

Vol. 4, 2020



# EAST BAY HISTORIA

# East Bay Historia



**California State University, East Bay History  
Department Journal**

**Volume 4, 2020**

An annual publication of the  
Department of History  
California State University, East Bay



To all the workers providing essential services to their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Thank you.

*“Man should be better than monsters. Ah, but who are the monsters?”*

*-Guillermo del Toro*

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*East Bay Historia* is an annual publication of the California State University, East Bay (CSUEB) Department of History. It aims to provide CSUEB students with an opportunity to publish historical works and to give students the experience of being on an editorial board and creating and designing an academic journal. Issues are published at the end of each academic year. All opinions or statements of fact are the sole responsibility of their authors and may not reflect the views of the editorial staff, the History Department, or California State University, East Bay (CSUEB). The authors retain rights to their individual essays.

*East Bay Historia's* mission is to promote the study of history at CSUEB, give history majors and non-history majors alike opportunities to express their passion for the subject, and to empower students, faculty, and staff who are studying or are interested in history.

Cover photo by Jackson Keen

This publication uses sans serif fonts and increased line spacing in order to increase accessibility for dyslexic readers.

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# Introduction & Acknowledgements

It brings me great joy to introduce this year's edition of our journal, the *East Bay Historia*, Vol. IV. This is the second year that I have been on the editorial board for the journal, and my first as editor-in-chief. This year, the *East Bay Historia* was put together by diligent students in an applied history course under the direction of Dr. Alexander. These dedicated students worked to improve upon and further develop the format that had been created in years past. The essays that are published in this journal cover an array of topics and are all phenomenal. These essays are a wonderful example of the potential that students from the history department of Cal State East Bay have to offer the professional world. The editorial board extends its thanks to those who submitted their essays for publication, as this journal would not be possible without their submissions.

While the editorial board worked to put together the journal, a global pandemic emerged. COVID-19 struck the community, and students and staff were told to stay home, which created some new obstacles to overcome. Without missing a beat, Dr. Alexander formatted the class so that it could continue online, and students communicated with one another to ensure that the journal could be finished on schedule. Teamwork was essential, and it is what led to the completion of the journal in spite of the rapidly changing state of affairs.

Despite the unfortunate circumstances in which we had to work in to finish the journal, the editorial board made great strides to create an exceptional journal. Starting this year, the *East Bay Historia* will have fonts that are dyslexia friendly to make the journal accessible to all. This edition of the journal also contains a special section of essays written by students on the editorial board about Latin American monsters, as well as artwork created by art students from Chico State that are paired with the essays. These are but a few steps that we have taken to improve the journal this year, and we look forward to seeing

how the journal will evolve and grow in the years to come. The editorial board would like to express our appreciation for our faculty advisors, Dr. Alexander and Dr. Kaatz, and the help that they offered us during our journey. We would also like to thank the Friends of History for their generous donations and continued support. I would personally like to thank those on the editorial board for their hard work, dedication, and all of the love that they put into creating this journal.

I hope you enjoy reading the *East Bay Historia*, Vol. IV!

Karla Vega  
Editor-in-Chief

## Author Biographies

**Matt Biundo** is a graduate student in the English department at Cal State East Bay. He has also published short stories and poems in the English department's magazine, *Occam's Razor*, and a collection of short essays and stories as part of his graduate thesis.

**Richard Cardoza** is an online student at Cal State East Bay and he hails from the rapidly growing farm town of Tracy California. He is happily married to his wife and has three young children. For employment, Richard manages a local bay area bottled water plant. Richard began his studies at Cal State East Bay in the Fall of 2012 and will graduate from East Bay in the Spring of 2020. Richard is an American history major and is excited to be earning his bachelor's degree. Richard is currently considering the history department's Master's program with a focus on becoming a community college professor.

**Adam Christian** is a Bay Area transplant who moved to California from Asheville, North Carolina in 2014. He is currently a student in the history department's Master's program with a focus on becoming a community college teacher. Adam has always had a love of history and considers himself lucky to have the opportunity to further his studies at Cal State East Bay. He is interested in Western U.S. studies and is currently working on a research project concerning the homeless crisis in San Francisco.

**Kevin DeForest** is a California native who moved to the Bay area in 2008 from Southern California. He is currently an undergraduate student at CSUEB who is completing a major in History this semester and is enrolling in the Teaching Credential Program at CSUEB this summer. Kevin has a love of both history and education with an emphasis on the social elements of History including race and gender. He considers himself a "reentry student" and has a tremendous

appreciation for the accepting and nurturing environment at the CSUEB campus which he considers his second home.

**Carrie Fulcher** graduated with a B.A. in U.S. History from Cal State East Bay in 2019. Although her concentration was in U.S. History, she is also passionate about Medieval and Renaissance History, especially women's roles within these time periods. She is currently contemplating obtaining her Master's Degree in Public History or Museum Studies. Outside of history, Carrie enjoys exploring the U.S. and abroad with her husband and two young daughters. This article is dedicated to her father William, a passionate history buff and veteran's advocate who left us too soon.

**Michael Hahn** is a senior at Cal State East Bay seeking a degree in history. He was born and raised in the Bay Area and plans to become a teacher here someday. Michael's passion is learning about the progression of humans towards a better future and applying this knowledge in today's world. He hopes to inspire the next generation of citizens to become active in the world around them and work towards a better future armed with the knowledge and lessons of the past.

**Sabrina Harper** graduated with a BA in U.S. History from CSUEB in 2018. She is currently completing her last semester in the MA program in US History with a Teaching Option and is expected to graduate in Spring 2020. Sabrina is particularly interested in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, especially how the experiences of immigrants, African Americans, and women have impacted and been impacted by social movements and conflict. An undercurrent that runs through all her scholarship is that of politics, religion and spirituality expressed in Catholicism. This is the third article that Sabrina has published in the *East Bay Historia*.

**Lillian Martin** graduated with a B.A. in U.S History from Cal State East Bay in 2019 and is currently continuing her internship under the Bay Area Housing Internship Program with Eden Housing which began in

June 2019. Lillian holds an interest in World War II and Cold War Era History, highlighting relations between the United States and other countries. Additionally, she has taken an interest in the history of homelessness in the United States, particularly in the Bay Area, after taking Dr. Alexander's "My Housing Story" History Lab.

**A. Brooks Moyer** studies education history in CSUEB's graduate program, researching segregation, politics, and reform movements in public education. Formerly a ballet dancer in New York, Brooks was a company member with the Verdon Fosse Legacy before moving to the Bay Area in 2018. He grew up in the Midwest, earned a BFA in Musical Theatre from Syracuse University, and now works with the education activism organization, Oakland Not For Sale, working to stop the privatization of Oakland's public schools.

**Randy Utz** is a first-year graduate student focusing on public history. Born and raised in Texas, he moved to California in 2012 and since then has found a new home in the Bay Area. His love of history and storytelling inspired him to pursue a degree in public history. His areas of interest include ancient history, with a special focus on Rome, as well as nineteenth and twentieth century working-class history. In addition to his work as a graduate student, Randy is also the Assistant Review Editor for *California History*. After finishing his M.A. he hopes to use the skills learned at East Bay and *California History* to find interesting and unique ways to bring history to everyone.

**Rebecca Weber** is a senior at Cal State East Bay, majoring in History with a concentration in Sustainability & Modernization. She is interested in women's history, especially at the turn of the 20th century, where women start taking a more politically active role in western society. Following graduation, Rebecca hopes to get her teaching credential in single subject social studies to pass on her interest in history to another generation.

**Bodhi Young** was born in Baguio City, Philippines before moving to California at the age of eight. Since then he has been a Bay Area local

studying History with a concentration in Social Justice and Citizenship with hopes of one day helping those who are attempting to immigrate or seek refuge in the United States. Bodhi is a proud Cal State East Bay Pioneer and is currently serving as Associate Editor of the *East Bay Historia* as well as a brother of Tau Kappa Epsilon



# A Place at the Mesa: Race and Labor in the Southwest 1912-2012

By Kevin DeForest

In 1917, travel writer George Wharton James characterizes Bisbee, Arizona in his epic travelogue, *Arizona the Wonderland*:

Quaint and peculiar, it is picturesque in the extreme. The trains of the El Paso and South Western Railway deposit one in the very heart of it. Crooked as a dog's hind leg, so narrow that you wonder that business can be done at all, the streets have been compelled to follow the natural contours of the mountain. The next moment a modern, full-sized powerfully-motored street car comes along with its full quota of passengers—miners in their working garb, Mexicans in their tall sombreros, ladies of refinement going to their club, and gentlemen interested in the mines who have just stopped over on their way to California or going back to New York.<sup>1</sup>

To reach his audience, James paints a picture of an ideal American Southwest town. He describes Bisbee from an Anglocentric perspective, noting the Anglo-American influenced architecture, economic structure, and class structure. His perspective lends this view, just like a painter's brush strokes paints over the finer details, James however, obscures the social and economic inequalities boiling below the surface in Bisbee, Arizona.

Historian Flannery Burke paints a contrasting view of the Southwest by highlighting the writings of Indian rights activist and historic

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<sup>1</sup> George Wharton James, *Arizona the Wonderland* (Boston: The Page Company, 1917), 411.

<sup>2</sup> Flannery Burke, *A Land Apart: The Southwest and the Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2017), 15.

preservationist Charles Lummis in her book, *A Land Apart: The Southwest and the Nation in the Twentieth Century*. In contrast to James' perspective, Lummis views the land through the lens of its people—both Native Americans and Mexicans—as one community sharing the same space. In 1888, Lummis immerses himself in the region that is now New Mexico, and unlike James' American tourist snapshot, he found a people steeped in culture and tradition. Where James points to modern American influences, Lummis promotes the beauty of native influences such as the unique architecture of the Mission style.<sup>2</sup>

Lummis presents an appreciation for the Southwest that is not Anglo-centric or Americanized, which is evidenced when Burke employs Lummis' findings to argue that the very term “Southwest,” and its orientation to the United States geography, disassociates both the Native American and Mexican perspective and their connection to the land.<sup>3</sup> Throughout her writing, Burke helps put into focus an American Southwest where the lines of race are at first overlooked, and then become clearly defined and broadened. This perspective of racial delimitation is brought to the forefront in its intersection with labor.

Historian and scholar Katherine Benton-Cohen expands on Burke's perspective of race by detailing the intersection of labor and race. She focuses on the county where Bisbee is located, which sits on the border of the United States and Mexico, allowing her to show in chronological stages how immigrants of different racial backgrounds forged a place in the white man's Southwest, often with resistance. Early in the settlement of the territory, Benton-Cohen describes Tres Alamos, a community that has not only disappeared from maps but also from society. Situated along the San Pedro River, Tres Alamos was a community of settlers with no distinctions in race or class level in the 1880s. People of Mexican, European, and African descent built an irrigation system, created businesses, built roads, schools, and

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<sup>2</sup> Flannery Burke, *A Land Apart: The Southwest and the Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2017), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Burke, *A Land Apart*, 6.

churches, and became friends and intermarried.<sup>4</sup> Benton-Cohen shows the words “Mexican” and “African” were connected to nations, not race. Such ideas and settlements would fade into the background in Cochise county as riches underground would be discovered and brought to the surface in places like Bisbee, which would also bring racial division to the surface.

Whereas three writers referenced succinct perspectives on race and the Southwest, both contemporary writers shared the analysis that race did not start out as a societal or labor issue in the early days of the territory. James and Burke share a passionate attachment to the Southwest, but James was influenced at the moment by the excitement of exploration of new lands with his orientation based in an Anglo orbit that did not include outsiders. Burke, in contrast, was afforded a century of history allowing her to avoid the influence impacting James. History also gave Burke more opportunity to examine the conflicting perspective, especially the perspectives on race and labor being experienced during Westward Expansion and how the different perspectives resulted in the two states following divergent paths.

The *New York Times* columnist, Randal Archibold, reflects on such divergence with the statement, “They may sit side by side on the border, they may share historical ties to Mexico; they may have once even been part of the same territory, but Arizona and New Mexico have grown up like distant siblings...”<sup>5</sup> Arizona’s Anglo assimilation and New Mexico’s pluralistic embrace of Mexican heritage play a key role in such divergence. Events that transpired during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries support the argument that the suppression of minorities in labor and socioeconomic status in Arizona’s ideological embrace of Anglo-American assimilation resulted in discriminatory

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<sup>4</sup> Katherine Cohen-Benton, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 2009), 18.

<sup>5</sup> Randal C. Archibold, “Side by Side, but Divided Over Immigration,” *New York Times*, May 11, 2010.

practices and laws. These events established structural discrimination up to present day, whereas New Mexico's embrace of a pluralistic society resulted in a communal system of acceptance and protection for minorities in labor and society. The progression of divergent racial identities between New Mexico and Arizona would not only have an impact in the socio-political arena but also a profound impact on both state's labor movements.

## **Bisbee**

The origins of Bisbee Arizona are like many other Southwest towns during Western Expansion and mineral exploration. In 1864, the first veins of copper ore were discovered in the New Mexico Territory, and by the 1870s several mines were in operation. In 1877 a military scout happened upon a narrow canyon, aptly named Mule Gulch. Dunn, along with another lieutenant, filed a claim in the area for silver and gold. He then offered financial backing to a local prospector who discovered a copper vein on the north side of the outcrop of the canyon. This claim became the Copper Queen mine, which would produce over 700 tons of copper within a year.<sup>6</sup> Mule Gulch was transformed into Bisbee, a boomtown that drew thousands of workers, including Mexicans, and set the stage for a collision of racism, labor, and capitalism in the Southwest. No one incident is more representative of this than the Bisbee Deportation on July 12, 1917.

The deportation of hundreds of mineworkers in Bisbee was a pivotal moment for labor and race in the Southwest. This event revealed many of the ugly truths and tactics employed by the white mine owners and civic leaders to maintain the racial hierarchy in the industrial and social realms of the region. In the months leading up to the deportation, miners who were part of the International Workers of the World (IWW) had struck for better wages and working conditions. The strike had been in progress for approximately two weeks. Then, early

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<sup>6</sup> Cohen-Benton, *Borderline Americans*, 80-81.

### *A Place at the Mesa*

on the morning on July 12<sup>th</sup>, Phelps Dodge, which controlled the telegraph station, phone board, and railroad servicing Bisbee, closed them all off, virtually cutting off the town from the outside world.<sup>7</sup>

Sheriff Harry Wheeler immediately deputized hundreds of white males supporting the deportation and supplied all of them with guns. The deputies went door to door, systematically breaking down the doors of the IWW members and their sympathizers, forcing them out of their homes at gunpoint and rounding them up at the post office downtown. They were then marched through the streets to the Warren baseball field where they were loaded into boxcars owned by Phelps Dodge's El Paso & Southwestern Railroad and shipped across the border to New Mexico. They were then forced off the train and abandoned in the desert near Hermanas in the middle of summer. At least twenty five percent of the men in these boxcars were of Mexican descent, even though they represented less than thirteen percent of the total Bisbee population.<sup>8</sup>

In the days leading up to the deportation, Sheriff Wheeler sent a telegram to Arizona Governor Thomas E. Campbell that included the following statement, "The strike here is most serious, and I anticipate great property loss and blood shed; majority of strikers seem foreign. The whole thing appears to be pro-German and Anti-American."<sup>9</sup> Fewer than two weeks later, New Mexico's Governor, Washington E. Lindsey, received news of the strikers being deported to Luna County, New Mexico and sent a telegram to officials there, urging to "Take care of them," and sent another telegram to President Woodrow Wilson asking his administration to "take charge and dispose of the matter

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Green, *Bisbee '17*, directed by Robert Green, released September 5, 2018, New York, Grasshopper Films.

<sup>8</sup> "Wheeler testimony PMC hearings" in Cohen-Benton, *Borderline Americans*. Note 209 states, "workforce numbers were compiled from statistics of the two major companies in the PMC hearings. Percentage of strikers is compiled by the Dorsey census and the database breaking down deportees by ethnicity is created by Cohen-Benton."

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Morse, *The Truth About Bisbee*, University of Arizona, University Special collections AZ115, The Bisbee Deportation, Web Exhibit, 16.

according to federal law and order.”<sup>10</sup> Sheriff Wheeler’s telegram was not an appeal for state assistance, or even permission, but more of a statement justifying taking the law into his own hands and employing xenophobia as the method to gain the support of the local citizens. Such xenophobia was evidenced in his wording when he equated great property damage and bloodshed to his claim that most strikers were foreign. Governor Campbell of Arizona did not attempt to stop Wheeler or take steps to verify the sheriff’s claims. In contrast to the hyperbolic rhetoric in Arizona, Governor Lindsay did not send the deportees back. Instead, his response was calm, reasonable, humane, and in accordance with the law. On the surface, the Bisbee strike and deportation may be viewed as simply another labor struggle in an era where such disputes were commonplace. The demands of the workers such as better wages and conditions were also the norm. The vigilante style techniques used by Sheriff Wheeler and the Anglo business owners in Bisbee, however, exposes a different element of racial hegemony unique to the border states with Mexico.

### **Racism in the Southwest**

The formation of a racial hierarchy in New Mexico and Arizona can be traced back to the Reconstruction era and would play out differently during their struggle for statehood in the late 1800s up to the post World War II era and beyond. In the Spring of 1917, world events were impacting the border states at the socio-economic and political levels. The convergence of the Great War and the Revolution intersected with the proposals of bringing the territory into statehood. The Mexican Revolution had a major impact on migration into the border states, causing a dramatic increase of Mexican immigrants heading north of the border to escape the increasing violence. This exodus is evidenced with the Mexican-born population of Arizona more than doubling from 14,172 to 29,452 between the years of 1900 and 1910,

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<sup>10</sup> *Albuquerque Evening Herald*, July 13, 1917; Richard Melzer, “Exiled in the Desert: The Bisbee Deportees’ Reception in New Mexico, 1917,” *New Mexico Historical Review* (July 1992): 273.

### *A Place at the Mesa*

with Tucson alone seeing a Mexican-born increase of seventy-five percent.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the United States had entered World War I expanding the demand for mineral resources and creating a demand for labor from the south.

The struggle for statehood for both Arizona and New Mexico was neither easy nor fast. Beginning during the same period that California became a state, the New Mexico Territory had to continue to push through the Civil War, fifteen presidents, and over six decades to finally proclaim a victory of statehood in 1912. Race shaped the struggle for statehood. In Washington, proponents of statehood perpetuated Anglo hegemony by arguing that Mexicans were assimilating to the Americanization of the Southwest. Conversely, opponents of statehood promoted the idea of non-Anglos as inferior, therefore implying that the Territory, with its racial makeup, was too inferior to be part of the United States, and that its inhabitants were ineligible to become U.S. citizens.

Arizona's statehood convention in 1910 reflected some of Senator Calhoun's "Anglo superiority" precepts in the fact that not one of Arizona's statehood convention members was of Mexican descent.<sup>12</sup> The beginning of such precepts began in January 1848, when South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun gave a speech categorizing both Native Americans and Mexicans as inferior races. He viewed the Native Americans as a defeated people, who were not under direct government control, and therefore not recognized as United States citizens. He made the declaration that only the Caucasians in the settled territory would be brought into the union, thus excluding mixed-race Mexicans. Using nationalistic rhetoric, Calhoun expressed that Mexico's weakness, and inevitable downfall, was a result of their history of treating natives on an equal basis, as well as the subsequent

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas E. Sheridan, *Arizona: A History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 169.

<sup>12</sup> Eric Meeks, *Border Citizens: The Making of Indians, Mexicans and Anglos in Arizona* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007).

creation of a mixed race, and Calhoun found any association with natives or mixed races to be “degrading.”<sup>13</sup> Racial influences based in Southern identity were not exclusive to the Anglos. Territorial delegate Miguel Otero married into a white, slave-owning Southern family. Otero held a view indicative of many of the Anglo Spanish-speaking, elevated class supporting slavery as a condition of statehood. This view aligned with the Anglo Mexican and American self-interest within the Territory, as New Mexico state historian, Estevan Rael-Gálvez, argues that enactment of slave codes in the Territory legalizing chattel slavery of blacks was necessary to secure their own form of slavery, which was practiced by wealthy Mexicans with the enslavement of nomadic Indians as domestic servants.<sup>14</sup> This view is documented in a letter written by the Territorial Secretary Alexander Jackson stating, “We have assured the Mexicans that [passage of a slave code] would protect their own system of peonage.”<sup>15</sup>

The 1910 convention was able to secure Anglo domination at all levels of state government and went to work on securing white superiority in the workplace and education, putting forth a measure called the Eighty Percent Law as part of the Alien Labor Act. This law mandated a quota requiring a minimum of four American-born citizens for every five workers hired. A Bisbee delegate proposed a law specific to mining that established a quota which stated that eighty percent of underground workers in the mine had to speak English.<sup>16</sup> Such a law falls in line with Arizona’s restrictive law of 1909 which required that all eligible voters be able to read the U.S. Constitution in English and

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<sup>13</sup>John C. Calhoun, *Speech of Mr. Calhoun, of South Carolina: On His Resolutions in Reference to the War with Mexico* (Washington: Printed by J. T. Towers, 1848), accessed by Hathi Digital Trust 10/10/2019.

<sup>14</sup>Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: New York University Press), 100.

<sup>15</sup>Estevan Rael Gálvez, “Identifying Captivity and Capturing Identity: Narratives of American Indian Slavery, Colorado and New Mexico, 1776-1934,” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2002).

<sup>16</sup>Cohen-Benton, *Borderline Americans*, 201.

were compelled to read it in front of an officer.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, Joseph H. Kibbey, a representative from Cochise County (and former railroad executive) introduced a bill requiring the segregation of black students in any school district that had more than eight students. Joseph Kirby, the territorial governor at the time, vetoed the bill, but it was overridden and remained law for over fifty years.<sup>18</sup>

The role of Anglo hegemony in labor laws in New Mexico would end up having different results from that of its neighbor. Burke argues that the mining companies in New Mexico did not have as large a presence as in Arizona. Landholdings in New Mexico were still heavily “Nuevomexicano-based” due to the native residents’ ability to secure the land during the transition to the American government. The land itself, especially Grant, Sierra, and Lincoln counties were more arid than Arizona, thereby requiring fewer agricultural laborers. Because of the lack of work in the area, the Spanish-speaking residents in New Mexico were multi-generational, going back to the Spanish era.<sup>19</sup> This establishment would support Nuevomexicano-inclusive legislation. This legislation made New Mexico the first bilingual state and featured a law requiring student access to all institutions of education regardless of race. These two laws had wide-reaching implications and would influence New Mexico’s struggle for labor and economic equality.

## **Organized Labor**

In surveying U.S. history, the importance and influence of organized labor at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century would be largely relegated to the area of the industrial Northeastern and Midwest States. Yet the role organized labor played in the mining industry of the Western states is of equal importance and relevance, especially upon

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<sup>17</sup> Mary Dale Palsson, “The Arizona Constitution of 1910: The Election of Delegates in Pima County,” *Arizona and the West* 16, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 111-124.

<sup>18</sup> Mary E. Gill and John S. Goff, “Joseph F. Kibbey and School Segregation in Arizona,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1980): 415-416.

<sup>19</sup> Burke, *A Land Apart*, 37.

the intersection of labor and race. The IWW was a pioneer in embracing minorities, such as Mexicans, into their organization because of their presence across national borders. The IWW was founded in 1905 during the progressive era when labor unions were beginning to embrace a global concept including minorities and women. Within one year, Sonoran immigrants Rosendo and Fernando Velarde established the IWW Local 272 in Phoenix. The couple had a tremendous influence on melding the Mexican population into both the labor and political movement, including Fernando's campaign for the constitutional convention in which he ran as a member of the Socialist Party. Their influence also helped create the first IWW newspaper for Spanish speaking members, *La Union Industrial*. The IWW blossomed in the Southwest, not only becoming one of the fastest growing local organizations, but also becoming a leader in racial inclusion, having Spanish speaking members as the majority.

Politically motivated labor laws in Arizona, such as the Eighty Percent Law and the Alien Labor Act, would soon encounter resistance from labor organizations. At first, unions relied on the anti-immigrant legislation to increase Anglo membership and add to the establishment of unions in places such as Bisbee in 1917. Though the support of the Alien Labor Act had originally come from the white union members, by 1915 these same members changed their views and no longer viewed the Mexicans as their enemies. Union leaders observed how the Mexican workers were emboldened by the Revolution to the south, which had support from organizations such as the IWW, showing a connection on both sides of the border. This period of labor strikes originated in Texas and then moved west into the Arizona mining towns of Clifton, Ajo, and Ray. All of the strikes carried out in Arizona had been organized by mostly Mexican workers.<sup>20</sup> The strike in Ray would end up being a testing ground by the mine owners and civic leaders in the area of creating division between the white and

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<sup>20</sup> Cohen-Benton, *Borderline Americans*, 203.

non-white workers, using methods of propaganda and nationalistic rhetoric. Many mine owners appealed directly to the white workers to cross picket lines. The owners framed the work as a patriotic duty to continue the supply of copper needed for ammunition to fight the Germans, adding the rhetoric that supporting any Mexican worker was being anti-American. In addition, workers of Mexican heritage were labeled as “Mexican Revolutionists.”<sup>21</sup>

As the strikes played out in the rest of the state, the stage was set for Bisbee, now at the height of its mining production and union activity, to become the epicenter of a racially-based labor suppression. The rapid increase in the price of copper from 26.5 cents a pound in mid-1916 to 37 cents in less than a year created a “boomtown” effect with workers flooding in. Three years before the strike, Bisbee had become a union town with different organizations representing groups ranging from bartenders to carpenters.<sup>22</sup> The IWW played the biggest role in the Bisbee strike when its members began organizing for the strike in early 1917. While one of their main goals was to end the wage disparity between whites and non-whites, they were able to gain the support of the Anglo miners by appealing to the bread-and-butter issues, namely inflation. The Phelps Dodge Company not only owned and ran the Copper Queen Mine in Bisbee, but they also created a company town, controlling the prices for necessities such as food, power, and water. The prices Phelps Dodge were setting for goods far outpaced the wages of all the miners regardless of their pay.<sup>23</sup> The IWW grew in influence not by appealing to the natural-born citizens but despite them.

Even before the war, the influx of immigrants and the explosion of U.S. industrialization resulted in the growth of unions like the IWW, which embraced people of all gender, social classes and ethnic racial

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<sup>21</sup> Cohen-Benton, *Borderline Americans*, 204.

<sup>22</sup> Carlos A. Schwantes, *Bisbee: Urban Outpost on the Frontier* (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1992), 61-69.

<sup>23</sup> Cohen-Benton, *Borderline Americans*, 206.

backgrounds. No group within the IWW garnered the level of bigotry and demonization as the Mexicans. By 1917, the Mexican population of Bisbee had seen a significant increase, including three hundred and fourteen workers at the Copper Queen Mine having Mexican origins. Even though Mexicans were the second largest ethnic group behind the whites, they still only comprised thirteen percent of the mine's workforce.<sup>24</sup> With the growing population of Mexicans coming into the Southwest looking for work, their influence became an attraction to the labor party and a concern for corporate management. The IWW was the first labor party to recognize the organizational potential of the Mexican bloc and invited Bisbee's Mexican workers to join (thus supporting the placement of Bisbee's first Mexican organizers, Joseph Robles and Benito Garcia).<sup>25</sup> Benton-Cohen quotes the words of a mine worker: "the times in which the master class were imposing on us are past and gone...The times of slavery are gone forever." Benton-Cohen concludes that "perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of the Bisbee strike was its ability to subvert established 'racial' truths."<sup>26</sup> She does not, however, give direct examples of what these "racial" truths are, but the designation of Bisbee being a "white man's camp" evokes images of the segregated South where Jim Crow laws were in effect. Just as African Americans in the South were viewed as "less than" or "inferior," the Mexicans in Bisbee viewed their segregated work as lower paid surface workers as a form of social injustice. They believed that the segregated work withheld their manhood to support their families with the proper standard of living wages that the white workers enjoyed.

Labor unions during the period were often being challenged by industry leaders and politicians to show their patriotism in a time of war, and in Bisbee, this anti-patriotic rhetoric was being directed at

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<sup>24</sup> As of June 26, 1917, out of 2201 total surface and underground workers, 314 were Mexican (compiled from PMC hearings).

<sup>25</sup> Cohen-Benton, *Borderline Americans*, 209.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen Benton, , 210.

the IWW. Because the IWW was a global organization, the IWW was susceptible to rumors questioning their patriotism since they were not a purely American organization. Additional anti-American rhetoric was the rumor of the IWW being pro-German caused by the Zimmerman Telegram. Arthur Zimmerman, the German Secretary of State, sent a telegram to the Mexican heads of state asking for allegiance on the chance the United States would enter the war and offer “generous financial support, and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost Territory in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.”<sup>27</sup> Even though the Bisbee mine workers had the support of the Socialist party in Arizona, the aim of the local chapter of the IWW was real wages equal to the standard of living (they were not protesting capitalism or being anti-American). But the mine ownership and management partnered with Sheriff Wheeler and Phelps Dodge-owned newspapers to start a fear campaign fueled by racist propaganda and targeted heavily towards the Mexican population in Bisbee. The June 28, 1917 issue of *The Bisbee Daily Review*, for example, included a letter from The Citizens Protective League (an organization sponsored by Sheriff Wheeler), filled with nationalistic themes such as, “We heartily endorse the stand taken by our patriotic sheriff, Harry C. Wheeler.” They connected the copper production disruption to anti-American racial propaganda when they claimed that all the problems began when “irresponsible men who have recently drifted into this camp for the avowed purpose of causing trouble and embarrassment to our government by tying [sic] up a large unit of its much needed copper output, many of these men not being employed here, unless by an alien enemy.”<sup>28</sup> The phrase “alien enemy” made by the citizens of Bisbee does not only evoke an emotional reaction that can

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<sup>27</sup> Telegram with a Translation of the Zimmerman Telegram, February 24, 1917, Docsteach.org, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/translation-zimmermann-telegram>.

<sup>28</sup> “The Citizens Protective League, Citizens and Business Men [sic] Condemn Action of I.W.W. In Calling Strike as Treason,” in an open letter to *Bisbee Daily Review*, June 28, 1917, from the Bisbee Deportation of 1917 University of Arizona Web Exhibit, accessed on 9/28/19.

be equated with an invasion by a foreign power, it echoes the Alien and Sedition acts passed by Congress in 1798. This law allows the government to deport any citizen of an enemy nation, thus the effort to connect the Zimmerman telegram to Mexican workers. After making their case against the strikers and their supporters, the League requested a call to arms when stating that they “call upon all loyal American Citizens of the District, and all liberty-loving and law-abiding inhabitants thereof, to join us in an earnest effort to stop this strike and restore our community to its wanted peace and tranquility.”<sup>29</sup> In this statement, the mine owners and businessmen were sowing seeds of the division with the implication that you were either a law-abiding citizen who supported Sheriff Wheeler and the United States, or you were a criminal committing treason.

Sending the deportees to New Mexico rather than California or Colorado was the most convenient due to proximity and cost effectiveness, especially since the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad was owned by the Phelps Dodge mining company and stretched from Southern Arizona into central New Mexico.<sup>30</sup> In addition, the decision of where to send the deportees echoes the anti-joint statehood view of Arizona, which was based primarily on the large Mexican population in New Mexico. Since the deportation was a covert operation, none of the authorities in New Mexico were given any advanced warning, including the governor. Upon receiving word from the local authorities in Luna County, Governor Lindsey gave the order to apprehend and confine the deportees but also requested they had suitable conditions including food provided by the state. There were no questions regarding the ethnic makeup of the deportees nor questions about legal status. Lindsey’s request for federal assistance in this matter came quickly, with President Wilson dispatching the U.S. Army which took responsibility and responded within two days.<sup>31</sup> The

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<sup>29</sup> *Bisbee Daily Review*, June 28, 1917.

<sup>30</sup> Burke, *A Land Apart*, 46.

<sup>31</sup> Melzer, “Exiled in the Desert,” 273.

troops were initially sent as a support operation but assumed the role of peacekeepers in the town of Columbus. By early August, many residents of Columbus voiced concern over the lack of supervision of the deportees in the camp known as “Camp Wobbly.” Responding to a request for more assistance, Governor Lindsey sent a former New Mexico Mounted Police officer, Fred Fornoff, to investigate the situation in Columbus. After two days in town, he sent a report back to the governor that there had been no disturbances, and in his words, there was “no alarm” being felt by the “level headed” citizens around Columbus.<sup>32</sup> In this report, Fornoff found the cause for alarm was created by certain individuals. The first was an official who worked for Phelps Dodges’ El Paso and Southwestern Railroad, and the second was a manager at one of the drug stores in Columbus, who Fornoff exposed was in close association with his Bisbee colleague.<sup>33</sup> Governor Lindsey did not placate the alarmists “who had clearly allowed self-interest and undue paranoia to cloud their perception of public danger.”<sup>34</sup>

The local press employed xenophobic rhetoric towards the deportees, displaying a pro-business, anti-immigrant stance. The *Albuquerque Morning Journal* praised Bisbee’s Sheriff Wheeler and went so far as to suggest that the deportees be “Hunted down and killed [just] as...hostile Indians were hunted down and killed.”<sup>35</sup> The racial identity of the deportees, namely those of Mexican heritage, was highlighted by the *Roswell Daily Record* which claimed that “The best way to cure the I.W.W.’s is to ship them across the [border] into Mexico.”<sup>36</sup> These newspapers, along with several other regional papers, fueled the nationalist fear that the I.W.W. was a pro-German

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<sup>32</sup> Fred Fornoff to Governor Washington E. Lindsay, August 11, 1917 Washington E. Lindsay Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

<sup>33</sup> Melzer, “Exiled in the Desert,” 273.

<sup>34</sup> Fred Fornoff to Governor Washington E. Lindsay, August 14, 1917, Washington E. Lindsay Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

<sup>35</sup> *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, July 18 & 23, 1917.

<sup>36</sup> *Roswell Daily Record*, July 26, 1917.

organization with the direct intent of disrupting production in the mines to sabotage the American war effort in Europe. Some regional papers sided on the views of facts and reason. For example, A. Clauson, editor of the *Fort Sumner Review*, argued that most of the other newspaper editors were “only Publishing the mine owners’ side” and that “The bulk of the I.W.W.’s are good honest workingmen and only ask for living wages and decent treatment.”<sup>37</sup> Clauson’s view aligned with national publications such as *The Nation* magazine that was written for a socially progressive audience (as a successor to the abolitionist *The Liberator*). *The Nation* writer Robert Bruer examined the arguments made by the mining concerns and local law enforcement in Bisbee, and his findings were that at the state level. Governor Campbell chose not to send state troops into Bisbee and allowed the local law enforcement to engage in the militia- and vigilante-style lawlessness, including setting up their own courts headed up by Phelps Dodge.<sup>38</sup> There is evidence from the federal government’s investigations and hearings that officials in Arizona neglected the rule of law, resulting in the arrest of twenty-one mining officials, businessmen, and deputies. All charges were dropped by a federal judge in San Francisco who ruled that no federal laws had been broken. Companies in Arizona like Phelps Dodge became more powerful and were able to suppress the labor movement, allowing Bisbee to remain a white man’s camp.<sup>39</sup>

## New Mexico

Increased activity amongst mine strikes and labor movements nationwide continued during the first part of the twentieth century, and in the Southwest the friction of race and labor would continue to scar the social landscape. However, an event in Grant County New Mexico would come to symbolize the power of communal support em-

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<sup>37</sup> *Fort Sumner Review*, July 21, 1917.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Bruere, “Copper Camp Patriotism: An Interpretation” *The Nation*, February 28, 1918, 235.

<sup>39</sup> Benton-Cohen, *Borderline Americans*, 234-236.

bedded in the Hispanic heritage of New Mexicans, contrasting with Bisbee in both time and space. When Mine Mill organizer Clinton Jencks first came to Grant County over thirty years after Bisbee, he observed an open space stretching out over 300 square miles in central New Mexico. He traversed the space from end to end, searching for local labor leaders. His travels brought his new home to life: “The rock dust, tailings, and slag dumps, as well as the yawning open pit, created a ghostly atmosphere as he contemplated the hard evidence of environmental degradation and inhaled the smell of money everywhere around him.”<sup>40</sup> Jencks viewed the stark scenery of the Southwest in a very different way than George Wharton James; seeing the cost it had on its workers as he reflected that they “ended up with broken limbs, of tombstones of solid rock inside their lungs.”<sup>41</sup> Jencks’s previous assignment in Colorado did not expose him to the Mexican labor movement nor the racial challenges the mineworkers faced. Unlike Bisbee, Grant County in the 1950s did have an established Mexican population, however like Bisbee, Mexicans faced blatant forms of discrimination including access to equal education, social standing, and most like Bisbee, discrimination in the workplace, particularly in the mines. De facto segregation was established in Silver City, the Grant County seat. The town banned Mexicans in the evening from entering any Anglo neighborhoods, nor were they allowed in any Anglo establishments. It was Jim Crow for the Mexicans.<sup>42</sup>

Facing inequality at every turn, Mexican workers embraced the unions, not only for equality in the workplace but a voice for equality in society and politics. The Mexican labor leaders in Grant county were articulate and hardworking, however, their voice went unheard with-

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<sup>40</sup>James J. Lorence, *Palomino: Clinton Jencks and Mexican American Unionism in the American Southwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 45.

<sup>41</sup> Jencks Interview, February 15, 1975, New York Tamiment Library, New York University, A Crime to fit the Punishment series, Oral History of the American Left Collection.

<sup>42</sup> Lorence, *Palomino*, 46.

out an Anglo speaking for them.<sup>43</sup> Clinton Jencks provided that voice going beyond the workers and encapsulating the entire community, including giving women representation as partners in the struggle. Local community leaders Juan and Virginia Chacon welcomed Jencks as a labor organizer and as a representative of the Communist Party, willing to fight for labor, social, and economic equality. Mexican women like Virginia Chacon stood shoulder-to-shoulder, not only with their husbands but with all the workers as equal members in the community and the union Local 890. Such labor organizing amongst women was born out of the New Deal Era creating organizations such as the *Asociación de Trabajadores* (ADW).<sup>44</sup> Female empowerment would soon become a key weapon in the Mexican labor struggles in Grant County.

Mineworkers in Grant County were experiencing poor working conditions and discriminatory wage practices similar to Bisbee three decades earlier, but more unique was the demands for better living conditions for the workers' families. On October 17, 1950 the mine workers walked off the job at the Empire Zinc Mine. This strike captured the attention of many Mexican workers in the Southwest, having great importance not only in addressing the racial wage gap but being organized by and for the Mexican people.<sup>45</sup> The union community was also important in giving financial support and supplying necessities, and such a support system allowed the strike to continue for months on end.<sup>46</sup>

By June 1951, with the strike stretching into a full year, the Empire Zinc mine owners increased pressure on the mineworkers. The district court judge sided with the mine owners and ordered a court injunction, specifically banning the miners from picketing.<sup>47</sup> The local sheriff

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<sup>43</sup> Lorence, 47.

