any harbor or other place in the American continents is so situated that the occupation thereof for naval or military purposes might threaten communications or the safety of the United States, the Government of the United States could not see without grave concern the possession of such harbor or other place by any corporation or association which has such a relation to another government, not American, as to give that Government practical power of control for naval or military purposes." See Bailey, 1933: 223-224).

¹⁰ S. 6412, An Act to regulate radiocommunications. In 48 *Congressional Record* H. 7572.

¹¹ 48 *Cong. Rec.* H9078. (1912).

¹² 48 *Cong. Rec.* H10503. (1912). For the President's wartime authority see Section 2 of the Radio Act of 1912 and Section 606 of the Communications Act of 1934.

¹³ Statement of Lt. Cmdr. Todd, 1912: 41.

¹⁴ Radio Act of 1912 37 Stat 302 (1912).

¹⁵ Radio Communication - Issuance of Licenses, 29 Opinion of the Attorney General, 579-582. cited in Sidak, 1997: 27-30. Sidak argues that the shortcomings of the provision must have been apparent to any corporate lawyer, so Congress may have passed it with an ulterior motive in mind. He speculates that Republican free traders in Congress and in the administration worked together to defeat a protectionist measure and hinder the work of incoming Democratic policymakers (1997: 28-30).

¹⁶ Colville Barclay, British Ambassador to the United States to Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, August 4, 1914. National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the Federal Communications Commission, Early Commerce files, RG. 173 [hereinafter Early Commerce files]

¹⁷ E. F. Sweet, Acting Secretary of Commerce to E. E. Mayer, manager of Tuckerton radio station, August 25, 1914. Early Commerce files. The Navy took control of the Sayville station a year later, in July 1915 (Douglas, 1987: 273).

¹⁸ Statement of Commander David W. Todd. United States Congress, House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Radio Communication: Hearings Before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 19350, a Bill to Regulate Radio Communication January 11, 1917*. 64th Cong., 2d. Sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1918) 32. [hereinafter "Statement of Cmdr. Todd, 1917"]

¹⁹ Statement of Edward J. Nally. United States Congress, House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Radio Communication: Hearings Before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 19350, a Bill to Regulate Radio Communication January 11, 1917*. 64th Cong., 2d. Sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1918) 180.

²⁰ Daniels to Lansing, 18 November 1915, National Archives, Department of State files, RG 59, 832.74/14 cited in Schwoch, 1990: 38.

²¹ Memorandum of conference with Senator Root, December 21, 1921. Papers of Stanford C. Hooper, Library of Congress. [hereinafter Root conference][hereinafter Hooper papers]

²² R. P. Schwerin to the Secretary of State, April 9, 1919. RG 59, file 811.74/171. cited in Michael J. Hogan *Informal Entente. The private structure of Cooperation in Anglo-American Economic Diplomacy, 1918-1928*. Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1991.

²³ Root conference, supra note 21.

²⁴ Josephus Daniels to William Jennings Bryan, 16 June 1915, National Archives, Department of State files, RG 59, 810.74/- cited in Schwoch, 1990: 37. see also Hogan, 1977/1991: 140. For U.S. expansion in Latin American during the war see Hannigan, 2002: 84-89.

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- ²⁵ The idea had been in the works for a while, considering that the Department of Commerce and Labor went on the record in support of government ownership as early as 1912 ("Federal ownership...", April 25, 1912).
- ²⁶ H.R. 19350 in United States Congress, House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Radio Communication: Hearings Before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 19350, a Bill to Regulate Radio Communication January 11-26, 1917*. 64th Cong., 2d. Sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1918) 1-6.
- ²⁷ Statement of John W. Griggs, President of the American Marconi Company. United States Congress, House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Radio Communication: Hearings Before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 19350, a Bill to Regulate Radio Communication January 18, 1917*. 64th Cong., 2d. Sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1918) 177.
- ²⁸ Statement of David Sarnoff, Commercial Manager of the American Marconi Company. United States Congress, House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Radio Communication: Hearings Before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries on H.R. 19350, a Bill to Regulate Radio Communication January 26, 1917*. 64th Cong., 2d. Sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1918) 350.
- ²⁹ Exec. Order (Apr. 6, 1917) *cited in* Sidak, 1997: 44.
- ³⁰ Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, *Views of the Navy Department on Radio Communication July 28, 1919*. United States Congress, House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, H. Doc. No. 165. 66th Cong. 1st Sess.: 1, 2 [hereinafter *Views of the Navy Department, 1919*]
- ³¹ *Views of the Navy Department, 1919*: 4.
- ³² M. B. West, radio inspector to Commander Stanford C. Hooper, January 26, 1920. Hooper papers, supra note 21.
- ³³ Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt to Secretary of State Robert Lansing, 14 January 1916, National Archives, State Department files, RG 59, 832.74/20. *cited in* Schwoch, 1990: 39.
- ³⁴ For U.S. government support to Federal see Alvey A. Adee, Second Assistant Secretary of State to J.B. Butler-Wright, Division of Latin American Affairs, 29 November 1915, National Archives, State Department files, RG 59, 832.74/13 and 13a. *cited in* Schwoch, 1990: 39.
- ³⁵ *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1919*: 96.
- ³⁶ Radio Corporation of America, "History of Radio Corporation and its relation to the art of radio communication and to the requirements of public communication," April 25, 1921. The papers of Wallace H. White, Chairman of the House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Library of Congress. [hereinafter White papers]
- ³⁷ E. T. Chamberlain, Commissioner of Navigation, "Memorandum for Secretary Hoover," March 17, 1921. Early Commerce files, supra note 16.
- ³⁸ Memorandum for Secretary Hoover, April 6, 1921. Probably prepared by E. T. Chamberlain, Commissioner of Navigation. Early Commerce Files, supra note 16. Initially, the radio bill drafted by the Commerce Department kept the language of the Radio Act of 1912 for foreign ownership provisions because its author was waiting for instructions on such a "broad public policy," not because he opposed restrictions on alien ownership.
- ³⁹ 62 *Cong. Rec.* H2333. (1923).
- ⁴⁰ Owen D. Young, chairman of RCA, to Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby, December 22, 1921. In Hooper papers, supra note 21.
- ⁴¹ Unsigned letter to Owen D. Young, December 22, 1921. Probably written by Stanford C. Hooper. In Hooper papers, supra note 21. Hooper's credentials as a reliable historical source are asserted by Aitken, 1985: 328-329, Douglas, 1987: 160 and McChesney, 1993: 156.
- ⁴² Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce to Senator Frank B. Kellogg, February 21, 1922. Roll 8. Frank B. Kellogg papers, Minnesota State Historical Society. [hereinafter Kellogg papers]
- ⁴³ Memorandum, December 15, 1925. *enclosed in* Harry J. Covington to Stephen B. Davis, Department of Commerce, January 6, 1926. Early Commerce files.
- ⁴⁴ Stanford C. Hooper, Memorandum for the Director of Naval Communications, September 29, 1927. In Hooper papers, supra note 21.
- ⁴⁵ Stanford C. Hooper to Milton S. Davis, Pacific Communication Officer, August 2, 1928. In Hooper papers, supra note 21.
- ⁴⁶ *Id.*
- ⁴⁷ Statement of Stanford C. Hooper, Director of Naval Communications. United States Congress, Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce, *Commission on Communications: Hearings Before the Committee on Interstate Commerce on S. 6, a Bill to provide for the regulation of the transmission of intelligence by wire or wireless May 8, 1929*. 71st Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1929) 328.
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Alcoholic Dogs and Glory for All:
The Launch of New Communications for National Prohibition, 1913

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In 1913, the Anti-Saloon League of America (ASLA), a Midwestern, church-based, social reform movement dedicated to the elimination of liquor traffic, declared its intention to pursue national prohibition. By this time, the League had established a system of communication messages and methods that, upon examination, looked very much like modern public relations strategies and tactics—although they were conceived and implemented well before oft-cited public relations pioneers such as Edward Bernays and John Hill entered the practice.¹ Although the ASLA continued to adhere to the principles of agitation—its term for the building and mobilizing of public sentiment—and political action, this shift from local and state politics to the national forum required additional communication methods. The purpose of this study is to trace through archival artifacts the strategies and tactics launched by the League that year.²

During 1913, the League intensified its political activism, increased its levels of controlled communications, such as newspapers and magazines, and harnessed the power of other tools that are now commonly recognized as modern public relations practice, such as third-party endorsements and special events. Most importantly, it entered a partnership that year with

¹ For details on the League's early communications, see: Margot Opdycke Lamme, "Literature to Form a More Perfect Union: An Examination of the Anti-Saloon League's Early Messages and Methods Through a Framework of Public Relations History" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, History Division, Miami Beach, Fla., 7-10 August, 2002). For discussions concerning the current model of public relations history, see: Karen S. Miller, "U. S. Public Relations History: Knowledge and Limitations," *Communication Yearbook* 23 (1999): 381-420; and Margot Opdycke Lamme, "Beyond Barnum and Bernays: Rethinking Public Relations History" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Journalism Historians Association, Nashville, Tenn., 2-5 October 2002).

² Primary sources used in this study consisted of hard copy originals available at the Westerville Public Library, Westerville, Ohio, which received ownership of the Anti-Saloon League of America's papers in 1973, and original League documents catalogued within an extensive microfilm collection compiled in a joint cooperative effort between the Ohio State Historical Society, Michigan Historical Collections, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, also available through the Westerville Library.

the Scientific Temperance Federation, a spinoff of the education arm of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Whereas the League saw the alliance as enhancing its own credibility with data-driven communications, the Scientific Temperance Federation saw the partnership as an opportunity to regain its financial footing and as an outlet for disseminating its messages.

National Prohibition

In his chronology of prohibition in the United States, Anti-Saloon League of America chronicler and publisher Ernest Cherrington cited attempts in the late nineteenth century by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Prohibition Party, the Independent Order of Good Templars, and the National Temperance Society to secure national prohibition through a constitutional amendment.³ In 1913, a number of factors came together to convince the League that it was time to try again, ensuring the transition of Prohibition from a local and state agenda item to a national one.

For one thing, nine out of forty-eight states were dry, or 19 percent, with at least twenty more pushing for statewide prohibition.⁴ That meant 46 million people, or more than half of the U.S. population, were living under prohibition legislation at the local or state level. And just thirty-six states, or three-quarters of them, were needed to ratify an amendment. Additionally,

³ Ernest H. Cherrington, *The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States of America: A Chronological History of the Liquor Problem and the Temperance Reform in the United States from the Earliest Settlements to the Consummation of National Prohibition* (Westerville, OH: The American Issue Press, 1920), 317-8. For an in-depth examination of the history of the woman's suffrage and temperance movements in Wisconsin and how their respective national reform organizations affected those efforts, see Genevieve G. McBride, *On Wisconsin Women: Working for Their Rights from Settlement to Suffrage* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press: 1993).

⁴ Manfred Friedrich and Donald Bull, *The Register of United States Breweries, 1876-1976* (Trumbull, CT: 1976), 309; Cherrington, *Evolution of Prohibition*, 319-20. Both sources reveal that there had been a dip in 1906 to just three dry states, down from seven in 1893.

according to Cherrington, “more than a majority” of the U.S. House of Representatives came from districts where most residents supported Prohibition. With this rise in dry states and local option laws, the ASLA had determined that the best way to ensure enforcement of the dry laws was to make the whole country dry.⁵ The popularity of local option laws may have pushed the ASLA to pursue a national law for an entirely different reason, as well. According to historian K. Austin Kerr, the wets had begun to capitalize on the League’s promotion of local option as the democratic ideal of self-rule—as a way to exercise the right to vote *for* liquor traffic (through liquor license laws), thereby diluting, if not defeating, the ASLA’s own efforts at the local level.⁶

Legislatively, prohibitionists had scored a success with the passage of the Webb-Kenyon Act, “an epoch in the history of this reform,” which outlawed the shipment and subsequent receipt, possession, or sale of intoxicating liquors from any place in or outside of the United States to any area within this country in which liquor had been banned.⁷ As an added victory, President William Howard Taft, who had vetoed the Act and then been overridden, was succeeded in the 1912 election by Woodrow Wilson, whom the ASLA had identified as a dry supporter, albeit incorrectly, as it will be seen. The League also perceived the advent of the income tax through the Sixteenth Amendment as advantageous because it would create an alternative to the revenue stream generated by the liquor tax since the Civil War.⁸

⁵ Cherrington, *Evolution of Prohibition*, 320-1.

⁶ K. Austin Kerr, *Organized for Prohibition: A New History of the Anti-Saloon League* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 141.

⁷ “General Superintendent’s Report, Rev. P. A. Baker,” *Proceedings, Fifteenth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America Twenty Year Jubilee Convention, Columbus, Ohio, 10-13 November 1913*, 62; *Webb-Kenyon Act, Statutes at Large* 90, 699 (1913).

⁸ “The Next and Final Step” in “General Superintendent’s Report, Rev. P. A. Baker,” *Proceedings, Fifteenth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America Twenty Year*

In terms of funding, the ASLA was entering what would be its most prosperous period, securing support from the likes of retailer S. S. Kresge and Standard Oil's John D. Rockefeller and reaping 80 to 90 percent of its earnings from its increasingly successful Field Days, in which League supporters spoke to congregations and then solicited subscriptions and contributions.⁹ In terms of communication, circulation of the League's flagship newspaper *American Issue* was rising while plans were under way to roll out four new publications, unsuccessfully as it will be shown, over the next two years. Most important, ASLA had secured a partnership in June 1913 with the Scientific Temperance Federation, an alliance that the League perceived as greatly enhancing its own credibility. The convergence of all these developments in 1913 paved the way for the League's "Next and Final Step," national prohibition.

The Declaration

It was at the League's Fifteenth National Convention, held in 1913 in Columbus, Ohio, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the League's founding in 1893, the ASLA general superintendent Reverend Purley A. Baker declared the ASLA's intentions to pursue a national prohibition amendment. He began by reinforcing the messages in William Anderson's 1910 Blue Book, which outlined the League's mission, goals and operations much as an annual report does

Jubilee Convention, Columbus, Ohio, 10-13 November 1913, 63. A copy of the declaration also can be found in the "Minutes of the Headquarters Committee of the Anti-Saloon League of America," Westerville, Ohio, 22 April 1913, roll 82 (box 27, folder 1), Ernest Hurst Cherrington Series, Westerville Public Library (joint Ohio State Historical Society-Michigan Historical Collections-Woman's Christian Temperance Union microfilm edition).

⁹ Howard Hyde Russell, "Statement of Howard Hyde Russell," speech given at the luncheon meeting of the Manufacture and Business Committee, Twentieth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America, Columbus, Ohio, 19-22 November 1918, roll 4 (folder 35), Howard Hyde Russell Series, Westerville Public Library (joint Ohio State Historical Society-Michigan Historical Collections-Woman's Christian Temperance Union microfilm edition); Peter H. Odegard, *Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), 273, 195, 183.

today, and in League Founder Howard Hyde Russell's speeches and writings during the first ten years of the ASLA, reviewing the challenges that the League and others had overcome in building the anti-saloon movement, including the liquor interests, some religious leaders and politicians, and "that part of the press in which liquor advertisements outweigh editorial decency and duty to the homes of their patrons."¹⁰

Additionally, Baker reminded the convention delegates that the founding purpose of the League had been to ". . . amalgamate scattered forces; to mobilize the already created sentiment and focus it at a given point for immediate results."¹¹ Its success, he said, was evident in the abundance of references that the League garnered in opposition publications and the lay press—not because the ASLA sought such attention, but because the prevalence of the League's work was bound to get noticed. He recognized the WCTU for its "early enlistment, constancy of effort, loftiness of purpose, wise planning, and successful execution," the Prohibition Party for having "sounded the gong in the ears of sleeping saints until under other auspices they are enlisted in a relentless war for the overthrow of the liquor traffic," and the Gideons for "making the hotel bars unpopular and unprofitable."¹²

But then he seemed to push these groups aside to position the League as leading the charge toward national prohibition, explaining,

¹⁰ "General Superintendent's Report," *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 56; Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen R. Broom, *Effective Public Relations*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 475-6; Doug Newsome and Bob Carrell, *Public Relations Writing: Form and Style* 6th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2001), 445; Fraser P. Seitel, *The Practice of Public Relations*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 336.

¹¹ "General Superintendent's Report," *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 57.

¹² "General Superintendent's Report," *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 58, 59-61.

There comes a time in every movement when distinctively advanced policies and programs must be announced and strictly adhered to until the entire line moves up. . . . It means thoughtful days and sometimes restless nights, . . . because of how your following and associates may view it. . . . To know when to move to hold the radicals and not lose the conservatives requires the most careful discernment of the draft of public thought.¹³

The implication was that it would be the League, with its “distinctively advanced policies and programs” and “careful discernment of the draft of public thought,” that would be raising the bar and causing friends and associates to fall by the wayside in its drive toward national prohibition.

By this way of introduction, Baker presented the ASLA’s declaration for the “Next and Final Step,” a resolution formally voted upon and passed by the League’s Headquarters Committee and National Board of Trustees that spring. Here, the ASLA drew its battle lines, calling the liquor traffic “an enemy of everything that is good in private and public life. . . . a friend of everything that is bad. . . .[and] a despoiler of the race . . .”¹⁴ The cities, Baker said, were a danger to democracy because their saloons bred their politicians; to save the urban citizenship, then, and preserve the rural people and the Republic, “the liquor traffic must be destroyed.”¹⁵ The time was ripe for national prohibition, he said, because the movement was so large and so well organized, and because “the moral, scientific and commercial aspects of the problem are being more intelligently put before the public than hitherto. The narrow,

¹³ “General Superintendent’s Report,” *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 62.

¹⁴ “The Next and Final Step” in “General Superintendent’s Report,” *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 63. See also Purley A. Baker, “The Next and Final Step,” *American Issue*, June 1913, roll 5, American Issue Series, 4. Although this story consisted of the formal declaration only, without the context Baker would provide in his convention speech later that year, it served to give five months’ notice to *American Issue* subscribers and so, presumably, anyone else, of the League’s intentions.

¹⁵ “The Next and Final Step,” *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 63.

acrimonious and emotional appeal is giving way to a rational, determined conviction that the traffic being the source of so much evil and economic waste and the enemy of so much good, has no rightful place in our modern civilization.”¹⁶

To elect a Congress favorable to such an amendment, Baker continued in his speech, would require that each House and Senate candidate from then on be “interrogated in a courteous, clear, dignified, written communication” by an anti-liquor committee from within his constituency concerning his stance on a prohibition amendment. His replies would then need to be publicized; if he refused, that would need to be publicized; if his response was convoluted, then the ASLA would interpret it and publicize its findings to his voters. Baker then neatly summarized the League’s political strategy, revealing a ruthlessness at which the 1910 Blue Book had only hinted.¹⁷ “One of the heartbreaking experiences of such a campaign,” Baker said, “is that we will be compelled to oppose and even defeat and probably thereby politically ruin some who have fought with us in the past.”¹⁸

After making a plea to the businessmen among the delegates for greater financial support and, as Anderson had in the Blue Book, chastising church ministries for instituting a budget system that was “used as a shield behind which to dodge sacred responsibilities,” including temperance reform, Baker ended his speech.¹⁹

Surprisingly, neither Baker, who had devoted much of the previous decade to establishing the infrastructure for the League’s communication efforts, including the building of a publishing

¹⁶ “The Next and Final Step,” *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 63.

¹⁷ For a description of the Blue Book, see Lamme, “Literature,” 23-7.

¹⁸ “General Superintendent’s Report,” *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 65.

¹⁹ “General Superintendent’s Report,” *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 66-70.

facility in Westerville, Ohio, nor Ernest Cherrington, who was the League's publisher, addressed the ways in which communication would be used in the national prohibition campaign. Instead, that direction could be gleaned from the speaker following Baker, Lillian Burt of the Ohio WCTU who praised the League's legislative efforts, but called for more emphasis on "definite, systematic educational work against the real enemy, alcohol."²⁰ If people understood the effects of alcohol on themselves and on their unborn children, she said, then they would not consider supporting the liquor interests. According to Burt, the Ohio WCTU had developed a series of readings that addressed the effects of alcohol on the brain, the nerves, heredity, child life, and government, among others, and that had been incorporated into youth meetings and weekly Sunday school lessons to convey "the truth concerning alcohol to the homes."²¹ The WCTU had then developed these readings into a series of pamphlets and posters to be distributed so thoroughly "that no man can go anywhere without seeing the truth concerning alcohol."²² Leaders of the movement, such as the Prohibition Party and the ASLA, she said, all did their parts in their own ways, but an "education campaign," she concluded, would establish more common ground among them because everyone recognized the truth about alcohol.²³

Although it is not evident from reviewing the 1913 convention proceedings, the ASLA had come to the same conclusion as Burt had concerning the importance of alcohol education. In

²⁰ "The Need of Temperance Education, Mrs. Lillian Burt," *Proceedings, Fifteenth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America Twenty Year Jubilee Convention, Columbus, Ohio, 10-13 November 1913*, 70-1. Cherrington's speech, which he was not present to deliver although it was included in the *Proceedings*, introduced a new international initiative, "The World League Against Alcoholism."

²¹ "The Need of Temperance Education," *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 71.

²² "The Need of Temperance Education," *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 71.

²³ "The Need of Temperance Education," *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 71-2.

fact, securing a controlling partnership with the Scientific Temperance Federation, a spin-off of the WCTU's education efforts, was one of the League's final steps in its preparation for launching its national prohibition amendment campaign.

Scientific Temperance Federation

In 1911, two years before Baker announced the League's decision to pursue national prohibition, he reported to the national ASLA conference that the American Issue Publishing Company (AIPC) would need to increase its daily production of literature from one and one-half tons to ten tons if the League were to print its "way into the knowledge and power of the people."²⁴ He said it would be five years before the AIPC could meet this production goal and explained:

This is not spectacular work. It is siege work, but it brings lasting victory. . . . The masses are utterly without knowledge. They will not seek knowledge. It must literally be forced upon them when they are not looking, "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," yesterday, today, and every day . . . In an age of a literature propaganda for everything, we are trying to convince the public with poor speeches that not one in fifty ever hear and those who do were mostly converted before they came. We must put modern advertising business sense into our propaganda. Well-prepared circulars for the different classes mailed into the homes, attractive posters hung everywhere, . . . bristling with facts that stick like tacks in the mind, the church press and the League papers—strong, dignified, intense and fertile, widely circulated to give texture and vision to our leadership, is our present and future need.

. . . You can not [*sic*] successfully combat page color advertisements, flashy posters and great electric beer signs with a few tracts printed on paper so cheap that when printed on one side you can read them on both. Such literature is a misappropriation of trust funds that ought to be prohibited by law.²⁵

If Baker had been writing an introduction to the work of the Scientific Temperance Federation (STF), he could not have been more on point. Cora Frances Stoddard, STF

²⁴ "General Superintendent's Report, Rev. P. A. Baker," *Proceedings, Fourteenth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America, Washington, D.C., 11-14 December 1911*, 22.

²⁵ "General Superintendent's Report," *Proceedings, 11-14 December 1911*, 22-3.

corresponding secretary and treasurer, wrote in 1910, “it is the simple statement of the proven fact that is winning attention and conviction from those who hitherto have regarded the matter [of temperance] with indifference or polite incredulity.”²⁶ Further, she said, the purpose of the STF’s work was not to find ways to eliminate pain and disease, but to “get the evidence that will convince man to exert his moral nature in resisting temptation, which indulged in, impairs his physical efficiency, but still worse weakens his moral nature, impairs his moral development and destroys character.”²⁷ This was the kind of focus Baker had called for, and Stoddard, who had graduated from Wellesley in 1896 and had been the secretary to Mary Hannah Hanchett Hunt of the WCTU’s Department of Scientific Temperance Instruction, would soon find herself and the STF beholden to the League.

The Boston-based STF was rooted in Hunt’s work with the WCTU, although the ownership of that work upon her death in 1906 remained in contention.²⁸ According to Stoddard, the WCTU’s Scientific Temperance Association shared Hunt’s material with the STF, which, in turn, used that research while continuing to gather more to enrich the body of knowledge concerning the effects of alcohol on individuals and society.²⁹

²⁶ Cora Frances Stoddard to Mrs. Mary F. Lovell, Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, TLS, 24 February 1910, roll 24 (box 8, folder 1), Scientific Temperance Federation Series, Westerville Public Library (joint Ohio State Historical Society-Michigan Historical Collections-Woman’s Christian Temperance Union microfilm edition), 4.

²⁷ Cora Frances Stoddard to Mrs. Mary F. Lovell, 24 February 1910, 7.

²⁸ Cora Frances Stoddard, Boston, Massachusetts, to Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts, D.D., Washington, D.C., TLS, 22 October 1909, roll 24 (box 8, folder 1), Scientific Temperance Federation Series; Laurel G. Bowen, “Scientific Temperance Federation: 1881-1934,” in *Guide to the Microfilm Edition of Temperance and Prohibition Papers*, ed. Randall C. Jimerson, Francis X. Blouin, and Charles A. Isetts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977), 162-3.

²⁹ Cora Frances Stoddard to Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts, D.D., 22 October 1909, 1.

Hunt's entry in the League's *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem* credited her with leading a national campaign between 1882 and 1902 that resulted in legal temperance education requirements in ". . . every State and in the Territories, requiring instruction in the nature and effects of alcohol and other narcotics, as a part of physiology and hygiene."³⁰ By 1901, one-half of the country's school districts had adopted a scientific temperance textbook that had been endorsed by Hunt, making one out of every two children at the time probable recipients of her temperance lessons.³¹ At Hunt's death, more than forty textbooks featured her research and/or her editorial input concerning the role of alcohol and its impact on the body and on society.³²

According to the ASLA, the STF took Hunt's work one step further because it disseminated scientific information on alcohol in "popular form, in books, pamphlets, special

³⁰ Ernest Hurst Cherrington, Albert D. Porter, William Eugene Johnson, and Cora Frances Stoddard, *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem*, 6 vols. (Westerville, OH: American Issue Publishing Company, 1925-1930), 3: 1269.

³¹ Jonathan Zimmerman, *Distilling Democracy: Alcohol Education in America's Public Schools, 1880-1925* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 7.

³² *Standard Encyclopedia*, 3: 1269. For a detailed examination of Hunt's work and its impact on American education and democracy, see Zimmerman, *Distilling Democracy*. See also Andrew Sinclair, *Prohibition: The Era of Excess*, with a preface by Richard Hofstadter (Boston: Little, Brown and Company in association with The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1962), 43-5. A. S. Barnes's Pathfinder Series and McGuffey's Readers have been identified by Zimmerman and Sinclair, respectively, as two of the many textbooks Hunt endorsed during her tenure at the Department of Scientific Temperance Instruction. According to Zimmerman, many within and outside the WCTU—including WCTU President Frances Willard—thought Hunt exaggerated and was even dangerous. Additionally, a number of Union members at the state and local levels resented her for taking credit for legislative reforms in their areas. After Hunt's death in 1906, the WCTU designated its Department of Scientific Temperance Instruction as "a clearinghouse for alcohol information"—the same role that the Scientific Temperance Federation sought to fill under Stoddard's leadership. See Zimmerman, 9, 10, 29-30.

articles, and addresses.”³³ Important, too, was that the League perceived the STF to be highly credible among temperance workers at home and abroad.³⁴ The STF not only had a library of international medical research concerning alcohol and alcohol-related studies, but it published a quarterly periodical, *Scientific Temperance Journal*. It also had found new ways to communicate these findings by publishing charts and colored diagrams, pictures, and slides, and incorporating these as well as three-dimensional models into a traveling exhibit.³⁵ Thus, the ASLA seemed to have concluded that the pairing would be mutually beneficial: the STF had the data and the design and the League had the production facilities and distribution channels.

From the STF’s perspective, however, there were two additional motivations to pursue this partnership. The first concerned financial survival. The STF was established as an independent clearinghouse for data and research concerning alcohol and alcohol abuse. However, many organizations found it more economical to gather their own data than to subscribe to the STF, and even its own supporters were reluctant to increase their donations because the STF lacked a well-organized or sizeable constituency.³⁶ The second reason for Stoddard’s alliance with the ASLA is that scientific temperance education in schools—the movement’s primary forum heretofore—was rapidly becoming eclipsed by a larger movement in social hygiene. This shift represented a move from a self-focused approach of physiology and alcohol’s effects on human organs, to a broader perspective of society’s welfare that emphasized

³³ *Standard Encyclopedia*, 5: 2830.

³⁴ *Standard Encyclopedia*, 5: 2830.

³⁵ Bowen, “Scientific Temperance Federation,” 163.

³⁶ Zimmerman, 135.

“social relationships and responsibilities.”³⁷ Whereas Hunt’s supporters would have considered hygiene to be a lifestyle issue (clean, moral living leads to good health), the social hygiene movement recognized that sound morals would not be enough to combat bacteria or disease.³⁸

Although the STF sought to follow in Hunt’s footsteps by demonstrating through scientific evidence the damage of alcohol to the human body, its “millions of posters, charts, billboards, and pamphlets” produced between 1908 and 1912 tended toward the emotional rather than informational, emphasizing the more visible social problems of alcohol abuse.³⁹ The STF’s “Exhibit in Alcohol and Public Health” at the 1912 International Congress in Hygiene and Demography may have been just such a display of social consequences that prompted the ASLA, through its publisher, Ernest Cherrington, to seek out the STF and propose combining forces.⁴⁰

By this time, though, the STF had affiliated itself with the National Temperance Society. Thus, in response to Cherrington’s overture, Stoddard wrote that the STF would be unwilling to submerge itself in another organization and that it would want to know the permanency of the arrangement concerning ownership of the materials produced jointly, “should the League at some future time decide that it did not wish to continue it any longer.”⁴¹

³⁷ Zimmerman, 130; 115.

³⁸ Zimmerman, 120-1. A contemporary article, for example, examined records of venereal disease, marriage, prostitution, criminal records, and divorce, to develop a measure for rural morality. Paul L. Vogt, “Rural Morality: A Study in Social Pathology,” *Journal of Social Hygiene* 1, no. 2 (1914-15): 207-219.

³⁹ Zimmerman, 134-6.

⁴⁰ Bowen, “Scientific Temperance Federation,” 163.

⁴¹ Cora Frances Stoddard, Boston, Massachusetts, to Ernest H. Cherrington, Westerville, Ohio, TLS, 4 November 1912, roll 24 (box 8, folder 3), Scientific Temperance Federation Series.

While awaiting a formal proposal from Cherrington, Stoddard wrote Charles Scanlon, an STF supporter and League critic, to update him on association news and to reassure him of STF's intentions in working with the ASLA.⁴² It was quite clear that while she and others regarded the League with skepticism, there were some pragmatic benefits that she believed the STF and the temperance movement as a whole could reap from such an arrangement:

While I know how you and many others of our good friends feel in regard to the Anti-Saloon League, I do not think we ought to turn down, without a hearing, at least, any proposition that they have to offer which carries any assurance of a larger work. There is the imminent danger that in the near future the liquor people are going to begin to work the scientific end, and when they once begin to cover the country with their false and misleading statements, they will gain the public ear, and it will multiply the difficulties of our work one hundred fold. If there is any agency by which we can reach the public in a large way immediately with the scientific facts, I think we ought to use it. . . .

. . . There is this question to be considered, let them go on and develop their own work in their own way, making mistakes as they have already done and are bound to do, or put ourselves in position to help control the matter . . .

. . . I want you to be open-minded and to consider what is the best thing in the largest way. . . . the work must be done by a scientific and not by a political organization, that its permanency and scientific standing must be ensured.⁴³

When the National Temperance Society considered dropping out of the negotiations six months later, Stoddard wrote to Scanlon that Cherrington wanted to delay the deal to avoid looking like "the League is trying to 'grab' everything in sight," although, she reported, the League seemed to be "finally waking to the importance of the scientific and educational work."⁴⁴

⁴² According to K. Austin Kerr, a number of prohibitionists objected to the work of the Anti-Saloon League because they felt it undermined the work of other groups, such as the Prohibition Party, and because it seemed more interested in raising money than "building a grass-roots movement for prohibition." See Kerr, 134.

⁴³ Cora Frances Stoddard, Boston, Massachusetts, to Professor Charles Scanlon, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, TL, 18 December 1912, roll 24 (box 8, folder 5), Scientific Temperance Federation Series, 2.

⁴⁴ Cora Frances Stoddard, Boston, Massachusetts, to Professor Charles Scanlon, Atlanta, Georgia, L, 12 May 1913, roll 24 (box 8, folder 3), Scientific Temperance Federation Series, 1; 2.

Weeks later, the National Temperance Society did drop out, although the League was still prepared to make an investment of a “good many thousand dollars.”⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, on 9 June 1913, the STF agreed to work with the ASLA. Among the stipulations were that the STF would retain its name and location in Boston; its name would appear as the source for all publications it provided, “so far as practicable”; it would be paid for articles furnished to the AIPC, but not for reprints; and the ASLA would have a 51 percent presence on the STF Board of Directors, while the STF would retain a 25 presence on its own board.⁴⁶ Thus, through its formal agreement with the STF, the ASLA gained access to the literature that Baker had dreamed would “quicken the conscience and enlighten the mind,” whereas Stoddard had found a way for the STF to stay afloat while still serving the movement.⁴⁷

Scientific Temperance Federation Fliers

Once the deal was signed, it was not long before the eight commercial presses at the League’s American Issue Publishing Company (AIPC) in Westerville, Ohio, began to churn out STF fliers, which would also double as posters and which usually featured the STF copyright, the AIPC publishing credit, and a source citation for the statistics featured in the copy. These three elements contributed largely to the idea of source credibility, considered today to be a

⁴⁵ Cora Frances Stoddard, Boston, Massachusetts, to Professor Charles Scanlon, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, L, 29 May 1913, roll 24 (box 8, folder 5), Scientific Temperance Federation Series, 3.

⁴⁶ “Meeting Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Scientific Temperance Federation,” Boston, Massachusetts, 9 June 1913, roll 7 (box 3, folder 6), Ernest Hurst Cherrington Series, Westerville Public Library (joint Ohio State Historical Society-Michigan Historical Collections-Woman’s Christian Temperance Union microfilm edition), 4.

⁴⁷ “General Superintendent’s Report, Rev. P. A. Baker,” *Proceedings, Thirteenth National Convention of the Anti-Saloon League of America, Chicago, Illinois, 6-9 December 1909*, 45.

primary element of effective public relations.⁴⁸ By listing itself separately from the AIPC as the copyright holder, the STF not only avoided being subsumed by the League, one of Stoddard's conditions for the partnership, but it conveyed to those drys who opposed the ASLA that the work continued to be the STF's, not the League's. Also, by citing its sources, the STF conveyed to readers that its information was based on scientific evidence, not "the narrow, acrimonious and emotional appeals" that Baker derided in his 1913 general superintendent's report.⁴⁹

Two other features common to most of the STF fliers and posters were the bold use of black and red against a white background and simple but powerful graphics used to reinforce the copy. Both sets of elements made the publications distinctive and remarkably timeless—as if they could just as well have been published in the 1980s, for example, as in the 1910s. In fact, sandwiched between an STF invoice to the AIPC and an AIPC materials order form is an item titled, "Some of the Reasons for Color Study in the Public Schools."⁵⁰ Quoting "Frederick J. Hopkins, Director of Drawing, Boston, Mass.," it included the statement, "Children have a marked preference for color. They will choose objects for their bright colors rather than for their fine form."⁵¹ With no other context, it is possible that this paper could have been included in a mailing from the STF to the AIPC as a way to show the AIPC the importance of color, i.e. red, in publishing their pieces, especially those intended for the classroom or Sunday school room. On

⁴⁸ See, for example, Newsome and Carrell, 57; Cutlip, Center, and Broom, 68; and, in the broader field of communication, Daniel J. O'Keefe, "Source Factors," in *Persuasion: Theory and Research*, Current Communication, ed. Jesse G. Delia, no. 2 (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990), 130-57.

⁴⁹ "The Next and Final Step," *Proceedings, 10-13 November 1913*, 63.

⁵⁰ "Some of the Reasons for Color Study in the Public Schools," ND, roll 24 (box 8, folder 4), Scientific Temperance Federation Series.

⁵¹ "Some of the Reasons for Color Study in the Public Schools."

the whole, the STF's use of simple graphics, bold copy, and color were just what Baker envisioned when he called for better communication pieces at the 1911 ASLA national convention. Here were the "attractive posters . . . bristling with facts that stick like tacks . . . strong, dignified, intense and fertile, . . . widely circulated to give texture and vision to our leadership, . . ."⁵²

The first STF/AIPC flier/poster titles had a copyright date of 1913 and closely adhered to Cora Stoddard's vision of science-based appeals: "Parents' Drinking Weakens Children's Vitality," "Alcoholic Dogs had more Feeble and Defective Puppies," or "Deaths, Defects, Dwarfings in the Young of Alcoholized Guinea Pigs."⁵³ It should be noted, however, that the data upon which these pieces were based stemmed from research conducted in 1909, 1903, and 1912, respectively. That would have meant that by publication time, the data was one to ten years old and twelve to twenty-one years old by 1924, when the fliers/posters still were available for purchase. Today, public relations practitioners would consider such time lags to be a serious challenge to source credibility. On the other hand, the increased pace and quantity of scientific research and the multiple forms in which scholars and the general public now receive research results make it difficult to compare what an acceptable "shelf life" of research findings might have been in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

⁵² "General Superintendent's Report," *Proceedings, 11-14 December 1911*, 22-3.

⁵³ Pocket version of ASLA's "1924 Catalogue: Temperance Posters," Anti-Saloon League Flier File, Westerville Public Library. Examples here are listed as "E Series No. 1, 10, 11, respectively. Each of the STF pamphlets is numbered, but there is no record in this file of when each was produced, only when each was copyrighted; however, many continued to be part of the ASLA's "1924 Catalogue: Temperance Posters" (pocket version found in the Flier File).

Other fliers concerned the dangers of drinking in relation to sunstroke, “feeble-mindedness,” and “worker’s efficiency.”⁵⁴ One striking flier featured a centered photograph of the ill-fated luxury liner Titanic over which was a headline that declared, “The Titanic Carried Down 1503 People” and under which was a subhead that added, “DRINK CARRIES OFF 1503 Men and Women EVERY EIGHT DAYS in the Year.” This was followed by a statement in smaller type that said, “At Least One Man in Every Seven and One-Half Men who Die in the United States Loses His Life as the Direct or Indirect Result of DRINK.” The last line of copy, printed in the third largest typeface, read, “No Man Need Die of Alcohol-Caused Disease.”⁵⁵

This piece demonstrated a few things about the sophistication of the STF’s communication tactics. First, it established common ground with readers by using an international tragedy with which most everyone could identify, and then it related the incident back to the alcohol issue by showing how alcohol abuse was an ongoing tragedy of similar proportion. Second, the STF kept the copy simple and direct and complemented it with a photograph of what by then would have been a widely recognized image. Third, the STF combined this emotive appeal with a cognitive one, statistics, in constructing its message, a technique that is now commonly accepted as sound persuasive writing.⁵⁶ Finally, the STF adhered to its own legacy of physiological messages by closing the piece with a medical-sounding note, “alcohol-caused disease,” rather than a moral one.

⁵⁴ “No. 35: Keep Cool”; “No. 6: Feeble-mindedness”; and “No. 23: “Moderate Drinking Reduces the Worker’s Efficiency,” in Anti-Saloon League Flier File, Westerville Public Library.

⁵⁵ “No. 40: Titanic” in Anti-Saloon League Flier File, Westerville Public Library.

⁵⁶ Newsom and Carrell, 60.

Even a pamphlet that focused on morality was presented as scientifically grounded. “DRINK A GREAT CAUSE OF IMMORALITY,” was developed from a 1909 study by the “Inspector Under Inebriates Acts, on 865 Immoral Inebriate Women in British Reformatories.”⁵⁷ The pamphlet showed a red triangle of which roughly 40 percent was black. In the black area was a white box that read, “40 percent of the Immorality was due solely to Drink.” The bold use of black and red against a white background not only was eye-catching, but the graphic served to reinforce the remaining copy, “There was no apparent reason why any of the persons (*represented by the black section*) should have become immoral but for preceding alcoholism. — R. W. Brandthwaite, M. D.”⁵⁸

A final example of the series the STF copyrighted in 1913 highlighted comments made by “Emperor William II, of Germany” in a 1910 address to German naval cadets. Above his photo, the headline read, “What Germany’s Emperor Thinks About Alcohol”; under his photo, the copy read, “During my reign I have observed that of the great number of crimes appealed to me for decision, nine-tenths were due to alcohol. Nerves are undermined and endangered from youth up by the use of alcohol. In the time [in war] for steady nerves and a cool head victory will lie with the nation that uses the smallest amount of alcohol.”⁵⁹

There was a number of striking elements in this flier. For one, the AIPC credit is not included, only the 1913 STF copyright note, although the type style, size, and layout look like

⁵⁷ “No. 19: Drink a Great Cause of Immorality,” in Anti-Saloon League Flier File, Westerville Public Library.

⁵⁸ “No. 19: Drink a Great Cause of Immorality.” [Italics in original.] It is hard not to wince at the unfortunate confusion between “drink” as a verb and noun; one wonders if it was caught at the time.

⁵⁹ “No. 47: What Germany’s Emperor Thinks About Alcohol,” in Anti-Saloon League Flier File, Westerville Public Library. [Brackets in original.]

most of the other AIPC-published fliers. Also, the use of the Anglicized “Emperor William,” rather than the more common German form of “Kaiser Wilhelm,” could have been a way to acknowledge anti-German sentiment while appealing to dry Americans of German descent.⁶⁰ Finally, the insertion of “[in war]” was an attempt to link war-time with the need for temperance, if not prohibition. Because the file does not indicate when the flier was published, however, it is not clear if this piece was used to help introduce this association or to help reinforce it.

American Issue Publishing Company Literature

Meanwhile, the AIPC had continued to produce League publications alongside those of the STF. In a 1 January 1925 report reviewing the output of the AIPC since its inception in 1909, Ernest Cherrington recorded the total revenue gained in that period from print orders for “books, booklets, pamphlets, leaflets, tracts, letterheads, envelopes, subscription cards, blank forms” placed by state Leagues and related concerns such as the STF, the Lincoln-League Legion, the Subscription Department (to print the subscription forms used for Field Days, for example), and the ASLA.⁶¹ A summary of those orders by category showed that leaflets, such as the STF fliers described above, far outnumbered the others, with more than 127 million pieces bringing in more than \$226,000 in revenue, compared to just over 2 million book orders at \$134,000 and 6.2

⁶⁰ Although two years before the sinking of the *Lusitania*, generally regarded as the point when World War I-era anti-German sentiment began escalating in the United States, the League already had declared its anti-urban stance, believing the cities were to blame for the liquor traffic and, by implication, the largely urban immigrant population. See page 6 of this study.

⁶¹ “Report of Ernest H. Cherrington as General Manager of the Publishing Interests of the Anti-Saloon League of America, including the Report of the American Issue Publishing Company as of January 1, 1925, and the Report of the General Educational Work Covering a Period of Fifteen Years,” 5 November 1925, in “Anti-Saloon League Pamphlets, Box 1,” Anti-Saloon League Archives, Westerville Public Library, 16-7.

million pamphlets at \$67,600.⁶² Total revenue from the League's flagship newspaper *American Issue* was not listed, although circulation figures revealed a steady rise between 1909 and 1914, from almost 700,000 to 8.9 million copies, and between 1917 and 1920, from 11.8 million to 18.4 million copies.⁶³ After the enactment of Prohibition, circulation dropped approximately 4 million between 1921 and 1924; the drop between 1914 and 1916, however, might best be explained by the brief appearance of four additional League publications.

AIPC Publisher Ernest Cherrington had developed these four with the intent of appealing to different parties and classes.⁶⁴ By doing so, he might have been attempting to meet a need identified by Baker as early as 1909: "The people must be graded and classified and their needs met as we have not dreamed of hitherto."⁶⁵ Thus, according to his 1925 AIPC report, the *American Patriot*, a general interest magazine, and the *New Republic*, a fundraising piece, first appeared in 1912 and 1913 respectively, whereas the *National Daily*, targeted to editors of the popular press and magazines, and *The Worker*, an appeal to labor, first appeared in 1915. All four were eliminated after 1916, because, according to Kerr, capital was spread too thin.⁶⁶ Indeed, the AIPC's total operating profits (excluding outside contributions) peaked in 1914 at

⁶² "Report of Ernest H. Cherrington," 5 November 1925, 15.

⁶³ According to Cherrington, because ASLA publicity began to spread to other League departments, pinning down revenue calculations for the *American Issue* was next to impossible. See "Report of Ernest H. Cherrington," 5 November 1925, 4, and, for example, Odegard, 204. For circulation figures, see "Report of Ernest H. Cherrington," 5 November 1925, 12-5.

⁶⁴ "Report of Ernest H. Cherrington," 5 November 1925, 12-3; Kerr, 155-6.

⁶⁵ "General Superintendent's Report," *Proceedings, 6-9 December 1909*, 45.

⁶⁶ Kerr, 155-6. See also, Odegard, 77. According to Odegard, five states published their own state League organs: Alabama, California, New Hampshire, Texas, and Waterville, Maine. Connecticut's separate publication fell under the auspices of the Connecticut Temperance Society.

just over \$46,000 but plummeted to just under \$1,500 in 1916, the last year these four publications were produced.⁶⁷ Such a staggering drop suggested that some or all of these pieces were not offered by subscription, as was the *American Issue*, but distributed for free to promote the League to specific groups whose support it sought: potential donors, editors, and labor.

A final point to consider is that although the circulation figures for the *New Republic* and the *National Daily* were substantial, neither publication was designed with home and family in mind. In contrast, although the *American Patriot* was a family magazine, it had quite a modest circulation even in its best year. Thus, in addition to financial concerns, it was also possible that the League ceased publication of these four pieces because they detracted from Baker's desire to reach men in the home.⁶⁸

American Issue

Ernest Cherrington had been the *American Issue* editor for four years now and, judging by the masthead and the infrequency of bylines in the June 1913 issue, in which Baker first declared the League's intentions to pursue National Prohibition, Cherrington might also have been the principal writer of the now monthly magazine. The cover design was reminiscent of early *National Geographic* issues, with bold letters across the top and an inner frame within which the cover image or copy appeared. This format used two covers, an outer and inner one. In the June 1913 issue, the two covers juxtaposed a higher ideal with a baser attitude. The outer cover featured a quote from lawyer, former Prohibition Party candidate, and League supporter John G. Woolley, who urged cooperation among the WCTU, the Prohibition Party, and the

⁶⁷ "Report of Ernest H. Cherrington," 5 November 1925, 18. In fact, according to this report, the 1914 figure was the greatest profit from operations the AIPC gained in the period between October 1909 and January 1, 1925.

⁶⁸ "General Superintendent's Report," *Proceedings*, 6-9 December 1909, 45.

ASLA. He wrote that the WCTU was unrivaled in “inspiration and education,” the Party was unrivaled in “its assault upon the national attention,” and the ASLA was unmatched in “utilizing public sentiment as it forms.”⁶⁹ Thus, he concluded, in words that were more inclusive than Baker’s would be at the November national convention, “there has been work enough and will be glory enough for us all.”⁷⁰

In contrast to this ideal, the issue’s inner cover was a cartoon that depicted a garbage barrel overflowing with trash labeled “rum,” “bar-room,” “cash,” “whisky,” and a half-buried man in a pinstripe suit, whose leg is labeled “the traffic.”⁷¹ Strewn around the base of the barrel were broken liquor bottles, dice, playing cards, racing forms, betting forms, and piece of paper with “prize fights” on it. These covers not only contrasted the good dries with the bad wets, but they also revealed something about the continuum along which the League operated. The ASLA was just as comfortable spouting lofty ideals as it was spewing crass attacks.

Articles in this issue included a recap of the Webb-Kenyon victory and announced that the principal authors of that bill, Texas Senator Morris Sheppard, North Carolina Congressman Yates Webb, and Iowa Senator William S. Kenyon, would be at the national ALSA convention in November.⁷² Another described two temperance addresses delivered in May by Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels and then spelled out their significance. Because Daniels “is a man of

⁶⁹ John G. Woolley, *American Issue*, June 1913, roll 5, American Issue Series, Westerville Public Library (joint Ohio State Historical Society-Michigan Historical Collections-Woman’s Christian Temperance Union microfilm edition), outer cover.

⁷⁰ Woolley, *American Issue*, June 1913, outer cover.

⁷¹ Will Frost, “For The Dump,” *American Issue*, June 1913, roll 5, American Issue Series, inner cover.

⁷² “Big Webb Law Demonstration at A. S. L. Jubilee Convention,” *American Issue*, June 1913, roll 5, American Issue Series, 6.

large affairs and wide experience,” it read, and hailed from North Carolina, a prohibition state, then Prohibition could not be a failure; otherwise “he would not have made these addresses.”⁷³ Such commitment to the cause, the story concluded, put Daniels alongside then Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan and President Woodrow Wilson “in public proclaiming against the drink evil.”⁷⁴ Bryan was, indeed, a dry supporter, earning \$11,000 as a speaker for the League in 1919.⁷⁵ Wilson, however, supported local option as a New Jersey gubernatorial candidate because he believed in local self-government, not because he was a prohibitionist.⁷⁶ In fact, according to Wilson biographer Ray Stannard Baker, the liquor question would become an “irritant” in his future campaigns.⁷⁷

The ASLA’s quick adoption of Daniels, Bryan, and Wilson as its own, despite Wilson’s objection to Prohibition, indicated its eagerness to amass powerful supporters who could then provide third-party endorsements. This method is often employed today in public relations to garner “legitimacy” for a message, idea, or action, and gain credibility with target audiences.⁷⁸ With the Daniels story, it was clear that the ASLA already had learned to do the same.

⁷³ “Mr. Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, Delivers Two Strong Temperance Addresses,” *American Issue*, June 1913, roll 5, American Issue Series, 7.

⁷⁴ “Mr. Daniels,” *American Issue*, June 1913, 7.

⁷⁵ Odegard, 274.

⁷⁶ Arthur S. Link, *Wilson*, vol. 2, *The Road to the White House* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 151; Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters*, vol. 3, *Governor, 1910-1913* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 63. See also James Kerney, *The Political Education of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Century Company, 1926), 185-90.

⁷⁷ Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters*, vol. 3, 151-2.

⁷⁸ Dennis L. Wilcox, Phillip H. Ault, and Warren K. Agee, *Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1998), 224-5.

The editorial page of the June 1913 *American Issue* featured an article reconfirming the League's commitment to national prohibition and assuring readers that the fight for local option would continue in areas where it did not already exist. "As a matter of fact," it read, "in many states, local option was and is urged temporarily but always put forth as a stepping stone to state Prohibition just as state Prohibition is designed as a stepping stone to national Prohibition."⁷⁹ This was a far cry from ALSA founder Howard Hyde Russell's call at the turn of the century for good citizenship through local political involvement. However, the transition from a local to national emphasis might best be explained by what the League had certainly said all along, that it would proceed at the pace of public sentiment, whether, apparently, it arose by itself or through the League's agitation efforts. Either way, the League perceived that public sentiment now justified a constitutional amendment.

The Hobson Amendment

To effect statewide policy, League leaders preferred legislation over general elections because laws were created by legislators, many of whom were influenced by the rural and largely dry small town constituencies they represented.⁸⁰ Unlike legislation and local options, however, general elections held the risk that the urban and largely wet vote could outnumber the rural vote because the former were easier to organize and to get to the polls.⁸¹ When the ASLA, and the state Leagues in particular, did get involved in elections, they pressured voters by, for example, encouraging women to escort their husbands to the polls so they would vote dry or not at all, or

⁷⁹ "National Prohibition," *American Issue*, June 1913, roll 5, American Issue Series, 8.

⁸⁰ Odegard, 121.

⁸¹ Odegard, 122.

by organizing a gauntlet of ministers, women, and children through which men had to pass to vote.⁸²

On 10 December 1913, the ASLA again assembled the masses to drive home its agenda, but this time it was not to influence voters, but legislators. In current public relations history, the best known use of marches or parades to garner public interest and media attention is Edward L. Bernays's 1929 "Torches of Freedom" parade.⁸³ At first glance, there seems to be little in common with the League's march. Through painstaking research and planning, Bernays sought to persuade women to smoke outside the home by recruiting ten debutantes to smoke cigarettes as they walked down Fifth Avenue on Easter Sunday. The League's Capitol march, on the other hand, was not intended to be a symbolic gesture so much as a literal one. It wanted to demonstrate to Congress the weight of its support. However, both Bernays and the League sought to influence attitude and behavior through their events. Bernays wanted to change the attitudes of the general public and the behavior of women in particular toward the idea of women smoking in public; and the League, true to Howard Hyde Russell's belief in agitation, wanted to establish its strength to the general public and influence the behavior of Congress in voting for the resolution. Because the League's efforts predated Bernays's by sixteen years, however, its work cannot be attributed to his influence. Instead, perhaps both the League's and Bernays's tactic of gathering likeminded people to display their interests or concerns to influence others

⁸² Odegard, 95.

⁸³ See, for example, Larry Tye, *Father of Spin* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1998), 28-31; Scott M. Cutlip, *The Unseen Power. Public Relations: A History* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 210; Karen S. Miller, *The Voice of Business* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 22.

could be better traced through American political communication history or prior social reform efforts.⁸⁴

To establish its strength, then, in an attempt to influence Congressional votes, the League organized one thousand men to march to the Capitol and present to the United States Congress petitions for a national prohibition amendment resolution.⁸⁵ They were joined by a similar number of women from the WCTU and hundreds of supporters.⁸⁶ Although the two groups marched separately and silently, they all sang “Onward Christian Soldiers” and “America” upon arriving at the Capitol.⁸⁷ Meeting them on the Capitol steps were Representative Richmond Pearson Hobson of Alabama and Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas, one of the champions of the Webb-Kenyon Act. Sheppard introduced a resolution that afternoon, but it died in committee, whereas Hobson presented it the next day to the House to better reception.⁸⁸ The resolution would not come up for a House vote until a year later, however, when, armed with a petition bearing six million names, Hobson won majority approval (197 to 189, out of a total of 428) but

⁸⁴ See, for example, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9, and Daniel Boorstin’s discussion of pseudo-events in *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), reprint (New York: Atheneum, 1971, 1975), reprint (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 9-12. The idea of a Washington march may have been particularly appealing to the League and the WCTU because of a woman’s suffrage parade that went awry there earlier that spring. See, for example, Linda J. Lumsden, “Beauty and the Beasts: Significance of Press Coverage of the 1913 National Suffrage Parade,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 77 (2000): 593-611.

⁸⁵ *New York Times*, 11 December 1913, 5.

⁸⁶ *New York Times*, 11 December 1913, 5.

⁸⁷ *New York Times*, 11 December 1913, 5.

⁸⁸ *New York Times*, 11 December 1913, 5; Odegard, *Pressure Politics*, 151-2.

not the two-thirds necessary to pass.⁸⁹ The amendment, surprisingly simple but determinedly final, contained two sections.⁹⁰ The first read, “The sale, manufacture for sale, transportation for sale, importation for sale, of intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes in the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof, and exportation thereof, are forever prohibited.” The second article read, “The Congress or the States shall have power independently or concurrently to enforce this article by all needful legislation.”

Although the resolution failed, the League considered the vote to be a great victory, because it did receive a majority and because it was the first time national prohibition had been debated in the U.S. House of Representatives.⁹¹ The ASLA would try submitting a resolution again in 1915, but to no avail.⁹² In 1916, a presidential election year, League publisher Ernest Cherrington urged the League leadership to place national prohibition on both party platforms, but they refused.⁹³ It would not be until 1917 that the resolution would finally pass both the House and the Senate, leading to the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment three years later.

In the meantime, despite his defeat in the 1914 congressional elections, Richmond P. Hobson would become the highest paid “special speaker” for the League between 1914 and 1925, earning \$171,250, or an annual average of about \$19,000, almost twice as much as the

⁸⁹ Congress, House, Representative Hobson of Alabama speaking for the Joint Resolution on National Prohibition, H. J. Res. 168, 63^d Cong., 3^d sess., *Congressional Record* 52 (22 December 1914), 603, 616.

⁹⁰ House, Representative Hobson, H. J. Res. 168, (22 December 1914), 595.

⁹¹ Odegard, 156.

⁹² Cherrington, *Evolution of Prohibition*, 326.

⁹³ Kerr, 192.

next highest earner.⁹⁴ In contrast, Louis Albert Banks, another League speaker and self-appointed chronicler of the League's temperance youth organization, the Lincoln-Lee Legion, made \$54,739 in that period, averaging just over \$6,000 a year, and, as mentioned earlier, the League paid William Jennings Bryan \$11,000 in 1919.⁹⁵

Conclusion

The year 1913 was a pivotal one for the League and its supporters. More than half of the U.S. population was living under some kind of prohibition legislation. Despite a presidential veto, the passage of the Webb-Kenyon Act outlawed the shipment and subsequent trade of liquor anywhere in the United States in which liquor had been banned. The Sixteenth Amendment enacted the federal income tax, which could serve as an alternative to the liquor tax as a revenue source for the U.S. Government. And an increase in contributions and its increasingly successful Field Days provided the League with newfound prosperity.

Additionally, the League had established a controlling partnership with the Scientific Temperance Federation, the comparatively savvy and scientifically based works of which would greatly enhance the ASLA's credibility and coffers through the American Issue Publishing Company. And, the League was identifying well-known public figures who could provide third-party endorsements for its work. Although it maintained its established system of communication strategies that pre-empted some of those attributed to public relations pioneer Edward Bernays, the League also expanded upon them, shedding the last vestiges of the religious fervor that had been so characteristic of its messages heretofore and serving notice to its supporters and its foes through its own pages and at its national convention that it intended to lead the national charge.

⁹⁴ Odegard, 274-5.

⁹⁵ Odegard, 274.

Thus, armed with these public relations strategies and tactics, culminating in the introduction of the Hobson Amendment to Congress at year-end, the League had succeeded in shifting the issue of prohibition from the dries' agenda at the local and state levels to the national agenda of the greater American public.

**“Neither Drunkards nor Libertines”:
Portraying Grover Cleveland as a Threat to the Family
in Political Cartoons During the 1884 Campaign**

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine more broadly cartoons against Grover Cleveland in the 1884 presidential campaign, exploring how artists attempted to portray the candidate and his personal and private behavior as scandalous. These cartoonists combined elements of both Cleveland's illegitimate child scandal and the tariff issue, combining them to make one overriding argument: Grover Cleveland is a threat not only to the Democracy, but also to the American middle-class family.

“Neither Drunkards nor Libertines”: Portraying Grover Cleveland as a Threat to the Family in Political Cartoons During the 1884 Campaign

When reports surfaced in August 1884 that Grover Cleveland had fathered a child out of wedlock, it largely sealed the manner in which future historians would interpret that year's presidential campaign. Publications aligned against GOP candidate James Blaine had been hammering the former Speaker of the House for more than two months on charges that he had improper financial arrangements with the railroads.¹ The subsequent revelation about the Democratic candidate's personal life forever set the canvass as one completely absorbed in scandal and inattentive to pressing needs of the country. “The Dirtiest Election” label would forever stick to this race,² a campaign perceived nearly a century later as “a vicious and filthy contest that set a new low in standards and practice.”³

The scandalous nature of the campaign was a boon to an emerging media form of the period: the weekly comic magazine. One of these publications, *Puck*, came of age during this rancorous campaign, its caricatures of Blaine as a freak show curiosity angering GOP supporters and delighting its opponents. A comic competitor, *The Judge*, emerged as a serious rival with its cartoon attacks on

¹ In the early 1870s, Blaine was rumored to be the beneficiary of a financial deal in which bonds from the bankrupt Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad had been purchased at far above market value by Union Pacific Railroad. Blaine survived a House investigation in 1876, but the issue resurfaced again in the 1884 campaign with the release of more potentially incriminating letters that had been saved by a railroad clerk named James Mulligan. In the most damaging of the “Mulligan Letters,” Blaine asked a business associate to write a letter of vindication for him and enclosed a draft of how he wanted it to read. On the cover document, Blaine wrote “Burn this letter.” David Saville Muzzey, *James G. Blaine, A Political Idol of Other Days*, American Political Leaders Series (New York: Dodd Mead & Company, 1934), 302-4.

² See, for example, Marvin and Dorothy Rosenberg, “The Dirtiest Election,” *American Heritage* 13, no. 5 (1962): 4-9.

³ Arthur Meier Schlesinger and Fred L. Israel, *History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968* (New York: Chelsea House, 1971), s.v. “Election of 1884,” by Mark D. Hirsch, 1572.

Cleveland's personal morals. The influence and popularity of the political cartoon was noted by partisans, who founded campaign-oriented comic publications such as *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly* in an attempt to sway voters. And although not a satirical publication, *Harper's Weekly* was engaged in the comic battle through the political cartoons of Thomas Nast, the last campaign in which he would be a visible force.⁴

While scandal certainly was a staple of media coverage in the 1884 campaign, closer examination reveals that, contrary to previous scholarship, the popular press far from ignored public policy issues. While Cleveland's alleged sexual conduct was a natural topic for cartoonists in 1884 – and cartoonists and their publications referred often to the Democratic candidate's alleged sexual immorality – they did not join in unison, or with the same intensity. Previous scholarly attempts to study cartooning in this election have overlooked the importance of the free trade plank of the GOP platform and neglected how artists used the issue against Grover Cleveland. Some publications sidestepped the sex issue until late in the campaign, focusing instead on Cleveland's alleged free trade position and accompanying support of British interests.⁵

⁴ Most scholarship on political cartooning in the 1884 campaign has focused on attacks against Blaine, particularly the "Tattooed Man" series in *Puck*, which portrayed Blaine as a Tattooed Man in a Dime Museum. See, e.g., Samuel J. Thomas, "The Tattooed Man Caricatures and the Presidential Campaign of 1884," *Journal of American Culture* 10, no. 4 (1987): 1-20; Everette E. Dennis and Christopher Allen, "Puck, the Comic Weekly," *Journalism History* 6, no. 1 (1979): 2-7, 13; Richard Samuel West, *Satire on Stone: The Political Cartoons of Joseph Keppler* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Richard Samuel West, "Laboring to Save Fools, The Presidential Contest of 1884 As Seen in the Pages of *Puck* and *Judge*," *Target* (Winter 1983): 14-20; Samuel A. Tower, *Cartoons and Lampoons: The Art of Political Satire* (New York: Julian Messner, 1982), 140-43; William Murrell and Whitney Museum of American Art, *A History of American Graphic Humor* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1938), 74-83; and Paul Somers, *Editorial Cartooning and Caricature: A Reference Guide*, American Popular Culture Series, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 9-11.

⁵ In the years following Reconstruction, the Democrats had increasingly been aligned with lower tariffs in line with the agrarian Solid South and using the issue to illustrate how, in their view, protectionism was only serving the interests of rich industrialists. Meanwhile, Republicans were advocating protectionism in the name of sheltering the American laborer against the threat of cheap British goods and in the process upholding the way of life of the American family. By 1884 Republicans hoped the tariff could help them make inroads with Irish-Americans by raising the specter of British economic domination and with an increasing industrial "New South" that was becoming less dependent on agriculture. Mark W. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion: The*

As historian Mark Summers points out, the 1884 campaign did have substantive issues, and candidates did address them.⁶ The purpose of this paper is to examine more broadly cartoons against Grover Cleveland in the 1884 campaign, exploring how artists attempted to portray the candidate and his personal and private behavior as scandalous. Cartoons about Cleveland's sexual morality will for the first time be examined in context with other cartoons that attacked his integrity on policy issues such as the tariff. The paper will focus on cartoons in three anti-Cleveland publications: *The Judge*, which in 1884 established itself as a pro-Republican comic weekly to rival the Democratic-leaning *Puck*; *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, a short-lived pro-GOP campaign magazine published by a young Frank Munsey; and *The Wasp*, a San Francisco satirical magazine that chose to support Blaine in the campaign.

In particular, what emerges from the anti-Cleveland cartoons is a concept of morality reflecting a Victorian middle class under siege. These pro-Republican cartoonists combined elements of both Cleveland's illegitimate child scandal and the tariff issue, taking two seemingly incongruous elements and combining them to make one overriding argument: Grover Cleveland is a threat not only to the Democracy, but also to the American middle-class family.

Sexual Propriety and the Victorian Middle Class

While sexual impropriety in the political arena was not unique to the latter half of the nineteenth century, the intensity of the "respectable" middle class in

Making of a President 1884 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 95-7. Helpful background on the tariff issue can be found in Mark W. Summers, *The Gilded Age, or, The Hazard of New Functions* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), 207-9; and S. Walter Poulshock, *The Two Parties and the Tariff in the 1880s* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1965).

⁶ Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, xii.

attempting to define and uphold sexual virtue had never been higher. Proper sexual behavior was not only a personal matter, middle class moralists argued, but also a means to achieve greater family financial achievement and societal cohesion. As scholars James Lull and Stephen Hinerman suggest, the first criteria of a scandal is a transgression of "social norms reflecting the dominant morality."⁷ While the Victorian middle class was not dominant in terms of numbers, it was prevalent in exerting influence on what the culture considered as aberrant moral behavior. To understand fully cartoons concerning Grover Cleveland's alleged sexual immorality, one must understand how the dominant culture defined acceptable sexual behavior and the challenges to those Victorian cultural norms in the 1880s.

As previous scholars have established, the white middle class defined prevailing standards of sexuality in the Victorian period.⁸ While being relatively small in terms of numbers, the Victorian middle class exerted great influence on the culture at large through sheer will.⁹ The moral ethic of the respectable middle class dictated "husbands were to provide the necessities of life, treat their wives with courtesy and protection, and exercise sexual restraint. . . . A wife's duty was to maintain a comfortable home, take care of household chores, bear and tend to the children, and set the moral tone for domestic life."¹⁰

⁷ James Lull and Stephen Hinerman, "The Search for Scandal," chap in. James Lull and Stephen Hinerman, eds., *Media Scandals: Morality and Desire in the Popular Culture Marketplace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 11.

⁸ John C. Fout and Maura Shaw Tantillo, eds., *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender and Race Since the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 6.

⁹ Milton C. Regan, Jr., *Family Law and the Pursuit of Intimacy* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 7.

¹⁰ Elaine May, *Great Expectations: Marriage and Divorce in Post-Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 157.

Among males espousing the Victorian ethic, many adopted the stance of the "Christian Gentleman," which emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century as an antidote to the "Masculine Achiever" standard of manhood that was typified by "accomplishment, autonomy and aggression."¹¹ The Christian Gentleman was defined by moderation, and in no area was moderation more important than in sexual matters.¹² To overindulge in sex, according to this line of thought, would result in a sapping of powers away from achieving in other important areas of the marital relationship, such as providing for the family financially. Moreover, an inner self-control was seen as the mark of the truly moral middle class man.

If men aspiring to the middle class in 1884 had any questions as to what was expected of them to reach conferral of status, they had little trouble finding answers in printed material of the period. Since the early part of the century, medical experts had told men that they had a finite amount of energy and that overindulgence in sex could lead to impotence.¹³ Now, promiscuity also was seen as a vice that could hamper a man's move up the social ladder. Writings by social scientists and critics in the period castigated both "the immoral rich and the debauched poor" for their lack of sexual propriety.¹⁴ Many reformers and social critics argued that promiscuity was

¹¹ E. Anthony Rotundo, "Learning About Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-Class Family in Nineteenth-Century America," chap. in J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 37-8.

¹² Charles E. Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America," *American Quarterly* 25 (1973), 139.

¹³ Kevin J. Mumford, "'Lost Manhood' Found: Male Sexual Impotence and Victorian Culture in the United States," chap. in John C. Fout and Maura Shaw Tantillo, eds., *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender and Race Since the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 81.

¹⁴ Rosenberg, "Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America," 143.

the equal of alcohol as vices that kept many Americans in the slums.¹⁵ To exercise sexual restraint was a prerequisite to joining and remaining a member of the respectable middle class.

Conceptually, sexual restraint had appeal to a large number of American men aspiring to the middle class in the late nineteenth century. In practice, the demands of the Christian Gentleman ethic, combined with increasing pressures brought on by the increasingly complex business world and rapid pace of urban life, seemed to be taking a toll by the 1880s. The tenets of self-control and individual achievement became a source of frustration for many males who worked in a new environment of highly organized and tightly scripted corporations that often frustrated upward aspirations. The growing cities that housed these companies seemed to be a breeding ground for immorality and vice.¹⁶ To the young Victorian male, the path to success and righteousness seemed to rely on an increasing number of disparate factors over which neither he nor his God had much control.

While Victorian-defined cultural admonitions about sex remained in effect during the early 1880s, they were also being slowly eroded. While some continued advocating sexual restraint – and many even practiced it – others were participating in sexual exploration. As historian Charles Rosenberg notes, Victorian sexuality included “a peculiar and in some ways irreconcilable conflict between the imperatives of the Masculine Achiever and the Christian Gentleman.”¹⁷ That conflict

¹⁵ Rosenberg, “Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America,” 144.

¹⁶ Susan Curtis, *A Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 75.

¹⁷ Rosenberg, “Sexuality Class and Role in 19th-Century America,” 150.

between aggression and control was reaching a boiling point by the time Grover Cleveland's private sexual past became public domain.

In many ways, those espousing Victorian standards and the Christian Gentleman ethic felt under siege late in the nineteenth century, but they were not about to stand by and acquiesce in what they perceived as the collapse of the culture. According to scholar Elaine May, Victorians "used every means of persuasion or coercion within their power to encourage, or even force, conformity to the code."¹⁸ One way this was achieved was through the emergence of family law, which made clear that marriage was not merely an arrangement between two adults, but an essential part of maintaining the societal fabric. Milton Regan argues that through these statutes, the family became an institution, "a natural and essential part of the social landscape, associated with certain prescriptions about proper behavior."¹⁹

The dominant Victorian ethic also was reinforced through means of public condemnation. By calling attention to aberrant behavior and chastising those who indulged in it, Victorians upheld moral standards and called out those who, in their view, threatened to tear apart the fabric of the country. In short, publications against Grover Cleveland were engaging in what John Thompson, a scholar on the process of scandal, terms "opprobrious discourse," a necessary condition for a transgression of values to rise to the level of scandal. This concept recognizes that the reaction of outsiders to a transgression is not just mere commentary, but rather a part of a

¹⁸ May, *Great Expectations*, 21.

¹⁹ Regan, *Family Law and the Pursuit of Intimacy*, 26.

transformative process: "no responses, no scandal."²⁰ Thompson defines "opprobrious discourse" as a "moralizing discourse which reproaches and rebukes, which scolds and condemns, which expresses disapproval of actions and individuals." Furthermore, for the act to become scandalous, at least some of this discourse must be "public speech-acts" and move beyond mere gossip uttered in confidence between acquaintances.²¹

In the case of the 1884 election, the press played the prominent role in moving discussion about Cleveland's sex life to the level of public speech act. Such exposure did more than merely bring attention to the transgression; as Lull and Hinerman suggest, it gave media audiences an opportunity to negotiate "a moral code they can use to understand and evaluate human conduct."²² Under this framework, it is possible to view cartoons concerning Grover Cleveland's sex life as more than merely a smear tactic to keep a candidate out of office, but a plea to uphold a Victorian conception of family and morality that was seemingly losing its grip on the American public.

Stigma of singlehood: The bachelor campaign

Stories about Grover Cleveland's illegitimate child came to dominate press coverage, but the candidate's masculinity and morality were issues before the scandal broke. His status as an unmarried male brought questions for many citizens who upheld the conventional family as the model for the nation, as Cleveland was

²⁰ John B. Thompson, "Scandal and Social Theory," chap. in James Lull and Stephen Hinerman, eds., *Media Scandals: Morality and Desire in the Popular Culture Marketplace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 44.

²¹ Thompson, "Scandal and Social Theory," 45.

²² Lull and Hinerman, "The Search for Scandal," 3.

just one example in a rising tide of American males who were staying single. More than 40 percent of males fifteen years and older were single in 1890, a figure that would not be surpassed until the late twentieth century.²³ These types of statistics led to a great deal of concern about bachelors' impact on society, social critics linking single males to increased lawlessness in the cities, and analysts sounding the alarm that the falling birth rate caused by rampant bachelorhood would lead to white race suicide.²⁴

For many, Cleveland's bachelorhood was not only a liability but a character flaw to be feared. One group who loudly articulated that belief was active in the political process even though it could not cast a ballot. In the post-Civil War period, a large number of women had been attracted to third parties such as the Prohibition and Greenback parties because of pro-suffrage platform planks and the opportunity to serve as delegates.²⁵ A number of activists such as Susan B. Anthony returned to the Republicans in the 1880s because they felt the GOP provided the best opportunity for lasting change.²⁶ In campaign literature, these suffragists painted the battle for the presidency in terms of moral good and evil, making reference not only to alleged Cleveland debauchery but advocating the need for the president to have a First Lady. To these activists, GOP candidates "are neither drunkards nor libertines and their relations with women are so noble that they will be accompanied to the national

²³ Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 48.

²⁴ Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor*, 4.

²⁵ Melanie Susan Gustafson, *Women and the Republican Party, 1854-1924* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 59.

²⁶ Gustafson, *Women and the Republican Party*, 58.

capital by wives and women friends of rare intelligence, high culture, and unquestioned moral worth."²⁷

One cartoon in *The Judge* suggested that Cleveland fit the model of the bachelor who selfishly indulged in vice at the expense of the greater good of society. In "What Does He Care?!" (Figure 1),²⁸ Grant Hamilton portrayed a well-dressed Cleveland in the center of the frame, reclining in a chair with his foot on the table, a drink in one hand and a cigar in the other. Surrounding Cleveland are four vignettes of working-class problems that the candidate is supposedly ignoring while living the carefree bachelor life. Children are shown leaving a factory, Cleveland unconcerned "that they have to work," a woman and man trudge in the rain past a closed rail station as the candidate ignores "that they have to walk," a laborer toils with the moon outside the window because under Cleveland "16 hours is a day's work," and a casket sticks out of an uncovered grave in a potter's field because "the poor are worked to death." Such depictions stood in stark contrast to Democratic rhetoric about "Grover the Good," the champion of reform, as graphically represented in a pre-campaign Nast cartoon in *Harper's Weekly* (Figure 2),²⁹ the New York governor signing bills accompanied by Theodore Roosevelt, who at the time was a young member of the New York Assembly who was gaining a reputation for reform. The image of the hard-working public servant had been cultivated since Cleveland was Buffalo mayor; a newspaper reporter during the early months of the new governor's tenure in Albany wrote that Cleveland "remains within doors constantly, eats and

²⁷ *The Woman's Journal*, 9 August 1884, 253.

²⁸ *The Judge*, 23 August 1884, 16.

²⁹ *Harper's Weekly*, 19 April 1884, 249.

works, eats and works, and works and eats."³⁰ In the 1884 presidential campaign, however, the image of the tireless worker for public good was being supplanted by that of the carousing libertine.

Cartoons and the Maria Halpin scandal

When the *Buffalo Evening Telegraph* broke its story about Cleveland's illegitimate child with Maria Halpin, the worst fears about bachelor culture were confirmed for many. Not only had Cleveland taken advantage of a woman and ruined her honor, the story insinuated, but he backed out of a promise to marry her, had her placed in a mental institution when she threatened to cause the aspiring politician trouble, and had tried to hide the child in an orphanage to conceal the illicit affair.³¹ Even worse were allegations, printed as Gospel truth, by Buffalo's Rev. George H. Ball, who regaled journalists with tales of Cleveland's drunken escapades with women of the evening.³² A few weeks later, investigations and newspaper reports in pro-Cleveland publications refuted or cast great doubt upon allegations brought against the candidate by Ball and others, reporting that the candidate had acted honorably in trying to provide for the welfare of the child,³³ but that did not stop GOP publications from continuing to savage Cleveland for his alleged lack of morality. Although Cleveland famously instructed his supporters, "Whatever you

³⁰ *Albany Evening Journal*, 23 March 1883; quoted in H. Paul Jeffers, *An Honest President: The Life and Presidencies of Grover Cleveland* (New York: W. Morrow, 2000), 79.

³¹ Summers, *Rum, Romanism and Rebellion*, 181.

³² Summers, *Rum, Romanism and Rebellion*, 180.

³³ Summers, *Rum, Romanism and Rebellion*, 182; *New York World*, 8 August 1884, 1; *New York World*, 11 August 1884, 2.

do, tell the truth,"³⁴ the exact nature of the relationship and the circumstances surrounding the fate of his child were unclear in press reports during the scandal's zenith.

Cleveland biographer Allan Nevins has put forth the most widely accepted version of the relationship between Cleveland and Maria Halpin.³⁵ In 1871, the young widow had left her two children in New Jersey and moved to Buffalo where she became a clerk in a drygoods store. Attractive, affable, conversant in French, and a member of a popular Episcopal church, Halpin was far from friendless in her new locale. She saw a number of men, including Cleveland, who was a year her senior. On September 14, 1874, Halpin gave birth to a child, whom she named Oscar Folsom Cleveland.³⁶ Grover Cleveland was not sure whether he was the father, and it is probable that Maria Halpin was not sure either. Many near the situation believed that the real father was, as the child's name suggests, Oscar Folsom, one of Cleveland's law partners, but that Halpin chose Cleveland because he was the only unmarried man she was seeing. Cleveland, some of his supporters believed, took responsibility to spare the family of Folsom, who was killed in an 1875 accident.³⁷

Things rapidly fell apart for Halpin after the birth of Oscar. She began drinking heavily, and Cleveland asked a judge to investigate the welfare of the child.

³⁴ Telegram from Grover Cleveland to Charles W. Goodyear, 23 July 1884, in Allan Nevins, *Letters of Grover Cleveland: 1850-1908* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1933), 37.

³⁵ Allan Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1933), 162-9.

³⁶ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage*, 164-5.

³⁷ Alyn Brodsky, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Character* (New York: Truman Talley Books, St. Martin's Press, 2000), 90. Cleveland, however, was angered at a supporter who had told the press of the Folsom connection and claimed it was not true. Telegram from Grover Cleveland to Daniel N. Lockwood, 31 July 1884, in Nevins, *Letters of Grover Cleveland*, 37-8.

In early 1876, the judge temporarily placed Halpin in an asylum and the boy in an orphanage. Cleveland later tried to set up a business for Halpin in Niagara Falls, but she soon returned to Buffalo in hopes of regaining her son. When legal means failed, Halpin kidnapped the child, but she was quickly caught. Oscar eventually was adopted by a prominent family in western New York, Halpin was rarely heard from thereafter, except for two 1895 letters to Cleveland threatening to reveal more about their relationship if she was not given money.³⁸

Despite reports that Cleveland had tried to act honorably in providing for his child born out of wedlock, anti-Cleveland publications continued to portray the scandal in terms reflecting the story as it was originally told by scandal-mongers such as the Reverend Ball. With a few notable exceptions, however, cartoons did not tackle the Halpin scandal on its own, but combined the theme with other issues in the campaign.

Foremost among satirical publications tackling the scandal was *The Judge*, which had steered an uneven editorial course in its short history but in 1884 settled in as a pro-GOP magazine.³⁹ Nearly a month after charges of sexual impropriety were leveled against Cleveland, the magazine claimed it had no interest in pursuing that angle, charging that his public record was enough to keep voters from selecting him. "History has shown that great private vices are perfectly compatible with great public virtues, and it is not on his record as a private individual but on his record as

³⁸ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage*, 165-6.

³⁹ Among the early stances of *The Judge* were anti-Semitism, early support for Blaine followed by ruthless attacks against him, and on-again, off-again support for Greenback advocate Benjamin Butler. Richard Samuel West, "Laboring to Save Fools: The Presidential Contest of 1884 as Seen in the Pages of Puck and Judge." *Target* (Winter 1983): 15.

a public servant of the country that the people will weigh Grover Cleveland and find him wanting next November."⁴⁰

A reader might be excused for not taking *The Judge* editorial seriously. After all, it did not take much to read between the lines of the cover cartoon in the same issue and conclude that the magazine was subtly reminding its audience of the Halpin scandal, even when other issues served as the topic material. "The Mistake of a Lifetime" (Figure 3)⁴¹ was on its surface about the defection of reform Republicans to the Democratic camp. *Harper's Weekly* editor George William Curtis, a prominent leader of the independent Republicans, is dressed in women's clothes and clutches a rag baby, a symbol throughout the campaign for publications that had also bolted the GOP. A sign over Cleveland's poster reading "National Theatre: Led Astray," adds to the insinuation that the Mugwumps were deceiving themselves in thinking Cleveland was a believer in reform. Taking the poster into account with the depiction of mother and child, it is also clear that the cartoon is a thinly veiled attempt to remind readers of Cleveland's illegitimate child.

Two weeks later, *The Judge* outwardly was wavering on its pledge to steer clear of the Halpin scandal and also sent out a warning to Democratic operatives who continued to pound Blaine on his most famous public scandal, an alleged improper financial relationship with the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad that resurfaced in the campaign with more damaging correspondence from Blaine that had been saved by a clerk. "Grover, don't make so much talk about the 'Mulligan

⁴⁰ *The Judge*, 16 August 1884, 2.

⁴¹ *The Judge*, 16 August 1884, 1.

Letters' till we learn if Maria has not written some which you may find more damaging. "⁴²

By early September, nearly two months after the scandal broke and weeks after investigators cast serious doubt upon many aspects of the original story in the *Buffalo Evening Telegraph*, cartoons in *The Judge* attempted to bring questions about Cleveland's private character back to the foreground. "Cleveland Shorn of His Strength" (Figure 4)⁴³ made use of the biblical tale of Samson and Delilah to underscore Cleveland's alleged women troubles. As weakness for a woman caused Samson to give up the source of his strength, Cleveland's dalliance would keep him from the power he sought as a presidential candidate, the cartoon suggests. At the right of the cartoon, Delilah holds shears in one hand and Cleveland's hair – labeled "His Moral Character" – in the other. Looking through a window above her are Mugwumps Carl Schurz and Henry Ward Beecher with a "Investigating Committee" sign, suggesting not only that reports absolving Cleveland were partisan but that they were also irrelevant; those who still supported the Democratic candidate were on the outside looking in at what was really happening to Cleveland in the court of public opinion. The Philistines tying up Cleveland include Tammany boss John Kelly and a kneeling Benjamin Butler, who was running as a third-party candidate on the Greenback-Labor ticket and was secretly being supported by the GOP, which hoped he could siphon off enough votes from Cleveland to put Blaine in the White House.

While graphically the message is clear, words in the same issue suggest that perhaps writers and artists at *The Judge* were struggling with how, or whether, to

⁴² *The Judge*, 30 August 1884, 2.

⁴³ *The Judge*, 6 September 1884, 8-9.

depict Cleveland's personal scandal. Major cartoons such as "Cleveland Shorn of His Strength" often were accompanied by short articles on the editorial page; in this case, the writer seems chagrined about being "forced" to refer to Cleveland as a Samson-like character, "far from believing that the illustrious Grover was ever the man to astonish the world by feats of power, mental, physical, or political."⁴⁴ Grudgingly, the writer supposes that "The picture looks as if he designed to show that there is no position, no power, no ambition which may not be impaired by undue yielding to carnal passion."⁴⁵

Two weeks later, a cartoon in *The Judge* again referred to Cleveland's affair and the woman with whom he had been involved. "From One Maria to Another" (Figure 5), shows a diminutive Cleveland being escorted by a large policeman to a "Black Maria," a term in the 1800s for a carriage that delivered convicts to prison. The connection to Cleveland's affair is made by a small "Maria's Cottage" sign on the wall just behind Cleveland, the wall also sporting two hearts with an arrow through them. An editorial in the same issue describes the scene: "From the side of Maria Halpin he is dragged to the obscurity of the Black Maria – the prison van which is to take him, tried, convicted, and sentenced, to suffer his penalty – and the penalty is political death."⁴⁶

The cartoon itself, however, suggests that *The Judge* is not comfortable with making the Halpin scandal the sole emphasis of its attacks. In a similar manner as "Led Astray" made subtle reference to the Halpin scandal while outwardly dealing with the Mugwump defection, "From One Maria to Another" deals with a public

⁴⁴ *The Judge*, 6 September 1884, 2.

⁴⁵ *The Judge*, 6 September 1884, 2.

⁴⁶ *The Judge*, 20 September 1884, 2.

policy issue as well. Cleveland is burdened with a ball and chain labeled "5ct Veto," referring to his killing a bill as governor a year earlier that would have lowered all New York City transit fares to five cents. The bill was supported by many political factions, including the Democratic Tammany Hall machine, because of its appeal to working voters. The legislation was extremely popular with the public, not only because it would save commuters money but also because the city rails were controlled by robber baron Jay Gould, loathed by many for his ruthless business practices. It was hard to find people who were against taking money out of Gould's pockets.

Cleveland was no fan of Gould, but he saw problems with the legislation. After studying the bill in great detail, as was his practice, the governor determined that the bill was an unconstitutional violation of a fair contract. Cleveland, recalling the event years later, said he went to bed the night of the veto muttering, "By tomorrow at this time I shall be the most unpopular man in the state of New York."⁴⁷ Cleveland's fears were largely unfounded as most newspapers and many legislators supported the veto after hearing the governor's reasoning.⁴⁸

Cleveland opponents tried to revive the controversy in 1884, framing the veto not as a stand on constitutional principle but an attack on the working class. Driving the Black Maria is a workingman, denoted by his apron and folded paper hat. It becomes clear that use of "Maria" is not the only play on words in this cartoon. The cartoon tells the reader that Cleveland is not only going to the "Reform Penitentiary" at the top of the hill because of his personal scandal but because of his lack of concern

⁴⁷ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage*, 115-7.

⁴⁸ Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage*, 117-8.

for the plight of the working class. Although barely visible in the cartoon, "Reform Penitentiary" can be interpreted not only as an argument that Cleveland's morals need "reform," but also that Cleveland's "reform" policy as governor of New York was a fraud perpetuated on working men and their families.

The following week, *The Judge* took its most direct swipe at the Halpin scandal with Frank Beard's infamous cover cartoon "Another Voice for Cleveland," (Figure 6).⁴⁹ A crying woman, presumably Maria Halpin, holds a baby who is yelling, "I want my pa!" as an angry Cleveland stomps his feet. Unlike the previous cartoons alluding to the Halpin scandal, "Another Voice for Cleveland" is devoid of references to other campaign issues, except perhaps the "Grover the Good" tag that dangles from the candidate's coat. The label had been used by Democrats to champion his reform record; Beard uses it here to achieve graphic contradiction, arguing that Cleveland's actions did not measure up to the lofty mottos given him. Overall, however, "Another Voice for Cleveland" addresses the Halpin scandal more bluntly than any previous cartoon. An editorial in the same edition tries to leave the impression that the fate of Oscar Folsom Cleveland is consuming the attention of the American public: "All the land, from Maine to California, has become acquainted with that baby's position and its wants, and shares in its anxiety to know, 'Where's my papa?' Well dear, as far as The Judge knows, your papa is at Albany, or thereabouts, and he is not a little disturbed by your incessant clamor. He is not fond of children, anyhow, and he seems to fear that you are interfering with his presidential prospects."⁵⁰ For

⁴⁹ *The Judge*, 27 September 1884, 1.

⁵⁰ *The Judge*, 27 September 1884, 2-3.

one of the few times in the campaign, cartoonists made Cleveland's personal scandal the sole issue, choosing not to attach illegitimacy to a perceived policy misstep.

The Mormon question: Cleveland and polygamy

Some of the cartoons echoed sensational charges by, among others, the *New York Sun* that Cleveland was a "course debauchee who would bring his harlots with him to Washington and hire lodgings for them convenient to the White House."⁵¹ "Congenial Company" (Figure 7)⁵² in *The Judge* goes even further, suggesting Cleveland was in favor of polygamy. The practice of having multiple wives was being fought against with more vigor than ever in the 1880s because of a perceived threat from a religious group in the West.

The Mormons had come under plentiful attack since officially announcing in 1852 its practice of encouraging men to marry more than one wife. Theologically speaking, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints believed that procreation was the rightful purpose of sex and that a devout Mormon would be accompanied by his wives and children in the afterlife.⁵³ Believing that statutes outlawing polygamy were unconstitutional infringements upon religious practice, Mormons brought a test case before the Supreme Court in 1878. In *Reynolds v. United States*,⁵⁴ the Court ruled against the Mormons, Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite writing that the maintenance of monogamous marriage was critical to the survival of

⁵¹ *New York World*, 8 August 1884, 4.

⁵² *The Judge*, 25 October 1884, 3.

⁵³ Joan Smyth Iversen, "A Debate on the American Home: The Antipolygamy Controversy, 1880-1890," chap. in John C. Fout and Maura Shaw Tantillo, eds., *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender and Race Since the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 123-24.

⁵⁴ *Reynolds v. United States*, 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

society and democracy.⁵⁵ By late 1880, fueled in part by Mormon women who produced a public petition against the Mormon conception of marriage, the Women's National Anti-Polygamy Society was formed, its *Anti-Polygamy Standard* actively encouraging women across the country to form chapters. The group's influence was nearly immediate; by 1882 it could claim partial credit for both bringing legislation that criminalized polygamy and ousting Utah's territorial representative, a polygamist, from Congress.⁵⁶

"Congenial Company" puts these cultural concerns in context of the campaign and rumors of Cleveland's dalliances with numerous women. Cleveland walks arm-in-arm with a man "From Salt Lake," as the label on his bag suggests. A sign on the wall near them reads "The Mormons for Cleveland, Birds of a Feather Flock Together." Whispers that Cleveland shared the Mormons' views on multiple wives occurred throughout the campaign.⁵⁷

In fact, the Mormon question may explain why Blaine did not react immediately to the Reverend Burchard's disastrous slur against Catholics at a pro-Blaine rally in late October, the preacher infamously saying that the Democrats were the party of "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion." Historian Mark Summers suggests that Blaine heard "Rum, *Mormonism* and Rebellion,"⁵⁸ not far-fetched considering the backlash against Mormons in the period.

⁵⁵ Iversen, "A Debate on the American Home," 126.

⁵⁶ Iversen, "A Debate on the American Home," 126-27. The Edmunds Bill gave Federal marshals the power to arrest polygamists and force their families to testify against them.

⁵⁷ Cleveland's stance on the Mormon question was quite clear after his election. In his inaugural speech, he railed against polygamy as "destructive of the family relation and offensive to the moral sense of the civilized world." In 1887, he approved plans to seize Mormon-owned property until the church formally renounced polygamy. Brodsky, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Character*, 113, 454.

⁵⁸ Summers, *Rum, Romanism and Rebellion*, 281, 283; citing *New York Sun*, 19 November 1884.

Friends in high places: The preacher and the candidate

The Judge also continued to portray graphically allegations about Cleveland's sex life that had been refuted, or at least put into more accurate context, by later investigations and newspaper reports. In "No Further Use For Her" (Figure 8),⁵⁹ a scowling Cleveland pushes Maria Halpin into an asylum, the mother of his child clasping her hands as if she were in prayer over her fate. Halpin is portrayed as the helpless victim, not as the alcoholic who was putting her child's well-being into jeopardy. Standing to the side under a poster reading "For President, Grover Cleveland, Champion of Purity Morality," watching passively with arms folded, is famed preacher Henry Ward Beecher. The minister publicly pledged his support for Cleveland despite the candidate's sexual transgressions, but considering the Congregationalist's own past, the endorsement potentially was as much a burden as a benefit.

The Plymouth Church in Brooklyn became prominent and controversial in the mid-1800s thanks to Beecher, the son of famous evangelist Lyman Beecher and brother of author Harriet Beecher Stowe. Beecher's attitude toward religion as "something to be enjoyed" was popular but also criticized by more traditional clergy for inconsistent theological stances – Beecher seemingly paying more attention to some Christian tenets than others. More traditional Christians also were critical of Beecher's delivery on the pulpit, which included making jokes and drawing applause from the congregation, "unseemly" according to previously accepted Protestant practices.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *The Judge*, 13 September 1884, 12.

⁶⁰ Paul A. Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), 125, 127-8, 130.

Beecher's ministry and future in the public eye were jeopardized in 1872 when radical reformer Victoria Woodhull charged Beecher with committing adultery with one of his parishioners, Elizabeth Tilton. Tilton's husband, Theodore, repeated the charges in 1874, igniting a firestorm of press coverage about the alleged affair.⁶¹ A Beecher-appointed Plymouth Church committee declared Beecher innocent, and a civil suit filed by Theodore Tilton against Beecher ended in a hung jury after fifty-two ballots in 1875.⁶² In the court of public opinion, however, many believed the charges of adultery against Beecher were true, as did many of the most prominent newspapers.⁶³ One of the major publications that stayed in Beecher's corner, however, was none other than *Harper's Weekly*, which would not abandon Cleveland in 1884 either. *Harper's* argued that the lack of a decision in the courtroom and the general confusion about the facts in the Beecher-Tilton scandal were unimportant – the masses had sided with the minister. "The real result is not to be sought in the formal verdict of the jury, but in the general public impression," the magazine wrote after the Beecher case, "for as the evidence in no cause was more universally read, so the verdict in every man's breast was never more entirely independent of that of the court-room."⁶⁴ The view of *Harper's* was hardly predominant, as the preacher continued to receive derisive press coverage for years following the trial.

The Democratic candidate hardly shied away from Beecher, a prominent figure in the Mugwump movement. Cleveland had long been an admirer of Beecher;

⁶¹ *The New York Times* published 105 articles and thirty-seven editorials about the Beecher-Tilton scandal in the second half of 1874. Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age*, 115.

⁶² Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age*, 117.

⁶³ Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age*, 121.

⁶⁴ *Harper's Weekly*, 17 July 1875, 574.

as a young man in the 1850s he had heard many of the preacher's sermons. In the 1884 election, Cleveland openly courted the evangelist's support, sending a letter to Beecher's wife confessing his affair with Maria Halpin but denying other charges of debauchery.⁶⁵ Beecher avidly spoke in behalf of Cleveland during the campaign, most famously in his "Brooklyn Rink" speech in late October, not only defending the candidate from personal attacks but suggesting that attacks on his own morality had been off the mark nearly ten years earlier:

Men counsel me to prudence lest I stir again my own griefs. No! I will not be prudent. If I refuse to interpose a shield of well-placed confidence between Governor Cleveland and the swarm of liars that nuzzle in the mud, or sling arrows from ambush, may my tongue cleave in the roof of my mouth, and my right hand forget its cunning. I will imitate the noble example set me by Plymouth Church in the day of my calamity. They were not ashamed of my bonds. They stood by me with God-sent loyalty. It was a heroic deed. They have set my duty before me, and I will imitate their example.⁶⁶

The ties between Cleveland and Beecher were most forcefully made in a San Francisco publication that has been largely overlooked by scholars studying the history of graphic satire, receiving only cursory mention in the most important works on magazines and comic art.⁶⁷ *The Wasp* first appeared in 1876 and may have been the first American newspaper to publish cartoons in color.⁶⁸ Its content reflected such tenets of middle-class morality as "industriousness, sobriety, thrift, class harmony,"

⁶⁵ Richard Wightman Fox, *Trials of Intimacy: Love and Loss in the Beecher-Tilton Scandal* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 47-8.

⁶⁶ Fox, *Trials of Intimacy*, 48-9.

⁶⁷ *The Wasp* receives only a few sentences in Frank Luther Mott's *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 77, 106. William Murrell's four-paragraph coverage of the magazine is limited to brief description of five cartoons. *A History of American Graphic Humor* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1938), 84-7.

⁶⁸ Roger Olmsted, "The Cigar-Box Papers: A Local View of the Centennial Electoral Scandals," *California Historical Quarterly* 1976 55(3): 256.

delivered in a stinging manner that corresponded with its name.⁶⁹ The satirical magazine is perhaps best known for the writings of Ambrose Bierce, who during his editorship of *The Wasp* from 1881-1886 skewered figures both public and private in his column of "Prattle."⁷⁰ While *The Wasp* was known as a Democratic publication,⁷¹ it was becoming more independent by 1884, as evidenced by its support of Blaine. Explaining the magazine's position, Bierce wrote "We prefer Blaine because we know him," in contrast to the political upstart Cleveland and stated that Blaine "has a party behind him that represents what is best in American politics." The choice of Blaine was not "on the belief that he is a more moral man than Cleveland."⁷²

In at least two prominent cartoons, however, *The Wasp* made Cleveland's morality the target of attack, but did so only in context with Beecher. When the preacher pledged his unwavering support for the Cleveland candidacy, artists in *The Wasp* graphically tied the two figures together in debauchery. In "Happy Reminiscences – 'Painting the Town Red' " (Figure 9),⁷³ an obviously intoxicated Beecher and Cleveland stumble down a cobblestone street, flailing away with brushes dripping with red paint, graphically portraying the cliché that refers to wild, drunken behavior. A sign on Beecher's side of the street reads "Elizabeth Tilton," a similar sign on Cleveland's side reads "Maria Halpin," reminding readers of the

⁶⁹ Richard A. Fitzgerald, "The San Francisco *Illustrated Wasp* and Chinese Labor in the 1870s," *Southwest Economy and Society* 1981 5(3): 3.

⁷⁰ S.T. Joshi and David E. Schultz, eds., *Ambrose Bierce: A Sole Survivor, Bits of Autobiography* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), xiv.

⁷¹ Roy Morris, Jr., *Ambrose Bierce: Alone in Bad Company* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1995), 174.

⁷² *The Wasp*, 4 October 1884, 4.

⁷³ *The Wasp*, 27 September 1884, 1.

women with whom each of the two men were reportedly involved. In the distance behind the men is a church steeple, adding to the insinuation that the two men had drifted far from standards that modern-day Christians and their followers deemed acceptable.

Artists at *The Wasp* also paired Cleveland with Beecher in “At The Confessional” (Figure 10).⁷⁴ In this cartoon, the two appear not as two buddies out for a good time, but with Beecher as the authority figure listening to a confession by one of his followers. A tearful Cleveland, wrapped with a long list of legislation he vetoed as governor, tells his sins to Beecher, who holds his ample belly in laughter. The list of vetoes makes the overall message of the cartoon unclear, however. Exactly what makes Beecher laugh? The confessional booths are open, meaning that Beecher must know who is on the other side. Assuming Cleveland is confessing about Maria Halpin, the most likely intended message is that Beecher is getting vicarious pleasure from hearing about the dalliance. Or, is Beecher amused that the candidate is so concerned with the sex scandal when he should be focusing attention on all the visible vetoes he carries with him that are be perceived as a slap at working-class voters? The technique of combining personal attack with public policy did not always make for graphic clarity.

The Judge also attacked the Cleveland-Beecher connection in the multi-panel “The Political Parson and His Candidate” (Figure 11).⁷⁵ Starting clockwise from the upper-left corner, Beecher and Cleveland are portrayed under the tree of “Forbidden Fruit,” each holding a piece of fruit behind his back while pointing amusingly at the other. In the following panel, Beecher, standing on a ball depicting Cleveland, tries to

⁷⁴ *The Wasp*, 18 October 1884, 16.

⁷⁵ *The Judge*, 11 October 1884, 8-9.

roll it up the precarious plank of "Public Opinion" to the presidential chair. In another panel, Cleveland carries a large basket of "His Sin" containing a young woman, Beecher offering, "Your burden is too heavy, let me carry it." In the next panel, Beecher tries to brush the dust of scandal out of Cleveland's coat, remarking "I can't get all the dirt out, but perhaps it won't be noticed." In the largest panel, Cleveland has women of "Pleasure" and "Folly" on each arm as Beecher speaks to a "Young American" and reassures him, "Here is a Presidential Candidate whose character and record I'm well satisfied with." Beecher carries a copy of a book *Advice to Young Men*, likely making reference to a published collection of lectures on morality that Beecher authored years earlier. This copy, however, contains the sarcastic suggestion "Don't Be Found Out." The largest panel is saved for the portion of the Beecher-Cleveland connection that disturbed many: hypocrisy. In a similar manner as Beecher was chastised for not living up to the moral standards he professed, "Grover the Good" was ridiculed for not being as upstanding as Democratic campaign machinery would have voters believe. Still, cartoonists in large part avoided dealing with the Cleveland scandal on its own terms, continuing to place the episode in context of other perceived scandalous behavior, this time Beecher's adultery trial of years earlier. Publications featuring the political cartoon were treading less lightly around Cleveland's Buffalo Scandal as the campaign neared conclusion, however, and one such magazine would make a complete turnabout in the canvass's final days.

Munsey's and The Buffalo Scandal

Munsey's Illustrated Weekly, the pro-Blaine publication that focused largely on the tariff issue, initially took a cautious tact in dealing with Cleveland's sex life.⁷⁶ The Buffalo Scandal was several weeks old when the magazine made its debut, and the new publication made little of the affair at first. Maria Halpin's name never appeared on its pages. The only reference to the scandal in the first two issues concerned a reprinted article from the *Independent*, a Republican journal that reversed its decision to endorse Cleveland on moral grounds.⁷⁷ Taking the relative moral high ground would not last for long. Soon, *Munsey's* began to express frustration over a perceived double standard for the two candidates: "Now why is past alleged unchastity to be dismissed in silence, while a like dishonesty is not?"⁷⁸

Less than a month before the election, *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly* turned its artistic content toward the Buffalo Scandal. On October 11, the publication ran a double-page illustration, "The Modern Achilles" (Figure 12).⁷⁹ In a similar manner as *The Judge* had approached Cleveland's personal morality by coupling it with questions about his public record, *Munsey's* focused this cartoon on the tariff issue. Blaine, the title character, holds a shield titled "Protection" and drives a chariot, dragging a slain Cleveland as Hector, who has a shield titled "Free Trade." However, a closer examination reveals that *Munsey's* is casting aspersions on more than just

⁷⁶ Munsey is perhaps best remembered for dropping the price of a later publication, *Munsey's Magazine*, to ten cents in 1893, ushering in the era of the mass-circulation magazine. He also owned eighteen newspapers in his career and is credited for killing half of them through cutting and consolidating. Margaret A. Blanchard, ed. *History of the Mass Media in the United States: An Encyclopedia* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998), s.v. "Frank A. Munsey," by Jonathan Y. Hill. In 1884, he was a struggling young publisher of a children's magazine, *The Golden Argosy*, but started the campaign magazine to help Blaine, whom he had met in Maine.

⁷⁷ *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 13 September 1884, 19.

⁷⁸ *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 20 September 1884, 34.

⁷⁹ *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 11 October 1884, 88-9.

Cleveland's stance on the tariff. "Immorality" is written across Cleveland's suit; papers with "Buffalo Scandal" and "A Blot Upon American Morality" are trampled under the horses' feet, along with other papers labeling Cleveland as "Defender of Monopolies" and "The Enemy of the Workingman." The visual rhetoric not only paints Blaine as a heroic defender of the working class, but Cleveland as its enemy, both economically and morally.

As occurred with *The Judge*, graphic conceptions of Cleveland's fall from moral grace were eventually portrayed in *Munsey's* without mention of public policy. Less than two weeks before the election, a front-page illustration dealt directly with the Buffalo Scandal and Cleveland's personal morals (Figure 13).⁸⁰ The cartoon, based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, has Cleveland placed in a public pillory. Among those surrounding Cleveland are Schurz, Curtis and Nast, who has drawn a Cleveland head with halo. As election day grew near, *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly* devoted more attention to "the personal record of Grover Cleveland, with his leman and his illegitimate son."⁸¹

That increased attention to personal morals led *Munsey's* back to one of the campaign's most infamous scandalmongers in the closing days. Although The Rev. George H. Ball, the source for much of the early coverage of Cleveland's alleged debauchery, had been discredited in a number of other publications, he received one more forum in the last *Munsey's* published before the election. Ball, according to the publication, had "the actual facts" about the Democratic candidate's activity at a Buffalo saloon. "Some have taken the testimony of men who personally know of the

⁸⁰ *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 25 October 1884, 113.

⁸¹ *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 25 October 1884, 114. "Leman" is a term for mistress.

facts; have often seen Cleveland there; have drunk with him in the saloon, seen him too drunk to walk without help, and seen him give money to his favorite girl under circumstances clearly indicating that it was for no legitimate object."⁸² Even though the leading Republican newspaper in Buffalo no longer took Ball or his evidence seriously,⁸³ Munsey had taken to peddling rumor and innuendo in his campaign magazine.

Discussion and Conclusions

As this paper has demonstrated, cartoonists took on the Maria Halpin scandal, but usually did so in layers, placing Cleveland's personal moral indiscretion along with perceived public policy blunders. Such techniques suggest that cartoonists and their publications generally were uncomfortable in solely addressing sexual topics, reflecting dominant standards that made subjects such as illegitimacy inappropriate for polite company. Combining private and public behaviors allowed cartoonists to castigate Cleveland in a process of "opprobrious discourse," a necessary aspect of bringing a moral transgression to the level of scandal. As election day drew closer, however, cartoonists were less timid about addressing Cleveland's Buffalo Scandal in blunt terms.

Previous research, in the few instances it has addressed cartooning against Grover Cleveland in the 1884 campaign, has left the impression that the defining characteristic was a relentless focus on the Maria Halpin scandal. This paper demonstrates that while a great deal of attention was paid to Cleveland's illegitimate

⁸² *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 1 November 1884, 131.

⁸³ Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 182. *The Buffalo Courier* forced Ball to write a letter in which he admitted the falsity of some of his claims. Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage*, 163.

child, the graphic discourse had a much broader argument for why a Cleveland presidency would be damaging to the country.

Scholars such as John Thompson have commented on the media's role in contributing to the "shifting boundaries between the public and the private."⁸⁴ That boundary seemed to be as much in contention here as in any time in American history, if anti-Cleveland cartoons in the 1884 election are any indication. Charges of private scandal almost always shared space with allegations of public wrongdoing within the same cartoon. Rare was the occasion when cartoonists solely addressed Cleveland's personal morality, suggesting that despite increasing attention to lurid items in the popular press, creators of content during the campaign felt the need to legitimize coverage of sexual misconduct by placing it in context of public policy.

The idea that detailing personal sexual transgressions would be too hot for editors to handle may be one explanation for why cartoon coverage of the Halpin scandal was often couched in other issues and came long after the initial allegations had been published. For example, *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly* referred to Cleveland's Buffalo Scandal in vague generalities, and its cartoonists ignored it, during much of the journal's short history. This is consistent with, as historian Mark Summers argues, the shift of publications during the period from strict party mouthpieces to content that would attract large general audiences and be appropriate for all members of the family. The shift to mass publications made personal scandal unsuitable for most editors targeting American homes.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ See e.g., John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 120-34.

⁸⁵ Summers, *Rum, Romanism and Rebellion*, 194-95.

Munsey's cartoon "Veto, Vice, Veto" (Figure 14)⁸⁶ perhaps serves as a snapshot of how pro-Republican cartoonists approached making their graphic arguments that Grover Cleveland's behavior was scandalous. Cleveland is portrayed as Richard III, but the words above him are a clear sign that graphic attacks on the Democratic candidate went well beyond his sexual experiences. The words make reference both to the Buffalo Scandal and his reputation for killing legislation to benefit workers while New York governor, both tools used to demonstrate, the artists believed, Cleveland's lack of fitness for office. In pro-Republican cartoons, Cleveland was not only undermining the moral fabric of the American family but was also taking food off its table.

⁸⁶ *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 25 October 1884, 125.



Figure 1: "What Does He Care?" *The Judge*, 23 August 1884, 16.



Figure 2: "Reform Without Bloodshed," *Harper's Weekly*, 19 April 1884, 249.



Figure 3: "The Mistake of a Lifetime," *The Judge*, 16 August 1884, 1.



Figure 4: "Cleveland Shorn of His Strength," *The Judge*, 6 September 1884, 8-9.

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Figure 5: "From One Maria To Another," *The Judge*, 20 September 1884, 16.



Figure 6: "Another Voice for Cleveland," *The Judge*, 27 September 1884, 1.

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Figure 7: "Congenial Company," *The Judge*, 25 October 1884, 3.



NO FURTHER USE FOR HER.
Brother Beecher don't see any reason for changing his vote.

Figure 8: "No Further Use For Her," *The Judge*, 13 September 1884, 12.

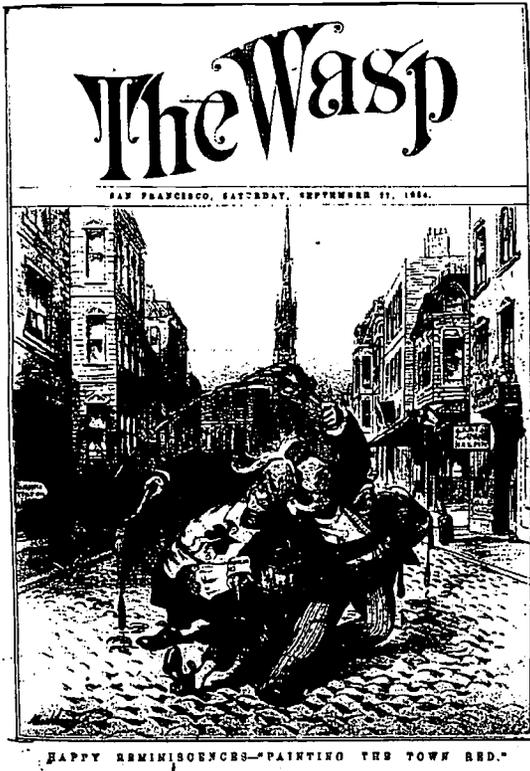


Figure 9: "Happy Reminiscences," *The Wasp*, 27 September 1884, 1.



Figure 10: "At the Confessional," *The Wasp*, 18 October 1884, 16.



Figure 11: "The Political Parson and His Candidate," *The Judge*, 11 October 1884, 8-9.

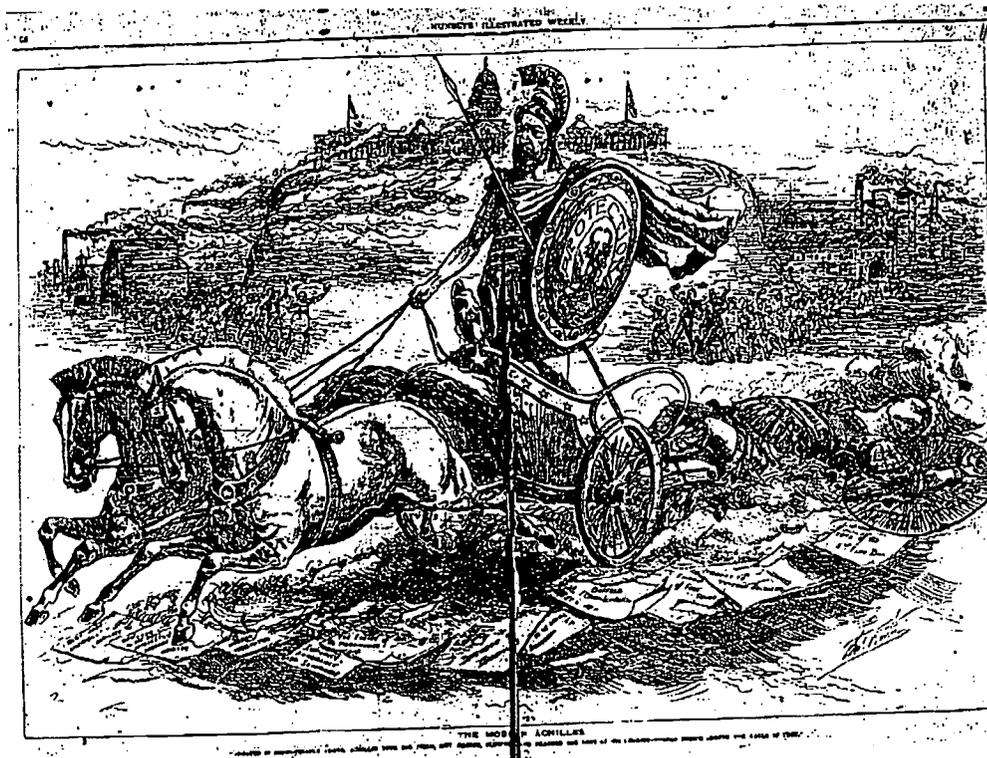


Figure 12: "The Modern Achilles," *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 11 October 1884, 88-9.

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Figure 13: Cleveland in pillory, *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 25 October 1884, 113.



Figure 14: "Veto, Vice, Veto," *Munsey's Illustrated Weekly*, 25 October 1884, 125.

**Exhortation to Action: The Writings of Amy Jacques Garvey,
Journalist and Black Nationalist**

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Abstract

Exhortation to Action: The Writings of Amy Jacques Garvey, Journalist and Black Nationalist

This paper provides a textual analysis of themes in the writings of Amy Jacques Garvey, a largely unrecognized black woman journalist who was an associate editor and editorial writer for the *Negro World*, the official organ of the Garvey movement. Analysis of one hundred fifty editorials Jacques Garvey wrote between 1924 and 1927 found she stressed black productivity, self-reliance, self-determination and repatriation to Africa as a means economic empowerment and independence. She informed and advocated, thus fulfilling the advocacy role of the black press

Analysis provides new insight into how a black woman who is virtually invisible in the literature on the history of the press used journalism to advance the agenda of a movement that impacted perhaps millions of blacks during the 1920s, a volatile time in the history of this country.

Lack of historical acknowledge of Jacques Garvey as a journalist created a need for this study.

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Exhortation to Action: The Writings of Amy Jacques Garvey,
Journalist and Black Nationalist

Amy Jacques Garvey¹ picked up her pen in 1924 and for four years she used journalism to become one of the primary voices for the Black Nationalist movement led by her husband, Marcus Mosiah Garvey.² Through the pages of Marcus Garvey's newspaper, the *Negro World*,³ Jacques Garvey waged a campaign aimed at elevating blacks in the United States, the Caribbean, and Africa.⁴ She once noted that her husband "whipped Negroes into the consciousness of race pride and, consequently, made them grow in power and stature."⁵ With a militancy and fierceness, Jacques Garvey was like her husband, trying to lift blacks out of the "lethargy of inferiority."⁶

Jacques Garvey was a prolific writer and editor, serving as an associate editor of the *Negro World* during the 1920's. Extant literature consulted for this paper revealed that she wrote exclusively for the

¹ Amy Jacques Garvey, the second wife of Black Nationalist Marcus Mosiah Garvey, will be referred to as Jacques Garvey in this paper to differentiate her from Amy Ashwood Garvey, Garvey's first wife.

² For information about Marcus Garvey, see Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (New York: Self, 1923); John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1988), 321; Tony Martin, "Women in the Garvey Movement," in *Garvey, His Work and Impact*, eds. Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, Inc., 1991), 72. Honor Ford-Smith, "Women and the Garvey Movement in Jamaica," in Rupert Lewis and Patrick Bryan, eds., *Garvey: His Work and Impact* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, Inc., 1991), 78. These writers have called Marcus Garvey the preeminent symbol of Black Nationalism that developed after World War I. Garvey was successful in attracting between one-half million and six million blacks to the Garvey Movement during its zenith, but in 1924 he was arrested and found guilty of mail fraud. He was imprisoned from 1925 through 1927, after which time he was deported to Jamaica. Jacques Garvey ran the UNIA and the *Negro World* while her husband was incarcerated. Garvey historians Honor Ford Smith and Tony Martin argue convincingly that Jacques Garvey was a powerful force in the movement even before Garvey was imprisoned.

³ Thousands of UNIA members in the United States and almost every Caribbean and sub-Saharan African country read the *Negro World* during the time Jacques Garvey was at its helm and served as one of its editorial writers.

⁴ This paper uses the word "black" as apposed to African-American because Jacques Garvey appealed to and referred to black people beyond the borders of the United States.

⁵ Amy Jacques Garvey, Introduction to *Black Power in America: Marcus Garvey's Impact on Jamaica and Africa* (Kingston, Jamaica: Self, 1968), 1.

⁶ Ibid.

Negro World.⁷ In 1924, she started the paper's woman's page, "Our Women and What They Think," because she wanted to give the women in the movement a voice.⁸ Beginning with her first editorial for that page on February 2, 1924, Jacques Garvey sought to influence black thought and action. She continued her editorials through November 1927, contributing approximately one hundred-fifty that appeared on the woman's page; and she solicited and edited articles, letters, and opinion pieces from female Garveyites.

Jacques Garvey's work as a journalist has been given little historical review. The extent to which her journalistic writings had an ideological appeal to blacks is also not investigated or acknowledged. Historical scholarship focuses overwhelmingly on Jacques Garvey in connection with her husband and her role as an organizer of the UNIA. Recent scholarship has focused on Jacques Garvey's writings about what she described as white imperialism and the exploitation of darker nations.⁹ This paper provides a textual analysis of another theme on which she dwelled--black elevation through economic independence. Achievement of that goal would come through racial productivity, self-reliance and self-determination, other themes on which she dwelled.

This analysis should allow for the discovery of new insight into how a black woman who is virtually invisible in the literature on the history of the press used journalism to advance the agenda of a movement that impacted perhaps millions of black people in the early 1900s. The study seeks to ascertain the values she espoused and the meaning Jacques Garvey ascribed to being a black person, a woman and a black woman during a volatile time in the history of blacks and the history of this country. In her quest to empower blacks, she informed and advocated, thus fulfilling the advocacy role of the early black press.

⁷ It is not clear exactly when Jacques Garvey became an editor of the *Negro World*; however, she is listed as associate editor in March 1925, the earliest copy of the complete paper that was available for this study.

⁸ Amy Jacques Garvey, Handwritten notation in Scrapbook, Marcus Mosiah Garvey Memorial Collection, Box 12.

⁹ For reference, see Jinx C. Broussard, "Amy Jacques Garvey: Black Woman Journalist and Vocal Race Advocate," Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Journalism Historians Association, October 7, 2001, San Diego, California.

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The lack of historical recognition of Jacques Garvey as a journalist created a need for this study. If her contributions warrant it, that history should be recorded.

Literature Review

Before delving into Jacques Garvey's narratives and her ideology, it is appropriate to place her life and work within the historical context of the period in which she lived and worked. Amy Euphemia Jacques was born in Kingston, Jamaica, on December 31, 1896, to Samuel and Charlotte Jacques, members of the Jamaican middle class and educated property owners.¹⁰ Samuel Jacques greatly influenced his only child, kindling in her a love for reading and exposing her to world affairs.¹¹ A year after graduating from the Wolmers Girls' School in Jamaica and moving to the United States to seek further education, Jacques Garvey became Marcus Garvey's private secretary and office manager at UNIA headquarters in New York.¹² She married Garvey in 1922, after his divorce from Amy Ashwood Garvey.

Jacques Garvey was among a group of black women who used journalism to accomplish their activism on behalf of blacks and women at the turn of the twentieth century. Historians indicate that nineteenth and early twentieth century black women accomplished their activism through their roles as teachers, journalists, church women, club women, suffragists, workers, wives, mothers and daughters.¹³ These activists and feminists struggled to define themselves and their world politically and socially as

¹⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, Elsa Barkley Brown, and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), 482-483.

¹¹ Amy Jacques Garvey, "Role of Women in Liberation Struggles," *The Negro World*, 9 February 1924. Jacques Garvey writes that Samuel Jacques made her an independent and analytical thinker. He collected foreign newspapers on Sunday afternoons and directed Amy to get a dictionary and read editorials and news items to him. He then explained what Amy had read and answered her questions. This routine benefited Jacques Garvey, she later recalled, and her writings revealed an independent streak.

¹² Clark Hine, *Black Women in America*, 483.

¹³ References can be found in Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1895-1925); Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

they fought racial and sexual oppression, according to author Paula Giddings.¹⁴ They supported woman suffrage “because they hoped that black women could help uplift the standards of the race through exercising the franchise.”¹⁵ Through the club movement, African-American women established long lasting educational and social service programs for poor and uneducated blacks.¹⁶ Through journalism, they encouraged race empowerment and demanded racial and gender equality.

Journalism historian Roger Streitmatter, writing about black women journalists, notes that despite racial and sexual discrimination, they fought against racism and oppression, and he noted that the women refused to be silent victims of their times.¹⁷ Those journalists publicized and criticized the horrendous conditions under which blacks lived and worked, and they sought to bring about changes in the economic, political, and social structure of the country.

Historical Context

The late 1800s and early 1900s has been characterized by historians as the Nadir,¹⁸ a period of approximately forty years when blacks were considered at their lowest ebb in the United States. Through written and unwritten rules, blacks were denied access to education, employment, and the franchise, thus guaranteeing them consignment to a permanent underclass status. Gloria Wade-Gayles notes that blacks were freed from slavery and “delivered—with-all-deliberate-speed—into a new-style (peculiar

¹⁴ Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1984) 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁶ References can be found in Gerder Lerner, *A Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 93.

¹⁷ Rodger Streitmatter, *Raising Her Voice: African-American Women Journalists Who Changed History* (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 1994), 2-6.

¹⁸ Reference can be found in Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro: From Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Collier Books, 1965), originally produced as *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1887-1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954).

institution)”) that included “disfranchisement, economic exploitation, lynching, rapes, and other institutionalized barbarities” that “sought to keep the race forever in a state of powerlessness.”¹⁹

African Americans were further disillusioned with their country after having fought for freedom in Europe during World War I, and, subsequently, denied rights at home when they returned. Lawrence W. Levine writes that blacks who had served “heroically” and with “devotion” believed that their second emancipation would come when they returned from the war.²⁰ Instead they found “brutal racial repression.”²¹ Levine notes that their

loyalty and hope were rewarded by inferior treatment for black troops, by a hardening of the lines of discrimination by increased humiliation, and by the bloody summer of 1919 which saw major race riots in city after city. Blacks had played the game by the rules and discovered definitely that the rules simply did not apply to them.²²

The early 1920s saw the flourishing of the Harlem Renaissance, a literary movement during which African-Americans’ talents and contributions in art, music, literature and drama were evident and were seen as a means through which blacks would gain respect and acceptance by white America.²³ However, the masses of blacks were not affected by the renaissance.

Dashed expectations and disappointment were evident throughout black communities in the United States.²⁴ Blacks scratched out a meager existence by working as domestic servants or in agriculture, and African-American children were six times more likely to be illiterate than their white

¹⁹ Gloria Wade-Gayles, “Black Women Journalists in the South: 1880-1905: An Approach to the study of Black Women’s History,” *Callaloo* 4 (1982): 138.

²⁰ Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to freedom*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 269.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ For, reference see, Peeks, *The Long Struggle for Black Power*, 222; Nathan I. Huggins, *Voices from the Harlem Renaissance*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3-11. Huggins writes that the “New Negro”, as blacks dubbed themselves, was “a man and a citizen in his own right—intelligent, articulate, self-assured,.” As well as “a revived and inspired competitor.”

²⁴ Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 32.

counterparts,”²⁵ Dorothy C. Salem argues. To escape harsh treatment in the South and seek better opportunities, blacks migrated in great numbers to the northern cities where they did not fare much better than their southern brethren.²⁶ The editors of *The Making of Black America* write:

The Great Migration during and after World War I accelerated a trend toward greater segregation in northern cities, which had been evident for a number of years. By the 1920's Negroes were already barred from countless recreation centers, restaurants, and hotels. Many northern communities extended segregation in the schools.²⁷

Historian Harvey Sitkoff confirms this view, arguing that whites who viewed the arrival of blacks during the Great Migration as a threat to their jobs and the status quo did not welcome African-Americans to the urban areas and frequently attacked them.²⁸ Sitkoff explains that most African Americans “found squalor, discrimination by labor unions and employees, decayed housing milked by white slum lords, and liquor and narcotics the only escape from despair.”²⁹ Providing further elaboration is Edward Peeks who writes, “The Roaring Twenties proved no exception to the rule of violence against Negroes, violence arising especially from the issues of jobs and homes in the North and from more general animosities in the South.”³⁰

According to Levine, the anxiety that accompanied blacks' discovery that they would not be recognized as equals “was marked by the dramatic rise of a series of revitalizing movements. Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association, “with its insistence on race history, race pride, and an

²⁵ Dorothy C. Salem, “Black Women and the NAACP, 1902-1922: An Encounter with Race, Class, and Gender,” in Kim Marie Vaz, ed., *Black Women in America* (Thousand Oaks; Sage Publications, 1995), 54.

²⁶ August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, Introduction to Emma Lou Thornbrough, “Segregation in Indiana during the Klan Era of the 1920s,” in August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, eds., *Making of Black America: Essays in Negro Life and History* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 184.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The Great Migration saw large numbers of African Americans leave the South to escape poverty and discrimination and search for employment and better opportunities in the North.

²⁹ Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks, The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 31.

³⁰ Edward Peeks, *The Long Struggle for Black Power* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 226.

autonomous race development,” was one such movement.³¹ Garveyism and its back-to-Africa philosophy reached its zenith during the 1920s, when Jacques Garvey was at the helm of the *Negro World*. Historian John Hope Franklin points out that Garvey enjoyed “wide popularity at a time when Negroes generally had so little of which to be proud,” for he insisted that the color black stood for “strength and beauty.”³² Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier argued that blacks in America were “fertile soil” for the Garvey movement for they were “repressed and shut out from all serious participation in American life.”³³ Franklin added that the black intellectual also felt “this repression.”³⁴ Therefore, blacks “took refuge in the belief that in an autonomous black Africa they would find their proper place.”³⁵

Sitkoff sums up the Garvey Movement as follows:

Despite his opposition to civil rights organizations, Garvey did more than any previous Negro leader to convince blacks to believe in their ability to shape their destiny. A master showman, Garvey dramatized the extreme plight of Afro-Americans and the desperate necessity of change. An intuitive psychologist, he radicalized the powerless by instilling in them a sense of their potential power. A persuasive teacher, the Jamaican leader convinced masses of Negroes that white racism and not black failings explained their lowly status.³⁶

It was within that context that a fiercely militant Jacques Garvey worked as a journalist and advocated through her editorials in the *Negro World*. She was unlike other black women journalists of the time, such as Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells, and Alice Dunbar-Nelson, who were writing about how to change the political, educational, social and economic structure within the United States. While she was like the women in emphasizing racial and gender uplift, Jacques-Garvey’s main focus was single-mindedly espousing the ideology of Marcus Garvey-- that of race pride and solidarity and black liberation

³¹ Ibid.

³² Franklin, “From Slavery to Freedom, 320.

³³ E. Franklin Frazier, “The Garvey Movement,” *Opportunity* 4 (November 1926): 346

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*, 32.

through economic enterprise and repatriation to Africa.³⁷ The future for blacks lied not in improvement of conditions in this country, but in a new life in Africa. And that was the constant refrain in her writings.

Themes

Jacques Garvey's journalistic activism was manifested as she used the power of her words and the reach of the *Negro World* to seek to motivate blacks the world over to elevate themselves. The themes she addressed pointed to the necessity of blacks to gain economic independence, especially at that point in the history of the black race. Framing her writings in what was happening in the international arena, the columnist advocated racial advancement and productivity via self-determination and self-reliance and productivity, economic independence as the route to empowerment and uplift and the role of women in the home and society. The lack of motivation on the part of black men was also a constant theme.

Racial Productivity through Self-Determination and Self-Reliance

Jacques Garvey reiterated the Garveyism view that only grim self-determination would lead to productivity, which, in turn, would bring about economic independence for black people throughout the world. This stream of reasoning was a theme echoed in the black press of the period and by other black women journalists who wrote for both the black and mainstream press.³⁸ In almost all of her editorials, Jacques Garvey stressed that the black race must be productive by engaging in economic development initiatives, seeking to become involved in business ventures, making sound judgments regarding how to invest and spend its money, and assisting fellow blacks.

In her scrapbook housed in the Marcus Mosiah Garvey Memorial Collection at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, Jacques Garvey's handwritten notation, "important editorial,"³⁹ reflected the extent

³⁷ Jacques Garvey, *Black Power in America*, 2; Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (New York: Self, 1963).

³⁸ For reference, see, articles in the *New York Age*, *Wilmington Advocate*, *Cleveland Plaindealer*, and *Pittsburgh Courier* written during the period.

³⁹ Amy Jacques Garvey, Handwritten note in Scrapbook, Marcus Mosiah Garvey Memorial Collection, Box 12.

of her strong ideology regarding self-reliance and productivity. The editorial urged blacks to become motivated and to organize themselves. Throughout the year, while focusing mainly on the negative effects of what she termed white exploitation, Jacques Garvey also encouraged her fellow blacks worldwide to be self-reliant, self-directed, and productive.

In her January 1925, New Year's message, she wrote that her readers should weigh "the year's misfortunes," find out the reasons for their failures, and resolve in their minds "to conquer the cause."⁴⁰ She added, "When this is done you will be on the way to success in the New Year."⁴¹ Under the subhead, "What Are You Doing with Your Money?" Jacques Garvey emphasized that it amounted "to criminal negligence for us as individuals to spend money foolishly."⁴² Such squandering, she noted, "not only hurts us personally, but hurts the race," she advised, adding: "Money accumulated can be invested in business, which would not only bring profit to the investors, but give employment to members of the race, thereby serving a two-fold purpose."⁴³

A week after her New Year's message, Jacques Garvey urged her readers to back up their talk with action and not to get to the end of the year remarking that they could have been productive but something prevented them from accomplishing anything. She offered,

There are not buts' [sic] that you cannot remove. The things that you plan to aid in need your help, and are neglected while you talk about it. Get into action so that you will be able to say to yourself at the close of the year "Thank God, I was able to better my condition and help my race in its struggle for manhood rights." Herein lies the joy of living.⁴⁴

The need to take action was still on Jacques Garvey's mind in April 1925, when she issued the following impassioned directive:

⁴⁰ Amy Jacques Garvey, "New Year's Resolutions," *The Negro World*, 3 January 1925.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Amy Jacques Garvey, "How to Help Better the Economic Conditions of the West Indies," *The Negro World*, 10 January 1925.

Wake up, Mr. Black Man, and go up and possess the land. Your women are tired of menial jobs and being abused by men of other races; your children want care and provisions made for their future if they are to live. Your race wants a first class rating according to present day standards. Your country calls. Will you answer?⁴⁵

Five months after that pronouncement, Jacques Garvey penned an editorial that questioned what the League of Nations had accomplished following World War I, but also provided additional direction for blacks aimed at helping blacks to become productive and to elevate themselves. The columnist challenged the men of her race to “get all the implements of protection that the other fellow has, and if possible improve on it so that the very knowledge of your preparedness will cause other races to think twice before they attempt to seize your land and wealth.”⁴⁶

At the end of 1925, Jacques Garvey returned to her January admonishments when she told readers to ask themselves whether they had “been slipping back or advancing,” whether they were “merely observers of the accomplishments of others or active participants in the march for human attainment.”⁴⁷ Jacques Garvey then called upon her readers, whom she described as “son, wife, husband, patriot or race lover,” to “make their contributions of good deeds.”⁴⁸

Jewish Example of Racial Solidarity and Economic Independence

In seeking to motivate her fellow race members, Jacques Garvey’s treatises often cited the Jewish people as an example of an oppressed group that had risen above obstacles and elevated itself. Jacques Garvey writings indicate that she clearly embraced the negative stereotype of Jews as shrewd, wealthy, money-grubbers. In an editorial titled “Will the Jews Conquer the World?,” Jacques Garvey argued that the Jews were not trying “to conquer the world religiously, and rule it spiritually” because they knew that “the spirit of hate would vent itself even above the ideas of Judaism.”⁴⁹ She offered that “the Jew” had

⁴⁵ Garvey, “Why White Men Want Africa,” 18 April 1925.

⁴⁶ Amy Jacques Garvey, “Is Life Worth Living?,” *The Negro World*, 17 October 1925.

⁴⁷ Amy Jacques Garvey, “What Have You Accomplished This Year?,” *The Negro World*, 28 November 1925.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Garvey, “The Civilized Savage,” *The Negro World*, 16 February 1924.

instead “shown the good sense in the choice of leadership when he chose to become the financial leader of the world,” adding, “he has emancipated himself without bloodshed.”⁵⁰ A few months after that editorial, the columnist explained that blacks, unlike the Jews, could not envision a “national home,” nor could they “forget their factional differences and work toward that end.”⁵¹ In what was clearly a reference to the UNIA, Jacques Garvey held that some people were “working with might and main” to “secure to themselves and to their posterity the independence and glory that was once their forebears.”⁵² She explained in May 1924, that the “Jew employs himself,” and “thinks always in terms of race,” while “the Negro always thinks in terms of self.”⁵³ The approach of the Jews allows them to conquer prejudice, Jacques Garvey wrote, while the “Negro bemoans his fate and prays to God for relief.” She concluded pointedly, “God only helps those who help themselves.”⁵⁴

Jacques Garvey did not relent in invoking the stereotype of Jews when she compared blacks to them. In June, she related that New York Jews had raised more than six million dollars for a cause, and she asked what blacks were doing.⁵⁵ On September 18, 1926, Jacques Garvey used her editorial to stress the need for blacks to put themselves in a position where they could gain respect, just as Jews had done. She argued that “the wandering Jew” had compelled the “hostile Gentile” to “respect him because he monopolizes trade everywhere he goes and thereby becomes rich and dictatorial. He employs his own people and prevents them from being servants to others.”⁵⁶ Jacques Garvey continued to educate on the differences between blacks and Jews when she noted that some Jews only went to synagogue twice a

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Amy Jacques Garvey, “Solving the Jewish Problem,” *The Negro World*, 1 March 1924.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Amy Jacques Garvey, *The Negro World*, 24 May 1924.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Amy Jacques Garvey, “New York Jews Raise Over Six Million Dollars—What of Negroes?,” *The Negro World*, 5 June 1926.

⁵⁶ Amy Jacques Garvey, *The Negro World*, 18 September 1926.

year, but went to their businesses every day. Further elaborating, Jacques Garvey maintained that Jews did not keep the Sabbath because it fell on a Saturday, “the day when Gentiles spend the most money.” On the other hand, Jacques Garvey professed, “Negroes go to church every Sunday and spend the other six days of the week hunting a job. There lies the difference between a thinking and unthinking group of people.”⁵⁷ The columnist urged activism as she ended her piece with the admonishment that if whites kicked blacks around in the western world, “it is all our fault.”⁵⁸ She added, “we are too darn lazy, [sic] and lack the pluck and ambition that cause men of other races to go out and to make themselves independent and respected.”⁵⁹

Reflecting her animosity toward Jews, Jacques Garvey used a January 8, 1927 editorial to make yet another comparison. She equated persecution of Jews in Rumania with the persecution of blacks, and noted that “both groups” were “wanderers without protection of a government of their own, no flag and no aeroplanes.”⁶⁰ Again embracing the stereotype, pointing to Jewish wealth, she offered, “Yet Jews are treated better than Negroes in all countries because they control big finance and are huge producers, while Negroes are poor consumers, dependent on other races for employment.”⁶¹ And Jacques Garvey criticized Jews for what she called their “opposition to African redemption.” Pointing out that both blacks and Jews were “striving for nationalism,” and working “for their respective homelands,” while “programs in Europe and lynchings in American continue to take their toll,” Jacques Garvey said “the Jew is heartless enough to persecute the Negro.”⁶²

Racial Productivity and Economic Independence

Jacques Garvey emphasized that Jews had prospered in the world because they had achieved economic independence. Such was the road that would lead to elevation for blacks, she believed. The

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Amy Jacques Garvey, “Man’s Inhumanity to Man,” *The Negro World*, 8 January 1927.

Garvey and UNIA creed advocated that blacks should become business owners and support black businesses to assure economic empowerment. Espousing that doctrine, she vehemently lamented that blacks were their “own worst enemy” because of their attitude “toward business conducted by members of the race.”⁶³ The editorial writer was referring to the failure of blacks to build businesses in the United States and Africa, as well as the neglect of blacks to patronize black businesses that did exist.

Despite her negative declaration about blacks, it was clear that Jacques Garvey believed that the failure to build businesses did not rest solely with the race. She provided a list of circumstances that prevented blacks from becoming successful, including inexperience and a lack of capital. Of the black businessman and the business acquisition process, Jacques Garvey explained,

He belongs to a pauper race; he is himself poor compared to the men of the other race who compose his business environment. He goes to the white bank in which he places his money, and lays his plans before the manager, who will listen attentively, lean back in his chair, scratch his head, cough a little, and then remark, “Well, that’s a very good idea, and you ought to make money in that line, but it is the policy of our office not to make loans of that sort to colored people.”⁶⁴

Although it was a common practice for white lenders to refuse to lend money to blacks during the period, that was not the only problem that the potential black businessman faced. His plight was exacerbated by the lack of support from fellow blacks, Jacques Garvey noted. In this editorial, she may have been referring to her husband who had collected money to buy the Black Star Shipping Line, a shipping and passenger fleet, in order to engage in foreign commerce and to take blacks back to Africa.⁶⁵ Ula Y. Taylor points out that the “Black Star line Steamship Company was the UNIA’s main venture to offset” the “injustice” of black people the world over living as “second-class citizens, largely as a result of

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Jacques Garvey, “Some Handicaps.”