<sup>44</sup> Lorence, 51.

<sup>45</sup> Lorence, 92.

<sup>46</sup> Lorence, 93.

<sup>47</sup> Lorence, 96.

promptly arrested Jencks along with several other workers. In response to the arrests and in solidarity to their community, the women and children who were exempt from the injunction picked up the picket signs.

An increase of women in the labor movement in Postwar America was the result of women entering into the industry labor field during the war, and an increase in community organizing coming out of the suffrage movement. These factors played a key role in the latter part of the Empire Zinc mine strike. The women's action on the picket line was a defining moment in the historical intersection of gender, race, and labor in the United States. Jencks later reflects on this moment claiming it was: "Just like a thousand other struggles until the women took over the picket line and made it something new and special and unheard of."<sup>48</sup> The women had taken over the strike at all levels, including taking part in the demands and negotiations. Their organizing and support from the community (including the district attorney) surpassed that of the men's. With this support, the women took an increasingly aggressive stance against authorities on the picket line. In retaliation, fifty-three women were arrested on June 15<sup>th</sup> and were jailed along with some of their children, drawing national attention and outrage.<sup>49</sup> Such actions strengthened the support for workers, helping Mine Mill successfully negotiate other contracts with other mining companies; however, Empire Zinc workers persisted, refusing to negotiate with the predominantly Mexican workers. The strike continued until January 21, 1952, with Empire Zinc ending the dual wage system and ceding to the women's' demands for better housing conditions, including running water.

The struggle for labor and race equality in Grant County resulted in limited gains. But systemic change can only come through progress,

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<sup>48</sup> Jencks Interview, February 15, 1975, New York Tamiment Library, New York University, A Crime to fit the Punishment series, Oral History of the American Left Collection.

<sup>49</sup> Lorence, 100.

and progress is only gained through continued struggle and determination. Battling racial discrimination in the workplace and beyond continues to present day. Elements of Bisbee's legacy of discrimination have softened but are still evident. For example, Arizona did not recognize Martin Luther King Day until 1992, after a National Football League boycott. In the twenty-first century, the discrimination continued in Arizona in 2010 with state bill AB1070, which required all residents to carry proof of legal status, was enforced by then Phoenix Sheriff Joe Arpaio, and was supported by then Governor Jan Brewer. In contrast, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson was taking a pluralist approach in this same period by issuing drivers licenses to undocumented residents as a matter of safety for all residents.

New Mexico continues to uphold its pluralistic defense of its heritage to this day through its state legislature and Senate democrats. The border wall promised by Donald Trump was denounced by New Mexico's state representatives and democratic Senator Tom Udall over the transfer of 170 acres in Hidalgo and Luna counties for the wall. In a speech on the Senate floor Udall states: "The Trump Interior department under Secretary Bernhardt is now party to President's Trump phony and unlawful 'national emergency' declaration to build a wall that is ineffective and offensive to New Mexico's values."<sup>50</sup> Reaching into the past to events such as Bisbee can help Arizona reform and emphasize humanity and equality over racial divides. Meanwhile, New Mexico can look to Empire Zinc, as an inspiration to continue to fight for a pluralistic society that embraces their native heritage.

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<sup>50</sup> Algernon D'Amassa, "New Mexico Delegation Blasts 'Land Grab' for Border Wall," *Las Cruces Sun News*, September 21, 2019.

# Decoding Robert Stinnett: Historiographical Comparisons Regarding *Day of Deceit: The Truth about FDR and Pearl Harbor*

By Adam Christian

On Dec 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 Japan successfully attacked Pearl Harbor leading to the deaths of 2,403 Americans, the loss of 160 aircraft and 3 battle-ships.<sup>1</sup> Later, Congressional hearings were held to investigate the events and circumstances relating to the attack.<sup>2</sup> Many historians have written about Pearl Harbor, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR), and the lead-up to the attack that launched the United States into World War II. The success of the attack has led to speculation that FDR knew of the attack ahead of time but took no action in an effort to move the United States from isolation to war. One of the most recent and popular books concerning this view of the attack on Pearl Harbor is Robert Stinnett's *Day of Deceit: The Truth about FDR and Pearl Harbor*. Robert Stinnett served in the U.S. Navy from 1942 to 1946 where he earned ten battle stars and a Presidential Unit Citation. He worked as a journalist and photographer for *The Oakland Tribune* and was a Research Fellow at the Independent Institute in Oakland. He resigned from his position at the *Tribune* to spend time researching the *Freedom of Information Act* to develop *Day of Deceit*.<sup>3</sup> Stinnett's accomplishments are remarkable and deserving of much respect and

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Loproto, "December 7, 1941: Pearl Harbor Casualties," *Pearlharbor.org*, last modified April 27, 2017, accessed November 18, 2019, <https://pearlharbor.org/losses-pearl-harbor/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack," *ibibli.org*, accessed November 18, 2019, [http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/congress/part\\_0.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/congress/part_0.html).

<sup>3</sup> "Robert B. Stinnett," *Independent Institute*, accessed November 18, 2019, [http://www.independent.org/aboutus/person\\_detail.asp?id=514](http://www.independent.org/aboutus/person_detail.asp?id=514).

recognition. However, there is no mention in biographies of Robert Stinnett ever being an academic or professional historian. This fact is of importance regarding his book, *Day of Deceit*, and the many historians who have referenced Stinnett in their works on Pearl Harbor. The question is, despite the fact that Stinnett is not an academic or professional historian, why have academic historians felt compelled to debunk *Day of Deceit* and what methods do they employ to do so? The intent of this paper is to show that historians feel compelled to debunk Stinnett because they do not view his work as an accurate historical finding of what prompted the attack on Pearl Harbor. Stinnett's book is well written, sounds convincing, and provides much information, some discovered through the passage of the *Freedom of Information Act*. In addition, *Day of Deceit* is popular, especially with conspiracy theorists. In fact, many historians view the work as a conspiracy theory and feel compelled to challenge it. In attempting to debunk Stinnett historians use a review of the evidence to come to their conclusions. Historians note the absence of specific damning information such as a smoking gun to prove Stinnett's theory. Historians also challenge the accuracy of the information Stinnett presents. In addition, historians note the totality of current historical facts and the findings based on these facts. In reviewing the evidence in this manner historians conclude that *Day of Deceit* does not form an accurate picture of a vast conspiracy theory that FDR and his advisors knew of the impending attack of Pearl Harbor and took no action.

Aspects of conspiracy theory thinking such as the absence of common sense and jumping to conclusions compel historians to act. *Merriam Webster* defines conspiracy theory as "a theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful conspirators."<sup>4</sup> In *Day of Deceit*, Stinnett writes that FDR, along with his advisors, wanted to provoke Japan into an attack on

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<sup>4</sup> "Conspiracy Theory", *Merriam Webster.com*, accessed November 23, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conspiracy%20theory>.

Pearl Harbor.<sup>5</sup> By definition, and to other historians, this assertion by Stinnett is a conspiracy theory. Volker Heins writes in an article concerning critical thinking and conspiracy theories that “conspiracy theorists might be capable of being attentive critics who try to get to the bottom of things and who still operate in harmony with the rules of a liberal public sphere even though they may seem to have abjured the public use of their reason.”<sup>6</sup> Does this statement describe Robert Stinnett? Historians do pounce upon Stinnett’s perceived abjuration of the reason that goes along with belief in a conspiracy. Warren Kimball, emeritus professor of history from Rutgers University, comments in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* on the conspiracy that FDR lured the U.S. into World War II by forcing an attack on Pearl Harbor. He writes that, “Buying into the conspiracy theory requires leaps of faith, and a suspension of common sense” and that the subtitle of Stinnett’s book alone “accuses everyone of lying or being either stupid or ignorant.”<sup>7</sup> Even proponents with different theories other than the current consensus that the success of the attack was based on Japanese radio silence consider Stinnett’s work a conspiracy theory. Michael Gannon, who was a distinguished service professor emeritus of history at the University of Florida, provides his input on Stinnett’s book. In *Pearl Harbor Betrayed: The True Story of a Man and a Nation Under Attack*, Gannon, who believes the success of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was due more to communication issues with Admiral Kimmel and the state of the U.S. military, writes that Stinnett’s book posits “a vast conspiracy by Roosevelt and his minions...to force the United States into war by a secret and deliberate contrivance that placed the fleet in harm’s way.”<sup>8</sup> Justus

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Stinnett, *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), XIII.

<sup>6</sup> Volker Heins, “Critical Theory and the Traps of Conspiracy Thinking,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 33, no. 7 (November 2007): 787–801.

<sup>7</sup> Warren Kimball, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Mar 2004), 97.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed: The True Story of a Man and a Nation Under Attack* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2001), 148.

Doenecke, professor emeritus of history at New College of Florida, writes about Stinnett in his book *From Isolation to War: 1931-1941*. Doenecke writes that even today, years after the conspiracy theory of FDR knowing about the Pearl Harbor attack ahead of time has been discredited, books such as *Day of Deceit* are still published.<sup>9</sup> All these authors mention Robert Stinnett directly and view his book as a conspiracy theory or thesis and therefore requires debunking.

In addition to historians who mention Stinnett's book, there are historians that have through the years debunked the theory that FDR knew of the Pearl Harbor attack ahead of time and took no action. Gordon Prange, who was a professor of history for the University of Maryland, an officer in the United States Navy, and who as a civilian was on General Douglas MacArthur's personal historical staff, had his own view concerning the Pearl Harbor conspiracy. According to Donald Goldstein and Katherine Dillon in an afterword of *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*, "Prange thought it an absurdity to assert that Roosevelt risked the prime units of the U.S. Pacific Fleet-the very tactical tools the United States would need in a Pacific conflict-to justify a declaration of war."<sup>10</sup> John Keegan, English Military Historian, provides his take on whether Roosevelt knew ahead of time about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in his book *The Second World War*. In summary, his view is that the charge that Roosevelt knew ahead of time of the attack on Pearl Harbor defies logic.<sup>11</sup> Finally, Robert Lewin, a British military historian, weighs in on the Pearl Harbor conspiracy theory. He writes that conspiracy is a "more convenient answer than all the complexities that led to the Pearl Harbor attack."<sup>12</sup> The above well-known historians have

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<sup>9</sup> Justus D. Doenecke and John E. Wilz, *From Isolation to War: 1931-1941* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2015), 211.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Prange, Donald Goldstein, and Katherine Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 857.

<sup>11</sup> John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York: Penguin Group, 1989), 254.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Lewin, *The Other Ultra: Codes, Ciphers and the Defeat of Japan* (United Kingdom, Anchor Press Ltd, 1982), 72.

disputed the theory that FDR knew ahead of time about the attack on Pearl Harbor as conspiracy or simply not plausible. Findings from historians such as these who have spent untold hours studying the Pearl Harbor attack are further proof that the view that FDR knew ahead of time is more conspiracy theory than fact.

In providing criticism on *Day of Deceit* historians have questioned specific main points that Stinnett says support his view that FDR knew. Stinnett's main points are that FDR used Lieutenant Commander McCollum's five-page memorandum of October 1940 to force Japan into war, that the Japanese fleet had not maintained radio silence and codebreakers had advance knowledge of the attack, and that crucial information was intentionally withheld from military commanders in Hawaii to ensure that the attack on Pearl Harbor was successful.

Stinnett writes in *Day of Deceit* that McCollum's eight action plan called for "virtually inciting a Japanese attack on American ground, air, and naval forces in Hawaii..."<sup>13</sup> Historians have weighed in on the importance Stinnett places on the McCollum memorandum. Gannon writes that Stinnett seems to say that if McCollum proposed it, Roosevelt must have done it.<sup>14</sup> David Kahn, a US historian, provides his take on the McCollum memorandum. He writes that Stinnett admits that he has no proof of Roosevelt ever seeing the McCollum memorandum. He also writes that it was more likely that McCollum was following national policy rather than Roosevelt taking guidance on American policy from a mid-level officer.<sup>15</sup> The eight points of the memorandum are listed below from *Day of Deceit*:

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<sup>13</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 149.

<sup>15</sup> David Kahn, *How I Discovered World War II's Greatest Spy and Other Stories of Intelligence and Code* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2014), 23.

- A. Make an arrangement with Britain for the use of British Bases in the Pacific, particularly Singapore.
- B. Make an arrangement with Holland for the use of base facilities and the acquisition of supplies in the Dutch East Indies.
- C. Give all possible aid to the Chinese Government of Chiang Kai Shek.
- D. Send a division of long-range heavy cruisers to the Orient, Philippines, or Singapore.
- E. Send two divisions of submarines to the Orient.
- F. Keep the main strength of the U.S. Fleet now in the Pacific in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands.
- G. Insist that the Dutch refuse to grant Japanese demands for undue economic concessions, particularly oil.
- H. Completely embargo all U.S. trade with Japan in collaboration with a similar embargo imposed by the British Empire.<sup>16</sup>

Kahn also writes that Stinnett is simply wrong when he writes, “If Japan could be provoked into committing an overt act of war against the United States, then mutual assistance provisions [of the Axis Tripartite Pact] would kick in. The treaty did not require assistance if one of the parties mounted an attack on another nation.”<sup>17</sup> Kahn further writes that when Hitler, surprised by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, declared war his reasons were not clear and remain a controversial subject among historians today.<sup>18</sup> Although the McCollum memorandum does appear a convincing document, one must re-

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<sup>16</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 275.

<sup>17</sup> Kahn, *How I Discovered World War II's Greatest Spy*, 25.

<sup>18</sup> Kahn, *How I Discovered World War II's Greatest Spy*, 25.

member that Commander McCollum was a mid-level officer and probably was not talking directly with FDR. The McCollum memorandum may have been seen by FDR but there is no evidence to support this as Kahn states above. Gannon also adds that when McCollum was asked about trickery during the Joint Congressional Committee (JCC) hearings on the Pearl Harbor attack, McCollum replied that there was none.<sup>19</sup> In summary, there were no conclusive findings putting the evidence directly into FDR's hands.

Much has been written about Japanese radio silence and code-breaking concerning the attack on Pearl Harbor. Stinnett writes, "Previous accounts have claimed that the United States had not cracked Japanese military codes prior to the attack. We now know this is wrong. Previous accounts have insisted that the Japanese fleet maintained strict radio silence. This, too, is wrong. The truth is clear: FDR knew."<sup>20</sup> This wording in itself sounds conspiratorial. He goes on to say that historians have made too much of the Purple diplomatic code and not enough of the *Kaigun Ango*, the Naval operational code.<sup>21</sup> Stinnett's claims are based on broken radio silence reports that are now available through the *Freedom of Information Act* and through interviews with codebreakers in Hawaii. Other historians disagree. Doenecke writes that Japan did observe radio silence writing that the "flotilla maintained radio silence and dumped no garbage."<sup>22</sup> He also writes concerning codebreaking that "not enough intelligence was collected, something not surprising when as Dwight D. Eisenhower later conceded, the army general staff had treated intelligence as a stepchild."<sup>23</sup> Robert Hanyok, a retired intelligence analyst and historian, discusses radio silence and code-breaking in *Naval War College Review*. He writes that the attack on Pearl Harbor was a total

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<sup>19</sup> Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 149.

<sup>20</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 21.

<sup>22</sup> Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 213.

<sup>23</sup> Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 226.

surprise. He states that success was based on “radio denial and deception in hiding the existence, makeup, purpose, and timing of the attack.”<sup>24</sup> In addition, he writes that claims that the *Kido Butai* (Japanese strike force) transmitted messages and was tracked by the U.S. Navy have been “expertly dismantled in books and articles.”<sup>25</sup> He references Robert Stinnett in his notes as a principal adherent of these claims. Steven Gillon, professor of history from Oklahoma University, also disagrees. He writes that although the U.S. had cracked the diplomatic Purple code, they had not cracked the military code.<sup>26</sup> In addition, American writer, historian, and biographer Stephen Budiansky writes in *Battle of Wits* that Stinnett’s book “misinterprets and misunderstands the process of cryptanalysis-and disregards the most important parts of the documentary evidence relating to the breaking of the Japanese naval codes: notably the fact that the Japanese introduced a completely new AN codebook in December 1940.”<sup>27</sup> Finally, Robert Hanyok writes that the “relatively few deceptive transmissions...intercepted by the Americans--a dozen at best--may have worked in favor of the Japanese. Such limited intelligence would not move the Americans from their conclusion that the carriers were still in Japanese waters.”<sup>28</sup>

Aside from broken radio intercept messages, the two main pieces of intelligence focused on by historians concerning prior knowledge of the attack on Pearl Harbor and were focused on during the JCC hearings were the fourteen parts of the Japanese response to a hard-line proposal from the U.S. communicated in November to the Japanese and the “Winds” messages. The hard-line proposal from the U.S. was issued by Secretary of State Hull on November 26, 1941. Hull

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<sup>24</sup> Robert J. Hanyok, "Japanese Radio Denial and Deception and the Attack on Pearl Harbor," *Naval War College Review* (Autumn 2008): 99.

<sup>25</sup> Hanyok, "Japanese Radio Denial," 100.

<sup>26</sup> Steven M. Gillon, *Pearl Harbor* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 34.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen Budiansky, *Battle of Wits: The Complete Story of Codebreaking in World War II* (New York: Free Press, 2000), 363.

<sup>28</sup> Hanyok, "Japanese radio denial and deception and the attack on Pearl Harbor," 120.

advised the Japanese envoys that the oil embargo would continue and demanded withdrawal from China and Indochina.<sup>29</sup> The Japanese response contained fourteen parts of which thirteen were delivered to FDR on December 6<sup>th</sup>. After reading the final section FDR told his advisor that “This means war.” Although the comment is dramatic Gillon believes that FDR did not take the response to signal an imminent threat to American bases in the Pacific.<sup>30</sup> Stinnett writes that the fourteenth part of the message was eventually received on Dec 6<sup>th</sup>, 1941 at 11:30 P.M. It included a request to deliver the response to the U.S. by 1:00 P.M. on Dec 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941 eastern time. It was decoded and eventually made its way to FDR at 10:00 A.M. eastern time, 4:30 A.M in Hawaii. When FDR received the message, he did not appear alarmed.<sup>31</sup> Stinnett goes on to say that the delivery of the fourteen messages to General Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, and subsequently to Commanders in Hawaii is “obscured by charges of intimidation, perjured testimony, coercion of witnesses, and obstruction of justice.”<sup>32</sup> However, this is a stretch. Gillon writes that “FDR assumed that the likely target would be either British Malaya or the Dutch East Indies. Without American intervention, the Japanese could control a vast area that was rich in natural resources that stretched from the Aleutian Islands to India.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Washington did not foresee an imminent attack. David Kaiser, an American historian who was a Professor in the Strategy and Policy Department of the United States Naval War College and who holds a doctorate in history from Harvard provides his take on the delay on the fourteenth part of the message reaching Pearl Harbor. He writes that “Washington authorities were much better informed than Kimmel and Short (the Navy and Army commanders in Hawaii) about the possibly imminent outbreak of war-although they had no information specifically suggesting an attack on Pearl

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<sup>29</sup> Gillon, *Pearl Harbor*, 25.

<sup>30</sup> Gillon, *Pearl Harbor*, 35.

<sup>31</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 232.

<sup>32</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 233.

<sup>33</sup> Gillon, *Pearl Harbor*, 34.

Harbor-but an unfortunate lapse prevented them from getting their best information to Hawaii until literally the last minute.”<sup>34</sup> The consensus from most historians is that an imminent attack was not expected based on the evidence at hand at the time.

The “Winds” signals were yet another matter. Lewin provides an overview of the Japanese intent in his book *The Other Ultra*. In summary, he writes that the “Winds” signals were transmitted from Tokyo to Washington through two messages. These messages were not in Purple but in J-19 code which has a lower priority and regarded emergency communications. If Japan-US relations were in danger a signal would be sent as a weather forecast during a shortwave news broadcast as HIGASHI NO KAZEAME (east wind rain). If Japan-U.S.S.R. relations were in danger then KITANOKAZE KUMORI (north wind cloudy) would be broadcast. If Japan-British relations were in danger then NISHI NO KAZE HARE (west wind clear) would be broadcast. Although there was round-the-clock listening for the messages, only Commander Safford believed an execution had been intercepted.<sup>35</sup> These “Winds” messages were made much of during the JCC hearings. Doenecke writes that antirevisionists find Safford’s testimony shaky during the hearings.<sup>36</sup> Prange writes that “No other aspect of the Pearl Harbor story has generated more heat and less light than the “winds code.”<sup>37</sup> In addition, he writes that the JCC was right when they reported that the winds code if intercepted, would have added nothing to what was already known of Japan-U.S. relations at the time.<sup>38</sup> Most historians believe that the “Winds” codes were never transmitted. Stinnett agrees that “there is no proof that the “Winds Code” was ever transmitted by Japan.”<sup>39</sup> However, Stinnett says that it was intro-

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<sup>34</sup> David Kaiser, *No End Save Victory: How FDR Led the Nation into War* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 331.

<sup>35</sup> Lewin, *The Other Ultra*, 97-99.

<sup>36</sup> Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 224.

<sup>37</sup> Prange, Goldstein, and Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept*, 361.

<sup>38</sup> Prange, Goldstein, and Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept*, 361.

<sup>39</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 81.

duced during the JCC hearings to derail the requests for the 5-Num intercept, the Naval operations code.<sup>40</sup> This may or may not be the case. Again, the issue is that there is no conclusive evidence, no factual information that Democrats intentionally introduced the “Winds” message to derail the 5-Num intercept questions.

The final question concerning Stinnett’s *Day of Deceit* is whether the information was intentionally withheld from the commanders in Hawaii. Stinnett writes that between November 28 and December 6 spy messages obtained by “American intelligence in Hawaii and Washington were deliberately derailed and mistranslated.”<sup>41</sup> He further writes that the only plausible reason for the failure was “to keep the information from Kimmel and Short and so ensure an uncontested overt Japanese act of war.”<sup>42</sup> Most historians disagree with the withholding of evidence stance that Stinnett takes. Gannon writes after being critical of Robert Stinnett that, “Many a book...has tried and failed to establish Roosevelt’s complicity in the Japanese attack, while withholding his supposed foreknowledge of the event from Kimmel and Short.”<sup>43</sup> Gillon writes, “Over the years, conservative critics of Roosevelt and a few historians have promoted the so-called “back door” theory, but it has failed to gain much credibility. All the evidence shows that FDR and the men around him were genuinely shocked when they learned of the attack.”<sup>44</sup> Doenecke writes that if Roosevelt had been the “Machiavellian the revisionists claimed he was, any “back door” efforts easily could have backfired on him.”<sup>45</sup> He poses the question of what if Hitler had not declared war. “The American government, forced to fight a major war in the Pacific, would have a most difficult time convincing its people that Germany was still the

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<sup>40</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 80.

<sup>41</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 107.

<sup>42</sup> Stinnett, *Day of Deceit*, 107.

<sup>43</sup> Gannon, *Pearl Harbor Betrayed*, 149.

<sup>44</sup> Gillon, *Pearl Harbor*, 191.

<sup>45</sup> Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 231.

greater enemy.”<sup>46</sup> Kimball writes “why would Franklin Roosevelt, who adored his Navy, sacrifice what was then considered a crucial and decisive weapon, the battleship fleet, when they might have set a trap for the Japanese, delivering a crushing blow to the Imperial Navy, and slipped through the “back door” into a war with Germany? In the absence of an unequivocal and undeniable smoking gun, the “FDR must have known” school flunks out.”<sup>47</sup> One of the important items to remember concerning the attack on Pearl Harbor was that a war warning was issued on November 27, 1941. Secretary of War Stimson said later that, “we assumed that...it would not be necessary to repeat that warning over and over again during the ensuing days.”<sup>48</sup>

Most historians look at the attack on Pearl Harbor through the lens of the totality of the evidence. Indeed, as with everything, historians look at the preponderance of factual evidence to come to conclusions regarding historical events. When reviewing the Pearl Harbor attack historians have focused on several main areas. First, historians agree that mistakes were made by the commanders in Hawaii and from leadership in Washington. The commanders on Oahu, Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet, and General Walter C. Short, commanding general of the Hawaiian Department, are seen as being unprepared for the attack. David Kaiser writes that “Kimmel took no new action in response to the war warning of November 27<sup>th</sup>, and his Army counterpart, General Short, merely put his forces on alert against sabotage.”<sup>49</sup> In addition, Kimmel said during a meeting with a journalist for the *Christian Science Monitor* on December 6, 1941, that since Moscow had not fallen the Japanese would not attack because they risked a two-front war. The journalist wrote that Kimmel’s staff, “seemed very relaxed, and no one seemed

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<sup>46</sup> Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 231.

<sup>47</sup> Warren Kimball, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and World War II.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Mar 2004), 97.

<sup>48</sup> Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 224.

<sup>49</sup> Kaiser, *No End Save Victory*, 329.

to disagree.”<sup>50</sup> As for Short, Prange writes that he was “preoccupied with training” and that he had a fixation on sabotage. Prange writes that he was so worried about sabotage, that he did not even consult his field commanders to seek their interpretation of the warning of November 27.”<sup>51</sup> As for the leadership in Washington, Doenecke writes that “warnings from Washington were ambiguous and lacked follow-through.”<sup>52</sup> As for FDR, there is quite a bit of blame. Prange writes that Roosevelt’s solicitude that the public not be alarmed during the mounting crisis in the autumn of 1941 had a baleful effect. The instruction not to upset the citizenry watered down the Army’s warning to Short of November 27”<sup>53</sup> Gillon writes that FDR can also be blamed for failing to pay close attention to the growing crisis in the Pacific in the months leading up to the Pearl Harbor attack. Roosevelt liked to act as his own secretary of state, but he was unusually passive in dealing with the Japanese threat.”<sup>54</sup> There was a lot of blame to go around. Many complexities led to the failure to protect Pearl Harbor on that fateful day. Prange writes that the only common denominator of the failures would lie in, “the gap between knowledge of possible danger and belief in its existence.”<sup>55</sup>

Where does this leave us with Stinnett? Overall, the factual evidence, the accuracy of the evidence, and the many historiographical writings show many failures concerning the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Academic and professional historians have spent many hours studying the evidence to come to this conclusion. They have maintained an open mind trying not to let their personal beliefs cloud their findings. Kahn’s final comment on Stinnett is poignant, “Conspiracies certainly exist, but those who propound a theory must be open to evidence that can prove them wrong. Otherwise, a rational argument

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<sup>50</sup> Kaiser, *No End Save Victory*, 368.

<sup>51</sup> Prange, Goldstein, and Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept*, 727.

<sup>52</sup> Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 230.

<sup>53</sup> Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 732.

<sup>54</sup> Gillon, *Pearl Harbor*, VII.

<sup>55</sup> Prange, Goldstein, and Dillon, *At Dawn We Slept*, 736.

cannot take place. Unfortunately, Stinnett is such a passionate believer in the conspiracy that he is unwilling to consider the countervailing evidence. He is offering not a theory but a definition that cannot be contradicted.<sup>56</sup> The many writings of academic and professional historians in this paper show that clarity can be obtained when looking at all the factual evidence. Historians feel compelled to debunk Stinnett because there is very little factual evidence in the theory he proposes. A finding based on personal beliefs, which appears to be the case in *Day of Deceit*, leaves one in the dark.

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<sup>56</sup> Kahn, *How I Discovered World War II's Greatest Spy*, 25.

# Exclusion of the Empire: Discrimination of Japanese-Americans in the United States

By Lillian Martin

*"We have no one to go to for help. Not even a church. Anything goes, now that our President Roosevelt signed the order to get rid of us. How can he do this to his own citizens? No lawyer has the courage to defend us. Caucasian friends stay away for fear of being labeled 'Jap lovers.' There's not a more lonely feeling than to be banished by my own country. There's no place to go."<sup>1</sup>*

This quote appears in *Kiyo's Story: A Japanese-American Family's Quest for the American Dream*, a biography in which first-generation, or *issei*, Kiyo Sato documents the struggles of her parents and siblings as they begin to follow the American Dream up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Sato's sense of cultural dislocation from a majority of other Americans is not uncommon, as brutal victimization and xenophobic rhetoric befell people of Japanese descent under anti-Japanese paranoia originating from the mid-nineteenth centuries. Nearly eighty years ago, Japanese-Americans were wrongfully detained and interned as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent war.

Now considered one of the greatest atrocities in the twentieth century on American Civil Rights, Japanese internment was not the first injustice against Japanese-Americans. Under the Naturalization Act of 1790, the only people entitled to become citizens of the United

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<sup>1</sup> Kiyo Sato, *Kiyo's Story: A Japanese-American Family's Quest for the American Dream* (New York: Soho Press, 2009), 37.

## *Exclusion of the Empire*

States were at the time "any alien, being a free white person, who shall have resided within limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for the term of two years."<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, people wishing to immigrate were required to provide additional materials such as a judgment of good character and "taking the oath or affirmation prescribed by law, to support the constitution of the United States."<sup>3</sup> As a result, Native Americans, slaves (freed or not), indentured servants, and essential to this paper, Asians were not included as being eligible for American citizenship. This blatant act of racism and inequality on a federal level is the first barrier among many that Japanese people and eventual Japanese-Americans faced when battling an abundance of new laws and acts. With the comparison between the United States and the individual state of California, respectively, the anti-Japanese emotion is evident through the national level. Through the use of laws, acts, and systematic denial of United States constitutional rights, U.S. aggression against the country of Japan and Japanese-Americans began well before Japan's involvement in World War II, rendering anti-Japanese sentiment during and after the war as a carried "tradition" both inside and outside of the United States.

With the Convention of Kanagawa signed by the United States and Japan after the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry on July 8th, 1853, the following goal was established by both countries, as stated in the text. "The United States of America and the empire of Japan, desiring to establish firm, lasting and sincere friendship between the two nations, have resolved to fix, in a manner clear and positive by means of a treaty or general convention of peace and amity, the rules which shall in future be mutually observed in the intercourse of their respective countries."<sup>4</sup> This convention brought an end to Japan's isolation and allowed for the United States, Great Britain, and Russia to

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<sup>2</sup> "Naturalization Act of 1790," March 26, 1790, *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875*.

<sup>3</sup> "Naturalization Act of 1790."

<sup>4</sup> Convention of Kanagawa; U.S.-Japan, art. 1, March 31, 1854.

trade with Japan at their leisure. The U.S. produced pieces of legislature such as the Treaty of Peace and Amity in 1854 and, perhaps more importantly, the Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858, allowing for the first Japanese embassy to travel upon arrival in San Francisco to Washington D.C. As detailed in Jesse Frederick Steiner's book, *The Japanese Invasion*, residents of San Francisco were thrilled to support the embassy and make them comfortable before their journey through Panama. Eventually arriving in our nation's capital, the Japanese embassy was "granted interviews by the President and chief officers of state, receptions and banquets were held in their honor, and facilities were given them to visit the places of interest in the city and become acquainted with American institutions,"<sup>5</sup> with one newspaper article from May 26th, 1860 referring to the embassy as: "The Japanese are the British of Asian [...] They are of insular origin and full of insular virtues and insular prejudices. [...] Civilized as we boast of being, we can learn much of the Japanese."<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the Japanese took great offense to the United States' "assumption of superiority." As the United States continued its' learned practice of exploration and exploitation, Chinese immigrant workers were substituted by the Japanese in Hawaii before emigration to the continental U.S. began as early as 1884.

While official policy from Japan regarding emigration a decade after its beginning from 1894 to 1896, Dr. David Teruo Hata, Jr explains in his book *Undesirables: Early Immigrants and the Anti-Japanese Movement in San Francisco 1892-1893*, "Under the authority of the *gaikoku bugyō* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] at Edo (later to be renamed Tokyo), Kanagawa, Nagasaki, and Hakodate, passports were issued to the following categories of travelers: Commercial businessmen, students, menial servants, and sailors recruited in the treaty ports for

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<sup>5</sup> Jesse Frederick Steiner, *The Japanese Invasion: A Study in the Psychology of Inter-Racial Contacts* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 6.

<sup>6</sup> Steiner, *The Japanese Invasion*, 23.

employment aboard foreign ships.”<sup>7</sup> To proceed, “Japanese officials preferred to use other terms such as *dekaseginin* or “birds of passage.”<sup>8</sup> This designation supports the suggestion that Japanese government officials were extremely reluctant to give official sanction to permanent settlement of their people in foreign countries. The United States, occupied with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, felt pressed for another form of desirable labor and set their sights on the Japanese as a replacement for their “Oriental” work-force. As described in David J. O’Brien and Stephen S. Fujita’s book *The Japanese-American Experience*, “The vast majority of immigration from Japan to Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States took place during less than four decades, from 1885 to 1924.”<sup>9</sup> Before filling America’s foreign labor quota, students from Japan were encouraged by Emperor Meiji to travel the world to better their education, divided into four categories in Hata Jr.’s book: “The first two groups were determined by geographic considerations: those who elected to stay on the Pacific Coast and others who continued eastward. The majority of students who went directly to the Atlantic coast either traveled with Japanese diplomatic missions or journeyed as individuals. In both cases, they fell under the category of *kampi* [government expense] students. [...] On the Pacific Coast, however, one found mainly the so-called *shihhi* [privately financed] students. [...] The fourth group was the *shosei* or pseudo-students.”<sup>10</sup> *Shosei*, particularly in San Francisco, morphed its definition over time to describe “students who worked as domestic servants in exchange for room and board while they pursued their formal studies.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Donald Teruo Hata, “*Undesirables*” *Early Immigrants and the Anti-Japanese Movement in San Francisco, 1892-1893; Prelude to Exclusion* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 14.

<sup>8</sup> Hata, “*Undesirables*,” 15.

<sup>9</sup> David J. O’Brien and Stephen S. Fujita, *The Japanese-American Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 14.

<sup>10</sup> Hata, “*Undesirables*,” 47-48.

<sup>11</sup> Hata, “*Undesirables*,” 49.

Japan grew worried about problems surrounding the shosei, such as reasons for desiring foreign travel, as Foreign Ministry officials despite the United States' showing appreciation for these students, referred to as the difference between the "good Jap" and the "bad Chinese"<sup>12</sup> for the time, despite unconfirmed reports from an informal census in 1888 detailing that many shosei were on the verge of starvation with no steady employment. Further evidence is given by Steiner, asserting "The people in the western states believed that the Chinese invasion was the great menace to their welfare. In their eyes, all the vices of the Orient were summed up in the Chinese coolies, who were coming in such increasing numbers that it was felt their absolute exclusion was imperative. The few Japanese who came to America either were looked upon with indifference or were regarded with favor, for they seemed to possess the virtues, but not the vices of the Chinese."<sup>13</sup> Mutsu Munemitsu, the newly-appointed resident minister to the United States, stopped in San Francisco while on a journey to Washington, D.C., making a personal inquiry and investigation for fear that Japan's dignity as a nation could be tarnished, predicting growing anti-Asian hostility after the backlash to Chinese laborers. Little did he know, the introduction of Japanese laborers to the mix of Japanese immigrants would begin to crumble the foundation of U.S.-Japan relations.

Throughout the beginning of the twentieth century, anxieties between the United States and Japan grew to unreasonable levels require multiple legal agreements between the countries. Japan, while not of primary concern in this paper, was growing to rival world powers through its' numerous victories in combat. The First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) granted numerous territorial expansions as recompense to challenging the budding empire to conflict. The conquering of Korea in 1894

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<sup>12</sup> Hata, "*Undesirables*," 50.

<sup>13</sup> Steiner, *The Japanese Invasion*, 38-39.

## *Exclusion of the Empire*

opened new territorial advances in China and the rest of Western Asia, with significant headway beginning in the twentieth century. To add to this quandary, Japan's "next-door neighbor" China faced the consequences of allowing itself to be in the sights of Western powers. However, unlike Japan's vulnerability during the nineteenth century, it too held a desire to colonize the vast geographical area for its' gain, leading to the United States and Japan having conflicts of interest. "The United States and Japan dealt with this dilemma differently, and, for all the talk of open doors, for different reasons. Americans wanted markets. Japan wanted markets and security. Americans cared most about open economic competition in Asia. Japanese cared most about Russian military forces. U.S. officials found the worst of their domestic upheavals behind them [...] Japanese officials feared that without changes the worst of their public protests lay ahead."<sup>14</sup> Other large nations around the world eyed the prowess and personal successes of the younger country of Japan, growing with each interaction with Western powers. After the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China and continued attempts to seize the Korean peninsula beginning formally in 1876, Japan suddenly held an alliance with Britain, sharing a mutual desire to keep Russia out of Manchuria.

Hawaii, which already housed Japanese citizens due to the continuation of sugar production, and the Philippines were desired by Japan and the United States, with the latter taking full ownership of both. To resolve this, the Taft-Katsura Agreement resolved in a discussion between senior leaders of both countries. The Agreement was explicitly not an "agreement" despite the headline, but a secret memorandum, in which the United States recognized Japanese control over the country of Korea, and Japan further promised they had no interest in fighting the United States' interest in the Philippines. During simultaneous tumultuous times on U.S. soil, Japan held a more significant focus on its territorial gains in Korea. Previous military confrontations

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<sup>14</sup> Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 74.

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resulted in a 1907 Japan-Korea Treaty that disbanded the army of Korea. Three years later, Japan held enough power over the nonmilitant country to officially annex the country with the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty. The United States encouraged this annexation under the previously mentioned Taft-Katsura Agreement, and no other significant nation challenged Japan's actions.

In the state of California, the 1900s held the first substantial boost to the immigration of Japanese as the demand for farm labor once again needed an Asian substitute, following the recent passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act beginning in 1882. What surprised Californians was the immediate "adaptation to California agriculture" that the Japanese held with their collective organizational tactics to meet the needs of the local economy.<sup>15</sup> The downside in the American's perspective was Japanese impact on the organization of farm laborers with the formation of the "Higher Wages Association" in 1908 and the Fresno Labor League in the same year, allowing "alliances [...] between the Japanese and other nationalities" with Fugita describing this as a "mixed blessing."<sup>16</sup> Californians began to challenge this rise in Japanese agriculture beginning in 1907, but would not reach a short and all-encompassing piece of legislation until 1913.

Through years of heavy deliberation fed by centralized xenophobic outrage towards the Japanese, California passed the California Alien Land Law of 1913. This "prohibited aliens from owning, leasing, possessing, enjoying, or transmitting property for more than three years,"<sup>17</sup> implicitly targeting the Japanese in addition to Chinese, Korean, and Indian immigrant farmers. While some found loopholes such as naming their deeds in their children who gained U.S. citizenship being born on American soil, others challenged through legal

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<sup>15</sup> O'Brien, *The Japanese-American Experience*, 10.