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ula Y. Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 3.

economic oppression.⁶⁶ Garvey had been imprisoned for alleged mail fraud in connection with misuse of funds for that failed venture.

In her editorial, Jacques Garvey charged that as soon as funds for the black business trickled in, “five or ten dollars at a time,” the black press began to harass the entrepreneur, the black newspapers “malign the five thousand dollars he has collected into five hundred thousand dollars,” and they ask, “What has he done with the money? Where is the business he promised?”⁶⁷ Black ministers, fearful of a drop in collections, urged their congregations not to contribute to black business ventures, “but to lay it (their money) on the altar.”⁶⁸ Finally, “stockholders became distrustful and, consequently, the businessman “is at a loss to know what to do.”

In what was clearly a reference to Marcus Garvey’s plight and again casting aspersion on Jews, Jacques Garvey explained,

Mr. Colored Man is so harassed that he is compelled to buy the first business he can lay his hands on, in order to satisfy his critics. The result is that he has not enough money left to equip the business to meet the white competitor in his line. His patrons have no sympathy for his efforts. They refuse to buy from him if he cannot sell cheaper than Mr. Ginsberg, whose brother is a wholesale dealer; whose uncle is his landlord; and who gets a loan from his bank to properly stock his store or equip his business.⁶⁹

Jacques Garvey ended her discourse with the revelation that the black business inevitably failed, and black newspapers “trumpet the demise” with headlines that read, “Mr. Colored Man Failed.” The black preacher, likewise, “gets up in the pulpit and says, ‘I told you so, sisters and brothers; colored folks just can’t do anything right,’”⁷⁰ Jacques Garvey complained.

Black dependence on whites for primarily menial jobs for which they were underpaid was another concern addressed in the editorials. After pointing out that the invention of laborsaving devices was

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Jacques Garvey, 7 February 1925.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

further eroding the ability of blacks to earn a living, the columnist warned that it was “imperative that the Negro create his own job, or face unemployment and consequently starvation.”⁷¹ The need to engage in commerce in order to build nationhood was the subject of Jacques Garvey’s supplication as she told blacks to “learn the value of industry and commerce.”⁷² Despite Jim Crow and other impediments during the period, blacks were becoming educated and making advances in medicine, nursing, teaching, the arts, and other areas. Jacques Garvey pointed out that it was fine to have a profession, but those professionals depended on blacks who had no economic means to patronize them or use their services. She believed that “the basic foundation of a people’s existence” was not just seeking a profession but creating “the means whereby they shall eat bread.”⁷³

Still preaching economic independence, Jacques Garvey asserted in October 1926, that only when the black man stopped “hunting a job” and created one would he prosper.⁷⁴ In a condescending and angry tone, she charged that blacks were “the greatest job hunters in the world.”⁷⁵ In the following passage, she both complained about the attitude of blacks toward entrepreneurship, and she explained why business development was necessary. She wrote:

The opportunities for doing business does not interest him; [sic] the light of slavery being still on him, he is afraid of responsibilities and clings to the idea of working under a white man and saying, ‘Thank you boss’ for a pay envelope, no matter how small it is. That’s the reason why the race is so poor and backward. When a people of any race cannot employ themselves [sic], they must be prepared to be dictated to by those who employ them, and subjected to their whims and fancies. Naturally white men are not going to the trouble of opening up their industries, and give Negro the best positions, nor are they disposed to build their governments for Negroes to legislate for them. Knowing the strength of the Negro race, they are not going to give them big sticks to break their heads.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Amy Jacques Garvey, “Fearful of Going Black,” *The Negro World*, 14 November 1925.

⁷² Amy Jacques Garvey, “What the World Needs.”

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Amy Jacques Garvey, “Stop Hunting a Job and Create One,” *The Negro World*, 9 October 1926.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

The familiar refrain in this editorial was that the solution rested with blacks themselves. Moving away from holding Jews up as the example of entrepreneurship, Jacques Garvey explained that financier J. P. Morgan and industrialist Henry Ford were not going to assist blacks through the maze of the financial world or hire them for any of their industries. Therefore, the woman implored blacks who wanted to be bank presidents to open their own banks and “experiment” until they reached “the standard of a Morgan.” As if to illustrate that the poverty of blacks should not prevent them from being entrepreneurs, Jacques Garvey observed that Ford “started out with only a few dollars” and “worked his way up to the top—the richest man in the world.”⁷⁷ The writer then asked, “why, therefore, should he make a berth for Negroes, when his own race needs his help.” Returning to another on-going theme, she pointed out that there was “plenty of iron ore and coal in Africa; and she again posed the question, “Why can’t Mr. Blackman go there and do for that great continent what Ford has done for America?”⁷⁸

In this lengthy editorial, Jacques Garvey sought to educate her readers as to how economic self-sufficiency worked and why it was so important. She maintained that one race should not have to provide for another “either industrially or economically.” Instead, the race should provide for its members. A pessimistic Jacques Garvey wondered whether blacks would pick up the gauntlet when she wrote, “it remains to be seen whether they will continue to be, or will make an effort to become independent, and thereby claim the respect of their white neighbor.”⁷⁹

Throughout 1926, Jacques Garvey aggressively urged blacks to rise above their economic dependency and to take charge of their destinies by becoming entrepreneurs. Editorials in this year continued to reflect the writer’s dismay about the lack of racial productivity in that area. The February 27, 1926, piece, “Don’t Avoid, But Seek Responsibility,” pointed out that the white race had advanced

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

because of “the readiness of its individual members to shoulder responsibilities.”⁸⁰ The column called the black race a “child race” and lamented that it was “the most backward, measured by the material standards of progress,” because it had “been accustomed to be led by others.”⁸¹ Jacques Garvey took the opportunity to again stress her husband’s and the UNIA’s quest to teach blacks “the spirit of independence,” as she told her readers to have faith in themselves. Such faith would save the race and would “enliven” its members to stand on their own feet, instead of doing “the white man’s bidding.”⁸²

While the exhortation for blacks—especially black men—to elevate themselves was a constant refrain of the opinion pieces, an equally frequent refrain was Jacques Garvey’s view that the UNIA and Marcus Garvey were the avenues for black resurrection. During the years she wrote for the *Negro World*, Jacques Garvey never grew weary of promoting the UNIA as the means of helping blacks to become self-reliant. In an editorial titled “Racial Achievements,” Jacques Garvey lauded the efforts and achievements of the organization and enthusiastically claimed that it was “the only organized body of Negroes that employs a large number of Negroes all over the world.” She stressed the organization’s endeavors to go into big business, and its encouragement of its members to do so.⁸³

On November 14, 1925, Jacques Garvey explained that her husband had studied the economic, political, and economic life of blacks and America, and that he was convinced that blacks could not rise above their present status in the United States because of white prejudice and intolerance. After pointing out that the invention of labor-saving devices was further eroding the ability of blacks to earn a living, Jacques Garvey warned,

It is imperative that the Negro create his own job, or face unemployment and consequently starvation. The black consumer is short unless he starts out immediately to produce essentials of everyday life, [sic] which will take him out of the servant class and at the same time ensure his livelihood, [sic] but the question of protection lies in the establishment of a

⁸⁰ Amy Jacques Garvey, “Africa Bides Her Time,” *The Negro World*, 27 February 1927.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Amy Jacques Garvey, “Racial Achievements,” 1 November 1924.

government of his own in Africa strong enough to protect him in any part of the world he may reside.

Truly the Negro has served well the white man's purpose for bringing him to America; and the enlightened wide-awake Negro is now determined to serve his own purpose, [sic] that of living and enjoying life as any other man, without limitations and without barriers against his development and progress.⁸⁴

Jacques Garvey believed that the poverty of her race equated to slavery and that the black race was the poorest of all peoples, despite the richness of Africa. Acknowledging that poor people would never be independent because they had to work for money, the columnist wrote, "To be truly independent, one must have money invested, so that whether one wants to play golf or play the fool, that money will be earning enough interest to meet all expenses."⁸⁵

Not only focusing on the plight of blacks in American, midway into 1927, Jacques Garvey provided a blueprint for blacks in the West Indies to obtain economic independence and self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship. The headline on her May 14, 1927 column, "It All Depends on You," summarized her view.⁸⁶ She maintained that British control, its failure to invest in industries that benefited natives, and its discouragement of American investment, robbed West Indians of their ability to find employment or earn a living. Because of such "repressive practices," natives had been forced to immigrate to other countries, but popular places of immigration were beginning to bar their entrance. West Indians who remained had to pay exorbitant prices for imported goods, thereby enriching the government and further impoverishing the natives, Jacques Garvey argued.⁸⁷

After outlining the situation, she proposed a solution. She called upon the "elected members of the legislative councils of their respective colonies" to enact laws that would encourage outside capital

⁸⁴ Amy Jacques Garvey, "Fearful of Going Black," *The Negro World*, 14 November 1925.

⁸⁵ Amy Jacques Garvey, "Poverty Is Slavery," *The Negro World*, 21 August 1926.

⁸⁶ Amy Jacques Garvey, "It All Depends on You," *The Negro World*, 14 May 1927.

⁸⁷ Amy Jacques Garvey, "How to Help Better."

and local commercial ventures.⁸⁸ She observed that tropical countries had the most delicious fruits, but because they had no jam or preserve factories, the fruit rotted on the ground. Consequently, factories should be built in the tropics where the natives could construct them and where jobs would be produced.

Not only was Jacques Garvey dismayed about the lack of entrepreneurial spirit and acumen, she was chagrined that West Indian housewives, whom she said had “so much citrus fruits in their garden that even hogs refuse it,” still sent to the grocery for a jar of marmalade made in England.⁸⁹ Such actions accounted for lack of achievement and economic empowerment, Jacques Garvey believed. Of the housewives, she wrote,

They don't stop to consider that to consider that they could gather their own citrus fruits and make marmalade to be used in and out of season. They also fail to observe that oranges do not grow in England, and the fruit used in making the marmalade was bought for a small amount from some tropical country, shipped to England and preserved in factories there, then reshipped to the tropics and sold at an enormous price.⁹⁰

Jacques Garvey, therefore, suggested that the women could “help materially by using good judgment in the regulation of their purchase for their homes.”⁹¹

Conclusion

Jacque Garvey's editorials afforded a unique analytic opportunity to gain insight into another aspect of the Garvey Movement by one of its premiere unsung proponents, and they provided perspective on the role and voice of a segment of the black press during the early 1920s. The more than one hundred fifty editorials analyzed in this paper indicate that Jacques Garvey raised the consciousness of blacks on social and economic issues that impacted their human dignity and well being. She placed the black experience for the black masses in context by providing lessons on world affairs and insight into the negative impact of international activities on blacks and people of color worldwide.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Calling for a oneness of blacks, she crafted messages that beseeched, chastised, encouraged, demanded-- almost willed-- that blacks worldwide act in their race's interest and rely on themselves to achieve racial freedom. In providing courses of action for her readers, she challenged blacks to have pride in their race and to look toward Africa for their future. She argued that black empowerment could only occur by bringing together American blacks, Caribbean people and Africans to establish, own and manage large-scale businesses in order to create their own economic enterprises leading to "a distinct coloured economy"⁹² and a black-governed nation in Africa that would stand up for the rights of black people everywhere.⁹³

The themes found in her pronouncements reflected Jacques Garvey's determination to energize her race by apprising them of consequences of the perils associated with the failure of blacks to determine their destinies. Hence, the overarching theme of Jacques Garvey's editorials was economic independence via self-help and productivity as a means of overcoming white domination.

Believing, as did her husband, that white people would never "place black people on a par with them,"⁹⁴ Jacques Garvey trusted no white people, and she negatively stereotyped Jews as she held them up as an example of racial productivity and accomplishments. In this aspect, she came from a different ideological position than the black press and other black activists of her day that fostered interracial cooperation as an avenue of black empowerment. Jacques Garvey's racial ideologies centered on detachment from anything American in favor on repatriation to Africa. Therefore, her editorials totally ignored what was happening in the United States—Jim Crow, lynching, disfranchisement—while focusing exclusively on Pan-Africanism. It may be surmised that her reason for not placing those issues

⁹² Amy Jacques Garvey, Introduction to *Black Power in America: Marcus Garvey's Impact on Jamaica and Africa* (Kingston, Jamaica: Self, 1968).

⁹³ For reference, see Satter, "Marcus Garvey," 44; Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism*.

⁹⁴ James H. Cone, *Martin and Malcolm and America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 10.

on the agenda for her readers and for not seeking changes at home to better their conditions was her desire for blacks to turn to her husband and his movement to ameliorate their plight.

In addition, her unrelenting criticism of the black race for what she termed its lack of productivity, and black males for what she argued was its laziness was unlike other black men and women of the press, who sometimes criticized blacks but also acknowledged racial accomplishments in the face of almost insurmountable political, social and educational odds. Only one of Jacques Garvey's articles highlighted racial achievement.

From an economic standpoint, it can be further argued that in seeking to motivate blacks to be self-reliant and establish their own businesses, Jacques Garvey displayed a lack of understanding of or a refusal to acknowledge the constraints that prevented blacks during the 1920s from being successful in business. Her editorials blamed black people for the dearth of black businesses. Only one editorial acknowledged the problems the black businessman faced. Instead, Jacques Garvey singled out the black press, black ministers and the black masses for criticism. But, blacks were largely powerless. As Jacquelyn Jones posited in her 1985 book, the structure of the time limited availability of work to blacks, especially black men. Hence, black men "were deprived of the satisfaction of providing for their families with a reliable source of income."⁹⁵ Again, Jacques-Garvey's motivation was positioning the Garvey Movement as the solution for blacks.

Nevertheless, like the black press, Jacques Garvey advocated on behalf of blacks. Like other black women journalists, she sought to elevate her race and gender, albeit, through a different path. Her writings had an impact on thousands, perhaps millions, of blacks who joined the movement and adhered to its teachings. Her editorials were informative, persuasive, and insightful. Although their tone was often harsh, critical and even demeaning, Jacques Garvey, like Marcus Garvey, sought to empower

⁹⁵ Jacquelyn Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1985), 110.

hundreds of thousands of economically marginalized blacks worldwide. She also helped her husband draw dozens of black leaders to his side.⁹⁶

In sum, this study reveals that Jacques Garvey was a journalist who used straightforward, unadorned language to report on and convey the values and racial ideologies of a major movement in this country during an especially dark period in black history. As she instructed, cajoled and criticized, she articulated the Black Nationalism view that had been defined as “a loss of hope in America.”⁹⁷ Moreover, through the pages of the *Negro World*, Jacques Garvey fulfilled the advocacy role of the black press. In doing so, she did as other black journalists of her day had done. She gave a voice to a voiceless.

Interestingly, African-Americans are dealing today with the issues of economic independence, self-reliance and self-determination, just as Jacques Garvey three quarters of a century ago.

⁹⁶ “Marcus Garvey and the UNIA,” The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers Project.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Keep and Use It for the Nation's War Policy

The Office of Facts and Figures and Its Uses of the Japanese-Language Press

From Pearl Harbor To Mass Internment

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Abstract

This study examines how the United States government treated the Japanese “enemy language” press during World War II by focusing on the policy of the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), a federal agency that took responsibility for the management and mobilization of the domestic foreign language press during the first six months after Pearl Harbor. The OFF took a distinctively liberal but realistic approach to the Japanese-language press. While seeing it as a symbol of American democracy, the agency also regarded it as a useful instrument to facilitate the national war effort. From this viewpoint, the OFF sought to preserve and utilize the Japanese-language press rather than to ban it. Specifically, the agency used the Japanese vernacular press for mainly three purposes, as a messenger of official news and views of the federal government, morale builder of Japanese Americans, and defense shield against Axis propaganda.

Keep and Use It for the Nation's War Policy

The Office of Facts and Figures and Its Uses of the Japanese-Language Press

From Pearl Harbor To Mass Internment

I. Introduction

During World War II, the United States government repeatedly publicized itself as a champion of democracy standing sternly against fascism marching violently in Europe and Asia. As a part of this campaign, Washington declared openly that it would treat aliens, immigrants, and other people of foreign-born on the same basis as U.S.-born citizens. Most symbolically, on December 10, 1941, only three days after Pearl Harbor, the Attorney General Francis Biddle announced: "The defense of our country will be hurt, not helped, by any persecution of our non-citizens. If we create the feeling among aliens and other foreign-born that they are not wanted here, we shall endanger our national unity. Such an impression could only give aid and comfort to those enemies whose aim is to infect us with distrust of each other and turn aliens in America against America."¹

In reality, however, the federal government excepted at least one particular ethnic minority group, the people of Japanese descent, from that inclusive national credo. By President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 of February 19, 1942, more than 110,000 Japanese immigrants and their offspring living on the West Coast were forcibly removed from their long-lived homes without any court hearings or due compensations. After mass evacuation, they were thrown into inland "relocation centers," which were surrounded by barbed wire fences and watched by the Army guard. About one-third of them were older first generation Japanese immigrants called the "Issei." They were prevented from becoming

American citizens by the anti-Asian federal naturalization law. But the remaining two-thirds were the second generation “Nisei,” who were born and educated in the United States and therefore possessed American citizenship.²

While a number of historians and scholars have critically examined this infamous Japanese American mass incarceration policy, little has been written about how the United States government treated *the press* of Japanese Americans. When Tokyo bombed Pearl Harbor, more than a dozen of Japanese-language general-interest newspapers were being published on the West Coast. While uprooting all people of Japanese ancestry as “enemy aliens,” how did the federal government treat their “enemy language” press?

This study attempts to answer the question by examining the policy of the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), a federal agency that took responsibility for the management and mobilization of the domestic foreign language press during the first six months after Pearl Harbor. To briefly summarize this study’s findings, the OFF took a distinctively liberal but realistic approach to the foreign language press in general. The Foreign Language Division, which took the leading role within the OFF concerning this matter, regarded the foreign language press as a symbol of American democracy and, at the same time, as a useful instrument to facilitate the national war policy. With this recognition, the OFF sought to preserve and utilize, rather than ban, the Japanese-language press even when mass evacuation of Japanese Americans was being executed. The agency used the Japanese-language press for mainly three purposes, as a messenger of official news and views of the federal government, morale builder of Japanese Americans, and defense shield against Axis propaganda.

This study depends heavily on the archival documents of the OFF. It also draws on records of other federal agencies and departments concerned, such as the Office of War

Information (OWI), Department of Justice, and War Relocation Authority (WRA). Primary sources on the side of Japanese Americans, such as back issues of Japanese-language newspapers, letters and memorandums of Japanese publishers and editors, are also utilized. Most of these source materials were collected from the National Archives and Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and used here for the first time.

II. Historical Background and Review of Literature

The Evolution and Development of the Japanese-Language Press in the United States

The Japanese-language press in the United States grew rather slowly, silently, but steadily since the late nineteenth century, mainly on the West Coast. Like other ethnic, immigrant press groups, Japanese-language journalism was founded and fostered by pioneering immigrants to help themselves and their followers establish and advance their own communities in the unaccustomed new nation. In the face of the deep-rooted anti-Asian prejudice, the earliest newcomers from Japan tended to flock together isolating themselves from the mainstream society. As a result, they came to rely heavily on their native language community newspapers to know important news and events happening both inside and outside their circles. In addition, as Lauren Kessler pointed out, living in a country that was often hostile to their presence, the Japanese in the United States “found a sense of community and a source of unity in their native-language publications.”³

By the 1940s, almost every Japanese American community with a sizeable number of population held at least one general-interest vernacular newspaper. According to an intelligence report by the Special War Policies Unit of the Department of Justice, there were about 17 general-interest Japanese-language newspapers on the West Coast in the fall of

1941. Of these, 10 were dailies, six were weeklies, and one was semi-weekly. The report estimated that these papers as a whole had more than 60,000 paid subscribers. In some larger metropolitan cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle, more than two dailies vied for Japanese readership. In addition to these regular broad-sheet newspapers, there were a number of smaller publications, which provided more specialized information and views for targeted audiences.⁴

However, this modest heyday of Japanese-language journalism in the United States ended suddenly when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Beginning from the very day of December 7, 1941, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) embarked on large-scale round-ups of Japanese community leaders, including many newspaper publishers and editors. This forced many newspapers to stop publication. Several newspapers that had a larger staff could barely continue or resume publication after temporary discontinuation. Nevertheless, as the Army began to carry out evacuation orders from March 1942, these remaining papers had also to give up their business. Thus, by mid-May Japanese-language journalism disappeared completely from the West Coast. The last one, the San Francisco daily Nichi Bei, closed with the issue of May 16.⁵

The situation was much different in inland states, however. A handful of Japanese-language newspapers in Utah and Colorado could continue publication throughout the war. They included the Utah Nippo in Salt Lake City, and the Rocky Nippon (later Rocky Shimpo) and Kakushu Jiji (Colorado Times) in Denver. This was possible because evacuation orders did not reach the intermountain states. The Utah Nippo was ordered by the FBI to stop operation on December 10, 1941, but it resumed publication from February 25, 1942 and continued throughout the war. Parenthetically, in Hawaii where martial law was declared,

the military authorities shut down all Japanese American newspapers except for two dailies, the Hawaii Hochi and Nippu Jiji, which were permitted to resume publication under military censorship.⁶

The Roosevelt Administration's Wartime Press Control Policy

The Roosevelt administration's wartime press control policy is a relatively well-researched topic, and previous studies show that the administration in general employed rather restrained methods in its handling of the domestic news media. At the very least, as these studies indicate, the Roosevelt administration was apparently less repressive than the Wilson administration during World War I and the subsequent Red Scare. This was in part due to loyal cooperation on the part of the press. Notably, the overwhelming majority of major newspapers and magazines at home readily complied with the Office of Censorship's wartime self-censorship code. As Japan's "sneak" attack on Pearl Harbor fanned the flames of the anti-Axis, anti-Japanese public sentiment, the American populace which had previously been divided over the nation's involvement in the war became firmly united under the leadership of President Roosevelt. The press was no exception. As Richard W. Steele put it, "[t]he press, already sympathetic, was now more than ever inclined to subordinate its critical instincts to administration needs."⁷

On the other hand, however, some studies demonstrated that the Roosevelt administration took stricter approaches toward certain unpopular, minority press groups. For example, scholars such as Athan Theoharis, Roger Daniels, and Richard W. Steele pointed out that the federal government placed close surveillance on publications of Communists, fascists, anti-war black nationalists, or pro-Nazi extremists. Indictments were brought to some of

them. Patrick S. Washburn also found that government officials had once considered seriously to prosecute some dissident African American publications for sedition.⁸

Despite such relatively rich previous literature on the Roosevelt administration's press control policy during World War II, little has been written about how the administration treated the press of Japanese Americans. One recent study revealed that local government officials controlled the California Japanese press by "coercive self-censorship," i.e. pressing Japanese American journalists to control themselves without exercising outright censorship. However, this study fell short of clarifying the larger framework of the federal government's policy toward the Japanese-language press. An examination of how officials in Washington attempted to control the Japanese "enemy language" press after Pearl Harbor is necessary to understand more fully the state of Japanese Americans and their press, and more broadly, the Roosevelt administration's press control policy during World War II.⁹

III. The Establishment of the OFF and its Roles

The Office of Facts and Figures (OFF) was one of the federal agencies engaged in the government's information dissemination and press relations activities in the earliest phase of war. The OFF was established by the presidential Executive Order of October 24, 1941 "for the purpose of facilitating the dissemination of factual information to the citizens of the country on the progress of the defense effort and on the defense policies and activities of the Government." Under this broad mission, the OFF distributed a variety of defense and war-related information to the press and public, by way of press conferences, releases, and pamphlets. President Roosevelt nominated Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress and

famed poet, for the Director. In the administrative map, the OFF was located under the Office for Emergency Management within the Executive Office of the president.¹⁰

The sudden outbreak of war made the OFF's duty more delicate and complex. According to the agency's internal report, the OFF's assigned task prior to Pearl Harbor had been still relatively simple and limited; however, as the nation entered the war, "[its] objective had necessarily to be combined with that of promoting the dissemination of information on the general war effort while avoiding any publication which would give aid and comfort to the enemy." Moreover, the state of war made it imperative for the OFF to coordinate the often conflicting interests of various governmental organizations and, at the same time, keep the press and general public fully informed of the government's uniform views on the developments of war and defense efforts. In a conference with the representatives of the domestic daily and weekly press in February 1942, one principal OFF official declared that "[t]he OFF is the instrumentality which sees that major policies and the decisions concerning [information dissemination, public relations, and press relations] are carried out. When the [federal government] has made a policy ... [and] if it is not carried out, we definitely have authority to see that it is carried out." Strictly speaking, the OFF had no "definite authority" of compulsion over other agencies. In fact, the OFF frequently met with opposition from other agencies. However, in highly specialized fields such as the handling of foreign language news media, the OFF did take a leading role within the federal government.¹¹

Although the OFF itself did not last long, major portions of its functions and roles, including its personnel, were taken over by the Office of War Information (OWI), which was created by the president's Executive Order 9182 of June 13, 1942. Since the United States entered the war in December 1941, President Roosevelt had been feeling a greater necessity to

establish a central agency that would integrate and coordinate the government's overall information policies, which previously had been scattered over several different agencies including the OFF. The OWI was established to do just this. It consolidated the powers, duties, and staffs of the OFF, the Office of Government Reports, the Division of Information of the Office of Emergency Management, and the Foreign Information Service of the Office of the Coordinator of Information. Roosevelt named a popular radio news commentator of CBS and former New York Times reporter Elmer Davis as the Director of this new wartime agency.¹²

Not all policies of the OFF were inherited by the OWI, of course. But, as this study will show, the handling of the foreign language press was one of the areas in which the basic philosophy and tactics of the OFF remained intact under the OWI. The Chief of the OFF Foreign Language Division occupied the same post in the OWI, and the OFF Director MacLeish continued to serve as an Assistant Director under Elmer Davis until January 1943. Many of other OFF personnel, both executive and lower officials, also remained in charge of their previous duties within the OWI. Thus, the OFF's foreign language press policy conditioned that of the OWI.¹³

IV. The OFF's Foreign Language Press Policy: Liberalism and Realism

In light of the fact that the nation entered the war to defend democracy against fascism, the OFF weighed the liberal principle of the free press and strove to develop mutual working relationships with the domestic news media. As the Director MacLeish once expressly stated, the OFF "will not alter the present relationship between newspaper and radio representatives and the various departments and agencies. ... The job is one of

coordination, not of control or regulation.” With this recognition, the OFF took a stand to elicit voluntary cooperation from the news media rather than to suppress or censor them. In his public address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 17, 1942, MacLeish declared: “There are plenty of people who will tell you that ... government, through its law-enforcement agencies, should crack down [and] suppress all publications of [a] divisive and defeatist nature. I don’t believe it. ... The press is justified in defending its right to criticize, and should and must defend it at all costs.” This liberal posture corresponded with that of the Department of Justice and Office of Censorship.¹⁴

Basically, the OFF took the same liberal, tolerant approach to publications of foreign tongues. Indeed, the OFF leadership assumed that all press groups, regardless of their languages or ethnic belonging, deserved the same First Amendment protection as the mainstream English-language media did. They believed that the freedom of speech and the press was a cornerstone of the nation’s democratic system itself, which must be guaranteed as a universal right. The Chief of the OFF Foreign Language Division, Alan Cranston, articulated this liberal view in his April 3, 1942 memorandum for MacLeish. “The foreign language press is in a sense a symbol of the freedom of speech for which we are fighting and it is doubtful whether the benefits to be gained from the elimination of the bad 10% in any blanket suppression of the foreign language press would counteract the positive benefits being gained from the good 90%.” Shortly thereafter, the Department of Justice elevated Cranston’s statement to a uniform policy of the federal government. On April 28, the Department of Justice announced that “all newspapers loyal to the United States, regardless of the language in which they are printed, need [to] fear no interference by the Federal Government.”¹⁵

The Justice Department's endorsement encouraged Cranston to declare in his May 3 public address that "[i]t would be apparent to anyone ... that language is no test of loyalty." In this speech before the New England Foreign Language Newspapers Association, Cranston also pledged that "all English language publications will not be suppressed because a few English language publications are disloyal, nor will all foreign language publications be suppressed because a few foreign language publications are disloyal."¹⁶

It is important to note here that such liberal, egalitarian outlook of the OFF set the framework of the foreign language press policy of the OWI, which took over the OFF in June 1942 and continued throughout the war. One OWI policy memorandum provided:

There can clearly be no question of attempting to obtain the cooperation of the foreign language press by any but purely voluntary methods. The use of any other method, especially enforced insertion of Government statements, imposition of any form of censorship, or suspension of these newspapers, would mean abandonment of democratic process in a struggle which can only be won by maintaining and strengthening them.

The foreign language press policies of the OFF and OWI were founded on the same liberal conception.¹⁷

Within the OFF, it was the Foreign Language Division headed by Alan Cranston that took the immediate responsibility for planning, documenting, and practicing the foreign language press policy. In a broader sense, the division's duty was to "sell America's war" to those who did not understand English or retained strong cultural ties with foreign nations. For more specific descriptions of its task, Cranston explained that his division would:

Stimulate morale among the foreign born for the most efficient and energetic prosecution of the war.

Inform the foreign born of the war-time resources and policies of America and the United States.

Give aliens and the foreign born precise information regarding their technical status in this country, and regarding such things as price control and Selective Service.

Sell the war to the German, Italian, and other groups in this country.

Although Cranston did not mention specifically, the people of Japanese descent constituted one important segment of his division's target audiences. While the OFF was integrated into the OWI, Cranston kept serving as the Chief of the Foreign Language Division until 1944.¹⁸

Equally important, however, the OFF did not advocate the continuance and preservation of the foreign language press on the ground of democratic idealism only. The agency had some realistic considerations, too. For one, officials foresaw that some serious troubles would arise if the government arbitrarily banned foreign language journalism. To take one example, they feared that dictatorial press suppression would alienate the people of foreign background and this in turn would weaken the national unity. Cranston expressed this concern in his April 3 memorandum for MacLeish. "Any blanket suppression of the foreign language press would be a serious blow to the morale of some of our most loyal Americans, just as the labeling of all German, Italian and Japanese aliens as 'enemy aliens' has terribly wounded some of the world's most staunch anti-Nazis and anti-Fascist." Cranston cautioned further that outright elimination of foreign language news media would impair the credibility of the United States abroad, too. "It would insult our allies," wrote he.¹⁹

The Department of Justice had the same concern. On April 6, the OFF and Department of Justice agreed on a joint policy statement, which read that “[the loyal foreign language] press is, in a sense, a symbol of the freedom of speech for which we are fighting. Aside from constitutional difficulties, the elimination or serious curtailment of all or a substantial proportion of the foreign language press as such would undoubtedly have a tendency to create disaffection and to alienate the sympathies of a substantial number of the foreign born.”²⁰

Concomitantly, the OFF officials feared that the banning of foreign language journalism might also assist the Axis propagandists in their efforts to divide the public opinion of the United States. Cranston’s aforementioned memo for MacLeish called attention to this danger, stating that the deprivation of the foreign language press “would make the foreign born easy targets for Axis rumor-mongers. It would turn them to the Axis short-wave broadcasts for their information.”²¹

Besides these concerns, the OFF had a more positive reason for supporting the First Amendment right of foreign language publications, i.e. the agency viewed them as ready-made ammunition to promote the national war effort. This consideration was expressed in the aforementioned joint policy statement with the Department of Justice, which bluntly stated that “it should be borne in mind that the loyal foreign language press serves a very useful purpose as a channel of communication through which the Government can reach the foreign born.” The OFF emphasized this merit when it advised the White House how it could more effectively publicize war programs to the national public. The OFF recommended that “every use ... be made of the foreign language press, the press in general, the radio, to bring home to the citizens what the program would mean to each individual man and woman. ... [The OFF]

proposes immediately to prepare a detailed and specified plan to set in motion its machinery for the utilization of all principal media of opinion and information (magazines, press, movies, etc.) to attain the objective.”²²

From such liberal but realistic standpoint, while acknowledging the basic First Amendment freedom from governmental intervention, the OFF exhorted publishers and editors of foreign language media to exercise stricter self-control. In the aforementioned address before the New England Foreign Language Newspapers Association on May 3, 1942, Cranston stated: “It would be a great contribution to American unity, to the foreign-language population in the United States, and to the foreign language press itself, if the foreign language press would purge itself of ... traitors before the Government steps in.” This “patriotic” act of self-censorship, he furthered, “would prove to skeptics that the vast majority of the foreign language press is loyal and pro-democratic and that it is contributing by every means to the winning of the war. It is easy enough to distinguish between friend and foe in this war, whether the enemy packs a rifle or publishes a newspaper.”²³

Equally noteworthy, Cranston cautioned that the federal government would have to take punitive actions, if not all-out suspension or censorship, if they failed to act “responsibly” or “loyally.” “Only when you fail to do your job is the Government forced to step in. The Government prefers to let you keep your own house in order.” Later in the same address, he reemphasized that strict self-control on the part of the foreign language press would be the best and only means to protect its own freedom. “When no segment of the foreign language press is playing the Nazi game, we who understand the value of the foreign language press will be greatly strengthened in our stand against those who would ruthlessly suppress all foreign language publications because of the disloyal few among them.” Cranston

concluded that “loyal Americans will do all within your power to prove that the foreign language press can make a great and telling contribution to America and to victory.”²⁴

V. The OFF’s Uses of the Japanese-Language Press After Pearl Harbor

The OFF applied basically the same liberal, realistic scheme of policy to the Japanese-language press. On the one hand, the OFF officials openly acknowledged its First Amendment freedom. At least publicly, they made no distinction between the Japanese “enemy language” press and other non-English press groups. Symbolically, Cranston declared in the May 3 speech that “[t]he foreign language press of America, publishing as it does in German, Italian, Japanese, and 35 other languages, the languages of friend, foe and neutral alike, is a symbol of the freedom for which we are fighting. It is a common ground for all who struggle for the defeat of tyranny.” MacLeish also held that “there should be no sweeping suppression of the Japanese press because much of it had the appearance of loyalty and sincerity.” Before President Roosevelt approved the military authorities’ proposal to uproot Japanese Americans from the West Coast, MacLeish and his OFF staff had actually attempted to dissuade the president from doing so.²⁵

On the other hand, the OFF took a realistic stand and made full use of the powerful influence of the Japanese ethnic press to facilitate the national war programs, in particular the mass evacuation and incarceration of West Coast Japanese Americans. As an agency responsible for information dissemination and public relations concerning the national defense, the OFF utilized the Japanese-language press for mainly three objectives. First of all, the agency used it as an information channel to relay official news and views of the federal government to the Japanese-speaking populace. The agency also used it to maintain and

promote the morale of Japanese Americans. Finally, although to a lesser extent, the agency regarded it as a defense shield against Axis propaganda.

The Japanese-Language Press as Information Disseminator

From the earliest stage of war, the OFF obviously had an intention to exploit the foreign language press in general as a vehicle to convey governmental information to the people of foreign nationalities and parentage. As early as February 6, 1942, Cranston wrote that “[w]e are already sending out a steadily increasing volume of foreign language press releases.” He added that the Foreign Language Division was sending “a growing volume of material to the foreign language press in 27 languages, carrying out general O.F.F. policy and also carrying material specifically aimed for the various foreign-born groups. We are also cooperating with other Government agencies in dissemination of information to foreign groups.” On another occasion, Cranston asserted that his agency “feels that the foreign press is a vital channel of information -- a channel that must be used in this crisis. ... Government agencies have often demonstrated their knowledge of the value of the foreign language press, by using it as a means of communication of vital Government information to new Americans.”²⁶

The OFF used the Japanese-language press for the same purpose. Because there was no luxury of time for both the Japanese-speaking people and government officials to learn the other party’s language, no sooner had the war erupted than the OFF mobilized the existing Japanese-language press to mediate communication between them. One internal memorandum of the OFF read:

Since late December [1941], the OFF has been sending a series of releases to the Japanese press in the United States explaining the regulations affecting enemy aliens, telling the story of the defense program, etc. The statements made by the President, the Attorney General and Undersecretary [of War, Robert] Patterson warning against discrimination have been translated in full.

The memo also noted that “[a]t the moment, in cooperation with the Treasury Department, a special article explaining the freezing of Japanese funds is under preparation.” Since Pearl Harbor, this kind of article had been desired strongly by a number of Japanese-speaking Issei merchants, shop owners, farmers, and fishermen, whose long-run businesses were suddenly endangered by the outbreak of war.²⁷

As President Roosevelt in February 1942 decided on mass evacuation of Japanese Americans, the OFF came to depend even more on the Japanese vernacular press to spread necessary information to them. To remove an entire ethnic group from one place to another was an undertaking of an enormous scale and of unprecedented nature. In order to carry out such hard policy in an orderly manner, it was essential to keep the subject people posted on a number of complicated orders, regulations, and notices. This could hardly be done without exploiting their native language press. A week after the issuance of Executive Order of February 19, Cranston reported to Ulric Bell, the Assistant Director of the OFF, that “in cooperation with the Department of Justice, we have sent releases to [the] Japanese press concerning restrictions on enemy aliens, so that enemy aliens may at once obey the law and maintain their rights.”²⁸

As Cranston implied, the Department of Justice also took advantage of this method of information dissemination to Japanese Americans. When the military authorities proposed

immediate and blanket prohibition of the Japanese and other foreign language press, one Justice Department official strongly opposed, saying that “[t]he extensive use which O.F.F. has made of the loyal foreign language press (particularly the Japanese press) as the only effective means of reaching the large groups of foreign born argues strongly the desirability of not eliminating these publications.”²⁹

By way of the OFF, not only the Department of Justice but other governmental agencies and departments also benefited from the information dissemination function of the Japanese-language press. They sent various orders, announcements, and releases for the Japanese-speaking people first to the OFF, and the OFF collected, edited, translated, and packaged them in suitable forms for their vernacular newspapers. This was actually inevitable because the federal government at that time had very few officials who could read, speak, or write the Japanese language fluently. The OFF’s activity report for the first quarter of 1942 stated that “[the Foreign Language] Division has arranged to receive all Government releases and information of any interest to the foreign groups and is cooperating with them in the dissemination of such information to the foreign-born through the foreign language press”³⁰

To fully understand this information relay system, however, one must not overlook the other side of the truth that a number of Japanese journalists volunteered to assist the OFF. In early March 1942, Togo Tanaka and Joe Inoue, the editors of the Los Angeles daily Rafu Shimpo, remarked:

Generally, the Japanese dailies demonstrated their value as a medium of information from federal agencies into homes of Japanese nationals. Dept of Justice regulations could be released [sic] effectively. Recognition was given to this useful role of the

language papers. [A] press relations officer of the Attorney-General's office dispatched telegrams to these newspapers directly, on several occasions.

Likewise, the largest Japanese daily in San Francisco, the Nichi Bei, once editorialized that “we should perform the public service of carrying out our function of passing on to all of you the commands of the Government and the wartime news ...”³¹

The Japanese-Language Press as Morale Builder

Besides information dissemination, the OFF also heeded the foreign language media's usefulness in education, moralization, and mobilization of the people of foreign national origin. In the aforementioned speech before the New England Foreign Language Newspapers Association, Cranston repeatedly stressed that it was the duty of foreign language journalism to entice its audience to support the United States government and its war effort.

For these hundreds of thousands of people, your publications have long been the principal source of information about the world. It has now become your war-time task to see that these people understand this great fight for freedom in which we are now engaged. It is your task to eliminate their doubts, where doubts exist, with hard, cold facts. It is your task to develop among your readers a clearer understanding of the issues involved in the war. It is your task to win their full cooperation in the war

Cranston then concluded, somewhat exaggeratedly, that “[b]y doing your part you can lay the foundation for a peace of justice and freedom for all”³²

By the same token, the OFF expected that the Japanese-language press would serve a helpful role in soothing the anxiety of Japanese Americans and improving their declining

morale. Cranston once gave high credit to the Japanese media's power in this regard, stating: "Because of the Immigration restrictions since 1924, it is probable that the number of readers of the [Japanese-] language press is substantially less than in the last war. However, this press has almost a monopoly on its readers because their tendency is to rely upon it for information." On another occasion, Cranston stated to the same effect that "[t]hese people are starved for reading matter in Japanese, to which they naturally respond more readily than to English." In the meantime, the OFF leadership made efforts to persuade mainstream West Coast news media to help alleviate the rising public animosity toward Japanese American. One Justice Department official also remarked that "[t]he Japanese press provides one of the most effective channels for government sponsored pro-democratic propaganda"³³

Their observations were correct, indeed. Especially under the intensely stressed mindset of war, the Japanese-language press proved its great power of influence to its readers. One Issei recollected that during the days following Pearl Harbor he and other Issei spent "hectic days. ... People would listen to anybody. They were hungry for news of any kind." Another Issei added: "If the Government wants to influence the thinking of the Issei, it should buy up the editors and the three [largest] Japanese-language newspapers." In a confidential letter to the Attorney General, Karl G. Yoneda, the San Francisco Correspondent of the Los Angeles opinion paper Doho, wrote: "[I] wish to stress that the Japanese papers have been and are the leading factors in shaping the opinions of the Japanese nationals" Tanaka and Inoue of the Rafu Shimpo also asserted that "[i]n bolstering morale, preventing hysteria, curbing rumor, encouraging patriotic efforts such as Defense Bonds sales, Red Cross campaigns, Civilian Defense, these [Japanese-language] publications have proven their usefulness."³⁴

In order to make full use of this moralization function of the Japanese press, the OFF often wrote its information releases so as to lessen Japanese Americans' uncertainty, fears, and disillusionment. For example, the agency intentionally provided items featuring statements of President Roosevelt and other high-ranking officials expressing sympathy toward Japanese Americans. Quotations that seemed especially catchy or moving were singled out and translated "in full" so that Japanese newspapers could print them entirely. The OFF Director Archibald MacLeish once wrote to a famed Nisei architect Isamu Noguchi that his agency "is doing all we can, by press, radio, and other means, to make the loyal Japanese in this country feel that they have a place here and that they can contribute to the cause of democracy in this crisis. At the same time, we are trying to prevent discrimination against the Japanese in this country who are loyal."³⁵

As the Army began to carry out mass evacuation and internment from March 1942, the OFF officials felt a greater necessity to convince Japanese Americans of the legitimacy of the policy as well as the nation's war aim in general. Naturally, the agency came to pay more attention to the morale-building function of the Japanese-language press. The Foreign Language Division's March 20 memo read:

The need for a vernacular on the West Coast which will reflect the opinions of the pro-democratic element among the local Japanese becomes more pressing daily. ...

The need cannot be stressed too strongly for a publication which will carry on a program of education for the [I]ssei, as well as the [N]isei, which will serve to maintain morale (especially necessary because many [N]isei are losing faith in democracy because they are being kicked around by our home-grown fascists), which will defend the rights of the [N]isei as citizens against the powerful forces on the [W]est [C]oast which play the fascist game of race hatred.

But this points to an irony that the Japanese vernacular press was used by the federal government to implant in the minds of Japanese Americans the righteousness of American democracy, the very democracy that denied their civil liberties and rights.³⁶

Equally important, the OFF continued to use the Japanese-language press for morale development even after the Japanese American evacuees entered the inland “relocation centers” operated by the War Relocation Authority (WRA). On March 20, the Executive Assistant of the OFF recommended the Assistant Director that the OFF initiate an information service that would help the WRA develop favorable relationships with camp inmates. Specifically, it was recommended that the OFF provide information material highlighting the humane and democratic aspects of the WRA’s camp administration and the WRA direct each evacuee newspaper to publish such material. At all 10 relocation camps, evacuees were allowed to publisher their own newspapers under the WRA’s “supervision.” The induction of evacuees into the WRA camps began in March 1942 and continued until the end of October.³⁷

After some internal discussions and negotiations, the OFF decided to launch the proposed special information program for the WRA. On April 29, 1942, the Assistant Chief of the OFF Foreign Language Division Bradford Smith formally notified the WRA’s Information Service of the OFF’s plan. Smith wrote:

My particular function in the Office of Facts and Figures is to devise and carry out a program for Japanese aliens and Japanese Americans. I scarcely need to say that I am most eager to work in close cooperation with the War Relocation Authority, to provide what material may be needed for the Japanese and also to help clear up some

of the misunderstandings which have arisen throughout the country in regard to the Japanese problem.

This Office is equipped to provide scripts and releases in Japanese, as well as in English for the Nisei population, and we wish to make available to you every facility that is at our disposal.

Smith proposed that “if you agree with [the OFF] to render this service for you, I should like to devise a regular system of releases for the newspapers now being mimeographed at Manzanar [and] other projects as they are set up. These releases would be in Japanese and/or English, and would have in mind the over-all plan of breaking down undesirable loyalties and gradually building up useful and effective allegiances.” Manzanar was one of the WRA’s relocation camps.³⁸

Thus, by August 1942, the Foreign Language Division, now of the OWI, began to give out news releases and other information material to evacuee newspapers at several WRA camps. Smith boasted to the WAR that his agency’s information items were made specially to convince Japanese American evacuees of the importance of “democracy” and to “prevent evacuees [and other Japanese Americans] from feeling cut off from the rest of the world” He went on to state that “we have emphasized the meaning of the war from a democratic viewpoint, the nature of the enemy, the need for fair treatment of all racial groups, the strength of the American armed forces, the need for sacrifice, and planning for a free world after the war.” Smith added that the same information material was being sent to outside Japanese-language papers, such as the Utah Nippo, Kakushu Jiji, and Rocky Nippon. Furthermore, in order to avoid an impression that the government was misusing them as propaganda outlets, Smith noted, his agency instructed “the editors to feel that we were

following their suggestions and filling their needs -- that the service is a cooperative one.”

Another undated OWI memorandum read: “The lack of any adequate reading matter in Japanese offers an excellent opportunity for education among Issei in the relocation centers.”³⁹

The Japanese-Language Press as Safeguard Against Axis Propaganda

Finally, although to a lesser extent than the first two types of usage, the OFF also viewed the Japanese and other foreign language press as a defense shield against enemy propaganda beamed from abroad. As mentioned previously, the OFF officials were concerned about how to prevent the people of Japanese, German, and Italian origins from being exposed to Axis propaganda. On this, Cranston wrote:

Today Axis short[-]wave broadcasts speaking to immigrant Americans in every foreign language seek to start among them rumors damaging to our cause. ... For if the foreign language groups in this country are neglected, if they are not reached by the United States Government in languages natural to them, they become prey to those broadcasts, those rumors, those stories and interpretations of events the Axis is constantly spreading. The Foreign Language Division removes the danger.

Cranston wrote this memorandum on April 28, 1942 to define the duties and significance of the Foreign Language Division.⁴⁰

Cranston’s concern derived from an assumption that the vernacular media of immigrants and foreign-born people, especially of those from the Axis nations, should be inherently more susceptible to solicitation from their old governments. Cranston wrote in his April 3 memorandum for MacLeish: “The foreign language press is subject to different

treatment from the American press because of [its] monopoly. It reaches a group that is extremely sensitive to foreign propaganda, and it tends to purvey more foreign propaganda and foreign news among such groups because of their interest in their homeland.” This assumption was reasserted in the OFF-Justice Department joint policy statement. It read:

[T]he foreign language press is directed at and circulated among groups many of which are more susceptible to foreign propaganda and ideologies. Because of their readers’ interest in the countries of their nativity or nationality, the foreign language papers present more foreign news than is the case of the English language press. Therefore, the approach that these papers take toward the cause of the United Nations, their loyalty to our democratic form of government and their attitude toward the enemy nations is of considerable importance to our national unity. 41

But the OFF officials did not necessarily see this problem negatively; they also considered that foreign language journalism could rather contribute to the national interest if it served as a barrier to block the entrance of enemy propaganda. This idea was interrelated with the first two types of usage of the foreign language media, i.e. by constantly feeding them with official news and morale-boosting information material, the OFF could justifiably preoccupy their news space with governmental views and thus preempt publication of the claims of enemy propagandists. In fact, this was one crucial reason why the OFF strongly opposed the military authorities’ proposal to terminate all Japanese-language publications. Cranston summed up this logic from the reverse side when he contended that “if the foreign language press were closed down, a vital segment of the American public would be left in the dark. Countless new Americans who depend upon the foreign language press for their war information would become easy targets for Axis agents and rumor mongers.” Cranston also

claimed that for this reason the Roosevelt administration was expanding its communication with the foreign language press to “a scale untouched since the heights of the World War in 1918.”⁴²

Thus, the OFF regarded the Japanese-, Italian-, and German-language press as a potentially useful social asset that could help the government counter Axis propaganda. In an internal policy memorandum that outlined how the agency should deal with these “enemy language” press groups, Cranston cited examples of some foreign nations that outlawed them entirely and suggested that blanket suppression would only backfire the government because it would end up with inviting more propaganda from abroad. “Examples of the havoc that can be caused by banning the use of a language is the present situation in Brazil and other South American countries ...; the Germans and Italians in Brazil no longer have their own newspapers, and are now turning to the Berlin and Rome broadcasts for their information.” These Latin American governments prohibited the Japanese-language press, too. MacLeish weighed Cranston’s advice, and it became a fixed stance of the OFF, and later of the OWI, that the extant Japanese and other Axis-language publications should be kept alive to combat Axis propaganda. One OWI policy memorandum asserted that the agency’s “[press release] service alone would make all the difference between our foreign language groups being overwhelmed with totalitarian propaganda from all sides and their getting a true picture of what our Government is doing today.”⁴³

VI. Conclusion

The OFF’s Japanese-language press policy during the first six months of World War II can be characterized by the mixture of two distinct concepts -- liberalism and realism. To

begin with the former, the OFF leadership from the outset worked with the belief that the United States was fighting for democracy and therefore the nation must wage the war without grossly abridging the civil liberties and rights, including the First Amendment freedom of the press. This led to the thinking that the presence of diverse news media written in various foreign languages, including the Japanese “enemy language,” symbolized the very thing that the United States and its Allies were fighting for. On this ground did the OFF officials oppose the military authorities’ proposal to suppress the entire Japanese-language press. Arguably, such a liberal outlook of the OFF makes a striking contrast with what the federal government did to Japanese Americans, labeling all of them “enemy aliens,” uprooting them from the West Coast, and confining them to inland camps.

The OFF officials were not naive idealists, however. They were liberal thinkers, indeed, but were realistic and pragmatic policy makers as well. For one thing, they stood against the blanket suppression of the Japanese-language press because they feared that it would injure the national unity in a long term. They also defended the Japanese-language press because they regarded it as ready-to-use ammunition to facilitate the nation’s war policy. In fact, the OFF used it for various aims. First, the OFF used the Japanese-language press as a channel to acquaint Japanese Americans, many of whom were illiterate in English, with vital governmental information and views. Second, the OFF utilized it to maintain and raise the morale of Japanese Americans. Finally, the agency deemed it as a defense shield against Axis propaganda.

In order to fairly assess this liberal, realistic policy of the OFF, however, it is necessary to bear in mind that the agency could always secure a superior position over the Japanese-language press. Japan’s “sneak” attack on Pearl Harbor thrust the entire Japanese

American community into a total confusion in a single day. Given such lopsided vulnerability of Japanese editors and publishers at the time, it was almost inevitable that the OFF's information service, no matter how "free" or "voluntary" it was, had enormous impacts on the editorial content of their publications. By giving out releases, the OFF could indirectly but effectively control the Japanese-language newspapers, and, via them, the attitude and agenda of Japanese Americans. And equally important, this method of press usage and control did not conflict with the OFF's liberal principle to abstain from outright press suppression or censorship. Thus, the agency could legitimately reconcile the nation's democratic cause of war with the wartime requirement of greater press control.

Finally, in a broader sense the OFF's usage of the Japanese-language press might be compared with the War Relocation Authority's (WRA) "supervision without censorship" policy toward in-camp newspapers. Taking advantage of its inherently superior position, the WRA, too, controlled the evacuee newspapers by moderate "supervision" without exercising overt "censorship." Further research is necessary to prove the connection between the policies of the OFF and WRA. But in their quasi-democratic press control tactics, one might be able to see the contradictory nature of the federal government's Japanese American policy per se, that the nation waging a "good war" for "democracy" forcibly evacuated and incarcerated innocent individuals on the basis on their ethnic origin in the name of "military necessity."⁴⁴

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Herbert Hoover's Philosophy of the Public Service Standard in Broadcasting

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Since the Radio Act of 1927 created the Federal Radio Commission (the forerunner of the Federal Communications Commission), it has been understood that broadcasters had an obligation to serve in “the public interest, convenience, and necessity.”¹ While not as fundamental to the American system of broadcasting as in Great Britain and many other Western democracies — and while deregulation in recent years has considerably diluted the standard — the public-service component has been a key licensing requirement for U.S. broadcasters from the beginning. It has also been a major point of disagreement because of its vagueness.²

In the embryonic years of American broadcasting, the Secretary of Commerce under President Warren Harding and, later, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover — of course, later president himself — profoundly affected the development of American broadcasting. In particular, Hoover’s decisions and leadership strongly influenced the concept that broadcasters, receiving licenses to use the public airwaves for commercial purposes, should in return provide a measure of public service. In fact, Hoover was the first to articulate the public-service requirement of U.S. broadcasting.³ This is especially relevant in the context of the continuing trend of broadcast deregulation and calls from public-advocacy groups for greater public-service demands to be made on broadcasters.

The idea of Hoover as a supporter of strong public-service requirements for broadcasters is at odds with his popular image today as a conservative’s conservative — a proponent of “what’s good for business is good for the country.” But Hoover’s papers reveal a strong advocate for the notion that broadcasting — more than a profit-centered medium for advertising and entertainment — should serve the general public interest. The standard of “public interest, convenience and necessity,” while vague and less

demanding than some would wish, nevertheless helped to provide at least a minimum level of public service in U.S. broadcasting for more than 50 years, before deregulation began to chip away at its foundation.

To the third in a series of national radio conferences Hoover called to organize the embryonic broadcasting industry, the commerce secretary asserted:

Radio has passed from the field of an adventure to that of a public utility. Nor among the utilities is there one whose activities may yet come more closely to the life of each and every one of our citizens, nor which holds out great possibilities of future influence, nor which is of more potential public concern. It must now be considered as a great agency of public service.⁴

The meaning of the “public interest, convenience and necessity” requirement has always been considered vague, and long-standing differences in opinion of what it should mean exist. And so, it is useful to understand as closely as possible what Hoover, the man whose influence was largely responsible for the requirement, meant by public service in broadcasting. This study uses archival material contained in the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa, supplemented by other historical sources, to explore Hoover’s philosophy of public-service in broadcasting.

Review

While Hoover pointed broadcasting in the direction of a public-service standard, historian Erik Barnouw⁵ wrote that the Teapot Dome scandal — in which Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall illegally sold oil leases from national reserves — also influenced the idea of broadcasting as a public service. Just as Congress saw oil reserves and rivers

as public resources requiring protection, so it came to see the airwaves as something that should remain under the control of the federal government. The scarcity of space in the broadcast spectrum compelled those granted a license to broadcast, in return, to provide a measure of public service.⁶

In the Radio Act of 1927, Congress mandated that radio broadcasters would be licensed to use channels for a limited period of time, and the licensees would be those who could best serve in the “public interest, convenience and necessity.” In developing the public interest standard, Congress used as its model the law that regulated the interstate railroad industry.⁷

The actual requirements of serving the public interest, convenience and necessity have evolved over the years. The Federal Radio Commission (created by the Radio Act of 1927) established loose criteria — including program diversity, high-quality transmission and reception, and a character evaluation of licensees — to determine whether each station was meeting its obligation.⁸

The FCC attempted to define the public interest more clearly in 1946 with the “Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees” statement, or “Blue Book.” The Blue Book addressed public service from the standpoint of programming. It required a balanced “sustaining” (unsponsored) program structure; live local talent programs; coverage of important public issues; elimination of advertising excesses; and a “field for experiment in new types of programs, free of concern for advertising.” A few stations had to answer questions related to the Blue Book in license renewal hearings, but no station lost its license because of non-compliance, and the FCC allowed the Blue Book to become obsolete after five years.⁹

The FCC created the Fairness Doctrine in 1949, mandating that both sides of controversial issues be heard over the air. It became a major part of the public-interest requirement for broadcasters until the courts ruled in 1987 that it violated the First Amendment.¹⁰ The equal opportunity, or “equal time,” provision, requiring stations to treat qualified political candidates equally in the sale of air time, has existed from the beginning and still remains.¹¹

In 1960, mainly to “remind” television broadcasters how to meet the public-interest requirements, the FCC issued a “Program Policy Statement.” Again, the FCC did not strictly enforce the policy, but it did add the license ascertainment requirement, which required broadcasters to survey their communities to determine local programming needs. The FCC dropped the license ascertainment requirement in the 1980s.¹² In addition, the 1960 Program Policy Statement led to guidelines that set a standard of at least 10% non-entertainment programming, including 5% news and public-affairs programming. The guidelines were repealed in 1984.¹³

Apart from these few exceptions, views of exactly what the public-interest standard means have widely varied, even among FCC chairmen. Newton Minow, the FCC chairman under the Kennedy administration, famously remarked that television was a “vast wasteland” because of its mainly vapid programming, and placed a high value on public service in broadcasting. “There were two words I wanted to be remembered in that speech,” Minow commented in recent years. “The two words were not ‘vast wasteland.’ The two words were ‘public interest.’”¹⁴ On the other hand, Mark Fowler, the FCC chairman under the Reagan administration, asserted: “Why is there this national obsession to tamper with this box of transistors and tubes when we don’t do the same for

Time magazine? . . . The television is just another appliance — it's a toaster with pictures."¹⁵

In recent years, various public-advocacy groups have criticized broadcasters' commitment to public service and have proposed new public-service requirements for broadcasting. A Media Access Project study found that 70% of the 40 television stations they studied provided no regularly scheduled local public-affairs programming. With digital broadcasting on the horizon, and the debate raging over the allotment of spectrum space for new digital-broadcasting channels, the group called for the FCC to require stations devote 20% of the digital capacity or program time to public-service programming, and to provide free time to political candidates. Broadcasters respond that their commitment to public service should be measured in other ways besides programming. A National Association of Broadcasters study reported that broadcasters contributed \$6.85 billion to public-interest projects in 1997.¹⁶

Hoover on public service and broadcasting

As a means of sorting out the many questions relating to the development of the fledgling radio broadcasting industry, Hoover, as secretary of commerce, called a series of conferences, bringing together radio manufacturers, broadcasters, and others. As he spoke to the First National Radio Conference in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 27, 1922, the idea of public service was very much on Hoover's mind. "We are indeed today on the threshold of a new means of widespread communication of intelligence that has the most profound importance from the point of view of public education and public welfare," Hoover told the conference. A Department of Commerce report following the conference stated: "It is the sense of the conference that radio communication is a public utility and

as such should be regulated and controlled by the Federal government in the public interest.”¹⁷

Hoover marveled that virtually no one opposed expanding federal regulation of broadcasting. As he contemplated what form that regulation should take, he was certain that some measure of public service should be part of the proposition. “It is one of the few instances that I know of where the whole industry and the country is earnestly praying for more regulation,” he remarked. “It raises questions as to what extension in the power of the [Commerce] department should be requested of Congress in order that the maximum public good shall be secured from the development of this great invention.” Hoover resolutely told the conference that it must keep the public’s interest in broadcasting foremost in mind. “There is involved in all of this regulation the necessity to so establish the public [‘s] right over the ether roads that there may be no national regret that we have parted with a great national asset into uncontrolled hands.”¹⁸

While Hoover made references to the public interest in broadcasting starting with the First National Radio Conference in 1922, broadcasting historian Erwin G. Krasnow and FCC member Susan Ness,¹⁹ among others, have credited Hoover with establishing the principle that the “public interest, convenience, and necessity” must be considered in the licensing of radio broadcasters in his address to the Fourth National Radio Conference on Nov. 9, 1925:

The ether is a public medium and its use must be for public benefit. The use of a radio channel is justified only if there is public benefit. The dominant element for consideration in the radio field is, and always will be, the great body of the listening public, millions in number. . . . I have

no frozen views on radio, except that the public interest must dominate.

. . . The greatest public interest must be the deciding factor. I presume that few will dissent as to the correctness of this principle, for all will agree that public good must overbalance private desire.²⁰

Significantly, however, Hoover added a qualifying comment, almost as an after thought, that foreshadowed the indistinct nature that the public-interest licensing requirement would ultimately take. “As many of you know,” he confided, “I am not one of those who seek to extend any sort of government regulation into any quarter that is not vital, and in this suggestion, I am even endeavoring to create enlarged local responsibility.”²¹ This concept has allowed local stations wide latitude in determining what is in the public interest.

When in 1925 the Zenith Corporation successfully challenged Hoover’s authority as secretary of commerce to restrict its Chicago radio station from moving to a more desirable frequency, Congress responded with the Radio Act of 1927. It included many of the recommendations from the series of radio conferences Hoover led, including the requirement for stations to serve in the “public interest, convenience and necessity” in return for use of the public airwaves.²²

Congressman Wallace H. White, Jr., the co-author of the Radio Act of 1927 — which became the framework for U.S. broadcasting regulation — in particular acknowledged that the Fourth National Radio Conference influenced the content of the legislation. “The recent radio conference . . . recommended that licenses should be issued only to those stations whose operation would render a benefit to the public. . . .

The broadcasting privilege will not be a right of selfishness. It will rest upon an assurance of public interest to be served," White said.²³

What did Hoover mean when he said that broadcasting should serve in "the greatest public interest"? He did not specifically define the concept of the public interest in broadcasting. But in a series of public comments over the years, Hoover emphasized several key concepts in connection with public service: That broadcasting should avoid control by monopoly; that it should be free of direct government control, which he considered the equivalent of censorship; that broadcasting should provide a high standard of programming, which would be insured by the listeners, free to choose among numerous stations; that the interest of amateur radio operators, many of them children and adolescents, should be protected; and, finally, and most fundamentally, that radio stations should transmit clear, interference-free programming to the listeners.

Opposed to monopoly

As one aspect of insuring that the public interest would be served by broadcasting, Hoover emphasized the importance of preventing radio from being dominated by monopoly. He argued for a system of licensing that required broadcasters to renew their licenses every few years. "I can see no alternative to abandonment of the present system, which gives the broadcasting privilege to everyone who can raise funds necessary to erect a station, irrespective of his motive, [or] the service he proposes to render," Hoover said at the Fourth National Radio Conference. He said those who received broadcasting licenses should not hold them indefinitely. "That would confer a monopoly of a channel on the air, and deprive us of public control over it. It would destroy the public assurance that it will be used for public benefit," Hoover said.²⁴

RCA president David Sarnoff, the most powerful figure in the early years of American broadcasting apart from Hoover, had proposed a system of “super power” stations, having virtually unlimited power and operated by RCA, and perhaps other major manufacturers, that would cover the entire country (Smulyan, 1994). Hoover, normally sympathetic to business interests, saw this as a dangerous step toward monopoly. Speaking at the Third National Radio Conference, Hoover said: “The conference has been strongly urged to recommend the abolition of all limits on power, but it refuses to do so. . . . The conference is unalterably opposed to any monopoly in broadcasting.” The conference recommended setting a power limit of 50,000 watts, which remains the greatest power allowed for AM stations.²⁵

Explicitly opposing a monopoly of the dominant radio manufacturers of the day, Hoover opposed domination by any “corporation, individual or combination. It would be in principle the same as though the entire press of the country was so controlled. The effect would be identical whether this control arose under a patent monopoly or under any form of combination.”²⁶

Hoover saw the avoidance of a broadcasting monopoly as a First Amendment issue. “What we must safeguard is that there shall be no interference with free speech, that no monopoly of broadcasting stations should grow up under which any person or group could determine what material will be delivered to the public.”²⁷

Opposed to government “censorship”

While Hoover staunchly held that broadcasting should be expected to serve in the public interest, he just as strongly opposed government control of broadcasting. Government control, Hoover felt, would hinder all aspects of broadcasting’s

development. But also, Hoover saw the imposition of programming requirements on radio as a form of censorship, and favored allowing the stations to decide for themselves the content of their programs. “Determining the priority of material to be broadcasted implies indirect censorship. . . . I certainly am opposed to the Government undertaking any censorship even with the present limited number of stations. It is better that these questions should be determined by the 570 different broadcasting stations than by any government official.”²⁸

During the First National Radio Conference in 1922, Hoover actually mused over the creation of a government-sanctioned service that would have resembled the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, speaking of “permitting one of the public service corporations to set up a broadcast system to be used generally by all sections of the government.”²⁹ But Hoover always felt uncomfortable with the idea of any form of government control of broadcasting and never seriously pursued the notion.

Like many men of his day, Hoover took for granted that profanity and indecency would be banned from the airwaves and did not consider this to be censorship. “We can protect the home by preventing the entry of printed matter destructive to its ideals, but we must doubleguard the radio,” he said. The 1934 Communications Act, the descendant of the Radio Act of 1927, renounced the “power of censorship” for the FCC, but adds, “No person . . . shall utter any obscene, indecent or profane language by means of radio communication.”³⁰

Hoover also saw no contradiction in his belief that broadcasting should serve the public interest but be as free of government control as possible. He believed in the philosophy of “corporate liberalism,” in which government worked closely with business

to create to bring about desired effects promoting social good, avoiding coercive action. Under this philosophy, the government could work cooperatively with the owners of broadcasting stations to insure they served the public interest. Hoover favored minimalist government, but was comfortable with using the power of the government, through the Department of Commerce, to encourage industrial self-regulation.³¹

For example, on the issue of whether “direct” advertising should be permitted over the air, Hoover commented: “The problem of radio publicity should be solved by the industry itself, and not by government compulsion and legislation.” In Hoover’s mind, business could be trusted, ultimately, to do the right thing, if only because the public would punish businesses that did not. Barnouw observed of the radio conferences Hoover organized:

That Hoover should turn for counsel to the most successful elements in the industry was taken for granted. This was cooperation – an administration policy. That their initiative would, in the nature of things, produce public benefit was an accepted article of faith. Another was that excesses would create their own antidotes through public reaction. Where enlightened business leaders were involved, all that would be needed would be an executive word of caution.³²

““This may be called an experiment in industrial self-government,” Hoover told the Third National Radio Conference. “The voluntary imposition of its own rules and a high sense of service will go far to make further legislation or administrative intervention unnecessary”³³

High-standard of programming, assured by public demand

“It is our duty as public officials, it is our duty as men engaged in the industry, and it is our duty as a great listening public to assure the future conduct of this industry with the single view to public interest,” Hoover said.³⁴ The inclusion of the “listening public” in the equation is significant.

An engineer by training, Hoover of necessity devoted much attention to the vexing problems of channel allocation and interference. But he took an interest in what the content of radio programming would be, and implicit in his comments was the assumption that the public would demand high-quality programming and would reject what it found offensive or, simply, not entertaining. Therefore, in Hoover’s view, it should not be necessary for the government to impose programming limitations or requirements on broadcasters. To a radio manufacturers exhibition in New York, Hoover said:

Every radio activity exists finally and lastly to serve the listening public.

The keystone of the industry is to maintain their interest by service. . . . It is, therefore, the listener in whom we are primarily interested, not only as an industry but as a public service. There is no industry so dependent upon public good will and interest.³⁵

Hoover presumed that the listening public would revolt against blatant “direct” advertising, and by no means was he alone in this view. Hoover had this discussion with E.P. Edwards, the General Electric radio department manager, at the First National Radio Conference, as they discussed how commercial broadcasting could be made compatible with Hoover’s public-service vision:

Hoover: Have you gone into the question as to whether commercial users could monopolize the area of transmission as against the interest of public education, news, etc.?

Edwards: I should think that one method, as I stated, would be to confine such broadcasting to daylight hours, if you please. . . .

Hoover: How are such transmitting stations to be supported and at the same time prevent the cluttering of the receiving stations with material they [the listeners] would resent?

Edwards: A great deal of resentment has already been expressed, I understand, because of personal advertising mixed with entertainment features.³⁶

Hoover believed that listeners acting in their own interest would insure that the public interest was served. In 1924, he noted that radio receivers allowed listeners their choice of stations. "This will, I believe solve the problem by competitive programs. . . . These stations naturally are endeavoring to please their listeners and thus there is an indirect censorship by the public. This is the place where it belongs."³⁷

However, Hoover, unlike latter day FCC commissioner Mark Fowler, saw that the radio (or, later, television) receiver was something more than just another household appliance. Clearly, Hoover believed that broadcasting should strive to elevate the listener, to promote education and citizenship, as well as provide entertainment. "For the first time in human history, we have available to us the ability to communicate simultaneously with millions of our fellow men, to furnish entertainment, instruction, and

a widening vision of national problems and national events,” Hoover told the Third National Radio Conference on Oct. 7, 1924. “An obligation rests on us to see that it is devoted to real service and to develop the material that is transmitted which is really worthwhile.”³⁸

What seems obvious to us today after more than 80 years of experience with broadcasting seemed wondrous to Hoover and others in its infancy. “So great has it [radio] become in service that I believe it would be possible in a great emergency for the President of the United States to address an audience of 40 or 50 millions of our people,” he marveled at a manufacturers’ exposition in New York on Sept. 12, 1925. Hoover’s vision of broadcasting seemed lofty in comparison with the reality of what it has become:

It is bringing a vast amount of educational and informative material into the household; it is bringing about a better understanding amongst all of our people of the many problems, which confront us; it is improving the public taste for music and entertainment; it is bringing contentment into the home. We are at the threshold of an international exchange of ideas by direct speech, and it will bring us better understanding of mutual world problems. . . . If it will succeed, it must continue as in the past to devote itself to actual public service to which it is already dedicated.³⁹

Implicit in these comments is the belief that the public would expect a high standard of broadcast programming. This is exemplified by Hoover’s disdain for the playing of phonograph records on the air, which of course became the foundation of radio programming with the advent of television. Hoover acknowledged that the playing of recordings had been an important part of radio programming in its nascent days, but

asserted that those days were gone forever, because the public now expected more. "The radio telephone would now die in 24 hours if it were limited to transmission of phonograph records," he said. "We have made great improvements in material transmitted. Original music, speeches, instruction, religion, political exhortation, all travel regularly by radio today."⁴⁰

Protection of amateurs

In Hoover's view, the radio phenomenon of the early 1920s had been created by "the genius of the American boy."⁴¹ By this, Hoover referred to the legion of young amateur, or "ham," radio operators, communicating one-to-one with each other, either by voice or Morse code. The term "radio" in the early 1920s still referred as much to this original use of radio technology as to the medium of mass communication and entertainment radio was fast becoming. Hoover was determined to protect the interest of these "boys," one of whom was his own son. "I had a boy (Herbert Jr.) who, like all boys at that period, had gone back on wireless . . . and it was demanded of me that I listen in on the crystal sets, which I did," Hoover said.⁴² Again and again during the series of radio conferences, Hoover would mention the interests of the "amateurs."

At the Third National Radio Conference, Hoover took up the cause of amateur operators when he pledged the cooperation of the department in blocking outside sources of interference from commercial stations.⁴³ Earlier, in a letter to the editor of *Popular Radio* magazine, Kendall Banning, Hoover wrote: "I am sure that the government has every wish to see the interests of the amateur radio operator fully safeguarded."⁴⁴

Similarly, Hoover defended maritime radio interests: "We must not forget that what is a

convenience and a pleasure for us is a necessity for them and that life may depend on the efficiency of their communication service.”⁴⁵

Hoover was adamant that commercial interests should not squeeze out the amateurs:

It is my belief that, with the variations that can be given through different wavelengths, through different times of day, and through the staggering of stations of different wavelengths in different parts of the country, it will be possible to accommodate the proper demands and at the same time to protect that precious thing — the American small boy, to whom so much of this rapid expansion is due.⁴⁶

Clear transmission

Of course, implicit in this was that the radio listener — the public — must be able to clearly hear radio transmissions, whether amateur or commercial. What we take for granted today — an orderly system in which stations broadcast at assigned frequencies in a well-defined broadcast band — did not exist in the early 1920s. An article in the November 1929 edition of *Radio News* magazine, “Public Interest, Convenience and Necessity,” focused mainly on the “clarity of reception unexcelled by the radio reception of any country in the world” and credited this to “a stronger law to regulate radio,” the Radio Act of 1927.⁴⁷

In calling the series of national radio conferences, Hoover, the engineer, more than anything else sought to bring order to the chaos. “The amount of interference has increased greatly and threatens to destroy the art,” Hoover warned.⁴⁸ At the most basic

level, unless listeners could not hear the programs, Hoover said, radio broadcasters could not serve the public:

That is the motive of the broadcaster who gives us better programs and better quality of transmission, and is the object of the manufacturer of receiving sets that they should give more reliable and more perfect reception.⁴⁹

Replying to a letter from a listener extolling the potential of radio to educate and uplift, Hoover wrote in 1923 that the commerce department had resolved to achieve “the disentanglement of technical conflicts in the industry which, if allowed to run, would ultimately destroy it.” The secretary connected reliable technical performance with providing programming that service the public interest. “All this is somewhat apart from your ideas but it is vital that we have a good working instrument and service before we can advance other fields. There are now about two million radio receivers and we are upon the threshold of the possibility of connecting up all the broadcasting stations in such a fashion that the President of the United States can speak to every radio receiver at the same moment.”⁵⁰

Addressing the Third National Radio Conference in 1924, Hoover advocated raising the power limits for local stations, to improve the quality of service to rural listeners. “We must have at all times a special thought for the owners of small sets and for those whose homes are far from great centers of population,” he said. “The true mission of broadcasting will not be realized until its service is available to each one of them at all times as it is now available in our larger cities.”⁵¹

Hoover's vision of broadcasting centered on the distribution of information to the American public. At his time in history, he could not take for granted the physical ability of each radio station to successfully transmit to expectant listeners. "It [the local station] must be able to deliver important pronouncements of public men," Hoover said. "It must bring instantly to our people a hundred and one matters of national interest."⁵²

Discussion

Hoover's guidance of broadcasting's early years should be seen as largely successful, given that prior to the national radio conferences he initiated, which led to the Radio Act of 1927 and the Communications Act of 1934, broadcasting was a chaotic mess. Under Hoover's guidance, a system developed that, by most objective measures, has thrived ever since, attracting massive audiences and generating enormous revenue. But the success of broadcasting specifically as an instrument of public service is more questionable.

As Hoover implicitly defined it, the argument can be made that broadcasting has mostly achieved his own vision of public service. Hoover steered broadcasting away from a monopoly of powerful business interests, as might have occurred if David Sarnoff's vision of a system of "super power" stations had prevailed. By requiring broadcasters to obtain licenses and periodically apply for license renewal, Hoover's guidance prevented, in his words, a "monopoly of a channel on the air."⁵³ Only in recent years, when broadcasting has been extensively deregulated, have giant corporations soaked up ownership of hundreds of stations, often owning formerly competing stations in a local market.

Censorship — in Hoover’s definition, the government “determining the priority of material”⁵⁴ — has also been avoided, although many would argue for a more expansive definition of censorship. Hoover’s opposition to the government directing the content of broadcast programming proved prescient when the Fairness Doctrine, a major requirement of the public interest standard that the FCC implemented long after Hoover’s day, was ruled in violation of the First Amendment. While amateur radio has faded as a hobby for young people, certainly broadcast spectrum space has been preserved for “ham” radio and it remains a vital service, with more than 700,000 FCC-issued call signs.⁵⁵ And, at the most basic level, broadcasting and the public have been well-served by the organization of the broadcast band, which came about from the national radio conferences that Hoover directed.

However, political scientist Ithiel de Sola Pool⁵⁶ and others argue that the entire concept behind the Communications Act of 1934 — the successor of the Radio Act of 1927, which Hoover strongly influenced — was fundamentally flawed, allowing a form of monopoly and, with it, censorship. Jonathan Wallace wrote: “Congress could have declared radio broadcasters to be common carriers [such as telegraph or telephone companies] opening up the spectrum to every conceivable variety of speech. . . . It granted a relatively few broadcasters a monopoly over the content of the airwaves — while imposing on them a public interest obligation.” Under the common-carrier model, broadcast stations would simply provide the means for transmitting programs produced by others.⁵⁷

Indeed, such a philosophy existed at the time of the First National Radio Conference in 1922. Representing AT&T, A.H. Griswold, described the company’s

plans for what became New York City station WEAJ: "The American Telephone and Telegraph Company will furnish no program whatsoever over that station. It will provide facilities over which the general public, one and all alike, may use those services. . . . It is up to the public to make use of that service in whatever way it is advantageous and desirable to the public."⁵⁸

Whether this would have resulted in a programming schedule dominated by "infomercials" cannot be known. The first program on WEAJ was a 10-minute "toll broadcast" promoting the sale of real-estate on Long Island, but entertainment programs soon developed such as the "The Browning King Orchestra," promoting a clothing store. Similar programs, created by advertising agencies, eventually dominated radio as we came to know it. But the WEAJ toll-broadcasting approach disappeared when AT&T sold its broadcasting operations to RCA and its partners in 1926.⁵⁹

It is mainly in the area of providing a high standard of programming where it might be argued that Hoover's vision of public-service broadcasting has failed. Hoover's faith that the public would actively reject things that it finds objectionable on the airwaves often seems to have been misplaced. Certainly, Hoover's conviction that the public would reject outright commercialism proved entirely unfounded. The tendency toward niche broadcasting, with radio and television programs increasingly targeted at demographically narrow audiences, may have contributed to the public tolerance for what would have been considered outrageous in years past. Hoover's comments to a 1925 manufacturers' exhibition that broadcasters must serve the public by providing programming that "maintains their interest"⁶⁰ proved prophetic and would be

echoed by most of today's market-oriented broadcasters as the only true measure of public service.

To a great extent, Hoover's faith in "corporate liberalism," or cooperation between government and business to bring about social good, seems to have failed. It is common for broadcasters to deny responsibility for their programming and advertising. While the mandate to serve in the "public interest, convenience and necessity" remains, enthusiasm for public service among broadcasters, as expressed by Hoover and others in the embryonic years of radio, has faded with the FCC's desire to meaningfully enforce the requirement.

Criticized for running ads touting miracle weight-loss potions, the manager of five St. Louis radio stations responded: "Part of being in a free society is that people can make a reasonable claim and it's up to the citizenry to decide."⁶¹ Under fire for staging sexually explicit on-air stunts, radio "shock jock" Anthony Cumia responded that he is not responsible for any negative effects on young listeners: "It turns out to be everyone's problem, but it's not our job to fix it. . . . We're entertainers. We're not psychologists. We're not doctors. We're not day-care workers."⁶² The former chairman of the National Association of Broadcasters Radio Board, Ted Snider, argued that there should be no public service standard at all, other than meeting technical operating standards.⁶³ Broadcasters argue that the billions they contribute to public-interest projects should be considered as public service, even if such projects take place off the air.

As Wallace⁶⁴ and others have suggested, the expectation for commercially operated stations to serve a significant public-service role may have been unrealistic from the start. The British model of a publicly funded corporation charged with the service

function might have been a more practical way of achieving a high-standard of programming — one that promotes education and citizenship — along with Hoover’s other public-service objectives. As historian Eric Barnouw saw it, Hoover was “paternally reprimanding — but lenient,”⁶⁵ unwilling to impose strict public-service programming requirements.

On the other hand, the notion of a government-sanctioned “high standard of programming” seems more than faintly elitist to many, and would constitute censorship under Hoover’s definition. In some respects, Hoover’s idea that listeners and viewers would naturally regulate the content of programming has indeed proved practical. For example, one recent study suggests that broadcast television is finally responding to the public’s increasing discomfort with the level of sex and violence in its programs. The Center for Media and Public Affairs found a 27% drop in sexual content and an 11% decline in violence on broadcast television in 2000.⁶⁶ Of course, the decline of offensive elements is not the same as providing constructive public-service programming.

Whatever questions remain about the public-service value of broadcast programming, it is certain is that Herbert Hoover played a profound role in creating a public-service standard for broadcasting in the United States and in shaping the form that it took.

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**A Stunt Journalist's Last Hurrah:
Nellie Bly Goes Ringside to Report on Jack Dempsey Winning the
Heavyweight Boxing Championship**

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Abstract

A Stunt Journalist's Last Hurrah: Nellie Bly Goes Ringside to Report on Jack Dempsey Winning the Heavyweight Boxing Championship

More than two decades after her departure from the newspaper business at the height of her career, Nellie Bly, the famous "stunt journalist" of the nineteenth century, attempted a comeback as a reporter for the *New York Evening Journal* in 1919.

Bly's second newspaper career lasted only three years, and she came nowhere near recapturing the glory of her youth. But overlooked in this period was her claim to be the first woman to cover a sports event from press row, when she reported the Jack Dempsey-Jess Willard title fight in 1919.

This article is an examination of Bly's fight coverage and her "exclusive" interview with Dempsey on his first day as champion, and how her reported intimate relationship with the boxer compares with what others have written about this pivotal moment in Dempsey's life.

Abstract

A Stunt Journalist's Last Hurrah: Nellie Bly Goes Ringside to Report on Jack Dempsey Winning the Heavyweight Boxing Championship

This article is an examination of Nellie Bly's coverage of the Jack Dempsey-Jess Willard title fight in 1919, when the "stunt journalist" of the nineteenth century attempted a comeback at age 54. The article looks at her claim to be the first woman to cover a sports event from press row and how her reported intimate relationship with Dempsey compares with what others have written about this pivotal moment in the boxer's life.

**A Stunt Journalist's Last Hurrah:
Nellie Bly Goes Ringside to Report on Jack Dempsey Winning the
Heavyweight Boxing Championship**

When Jack Dempsey first arrived in the ring to challenge Jess Willard for the heavyweight boxing championship of the world on July 4, 1919, one observer reported that he paused to scan the faces along press row at ringside. Most of the great sportswriters of the day were on hand for the event. There was New York *Tribune* columnist Grantland Rice, whose poetic descriptions of sporting events were sprinkled with literary references and mythological figures,¹ and his sports editor, the acerbic W. O. McGeehan, who took pleasure in debunking the aura of athletes and who once cryptically described boxing as “the manly art of modified murder.”² Nearby was Bat Masterson, the one-time Kansas lawman who now wielded a pen instead of a six-shooter and as sports editor of New York’s *Morning Telegraph* was known as one of the nation’s most authoritative boxing writers.³

There were more celebrities in the crowd that sweated under the broiling sun in the outdoor arena in Toledo, Ohio. Ethel Barrymore, the great actress was in attendance, watching from the special “ladies’ gallery” that also included Mrs. Jess Willard, the champion’s wife.⁴

But Dempsey, a 24-year-old one-time railway tramp who fought his way up through the smoky clubs and two-bit saloons in the West to gain this shot at the heavyweight title, did not acknowledge the rich and famous among the spectators nor the famous sportswriters who could make or break a boxer’s career with the words that appeared under their by-lines. By most accounts, the

challenger grimly stared at the floor of the ring, refusing to look up lest he make eye contact with the champion.⁵ But according to one newspaper report, at this crucial moment in his career, Dempsey did acknowledge an aging but well-known reporter, who more than two decades earlier had been as famous as any championship boxer.

Dempsey, according to the reporter, rose from the stool in his corner and waved, then laughed as the reporter waved back.⁶ Implied in this version of events was that the two unlikely acquaintances — the rising young boxing great and the once-time star reporter — shared the knowledge that both were on the verge of making history on this day. Dempsey was about to stun the sporting world by savagely beating the 6-foot-7-inch giant Willard, launching his reign as heavyweight champion and as one of the country's most celebrated athletes. And Nellie Bly, once the toast of the newspaper world for her daring "stunt journalism" of the 1880s and 1890s, would enjoy her last hurrah as a reporter by writing her ringside account of the bout and in the process claiming to be the first woman to cover a championship boxing match from press row.⁷

For Bly, whose real name was Elizabeth Cochrane, this would be an attempt to launch a comeback more than two decades after retiring from the newspaper business. She once had broken down barriers for women in the newsroom with her innovative first-hand news stories, most notably when she feigned insanity to report on the conditions inside an infamous New York insane asylum and later in her highly publicized journey around the world by boat, train and horse for Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* in 1889-90. But in 1895, Nellie Bly retired at the height of her fame to marry a wealthy but elderly businessman. When she returned to the news business by signing on with William Randolph Hearst's

New York *Evening Journal* in 1919, she was a 54-year-old widow in need of an income after having lost all the money from her late husband's once lucrative business.

Nellie Bly's "second newspaper career" would be brief, as she died just three years later, and she came nowhere near recapturing the glory of her youth. But she did have one last "stunt" left to perform and one final barrier to break down for women journalists. In covering the Dempsey-Willard fight in Toledo, Bly boasted that she not only was the first newspaperwoman to report from press row at a major sporting event but that during her time in Toledo she became a friend and confidante of Dempsey. If true, this made for an unlikely pair, the matronly Bly, representative of a past era of journalism, and the 24-year-old Dempsey, a poorly educated, unrefined boxer on the threshold of becoming a national hero.

This article is an examination of Nellie Bly's coverage of that fight and Dempsey's first day as champion, and how her reported intimate relationship with Dempsey in Toledo compares with what other sportswriters at the fight reported and what later journalists and biographers wrote about this pivotal moment in Dempsey's life.

Nellie Bly: Introducing a New Style of Journalism

Elizabeth Cochrane, who was born May 5, 1865 in Cochran Mills, Pennsylvania, a town named after her father,⁸ got her start in journalism in an unlikely manner. As a young woman, she wrote an angry response to an article titled "What Girls Are Good For" in the Pittsburgh *Dispatch* that suggested women were good for little more than housework. The editor of the *Dispatch* was so impressed by her lively writing style, he offered to pay her for free-lance

articles. Shortly afterward, in 1885, the newspaper made Cochrane, then only 20 years old, its first female reporter by hiring her at \$5 a week. As was the custom of the day for the handful of woman journalists in the country, Cochran chose a pen name for her by-line. Her choice was "Nellie Bly," which came from a popular Stephen Collins Foster song⁹ but soon would become one of the most famous names in American journalism.

Just two years after her start in Pittsburgh, "Nellie Bly" went to New York determined to land a position at America's largest and most influential daily, Pulitzer's *New York World*. According to a popular story, she waited for three hours one day, then barged into Pulitzer's office and proposed to feign insanity to get into Blackwell's Island, an infamous lunatic asylum, and write a first-hand expose of the treatment of patients.¹⁰ Cochrane's series appeared in the *World* beginning on October 9, 1887, launching her spectacular career and introducing "stunt journalism," in which women such as Cochrane became active participants in their stories and relied heavily on dialogue in their reporting. Nellie Bly's most famous stunt was her 72-day journey around the world that began on November 14, 1889, and beat the record set by the fictitious Captain Phineas Fogg in Jules Verne's popular novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*. But there were many others. She contrived her own arrest on grand larceny and wrote an expose of her treatment in jail, she went behind the scenes at Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, she interviewed all the living wives of former U.S. presidents, she exposed worthless washing machine swindlers, she reported on women medical students and private detective, and she went to the Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston, where she wrote about a 9-year-old girl named Helen Keller, who was destined to become "the marvel of the age."¹¹

What made Nellie Bly so special was not just her daring but also her ability to gain the trust of her subjects and engage them in conversation.

Her particular method was to establish a sense of intimacy with both her subject and the reader, letting both in on her thoughts and actions in a way that put the subject at ease, thus loosening his or her tongue. She cast the reader as eager voyeur. . . As in everything else, she was always as much a part of the story as its ostensible point.¹²

Bly's success with her wide variety of first-person interviews put her at the forefront of a generation of women journalists who were gradually breaking down the sexual bias in the newsroom. According to U.S. Census figures, there were only 888 female journalists in 1890, or about one in 25 of the 21,849 journalists in the country. Although women were a substantial minority in the newsroom, their numbers had grown steadily from only 35 (or .007 of the total) in 1870 to 288 (.023) in 1880. By 1900, the number of female reporters more than doubled, to 2,193 (.073).¹³ For the most part, these women were relegated to writing about fashion, society and other perceived matters of interest to females. As editors recognized the value of women's topics to attract female readers, newspapers of the 1880s and 1890s began to feature women's columns, society notes, fashion and household tips. Although many of the first writers of these columns were men, the door was opened for women reporters.

However, Bly's success paved the way for an expanding role for women reporters. After her journey around the world, newspaper editors across the country began to seek out their own "Nellie Blys." More and more women reporters "freely risked their lives and reputations" while posing as "beggars, balloonists, street women, servants, steel workers, lunatics, shop girls and Salvation Army lassies."¹⁴ Still, these women faced stiff resistance from their male

counterparts, and they were discouraged from attempting to enter the profession. When Elizabeth Banks applied for a job as a reporter at a St. Paul, Minnesota, newspaper in the 1890s, the publisher told her: "Don't think of it, my poor child. Be anything but don't be a newspaper girl."¹⁵ Ishbel Ross, another of the early women reporters, recalled the time a "frustrated colleague wrote self-righteously that Nellie [Bly] had 'prostituted her womanhood for the sake of a good story.'"¹⁶

The attitude many newspapermen had toward these women was expressed by Stanley Walker, the famed city editor of the New York *Herald*, who wrote, "A great many of the girls who have managed to get on newspaper payrolls have been slovenly, incompetent vixens, adept at office politics, showoffs of the worst sort, and inclined to take advantage of their male colleagues."¹⁷ Marian Ainsworth-White, writing in 1900, castigated the early women journalists for being unkempt and messy, thus adding to their image as "queer" and "eccentric." However, she credited the modern women at the turn of the century for insisting that "the literary woman shall be neatly if not fashionably attired," and demonstrating that "ink-begrimed digits and frowzy hair shall not go hand-in-hand with brainwork."¹⁸

But by the turn of the century, Nellie Bly had retired from the business after a brief but spectacular career. She had begun writing a Sunday column in 1893, but two years later, at the age of 30, she married Robert Seaman, a wealthy businessman who, at 70, was more than twice her age. Bly left the newspaper scene as abruptly as she had arrived, retiring in 1895 to be with her husband. When Seaman died in 1904, she took charge of his hardware company and ran it for nine years. When the company went bankrupt in 1913, Bly moved to Europe

to live, returning in 1919 in need of money and hopeful of reviving her newspaper career. One of her colleagues from the 1890s, Arthur Brisbane, now was Hearst's right-hand man, and he hired her to write for the New York *Evening Journal*.

It seems fitting that Bly's last big assignment would be on the sports beat. Nellie Bly was like a championship boxer coming out of retirement for a final shot at glory. Much had changed in her time away from the profession. There were more women in the newsroom, and they no longer wrote under pen names borrowed from songs. Typewriters, a rarity in 1890, now were standard fare in the newsroom, as were telephones. The sports section, popularized by Hearst in the late 1890s, now was a major part of the newspaper. Sportswriting, which was in its infancy when Bly wrote for Pulitzer's *World* from 1888 to 1895, now was a popular field that spawned such celebrities as Grantland Rice, Ring Lardner, Damon Runyon, Westbrook Pegler, Heywood Hale Broun and Paul Gallico. When Dempsey and Willard met in their historic boxing match in 1919, sportswriting was at the threshold of what has been widely described as the "Golden Age of Sportswriting."

But in 1919, the sports desk remained one area of the newsroom where women still were struggling to gain a toehold. These "sporting experts" were almost exclusively males, although across the country there had been a handful of women who had written about sports. Midy (Maria) Morgan had been the livestock reporter for the New York *Times* from 1869-92, and among her duties was covering horse races.¹⁹ In Baltimore, Sadie Kneller Miller had written about the local baseball team, the Orioles, for the Baltimore *Telegram* in 1884, writing under the by-line SKM.²⁰ Winifred Black, who wrote under the pen name "Annie

Laurie and was Hearst's star stunt journalist at the San Francisco *Examiner* and New York *Journal*, had sneaked into an all-male arena to provide a first-hand account of a San Francisco boxing match for the *Examiner* in June 1892.²¹ Sallie Van Pelt also had written about baseball for the Dubuque, Iowa, *Times* at the turn of the century,²² and in 1897 Nellie Verrill Mighels Davis, editor and owner of the Carson City, Nevada, *Daily Appeal*, had used a fictitious name to write about the championship fight between Jim Corbett and Robert Fitzsimmons for a Chicago newspaper.²³ More women would write sports after the turn of the century, and one of them, Eloise Young, served as sporting editor of the *Chronicle News* in Trinidad, Colorado.²⁴

However, it was not until after World War II that women would begin gaining widespread acceptance into the field of sportswriting. Mary Garber, who covered sports for the Winston-Salem, North Carolina, *Journal-Sentinel* from 1946-86, has been called the "dean of female sportswriters,"²⁵ and following in her footsteps more women entered the profession in the 1970s.

Certainly, when Nellie Bly arrived in Toledo, Ohio, along with scores of other reporters²⁶ and thousands of fight fans, she had much to prove, not only personally but also for other women journalists. For starters, she had to demonstrate that a woman could hold her own in the all-male bastion of sportswriting and cover a major sporting event with the accuracy and color of her male colleagues. To do so, she would have utilize her trademark style of self-promotion and injecting herself into the story, traits that fit in well in an era where sportswriters freely offered "commentary on what they had painted and on the characters they described."²⁷ Nellie Bly had to prove that, like an aging

boxer, she could still recapture the skills of her youth and once again prove herself to be a champion in her field.

Nellie Bly at Ringside: Describing the Fall of "A Ring Goliath"

When Nellie Bly traveled to Toledo to cover the Dempsey-Willard bout, she at least could draw upon her past experiences in writing about boxers. Her first foray into the sports arena came in May 1889, when she interviewed boxing champion John L. Sullivan. Bly's account of this meeting followed the formula she used whether the subject was a powerful politician, an infamous criminal or an ordinary man or woman cast into extraordinary circumstances. She wrote in first person, included detailed observations of her subject and his or her surroundings, and engaged the person in intimate conversation. And Bly asked questions that most male journalists did not or could not. Her seemingly innocuous queries often led to revealing details of the subject's daily routine or innermost thoughts.

For example, she got the powerful Sullivan, the most feared boxer of the nineteenth century, to reveal a personal side that no male had ever uncovered with a simple but unexpected question: "When you see that you have hurt [your opponent] don't you feel sorry?"

This led to the following exchange:

"I never feel sorry until the fight is over."

"How do you feel when you get hit very hard?"

The dark, bright eyes glanced at me lazily and the deep, deep voice said with feeling: "I only want a chance to hit back."²⁸

At the end of this interview, Sullivan told Bly, "You are the first woman who ever interviewed me, and I have given you more than I ever gave any reporter in

my life. They generally manufacture things and credit them to me, although some are mighty good fellows."²⁹

In August 1894, Bly went a step further by not only interviewing the new boxing champion, James J. Corbett, but also by putting on the gloves and stepping into the ring with him for a sparring session. As she proudly wrote in her column the next day, she knocked down Corbett and drew blood from his mouth.

"See what I did," I said proudly to the spectators.

"Oh, that's nothing," Mr. Corbett said. "You hit me in the mouth with your elbow."

"You won't confess that I drew blood with my fist," I replied, as my pride vanished.

"Well, I bear you no ill-feeling. I'm glad the championship stays in America," he said.³⁰

So, Nellie Bly had experience interviewing and writing about boxers when she arrived in Toledo. She wrote four stories leading up to the fight, followed by her Page 1 coverage of the bout and an especially interesting account on how Dempsey spent his first day as champion. As was her style, she not only made herself part of the stories, she did not hesitate to acknowledge the historic role she perceived herself to be playing at the event.

"I, the first newspaperwoman in the world to sit with the press and telegraphers at the end of the boxing ring, felt what?" she asked early in her fight story.

In reply, she noted:

I expected to be frowned upon and to feel like a stranger thrust upon a family Christmas party. But everybody was so nice; the telegraph operators became messenger boys for me; the ushers brought pails of water that I might drink from the edge and not be thirsty; the newspapermen did their level best to show me they were glad I was there and were at my service.³¹

As she had been in her interview with Sullivan, Bly also seemed fascinated by the clothing not only of the boxers but even more so of the spectators. She described Willard's "blue woolen trunks, bound at the waist with the national colors," Dempsey's "white muslin trunk, also bound at the waist with the national colors," and even the "brown sun umbrella" used to shade Willard as he entered the ring at eight minutes past 4 o'clock on a sweltering, 100-degree summer day.³²

Bly saw it as a sign of progress that in her estimation "one half" of the spectators were women "in beautiful clothes, just as eager and intent as the men."³³ Of the men in the crowd, she wrote that "no two shirts [were] alike," and "such beautiful shirts. It was a joy to look at them." In addition, each man "wore [a] handkerchief hanging down under his hat like a curtain." Less pleasing were many of those hats, some of which were "the broad, silly shaped straw hat of the regular country rube."³⁴

But once the fight began, Bly turned her attention to the savagery in the ring. This would prove to be one of bloodiest bouts in boxing history, as Dempsey, after a brief "feeling-out" period with his opponent in the opening moments of the fight, unleashed a torrent of blows that left the bigger but slower Willard bloodied and dazed. One of Bly's pre-fight articles had been headlined, "Didn't Faint When Blood Was Drawn,"³⁵ and she proved her mettle again as she unflinchingly provided her readers with a vivid and chilling description of the brutality of the beating Willard suffered on fight day.

Willard, 57 pounds heavier, was floored by the quicker Dempsey's early onslaught, and the champion had scarcely regained his footing when Dempsey

again descended upon him. Reading Bly's account, one can experience what it was like to witness this terrible beating from ringside.

Dempsey struck blows, terrific blows. It seemed to me by the second blow Willard's eye was bleeding and almost swollen shut.

Again Dempsey knocked him down. The referee counted. I held my breath. "Is it the finish?" I wondered.

Once more Willard dragged himself to his feet. He did it heavily, like a wounded elephant. Dempsey, like a wild cat, stood waiting. Before Willard stood straight on his left feet the wild cat was at him again. Blood was over each man. It was Willard's blood. . .³⁶

As if the gore in the ring was not enough to contend with, Bly next was confronted with one of the most confusing and controversial incidents in heavyweight boxing history. With Willard again on the canvas "on all fours like a creeping child" with "the look of defeat, surprised defeat" on his face,³⁷ the referee slowly counted to 10. In the noise and excitement, it appeared that the champion had been counted out, and the referee raised Dempsey's hand in a signal of victory. The fight seemed to be over and pandemonium erupted, both inside the ring and out.

Bly provided the following account of what happened next:

Covered with the blood of his opponent, but smiling with a broad smile which showed all his teeth, Dempsey sprang from the platform down among the press men. . . . According to all rules and precedents Dempsey forfeited the fight when he left the ring and did not return to his corner to await the order of the referee.

It was boyish and impulsive. But it was strictly unethical, and had the referee been alert he would never have permitted it to happen.

It wasn't over. The great, heavy, one-time king pulled himself slowly, painfully, almost unconsciously, to his feet and staggered to his corner. He was not counted out. Dempsey was called back upon the platform. . .³⁸

Suddenly, Dempsey was forced to resume a fight he thought he had won and to defeat a bloodied but courageous champion for a second time. Amid the

chaos and confusion that now prevailed, Bly again proved herself to be a capable reporter as she continued to record the details of this tumultuous fight. And when the second round began, things got even bloodier, as Bly so vividly recounted.

Then, with a rally mixed with anger and ferociousness, Dempsey struck. The blow landed on Willard's right cheek just below the closed right eye. Blood gushed from Willard's mouth and with it came teeth, which he spat upon the mat.

I kept hoping and hoping that the round would end.³⁹

Amazingly, Willard still was able to answer the bell for the third round. Again, he endured a series of punishing blows by Dempsey, but still he refused to go down. The end finally came after the round, and one could sense the relief in Bly's writing.

Everybody waited in trembling suspense for the next round.

But it never came.

A wet bloody towel shot up into the air and fell in the middle of the platform. A wild scream came from the Dempsey corner and some one pulled Dempsey to the middle of the ring, holding up his gloved right hand.

The fight was over.

The King was dead. Long live the King! . . . Wildly excited men hoisted Dempsey upon their shoulders. They stuck a horse hat as a crown upon the new king. The air was filled with flying cushions, broken hats and fans. Shirts were torn from men's bodies; everybody was wild, it seemed, with joy. . .⁴⁰

The fight was over and Dempsey was king of the boxing world, but Nellie Bly's historic coverage was not yet finished. The next day, she went to Dempsey's training camp to interview him as champion, but there she was told he was not receiving visitors. Bly reported that, undeterred, she used her guile as a reporter and her persistence to gain an exclusive audience with the new champion. Refusing to leave until word was passed to Dempsey who she was,

she soon received permission from an attendant to go back to Dempsey's quarters.⁴¹

Bly's description of her meeting with Dempsey revealed not only the innocence of the young champion, a self-described "bum" who never before had access to the company of "nice people" and now found himself a national celebrity, but also of her own longing for her past glories. "Imagine the whole beautiful world being young and new to you!" she wrote. "Imagine being just twenty-four! Imagine the dream of your entire existence coming true in exactly eight minutes! How would you have felt the day after?"⁴²

Bly was 54 years old at the time, but surely she could still remember what it was like to be 24 and to attain widespread acclaim. It was at that age that she had embarked upon her round-the-world trip, when the dream of her existence came true not in eight minutes but in a spectacular 72-day journey.

Now, in the twilight of her life, Nellie Bly seemed more like a starstruck young schoolgirl than a journalist as she recorded her account of spending this memorable day with the new heavyweight champion. When Dempsey first entered the room, she wrote, "A tall slender boy was by my side, holding my hand tightly in his great masterful grasp."⁴³

Although she began by asking him what it felt like to be the boxing champion, the conversation soon turned to a new shirt Dempsey had bought. "It's very pretty," Bly told him, "and silk too!" To which Dempsey proudly replied, "Yes! It cost \$14."⁴⁴

Bly followed with a more detailed description of the shirt and matching scarf and cuff links, as well as the new champion's patent leather shoes and black belt that "encircled his slender waist."⁴⁵

Again, Bly's fascination with a boxer's clothing leads to a revealing piece of information not likely to be found in the stories of any of the male sportswriters. Dempsey showed her his silk boxing trunks, and he told the story of boarding in a house in Chicago, where a girl made him two pair of trunks, one of which he wore to defeat Willard. They were size 32, Bly reported. And then, in the comfortable surroundings of the champion's quarters, amid talk of silk shirts and waist sizes, Bly noticed Dempsey thoughtfully examining the trunks. "The white purity of the silk was blurred by large red stains," she wrote, "the blood of his defeated opponent."⁴⁶

Dempsey said he wanted Bly to have the belt he wore in the ring, but when he handed it to her, she noticed that it too was covered with blood. The champion remarked gravely: "I was very sorry for Mr. Willard. I could not take what he did yesterday for three times one hundred thousand dollars."⁴⁷

Dempsey then revealed to Bly another fascinating bit of information. Two nights before fight day, he dreamed that Willard refused to fight him. Despite his protests, the Willard camp refused to give him the title shot he had been promised. Instead, Willard fought a lesser opponent. In his anger over this injustice, Dempsey told Bly he suddenly awoke with renewed determination to beat the champion.⁴⁸

Bly wrote that she and Dempsey spent the remainder of the day together, as if they were old friends. They dined in a quiet restaurant, which Dempsey said was "cool."⁴⁹ Afterward, Dempsey took Bly for a drive in his new touring car.⁵⁰ People rushed up to get a glimpse of the new champion, but away they drove.

Soon, Bly wrote, they arrived at the arena where 24 hours earlier Dempsey had achieved his life-long dream. Again, Nellie Bly reported how she shared this intimate moment with the younger man.

We stood still, hand in hand, looking. . .

Hand in hand we walked down to the ring. Then, only then, he broke the silence.

"I was sorry for Mr. Willard, Miss Bly," he said, regretfully. "The blow we had planned — the blow over the heart, finished him. It was almost the first blow. As soon as it landed, I knew he was finished. I saw the pain in his eyes. I was sorry."

"I am glad to hear you say that, Jack!" I said, unsteadily. We held hands again.

"I don't think I could have kept on," he added, "had I not known he felt nothing afterwards. It's just the same if you shoot a man; you can stab his body all over afterwards and he never feels it. That heart blow ended all connection between the brain and the hands and feet. Mr. Willard's magnificent physique kept him going almost automatically, but he had lost all power of control."

"You'll keep on fighting?" I queried.

"I hope not forever, at least I hope to stop while I still have my senses. You know they all get queer and silly who keep at it long. It can't be good for anyone, this hard training and beating."

We were walking away. People had somehow found out and had gathered at the gate. An Irishman prevented their entrance. Cameras were busy.

"God bless you, Mr. Dempsey," said the watchman with the deep brogue. "I've seen you knock two men out, and you'll live to knock them all out for years to come. God bless ye!"⁵¹

Thus ended Nellie Bly's coverage of Jack Dempsey when he won the heavyweight boxing championship of the world.

The Other View: Contemporary and Historical Accounts of the Fight

A comparison of Nellie Bly's coverage of the fight and Dempsey's first day as champion reveals many similarities in her writing style compared to her male colleague, but it also raises questions about some of her claims and her account of events the day after the fight.

A notable similarity is in Bly's description of Jack Dempsey as a boxer. Roger Kahn has observed that because of Dempsey's boxing style, most sportswriters described him "in jungle terms," with many seeing him as "a tiger closing for a kill."⁵² For example, James P. Dawson of the New York Times wrote that Dempsey was a "bobbing, weaving tiger" with "the savage instinct to tear into and rip and slash his opponent into instant helplessness, with contempt for the consequences."⁵³ Bly made a similar observation, describing the smaller and quicker Dempsey as "a tiger" and the bigger and lumbering Willard as "a wounded elephant."⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Grantland Rice in his fight account called Dempsey "a fighting tornado,"⁵⁵ but in his autobiography almost three decades later he described Dempsey stalking Willard like "a tiger circling an ox."⁵⁶

Rice also included in his fight story allusions to Rudyard Kipling, and he wrote of the beating Willard endured, ". . .the features continued to swell, the raw meat continued to pop open in deep slits as the red surf rolled from his shaking pulp-smashed frontispiece."⁵⁷ W. O. McGeehan also evoked a clever image when he wrote, "The champion rocked and swayed like a huge pine that is falling under the blows of an axeman."⁵⁸ Perhaps these were more colorful descriptions than those used by Nellie Bly, but they were neither more compelling in their drama nor more comprehensive in their coverage of the event.

Bly's lead to fight story is not as descriptive as those by the best-known of the male sportswriters covering the event, but it is indicative of the exaggerated style seen on sports pages of the era:

The king is dead. Long live the king!
 Success is dragging all the world at its chariot wheels.
 Defeat, forgotten and abandoned, is hauled away in an ambulance. . .

Willard's day is done.
Dempsey's day has begun.⁵⁹

Bly's story appeared on the bottom left of Page 1, while the *Journal's* lead story on the fight ran at the top right under the by-line "Tad." It began: "With his right eye closed tight, his mouth torn, Jess Willard dragged his weary legs to his corner at the end of the third round with Jack Dempsey here to-day and threw up the sponge."⁶⁰

Rice, writing for the *New York Tribune*, led with a more straightforward and vivid statement: "Jack Dempsey proved to be the greatest fighting tornado, in a boxing way, the game has ever known, when in nine minutes of actual combat to-day he crushed Jess Willard into a shapeless mass of gore and battered flesh."⁶¹

W. O. McGeehan, who had the Page 1 story for the *Tribune*, also began with a vivid description of the end to the fight: "A towel tossed into the ring from the corner where Jess Willard floundered on a stool, with his right eye closed and a torrent of blood gushing from his gaping mouth, was the signal that a new heavyweight champion had arrived here this afternoon."⁶²

Damon Runyon, another of the great sportswriters of the time, employed similar tactics when he began his *New York American* story: "Squatting on the stool in his corner, a bleeding, trembling, helpless hulk, Jess Willard, the Kansas Giant, this afternoon relinquished his title of heavyweight champion of the world. The end came just as the bell was about to toss him into the fourth round of a mangling at the paws of Jack Dempsey, the young mountain lion in human form, from the Sangre de Cristo Hills of Colorado."⁶³

What set Bly's story apart from these was how she injected herself into the action, becoming a part of the action as she gave her ringside narrative of events. Rice, Runyon, McGeehan, Tad and others were graphic and detailed in their accounts of the fight, but they did not make themselves part of their stories. However, Rice did resort to literary allusions, recalling "Fuzzy-Wuzzy, in Kipling's verse," and placing events in the context of "all the history of the ring, dating back to days beyond all memory."⁶⁴

While Bly's abilities as a sportswriter can be said to measure up to those of her male counterparts, what is more difficult to verify is her intimation of a close relationship with Dempsey and her fascinating account of sharing with him his first day as champion. Her exclusive interview with the new champion is captivating and detailed, but it is curious that she is never mentioned in any of the many books or articles since written by or about Jack Dempsey and this pivotal moment in his life. This omission is particularly significant when so many of the other reporters at the fight in Toledo are mentioned extensively by historians studying Dempsey's life. For example, Roger Kahn writes in *A Flame of Pure Fire* that during the pre-fight training, Jack Kearns, Dempsey's manager, held a spaghetti dinner for several prominent sportswriters, including Grantland Rice, Ring Lardner and W.O. McGeehan.⁶⁵ There was no mention of Bly attending the event. In *When Dempsey Fought Tunney*, Bruce Evensen revealed that on the eve of the fight, "several sportswriters went to Dempsey's dressing room to wish him well." Included in this group were two old friends from Colorado, Otto Floto of the *Denver Post* and Damon Runyon, and also Rice, Nat Fleischer, Robert Edgren, Scoop Gleeson, Rube Goldberg, Hype Igoe and Ring Lardner.⁶⁶ Again, there was no mention of Nellie Bly. Perhaps this is to be

expected since Bly, a woman, was not an accepted member of the informal fraternity of sportswriters who socialized with the sports figures they covered.

It also is significant that none of the accounts of Dempsey's first day as champion mentions him spending time with Bly. To the contrary, Kahn wrote that Dempsey, accompanied by his trainer, Teddy Hayes, drove his new automobile to Chicago, where he "spent a long day visiting boxing friends and driving the sports car at high speed."⁶⁷

While Bly might be guilty of exaggerating her relationship with Dempsey in writing her of her "exclusive" post-fight interview with him, her interview with him appears authentic, and there are no claims to indicate it was fabricated.

One of her fight observations also must be viewed with a critical eye. Her claim that Dempsey singled her out for a greeting in the moments before the fight began appears to contradict not only contemporary reports of the fighters entering the ring but also more recent versions of the tense moments before the opening bell. Roger Kahn, who knew Dempsey, not only studied press accounts of the fight but also was able to interview the boxer about what happened that day. Kahn gives a detailed account of Dempsey's thoughts as he first arrived in the ring, and what Dempsey remembers most was his anxiety and a very real fear that the bigger Willard "is liable to kill me." According to Kahn, Dempsey "looked somber and preoccupied" and "made no eye contact with anyone."⁶⁸ Continuing, Kahn wrote that Dempsey stood under an umbrella a sparring partner held to shield the boxer from the sun, and a nervous Dempsey kept his eyes focused on the canvas in order not to look at his hulking opponent.⁶⁹ Similarly, Evensen, relying on Dempsey's written accounts of that day, writes that Dempsey "looked down at the canvas nervously, hoping a three-day-old

stubble of a bear might mask his emotions."⁷⁰ Again, however, Bly's claim that Dempsey did indeed single her out for acknowledgement is detailed enough to appear authentic, at least in her mind. In her description of the fighters' entrances into the ring, she also mentions Dempsey standing beneath the umbrella before going to his corner to await the introductions. Then she tells of getting the attention of Jack Kearns, Dempsey's manager.

I waved greetings to Jack Kearns. He went over to the corner and told Dempsey where I was. Dempsey stood up, waved his hand and laughed as I waved back to him.⁷¹

There is no way to validate the authenticity of Bly's version of events, but what does appear beyond dispute is that in covering this famous boxing match, she was able to hold her own as a sportswriter in what still was a male-dominated profession at a brutal and controversial sporting event. Although her post-fight interview with Dempsey was fraught with self-promotion and perhaps some exaggeration, it also provided an interesting insight into the new champion's mood and thoughts at a historic moment in his life. For whatever reasons, it has been overlooked in the large body of work on Jack Dempsey, one of the most popular figures in American sports. It is possible that this omission results not from a lack of credibility but from the source of the story. Nellie Bly was not one of the well-known sportswriters who covered the fight, and so perhaps she simply has never been considered as a source of information for this event and Dempsey's reaction to the fight. Of more significance, perhaps the major importance of Nellie Bly's coverage of Jack Dempsey is not what it adds to the story of a boxing champion but what it adds to the early contributions of women to the field of sportswriting.

Postscript: The Beginning of One Era, the End of Another

Grantland Rice, W. O. McGeehan and many of the other famous writers at the fight continued to write their vivid accounts of the great sporting events of the era, and their lively style and literary allusions not only made the 1920s the "Golden Age of Sportswriting," they led the decade to be known as the "Golden Age of Sports," filled with such heroes as Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Red Grange. But behind Ruth, no sports hero was greater than Jack Dempsey. He reigned as heavyweight champion for seven years, dubbed "The Manassa Mauler" for his brawling, brutal style of boxing.

Nellie Bly did not live to witness this colorful era. She died of pneumonia in 1922, just three years after her return to newspapers. Many historians have called this final stage of her career as an unsuccessful comeback, and one of her biographers, Brooke Kroeger, surmised that the "feisty-woman-braves-man's world aspect of Bly's reporting had lost its novelty."⁷² But Bly's final fling with journalism was not without merit. She did have that one last hurrah on press row at the famous boxing match of 1919.

There also was a final twist to that day. When Nellie Bly became such a sensation at Pulitzer's *World* three decades earlier, William Randolph Hearst developed his own star "stunt journalist" in Winifred Black, who wrote under the pen name "Annie Laurie." Ironically, when Nellie Bly joined the *New York Evening Journal* in 1919, Black, now writing under her real name, also worked for the newspaper. On the day of Bly's coverage of the Dempsey-Willard fight, Black wrote on the problems of "modern women" who wanted to work outside the house even though their husbands did not want them to do so. Her conclusion: "In my experience it is a dangerous thing for a woman to let her husband feel

that she can take care of herself. He's generally quite willing to let her do it, even when she's a bit tired of the experiment."⁷³

Nellie Bly never accepted those barriers on women, and as a result she did much to advance the cause of women in journalism. And in one of her final and overlooked "stunts," she even played a small but significant role in women entering the field of sports journalism. Like Jack Dempsey, the boxer she claimed to have befriended, Nellie Bly can be described as a champion in her field.

¹ Rice is the author of perhaps the most famous lead on a sports story, "Outlined against a blue-gray October sky, the Four Horsemen rode again." Grantland Rice, "Notre Dame's Cyclone Beats Army, 13 To 7," *New York Herald Tribune*, 19 October 1924, 1.

² Stanley Walker, *City Editor* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1934), 127.

³ Nat Fleischer, *50 Years at Ringside* (New York: Fleet Publishing Corporation, 1958), 253. Fleischer, a noted boxing historian and the founder of *Ring* magazine, singled out Masterson with 11 others in a select group of newspaper reporters he ranked as the best boxing writers he knew in a half century covering the sport.

⁴ Nellie Bly, "Nellie Bly Describes Fall of Ring Goliath," *New York Evening Journal*, 5 July 1919, 3. Bly reported on the attendance of Barrymore who "wore a brown silk tricollette and a brown feather turban." W.O. McGeehan of the *New York Tribune* reported that Mrs. Willard "was one of the women who watched his passing from the 'ladies' galleries." McGeehan, "Dempsey Says Opponent Was Put Out Twice," *New York Tribune*, 6 July 1919, S2.

⁵ This is what appeared in most fight stories the next day and in later books and articles on the event. By contrast, after the fighters met in the center of the ring and then returned to their corners before the introductions, "Willard turned and offered waves and the suggestion of a smile to people he recognized at ringside." Roger Kahn, *A Flame of Pure Fire: Jack Dempsey and the Roaring '20s* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1999), 91.

⁶ Bly, "Nellie Bly Describes Fall of Ring Goliath," 3.

⁷ Bly did not claim to be the first woman to cover a sporting event but rather the first to do so from the press area, suggesting that she was there to cover the event as a reporter, not just as a woman. In fact, there were two women from local Toledo newspapers at the event, but they wrote sidebar or "color" pieces. For example, when Willard was about to be counted out after being knocked down by Dempsey in the first round, Maria Blanchard wrote in the *Toledo News Bee*: "Ten-buck Jennie and sixty-dollar Geraldine, Jim in the bleachers and James at ringside, all went mad together." Betty Brown of the *Toledo Times* screamed in delight, "This beats the circus." Kahn, 95.

⁸ Madelon Golden Schilpp and Sharon M. Murphy, *Great Women of the Press* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 134.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹¹ This summary of Bly's better-known articles was compiled from Schilpp and Murphy, and Brooke Kroeger, *Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Reporter, Feminist* (New York: Times Books, Random House, 1994), 125-128.

¹² Kroeger, 129.

¹³ Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, S.N.D. North, Director. "Special Reports: Occupations at the Twelfth Census," Vol. 13, Series Number 83 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), U.S. Census, page L.

- ¹⁴ Ishbel Ross, *Ladies of the Press: The Story of Women in Journalism by an Insider* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, second edition, 1936), 17.
- ¹⁵ Elizabeth L. Banks, *The Autobiography of a Newspaper Girl* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1902) 6, in Linda Steiner, "Gender at Work: Early Accounts by Women Journalists," *Journalism History*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring 1997, 2.
- ¹⁶ Ross, 17.
- ¹⁷ Ross, xi. Interestingly, Walker wrote these comments in the forward to Ross's outstanding 1934 book on women in journalism.
- ¹⁸ Marian Ainsworth-White, "Women in Journalism," *Arena*, Vol. 23, June 1900, 670.
- ¹⁹ Ross, 145-149.
- ²⁰ Pamela Creedon, ed. *Women, Media and Sport: Challenging Gender Values* (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994), 73.
- ²¹ Annie Laurie, "Annie Laurie at a Prize Fight," *San Francisco Examiner*, 4 June 1892, 9.
- ²² Creedon, 73.
- ²³ Sherilyn Cox Bennion, *Equal to the Occasion* (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press) 160.
- ²⁴ Creedon, 75.
- ²⁵ Kay Mills, *A Place in the News: From the Women's Pages to the Front Pages*, (New York: Dodd, Mead 1988) 219.
- ²⁶ Different figures have been given on the number of writers who covered the fight. Grantland Rice reported there were as many as 600 sportswriters in town for the event. Kahn, 62. According to Evensen, there were 400 reporters who would "generate half a million words on the fight." Evensen, 26.
- ²⁷ Kahn, 385. Kahn described the prevailing style of sportswriters in this era as "tough-guy romantic . . . and their best work is belletristic — writing that is not merely informative but also beautiful to read." Kahn, 443. Stanley Walker offered the perspective of a city editor when he observed that in this period there were "two fairly definite schools, sometimes defined as the 'Gee Whizz!' and the 'Aw Nuts!' wings." Walker, 123. Grantland Rice symbolized the former, who were described by Dempsey biographer Bruce J. Evensen as "self-promoting reporters who saw a certain cultural significance in the squared ring, or at least wrote as if they did." Ring Lardner was the leader of the latter group, which "denigrated the 'fine fetish' of playing sports to the little. He [Lardner] saw little glamour in the supposedly sweet science and even less social significance." Bruce J. Evensen, *When Dempsey Fought Tunney: Heroes, Hokum, and Storytelling in the Jazz Age*. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 26-27. Paul Gallico considered himself a gee-whiz writer and offered this explanation of this approach to sportswriting: "I was impressed by athletes, by what I was seeing and also what I was trying to do. I thought I ought to impress my public, impress the people who were reading, because if I didn't make a game that I saw, and which excited me, if I didn't make that exciting to the reader, I was a lousy sportswriter." Jerome Holtzman, *No Cheering In the Press Box* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, first paperback edition, 1978), 71.
- ²⁸ Bly, "Nellie Bly and Sullivan," *New York World*, 26 May 1889, 13.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ Bly, "Prizefighter James J. Corbett," *New York World*, 12 August 1894, 13. Bly was not the last writer to put on the gloves against a heavyweight champion. In 1923, Paul Gallico of the *New York Journal* boxed an exhibition against Jack Dempsey, learned the hard way what it was like to be knocked out and then wrote a first-hand account for the next day's newspaper. He later recalled: "It was as if a building had fallen on me. The whole thing lasted a minute and thirty-seven seconds. I came out with resin on my pants, a cut lip, and a headache." Holtzman, 64.
- ³¹ Bly, "Nellie Bly Describes Fall of Ring Goliath," 1.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Ibid.* Promoter Tex Rickard set aside the special area for women called "the Jenny Wren section," which he surrounded with barbed wire to keep out unwelcome males. Kahn, 59.
- ³⁴ Bly, "Nellie Bly Describes Fall of Ring Goliath," 1.
- ³⁵ Bly, "Didn't Faint When Blood Was Drawn," *New York Journal*, 16 June 1919, 14.
- ³⁶ Bly, "Nellie Bly Describes Fall of Ring Goliath," 1.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*

- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Bly, "'Knew I'd Win And I'm Sorry For Willard,' Dempsey Tells Nellie Bly, Joyfully Celebrating 'His Day,'" *New York Evening Journal*, 8 July 1919, 17.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ The day after the fight, Dempsey received a bright red sports car from Harry Stutz, president of a local automobile company. Kahn, 104.
- ⁵¹ Bly, "'Knew I'd Win And I'm Sorry For Willard,' Dempsey Tells Nellie Bly, Joyfully Celebrating 'His Day,'" 17.
- ⁵² Kahn, 70.
- ⁵³ Fred Russell, *Bury Me in an Old Press Box: Good Times and Life of a Sportswriter* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1957), 21.
- ⁵⁴ Bly, "Nellie Bly Describes Fall of Ring Goliath," 1.
- ⁵⁵ Grantland Rice, "Big Champion Is Crushed In Nine Minutes," *New York Tribune*, 5 July 1919, 11.
- ⁵⁶ Rice, *The Tumult and the Shouting: My Life in Sport* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1954), 117.
- ⁵⁷ Rice, "Big Champion Is Crushed In Nine Minutes," 11.
- ⁵⁸ McGeehan, "Dempsey Wins Title; Willard, Severely Beaten, Quits After 3rd Round," *New York Tribune*, 5 July 1919, 1.
- ⁵⁹ Bly, "Nellie Bly Describes Fall of Ring Goliath," 1.
- ⁶⁰ Tad, "Willard Helpless Before Dempsey," *New York Journal*, 5 July 1919, 1.
- ⁶¹ Rice, "Big Champion Is Crushed in Nine Minutes," 11.
- ⁶² McGeehan, "Dempsey Wins the Title; Willard, Severely Beaten, Quits After 3rd Round," 1.
- ⁶³ Evensen 33, from *New York American*, July 5, 1919, 1.
- ⁶⁴ Rice, "Big Champion Is Crushed in Nine Minutes," 1.
- ⁶⁵ Kahn, 60.
- ⁶⁶ Evensen, 30.
- ⁶⁷ Kahn, 104.
- ⁶⁸ Kahn, 90.
- ⁶⁹ Kahn, 90-91.
- ⁷⁰ Evensen, 31, from Jack Dempsey and Myron M. Stearns, *Round by Round: An Autobiography* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1940) 178-180; Jack Dempsey and Barbara Piatelli Dempsey, "The Destruction of a Giant: How I Beat Jess Willard," *American Heritage*, April 1977, 76-81; Jack Kearns and Oscar Fraley, *Million Dollar Gate* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 14; *Denver Post*, 5 July 1919, 8; *Chicago Tribune*, 5 July 1919, 1.
- ⁷¹ Bly, "Nellie Bly Describes Fall of Ring Goliath," 1.
- ⁷² Kroeger, 457.
- ⁷³ Winifred Black, "Independent Wives Often Their Own Enemies," *New York Journal*, 5 July 1919, 12.

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“Sex and Censorship on Postwar American Television.”

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“Sex and Censorship on Postwar American Television”

(150-word abstract)

This research explores some of the major sexual programming discourses on postwar television. Considered, among others, are questions of how network censors negotiated representations of homosexuals, the female bosom, and “dirty dancing” on nascent American TV. The paper concludes that viewers of the era expected—even demanded—“protection” by network imposed censorship from an array of secular evils they claimed they witnessed on television.

At its core, the paper details the censorious actions taken by Stockton Helffrich, director of NBC-TV’s Continuity Acceptance (CA) Department from 1948-60. Methodologically the work employs original archival research, specifically from the NBC Continuity Acceptance for Radio and Television (CART) reports, and other primary sources. Helffrich’s 225 discreet CARTs span the postwar years, and offer a fascinating look at day-to-day censorship decisions as television programming forms were literally being invented.

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This paper explores some of the major sexual programming issues faced by early network television. It analyzes and offers conclusions to some of the postwar era's most significant sexualized public events vis-à-vis the censorious actions taken by Stockton Helffrich, director of NBC-TV's Continuity Acceptance (CA) Department from 1948-60. Methodologically the work employs original archival research, specifically from the NBC Continuity Acceptance for Radio and Television (CART) reports, as well as other primary and secondary sources. The 225 discreet CARTs span the postwar years, and offer a fascinating look at the day-to-day censorship decisions made by Helffrich and his department as television programming forms were literally being invented. First, however, the paper endeavors to situate the reader by recounting specific sociosexual and cultural beliefs that informed behavior before and during the epoch.

Television's arrival was part of a mutable cultural landscape after the Second World War, and many of the nation's anxieties about sex and deviance—especially what was considered “sexually normal”—were played out on the home screen. Citizens hearkened to past notions of gender, class, and religion to guide them through these new and formidable social changes that informed their present day concerns. During the postwar era these formerly solid, foundational notions were continually negotiated, and an important area of those negotiations was the public space created by television.

Sex in the Decade Following World War II

Much of the postwar era's social ennui was rooted in evangelical taboos, many of which were expressed culturally through legal statute. At the threshold of the 1950s nearly every state in the nation lived under strict laws making it criminal to participate in unconventional sex and acts of homosexuality. An Indiana statute named masturbation a heinous offense punishable by fine and up to fourteen years in jail. Kansas convicted anyone practicing bestiality, calling it a

“detestable and abominable crime against nature.” Some states outlawed cuckoldry between consenting (but unmarried) *heterosexual* adults.¹ Historian J. Ronald Oakley argued such confusing postwar amatory codes “existed in the midst of a society permeated with sexual hypocrisy and titillation.”² Ubiquitous advertising used sex to sell a dizzying array of products, while movies, magazines and television featured a procession of seductive male and female stars equipped to titillate. The dominant discourse concurrently promoted sex as attractive yet repulsive, at once permissible but unacceptable. Across the nation citizens paid “lip service” to what Oakley called “an unofficial Puritanical code . . . that [even] frowned upon . . . *talk* about sex (especially in mixed company or before the children) . . .”³ It is not surprising that Helffrich, and his NBC-TV CA department, worked determinedly—albeit capriciously, as we shall see—to enforce most of these questionable, amorphous social codes.

When commercial network television began its rise very few people would talk openly about sex. In polite conversation not even the word “leg” or “breast” would be acceptable. Such expression bordered on the pornographic because of the mental associations it evoked. Clearly, these social prohibitions conflicted with natural urges, but mainstream Fifties society taught sex was sinful, therefore following normal human desires would inevitably result in feelings of guilt and social opprobrium. To elude the unpleasant sense of shame and confusion, mannerly gentlefolk often simply avoided the dangerous subject of sex.

For the post-Victorian generation, a sense of cultural dislocation settled in after the war as mothers and fathers of returning WWII veterans found themselves challenged by a combination of social and market pressures. Historian Beth Bailey located a reason for this amative bewilderment in the remnants of past sexual convention. “What changed,” argued Bailey, “were not sexual acts so much as what those acts *meant*—how they were perceived, what

symbolic freight they carried,” adding, “Individual sexual expression changed less [in the Fifties] than the *context* of that expression.”⁴ Moreover, Bailey explained the war forced recognition of “different mores and customs, [of] different definitions of respectability, and [of] sexualized images of popular culture and advertising, produced on a national scale for a national audience.”⁵ With the postwar explosion of consumer goods and, for most American’s startling personal economic growth, many older citizens worried such affluence would engender moral flabbiness and sexual deviance. Cold War political tensions at home and abroad, the threat of nuclear annihilation, changing gender roles, a “baby boom,” deep-rooted fear of “sexual deviants” and communists, emerging civil rights activism, and a general upheaval created by retooling for a peacetime economy, each in its own way contributed to the climate of American apprehension. Within this period of profound social and economic metamorphosis, an undefined, free-floating anxiety coalesced around certain objects of concern, among them sex, gender identity, and television.⁶

Undoubtedly, media were sending mixed messages about sex, and on the first day of January 1950, eminent psychologist Dr. Albert Ellis set out to discover the character of those discourses. Shepherding a massive media survey, scrutinizing all manner of American sexual beliefs and opinions, Ellis conducted a detailed and painstaking content analysis, collecting what he termed “a 100-percent sample of [U.S.] mass media extant.”⁷ Ellis then scrutinized these media for what he called their “sex, love, and marriage content.”⁸ He considered *The New York Times* best-selling fiction and non-fiction books; representative newspapers from all over the U.S.; popular magazines; journals; comic and joke books; movies and plays; radio and television shows and scripts; even the lyrics of popular songs.⁹ Ellis wanted to learn what democratic media were telling citizens about sex and what could be inferred, implied or deduced through

them about American culture and behavior. His societal snapshot taken on that New Year's Day 1950, found in part

The average American—in fact, *virtually every living American*—is completely muddled-, mixed-, and messed-up in his sex views, feelings and acts. Much of the time he is quite consciously confused and knows that he does not know sex “right” from “wrong.” Or else he keeps changing his mind about what is sexually proper or improper. . . .¹⁰

This mercurial, jumbled sense of public and private sexuality might be seen as a blueprint for how the “erotic” would be portrayed on commercial television.

Should the coming of network television “reflect” comfortable old ways or unsettling new ones? That hand-wringing question caused tensions to run high. Still, it will become clear that NBC-TV's chief censor from 1948-60, Stockton Helffrich, and his decisions on sex in television programming make certain the new medium would *not* become the destabilizing influence many feared.

Sex on Television: The Kinsey Report

In the same year network television made its national debut so did zoologist Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey's book, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. The 1948 report, a sweeping study grounded in over 18,000 case histories, stunned the nation. Kinsey's work revealed a vast, covert world of sexual experience sharply at odds with publicly espoused standards of fidelity and heterosexuality.¹¹ It is not surprising, then, that some of the earliest CART references to sex on NBC-TV mention the Kinsey Report.

One incident forced the network to directly address the use of Kinsey's findings in comedy-variety shows. In mid-December 1948, Helffrich wrote about a deleted joke from *The Arrow Show*, starring comedian Phil Silvers.¹² The show, itself less than a month old, had already come under fire for making “derogatory references to some actual hotels and places in

Lakewood, New Jersey” and for caricaturizing homosexual behavior.¹³ The extirpated joke went as follows: A couple had been waiting for a table in a crowded restaurant. The impatient chap posed a rhetorical question to a Waiter: ““What are a man and woman supposed to do?”” referring only to what steps might be taken to end the pair’s frustratingly long delay in being seated. The joke—hence the problem—rested in the Waiter’s double-entendre sexual rejoinder: ““How should I know,” he said, “my name’s Ginsburg not Kinsey.””¹⁴ Network policy from that point forward prohibited “casual and jocular” references to Kinsey’s findings on any NBC network show.¹⁵ Helffrich and CA extended this ban to the advertising agencies that produced sponsored radio and television programs for NBC. The memo reminded agencies of the network’s “desire to keep references to the Kinsey Report on a serious and mature plain.”¹⁶ By 1951, the CA department deleted any breezy reference to Kinsey they found on all NBC-TV entertainment programs.¹⁷

The second Kinsey Report, published in 1953, again unveiled a chasm between accepted and deviant behavior, this time focusing its research on the amative proclivities of the American woman. Kinsey’s *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* was also an immediate success. Like his first book, its conclusions revealed an astounding number of women practiced sexual behaviors considered “shocking” or “transgressive,” suggesting such activity should not be considered aberrant. “Opinion polls [also] indicated that [Kinsey’s] research met with approval from the vast majority of Americans,” wrote social historian John D’emilio, “[the popular press] discovered that articles about sex did not provoke an outraged response from the majority of their readers.”¹⁸ In separate investigations, researchers Donald B. Hileman and Paul D. Brinkman discovered Kinsey’s report, in fact, encouraged revisionist thought on earlier sexual beliefs and established the theme of sex and sexuality as a valid topic in mainstream magazines

and newspapers.¹⁹ That same attitude appears to be at least partially the case for the much more tentative broadcast media.

Television and radio commercials trumpeting magazine articles on Kinsey's latest findings in popular periodicals like *Ladies Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Time*, *Look*, and *Colliers* were accepted for broadcast by NBC, but with some qualifications. Helffrich noted the ads were "in excellent taste and show good judgment in the main," adding, "We did chuck from one of those [commercial spots] a statement— 'I wish I'd known this when I got married, it would have saved me months of uncertainty and stupid embarrassment'— as being cheap and more like something you'd find in a pulp magazine."²⁰ The CA department's policy was only to accept Kinsey commercials that were "soberly handled and free of details which might create unnecessary antagonism among family audiences in varying sections of the country."²¹ *Variety* commented that censors at all the networks were against having the book "gagged up" and *Radio and Television Daily* reported Kinsey's findings on the NBC networks would be "confined to straight news announcements with caution prevailing to prevent radio and television comics from treating the subject lightly."²² In the same story, NBC's press department commented that "essentially no directives went out and *good taste* [was] the order of the day where comedian's material is concerned . . ."²³ The inherent message was that sex was neither fun nor funny. Rather, it was a sober topic that broadcast media may talk about but only in the most circumscribed technical and scientific of terms. As long as its presentation was treated seriously within news broadcasts, discussion programs, occasionally in television drama, even in commercials, NBC had no problem with airing allusions to Kinsey's conclusions. However, when as somber a subject as sex was used in comedy routines or as punchline to a comic's joke, the CA department deleted it.

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In postwar America, humor used as a social discourse on sex—or to enumerate the sexual hypocrisy in certain vaunted Victorian notions—might call into question intrinsic values linked to enduring evangelical Protestant beliefs. If those social values were destabilized, formal legal codes might next be interrogated, as might governmental authority itself, or so went the logic. A humorous social critique on Kinsey's expose of the hidden sexual habits of Americans would only work to undermine and further unbalance the heretofore-accepted erotic notions of an already anxious public. D. H. Monro, a philosophy professor who has written extensively on theories of humor, explained "Humor is more penetrating when it brings to light a real connection between two things normally regarded with quite different attitudes, or when it forces on us a complete reversal of values."²⁴ Monro summed it thusly:

Humor, according to incongruity theories, may be said to consist in the finding of "the inappropriate within the appropriate." It is not merely that unexpected connections are found between apparently dissimilar things: our notions of propriety are also involved. In any community certain attitudes are felt to be appropriate to some things but not to others; and there develop "stereotypes" . . . The humorist drags into light the inconvenient facts which shatter these attitudes and puncture these stereotypes.²⁵

But Helffrich could not permit such discourse to prevail on NBC-TV. He had angry viewers with which to contend; some of whom had powerful enough voices to produce significant public relations problems. Even a relatively few complaints strategically positioned could impact network revenues, or stoke the regulatory fires of government.

Still, as an open-minded eastern liberal, Helffrich and many like him found value in "serious" presentations of certain sexual themes. Therefore, the Kinsey discourse was not completely muzzled, however it had to find different ways to communicate and be popularly heard. News and discussion programs, as mentioned, were two of its sanctioned outlets. But challenging perspectives on sex and sexual attitudes often spoke louder, albeit somewhat more

disingenuously, through television drama. The anthology-based *Armstrong Circle Theatre* was just such a dramatic vehicle.