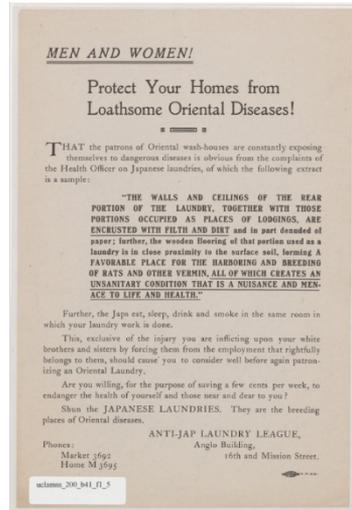
<sup>16</sup> O'Brien, *The Japanese-American Experience*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Sang Chi and Emily Moberg Robinson, *Voices of the Asian American Experience* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2012).

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means. As reported in *The New York Times* in 1916, the first lawsuit was filed against the motion, understood to be the first in “a series of similar cases to be brought by the state.”<sup>18</sup> With the Japanese viewing the action as “unjustifiable”<sup>19</sup> and President Woodrow Wilson pushing to prevent “unnecessary offense,”<sup>20</sup> attempts to soothe California’s “yellow peril” through the dispatching of the Secretary of State was unsuccessful. These failed attempts allowed for both the 1920 and 1923 amendments, with 1923 proving to be the year that determined the Alien Land Law as constitutional in the United States Supreme Court despite allegations exclaimed the law violated the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. This “pathological” phobia of Japanese in the state of California would continue into the early 20th century.<sup>21</sup> Back in the United States, the Anti-Jap Laundry League published further propaganda that called for specific white action.

Nationalistic rhetoric is not disguised in the anterior leaflet, reflecting the state of California’s anti-Japanese actions. There was a shared belief that the Japanese undersold the “white man’s labor” and tarnished “the social standing of the people of California.” Goto’s article continued with a plea from Japan, as immigration ceased from the nation. “She is simply asking that those of her people who are already in America shall be given decent treatment that will make pos-



*Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Men and Women! Protect Your Homes from Loathsome Oriental Diseases!", 1910.*

<sup>18</sup> "Alien Land Law Suit Brought in California: State Seeks, at Least, to confiscate the cottage of a Japanese Resident," *New York Times*, Oct 6, 1916.

<sup>19</sup> Steiner, *The Japanese Invasion*, 57.

<sup>20</sup> O'Brien, *The Japanese-American Experience*, 23.

<sup>21</sup> Steiner, *The Japanese Invasion*, 84.

sible the friendship of two people.”<sup>22</sup> The state of California did not share this desire for peaceful relations, instead of allowing for further racial inequality through the segregation of the San Francisco Board of Education.

The city of San Francisco held a high concentration of Japanese immigrants beginning in the 1880s and proliferating through the following decades. Concerning the local school district, “In 1906, there were 93 Japanese students in 23 different elementary schools,”<sup>23</sup> as unlike Chinese immigrants with Chinatown, the Japanese did not have an enclave of homogenous living space. So long as no white parents complained, the calls for segregated schools for Japanese students fell on deaf ears due to limited funds and very few students. The Japanese’s desire to stay in the United States with their entire family and ease into assimilation convinced some that they held a greater danger to nationalism than the Chinese. Months before the finalization of segregation by law, San Francisco suffered the damages of the Great San Francisco Earthquake in April 1906. With the entirety of Chinatown destroyed, the remaining immigrants, mainly Chinese immigrants, chose to relocate. The school that was legally mandated to serve only the children of Chinese immigrants contained vacancies that Japanese and Korean students could fill, enforcing the policy in October 1906. The Oriental Public School appeased the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League but angered the local Japanese community with their values of education challenged by this xenophobic policy. While legal suits were ineffective, back in Japan, many public hearings and newspaper articles showed distaste and an “insult to their national pride and honor,”<sup>24</sup> as the U.S. compared the Chinese to the

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<sup>22</sup> Baron Shimpei Goto, “The Anti-Japanese Question in California,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 93 (1921): 104-10.

<sup>23</sup> Aimee Eng, “The Japanese Question: San Francisco Education in 1906,” (class instruction, Stanford University School of Education, Stanford, CA, December 14, 2006), [https://caselib.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/cases/Eng\\_case.pdf](https://caselib.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/cases/Eng_case.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Eng, “The Japanese Question.”

Japanese with the same lower status under Caucasians and non-immigrants. The federal intervention of President Theodore Roosevelt was ineffective in quelling internal and external Japanese anxieties until 1907.

The Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 resumed the model of informal but known agreements between the U.S. and Japan, with the U.S. refrain from imposing restrictions on Japanese immigration in exchange for Japan curbing further emigration to the United States. Groups such as the Anti-Jap Laundry League serve as one example of a xenophobic attitude towards the Japanese on American soil, claiming the "little brown men" presenting a danger with their monopolizing business practices that threatened American workers.<sup>25</sup> These stresses from the United States against Japan culminated in the founding of the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League. The Japanese, who took over the racial spotlight that the United States had previously shone on Chinese immigrants, became the new scapegoat for financial hardships alongside Korean immigrants, who at the time were too small in number to cause significant distress. The overall objective of the League was "the exclusion of Asiatic immigrants by legislative enactment,"<sup>26</sup> adopting resolutions that allowed anti-Asian sentiment urged school segregation in the San Francisco school board. While the rest of the United States first held sympathy towards Japan for fighting against Russia in the concurrent Sino-Japanese War, "The pluck of this new nation, with scanty resources and limited manpower, aroused the admiration of the English-speaking world. But with the progress of the war and the repeated victories of the armies of Nippon, the enthusiasm for the yellow man, at least along the Pacific Coast, began to wane. The Kaiser's extravagant warning of the 'Yellow Peril' found an instant response among the workingmen

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<sup>25</sup> Anti-Jap Laundry League, "Will the Japanese Predominate?" (June 1909), Dept of Special Collections/UCLA Library, Charles E. Young Research Library, <https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb8g5011zn/?brand=oac4>

<sup>26</sup> Eng, "The Japanese Question."

of California."<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the greatest fear "of more practical importance was the possibility that at the close of the war, the desire of the Japanese to come to the United States would be more significant than ever. Tired of the struggle which they had been drafted, and fearful of the economic hardships which the war imposed on those who remained in Japan, they would seize every opportunity to migrate to El Dorado across the seas. It was the fear of this 'invasion' which fortified California's outcry for ironclad exclusion."<sup>28</sup> This racial antipathy would only grow shortly with the outbreak of the Great War, tossing both nations into a militaristic battleground the world had never witnessed.

Japan would serve in the First World War years before the United States as obligated through the alliance with Britain. With the Triple Entente consisting of Great Britain, the Russian Empire, and the French Third Republic fighting as allies, the United States would join them in 1917 and successfully beat the Central Powers of the German Empire, Austro-Hungary, and co-belligerents. Japan would reap multiple rewards that came with assisting the dominant western nations, including American endorsement into the League of Nations in 1919 and clusters of islands in the South Pacific, consisting of the Marshall Islands, Palau, Carolines, and the Marianas. Negatively for the United States, this excess of power held by Japan was under heavy scrutiny after their imposing of what was known as the Twenty-One Demands on China. These demands made during World War I from Japan to China, who wished to expand control over Manchuria and their recently-acquired territories previously under German control, on top of measures holding power to turn China into a puppet state for Japan's benefit. President Wilson declared his vicious disagreement with Japan's enforcing policies during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, but Britain and France encouraged Japan, with anti-

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<sup>27</sup> Raymond Leslie Buell, "The Development of the Anti-Japanese Agitation in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (December 1, 1922): 605-638.

<sup>28</sup> Buell, "The Development of the Anti-Japanese Agitation," 615.

Japanese rhetoric growing back in the United States. Once again, tensions would boil over for two Asian-centric pieces of legislation: The Immigration Acts of both 1917 and 1924.

The Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924 offered a solution to strengthen anti-Japanese and anti-Asian sentiment in the United States further. The 1917 act, seldom referred to as the Literacy Act required literacy tests to be distributed to potential immigrants and prevented immigration from the Asia-Pacific Zone, “excluded from entry anyone born in a geographically defined “Asiatic Barred Zone” except for Japanese and Filipinos.”<sup>29</sup> The Immigration Act of 1924 prevented immigration from the entirety of Asia as a federal law, including Japan. Aply referred to as the Asian Exclusion Act, the order “virtually ended immigration until after World War II”<sup>30</sup> as quotas decreased incoming immigrant percentages as much as eighty percent reduction, limiting immigration from the Eastern Hemisphere to pre-World War I levels. The previously existing nationality laws from 1790 and 1870 excluded specified Asian lineages from immigrating, allowing the 1924 law to exclude the Japanese in particular despite no prior regulations. Rightfully furious, Japan insisted that the Immigration Act of 1924 was in direct violation of the Gentlemen's Agreement, but the law persisted. Eugenics and the desire to preserve “the racial composition of the country”<sup>31</sup> grew to be the more pressing matter for the U.S. In a few short years, both countries would need to halt their tensions to solve their internal financial struggles adequately.

Both Japan and the United States would suffer cataclysmic, unprecedented blows to their economy. The Shōwa Financial Crisis of 1927 was the result of a swelling economic depression after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and the bursting economic bubble of post-World War I business. Serving as a precursor to the Great Depression of 1929, the United States faced its economic crash two years later

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<sup>29</sup> The Immigration Act of 1924, Pub. L. No. 68-139, 43 Stat. 153 (1924).

<sup>30</sup> O'Brien, *The Japanese-American Experience*, 14.

<sup>31</sup> The Immigration Act of 1924, Pub. L. No. 68-139, 43 Stat. 153 (1924).

with the stock market crash that sounded around the world. Both countries suffered from the rising cost of essential items of rice and silk in Japan and farmers in the United States being unable to care for themselves, thus allowing the nation to fall with them. A period of nationalism followed this economic disaster for both countries, with Japan embracing racial discrimination against other Asians as Japanese colonialism persisted with the takeover of Manchuria in 1931. The League of Nations condemned Japan for the action of the Japanese army over its government commands, but Japan persisted in gaining control of all of Manchuria and the establishment of the puppet state Manchukuo. The United States, a fellow League of Nations member, arguably had more to lose with the lack of control in Manchuria. As the oil reserves of the Middle East hid under the ubiquitous desert sand, Southeast Asia held such commodities of oil, rubber, and tin. Both the U.S. and Japan competed in the same Asian markets for the same materials, with Japan seizing necessary lands. The lack of control the League of Nations had over Japan became more and more apparent over the years, with the rise of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini only allowing praise and support for Japan's aggression.

The anger of Americans only grew throughout the 1930s, both inwardly at their country's inability to escape the Great Depression, and outwardly at the affairs of other nations. Japan fell under heavy scrutiny as its pillaging of Asian nations continued, notably with the 1937 Nanjing Massacre following the beginning of the second Sino-Japanese War. The death count varies due to the destruction of evidence, but historians unanimously agree that Japan's Imperial Army took part in war crimes against the people of China. At the same time, Japan initiated an attack on the USS Panay, claiming to not see the American flags on the vessel and formally apologizing as neither country was at war with the other. Published in *The Evening Star*, "Survivors Show Strain of Shelling in Asia's Undeclared War" showed the damage to human life and property as a result of Japan's "terrible

mistake.”<sup>32</sup> The unprovoked attack on the United States, the colonization of China through Manchuria, Korea, and Vietnam at the beginning of the 1940s, prompted an American response through the Export Control Act.

Beginning in 1938, the United States issued a trade embargo along with Australia and Britain, supporting its citizens with their vocal exclamations against Japanese actions in Asia through “moral embargoes” before eventually progressing through an act by law. Being an island nation, Japan survived on the exports of other nations, with oil as its’ most burdensome need. The United States imported a whopping eighty percent of Japan’s oil, rendering the country useless with the onslaught of national protests, terminations of commercial treaties, and restrictions of exports. As a majority of the world’s countries raised military powers against one another, the United States’ pressured Japan into a corner: With the control of oil, tin, iron, and steel, airplane production indefinitely ceased. Either Japan needed to cease its puppet state and withdraw further military progress in China to end the trade embargo, or risk going to war against the United States, Britain, and China if they proceeded. Despite substantial threats from the United States, Japan could rely on the hesitancy of the country that held back from the full-blown war for another three years.

Due to the suffering of the Great Depression and the scarred memories of those lost in the Great War, the United States underwent a period of isolationism, not dissimilar from Japan’s isolationist stance in the 1860s. Dubbed isolationists, these individuals and groups of people defined their actions as rightfully justified, signifying a somewhat selfish nature given the growing urgency of war around them. “Isolationism is most realistic in that there are many times when the wisest course of action for a great nation is to do nothing, to

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<sup>32</sup> Associated Press, “Apologies Offered the Panay. For Sinking of. Japan’s Navy Takes Blame,” *Evening Star*, December 13, 1937, Library of Congress.

wait for developments to indicate the proper line of interest and sentiment.”<sup>33</sup> Others would argue that this was not a period of isolation similar to Japan’s, but instead a period of non-interventionism or unilateralism, seeking one-sided advantages and limiting alliances to prevent non-consensual inclusion into a war. This misnomer would only prove to infantilize the United States, not desiring U.S. casualties for international interests. Progressives and conservatives, peace activists, and business owners could all stand for isolationism with no direct opposition from internationalism supporters. Multiple Neutrality Acts in 1935, 1937, and 1939 distanced the United States further from the outside world. Limiting the export of arms and ammunition to foreign countries at war, preventing American citizens from traveling to belligerent countries, and the eventual Lend-Lease Act, the United States became an outside influence and helpful addition to warring countries, “leasing” arms with Great Britain and over thirty other countries throughout World War II. The parallelism of the two countries, one in times of peace and the other in discord, would soon come to an end with the development of the war.

Germany, Italy, and Japan would form alliances as the Tripartite Pact, later known as the Axis Powers against the Allied Powers of Great Britain, France, China, and eventually Russia and the United States. The United States, further angered by Japan’s actions of aggression, froze all assets of Japan and cut off shipments of oil as a continual deterrent. Japan’s control of Manchuria and coastal China was persistently unrecognized by the U.S. but not challenged through military force. The integrity of China held profound importance to the United States, more so as isolationism seemed to fade with Asia over Europe. As tensions rose to a climax, Japan’s leader, Emperor Hirohito, in conjunction with the Imperial Army, came to an agreement that the oil embargoes challenged their longevity in the war. As the United States was the main contributor to the oil embargo and still undeclared in

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<sup>33</sup> Associated Press, “Apologies Offered the Panay.”

battle, the Japanese held a desire to knock out the United States' fleet at Pearl Harbor to pressure a negotiation. As Japan was unwilling to relinquish control of Japan and America's desire to preserve the defense of China, the ability to negotiate grew weaker as the day of attack grew closer.

On the morning of December 7th, 1941, the American naval base at Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japanese forces, resulting in a declaration of war from the United States against Japan, and the remainder of the Axis Powers following a few days later. The United States faced a handful of land attacks and invasions in isolated incidents throughout 1939 to 1945, but the dangers for citizens of the country raised to levels of fanaticism and paranoia as "enemy aliens" were pictured as holding hostilities against "pure" American citizens. Unlike German and Italian-Americans, Japanese-Americans held an unusually high detested as a result of the Attack on Pearl Harbor and the perpetual "yellow peril," leading President Franklin D. Roosevelt to begin work on the possible internment of Japanese-Americans and Japanese citizens as early as 1936. Through the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), surveillance on citizens located in Hawaii and the continental United States led to the creation of a Custodial Detention Index alongside the FBI and Military Intelligence Division. Roosevelt received reports from both Kenneth Ringle of the ONI and Curtis Munson of the State Department, and both declared an unchallenged loyalty from Japanese-Americans and a firm stance against any internment.<sup>34</sup> Public opinion of Japanese-Americans on the West Coast swayed violently towards the requirement of internment shortly after Pearl Harbor, stemming entirely from racial prejudice over an actual threat against the mainland United States. "The fact that nothing has happened so far is more or less . . . ominous," he [Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command] said, "in that I feel that in view of the fact that we have had no sporadic attempts at

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<sup>34</sup> Brian Masaru Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2004), 34.

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sabotage that there is a control being exercised and when we have it it will be on a mass basis.”<sup>35</sup> The state of California held groups, such as the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West and the California Department of the American Legion, both groups limited to native-born Californians and U.S. war veterans, respectively, demanded the incarceration and internment of Japanese with dual-citizenship. This pressure from the state of California, amongst other national and international pressures, led to the enactment of Executive Order 9066.

For the state of California, the Hayward Journal in the year 1942 detailed the progression of EO9066 for Japanese-Americans of the West Coast United States. A certificate of identification call to action required “Aliens” of German, Italian, and Japanese descent to submit applications at the local post office from February 2nd to the 7th of 1942, with the continental United States hosting dates from February 9th to the 23rd, with penalties including “the possible internment of the enemy alien for the duration of the war.”<sup>36</sup> The next edition of the Hayward Journal indicated half of the expected aliens registered for the necessary certificate, and detailed a mandatory curfew for all “aliens” from 9 AM to 6 PM as well as remaining within five miles of their home at all times, limiting possible escapes to the Eastern half of the mainland United States. The local Hayward Union High School lost an estimated sixty students due to the looming evacuation orders, with five Japanese allies arrested by the FBI. The official evacuation order for Hayward and Alameda County occurred on April 23rd, 1942, under Lieut. General DeWitt, continuing to May 3rd, where Japanese “aliens” would be rounded up through their transportation or otherwise to gather at designated assembly centers, with 1211 registered for evacuation collected from San Lorenzo, Hayward, south

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<sup>35</sup> Stetson Conn, Rose C. Engelman, and Byron Fairchild, *Guarding the United States and its Outposts* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1964), 120–23.

<sup>36</sup> “Aliens File Here Feb. 2-7 For Identification Cards,” *Hayward Journal*, January 29, 1942.

to the Santa Clara line, and east to the Dublin-Sunol road. “Enemy Alien Travel Permits” began in September, months after the call to evacuation, in order to evade curfew and military evacuation. Multiple pieces of war propaganda are splashed between the articles and editions, along with writer contribution to Hayward’s opinion on the war and Japanese internment. An article entitled “Japanese Problem Not Solved by Evacuation,” it is argued that although the army and military may handle the “problem,” it is unclear what actions could be taken to prevent additional problems once they are released back into the general population. “It is a timely question which must be given a satisfactory answer sooner or later, and some thought should be given to that answer now.”<sup>37</sup>

The actions of the United States and Japan from 1868 to 1945 and beyond are reprehensible. It would take an equally dedicated paper to ascertain just how deplorable The United States and Japan are on individual accounts before, during, and after the war. Regardless, the U.S. harbored over a century of racial prejudice that allowed for the law of the land to be manipulated against an entire ethnicity of people. The state of California holds only a small number of examples of direct racial distrust, detested, and disgust against the Japanese, despite the United States instigating and allowing for Japanese citizens to enter the country freely before legal restrictions. The animosity held towards the Japanese government and the racism against its people go hand-in-hand in the United States. Notwithstanding Japan’s effort to adopt Western ways and prove itself as a stronger, less dependent country, the cyclical abuse of a country against another allowed for Japan to view itself as superior over other Asian countries and carry out the same oppressions it was beaten with by Western superpowers. It is no surprise that the United States held hostility upon their first encounter with the Sunrise Kingdom, one that would continue to the destruction of hundreds of thousands of

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<sup>37</sup> “Japanese Problem Not Solved by Evacuation,” *Hayward Journal*, November 12, 1942.

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Japanese lives under atomic bombs, the internment of their people in faraway lands, and the continued distrust of all countries around them. Japan has and will suffer from the racial consequences of discrimination with no proper reparations offered for the unconstitutional action of the United States. One can only hope that the damage done dissuades others from repeating the same unjustified offenses against a group of people as tumultuous times rock our country.

# Fashion and Feathers: The Impact of the Millinery Trade on North America

By Rebecca Weber

## Introduction

The mid to late 1800s saw a sudden increase in hats for women ornamented with feathers and whole exotic birds, starting with the high society women and trickling down to the new middle classes of the era. As demand for plumes and birds increased, the hunting of birds in North America caused a decimation of many bird populations. The obvious destruction of the bird populations caused concern from many in the United States, leading to a rise in conservation among the wider population. The concerned citizens and ornithologists pushed for the legal change in a million-dollar industry and achieved their goals. Women's hats single-handedly led to the decimation of bird populations in North America, which birthed a new movement of conservation and environmentalism supported by laws.

## The Historical Feathers in Fashion

Historically, feathers were used in western fashion by the wealthy to show their wealth. Ancient Greece and Rome held the ostrich in high esteem, and dignitaries wore their feathers as head ornaments. With the collapse of the Roman Empire, feathers don't regularly appear in headgear again until the late middle ages in 14th Century France. In the mid-16th century, feathers appeared elaborately at jousts and tournaments where noblemen sported them. Feathered head ornaments appeared in North America in the 17th century. The first account is of high-ranking Virginia colonial officials wearing Cavalier hats trimmed with ostrich plumes. As early as the 1620s in New England, women wore feathers, and men along the same time started

to wear their tricorne hats with plumes and ribbons. Feathers in North American fashion gained more popularity after the revolution, when the United States looked to France and its trendsetter Marie Antoinette. In the 18th century, Marie Antoinette set the fashion of women at court wearing feathers in their hair or their wigs. Not only did she influence the French court, but all the courts of Europe. Feathers did not disappear from the upper classes even after her execution in 1793. Feathers also topped the hats of ceremonial guard uniforms, French military officers had aigrettes late into the 19th century, and the British army replaced aigrettes feathers with the more acceptable ostrich plums in 1899.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Start of Popular Fashion of Bird Feathers and the Problems**

In the 1850s, bonnets opened more at the brim, and they were decorated with a few feathers. As the hats got larger by 1875 in England, entire birds were placed on the hats; it is why the 1870s is the date typically given to when the hats with feathers became popular to the masses.<sup>2</sup> The rise in popularity and the problems that followed are tied to a change in fashion and industrialization. It was not the change to hats from bonnets that caused the craze for feathers; it was, in fact, the shrinking of the width and volume of the skirt. The high crowned hats that we associate with early plume wearing were brought into mainstream fashion in the 1860s when bonnets went out.<sup>3</sup> Hats and their decorations got larger in the 1870s when fashion got rid of the hoop skirt or cage crinoline and brought in the crinolette and later the bustle in the 1880s. The 1850s skirt was a typical hoop skirt, the 1860s crinoline was elliptical, which focused and pushed the shape out in

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<sup>1</sup> Robin W. Doughty, *Feather Fashions and Bird Preservation: A Study in Nature Protection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 1-13.

<sup>2</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 18.

<sup>3</sup> "Victorian Hat History | Bonnets, Hats, Caps 1830-1890s," *Vintage Dancer*, Accessed April 21, 2019. <https://vintagedancer.com/victorian/victorian-hat-history/>.

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the back. The crinolette was made of half hoops and had a flat front, the soft bustle was a padded undergarment, and the hard bustle was a wireframe which also helped accentuate a woman's posterior.<sup>4</sup> As the 19th-century moved on into the 1890s, attention shifted from the fullness of the lower body to the upper torso, neck, and head. The feather trimmings of hats added vertical and horizontal scale to these features by rounding out body contours and highlighting the face.<sup>5</sup> By the first two decades of the 20th-century, cartwheel hats are as wide as three feet and paired with the hobble skirt. The hobble skirt was a skirt that typically followed the curve of the legs and ended at the ankle with a tight hem that impeded normal stride.<sup>6</sup>



Head and shoulders of model wearing "Chanticleer" hat of bird feathers, c. 1912. Library of Congress

The bird populations around the world fully felt the effect of the industrial revolution in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The creation of the middle class with its disposable income, which came from the industrial revolution, allowed women of moderate means to display themselves in similar ways to the upper class, which meant feathers. The ladies' fashion and home journals proclaimed the popularity and necessity of feathers for women to be on the cutting edge of fashion, as well as the mail-order forms, which made it easier for middle-class women to get the plumed fashion items. These two things fueled the

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<sup>4</sup> Lucy Johnston, "From the Crinoline, to the Crinolette, to the Bustle: 1860-1880," (Victoria & Albert Museum), April 25, 2013. Accessed April 21, 2019. <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/crinolines-crinolettes-bustles-corsets-1860-1880/>

<sup>5</sup> Robin W. Doughy, "Concern for Fashionable Feathers," *Forest History Newsletter* 16, no. 2 (1972): 6.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Ewing and Alice Mackrell, *History of Twentieth Century Fashion*, 3rd ed. (New York: Costume & Fashion, 1992), 66.

demands for bird plumage. In the 1880s and 1890s, women wore hats covered in owls blankly staring ahead, small birds posed in positions of “earnest incubation,” hummingbirds perched on flowers, lace, silk, and whole slightly larger birds like pigeons, gulls or terns.<sup>7</sup> Hats popular in the last quarter of the 19th century had mercury wings on each side of the hat or bonnet made of doves, blackbirds, swallows, and seabirds.<sup>8</sup>

## **Bird Species**

Common exotic species for the feather trade were ostriches, peacocks, pheasants, birds of paradise, and herons. Ostrich feathers by the end of the 19th century came from populations in domestic farms in Africa as well as across the world in Europe, Australia, and North America, instead of wild populations hunted like in previous generations. Peacock plumes from India graced the Mediterranean in numbers when Alexander the Great conquered Asia Minor circa 330 BC. The peacocks and pheasants graced the estates of kings and nobles from the time of Charlemagne at the end of the 8th century for game and ornamental purposes. In the 16th century, Magellan’s expedition brought back birds of paradise skins, which would later be used in hair and hats. Herons and egrets, both are species found all over the world and in America, were featured in the feather trade. The North American egret that caught the attention of the plume trade were the great and snowy egret in particular, with their all-white plumes, and were discovered around the 17th century, but their popularity did not take off until the 19th century with the popularity of hats. The Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) was targeted for its dorsal plumes, which are 35-50 cm long, pure white, and consist of thin, widely spaced first order barbs called rami, which are attached to the feathers shaft, or rachis without the second-order barbs, called radii. The dorsal feathers are soft as silk, flexible but also able to keep its stiffness, making it an ideal

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<sup>7</sup> Doughty, "Concern for Fashionable Feathers," 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 16.

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feather for the millinery trade. Each egret only yielded 40 to 60 plumes, which were deemed suitable for ornament. Feathers from these birds, and all birds in the same family, were called aigrette. These plumes for the millinery trade were typically taken from sexually mature males as the feathers taken were used to attract mates.<sup>9</sup>

It was not only the exotic birds that graced the heads of the women in the mid-19th century; it was also common birds as well. Un-

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)  
Feather Millinery Reported in Harper's Bazar, 1875-1900

<i>Millinery in New York</i>		<i>Birds</i>
Fall	Dresses bordered with smooth soft feathers and birds' heads. All imported bonnets carry feathers for a "wind-blown" effect while aigrettes lend height to some.	Ostriches, partridge, guinea fowl and usual species.
1887 Spring	Some breasts and wings added to ribbon trim; aigrettes.	Ostriches and herons.
Fall	Feather revival on close fitting bonnets and round hats; tails and quills.	Domestic fowl, pheasants and parrots.
1890 Winter	Novelty capes of coop' plumes tasseled with bits of plumage.	Domestic fowl.
Spring	Feathers on large round hats with short aigrette trim and cavalier plumes.	Ostriches and herons.
Fall	"Hans will be feather-laden all winter. . . . Prince of Wales plumes and sock ruches.	Ostriches, swallows, blackbirds, and owls' heads.
1895 Spring	"Mercury wings and Mephisto aigrettes appear larger and more exaggerated than those of last year. . . ."	
Fall	"Valkyrie" effect of mercury wings in extremes. Dinner gown of black duchesse "bordered with tiny swallows with outspread wings."	Parrots, ducks' breasts of yellow, green, blue.

Source: Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 20-22.

TABLE 1  
Feather Millinery Reported in Harper's Bazar, 1875-1900

<i>Millinery in New York</i>		<i>Birds</i>
1875 Fall	Birds and small wings, bandeaus and sprays on imported French hats.	Hummingbirds, pigeons; wings of larks, blackbird and starlings; sprays of birds of paradise and "brone" species.
1878 Winter	White trim on bonnets.	Marabou.
Summer	Heads and wings as wall hangings.	Pheasant and white pigeons.
Fall	Colored novelties for headwear.	Tanagers and orioles.
1881 Winter	Breasts on bonnets and dresses; small bonnets entirely of feathers, and feather collars for street wear.	Grebes, pheasants and "small stuffed" types.
Spring	Grey birds on medium pale bonnets, feathers on large flared round hats.	Doves with other grey colored species and ostrich plumes.
Summer	Aigrettes, long colored plumes and pompons.	Herons and ostriches.
Fall	A profusion of feathers, especially breasts, wings, and parts on turbans, large round hats and upon the sides of bonnets.	Fourteen types named, including scarlet ibis, kingfishers, paroquets, hummingbirds and the impyan pleasant.
1884 Winter	Feather fans, nodding plumes for younger girls and sealbin hats with feather borders, wings, heads, and breasts.	Ostriches, pheasants and hummingbirds.
Spring	Aigrettes on small dress bonnets.	Herons, marabou and hummingbirds.

Source: Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 20-22.

TABLE 1 (CONTINUED)  
Feather Millinery Reported in Harper's Bazar, 1875-1900

<i>Millinery in New York</i>		<i>Birds</i>
1896 Winter	Grebe skins with furs and feather turbans, wings, tails, and quills.	Grebes, parrots, and ostriches.
Spring	Bonnets dazzling in feathers and flowers; aigrettes.	Herons and others.
Summer	Lavish use of feathers, wings and plumes.	Peafowl, "dark" birds, birds of paradise.
1899 Summer	Fad for whole birds on walking hats; wings, feathers on golf hats and horse-show costumes.	Pigeons, ostriches and many others.
Fall	Feather headed windows.	Seabirds and grebes.

Source: Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 20-22.

<sup>9</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 7-12.

## Fashion and Feathers

like with the more large and exotic birds, the smaller birds provided feathers, wings, heads, and even entire birds. Editors from Harper's Bazar, the New York fashion magazine which first started publishing in 1867, had a close eye on feathers, and a list was compiled of the types of birds, the ways they were used, and the fashion season it was used in.

These birds listed above are not an inclusive list of all the birds used or for what purpose, a detailed analysis of customs declarations and milliners' lists would need to be done and would not include the smuggling data.

Christopher Cokinos, author of the book *Hope is the Thing With Feathers*, found a list of feathers seen on women's hats in New York City, in a single day, on a single street, when visiting the American Museum of Natural History from 1885. This list included; "Robin, Brown Thrasher, Bluebird, Baltimore Oriole, Blackpoll, Wilson's Warbler, Tree Swallow, Tree Sparrow, Bobolink, Meadowlark, Blackburnian Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Cedar Waxwing, Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Shrike, Pine Grosbeak, White-throated Sparrow, Scissortailed Flycatcher, and Pileated Woodpecker."<sup>10</sup> This list does not include the species Cokinos talks about in his book, the Carolina Parakeet, which went extinct in part due to the plume trade.<sup>11</sup>

## Numbers

The public tracking of numbers for the millinery trade did not start until the mid-1880s when the public movement to protect birds gained popularity. In Northern California, near Tule Lake and the Lower Klamath Basin; forest terns, western grebes, and white pelicans were shot in numbers. On the east coast, tern shooting increased on

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Cokinos, *Hope Is the Thing with Feathers: A Personal Chronicle of Vanished Birds* (New York: J.P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2000), 32-34.

<sup>11</sup> Cokinos, *Hope Is the Thing with Feathers*, 32- 34.

## *Fashion and Feathers*

Muskeget Island, Massachusetts, from a few hundred in a year in the 1870s, to around 10,000 in 1908.<sup>12</sup>

In the Northern Florida plume, Hunter J.H. Batty and associates in the mid-1880s would take up to 150 birds per day no matter the species.<sup>13</sup> In 1886, a Science Supplement article estimated that around 5 million birds annually died for the millinery trade. Good Housekeeping reported in its winter of 1886-1887 issue: one woman on Cobb's Island along the Virginia Coast killed 40,000 seabirds for 40 cents apiece (about \$10.75 in today's money) for a single hat maker.<sup>14</sup>

Plume hunter David W. Bennett of Pomona, California reported that a good season's haul for a hunter was 50 ounces of plumes and 130 ounces of smaller feathers, and he preferred to sell them in San Francisco or New York where good fathers could go for \$28 per ounce which is about \$5,000. Bennett specialized in Egrets, which he hunted primarily in South America. Between 1899-1912, 12-15 million smaller herons were killed along with 3-4.5 million larger ones, which combined makes up the 15,000 kilos exported from Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela.<sup>15</sup> The 15,000 kilos would be worth around \$14.8 million in those days if sold at Bennet's top dollar price.

In 1902, a dealer shipped 1.5 tons of egrets' feathers from America to England.<sup>16</sup> If Bennett's price is used, this is anywhere from \$1.5-1.3 million, depending on the ton used in the United Kingdom (long ton) or the United States (short ton), as the metric ton falls in between them. After 1902, over \$2 million of crude feathers were shipped

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<sup>12</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 84-85.

<sup>13</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 29.

<sup>14</sup> Linton Weeks, "Hats Off To Women Who Saved The Birds," *NPR*, National Public Radio, 15 July 2015, [www.npr.org/sections/npr-history-dept/2015/07/15/422860307/hats-off-to-women-who-saved-the-birds](http://www.npr.org/sections/npr-history-dept/2015/07/15/422860307/hats-off-to-women-who-saved-the-birds).

<sup>15</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 72-74.

<sup>16</sup> Weeks, "Hats Off To Women Who Saved The Birds."

annually to the United States, by 1907 it doubled, and by 1910 over \$7 million worth of bird skins and plumage came into the United States.<sup>17</sup>

In 1911, the feathers of 129,000 egrets; 13,598 herons; 20,698 birds of paradise; 41,090 hummingbirds; 9,464 eagles, condors and other birds of prey; and 9,472 other birds were sold at auction in London for the millinery trade.<sup>18</sup> The same year, William Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park, calculated over 220,000 birds were needed to supply three London plume auctions over only half a year.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Rise of Conservation in North America**

The plight of the many bird species being ravaged by the plume trade got the attention of the public and pushed people to support the laws for the protection of the birds. People of all backgrounds helped to campaign the end of what many considered a waste of creatures and life. Well-known ornithologists, church dignitaries, scientists, and writers were some of the different types of people supporting the movement. The early movement was focused or restricted to the upper classes of society, the well-to-do, and better educated. The early movement focused on the impropriety of feather wearing, first with prominent social ladies discouraging the practice on religious and moral grounds. The more the newspapers reported on the dimensions of the feather trade both in local and national newspapers, the more

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<sup>17</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Laurie Frost, "Ladies' Hats," Public Domain Images Online, August 06, 2011, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://imagespublicdomain.wordpress.com/2011/05/10/ladies-hats/>.

<sup>19</sup> Tammy Zhang, "The Conflict of Conservation, Fashion, and Industry: Compromise Between Environmentalists, Women, and the Plume Trade," [https://www.nhd.org/sites/default/files/The%20Conflict%20of%20Conservation%2C%20Fashion%2C%20and%20Industry\\_%20Compromise%20Between%20Environmentalists%2C%20Women%2C%20and%20the%20Plume%20Trade.pdf](https://www.nhd.org/sites/default/files/The%20Conflict%20of%20Conservation%20%20Fashion%2C%20and%20Industry_%20Compromise%20Between%20Environmentalists%2C%20Women%2C%20and%20the%20Plume%20Trade.pdf)

the middle classes knew about it. The end of the feather trade is a part of the progressive era, and it started before the major movement.<sup>20</sup>

There are two waves of the Audubon society: the first starts in the mid-1880s and the second almost a decade later. George Bird Grinnell founded the first Audubon society in 1886 and was to work with the American Ornithologists Union Committee, founded in 1884, in making bird laws effective.<sup>21</sup> Membership to the Audubon Society was to be free to all enthusiasts who desired to prevent: “(1) the killing of any wild birds not used for food, (2) the destruction of nests or eggs of any wild bird, and (3) the wearing of feathers as ornaments or trimmings for dress.”<sup>22</sup> In January 1887, membership was at 19,830 people and by December of 1888; it was 48,862.<sup>23</sup>

The National Audubon Society was a part of the second wave to the movement, and it is a group formed, in their own words, to protect waterbird populations. Harriet Hemenway and Minna B. Hall founded the Massachusetts Audubon Society in 1896 over the outrage of the slaughter of millions of waterbirds for the millinery trade. By 1898, state-level Audubon Societies had been established in 16 states, including New York, New Hampshire, Illinois, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Ohio, Indiana, Texas, and California. The National Audubon Society was founded in 1905 with a high priority to the protection of gulls, terns, egrets, herons, and other water birds.<sup>24</sup>

The end of the 19th century saw the rise of progressivism, and the crusade for bird protection was spurred on by enthusiasm and impatience to “began efforts to render illegal the killing, possession, sale,

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<sup>20</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 98-100.

<sup>22</sup> Doughty, "Concern for Fashionable Feathers," 4.

<sup>23</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 102.

<sup>24</sup> "The History of Audubon," Audubon, June 04, 2018, Accessed April 21, 2019, <https://www.audubon.org/about/history-audubon-and-waterbird-conservation>.

and importation of plume birds and ornamental feathers.”<sup>25</sup> In the early years, the Audubon Society and the American Ornithologists Union faced stiff resistance from the trade groups and the plume hunters as the feather trade was very lucrative.<sup>26</sup> The first target for the American based groups was to try to get rid of the trade at a state level. These groups were at their core trying to protect the North American bird species that were under threat for the trade.

## **State Laws**

The Audubon Societies worked with the American Ornithologists Union’s Committee on the Protection of North American Birds to make laws effective in protecting the bird species by broadening the scope of the law and to introduce new laws in states that didn’t have any.<sup>27</sup> The American Ornithologists Union bird protection committee formulated a proposal for a “model law” for non-game bird protection. The Model Law aimed to create an orthodoxy and unanimity among the states by defining what a game and nongame bird was, and afforded protection onto species sought for their plumage. It was published in *Science* (Italics) stating that:

Section 1. No person in any of the counties of this State, shall kill, wound, trap, net, snare, catch, with bird-lime, or with any similar substance, poison or drug, any bird of song or any linnet, bluebird, yellowhammer, yellowbird, thrush, woodpecker, catbird, pewee, swallow, Martin, bluejay, oriole, Kildee, snowbird, grassbird, grossbeak, bobolink, phoebe-bird, hummingbird, wren, robin, meadowlark or starling, or any wild bird, other than a game bird. Nor shall any person purchase, or have in possession, or expose for sale any such song or wild bird, or any part thereof, after the same has been killed. For the purposes of this act the following only shall be considered

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<sup>25</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 92.