Sex in Television Drama

The *Circle Theatre*, as it was also known, was considered one of television's premier dramatic programs, unafraid to feature original, contemporary fare.²⁶ One dramatic offering, wrote Helffrich, "concerned itself with [the story] of a straying wife apprehended by her indignant son. The boy's father steps in [and] in due course . . . counsel[s] understanding and forgiveness with resultant rehabilitation of the family unit."²⁷ Harriet Van Horn, television critic for the *New York World Telegram-Sun*, gave the program high marks for presenting a play "so wise [and] so grown-up in its approach to a touchy problem."²⁸ *Variety* commended the show for its courage "to tackle 'adult subjects,' credit[ed its] sponsor, Armstrong, with a willingness to go to bat on this Kinsey involvement, and [praised] the production force for a worthy experiment in serious, grown-up drama," wrote Helffrich.²⁹ Such acclaim notwithstanding, Kinsey's actual research revealed only about a quarter of American women had extra-marital affairs while statistically *half of men did*.³⁰ So despite its slanted perspective, extant sexism, and *Father Know Best* ending, the drama was significant (and shocking) because it challenged the long-standing double standards applied to men and women. Kinsey's work, as interpreted by this teleplay, suggested women could no longer be seen as traditional and virtuous paragons of family morality. Like men, they, too, were sexual beings capable of straying and breaking conventional mores. Helffrich reported he received "violent objections" from New York City viewers, one calling the material "depraved and immoral."³¹ Helffrich shrugged, "I guess . . . dramatic fare pointing up . . . facts about ourselves is going to disturb viewers concentrating [only] on the illusion."³²

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Even plays with “classic” sexual themes were heavily circumscribed. *Masterpiece Playhouse*, a summer replacement for NBC-TV’s *Philco Television Playhouse*, presented truncated versions of timeless dramas by “important” playwrights—Ibsen, Shakespeare, Chekhov, and Pirandello.³³ The sixty-minute programs of “serious” works were a critical if not popular success, and came a few months before NBC-TV programming chief Sylvester “Pat” Weaver’s announced plans for “Operation Frontal Lobes” in December 1950.³⁴ Of the four productions broadcast, the single show in the *Masterpiece* series about which most is known in terms of Helffrich’s censorial influence is Pirandello’s “Six Characters in Search of an Author,” adapted for television by NBC-TV producer Caroline Burke.³⁵

Nobel laureate Luigi Pirandello’s 1921 play, “Six Characters,” was considered a dangerous, controversial work and proved a difficult transition for television. Earlier, Hollywood censors had rejected the legendary Irving G. Thalberg’s proposal to turn it into a major motion picture; a fact not lost on the young TV producer. Even Helffrich remarked to Burke, “If you can’t work this out we’ll be limited in the classics we can do in the future.”³⁶ Could Helffrich approve this controversial play dealing with the then taboo subjects of incest, prostitution, pathologic guilt, suicide, and aberrant sex? Just how was the play altered to fit the “family audience” imagined to be watching Sundays from 9 -10 p.m., “without,” as Burke opined, “emasculating Pirandello’s intent”? Helffrich changed words as well as whole scenes—the bordello became a dance hall; the stepfather paid his stepdaughter/prostitute not with money but with the “gift” of a dress. The striptease and suicide scenes were cut entirely, even the proscenium stage setting was replaced with a television studio and a behind-the-scenes backdrop of lights, cameras and boom microphones.³⁷ “Once we had captured the inner script,” Burke wrote, “we said what Pirandello wanted to say, although we may have had to say it more

politely.”³⁸ She characterized the way Helffrich, CA, and she conspired to change the story as “*helpful* censorship,” writing that the experience had placed her “entirely on the side of NBC’s Continuity Acceptance Department.”³⁹

Whether NBC-TV was true to Pirandello’s “inner script” or not, Helffrich and company definitely eviscerated the original wrenching psychological story, its seamy, shocking social commentary, and angry, impolite words. Moreover, by changing the setting from theatrical stage to television studio, lost were Pirandello’s innovative critiques of theatre convention, and his exploration of the peculiar understanding of reality itself by both character and audience. Burke wrote, “It is regrettable that we had to [make these changes] . . . but you’ll admit it was necessary.”⁴⁰ And it *was* necessary since network public relations requirements during this sexually confusing era demanded such script redaction. One, therefore, may be dismayed but not surprised at how Pirandello’s classic work was handled by Helffrich and NBC-TV.

Postwar television after all was *not* a comfortable venue for agitprop or controversial theater, nor was it established as a genuine forum for political discourse. To the advertisers that used it, television was simply looked upon as an electronic marketing tool. Therefore, producers, writers, actors, and censors existed only to the extent of how each contributed to a positive environment in which to entice consumers. Any television story considered uncomplimentary or threatening to the commercial, sociosexual, or cultural power system that underwrote it, would ~~always be modified or not used at all. To the ad agency, sponsor, and network it made little~~ sense to be associated with a show that could possibly damage business, no matter how important the writer’s “message.” As postwar columnist and author Myra Mannes once remarked, “[Advertisers] are not here to elevate taste, to inform, to enlighten, to stimulate. [Television’s] business is to move goods. Period.”⁴¹ To “elevate taste,” “inform,” “enlighten,”

“stimulate,” these are provinces of art, drama, theatre; and although television used the symbolic forms of drama, the palette of the artist, and many techniques of theater, television programming in the strictest sense was (and is) not art. It is the *illusion* of art since its prime purpose uses artful expression for the on-going commodification of culture.

Christine Jorgensen and Television

Then—during this complex postwar negotiation among notions of art, commerce, and the place of sex and gender on television—came Christine Jorgensen. Christine, formerly “George,” Jorgensen was an erstwhile GI who traveled to Denmark and underwent a sex change operation in late 1952. Within months Jorgensen had become a stunning blond and, according to *Publisher's Weekly*, the most written-about person in the popular press during 1953.⁴² News of her sex change was sensational, and brought with it another layer of widespread sexual uneasiness. Social historian John D'emilio reminds that postwar America viewed any eroticism, other than heterosexual love-making, as a perversion, writing, “The matrix of religious beliefs, laws, medical theories and popular attitudes that devalued and punished lesbians and homosexuals remained in tact.”⁴³ There was also a pervasive public anxiety about homosexuality especially when it involved government or former military personnel. It should be noted Jorgensen was *not* a homosexual, and even she saw homosexuality as a perversion. In her memoir Jorgensen writes of the “horror” she felt over her earlier gay inclinations and drew careful distinctions between her transsexism and the homosexual lifestyle.⁴⁴ For the mass media, Jorgensen was at once an object of celebration, morbid curiosity, and ridicule. A number of reasons undoubtedly contributed to her notoriety, one of which was the perception that transsexual surgery could be a “cure” for sexual deviates—a paean most probably rooted in the nation's newfound reverence for medical and scientific capabilities at the dawn of the atomic and

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computer age. Another was the tension about gender roles themselves at a time when women were encouraged to relinquish their good-paying factory jobs to returning servicemen and drift back to domestic life.

The NBC-TV company line was that jokes or humorous adlibs about Jorgensen were to be deleted. Helffrich wrote that Hal Fellows, National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters president, stood clearly against the use of the Christine Jorgensen incident all forms of programming. "Kidding about Christine is being chucked from script[s]," revealed Helffrich, "and all of us working with talent are making every effort to caution them against adlibs along the lines which have [already] reached the American public."⁴⁵ Helffrich and CA removed all references to Jorgensen on the NBC network just as they had to the Kinsey Report during roughly the same period.⁴⁶ The difference was that Jorgensen mentions were embargoed from all NBC-TV programming *including* news and public affairs shows. Even pressure from advertisers could not change the policy. Distinguished NBC-TV host and announcer Ben Grauer "received a request from the publicity department of one of our sponsors to interview Christine Jorgensen," wrote Helffrich, "The idea was vetoed."⁴⁷

Despite CA's caution, Jorgensen jokes were still adlibbed by some of the network's biggest stars. NBC-TV's reaction to this comic banter was to couch its censorship argument in the name of protecting the children. Helffrich, attempting to show the psychic pain such jokes inflicted, reported an open-minded New York City couple were quite upset over "witticisms at the expense of Christine Jorgensen," and demanded restraint by NBC-TV. "We do not like jokes dealing with sexual misfortunes," the pair wrote, rhetorically adding, "What do we tell our young children?"⁴⁸ In the same CART report Helffrich included a quote from a *Tide* magazine article that expressed a similar position in its "One Adman's Opinion" column. The

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anonymous columnist opined that he was fearful any explanation of Jorgensen to his children would make the wrong impression. "We parents," he wrote, "are faced with a conflict between providing emotional security and supplying information."⁴⁹ Conflicted is an apt way to describe how many parents felt as they navigated the tricky waters of Fifties sexuality. They were not only trying to explain a brave new sexual world to their children they were attempting to make sense of it themselves. And of the many new sexual questions being asked, few prompted as much concern as depictions of homosexuals on television.

The "Swish:" Portrayals of Homosexuals on Postwar Television

For all his admitted liberal inclinations, especially on social issues, Helffrich's reactions to representations of homosexuality on early NBC-TV are puzzling. Based upon his CART report notes from 1948-52, Helffrich's writings could easily be interpreted as scornful, even mocking of gay depictions. His regular use of the words "swish" and "swishy" when describing portrayals of homosexuals may even be read as hostile or homophobic. The terms were derisive slang and Helffrich, a master wordsmith, had to know it. Why did he choose to utter the expressions at all? It is unclear if Helffrich only viewed as opprobrious *programs* that offered stereotyped caricatures of gays, or if his writings reflected contempt for the *lifestyle* itself. As early as 1948 he wrote of deleting a "swish portraiture" on the *Arrow Show*.⁵⁰ Helffrich was also dismayed about a segment on *Stop Me if You've Heard This One*, a game show where well-known comedians offered punch lines to jokes sent in by viewers.⁵¹ Helffrich noted one comic "included a swish routine and other adlibbed jokes in such bad taste the trade press took us to task on them."⁵² On a *Kraft Television Theatre* broadcast, Helffrich was concerned that "an interior decorator [character] would be given . . . the swish treatment."⁵³ He worried that a sketch by comedians Olsen and Johnson, in which they were to walk "with mincing steps,"

would play “in a swishy manner,”⁵⁴ and was trepidatious over Eddie Cantor’s routine of dressing like a woman doing laundry, fearing it “bordered on a swishy interpretation.”⁵⁵

Throughout the 1951-52 television season, Helffrich continued his policy of “careful avoidance”⁵⁶ of homoerotic themes. In one offering of *The Clock*,⁵⁷ a suspenseful anthology program, he made certain the following scripted speech of a “young man” was deleted: “. . . No woman’s going to tie me down. No strings or marriage license for me. When I get my degree I’m going to a hotel for men. . . .”⁵⁸ On *The Colgate Comedy Hour*,⁵⁹ guest hosts Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis were doing a scene set in a gymnasium wherein Martin says, “Take off your things . . . you’re with men,” to which Lewis replies, “How do I know?”⁶⁰ In both instances, Helffrich cut entire sequences, proscribing any sexual impropriety or underlying gay motif. The same went for a caricature of a Frenchman engaged in “cheek kissing,”⁶¹ “two [Eastern European ethnic] men kissing each other on the lips,”⁶² even homoerotic mentions in a usually benign audience warm-up activity. Before each network telecast, it was customary to have a studio announcer or comedian do a few jokes to break the ice with those in attendance. Word got back to Helffrich that some chatter performed during the warm-up “bordered on so-called swish inferences.”⁶³ He wrote, “This didn’t go on the air but we should remind everyone that NBC policy flatly states that ‘before a program attended by an audience at the point of NBC origination is on the air, material presented to the program’s guests must conform to the same standards applied to the actual broadcast.’”⁶⁴ Was Helffrich just doing his job as a corporate censor by reacting to the era’s cultural realities, or was he a homophobe? It is difficult to say with any certainty although, as you will see in the discussion that follows, his early CART writings may be interpreted as more closely aligned with the dominant homophobic beliefs of mainstream America.

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Homosexuals had long been considered a morally weak and degenerate lot. From Biblical condemnation of same-sex love⁶⁵ through church-inspired sodomy statutes in the American Colonies,⁶⁶ to “scientific” medical literature of the late nineteenth century coupling gayness with mental illness,⁶⁷ to the “sexual psychopath” laws of the 1940s and 50s,⁶⁸ Americans would simply not abide homosexuality. Moreover, Cold War political conditions and federal statutes encouraged such homophobia. In 1950, a U.S. Senate committee proclaimed, “Those who engage in acts of perversion lack the emotional ability of normal persons,” adding the oft-quoted, “One homosexual can pollute a Government office.”⁶⁹ The same committee recommended a government purge of all gay and lesbian employees. Homosexual Americans were by definition “sexual deviants,” “subversives,” and “national security risks,” ready to betray their country in a heartbeat if blackmailed by a Communist spy.⁷⁰ Postwar historian Steven J. Whitfield reported a visiting European anthropologist in 1950 remarked, “‘The overriding fear of every American parent’ . . . was that a son would become a ‘sissie.’”⁷¹ During the same year, Senator Joseph McCarthy began his paranoid crusade to rid the American government of “sex perverts,” rarely missing a chance to yoke communism to homosexuality.⁷² By 1953, President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10450 which prohibited homosexuals from government employ (amending the earlier Truman administration’s federal loyalty program), while the FBI and U.S. Post Office Department covertly surveilled anyone considered sexually suspicious.⁷³ Across the nation, in both small and large metropolitan areas, tens of thousands of homosexuals were entrapped, arrested and jailed without due process.⁷⁴ Historian Lawrence Goldwyn’s research found that a number of New York City magistrates aimed mordant ridicule and caviling language at homosexuals brought before them.⁷⁵ Even the traditionally liberal American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) did little to help. The ACLU

conceived of homosexuals as “a socially heretical . . . deviant group . . .” viewing gayness as a moral rather than legal issue, and agreeing with the government that the same-sex lifestyle posed a national security risk.⁷⁶ Considering the historiography of this unfortunate time, it seems Helffrich’s CART writings, although not as vitriolic as most, clearly mirrored the period’s intolerant attitude. Homosexuality was simply not mass media fare and was to be scrupulously avoided. Permit it no discourse, was the unspoken plan; ignore it and it might go away.

The cult of social silence on homoerotic activities has deep and enduring roots. As early as 1629 a colonial religious leader called the “crime” of sodomy a “wickedness not to be named,”⁷⁷ and near the end of the nineteenth century a judge in Illinois labeled homosexuality a crime “not fit to be named among Christians.”⁷⁸ In the 1920s plays of “perversion” were banned from New York’s theatre district;⁷⁹ by the early 1930s the Catholic-run National Office for Decent Literature prohibited any lavender-tinged writings and, to avoid trouble with the religious group, book and newspaper publishers remained eerily quiet on the subject by self-imposed censorship;⁸⁰ by 1934 the Motion Picture Production Code forbade depictions of homosexuality in movies.⁸¹ Undoubtedly, the censorship of unconventional sexual themes and characters had a long and silent history as it evolved toward radio and television.

In 1954, homosexuality came out of the closet and on to a local television talk show. An unprecedented series of programs were broadcast on WNBT-TV, NBC’s owned and operated station in New York City. The fifteen-minute shows ran at midnight for five consecutive nights from February 8-12, 1954. Discussed was Nobel Prize winner Andre Gide’s landmark work *The Immoralist*, a controversial novel that had just been reissued. Its story regards one young man’s moral and sexual awakenings, and the abandonment of his oppressive notions of Christian duty, choosing instead hedonism, freedom, and homoerotic satisfaction. Gide’s book made an

uncompromising defense of homosexuality while it challenged accepted ideas of religious and personal ethics. Originally published in the 1921 and reprinted in 1948, the 1954 iteration of Gide's work created a whole new sensation for the avant-garde literati. In the wake of an exploding postwar economy, the baby boom, Kinsey's research, Christine Jorgensen's revelations, growing sexual freedom in movies, the coming of *Playboy* magazine, the Beats and Bebop, even the infant stirrings of rock music, *The Immoralist*, a thirty-three year old work, resonated with changing American social and cultural mores.⁸² The local television program was called *About 'The Immoralist'* hosted by NBC staff announcer/emcee Ben Grauer. It featured marriage counselor Dr. Abraham Stone, media celebrities Ilka Chase and Charles Boyer, writer Abe Burrows, and Broadway tunesmith Richard Rogers—and that was just the first night! The show was presented “in adult good taste” and any same sex references limited to the book's plot. Helffrich wrote, “The full week of broadcasting did include a couple uses of the word ‘homosexual;’ and to the best of my current knowledge no material criticism has developed.”⁸³ It remains curious how a famous literary work, of which a central theme is homosexuality, can be discussed *without* using the word “homosexual.” However, such concern tells us much about the taboo. Homosexuality was a subject whispered about, hinted at, laughed over, and talked around, but until this 1954 Gide discussion it had never seriously been broached on television. Such realization gave Helffrich pause to wax literary and prescient. He noted how William Somerset Maugham's work, *Cakes and Ale*, when first released was also condemned by critics and labeled obscene and offensive.⁸⁴ Helffrich, quoting Maugham, wrote that the novel today would not even, “‘bring a blush to the cheek of the most guileless,’” and concluded, “such anxiety as was felt [by] *About 'The Immoralist'* will in retrospect and with the passage of time [also] seem dated indeed.”⁸⁵ A week later *Variety* observed the program “gave TV a grown-up

stature and produced a lively sometimes crisp discussion.”⁸⁶ *About ‘The Immoralist,’* therefore, set itself apart from other early shows on the subject because it gathered together a slate of diverse guests, and used erudite literary criticism rather than pathology or legalism as a catalyst for discussion of homosexuality. Still, when one considers the program was not a network offering but broadcast on only one local (albeit New York) television station, at midnight, and its touchy subject was discussed indirectly through belletristic critique, one would assume interest in the show was light, its impact minimal, if at all.

The anomaly of *About ‘The Immoralist’* aside, homosexuality, if discussed at all on early television, was usually treated suspiciously. Historian Stephen Tropiano wrote that homosexual behavior was usually equated “with other ‘social ills’ (like alcoholism and drug abuse . . .)”⁸⁷ The typical talk show panel, Tropiano explains, were usually made up of traditional experts—doctors, lawyers, and theologians—whose discussions were framed around sensational or exploitive show titles like: “Homosexuals and the Problems they Present,”⁸⁸ “Homosexuals who Assault and Molest Children,”⁸⁹ and “Are Homosexuals Criminal?”⁹⁰ Moreover, by Helffrich’s removal of all television depictions of the homosexual presence—even its unfair stereotyped presence—a space for public validation and potential discourse was also removed. Homosexuals were either nonexistent or in most cases, when shown or talked about at all on television, were depicted as “deviant” and “predatory.” Helffrich acted as a free agent in this conspiracy of silence, and in 1955 was at it again, noting that he deleted “an entire sequence [of *The Adventures of the Abbots*],⁹¹ which would have featured a swishy gent on a reception committee.”⁹²

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“Blooming Bosoms:” Postwar Television’s Obsession

Just about the time American television made its commercial debut, so did the return of clothing that over-emphasized the female bust. Evangelist Billy Graham remarked that Americans had become “absorbed and obsessed with sex, especially the female bosom.”⁹³ It was, indeed, the age of “mammary madness,” a time of cone-shaped brassieres—dubbed “torpedo” or “bullet bras”—that caused each breast to appear perpendicular and somewhat pointed like the head of a missile.⁹⁴ During the Second World War and throughout the postwar period, “breasts and bombs remained culturally entangled,” observed scholars Maura Spiegel and Lithe Sebesta, pointing to persistent references to buxom women as “bombshells” in the press and movies, advertising, and on television.⁹⁵ Helffrich, in fact, spoke of the “devastation” wrought by Sophia Loren’s cleavage on Dean Martin during a 1959 Academy Awards telecast.⁹⁶ It was a time when such breast exhibition sent dual (so to speak) messages: “make them big, but don’t show them in the flesh.”⁹⁷ Hollywood films responded with a new (and larger) iteration of the forties “sweater girl,” while television tried to mask any revealing décolletage with tulle. New restrictive rubberized foundation garments pinched female waists and pushed pulchritude upward with the help of underwire bras and padding.

Some historians pinpoint the fashion emphasis on breasts began in early 1947 with the introduction of Parisian fashion designer Christian Dior’s première collection.⁹⁸ Dior intended to turn women “into flowers with soft shoulders” and provide them “waists slim as winestems . . . [and] blooming bosoms . . .”⁹⁹ Cultural historian Karal Ann Marling wrote that Dior’s fashions actually made women appear synthetic and fabricated by exaggerating female anatomy to conform to pre-and-postwar “sexual dimorphism.”¹⁰⁰ Women’s studies scholar Carolyn Latteier suggests that it was just a nostalgic yearning for safety, security, and familiarity that spurred

acceptance of Dior. His fashions, she argues, were but updated restatements of the earlier “hourglass figure” en vogue during the late Victorian era, that also featured a cinched waist and voluptuous bust. “It took the shock of World War II and the horror of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” Latteier declared, “to frighten the western world into a conservative retrenchment that brought back the breast[s. . . which may be seen as] emblems of plenty during this era of greatly expanding prosperity”¹⁰¹

However, eroticized breasts were not “brought back” by postwar “conservative retrenchment” at all, because their sexualized usage never really went away. “Certain conventions,” wrote feminist scholar Marilyn Yalom, “established during the Renaissance . . . have by no means disappeared from Western Civilization,” adding, “When breasts became overeroticized [in the late Middle Ages] their sexual meaning began to over shadow their maternal meaning.”¹⁰² Moreover, ancient artifacts discovered on anthropological digs also suggest bosom fetishes existed thousands of years *before* the Christian era. Breasts, at one time or another, have been sacralized, domesticized, politicized, psychoanalyzed, and, of course, commercialized.¹⁰³ In the mid-1700s, almanacs, newspapers, even an Anglican minister’s diary featured bawdy and titillating references to “buxom” ladies with thin shirts showing “the roundness of their breasts.”¹⁰⁴ During the Civil War, “ubiquitous printed erotica” circulating among the troops depicted “great numbers [of] obscene books and pictures.”¹⁰⁵ Journalist and historian Hugh Merrill reminds that popular, albeit lewd, humor magazines that featured off-color jokes and festishized drawings of busty women—one of which was the pre-Luce *Life*, home of the Gibson Girl—had been around since the early 1880s.¹⁰⁶ From the turn of the century through WWI and into the 1920s, ribald, mass-produced “men’s magazines” like *Captain Billy’s Whizbang*, *Smokehouse Monthly*, and the *Calgary Eye-Opener* supplied typically male audiences

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with vulgar humor and sordid etchings of bosomy womanhood.¹⁰⁷ By 1933 *Esquire* spotlighted sexualized pinups and cartoons of voluptuous femininity; twenty years later barechested female foldouts were central to *Playboy's* success.¹⁰⁸ Womanly breasts also played significant sexual and cultural roles in “low class” burlesque strip shows, and “high class” Ziegfeld-produced Broadway extravaganzas. Pre-code Hollywood allowed actresses Dorothy MacKaill, Renee Adoree, Norma Shearer and others to show their naked chests though thin and flimsy costuming.¹⁰⁹ Jane Russell’s star turn in Howard Hughes’ 1940 production *The Outlaw*, inspired censor Joe Breen to write, “Throughout most of the picture [Russell’s] breasts, which are quite large and prominent, are shockingly emphasized and . . . are very substantially uncovered.”¹¹⁰ WWII GI’s were not discouraged from pinning up leggy or busty images of female sex icons—movie stars mostly, but some fantasy drawings, too—and chesty, dishabille female totems were painted on airplane fuselages for good-luck. Sex sold everything from “Yankee Doll” apples to “Buxom” brand melons.¹¹¹ Spiegel and Sebesta wryly wrote, “Fruit growers understood that breasts were an excellent metaphor for tender succulence—and patriotic consumption.”¹¹² So, it is not as if interest in the female breast had faded away and was jarringly rediscovered on television during the postwar era. What had again shifted by the 1950s was the social *meaning* of the breast, and the fact that its cleavage was frequently and, for some, too prominently, featured on the new democratic medium of television. The specific social obsession with the female bust shown (or implied) on the nation’s home screens quickly made bosoms the hyper-sexualized locus of negotiation for postwar network censorship. It was at this point of political, commercial, and technological convergence that serious problems arose for Helffrich and his NBC-TV CA department.

“Dagmar”

Virginia Ruth Egnor’s original stage name was Jennie Lewis, but she is best remembered as “Dagmar.”¹¹³ She was one of the first television-created icons, a “star” not so much for what she *did* on television, but simply because she *was* on television. Dagmar was a tall, buxom woman of twenty-three, a former sweater model, hired to play the “dumb blonde” foil to host/comedian Jerry Lester on *Broadway Open House*— America’s incipient late-night talk offering, precursor (by four years) to NBC-TV’s *Tonight Show*. The televised image of Dagmar’s empty-headed, full-bosomed character prompted viewer comments like: “Her dress was practically down to her waistline. She really is a disgrace . . . Send her back to burlesque.”¹¹⁴ Television program historians Harry Castleman and Walter Podrazik wrote that other “sensitive viewers described Dagmar as ‘nothing more than a walking pin-up picture,’ apparently even more dangerous than [NBC-TV’s other cleavage queens] Faye Emerson and Ilka Chase.”¹¹⁵ Helffrich once cautioned Dagmar on “what passes for a neckline,” and shrugged, “*Radio Daily* . . . once raised an eyebrow on the girl, but otherwise [there] have [been] absolutely no clamorous protests. Bosoms would appear here to stay.”¹¹⁶ That may have been so, but a certain frightened NBC-TV affiliate in New England reacted differently.

Bill Swartley, general manager of WHDH-TV, Boston, expressed his concern over Dagmar’s ample bosom and the unrestricted burlesque-like sexiness of *Broadway Open House*, which reflected similar objections from other Bostonians. Swartley noted that he and Westinghouse Broadcasting, then corporate owner of the station he managed, were concerned over Dagmar’s chesty appearance since the city’s Catholic Archbishop, Richard J. Cushing, had blasted television for being morally lax, and one local politico was calling for a government-run TV censorship board.¹¹⁷ Boston’s representative to Congress, Thomas Lane, had indeed told the

press he was receiving “hundreds of complaints” from citizens upset over seeing Dagmar and other “immodestly clothed” women on television, and recommended a Federal Censorship Board to control, what he termed, the “primitive state of nudism”¹¹⁸ being telecast. Cushing further criticized television comics like Jerry Lester and Milton Berle for having “perverted sense[s] of humor,”¹¹⁹ and, during the 1951-52 television season, an often-vehement public discussion on appropriate broadcast fare ensued in local newspapers, public schools, and churches throughout the city of Boston.¹²⁰ As it turns out, *Broadway Open House* was a short-lived television phenomenon lasting only sixteen months, with Lester quitting the show after his continuing feud with Dagmar could not be resolved.¹²¹ Subsequent to 1952 there are no further references to the opulent Dagmar in the CART reports, although she was seen on network television for several more years.¹²² Nonetheless, the controversy continued over what Helffrich described as “the under costuming of female performers”¹²³ on television.

NBC-TV’s “Cleavage Control”

The viewers that complained the loudest simply did not want to see female cleavage on television, period. In an early CART, Helffrich notes that about 150 post cards, all from Brooklyn, New York, and addressed to then NBC President Joseph McConnel, included the same message: “In the name of decency, I ask you to bar from your network all so-called modern styles which leave our women only half clothed. Please remember your programs come into homes where our young children and adolescents should be safe from improper displays. . . Television should be a boon to humanity—not a curse.”¹²⁴ Most letters, however, were not as literate. Enraged over the low cut dresses seen on the *Cameo Theater* show,¹²⁵ another viewer sent a rambling, poorly written dispatch blaming television for contributing to what was seen as the world’s moral decay. This person listed as reprehensible: “low neckline[s] revealing too

much cleavage, violence, filth and murder everywhere, more filth on [the] next channel, dirty kissing[,] bending women down half way, dirty women drinking and kissing. Why isnt [sic] the people advertise [sic] good things such as . . . go to church [and] be a good Christian.”¹²⁶

Helffrich wrote, “A definite segment of the viewing audience of *average articulation* [author emphasis, suggesting Helffrich may have harbored a hierarchical class bias] feels resistance to plunging necklines and cliff dweller sophistication in general.”¹²⁷ He determined his last batch of critical mail “included petitions totaling three or four dozen signatures, all of which support a call for greater decorum.”¹²⁸

Helffrich and NBC-TV management instituted a “good taste” cleavage control policy the next year. After a particularly naughty image of a low-cut dress was broadcast and later deemed “in extremely bad taste on the plunging neckline front,” NBC-TV’s CA department decreed it standard procedure to always place a censor in the control room during live broadcasts. The CA representative could then make split-second decisions on décolletage acceptability under code requirements. “If there is anything in dubious taste which requires Management action to enforce its deletion,” Helffrich warned, “the Management is ready, willing and able.”¹²⁹ Indeed, he was not bluffing, and, as a battery of CA censors masked and deleted allusions to the female breast in likeness or reference, Helffrich resolutely supervised. Removed, for example, was a shot of a nude department store *mannequin* because such an image played “too blue” for NBC-TV content examiners,¹³⁰ expunged were all references to the word “falsie”¹³¹ — a kind of bra padding that appeared to make a woman’s breasts larger; even jokes about udders or milking cows were eliminated because such humor was seen as “too graphic.”¹³² The taboo even extended to drawings and animated cartoons. The only animated cartoon cows cleared for television during this period were ones drawn wearing *skirts*,¹³³ otherwise certain vocal portions

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of the neo-Victorian audience would be reminded that they, too, were warm-blooded vertebrates burdened with the mammalian necessity of suckling their young. Actually, cow and udder jokes briefly became a humor substitute for breast jokes. On *The Hank McCune Show*, an early filmed sit-com and the first to use a laugh-track,¹³⁴ Helffrich and CA removed a gag that suggested one could “make a milkshake by getting a cow to jump rope, [as well as one] on the subject of a cow packing her bag . . . raw references to cow accessories . . . and a discussion of a cow’s frozen faucets.”¹³⁵ Helffrich mused, “It is a toss up whether getting rid of cleavage and [jokes] related thereto is any advantage if the substitute is going to be a concentration on bovine anatomy.”¹³⁶

“Sexual Containment” and Television Censorship

How are we to understand and place in perspective the ethos that spawned such censorious attitudes about female breasts and sexual content on television? Historian Elaine Tyler May submits a productive yet controversial viewpoint that offers one way of seeing the era. May argues that rigidly applied postwar notions of domesticity and strict gender roles within the home and family were social by-products of the American policy of foreign and domestic communist containment. Her argument suggests such cultural constraint—primarily of female sexuality, but any sex deviance was suspect—fit the concrete objectives of the Cold War.¹³⁷ “The nation,” May wrote, “had to be on moral alert”¹³⁸ and domestic sexual restriction was part of such vigilance. Literary scholar Alan Nadel asserts “this containment of sexuality permeated the full spectrum of American culture in the decade following the war and contributes to explanations of such varied cultural phenomena as strictly censored television programming . . . [and] the constrictive and restrictive structure of female undergarments.”¹³⁹ That might be the case, but this dissertation proposes that women on early television were not the only objects of sexual containment. Indeed, as we shall soon see, men’s sexuality was just as proscribed as the

udders of those cartoon cows mentioned earlier. That said, this work should not be interpreted as failing to recognize or seeking to diminish the disparate social burden placed upon women in the culture during the war years and after.¹⁴⁰ Instead, the undertaking argues that, while there was a clear and significant overemphasis on women's breasts and undergarments on early television, based upon Helffrich's CART reports, *all* overt sexuality was circumscribed on the medium. Scholars of postwar culture like T. J. Jackson Lears,¹⁴¹ George Lipsitz,¹⁴² and Joanne Meyerowitz,¹⁴³ no longer try to identify monolithic, singular movements or specific event as clear indicators of significant historic shift. Besides, wrote Meyerowitz, "an unrelenting focus on women's subordination erases much of the history of the postwar years . . . [and] tend[s] to downplay women's agency portray[ing them] as victims."¹⁴⁴ This work, then, views popular culture similar to Meyerowitz, seeing it as "rife with contradiction, ambivalence and competing voices."¹⁴⁵

As noted, postwar America can be accurately characterized as a time of anxiety. May, for instance, has documented in her writings how "fears of sexual chaos tend to surface during times of crisis and rapid social change."¹⁴⁶ This era exemplifies her point. Conventional wisdom instructed that if America fell, it would fall from within. It would topple from sexual upheaval, relaxed moral standards and increased promiscuity; it would collapse from homosexual "perverts" in government, easy pickings for the wily, ubiquitous communist; it would tumble from the breakdown of the independent, nuclear family structure—working male as family provider, stay-at-home female as wife, mother and exclusive sex partner—all other familial configurations were rejected as un-American. Some also believed such a breakdown could happen through the Huxleyan whammy of commercial television. Like communists, TV, too, was found everywhere. The brave new medium had to be monitored and, when necessary,

coldly censored. Any program broadcast that was not seen as “American,” family friendly, or a recognized reflection of past religious, social, political, legal, and cultural norms, was suspect.

While censorship of female breasts was clearly magnified in early television, bosoms were not the only objects of concern for finicky home viewers. Modern dance routines was also suspect. Tight costuming and free, aggressive sexual expression through austere body movements made modern dance another point of heated discourse and negotiation for Helffrich and NBC-TV CA.

“Dirty Dancing” on Early Television

“[It was],” wrote the shaken viewer, “one of the most sensuous and sensual programs I have ever seen,” concluding, “as a teenager, it got me all stirred up with desires I know I shouldn’t have as a Christian.” The reference was to segment on *Frontiers of Faith*, a religious show, featuring a “dance interpretation of pagan rites” used to express the sweep of religious history through the millennia. “I am amazed that a religious group would present it,” continued the agitated teen, “and that *you* did not tame it.”¹⁴⁷ Helffrich made no further comment after this CART entry; the passage supposedly left to speak for itself. Postmodernists would surely argue it as an excellent example of how meaning is made not by the intentions of television producers, but at the intersection of text (program) and reader (viewer). If nothing else the story shows how watching human bodies engaged in non-traditional dance on *any* NBC-TV offering was subject to calls for censorship, and introduces the question of how to negotiate what some saw as “dirty dancing” on early television.

Ruth Mata and Eugene Hari¹⁴⁸ were a highly skilled, athletic, and imaginative modern dance team seen frequently on *Your Show of Shows* among other NBC-TV programs. Their interpretive dances, choreographed in the Isadora Duncan/Martha Graham tradition, revealed an

interior passion by severe, angular body movements and close contact with the ground. Professionally known as “Mata and Hari,” they were celebrated for their muscular, lithe dance routines, which frequently involved, among other things, leaping, tumbling, and sliding on the knees. While some viewers witnessed in their ballet the artful expression of “inner emotion,” others just saw dance movements far too lewd and suggestive for television. In his report to Helffrich, nighttime CA manager Burke Miller described the duo’s first dance number on *Your Show of Shows* in May 1951. “The female dancer,” Miller wrote, “in a sinuous routine, fell back on the stage with her legs spread apart and the pursuing male dancer fell upon her.”¹⁴⁹ Helffrich replied, “With TV for the first time bringing ballet to many who have never seen it before it is just possible that some of these more free expressions will be misunderstood,” adding, “I don’t think banning them is necessary but watching just how they are used certainly is.”¹⁵⁰ Mata and Hari stayed on the air, but after any appearance by the pair, CA braced itself for messages of shock and outrage from the home audience. Viewers considered their dancing “too lurid,”¹⁵¹ unfit for the eyes of children,¹⁵² “dirty filth,” “pornographic and revolting.”¹⁵³ Likewise, their *Apache dance*—a Parisian *pas du deux* cabaret that represents an apache, or Paris thug, slapping and mistreating his female partner—was criticized for being “lewd and disgusting,”¹⁵⁴ and persistent straddling moves in ballet sequences broadcast in early March 1953, brought heightened complaints.¹⁵⁵

Ballet appears to be a favorite target of criticism not only for its sensuous movement but also its costuming. A mother’s complaint was registered on behalf of an unnamed male ballet dancer’s tights, seen on the *Ford Star Review*, as being “too revealing,” causing Helffrich’s droll reply, “in terms of contours [what the tights] revealed was strictly average.”¹⁵⁶ The same parent added that seeing exposed male thighs was shocking to her daughters. To that Helffrich blithely

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quipped, “the mother must be in need of a good anatomy lesson.”¹⁵⁷ In fact, Helffrich dismissed most “dirty dancing” complaints with a didactic East Coast sniff. “Outside of the big cities,” he lectured, “we still get scattered mail finding excess sophistication in material which the majority of our audience seems to find acceptable.”¹⁵⁸

Helffrich clearly drew specific distinctions in performance genres. In a comedy sketch for the short-lived *Jack Carter Show*, host Carter made an appearance in too tight long Johns causing the home audience to clearly see the contours of his penis. Complaints came in as far away from New York as Memphis. An angry Helffrich wrote, “stage business around this [was] in no way anticipated by the script. . . . [It] was . . . a pornographic bit . . . unbelievably out of line,” adding he did not think it was the job of CA to tell performers to wear “appropriate undergarments . . . where costuming indicates.”¹⁵⁹ Why would Helffrich label one viewer as provincial for her consternation over seeing an obvious bulge in tights worn by a male ballet dancer and find Jack Carter’s actions “pornographic”? The answer may lie in how Helffrich beheld the nature of culture itself.

Television’s Role in Summoning “Culture”

The postwar notion of television’s purpose as cultural missionary is a regular Helffrichian theme.¹⁶⁰ Like his programming boss, Pat Weaver, Helffrich also saw the medium as not only a conduit for professional wrestling and roller derby, but for bringing, at least occasionally, tasteful refinement to the coarse, ill-bred masses. It is this fusion of highbrow and lowbrow impulses that tells us much about how Helffrich and others at NBC-TV viewed the medium’s role. Until about the late nineteenth century, American-performed ballet, opera, Shakespeare, and to lesser degree symphonic music, were as much the domain of the working-class poor as the Brahmin rich. But, as the twentieth century approached, historian Lawrence W. Levine located a clear

break with past behavior and found a decided dichotomy of culture. During this mid-to-late 1890s period, romantic notions had the artist's vocation treated as a "religion"—what Levine termed "the sacralization of culture"¹⁶¹—which in turn prompted high and lowbrow distinctions. Refinement was seen as a serious business that could only be understood and appreciated by the studied literati. These suffocating distinctions had currency in postwar television as well. It might be argued that Helffrich was not as concerned with audience complaints over ballet costuming because in it he saw a long and worthy European dance tradition. Ballet was simply perceived as "nobler" art than Jack Carter's comedy burlesque. Carter's actions were taken as vulgar, descending from a democratic and decidedly lowbrow vaudeville/minstrel heritage. One was not necessarily "better" than the other, but ballet held sway as it was seen as an "important," "artistic," and abiding classical form of expression. Helffrich's attitude, on its face, was the standard Victorian model of snootiness. If home viewers questioned or found themselves embarrassed by ballet, to Helffrich it signaled their parochial tastes were far too bucolic, suggesting it was they, not television, which had to change.

Nonetheless, the NBC CART reports make clear that postwar viewers expected the "protection" of network-imposed censorship from a variety of secular evils they saw on television. And, based upon Helffrich's notes, in most cases they got it. While there were, of course, seminal moments—Kinsey's work, among others—that loosened the strictures of sexual repression in media, ancient amative codes could not be severed. Therefore, open sexuality developed slowly on television and its transformation took place in fits and starts. It was within this continual tension that postwar television experimented.

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Notes:

¹ Donald Webster Corey, *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach* (New York: Greenburg Publishing, 1951), 284-85.

² J. Ronald Oakley, *God's Country: America in the Fifties* (New York: Barricade Books, 1990), 302.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Beth Bailey, *From Front Porch to back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 77.

⁵ Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 46.

⁶ Mary F. Corey, *The World Through a Monocle: The New Yorker at Midcentury* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 3-11. See also Douglas T. Miller and Marion Nowak, *The Fifties: The Way We Really Were* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 147-81.

⁷ Albert Ellis, *The Folklore of Sex* (New York: Charles Boni, 1951), 13. Ellis didactically noted that the second half of the twentieth century would technically begin on 1 January 1951, "but very few contemporary American's consider it as such."

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid. For a complete listing see 289-302.

¹⁰ Ibid., 272.

¹¹ Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardel B. Pomeroy, Clyde C. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948), passim.

¹² Tim Brooks and Earl Marsh, *The Complete Directory of Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows: 1946-Present, Sixth Edition* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1995), 58; and Alex McNeil, *Total Television, Fourth Edition* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 57. The comedy/variety show ran from November 24, 1948 to May 19, 1949.

¹³ NBC CART, 14 December 1948, box 1, folder 1, M95-105, 4/35/G4, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wis.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ NBC CART, 25 July 1949, box 1, folder 2.

¹⁶ Ibid.

- ¹⁷ NBC CART, 5 October 1951, box 1, folder 4.
- ¹⁸ John D'emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970, Second Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 37.
- ¹⁹ Donald B. Hileman, "The Kinsey Report: A Study of Press Responsibility," *Journalism Quarterly* 30 (1953): 434-35; Paul D. Brinkman, "Dr. Alfred Kinsey and the Press," Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1971. See also Bailey, *From Front Porch*, 83. Quoting from *Time*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Look*, she argues the popular press also reflected a note of caution in their reportage of Kinsey.
- ²⁰ NBC CART 26 August 1953, box 1, folder 6.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ D. H. Monro, "Theories of Humor," in Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen, (Eds.), *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum, Third Edition* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1988), 349-55.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Brooks and Marsh, *The Complete Directory*, 56; and McNeil, *Total Television*, 57. During its 13-year run the *Armstrong Circle Theatre* explored significant current topics among them dramas on racial tensions, mental illness, nuclear war, and existential loneliness.
- ²⁷ NBC CART, 22 September 1953, box 1, folder 6.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Kinsey et al, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, 585; and Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardel B. Pomeroy, Clyde C. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1953), 233.
- ³¹ NBC CART, 22 September 1953.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Caroline Burke, "It's Not TV Censorship: Case History of a Classic," *Variety*, 3 January 1951, 102. The four plays produced from 23 July 1950—3 September 1950 were "Hedda

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Gabler," Richard III," "Uncle Vanya," and "Six Characters in Search of an Author." Burke wrote at length of her dealings with the CA department for *Variety* in 1951

³⁴ Pat Weaver with Thomas M. Coffey, *The Best Seat in the House: The Golden Years of Radio and Television* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 209-212. "Frontal lobes" was Weaver's grand idea to "elevate television programming" by first (and gradually) exposing a mass audience to arias, ballet, timeless drama, and classical music via insinuation of such "culture" into a few popular NBC shows of the time, like *Your Show of Shows*.

³⁵ Burke, "It's Not TV Censorship . . ." 102.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Another example from the *Masterpiece* show: edited was the 27 August 1950 production of Shakespeare's *Othello*. The original line penned by the famous Bard is, "Villain, be sure thou prove my love *a whore!*" Italicized words were changed to "wanton." See NBC CART, 6 September 1950, box 1, folder 3.

⁴¹ Alan Arthur, Robert, Rod Serling, Irve Tunick, et al. *The Relation of the Writer to Television*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, 1960), 15.

⁴² Christine Jorgensen, *A Personal Autobiography* (New York: Bantam, 1968), xi.

⁴³ D'emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 40.

⁴⁴ Susan Stryker, "Christine Jorgensen," <<http://www.planetout.com/pno/news/history/archive/jorgensen.html>> Internet accessed, 2 April 2002.

⁴⁵ NBC CART, 12 January 1953, box 1, folder 6.

⁴⁶ In her memoir, Jorgensen claims to have met and stayed at the Kinsey's home in 1952, and "enjoyed a friendly conversation with him until his death in August of 1956." See Jorgensen, *A Personal Autobiography*, 201-202.

⁴⁷ NBC CART, 11 January 1954, box 1, folder 7.

⁴⁸ NBC CART, 12 January 1953.

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⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ NBC CART, 14 December 1948, box 1, folder 1. Helffrich provided no example of what was cut from the show or why the deletion was unacceptable.

⁵¹ Brooks and Marsh, *The Complete Directory*, 982-83; and McNeil, *Total Television*, 792. Home audience members would win prizes if the guest comedian gave the incorrect punch line. *Stop Me* was based on an earlier NBC radio show that began in 1939 and starred Milton Berle.

⁵² NBC CART, 28 February 1949, box 1, folder 2.

⁵³ NBC CART, 1 September 1949, box 1, folder 2.

⁵⁴ NBC CART, 27 September 1949, box 1, folder 2.

⁵⁵ NBC CART, 8 November 1950, box 1, folder 3.

⁵⁶ NBC CART, 14 June 1950, box 1, folder 3.

⁵⁷ The passage of time in each dramatic story played a pivotal role in *The Clock*. A former radio show, it was seen on NBC-TV from 1949-51. See Brooks and Marsh, *The Complete Directory*, 197; and McNeil, *Total Television*, 168.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ *The Colgate Comedy Hour* later renamed *The Colgate Variety Hour*, and, after Colgate dropped its sponsorship, *The NBC Comedy Hour* was seen Sunday evenings on NBC-TV from 1950-1955. It competed successfully with CBS-TV's *Ed Sullivan Show* for four of its five seasons. See Brooks and Marsh, *The Complete Directory*, 171; and McNeil, *Total Television*, 202.

⁶⁰ NBC CART, 18 October 1950, box 1, folder 3.

⁶¹ NBC CART, 17 October 1951, box 1, folder 4.

⁶² NBC CART, 26 April 1951, box 1, folder 4.

⁶³ NBC CART, 28 May 1951, box 1, folder 4. For other deletions to sexual references in audience warm-up activities, see also NBC CART, 14 June 1950, box 1, folder 3.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Leviticus 20:13 reads, "If any man layeth with mankind, as he layeth with a woman, both of them have committed abomination; they both shall surely be put to death." Another oft-used

passage taken from the Christian Bible to decry the wickedness of same-sex eroticism is from the Book of Romans 1: 26-27.

⁶⁶ Richard Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2002), 105-112; see also Robert F. Oaks, "Things Fearful to Name: Sodomy and Buggery in Seventeenth-Century New England," *Journal of Social History* 12, 1978, 268-81.

⁶⁷ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in America* (New York: Plume, 1992), 16-24.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ U.S. Senate, 81st cong., 2d sess., Committee on Expenditures in Executive Departments, *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950), 1-5.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War, Second Edition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 43.

⁷² There are literally dozens of volumes tracing McCarthyism's rise and fall, and its misguided—albeit politically productive—union of homosexuals with communism. Among them see Whitfield, *The Culture*; Richard H. Rovere, *Senator Joe McCarthy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1994); Earl Latham, *The Communist Controversy in Washington From the New Deal to McCarthy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are The Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1998); and David Cauter, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

⁷³ John D'emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics and the University* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 57-73.

⁷⁴ D'emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 49-51. See also Neil Miller, *Sex-Crime Panic: A Journey to the paranoid Heart of the 1950s* (Los Angeles: Alyson Books, 2002), 105-111.

⁷⁵ Lawrence M. Goldwyn, "Legal Ideology and the Regulation of Homosexual Behavior," Ph.D. diss, Stanford University, 1979, 23-47.

⁷⁶ Mark Blasius and Steve Phelan (Eds.) *We are everywhere: A Historical Source Book of Gay and Lesbian Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 274-5.

⁷⁷ Katz, *Gay American History*, 20."

- ⁷⁸ Morris Ploscowe, *Sex and the Law* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1951), 195-213.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 82-91.
- ^R Robert W. Haney, *Comstockery in America: Patterns of Censorship and Control* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), 88-95.
- ⁸¹ Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics and the Movies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 307. Specifically, the Lord-Quigley movie code prohibits filmed scenes of “impure love . . . which has been banned by divine law . . .”
- ⁸² See Andre Gide, *The Immoralist* (New York: Vintage, 1954); and Lewis MacAdams, *The Birth of Cool: Beat, Bebop, and the American Avant-Garde* (New York: Free Press, 2001).
- ⁸³ NBC CART 9 March 1954, box 1, folder 7.
- ⁸⁴ A swirl of controversy engulfed Maughm’s novel *Cakes and Ale* when it was first published in 1930. It is a wicked satire on contemporary literary poseurs and the amorality of Great Britain’s vaunted literary elite. See W. Somerset Maughm, *Cakes and Ale* (New York: Vintage Books International, 2000).
- ⁸⁵ NBC CART 9 March 1954.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ Stephen Tropiano, *The Prime Time Closet: A History of Gays and Lesbians on TV* (New York: Applause Theatre and Cinema books, 2002), 1-5.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, ix, 4, and NBC CART 15 August 1956, box 153, folder 2. This program, “Homosexuals and the Problems they Present,” was seen as an episode of the Los Angeles-produced program *Confidential File*, 25 April 1954. A comparable treatment was broadcast by the New York-based show *The Open Mind* hosted by Dick Heffner, 4 August 1956. Similar shows followed in *The Open Mind* series. In fact, after one of *The Open Mind* discussion shows on homosexuality, a laudatory Helffrich wrote, “from a Continuity Acceptance point of view, it seems to me the picture looks bright [on discussing difficult, adult subjects on television:] At least there is a departure from the head-in-the-sand attitude [on this show that] TV can do without.”
- ⁸⁹ Tropiano, *Prime Time Closet*, 3. This was another title in the *Confidential File* series from 1955.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.* This sensationally titled show was seen on WTVS-TV, Detroit, 1958.
- ⁹¹ *The Adventures of the Abbots* was heard on NBC radio, over which Helffrich and the CA department also exercised editorial control. This program never became a television show.

- ⁹² NBC CART, 17 May 1955, box 153, folder 1.
- ⁹³ NBC CART, 27 August 1958, box 153, folder 4.
- ⁹⁴ Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Breast* (New York: Ballantine, 1997), 177.
- ⁹⁵ Maura Spiegel and Lithe Sebesta, *The Breast Book: An Intimate and Curious History* (New York: Workman Publishing, 2002), 279-82. "The big breasts that symbolized patriotism [in WWII]," wrote the authors, "would be come a well-loved hallmark of the All-American girl." In addition, Freudians suggested that displaced breast, penis, and other sex fetishism could also be detected in the American obsession with gargantuan, chrome-adorned automobiles of the Fifties. Along with large eroticized female mammaries, these befinned, swollen, gas-guzzlers were also enduring metaphors of industrial abundance, material waste, and sexual fixation that characterized the age.
- ⁹⁶ NBC CART, 7 May 1959, box 153, folder 5.
- ⁹⁷ Spiegel and Sebesta, *The Breast Book*, 160.
- ⁹⁸ Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 9.
- ⁹⁹ "Dictator by Demand," *Time*, 4 March 1957, 34; also see Jane Dorner, *Fashion in the Forties and Fifties* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington, House, 1975), 28.
- ¹⁰⁰ Marling, *As Seen on TV*, 12.
- ¹⁰¹ Carolyn Latteier, *Breasts: The Women's Perspective on an American Obsession* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1998), 37-38.
- ¹⁰² Yalom, *A History of the Breast*, 90.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 9-12, 49, 91, 105, 147, 159.
- ¹⁰⁴ Godbeer, *Sexual Revolution in Early America*, 120, 213, 271-2.
- ¹⁰⁵ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex: Battles Over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 299, 312-13; see also Charles A. Mills, *Love, Sex and Marriage in the Civil War* (Nokesville, Virginia: Apple Cheeks Press, 1998).
- ¹⁰⁶ See Hugh Merrill, *Esqy: The Early years at Esquire* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 4-12.

¹⁰⁷ John Tebbel and Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *The Magazine in America, 1741-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 33-36; see also Merrill, *Esqy*, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ See Mick LaSalle, *Complicated Women: Sex and Power in Pre-Code Hollywood* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2000), 8, 155. LaSalle wrote that Shearer's "near transparent gown she wore in *A Free Soul* . . . still incites gasps at repertory houses . . ."

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons, *Dame in the Kimono: Hollywood Censorship and the Production Code*, Second Edition (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 115-16.

¹¹¹ Yalom, *A History of the Breast*, 185-7.

¹¹² Spiegel and Sebesta, *The Breast Book*, 282.

¹¹³ Louis Chunovic, *One Foot on the Floor: The Curious Evolution of Sex on Television from *I Love Lucy* to *South Park** (New York: TV Books, 2000), 28-30; Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik, *Watching TV: Four Decades of American Television* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1982), 48; and Penny Stallings, *Forbidden Channels: The Truth They Hide from *TV Guide** (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 75.

¹¹⁴ NBC CART, 30 November 1950, box 1, folder 3.

¹¹⁵ Castleman and Podrazik, *Watching TV*, 48.

¹¹⁶ NBC CART, 27 November 1950, box 1, folder 3.

¹¹⁷ NBC CART, 28 February 1951, box 1, folder 3.

¹¹⁸ *Variety*, 7 March 1951, 36.

¹¹⁹ "Boston Prelate Blasts TV Comics for 'Committing (Video) Suicide,'" *Variety*, 28 February 1951, 26.

¹²⁰ Ibid., and *Variety*, 7 March 1951, 36.

¹²¹ Stallings, *Forbidden Channels*, 75; and Brooks and Marsh, *The Complete Directory*, 137-8.

¹²² After *Broadway Open House*, Dagmar had her own brief (four-month) network show, *Dagmar's Canteen*, and was a frequent guest panelist on the NBC-TV game show *Masquerade Party*. Virginia Egnor, the woman remembered as "Dagmar," died in 2001 at the age of 79. See Dennis Mclellan, "Comic actress, Dagmar, dies at 79," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 October 2001, 54.

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- ¹²³ NBC CART, 7 December 1951, box 1, folder 4.
- ¹²⁴ NBC CART, 28 December 1951, box 1, folder 4.
- ¹²⁵ *Cameo Theatre* was another experimental dramatic anthology series produced in the round that featured minimalist sets, props, and costumes. The live show used close-ups and other odd camera angles to emphasize character and engage the home viewer in the story. In various time slots, it ran on NBC-TV from 1950-55. See Brooks and Marsh, *The Complete Directory*, 159; and McNeil, *Total Television*, 33.
- ¹²⁶ NBC CART, 13 August 1951, box 1, folder 4.
- ¹²⁷ NBC CART, 28 February 1951, box 1, folder 4.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid.
- ¹²⁹ NBC CART, 7 October 1952, box 1, folder 5.
- ¹³⁰ NBC CART, 8 February 1952, box 1, folder 5.
- ¹³¹ NBC CART, 2 December 1952, box 1, folder 5.
- ¹³² NBC CART, 23 January 1952, and 2 February 1952 both found in box 1, folder 5.
- ¹³³ "Censorship Invades the Animal Kingdom," TV Guide, 4 January 1958, 12-15.
- ¹³⁴ *The Hank McCune Show* had only a four-month run, September- December 1950, on NBC-TV; after that it went into syndication. See Brooks and Marsh, *The Complete Directory*, 431; and McNeil, *Total Television*, 357.
- ¹³⁵ NBC CART, 16 November 1950, box 1, folder 3.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid. Also, any natural image of or relating to the birthing of animals—even if done in a serious documentary style—was touchy. Helffrich passed a Disney film, *The Vanishing Prairie*, in which a Buffalo calf was born. Outspoken viewers found the show "morbid and depressing." One thought it better suited to "a specialized audience such as medical students," another lectured that it "was the wrong thing for expectant mothers" to witness. See NBC CART, 5 November 1954, box 1, folder 7.
- ¹³⁷ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York; Basic Books, 1988).
- ¹³⁸ Ibid., 93-94.

¹³⁹ Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narrative, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 117.

¹⁴⁰ The 1940s-50s were difficult for women on many fronts. The government encouraged conflation of housewifery with stay-at-home patriotism; the stress of verbal mother-bashing emanating from ideas like "Momism;" the "Rosie the Riveter" fabrication of an expanding job market and pay structure for women in industry when, in truth, limited work options greeted the female labor force, and pay scales never reached parity with men. Culturally, lesbianism was linked to prostitution and degeneracy; pregnancy out of wedlock created a new iteration of the "fallen woman," or worse a completely invisible woman, a shunned outcast. After the war little changed, the government, employers, and even the unions blocked further industrial opportunities for women. See Philip Wylie, *Generation of Vipers* (New York: Pocket Books, 1942, 1955), 184-196; and Donna Penn, "The Sexualized Woman: the Lesbian, the Prostitute, and Containment of Female Sexuality in Postwar America," in Joanne Meyerowitz (Ed.), *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 358-81.

¹⁴¹ See T. J. Jackson Lears, "Power, Culture and Memory," *Journal of American History*, June 1988, 137-140.

¹⁴² See George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

¹⁴³ See Joanne Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Popular Mass Culture, 1946-1958," in Joanne Meyerowitz (Ed.), *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 229-262.

¹⁴⁴ Joanne Meyerowitz, "Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960," in Meyerowitz (Ed.), *Not June Cleaver*, 4.

¹⁴⁵ Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique," in Meyerowitz (Ed.), *Not June Cleaver*, 231.

¹⁴⁶ May, *Homeward Bound*, 93.

¹⁴⁷ NBC CART, 18 June 1957, box 153, folder 3.

¹⁴⁸ The dancer's real names were Meta Krahn and Otto Ulbricht; both studied in Zurich and Berlin and were proficient in tap, mime, acrobatics, and ballet. See Ted Sennett, *Your Show of Shows* (New York: Hal Leonard Publishing, 2002); and Internet, accessed 9 November 2002, <<http://www.streetswing.com/histmai2/d2matah1.htm>>

¹⁴⁹ NBC CART, 15 May 1951, box 1, folder 4.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

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- ¹⁵¹ NBC CART, 5 October 1951, box 1, folder 4, referring to Mata and Hari dance on *Your Show of Shows* broadcast on 9 September 1951.
- ¹⁵² NBC CART, 31 October 1951, box 1, folder 4, referring to same show above.
- ¹⁵³ NBC CART, 27 November 1951, box 1, folder 4.
- ¹⁵⁴ NBC CART, 15 November 1951, box 1, folder 4, referring to the *Ford Festival Show*, 8 November 1951.
- ¹⁵⁵ NBC CART, 5 March 1953, box 1, folder 6.
- ¹⁵⁶ NBC CART, 6 October 1950, box 1, folder 3.
- ¹⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁸ NBC CART, 8 July 1955, box 153, folder 1.
- ¹⁵⁹ NBC CART, 31 October 1951, box 1, folder 4.
- ¹⁶⁰ A similar leitmotif was heard at the outset of radio broadcasting. Here, proclaimed its boosters, was an aural medium “sent from the gods” to lift up the people exposing them to finer music, more sophisticated drawing-room humor, and subtle drama. Television, too—despite its tavern-based pedigree and early programs of professional wrestling and roller derby—was seen as a site for potential cultural enrichment, witness Pat Weaver’s idea, “Operation Frontal Lobes,” mentioned earlier. Weaver dreamed of inserting operatic arias, symphonic music, and scenes from ballet into “high-quality variety series.” See Weaver with Thomas M. Coffey, *The Best Seat in the House*, 211.
- ¹⁶¹ Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 136, 210, 254. “Sacralized culture” might best be understood as the assertion that classical art, dance, music, etc., brings man closer to God.

*Propaganda v. Public Diplomacy:
How 9/11 Gave New Life to a Cold War Debate*

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75-WORD ABSTRACT

Propaganda v. Public Diplomacy: How 9/11 Gave New Life to a Cold War Debate

This paper explores the public debate over the use of U.S. propaganda during both the Cold War and the War on Terrorism. While there is broad consensus for communicating U.S. policies and values to foreign audiences, differences of opinion in the role, scope and administration of overseas information programs dominate the debate. The role the State Department plays in administering these programs, first raised during the Cold War, remains unresolved.

150-WORD ABSTRACT

Propaganda v. Public Diplomacy: How 9/11 Gave New Life to a Cold War Debate

This paper explores public debates over the use of U.S. propaganda during both the Cold War and the War on Terrorism. It relies heavily upon previously classified documents from the Truman and Eisenhower presidential libraries, as well as Bob Woodward's contemporary account based upon classified materials in the Bush White House. It examines the 1953 debate over the role of U.S. propaganda, and shows how many of the same issues reemerged following the September 11 terror attacks. While there is broad consensus for communicating U.S. policies and values to foreign audiences, differences of opinion in the role, scope and administration of overseas information programs dominate the debate. The role the State Department plays in administering these programs, first raised during the Cold War, remains unresolved. And in both debates, the president's closest communications adviser appears to have exerted the greatest influence on their outcome.

*Propaganda v. Public Diplomacy:
How 9/11 Gave New Life to a Cold War Debate*

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, brought new life to an old debate. That the hostility of Islamic fundamentalist extremists could result in approximately 3,000 deaths forced the people of the United States to ask a fundamental question, Why do they hate us? It also resparked interest in American overseas information programs, a topic that had lost much of its luster since the end of the Cold War.

This paper looks at the ongoing debate over the role of U.S. government overseas information programs in the War on Terrorism. It does so by reviewing the last time the government and opinion leaders focused as much attention on what many label as propaganda. That debate took place in 1953, in the middle of the Cold War. A new president, unhappy with what he saw as the ineffective efforts of his predecessor, sought new approaches for communicating American policies and values to the rest of the world. That effort led to the creation of the United States Information Agency, an independent government agency that essentially served as the nation's public relations outlet. It remained in that role until 1998, when its functions were consolidated within the State Department.

As this paper will demonstrate, many of the issues that surrounded the decision to create the USIA are present in today's debate. Those issues include the definition of propaganda, whether it has a role in democratic societies, and what forms it should take. Then there is the question of where within the government should such a program be housed. Prior to the creation of the USIA, most overseas information functions resided under the umbrella of the State Department. However, as this paper will chronicle, State Department stewardship of these

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programs was an issue in 1953 and is so again today. The paper also suggests that presidential communications advisers have been and continue to be key players in framing this debate.

Propaganda versus Persuasion

There are few words in the English language that are as emotionally charged and carry as many ethical intonations as *propaganda*. Among many Americans, the very mention of the word conjures images of Nazi Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels, *Pravda* and the Cold War. How broadly the term is defined creates a filter through which persuasive communication activities are viewed.

The convergence of the Industrial Age, new mass communication technologies, and tensions growing out of international competition brought persuasive communication to the forefront in the early 20th century. However, for as long as humans have organized themselves into groups of shared values and concerns, communication has been used to strategically advance self interests. Archaeologists have uncovered evidence dating back to 1,800 BC of primitive agricultural extension agents giving farmers advice on how to improve their crop yield. During the fifth century BC in the city-state of Athens, new political freedoms gave rise to the birth of rhetoric, the study of public opinion and how to influence it. A philosophy of *vox populi*, the voice of the people, was embraced four centuries later in the Roman Republic. The spread of Christianity during the Middle Ages was also linked to strategic communication. The faith was passed along by word of mouth through missionaries such as Francis of Assisi, who spread his teachings of self-imposed poverty and service to the poor across Europe and the Middle East during the 12th century. The Catholic Church's efforts became more formalized in the 17th century with the establishment of the *Congregato de Propaganda Fide* for the purpose of spreading church doctrine.¹

The history of the use of propaganda is somewhat confusing because its very

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definition is a matter of dispute. Historian Brett Gray wrote, "Propaganda as a label suffered (and suffers) from a certain imprecision; it is not unlike Justice Potter Stewart's fabled definition of pornography: 'I don't know how to define it, but I know it when I see it.'"² *Webster's Dictionary* defines propaganda in a broad context as "the propagating of doctrines or principles; the opinions or beliefs thus spread."³ Linebarger wrote in a Cold War era publication that propaganda is "the planned use of any form of public or mass-produced communication designed to affect the minds and emotions of a given group for a specific purpose, whether military, economic, or political."⁴ Jowett and O'Donnell wrote that propaganda, "in its most neutral sense, means to disseminate or promote particular ideas."⁵

Many scholars -- and laypersons -- embrace the paradigm of propaganda as an umbrella covering all forms of persuasive communication, including advertising and public relations. Mertz and Lieber lump persuasive communications into two broad categories. One is *revealed propaganda*, messages that are overt in their effort to persuade, such as those in conventional advertising. The other is *concealed propaganda*, such as publicity generated from the distribution of news releases. In their model, the propaganda label can apply to almost any communication.⁶ Noam Chomsky, who also embraces the broad definition of propaganda, says it has the effect of narrowing debate within democratic societies:

"Since the voice of the people is allowed to speak out, those in power better control what that voice says -- in other words, control what people think. One of the ways to do this is to create political debate that appears to embrace many opinions, but actually within very narrow margin. You have to make sure that both sides in the debate accept certain assumptions -- and that those assumptions are the basis of the propaganda system. As long as everyone accepts the propaganda system, the debate is permissible."⁷

This broad definition of propaganda has created difficulties for the public relations profession, which emerged in its modern form during the early 1920s in no small measure due to public interest in propaganda. Using the broader context,

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propaganda appears to be a kin to a public relations approach known as press agency. Todd Hunt and James E. Grunig described this approach as being "public relations programs whose sole purpose is getting favorable publicity for an organization in the mass media."⁸ This was the "I don't care what you print as long as you spell my name right" approach popularized in the mid-19th century by master showman P.T. Barnum. It is a philosophy that has, for many, defined and stained the profession. Even the man considered the father of modern public relations, Edward L. Bernays, gave credence to this interpretation when he defined public relations -- the term he coined in his seminal book *Crystallizing Public Opinion* -- as "the new propaganda."⁹

However, that interpretation draws criticism from many quarters, especially public relations scholars and communication professionals. Since its earliest days, modern practitioners have tried to differentiate public relations from propaganda by placing it within an ethical framework. That was certainly the intent of Ivy Ledbetter Lee, whose *Declaration of Principles* in 1906 was the first attempt to articulate such a framework. That is also why public relations historian Scott M. Cutlip wrote that Bernays' efforts to further define public relations in his 1928 book *Propaganda* served only to muddy the waters and "handed the infant field's critics a club with which to bludgeon it."¹⁰

Gray argued that propaganda should not be confused with advertising and public relations. He wrote, "For my part, I try to maintain that distinction by defining propaganda as the organized manipulations of key cultural symbols and images (and biases) for the purposes of persuading a mass audience to take a position, or move to action, or remain inactive on a controversial matter."¹¹ Historian Leo Bogart wrote that the propaganda studies of the mid-1930s were "prompted by the assumption that the statements of totalitarian governments represented cunning and deliberate distortions of the truth to serve deeper strategic objectives."¹²

Jowett and O'Donnell prefer a narrower definition of propaganda, one that

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makes it a sub-category of both persuasion and information. "Propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist."¹³ On the other hand, they say persuasion "is interactive and attempts to satisfy the needs of both the persuader and persuadee."¹⁴ These tend to be in closer harmony with more widely accepted definitions of public relations that stress two-way communications, as well as the building and maintaining of mutually beneficial relationships.

It is not just communication professionals who have sought to distance themselves from the propaganda label. The United States government has backed away from that terminology since an initial flirtation with it at the outbreak of the First World War. In what is a common government tactic, officials have attached the label "public diplomacy" to the effort to influence foreign public opinion. However, few are fooled by the use of creative language. USIA veteran Fitzhugh Green acknowledged in his 1988 book *American Propaganda Abroad* that public diplomacy is "a euphemism for the word modern Americans abhor - propaganda."¹⁵

The same skittishness holds true for the more benign term "public relations." Once again, this is largely because of the broad definition many apply to propaganda. Although thousands of public relations practitioners are employed in all levels of government, they tend to operate under stealth job titles such as press secretary, public information officer, public affairs officer, and communications specialist. As early as 1913, Congress adopted the Gillett amendment, which declared that "appropriated funds may not be used to pay a publicity expert unless specifically appropriated for that purpose."¹⁶

Propaganda Techniques

The use of strategic communication in the United States predates the

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founding of the nation. Placed in a 21st century context, some of this activity can be characterized as propaganda. And as with modern-day propaganda, these activities took different forms that were defined by their source and accuracy.

According to Jowett and O'Donnell, *white propaganda* is that which comes from a source that it identified correctly and accurately reported.¹⁷ Thomas Jefferson urged President James Monroe to use what could be characterized as white propaganda to promote an American perspective against what he saw as a negative and hostile British press:

"I hope that to preserve this weather gauge of public opinion, and to counteract the slanders and falsehoods disseminated by British papers, the government will make it a standing instruction to their ministers at foreign courts to keep Europe truly informed of occurrences here, by publishing in their papers the naked truth always, whether favorable or unfavorable. For they will believe the good, if we candidly tell them the bad also."¹⁸

In a modern-day context, the Voice of America overseas broadcast can be said to fill this role.

Black propaganda is "that which is credited to a false source and spread lies, fabrications and deceptions."¹⁹ This is the form of propaganda most widely associated with Josef Goebbels. However, far less sinister figures have employed this technique to advance their causes. During the Revolutionary War, Benjamin Franklin spread false stories about British acquiescence in Seneca Indian atrocities against colonists. He did so to undermine the British war effort and to bolster overseas public opinion in favor of American independence.²⁰

A third form identified by Jowell and O'Donnell is *gray propaganda*, where the source "may or may not be correctly identified, and the accuracy of the information is uncertain."²¹ Exaggerated claims were often the basis for encouraging settlement of the wilderness. At first they were aimed at attracting Europeans to fledgling East Coast settlements. Later, the myth of frontiersman Daniel Boone was created to woo settlers into the new nation's interior.²²

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On some occasions, the form of the message is not as important a consideration as its timing. President Abraham Lincoln delayed publication of the Emancipation Proclamation until he could link it to a Union victory in the battlefield. Lincoln did not want the abolition of slavery (limited to just the Confederate states) to be seen as an act of desperation. When Lincoln got a much-needed victory at the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, it gave the proclamation credibility and eliminated the threat of European intervention into the American Civil War.²³ To hasten American intervention into World War I, the British government delayed release of the infamous Zimmerman telegram -- an intercepted German diplomatic communique that outlined a plot to draw Mexico into a war with the United States -- until it would have a maximum effect on U.S. public opinion.²⁴

Propaganda and the World Wars

The seeds for today's common conceptions of propaganda -- or misconceptions, depending on your point of view -- grew out of the 20th century's two world wars. For contextual purposes, it is important to remember that the term did not hold the same meaning prior to the outbreak of World War I. When the United States was drawn into global conflict in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson saw the creation of the Committee for Public Information as a necessary counterweight against the propaganda of the Central Powers. He appointed a long-time friend and political ally, newspaperman George Creel, to head its operations. Creel saw the application of American-style propaganda as being preferable to the wartime censorship favored by some in the military. However well-intentioned, CPI had its critics. As David M. Kennedy has written:

"According to historians critical of Creel's work, CPI propaganda 'frequently wore a benign face, and... its creators genuinely believed it to be in the service

of an altruistic cause,' but on the whole it showed an 'overbearing concern for correct opinion, for expression, for language itself.' Creel's agency promoted jingoism, intolerance, and vigilantism, an assessment that quickly became the reigning interpretation of both Creel's legacy and, at war's end, of the powers of propaganda."²⁵

As the public became disenchanted with the outcome of the so-called "war to end all wars," propaganda became a source of widespread concern. One postwar researcher wrote, "As writers for popular magazines reevaluated the nation's experience with war propaganda, there was more shock and concern about precisely this aspect of the propaganda than any other: the fact that propaganda appeared to be a force of boundless power."²⁶

The Office of War Information, created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the outset of the Second World War, had neither the authority or the influence of the CPI.²⁷ The Voice of America, modeled after the BBC's overseas broadcasts, was beamed to occupied Europe. As the Allies moved into Europe, OWI served as media contacts and established a series of Information Centers, or libraries. The agency engaged in white and gray propaganda.²⁸ It was left up to the Office of Strategic Services to conduct psychological warfare against the enemy, including the use of "black propaganda."²⁹

Bogart wrote that the differing missions of OWI and OSS led to a philosophical split that influenced American overseas information programs throughout the Cold War and into the post-Soviet era.³⁰ These differing views were first articulated in a 1948 Brookings Institute study:

"The struggle abounded in personalities, but was not fundamentally personal. It rested on differences between those who believed that propaganda should form part of the program of subversive operations, and should consist of any action, true or false, responsible or irresponsible, which would effectively hamper the enemy at any point; and those who believed that propaganda should be a public, responsible government operation to tell the truth about the war, about the United States and its allies, as a means of describing democracy and freedom, our war aims, and our determination to win both

the war and the peace."³¹

In many ways, the Brookings study defined the two central questions of the debate about the role of U.S. overseas information: Does propaganda work, and do the ends justify the means?

Cold War Propaganda

At the start the Cold War era, the U.S government was uneasy about embracing anything that smacked of Goebbels-like propaganda. Former Senator William Fulbright (D-Ark.) echoed this sentiment when he said, "there is something basically unwise and undemocratic about a system which taxes the public to finance a propaganda campaign aimed at persuading the same taxpayers that they must spend more tax dollars to subvert their independent judgment."³²

Nevertheless, there were others who felt the government should be doing more to counter the communists. Allen M. Wilson, vice president of The Advertising Council, told a New York gathering on March 22, 1949, "Is propaganda an effective weapon? It must be. How else, since the communists have nothing to offer France but promises, could the communist leaders have captured control of great sections of the French labor movement?"³³

Harry Truman distanced the government from the use of overseas information as a strategic tool during the early stages of his presidency. When Truman signed an executive order abolishing the OWI on August 31, 1945, he said, "This government will not attempt to outstrip the extensive and growing information programs of other nations. Rather, it will endeavor to see to it that other peoples receive a full and fair picture of American life and the aims and policies of the United States government."³⁴ However, Truman's view toward overseas information programs would evolve over the next two years as a result of both foreign and domestic pressures.

The initial step in this evolution came on March 12, 1947, when the president first articulated what would become known as the Truman Doctrine in a nationally broadcast speech before a joint session of Congress. The purpose of the speech was to announce a \$400 million economic and military aid package for Greece and Turkey. The fear was that British disengagement because of post-war financial strains would leave that area of the world open to Soviet domination.

Prior to the speech, Assistant Secretary of State Will Clayton wrote in a memorandum that "the United States will not take world leadership effectively unless the people of the United States are shocked into doing so."³⁵ Senator Arthur Vandenberg (R-Mich.) told the president that he would have to "scare the hell out of the country" to win approval of the Greco-Turkish aid package.³⁶ The Truman Doctrine speech established the philosophical and rhetorical tone for the announcement of the administration's signature foreign aid program, the Marshall Plan, later that same year.

Overseas information programs became a political battleground between the President and his congressional critics. The administration consolidated the State Department's Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (a direct descendent of OWI) into the new Office of International Information and Educational Exchange in the fall of 1947.³⁷ However, the Republican-controlled Congress, unhappy with what it saw as a timid American response to Russian propaganda, trumped the White House with the Smith-Mundt Act, which authorized the government to globally disseminate information about the United States and its policies.³⁸ In turn, the White House created an even larger, more aggressive overseas information program, the Office of International Information.³⁹

Truman fully embraced overseas information programs in an April 20, 1950, speech before a meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Truman told the editors that his administration would embark upon a "Campaign of Truth:"

"The cause of freedom is being challenged throughout the world by the forces

of imperialistic communism. This is a struggle, above all else, for the minds of man. Propaganda is one of the most powerful weapons the communists have in this struggle. Deceit, distortion, and lies are systematically used by them as a matter of deliberate policy. This propaganda can be overcome by truth -- plain, simple, unvarnished truth -- presented by newspapers, radio, and other sources that the people trust."⁴⁰

The debate over American overseas programs during the last two years of the Truman presidency was shaped by two wars, a shooting war on the Korean Peninsula and battles within the Washington bureaucracy. It could be suggested that while the Korean War added a sense of urgency to his debate, it was the in-fighting -- inner-agency and partisan -- that gave it its intensity. This was not without precedent. As Campbell and Jamieson have written, "Presidential war rhetoric is intimately related to an ongoing struggle between the president and the Congress, refereed by the courts, over what the Constitution permits the president to do."⁴¹

The United States International Information Administration was created in January 1952 "for the conduct of the (State) Department's international information and educational exchange programs."⁴² This development occurred, in part, because of a rift between the Economic Cooperation Administration and the United States International Information and Exchange Program. While there were other domestic and foreign influences on this debate, this was, essentially, a turf battle. USIE was the operating agency responsible for the State Department's foreign information and exchange program.⁴³ In 1949, Congress also authorized ECA to publicize its Marshall Plan programs in the participating countries.⁴⁴ It wasn't long before the two public information staffs began stepping upon each other's toes.

The creation of IIA did not quell the criticism of overseas information programs. At the start of 1953, the agency was faced with four congressional probes, including a McCarthy committee investigation into the location and construction of two Voice of America transmitters. And even before Truman vacated the Oval Office, Dwight Eisenhower was preparing IIA's demise.

The Eisenhower Approach

Unlike his predecessor, Eisenhower embraced the strategic use of overseas information from the outset of his administration. And different from many political figures, Eisenhower's rhetorical approach was oriented more toward outcomes than process:

"Eisenhower often appeared to be reticent about speaking, leading some scholars to suggest that he disliked speaking, per se. It would be more accurate to say that Eisenhower hated to waste time and found political speaking to be just that - a waste of time. He always had his eye on the goal to be achieved; he was not overly concerned with how it got done. In fact, if the goal could be achieved quietly, without fanfare, that was preferable."⁴⁵

Eisenhower had made the nation's cold war "psychological strategy" a campaign issue. "Many people think 'psychological warfare' means just the use of propaganda like the controversial Voice of America," Eisenhower said. "Certainly, the use of propaganda, of the written and spoken word, of every means to transmit ideas, is an essential part of winning other people to your side.

"But propaganda is not the most important part of this struggle," Eisenhower said. "The present Administration has never yet been able to grasp the full import of a psychological effort put forth on a national scale."⁴⁶

Just six days after taking the oath of office, President Eisenhower appointed the President's Committee on International Information Activities. It became widely known as the "Jackson Committee" because of its two most prominent members, William H. Jackson, the managing partner of a New York investment firm, and the committee's chairman, and C.D. Jackson, a Time-Life executive who had become one of Eisenhower's closest advisers. It was C.D. Jackson, an adviser to General Eisenhower on psychological warfare matters during the Second World War, who first suggested the creation of the committee in a November 26, 1952,

memorandum, to the President-elect.⁴⁷

Other members of the committee were New York advertising executive Sigurd Larmon, University of North Carolina President Gordon Gray, New Jersey businessman Barklie McKee Henry, and New York textile executive John C. Hughes. General Mills executive Abbott Washburn served as the executive secretary of the committee. All of the members, except Larmon, had military experience in either intelligence or psychological warfare. Most had media experience. The committee's final report was due no later than June 30, 1953.⁴⁸

In a letter to the executive secretary of the National Security Council, Eisenhower said the purpose of the committee was "to make a survey and evaluation of the international information policies and activities of the Executive Branch of the Government and of policies and activities related thereto with particular reference to the international relations and the national security of this country." The President went on to say, "It has long been my conviction that a unified and dynamic effort in this field is essential to the security of the United States and of the peoples in the community of free nations."⁴⁹

The Debate of 1953

When the Jackson Committee met for the first time on January 30, 1953, it was not the only panel in Washington discussing the future of U.S. overseas information programs. Within a month, the Senate extended the life of a special subcommittee investigating overseas information programs until June 30, the same day the Jackson Committee report was due. The Hickenlooper Committee, chaired by Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper (R-Iowa), held a series of hearings March 6 through May 13.⁵⁰ There was the Advisory Commission on Information, a five-member panel of specialists outside of government created by President Truman to review the operations of the IIA.⁵¹ There was the aforementioned McCarthy committee, which was being closely monitored -- as evidenced by the large volume

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of archived memoranda and newspaper clippings in the Jackson Committee files. The Jackson Committee also received indirect input from the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization, chaired by Nelson A. Rockefeller.

There was also intense interest in the Jackson Committee's deliberations from outside government circles -- particularly among journalists, who were generally opposed to anything that had the appearance of propaganda. The tone of much of this commentary was along the lines of the editorial opinion of *The Washington Post*, which said "Psychological warfare, in addition to being contrary to the American way of doing things, is antithetical to the American way of life."⁵² Columnists Joseph and Stewart Alsop wrote "Democracy cannot be peddled like soap flakes."⁵³ Walter Lippmann, who wanted to abolish the Voice of America, wrote, "In a society where opinions are free, a government propaganda, which is a monopoly, is an inherent contradiction and practically unworkable."⁵⁴

Predictably, the deliberations also had the attention of the nation's public relations practitioners. While generally supportive of an aggressive program of overseas public information, they, too, shied away from the "propaganda" label. "Psychological warfare must be an integral part of our national policy, not a thing apart," said public relations pioneer Edward L. Bernays. "The government should use social scientists who understand our activities as they relate to other countries."⁵⁵ Thomas J. Deegan, Jr., vice president and director of C&O Railway Company, told participants in a public relations workshop that the U.S. was "naive" in its counter propaganda and that the government had "traded down" public relations by using inadequately trained "press-release men."⁵⁶ Some of the most comprehensive recommendations came from Denny Griswold, the publisher and editor of the weekly newsletter *Public Relations News*.⁵⁷

The debate on the role overseas information programs can be boiled down to two questions: Should the nation use propaganda to advance its foreign policy goals, and where in the government should overseas information programs reside? Considering the political atmosphere of the times, it is somewhat surprising that the

Jackson Committee was able to reach a broad consensus on both points.

As already noted, there was strong opposition to the use of propaganda. The feeling in the Congress, within the media, and among public relations practitioners was that the nation's initial flirtation with propaganda, the Psychological Strategy Board, had been a failure. President Truman created the PSB on April 4, 1951, "to authorize and provide for the more effective planning, coordination, and conduct within the framework of approved national policies, of psychological operations." The PSB had been charged with reporting to the National Security Council "on the Board's activities on the evaluation of the national psychological operations, including the implementation of approved objectives, policies, and programs by the departments and agencies concerned." The PSB role was designed to be that of strictly coordination. It did not conduct any operations of its own.⁵⁸

The Jackson Committee heeded the voices of the board's many critics who felt that the PSB had been established on a false premise. "It is founded upon the misconception that 'psychological activities' and 'psychological strategy' somehow exist apart from official policies and actions and can be dealt with independently by experts in this field," the committee stated in a July 8 press release timed announcing its recommendations. "In reality, there is a 'psychological' aspect or implication to every diplomatic, economic, or military policy and action."⁵⁹

The committee also won praise from both reporters and public relations practitioners for rejecting of the use of propaganda in pursuit of American foreign policy goals. "American broadcasts and printed materials should concentrate on objective, factual news reporting," the committee news release said. "The tone and content should be forceful and direct, but a propagandist note should be avoided."⁶⁰ The Jackson Committee report also objected to the use of terms such as "psychological warfare" and "Cold War." The committee report said "they should be discarded in favor of others which describe our true goals."⁶¹

There wasn't as much a consensus as to where in the government overseas information efforts *should* reside as there was for where they *shouldn't*. From the

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very beginning of this debate, an array of voices from a variety of perspectives had advocated the removal of these programs from the operational control of the State Department.

During the 1952 presidential campaign, Eisenhower singled out the State Department when criticizing the Truman administration for compartmentalizing the nation's response to the Cold War. "We shall no longer have a Department of State that deals with foreign policy in an aloof cluster," Eisenhower said. "The Administration in power has failed to bring into line its criss-crossing and overlapping and jealous departments and bureaus and agencies."⁶²

The State Department's stewardship of overseas information programs also drew fire from the legislative branch. Senator Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) said the only way to save these programs from "certain death" was to transfer them from the State Department to a new federal agency. Senator Karl E. Mundt (R-S.D.), a member of both the McCarthy and Hickenlooper committees, predicted that the government's various overseas information programs would be placed under one head.⁶³ In a 44-page memorandum, Hickenlooper Committee staff concluded that "Congress and the American people lack an accurate definition of what we are attempting to accomplish with overseas information programs." The report stated that the program had "strayed too far" from its original purpose and "has become increasingly less effective as it has become more an instrument of propaganda and less an instrument of information."⁶⁴

There was less consensus on where the overseas information programs should reside. The Hickenlooper Committee and the Advisory Committee on Information proposed that these programs be consolidated into one Cabinet-level agency. This drew support from public relations practitioners such as Griswold, who wrote the White House and said, "Set up an independent agency, free to operate a fast-moving, modern program where timeliness takes precedence over protocol,"⁶⁵ However, there were also critics to raising the profile of overseas information programs to the Cabinet level. Senator John L. McClellan (D-Ark.), the

ranking minority member on the McCarthy committee, said the proposal "doesn't make any sense."⁶⁶ Jackson Committee staff member Lewis C. Mattison wrote in a critique of Griswold's proposals that "Cabinet rank is newspaper talk."⁶⁷

President Eisenhower effectively ended the debate when he sent Congress Reorganization Plan No. 8 of 1953. The order created the United States Information Agency. In many ways, it mirrored the Rockefeller Committee's recommendations. USIA represented a consolidation of overseas information programs administered by IIA, the Mutual Security Agency, the Technical Cooperation Administration, and by programs financed in connection with government in occupied areas. The president also agreed with the chorus of those who favored abolishing the PSB. However, the Rockefeller Committee's recommendation that the new agency be established under the control of the NSC was rejected.

Oddly, the only voice in the debate that appeared to favor State Department control of overseas information was President Eisenhower's own hand-picked group, the Jackson Committee. However, Reorganization Plan No. 8 was sent to Congress on June 1, 1953, exactly one month *before* the Jackson Committee report was due. Noting that the White House had already sent its proposal to Capitol Hill, the Jackson Committee declined to make a specific recommendation. But the report did say, "In our opinion, the most satisfactory arrangement would be to retain *within* the Department of State those functions now assigned the IIA and combine them with the information activities handled by MSA and TCA."⁶⁸ In a strategic footnote, the Jackson report stated that the committee had considered the recommendations of the Hickenlooper and Rockefeller committees to remove overseas information functions from the State Department. By declining to make a recommendation, the Jackson report appears to have acknowledged the political reality.⁶⁹

There is an ironic historical footnote to this debate. Under the direction of Vice President Al Gore, the Clinton administration embarked upon a cost-cutting program in 1993, the National Performance Review. USIA was one of the agencies

targeted for fat-trimming. Gore said, "It is imperative that both the State Department and USIA look for efficiencies and economies that result from the elimination of redundant programs, duplicative functions, and excess capacity in the infrastructure that supports the conduct of foreign affairs."⁷⁰ In the context of the Jackson Committee's deliberations 40 years earlier, this sounded a lot like movement toward the consolidation of overseas information programs under a State Department umbrella.

As late as February 15, 1995, the White House remained committed to an independent USIA. "After a review under auspices of the Vice President's National Performance Review, the Administration concluded that USIA, AID and ACDA should continue to pursue their missions as independent agencies under the foreign policy direction of the Secretary of State." However, the same White House statement foreshadowed the future when it said, "The review the Vice President directed also concluded that the State Department, and each of the other agencies, should continue to conduct thorough reinvention activities to attain greater efficiency and effectiveness and eliminate activities that can no longer be justified."⁷¹

On December 30, 1998, the White House announced that USIA's functions would be consolidated within the State Department. Because it came during the holiday season and in the period immediately following President Clinton's impeachment, the move received little attention. On October 1, 1999, USIA ceased to exist.⁷² Ironically, the one Jackson Committee recommendation ignored by President Eisenhower had finally been realized.

The Past Becomes Prologue

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States thrust the debate over the role of overseas information programs in advancing American foreign policy initiatives back to center stage. This would, in turn, spark a public debate

reminiscent of the overseas information debate nearly a half-century earlier. Again, the two most prominent issues in this debate were *what* kind of propaganda, if any, is appropriate, and *where* within the government should it be practiced?

With what many assume was one eye on history and the other on reelection, the Bush White House gave *Washington Post* reporter Bob Woodward unprecedented access to the president, key administration and military figures, and classified documents during 2002. The result was *Bush At War*, a 376-page book detailing the administration's response during the first 100 days of the War on Terrorism. It gave the reader a rare, albeit filtered, look at a major historical event as it is evolving. It also showed that overseas information, often referred to as the politically more palatable *public diplomacy*, was on President Bush's mind in the first hours following the attacks.

According to Woodward, Bush met with Karen P. Hughes, counselor to the president, on the morning after the attack. The president told Hughes to develop a "plan, a strategy, even a vision...to educate the American people to be prepared for another attack. Americans need to know that combating terrorism would be the main focus of the administration -- and the government -- from this moment forward."⁷³ The significance of this exchange was its focus on framing message content. Bush was, in effect, embracing the use of overseas information programs for strategic purposes.

A slightly different philosophy, one emphasizing the control of information, was articulated by Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. During a September 15 meeting of the Bush war cabinet at Camp David, Rumsfeld outlined his vision for overseas information. The minutes of that meeting indicated that the secretary of defense said, "Need tighter control over public affairs. Treat it like a political campaign with daily talking points."⁷⁴

At the risk of reading too much into the nuances of the individual speakers, these semantical differences foreshadowed the debate on the role of overseas information in the war on terror. Using the term *propaganda* in its broadest and

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least pejorative context, the U.S. would engage in white and gray propaganda -- and flirt with the use of black propaganda -- in the months that followed the attacks.

Hughes spearheaded the use of white propaganda with the creation of the Coalition Information Center in October 2001. The CIC was set up in the Indian Treaty Room in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building -- the site of many of Ike's Cold War news conferences. (The irony of this will be noted later.) There were also smaller CIC operations in London and Islamabad. Within the CIC, staffers from the White House, other administrative agencies, and the British Embassy engaged in what *The New York Times* described as "the most ambitious wartime communications effort since World War II."⁷⁵ The CIC's stated purpose was to more effectively and quickly communicate U.S. foreign policy goals to the world -- especially a skeptical Muslim world. The CIC was also established to counter the propaganda efforts of the Taliban regime, al Qaeda, and Osama bin Laden. *The New York Times* also reported that its creation was "an acknowledgment that propaganda is back in fashion after the Clinton administration and Congress tried to cash in on the end of the Cold War by cutting back public diplomacy overseas...to balance the budget."⁷⁶

The creation of the CIC came at a time the administration was being hammered in the media for targeting mistakes during the U.S. bombing campaign in Afghanistan. Twice during the early weeks of the air campaign, Red Cross facilities had been mistakenly struck by U.S. bombs. President Bush told the National Security Council on October 29, 2001, "We need to also highlight the fact that the Taliban are killing people and conducting their own terror operations, so get a little more balance here about what the situation is."⁷⁷ Just two days later, the President repeated his frustration when he opened an NSC meeting by saying "We're losing the public relations war."⁷⁸

The first fruits of the CIC came within a few days of its creation. It arranged an appearance by former American ambassador to Syria Christopher Ross on the influential Arabic news channel Al-Jazeera. It was the first time an American

official had addressed the Arab world in its own language since the attacks.⁷⁹ On November 17, First Lady Laura Bush presented the White House's weekly radio address as part of a coordinated effort to draw attention to the Taliban regime's brutality against women and children.⁸⁰ Just a few days later, the CIC office in Islamabad released a list of 22 atrocities it alleged were committed by al Qaeda and the Taliban.⁸¹

At approximately the same time Hughes and the White House created the CIC, the Pentagon established its own information outlet, the Office of Strategic Influence. Defense officials would say after its existence was revealed several months later that its objectives were not that much different from those of the CIC. However, it also engaged in the use of gray propaganda techniques, often associated with military and CIA PSYOPs, psychological operations, against the Taliban and al Qaeda. In the early stages of the war, the gray propaganda efforts included the dropping of leaflets and the use of flying radio stations -- both carrying instructions to the Taliban on how to surrender. One such broadcast began: "Attention Taliban! You are condemned. Did you know that? The instant the terrorists you support took over our planes, you sentenced yourselves to death."⁸²

The speculation that OSI was planning to move into the area of black propaganda spelled its early demise just three months later. When media reports surfaced in February 2002 of OSI plans to spread disinformation to foreign journalists,, White House aides reportedly "hit the ceiling," and, in a rare show of disharmony within the administration, said they were "furious" about the proposal. Hughes, who had been accompanying Bush on a Asian trip at the time the news broke, called a *Washington Post* reporter to ensure "that there be no change in the administration's strict policy of providing reporters with the facts."⁸³ Although he characterized the reporting as "inaccurate speculation and assertions," Rumsfeld announced the office's closing one day later. He also said the Pentagon would not deal in disinformation.⁸⁴

As 2002 drew to a close, White House and Pentagon officials found

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themselves still trying to avoid the stigma of black propaganda. *The New York Times* reported in December the existence of a secret effort "to discredit and undercut the influence of mosques and religious schools, as well as planting news stories in newspapers and other periodicals in foreign countries." White House spokesman Ari Fleischer told reporters, "The president has the expectation that any program that is created in his administration will be based on facts, and that's what he would expect to be carried out in any program that is created in any entity of the government."⁸⁵ In a Pentagon briefing, Rumsfeld said that the idea may have been discussed "at the 50th level" of the bureaucracy, but that "we don't intend to do things that are in any way inconsistent with the laws, or our Constitution, or the principles and values of our country."⁸⁶

As mentioned, there was another echo of the past in this debate: Where within the government should overseas information programs be housed? As was the case in 1953, there were a variety of opinions -- most of which wanted to distance these programs from the State Department.

The White House announced July 30, 2002 -- the 49th anniversary of the Jackson Committee Report -- that it was establishing a permanent Office of Global Communications, an extension of the CIC, to coordinate the administration's foreign policy message and to help shape the country's image abroad. Spokesman Ari Fleischer said, "better coordination of international communications will help America to explain what we do and why we do it around the world. It's important to share the truth about America and American values with other nations in the world." However, when asked whether the new office would replace or supersede State Department public diplomacy efforts, he said, "it's not above the Department of State. The Department of State has the lead in public diplomacy around the world. But it's a White House coordinating body, to work shoulder to shoulder with the State Department on this."⁸⁷

This approach won qualified praise from the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, a bipartisan panel created during the Cold War

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to provide oversight on overseas information programs. In a report released September 18, 2002, the five-member panel said "The Office of Global Communications should provide strategic direction and themes to the U.S. agencies that reach foreign audiences, while relying on the Secretary of State to provide tactical and strategic coordination of the diplomats overseas."⁸⁸ Translation: Let the State Department take the lead on diplomacy, and let the OGC take the lead on overseas information.

That interpretation is supported by another commission recommendation, that the 1998-consolidation of USIA within the State Department be reviewed. The report noted that the State Department's public diplomacy efforts had been strengthened since the consolidation, "much remains to be done to ensure that public diplomacy is brought into all aspects of policy decision making." It also favored integrating Congress into public diplomacy efforts⁸⁹ It should be noted that a previous incarnation of the commission had made similar recommendations 49 years earlier. The only major difference was that in 1953 it had favored placing overseas information programs in an independent Cabinet-level agency.⁹⁰

There were others who wanted distance between the State Department and overseas information programs. In a report released the same day the White House made its announcement, the independent Council on Foreign Relations recommended the creation of an independent Corporation for Public Diplomacy, modeled after the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, to develop programs to communicate American messages overseas.⁹¹ In a recommendation that in some ways mirrors the creation of the OGC, the Council on Foreign Relations also proposed the creation of a "Public Diplomacy Coordinating Structure, whose chair would be the president's principal advisor on public diplomacy."⁹² The report also called for increased funding of public diplomacy efforts -- which would be echoed six weeks later in the Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy's report.

Different Wars, Common Themes

In comparing the debate over the role and direction of U.S. overseas information during the Cold War with the renewed debate brought on by the War on Terrorism, one cannot help but be struck by the similarities. In both cases, the United States was not as much at war with another nation as it was at war with a philosophy. The rhetoric of communists and fundamentalist Islamic extremists was inflammatory and hostile toward Western values. In both cases, the influence -- and therefore, the threat -- of the adversary appeared to be spreading. And in both instances, Americans were left to ask themselves the question of "why don't they like us?"

Both debates occurred at a time when new media were emerging. In the case of the Cold War, television was just starting to take its place as the predominant mass medium. With the War on Terrorism, the Internet and forms of wireless communication are the emerging media. Significantly, in both debates the focus was more on the message than the media.

In terms of message content, the White House, the Congress, public relations practitioners and the media struggled in 1953 to define the appropriate role for overseas information when it came to advancing national foreign policy objectives. That debate was revived on September 11, 2001. In both instances, there was broad consensus on the need to more effectively communicate U.S. messages and values. However, when it came to the specific nature of such communication, opinions diverged. Those aligned with the military tended to take a more tactical approach to overseas information. This, in turn, provided them with justification for the use of gray and, occasionally, black propaganda techniques. Journalists and public relations practitioners preferred a more strategic approach. They favored the use of white propaganda -- although the practitioners distanced themselves from the term. The political leadership in the White House and the Congress publicly embraced the strategic approach while, at times, appearing the turn a blind eye to the occasional

necessity of the tactical approach.

Another striking similarity is the ambivalence toward State Department leadership of overseas information programs. There appears to be a basic mistrust of the State Department that transcends eras or political parties. There was a broad-based consensus toward removing these programs from State Department control during both the Cold War and the War on Terrorism. Even the different versions of the same presidential advisory panel made parallel recommendations some 49 years apart.

During both debates, there was intense Congressional interest in oversight. However, if the 21st century war follows the pattern of the 20th century war, it will ultimately be the White House that determines the question of how overseas information programs are administered. Only during the early stages of the Truman presidency, before the Cold War had reached its full intensity, and the later stages of the Clinton presidency, as the Cold War faded into memory, was there White House support for State Department control. History suggests that some public diplomacy functions currently housed within the State Department may yet again be on the move.

There is one other significant point of comparison: the role of a key presidential adviser in framing the debate. For Dwight Eisenhower, that key adviser was C.D. Jackson, who had a relationship with the president that pre-dated the White House and who had long served as an adviser on communication matters. For George W. Bush, that person is Karen Hughes -- a trusted confidant who has served as his chief adviser on communication issues since his days as Texas governor. These were the first people the two presidents turned to when it came to the critical question of how to win the hearts and the minds of an overseas audience. Theirs are the voices that appears to matter the most in this debate. It should be noted that this has precedent: It was Woodrow Wilson's close friend and adviser George Creel that convinced the White House to adopt create CPI in lieu of military censorship at the outbreak of the First World War.

While these comparisons between the Cold War and the War on Terrorism may be somewhat simplistic, they may provide some direction for future policies and, therefore, merit further study.

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***Pricking the National Conscience:
The Early Radio Career and
Thematic Interests of Charles Kuralt***

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During his long stint at CBS News, Charles Kuralt became known for his genial celebration of the American spirit. In the 13 years of his “On The Road” television reports, Kuralt “told uplifting tales of kindly brick makers and bike fixers and farmers sailing yachts to the sea” (Ehrlich, 2002, p. 327). And while those optimistic profile pieces were occasionally interspersed with stories of tragedy and conflict, he mostly reported on “Americans at their best: not cynical or callous or cruel, but idealistic, compassionate, and kind” (p. 335). But while Kuralt is remembered as one of the very best of television’s journalistic writers, his radio scripts reveal writing that is often even more rich and descriptive than his television work.

Charles Kuralt began his 49-year career in broadcasting as a volunteer sports announcer for WAYS-AM in Charlotte, North Carolina. While Kuralt’s television work is well-chronicled and documented (Kuralt, 1968, 1979, 1985, 1990, and 1995; Grizzle, 2000; and Ehrlich, 2002), his radio scripts offer an important and largely unknown step, taking him from a young newspaper columnist reporting individual stories, into one of the country’s preeminent broadcast journalism writers, focused on much larger themes. As his early radio scripts show, Kuralt was distressed about poverty and the need to provide opportunity for all American, regardless of race, gender or creed.

This article examines the significance of Kuralt’s early writing and reporting and traces the evolution of the style with which he would eventually become synonymous. Culled from a review of more than 100 radio scripts in the Kuralt Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, these scripts from the early part of Kuralt’s career are important because they predate his groundbreaking “On The Road” series and

demonstrate how his writing style and thematic interests were developing. They provide a day-to-day picture of the issues that were engaging Kuralt during those formative years and offer some insight into his evolution as a self-proclaimed “optimist” (Kuralt, 1968, September 1, p. 14). The radio scripts show Kuralt’s distress over his country’s neglect of its citizens, a dedication to preserving the environment, and an often ironic view of how social institutions work. His commentaries demonstrate Kuralt’s sense of humor and some foreshadow his love of the road and the people found along it. Matthew Ehrlich (2002) wrote that Kuralt’s “On The Road” series created a somewhat mythical picture of America in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but these radio scripts show that while Kuralt was aware of the reality of the American landscape during that period, he made a conscious decision to move away from those images and toward a more positive portrayal of his country. An examination of the themes featured by Kuralt in the radio columns written between 1961 and 1968 show an often less-than-optimistic outlook on life in America and a cynicism that he later decried in other members of the news media. In those radio columns, Kuralt railed at what he saw as America failing to live up to its promises, a concern over the destruction of the environment, and a sense of humor about often sacrosanct American institutions. Some of his work even foreshadowed his later “On The Road” career.

Kuralt’s Early Radio Career

Charles Kuralt’s love affair with radio spanned nearly a lifetime, starting with his first announcing job at age 13 and ending with the purchase in 1995 of an Ely, Minnesota station which he owned at the time of his death two years later. Kuralt will be remembered by history as “one of television’s great successes” as CBS colleague Walter

Cronkite noted at his memorial service (1997), but, as with many of Kuralt's contemporaries, it was radio that launched his broadcasting career (Bliss, 1991; and Sterling & Kittross, 2002, p. 312). Some of Kuralt's most passionate and descriptive broadcast writing is evident in his radio columns. The period from 1957 to 1967, beginning with his arrival at CBS to his creation of the "On The Road" series, was the most significant in Kuralt's radio career. But from North Carolina to locations around the world, his involvement with radio continued during most of the 37 years he spent at CBS.

Kuralt's radio experience marked an important transitional period in his career. It was radio that launched his 49 years in broadcast journalism. From the late 1950s, throughout the turbulent 1960s, and until his retirement in 1994, CBS Radio offered Kuralt a national forum on which to comment about what was going on in the country and world. He often used his radio commentaries to spotlight a darker side of American life. Despite his protestations that he was not a hard news reporter, Kuralt's radio scripts show a particular flair for sharp social criticism and commentary. Certainly, the radio writing often focused on harder news topics and demonstrated an "edge" not commonly associated with the television image of Charles Kuralt.

According to the *Charlotte News*, Kuralt was one of the youngest radio announcers in the country in 1948 (Grizzle, *Remembering Charles Kuralt*, p. 31). The teen was given his own, once-a-week radio show, "Junior Sports Parade," every Tuesday afternoon. At the same time, Kuralt worked as a color commentator for the Charlotte Hornets baseball team. Childhood friend Charles Lockwood often accompanied Kuralt to the station while he was working his shifts and remembered:

...you could just tell this guy - he's got something special.

It was either his voice or his writing ability, his writing ability and his interest in writing. And that made him stand out and everybody knew he was bound for great things... (Lockwood, 1998, p. 7-8)

Other friends were impressed that Kuralt was trusted with the late-night, weekend operation of the station as a 15 and 16-year-old announcer (Howey, 1998, p. 5). A senior WAYS staff member remembered that, even as a young teen, Kuralt stood out: "...he was an intellectual sponge. He wanted to learn everything I had learned up until that point about radio and about how to maneuver within the system...he was really a giant at that time" (Lindsay, 1998, p. 3).

Kuralt's writing ability was recognized by others as well. In addition to winning local and state competitions, as a junior high school student Kuralt won a National Association of Broadcasters-sponsored "Voice of Democracy" contest. The prize was a trip for the teenager and his mother to Washington where they met President Truman. The boy's professional hero, CBS broadcaster Edward R. Murrow, read parts of the boy's essay on the air, an experience Kuralt described years later: "Big thrill, bigger than meeting the President. Filler. Didn't understand that, then. Thought I had written something lasting and immortal" (Kuralt, Letter to Wes Wallace, no date, p. 1). As a high school senior, Kuralt was invited to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to hear Murrow address students. For the first time, Kuralt got to meet his professional idol.

In the Fall of 1951, Kuralt left his parents' home in Charlotte to enter the University of North Carolina. While there, he worked as an announcer at Chapel Hill's WCHL, and on weekends held similar responsibilities at a Sanford, North Carolina, radio station. In the summers, Kuralt was an announcer for Charlotte's WBT radio, and its sister station, WBTV. Back at school in 1953, Kuralt participated in a radio drama to sign on WUNC, the new campus station. (One of Kuralt's fellow student actors in the drama was Carl Kasell, who has had his own long radio journalism career at National Public Radio.) Kuralt continued to work at that station while - increasingly less successfully - juggling a full course load at UNC.

At the same time he was holding down several part-time radio jobs, in 1954, Kuralt was elected editor of the University's student newspaper, *The Daily Tar Heel*. Years later, Kuralt noted that becoming editor of the "DTH" meant "no time" and the effective end of his academic career (Kuralt, Letter to Wes Wallace, no date, p. 2). That year, Kuralt also married his high school sweetheart, Sory Guthery. In the wake of steadily declining grades, Kuralt left the University of North Carolina in 1955, just a few credits short of earning his history degree. After petitioning the University, in 1972, Kuralt was informed by the University that he would be awarded his B.A. degree "as of January 1965," due to a change in credit requirements (Duffey, Letter to Charles Kuralt, p. 1).

When Kuralt left the University of North Carolina in 1955, he took a job with the *Charlotte News* as a general assignment reporter. Soon he was given his own feature column called "People." A year later, Kuralt won Scripps Howard's Ernie Pyle Memorial Award for the 170 columns he produced on Charlotte personalities. The

recognition also caught the attention of CBS News which invited him to New York for a job interview. That paved the way for Kuralt's third encounter with Edward R. Murrow. Later, Kuralt remembered the experience: "They offered me \$135 a week to work the overnight, midnight to 8 a.m. I'd have paid them just to work in same room with Murrow" (Kuralt, Letter to Wes Wallace, p. 2).

In May 1957 when Charles Kuralt arrived at CBS' New York headquarters, he was assigned to write radio copy for the network's overnight newscasts. Veteran network international correspondent Marvin Kalb began his career at CBS within weeks of Kuralt and more than 45 years later, Kalb remembered, "The minute I saw him, heard him talk, read his copy, I knew we were dealing with an exceptional colleague....We all knew this guy Kuralt was something special and he proved us right" (Kalb, 2002). Kuralt's younger brother, Wallace, believed that first job at CBS was among Charles' favorites:

I think he probably enjoyed, as much as anything, the sitting up all night, taking all the stuff off the wires from all over the world and pulling it together in five minute [or] two minute newscasts and rewriting a lot of what they had written. He expressed to me many times how much fun that was (W. Kuralt, 2002).

A few months later, Kuralt was promoted to a writer position for the network's lead radio broadcast, *Douglas Edwards with the News*. After only a short time, the young man transferred to the television assignment desk. Kuralt was rapidly trusted with increasing responsibility and in March 1959, he began covering general assignments as the youngest person ever to be named a correspondent by the network. Kuralt was

apparently admired by many colleagues and managers alike, and enjoyed a stint as the golden boy of the network, but his initial anchor experience was short-lived. In 1960, at age 26, he was appointed anchor of the first network prime-time magazine show, “Eyewitness to History.” But Kuralt’s deliberative style didn’t work for the head of CBS Television (Grizzle, 2001, p. 147). After just four months, Kuralt was replaced as anchor by Walter Cronkite and sent to Latin America as the network’s only correspondent assigned to that region. In that position, in addition to his television duties, Kuralt also resumed the radio career begun 11 years before in Charlotte.

Themes in Kuralt’s Early Network Radio Work

There were four major themes that recurred frequently in the sometimes daily radio commentaries filed by Charles Kuralt between 1961 and 1968. Those themes included a look at poverty in the United States and how it affected the promise of America, a concern for protecting the environment, irreverence toward often sacrosanct institutions, and topics that foreshadowed some of Kuralt’s later work with “On The Road.”

Families and Poverty: Challenging Broken Promises

A frequent theme in Kuralt’s commentaries was the broken promises of the U.S. government to its citizens. Kuralt was the son of a social worker and, during the early to late 1960s, Kuralt’s radio pieces often displayed a sense of outrage that the American dream was not equally reachable for all. In June 1964, he wrote of the reality faced by Harlem’s African-American residents:

The young men out of a job who sit on the steps of the

deteriorating brownstone houses are black. The guy who collects the numbers slips and pays off the cop on the corner is black. Harlem is the blind despair of the black man and the supreme unconcern of the white man, who daily roars through Harlem on the New Haven's 5:20 to Westport, doing the crossword puzzle in the New York Times as the train picks up speed... (Kuralt, 1964, June 19, p. 1).

As a boy, Charles Kuralt traveled the back roads of North Carolina, watching his father tend to some of the country's most needy citizens, both black and white. That early experience exposed the young Kuralt to citizens who were trying to fight their way out of the Depression against overwhelming odds. Charles Kuralt acknowledged the influence his father's profession, and the time he spent traveling with his father, had on his own sense of fairness and civic responsibility:

Through his eyes I saw a part of our community that a lot of my schoolmates didn't see: a grinding poverty that most of them didn't even know existed in our community. To see my Dad wrestle with those problems every day, really doing his best to lift people out of their troubles and into society, made me admire him." (A&E, 1997).

Charles Kuralt never forgot his early exposure to the difficulties endured by some members of American society. Even during the 13 years of the "On The Road Series," largely remembered for its optimistic and positive spirit, many of the most compelling

stories were about poor people who managed to overcome the odds and, through hard work, better themselves, their families, and their communities.

A student of history, Kuralt had high expectations for his government and its conduct. In a story aired on CBS Radio on July 19, 1967, Kuralt wrote about actions by urban police departments that he believed were contributing to community unrest:

In Newark, New Jersey, for example, a 10-year-old boy was shot to death by the police while riding in a car with his parents.

A 41-year-old mother of 11 children was shot and killed while sitting quietly in her apartment. These were not stray shots. The police aimed and fired. When news of these deaths spread, it did not contribute to the keeping of the peace in Newark

(Kuralt, 1967, p. 1).

Again and again in his radio commentaries in the 1960s, Kuralt returned to the theme of governmental fairness and responsibility toward its citizens.

Where We Live: Advocating Environmental Protection

One of the subjects Kuralt was most passionate about in his radio columns was the importance of preserving the environment. As a boy, Kuralt spent time visiting his maternal grandparents' farm in rural North Carolina. He was a lifelong outdoor enthusiast, frequently writing about the pleasure he derived from fly fishing, gardening, and spending time in the outdoors. There were few subjects Kuralt approached with as much disdain as that of perceived environmental irresponsibility. A radio commentary aired on June 20, 1968, was titled "A Letter to Daniel Boone." In it, Kuralt railed at the encroachment of developers on the Kentucky land first explored by Boone:

For now, suffice it to say that things have changed in Kentucky. The buffalo and deer have fallen on hard times. The bluegrass meadows you came back east to tell about...well, the ones that are left were only saved by the desire of rich men to have some place for their race horses to graze. And the mountains you knew ...the ones with virgin timber growing along the ridgelines, the ones that gave off that beautiful blue haze on the misty mornings... you wouldn't know them now, Daniel. Unfortunately, for the mountains and for us, they turned out to have coal in them, so they've been skinned, destroyed, and left there. The people, those independent-minded people who followed you into the mountains...they have fled, the water turned acid, the timber has been uprooted, the land has died (Kuralt, 1968, p. 1).

Longtime Kuralt cameraman Izzy Bleckman remembered a shoot in the American northwest where the "On The Road" team was covering a story on clear cutting of forests: "He [Kuralt] was aghast at what he saw up there and what a shame it was. Especially up in Alaska - the old growth [forests] up in Alaska that the log companies were trying to get access to" (Bleckman, 2002).

A related theme which drew Kuralt's ire was the negative affect that urban development was having on the country's environment. For example, in November 1964, Kuralt authored a commentary about the opening of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge:

The opening of the great Verrazano Narrows Bridge

across the inlet to New York harbor is being hailed this week as the last great link in a highway system that will speed motorists around crowded Manhattan. And so it will. But among the places it will speed motorists to is Staten Island, a heretofore bucolic borough of New York City, which had farms and forests, and where it was possible to hear bird songs above the internal combustion engines.

The bridge has ended all that. The bulldozers are at work on Staten Island, and bulldozers are no respecters of forests, or the birds who live in them. It is clear that Staten Island will soon look like Brooklyn or Queens - rows and rows of streets, clogged with cars, rows and rows of houses, one very much like another, and a tree will be a precious, surprising thing to behold there (Kuralt, 1964, p. 1).

Kuralt's love of the land, and his desire to see it preserved, was a theme that would often reappear in his "On The Road" and "Sunday Morning" pieces later in his career.

Barbed Humor: Criticizing Institutions

While there were weighty topics in Kuralt's radio scripts that he treated with great seriousness, those scripts, rich in detail and observation, often reveal a sharp sense of irony not associated with his genial "On the Road" pieces. Kuralt's ironic touch could be biting or funny, as in this April 15, 1965, commentary:

As everybody who has paid even passing attention to the Book of Luke knows, there once went out a decree from

Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. We are still rendering unto Caesar the part that is Caesar's, and you had better render by midnight tonight, else Caesar's part automatically goes up 6 per cent (Kuralt, 1965, p. 1).

Kuralt poked fun at other American institutions as well. The day before Thanksgiving 1961, Kuralt offered this commentary for CBS Radio's "*The Reasoner Report*" concerning the American tradition of turkey-centered holiday dinners:

...the American Institute of Hypnosis announces today a way to make it easier on the bird and on yourself. A turkey which meets its death in a state of panic, the institute says, will have adrenalin in its blood. So it's better to hold the bird to the ground, talking softly to it. Draw a straight chalk line away from its beak which will make it lie motionless in a state of hypnosis. Tuck its head under its wing. It will go to sleep. Then put your hand over its eyes, as you take the head out again for the ax, because the turkey will think it's night and stay asleep. The drumstick will then taste good, like a hypnotized turkey should. Let us give thanks, among other things, for imaginative publicity men (Kuralt, 1961, p. 1).

The tone of this piece is perhaps more cynical than the television packages Kuralt became known for, but it shows his instinct for telling a story.

While Kuralt was skewering other American institutions, he didn't spare his peers in the press corps. As CBS' Latin American correspondent, Kuralt spent two years filing stories from throughout the region. Reporting from Haiti in 1963, Kuralt wrote:

If rumors had weight, the old island of Hispaniola would have sunk into the sea this week. The rumors kept interrupting the reporters at the swimming pool of Santo Domingo and Port Au Prince.

Most of the press corps spent last week in Santo Domingo. This is a long way from Port au Prince, and in another country - but you could telephone and telegraph from Santo Domingo. There is no use knowing the news if you can't get it out.

First, the excited word came that a large Midwestern newspaper had said 800 armed Haitian exiles were poised to invade Haiti. They turned out to be 65 exiles, not 800, and whatever arms they had they had given up. There was no invasion (Kuralt, 1963, p. 1).

In the spring and summer of 1963, Kuralt wrote about the press' coverage of the tensions between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Kuralt was CBS's only reporter in Latin America, and he had a jaundiced view of others "covering" the story without being close to the scene. He was also doubtful about the likelihood of the various dictators' posturing actually breaking into an armed conflict:

If Haiti and the Dominican Republic ever do go to war it

will be a terrible thing...and the Organization of American States is exactly right to do what it can to prevent it. But judging from some of the 120-point headlines of last week, the war was on. Not exactly.

I went up to the frontier twice during the week. The first time, at a place called Puerto Cachiman, I asked a Dominican corporal where the border was. 'Well,' he said, pointing to a foot-wide ditch behind me - - 'That's it.' The ditch goes thirty yards or so to a clump of trees at Puerto Cachiman and then just disappears as if somebody decided long ago it is too much trouble to bother with.

On the other side of the line one Haitian soldier with a rifle was standing in the shade of a bayona tree. The Dominican corporal said he had known him for seven years.

The corporal hollered to the Haitian - 'Hey, Pierre, come talk to this American reporter.'

'You talk to him,' Pierre said. 'It's too hot. Hey - you're not coming today are you?' Meaning the invasion.

'No, everybody's back there sleeping today,' the corporal said.

'Yeah,' Pierre said, 'it's too hot today.' (Kuralt, 1963, May 12, p. 1).

Kuralt's radio and television coverage of Latin America includes many examples of more traditional journalism featuring serious analytical pieces, but the radio work offers insight into how Kuralt really felt about some of the issues – both large and small – that he was covering. It also provided the chance for Kuralt's personal thoughts to show through in a way that his television writing did not allow.

Finding A Wider Audience: Foreshadowing "On The Road"

Some of Kuralt's radio columns dealt with light topics. In the summer of 1964, Kuralt took a driving trip across the United States with his second wife, Suzanna "Petie" Baird Kuralt. That experience gave him material for radio commentaries which thematically foreshadowed his later work in the "On The Road" series:

On our trip across the country, my wife and I escaped the 75-mile-an-hour traffic and the uniformly bad restaurants of the super highways and we're glad we did. We'll always remember the girl at the motel desk in Kalispell, Montana, who gave us a basket of cherries because she didn't think we ought to leave Montana without tasting them. They were delicious. We'll always remember the drive from Greybull to Sheridan, Wyoming, across the Big Horn mountains. There is a shorter east-west route, so that one is not much used. We're glad we used it. We were grateful to Idaho for its many neat picnic tables, grateful to South Dakota for its golden summer wheat fields at sunset, grateful to the New Jersey family we saw tidying up other people's bread wrappers and soft drink

bottles at a scenic turnout in Oregon. It is a country made to be grateful for, and even all the exhaust fumes, billboards and litter of its roadways have not ruined it - not yet (Kuralt, 1964, p.1).

It would be another three years and many hard news assignments before Kuralt returned to consistently reporting on the generous spirit of the people he met along the open road, but clearly, the seeds had been planted.

From 1959 to 1967, Kuralt was a general assignment reporter for CBS News, filing television and radio reports from hotspots ranging from Latin America, to the American South, to Vietnam. His reporting was widely thought to be solid, even, on occasion, gifted, but Kuralt was dissatisfied. Still only in his late twenties and early thirties, Kuralt was highly ambitious but believed his bosses had “decided I was a washout as a reporter of breaking stories” (Kuralt, 1990, p. 133). And while Kuralt liked the travel, he was, in fact, not enjoying the kinds of stories he was sent to cover.

Like other young people in the U.S. during the 1960s, Kuralt expressed distress over internal unrest and the way his government was reneging on what was supposed to be the American promise. At the end of his career, Kuralt still remembered the disillusionment he felt covering the Vietnam War:

I was very excited the few times I was close to combat or in the midst of it. But afterwards, I was shaking, frightened to think of the dangers. I was sometimes nauseated. I remember that first time I threw up once I got back to Saigon. I didn't like it. I didn't like seeing dead men lying on the ground with whom I had been talking just a few minutes before (A&E, 1997).

After several tours covering the Vietnam War, Kuralt was eager to try something else. He had asked CBS management to allow him to contribute feature stories to the *Evening News with Walter Cronkite* prior to 1967, but met with resistance, including from Cronkite, who later called his opposition “the worst mistake of my life” (Cronkite, 1998, p. 2). In the Fall of 1967, the newscast producers finally relented and Kuralt’s first “On the Road” piece – an essay on falling leaves in New England – aired to an overwhelmingly positive response. Kuralt’s career - and television journalism - were forever changed.

Conclusions

Kuralt was lauded as a talented writer almost from the time he began penning stories as a teen, but the early years he spent writing for radio provided him a unique opportunity to develop his broadcast writing style. In his radio commentaries, Kuralt took full advantage of the freedom offered by radio: the freedom to be more descriptive, more detailed, and more opinionated. Former CBS reporter Bill Moyers worked with Kuralt on a few projects while at the network and admired his skills. He said he believed that Kuralt’s writing talents rivaled those of Kuralt’s hero, Edward R. Murrow: “...the clear, strong, declarative sentence. The faithfulness to his material. The ability to paint word pictures. Charles [was] as good on the radio as Murrow was. His love of language, his wide reading, and his ability to be his own man, his determination to be his own man” (Moyers, 1998, p. 10). The radio scripts provided Kuralt an opportunity to transition from a newspaper feature reporter who focused on interesting local characters to a skilled news correspondent who was commenting, in many cases, on important world events.

The radio scripts collected in Kuralt's papers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill are relatively clean and clear of editing marks. Unlike the later television scripts, Kuralt's radio pieces were often written on a very tight deadline, without the assistance of a secretary to retype. Yet, there are only limited indications of revision by the author. Years later, from a literary standpoint, they stand on their own, the product of a confident young writer with a sure hand. Like many of his generation, Charles Kuralt remembered that, as a boy, his family gathered around the radio to hear Edward R. Murrow broadcast the news of the Second World War (A&E Biography, 1997). That experience, he said, helped formulate his desire to become a journalist. And radio remained a key part of that desire throughout his life.

Among the themes found in Kuralt's radio work were a sense of distress about America's perceived failure to carry out its promise, a need to preserve the environment, a sense of humor about established institutions, and the beginning of his celebration of the America found "on the road." Overall, the scripts show a concern with many serious and weighty topics Kuralt did not typically deal with in his "On The Road" and "Sunday Morning" pieces. At the same time, some of the radio scripts allow Kuralt's humor and unique take on the American spirit to show through. Virtually all of the scripts demonstrate his deft touch and skill with the language. In addition to the content and style of Kuralt's radio scripts, they are important because they mark the beginning of his transition from a young, local newspaper columnist into one of the country's preeminent broadcast writers.

Kuralt will most likely be remembered as television journalism's rumpiled and avuncular chronicler of back road American life. The radio scripts he penned for CBS

News during the 1960s show that he was also an insightful and, at times, highly critical commentator on American society during some of the most important years of its recent history. Yet, the turbulent times captured in Kuralt's radio commentaries, evolved into the optimism that became his trademark: "I have found a lot out there on the road to be confident about and reassured about. Most important of all, [Americans] have come to see the grace and worth and joy in taking part themselves in solving problems and becoming a part of the national conscience" (Kuralt, 1995, August 13, p. 1). In a sense, as Kuralt knew, we are all on the road, or want to be.

Charles Kuralt's Radio Career	
1948-51	Began broadcast career as a 13-year-old disc jockey for radio station WAYS in Charlotte, N.C. With his own Tuesday afternoon program, "Junior Sports Parade," Kuralt was billed one of the "youngest radio announcers in the country," according to the <i>Charlotte News</i> .
Spring 1951	Heard Edward R. Murrow speak at Chapel Hill. "There he was in [the] same room," Kuralt wrote in a letter to Wesley Wallace.
Fall 1951	Worked the Sunday shift at a Sanford, N.C. station while in school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
1953	Worked as an announcer at WUNC, Chapel Hill's campus radio station.
Summer 1953	Worked at WBT, the CBS affiliate in Charlotte, N.C. during summer breaks from the University of North Carolina.
May 1957	Hired by CBS Radio as a news writer.
Fall 1957	Promoted by CBS to a writer position with <i>Douglas Edwards with the News</i> .
1958	Transferred to CBS Television's assignment desk.
March 1959	Became the youngest person ever to be named a CBS correspondent at age 24.
1960s through 1980s	Continued to work with CBS Radio while filing television stories from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States.
April 3, 1994	Retired from CBS News. Contributes occasional pieces and hosting duties in the next three years.
Fall 1995	Purchased WELY, a radio station in Ely, Minnesota, population 4,000.
July 4, 1997	Died of complications from lupus.

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History

**Deeper Than the Fictional Model:
Structural Origins of Literary Journalism
in Greek Tragedy and
Aristotle's *Poetics***

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5,460 words

Abstract

*This paper demonstrates that the narrative structure of literary journalism originated not simply in the novel or short story but, rather, in Greek tragic drama. In ancient Greece, the adaptation of mythology from oral tradition to tragic drama necessitated structural changes – a process called “literary transfiguration” by anthropologist/mythologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and “displacement” by literary critic Northrop Frye. The first and greatest critic of mythology’s displacement into drama was Aristotle, in his *Poetics*. Aristotle’s descriptive/prescriptive analysis of tragic plots, identifying such conventions as causality, altered chronology, complication, and dénouement, has, of course, displaced into novels and short stories. More recently, those structural elements have displaced into literary journalism, primarily in magazine articles. Through a chain of displacement, Greek mythology’s original literary structure now shapes the modern nonfiction narrative. Such structure may give literary journalism, and the magazines in which it appears, a powerful explanatory function.*

Introduction

In 2000, Harvard University's Nieman Foundation and Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism sponsored a roundtable on the nonfiction narrative. Participants debated the name and the future of what also has been called literary journalism and the magazine feature¹, but they agreed upon its debt to fiction: "It's a sophisticated form of nonfiction writing, possibly the highest form, that harnesses the power of facts to the techniques of fiction."² Indeed, in his book *Writing for Story* Jon Franklin uses the term "nonfiction short story" for literary journalism because, he says, such works "represent the revival, in new form, of the old fiction short story."³ Franklin, however, gets even closer to the origins of literary journalism in the subtitle of that book: *Craft Secrets of Dramatic Nonfiction...* (emphasis added). This paper will demonstrate that mythological tales, as presented in the Greek tragic dramas of the fifth century B.C.,⁴ first incorporated standard plot conventions that, today, give shape to nonfiction narratives. Identified by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, those conventions "displaced" (a term defined below) into prose fiction, and from prose fiction into the nonfiction narrative. The structures of nonfiction narratives hearken back to humans' first efforts to create literature out of myth. In brief, literary journalism embraces the plot conventions of literary myth, potentially "stirring in the soul something at once familiar and strange."⁵

Definition of Terms: *Literary Journalism, Myth, and Displacement*

We already have seen, in this paper, a variety of names for the modern nonfiction narrative. At the above-cited roundtable, Robert Vare, senior editor at *The Atlantic Monthly*, said, "Let's try to get one troublesome piece of business out of the way as

quickly as we can. What do we mean by the term ‘narrative nonfiction’? And is it the same or different from other terms that are in use, like ‘literary journalism,’ or ‘creative nonfiction,’ or ‘extended digressive narrative nonfiction?’”⁶ (Vare might have added “narrative journalism,” “long-form journalism,” and Franklin’s “nonfiction short story.”⁷) He concluded, “To me these semantic wrestling matches that go on are a complete waste of time. I think what each term suggests is that this is essentially a hybrid form, a marriage of the art of storytelling and the art of journalism – an attempt to make drama out of the observable world of real people, real places, and real events.”⁸ In most instances, this paper will use the terms *literary journalism* and *nonfiction narratives* to signify such works.

Myth can be an equally slippery term. Lule notes that the concept embraces falsehoods; ancient tales; and social narratives that offer “exemplary models for social life.”⁹ This paper uses a definition of ancient, literary myth from a traditional source for literary studies, Holman’s *Handbook to Literature*: “An anomalous story or stories having roots in the primitive folk-beliefs of races or nations and presenting supernatural episodes as a means of interpreting natural events in an effort to make concrete and particular a special perception of human beings or a cosmic view.”¹⁰ As Claude Lévi-Strauss notes, the primary forms of myths exist in a preliterate state, seemingly free of the constraints of Aristotelian poetics and other logic-based structural influences: “In the course of a myth, anything is likely to happen. There is no logic, no continuity. Any characteristic can be attributed to any subject; every conceivable relation can be met. With myth, everything becomes possible.”¹¹

The very latitude of such preliterate myths prompts the next term to be defined: displacement. Literary critic Northrop Frye created the term to describe what happens to myth as it moves from the preliterate state that Lévi-Strauss studied into the more logical, structured Greek drama and, consequently, other genres: “To this indirect mythologizing, I have elsewhere given the name of displacement. By displacement I mean the techniques a writer uses to make his story credible, logically motivated or morally acceptable – lifelike, in short.”¹² Though they did not interest him greatly, Lévi-Strauss noted the same concessions to verisimilitude as myth became literature, calling them “literary transfigurations” of the originals.¹³ This paper will use Frye’s term to discuss the movement – the displacement – of mythological structure from preliterate forms to Greek drama, and from Greek drama through prose fiction the literary journalism nurtured by 20th century magazines. Importantly, both Lévi-Strauss and Frye note that displacement means alteration; the original structures of preliterate myth do not move unchanged from original mythology to the nonfiction narrative.

Literature Review

An examination of critical analyses of literary journalism reveals four research trends and conclusions relevant to this paper and its presentation to magazine scholars:

- Magazines, rather than newspapers, were and are the primary venues for literary journalism.
- Histories of literary journalism tend to look back only to novels and short stories as structural models.

- Analyses of mythological influences on journalism deal primary with journalism en masse, particularly hard news, rather than offering focused examinations of literary journalism. Even within hard news, studies of myth deal more with themes than structure and more with modern myth-making than with the structural influence of literary myths.
- While no single work analyzes the impact of original dramatic structure on literary journalism, critics have separately documented the displacement of structure from oral myths to Greek tragedy; and thence to novels and short stories; and thence to literary journalism.

Role of magazines. Magazines, rather than newspapers, offered the primary venues for literary journalism in the United States in the 20th century. “American newspapers featured timely coverage written in a straightforward, objective style,” Chance and McKeen explain. “Magazines dealt with less timely topics, had less-stringent deadlines, and allowed more literary freedom. . . . Magazines were the first medium that learned to adapt; some newspapers are still in the process.”¹⁴ (Literary journalism does appear in newspapers, of course, as some examples below illustrate.)

In comparing newspapers and magazines, Chance and McKeen echo Wolfe, who as a both writer and a critic of New Journalism found newspapers more resistant to literary journalism than were magazines: “Newspaper people . . . were better than railroad men at resisting anything labeled new.” Wolfe compared Breslin’s work for the *New York Times* and *Esquire* – and his own work for the *New York Herald Tribune* and its Sunday magazine – and concluded that magazines, not newspapers, were the preferred medium

for writers “moving beyond the conventional limits of journalism.”¹⁵ In *A Sourcebook of Literary Journalism*, Connery writes, “Most of the writing identified as literary journalism from the 1930s to the present has appeared either in magazines or books.”¹⁶ One could add that many of those books first appeared piecemeal as articles or installments in magazines.¹⁷

Structural origins in novels and short stories. Histories of literary journalism generally trace antecedents no further than novels and short stories, beginning in the 18th and 19th centuries.¹⁸ Such limits seem logical when literary journalists themselves look no further. Franklin, as noted, champions the term “nonfiction short story,”¹⁹ and Wolfe, in *The New Journalism*, holds that the techniques of the new form “originated with the novel.”²⁰ In *A History of American Literary Journalism*, Hartsock traces origins of the genre to the dramatic dialogues of Plato, though not directly to Greek myth. But Hartsock focuses primarily on the 19th and 20th centuries and the “novelistic technique” of literary journalism.²¹ The Summer 1974 special issue of *Journalism History* hinted at earlier antecedents, but, in Connery’s words, “did not really establish a tradition as much as simply state that some of the techniques of new journalists can be traced as far back as the ancient Greeks.”²² In Sims’ anthology *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, Eason describes “texts that read like novels or short stories” and posits that realist literary journalism, contrasted with the less-structured modernist form, has a “novelistic” quality.²³ In that same anthology, Smith also applies the adjective “novelistic” to literary journalism.²⁴ In his anthology, Connery cites Ford’s more comprehensive view that a literary journalist uses “an approach somewhat similar to that of the novelist, short-story writer, and the poet.”²⁵ Chance and McKeen hold that literary journalism returned “to the

eternal verities of great storytelling.” In the next sentence, however, they link those verities to “novelists and short story writers.”²⁶

No studies, recent or otherwise, directly and extensively link nonfiction narrative plots to the structure of myths as presented in Greek tragic dramas of the fifth century B.C. However, like Hartsock, writers and editors of modern nonfiction narratives occasionally emphasize their awareness that the storytelling conventions they embrace predate the novel and the short story. *The Quill* reported that participants at a 1998 conference on nonfiction narratives “all agree that narrative journalism is an old genre that finds itself embodied in a new version amidst a modern setting. The genre’s popularity is as old-as speech and language.”²⁷ In Sims and Kramer’s *Literary Journalism*, Kidder declares, “Some people criticize nonfiction writers for ‘appropriating’ the techniques and devices of fiction writing. Those techniques, except for the invention of character and detail, never belonged to fiction. They belong to storytelling.”²⁸ More recently, at the 2000 Nieman/Columbia roundtable, two participants noted the enduring “neoclassical approach” of nonfiction narratives.²⁹ Such comments push the plot conventions of nonfiction narratives to a time before the first novels and short stories, but they stop short of linking those conventions to the origin: the displacement of myths into Greek tragedies.

Focus on journalism en masse. Studies that examine the influences of mythology on journalism tend to focus on journalism en masse rather than literary journalism alone. The title of Lule’s *Daily News, Eternal Stories: The Mythological Role of Journalism* is revealing, its emphasis on *daily* tending to downplay nonfiction narratives from *Esquire*, *The New Yorker*, *New York* magazine, *Harper’s*, and other

magazines that nurtured literary journalism.³⁰ In the Summer 2002 special issue of *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, titled "Mythology in Journalism," Lule concludes that "writers in the last four decades have adapted myth to study the role of news in society."³¹ Critics such as Eason, Manoff, and Kitch do note in passing the mythological relevance of "news stories ... when they are told in dramatic-narrative form."³²

Rather than focusing primarily on mythological structure, studies of myth and journalism focus more on mythological themes and modern mythmaking. Lule's study of editorials related to the terrorist attacks of September 11, for example, focuses on dominant themes such as "The End of Innocence" and "The Heroes."³³ He builds his earlier *Daily News, Eternal Stories* on the analysis of seven such myths.³⁴ In her examination of journalistic coverage of tragic events, Kitch concludes that news takes on "mythic qualities" with "themes [that] offer a promise of hope and healing, a message meant not just to console, but also to restore the social and political status quo."³⁵ In doing so, news stories command attention as modern mythmakers rather than as reflections of Aristotelian structure. "As modern myth, news proclaims and promotes social order," Lule concludes.³⁶ Zavarzadeh acknowledges the role of myth in literary journalism but still focuses on modern mythmaking, calling the nonfiction novelist "the mythographer of contemporary consciousness."³⁷

Displacement from preliterate myths to literary journalism. An assortment of separate critical studies does detail a chain of displacement that ultimately links the plots of nonfiction narratives to Greek mythology. Specifically, we can chart the displacement of Greek myths from oral tradition to Greek tragedies and epic poems,³⁸ from tragedies

and epics to novels and short stories; and from those prose-fiction genres to literary journalism. That chain begins with the realization that original, preliterate myths supplied the stories for our earliest recorded literature: Greek tragic dramas and epic poems.

“Tragedy in Greece was rooted in mythical paradigms,” Charles Segal writes in *Interpreting Greek Tragedy: Myth, Poetry, Text*.³⁹ Several studies of ancient Greece arrive at a similar conclusion, including Will Durant’s *The Life of Greece*.⁴⁰ Most important, however, Aristotle in his *Poetics* described with typical specificity the debt of tragic drama to myth: “In these days, the finest tragedies are always on the story of some few houses, on that of Alcmeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus....”⁴¹

Aristotle also noted the displacement of original myth’s free-form structure as it moved to drama: “One must not aim at a rigid adherence to the traditional stories on which tragedies are based. It would be absurd, in fact, to do so.”⁴² In his *Poetics*, Aristotle described and prescribed six categories of conventions – all the result of displacement – that characterize successful tragedies: “Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought [the content of speeches], Spectacle [stage appearance of the actors], and Melody.”⁴³ Of these six, this paper deals only with plot – partly to avoid a dissertation and mostly because, again in the words of Aristotle, “The first essential, the life and soul, so to speak, of Tragedy is the Plot.”⁴⁴

In her assessment of news coverage of the death of John F. Kennedy Jr., Kitch echoes Aristotle: “Stories of tragedy in particular require ‘a narrative framework that adheres to the requisites of dramatic unity and plot development.’”⁴⁵ However, literary journalists acknowledge the importance of structure regardless of content, tragic or otherwise. “The 800-pound gorilla was suddenly structure,” Franklin writes of early

efforts to produce literary journalism.⁴⁶ In his introduction to *The John McPhee Reader*, Howarth writes, “Structural order is not just a means of self-discipline for McPhee the writer; it is the main ingredient in his work that attracts his reader.”⁴⁷

The conventions (this paper uses the term adopted by structuralist literary critics⁴⁸) of tragic plots that Aristotle described and prescribed seem thoroughly mundane in the 21st century. We must remember, however, that *Poetics* offers the first identification and analysis of these familiar literary concepts, including totality (the notion that all episodes develop a core theme; none are extraneous); completeness (a beginning, middle, and end); causality; altered chronology; a complication (which the protagonist confronts); peripety (a complication-induced change of fortune for the protagonist); discovery (improved knowledge or self-knowledge prompted by the complication and peripety); and dénouement (the resolution of the complication). This paper demonstrates that these eight conventions of displaced Greek mythology also shape the plots of modern nonfiction narratives.