<sup>26</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 92.

<sup>27</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 97.

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game birds: the Anatidae, commonly known as swans, geese, brant, and river and sea ducks; the Rallidae, commonly known as rails, coots, mud-hens and gallinules; the Limicolae, commonly known as shorebirds, plovers, surfbirds, snipe, woodcock, sandpipers, tattlers, and curlews; the Gallinae, commonly known as wild turkeys, grouse, prairie chickens, pheasants, partridges, and quails.<sup>28</sup>

Nineteen states had passed laws before the American Ornithologists Union was formed. All but five of these state laws did not meet the standards of the group, and the laws that did were lacking in some way: unfunded, incomplete or ineffective. Once lobbying became effective, many states amended or repealed legislation, but it was sometimes slow to enforce these laws. By 1909, over 40 of the States had a law modeled after the Model Law that either one, protected native and foreign species plumage, two, gave special protection to herons, and/or three, prohibited the possession and or sale of all wild birds and their plumage.<sup>29</sup>

### Federal Laws

The early 20th century saw the Audubon Society and the American Ornithologists Union's Committee work towards federal protection for Birds. The three federal laws were the Lacey Act of 1900, the Weeks-McLean Law of 1913, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

The Lacey Act is now the oldest federal wildlife protection law in the United States. It originally made it illegal to "import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce any wildlife [dead or alive] that was taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any law or regulation of any State or in violation of any foreign law." It also tried to ensure the labeling

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<sup>28</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 105 and 107.

<sup>29</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 104 and 107-109.

## *Fashion and Feathers*

of containers that contained wildlife per the Secretary of the Interior and Commerce.<sup>30</sup> At the time it was passed, it was not very effective as it held traffickers to the state laws, and in 1900 not many of the states had effective laws to protect the bird populations. The act did not prohibit the importing of birds unless they were alive and then had to go through the Department of Agriculture.<sup>31</sup> It has since been amended multiple times and is a very important piece of legislation that protects many of North America's wild game species.

The Weeks-McLean Law of 1913 tried to stop the commercial hunting operations and the illegal shipment of migratory birds over state lines. The Act states that:

All wild geese, wild swans, brant, wild ducks, snipe, plover, woodcock, rail, wild pigeons, and all other migratory game and insectivorous birds which in their northern and southern migrations pass through or do not remain permanently the entire year within the borders of any State or Territory, shall hereafter be deemed to be within the custody and protection of the Government of the United States, and shall not be destroyed or taken contrary to regulations hereinafter provided therefore.<sup>32</sup>

It was constitutionally weak because it was not a law on its own but attached as a part of an appropriation bill for the Department of Agriculture, and it would be made redundant and replaced by the migratory bird's treaty act.<sup>33</sup> The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 made it illegal to:

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<sup>30</sup> "Policy Brief Lacey Act," The Wildlife Society: Policy Brief. Accessed April 21, 2019, [http://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Policy-Brief\\_LaceyAct\\_FINAL.pdf](http://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Policy-Brief_LaceyAct_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Doughty, *Feather Fashions*, 109.

<sup>32</sup> "Other Relevant Laws," U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Department of the Interior, accessed

April 21, 2019, <https://www.fws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulations/laws-legislations/other-relevant-laws.php#weeks>

<sup>33</sup> "Other Relevant Laws."

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pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any means whatever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention . . . for the protection of migratory birds . . . or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird.<sup>34</sup>

The act was an extension/formalization of the 1916 treaty with Great Britain, and it effectively ended the legal plume and feather trade and subsequently put an end to birds on hats.<sup>35</sup>

### **Impact**

The Lacey Act and the Migratory Bird Act did help turn bird populations around. The Snowy Egret, and the Great Egret are both birds that were almost pushed to extinction in North America, but both of these species have been recovering. These acts have not only helped the bird populations of many species in North America, but the Lacey Act has also been expanded to cover over 200 different species. In 1969, an amendment was added to protect amphibians, reptiles, mollusks, and crustaceans and another amendment in 1975 added all fish and wildlife protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Trees and plant products were added in 2008 to expand on the endangered plants covered by the law.<sup>36</sup> Other federal laws were passed later to ensure the protection of threatened and endangered species. One such law is the Endangered Species Act passed in 1973. It provides a

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<sup>34</sup> "Digest of Federal Resource Laws of Interest to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," U S Fish and Wildlife Service, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://www.fws.gov/laws/lawsdigest/migtrea.html>.

<sup>35</sup> "Digest of Federal Resource Laws of Interest to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

<sup>36</sup> "Policy Brief Lacey Act," The Wildlife Society: Policy Brief, accessed April 21, 2019, [http://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Policy-Brief\\_LaceyAct\\_FINAL.pdf](http://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Policy-Brief_LaceyAct_FINAL.pdf).

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program for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and their habitats. The law also prohibits the taking and transporting of any endangered species and the destruction or negative modification of habit for those species.<sup>37</sup> It is important to note that without the conservation movement and the laws that were put into place, many bird species would be extinct for the only reason that they looked good on hats.

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<sup>37</sup> “Summary of the Endangered Species Act,” EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), Accessed January 13, 2020, <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-endangered-species-act>.

# “Fought Together, Feared Together, Witnessed Together”: Historiography of the Catholic Struggle for Interracial Justice

By Sabrina Harper

In March 1965, a contingent of nine Sisters of Loretto and five priests traveled from Kansas City to Selma, Alabama, to participate in the demonstrations which would culminate with the Civil Rights marches across the Edmund Pettus Bridge led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Undoubtedly inspired by the Catholic doctrine of the *Mystical Body of Christ*, the Second Vatican Council, Dr. King’s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, an example provided by the laypeople and clergy who had been working to advance civil rights for African Americans for three decades, Sister Judith Mary wrote an account of her experience detailing her involvement in the events that led up to the demonstrations in Selma.<sup>1</sup> Sister Judith Mary’s account of her involvement in Selma sparked my interest in Catholic involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. More specifically, I am fascinated by how the clergy, the nuns and especially the laypeople, became involved in the struggle. The scholarship in this field is relatively new and more study into the intersections between Catholic involvement and Civil Rights needs to be accomplished.

This historiography will analyze as well as compare and contrast the different types of approaches of the scholarships of six historians, who have written about Catholic involvement in the struggle for civil rights and racial justice and the intersections of race and gender

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<sup>1</sup> G. S. R. Staff, “From the NCR Archives: On the Line in Selma with a Sister Demonstrator,” Global Sisters Report, 4:00 am, <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/ncr-archives-line-selma-sister-demonstrator-21211>.

within these movements. One scholar, John McGreevy argued that, for Euro-American Catholics, “race” is centered on national origin and ethnicity before the 1940s and that it was only after the Great Migration that a binary “black” and “white” system of parish and neighborhood segregation emerged in northern cities. Scholar Karen J. Johnson builds on the work of McGreevy but focuses her study on lay involvement in the long civil rights movement through her bottom-up approach. Like Johnson, Paul T. Murray’s study focuses on the contributions made by Catholic laypeople; in his case, he focuses on civil rights activist Matthew Ahmann. Jesuit historian, Bentley R. Anderson’s article focuses on the policy discussions and decisions made by the New Orleans Province of Jesuits which rejected the dominant narrative of segregation two years before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. While Anderson focuses on the institutional decisions of the Jesuits in New Orleans, historian Amy Koehlinger focuses on the contributions made by the “new nuns” who experienced personal transformations which enabled them to move out of the isolated and protected world of religious life into the “racial apostolate.” And finally, taking an entirely different perspective, Matthew J. Cressler’s work explores how African American Catholics developed a uniquely “Black Catholic” experience as a result of their involvement in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

McGreevy, Koehlinger, and Cressler all acknowledge the impact that Dr. King’s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* had on the hearts of Catholic clergy, religious sisters and laypeople. In the letter, he commends the [Jesuit] Catholic leaders of Alabama “for integrating Springhill College several years ago,” but he also expresses his frustration and disappointment with “the white ministers, priests, and rabbis of the South” as he thought that they “would be some of our strongest allies.”<sup>2</sup> He pushed white ministers to not just follow desegregation orders because it was lawful to do so, but because “integration is

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” 5.

morally right and the Negro is your brother.”<sup>3</sup> His words combined with television images of African Americans being beaten for peacefully marching through the streets galvanized the movement and transformed this struggle from a political and social issue to a moral one.

John T. McGreevy’s study, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, “traces the threads connecting religion, race, and community in the nation’s northern cities” issues which he argues, are too infrequently included in scholarly discussions.<sup>4</sup> Through this volume, the author’s “guiding principle...has been to understand Catholic racism, not simply to catalog it.”<sup>5</sup> During the early to mid-twentieth century, when northern cities were between twenty to seventy percent Catholic, neighborhoods were defined by parish boundaries. McGreevy illuminates how parishes served to strengthen and empower individuals and the communities in which they lived, while at the same time promoted exceptionalism and even bigotry at times. As he points out, neighborhoods in northern cities became significantly more segregated between African-Americans and “whites” than southern cities.<sup>6</sup> Racial violence and discrimination in the northern cities of the United States in the twentieth century centered on issues of housing. Clergy actively “commanded parishioners to purchase homes within the parish boundaries.”<sup>7</sup> This practice helped parishioners achieve financial security but also helped the local parish neighborhood maintain its ethnic purity as pastors would counsel parishioners to maintain the status quo and discourage people from other ethnic groups from moving into the parish territory. McGreevy argues that “the Catholic

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” 5.

<sup>4</sup> John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>5</sup> McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 4.

<sup>7</sup> McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 18.

parish itself, because of its size and community base, helped define what neighborhood would mean.”<sup>8</sup>

To this end, McGreevy explores themes of discrimination in the early twentieth century between European ethnic groups. At a time when these groups fought to maintain their cultural integrity, the Church responded by establishing national churches to serve those communities. McGreevy captures the fears of Euro-Americans who had fought to achieve relative middle-class status through the purchase of their homes and their fears that African Americans moving into their neighborhoods would lower property values. This is evident in the statement by the Jesuit Superior, Fr. Love, from Philadelphia in a 1941 statement, “We have nothing against Negroes, but we cannot stand by and see property which represents the life-savings of some of our oldest parishioners become almost valueless or go to ruin [if African Americans move into the parish].”<sup>9</sup> It is into that environment that large numbers of African Americans enter during the Great Migration and McGreevy focuses his scholarship on how the institutional church, clergy, and laypeople encountered and responded to race in northern parishes.

Building on the scholarship of McGreevy, who acknowledged that race and religion are inextricably linked, Karen J. Johnson chose to take the long view on the interracial struggle and focused her study specifically in Chicago. She begins *One in Christ: Chicago Catholics and the Quest for Interracial Justice* in the early twentieth century with a biographical narrative of Catholic African American and interracial activist, Dr. Arthur G. Falls. Using Falls’ unpublished manuscript to offer narration of his early experiences with discrimination and exclusion, we come to understand the pervasiveness of this systematic exclusion in neighborhoods and the Catholic Church. In 1919, Falls’ family was one of only 600 African American families in Chicago. The

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<sup>8</sup> McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 20.

<sup>9</sup> McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 252.

family-owned their home in a predominantly white neighborhood populated by Irish and German immigrants and their descendants. He lived through the riots “which were instigated by the Regan Colts, an Irish athletic club” and would remember, almost four decades later, that they were “roaming bands of youths looking for Negroes to beat up and kill.”<sup>10</sup> As he remembered, “for most colored people, the term Irish Catholic was synonymous with the word enemy.”<sup>11</sup> This episode exemplifies the racial divisions even amongst co-religionists.

White priests and laypeople didn’t want African Americans, who were predominantly Protestant, moving into their neighborhoods as they perceived that this would disrupt the rhythms which structured their lives in terms of housing, race, and religion, which were inseparable. Johnson brings to light the racial policies of Archbishop George Mundelein who she claims, was most responsible for initiating a system that perpetuated the segregation of coreligionists.<sup>12</sup> As McGreevy explained, in the early twentieth century, the Church had been divided into national churches based on ethnic identity, not on strict binary black and white lines. As this system of national churches was shifting to a territorial model based on neighborhood and parish boundaries for the Euro-American churches, Archbishop Mundelein established St. Monica’s parish in 1917 for African American Catholics. Johnson explains that although the Archbishop didn’t promote racist policies, and says that he “insisted that black Catholics could attend any parish” but, he would also “turn a blind eye when white diocesan priests outside “Negro” parishes denied the sacraments, the very means of God’s grace, to black Catholics.”<sup>13</sup>

This continuation of a segregated model of parish life propelled Dr. Arthur G. Falls and other African Americans to reject this racial

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<sup>10</sup> Karen J. Johnson, *One in Christ: Chicago Catholics and the Quest for Interracial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 10.

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, *One in Christ*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Johnson, *One in Christ*, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, *One in Christ*, 24.

separation and seek a more meaningful and fulfilling experience of a racially integrated Catholicism. Johnson provides a detailed analysis of the shift from a politically conservative approach to a more militant approach that involved both black and white Catholics as well as nuns who collaborated in organizations founded to work for equity. Through his involvement in the Federated Colored Catholics (FCC), an organization that had been founded in 1925 by Thomas Wyatt Turner, Falls “attacked the Catholic hierarchy in several *Chronicle* articles, signaling a new direction for the FCC.”<sup>14</sup> He argued that black people should not wait for whites to change their minds about interracial justice, but should counter power with power through organizing. This shift came nearly thirty years before King’s activism and Falls said that what they will accomplish “will be the result of intelligent, cooperative efforts of colored and white friends.”<sup>15</sup> He used his position to create an Interracial Commission and fostered collaboration and relationships within various community organizations to improve and strengthen networks of racial and religious groups.<sup>16</sup>

Whereas Johnson and McGreevy focused their scholarship in northern cities, Bentley Anderson’s article *Black, White and Catholic: Southern Jesuits Confront the Race Question, 1952*, addresses the “race question” in the South. He argues that the New Orleans Province of the Society of Jesus, at least officially, rejected the dominant racial narrative of segregation two years before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and three years before the Montgomery bus boycott. Their decision to integrate the Catholic schools and institutions under their control was inspired by the doctrine of the *Mystical Body of Christ* and the necessity to demonstrate solidarity with workers out of fear that they would be attracted to secular doctrines like Communism. Their fear was well-founded as seventy to eighty percent of black workers were classified as unskilled laborers

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<sup>14</sup> Johnson, *One in Christ*, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson, *One in Christ*, 39.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson, *One in Christ*, 41.

in southern cities.<sup>17</sup> Some Jesuits believed that there was nothing that could be done to change the long-established systems of segregation in the South, while others, including the superior general of the order, John Baptist Janssens, S.J., believed that Christ's love compelled them to examine and change society.<sup>18</sup>

Anderson focused on institutional response to the "race question" whereas, historian Paul T. Murray, like Johnson, focuses on an individual's contributions to the civil rights struggle. He highlighted the involvement of white Catholic layman, Mathew Ahmann as the coalition builder who brought Catholic laypeople and clergy into a national ecumenical Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Ahmann had stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial next to Martin Luther King, Jr. on August 28, 1963, when he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.<sup>19</sup> Through his involvement with Catholic Action in Chicago, then his later work as secretary of the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago, he urged for a more aggressive agenda in the arena of civil rights. As a white Catholic layman, he was able to enter into spaces with Catholic clergy and promote coalition-building with Black community leaders and to build ecumenical alliances. Through his experience and relationships, he advocated for the establishment of a national Catholic civil rights organization that merged the Chicago and New York regional chapters. It was comprised of clergy, religious sisters and both Black and white laypeople and was called the National Catholic Council of Interracial Justice (NCCIJ). When Ahmann received the call to create this new organization, he was told that it must be "lay controlled and lay operated and thus not subject to the immediate pressures confronting the various bishops."<sup>20</sup> This

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<sup>17</sup> R. Bentley Anderson, "Black, White, and Catholic: Southern Jesuits Confront the Race Question, 1952," *The Catholic Historical Review* 91, no. 3 (2005): 485.

<sup>18</sup> Anderson, "Black, White, and Catholic," 488.

<sup>19</sup> Paul T. Murray, "From the Sidelines to the Front Lines - Mathew Ahmann Leads American Catholics into the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 107, no. no. 1 (Spring 2014), 77.

<sup>20</sup> Murray, "From the Sidelines to the Front Lines," 82.

directive protected the bishops from parishioners who opposed integration as well as protected the organization itself from the pressure it might have received from the bishops to curtail their activities

Like Anderson who focused on institutional response to the “race question,” Amy Koehlinger’s book, *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s*, chronicles the tensions, frustrations, and triumphs experienced by religious communities and particularly, the “new nuns” who were inspired by the documents of the Second Vatican Council and a desire to move out of the cloisters and into the streets to live the faith of their vocation. She seeks to trace “the historical origins of the racial apostolate, to outline some of its dominant features, and to discuss the effect racial-justice activism had on the individual women who engaged in it.”<sup>21</sup> These “new nuns” answered this call to a “racial apostolate” by climbing in station wagons and heading south to join in civil rights marches, by teaching in local northern urban parishes, creating free summer programs for African American children, and by actively seeking relationships with African American neighbors and activists. Her study looks at the active and varied roles that nuns played in the civil rights movement and how those roles were sometimes in conflict with hierarchical structures.

Although the “new nuns” contributions to the civil rights movement were insignificant, the individual sisters who participated experienced a profound sense of identification with black men and women which is evidenced by one sister’s testimony after spending the summer in inner-city Chicago. One sister wrote, “I feel black. I look at everything through Negro eyes – Negro emotions & Negro pain.”<sup>22</sup> Although this may seem unexpected for modern readers, Koehlinger explains that “both [African Americans and nuns] were depicted as simple and childlike; the inexpensive labor of both was essential to

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<sup>21</sup> Amy L. Koehlinger, *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Koehlinger, *The New Nuns*, 16.

economic expansion in the 1950s and 1960s that largely benefited others.”<sup>23</sup> This ability to ‘see through other’s eyes and walk in other’s shoes’ propelled the sisters’ personal and congregational reformation.

Koehlinger identifies three factors which contributed to this reform: racial activism, religious reform, and “an emerging feminist consciousness.”<sup>24</sup> In a 1969 letter to Sr. Margaret Traxler, another nun wrote, “I feel that our days of being male-dominated have come to an end.” Another sister, who wrote about the “dictatorial decrees of the American bishops for women religious” opined, “it seems hard to get the idea into some of the episcopal minds that women are adults and able to manage their own affairs.”<sup>25</sup>

As Koehlinger explored the conversion experienced by some Catholic nuns as a result of the religious reformation, racial activism, and an emerging feminine consciousness, historian Matthew Cressler’s book *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration* traces the origins of a revolution which was started on the streets of Chicago by Black laypeople, sisters, and priests in the 1960s. Although built on the work of McGreevy and Murray, his approach is different from the previous historians’ work surveyed in this paper in that Cressler focuses on how this revolution transformed how Black Catholics viewed themselves in the church and the world. Like white laypeople, religious and clergy, Black Catholics also drew inspiration from both the Second Vatican Council, and the *Mystical Body of Christ* doctrine, but Cressler explains how they were also inspired by the Black Power movement. His conclusions about conversion experienced by African Americans is similar to the experiences of the nuns that Koehlinger studies, in that African Americans were powerfully transformed by their experiences with

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<sup>23</sup> Koehlinger, *The New Nuns*, 16.

<sup>24</sup> Koehlinger, *The New Nuns*, 234.

<sup>25</sup> Koehlinger, *The New Nuns*, 234-235.

Black Power and Catholicism. Cressler seeks to answer the question; why did so many African Americans become Catholic?

To answer this question, Cressler focuses his study on Black Catholics rather than white Catholic encounters with Black people or interracial encounters. He points to two factors; the Great Migration and the response of the institutional Church in Chicago. Before the 1940s, the numbers of Black Catholics in the United States were relatively low, there were only approximately 300,000 Black Catholics in the U.S. but by 1975, their numbers had increased by 208 percent to almost 1 million, “and the Black Catholic center of gravity had shifted from the coastal South to the industrial North.”<sup>26</sup> This influx of African Americans into the urban northern Churches of cities such as Chicago dramatically remade Catholicism “into the image of Black Spirituality and the Black Church.”<sup>27</sup> Chicago’s Black Belt was considered “foreign mission territory” by the Archdiocese of Chicago and “missionaries...linked evangelization with education and re-imagined schools as convert-making machines.”<sup>28</sup> Schools were the catalysts for conversion and clergy knew that once children were converted, they would bring their parents and siblings along too. Through the parochial school system and limited empowerment provided by the Church, and the changes ushered in by the Second Vatican Council which opened the doors to more engaging forms of worship and greater involvement in the modern world, and as the Black Power movement advocated for greater self-determination and Black liberation, a group of Black activists attempted to transform “what it meant to be both Black and Catholic.”<sup>29</sup>

Although the institutional Catholic Church became involved in the Civil Rights struggle relatively late and the contributions made

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<sup>26</sup> Matthew J. Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 4.

<sup>27</sup> Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic*, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic*, 52.

<sup>29</sup> Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic*, 5.

*Fought Together, Feared Together, Witnessed Together*

were insignificant, the involvement of individual laypeople and religious sisters, especially was transformational. Through the empowerment gained by individuals through parish involvement, the national media's coverage of the Civil Rights struggle, the foundation of the National Catholic Council for Interracial Justice and the organizing efforts of Black Catholics, a uniquely Black Catholic experience was created and a shining moment in the history of American Catholicism is remembered. As Sister Judith Mary said, "we had fought together, feared together, [and] witnessed together." She was shown a model of love and patience by the "Selma Negroes" which she prayed would be replicated in her home community of Kansas City.<sup>30</sup> This experience of activism most certainly did not achieve full citizenship rights for African Americans, but it transformed the way that Catholics related to each other, formed neighborhoods and worshipped together.

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<sup>30</sup> G. S. R. Staff, "From the NCR Archives: On the Line in Selma with a Sister-Demonstrator," Global Sisters Report, 4:00am, <https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/ncr-archives-line-selma-sister-demonstrator-21211>.

# Historian Charles Beard: American Social Pioneer

By Richard Cardoza

American progressive historian Charles Austin Beard was a key figure in the growth of individualism and equality within American society. Ever since the Progressive Era in American history, civil, political, and economic rights in America have increased more and more as the years have passed. For nearly a century, Beard's ideology of relativism, which claims that certain knowledge and truth are of great importance to a culture or society, and his ideology of subjectivity, which is a perspective based on personal feelings, morals, and opinions, have encouraged Americans to create and establish their own viewpoints and interpretations. Prior to Beard's influence on society, history had been studied solely through the lens of science, with the goal of finding objective truth. During the nineteenth century German historian Leopold von Ranke declared that finding objective truth from the past was achievable. Ranke believed that historians would find objective truth within primary sources. For nearly a century historical objectivism was considered historical law. The problem with Ranke's claim was that factors such as culture, environment, economic status, politics, gender, race, and religion ultimately created contrasting viewpoints and interpretations when it came to the deciding absolute truth. Along with contrasting viewpoints and interpretations, public outcry against gender, race, and class oppression had caused Charles Beard to realize that historical objectivism, which is the idea that all human knowledge is attainable, was failing in its attempt to provide historians with absolute truth. By recognizing that the objective truth of history was unachievable, and that history must be interpreted subjectively, Beard dramatically changed how historians go about researching, organizing, and writing history. Beard

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claimed that history must consider the viewpoints and interpretations of all people. Beard's dismissal of objective truth has allowed for a much richer and more accurate account of the past and greatly expanded American cultural diversity, by means of incorporating historical perspectives and interpretations from all people, not just from wealthy white men. Beard's justification for the incorporation of relativism and subjectivity within the study of history has helped to give women, African Americans, and people from the working class a greater opportunity to access civil, political, and economic rights throughout America.

Prior to the Progressive Era, historians primarily viewed history through a scientific lens, which limited their access to historical knowledge. Leopold von Ranke and the overwhelming majority of nineteenth century historians' claim that historical truth was both objective and achievable was a product of both the Scientific and Industrial Revolution. Ranke believed that, "history is not for entertainment or edification, but for instruction."<sup>1</sup> Initially many historians accepted Ranke's argument, but skepticism from philosophical historians cast doubt on the accuracy of the content within historical documents. Beard explains, "No school that makes pretensions to exclusive omniscience or exclusive virtue, that claims to know history as it actually was can long escape the corroding skepticism that search and thought bring to it."<sup>2</sup> Ranke and many other historians of his day felt that historical truth could be captured exclusively through science. The reason Ranke and many other historians of his day believed in objective historical truth was due to the relevance of scientific research and its discoveries during the nineteenth century. Ever since Nicolaus Copernicus had discovered that the planets orbit

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<sup>1</sup> Leopold von Ranke, "Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences," *American Academy of Arts & Sciences Stable* (1886), 542-558.

<sup>2</sup> Fritz Stern, *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present* (New York: Meridian Books, 1972), 327.

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around the sun at the center of the solar system, science had become the answer to former unknowns and the way to solve problems throughout the world. At the same time Ranke had made his claim for attaining objective truth in history, Georg Ohm discovered and established Ohm's Law, Gregor Mendel established Mendel's Laws of Inheritance and Genetics, and Charles Darwin created the Theory of Evolution and Natural Selection. Each of these groundbreaking discoveries was accepted and viewed as objective truth throughout the world of academia. Although Charles Darwin's theories in particular concluded that women and people of color were inferior to white men, women and African Americans began making large strides toward equality. Hoping to advance both socially and economically, large numbers of women and African Americans began attending college. With the growing outcry from suffragettes and segregated minorities, as well as the increased number of organized protests and strikes that were occurring during the early twentieth century, it became evident that science could not solely solve the social and ethical issues during the Progressive Era. American progressive historian Charles Beard eventually made his stamp on both history and American society with his claim that history must be interpreted subjectively.

As a child and young man Beard learned many valuable lessons from his father that would help him succeed in his career as a political economist and historian. Having been raised on an Indiana farm within an affluent conservative home, Beard learned the importance of economic interests and the link between money, law, and politics at a young age. According to Law Professor at Indiana University Ajay Mehrotra, "Beard came to understand how modern industrialism was affecting the plight of ordinary farmers, and how populist organizations were attempting to challenge existing economic and political

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powers.”<sup>3</sup> When it came to schooling, Beard’s father William spared no expense. Beard’s privileged upbringing allowed him to attend a prominent Quaker school. As a teenager Beard grew in confidence when it came to voicing his opinion and was no stranger to opposition and rejection. In 1890, Beard was expelled from his high school, Spiceland Academy, for helping his older brother produce a pamphlet criticizing the faculty and administrators at nearby Indiana University. After high school Beard went to work for his father, who ran a local newspaper business. Beard was given duties which consisted of covering local political and social events and authoring editorials in support of the Republican Party. Beard learned the importance of writing for a broad audience, and he quickly came to realize that no matter what topic he chose to write about, there would be those who agreed and disagreed with his thoughts.

It was at the university where Beard first learned the importance of giving back to society. Beard attended DePauw University, a nearby Methodist college, while working for his father in the newspaper business. As editor-in-chief of DePauw’s student newspaper and member of the debate team, Beard impressively articulated the current need for American society to address issues such as organized labor and women’s suffrage. Beard went on to study abroad at Oxford, then Columbia University, where he was introduced to European culture and secular education. While studying at Oxford, Beard collaborated with Walter Vrooman in the founding of Ruskin Hall, a school that was created to give working men from the lower classes the opportunity and accessibility to attend school. According to American and European Historian Richard Drake, “Beard’s life experiences outside of the Oxford University classrooms, in the Black Country and at Ruskin Hall, fueled his skepticism about the pretensions of the capitalist status

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<sup>3</sup> Ajay K. Mehrotra, "Charles A. Beard & the Columbia School of Political Economy: Revisiting the Intellectual Roots of the Beardian Thesis" *Constitutional Commentary* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2014).

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quo and propelled him along the path he took as a historian.”<sup>4</sup> Beard returned to the United States in 1902, where he pursued a graduate degree at Columbia University. In 1904 Beard received his doctorate and joined the faculty as a lecturer. With Beard’s help, Columbia University quickly became an institution that focused on meeting the current needs of society. It was at Columbia University that Beard and James Harvey Robinson began collaborating on their progressive ideologies and goal of establishing a “New History.”

Having an intellectual wife greatly aided Beard in his career as a historian and helped to shape his progressive ideologies and strong belief in equality for all people. While studying at DePauw University, Beard came into regular contact with early feminists, such as Mary Ritter, who eventually became his wife. In terms of partnership, Beard’s marriage to his wife Mary was unique for its time. In an era when most men considered their wives good only for child bearing and homemaking, the Beards relied on each other to accomplish both personal and professional goals. By exposing her husband to the Women’s Suffrage Movement, Mary enlightened him in regarding the social goals of women during that time. While Charles Beard was making his imprint on how history was taught within academic institutions, Mary was creating her own legacy through the development of women's history courses, which have become standard curriculum in American colleges. Their marriage was very productive and fruitful. Together they would coauthor seven books, including some of the most popular early twentieth-century texts on American history intended for academic institutions. The couple's co-authorship of broad and inclusive textbooks was innovative and unheard of during their time. The Beards often encouraged women to pursue leadership positions within local government and recognized the impact that women had on their civilizations.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Drake, "Charles Beard & the English historians," *Constitutional Commentary* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2014).

Historical writing has always been susceptible to the influence of the cultural needs and ideals of its day. Beard believed the needs and interests of society always changes from generation to generation, and that historians must focus on the current interests of society to ultimately gain knowledge of current quandaries. He stressed the importance of interpreting historical literature to help solve current problems. According to Vanderbilt University professor of history Paul Conkin, “The flexibility of historical inquiry-its tendency to reflect the climate of opinion of the age-has undoubtedly been one of the leading discoveries of modern historical thought.”<sup>5</sup> Nineteenth century historiography was heavily influenced by scientific discoveries, while the twentieth century was influenced by progressive advances toward equality within society. Similar to Beard, Progressive historians James Robinson and Carl Becker believed in using subjective historical interpretations to understand the current issues of society and bring a resolution to them. Gender, racial, and working-class oppression was a growing issue sparking both public and political interest during Beard’s day.

The ability for women to prove their value within society and the workplace was key for them in their quest to overcome the oppressions they faced during the nineteenth century. The early twentieth century was the first time in American history when large numbers of women had entered the work force. There was an increase in demand for women industrial laborers within factories. Due to the shortage of men available to work, women’s labor became necessary and a key component of the war effort during World War I. During the nineteenth century women’s menstruation was a human characteristic that had commonly identified women as the weaker sex. It was also thought that mental and physical activity for women during menstruation would overload them and push them beyond their limits in a negative way. According to Penn State University professor of kinesiology

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Conkin, *Heritage and Challenge: The History and Theory of History* (Wheeling, IL, Forum Press, 1989), 86.

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Jaime Schultz, “Menstrual mythologies exist in myriad cultures, often deeply rooted in religious, folkloric, and medical beliefs.”<sup>6</sup> Working women were out to prove to society that their menstruation did not render them the weaker sex. This was also a time when women were making progress in the long-fought battle of suffrage.

Even though African Americans had overcome slavery, and African American men had earned the right to vote nearly half a century prior to the American Progressive Era, they still faced extreme forms of segregation that were preventing them from achieving social equality. Within his book titled, *The American Spirit* Beard states, “The power of the Negro in the United States to do his own work is still hindered at many points, economic opportunities are limited and restricted. Educational facilities in the sections of the country with the largest number of Negroes are quite inadequate for either race, and more so for the children of Negroes. In a number of states, the Negro is deprived of his vote and is unable to help himself to secure an equal measure of justice from the state.”<sup>7</sup> The nation was socially and economically torn. A concern emerged from many Americans who believed that great change was needed in society to protect everyday people. This call for social reform became a great opportunity for African Americans to join together in the fight for equality.

The capitalist dynasty of the late nineteenth century was quickly coming to an end. For decades’ children from the working class had been kept out of school and forced to work at a young age to help provide for the family. Adults from the working class were often unable to afford higher education, or their busy work schedule would not allow for time when it came to attending school. The Industrial Revolution had led to the rise of capitalism and the exploitation of the working class. The condition of the working class became such a cause of

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<sup>6</sup> Jaime Schultz, *Qualifying Times, Points Of Change In U.S. Women’s Sport* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2014), 50.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Beard, *The American Spirit: A Study of the Idea of Civilization in the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 30.

concern that it led to the rise of socialism. Within his book *The Rise of American Civilization* Beard stated, “The working class is becoming conscious of its position and its political strength; it is being consolidated by cooperation, economic and political.”<sup>8</sup> The organization and expansion of trade unions was a promising sign to progressives and the working class.

It had become evident that there was strength in numbers. The ever-increasing participation and publicity given to civil rights movements convinced Beard that civil progress for women, African Americans, and the working class was on the brink. During the American Progressive Era a record number of women, African Americans, and working-class employees joined associations and organizations to unite and defend against severe forms of sexism, racism, and classism. Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt had led the National American Woman Suffrage Association in the grueling fight to guarantee women constitutional protection from discrimination with the successful establishment of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, which provided all American women with the right to vote. Female African American journalist Ida B. Wells gained the attention of the national media by providing horrific firsthand stories of the brutal lynchings of African Americans occurring within southern states. Wells’ reporting initiated the development of the Anti-Lynching Campaign. According to Salvatore Restifo’s 2013 article in the *American Sociological Review* from 2013, “African Americans in the early twentieth century “were persistently represented in lower class status employment sectors and thus highly excluded from high return occupations.”<sup>9</sup> Conservative businessman Booker T. Washington had founded the National Business League with the purpose of ending racism and promoting commercial and financial development for

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Beard, *The Rise Of American Civilization* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 548.

<sup>9</sup> Salvatore Restifo, "Segmented Assimilation, Split Labor Markets, and Racial/Ethnic Inequality: The Case of Early-Twentieth-Century New York," *American Sociological Review* 78, no. 5 (2013): 910.

African American men through education and economic development. Radicals W. E. B. Du Bois and William Monroe Trotter established the Niagara Movement, a militant style approach aimed at fighting racial inequality. The Niagara Movement eventually led to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. For the first time in American History the voices of women, African Americans, and the working class were being heard in large numbers allowing them to gain national attention.

Successful labor strikes and protests during the Progressive Era proved to Beard that the opinions of women and immigrants were becoming relevant within American society. Class-struggle had existed within America dating back to its revolution and had reached its boiling point in the early twentieth century. According to American author and University of Virginia law professor Edward White, "If one viewed history through modernist lenses, the contested legal and constitutional issues of the twentieth century appeared as a series of clashes between interests in which, over time, leveling interests prevailed."<sup>10</sup> Gender, race, and class division causing internal dissension within factories was a common theme during the early twentieth century. Young working-class men and women endured long workdays, a heavy workload, and minimal pay, making it very difficult for them to attend or afford higher education or career training. Factory employees galvanized together over issues such as long work day, declining wages, and unsafe working conditions. Tragedies such as the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in which a total of 146 women died, had opened the door for the laboring class to protest against corporations that lacked proper safety and business ethics. Professor of English at Purdue University Karen Kovacic states, "Ultimately twenty thousand workers from all over New York City joined together in a strike, the largest uprising of American women at the time-because of energetic organizing efforts that targeted women from different religious and

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<sup>10</sup> Edward White, "Charles Beard & Progressive Legal Historiography," *Constitutional Commentary* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2014).

ethnic groups and because cross-class alliances in the Women's Trade Union League helped bail out strikers from jail and protested police brutality against picketers."<sup>11</sup> Employee uprisings such as the Triangle Shirtwaist protest, the Lawrence Textile strike, and the Paterson Silk strike had caught the attention of progressives such as Beard, who believed in both social and economic progress throughout society, including the workplace. According to University of Chicago Professor of History Peter Novick, "Beard rang doorbells to raise money for the Shirtwaist workers' organizing campaign."<sup>12</sup> For the first time in American History many labor disputes over worker compensation, child labor laws, minimum wage legislation, work hours, and graduated income tax were settled in favor of the laborer. Economic and social victories for the laboring class were a sign that organized protests from trade unions had the power to change constitutional law. This was a sign that historiography was on the brink of change.

The current and relevant needs of a society are what Beard believed that historians should base their study of history around. To accurately interpret history, it is necessary to include the historical perspectives of women, minorities, and people from lower economic classes. Beard was a firm believer that all historical interpretations mattered and brought with it new insight. According to Beard, "Every person, whether primitive or highly civilized, has a conception of himself and the universe in which he lives and works, or idles."<sup>13</sup> Each individual perspective can provide historians with a more accurate and genuine portrayal of American history, while also helping historians to understand the future direction of society. Multiple interpretations of history allow for a much more accurate interpretation of history than does a single interpretation. Through the careful study of multiple interpretations of a historical event, we can understand what

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<sup>11</sup> Karen Kovacic, "Words of Fire for Our Generation: Contemporary Working-Class Poets on the Triangle Fire," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 26, no. ½ (1998): 137..

<sup>12</sup> Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 96.

<sup>13</sup> Beard, *The American Spirit*, 1.

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was the thought process of a particular people or society. Beard believed to be necessary to include all interpretations of history to capture as much of the past as we possibly can. Beard believed history to be all the antiquities that we have inherited from the past, studied with all the critical and interpretive power that present can offer. The inclusion of a plurality of perspectives would bring historians ever closer to historical truth.

Objectivity is a pathway to oppression. Objectivity had allowed oppression to exist and linger well into the twentieth century. Objective history often consisted of manipulated and manufactured interpretations in order to accomplish political and economic goals. The problem that Beard and other historians faced was that historical information was being gathered in a very narrow and biased manner. From Beard's perspective objective history was an ignorant form of history. The inclusion of diverse historical perspectives was a necessary component in Beard's goal of establishing a new philosophical style of history. The outcries from oppressed women and minorities, as well as the working class's call for social equality and economic stability had strengthened Beard's belief in a need for historical relativism and subjectivity. For example, do we truly believe that women and African Americans of the early twentieth century lacked the ability to become intellectual or intelligent? Of course not. While white men believed women and African Americans were lacking mental capacity, women and African Americans claimed a lack of resources needed to educate themselves. So, can history be objective? Of course not. Thus, all sincere interpretations of history can bring forth knowledge of the past and present.