Aristotle did not prescribe these conventions for all narratives, past, present, and future: His focus was on the displacement of original myth into tragic drama. But his elucidation of the structure of literary myth has shaped storytelling for two millennia.

G.M.A. Grube, in his introduction to *On Poetry and Style: Aristotle*, writes:

The question is sometimes raised whether we should look upon the *Poetics* as a handbook of rules telling tragic poets how they should proceed in order to write good tragedies, or whether it is rather a collection of musings, often extraordinarily illuminating, by a great thinker on the subject of tragedy. It may, in part at least, have been intended to be the

former, but there can be no doubt that its greatness is due to its being, in fact, the latter.⁴⁹

Northrop Frye amply documents the displacement of mythological structures from tragic drama into prose fiction. In the aptly titled essay “Myth, Fiction, and Displacement,” Frye writes, “Literary shape cannot come from life; it comes only from literary tradition, and so ultimately from myth.”⁵⁰ Earlier, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, he emphasized the concomitant displacement as mythological structure moved from drama to fiction: “The presence of a mythical structure in realistic fiction, however, poses certain technical problems for making it plausible.... To make it a plausible, symmetrical, and morally acceptable story a good deal of displacement is necessary.”⁵¹

Despite Frye’s contention that “literary shape cannot come from life,” modern literary journalists attempt to find and reveal literary structure in real situations, as in McPhee’s “Travels in Georgia” and Franklin’s “Ballad of Old Man Peters.” This quest for literary structure in nonfiction troubles former *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* editor William Woo, who writes, “I think we can also mislead ourselves into imagining – and even worse, believing – that life divides neatly into beginnings, middles, and ends and plots and characters that develop as events unfold.”⁵² Despite such objections, Franklin maintains that nonfiction narratives “represent the revival, in new form, of the old fiction short story.”⁵³ The nature of the displacement from fiction to nonfiction is, in part, obvious: Unlike fiction, nonfiction cannot invent facts, however plausible. McPhee’s Princeton course on nonfiction narratives is called *The Literature of Fact* (as is Ronald

Weber's 1980 study of literary journalism).⁵⁴ "You arrange it and present it," says McPhee. "There's a lot of artistry. But you don't make it up."⁵⁵

The displacement of the conventions of literary myth, from Greek tragedy to prose fiction and then to literary journalism, shows an increasing tendency toward realism, culminating, perhaps, in the nonfiction narrative – McPhee's literature of fact. "The important point for literary analysis," Lucente writes in *The Narrative of Realism and Myth*, "is the combination of realism and myth, each of which may be seen as necessarily operative on all levels of narrative, though with radically different emphasis in each historical period."⁵⁶ Literary journalism represents storytelling's greatest injection of realism into mythological literary structure.

Aristotelian Mythological Plot and Literary Journalism

In his dissection of displaced myth in *Poetics*, Aristotle concisely described, for the first time in the history of literary criticism, the key plot elements of a well-constructed narrative. Those elements include totality; completeness; causality; altered chronology; complication; peripety; discovery; and dénouement.⁵⁷ In the sections below, this paper places Aristotle's descriptive/prescriptive analyses side by side with those of modern critics of literary journalism – demonstrating, ideally, that the plot conventions Aristotle established for literary myths are those of modern literary journalism.

Totality. Aristotle did not use the word *totality* to describe the notion that all episodes develop a core idea. Instead, this paper borrows the word from Edgar Allan Poe, who used it in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* to describe a literary work's "unique or single effect to be wrought out." Poe wrote, "In the whole composition there

should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design.”⁵⁸ Poe may have coined the best term for this concept, but the original idea belongs to Aristotle. In *Poetics*, he wrote,

The end is everywhere the chief thing.... The story, as an imitation of action, must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole. For that which makes no perceptible difference by its presence or absence is no real part of the whole.⁵⁹

Richard Read describes the plotting of his Pulitzer Prize-winning nonfiction narrative series “The French Fry Connection” in much the same way: “[*Oregonian* writing coach Jack] Hart helped me outline the piece in scenes and points. Each scene had to have a point, or we cut it.”⁶⁰ Howarth reports that John McPhee likens the relationship of “end” and “incidents,” to use Aristotle’s terms, “to a magnet’s attraction of iron filings.”⁶¹ In *Writing for Story*, Franklin instructs would-be writers of nonfiction narratives to write “actions” on note cards and keep and organize only those that help develop the story’s complication and resolution.⁶² In fact, Franklin believes that some of the early failures of nonfiction narratives at the *Baltimore Evening Sun* were failures of totality: “Too often, ‘writing long’ was done by including more facts. Fifty inches gave the city hall reporter space to lay out the whole city budget in stupefying detail.”⁶³

Completeness. “We have laid it down that a tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete in itself,” Aristotle wrote. It says much about the loose, episodic nature

of original myths that Aristotle felt compelled to add: "Now a whole is that which has a beginning, middle, and end. A beginning is that which is not itself necessarily after anything else, and which has naturally something else after it; an end is that which is naturally after something itself, either as its necessary or usual consequent, and with nothing else after it; and a middle, that which is by nature after one thing and has also another after it."⁶⁴

Literary journalists also insist on complete stories. "The piece of writing has a structure in it," McPhee says of one of his narratives. "It begins, goes along somewhere, and ends in a manner that is thought out beforehand."⁶⁵ Woo, as noted above, criticizes literary journalists for believing that nonfiction stories can have beginnings, middles, and ends. Yet Thomas French, a Pulitzer Prize winner for the *St. Petersburg Times*, describes in *Nieman Reports* one of his nonfiction series in which he "took whatever we had and broke it down into sections, with a clear beginning, middle and end." And Roy Peter Clark and Don Fry advise literary journalists to "arrange the material into a narrative with a beginning, a middle and an end."⁶⁶ Connery writes that an early example of literary journalism, Stephen Crane's "The Broken-Down Van," has "a clear beginning, middle, and end."⁶⁷

Causality. Aristotle touched on the notion of causality in his concept of completeness, in which middles and ends must stem from preceding events. No doubt reacting to the randomness of original myths, however, Aristotle devoted several passages in *Poetics* to the necessity of causality:

Incidents have the very greatest effect on the mind when they occur unexpectedly and at the same time in consequence of one another....

These [peripety and discovery] should each of them arise out of the structure of the Plot itself, so as to be the consequence, necessary or probable, of the antecedents. There is a great difference between a thing happening *propter hoc* and *post hoc*.... It is clear, therefore, that the causes should be included in the incidents of [the writer's] story.⁶⁸

In displacing the reporter's traditional five W's into literary journalism, Clark emphasizes causality by turning "why" into "motivation" – echoing Franklin's dictum that "the final important point about the literary quality of resolutions is that they must, absolutely and without exception *must*, be products of the character's own efforts."⁶⁹ McPhee also pushes "why" into "motivation" in saying, "It may take weeks to form [a story's] structure, to know where it's going to end, to know why it's going to end there...."⁷⁰ Joseph Mitchell, whom Sims credits with helping literary journalism survive during the mid-20th century, rejects predictable, slapdash causality – the painfully visible "myth." However, he defends the integrity of well-designed causality: "If I read something and I think 'Oh, God, here comes the myth,' I'm tired of it already. But if it's inherent and inescapable, then the reader will go along."⁷¹

Altered Chronology: Aristotle praised altered chronology as much by example as he did in plain language. He prescribed what we now call flashbacks as he recommended incorporating "incidents before the opening scene"⁷² that are necessary to the complication. However, the examples of structural excellence that Aristotle offered – particularly Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and Homer's epic poems – better illustrate his recommendation of beginning in a fashion that Horace, in the later *Ars Poetica*, termed in

medias res – in the middle of things.⁷³ Of *Oedipus the King*, for example, Durant writes, “*Oedipus* ... is a perfect instance of that method which Horace advised, of plunging *in medias res*, and letting explanations enter afterward.... Aristotle, when he wished to illustrate perfection of dramatic structure, always referred to *Oedipus the King*.”⁷⁴

Howarth, an English professor, uses Horace’s exact phrase to describe McPhee’s altered chronology in “Travels in Georgia”: “The action begins in *medias res* and continues for several pages without flashbacks.... When readers finally hit a backward loop, they already have a subliminal sense of who-what-where.”⁷⁵ McPhee himself describes “Travels in Georgia” as “a reassembled chronology.”⁷⁶ In *Literary Journalism*, Kramer writes of “starting nearly currently and flashing back,” and in *Writing for Story*, Franklin devotes several paragraphs to the importance of flashbacks.⁷⁷

Complication. “Every tragedy is in part Complication and in part Dénouement,” Aristotle wrote. “By Complication, I mean all from the beginning of the story to the point just before the change in the hero’s fortunes.... It is necessary for both points of construction [complication and dénouement] to be always duly mastered.”⁷⁸

If Aristotle’s definition of complication is somewhat implicit, the notion of a protagonist confronting a growing challenge is nonetheless a staple in nonfiction narratives. In his displacement of the reporter’s five W’s into literary journalism, Clark transforms “what” into “plot, action, complication.”⁷⁹ Like Clark, Franklin also uses the term *complication*:

Most often, the piece of story anatomy that will catch your attention is the *complication*.

A complication is simply any problem encountered by any human being.... To be dramatic, the complication has got to matter deeply to the character involved.⁸⁰

Richard Read substitutes the word *obstacles*, but the convention remains the same:

“Classic nonfiction narratives have a protagonist, a quest, and a set of obstacles.”⁸¹

Peripety. “The most powerful elements of attraction in Tragedy [are] the Peripeties and Discoveries,” Aristotle wrote. “A Peripety is the change ... from one state of things within the play to its opposite.”⁸²

In literary journalism, we find peripety more in example than in open analysis, and more in character studies than in other forms of the genre, though one could claim that a continental peripety – the collapse of Asian economies – is a convention in Read’s “The French Fry Connection.” Peripety lies at the heart of both nonfiction narratives that Franklin analyzes in *Writing for Story*. In “Mrs. Kelly’s Monster,” events move Dr. Thomas Ducker from cautious optimism to stoic defeat – just as they move Edna Kelly from life to death. In “The Ballad of Old Man Peters,” the protagonist moves from ignorance that he finds intolerable to levels of knowledge and perception that lead him to delivering a college convocation speech. Kramer concludes that while literary journalists seek stories of peripety in others – “a person about to be mugged, slip on a banana peel, or find a pot of gold” – they themselves sometimes become the protagonists, the subjects of first-person tales of changing fortune: “Once in a while, something untoward happens to a writer, and readers may profit from the author’s misfortune – Francis Steegmuller’s

'The Incident at Naples' ... comes to mind. Steegmuller describes being robbed and injured while on holiday. Perhaps it is to push this limit that writers go adventuring."⁸³

Discovery. We already have seen Aristotle call discovery one of "the most powerful elements of attraction in Tragedy." By discovery, Aristotle meant the protagonist's "change from ignorance to knowledge" of the complicating forces at work in his or her life. Such a moment, Aristotle wrote, can work best when it comes as a "great surprise."⁸⁴

In *Writing for Story*, Franklin's discussion of discovery – and its relationship to complication and peripety – closely parallels Aristotle's: "In the best stories, the odyssey from complication to resolution changes the character profoundly. In fact, the resolution often results not directly from the action but from a growing enlightenment – often a sudden flash of insight – as the character finally realizes what he has to do to solve his problem. Screenwriters often call this flash of insight, or self-realization, a 'plot point.'"⁸⁵

In "Mrs. Kelly's Monster," Dr. Ducker's discovery is not pleasant:

The neurosurgeon freezes.

Dead ahead the field is crossed by many huge, distended ropelike veins.

The neurosurgeon stares intently at the veins, surprised, chagrined, betrayed by the x-rays.

The monster.⁸⁶

The monster in Mrs. Kelly's brain is larger and more entrenched than the neurosurgeon had feared. In that moment of discovery, he learns that his skills are insufficient and that Mrs. Kelly's monster soon will kill her.

In *Poetics*, Aristotle wrote that discovery need not be a single event, that in longer literary myths, such as epic poems, it can be a series of realizations as a protagonist moves toward enlightenment.⁸⁷ In "The Ballad of Old Man Peters," Franklin includes moments of discovery throughout the first four "verses," discoveries that help Peters to triumph over ignorance and old age in the fifth and final verse. In fact, in his outline of that story, Franklin often uses the word *discovery* to describe such leaps from ignorance to knowledge: "Wilk Finds Dream"; "Wilk Discovers Books"; "Wilk Discovers World."⁸⁸

Dénouement: For Aristotle, dénouement was everything that followed a protagonist's change in fortunes, culminating in a resolution – an end: "By Dénouement [I mean] all from the beginning of the change to the end."⁸⁹

Again, Franklin strongly echoes Aristotle, substituting the word *resolution* for *dénouement*: "That brings us to the next important part of the anatomy of a story, the *resolution*. A resolution is simply any change in the character or situation that resolves the complication."⁹⁰ In fact, Franklin's concept of resolution evokes Aristotle's concept of catharsis, which he introduces in *Poetics*. Of catharsis, Aristotle wrote, "A Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action ... with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions."⁹¹ Of resolution, Franklin writes, "A resolution, by definition, destroys tension."⁹²

In *Coaching Writers*, Clark and Fry emphasize the importance of resolution within a dénouement: “Endings give the reader a sense of closure and completeness of action, as well as a sense that the writer controls the material by giving it shape. The reader’s perception of structure lends authority to the words.”⁹³

Discussion and Future Considerations

Clark and Fry’s assertion that “the writer controls the material by giving it shape” is the essence of displacement. In *Poetics*, Aristotle revealed the literary conventions of tragedians who displaced original myth into drama. Those myth-related conventions displaced into fiction and then into the nonfiction narrative of 20th century magazines.

In the 21st century, we need no literary critics to tell us that the plots of literary myths are aesthetically satisfying; the aesthetic rationale for their displacement into fiction and nonfiction narratives seems obvious. But in adopting the structures of displaced myths, literary journalists may be doing more than striving for artistic wholeness. The “why” of the structure of literary journalism, the motivation for building mythic plots, remains a fertile area for future research. In *Fame and Obscurity*, Gay Talese writes that literary journalists seek “a larger truth than is possible through the mere compilation of verifiable facts, the use of direct quotations, and adherence to the rigid organizational style of the older form.”⁹⁴ If Talese is correct – and when we examine such nonfiction narratives as “The Ballad of Old Man Peters” and Joseph Mitchell’s “The Rivermen,” Talese does indeed appear correct – then this paper contends that these displaced plot conventions are mediators between the limitations of fact and Talese’s “larger” truths, like the truths once embodied in myths. Nonfiction narratives embrace the

plot conventions of displaced, literary myths in part because those conventions seem to be rituals in revelations of important truths.

Aristotle makes much the same point in *Poetics*. In that work, he maintains that well-structured literary works not only entertain – literally providing “pleasure” through a “catharsis of ... emotions” – but also strive to impart significant truths through their universal applicability: “Hence poetry is something more philosophical and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars.”⁹⁵ What, we can wonder, would Aristotle make of a literary form that was history and that assumed the powerful structure of tragedy and epic poem – the structure of art? As noted earlier, Aristotle held that “the first essential, the life and soul, so to speak, of Tragedy is the Plot.”

The social functions of myths are complex. Scholars maintain that myths can range from innocent, entertaining fables to coercive, exclusionary ideologies.⁹⁶ Does the mythological structure of literary journalism have a primary function? Or are its functions as diverse as the functions of myths themselves? A starting point for our musings might be André Maurois’ comment on religion, art, and instruction: “All art in its origins was religious, and ... religion has often found in art the means of communicating to the human consciousness truths which the intelligence can discover only with difficulty.”⁹⁷

¹ Norman Sims, *The Literary Journalists* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984), 4. Charles Marsh, *A Quick and Not Dirty Guide to Business Writing* (Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch-Scarbrick, 1997), 47.

² Robert Vare, “The State of Narrative Nonfiction Writing,” *Nieman Reports* (fall 2000): 18.

³ Jon Franklin, *Writing for Story* (New York: Penguin Books/Plume, 1986), xvii.

⁴ These are, primarily, the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, which, a century later, Aristotle analyzed in *Poetics*.

⁵ Philip Wheelwright, *The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1982), 54.

⁶ Vare, “The State of Narrative Nonfiction Writing,” 18.

- ⁷ Jon Franklin, "When to Go Long," *American Journalism Review* (December 1996): 36. Bill Kirtz, "Tell Me a Story," *Quill* (April 1998): 5. Franklin, *Writing for Story*, xvii.
- ⁸ Vare, "The State of Narrative Nonfiction Writing," 18.
- ⁹ Jack Lule, "Myth and Terror on the Editorial Page: The New York Times Responds to September 11, 2001," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (summer 2002): 277.
- ¹⁰ C. Hugh Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, 4th ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1980), 282.
- ¹¹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," in *Theories of Myth: Structuralism in Myth*, ed. Robert A. Segal (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 119. Lévi-Strauss tempers this remark by noting that the similarity of myths from different cultures throughout the world suggests the presence of some structural principles.
- ¹² Northrop Frye, "Myth, Fiction, and Displacement," in *Theories of Myth: Literary Criticism and Myth*, ed. Robert A. Segal (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 135.
- ¹³ Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," 122.
- ¹⁴ Jean Chance and William McKeen, "Introduction," in *Literary Journalism: A Reader*, eds. Jean Chance and William McKeen (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001), vii and x.
- ¹⁵ Tom Wolfe, "The New Journalism," in *The New Journalism*, eds. Tom Wolfe and E.W. Johnson (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 25, 11, 15, 21.
- ¹⁶ Thomas Connery, "Discovering a Literary Form," in *A Sourcebook of American Literary Journalism*, ed. Thomas Connery (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 26.
- ¹⁷ For example, Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* and Norman Mailer's *The Armies of the Night*.
- ¹⁸ Connery, "Discovering a Literary Form." Thomas Connery, "A Third Way to Tell the Story: American Literary Journalism at the Turn of the Century," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- ¹⁹ Franklin, xvii.
- ²⁰ Wolfe, 34.
- ²¹ John Hartsock, *A History of American Literary Journalism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000) 41.
- ²² Connery, "Discovering a Literary Form," 17.
- ²³ David Eason, "The New Journalism and the Image-World," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 192, 199.
- ²⁴ Kathy Smith, "John McPhee Balances the Act," in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 212.
- ²⁵ Connery, "Discovering a Literary Form," 16.
- ²⁶ Chance and McKeen, xiii.
- ²⁷ Kirtz, "Tell Me a Story," 3.
- ²⁸ Norman Sims and Mark Kramer, *Literary Journalism* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 19.
- ²⁹ "Talking About Narrative Journalism," *Nieman Reports* (fall 2000): 20, 21.
- ³⁰ Jack Lule, *Daily News, Eternal Stories: The Mythological Role of Journalism* (New York: The Guildford Press, 2001).
- ³¹ Lule, "Myth and Terror on the Editorial Page," 278.
- ³² Eason, 191-192. Carolyn Kitch, "'A Death in the American Family': Myth, Memory, and National Values in the Media Mourning of John F. Kennedy Jr.," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (summer 2002): 297.
- ³³ Lule "Myth and Terror on the Editorial Page," 280.
- ³⁴ Lule, *Daily News, Eternal Stories*, 21-25.
- ³⁵ Kitch, "A Death in the American Family," 305.
- ³⁶ Lule, "Myth and Terror on the Editorial Page," 287.
- ³⁷ Mas'ud Zavarzadeh, *The Mythopoeic Reality: The Postwar American Nonfiction Novel* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 67. I am indebted to Thomas Connery for this observation.
- ³⁸ In *Poetics*, Aristotle likens the conventions of tragic drama to those of epic poetry.
- ³⁹ Charles Segal, *Interpreting Greek Tragedy: Myth, Poetry, Text* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 45.
- ⁴⁰ Will Durant, *The Life of Greece* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), 377-416.

- ⁴¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, in *The Rhetoric and Poetics of Aristotle*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts and Ingram Bywater. (New York: The Modern Library, 1954), 1453^a.
- ⁴² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451^b.
- ⁴³ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450^a.
- ⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450^a.
- ⁴⁵ Kitch, "A Death in the American Family," 297. In this quotation, Kitch cites Steve M. Barkin and Michael Gurevitch, "Out of Work and on the Air: Television News and Unemployment," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 4 (4, 1987): 4.
- ⁴⁶ Franklin, "When to Go Long," 38.
- ⁴⁷ William L. Howarth, "Introduction," in *The John McPhee Reader*, ed. William L. Howarth (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), xv.
- ⁴⁸ Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 147.
- ⁴⁹ G.M.A. Grube, *On Poetry and Style: Aristotle* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1958), xvii-xviii.
- ⁵⁰ Frye, "Myth, Fiction, and Displacement," 133.
- ⁵¹ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), 136, 137.
- ⁵² William F. Woo, "Just Write What Happened," *Nieman Reports* (fall 2000): 17.
- ⁵³ Franklin, *Writing for Story*, xvii.
- ⁵⁴ Howarth, *The John McPhee Reader*, xi.
- ⁵⁵ Sims, *The Literary Journalists*, 3.
- ⁵⁶ Gregory L. Lucente, *The Narrative of Realism and Myth* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 41.
- ⁵⁷ Aristotle also included length, which differed for tragic dramas and epic poems.
- ⁵⁸ Edgar Allan Poe, "Review of Twice Told Tales," in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 108.
- ⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450^a, 1451^a.
- ⁶⁰ Richard Read, "Narrative Writing Looked Easy," *Nieman Reports* (fall 2000): 24.
- ⁶¹ Howarth, *The John McPhee Reader*, xiv.
- ⁶² Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 84-85.
- ⁶³ Franklin, "When to Go Long," 38.
- ⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450^b.
- ⁶⁵ Sims, *The Literary Journalists*, 13.
- ⁶⁶ Roy Peter Clark and Don Fry, *Coaching Writers* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 97.
- ⁶⁷ Connery, "Discovering a Literary Form," 9.
- ⁶⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1452^a, 1453^b.
- ⁶⁹ Kirtz, "Tell Me a Story," 4. Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 82.
- ⁷⁰ Sims and Kramer, *Literary Journalism*, 15-16.
- ⁷¹ Norman Sims, "Joseph Mitchell and *The New Yorker* Nonfiction Writers" in *Literary Journalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Sims (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 83, 101.
- ⁷² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1455^b.
- ⁷³ Horace, *Ars Poetica*, in *Horace: Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 148.
- ⁷⁴ Durant, *The Life of Greece*, 393, 398.
- ⁷⁵ Howarth, *The John McPhee Reader*, xiv.
- ⁷⁶ Sims, *The Literary Journalists*, 13.
- ⁷⁷ Sims and Kramer, *Literary Journalism*, 32. Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 105-106.
- ⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1455^b.
- ⁷⁹ Kirtz, "Tell Me a Story," 4.
- ⁸⁰ Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 72, 75.
- ⁸¹ Read, "Narrative Writing Looked Easy," 23.
- ⁸² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1450^a, 1452^a.
- ⁸³ Sims and Kramer, *Literary Journalism*, 28.
- ⁸⁴ Aristotle, 1452^a, 1455^a.
- ⁸⁵ Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 89.
- ⁸⁶ Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 36.
- ⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1459^b.

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- ⁸⁸ Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 236.
⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1455^b.
⁹⁰ Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 76.
⁹¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449^b.
⁹² Franklin, *Writing for Story*, 77.
⁹³ Clark and Fry, *Coaching Writers*, 98
⁹⁴ Gay Talese, *Fame and Obscurity* (New York: World, 1970), vii.
⁹⁵ Aristotle, 1453^b, 1449^b, 1451^b.
⁹⁶ Lule, "Myth and Terror on the Editorial Page," 277. Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
⁹⁷ André Maurois, *The Quest for Marcel Proust*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (London: Jonathan Cape, 1950), 102.

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The Pulitzer and the Klan

Horace Carter, the Pulitzer, and how a Weekly Editor stood up to the Klan – and won

*“Any man can have kids. It’s what you do with
your life outside your family that counts.”*
– W. Horace Carter¹

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¹ W. Horace Carter in telephone conversation with the author, 20 September 2002.

A line of 29 cars snaked down Highway 701 East to Railroad Street in Tabor City, North Carolina, through the business district, and along the “dusty, unpaved streets” to “the bottom” where the black citizens lived, surrounding it like a lariat. The lead car bore a two-foot high “brightly-glowing red cross” above its radiator; the letters “KKK” scrawled on its windshield. The dome lights of the cars, mostly bearing South Carolina plates, burned luridly in the dark and warm of that July 22 evening in 1950, illuminating the occupants, 100 armed men all cloaked in the white robes and hoods of the Ku Klux Klan.¹

There was no violence that first night, no cross burnings, no voices raised in anger or protest. Stunned residents lined the streets in silence. A butcher from a meat market clattered down the steps of his grocery, wiping his bloody hands on his apron. “What’s going on?” he asked a knot of Tabor City residents watching the spectacle in disbelief. Jewish businessman Albert Schilds stood aghast in the doorway of his department store.² A drunk, mouth hanging open, leaned for support against a utility pole.³ Three black women tried to melt into the crowd.⁴ Standing by the curb, Police Chief L. R. Watson “seemed petrified” at the spectacle of Klansmen prowling the streets of his town. The Tabor City police force consisted of just two men and if the Klansmen attempted violence, they would have met little resistance.⁵

Twenty-nine-year-old W. Horace Carter, editor, owner, and founder of the *Tabor City Tribune*, had been tipped off by his barber earlier in the day that “something” was going to happen that evening.⁶ When he heard the wail of a siren, he looked outside his rented home for the telltale

¹ Ibid., 10-11.

² Ibid., 10.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁶ Ibid., 9.

smoke from a fire. Seeing none, he jammed his rumpled felt hat on his head (“I wanted to be a ‘real’ newspaperman”), and headed toward the “uptown” of Tabor City.⁷

If a twist of fate had not sent him to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and journalism, he would have been in China as a Christian missionary rather than Tabor City.⁸ And yet, another crusade, a mission of a different kind, was driving down the unpaved streets of Tabor City. Gradually the caravan of cars unwound and disappeared toward South Carolina, red taillights gradually swallowed by the night.⁹

Carter picked up one of the flyers scattered by the Klansmen. “Beware of association with the niggers, Jews and Catholics in this community. God didn’t mean for all men to be equal . . . We are organizing all over your state and particularly in this community.” It was signed by Grand Dragon Thomas L. Hamilton of the Association of Carolina Klans.¹⁰

Dismayed, troubled, and yet determined, Carter walked home, recalling in his memoirs:

My duty as the only newspaperman in Tabor City stared me squarely in the face. I could not compromise my conscience. I must fight the Klansmen with all the power that my tiny press could muster. That meant that I too would be the victim of their wrath. I was no hero, but the die was cast and I would have to respond. I must fight this KKK resurrection . . . The blueprint of what the future might hold for me . . . flicked through my busy mind as I slowly walked home.¹¹

It is the purpose of this article to discuss the choices Horace Carter faced, the actions he took, often alone, isolated and unaided, and the results his editorials engendered during the Ku Klux Klan’s resurgence in southeast North Carolina during 1950-1952. His efforts culminated with the imprisonment of 62 Klansmen, two-thirds the number police estimated had driven slowly through

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ He might have been dead in China. “Mao killed all the missionaries after he came to power,” Carter recalled. Interview with W. Horace Carter, tape recording, 27 September 2002.

⁹ W. Horace Carter, *Virus of Fear*, 11 (Tabor City, North Carolina: Atlantic Publishing Co., 1991).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 13.

Tabor City that first night, and the bestowal of the Pulitzer Prize for Meritorious Public Service on Carter and the *Tribune*.

Carter was part of a Southern tradition of liberalism, a philosophy that surfaced at times of trial. At the time Carter was fighting the Klan, Raleigh's *News and Observer* was completing its transformation from a segregationist publication under long-time owner Josephus Daniels, a newspaper that had helped spur the disenfranchisement of blacks in the late 19th Century, into a liberal bulwark in the state under Daniels' son, Jonathan. Other journalists contemporary with Carter – Ralph McGill, and Hodding Carter, both Pulitzer Prize winners – had their own battles either with the Klan, or other demons from the South's history.

Carter also enjoyed a circle of family that helped support him, especially his wife, and a few in the wider North Carolina newspaper fraternity. His own father, though, disagreed with his opposition to the KKK at first.¹² Charles Kuralt and the *News and Observer* of Raleigh eventually rallied to his cause. Willard Cole, a long-time friend at the nearby semi-weekly *Whiteville News Reporter*, supported him in his clashes with the Ku Klux Klan, and actually shared in the Pulitzer.

Out of the chaos

The Ku Klux Klan was born in the chaos of the postbellum South, “during the restless days when time was out of joint . . . and the social order was battered and turned upside down,” according to David M. Chalmers in his history of the clandestine organization.¹³ With carpetbaggers and scalawags in power in the South, the economy shattered, cash worthless, agriculture practically ruined, land redistribution threatened (and carried out on a small scale), properties sold to settle back taxes, and many children and women orphaned and widowed, restoring pride and a respect for

¹² W. Horace Carter. Speech, Campbell University, Buies Creek, North Carolina. March 16, 2000.

¹³ David M. Chalmers. *Hooded Americanism: the History of the Ku Klux Klan*. 2, (New York and London: New Viewpoints, 1981).

the traditional white leaders required drastic action in the minds of hundreds of thousands of Southerners.

Like a mold that is not quite eradicated, the bleach-sheeted Klan was revived in the wake of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* in 1915. It died back, only to be rejuvenated again just after World War II, led by Dr. Samuel Green, an Atlanta, Georgia obstetrician.¹⁴ His unexpected death in 1949 took away the Invisible Empire's only national leader and led to the organization's further, perhaps final fragmentation.¹⁵ Into that vacuum in the Carolinas, for a time, would step Leesville, South Carolina, grocer Thomas L. Hamilton, self-styled Grand Dragon of the KKK. And W. Horace Carter.

Convictions

Carter's convictions came from the first "liberal" he ever met, Dr. Frank Porter Graham, president of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). "He had a lot to do with it," Carter remembered.¹⁶

He believed in equality of the religions and equality of the races. And not many people did then . . . Not many people believed in sitting down and eating with a black man, for instance. But he got it across to me very tactfully and over a lot of different conversations that they were entitled to all the privileges the rest of us were entitled to. And I think that's what I was thinking of when I saw those 29 cars go down the street.¹⁷

Carter was editor of *The Tar Heel* at UNC-CH. Dr. Graham had an open door policy for students, invited them to his office and home, and was seen frequently around campus talking to students. On Sunday nights, Carter recalled, he would often have members of the newspaper staff to his home for dinner.¹⁸ Carter's friendship with and respect for Graham sparked a defining

¹⁴ Ibid., 6

¹⁵ Ibid., 7

¹⁶ Carter interview.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Carter interview.

moment in his journalistic life.¹⁹ During World War II, Dr. Graham, a friend and confidant of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, served on the War Labor Board in the nation's capital, while remaining as university president. There was grumbling from other university administrators and the board of trustees about this arrangement.

Adopting the practice he would later use to great effect in Tabor City, Carter wrote a stinging editorial excoriating opponents of Dr. Graham. Though it was a “small student publication paid for largely by fees collected as part of the quarterly tuition,” its editorial resonated far beyond Chapel Hill.²⁰ “I wasn’t smart enough to write diplomatically. I still am not,” Carter admitted, describing his blunt language.²¹ Carter’s fulminations infuriated State Senator John Umstead, who telephoned Carter and demanded he meet him at the journalism school “right now!”²² His nerves “like a bowl of Jell-O® on a merry-go-round,” Carter headed across campus to Bynum Hall to meet with the senator. When he arrived, he was met at the top of the steps by the dean of the journalism school, Skipper Coffin. Coffin told him of a similar call he had just received from Umstead. His words would galvanize Carter. “I don’t give a damn whether you are right or wrong, but don’t you give in to him. You stick by what you wrote and what you really believe, regardless of what he threatens,” Coffin instructed Carter in an “almost dictatorial tone.”²³

A few minutes later, Sen. Umstead arrived and met with Carter alone. “His face red with rage,” he demanded to know Carter’s sources; Carter refused, but let the senator know they were

¹⁹ W. Horace Carter, *Only in America: An Autobiography of a Weekly Newspaperman and Business Success*, 88 (Tabor City, North Carolina: Atlantic Publishing Co., 2001).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

authoritative.²⁴ Sen. Umstead gave him a “raking over the coals,” and then “made me get in the car and go to Raleigh” to meet his brother, William Umstead, former Congressman, Democratic state chairman, and future U.s. senator and governor.²⁵ Despite the pressure, Carter remained steadfast and adamantly declined to divulge his sources or back away from his editorial position. Five days later, Carter received a letter from President Roosevelt praising his convictions; he printed it on the front page of *The Tar Heel*.²⁶ Eventually, Dr. Graham retained both positions. In his memoirs, Carter summed up the effect this episode had on his nascent career: “For more than half a century, I have lived by the same premise concerning controversial subjects when my business, home, and even my life and my family were threatened by someone who disagreed with my position(s) . . . I started my whole crusading career right there . . . I’ve never seen it as being heroic. I’ve always seen it as just another way to tell what was going on in the community.”²⁷

Into print

The days between the Klan parade, and his earliest opportunity to respond in print, the next Wednesday’s edition of the *Tabor City Tribune*, were worrisome to Carter. As he recollected later:

Was it worth sacrificing our happiness, shattering the tranquil life of running a little weekly newspaper in a small town and taking part in Red Cross Drives, church covered-dish suppers, and the Annual Yam Festival promotion just because I believed in a principle? Was it worth the risk that the print shop might be burned, our home dynamited? I could be dragged from our house with the frantic screams of my family ringing in my ears. I might suffer a brutal lashing by a band of masked hoodlums or even death if I dared to oppose them. Is it the time to stand up for principles even before I am fully aware of what this Klan proposes?²⁸

²⁴ Ibid, 90.

²⁵ Carter interview.

²⁶ *Only in America*, 90-91.

²⁷ Carter interview.

²⁸ *Virus of Fear*, 17.

Convinced in his own mind and supported by his wife, Carter sat down at the used \$15 Royal typewriter he still owns to compose the first salvo in his crusade against the Klan. It was then typeset on an old Linotype, and printed on a sheet fed Whitlock printing press for his 1,500 subscribers. The editorial appeared on the front page as would all but one Klan editorial over the next two years. It was a conscious decision, Carter explained.²⁹

I knew it would be read on the front page . . . and I made the decision to publish all future KKK editorials on the front page regardless of the length of the campaign. I had a feeling then that there was no quick fix. This would be a long, hard-fought struggle. Neither the Klan nor the newspaper would just roll over and play dead.³⁰

He admitted in his memoirs that it was “no great literary masterpiece,” but he had a particular audience in mind, one that the Klan would prey on.³¹ As he told his wife, Tabor City residents were “hardworking, fifth and sixth generation Americans . . . but many of the adults never saw the inside of a schoolhouse. Few of the rural farmers here got past grammar school and there [was] a racial tension that could play right into the hands of the Klan.”³² North Carolinians and other southerners had been taught in “high schools for generations in history” that the Klan was heroic.³³ Yankees descended from the North to prey on the defeated South, “took over the governments and taxed (southerners) beyond reasonable limits.”³⁴ Carter found it “hard to counteract” that ingrained mindset and erroneous reading of history.³⁵

In Tabor City in the early Fifties, there were “no racial problems to speak of,” Carter commented.³⁶ “The Negroes were poorer than most whites and there had always been some

²⁹ Carter interview.

³⁰ *Virus of Fear*, 18.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 14-15.

³³ Carter interview.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Virus of Fear*, 25.

injustices,” it being the rural South.³⁷ Nonetheless, “the little town remained peaceful and quiet. There was no clamor for change, no animosity, no confrontations,” Carter recollected many years later.³⁸ Despite that, “the man on the street” sided with the Klan, Carter thought.³⁹ Within a few months of that first motorcade, “unofficial estimates” put KKK membership in Columbus County, North Carolina, and Horry County, South Carolina, both in the *Tribune*’s coverage area, at 5,000 (or more) out of a population of 75,000.⁴⁰ “That meant that one out of every fifteen people I met on the street owned a robe and hood. It might also apply to those I sat next to in church.”⁴¹ Carter also anguished over the possibility that “people resent being told what to do by a newspaper.”⁴²

Three houses in a nearby County were burned, presumably by the Klan. A pregnant black woman was severely beaten. A mechanic was hauled out of his bed in the middle of the night and “flogged,” presumably because he had a drinking problem. Others received threatening letters warning them to change their behavior, “or else.” A Jewish businessman, distraught by threats, closed his department store and left town with his family.⁴³ Others were enticed from their homes in the middle of the night on a pretext: a favorite ploy was to knock at the door and ask for assistance with a car breakdown.⁴⁴ The litany of outrages continued like a drumbeat. Carter is convinced many more attacks went unreported, especially by blacks, and others were delayed sometimes weeks while victims anguished over possible reprisals.⁴⁵

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Carter interview.

⁴⁰ *Virus of Fear*, 20.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Carter interview.

⁴⁴ Carter interview.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

His readers did not believe him when he wrote that lawlessness would follow the Klan's organization. "You couldn't organize a gang of troublemakers and appease them by holding meetings and talking about the price of tobacco," Carter wrote ruefully decades later. "They would want to use those sheets and hoods for the bedevilment of others."⁴⁶ The KKK very soon began its mission of mayhem.

On January 15, 1951, Klansmen invaded the home of a black couple in rural Tabor City. As the husband escaped unseen through the back door, Klansmen pumped five shots into an attic where they thought he was hiding. They then dragged his wife outside, whipped her mercilessly, carved a cross into her scalp with a razor, and clubbed her with a butt of a rifle. All the time she begged for her life, while her daughter cowered nearby. The same evening, a disabled World War II veteran and his crippled uncle were severely beaten in their own home. Both incidents involved 40-50 Klansmen. No one was ever caught, no reason was ever given, though Carter suspected it involved judgments on their moral conduct. "An ominous silence crept over the community," Carter recalled, "the virus of fear was spreading."⁴⁷ Carter reported the beatings "vividly," hoping to convince the "so-called good people" of the true essence of the Klan. "Not even the pastor in the Tabor City Baptist Church, where I taught a Sunday school class, would publicly criticize the Klan floggings," Carter wrote, surmising that some Klansmen were parishioners.⁴⁸

Blacks felt they could not trust the police and local government officials – and with reason. The sheriff of Horry County was part of the organization, in Carter's estimation. Police departments in the area were suffused with Klan members.⁴⁹ The threats and harassments built,

⁴⁶ Carter, *Only in America*, 198.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

⁴⁸ Carter interview.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

one upon the other, to a crescendo that never seemed to resolve itself. Twice, on the street, Carter was approached by different men, much larger and stronger than him. They berated him and his newspapers, and made rude remarks about him and his family, trying to pick a fight. Wisely, Carter shrugged them off.⁵⁰

The Klan put pressure on Carter's advertisers. One of the largest, C. C. Sells, did abandon the *Tribune* for some time, staying away even after the whole controversy was over. None of the advertisers actually came out and admitted they were cutting back on their advertising because of intimidation, but Carter knew it was happening. Some would tell him they did not want an ad a particular week, one that Carter had been expecting. Grand Dragon Hamilton told Carter plainly in one of their two face-to-face meetings in the *Tribune* office that he would put him out of business by organizing a boycott. Support from home was vital here, too. Carter's wife Lucille told him, as she had before and would later: "Well, we came with nothing. Let's leave with nothing. Let's beat them."⁵¹

In addition to its traditional racial and religious hatreds, the Klan cloaked itself in a false morality, Carter believed. This veneer of morality won the Klan converts and sympathizers. Stripped of its violence, the organization seemed to represent many American virtues. Threatening letters were sent to those the Klansmen believed fell short of their standards of morality and decency, all without proof, although with some evidence, Carter admitted. Men who cheated on their wives, unmarried couples who lived together, a man who would not allow his wife to attend the church of her choice, families who did not seem to be providing for their children properly, several individuals who spoke against the Church of Christ, a man who, habitually, found himself arrested for public drunkenness and who, therefore, did not seem to be

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Carter interview.

supporting his family properly; all received warnings, threats, or visits from the Klan. Many law-abiding citizens, according to Carter, thought some of these goals, far from being deplorable, were in fact admirable. With his editorials, Carter tried to draw attention to the hypocrisy of their stands, and the vigilante nature of the justice they were meting out.

Shacking up with somebody else's wife, or living together when you're not married: at that time, that was about as sinful as you could get. And in the Klan came and flogged these people and beat them and told them if they ever turned notice of their flogging over to the sheriff, they'd be back . . . We knew that the Klan couldn't go in there and punish them into changing their lives. So, generally, those people were abusing their wives and (were) alcoholics that couldn't look after their families, people who obviously deserved some kind of reprimands, some kind of punishment. Well, we fought them anyway just on the basis that if you don't go by the law, you don't even have a country. We're through if we don't go by the law.⁵²

The editorials

The Tabor City community learned immediately where Carter and the weekly *Tribune* stood, just four days after the Klan motorcade, in that first editorial headlined, “No Excuse for KKK.”

In this democratic country, there's no place for an organization of the caliber of the Ku Klux Klan . . . Any organization that has to work outside the law is unfit for recognition in a country of free men. Saturday's episode, although without violence, is deplorable, a black eye to our area and an admission that our law enforcement is inadequate.

Sanctioning of their methods of operation is practically as bad as if you rode in their midst. It takes all the law-abiding people as a unit to discourage and combat a Ku Klux Klan that is totally without law. The Klan, despite its Americanism plea, is the personification of Fascism and Nazism. It is just such outside-the-law operations that lead to dictatorships through fear and insecurity.

The Klan bases its power on fear and hate of one's fellow man

⁵² Carter interview.

and not through love, understanding and the principles upon which God would have us live together. We have some racial problems in this country. That cannot be denied. However, we do not have open warfare which we will have if the primitive methods of the KKK are applied . . . They are endeavoring to force their domination upon those whom they consider worth of punishment. It is not for a band of hoodlums to decide whether you or I need chastising.⁵³

Carter wrote that “punishment must be kept within the law; if that is not adequate then we . . . have the power to enlarge upon (those laws) should we deem the present ones inadequate.”⁵⁴ Carter further noted that:

The racial issue in the South has been overstressed. There is little tangible evidence of any struggle between races. There’s no basis to a federal government forcing us to mingle together. A law of this nature would get no further than the record, and you know it would not and could not be enforced.⁵⁵

Given his later career, and his consistently articulated opinions, Carter was clearly speaking to his “back country” readers, mostly white, who were troubled by the rumblings over civil rights. In this sense, Carter’s campaign against the KKK can be seen as part of the first threads in the rich tapestry of the Civil Rights movement that would soon engulf the South. Drawing on the intensity of his religious faith, Carter predicted:

Any non-segregation that ever comes about in the South will have to be a natural movement, through many generations of people, through education and *the practice of God’s teaching*.⁵⁶

God and ungodly. Segregation and non-segregation. Hate and love. Natural movement and federal government force. All terminology balanced in a ying and yang of racial relations, in an editorial that, on the surface, seems almost haphazardly and simply written, but which is, upon further investigation, seen to be richly textured, subtle, and imbued with religious fervor.

⁵³ *Tabor City Tribune*, July 26, 1950, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Italics added.

Religious terminology can be seen also as an attempt by a very sophisticated writer who chose to write in the homely language of a rural, “country weekly” as a way to connect with a populace that was, at the time, deeply and fervently religious, as well as unsophisticated. His religious terms and imagery were touchstones and reassuring ones. His readers were deeply worried about the “mingling of the races” and some saw in the KKK a way to beat back, as the group did during Reconstruction, the racial tsunami that was threatening to batter their way of life to pieces.

This editorial was also important, not just because it was the first, but because it came immediately, at the earliest possible opportunity after the Klan’s appearance in Tabor City. This editorial defined the fight to come, put Carter and *The Tribune* forthrightly against the Klan. The religious and ethical aspect is evident; Carter clearly regarded this as a “crusade” – his word – and a religious imperative.⁵⁷ In at least half a dozen instances Carter knew of – and he believed there were many others unreported – Klansmen entered churches in the midst of worship services and walked up and down the aisles menacingly. The one arena where townsfolk were gathered together once or twice a week presented an opportunity to those with the conviction, like Carter, to oppose the Klan on moral and religious grounds. The preaching the ministers failed to do had to be accomplished in Carter’s secular arena. Through intimidation or even agreement (at least one minister was eventually indicted for Klan activities), the churches fell silent while Carter did not.⁵⁸ To Carter, the Klan represented the power of Darkness (again, fascism and Nazism), and he was going to join the battle with Light, even if he was its sole defender. To oppose the Klan

⁵⁷ Carter interview.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

was righteous, Carter was convinced, and he was appalled that the Klan wrapped its efforts in bedsheets of faith.⁵⁹ In his penultimate paragraph, Carter wrote:

America was founded by persons seeking a country of religious freedom where they could worship God in their own way without fear. Would you have us resort to a nation of people wishing there was another America to discover so we could leave this one?⁶⁰

And, finally, in a deeply-felt denouement, Carter returned to his bedrock values and the overarching them of his campaign.

With the Klan's frequent reference to Jesus, God and religion, they are being highly sacrilegious because their very being is in contrast to God and the Bible. If you had the names of those persons appearing here Saturday night and if you had church attendance slips for those persons, it's our opinion that not five percent of them entered any church of any denomination on Sunday morning.⁶¹

From the instant that first issue with the anti-Klan editorial hit the street, Carter felt the pressure in Tabor City rising against him.⁶² Business leaders, worried about the effect on their bottom line objected. One advertiser in *The Tribune* urged him to “pull in your horns” before “it’s too late.”⁶³ Another friend and businessman warned him that “they’ll beat you to a pulp or burn you out.”⁶⁴ His three closest friends and fishing buddies opposed his stance.⁶⁵ “It’s hard when your best friends don’t want to back you up,” he remarked.

The next morning, the Klan made its first “direct and ominous contact” with Carter, a note stuck under his car’s windshield wiper.⁶⁶ That “audacious” and “brazen” action, done while his family slept a few feet away, chilled the young editor: he could have had his “house set afire or blown . . . up” like one in Horry County a few weeks earlier that killed three people, a possible

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Carter interview.

⁶³ Carter, *Virus of Fear*, 18.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁵ Carter interview.

⁶⁶ Carter, *Virus of Fear*, 23.

“Klan reprisal.”⁶⁷ Two other handwritten notes awaited him under the front door of his newspaper office. “More than ever I was fearful for my family’s safety. These vipers were certainly creating an atmosphere of fear . . . a virus,” he recalled in his memoirs.⁶⁸

On August 2, 1950, the second week of his crusade against the Klan, most of the bottom fourth of the front page was given over to an open letter from Carter to his readers about the week’s Ku Klux Klan activities. He squelched one rumor, started by a local boy, “a liar first class . . . (with a) chance of still becoming . . . a mediocre citizen,” claiming that Carter was in fact the “headman” of the Klan.⁶⁹ Another rumor suggested “many” blacks were talking of abandoning Tabor City in the wake of the Klan’s appearance. Carter exhorted them not to the “let this band of hoodlums scare” them.⁷⁰ Some farmers were fearful of bringing their tobacco to Tabor City to sell, and Carter tried to alleviate their concerns.

Another key feature of Carter’s *Tribune* during this period was instituted the next week: he began publishing letters to the editor on the Klan controversy, providing a forum for opposing views. The first one was from a “Klan friend at heart,” who wrote praising the clandestine organization as a “profit to the community and Nation” and criticizing it only for “getting too far behind with their work.”⁷¹ The writer, John Hardee, disapproved of Carter’s editorials and open letter.⁷² Carter’s tactic subliminally buttressed his campaign, confirming that the “other side” was so harmless it did not matter that it received publicity. With one notable exception, the letters to the editor, all virtually verbatim, were published on the traditional, inside editorial page.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ *Tabor City Tribune*, August 2, 1950, 1.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ *Tabor City Tribune*, August 9, 1950, 1.

⁷² Ibid.

In November, Carter responded in an editorial to a Klan tirades at one of their periodic evening cross-burning mass meetings. The great plumes of smoke and fire and sparks rising in the night sky as white horses pawed and trotted around the burning cross were macabre spectacles – and to Carter, pagan ones. Carter attended them, not in secret, but certainly inconspicuously, to take notes and observe. He was always accompanied by his brother-in-law and a printer and was, to the best of his knowledge, never recognized in the dark.

Disarmingly in the editorial, he ticked off the areas where the *Tribune* and the Klan agreed: that Communism in the U.S. should be “nipped in the bud,” that police in Horry County needed to be investigated, that he believed in the Constitution and the Bible, that Alger Hiss, a prominent state department official and New Dealer, accused of being a communist in the 1930s, was a traitor, and that the U.N. charter was “not all that it should be.”⁷³

Then, he enumerated where they parted ways. He denied that Klansmen, “on the whole,” were God-fearing and Christian – and this was something his readers were not hearing from the pulpits. He wrote that “no race should be condemned” as a group, but that individuals might be good or bad. The Klan had singled out Jews as Communists; Carter disagreed.

To say that a Jewish sect, composing 9,000,000 people in the United States, is communistic and evil, is condemning a block (sic) without regard to individuals. Perhaps there are (sic) a great number of these persons who are Communists. But the ratio of Communist Jews to the ratio of Communists of any other race is no greater.⁷⁴

He disputed that the newspapers were controlled. He denied that churches and schools were being led toward communism. In fact, he drew the parallel that the only other secret organization he knew, other than the Communist Party, was the KKK. “If the Ku Klux Klan is good and pure, if it is made up of good people, and if they do not work outside the law as stated

⁷³ *Tabor City Tribune*, November 15, 1950, 1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

at the meeting, then why doesn't it charter its organization like all other groups and not hide its membership and carry on its activities in the dead of night in this mystic fashion?"⁷⁵ He concluded the editorial by urging any KKK member to write a letter to the editor, even offering to withhold the writer's name if he or she so requested.⁷⁶ Carter was very adroit at the subtle and tricky art of audiencing long before it even had a name. He knew who his readers were, their prejudices, their limitations, and their "hot button" issues. He stayed just ahead of them, pulling them along at a pace that was just enough to move them ahead, but not too rapidly to destroy his credibility or have them balk. As counterpoint, he ran his front page editorial next to the banner story on the KKK meeting.

An anonymous KKK mimeographed broadside against Horry County sheriff Ernest Sasser, intimating charges of embezzlement and graft, stirred Carter to a February 1951, editorial. Admitting he had "no complimentary remarks to make in regard" to the sheriff, Carter, showing the even-handed fairness that even his opponents would have to recognize, asked for proof.⁷⁷

Carter worried, in May of 1951, that the subversive influence of the KKK was contributing to a breakdown in government. The KKK, he opined:

Choosing not to voice their sentiments in open and truly American ways, this organization instead chooses to hide in the blackness of night. To carry on its cowardly deeds in a backhanded, illegal, crafty manner indicative of a big city in the days of prohibition.⁷⁸

He wondered why the KKK could not "shed their cloaks of secretness" and "carry their sentiments" to the polls in what has "long been the American way."⁷⁹ He claimed to have never known a church member, Mason, American Legion member, or a Rotarian who hid his

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ *Tabor City Tribune*, February 7, 1951, 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

affiliation. In a ringing final phrase, Carter asserted that the “disgruntled” Klan members were taking a “fanatical pride” in doing their vile work of subverting the American system.⁸⁰

It is among just such groups the eventual internal growth of antagonism toward our government and our way of life is springing up. It is through just such groups that freedom of every kind may perish and Americans could find themselves being ruled through fear.⁸¹

All but one of the editorials, plus one “open letter” from the editor to readers, were on the front page. Except for a handful of stories, dozens of stories relating to Klan activities, cross-burnings, floggings, and indictments were also on the front page.

The atmosphere

In late January, 1951, he received a worrisome telephone call from an anonymous doctor in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.⁸² The caller claimed to have overheard a KKK official making arrangements with a gunman in Tampa, Florida for a mob-style “hit” on Carter.⁸³ Carter was told the hit man would know his whereabouts and had photographs of his house. Moments after he hung up, the night policeman in Tabor City called on Carter, relating a similar telephone call. A few days later, the man who rented a back room at the Carter home asked whether he was going to have some work done on the house, because he had seen someone in a car with out-of-state plates taking numerous photographs of the house.⁸⁴

Carter’s wife was terrified. The town board assigned a policeman to watch his house for a week. Carter was convinced the Klan never would have dared “kill me or any other editor who is fighting them,” because that would “bring down the newspapers everywhere.”⁸⁵ “It would have

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Carter interview.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

made a hell of a lot better story if I'd gotten killed," Carter claimed.⁸⁶ Carter received more than 1,000 death threats over a three-year period, but still he kept at it.⁸⁷

I don't know (why) I stuck with it other than the fact that I didn't have anything and I was trying to make a living. and one thing's for sure, people were reading the damn paper. It was getting on people's tables. I don't know whether that's the way to get them to read it or not, but I sure had the readership.⁸⁸

Carter was convinced he was also protected from floggings and other physical abuse, simply because he had a newspaper.⁸⁹ The *Tribune* was both his sword and his shield, and had a high profile that made it unwise to assault him. He also believed allowing letters to the editor helped defuse some of the Klansmen's anger; they knew they could have their views publicized in the *Tribune* as well.⁹⁰ He received considerable help and publicity from others in the journalism field. His friend and former *Tar Heel* editor, Charles Kuralt, who later enjoyed great professional success and fame with CBS News, broadcast weekly from the area on the Klan for six months for a Charlotte radio station, reporting on the situation. Eventually, Jake Jenkins and the *News and Observer* of Raleigh "got on our bandwagon," and ran stories on the resurgent Klan. Hodding Carter, the Mississippi journalist opposing the Klan, kept a loaded gun in every room of his house in case someone burst in. Horace Carter was never either that paranoid or prepared. "I had an automatic shotgun. And I told the sheriff about it, (and that) I'd leave some of them in the yard," dead or wounded, if they had tried to break in.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ W. Horace Carter. Speech, Campbell University, March 16, 2000.

⁸⁸ Carter interview.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Carter interview.

Unraveling

In the fall of 1951, things began to unravel for the Invisible Empire. A common law husband and wife were dragged from their bed in the middle of the night near Tabor City in North Carolina and taken across the border into South Carolina where they were severely beaten. Kidnapping and transportation across state lines were the legal contexts the FBI needed to get involved.⁹² Carter said that he did not “ever waver” from his opposition to the Klan and its rebirth, and would not have, but that “if it hadn’t been for J. Edgar Hoover, they (the Klan) would be in charge now.”⁹³ The FBI chief “sent about 32 FBI agents down here and said, ‘don’t come back till you’ve got them in jail.’”⁹⁴ The FBI eventually infiltrated the Klan, and finally indicted nearly three-dozen Klansmen in the first batch.⁹⁵ Within 30 days, both the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and South Carolina Law Enforcement charged others. “I think they saw (that) the tide had turned,” Carter said.⁹⁶

Authorities kept the assault against the common law couple secret for four months, until federal agents and the recently elected sheriff of Columbus County, Hugh Nance, arrested ten Klansmen for the crime. They were charged under the Lindberg Law, making their crime a capital offense, although the ultimate penalty was not sought. The arrest of those 10 men made national headlines; Hoover himself announced the arrests in the early morning hours. The floodgates were opened, and nearly two years of often solitary crusading were coming to an end. Amazingly, to Carter, ministers suddenly commenced preaching against the Klan, mayors began voicing opposition, and police chiefs lamented the wickedness of the organization. Carter accepted the turn of events with equanimity, and without editorial comment.

⁹² Carter, *Only in America*, 278.

⁹³ Carter interview.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Sometimes it takes one or two “plain folks” to do the right thing in the midst of madness to effectuate change. For several years, the few Klan incidents that had been brought before a grand jury or a judge were dismissed for want of evidence or witnesses willing to testify. Then, in the swampland town of Nakina, twelve miles from Tabor City, along the Waccamaw River, farmer Dan Ward stood up to the Klan.⁹⁷ On Christmas Day, 1951, three neighbors, one armed, all KKK members, visited Ward and told him to get rid of one of his black sharecropping tenants, “if you want to live.”⁹⁸ Ward and his wife took the matter to authorities. Two other residents, who had been approached to assist in “running this nigger out of Nakina,” testified against the trio.⁹⁹ They were convicted by a jury, and sentenced to two years on a road gang. Carter termed it a ‘turning point in the Klan movement,’ because finally a “local court” dared to “oppose the vigilantes, something (he) had never expected to happen.”¹⁰⁰

Eventually, Imperial Wizard Hamilton, who had by 1952 promoted himself from Grand Dragon, would face indictment, trial, and conviction. By then, with 254 indictments in hand (yielding, ultimately, sixty-two convictions) and with its leadership crushed, indicted, or jailed, the Klan ceased to exist for all practical purposes in Horry and Columbus counties. Many Klansmen turned state’s evidence to save themselves. A federal judge, Don Gilliam, after examining the financial books, stated in open court that “I think (Hamilton) is more interested in the money he is making . . . than he is in the floggings.” According to Carter, in his memoirs, Klan sympathizers realized “the KKK movement was a money game that enriched some of its

⁹⁷ Carter, *Only in America*, 270.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

leaders.” Believing in the power of redemption, Carter testified on Hamilton’s behalf at a parole hearing, and Hamilton was released early from his four-year sentence, and simply disappeared.¹⁰¹

When the first indictments were announced, Carter put the credit where he felt it belonged: “Thank God, there is still law, courts and justice in Columbus County.”¹⁰²

They have yet to be proven guilty. But they will have that opportunity, unlike those many persons brutally beaten by nightriders in Columbus during the several months that violence headlined the news from this area . . . Our biggest hope is that those individuals who have taken part in the other floggings also feel the strong arm of the law reaching out for them, wherever they are. We want to see each of them ferreted out from behind the mask of cowardness to face the world and pay for (their) crimes.¹⁰³

Conclusion

Sometimes a man and a time come together, serendipitously, perhaps, but perhaps there are other forces in the universe that propel them together. Horace Carter would call that force God. Good men and women, preachers and policemen, sat on their hands when evil came walking the streets of Tabor City. But Carter was fired with the liberalism of Frank Porter Graham and the “liberal” – all though he disdains that word, now, which he remarked upon with approbation then – education” he received at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the missionary zeal of his Baptist background. And there was his mother, her quiet tolerance a counterweight to the pointed racism of his father. All Carter had was his pulpit, an old Whitlock handfed press, and the resolution that under other circumstances would have sent Carter to missionary work in China. Instead, he spread the gospel in southeastern North Carolina. “You

¹⁰¹ Carter interview.

¹⁰² *Tabor City Tribune*, February 20, 1952, 1.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

sometimes wonder what hand God (has) in your future,” Carter remarked. Would he do it again? “It’s what every weekly editor would have done in the same circumstances.”¹⁰⁴

Perhaps the final and supreme endorsement of his crusade came from the citizens of Tabor City, most of whom had kept their heads down and their opinions to themselves while Carter campaigned against the Klan. They overwhelmingly elected him mayor in the spring of 1953, scarcely six weeks after the *Tribune* won the Pulitzer. Carter had done his job newspaperman’s job well, cajoling, berating, exhorting, and leading his small community through the crucible of the Klan challenge. That he had not destroyed his credibility and his support in the process was a significant accomplishment.

Past amidst the present

Horace Carter has outlived nearly everyone on either side of the Klan controversy. Hamilton disappeared after being released from prison after serving half of his four-year sentence. Carter’s first wife died in 1982 of cancer. Willard Cole, with whom he shared the Pulitzer, died within a decade of his greatest triumph. Only two of the over 260 men indicted are still living in the area. One would admit to having been a Klansmen, Carter observed, but not the other.¹⁰⁵

The streets are paved now, but there are empty buildings, vacated factories sprinkled around Tabor City. At the edge of town, a ramshackle storefront flies the Confederate battle flag, while offering souvenirs to what tourists may happen upon the town. Appended to the crisply modern *Tabor City Tribune* building is a small, two-room Horace Carter museum dedicated to his career. Across the street is a large factory, matched by one next to the museum. From a nest

¹⁰⁴ Carter interview.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

egg of \$4,700 left from his service in the U.S. Navy, Carter's corporation has grown into the 25th largest private business in North Carolina, with 2001 revenues of \$150 million.¹⁰⁶

A rattly Chevrolet pick-up truck drives by, a large Confederate battle flag waving in the slipstream, an empty gun rack lashed to the rear window. The streets may be paved now, but the attitudes that gave the Klan fertile ground to till may still be a dusty road like Railroad Street leading to the bottom where the people of the southeast corner of North Carolina come face to face with the ghosts of a past they have yet to totally repudiate.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

The Newspaper Reporter as Fiction Writer: The Tale of "Franklin W. Dixon"

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When the young Canadian newspaperman Leslie McFarlane saw the ad for "experienced fiction writer" in the newspaper trade publication *Editor & Publisher* in 1926, he didn't know many details about it, but he decided to answer it anyway. The ad was surrounded by the usual ads for editors, reporters and other newspaper types, but its uniqueness – and brevity – caught his eye: "*Experienced Fiction Writer Wanted to Work from Publisher's Outlines.*" The address was the Stratemeyer Syndicate in New York City.¹ McFarlane had never heard of such a syndicate, but, he thought, he certainly was "experienced" and was a writer of fiction, so he dashed off a quick letter from his desk in the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican's* newsroom and enclosed a story of his that was published in the pulp magazine, *Adventure*. At the time, it was one of his few clips as a freelance writer. The first was published in 1919, when he was 17 years old. He had also sold a short story to the *Sunday Toronto Star Weekly* magazine.²

McFarlane didn't know it at the time, of course, but he was less than a year away from embarking on a 20-year ghostwriting career as the fictional author "Franklin W. Dixon." As millions of youngsters throughout the twentieth century know, Dixon wrote about the exploits of two of the most famous "sleuths" of all time: The Hardy Boys.

Like many newspaper reporters of his era, McFarlane worked ten- and twelve-hour days, and he enjoyed the drama and fast pace of newspaper work. He worked on newspapers during an era when they served as the only source of

news for readers, and during an era when "beats" were almost non-existent: good reporters covered several beats and became experts at all of them. And most newspaper editors relished those stories that were dramatic and provocative. But McFarlane knew that he did not want to be a reporter for his entire life. He saw his years in newsrooms as a way to earn a living, learn about people and governments, and get experience in writing quickly and well.³ What McFarlane dreamed of, ultimately, was writing the Great Canadian novel. In the short run, he wanted to write magazine fiction for some of the many well-read and well-respected slick magazines of the era -- magazines that included *Maclean's* (in Canada), *Harper's Weekly*, *Smart Set* and others. At this point in his life, McFarlane, who grew up in the northern Ontario town of Haileybury, about 300 miles north of Toronto, was working fulltime on his fourth newspaper. At the young age of 25, he was ready to make a change; but he could not afford to quit his day job until he could establish himself as a successful freelance writer.

It would be a fateful day when he answered the ad seeking fiction writers, although McFarlane acknowledged much later that within days of mailing his reply, he had forgotten all about it. Three weeks later, though, came a neatly typed response from Edward Stratemeyer, offering a brief description of the syndicate and informing him of the rules for ghostwriters of the group. Stratemeyer paid ghostwriters about \$100 per book to write series juvenile books from a specific plot outline he provided. The ghostwriters, upon completion of the books, would receive the lump sum after they had signed away all rights to the books and agreed not to reveal that they wrote for the Stratemeyer Literary Syndicate.⁴

As a test, Stratemeyer asked McFarlane in the letter to read two of the syndicate's typical books as examples, and then decide if he wanted to try his hand at writing a few chapters of one of the series books, based on an outline which would be provided. If the sample chapters were good, he could become a Stratemeyer ghostwriter. McFarlane laughed, he said, when he realized that the authors of some of the books children loved were not even flesh-and-blood men and women. "Roy Rockwood," for instance, who "wrote" the well-known *Bomba the Jungle Boys* series, was a pseudonym created by Stratemeyer. The same phony "Roy Rockwood" had written the *Dave Fearless* deep-sea adventure series that served as a practice book for McFarlane. (All the confusion about who was real and who wasn't triggered his feelings of inferiority as a Canadian – and his wit. In America, he noted dryly in his autobiography, anyone could grow up to be president of the United States, but since he was Canadian, all he could hope for was that he could still grow up to be Roy Rockwood.)⁵ Stratemeyer, of course, wanted children to believe that the authors of his series were real people, and he never revealed in rare interviews that he did that they were simply pen names attached to a variety of different writers. It was part of the mystique of the books.

Ultimately, Leslie McFarlane did become a Stratemeyer ghostwriter – one of the syndicate's most famous and prolific ghostwriters, and, for that matter, one of the most famous "authors" in the history of children's literature. Leslie McFarlane passed the test that Edward Stratemeyer gave him, and he wrote a few more books about the exploits of underwater diver *Dave Fearless*.

By doing this, he learned about the strict formulaic aspects of syndicate books: all were about 214 pages in final book form, and all had the equivalent of "commercials" imbedded in them. The second chapter of the books began with a quick break from the action as the author summarized the activities of the protagonist in previous volumes. At the end of each book was another plug for the exploits of the hero or heroes in future volumes. Both tactics were designed to get youngsters running to buy more books in the same series. Within a few months, though, Stratemeyer asked him if he wanted to try his hand at a new series the syndicate was launching. It was about two bright and resourceful brothers who were amateur detectives. Their names were Frank and Joe Hardy. Stratemeyer told McFarlane that he would "become" the ghostwriter Franklin W. Dixon if he agreed to launch the new Hardy Boys series. McFarlane said he'd give it a try. With that, he began what would be one of the most enduring and frustrating relationships of his life.

After this first experience with the Stratemeyer Syndicate, McFarlane was able to quit his newspaper job and become a fulltime freelance writer. He had it all planned - he learned he could write a Stratemeyer book in about three or four weeks, enabling him to earn a little more than \$100 a month, a figure equal to what he was earning as a reporter. According to his plan, though, he could work on syndicate books for only a few hours a day, allowing him to do serious freelance-writing in the remainder of his time.⁶

But things didn't work out quite as planned for McFarlane. He remained a Stratemeyer ghostwriter for nearly twenty years, writing twenty of the first twenty-six Hardy Boys books.⁷ And the writing did pay many of the bills and did allow him to write on a freelance basis for many magazines of the era. But the moniker of Franklin W. Dixon would also become an albatross of sorts around McFarlane's neck, and writing the Hardy Boys books -- or "the Hardy Brats," as he sometimes referred to them -- would become a chore for him.⁸ Their novelty soon wore off, and for a variety of reasons -- his marriage, the birth of three children and abysmal economic times in the early 1930s -- he continued writing them long after the thrill was gone. McFarlane would live well into his seventies, long enough to know that the agreement he signed with the Stratemeyers in 1926 kept him and his heirs from sharing in any of the millions of dollars generated throughout the twentieth century by Hardy Boys books, lunch boxes, films, television shows, audio tapes and other artifacts stemming from their creation. McFarlane was not bitter about the fact he earned only several thousand dollars for writing some of the most widely read and successful children's books of the twentieth century. But, as he would note many times after revealing his "identity" as Franklin W. Dixon, he soon tired of explaining to people how he managed to write so many books and make so little money.⁹

Leslie McFarlane was of course not the first newspaperman to have visions of becoming a well-known writer of fiction. At the end of the nineteenth century, a young New York *Evening World* reporter named Albert Payson Terhune found his

niche not in writing news, but in writing longer fictional pieces for the paper's magazine department. One of his jobs was ghostwriting fiction serials for the paper's magazine section. He found it to his liking and eventually set aside five hours a day to write stories for pulp magazines, such as *All-Story* and *Argosy*, and, before World War I, for the slick *Smart Set*. Terhune honed his craft as a writer of fiction, eventually writing the immensely popular *Lad a Dog*, based in part on the knowledge he gained raising collies with his wife.¹⁰ He first wrote about Lad in an article for *Redbook*.