The denial of objective truth in history was a necessary step in establishing social equality and civil justice in America. Many historians were still trying to uphold the noble dream of searching for or making claims of objective truth. Beard believed that the driving force behind history was for historians to search for relics from the past and fill in the missing pieces to the puzzle with their honest interpretation to

create the entire story of the subject being studied. Beard made it known loud and clear that historical objectivism was failing to provide historians with an accurate version of history. Beard's presidential address, "Written History as an Act of Faith," and his historical review, "That Noble Dream," were key in convincing members of the American Historical Association for the need for relativity and subjectivity within historical writing. Within Beard's presidential address to the American Historical Association on December 28, 1933, he stated, "History is the contemporary thought about the past. It is history as thought, not as actuality, record, or specific knowledge, that is really meant when the term history is used in its widest and most general significance."<sup>14</sup> Beard had revealed to his audience that the subjective nature of the historian's selection and arrangement of historical facts was linked to his own relationship to contemporary thought. According to Beard, "History, one may say, is a tool we use each generation or each year to help us get along in the world, discarding old versions for new ones whenever necessary."<sup>15</sup> Beard found it impossible to completely recount the past but possible to improve the accuracy of history through the careful study of a wide range of current social topics. Beard stated, "The effort to grasp the totality of history must and will be continued, even though the dream of bringing it to earth must be abandoned. This means a widening of the range of search beyond politics to include interest hitherto neglected-economic, racial, sex, and cultural in the most general sense of the term."<sup>16</sup> As an intellectual, Beard was looking to history not only as a mode of understanding, but also as a final destiny. Beard's "New History" that was relevant to the current needs of society and subjective in nature was a hit among his peers and colleagues. The belief in achieving objective truth quickly dissolved, and Beard's "New History" became the stand-

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<sup>14</sup> Charles Beard, "Written History as an Act of Faith," *The American Historical Review* 39, no. 2 (1934): 219.

<sup>15</sup> Conkin, *Heritage and Challenge*, 90.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Beard, "That Noble Dream," 87.

ard method of historiography among American historians. This reform of history had made history become relevant to and useful for contemporary Americans. Subjectivity had allowed for an expansion of topics in the field of historical study. Above all other subjects, the study of economics was proving its worth within the field of history.

Much of history can be revealed through the careful study of economics. In general, a man's political ambitions are often linked to his ambitions of establishing wealth or protecting his wealth. Beard was a firm believer that economics plays a huge part in explaining the history behind a nation, its politics, and society in general. Beard was a firm believer that much of American history had been shaped through economic greed and class conflict. Prior to Beard, historians were not questioning the intentions of the early American government. Within his most famous book, *The Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, Beard had claims that through the careful study of economics historians can learn an abundance about the past. Beard also claims that the economic interests of members of the Constitutional Convention affected their actions when voting. His writings suggest that the Constitution was a counter-revolution, established by rich bondholders who opposed farmers and planters. According to Beard, "A large property-less mass was, under the prevailing suffrage qualifications, excluded at the outset from participation (through representatives) in the framing of the Constitution."<sup>17</sup> Beard argued that the Constitution was created to reverse radical democratic tendencies forced by the Revolution on the common people, especially farmers and debtors. According to Dartmouth University professor of political science Clyde Barrow, "Beard's economic interpretation of history insisted that political theories are a combination of ideas and interests embedded in everyday social relations, collective actions, and institutionalized patterns

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<sup>17</sup> Charles Beard, *An Economic Interpretation Of The Constitution Of The United States* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1913), 324.

of behavior.”<sup>18</sup> Beard argued that the Constitution was an economic document that should be interpreted loosely and changed if necessary, to benefit people of the twentieth century. According to American historian and Fordham professor Saul Cornell, “A healthy dose of Beardianism seems essential to any sophisticated approach to understanding the original debate over the Constitution's original meaning.”<sup>19</sup> Many historical scholars have adopted Beard's thesis, making it the standard interpretation of the American Revolutionary era.

Beard's unique economic historical perspective quickly allowed him to become the most influential American historian of the early twentieth century. Beard was foremost among the American historians of his or any generation in the search for a usable past. Trained as a political economist, Beard was committed to understanding how social, political, and economic institutions shape human behavior. Beard's contributions to history culminated from his knowledge of economics and politics. According to Barrow, Beard's works consisted of “forty-two books, thirty-five co-authored books, thirty chapters in edited collections, twenty-five prefaces or introductions to books, 330 articles, 150 book reviews, and numerous letters to major newspapers and magazines.”<sup>20</sup> Beard's knowledge of American history, politics, and economics allowed him to masterfully explain the creation and function of American democracy to his audience. According to American historian and former University of Chicago professor Peter Novick, “Beard was accorded great respect even by those who differed with him; his reputation extended far beyond the limits of his profession.”<sup>21</sup> Throughout the last century Beard's works have

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<sup>18</sup> Clyde Barrow, *More Than a Historian: The Political and Economic Thought of Charles A. Beard* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000) 17.

<sup>19</sup> Saul Cornell, "Conflict, Consensus & Constitutional Meaning: The Enduring Legacy of Charles Beard," *Constitutional Commentary* 29, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 383.

<sup>20</sup> Barrow, *More Than a Historian*, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 252.

inspired historians to use economics and other branches of knowledge to help explain the knowable past.

Historical thinking should be used as a social instrument to meet the current and ever-changing needs of society. Beard was a firm believer in not repeatedly making the same mistakes from one generation to the next. According to Beard, “The nineteenth century was often too arrogant to recognize its dependence upon the eighteenth, from which it derived most of its inspirations as well as its aversions.”<sup>22</sup> History is made up of things deemed necessary, things desirable, and things possible. Beard warned his audience that it is impossible and ignorant to claim to truly know what occurred in the past in its totality. “No school that makes pretensions to exclusive omniscience or exclusive virtue, that claims to know history as it actually was can long escape the corroding skepticism that search and thought bring to it.”<sup>23</sup> Moving away from objective history to subjective history has allowed for the revision of history when new insight presents itself.

Americans were attracted to Beard’s ideas and writing because of his transparency and honesty. Transparency and honesty are key traits which can enable a historian to accurately interpret historical evidence. Prior to Beard genuine historical interpretations were rare and often without personal advertisement. A subjective interpretation of history has created a much more honest and unbiased version of history. Within his published writings, Beard always claimed that he did his best to remove bias from his work. Beard was careful about claiming historical events or subjects of the past as fact. He cautiously reminded his audience that what he had revealed was just an interpretation of history. His writings bare their own warning. For example, in his most famous book, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, Beard made certain that he included

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<sup>22</sup> Fritz Stern, *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to the Present*, (New York: Meridian Books, 1972), 258.

<sup>23</sup> Stern, *The Varieties*, 327.

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the word “interpretation” within the title. According to Beard, “In the first place, some person or persons are engaged in speaking or writing or making symbols of one kind or another. But few essays, editorials, orations, dissertations, and serious volumes open with confessions: I am speaking, in fact, making a statement of the things which I have found true, or good report, and worthy of discussion.”<sup>24</sup> Personal bias and authority must be absent within the historical evidence a historian presents. The New History that Beard had created required that historians never lose sight of the fact that history is source based, while also giving an honest attempt of accurately recording history.

Beard dramatically changed how American academic institutions teach history by emphasizing the need for specialization within the field of historical study. Prior to Beard, academic institutions were lacking diversity when it came to teaching how to research and interpret historical subjects. Students of history were learning more about historical dates of an event than about the deciding factors of why the event itself occurred. Pre-Progressive historiography consisted of “the inclusion of mere names, a penchant more or less irresistible to recite political events to the exclusion of other matters of far greater moment, and the old habit of narrating extraordinary episodes.”<sup>25</sup> There was more to the past than just the rise of institutions. Beard stated that, “Political facts, economic facts, ethical facts are not isolated particularities; they are phases or aspects of events and personalities.”<sup>26</sup> Beard believed that American students lacked both historical knowledge and a love for the subject of history. He believed that it was a student’s duty to provide society with a social service to help improve it. According to Beard, “The Human nature must not be made weak and insipid, but trained so that it may find expression in useful, and not mere money-making activity. In short, physical and

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<sup>24</sup> Charles Beard, *The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), 4.

<sup>25</sup> Fritz Stern, *The Varieties*, 261.

<sup>26</sup> Beard, *The Economic Basis of Politics and Related Writings*, 4.

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social health must be the basis of education.”<sup>27</sup> Beard was concerned with educating his students and the general public on the small stories of history which have led to major events or changes within the United States. Beard states, “In teaching American government and politics, I constantly meet large numbers of students who have no knowledge of the most elementary facts of American history since the Civil War. When they are taken to task for their neglect, they reply that there is no textbook dealing with the period, and that the smaller histories are sadly deficient in their treatment of our age.”<sup>28</sup> Because of Beard’s influence on how history departments operate within academic institutions, students now have the opportunity to choose between numerous historical subjects, courses, and degrees.

Outside the confines of historiography, Beard has become a forgotten man. Unfortunately, even as influential as Beard was in paving the way for all Americans to have and maintain social equality, many twenty-first century Americans have never heard of him. According to John Diggins, “During the years between World War I and World War II Beard’s reputation was so firmly established that the adjective “Beardian” was not only considered a compliment but denoted a respected school of thought as well.”<sup>29</sup> There are a few reasons why Beard’s legacy outside the history books has failed to live vibrantly on. These reasons begin with the fact that shortly before Beard’s death in 1948, he purposely destroyed all his unpublished writings so that he would be judged by only his published works. The Progressive Era had come to an end and capitalism had once again emerged victorious in American during the 1950s. During the Cold War Beardianism became synonymous with Marxism. Even though many oppressed Americans were gaining new civil rights in the quest for social equality, socialists and those

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<sup>27</sup> Charles Beard, *The Industrial Revolution* (London: The Riverside Press, 1927).

<sup>28</sup> Charles Beard, “Preface” in *Contemporary American History, 1777-1913* (New York, Macmillan, 1914).

<sup>29</sup> John Diggins, “Power and Authority in American History: The Case of Charles A. Beard and His Critics,” *The American Historical Review* 86, no. 4 (1981): 701-30.

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who believed in progressive ideologies were publicly ridiculed for their beliefs. Beard's claim that the founding fathers had manufactured the constitution for their own personal benefit seemed like heresy to capitalists. During the past century the social needs of the American people have changed, making it difficult for Americans to relate to Beard. Even though many Americans dismiss Beard's progressive ideologies and his economic interpretation of the constitution, his positive impact on social equality throughout America should not be overlooked.

Thanks to Beard, historical relativism and subjectivity serve the needs of the living present by promoting civic virtue, while opposing gender, racial, and economic oppression within American society. In addition to historians having the opportunity to agree to disagree regarding historical interpretations, all Americans now have the freedom to establish their own beliefs and to publicly voice their opinions. The establishment of historical subjectivity has led to an American society that values the interpretations and perspectives of each of its citizens equally. We as Americans now have many more opportunities to learn about different cultures and customs. All Americans now have the opportunity to decide and articulate what is or what is not truth, without being considered wrong. A society that practices subjective truth allows every citizen the opportunity to make historical and civil contributions. The United States has become a cultural melting pot and has flourished culturally through its subjectivity. Over the decades civil protests have become increasingly beneficial to women and minorities. Protests have led to the establishment of laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects all Americans against discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; the Title IV Educational Amendments Act of 1972, preventing any student from being excluded from participation and denied benefits from a federally-funded school, and the Employment Equality Act of 1998, which prevents gender and racial discrimination within the workplace. Segregation within academic institutions and sports leagues is

now illegal. Women and minorities now have the opportunity to run for political office. Once considered a transgression, interracial marriage is now common throughout American society. Tolerance for religious diversity has greatly increased over the past century. There are currently thousands of radio, television, internet, and social media outlets created for the specific interests of each American citizen. For example, is the conservative network Fox accurately describing what is happening within the Trump Investigation, or are the strong allegations reported by the liberal CNN Network relaying the truth to the general public? Individuals can now decide if police officers Terrance Mercadal and Jared Robinet were justified in their shooting of 22-year-old Sacramento native Stephon Clark, or if Stephon Clark's defense attorney and the Black Lives Matter Movement providing us with the truth when they say that the shooting was unjustified. If we as Americans fail to focus on the current social needs or fail to interpret truth subjectively, the quest for truth will become distorted, and all the civil advancements that have been accomplished through relativism and subjectivity will cease to exist.

# Integration En Route: How Civic Engagement Desegregated the Berkeley Unified School District

By A. Brooks Moyer

It was 1964 when community and democracy converged to set Berkeley en route to equality. Before then, there was a bold vision for an equal future but a lack of necessary support and resources to realize the vision. The goal was the total integration of the Berkeley Unified School District and years of hard work, many firsts, and a persistent commitment to the community made this ambition a reality. The years leading up to 1964 inform us that through civic engagement, representative leadership, and a commitment to the fundamental principles of equality upon which our country is based, Berkeley Unified School District became the first school district to implement two-way busing to voluntarily integrate students.

## **Before 1957**

In Berkeley, in the 50s, families fit into one of two categories: "hills" families or "flats" families. These distinctions were geographical, describing the part of the city in which one resided. The hills were in the northeast part of town, and the flats were in the southeastern part. However, these geographic distinctions carried with them a racial significance whereby the hills were for white families and the flats were for Black families. It was a conscious decision made by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), which became the lender for the HOLC's loans. These agencies, created by President Roosevelt as part of the New Deal, provided affordable mortgages to families. In order to protect the banks from borrowers who may default on their loans, "security maps" were

made to determine the risk levels of different parts of town: green was “best,” blue was “desirable,” yellow was “declining,” and red was “hazardous.” These maps ultimately served another purpose. These maps served as a tool to legally discriminate against minorities. “A neighborhood earned a red color if African Americans lived in it, even if it was a solidly middle-class neighborhood of single-family homes.” By designating the red neighborhoods as “hazardous,” banks were able to deny African-Americans loans to buy homes and start businesses, in turn making it near impossible to build wealth while also forcing the black population into particular pockets of the city. In Berkeley, this “redlining” concentrated Black residents in the southwest flats and white residents in the northeast hills.<sup>1</sup>

The division between the flats and the hills became increasingly visible in day-to-day life following the war. Berkeley’s black population grew from 4% in 1940 to 20% in 1960.<sup>2</sup> In the decades after WWII, the Bay Area saw a boom in opportunity for blacks; work in the Richmond shipyards, in addition to companies like Sears and Safeway which were persuaded to hire Black workers, led many young Black families from the legally segregated Jim Crow south to the opportunity-rich city of Berkeley, accounting for this dramatic 500% population increase in only twenty years.<sup>3</sup> Even more dramatic was the generational disparity that grew out of this migration. The 20% Black population accounted for more than 30% of the student population at BUSD, a number that grew to 43% by 1968.<sup>4</sup> As Berkeley’s

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<sup>1</sup> For more about “redlining,” see: Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> City of Berkeley -- 1950 to 1960 Census Data, accessed May 04, 2019, <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/cities/Berkeley50.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> “Redlining: The History of Berkeley’s Segregated Neighborhoods.” BerkeleySide, September 23, 2018, accessed May 07, 2019, <https://www.berkeleyside.com/2018/09/20/redlining-the-history-of-berkeleys-segregated-neighborhoods>.

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript of Memoir by Carol Rhodes Sibley, 1950, BANC MSS 86/1c, Carton 1, Folder 41, *Never a Dull Moment, part II*, Carol Sibley papers, Bancroft University Archives, Berkeley, California.

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White population grew to become older longtime residents and younger college students, it was the new migration of Black families that bolstered the school-age population of the city. This racial and generational shift spelled trouble for Berkeley's previously conservative White majority of the 1950s, giving way to the more liberal and diverse Berkeley of the 1960s.

As the hills and the flats grew more and more visibly dissimilar, so too did their schools. Schools in the flats were between 66.8% and 98.7% minority students, whereas schools in the hills ranged from 1.8% and 5.9%.<sup>5</sup> Berkeley was not unique in this sense. Throughout the country, schools were just as segregated despite the 1954 Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision declaring separate but equal to be inherently unequal.<sup>6</sup> Even though the law dictated that schools could not intentionally segregate, that did not reverse the geographic segregation reinforced by redlining. Realistically, Berkeley had two options: continue down the current path under White conservative leadership further exacerbating the racial and economic divisions or bridge these gaps with a new, more representative leadership.

What happened next in Berkeley in the 1960s cannot be reduced to anything less than a community wide effort to put Berkeley on the right side of history. The racial, economic, and ideological divisions would not disappear overnight, not even over decades, but they would dramatically lessen. When looking at other cities' efforts to integrate their schools, it is difficult not to find court involvement driving these efforts. There were myriads of U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the 60s and 70s regarding school integration; often with courts ordering forced two-way busing to desegregate the schools—Black students were bused to White schools and White students were

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<sup>5</sup> Manuscript of Memoir by Carol Rhodes Sibley, 1950, BANC MSS 86/1c, Carton 1, Folder 40, *Never a Dull Moment, part I*, Carol Sibley papers, Bancroft University Archives, Berkeley, California.

<sup>6</sup> *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

bused to Black schools. The rage that two-way busing ignited throughout the nation was visceral. White parents were incensed by the idea of being forced to send their children across town to the bad schools in red and yellow neighborhoods, schools they purposefully avoided through homeownership in green and blue neighborhoods.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike Charlotte, NC and nearby Richmond, CA, Berkeley was not encumbered by these court orders that irritated white populations.<sup>8</sup> Like these other cities, however, Berkeley was encumbered by a lack of real opportunity for its growing minority population caused by racist policies and political leadership from a whiter time. Despite the employment opportunities that drew so many southern Blacks to the Bay Area, the housing segregation caused by redlining limited other opportunities, most obviously in the schools, and to boot, the city leadership did not represent the newly diverse population. Without Black representation among the elected bodies of the city, how could the Black community advocate for the changes they needed to succeed? Would they be forced to rely on White liberals without knowledge of the lived experiences of their community? It is likely, had these things not changed, Berkeley would have been headed towards a fate similar to other equally segregated school districts—burdened by imposed court orders that left little opportunity for collaboration and community building.

Too often stories of triumph are told as the story of a great leader fighting for his people. This is also true of the literature about busing

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<sup>7</sup> For more about two-way busing see: Roscoe Hill, *Affirmative School Integration: Efforts to Overcome De Facto Segregation in Urban Schools* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1968); Lillian B. Rubin, *Busing and Backlash; White against White in a California School District* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

<sup>8</sup> For more about busing in Charlotte, NC see: Frye Gaillard, *The Dream Long Deferred: The Landmark Struggle for Desegregation in Charlotte, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Pamela Grundy, *Color and Character: West Charlotte High and the American Struggle over Educational Equality*. Chapel High (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Matthew D. Lassiter, "The Suburban Origins of 'Color-Blind' Conservatism," *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 4 (2004): 549-82.

in Berkeley. It focuses on the leaders of the story: Rev. Roy Nichols, Mr. Herbert Wennerberg, Carol Sibley, and Dr. Neil Sullivan. Their impact through leadership is not disputed here; instead, a look at the actions they took as leaders reveal a more compelling story. Each one of these people played a significant role in bringing about integration for the BUSD, but what they have in common is that their efforts were community-centered and community-driven. In many ways, their most significant individual accomplishments were engaging the community.

Another pitfall of historians and laymen alike is the brushing over of events that are not rich with drama and controversy. This may be a reason why so much has been written about the desegregation of Charlotte, NC schools and less about the situation in Berkeley. At first glance, it is easy to conclude that Berkeley's liberal reputation is to thank for this progressive "first." However, Berkeley's efforts to integrate began before a liberal wave overcame the city.<sup>9</sup> This assumption can be dangerous to our understanding of politics, democracy, and race relations. To assume an ideological bend is the reason for successful integration is not only historically inaccurate, but it also devalues the incredible efforts made by the Berkeley community—conservatives and liberals, alike.

Berkeley's label as the first city to voluntarily implement two-way busing to integrate their schools introduces another misconception. If it was voluntary, the story must be straightforward. Apart from the inaccuracies of this assumption, the more significant problem lies in the romanticizing of struggle through the courts. So often history commemorates social justice victories through court cases, creating a reliance on the courts that can be dangerously casual. The Judiciary is meant to uphold the Constitution and protect the people from

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<sup>9</sup> W. J. Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War: The 1960s* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1990), 52.

themselves. It would seem preferable then, that the courts need not get involved, and that the people can, and will protect each other.

Aristotle discussed the ideal cities as being “excellent, at any rate, by its citizens’—those sharing in the regime—being excellent.”<sup>10</sup> This idea, regardless of opinion, is a foundation of American democracy. Founding Fathers, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, attribute much of the country’s founding to Aristotle’s philosophies about cities in *Politics*. The goal of the nation, then, is for the people to do what is best for all people—a pursuit of the common good for the community.<sup>11</sup> Meeting this ideal implies a need for communities to uplift each other. Should they fail, the strength of the US Constitution permits the courts to step in. The courts are therefore the last resort which, in actuality, suggests that there may be more to learn from historical successes that did not require court intervention than the contrary, despite the greater range of easily observable effects court decisions have. Ultimately, the glamorization of court decisions can distract from the lessons of history.

The story of Berkeley’s fight for racial equality in education is not a story just about brilliant leaders, nor is it a story of Berkeley cementing itself as the liberal bastion of the west. Instead it is a story about the mobilization of diverse communities, working together to bring prosperity to all in their city. The leaders may be the face of the story, but they are not the whole heart of it.

## **1957-60**

Things started to change for Berkeley in the late 50s. In 1957, at the urging of Reverend Roy Nichols, a member of the local NAACP chapter, the Board of Education appointed a committee to investigate segregation in the schools. It was unlike the Board, in 1957, to have

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<sup>10</sup> *Aristotle’s Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).

<sup>11</sup> Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/aris-pol/>.

given Rev. Nichols' proposal such consideration. For a long time now, the status quo had dictated that the Board be a diplomatic and cautious elected body, always White and mostly conservative. However, the Board did agree to Nichols' request, even if they did so with hesitation. At the outset, neither the Board nor the superintendent believed there were any issues concerning race. Moreover, even if there were issues, the Board was fearful of disrupting the status quo. Despite these fears, after six months of deliberating, a committee was formed to study the state of racial disparities in the school district.<sup>12</sup> The Board appointed local Judge Redmond Staats, a pragmatic White conservative who took on this mission with only a cursory interest in Black affairs. Staats was a strategic choice for the Board; a respected community member without notable black sympathy—logical and ethical, the Board assumed Staats' findings would be devoid of the kind of bias a Black chairman might have found. Regardless, this marked one of the first real efforts of the Board to address racial issues, even if it was done grudgingly. Charged to “study certain inter-racial problems in the Berkeley Schools and their affect [sic] on education,” the chairman dispassionately led a fact-finding mission.<sup>13</sup> Fortunately for the black community, the facts could not lie. When the results came in, Judge Staats quickly realized the gravity of Berkeley's racial disparities. It could no longer be denied. Berkeley had changed: yes, in demographics, but also in equity.

Although an essential first step, the STAATS Report brought little direct change other than increased employment of minority teachers, most of whom ended up being segregated to minority schools regardless.<sup>14</sup> How was Berkeley's Black community supposed to make any

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<sup>12</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never a Dull Moment, part I*, Carton 1, Folder 40.

<sup>13</sup> Report by Carol Rhodes Sibley, 1950, BANC MSS 86/1c, Carton 1, Folder 14, DEEPS—A Brief Chronological Listing of Significant Events, Carol Sibley papers, Bancroft University Archives, Berkeley, California.

<sup>14</sup> Report by Carol Rhodes Sibley, 1950, BANC MSS 86/1c, Carton 1, Folder 14.

meaningful change if all decisions were being made without their input?

Despite the clear evidence that more, bolder changes had to be made, it was difficult to take any meaningful action. The Board was conservative and white, and even though they were agreeable to the facts, they lacked an authentic understanding of the issues affecting minority populations. Without representation on the Board or at the very least on the study committees, the black community had little opportunity to help the white majority understand their concerns. The Board's subsequent efforts were too slow, often making incremental changes so as not to upset the white families. However, bold change came with the new decade.

The new superintendent, Mr. Herbert Wennerberg, brought with him a desire to understand the community and to enlist their help. Wennerberg was appalled by the Board's lack of engagement with the community. He observed a façade of power, tradition, and cordialness that was very misleading. "I want you to open up every area of communication possible in this city. I want to know the various communities and I want to be sure they know I will listen to them" were his first instructions to his assistant, Barney Johnson.<sup>15</sup> This was in stark contrast to the closed-door policy of his predecessor, and to an extent, the behavior of the current Board. Thanks to Rev. Nichols, the state of racial inequities in the BUSD were now known fact, and thanks to Mr. Wennerberg, the community would soon have a say in their education.

## **1960**

One of his first steps toward greater transparency and collaboration was the creation of an interracial team of three teachers, two African-American teachers and one Japanese. These teachers became local celebrities in the school district, being recruited to give talks, and

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<sup>15</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never a Dull Moment, part I*, Carton 1, Folder 40.

admired by much of the faculty. What these teachers offered, that the Board lacked, was the lived experience of a minority in “White America,” both in and outside of the classroom.<sup>16</sup> Some teacher-peers even said, “If we could get minority teachers like these three, we’d certainly welcome them!”<sup>17</sup> This backhanded compliment was evidence of the somewhat discreetly fraught state of Berkeley’s race relations, while also showing how important small actions like establishing this team were to building intercultural understanding.

In reality, a lot of these stereotypical misconceptions had more to do with a certain cluelessness of the more affluent White majority than it did with intentional racism. The demographic change was swift, happening in the matter of one generation, and because of the outdated racist housing policies mentioned previously, these demographic changes were really only visible in certain parts of town.<sup>18</sup> This worsened the already apparent lack of minorities in elected bodies. Because of housing segregation, minorities and whites remained segregated in their day-to-day lives as well as their educational and civic endeavors, further perpetuating false stereotypes.

Continuing in the same vein of building intercultural understanding, the district implemented a new program with the help of Dr. Marie Fielder, a black expert in group dynamics at UC-Berkeley. Fielder’s work with the Berkeley community was monumental.<sup>19</sup> She facilitated conversations with “hill” parents and “flats” parents to discuss student motivation, cultural bias in IQ testing, and overall student experiences. She even conducted seminars at which she taught about cultural differences in diverse communities and even trained

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<sup>16</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never a Dull Moment, part I*, Carton 1, Folder 40.

<sup>17</sup> Carol Sibley papers, DEEPS—A Chronological..., Carton 1, Folder 14

<sup>18</sup> Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War*, 50.

<sup>19</sup> Carol Sibley papers, DEEPS—A Chronological..., Carton 1, Folder 14.

community members to lead similar seminars of their own. The impact of these efforts was pronounced in the coming years.<sup>20</sup>

In order to continue making the changes that Mr. Wennerberg suggested and that the community so desperately needed, more funding was necessary. The Board decided to launch a bond campaign that would raise the tax ceiling of the school district, providing a significant boost in resources. Unfortunately, the measure failed each of the four times it was attempted between April 1959 and April 1961, including a proposition in 1960 known as Proposition E. The Prop **E** campaign operated with the intention of supporting an **E**qual Education for *all*. This became one of the first campaigns in which the focus was entirely on equality; working to provide a quality education for a diverse population.<sup>21</sup>

Despite broad community involvement, Prop E also failed to pass. However, this failure became a critical moment for the community. You see, when Rev. Roy Nichols approached the Board in 1958 about the disparities in education between black and white students, few people were aware of the urgency of his concerns. Shortly after, when Mr. Wennerberg became superintendent and further pushed an agenda of equity, he realized that community involvement was necessary yet unlikely without increased community education and awareness, which he then made possible through programs like the interracial team of teachers and Dr. Fielder's seminars. Prop E, although intended to raise money to support these initiatives, ended up accomplishing something much more significant—mobilizing the community.

The School Resource Volunteers (SRV) emerged out of Proposition E's failure.<sup>22</sup> This group consisted of parents, mostly from

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<sup>20</sup> Fielding Graduate University, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.fielding.edu/our-programs/centers-initiatives/marie-fielder-center-for-democracy-leadership-and-education/>.

<sup>21</sup> Carol Sibley papers, DEEPS, 1:14.

<sup>22</sup> Carol Sibley papers, DEEPS, 1:14.

“hill” schools, who had worked on the Prop E campaign. In doing so, they started to see what was going on at the schools in the “flats.” These affluent, White parents observed the crowded classrooms, inadequate or non-existent libraries, and general lack of basic services, leading them to ask the administration, “What can we do to help these teachers who need help so much?”<sup>23</sup> Charlotte Treutlein was the first to do this. She had worked diligently on the Prop E campaign and was galvanized by what she learned about the educational inequities in the BUSD.

Treutlein got in touch with a teacher at a “flats” school who was trying to teach English to 35 struggling junior high students without books. There were so few books at the school and often even fewer at home for the kids that Treutlein went to the “hills” school to which her own child went and asked for the countless extra books they had stuffed away in a storeroom to bring to the “flats.” This passion project of Treutlein became a full-scale operation as more and more “hills” parents and community members joined. They soon had in-school bookstores funded by the Dad’s Club, art exhibits and concerts, and apparently, “always delighting puppet shows,” as Carol Sibley claimed. These opportunities at the “flats” schools not only enriched the students but also rallied the White community to reach across racial—and geographic—boundaries in a way unseen thus far in Berkeley’s history. The community was becoming aware of the truth that had been hidden by geographic segregation and the aloofness it engenders. What is most poignant about their efforts to address this is that it was done on their own volition—no board members or superintendents or judges suggested or ordered them to do this.<sup>24</sup>

At a certain point, however, the poignancy of this charity turns sour. There is no equality between a school where White children get new books and a school where Black children get their hand-me-

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<sup>23</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never a Dull Moment*, Carton 1, Box 40.

<sup>24</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never a Dull Moment*, 1:40.

downs. No matter how positive a change this was, it still was far from corrective. Goodwill by sympathetic white philanthropists has historical roots in American education history, often used to ease their guilt while perpetuating inequalities and reaffirming racial dominance all under the guise of charity.<sup>25</sup> Well-intentioned but far from transformative, the SRV galvanized Rev. Roy Nichols and Carol Sibley to run for the school board, with the hopes of curing the disease of segregation rather than continuing to manage the symptoms.<sup>26</sup>

However, this is often the nature of political representation that is not at all representative. Symptoms are addressed as a means of appeasing the advocates and tempering the opposition. Yet the symptoms rarely disappear, and often, neither side is too happy, and even worse, progress is never really made.

Up until the 1960s, for Berkeley, the greatest hindrance to progress was the lack of representation in elected bodies. No Black community member had successfully attained a seat on the City Council or the Board of Education. The most robust outlet for advocacy in the Black community at the time was through organizations like the NAACP, which allowed Rev. Roy Nichols to speak to the Board, and be taken seriously.<sup>27</sup> Rev. Nichols' presentation to the Board in 1958 is largely responsible for initiating real changes that addressed race in the BUSD, bringing him great respect from both the white and black communities.

## 1961

Perhaps thanks to the critical study he spurred, Reverend Roy Nichols won a seat on the Board of Education in 1961. The Board

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<sup>25</sup> For more information about black education and white philanthropy, see: Noliwe M. Rooks, *Cutting School: Privatization, Segregation, and the End of Public Education* (New York: The New Press, 2017).

<sup>26</sup> Mailing from Rev. Roy Nichols' Campaign by Carol Rhodes Sibley, 1950, BANC MSS 86/1c, Carton 1, Folder 2, Campaign Materials, Carol Sibley papers, Bancroft University Archives, Berkeley, California.

<sup>27</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never*, 1:40.

elections of 1961 set the stage for the pivotal year, 1964, in many ways; firstly, by ushering in a liberal majority on the Board, but also by electing the first black man to the BUSD Board of Education. Reverend Roy Nichols came to represent the beginning of progress for Berkeley's black community, winning 61 percent of the vote.<sup>28</sup> Nichols joined the Board with another liberal, Carol Sibley—the two of whom would become a Bonnie and Clyde-like duo, although their focus was on racial justice rather than bank robbing. These two spent the next few years writing the future of race relations in Berkeley. Their methods were unique from those of previous board members in that Nichols and Sibley believed in the strength of community and democracy as driving forces of change. Their leadership was diffuse in the community—creating numerous committees and community groups in order to involve everyone in Berkeley as they began what would be a challenging route to full integration.

Nichols and Sibley's ambitions were supported by the new, four to one liberal majority on the Board. This Board, in many ways, symbolized the birth of Berkeley as the liberal bastion of the west.<sup>29</sup> To be clear, the liberal majority on the Board was not the force behind this ideological change, but rather a result thereof. After all, these elected members reflected the community's views, with most of these new members winning a plurality of the vote. This community shift also presented itself in the City Council elections that same year, where a liberal majority (5-4) also was attained.

The Board and City Council soon came to act in tandem, both on a mission to tackle the racial divisions and inequities that had been growing in Berkeley. However, for the Board to accomplish any of their goals, they needed the funds, and the BUSD did not have great luck with bond campaigns. Perhaps learning from the ways Prop E inspired civic engagement or from Mr. Wennerberg's desire to hear the

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<sup>28</sup> Carol Sibley papers, DEEPS, 1:14.

<sup>29</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never*, 1:40.

unique voices of Berkeley, Sibley and the Board intentionally involved the community in every matter, no matter how divisive.

### **1962-63**

Over the next year, a bond campaign was voted on twice more, finally succeeding the second time, in June of 1962. Meanwhile, Mr. Wennerberg requested a grant from the Ford Foundation to expand the programs established to address racial inequalities. The Board and the District were determined to find the funding to support their efforts, they needed to, otherwise they would not be able to expand the many innovative pilot programs newly implemented at “flats” schools. Some of the most effective programs involved the community in new ways, like the presentations for parents that would enable them to help their children at home. These presentations included science workshops, explanations of new methods in math, guidance about developing reading-readiness, and selecting books of the appropriate reading level. This not only provided information necessary to best support their children, but it also empowered the “flats” community with more of the skills and knowledge of which they had been systematically deprived. Rev. Nichols designed one of the other community-uplifting programs—“study halls were provided at the local YMCA and at some churches for students who were unable to study at home.”<sup>30</sup>

The Ford Foundation grant was particularly crucial to the BUSD’s success. One-fourth of BUSD’s students placed in the lowest tenth percentile on standardized tests while one-third placed in the upper tenth; many of those in the former group were part of the 46% of BUSD’s total minority population. This dramatic disparity needed to be addressed, and the pilot programs could not continue without funding. Besides, the Ford Foundation grant was also important for its symbolism. This grant would be a national message to other

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<sup>30</sup> Carol Sibley papers, DEEPS, 1:14.

communities, encouraging and exemplifying a fight for racial justice. Mr. Wennerberg believed that Berkeley was ready for this fight, and he wanted Berkeley to become the symbol of it. He explained the moral values behind BUSD's mission: "It may be that Berkeley can demonstrate to the nation that minority groups can become an asset to a community. We may prove that many low IQ scores denote a lack of opportunity more than a lack of mental capacity and that teenagers can become better known for their talents than for their delinquency."<sup>31</sup>

The District and Board were earnest in their efforts and did bring about change in the communities; however, they did not bring about change by way of actually providing a better education for minorities. In July of 1962, representatives from the local chapter of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) met with Mr. Wennerberg to discuss the persisting inequalities. Mr. Wennerberg, unlike many other Bay Area superintendents, welcomed them and eagerly listened. CORE did acknowledge the small efforts made by the District, but they were primarily dissatisfied with the minimal interaction between White and Black students because of de facto segregation and urged the superintendent to appoint a study, like the Staats report, but this time explicitly studying segregation and devising a plan to address it. The liberal Board likely would have agreed to this request on principle alone, but the spokesman of CORE, Wilfred T. Ussery, gave overwhelmingly convincing opening comments: "Culpable inaction leaves the Board morally 'inert.' We believe that you, the Board of Education, cannot refuse to assume responsibility for segregation, merely because you did not foster it. If de facto segregation means inferior education, school authorities have both an educational and a moral responsibility to take affirmative steps to eliminate such segregation."

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<sup>31</sup> Carol Sibley papers, DEEPS, 1:14.

The Board was easily convinced to begin building a committee for this report.<sup>32</sup>

The appointed committee of The Hadsell Report, as it became known, was widely representative of the city, comprised of two members from each elementary and secondary school, thus ensuring significant racial and economic diversity. The Board also selected these members based on community nominations. In 1963, after a year of intensive research, The Hadsell Report revealed to the city in real data how incredibly segregated Berkeley was; schools in the hills were up to 98% White and schools in the flats were up to 96% Black. When the community saw the report, emotions were mixed. Especially because the Hadsell Report suggested redistricting of the schools, thus requiring busing students outside of their region, something that many of the “hills” parents did not support.<sup>33</sup>

## 1964

Conflict within the community had been less overt up to this point when it came to the school district addressing racial inequalities. Plans had been rolling along at a slow, but steady pace, and were reasonably unobtrusive, rarely affecting the “hills” families. However, conflict would not stay at bay. All of the work, progress, and collaboration that pushed the Berkeley community through the challenging demographic changes of the 40s and 50s would now confront a new challenge: attacking segregation “root and branch.”<sup>34</sup> What the school board and the administration and so much of the community had been preparing for was now on a collision course with the possibilities, both good and bad, that would come from acting.

The antagonist of this conflict was Berkeley Citizens United, an older, conservative group of parents who opposed the integration

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<sup>32</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never*, 1:40.

<sup>33</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never*, 1:40.

<sup>34</sup> *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, 391 U.S. 430 (1968).

plans for varied reasons. Some parents viewed “flats” students as “hoodlums,” others were just uncomfortable with so much change, while others supported the ideas but did not want their own children affected. This group slowly grew louder, largely thanks to the community meetings hosted by the Board that encouraged open discussion. Towards the beginning of the community meetings at which integration plans were discussed, a teacher, Marjorie Ramsey, proposed an entirely different and original plan to integrate; one that she felt would more effectively address issues of segregation. The Ramsey Plan proposed that one of the junior highs be made into an all-9th-grade school and the other two be made into proportionally integrated junior highs.<sup>35</sup>

The Ramsey Plan was bold and disruptive, and before the Board would move forward, they requested another, quicker study be done by the district administration on the possible outcomes, schedule, and financials of the Ramsey Plan. This committee reported in March of 1964 and proposed a full adoption of the Ramsey Plan and several other initiatives suggested in the original Hadsell Report. The Board voted in favor and prepared for a fall rollout. Enraged by this decision, the group of parents, opposed to integration by busing, organized immediately as the Parents’ Association for Neighborhood Schools (PANS). The very next day PANS began petitioning for a Recall Election of the Board, then led by Carol Sibley.<sup>36</sup>

Amid this partisan battle, turmoil grew. Rev. Roy Nichols left the Board of Education at the request of the largest Methodist Church in Harlem, a position that would lead Nichols to become a Civil Rights Leader in Harlem.<sup>37</sup> What is more, the Board asked Mr. Wennerberg to retire earlier in the year, despite the protests of Nichols and Sibley. It

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<sup>35</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never*, 1:40.

<sup>36</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never*, 1:40.

<sup>37</sup> Newspaper Clippings by Carol Rhodes Sibley, 1950, BANC MSS 86/1c, Carton 1, Folder 3, BUSD Clippings, Carol Sibley papers, Bancroft University Archives, Berkeley, California.

became imperative that a replacement be found who could lead the community through the coming storm.

After a nationwide search for a new superintendent, the Board landed on Dr. Neil Sullivan of Virginia as their preferred candidate. Dr. Sullivan had remarkable experience working with diverse communities and was inspired by the opportunity at Berkeley. In the spring, Carol Sibley invited Sullivan and the Board to a dinner party at her home for an informal interview. After dinner, the board members and their spouses proceeded to Sibley's bedroom—which was rumored to be quite spacious—to begin the interview. One can only imagine the inspiration and excitement of that bedroom interview, considering Sullivan left Sibley's home that night with the job, as he would often joke.<sup>38</sup>

With a new superintendent set to begin that fall and a temporary replacement for Rev. Nichols in place, all focus turned to the possibility of a Recall Election. Throughout the summer, PANS was vigorously collecting signatures to warrant a recall. By the end of summer, they succeeded in collecting the required 10,000 signatures, although not as easily as they had anticipated.<sup>39</sup> The unforeseen resistance prompted PANS to push for a summer election date, one that would coincide with the vacations of the liberal UC-Berkeley families and students. However, the City Council saw through this manipulation of democracy and arranged an October election.

It was a brutal campaign, particularly for current Board president and enemy of PANS, Carol Sibley. As the face of the integration plans, Sibley was the most contested member up for recall. Despite her courageous leadership, she had also been a vocal advocate for racial equity, most always in step with Rev. Nichols. The conservative community was most opposed to her. What is more, as the only woman on the Board and a vocal one, at that, Sibley received many phone

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<sup>38</sup> Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War*, 66.

<sup>39</sup> Carol Sibley papers, *Never*, 1:40.

threats and attacks. However, both sides continued in the pursuit of their own concept of justice. It became an expensive campaign that consumed much of the community's time. The newspapers were covering the recall election with a laser focus—producing pages of “Letters to the Editor” each week wherein the community voiced their support, or more often, opposition. Newspapers all over the Bay Area were actively following, as well.<sup>40</sup>

When October came, it was anyone's race. On both sides, the newspapers had been reporting relentlessly, opinion pieces were ubiquitous, and community events were plentiful. It was expected to be close, but it was far from it. Sibley and the other members up for recall received a resounding vote of confidence winning nearly twice as many votes as the PANS candidates. It became clear to Carol Sibley that her years on the Board, working to bring community members into the decision-room, reaching out to underrepresented communities, and diligently pursuing what is right paid off. Sibley received the most votes of anyone, and shortly after that, her public image quickly rebounded.<sup>41</sup> With the Ramsey Plan for junior high integration in place, Sibley was able to turn her complete focus back to the school district and begin making big plans for BUSD's future.

Perhaps this victory inspired new confidence in Sibley, or perhaps she met the occasion with whatever chutzpah she already possessed, but either way, she quickly became the driving force behind integration in Berkeley. Without Rev. Nichols and Mr. Wennerberg, Sibley was the only constant throughout this process thus far, eventually becoming the only board member to endure the entire decade-long process toward full integration.

Unlike the many cities that integrated their schools by order of the court, Berkeley was able to rely on their community to bring about this change. It was certainly not easy, and it was certainly not quick.

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<sup>40</sup> Carol Sibley papers, BUSD Clippings, 1:3.

<sup>41</sup> Carol Sibley papers, BUSD Clippings, 1:3.

But, through the vigilant efforts of the community and the unwavering commitment to civic engagement on the part of the Board, Berkeley was able to prove to the country what a more racially just city looks like, but also what the power of a representative democracy that is truly representative and truly democratic can do for a society.

Despite full integration of the elementary schools not taking place until four years later, it is clear that without the involvement of the greater community, support for integration may not have been so strong. Nor would the community be able to withstand the dramatic upheaval this integration brought. In many cities, “White Flight” was the response of the affluent White opposition to forced busing.<sup>42</sup> In Berkeley, however, the White population actually increased in the years after integration, with many of the new residents citing the excellence of the schools as the city’s greatest draw.

In her formal response, addressing the Board of Education, after retaining her position as president, Sibley shared her reaffirmed beliefs in democracy: “I take the vote of confidence to be primarily a statement of belief in the institution of representative government in a democracy where, after thorough study and public discussion, duly elected officials have both the right and obligation to act according to their carefully arrived at conclusions.”<sup>43</sup> Sibley, along with Nichols, Wennerberg, and the many other groups, families, and teachers who acted on their own carefully arrived at conclusions, all demonstrate the power of democracy and the importance of public education in guiding society towards a more just and equitable future.

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<sup>42</sup> For more on “white flight” see: Matthew D. Lassiter, “The Suburban Origins of ‘Color-Blind’ Conservatism,” *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 4 (2004): 549-82.

<sup>43</sup> Speeches by Carol Rhodes Sibley, 1950, BANC MSS 86/1c, Carton 1, Folder 1, Articles and Speeches by Carol Sibley, Carol Sibley papers, Bancroft University Archives, Berkeley, California

# On the Influence of Thoreau's Disobedience

By Matt Biundo

In his book *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau, who is among one of the principal Transcendentalists of his era, says that he “wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach.”<sup>1</sup> This proved to be a motto that was essential to Thoreau’s philosophy and writings. Thoreau, taken at his word, appeared to be a deeply principled man who sought to live by finding “the facts of life” – whatever those may be – which was certainly a noble mission. But noble intentions and influence, in this sense, does not necessarily mean that Thoreau’s message was applicable to everyone. His Transcendentalist philosophy crossed the boundary into politics with his lectures and essays collectively referred to as *Civil Disobedience*. On the surface, Thoreau’s text is an argument against the government’s power and a challenge to a specific policy, which falls back to his primary philosophy: to “live deliberately.” He uses *Civil Disobedience* to suggest that society should also “live deliberately” – that Americans should be governed by morality, rather than being governed by profit or power.<sup>2</sup> In his lectures, Thoreau details his loathe for the institution of slavery and of the savagery of war, but does so as a means to delegitimize the United States government which he feels inhibits his philosophy of freedom – more so than the institutions themselves that he rallied against. What is perhaps more telling is his decision to not condemn violence; in fact, his insistence of civil disobedience leads to common

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<sup>1</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854).

<sup>2</sup> Though a contemporary of Karl Marx, Thoreau does not appear to use the word “capitalism” in his published writings.

misinterpretations of his intent.<sup>3</sup> Instead, it is much more likely that Thoreau agreed with abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and John Brown, who each argued that slavery was not an institution that could be overcome simply through well-reasoned verbal arguments. Nevertheless, his essay's influence reaches far and wide, centuries after its publication, and is frequently the subject of scholarly study. This is most notable in its impact on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, who both advocated for peaceful forms of resistance, yet also credit Thoreau as an influence. The significance of *Civil Disobedience* is how Thoreau's approach to protesting and resisting government inequality has influenced generations of political and civil discourse. Specifically, I seek to challenge the notion that some of his followers hold that he advocated for peaceful resistance. Instead, I believe that his lack of clarity on violence, as a means to an end, ultimately obscured his message, but because of other important speakers of his time, Douglass and Brown, his movement was still able to inspire eventual changes in government and civil rights.

Like Thoreau, Frederick Douglass was an influential writer and speaker who fought for the abolition of slavery. His signature text, *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, reveals the excruciating detail of the abhorrent nature of slavery in the antebellum South. The powerful text served as one of the most important and influential abolitionist treatises of his era. Douglass quickly became one of the most important and well-respected leaders of the movement. Historians note, however, that there is scant evidence to suggest that Douglass and Thoreau had ever met or interacted with each other. According to Jason Matzke, if they had met, it was likely only once, in 1844.<sup>4</sup> Despite this, there are parallels between Douglass's autobiography and Thoreau's essay. At their core, the two writers care deeply

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<sup>3</sup> Michael T. Gilmore, *The War on Words: Slavery, Race, and Free Speech in American Literature* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Jason P. Matzke, "The John Brown Way: Frederick Douglass and Henry David Thoreau on the Use of Violence," *The Massachusetts Review* 46, no. 1 (2005), 62.

about the issue of freedom, and pursue this cause passionately, both philosophically and politically, throughout their respective lives.

While, in the North, Thoreau campaigned against slavery and the tyranny of government, Douglass remained an arguably more compelling counterpart in the South. The distinction between the backgrounds of the two writers is important. Thoreau's arguments, though principled, came from a position of privilege that was not afforded to Douglass. As an upper-middle class white man in the North, Thoreau fought for the abolition of slavery from a largely theoretical point of view. Douglass, on the other hand, was an escaped slave from the South whose own education – which he details in his narrative – came about through unpredictable and inconsistent manners. Whereas Thoreau witnessed the atrocities of slavery indirectly, Douglass was forced into enslavement by virtue of birth, and thus experienced circumstances that were much more literal and tragic than Thoreau. In his narrative, Douglass details his account of unimaginable, dehumanizing violence and depravity as a slave in Maryland. He recalls as a young boy seeing the overseer “whip upon [his aunt's] naked back till she was literally covered with blood.”<sup>5</sup> As he grew up, the savagery subjected upon Douglass and his fellow slaves grew more cruel and frequent. He speaks of another occasion in which a fifteen-year-old slave was murdered for falling asleep after several days of no rest. Reflecting on the consequences, he writes, “it did produce sensation, but not enough to bring the murderess to punishment . . . she escaped not only punishment, but even the pain of being arraigned before a court.”<sup>6</sup> Douglass's narrative depicts events that were both tragic and horrific. These experiences, however, shaped Douglass's attitude and personal determination to fight oppression and enslavement in ways that Thoreau – even if he did read his contemporary's work – could never comprehend in the same

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<sup>5</sup> Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1995), 3–4.

<sup>6</sup> Douglass, 15.

### *On the Influence of Thoreau's Disobedience*

manner. It is for this reason that each of their thoughts on violence, in the name of civil disobedience, should be approached differently.

It is worth noting that this is not an attempt to discredit or delegitimize the efficacy of Thoreau's argument. Thoreau's essay has been undeniably influential in more than a century and a half since its first publication. Revolutionary thinkers, especially Gandhi and King, have cited Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* as an inspiration in further articulating their campaigns. In many ways, it is indeed easy to find a connection between these movements. King, in particular, was drawn to Thoreau, writing in his autobiography: "in [Thoreau's] refusal to pay his taxes and his choice of jail rather than support a war that would spread slavery's territory into Mexico, I made my first contact with the theory of nonviolent resistance."<sup>7</sup> What is interesting here is King's interpretation and attraction to Thoreau's call for "nonviolent resistance," which famously served as a foundational approach for his eventual leadership in the civil rights movement. But it is this claim of Thoreau's alleged campaign of nonviolence that is worth exploring. While King's adoption of civil disobedience protests ultimately served an important purpose, it is questionable if Thoreau himself supported this view.

King was, of course, famous for his opposition to violence. In addition to Thoreau, he cites Gandhi as a persuasive influence on his emerging school of thought. He writes, "it was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking."<sup>8</sup> Throughout his work, King continued to advocate for a strong civil resistance to the social inequities that spawned the civil rights movement. King does, however, only extrapolate the strictly nonviolent actions his predecessor engaged in. It is clear that while Thoreau prefers nonviolence, it is not a core tenant of his beliefs as it is for King. In addition to King, Gandhi

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson (New York: Warner Books, 2001), 14–15.

<sup>8</sup> King, 24.

also extracts meaning from Thoreau's essay that does not always resemble the transcendentalist's original argument. Gandhi, according to Roger Baldwin, said in 1931, that *Civil Disobedience* "contained the essence of [my] political philosophy . . . [and] views of the relation of citizens to government."<sup>9</sup> Yet, there are remaining significant differences on the basis of each movement. Gandhi and King are able to draw important messages from Thoreau's text despite any flawed interpretations.

An important digression is necessary here to examine the language that appears in *Civil Disobedience*. It is difficult to try and ascertain Thoreau's meaning without looking at the specific words he uses, with consideration for connotations existent during the author's lifetime. Perhaps the most important – and incidentally, the most debatable – word that demands attention comes from within his essay's title: "civil." Lawrence Rosenwald, in his article "The Theory, Practice, and Influence of Thoreau's Civil Disobedience," looks at, among other aspects of Thoreau's essay, the text's lexicon, and its subsequent interpretations. Rosenwald argues that readers should interpret Thoreau's use of "civil" to refer to government, with disobedience to "a government [that] supports slavery and wages unjust wars in its support."<sup>10</sup> This does not mean, as Rosenwald maintains, the alternative use of the word, which could be misinterpreted as non-violent. There is a distinction between these two meanings that is often lost in the discourse. Rosenwald offers a compelling look at the etymology of the word *civil*, and in the context here, reasons that "most accounts of Thoreau's essay push 'civil' towards 'civic,' in accord with Thoreau's own claim that he is speaking 'practically, as a citizen."<sup>11</sup> Historically, no consensus has been reached among

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<sup>9</sup> Baldwin, "The Thoreau Society Bulletin, Number 11," *Internet Archive*, 1945, [archive.org/details/thoreausocietyb194511unse](http://archive.org/details/thoreausocietyb194511unse).

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence Rosenwald, "The Theory, Practice, and Influence on Thoreau's Civil Disobedience," *A Historical Guide to Henry David Thoreau*, edited by William E. Cain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 160.

<sup>11</sup> Rosenwald, 172.

Thoreau scholars as to whether or not this is the correct interpretation of the word. Because Thoreau served as a great inspiration to both King and Gandhi, with each of these political figures placing an important emphasis on nonviolent resistance, the definition of *civil* becomes a necessary point of contention when discussing Thoreau's meaning, and the greater effect it produces throughout the ensuing history of government protest.

Within *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau makes very little direct reference to violence of any kind. There is, however, one passage in particular that appears to resonate with King. Arguing that tax avoidance is a powerful act of resistance, Thoreau states: "If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible."<sup>12</sup> Here, Thoreau does indicate his preference for a nonviolent method in showing one's resistance to State-sponsored war and slavery. His argument hinges on the premise that the government would take notice of a large minority's refusal to pay taxes; his hope would be that this form of resistance would inhibit the United States' ability to advance those institutions in which he disagrees with. Thoreau's position, however, is to disobey an immoral government; an act that accomplishes this feat is where his interest lies, and any inclusion of violence is only a secondary concern. Rosenwald agrees, contending that "nonviolence is not a first principle for [Thoreau]; it is at most a practical preference."<sup>13</sup> He points to Thoreau's use of the word "unjust" to describe his criticism of government, calling the war with Mexico an "unjust war"<sup>14</sup> and castigates "a government which

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<sup>12</sup> Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government," *Aesthetic Papers*, edited by Elizabeth P. Peabody, 1849, *Internet Archive*, [archive.org/details/aestheticpapers00peabrich](http://archive.org/details/aestheticpapers00peabrich), 200.

<sup>13</sup> Rosenwald, 170.

<sup>14</sup> Thoreau, "Resistance," 196.

imprisons any unjustly.”<sup>15</sup> It is clear that Thoreau detests violence at the hands of the government; what is not definitive, however, is his view on violence in retaliation to existing acts of evil and threats to personal freedoms.

Because, unlike King or Gandhi, Douglass and Thoreau do not appear to repudiate violence, so it becomes necessary to examine cases when the two may have supported it. Modern critics like Matzke and Rosenwald each point to aspects of Thoreau's life and writings to analyze where he splits from prominent advocates of nonviolent resistance. Matzke's 2005 article, "The John Brown Way: Frederick Douglass and Henry David Thoreau on the Use of Violence," argues that Thoreau does support some violent episodes – in this case, John Brown's rebellion against federal support for slavery in 1859.<sup>16</sup> Brown, a white man from the North, who similarly detested slavery, led a violent armed offensive rebellion in an effort to free hundreds of slaves in the South. Ultimately, his plan came to a halt when he was captured and eventually tried and hanged.<sup>17</sup> Matzke explains that "Northern abolitionists . . . typically supported only non-violent tactics such as moral suasion."<sup>18</sup> Matzke makes this distinction because, counter to this, "Douglass and Thoreau stood almost alone in their immediate public support of Brown's use of violence against slavery."<sup>19</sup> Although Thoreau's actions may not have included violence, he did not have a moral objection when it came to what he believed was for the greater good.

Douglass, too, supported Brown and goes even further than Thoreau. Douglass went on to give a speech in 1860 where he specifically endorsed this method, which he termed "The John Brown

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<sup>15</sup> Thoreau, "Resistance," 199.

<sup>16</sup> Jason P. Matzke, "The John Brown Way: Frederick Douglass and Henry David Thoreau on the Use of Violence," *The Massachusetts Review* 46, no. 1 (2005): 62–63.

<sup>17</sup> Matzke, "The John Brown Way," 63.

<sup>18</sup> Matzke, "The John Brown Way," 63.

<sup>19</sup> Matzke, "The John Brown Way," 63.

Way.”<sup>20</sup> In this speech, he emphasized his strongest support for this method that includes violence, when necessary – when he said: “the moral and social means of opposing slavery have had a greater prominence”<sup>21</sup> before Brown, but it had accomplished little. Instead, he declares, “I [am] advocating John Brown’s way of accomplishing our object.”<sup>22</sup> Douglass elaborates further throughout the speech, arguing that more traditional and passive methods have not worked. Despite the various abolitionist organizations and campaigns, they were still dealing with the deadly realities of human enslavement. Perhaps, Douglass surmised that they needed to fight back harder – and thus, the John Brown Way earned his respect. Similarly, Thoreau wrote his essay in support of Brown, titled “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” in 1860. In relating the history of Brown, Thoreau writes that, after witnessing the brutality of war, “[Brown] then resolved that he would never have any thing [*sic*] to do with any war, unless it were a war for liberty.”<sup>23</sup> In “A Plea”, Thoreau does not only memorialize Brown but propels him into martyrdom. He appeals to Brown’s principled background and emphasizes the importance of personal freedoms and liberty. This, of course, is central to Thoreau’s doctrine. Though Brown was a controversial figure, even seen by many abolitionists as too extreme, both Thoreau and Douglass endorse his methods. This support stands in stark contrast to King’s and Gandhi’s nonviolent philosophy, even if they all share an end goal of ending systemic oppression.

It seems reasonably established that both Douglass and Thoreau held different views on violence than those of their eventual successors, Gandhi and King. These differences, however, discredit neither the 19<sup>th</sup>- nor 20<sup>th</sup>-century leaders – nor is this discrepancy with-

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<sup>20</sup> Frederick Douglass, “Speech on John Brown,” *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*, edited by Philip S. Foner and Yuval Taylor (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2000), 417.

<sup>21</sup> Douglass, “Speech on John Brown,” 417.

<sup>22</sup> Douglass, “Speech on John Brown,” 417.

<sup>23</sup> Henry David Thoreau, “A Plea for Capt. John Brown,” in *Echoes of Harper’s Ferry*, edited by James Redpath, 1860, *Internet Archive*, [archive.org/details/echoesofharpersf00redp](https://archive.org/details/echoesofharpersf00redp), 18.

out cause. Douglass's life as a slave exposed him to unfathomable levels of violence – even, in many cases, the nonchalant reactions to cold-blooded murder. Not only did Douglass watch his fellow slave be whipped and beaten mercilessly, but Douglass himself had his run-ins, which he addresses in his narrative. Angela Davis, in her “First Lecture on Liberation,” acknowledges the violence Douglass must have overcome en route to his freedom: “the violent retaliation signifies much more than the physical act: it is refusal not only to submit to the flogging, but refusal to accept the definitions of the slave-master; it is implicitly a rejection of the institution of slavery, its standards, its morality.”<sup>24</sup> Davis argues that Douglass, in the face of violence, needed to not only resist his slave master but to be prepared for violent retaliation. Douglass's later support of John Brown made sense given this context. He and Thoreau both understood that decades of passive resistance were not working; a new method of civil disobedience – retaliating against oppression with force – was necessary.

Not only did Douglass fight his oppressors in person, but he was also not averse to encouraging strong resistance in the generations that followed him. In addition to the abolition of slavery, Douglass frequently spoke out against institutional inequality, including women and minorities of other races. His commitment to the cause proved to be an enduring part of his legacy. But oppression, of course, did not end with the abolition of slavery. Just as fighting to end slavery required both physical and mental strength, so too did further the cause in the decades and centuries following. Joseph Winthrop Holley, a career academic and founder of the historically black university Albany State in Georgia, writes in his memoir, *You Can't Build a Chimney from the Top*, of a conversation he had as a young man with an aging Douglass: “‘What have you to say to a young Negro just starting out? What should he do?’ The patriarch lifted his head and replied,

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<sup>24</sup> Angela Davis, “Lectures on Liberation,” in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2010), 52.

### *On the Influence of Thoreau's Disobedience*

'Agitate! Agitate! Agitate!'"<sup>25</sup>. Douglass, importantly, did not tell Holley to argue, or to disobey peacefully; instead, he carefully emphasizes the word *agitate*, aware of its connotation and importance, wishing to convey its power to the younger generations of would-be disobedient agitators.

The importance of Douglass's written experience cannot be understated. The idea that slavery ended on its own – that slavery *could* just stop, without forceful intervention – is dangerous in its prevalence in American literature. Toni Morrison addresses this issue in her critical text *Playing in the Dark*, writing about the power of the white narrative – that is, the efforts of the dominant racial group in power to remain dominant – to overcome slower forms of resistance. Morrison focuses on the representation of African Americans in literature, which she traces back to the works of white American authors of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the appropriations and mistreatments of what she calls the Africanist presence. Morrison looks at the power of the slave narrative in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but argues that the strength of the “master narrative” was its power to adapt. She writes, “whatever popularity the slave narratives had . . . the slave's own narrative, while freeing the narrator in many ways, did not destroy the master narrative. The master narrative could make any number of adjustments to keep itself intact.”<sup>26</sup> Morrison and Davis agree that the slave narrative, in particular Douglass's, depicts an unacceptable level of violence. What is troubling, both argue, is that the subsequent popularity of these narratives, though influential and persuasive for many, was not enough to permanently turn the public tide away from slavery. If non-violence did not work, perhaps violence was worthy of further consideration.

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<sup>25</sup> Joseph W. Holley, *You Can't Build a Chimney from the Top*, ed. Russell W. Ramsey (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1949), 23.

<sup>26</sup> Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 50–51.

### On the Influence of Thoreau's *Disobedience*

King states in his autobiography that the “teachings of Thoreau came alive in our civil rights movement.”<sup>27</sup> While King does appear to offer an enormous amount of credit to Thoreau, questions abound involving their movements’ similarities, and any deserved recognition towards Douglass. Curiously, King does not discuss Douglass in his autobiography, despite his repeated allusions to Thoreau and *Civil Disobedience*. It is difficult, however, to dispute the necessity in which Douglass countered his own violent upbringing with strong retaliation, and King certainly sought to prevent chaos, especially violence, from obstructing the core of their mission. Thoreau’s text does offer much for King to glean from, and certainly, Thoreau’s rhetoric does inspire action. In perhaps one of the more famous lines from *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau writes, “I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave’s* government also.”<sup>28</sup> This quote is strong and clearly resonates with King. In his autobiography, reflecting his own intensifying movement of civil disobedience in Montgomery, Alabama, King writes: “I became convinced that what we were preparing to do . . . was related to what Thoreau had expressed. . . From this moment on I conceived of our movement as an act of massive noncooperation.”<sup>29</sup> Throughout his memoir, King makes references to Thoreau’s essay to the power of resistance in the face of injustice. Though his assessment of Thoreau’s argument as nonviolent does not seem to line up with Thoreau’s history, it is important to also recognize the differences in each figure’s campaigns. King fought a different war than Thoreau and Douglass; despite some inherent similarities relating to freedom and justice, context is necessary for parsing out the details of each movement, including any apparent inspiration one author draws from another.

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<sup>27</sup> King, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Thoreau, *Walden*, 192, emphasis in original.

<sup>29</sup> King, 54.

### *On the Influence of Thoreau's Disobedience*

Henry David Thoreau's essay, *Civil Disobedience*, has become a staple in American literature courses since its publication – and for good reason. The text is moving and persuasive, even if readers do not always agree with his political beliefs. Likewise, Frederick Douglass's powerful memoir, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, is one of the most important pieces of literature in the American canon. While it is unlikely that Douglass and Thoreau ever met in person, there are substantial similarities in their writings and political beliefs, and both maintained an important and enduring influence on revolutionary political movements in the generations succeeding them. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi both famously read Thoreau's essay and cited it as among their greatest influences. While Gandhi and King subscribed to a more peaceful means of resistance than Thoreau and Douglass, the common political paths among each leader are evident. However, it is significant to note how each leader experienced his own challenges; it was important for King and Gandhi to establish non-violent principles for their adherents to follow, whereas their predecessors were not as ready to dismiss violence altogether if it meant reaching a greater form of civility. The pivot to 20<sup>th</sup> century practice from 19<sup>th</sup> century theory is not a minor or insignificant one. The concept of civil disobedience is not exclusive to one man or one movement, and the difference between Thoreau's tone and the actions of King are worthy of an update in interpretation.

# The End of Antiquity: How the Fall of the Roman West has been covered in the 21st century

By Randy Utz

In 476 CE Odoacer, a Germanic military official serving in the Roman army, deposed the Western Emperor, Romulus Augustulus. Though coups were nothing new to the Roman Empire by the fifth century, what set this moment apart was that Odoacer did not name a replacement. Instead, he pledged his loyalty, ostensibly, to the Eastern Empire, though in practice Odoacer would be fully autonomous and Roman control would cease in the lands of the former Western Roman Empire. Theories about what caused this collapse are numerous, with one historian counting over 200 unique theories about the fall of the Western Empire.<sup>1</sup> During the twentieth century, it became common practice to describe the fall of the Western Empire not as a collapse, but as a transition into the period which had become known as Late Antiquity. This tendency de-emphasized the role of war and high politics, as well as the need for a narrative describing the fall of the West, and focused on how events were perceived by the people who lived through them. However, not all historians found this approach completely satisfactory and by the end of the twentieth century, a few historians began to push back on this idea of transition rather than collapse. This paper will focus on three historians and how each of them cover the fall of the Roman Empire: Peter Heather, a British historian who has written extensively about the various so-called “barbarian” tribes and their role in the decline and fall of Rome; Adrian Goldsworthy, a Roman military historian who focuses on

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Keith Goldsworthy, *How Rome Fell: Death of a Superpower* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

internal instability and the effect that successive civil wars had on the empire; and Kyle Harper, an American classicist and environmental historian whose work focuses on climate change in the ancient world. All three of them take a different view on what caused the fall of the Roman Empire but they find consensus in their rejection of the idea of a mostly peaceful and smooth transition into the Middle Ages. Additionally, each of these historians returns to the style of narrative history as the framework for presenting their theories over the collapse. This style of narrative history allows them to bring order to the chaos that makes up the tumultuous facts and events of the last three centuries of the Western Roman Empire.

The first historian, Peter Heather, is a British historian of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages and is currently a professor of medieval history at King's College London. In his book, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History*, he rejects popular theories explaining the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, including Edward Gibbon's thesis that Christianization and barbarization of the Empire led to its collapse. He also finds exceptions to less famous explanations such as excessive taxation and internal instability leading to institutional degradation and the inevitable collapse. For Heather, the key to understanding why Western Rome fell when it did is to recognize the developments beyond its borders. He argues it was the rise of two new superpowers, the Sassanid Dynasty in Persia during the third century and the Huns in the fourth and fifth centuries, which spelled the end for the Roman Empire. These new superpowers were the first real challenge to Roman hegemony and both would cause a radical restructuring of the Roman World.

The third century was a crisis period for the empire from which it could be argued it should not have recovered. Usurpers, invasion, plague, and economic crisis combined to pummel the empire for fifty years during the third century. Heather argues that this crisis was initiated by the rise of the Sassanid Dynasty in Persia. The previous dynasty had been fatally weakened by multiple Roman invasions over

the second century and this allowed Ardashir I to depose the last Parthian emperor. According to Heather, “The Sassanids marshaled the resources of Mesopotamia and the Iranian Plateau much more efficiently than their Arsacid predecessors had done.”<sup>2</sup> This allowed them to raise a large enough invasion force to finally seize territory from the Romans, which Ardashir did in 237 and 240. As Roman forces were diverted away from the Danube and Rhine frontiers to fight the Sassanids, the tribes on the other sides of those borders were encouraged to begin raiding into the empire. The central government proved unable to deal with threats in the east or the west for some time which led to the splintering of the empire into three separate, but still completely Roman, empires.

According to Heather, “the sudden appearance of a Persian superpower in the east in the third century thus generated a massive restructuring of the Roman Empire.”<sup>3</sup> In the second century, the Parthians lacked the capacity to pose a serious threat to the empire, but the military situation changed when the Sassanids rose to power. In response, the size, and therefore the importance, of the Roman army was increased because the border with Persia would now need to be fortified at all times, but so too did the Rhine and Danube frontiers. Additionally, control of the imperial office was seized by Illyrian generals who would retain control over the empire until the fifth-century. It would be the fifth-century invasion by the Goths which would finally break the Illyrian hold on imperial power. The economic reforms of Diocletian and Constantine would further centralize state authority, and taxation was brought under the direct control of the emperors.<sup>4</sup> As a result, a huge bureaucracy was built up around the emperors which changed the power relations between the emperors and the aristocracy. Civil service now offered a chance to win the

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<sup>2</sup> P.J. Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 61.

<sup>3</sup> Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 65.

<sup>4</sup> Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 24.

emperor's favor. Perhaps most momentous of all was the division of imperial power into east and west. Initially, the division was not official, and every emperor moved freely about the empire, but in time the separation would become permanent and lead to a divergence of destinies for the two halves of the empire. All of this created a wholly new empire that was entirely different from what had existed under Augustus. Still, the empire was secure and would go on to recover a bit in the fourth century, though the "Dominate" of Diocletian and Constantine would never be as stable as the "Principate" of Augustus and Trajan.

The first half of the fourth century was a time of recovery for the empire. The city of Rome boasted a population of over a million people which made it far larger than any other ancient city.<sup>5</sup> Latin remained the language of the cultural elite throughout the empire and Rome had successfully co-opted the local aristocracies of conquered lands into the imperial project. Furthermore, archeological evidence has shown that the rural economy of the fourth century was flourishing.<sup>6</sup> Yet some cracks in Roman dominance still showed. The new military reality in the east meant that an emperor would need to be permanently stationed there just in case a new war started with the Sassanids, while another was needed in the west to fend off barbarian invasions. It was during this crisis period that the "barracks emperors" made their bases in cities closer to the frontier, such as Ravenna and Constantinople. This made the city of Rome, and the Senate along with it, politically irrelevant. Just as the empire was settling into this new reality, the Huns, a dangerous threat to the empire, were migrating westward into the outskirts of Europe. Before the Huns and the Romans would come to blows, the Empire would begin to feel the effects of the migration.

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<sup>5</sup> Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 141.

For most of Roman history, the tribes beyond the Rhine and Danube frontiers did not represent much of a threat to the empire. For years, the Romans had successfully implemented a mixture of diplomacy and military dominance to keep the tribes disunited, but the accumulated wealth from raiding, trade, and tribute allowed tribal leaders to amass larger groups of soldiers and further the extent of their control. When the Huns moved into Europe these confederacies were either subjugated by the Huns or sought refuge within the Roman Empire. In 376, one such confederacy, known as the Goths, requested entry into the empire. Corruption and bigotry led the Romans to mishandle this refugee crisis and soon the Goths were rampaging across the Balkans.<sup>7</sup> After six years of fighting, the Romans were able to make peace with the Goths and settled them in the empire. However, it is notable to mention that upon settlement the Goths were not divided into smaller groups or disarmed. In 405-408 another wave of Germans was driven west by further Hunnic expansion into Europe. Initially, these groups were bottled up in Northern Gaul where they looted and pillaged the region with abandon. Due to the lack of an effective response from Rome's central government, the soldiers in Britain raised their own emperor who subsequently withdrew the army from the island to make a play for the throne. Imperial control would never return to Britain. This loss of territory reduced the tax income for the government and made it harder to field a professional army, which in turn increased the West's reliance on mercenary troops.<sup>8</sup> Along with the loss of Britain's tax revenue, the loss of manpower proved to be of equal consequence. According to Heather, documentary evidence shows that roughly half of the military regiments of the western army were destroyed during this period.<sup>9</sup> This would prove disastrous as the Romans were about to meet Attila the Hun.

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<sup>7</sup> Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 167.

<sup>8</sup> Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 206.

<sup>9</sup> Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 247.

Attila and his Huns were perhaps the most dangerous foreign foe the Romans ever faced. A confederacy of multiple tribes, the origin of the Huns is shrouded in mystery. The reason for their expansion into Europe will be discussed later in this paper, but for the victims who felt the military might of the Huns, they were probably not concerned with motivations in the first place. Until 440, the Romans had only experienced this danger second hand through the migration of the Germans. In 440, as Rome was preparing to retake North Africa, an operation they would subsequently abandon, the Huns began invading the empire. Initially, these invasions occurred in the richer Eastern Empire but ultimately Attila would cause the most damage in the West. Though the Huns were eventually repelled, the poor quality of the Roman army meant that the Romans took numerous casualties while the Huns extracted large amounts of plunder and tribute from Rome, further draining the Western Empire of the much-needed funds to pay for the army. Yet for all the damage caused by the Huns they never seriously threatened to take large chunks of territory from the Romans. It was the tribes who pushed west in the 370s and in 405-408 which would ultimately break up the empire. After the initial invasions, the Romans relied on the Huns to control the empire by employing Hunnic mercenaries to restrain the barbarian groups within their borders. When the Hunnic empire withdrew to Central Asia after Attila's death, the barbarian tribes left behind grew larger and more formidable. Across Gaul, Spain, and North Africa warlords were vying for power in the vacuum left by Attila. They began establishing independent kingdoms while the central Roman government proved unable to prevent this. Odoacer, the leader of one of these new groups, dethroned the last Western emperor and established a new kingdom in Italy, thus ending the Western Roman Empire.

The next theory for the collapse of the West is from Adrian Goldsworthy, another British historian. He specializes in Roman military history. In his book, "The Fall of the West: Death of a Superpower," which was published three years after Heather's book,

he argues that it was not external forces that brought down the Roman Empire, instead, it was successive waves of civil war which destabilized the empire and drained it of the ability to respond to the threats of the Late Empire. He is also a proponent of a long decline phase. According to Goldsworthy, historians like Heather have over-corrected in arguing that the fourth-century empire was a recovered empire. Instead, he argues that though it was still stronger than its nearest enemies, the empire of the fourth century was less stable than in previous generations and this made it unable to rise to the challenges of the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>10</sup> From the death of Caracalla in 217 through the deposition of Augustulus in 476, only a handful of decades would be free of civil war.<sup>11</sup> These civil wars broke the military strength of the Romans and at the same time encouraged invasion from Rome's enemies.

This cycle of civil war began with the Sassanid invasion of 236. More of a raid than an invasion, emperor Maximinus was forced to increase taxation to pay for a second army to fend off the invaders as the main field army was tied down in the west. This provoked a rebellion in North Africa that, though quickly suppressed, set into motion the "Year of the Six Emperors" in which the Roman Senate would proclaim a succession of five emperors in opposition to Maximinus. The winner of this contest was the teenage Gordian III who turned out to be no more than a puppet of his advisors. The elevation of a child ruler and the political distraction caused by the civil wars were taken as a sign of weakness by the Sassanids, who launched a full invasion of the empire, seizing multiple border fortifications and raiding as far as Antioch.<sup>12</sup> The central government's response to these invasions resulted in the deaths of two emperors and one who was captured in battle. Their successors were never secure on the throne and usurpation followed usurpation as civil war became endemic to the

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<sup>10</sup> Goldsworthy, *How Rome Fell*, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Goldsworthy, *How Rome Fell*, 84.

<sup>12</sup> Goldsworthy, *How Rome Fell*, 92.

empire. To find soldiers to fight in the civil wars, emperors diverted troops from the Rhine and Danube frontiers. This encouraged the tribes on the other side of the borders to begin raiding deeper and deeper into the empire. As the political crisis in the empire worsened, the frontier failed completely, which led to raids in formerly peaceable regions of the empire. The invaded regions, such as Gaul and Syria, broke away from central authority altogether. It was only through a Herculean effort that the empire was reassembled by Aurelian in the 270s.

As Goldsworthy sees it, the crisis of the third century changed the priorities of the emperors. The survival of the empire had replaced the common good of the empire as their top priority. The elevation of a co-Augustus was enacted because Diocletian needed help commanding the military on multiple fronts. He knew that if he sent a subordinate, and they were successful, the army would inevitably make them Augustus anyway.<sup>13</sup> This led to the creation of the Tetrarchy, a form of government that included four emperors, two senior Augusti and two junior Caesars. However, this expansion of the imperial college did not prevent usurpers from making a play at power as usurpers appeared in Britain and Egypt during the reign of Diocletian. When Diocletian retired his Tetrarchy imploded as each member went to war with one another to decide who would be the sole ruler of the empire. The threat of usurpation caused the emperors to divide the provinces into smaller regions, thereby reducing the number of soldiers under a governor's command. Army units were reduced in size as well. This had the opposite of the intended effect, as these new bureaucrats and military officials became a new source of challengers to imperial power. This perpetual cycle of civil war continued until the collapse of the West, though in the fourth century, usurpations were slightly less frequent.

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<sup>13</sup> Goldsworthy, *How Rome Fell*, 159.