Early in his career, Terhune had asked advice of another newspaper-reporter-turned-author: Sinclair Lewis, who, after graduating from Yale University in 1908, began working at the *Waterloo Daily Courier* in Iowa. Lewis then went on to other papers, including the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*. He, too, found it difficult to work fulltime in a newsroom and write fiction on the side: "Gee! Newspaper work is plumb hard," he once complained.¹¹

Of course, the "granddad," so to speak, of all newspaper reporters turned fiction writers is Ernest Hemingway, whose romantic image as sportsman, war correspondent and writer of fiction endures today. Leslie McFarlane once met Hemingway in the early 1920s when they were both reporters in Canada — McFarlane on the *Sudbury (Ontario) Star*, and Hemingway during his last fulltime newspaper job on the *Toronto Star*. As McFarlane described it five decades later, he was not impressed at this initial meeting, although Hemingway's later success would certainly provide a model for aspiring fiction writers of his era. McFarlane met Hemingway in *Sudbury* when the *Toronto Star* had sent him up to cover what

turned out to be a bogus story about a man who said he discovered a huge coal deposit next to a nickel mine. (Sudbury and nearby parts of northern Ontario were then rich in silver and nickel mining). The story turned out to be false, but Hemingway did do a profile of Sudbury. The worldly Hemingway had seen many young girls walking in the streets of Sudbury, McFarlane remembered, and implied erroneously in his story that they were literally "streetwalkers" – prostitutes in training. McFarlane was amused by the characterization, but many in Sudbury were not: indignant citizens wrote letters to the editor, denying the allegation.¹²

Hemingway may have become one of the most famous former newspapermen to become a writer, but plenty of unknown journalists, including McFarlane, followed in his footsteps in the 1920s. The idea that reporters were thought of as intelligent and shrewd, combined with the fact that their jobs often led to travel, worldliness, and a familiar byline, made them respected by the editors who published the many magazines of the early twentieth century. By the mid and late 1920s, magazines and newspapers were beginning to flourish and writers for them were in demand. The men and women who would become known as some of the greatest fiction writers of the century – Virginia Wolfe, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis and others – all had books published in 1925.

To some of those writers, experience on newspapers was a blessing and a curse. In his history of writers of the first half of the twentieth century, Ronald Weber quotes Willa Cather, who denounced newspaper journalism as "the vandalism of

literature," and a phenomenon that made "an art a trade." Similarly, Gertrude Stein once warned Hemingway, "if you keep on doing newspaper work you will never see things, you will see only words....and that will never do....if you intend to be a writer."¹³

It is easy to see why many hard-working newspaper reporters of the 1920s were lured to fiction writing. As Terhune and others found out, it was more fun to do and less time-consuming than newspaper reporting. And the time was ripe: thanks to many cultural, societal and technological changes of the early twentieth century, American magazines were at their peak. Magazine publishing got a shot in the arm in 1879 when the government passed legislation resulting in lower mailing rates. This came on the heels of a spirit of expansion in the country and technological advances in printing. The number and types of national magazines began to grow. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, a privileged class of educated readers could afford high-brow magazines, such as *Harper's*, *Scribner's* and *Century*, leaving the market wide open for a less-genteel reader.¹⁴ As Edward Stratemeyer helped fulfill a need for less-expensive juvenile books, several pioneers in magazine publishing recognized and helped fill the need for magazines that had wide appeal. Like most successful entrepreneurs, these men -- Frank Munsey, S.S. McClure, John Brisben Walker and George Horace Lorimer, for example -- took advantage of the times and of the chain reaction that resulted from rapidly increasing factory output. Improvements in technology led to the growth in output of goods, which coincided with rapid improvements of railways and transportation systems. Consequently,

advertising and promotion of goods changed and the local orientation of newspapers would no longer get the job done.

Magazines were ready-made vehicles to take advantage of the explosion of retail goods at the turn of the century. And printers could now work faster and turn out magazines with higher quality graphics at a lower price per copy. Enterprising magazine editors now found themselves in an advantageous position. By 1893, S.S. McClure could lower the price of his new magazine, *McClure's*, to 15 cents, a dime or more lower than the 25- and 35-cent magazines that were currently on the market. Other publishers followed his lead. Ultimately, a large, untapped audience of readers could afford the magazines and more advertisers could advertise at lower rates, since circulation was now larger.¹⁵

Some magazine publishers were also clever enough to understand changing cultural values and take advantage of them. For instance, when Cyrus Curtis, publisher of *Ladies Home Journal*, bought the dying *Saturday Evening Post* in 1897, it had a circulation of 2,231 readers and advertising revenue of \$6,933. Thanks to several factors – Curtis' faith that he could revive the declining magazine, his willingness to sink money into it and the hiring of a talented editor – the magazine rebounded. By 1912, circulation was 1.9 million readers and advertising revenue was \$7.1 million. By 1922, circulation grew to nearly 2.2 million and advertising sales were \$28.2 million.¹⁶

So the magazine market was ripe in the mid 1920s when McFarlane and other newspaper reporters quit their jobs to write fiction fulltime. Fiction was the bread and butter of most of these magazines, and it was an absorbing story – rather than

the writing itself -- that publishers and editors sought. As magazine publisher Frank Munsey said, "We want stories. That is what we need -- stories, not dialect sketches, not washed out studies of effete human nature, not weak tales of sickly sentimentality, not 'pretty' writing...Good writing is as common as clam shells, while good stories are as rare as statesmanship." ¹⁷

It was this potentially lucrative magazine market that McFarlane entered in 1926 when he quit his newspaper job and moved to a rustic cabin in Lake Ramsey in northern Ontario. By 1927, he had written three Hardy-Boys books: *The Tower Treasure*, *The House on the Cliff* and *The Secret of the Old Mill*. (Stratemeyer launched most of his series by issuing three "breeder" books: books that were published simultaneously to generate interest in the new series). His first year and a half at Lake Ramsey was slow -- he received plenty of rejection notices from magazines, but had written seven Dave Fearless books for \$100 apiece, and had a 25,000-word work of fiction about a prospector accepted by a magazine called *Everybody's*. By 1928, though, his career was coming along. His success with the Stratemeyer Syndicate meant he could pay the bills, he thought, and the birth of the Hardy Boys series -- and early moderate success of the series -- meant he could continue with that series as well as some others. That year he wrote two more Hardy Boys books. His fiction sales totaled \$3,928 in 1928, more than he would have made on a newspaper, and he won second place in a national fiction writing contest sponsored by *Maclean's* magazine. ¹⁸ The award gave him a tremendous morale boost and a few hundred dollars. Further, he believed that after nearly two years as a fulltime

freelance writer, he had become a "professional:" As he notes in his autobiography, he got in to a writing groove after the fourth Hardy Boys book, *The Missing Chums*: "Without realizing it I had acquired systematic work habits and a professional attitude," he wrote. "The morning chapter rolled out of the typewriter every day until the book was done, the order filled, the merchandise delivered."¹⁹ He enjoyed his new life at Lake Ramsey as soon as it began. He loved the cabin, the clean air and water, the woods and nearby beach with its birds and ducks. He loved the slower pace of his life that allowed him to enjoy a cup of coffee and some bacon and eggs before he began his work. In short, after working nearly six years on newspapers, he loved his freedom: "Never again would I work for a master, by hour, by day, by week or by year. Perhaps I had neither the talent nor the ability to make a living by writing, but such freedom was worth any sacrifice until I found out."²⁰

By May of 1928, in fact, he must have been so encouraged by his new career that he married his longtime sweetheart, Amy Arnold of New Liskeard, Ontario, a few miles from his hometown of Haileybury, and the two lived briefly in Montreal before moving back to McFarlane's hometown of Haileybury. But thanks to an upcoming economic depression that swept North America, McFarlane's longtime dream of becoming a successful writer of adult fiction would never really materialize. But he would obtain fame in a way he never dreamed of.

McFarlane was not the only former newspaper reporter to sign on with the Stratemeyer Syndicate. The bare-bones syndicate, which employed only a handful

of fulltime employees, was actually an office in Manhattan that turned over its completed manuscripts to one of two or three publishers. The publishers were paid a sum to publish and market the books, but the copyrights belonged to the syndicate -- in essence, to Edward Stratemeyer. And Stratemeyer became a rich man because of his novel idea. As *Fortune* magazine wrote in one of the few articles about the syndicate, "as oil had its Rockefeller, literature had its Stratemeyer."²¹

Stratemeyer's right-hand man was Howard Garis, a newspaper reporter from Newark, New Jersey. Garis helped Stratemeyer prepare plot outlines and wrote volumes of many of the syndicate series. More important to the syndicate, though, was his role as ghostwriter for many early series, including some Motor Boys and Tom Swift books.²² Garis is probably most famous, though, as author of the Uncle Wiggily series of books, which he wrote on his own under his own name, outside of the syndicate.

But ultimately, two of the syndicate's best-selling and enduring series were written by former newspaper reporters: the Hardy Boys series, and the popular Nancy Drew series. In 1926, the same year Leslie McFarlane quit his newspaper job, Mildred Wirt quit her newspaper job in Iowa and ventured to New York to embark on a career as a writer there. After interviewing with the syndicate, she also became a member of its stable of regular writers. Many people may know her as "Carolyn Keene," author of the tremendously popular Nancy Drew series, the most lucrative of all the syndicate books. Wirt helped launch that series in 1930 -- ironically, the first group in the series was published within a month or so of Edward

Stratemeyer's death. Mildred Wirt, later Mildred Wirt Benson, wrote most of the first 25 Nancy Drew books, as well as a few books in other syndicate series.²³

As innocent as they seem today, the Stratemeyer series books have been a lightning rod for controversy for much of their existence. Indeed, as late as the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, some children's librarians banned them from the shelves because they regarded them as unimaginative, formulaic – and a waste of time for children.²⁴ Stratemeyer himself, though, battled the first attempt at censorship of the books near the turn of the century, when the "head librarian" of the Boys Scouts of America began a national campaign against the books, claiming they were harmful to children and that the adventures in the books led children astray. Formation of the Boy Scouts of America in 1908 had stimulated readership and production of boys' serial books, including Stratemeyer's Boy Scouts series, a phenomenon that enraged Boy Scout head librarian Franklin K. Mathiews. In an attempt to stem what he deemed the reckless production of mindless adventure books that were harmful to normal adolescents, Mathiews went to publishers with his own Scout-approved reading list and the suggestion of taking part in a "Boy Scout Safety First Book Week."²⁵ His activities did not bother Stratemeyer, who kept up business as usual; but Mathiews did get the ear of publishers, many of whom did follow a Boy Scout-approved list.

It is a measure of Stratemeyer's steely determination and his business acumen that he was still unfazed by Mathiews, despite the actions by publishers. And it is a measure of Mathiews' evangelical zeal that he did not stop there. In 1914, he wrote a now-famous 1,000 -word essay in *Outlook* magazine that would be read by

librarians for decades to come, titled "Blowing Out the Boys' Brains." By today's standards of language and imagery, the tone of the essay is comical. Although he never mentions Stratemeyer by name, he angrily points out that the series books of the era were like explosives, guaranteed to "blow out the brains" of the boys who read them, and worthy of a warning label on each one. The books are not written, he says, but "manufactured," not by one man, he implies, but by several people who turned out the books at break-neck speed, often one every two weeks.²⁶ With their formulaic writing style and plots, Mathews writes, the "vile" series books may provide short-term cheap thrills, but will destroy the brain and the body, much as alcohol does. It would be the first of many challenges to Stratemeyer series books.

By the time McFarlane became involved with the syndicate in 1926, it was clear that the efforts of the Boy Scouts and others who criticized the books were nearly fruitless. The syndicate books had achieved commercial success and no criticism by the Boy Scouts would stop children from reading them. In 1926 and 1927, the American Library Association published the Winnetka Grade Book List based on a survey of books read by schoolchildren in 34 American cities. It showed that series books were read by a full 98 percent of those surveyed. And it noted, "the books of one series [presumably the Bobbsey Twins] were unanimously rated trashy by our expert librarians and almost unanimously liked by the 900 children who read them." Although sales figures were kept under wraps, it is estimated that the series books in the first twenty years or so of their existence sold an average of 5 million

copies a year. The sales net Stratemeyer \$5,000 annually "in an era when one dollar could buy a fine three-course meal," according to one critic.²⁷

Certainly the millions of readers of Stratemeyer books exemplified the power children had when selecting reading material – a power that was greater in Stratemeyer's era than it is today. The role of librarians and teachers in the selection and recommendation of children's books by schools and libraries has of course been pivotal for most of the twentieth century, but until the 1920s publishing houses did not have separate children's divisions and children's sections of public libraries were rare or non-existent.²⁸

Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, published in 1865, was a watershed book, primarily because it was one of the first books written for children's pure enjoyment, rather than one designed to teach a lesson or instill a moral. Other books of the late nineteenth century were romantic and fey in nature, and were frequently aimed at a female audience – books like Lucretia Hale's the *Peterkin Papers*, and of course the famous *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, which portrayed the warm family life of the Marches. Boys for books – most notably Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1884 and *Tom Sawyer* in 1876 – portrayed greater realism, combining adventure, realism and humor.²⁹ But the true watershed book of the era was Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. The difference between *Treasure Island* and other adventure novels of the era is, again, that Stevenson's book is pure adventure undiluted by what one group of children's literature critics called "ulterior" motives such as piety or morality. As one critic wrote, the beauty and craft of the writing "raises it to a level of art...[Stevenson] is

not just a lover of tales, but equally a lover of words and phrases, a meticulous searcher for the right word, a builder of phrases precise and exact...*Treasure Island* anticipates the escape from previous limitations of Puritanism and didacticism into complete freedom of form, idea and substance."³⁰

And of course many other brilliant and richly textured children's books were written in the late 19th and early twentieth century. Still, children's librarians of the early 1920s lamented the dearth of such books. "We are tired of substitutes for realities in writing for children," said Anne Carroll Moore, head of the New York Public Library's Children's Department in 1920. "The trail....[is] strewn with patronage and propaganda, moralizing self-sufficiency and sham efficiency, mock heroics and cheap optimism – above all, with the commonplace in theme, treatment and language."³¹ The end of World War I, however, brought many revolutionary changes in children's literature. Children's divisions were formed in publishing houses, magazines about the subject of children's literature most notably *The Horn Book Magazine*, were published and the John Newbery Medal was created by the American Library Association in 1922 to encourage high-quality juvenile books.³² Most important, for the first time, the concept of "children's literature" was formed. In other words, the genre was starting to be taken seriously. Moore, of the New York Public Library, began editing in 1924 a weekly page of criticism of children's books in the *New York Herald Tribune*, a section which included submissions from writers, illustrators and librarians. A similar section was formed in the *New York Times Book Review* in 1930.³³

After his marriage in 1928, his life naturally changed – but he had no idea how much it would change, not simply domestically but because of the Great Depression of 1929. Just as his magazine sales began to pick up, and just as he thought he could abandon his "Franklin W. Dixon" identity, North America was plunged into an economic depression. Magazines folded, markets dried up and pay declined dramatically by those outlets that were still accepting stories. The advent of the Great Depression coincided with the birth of two of his three children. Patricia McFarlane was born on February 17, 1929; Brian McFarlane was born two years later on August 10, 1931, and Norah McFarlane was born on February 4, 1933. And these were very tough years for the McFarlane family; frustration with his career caused McFarlane to drink too much and, eventually to seek treatment for his drinking. Amy McFarlane suffered bouts of depression that deepened as her family's financial situation worsened. Although he frequently contemplated applying for fulltime jobs and abandoning his freelance career, McFarlane endured. It was twenty years before he gave up that career for fulltime work.

McFarlane continued working on his fiction into the 1930s and he hoped his work would get accepted by magazines. A compulsive writer, he also kept detailed diaries for nearly 20 years. These diaries detailed his daily activities, his professional successes and disappointments and his thoughts about many matters. Over the years, they paint a picture of a man who was plagued by insecurities about his freelance writing and his decision to support a family of five through it. The passages also showed that despite numerous setbacks and much indecision, he

struggled on, taking pride in the fact that his magazine sales allowed him to continue working on his own.

Yet his life was not easy in the 1930s when markets dried up and he had a growing family. The passages also dramatically illustrate the vicissitudes of the life of a writer, particularly during the brutal weather of northern Ontario (where, he writes, it could be cold nearly eight months a year). In McFarlane's case, he could usually count on the Stratmeyers to send him a small advance check for the work he was to do for them. He would pay some smaller bills with the advance and hope the remainder of the check would come soon enough to help cover rent and utility payments.³⁴ "Feeling very tired today," he wrote on November 1, 1930.

"Disappointed when the Stratmeyer letter came with outline for new story but no advance cheque. Absolutely broke now. Not a nickel in the house." McFarlane's fortunes could change dramatically within days, though, if he received word of a sale -- or a check. As a result, the McFarlane family usually waited on tenterhooks each day for the mail, hoping for good news. The news, though, was sometimes bad: "A bad day," he wrote on September 25, 1931. "Had to meet an overdraft at the bank... [Amy] couldn't understand how our finances got so low and feels badly." Amid the ups and downs of his career, it was Frank and Joe Hardy who frequently bore the brunt of his frustrations in those desperate days of the 1930s. He found writing "the juveniles" a frustrating and time-consuming experience. And if he didn't record an entry in his diary, he berated himself. "As usual, when I am writing one of those cursed juvenile books everything else goes by the board," he wrote on January 8, 1936, after failing to write in his diary for two days. "Day after day has

been a solid sweat at the damnable boys book, usually 4,000 words a day when I have been in a good working sweat, some days so fed up that I have been able to do nothing at all...." He seemed particularly bitter in this diary entry, and even criticized the plot summary that the syndicate had sent him for *The Sinister Signpost*, the 15th in the Hardy Boys series. "Full of inventors, secret chambers, etc. and a kidnapped racehorse as well as the obnoxious Hardy Brats." By this time, after the death of Edward Stratemeyer, the syndicate was run by Edward Stratemeyer's daughters, Harriet Adams and Edna Stratemeyer, who were now paying \$85 per book for many syndicate books, but who usually kept McFarlane's pay at \$100 per book. Nonetheless, he wrote, he felt he was potentially losing money writing the Hardy Boys because his pay for other work was higher. McFarlane did finish *The Sinister Signpost* three weeks later, on January 28, as his diary reflects: "I worked hard and finished up the boys' book at 5 o'clock [in the morning], sent it out by express at once and feel as if I have just climbed the Matterhorn."

But these passages in the diaries are misleading to some extent. When things were going well for McFarlane and sales to magazines were good, he was much more complacent about his work for the syndicate, and even felt a certain loyalty toward his "step-children," Joe and Frank Hardy. In fact, in the early 1940s, when his life stabilized and his magazine fiction began to sell better, he decided to accept a few more Hardy Boys assignments, he wrote, because he was repelled by the thought of another author writing about the Hardy Boys.

Based on his diaries, those days of the middle 1930s were the lowest for McFarlane and his family. Not normally a heavy drinker, McFarlane, like many

newspaper reporters, was never one to turn down a drink. But his drinking worsened in 1935 and 1936 – to a point where his family intervened. Even his diary entries during some of those weeks in 1935 indicated that he was not himself. He notes that he has trouble working and concentrating because of "making a night of it" or staying out late. "I'm in bad shape today and badly in disfavor [with his family]," he wrote one cold day in February. He knew, though, that the drinking was hurting his writing. As he wrote two days later, "Still enfeebled....my health can't stand this nonsense much longer. Got back to work and am now over the worst of the book, into the home stretch. Ten days overdue and a bad job." By October, things had not looked up. On October 1, he wrote, "Tired today and in no shape for work." He apparently thought he could recuperate with the hair of the dog that bit him. "Revived myself with a Bass."

Norah McFarlane Perez said her father's actions would exasperate her mother, who often went out looking for her husband on the nights he was holed up drinking. On some desperate evenings, she would hide his clothes in the oven as a pre-emptory strike – no clothes, no drinking, particularly for someone like McFarlane, who was dapper and concerned about his appearance.³⁵ Finally, in the spring of 1936, McFarlane's father, John Henry McFarlane, who lived nearby, took matters in his own hands and took his son away for "the cure." McFarlane's children, who were very young at the time, barely remember this era and later came to believe that their father went to a sanitarium near Hamilton, Ontario. Norah Perez believes this drying out consisted of a treatment like Antabuse, which is designed to instill a strong distaste for liquor. For many years after that, Leslie

McFarlane didn't take another drink. After his children were grown, he indicates in diaries and letters that he was once again a social drinker. There is no evidence that drinking was ever a problem for him again.

The hard-drinking writer has long been a stereotype in North American literary culture, and when it came to freelance writers of the 1920s and 1930s, that image may have had a basis in reality. Indeed, his brief period of alcohol abuse may have been one of the few behaviors that linked McFarlane to other writers of the era. In his biography of author and pulp writer John D. MacDonald, Hugh Merrill wrote that only about 300 writers – most of whom lived in New York – filled the pages of America's pulp magazines. Their domestic situation was hardly tranquil, though. To support themselves, they lived in cheap hotels, ate in cheap restaurants and were prone to spending what little money they made on cheap liquor. During that era, Merrill estimated that American pulp magazines published about 800 pieces of fiction a month. So McFarlane was an anomaly both socially and geographically, when compared to his fellow pulp writers.³⁷

Although McFarlane naturally preferred to sell his material to "slick," more literary magazines, many of his sales did go to pulps, such as *Adventure*, *Detective* and others. Some of his work in the 1930s, though, was sold to *Maclean's* in Canada and to the *Toronto Star Weekly* magazine. He also sold hockey and boxing fiction to *Sport Story* and a few other sports magazine. The bulk of his work was mysteries and sports stories, although he was versatile: he also sold much humorous fiction and even poems.

But McFarlane and other young writers of his generation never did fully recover from the effects of the Great Depression. Even after McFarlane gave up drinking, Amy McFarlane began suffering severe bouts of what we now call depression. She suffered a variety of physical ailments, and at times was unable to leave her home; other times, she was unable to leave her bed. As the years passed, as her three children grew older, and after her husband took a fulltime job, she did recover.³⁸

Despite the declining markets for fiction, McFarlane did survive during those shaky years of the mid and late 1930s, and, ultimately, he was able to support his family (and eventually send two of this three children to college). But life was not without its disappointments. His role as author of the Hardy Boys books certainly helped to keep him afloat financially, but he never was able to fulfill a lifetime dream of writing an epic novel about settlement of Northern Ontario and the drama and romance of the pioneers who came to the region in the late nineteenth century. McFarlane had met his share of characters when he was a young reporter in Canada – miners, con men, adventurers and others who were drawn to the wealth of the mines of the region – and he believed the tale of the region had tremendous potential.³⁹

An avid reader throughout his life, McFarlane kept current on books and magazines, and thought it important to maintain contact with other writers, even if by letter. He evidently wrote to F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1938 to critique Fitzgerald's book, *Tender is the Night*, and to praise him for short articles he did for *Esquire*. McFarlane received a grateful reply from the author, who had by 1938 become a

successful magazine fiction writer and a moderately successful novelist. In a 160-word hand-scribbled note, Fitzgerald wrote that he, too, was insecure about his career and feared his work was not read. Consequently, he said, he appreciated letters like the one he received from McFarlane: "One of the ghastly aspects of my gloom was a horrible feeling that I wasn't being read," he wrote. "And I'd rather have a sharp criticism of my pet child *Tender is the Night* such as yours, than the feeling of pouring out endless words to fall upon as ears as I had had." Fitzgerald went on to say that he believed "I am done as a writer – maybe not, of course...In the meantime I appreciate the goodness of heart that prompted your letter." McFarlane of course valued the letter – it became one of his prized possessions.⁴⁰

McFarlane's diaries are filled with the enormous highs and crushing lows of the life of a fulltime freelance writer. Of course, upping the stakes was the fact that he had a family of five to support, and that he lived in an area that was cold much of the year. Passages in the diary reflect how he worries at times that his home's heating oil will run out, and that he will have no resources to buy more. Or, in one particular desperate passage, he notes how his young son, Brian, has holes in his shoes and he has no money to buy him new shoes. But the "markets" as he called them, always came through for McFarlane, and despite the drama and stress in his life, he was able to hold his family together.

All of that ended however, in 1942, when the patriotic McFarlane, disappointed that he was rejected for military service because of his height (he was 5-foot-3-inches tall), agreed to become a speechwriter in the public relations office of the Canadian Department of Munitions and Supply. It was his first fulltime job in

about fifteen years. As part of his duties, he began writing for the newly formed Canadian National Film Board, whose role was, in part, to produce short documentaries about Canada's role in the war effort.

At this point in his life, McFarlane gave up magazine writing for good, but he began a new life of sorts. By 1943, he was asked to join the Film Board on a fulltime basis, and he began a career of traveling throughout Canada as a producer, director and writer of short documentary films. After the war, the Film Board expanded and eventually became respected for the films it produced on a variety of topics. McFarlane won several awards for the films he wrote and produced, including a British Film Award for a feature documentary on the visit of the British royal family to Canada, and a nomination for an American Academy Award for a documentary on herring boats in Canada.

Eventually, McFarlane's versatility in documentary-film writing and directing led to a job in 1953 with the fledgling television network, the Canadian Broadcasting Company, and he was named chief editor of television drama. He was responsible primarily for editing and writing live dramas for the new medium of television, a job that he has described as one similar to a playwright. In 1960, he received *Liberty* magazine's award for the "best playwright" in Canada. Even when he was in his 70s, McFarlane never retired – he continued to write sports stories for adults and children, and he wrote a wry and humorous autobiography that focused primarily on his years as "Franklin W. Dixon," and the events leading up to that role. But he never did write his Great Canadian novel about the pioneers of northern Ontario.

In the many interviews he granted late in his life, when he finally acknowledged that he was "Franklin W. Dixon," Leslie McFarlane exhibits a type of schizophrenia about that role. "The irony there is that a relatively small body of my work took over everything else," he said late in his life.⁴¹ But he acknowledged that he took seriously the millions of readers who loved the Hardy Boys, and respected the fact that the series introduced many of them to the joys of reading. "Anything that induces the reading habit is all for the good," he said."⁴² And although he did not write the great novel he had talked about as a young man, and although his real name never became nearly as famous as his pen name, he was particularly proud that he had overcome many obstacles to earn his living as a freelance writer. It was an accomplishment that had eluded many others.

Notes

Leslie McFarlane's diaries and papers are stored at the home of his son, Brian McFarlane, in Toronto, Ontario. The author appreciates Brian McFarlane's generosity in giving her permission to read and quote from them.

¹ See McFarlane's autobiography, The Ghost of the Hardy Boys, Toronto: Methuen, 1976, pp. 1-9.

² McFarlane discusses at length this period and other periods in his life in a series of "Interview Notes" he typed late in his life in the late 1970s. These are located among his personal papers, which are held by his son, Brian McFarlane.

³ Ghost of the Hardy Boys, pp. 1-7.

⁴ McFarlane describes in length in his autobiography receiving the packet from the Stratemeyer Syndicate and the "test" chapters he was asked to write.

⁵ Ghost of the Hardy Boys, p. 13.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 57-61.

⁷ Exactly how many of the first group of Hardy Boys books were written by McFarlane is debatable. Some researchers believe that he wrote twenty-one of the first twenty-six, and others think he may have written nineteen of the first twenty-six. Many Hardy Boys readers have debated the issue in papers and on web sites. It is likely, however, based on correspondence between McFarlane and the Stratemeyer Syndicate (located at the New York Public Library) that he wrote the twenty-one of the first twenty-six. For a discussion of this, see for example Robert Crawford's, The Lost Hardys: A Concordance, Rheem Valley, CA: SynSine Press, 1997, and writings by James Keeline at www.Keeline.com.

⁸ Interview by the author with Norah McFarlane Perez, July 31, 2001, Lewiston NY.

⁹ McFarlane mentioned this in many interviews he did late in his life and his children confirmed it in interviews with the author: Norah McFarlane Perez, in an interview with the author, op. cit., and Brian McFarlane in an interview on July 30, 2001 in Toronto, Ontario.

¹⁰ See Bruce Weber's Hired Pens: Professional Writers in the Golden Age, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1997, pp. 117-119.

¹¹ Weber, p. 122.

¹² McFarlane recounts this story in Ghost of the Hardy Boys, pp. 111-112.

¹³ Weber, p. 113.

¹⁴ See Theodore Peterson's A History of Magazines in the 20th Century, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸ McFarlane kept detailed ledgers of his fiction sales that are among his personal papers.

¹⁹ Ghost of the Hardy Boys, p 186.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

²¹ This quote appeared in an extensive profile of the Stratemeyer Syndicate that was published in the April 1934 issue of Fortune magazine, titled "For Indeed it Was He" (no author listed), pp.86-90. The quote appeared on page 87.

²² Howard Garis' role with the syndicate is discussed in much of the literature about the syndicate, including in the Fortune story. It is also discussed at length

in Carol Billman's history of the syndicate, The Secret of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, New York: Ungar Publishing Co., 1986, p. 23. Garis' son, Roger -- who also wrote the syndicate -- describes at length his father's role with it in Roger Garis' memoir, My Father Was Uncle Wiggily, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966.

²³ For this and more details on the syndicate see Deidre Johnson's Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate, New York: Twayne Publishing, 1993, p. 10.

²⁴ Several newspaper articles have discussed the controversial nature of some of the Stratemeyer books. See, for example, Roger May's "Nancy Drew and Kin: Still Surmount Scrapes and Critics' Slurs," Wall Street Journal, January 15, 1975, pp. 1, 25. Here a librarian is quoted as saying, "You'd be surprised how much heat you can generate by mentioning Nancy Drew."

²⁵ Mathews' actions are discussed in many writings about the syndicate. For a summary see Arthur Prager's "Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate," Saturday Review, July 10, 1971, p. 16; Ken Donelson, "The Stratemeyer Syndicate," Then and Now," in Children's Literature, vol. 7, 1978, pp. 16-44; John T. Dizer, Tom Swift and Friends. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 1982, pp. 15-29.

²⁶ Mathews' article appeared in Outlook on November 18, 1914, pp. 2-4.

²⁷ See Johnson, p. 161. Johnson notes that the original reading list was published in 1926 in Chicago by the American Library Association. John Maxwell Hamilton offered these sales figures and earnings in his book, Casanova was a Book Lover. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000, p. 50.

²⁸ See Kathleen T. Horning, From Cover to Cover: Evaluating Children's Books, New York: HarperCollins Juvenile Division, 1997, p. 150.

²⁹ Cornelia Meigs, Anne Thaxter Eaton, Elizabeth Nesbitt, Ruth Hill Viguers, eds., A Critical History of Children's Literature, New York, Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1969, p. 359.

³⁰ Meigs, et. al., p. 303-305.

³¹ Horning, p. 150.

³² Ibid., p. 151.

³³ Meigs, et. al., p. 394.

³⁴ McFarlane wrote passages in his diary nearly every day -- the entries were usually between two and eight or nine sentences. Occasionally, a week or so would go by when he did not write a passage, but this was unusual, and he frequently chastised himself later in an entry for failure to write in the diary. The diary entries reflected his daily activities as well as his thoughts.

³⁵ Interview with Norah Perez.

³⁷ Hugh Merrill, The Red Hot Typewriter: The Life and Times of John D. MacDonald, New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Minotaur, 2000, pp. 45-47.

³⁸ Brian McFarlane and Norah Perez discussed their mother's illness during interviews with the author , op. cit.

³⁹ McFarlane conducted an extensive letter-writing relationship during the 1920s and part of the 1930s with literary critic William Deacon. Deacon had been a book critic and literary editor of several Canadian publications, including the defunct Toronto Mail and Empire , and, later the Globe and Mail. In their letters, the two men discuss the possibility of McFarlane writing an epic novel about the Northern Canadian frontier. See, for example, a letter from McFarlane to Deacon dated December, 1931, and from Deacon to McFarlane dated August 23, 1931. The correspondence is stored in the Deacon Archives at the University of Toronto.

⁴⁰ Norah Perez now has the copy of the Fitzgerald letter in her home in Lewiston, NY.

⁴¹ Ghost of the Hardy Boys , p. 41.

⁴² He wrote this in his Interview Notes , op. cit.

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History Division

**'Our People die well': Death-bed Scenes in Methodist Magazines in
Eighteenth-century Britain**

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Introduction

“The best of all, God is with us!” John Wesley repeated these words over and over during his final days. Wearing his belief like a badge of holy triumph, John Wesley, who died in March 1791, punctuated his death with a series of such exclamations, demonstrating both his faith in God’s promise of salvation and his own spiritual readiness to embrace death and pass into the next world (Wesley, 1938 p. 131-44). Having witnessed the deaths of many of his friends and co-religionists, and having read and edited for publication descriptions of hundreds more, John Wesley was highly conversant in the language people used to express themselves as they reached their last moments. Indeed, as this essay will argue, Wesley’s career as the editor and figurehead of a Methodist magazine that came to publish large numbers of death-bed scenes not only shaped the way he envisioned what constituted a good, holy death, but also served to construct and disseminate a Methodist vision of the perfect death to a growing national readership. Drawing on the one hundred and fifty-two non-serialized accounts of death-bed scenes published in the *Arminian Magazine* between its first issue in January 1778 and 1791, the year in which John Wesley died, we can determine the constitution of the Methodist framework of holy death. By focusing on the construction and maintenance of what became an important genre of Methodist writing, this paper seeks to probe the particular significance of dying to this denomination and, in so doing, make a contribution to the way historians understand religious movements.

One of the hardest questions facing historians of religion is how to deal with the issue of belief. In the historiographical past, professional historians have frequently sought to understand adherence to religious doctrines by recourse to economic, social and emotional explanations. Rationalizing to the point of reduction, it is not uncommon for historians of Christianity to explain religious beliefs without recognition of the reasonable steps toward faith made by all those who follow in this religious tradition. This paper seeks, in some small way, to redress this imbalance in historiographical causation. In my view, the appearance and particular presentation of death-scenes

in the *Arminian Magazine* served to bridge an important gap for all those struggling with their beliefs. Those engaged in holy dying behaved in ways designed to demonstrate their assurance of salvation to themselves, their families and friends and to God. The diverse group of Methodist itinerants, family members and friends who submitted their descriptions of these death-scenes for edifying publication in the *Arminian Magazine*, then made additional embellishments and omissions designed to further perfect these tableaux and maximize their utility to those Christian readers looking for ready proofs that they themselves would go to heaven. For readers who doubted the efficacy of Wesley's abstract promise of universal redemption, death-scenes seemed to provide repeated, tangible proof that those who accepted Christ into their hearts, rejected the devil, and searched their hearts for sin and found nothing, went directly to heaven. Exploring the methods used to make these potentially morbid accounts as appealing as possible to a diverse national readership, we can gain a sense of how Wesley used the new technologies of mass communication to inculcate a feeling of community between readers while at the same time using this new channel as a tool of religious instruction. Beginning with an analysis of the role and success of denominational periodicals such as the *Arminian Magazine* in the late eighteenth century, this paper examines why death proved such a potent theme in literature and then considers why and how it came to be deployed with such vigor as a literary and rhetorical device in Wesley's magazine.

I. The *Arminian Magazine*.

The collapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 wrought profound changes upon English society. Deregulation of laws pertaining to the publication of various kinds of printed material allowed anyone with the will and the means to publish to do so (Herbert, 1940 p. 33-4). The result was the establishment of a growing number of newspapers and periodicals designed to cater to the needs of a public becoming increasingly familiar with print and its uses. By the eighteenth century, increased intellectual activity - the consequence of improved means of communication, more widespread education, and the French and Industrial Revolutions - had served to greatly increase the size and

appetite of the English reading public. Benefiting from greatly reduced costs of mass production, publishers responded with a rising tide of print.

As one of many genres that rose in number and popularity over the course of the eighteenth century, magazines came to serve markets both general and specialized and brought readers together into newly imagined communities based on common interest rather than physical proximity and contact. Beginning in the early 1700s, the verve and vigor of magazines such as the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* created national readerships for serial-format print (Collins, 1927; Graham, 1926 pps. 46, 62, 69). Never slow to take advantage of an opportunity presented by new media, organized religions were among the first and most successful groups to establish printed periodicals and distribute them to a large and loyal readership. Their motivation in doing so was to extend and reinforce their ministries by adding another channel to their already multifaceted means of outreach. Highly organized religious movements like Methodism and certain strands of Calvinism were already making use of mechanisms as diverse as field preaching, schools, folk medicine, lending societies and publishing houses to spread their beliefs across the country; regular periodical publication, however, offered particular advantages (Rogal, 1984 p. 231). Most importantly, journals could be distributed widely, perhaps beyond the reach of traditional preaching methods. In addition to its potential geographical range, serial publication offered the possibility of reaching those classes of people not normally affected by intricate theological arguments, however presented. If suitably concise and entertaining, the contents of such journals could provide edification and instruction on religious subjects “for those whose circumstances would otherwise grasp none at all” (“The Gospel Magazine,” 1774, 1:1, p. iv).

The monthly *Arminian Magazine: Consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption* was first published in 1778 in an effort to counter the predestination doctrines of Wesley’s Calvinist publishing rivals. As its subtitle suggested, Wesley’s *Arminian Magazine* was to serve as a textbook on the theme of universal redemption. On almost every page an exemplary

reminder appeared that "God willeth all men to be saved, by speaking the truth in love" ("AM," 1778, I:1, p. iv). Laying out the proposed format of his magazine, Wesley kept this theme of universal salvation to the fore. Each issue would consist of four parts, the first a theological defence of this doctrine ("AM," 1778, I:1, p. v). "Secondly," Wesley continued, "An extract from the life of some holy man, whether Lutheran, Church of England, Calvinist, or Arminian. Thirdly, Accounts and Letters, containing the experience of pious persons, the greatest part of whom are still alive: and, Fourthly, Verses explaining or confirming the capital doctrines we have in view" ("AM," 1778, I:1, pps. v-vi).

As these editorials demonstrate, Wesley exerted a phenomenal degree of personal control over the content of the magazine, both as editor and author. Devoting the last thirteen years of his long life to the publication, Wesley personally compiled and edited each month's edition until his death at age eighty-eight. While employing Thomas Olivers as 'Corrector of the Press' from 1776 to 1793, Wesley's autocratic scrutiny was such that at the end of the ninth volume, published in 1786, Wesley included his own list of errata, eight pages in all (Mathews, 1949, p. 171). Moreover, he was responsible for the authorship of a good deal of the magazine's contents. A typical issue might include a reproduction of a Wesley sermon, a serialization of one his longer tracts, and a piece of general writing on some religious subject written specially for the magazine, as well as comments and introductions to many other inclusions and substantial amounts of personal correspondence. He was also the author of a significant number of the biographical sketches of notable Methodist preachers and the witness and recorder at several of the death-bed scenes that began to appear in the magazine after 1780. Thus, although the magazine contained valuable contributions from correspondents from every corner of the British Isles and sometimes beyond, the shape and tone of the magazine and, indeed, the ultimate decisions as to what was included and discarded were Wesley's responsibilities. Indeed, as Wesley advanced in years, as his eyesight and limbs began to fail him, he was forced to limit the frequency and intensity of his preaching and visiting tours and reduce the number of daily sermons to a more manageable amount (Rogal, 1987). Instead he

devoted more and more time, proportionally, to this new venture, a magazine that would carry his voice and his message where his legs no longer could.

And carry it did. While gauging the success of periodicals of this time is a notoriously imprecise science, we have a few pieces of evidence that indicate that the *Arminian Magazine* was bought and read by large numbers of people. Contents pages proudly proclaimed that the magazine was “sold at the New Chapel, City-Road, and by all the Booksellers in Town and Country”(“AM,” 1778, I:1, backpage). While it is undoubtedly true that copies were sold in this fashion, most likely to those with little or no denominational adherence to Methodism, the majority of sales were probably achieved through another channel. The research of H. F. Mathews reveals that copies of the magazine were brought to the weeknight preaching services by the Methodist itinerants with whom Wesley was in regular contact. At these meetings, copies of the *Arminian Magazine* were distributed and sold to those present alongside other religious books (Mathews, 1949, p. 169-170). Edward Martin has suggested that, at the time of Wesley’s death, the total number of copies sold at these and other venues was around 7,000 copies (Martin, 1900, p. 90; “AM,” 1790, XIII: Preface, p. iii). As Thomas Walter Herbert has commented, however, while this is a fairly large number, “it is not an adequate representation of the reading public the journal reached (Herbert, 1940, p. 44).” While circulation figures of this type constitute a useful insight into the extent of printing in England at this time, they can provide little more than a clue to the actual size of the readership that these magazines would have attracted. Indeed, I would suggest that, for publications of this nature, its circulation (seen as a function of its cost to the consumer) bore an inverse relation to the number of people who read or heard the contents of each issue. The shilling charged for the *Arminian Magazine* meant that the magazine was unlikely to have been an impulse purchase and thus its circulation was perhaps lower than its cheaper rivals. Given its relative expense, Mathews’ work indicates that it was not uncommon for two or more peasant families to put their savings together to purchase copies. Then, once saved for and acquired, Wesley’s magazine assumed a prized status in Methodist homes. In his memoirs, Thomas Jackson, who was later to become the magazine’s

editor, recalled how his father, in order to inculcate a taste for reading of this nature, resolved to bind in calf a volume of the magazine for each of his children (Jackson, 1874, p. 25-6). However they were bound, these magazines were read intensively and repeatedly by their purchasers and by up to twenty or thirty family and friends. On this basis, one could safely estimate a total readership in the region of 100,000.

Whatever the precise figures for readership, as Wesley had hoped, the magazine was distributed and sold at meetings the length and breadth of the British Isles. Analyzing the origins of the letters published in the *Arminian Magazine* reveals that published correspondence came from all over the country, although there were notable, if unsurprising concentrations of correspondence from London and the Methodist strongholds of Bristol and Lincolnshire. While it is not discernible in all correspondence, in a significant number of letters the authors refer, sometimes directly and sometimes implicitly, to the contents of previous numbers of the magazine thereby demonstrating their readership and not just their personal acquaintance with the editor.

Measured by many indicators, not least its longevity, the *Arminian Magazine* was a success. Much of this accomplishment was due to Wesley's sensitivity to the tastes of his readers. Indeed, while the format of the magazine remained, at least during Wesley's lifetime, largely true to the template he had set out during in its first issue, Wesley made several key changes over the years, usually at the request or complaint of his readers. Having received favorable notices following a trial run the previous November, in 1781 Wesley committed to regularly including "part of the Life of some of those real Christians, who, having faithfully served God in their generation, have lately finished their course with joy" ("AM," 1781, IV:1, p. 1). In practice, such stories placed considerable emphasis on the closing days and hours of these lives. These death-bed scenes, apparently in response to reader interest and a growing number of suitable submissions, became more and more prominent in the following decade with the number of published scenes rising from an average of eight per year between 1780 and 1782 to almost seventeen per year, more than double, between 1789 and 1791.

No other section of the magazine rose with such distinction, suggesting that, at the very least, death packed an unequaled emotional punch.

Indeed, the moment of death has always held people in rapt attention and, whether fact or fiction, accounts of final moments have continually sold well (Auerbach, 1990; Holubetz, 1986; James, 1980; Kastenbaum, 1989; Reed, 1975). "The truth of it is," Joseph Addison wrote in *The Spectator* of January 31, 1712, "there is nothing in history which is so improving to the reader, as those accounts which we meet with of the deaths of eminent persons, and of their behavior in that dreadful season" (Smithers, 1968 p. 460). Much popular fascination with death-bed scenes derives from the seemingly timeless belief that the dying receive a clearer revelation of truth and a supernatural insight into the future. Momentarily lingering on the borderlands of two worlds, "why may they not, when just leaving the one, catch some glimpses of the other?" (Clark, 1851 pp. 15-6). As Karl S. Guthke has remarked, "finality commands attention" and dying words, then, assume a cherished importance (Guthke, 1992 p. 11). In fact, death proved a great leveler as even the poorest soul could assume authority on the basis of dying revelation. Perceived both as the first and last opportunity for men and women to communicate a genuine insight into life and afterlife, the words of dying persons were invested with profound significance.

For Christians then, death was not solely the event of physical cessation but the portal to a new level of existence that was to last for eternity. Given the magnitude of this transition, the circumstances of death assumed monumental importance. Nevertheless, there were profound differences in the significance different denominations invested in the final moments of earthly life. Calvinists, for instance, believed that it was not the business of man to anticipate God's judgments, and judged it arrogance and impatience to preempt the verdict in this manner. In contrast, followers of John Wesley subscribed to a doctrine of perfectibility. Believing that human beings could follow Christ's commands and become perfectly free from sin, they concluded themselves irrevocably assured of salvation. A peaceful and graceful death was, Methodists believed, a sure sign of this

deliverance. Their belief in God's promise of universal redemption for all repentants meant that the minutes, hours and days before death were a crucial proving ground for those who did not yet feel fully assured of their salvation (Cecil, 1982). An unassured soul could look forward only to an eternity of fiery damnation in hell. Whereas, for those who successfully rid their hearts of sin, "the exemplary manner in which they met their death was the ultimate proof that they were indeed saved" (Cecil, 1982 p. 30). With the stakes so high, relatives, friends, and preachers gathered eagerly round the death-bed for some final intimation of the dying person's ultimate destination. Thus, Wesley's inclusion of death-bed scenes in the *Arminian Magazine* was an important means of highlighting a central doctrinal difference between Methodism and many of the religious movements with which it competed for souls. For this purpose, the next section will follow the course of a typical death-bed scene, focusing on the elements that the moribund and their biographers chose to suppress, the components they chose to emphasize, and the meaning with which they invested each ritual of holy dying.

II. The Rituals of Holy Dying

Published accounts of holy death served, in microcosm, the same purposes as the magazine of which they formed an increasingly dominant part. In short, death-bed scenes were included and selected to promote conversion, theological instruction, pious living and holy dying in ways that created and cemented a sense of Methodist community across the nation and beyond. Thus, they were couched in a plain and simple descriptive language designed to be understood by even the most uneducated of readers ("AM," 1784, VII: Preface). To further resonate with the broadest possible cross-section of society, accounts of holy death stripped themselves of specifics, to the extent that Wesleyan death-bed scenes closely resembled each other. Moreover, those who featured in descriptions of holy death were, by and large, ordinary members of the Methodist laity, selected for inclusion in the *Arminian Magazine* not on the basis of their social station or vocation but on the exemplary nature of their death. Only nineteen of one hundred and fifty-two dying persons who

appear in the magazine between 1778 and 1791 are itinerant preachers. Indeed, seeking both to represent and to appeal to the large numbers of women sympathetic to the Methodist religion, a robust forty-six percent of dying persons were female, a much higher proportion than that found in Methodist or Calvinist biographies of living persons. Furthermore, Wesley took particular care to include accounts of the deaths of pious children among the pages of his magazines. Accounting for approximately fifteen percent of descriptions in which the dying person's age can be identified or surmised, the presence of children less than fifteen years old in the *Arminian Magazine* reflected Wesley's belief that they were capable of devout piety. By providing examples of young children experiencing conversion and dying holy deaths that could be read aloud to youngsters, Wesley attempted to reach out the young believers whom he considered to be the vital future of the Methodist revival movement, in order to encourage them into a state of Christian perfection (Willhauck, 1992 p. iv-v).

Ultimately, however, sending the correct message was essential. Whether the subject was a young girl or an old man, accounts were selected for publication on the basis of what they contributed to an understanding of Methodism and holy death. Although the majority were authored by members of the Methodist laity, the emphasis Wesley placed on a suitable demonstration of the doctrine of universal redemption meant that, perhaps unsurprisingly, almost a third of published accounts were written by itinerant preachers, many of whom, like John Pawson and Alexander Mather, contributed more than once. Indeed, the most frequently published witness to death-bed scenes was Wesley himself, who appeared as author no less than six times between 1782 and 1783. To further heighten a sense of pathos Wesley also included occasional poignant accounts authored by close relatives of the deceased.

Many of the first dying scenes to appear in the early 1780s were composed much earlier, as private correspondence to John Wesley written in the 1740s, 50s, and 60s. As the magazine became more firmly established, however, and began to generate its own correspondence independent of Wesley,

more and more accounts of holy death were submitted and published, usually within a year of receipt. Thus, by the time of the publication of the seventh volume in 1784, and lasting through till the death of Wesley in 1791, the vast majority of accounts came from witnesses to the recently deceased. While the first accounts had been written in textual isolation from each other, their publication in early editions of the magazine gave later authors a template of how to construct and write a publishable dying scene. As authors became increasingly exposed to previously published dying scenes, their own creativity seems to have become subsumed by an increasing awareness of the essential common features of effective writing in this genre. By recourse to an increasingly homogeneous menu of images, symbols, and themes, Wesley and his contributors slowly created a formula of literary conventions (Cawelti, 1976 pps. 5, 16). From a different perspective we might argue that as more and more people read more and more accounts of holy death, they internalized the implicit instructions presented in these passages and enacted them at their own deaths. When these deaths were recorded they reinforced what was becoming a formulaic genre of religious writing. Certainly, by the time of Wesley's death in March 1791, these narratives had taken on a relatively conventionalized appearance. Each case implicitly directed that the dying person must engage in praying both for himself and his survivors, search his soul for sin, and banish any evil he finds. He must repent all of his past misdeeds, commend his soul to God and surrender his life and his spirit to God's will, leaving the Almighty to determine his fate. The ways that such instructions were presented in these narratives are thus centrally important if we are to fully comprehend the significance and effectiveness of death scenes in the *Arminian Magazine*.

Methodist accounts of death present a particular view of the traumas of biological cessation. Directing the reader's attention to the spiritual significance of the event and the mental preparations being made by the dying, Methodist descriptions of death emphasize these elements by downplaying any attention paid to the cause of physical decline and to the biological symptoms that different modes of death generated. In almost half these scenes, the authors preferred to leave the cause of death unmentioned, while in the majority of other descriptions, vague, general terms such

as 'illness' or 'disorder' were held accountable for the demise of their subject in an attempt to universalize the message embedded in their individual reports. Indeed, this agenda was reinforced by those authors who chose to comment on why such afflictions had targeted these good Christians. Unanimously, they recast these myriad illnesses as the product of a common condition. In each case, they wrote, the illness was the manifestation of God's will. Dreaming that he was praying, the seven year-old Thomas Spear, afflicted with a disorder that putrefied his flesh and reduced his lower extremities "till the bones dropped out," saw a vision of God and asked of Him, "Lord wilt thou cure my leg!" But the Lord said, 'Hush child! I am going to take thee to myself. Thou shalt die and go to heaven'" ("AM," 1788, XI:1, pp. 18-21). Arguing that such deaths had discernible divine purpose, these authors explained how God, seeking to draw particular people back to His fold, struck them down so they might live with Him again in heaven.

This agenda continued beyond references to the cause of illness; in case after case in which evidence of physical pain is manifest, it is employed for spiritual effect. Dying persons would often remark that their afflictions, while severe, were nothing in comparison with their spiritual torment as they prepared to meet their maker, or the much greater agonies endured by Christ on the cross. Indeed, for many, the promise of their salvation and their firm belief in Jesus's love for them allowed them to endure physical suffering. As Mrs. Doyle told those gathered around her, "I bless the Lord, I am not afraid of the strongest pain" ("AM," 1782, V:12, pp. 462-3).

While rarely succumbing to the agonies of their physical afflictions, many Methodists felt temptation of a different kind. Methodists believed Satan, preying on the physically weak, was always close at hand trying to snatch souls for his own. Some fared better than others: those most assured of their salvation felt a sense of God's protection, envisioning his love as a shield through which the Devil could not pierce. Sarah Bulgin, for instance, blessing the Lord for putting Satan at a distance, ridiculed the devil's efforts, declaring "I now find thy darts are of no avail" ("AM," 1787, X:8, pp. 410-2). While several dying Methodists perceived a warrior Jesus shackling or banishing

their tempter, far more felt the Devil close at hand, maybe crouching at the bed's foot or up "against the ceiling" ("AM," 1787, X:2, pp. 75-6). In the case of Caster Garrett, the devil seemed to have found a particularly vulnerable target. Feeling the action of Satan upon him, Garrett cried out, "I am undone! undone! I have lost my way! The Lord is departed from me! O, it was all lies I was telling!" ("AM," 1787, X:1, pp. 18-21) These crises and conflicts, which usually lasted for less than twenty-four hours, were always successfully negotiated. In this case as in many others, their undoing served only to redouble the efforts of dying persons to find true assurance. Having been comforted and counseled by a pious friend to fully confess his sins, Garrett slowly rebuilt his faith in God's love and forgiveness. "God is faithful and just!" he later assured those gathered around him. Then stamping his foot, he said "Satan! I stamp thee under my feet!" ("AM," 1787, X:1, pp. 18-21) Ultimately snatched from the hands of the devil, this sequence of doubt followed by faith, weakness followed by strength, temptation followed by defiance, was an important stage in the preparations for many holy deaths.

Having found definitive assurance of salvation, Methodists' next temptation was impatience. For many consumed with a love of God that followed from a belief in their own assurance, their continued stay on earth was a source of frustration. "Why!" Ann Ritson asked, "O why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming! Come sweet Jesus come quickly!" ("AM," 1788, XI:12, pp. 630-635) Indeed, in a handful of cases dying persons complained that the efficacy of the prayers of friends and family was proving sufficient to delay their deaths. Mrs Trotter, for instance, was pleased to find her spirit gently slipping away only to be roused from her fit by what she believed to be the prayers of her husband, who knelt beside her. She reproved him gently but firmly: "My dear, it was cruel, it was cruel; I was just entering the threshold, and you have prayed me back to life" ("AM," 1791, XIV:5, pp. 235-41). More often, however, such impatience was held in check as many dying persons recognized the temptation to wish actively for death and feared, like Mrs. Harcourt of Bristol, that they "should too earnestly desire to depart" ("AM," 1791, XIV:11, pp. 557-62).

At the opposite extreme, authors were also keen to demonstrate that good Methodists were willing and able to relinquish their ties to this world before proceeding to the next. Some were hopeful of recovery, anxious to continue the work of God on earth. For instance, in the case of Hannah Kay, “she seemed rather desirous of recovering... that she might be more useful in the Church of God” (“AM,” 1788, XI:7, pp. 355-7). More common however, was the concern among authors and visitors alike that dying persons divest themselves of any emotional attachments to their family that might render them reluctant to die. In response, many dying Methodists demonstrated that they had made adequate preparations. Indeed, a recurrent manifestation of the effect of heavenly assurance upon the souls of dying persons was a freedom from anxiety regarding their families (e.g. “AM,” 1780, III:3, pp. 592-601). This sequence of trust and release was reciprocal; authors often described how family members, convinced of the imminent salvation of their relatives, bade them cheerful farewells (“AM,” 1788, XI:9, pp. 461-5). For instance, Caster Garrett’s wife said to her dying husband, “I am willing to part with you; for you are God’s, and not mine. I freely give you up to him.” (“AM,” 1787, X:1, pp. 18-21).

Attempting to further probe the strength of the religious beliefs of dying persons, many visitors inquired whether religious preparations had allowed them to overcome their fears of death itself. In each case, and in others that did not require such prompting, those engaged in the business of holy dying responded in words similar to those of Thomas Wadsworth. Challenging an implication made by a companion, Wadsworth replied that the promise of salvation “hath taken all the terror of death quite away from me.” (“AM,” 1785, VIII:9, pp. 461-4). Even in descriptions in which subjects did not articulate their resolution to face death without fear, their courage was evidenced by other means. Reporting the demise of John Tregallas in St. Agnes in Cornwall in 1785, the itinerant preacher Joseph Taylor recorded an encounter he had had with the physician following Tregallas’ death. “[H]e told me after,” Taylor recalled, “that what he had seen and heard had confirmed him in one point wherein he had been wavering, viz. whether a person could in this life, be wholly

delivered from the fear of death?" ("AM," 1786, IX:5, pp. 249-252). Whether explicitly verbalized or implicitly demonstrated, every scene reinforced the same message: death, "formerly so dreadful," lost its sting when confronted by God's victory over evil and the promise of salvation ("AM," 1788, XI:6, pp. 297-8). Indeed, for some dying persons assured that they would be reawakened in paradise, the act of dying was akin to falling peacefully asleep; while for others death was "a wholesome messenger" full of glad tidings of what was to follow (e.g. "AM," 1788, XI:9, pp. 461-5).

In case after case, then, dying persons, having wrestled with their consciences, reconciled their desire to join God with their emotional ties to their family. Convinced that their condition was God's will, dying persons learned to be patient and to submit themselves to His control. For some, like Benjamin Wood of Sheffield, who was "quite resigned to live or die," this manifested itself in a position of considered ambivalence ("AM," 1783, VI:8, pp. 414-5). Most others, while expressing a strong preference for death and the beginnings of a life in paradise, were content to acquiesce to God's wishes, whatever they might be (e.g. "AM," 1783, VI:6, pp. 305-6). Thus, when asked how she was, Ann Dunn who was confined to her bed by a fever, replied, "If it was the will of the Lord, I would rather choose to be gone. Nevertheless,' said she, 'not my will, but thine, O Lord, be done'" ("AM," 1783, VI:3, pp. 128-9). Others demanded more immediate release, "if it was the Lord's will" ("AM," 1782, V:4, pp. 183-4). For dying persons suffering the physical discomfort endured by Miss Griffiths of Knowles, dissolution could not come soon enough. "If it be thy will' (she would often say) 'O take me now! but if not, thy will be done!'" ("AM," 1788, XI:10, pp. 519-21).

With the rhetorical emphasis so tightly focused around dying persons' patience in the face of imminent death, the presence and actions of physicians was somewhat incongruous. It is likely that doctors attended in almost all death-bed illnesses in English towns and cities in the late eighteenth century, yet doctors made only the rarest appearances in descriptions of the holy dying in the

Arminian Magazine. Indeed, one author delighted in exposing the fundamental contradiction of a doctor's attempts to cure a person preparing for a holy death. Having administered some drops to make her sleep, the doctor, "thinking it might afford her some satisfaction," told Martha Brewton that "there was hope of her recovery; but she replied, 'I do not want to live'" ("AM," 1787, X:10, pp. 518-20). When doctors appeared it was usually to offer not diagnosis, but prognosis or treatment. Serving a dramatic function, authors' descriptions of doctors' visits generally focused on their forecast of the precise, usually imminent, moment of death; when John Tregallas enquired what his physician thought of his condition, he replied, "You will not be many hours here" ("AM," 1786, IX:5, pp. 249-252). When invited to attempt to relieve or cure the dying persons, eighteenth century physicians responded with a range of treatments included bleeding, the pulling of teeth, induced vomiting, diet-drinks, and sleeping drops. Very few of these, as Methodist authors reported it, had any positive effect. Indeed, these authors seemed to take some small pleasure in describing the inefficacy and inadequacy of medical attempts to prolong life in the face of God's decision to draw it to a worthy close.

Before their final curtain was drawn, dying persons took the opportunity to further demonstrate the strength of their religious devotion by exhorting those gathered around them. Over a quarter of accounts feature direct death-bed admonishments to the survivors. Dying persons most commonly encouraged those already walking along the path to God, or, like Matthew Lamplough, lectured the careless or carefree "exhorting and persuading them to believe and love the Lord Jesus Christ" ("AM," 1790, XIII:1, pp. 15-7). In the former cases, dying persons frequently offered prayers to friends, family, the Methodist Society and its leaders, most particularly Mr. Wesley. Addressing those already active in the Methodist faith, they would offer long, joyous testimonies to God's love, frequently punctuated by hymn-singing.

In the second type of address, dying persons would use all their rhetorical powers to persuade their less pious listeners and, by extension, their readers of the importance of repentance. As John

Tregallas wrote in a message to a distant acquaintance, "You must prepare to meet the Lord. If you do not alter your present course of life, you are undone for ever!" ("AM," 1786, IX:5, pp. 249-52). For others closer to hand, dying persons believed that the stakes were even higher. Ann Ritson, desiring to prepare her uncle to meet her in heaven, offered familial honor as an incentive, saying "I shall soon be there! and it will be an awful thing if at last some of the same family be found in heaven and some in hell!" ("AM," 1788, XI:12, pp. 630-5) Indeed, while the concern to spread the word of God was obvious in each and every exhortation, the desperate urgency evident in addresses to friends and family was particularly poignant. Having urged his wife, "much to seek the Lord," William Stafford took her by the hand and with his last breaths asked her, "Must I leave you unconverted!" ("AM," 1783, VI:5, pp. 249-50).

Whatever the particulars of circumstance and station, each account shared a common arena in which these religious rituals were enacted. Confined to their beds, each dying person used the bedroom as a theater in which to perform. Central and permanent, beds provided a stage around which spectators and participants could gather. Indeed, so intrinsic was it that many authors seemed to be influenced by the bed in the way they characterized the process of passing on. In one out of every three accounts, the metaphor used to describe death was that of slumber. In case after case, such as that of Samuel Newman in 1789, the dying person "fell asleep in Jesus" ("AM," 1790, XIII:9, pp. 465-76). Furthermore, in several accounts, the bed was deployed not solely as a place of slumber but a site, for women at least, of romantic comfort. For example, having said farewell to her gathered friends and family, Mrs. Boardman "fell asleep in the arms of her Beloved" ("AM," 1783, VI:9, pp. 472-3). In a further handful of death-bed scenes, the bed became a site of something more. Envisioning Christ not simply as Saviour and comforter, but as bridegroom, death-beds became, at least by implication, marriage beds. Reconfiguring the day of their death as their wedding day, several dying persons made last minute preparations for what they believed would be their "happiest day" ("AM," 1790, XIII:7, pp. 365-72).

Further analysis of the metaphors used to describe the moment of passing reveals additional gendered patterns. Descriptions of dying can be divided into three further principal categories of metaphor: those of "flight," "departure," and "surrender." The deaths of men were only two-thirds as likely to be described in terms of falling asleep as were the deaths of women. Inversely, women were only two-thirds as likely to be described as 'departing this life' or 'surrendering their soul'. While the pattern is hardly definitive, it suggests that Methodists inferred gendered connotations from certain metaphors of death. A man was considered godly if he "yielded up his soul into the hands of God," resigning himself to the divine will. Enacting a transfer of power and authority, men died a holy death by surrendering their prized independence to a heavenly Master. For women, who rarely felt the liberties of autonomy, the concept of surrender carried less significance. Rather, used to a more submissive earthly role, it seemed more appropriate that descriptions of women's death emphasized their non-threatening, passive, almost romantic relations to the figures of (male) power in their lives. The description of the death of Mrs. Spencer, who "fell asleep in the arms of Jesus" was typical in its evocation of a female's gentle slide into tranquility ("AM," 1787, X:6, pp. 300-1).

The evidence gathered from these one hundred and fifty two death-bed scenes suggests that Methodists understood and followed a distinct program of preparations to be made if a dying person was to expire in a manner befitting someone assured of salvation. While the exact structure and performance of these mini-rituals varied from person to person and between authors, there are, as we have seen, a number of features so common to dying scenes that they can be understood as essential practices. To use an analogy employed by writers in the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, we can understand these practices as demonstrations that the dying person had overcome the threat of five distinct sequential temptations that befell him as he approached death (Lockyer, 1969). First, to conquer the temptation of unbelief, faith had to be maintained at all costs. Often perceiving themselves to be locked in physical or emotional combat with the devil, dying persons thwarted his efforts to cloud their mind with delusion, distraction and doubt. Second, despair had to be avoided. Tormented by considerable physical suffering and often exhausted from their struggles with the

devil and their wrestling with God, dying persons strove to resist sorrow by attempting to transcend their sufferings. Whether ignoring their physical discomforts or lessening them through comparison with Jesus's greater sufferings, dying Methodists clung to the pity and mercy of God, rarely succumbing to their frailties. Third, impatience had to be disavowed. Having found assurance in God's mercy, many dying Methodists felt the temptation to long for death. Recognizing their weakness, they called to God for strength and tried to resign themselves to His will. Fourth, complacency had to be eschewed. Those conceited by their feelings of salvation were counseled to search their soul for sin in order to find true assurance. Others found themselves visited by a healthy doubt which led them to a second, wholehearted repentance. Finally, dying persons had to willingly renounce their earthly ties and possessions to demonstrate not only a readiness for death but a love of Jesus that surpassed their terrestrial affections. Allied with these responses to the five temptations, dying persons also frequently used their last moments and the attention that their circumstances commanded to give witness to the faith and to pray for and exhort those to be left behind to search their own souls and begin to prepare themselves for their own death.

Death-bed scenes were written and published to provide practical examples of universal redemption. This fact is reflected not only in the subject matter of these narratives but in the style of writing adopted by most authors. Ministers and family members alike wrote in a way designed to emphasize the dramas and crises of these last moments in order to most powerfully excite their readers' emotions and empathy. Indeed, the sequential progression through a series of temptations is melodrama par excellence (Cawelti, 1976 pps. 46, 262, 264). As they moved their readers' attention hurriedly but persuasively from one psychomachic crisis to the next, these melodramatists steadily built up suspense until the final blissful triumph of true faith and the banishment of doubt, despair, haste, complacency, and worldliness.

To further enforce this sense of triumphal victory, authors made much of the visions experienced by

those close to death. For those not yet swayed by dying persons' repeated testimonies of assurance, several dying persons provided further less refutable proof of their salvation by testifying to having death-bed foresight of the paradise they were about to enter. Teetering on the precipice between life and afterlife, those who caught a glimpse of heaven viewed such sights as suggestive of their final destination and thus confirmed their assurance. As an ecstatic Mary Thomas reported as she neared her end in 1745, "I am almost at the top of the ladder. Now I can see the towers before me, and a large company coming up behind me" ("AM," 1782, V:1, pp. 21-2). Many told of the indescribable beauty of the celestial city or the peacefulness of journeys along rivers and through meadows escorted by heavenly guides. Others reported encounters with Jesus or angels. More affecting still were the accounts of those visited by family members already passed away. For instance, Martha Cook told her audience that "her brother Dickey had been with her, who had died six years before." Overhearing her husband's whispered suggestion that she was delirious, she replied "I am not: I know what I said: my brother has visited me more than once. He is a happy spirit: he has comforted me, and told me that I shall soon be with him" ("AM," 1791, XIV:1, pp. 17-22). Such visitations not only eased anxieties about the state of the deceased family member's soul but, as Margarete Holubetz has remarked of parallels in later fiction, provided "sturdy material proofs of the salvation of a departing soul permitted to envisage the glory of Heaven" (Holubetz, 1986 p. 20).

The emphasis that Methodist authors placed upon these visitations as a demonstration of the doctrine of universal redemption reflects the agenda of these biographers to use the behavior of their subjects for practical instruction. This was not merely an agenda internalized by authors eager to provide fitting testament to their deceased friends and relatives. Rather, these death-bed scenes include unmistakable affirmations of intent. Whether it was in the exhortations of the dying person or in the narration sometimes added by the author, these descriptions make recurrent references to their grand purpose: to educate, evidence, and inspire. Manifold were the accounts in which persons engaged in holy dying encouraged their witnesses and, by extension, their readers, to "Come, see a

Christian triumphing over death" (e.g. "AM," 1782, V:3, pp. 128-136). Recording witnesses often remarked how their subject was "a living and dying witness" to the power of God (e.g. "AM," 1790, XIII:6, pp. 295-300). Even more explicit were the comments of those authors who chose to address their readers directly. Submitting a moving account of his wife, Sarah, Barnabas Brough explained that he did so "For the comfort and encouragement of those who are struggling on heavenward" ("AM," 1780, III:11, pp. 592-601). Internalizing the experience he hoped his description would have on his readers, another writer wrote how the death of Mrs. Dawson of Dublin "was a means of strengthening my Faith. I was enabled to believe that sin should not again find a place in my heart: and that my God would be with me also in the dark valley" ("AM," 1783, VI:6, pp. 305-6). Finally, in the story of the death of a ten year old boy, the narrator describes an encounter which exposes the common agendas of biographers and their dying subjects. Being consumed by a "hectic fever," John Warwick was visited by an adult acquaintance, Mr. Collins ("AM," 1782, V:9, pp. 468-71). Addressing his elder, Warwick said "'Sir, I shall not live to be a Preacher.'" Referring to the many exhortations the boy had already performed, Collins replied, "'my dear, you are a Preacher now'" ("AM," 1782, V:9, pp. 468-71). While the full significance of Collins' remarks may have escaped both those present, it would not have evaded the anonymous author who submitted this narrative to Wesley; who would also have discerned a deeper meaning. Not only did John Warwick preach the power of universal redemption to his witnesses through his exhortations and his own dying example; but the publication and distribution of an account of his death to a national readership as part of an extended ministry took the little boy's message of repentance and faith farther than he could have ever imagined.

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