The instinct for personal and professional survival would be catastrophic for the empire in the late fourth century. When the Goths invaded in 376, political posturing between emperors Valens and Gratian led to distrust between the two Augusti. Consequently, Valens refused to combine his army with that of Gratian, and took the Goths on alone. He was defeated and killed in battle alongside tens of thousands of his troops.<sup>14</sup> The Goths were left to plunder the region for years before being brought to terms by Theodosius. The destruction of Valens's army weakened the East's ability to aid the West during the crisis with the Germanic kingdoms but more importantly, it opened up another round of civil wars in the west. From here on, the emperor would be either a child or a feckless puppet, easily controlled by military strongmen. The jockeying for position between these military strongmen would hamstring Rome's response to the Hunnic and Germanic threats. Even the general responsible for repelling Attila, Flavius Aetius, found himself the victim of a palace plot and was executed. After Aetius's death in 454, control of the Western emperors fell into the hands of people whose personal agenda did not include a Roman Empire. Twenty-two years later, Odoacer saw no need for a Western Emperor and Augustulus was sent into retirement.

The last author on this list, Kyle Harper, is an American environmental historian. His work looks at new, emerging data such as ice core samples, mineral deposits, and tree ring data, to determine what the ancient climate looked like. Harper argues that the climate of Late Antiquity was colder and drier than previous centuries and that this led to drought, famine, and pandemic disease which drained the empire of its resources and manpower. However, Harper is clear that human autonomy also played a role in this collapse as it was the failures in the Roman leadership which mishandled these environmental catastrophes. He says "the fall of Rome was carried out by emperors and barbarians, senators and generals, soldiers and slaves. But it was

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<sup>14</sup> Goldsworthy, *How Rome Fell*, 258.

equally decided by bacteria and viruses, volcanoes and solar cycles.”<sup>15</sup> In the end, what brought down the Roman Empire were processes that we are just now beginning to understand 1,500 years later.

If the fall of the empire was due to a hostile climate, then the rise of the empire was similarly aided by a friendly climate. The climate around the Mediterranean from about 250 BCE to 150CE was warm, wet, and generally stable. This period is known as the Roman Climatic Optimum (RCO) and this friendly environment allowed the Romans to build their vast agrarian empire. Beech trees, which are normally a valley plant, were able to grow on mountainsides while wine and grain cultivation was expanded further and further north as the empire expanded.<sup>16</sup> The vast availability of food combined with Roman trade networks allowed the Romans to call upon a vast pool of manpower for its armies and building projects. Some droughts, famines, and plagues are recorded, but during the RCO these events remained localized problems rather than interregional crises. This changed in the middle of the second century during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The Antonine Plague was Rome’s first pandemic disease event. Its arrival in the mid-second century would bring the Romans into a closer relationship with death than the people of the ancient world thought possible.

The *Pax Romana* of the first and second centuries brought with it increased urbanization, social stratification, and trade which circumnavigated the Mediterranean. The combination of these factors made the Romans particularly susceptible to disease. The Romans were unhealthy even by the measure of ancient societies.<sup>17</sup> Diseases like malaria were endemic throughout the empire. In 165 a plague known as the Antonine Plague struck the empire beginning in the east and traveling along the Roman trade networks to the rest of

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<sup>15</sup> Kyle Harper, *The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 45.

<sup>17</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 79.

the empire. The plague struck again fifteen years later, this time infecting the elderly, whose immune systems were compromised by age, and the very young. Though it is impossible to know for certain, Harper argues that according to the symptoms described by the Roman physician Galen, the Antonine Plague was most likely smallpox. Smallpox has a mortality rate between 30-40% meaning a majority of the people who contracted the disease survived and became immune to further infections.<sup>18</sup> Over time, this prevented the disease from returning with any force, though the empire would never be completely free of the disease. The effects on the Roman army during this pandemic were disastrous as the army had been “reduced to near extinction” which forced the emperors to rely more heavily on mercenary troops.<sup>19</sup> In the civilian world, the death of such a large percentage of the population further reduced the food supply because there were fewer people to work in the fields. Famine and disease combined to wipe out an estimated 10-20% of the Roman population.<sup>20</sup> This eliminated the stores of manpower that the Romans had built up, but the empire survived. From this point, until its collapse, Rome was less secure and its military dominance was less complete.

The next major disease event to strike the empire was the Plague of Cyprian, which hit the empire in the middle of the third century. During this period, the climate had shifted from the RCO to the “Roman Transitional Period”, which consisted of a colder, drier, less stable climate. Drought became a frequent problem in places like Egypt and North Africa where desertification restarted after a pause during the RCO. The return of desertification in North Africa created insecurity in the food supply which in turn made the population more likely to revolt. The Plague of Cyprian would team up with famine to fundamentally change the empire. The plague, which Harper argues was either pandemic influenza or a viral hemorrhagic fever like Ebola,

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<sup>18</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 110.

<sup>19</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 112.

<sup>20</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 115.

further weakened an already depleted army and invited new invasions from the Sassanids.<sup>21</sup> The plague also created space for Christians to begin their conversion of the empire. Until the fourth century, Christians are nearly invisible in the historical record. They would be scapegoated for the pandemics of this time and the religious conflict this stoked would eventually be decided in favor of the Christians when Constantine converted on his deathbed. According to Harper, “Where the Antonine crisis had sapped the Empire of stored energy but left the foundations intact, the crisis of the third century was transformational.”<sup>22</sup> What emerged was a military dictatorship in which raw military might, rather than heredity or public opinion, decided who ruled the empire. The empire was not dead yet, but it had been brought to its knees in the third century. It would take one more cataclysmic disease event to finally bring down the Western Roman Empire.

The fourth-century was a time of recovery. The climate stabilized and solar energy reached peak levels for the Roman Era during this century. Interregional food crises became rarer during this time, though local crises still occurred. This allowed reformists like Diocletian and Constantine to put the empire back on proper footing economically and militarily. This new stability broke in the last half of the century when a megadrought hit Central Asia. Harper believes that it was this drought that was ultimately responsible for the migration of the Huns and the problems they brought with them.<sup>23</sup> The forced migrations of the Goths, Vandals, Alans, Suevi, and Huns proved too much for the West to handle. However, the Roman disease ecology in Italy was foreign to the Huns and an outbreak of malaria likely compelled them to withdraw from the empire. This withdrawal saved what was left of the empire, but in their wake, they left the Roman Empire

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<sup>21</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 142 and 146.

<sup>22</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 122.

<sup>23</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 192.

in shambles and the kingdoms they previously dominated would compete over who got to pick the bones of the Western Empire clean.

One last disease event should be mentioned here. Harper draws a distinction between the fall of the Western Empire and the end of the Roman World. The former ended with the deposition of Romulus Augustulus while the latter did not end until the seventh century. The Eastern emperor, Justinian, sent his general Belisarius to reconquer the lands in North Africa, Italy, and Spain which had been lost to the empire. Initially, Belisarius was successful, but in 541 a new pandemic killed an estimated 40% of the empire and dash any hopes for a reunited empire. The Plague of Justinian is generally agreed to have been caused by the bacterium *Y. pestis* which causes bubonic and pneumonic plague. A changing climate in Central Asia likely pushed the animal hosts west along the Silk Road trade routes decimating the populations it encountered, both animal and human. Hundreds of thousands of people died in Constantinople alone.<sup>24</sup> Because bubonic plague does not confer immunity to its victims the plague remained in the lands of the Roman World for centuries. The effects would wreak havoc on the Roman economy and reduce the Roman Empire's manpower, making a reconquest of the west impossible.

Taken together, these three historians offer us a more complete overview of the third through sixth centuries in the Roman Empire than existed in previous generations. It must be pointed out that Goldsworthy and Heather's arguments are not new. These are theories that have existed in one form or another for some time. However, new archeological developments have helped shine a brighter light on this period which has helped flesh out their theories. Harper's argument is the most intriguing as the second decade of the twenty-first century saw a rapid increase in the discovery of new evidence and studies pertaining to the climate of the ancient world. It is likely the case that climate studies are the key to unlocking the mystery of the

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<sup>24</sup> Harper, *The Fate of Rome*, 226.

collapse of the west. With the help of climate science, perhaps we will finally find the answer to the question “Why was Rome suddenly unable to deal with the crises it faced when it had never failed to do so before?” The arguments about barbarians and political instability ring hollow without also taking the climate into consideration. During the Roman Republic, the empire had faced invasions, including Hannibal’s war across Italy, as well as decades of civil war, and yet its security was never questioned. During this time, it would have been much easier to throw off the yoke of Roman conquest and yet that did not happen. The explanation for this seems to be that the fruits of empire, bolstered by a favorable climate, were too appealing to pass up. Rome was incredibly skilled at co-opting the local elite and convincing them into buying into the political project of empire. In later centuries as the climate worsened these rewards became less desirable and the Roman project ended in the west. Yet the narrative of transition cannot be so readily discarded as these authors would have us believe either. It is undoubtedly true that much of the local and regional administration fell to church officials after the fall of the Western Empire. Today, the Pope still carries the title *Pontifex Maximus* which was a title that Julius Caesar himself carried back in the last century BCE. Additionally, in the successor states, Roman titles can still be seen and Roman law still influenced these new polities. It is likely the binary ideas of collapse or transition that historians are getting hung up on. The answer, like most things, lies somewhere in the middle. Western Europe was created out of a cataclysmic collapse and the people and institutions left in the wake of this used what they knew to rebuild. Whatever happened, it is clear that historians will continue to debate the fall of Rome for generations to come.

# The Frontiers of Morality: A Brief History of Prostitution in Nevada

By Michael Hahn

Under a blazing sun and tightly nestled between two formidable mountain ranges lies the state of Nevada. It is here that a legalized brothel system has made its last stand, or so it would seem. However, one may feel about this controversial subject, it is important to realize Nevada's value as a case study for the institution of prostitution.<sup>1</sup> A unique set of circumstances has led to prostitution being accepted here far longer than any other American state. To understand why this is, one must understand why prostitution was so widespread during the frontier days of the United States, and then figure out why those circumstances continued longer in Nevada than that of other counterparts. Finally, one must analyze what role Las Vegas has played and the associated culture of vice that stems from the city. Nevada's unique circumstance led to a longer "frontier" period than other states and Las Vegas as a city that capitalized on it to attract tourists. Even after modernization came to Nevada, and the "Wild West" appeal was traded for the glitz and glam of the present-day city, the culture of vice continued to sell. The notion of "the Last Frontier" was simply replaced with "Sin City" and it is through this story that one finds the persistence of "accepted" prostitution in Nevada. However, accepted, what one does not find at the end is a truly legal brothel system. What one finds is a system that ineffectively toes the line

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<sup>1</sup> For this paper, I use the terms prostitute and prostitution, as it is the predominant term used throughout history. I do acknowledge that sex-worker and sex-work is a better term, given the amount of negative connotation the term prostitute has garnered over the years.

between two worlds. If we are to fix an ailing system today, we should look to the past to find viable solutions.<sup>2</sup>

Historians that cover the topic of prostitution in Nevada rarely do so holistically. To gather an understanding of prostitution in the early frontier days of the American West, one could look to the book by Anne M. Butler called *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-1890*. This book gathers an extensive amount of source material in order “to describe the quality of life for prostitutes who lived in various locations on the post-Civil War frontier.”<sup>3</sup> While looked to as a definitive piece in the field, it focuses on a small period. For a more modern take on Las Vegas prostitution, one can look to *Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada: Making the Connections* by Melissa Farley. This book is very similar to Butler’s account of early frontier prostitutes in that its immediate goal seems to be striking down any stereotypes you have of the “paid vixen.” She uses data such as police records as well as interviews with forty-seven prostitutes in the various legal brothels in Nevada to paint legal prostitution as an unequivocal mistake with no benefit but to the “pimps” who stand to profit from it. She works hard against any notion that prostitution in any form is acceptable. There is a clear bias present in this piece as no counterargument is made fully. Moreover, Farley used leading interview questions that invited negative answers and shunned any question which might elicit a positive response. For instance, she states: “We asked women for the often painful truths about their experiences...we were asking the women to briefly remove a mask that was crucial to their psychological survival.” I believe her method of interviewing was perhaps skewed by her outright bias, leading the interviewees down the path which would give

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<sup>2</sup> For the sake of this paper, I ignore male and/or non-heterosexual prostitutes which were nearly non-existent prior to 1950 and are far less widespread than heterosexual female prostitutes up to the current day.

<sup>3</sup> Anne Butler, *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-1890* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), xviii.

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her the most negative accounts.<sup>4</sup> What is missing from historical accounts is a true case study of the entirety of prostitution in Nevada, and how it manifested itself differently according to societal forces that acted on it at different times. Furthermore, if we look at the current system of legalized prostitution in Nevada, we can objectively see obvious failings. These failings have led to human trafficking, exploitation of workers, and an extreme amount of *illegal* prostitution despite the laws in place. What follows is an attempt to understand the history of prostitution in this unique American case-study with a hope it will shed light and help rectify a failing system today.<sup>5</sup>



Block 16 in 1905

### The Frontier Days

When we think of the American West frontier, many iconic images come to mind, and the Wild West prostitute with her shady, seductive prowess, undoubtedly nears the top of the list. How is it that prostitution became such a widespread phenomenon of the American West? The answer lies in the very reason settlers moved westward in the first place: the mining industry. The primary jobs available during the frontier days were in mining and construction, both labor-intensive and male-dominated industries, leading to greater migration of males into the region than females. An 1860 census shows that in the Nevada Territory, eighty-nine percent of the population was male due to the

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<sup>4</sup> Melissa Farley, *Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada: Making the Connections* (San Francisco: Copyright Melissa Farley, 2007), 13.

<sup>5</sup> Picture of Block 16 from the UNLV special collections. Accessed from Lynn Comella. *My Nevada 5: Prostitution in Las Vegas*. (Las Vegas: University of Las Vegas, 2019), accessed on May 5, 2019, <https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/my-nevada-5-prostitution-las-vegas>

fact that seventy-five percent of the total workforce was in the male-dominated mining industry.<sup>6</sup> However, the demand for prostitutes did not inherently provide the supply, as many women might not have wanted to join their ranks. Women of the frontier faced significant challenges that pushed them into the industry. The problem of available work became exacerbated by the sexism typical of the time. Research conducted by Anne Butler shows: “Occupations for skilled or semiskilled workers failed to materialize. Even employment as clerks, secretaries, or office help fell to males.”<sup>7</sup> Even women who could find work were often forced to accept paltry wages. The same 1860 census also showed that the average wage for a female domestic worker in Nevada, the most common female profession, was 7.45 dollars per week, which translates to 210 dollars per week today.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, this would be far less than the earnings prostitution could bring, and not enough to live on. The industry would also become a catchall for the most vulnerable women: widows, minorities who received fewer wages for similar work, the illiterate, and the children of prostitutes—of which there were many, given the lack of contraceptives during the period.<sup>9</sup> The result of these overlapping circumstances was that one or several brothels were opened in every mining boomtown throughout the American West.

Most scholars of this subject will quickly dispel any notion of hegemony among prostitutes, as the typified Hollywood stereotype will lead you to believe they were all classy and shady archetypes. In reality, life as a prostitute, as in almost any era, was difficult and highly varied. The most vulnerable were a class known as “streetwalkers.” They were most likely rejected from local brothels but had no other

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<sup>6</sup> United States Census Bureau: Secretary of Interior, 8th U.S Census, “Territory of Nevada: Population by Age and Sex,” 1860, 565.  
<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/population/1860a-41.pdf#>

<sup>7</sup> Butler, *Daughters of Joy*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> 8th U.S Census, “Territory of Nevada,” 512.

<sup>9</sup> Butler, *Daughters of Joy*, 2-20.

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way to generate income. They had no protection from anyone and were often targeted by police with fines and imprisonment such as loitering and "lewd behavior" that were punishable by law.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, this class of prostitutes best resembles what the majority of prostitution is today; a secretive and unprotected affair. Women of the brothels fared much better. Firstly, they were not alone and shared



*Fannie Porter, a wealthy "madam" of 1870s Fort Worth, Texas UNLV Special Collections.*

their experience with the women around them. The police were considerably less harsh to them, as the worst punishment for the operation of a brothel tended to be a forced eviction from their current locale.<sup>11</sup>

The level of acceptance for these brothel systems meant that they could even look to the police if crimes were committed against their establishments or their women. This allowed for a brothel system, run by prostitutes and protected by police, ensuring that the women had control over their practice while remaining relatively safe.

The brothels themselves varied in the standard of living they provided their workers. High-end brothels would keep up that image with lavish offerings to both customers and employees.<sup>12</sup> The women working in these establishments were paid the highest as they were often the most desirable. Archeology shows us cheaper brothels existed as well, with an evident lower standard of living for the workers.<sup>13</sup> Within the brothel system, one would expect a degree of upward

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<sup>10</sup> Donna J. Seifert, "Introduction Archaeology in Sin City," *Historical Archaeology* 39, no. 1 (2005): 1-3.

<sup>11</sup> Seifert, "Introduction Archaeology in Sin City," 1-3.

<sup>12</sup> (Photo) UNLV Special Collections. Accessed from Lynn Comella. *My Nevada 5: Prostitution in Las Vegas* (Las Vegas: University of Las Vegas, 2019), accessed on May 6, 2019, <https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/my-nevada-5-prostitution-las-vegas>

<sup>13</sup> Seifert, 1-3.

mobility, as the brothel owners were almost always former prostitutes. This was the case with Fannie Porter, a “madam” famous for owning a very high-end brothel in Fort Worth Texas that served patrons such as Butch Cassidy, an infamous gunslinger of the Wild West. She began as a prostitute with little to her name but ended up as one of the very wealthy people in Texas.<sup>14</sup> The public perception of prostitution played a great role in the lives those women-led. Significant damage to reputation in a small community like that of a mining boomtown could limit one's marriage possibilities, which for women in a male-dominated society had vast consequences. Newspapers of the era slandered prostitutes as immoral; “soiled doves” who worked in “houses of ill-fame.” This portrayal of prostitutes as irredeemable meant they could seldom marry men of status that could free them from their profession. In a chronicle of her life in Virginia City in 1880, Mary Matthews confirms this point. She states: “Sometimes a good citizen, wealthy and respectable, marries his wife from one of these corrupt houses, and he seldom ever regrets his choice. He builds her up to be respected and respectable... more of such men would make Virginia City better.”<sup>15</sup> Matthews further shows that lower-class prostitutes acted quite contrary to public opinion. “This class of women is always kind-hearted... always ready to assist the poor and suffering.”<sup>16</sup> Some prostitutes became valued members of their community. In his journal, Alfred Doten, who also lived in Virginia City in 1880, chronicles a funeral for a highly respected and known prostitute. This funeral was said to have lasted six hours and it included sermons from the local priest, music from a live band, sixteen

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<sup>14</sup> Marshall Trimble, “The Wild Bunch Often Hung Out at Fannie Porter’s Bordello in Texas. Where was it? Movies Say Fort Worth or San Antonio,” *True West Magazine*, June 24, 2017, <https://truewestmagazine.com/wild-bunch-often-hung-fannie-porters-bordello-texas/>.

<sup>15</sup> Mary McNair Mathews, *Ten Years in Nevada: Or, Life on the Pacific Coast* (Buffalo: Baker, Jones & Co., 1880), 193-194.

<sup>16</sup> Mathews, *Ten Years in Nevada*, 193-194.

carriages of attendees, and a city-wide funeral procession.<sup>17</sup> In essence, first-hand accounts of the frontier west reveal how much of an impact prostitution had on the community. However, the response from society was as complex and varied as the prostitutes themselves.

### **Prohibition and the “Last Frontier”**

In the twentieth century, states such as Oregon and California would rid themselves of “accepted prostitution” and begin to mirror their eastern counterparts. This is due to a massive population boom and a normalization of cities and settlements in the area that were no longer reliant on mining. In Nevada, geographical challenges prevented such changes. The 1930 census shows why prostitution might have continued to flourish later in that state. California experienced a massive population boom not seen in Nevada, growing to a total of 5.67 million inhabitants in California while Nevada stayed at just 91,000. This is due to the lack of resources and farming potential in a mostly barren and arid Nevada, and its geographically isolated region nestled between two formidable mountain ranges. So while states like California experienced a massive growth in farming and trading communities, Nevada stayed mostly stagnant. Furthermore, the gender gap in 1930 was still persistent in Nevada as opposed to California. Nevada’s population had 140 males to every 100 females while California’s ration was 107 males to every 100 females.<sup>18</sup> If the gender gap was partly responsible for widespread prostitution in the frontier West, one can begin to see why accepted prostitution stubbornly held on in Nevada.

However, demographics alone do not tell the full story as there is a significant cultural aspect. Much of this is centered around Las Vegas

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<sup>17</sup> Alfred Doten, *The Journals of Alfred Doten*, ed. Walter Van Tillberg Clark (1849-1903, originally composed; University of Nevada Press Online Edition, 2019), <https://clark.dotendiaries.org/content/table-contents>

<sup>18</sup> United States Census Bureau, “1930 Census: Volume 3. Population Reports by State,” 1932. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1932/dec/1930a-vol-03-population.html>

and the way the city has shaped the state of Nevada. Las Vegas was founded in 1905 when Senator Williams Andrew Clark auctioned off 600 plots of land to become a transcontinental railroad stop. In the beginning, Las Vegas and Nevada more generally were trending toward moral regulation like in California. Gambling was banned throughout Nevada in 1909 and statewide ratification of prohibition in 1919 meant that alcohol bans would be enforced by the state officials, although this would be repealed by 1923. The city would remain an ordinary railway community of about 5,000 up until 1930 when the federal government began to invest in the area.<sup>19</sup> This began with the building of Boulder Dam (later renamed Hoover Dam). This was a massive hydroelectric dam project that facilitated a huge influx of male workers to form Boulder City, twenty-six miles outside of Las Vegas. It is unclear what exactly reversed the trend of conservatism-- whether the influx of male-workers restarted a wild west atmosphere, or that Nevada wanted to appeal to tourists weary of the moral regulations that began to be enforced in California-- but after the construction of Boulder Dam, things changed in Nevada and Las Vegas in particular. Immediately after construction, Nevada relaxed its gambling laws and made divorce easier, giving rise to “dude ranches” which housed men while they went through divorce proceedings.<sup>20</sup> Las Vegas’ own humble red-light and saloon district would be carved out by state officials and dubbed “Block 16.”<sup>21</sup> It was an area slightly separated from the whole of the city that would allow alcohol sales and brothels. It was also relatively close to Fremont Street which was paved in 1925 and would become the gambling hub of Las Vegas. Furthermore, a law passed in 1937 that required all brothel prostitutes to have weekly health checks, showing Nevada lawmakers’ open approach towards prostitution.<sup>22</sup> Soon, dam workers would take

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<sup>19</sup> “Timeline,” *The Las Vegas Sun* (Las Vegas: Las Vegas Sun Publishing, 2019).

<https://lasvegassun.com/history/timeline/>

<sup>20</sup> “Timeline.”

<sup>21</sup> “Timeline.”

<sup>22</sup> Vivian Giang, “Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Prostitution In Nevada,” *Business Insider*, December 15, 2011.

many weekend trips to Las Vegas to blow off steam as well as their earnings in the avenues of vice that Las Vegas would become known for: drinking, gambling, and prostitution. In 1938, there was a major crackdown on illegal gambling rings in California that would bring more gamblers to live in Las Vegas and many more would begin taking short trips in the newly available automobiles. To add to the situation, the federal government built the U.S Air Gunnery School in Las Vegas in 1941 in response to the beginning of WWII; choosing Nevada as its location due to the abundant open space available.<sup>23</sup> This once again brought in another huge influx of males to the area. By 1943, 57,000 males had graduated from the academy.<sup>24</sup> With all of these things occurring, investors saw a major opportunity in the budding Las Vegas community and soon took advantage of furthering Las Vegas' path towards "Sin City." Major hotels began popping up in Las Vegas during the 1940s that far outsized the city's population of 8,000; the *Rancho Las Vegas* in 1941, *El Cortez* in 1941, *The Last Frontier* in 1942.<sup>25</sup> The last hotel mentioned would encapsulate the idea that Las Vegas was striving for as it marketed itself; "The Last Frontier City." This marketing ploy played on how the other states pacified in the last fifty years and assured would-be tourists that the vices widely available in the Wild West could still be found there. The extent of this marketing can be found easily by looking at any picture of Las Vegas during this era. Neon signs for "saloons" were everywhere, and "Vegas Vic", a Wild West cowboy became the city's mascot. The success of this strategy can be seen in a 1953 documentary by HBO called *Las Vegas: Frontier Town of Two Centuries*, which adopts and propagates the idea that Las Vegas was the last bastion of the "Wild West" in America.<sup>26</sup> However, the strategy taken on by the city to attract tourists would put them at

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<sup>23</sup> "Timeline."

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Manning, *History of Air Education and Training Command* (New York City: AETC Office of History and Research, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> "Timeline."

<sup>26</sup> W. Van Voorhis, "March of Time, and Home Box Office." in *Las Vegas: Frontier Town of Two Centuries* (New York: Home Box Office, 1953), World Newsreels Online: 1929-1966.

odds with the people who got them there in the first place: the United States Federal Government.

### **Federal Meddling and the Drive Underground**

During Prohibition, Las Vegas along with most of Nevada, was unapologetic in its liquor sales and prostitution brothels despite federal illegality. This would subject them to the longest and most active series of federal raids to ever occur in America.<sup>27</sup> Federal raids on Block 16 would occur in almost every year of prohibition. The Arizona Club, a mainstay on Block 16, was raided in 1925 and padlocked for one year only to be back to business as usual as soon as they reopened. The Arizona club was raided again in 1928, and again in 1930. This pattern repeats itself with many of the saloons of Las Vegas, although most would reopen under a different name. This culminated in 1931 when federal prohibition officers officially moved into the area and conducted routine raids throughout the area.<sup>28</sup> The *Las Vegas Age* reported in 1931 that the Brown Derby Bar was closed down and turned into a “fingerprinting station.” Furthermore, they said Las Vegas was finally “bone-dry” and that “it is doubtful whether Southern Nevada will boast of the ‘wide open’ again during Prohibition.”<sup>29</sup> Though these initial series of raids had little to do with prostitution, it set the stage for the struggle between the federal government and the morally unregulated Nevada. This struggle would continue on past prohibition with the brothel industry being the next target on the list.

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<sup>27</sup> The Mob Museum, *In Las Vegas, Prohibition was Sporadically Enforced*. (Themobmuseum.org, 2019). <http://prohibition.themobmuseum.org/the-history/prohibition-in-las-vegas/las-vegas-and-prohibition/> .

<sup>28</sup> The Mob Museum, *In Las Vegas, Prohibition was Sporadically Enforced*.

<sup>29</sup> “One Nabbed as Liquor Located,” *Las Vegas Age* XXVII, no. 212 (November 5, 1931).

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Much of the federal government's concern with ending the brothel industry in Nevada came with the building of the U.S Air Gunnery School in Las Vegas. Military men training in the area would frequent local brothels. From 1911 to 1934, John D. Rockefeller oversaw the creation and implementation of The Bureau of Social Hygiene which was designed to better understand venereal diseases and fight prostitution across America.<sup>3031</sup> This body of research led the army to ask the federal government to fight prostitution near military installations as part of the “social hygiene”



Las Vegas in 1940

overhaul. Army administration threatened Clark County with a ban on military personnel visits to the city until Block 16 was closed down entirely. As by this time the bulk of revenue was generated from gambling on Fremont Street, county officials obliged and the district closed down in 1942. Despite this, the brothel industry continued to thrive in Las Vegas well into the 1950s and a cycle of raids, releases, and reopenings continued. The final blow to the above-ground brothel industry in Las Vegas came with a federal raid on Roxie's in 1954. Roxie's was an especially resilient brothel that had continually closed and reopened. Simultaneously, Hank Greenspun of the *Las Vegas Sun* exposed a series of bribes between the owners of Roxie's

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<sup>30</sup> “Bureau of Social Hygiene,” *The Rockefeller Foundation: A Digital History* (The Rockefeller Archive Center, 2019). <https://rockfound.rockarch.org/bureau-of-social-hygiene>.

<sup>31</sup> (Photo) UNLV Special Collections. Accessed from Lynn Comella. My Nevada 5: Prostitution in Las Vegas. (Las Vegas: University of Las Vegas, 2019). Accessed from <https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/my-nevada-5-prostitution-las-vegas> on 05/06/2019

and county officials, which marked the end of the above-ground brothel industry in Clark County for good.<sup>32 33</sup>

Despite the government shutting down the last brothel in Las Vegas, there remains no hard evidence that prostitution waned. New hotels like *The Flamingo*, built-in 1946, began having several entrances in and out to ensure that illicit business could occur unnoticed.<sup>34</sup> The heightened sexual climate induced by shows and strip clubs in Las Vegas continued to increase demand. This demand continued to be met with freelance prostitutes on the street, and workers in the strip clubs via “private dance.” Law enforcement in Las Vegas arrested and fined prostitutes, but at no point have they been able to either help or punish these women off the streets entirely.<sup>35</sup>

The closures of brothels in Las Vegas did little to reduce prostitution but it did change the industry entirely. Prostitutes left the relative safety of the brothels for street corners, strip clubs, and “saloons” to sell their services. Without the safety net of the police protective services, many prostitutes conducted a dangerous lifestyle, dealing with some of the most dangerous members of society. Serial killers often target prostitutes because of their willingness to enter vehicles, and the lack of people looking for them once they go missing. Even people who do not appear to have initially intended to kill sometimes get carried away during the act, imposing what they want on the now un-

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew Taylor, “Over a Century, Four Mile Has Gone from Trailside Oasis to Brothel to Bar,” *The Las Vegas Review Journal*, April 2, 2012.

<sup>34</sup> David Clary, “Mob Scene: Crim Syndicates Overwhelm Authorities in Nevada,” in *Gangsters to Governors: The New Bosses of Gambling in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 84-102. <sup>35</sup> Kathleen Barry, “The State: Patriarchal Laws and Prostitution,” *The Prostitution of Sexuality* (New York: NYU Press, 1995), 220-49.

<sup>34</sup> David Clary, “Mob Scene: Crim Syndicates Overwhelm Authorities in Nevada,” in *Gangsters to Governors: The New Bosses of Gambling in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017), 84-102. <sup>35</sup> Kathleen Barry, “The State: Patriarchal Laws and Prostitution,” *The Prostitution of Sexuality* (New York: NYU Press, 1995), 220-49.

<sup>35</sup> Kathleen Barry, “The State: Patriarchal Laws and Prostitution,” *The Prostitution of Sexuality* (New York: NYU Press, 1995), 220-49.

willing prostitute.<sup>36</sup> The vulnerability of prostitutes facilitated the appearance of pimps in Nevada by 1950, something that had been the norm on the East Coast since 1890. A pimp is a man who offers protective services to a prostitute for a cut of their profits. Pimp relationships are often predatory in nature and prostitutes begin losing their autonomy over their profits and even their body. Pimps often threaten and use physical harm as well as manipulative techniques to keep workers under their wing, take disproportionate amounts of profit, and specifically target underage and vulnerable women.

### **Into the Modern Age of Nevada Prostitution<sup>37</sup>**



*Brothel Raid in the 1950s*

Brothels continued to exist throughout the state, only now they had been relegated to less populated areas which commanded less attention. The “legality” of prostitution in Nevada was beginning to form into what is present today.

Federal meddling would cease in Nevada, sparking an internal struggle over whether it would allow prostitution and where. In 1948, Reno had already shut down all of their brothels under the accusation that they constituted a public nuisance, a motion that the Supreme Court upheld in 1949. Reno shutting down its brothels was the first step taken by state officials who wished to fight prostitution. The response from brothel owners came from Joe Conforte in 1971. Joe Conforte, the owner of a brothel called Mustang Ranch located in

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<sup>36</sup> Lee Jooyoung and Sasha Reid, “Serial Killers & Their Easy Prey,” *Contexts* 17, no. 2 (May 2018): 46–51.

<sup>37</sup> (Photo) UNLV Special Collections. Accessed from Lynn Comella. *My Nevada 5: Prostitution in Las Vegas* (Las Vegas: University of Las Vegas, 2019), accessed May 6, 2019, <https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/my-nevada-5-prostitution-las-vegas>

Storey County, east of Reno, was beginning to believe that his brothel might be subjected to a similar attack. He persuaded the county to pass a city ordinance to license brothels and prostitutes, eliminating the possibility of being shut down as a public nuisance. The brothel license required all prostitutes to be individually licensed and regularly checked for venereal diseases, as well as a yearly fee of 20,000 dollars (up to 100,000 dollars today).<sup>38</sup> Las Vegas officials and hotel-casino owners feared that the precedent by Storey County would eventually extend to their county. In response, they passed emergency legislation to limit prostitution to counties with less than 700,000 people, which excludes Reno and Clark counties.<sup>39</sup> Today, more counties have also banned brothels from operating, leaving only eight: Elko, Lander, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Storey, and White Pine, and Humboldt.

At first glance, this system might seem an acceptable middle ground. An outlet for prostitution exists, but separated from those who might be offended by it. However, in practice, prostitution is not legal for the majority of those partaking in it. Ten times more prostitution happens illegally than legally in Nevada.<sup>40</sup> Overall, illegal prostitution in Las Vegas is more than a billion-dollar industry.<sup>41</sup> How can this be? Las Vegas, and the Sin City culture with which it is synonymous, have become the main driver of demand for the industry. Just as they have in the past, people come to Las Vegas to escape moral repression they might be experiencing wherever they came from. Anyone visiting Las Vegas then has to deal with some form of sexual solicitation. If not by a person on the street one will at least encounter many ads for “escorts,” often a codeword for prostitutes. It is not uncommon to see seductive business cards of prostitutes littering the

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<sup>38</sup> Alexa Albert, *Brothel: Mustang Ranch and Its Women* (San Francisco: Random House Publishing, 2019), 41.

<sup>39</sup> Nevada Penal Code, Chapter 201 Crimes Against Public Decency and Good Morals 201.354, <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-201.html#NRS201Sec354>

<sup>40</sup> Farley, “Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada,” 13.

<sup>41</sup> Farley, “Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada,” xiv.

street. Furthermore, thousands of people enter strip clubs daily, often intoxicated, and order private rooms where the boundaries of legality are pushed, if not completely surpassed. The problem is that within the culture of Las Vegas, tourists often don't premeditate the act of prostitution enough to plan traveling an hour and a half to the closest brothel. Much of Las Vegas is designed to get one intoxicated and loose with money. An easy example is free drinks in the gambling areas. It is under these circumstances that people seek the services of prostitutes.

This problem is furthered by Las Vegas' lax attitude towards its law. In many ways, it seems the act of outlawing prostitution was a move to retain the semblance of a family-friendly atmosphere. In both the case of the customer and the prostitute, a first-time offense is a simple misdemeanor: a \$1,000 fine, an HIV test, and a, highly unlikely, possibility of jail time for up to 6 months. Furthermore, the punishments for prostitutes don't ramp up for repeated offenses, and only the fines go up in repeated offenses for customers.<sup>42</sup> This all amounts to an atmosphere in Las Vegas that prostitution is illegal and yet accepted. This creates the perfect scenario for black market prostitution to flourish despite the legal brothel system just 40 miles away. The Las Vegas police arrest three hundred to four hundred prostitutes every month, and yet the industry shows no sign of slowing down.<sup>43</sup> The only way to drastically reduce prostitution in Nevada is to realize that it is a cultural phenomenon, and fight against the image of "Sin City." However, this is unlikely to ever happen as so much revenue comes from the image that Las Vegas sells. This leaves us with only

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<sup>42</sup> "Prostitution and Solicitation Laws," Las Vegas Defense Group (Las Vegas: Las Vegas Defense Group LLC, 2019), accessed on May 8, 2019, <https://www.shouselaw.com/nevada/solicitation.html>

<sup>43</sup> "Brothel History and Background," Nevada Brothel Association (Nevada Brothel Association, 2019), accessed on May 10, 2019, <http://nevadabrothelassociation.com/history/>

one way to drastically reduce the amount of illegal prostitution that occurs: the implementation of a legalized brothel system.

There are several missed opportunities when looking at illegal prostitution in Nevada. The most obvious one would be the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. By law, prostitutes in licensed brothels must be screened weekly for syphilis, herpes, and gonorrhea and monthly for HIV. Furthermore, they must use a condom for any sexual act.<sup>44</sup> When prostitution is illegal, an underground prostitute might have sex with hundreds of people before any symptoms of an STI appear. The next problem lies in the massive industry of human trafficking that occurs in Las Vegas. The U.S Department of Justice claimed in 2007 that Las Vegas was the seventeenth most likely destinations for victims of sex trafficking in the world, and first in the nation.<sup>45</sup> Within the Nevada brothels, all prostitutes must be individually licensed requiring them to be legal adults, have work cards, and be there of their own free will.<sup>46</sup> Finally, when prostitution is illegal it happens in secret. This means that there isn't any regulation occurring. There is an opportunity to give the women that have entered this industry control over their own body again. Women that have found themselves under the control of a pimp often feel like they cannot leave. They are threatened with physical violence and give a vast majority of their profits over and do not have the cash needed to escape their situation. Furthermore, pimps often manipulate women with cold tactics, often intending to make sure women feel that their only worth lies in sexual favors. With legal brothels, it is possible to regulate business tactics and make sure that they aren't predatory, which is necessary to ensure that brothel owners don't become glorified pimps. However, before anyone is to legalize a brothel system in Nevada, one must ensure that the aforementioned benefits will come to fruition. To get a sense of whether this is possible one can

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<sup>44</sup> Las Vegas Defense Group, "Prostitution and Solicitation Laws."

<sup>45</sup> Farley, "Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada," xiv.

<sup>46</sup> Las Vegas Defense Group, "Prostitution and Solicitation Laws."

look to the current system in the legalized counties to see how the system has unfolded.

### **Life Inside a Modern Legal Brothel**

Attempting to define the average brothel worker's life is incredibly difficult. Most first-hand accounts argue strongly one way or another, and often might have ulterior motives for doing so. An account from Rebekah Charleston, who currently is suing the Nevada Federal court to end legalized brothels, states that she was "trafficked between brothels," and that she was "forced, manipulated, and abused into doing those things."<sup>47</sup> This is a jarring account of legalized prostitution, and beyond the facts of the case, it underscores how critical transparency and government oversight are. Most counties that allow brothels to bring in massive revenues from the industry and must use them productively to ensure the safety and the consent of the people that work there.

Prostitutes that advocate legalization paint a far different picture. In an interview by *Buzzfeed*, Lexie Jade, a noticeably well-spoken legal sex-worker, stated very clearly that "we retain ownership of our body, we set our own prices, we say no when we want to, we can be in the middle of a 'party' and if I ask you to leave you have to leave, everything is our choice, and everything goes as far as we want it."<sup>48</sup> What Jade describes is something that can only be achieved under a legalized system with the protections necessary to make women feel secure in their profession. It does stand to reason that these women are still actively tied to the brothels and could be persuaded or coerced into giving such positive remarks about the industry. However, the positive accounts of women trying to protect the industry far outweigh the negative accounts. Tiara Tae, in an interview with Doug

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<sup>47</sup> M.L. Nestel, "Ex-Sex Worker Sues Nevada To Ban Brothels in Rural Counties Alleging They Create 'Foreign Prostitution Market,'" *Newsweek*, February 27, 2019.

<sup>48</sup> "Sex Workers Answer Questions About Legal Prostitution," YouTube, last modified December 7, 2018, accessed on May 2, 2019  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bK4z8Mzseo8>

Fraser, states that “she is the most successful she has ever been” and that she “plans to retire by age thirty.”<sup>49</sup>

There is a sizable amount of active legal sex workers in Nevada that are vehemently protecting their industry from illegalization. Despite this, the majority of opponents will attempt to argue that prostitution is never truly by choice. The primary objective of the opposition to legalized brothels is to break down the core of the debate: that women are free to do what they choose with their bodies. This argument is best summed up by this statement made by Rebekah Charleston during her testimony: “You cannot introduce an influencer as powerful as money and expect that that equals consent because it doesn’t.”<sup>50</sup> This argument is condescending and belittling, insinuating that women are controlled by money and are not able to make autonomous decisions. When prostitutes are protected and safe in a legal and non-exploitative brothel system, the greatest detriment to their life becomes the society’s reaction to their lifestyle. Those who argue that prostitution is humiliating or degrading project their representations of morality and sexuality on others, denying their sanity, their dignity, and their ability to choose. There are certainly cases of prostitution that stem from coercion--whether it be abusive third parties, drug addiction, or manifestations of prior mental abuse--and necessary precautions must be taken to ensure that this is not the case. However, one cannot simply ignore the vocal outcry of sex workers who are defending their livelihoods. Many of these women speak eloquently, lucidly, and candidly about what they do and what they want.

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<sup>49</sup> "Alice the Legal Sex Worker: Season 1, Episode 5," *What We Do*, YouTube, last modified September 23, 2018, accessed on May 1, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CS4aiUfUst4>

<sup>50</sup> Nestel, “Ex-Sex Worker Sues.”

## **Conclusion**

All the American West states experienced a similar beginning. Nevada was faced with challenges that slowed its progression, earning it the nickname “the last frontier state.” Furthermore, Nevada embraced its position and capitalized on the notion that it could be the last center of Wild West culture in America. The effect was the prolongation of prostitution. Realizing the amount of tourism relaxed laws could bring an isolated city in the desert, Las Vegas embraced vice and subsequently, legal brothels have always been around. Nevada has always been ground zero for the debate on whether prostitution could ever be ethical, and an important case-study to understand the institution. What must be realized by Nevada officials is the failure of toeing the middle line within the current system. Acceptance, when combined with illegality, fosters an environment that promotes widespread black market prostitution, and this point is proven in the history of Nevada. A return to a legalized system that gives total control to the women that partake in it is in order. This may be the only way for hundreds of women not to fall victim to “Sin City” and the demand for prostitution that its concept has brought.

# The Gullah: Slavery, Rice, and Kinship

By Carrie Fulcher

*“Efoonuh ent kno’ whe’ oonuh gwine, den oonuh should kno’ whe’  
oonuh cum fun.”*

*(If you don’t know where you’re going, you should know where you  
come from)*

*- Gullah Proverb*

Slavery is a word that produces images of horror and despair. Men, women, and children ripped from their homeland, and stripped of their cultural roots and kinship ties, struggled to fathom how they could exist in a foreign land where they would become the property of another. How did they interact with each other? Did they ever lose their heritage or did they cling to their roots and transform them into a culture that transcended their experience of slavery? For Africans that came to South Carolina, the transformation would not only alter them on a personal level, but it would also merge a diversity of African cultures to create an African-American culture called Gullah.

The Gullah people are a distinct group of African Americans living in and around South Carolina, Georgia, and the Sea Islands located off the coast of these states. They are direct descendants of slaves brought to the New World from West African nations, for rice cultivation, beginning in the colonial period. The Gullah are a melting pot of different genetic, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds that merged under the dissent of slavery to form a new culture in the Lower South.

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Due to their relative isolation from the white population of the south and the system of labor under which they were subjected, their culture has persisted throughout the centuries because of strong kinship ties and the syncretism of African tribal culture passed down from generation to generation.

A commonly held belief in modern historiography is that the success of the rice plantations in the Lower South, primarily South Carolina, was based on the ingenuity of white planters and the forced labor of enslaved African people. Although this would seem a reasonable belief, the actual ingenuity of rice cultivation came from the enslaved and was transmitted to the white planter. For centuries prior to the founding of the New World, African peoples, throughout the vast continent, had successfully cultivated and processed rice for subsistence and trade. This knowledge and experience, coupled with the Atlantic Slave Trade, introduced rice into the South Carolina colony and made it the most lucrative crop in the New World. The contributions of the enslaved Africans have largely been obscured by the horrors of slavery, but over the last forty years, historians and numerous other scientific scholars have concluded that without the knowledge and expertise of enslaved Africans, the rice economy of the New World would not have been possible. In Judith Carney's groundbreaking work, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, she argues that the enslaved Africans were the primary reason that the rice plantations were so successful in the Lower South:

Enslaved Africans and their descendants were central to the economic development of the New World. But their contributions involved far more than providing the muscle behind it. They brought critical skills and knowledge. Under conditions that today are scarcely imaginable, and seldom faced by any other immigrants to the Americas, slaves

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revitalized familiar foodways that were lost along with their freedom.<sup>1</sup>

But how and why were the enslaved instrumental in this process? The answer lies within the folklore, traditions, and merging of African cultures on the plantations of South Carolina. To understand the success of the Gullah culture, we must turn to the beginning of the transport of the enslaved from the Atlantic coast of Africa to the Atlantic coast of South Carolina. Slave merchants had a strong presence on the West African coast. As the slave ships collected their bounty of humans, they also had to procure provisions for the enslaved to survive the Middle Passage. It was commonplace for slave merchants to purchase already processed grains, such as rice, from the West African nations, but it was expensive and cut into their profits. Instead, the slave merchants would often purchase grain unprocessed and use enslaved women to remove the husk and mill it by hand. While enslaved males generally outnumbered enslaved females on the ships, the milling of rice was “traditionally the work of women”<sup>2</sup> throughout the African Coast, and as the slavers were familiar with this tradition, they sought women to process the rice aboard the ships in transit to the colonies.

African folktales often rely on the ability of the maternal figure to provide traditional subsistence to their people in the face of adversity. Indeed, enslaved women are prominent throughout these oral histories as the sole vessel through which rice enters the New World. Carney has collected various versions of this folktale throughout the Maroon (enslaved runaways) societies in South America. In French Guiana, the tale is told of an enslaved woman aboard a slave ship who hides rice seeds in her hair in order to provide a subsistence strategy in the uncertainty of the New World. In Brazil, the folktale of a mother,

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Carney and Richard Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa's Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001),

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fearing that she will be separated from her children after disembarking, hides rice seeds in her children's hair to provide them a subsistence strategy familiar to their country of origin.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the most notable folktale is that of an enslaved woman in Marahano, Brazil:

An enslaved African woman, unable to prevent her children's sale into slavery, placed some rice seeds in their hair so they would be able to eat after the ship reached its destination. As their hair was very thick, she thought the grains would go undiscovered. However, the planter who bought them found the grains. In running his hands through one child's hair, he pulled out the seeds and demanded to know what they were. The child replied, 'This is food from Africa.' So this is the way rice came to Brazil, through the Africans that smuggled the seeds in their hair.<sup>4</sup>

This version clearly states that the diffusion of rice knowledge was completely dependent on African transference via mother to child and child to planter. Although Europeans, in their ethnocentric attitudes, were apt to think that these are simply fairy tales, these narrations would explain the distinct culture that developed in South Carolina based on the ability of the enslaved to have some modicum of control in their servitude. Without the knowledge and expertise that the West African tribes provided, rice would be another failure in the colonies so planters would have been more willing to negotiate the terms of their servitude. Indeed, plantation life in the Lowcountry facilitated this new culture through labor systems and the enculturation of the enslaved.

Life on the rice plantations of South Carolina used a specific labor system in order to facilitate the continued transmission of rice

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<sup>3</sup> Carney and Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Carney and Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 76.

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cultivation knowledge to the white planter, as well as provide less arduous labor for the enslaved. The “task system” developed out of the necessity for the plantation master to be absent from his plantation in the dismal summer months. As the temperature rose, the risk of malaria and other diseases became more prevalent and in order for the planter to keep himself and his family healthy, he would move them to a summer home far from the low country swamps of the rice fields. In *A Woman Rice Planter*, Elizabeth Allston Pringle notes:

It may be wise to explain the peculiarity of our low-country rice region. From the last week of May until the first week of November it was considered deadly for Anglo-Saxon to breathe the night air on a rice plantation; the fatal high bilious fever of the past was regarded as a certain consequence, while the Africa and his descendants were immune. Hence every rice planter has a summer home either in the mountains, or on the seashore, or in the belt of the pine woods a few miles away from the river, where perfect health was found.<sup>5</sup>

This left the overseer to manage the daily workings of the enslaved and the plantation. Because rice was a hardy crop, there was very little to do between planting and harvesting.

The plantation system of the Lower South differed from the slave systems set up throughout the other colonies. Contrary to the widely used “gang system” of slavery, in which the enslaved worked from sunup to sundown, the task system assigned specific tasks for each individual to complete daily. Tasks could vary from the hoeing, sowing or harvesting of the rice crop to digging ditches or producing earthworks to facilitate proper growing conditions. Once the task was complete, the enslaved were free to tend to their individual or familial interests. Carney argues that the task system of slavery was a negotiated agreement between the planters and the enslaved, with the

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Allston Pringle, *A Woman Rice Planter* (New York: The McMillan Company, 1914), 58.

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enslaved holding leverage over the planters thereby limiting their demands in the field. “Expected work burdens on rice plantations were already established in customary practice during the colonial period. The process of technology transfer consequently may have provided slaves the opportunity to negotiate patterns of labor...”<sup>6</sup> This is not to minimize the brutality that the enslaved experienced in the task system. Former slave Ben Horry, interviewed by Genevieve Chandler of WPA stated:

The worst thing I remembers was the colored overseer. He was the one straight from Africa. He the boss over all the men’s and women’s, and if woman’s don’t do all he say, he lay task on ‘em they ain’t able to do. My mother won’t do all he say. When he say, “You go barn and stay till I come,” she ain’t do ‘em. So, he have it out for my mother and lay task on ‘em she ain’t able for do. Then, for punishment, my mother is take to the barn and strapped won on thin called The Pony. Hands spread like this and strapped to the floor and all two both feet been tied like this. And she been give twenty-five to fifty lashes till the blood flow.<sup>7</sup>

Essentially, the agricultural knowledge and experience that the enslaved provided, allowed them to negotiate a better contract of servitude. According to one plantation master, Plowden C.J Weston, it became a necessity to provide time off to the enslaved in order to maintain a cooperative workforce. In his contract with his overseer, he states:

No work of any sort or kind is to be permitted to be done by negroes on Good Friday, or Christmas day, or on any Sunday, except for going for a doctor, or nursing sick persons; any work

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<sup>6</sup> Judith Carney, “From Hands to Tutors: African Expertise in the South Carolina Rice Economy,” *Agricultural History* 67, no.3 (Summer 1993): 1-30.

<sup>7</sup> Belinda Hurmence, *Before Freedom, When I Just Can Remember: Twenty-seven Oral Histories of Former South Carolina Slaves* (Winston-Salem: Blair, 1989), 24.

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of this kind done on any of these days is to be reported to the Proprietor, who will pay for it. The two days following Christmas day; the first Saturdays after finishing threshing, planting, hoeing, and harvest, are also to be holidays, on which the people may work for themselves. Only half task is to be done on every Saturday, except during planting and harvest and except by those who have misbehaved or been lying up during the week.<sup>8</sup>

Although the cultivation of rice was arduous, the enslaved often had time to tend to community gardens that were instrumental in providing supplemental crops to their daily rations provided by the plantation owner. According to Johan Bolzius, a Lutheran minister who had emigrated from Germany and settled in Georgia, “They are given as much land as they can handle. On it, they plant of themselves corn, potatoes, tobacco, peanuts, water and sugar melons, pumpkins, bottle pumpkins (sweet ones and stinking ones which are used as milk and drink vessels and for other things. They plant for themselves also on Sundays.”<sup>9</sup> They raised chickens, pigs, and other livestock and often sold extra crops, eggs, milk and handmade goods, such as sweet grass baskets, at local markets as well as to their masters. They hunted the forests that backed up to the plantations and fished local rivers and the seas, utilizing what was available in nature for their sustainability. They traded with other enslaved individuals from nearby plantations, white shopkeepers and various other non-enslaved individuals. Indeed, a flourishing “internal market” economy developed throughout South Carolina with the enslaved at the heart of it.

When the plantation masters were present at the plantation, the enslaved still managed to expand their new culture due to relative

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<sup>8</sup> Plowden C. J. Weston, “Rules and Management for the Plantation, 1859,” quoted in Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 127.

<sup>9</sup> Johann Martin Bolzius, “Reliable Answer to Some Submitted Questions Concerning the Land Carolina,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1957): 259-60.

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isolation from their master's house. "In the Lowcountry, each plantation had a hundred or more negroes, which necessitated separate villages, where the Negroes lived more or less to themselves."<sup>10</sup> Slave quarters were often the hub of the community for the plantation enslaved. Often set back far from the plantation main house, they were generally unimpeded when it came to nurturing family and culture. This isolation enabled the enslaved to establish a community in which they could create kinship ties based on their individual African traditions, foodways, folklore, language, and shared experiences. As the enslaved resisted the control of their bodies through the task system of labor, they too embarked on resisting slavery through the syncretism of African traditions.

The Gullah culture developed out of the necessity for the various enslaved tribes to be able to communicate and establish kinship based on their new existence. Though most of the enslaved came from West African nations, they did not always share the same languages, traditions or belief systems. The syncretism of their various beliefs and traditions, established in Africa and brought to America, allowed them to create a shared heritage based on the rice culture of their individual nations. According to Pollitzer, "Deeply ingrained traits of the spirit no less than those of the flesh endure against all hardships. Recent scholars have shown that the heritage of Africa, elements of language, folktales, religious beliefs, food preferences, music and dance, arts and crafts, persisted through the centuries."<sup>11</sup>

The hub of this syncretism was concentrated within the center of the enslaved quarters on the plantation. This shared space was a place where "communal singing and dancing and where stories and

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<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Allston Pringle, *Chronicles of Chicora Wood* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), 53.

<sup>11</sup> William Pollitzer, *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 9.

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oral histories were repeated and learned.”<sup>12</sup> Folktales, passed down from generation to generation, continued the African oral traditions of overcoming barriers. Most stories originated from their African homelands but were adapted to educate the communities based on their struggles and resistance to slavery. According to Joyner, “Its theme was a satirical depiction of their own world and its social relations. Its function was to inspire and educate. Its telling and hearing helped to create the solidarity of the slave community.”<sup>13</sup>

Stories and folktales often featured animal tricksters. The small and meek challenging the strong and dominant weaved tales of subtle resistance and rebellion. Folktales were often used as metaphors for the enslaved response to slavery. If you could outsmart, outwit and overcome you could survive. A familiar tale, made famous by Uncle Seamus but rooted in Gullah folktale, is the tale of Br’er Rabbit and the Tar Baby. Br’er Fox, exasperated by Br’er Rabbit stealing his food, becomes obsessed with capturing Br’er Rabbit. Br’er Fox places a figure of a child, made out of tar, in the path of Br’er Rabbit. When Br’er Rabbit greets the Tar Baby, and no response is to be had, Br’er Rabbit strikes him first with both hands and then both feet, rendering Br’er Rabbit stuck and incapacitated by the tar. When Br’er Fox comes to find Br’er Rabbit, he is pleased to see him stuck and struggling. Br’er Rabbit begs Br’er not to toss him into the briar patch, but rather save him from an uncertain death by killing him right then and there. Br’er Fox, clearly wishing for Br’er Rabbit to suffer, tosses him into the briar patch forgetting that rabbits are born from and thrive in the briar patch. Of course, Br’er Rabbit escapes managing to outwit Br’er Fox. This allegorical portrayal is a direct response of resistance to slavery and those that inflicted it on the enslaved. Folktales were also strong moral lessons for the enslaved communities. It was important for the

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<sup>12</sup> Tim Lockley, “Slavery, Antebellum,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 3: History*, ed. Charles Wilson (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 242-47.

<sup>13</sup> Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, 172.

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community to stand together in the face of adversity. If one person acted in disregard for the community, the bonds they created could not withstand the deception. It is important to also acknowledge that these tales were not simply moral lessons for the collective. According to Joyner, “The slaves folktales also served the important psychological function of projecting personal hopes and fears, frailties and weaknesses onto a surrogate (usually a weaker animal), which is then made to defeat his stronger and larger adversaries.”<sup>14</sup> The enslaved could identify with the trickster and in doing so adapt, but continue to resist, their circumstances. Folktales such as Br’er Rabbit encouraged the enslaved to rely on themselves and their communities for cultural identity. Joyner relates this idea when speaking of the Gullah parish of All Saints, South Carolina in which he states, “It is important that one look beyond the surface themes of the trickster tales. The enhancement of self- image, of identity, was an important function of the All Saints trickster tales, however elusive it may be to examine. Like Br’er Rabbit, slaves had to make do with their natural resources and learn to maneuver with what they had.”<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the folktales of survival and resistance, Gullah culture relied on the interconnectedness of their West African spirituality and their inherited Christian faith. Arguably, the Christianization of the enslaved was not a forced conversion, but rather a subversive way in which to keep the enslaved in a filial relationship with their masters. By the late 1700s, the enslaved outnumbered whites 10:1 and fear of uprisings was almost tangible. One way in which plantation masters kept the enslaved pacified was to allow them to worship their newly formed faith in “praise houses” on the plantations. Because the enslaved culture relied on oral traditions, resolved to memory, the fusing of Christianity with West African belief systems allowed them to

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<sup>14</sup> Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, 192.

<sup>15</sup> Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, 193.

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find meaning in their life as well as cling to the hopeful teachings of Christ. According to the NPS Ethnography Study of the Gullah:

Religion has played a central role in community life, organization, leadership, and survival within the various Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia...Gullah religious belief and practice can be compared to the broader belief systems of African Americans as they pertain to the doctrine of Christianity and worship of God; however, a fair portion of Gullah religiosity remains grounded in African cosmology and worldview.<sup>16</sup>

The syncretism of Christianity and African religion seemed to take hold simply due to the commitment of the enslaved to resist. According to Pollitzer:

But the folk religion that evolved in the slave quarters along the Sea Islands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was more than a survival, and more than a blend; it was creolization. The Gullah people adapted African beliefs to their own concept of Christianity in a dynamic and creative synthesis that helped build a community of strength and solidarity that withstood the hardships of life. Religious faith raised up the slave, gave him hope and moral superiority, and contradicted the dehumanizing experience of slavery.<sup>17</sup>

Language, singing, music, and dance in the Gullah culture find their roots within the tribal lands, such as that of West Africa. Language, perhaps the most important aspect of the Gullah culture, was a creolized version of English in which the varying tribes that were thrust upon plantation life were able to create and utilize in order to create a connectedness in which to communicate all aspects of their individual cultures to each other. The linguistic theories of the Gullah

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<sup>16</sup> "NPS Ethnography: African American Heritage & Ethnography," National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior), accessed November 29, 2019, <https://www.nps.gov/ethnography/aah/aaheritage/lowCountryA.htm>, p.5.

<sup>17</sup> Pollitzer, *The Gullah People*, 143.

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language are many and varied, so for the purpose of this paper, we will leave them there, except to state that linguists have traced the Gullah language back to West African coastal countries such as Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, and Angola, legitimizing the “Rice Coast” of Africa as the homelands of the enslaved of South Carolina. What needs to be understood about this creole language was that it gave the beginnings of the Gullah culture their bearings. Language served as a tool. Africans coming into South Carolina ports spoke little to no English. Shackled, exhausted and barely clinging to life, they struggled to comprehend this new and alienating land. The only hope of surviving would be to string together sounds as best they could to at the very least understand their fellow countrymen as well as the commands and demands of their white enslavers. Out of this necessity, West Africans developed a “pidgin” language in which to communicate. As the centuries of slavery continued, American born enslaved peoples, with inherited knowledge of this pidgin language, developed the linguistically complex Gullah language. This fusion of languages into one gave the enslaved a means of communicating their hopes, fears and daily tribulations and in doing so, shut them off from their white masters. Language was also a means of teaching children the ways of the world, right or wrong and a conduit in which to transfer their agricultural knowledge to future generations.

Singing, music, and dance are all equally important cultural aspects of the Gullah. Each individual piece is connected to the others. Singing was instrumental in the daily grind of plantation labor. The rhythmic tones of voices replaced the drums of their native land while the call-and-response tradition, in which a leader would call out a verse and others would respond, kept the community in sync with each other. This method would also be used in their religious practices within the praise houses. Because plantation owners did not allow the use of drums, the enslaved replaced them with hand clapping and foot-stomping. Although they had lost elements of their traditional culture in West Africa, the enslaved managed to forge a new but

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equally moving method of song, music, and praise. According to Pollitzer, “Music permeates and dominates the African continent and influences people from before birth through the funeral that marks the entrance into the afterlife.”<sup>18</sup>

Dancing and music were used as a means to celebrate important life events. Similar to West African nations, dance held an important role in the ebb and flow of daily life. Dance implemented specific motions for specific reasons. Dancing at weddings and births took different forms than dancing for healing, occupations, and rituals.

They dance for joy and they dance for grief; they dance for love and they dance for hate; they dance to bring prosperity and they dance to avert calamity’ they dance for religion and they dance to pass time. Far more exotic than their skin and their features is this characteristic of dancing; the West African Negro...is the man who expresses every emotion with rhythmic bodily movement.<sup>19</sup>

Music was devoid of most instruments except those specifically fashioned by the enslaved on the plantations. As noted earlier, drums were prohibited on plantations, as white owners were concerned that it was a means of communication for possible uprisings amongst slaves. However, banjos created from hollowed gourds from their personal gardens, and flutes made from wood gathered from the forests surrounding the plantations were used in conjunction with hand-clapping, knee-slapping, and humming in order to facilitate rhythm. These components of West African culture, although altered, continued to be important elements in what constituted the Gullah culture. The enslaved simply transformed them into a tool for themselves and future generations.

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<sup>18</sup> Pollitzer, *The Gullah People*, 154.

<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Gorer, *African Dances: A Book about West African Negroes* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935), 289.

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Another important aspect of Gullah culture, and in fact the most long-standing, is the familial ties that bound them together. Some ties were biological as plantation owners sought to purchase entire families from West African nations familiar with rice production in order to further their profits. Other times, the kinship and family ties were separate from the nuclear family and extended throughout the enslaved community. Each individual, regardless of blood relation, was family and thus treated as such. This was a common tribal practice within West African ethnic groups such as the Dyula, Kissi, Mandinke, and Mende, and managed to be transferred to the tribal cultures on the plantations. According to Pollitzer, “The removal of slaves from the plantation of their birth by sale to a distant master was less likely on the Sea Islands than elsewhere in the South, so the network of kinship dear to the African provided practical and moral support for adults and transmission of culture to children in the face of the dehumanizing effect of slavery.”<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, plantation masters encouraged cohabitation between the enslaved as this would ensure offspring that would be born into slavery guaranteeing that their rice production would continue with ease, as the transfer of knowledge, from parent to child, would solidify this. Pollitzer states, “Kinship along with religion, provides social order, ethical direction, economic success, and emotional security. Family, rather than the individual, ensures the raising of children and the support of its members.”<sup>21</sup> The stability of kinship ties among the enslaved ensured that the extended family would provide the necessary components in culture transfer. The collective community, although relegated to one-room shacks, found great solace in their centralized community. Tribal belonging, whether it was nuclear or extended, was evident by their mutual respect demonstrated towards the individual and the family, regardless of how it was formed.

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<sup>20</sup> Pollitzer, *The Gullah People*, 134.

<sup>21</sup> Pollitzer, *The Gullah People*, 131.

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Perhaps the most important element of the Gullah culture is the foodways that developed out of a necessary subsistence strategy. We have discussed previously the role of women in the transfer of rice seed and knowledge in the New World, but how did they manage to transform this simple grain into a life force that has sustained their culture for centuries? The answer lies within the West African agricultural practices of the various tribes forcibly migrated to the New World. Carney notes that Dutch traders, as early as 1624, took note of the agricultural practices of these West African nations. According to Francis Moore, who chronicled his excursions throughout the West African Coast in 1738, gender-specific tasks were assigned to each level of rice production. He states:

The crops are the properties of those who have tilled the ground. For every town almost having 2 common fields of cleared ground, one for their corn [millet and sorghum], and the other for rice, the alcalde [village headman] appoints the labor of all the people, he being the nature of a governor. The men work the corn ground and the women and girls the rice ground. And the women [are] busy in cutting their rice, which I must remark, is their own property, for, after they have set by a sufficient quantity for family use, they sell the remainder, and take the money themselves, the husband not interfering.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear from Morris' account, that rice planting and harvesting was the sole responsibility of women in West Africa. Carney notes that women up and down the coast were instrumental in the planting, sowing, harvesting and processing of rice, while men were responsible for the upkeep and prep of the fields. Indeed, because of rice being considered "women's work" throughout West Africa, their transmission of knowledge and the labor they provided were key

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<sup>22</sup> Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: Edward Cave, 1735), 129.

## The Gullah

elements in not only West Africa, but also the New World. According to Carney:

The deep association of African women with rice culture throughout West Africa extended both to cultivation and processing. Women's labor proved crucial to the rice-cropping system in ways that were not the case with other cereals such as sorghum and millet. This labor embodied specialized forms of knowledge that would make a significant contribution to rice history in the Americas.<sup>23</sup>

From the beginnings of the Atlantic Slave Trade, in which women from the "Rice Coast" of Africa were valued as much as their male counterparts, to the successful and profitable plantations of South Carolina, women proved to be a significant force behind a crop that would change the labor system and provide their families and communities with a subsistence crop that would transcend their experience in slavery. Carney notes:

Women's indigenous knowledge, transmitted from one generation to another and from mother to daughter, forms a significant aspect of rice culture in West Africa. With enslavement this knowledge crossed the Middle Passage and reemerged in the way rice was grown and processed and in the cooking styles that mark the African Diaspora in the Americas. Among all the African crops that transferred to the New World, none proved as significant as rice in affirming African cultural identity.<sup>24</sup>

This reinforcement of indigenous knowledge is what helped the Gullah develop and thrive. Their foodways were an integral part of their lives as food scarcity and uncertainty were foremost in their minds. In order to survive, they had to integrate their traditional foodways with the availability of rations and New World crops and begin

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<sup>23</sup> Carney and Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 27.

<sup>24</sup> Carney and Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 137

## The Gullah

anew. The Gullah adapted to this new idea of foodways by integrating rice with familiar West African crops brought to the New World via the Atlantic Slave Trade. They relied on their rations from their owners, trading and selling to other enslaved peoples on other plantations, and most importantly their community subsistence gardens. In these small plots, the enslaved sought out familiar crops from their homeland that they knew would provide for their needs both physically and spiritually. Plants such as yams, pigeon pea, kola, pearl millet, corn, taro, squash, and okra were present in most areas in the “Rice Coast” of Africa and because of their transport to the New World, they became familiar crops of the enslaved subsistence gardens. This knowledge, coupled with hunting and fishing in their “off time” helped to integrate their culture with the New World culture.

Food is vested with symbolic ties to homelands left or lost. The emphasis on meaningful foods and familiar forms of preparation enriches the memory dishes with which migrants connect past and present...The violent dislocation of New World bondage could not eradicate the memories of African foodways, and indeed invigorated and perpetuated them because of their importance as means of subsistence and survival.<sup>25</sup>

Food was a way of remembering the past but also a means in which to forge a future. Food became a means of subsistence and resistance and the stories and folklore that infiltrate every Gullah dish is a testament to their African heritage.

The Gullah remained an isolated plantation community until the U.S. Civil War (1860-1865). After emancipation, and the collapse of the rice plantations, the former enslaved found no solace in their new-found “freedom.” For them, freedom was a simple word, an act that gave them human rights, but their lives, so enmeshed in slavery, did not improve. Powerless, destitute and suffering under the weight of

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<sup>25</sup> Carney and Rosomoff, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 185.

## The Gullah

Reconstruction, the only things they could count on were their culture and community. According to former South Carolina slave, Violet Guntharpe, life changed forever for a second time after emancipation.

Honey, us wasn't ready for the big change that come. Us had no education, no land, no mule, no cow, not a pig, nor a chicken, to set up housekeeping. The birds had nests in the air, the foxes had holes in the ground, and the fishes had beds under the great falls, but us colored folks was left without any place to lay our heads. The Yankees sure throwed us in the briar patch, but us not bred and borne there like the rabbit. Us born in a good log house...but when them Yankees came and take it all away, all us had to thank them for, was a hungry belly, and Freedom.<sup>26</sup>

The former enslaved of the rice plantations continued to work for free for their former masters and if they were lucky, they were paid a meager wage for their labors. Eventually, the rice plantations collapsed under the economic burdens of competition with other southern states. As white planters deserted their plantations in search of better economic futures, the Gullah remained in the Lowcountry in relative isolation. As newly freed men and women eked out a living, they continued their inherited cultural ways and continued to pass them on to the following generations. Rice was a blessing and a curse amongst the Gullah, but the culture that formed from it helped them survive the calamities of an insecure existence.

The Gullah culture, established through the enslavement of West Africans in the South Carolina plantations, was and remains the only African culture to have continuity in the history of the Americas. This was successful due to the relative isolation of the Gullah, but also through establishing a new culture under the dissent of slavery within the Americas. The success of the South Carolina rice plantations

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<sup>26</sup> Hurmence, *Before Freedom*, 3.

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would not have been attainable without the labor, knowledge, and expertise of the West Africans forcibly imported to the region. This trifecta created a diaspora that relied on the oral traditions of their ancestors but adapted to their ways of life within the colony by transmitting that knowledge from generation to generation. From the language they speak to the culinary feasts they create, the Gullah created a culture that transcended time and created a bond between the displaced and desperate.

Their culture is a reminder that even in the face of adversity, marginalized people can come together to create a community. Their cultural identity will forever be African-American, but their roots will forever straddle two continents.

# The Phantom Forest

By Bodhi Young

*The following is a transcript from a podcast assignment titled, “Vandals, Franks, and Saxons, Oh My!” an exploration into regions north-west of the Roman Empire. This podcast specifically focuses on the military blunder that was the Germanic ambush in Teutoburg Forest and how it shaped the rough borders of Europe.*

The year is 9 CE, and Augustus rules in Rome. The empire is at peace, but three legions explore East of the Rhine, in Germania (Germany), hunting down rebel insurgencies. The land of Germania, at this point in the empire, was unconquered but in a loose alliance with Rome, as many of the local tribes saw themselves allied with Augustus. This alliance had created a non-fixed border between the Roman Empire and Germanic lands allowing for free travel between the two regions. In the late months of summer, Roman Governor, Publius Quinctilius Varus, began campaigning East of the river Rhine in Germania putting down small uprisings, managing local disputes, and in general, spreading Roman influence throughout the region.<sup>1</sup> Governor Varus' spread of Roman influence was done in order to ready the region for Roman expansion without the need of large scale military conquest, removing the loose border between the two regions and expanding the Roman Empire. Governor Varus' militaristic actions however, would eventually solidify the boundary between Germania and Rome further. Varus' tour of Germania was coming to an end as winter approached. Varus had about 18,000 troops, which were the combined forces of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth legions including six cohorts of auxiliary troops, and three cavalry squadrons,

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<sup>1</sup> Martin P. Nilsson, *Imperial Rome* (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1962), 169.

## The Phantom Forest

all of which were under the direct command of Governor Varus.<sup>2</sup> Also under Varus' command was a young German named Arminius, who would play a major role in the Germanic victory.<sup>3</sup> As the three legions and Varus began to head back West across the Rhine, several Germanic representatives of local tribes approached the army and each offered to host a Roman Cohort for the winter, a cohort being about 500 men. Still trying to spread Roman influence and expand Rome's borders, Varus was very accepting of leaving more of a Roman military footprint in Germania. He had sent approximately 5,000 soldiers or about 1/8th of his total fighting power with these tribes. Each Roman cohort would set up small outposts near each tribe spread throughout parts east of the Rhine. When the time came, on a set day, each of the Germanic tribes slaughtered the Roman cohorts. This conspiracy was led by one of Varus' own, Arminius. Let's talk a little bit more about this rebel scum. "The league was under the headship of... Arminius", who was the prince chieftain of the Germanic Cherusci tribe and also a military leader in Varus' army. As a boy, he was captured, along with his brother Flavus, and held hostage in Rome as a means of keeping his father, former Cheruscan chief Segimerus, under the thumb of Augustus.<sup>4</sup> Arminius was trained along with his brother as a military commander and selected by Governor Varus as Arminius was seen as the prime example of Germanian-Roman assimilation. As Arminius rose through the ranks, his plans for revenge against the Roman Empire grew along with him. He would meet with Germanic tribes throughout the campaigning season in Germania in attempts of uniting them against the Romans, though Varus saw these as diplomatic meetings between his prize Germanian-Roman soldier and those who he could influence. Many chieftains and tribe leaders knew of Arminius' reputation as a Roman military commander under Varus and did not trust him, however, the

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<sup>2</sup> Karen Schousboe, "Battle of Teutoburg Forest," published February 06, 2017, <https://www.ancient.eu/article/1010/battle-of-teutoburg-forest/>.

<sup>3</sup> Nilsson, *Imperial Rome*, 169-170.

<sup>4</sup> Nilsson, *Imperial Rome*, 229.

## *The Phantom Forest*

ones that did trust him, created the biggest ruse that the Roman Empire<sup>5</sup> never saw coming. After the slaughter, messengers from the Germanic villages rode out to Varus as he was leading his three legions west, back into Roman territory. They informed him about a revolt happening in the north and that those Germanic people were seeking Roman assistance. This was another trick. There was no revolt, but Varus didn't know that and, feeling inclined to help Rome's "allies," rode north towards the Teutoburg Forest.<sup>6</sup> The forest was densely populated with trees and many low-lying hills. Cut in between these hills were thin dirt paths which the Romans sledged through as the rain of the season turned the trails to mud. The Romans, instead of waiting out the night for the rain to stop, were ordered by Varus to push onwards. He was determined to quell the barbarian revolt and help his "allies." This was tactically foolish but all Governor Varus saw was another chance to show the Germanic peoples that assimilation with Rome was beneficial. As he entered the forest, Varus and his men encountered a swamp that had formed from the rain, flanked by two hills. In his haste, wanting to reach the revolt, Varus decided to march his men straight through the swamp as opposed to all other options. He was immediately met by javelins from both sides as Germans scaled the hills and attacked the Romans from above.<sup>7</sup> It was an ambush, and within the first few minutes, Varus had lost a significant amount of men. The soldiers attempted to get into formation, trying to repel any attack made against them but the combination of the swamp and hills left them at a severe disadvantage. Despite this, Varus was able to get his men out of the swamp and away from German attack long enough to set up a defensive fort. The Romans were skilled fighters but were also skilled engineers and were able to construct their encampment before the end of the first day. After significant losses, Governor Varus continued on north, still believing

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<sup>5</sup> Schousboe, "Battle of Teutoburg Forest."

<sup>6</sup> Schousboe, "Battle of Teutoburg Forest."

<sup>7</sup> Fergus M. Bordewich, "The Ambush That Changed History," *Smithsonian Magazine*, September, 2006.

## *The Phantom Forest*

there to be an uprising. After exiting the forest, the three legions marched through an open field and set up camp again for the day hoping for another attack. Roman military tactics favored open terrain as they were able to get into a defensive position more easily and repel an ambush if it were to happen.<sup>8</sup> It was a sleepless night, but no Roman lives were lost that day. On the third day, the Roman legions were forced to re-enter the forest and were subsequently attacked again. Due to the dense vegetation, the Romans were unable to get an accurate number of the German attackers. Despite this, they managed to hold them back long enough to retreat to their encampment. After Varus pulled his men back into the field, that area of Germania was hit by a strong storm.<sup>9</sup> With winds battering down on their fort, Varus decided it would be wise to wait out the storm on the fourth day. After the storm passed on the fifth day, the Roman Legions attempted to re-enter the forest, and with no Germans in sight, they continued north. They were soon met by another ambush with Varus leading his men straight into a wall of Germanic warriors. They had been blocking the Romans' only dry path, forcing some soldiers back into yet another swamp. The cavalry, witnessing this, attempted to flee only to be stopped by a group of Germans hiding in the forest. Many believe that this mutiny was actually planned by Arminius and that the Roman Cavalry unit did not perish but instead joined the side of Germania against Rome. However, there is no hard evidence on this, making it one of the many mysteries of how German tribesman defeated the greatest army in the world. After the blockade, Varus attempted to construct another fortified encampment but was stopped by Germans who had flanked the legion on a small hill just south of the battlefield.<sup>10</sup> Like the first day, the Romans were unable to repel the attack from the hill as small spears, arrows, and rocks bounced off the helmets of the troopers, all thrown by small furry creatures that lived in the trees. Or perhaps I'm mixing this up with another story from a

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<sup>8</sup> Bordewich, "The Ambush That Changed History."

<sup>9</sup> Bordewich, "The Ambush That Changed History."

<sup>10</sup> Bordewich, "The Ambush That Changed History."

### *The Phantom Forest*

long time ago in a place far, far away. Nevertheless, with the fortification only half-built the Germans easily descended on the Romans and with the battle essentially over, “the general [with] more courage to die than to fight, for, following the example of his father and grandfather... ran himself through with his sword.”<sup>11</sup> The Germans then, after seeing the corpse of the fallen general, devastated those remaining of the Roman legions, beheading soldiers, burning commanders, and killing those who thought surrender would bring them mercy.<sup>12</sup> In the end, “the victorious enemy was... German rebel, Arminius... a man who had served in the Roman army and whom Varus had trusted as a loyal friend... as on other occasions, the most effective opponents of the legions were those whom the Roman themselves have trained.”<sup>13</sup> This battle, while early in the history of the Roman Empire, was decisive in deciding the rough boundaries of Germania and Rome. Despite their utter defeat in the Teutoburg Forest, the Romans for centuries would continue their attempts of conquest on Germania without success,<sup>14</sup> making the east of the river Rhine now undoubtedly German territory. This would remain this way up until the fall of Rome by the Germanic leader Odoacer nearly 500 years later during the transformation of the German Kingdom into the Holy Roman Empire, technically making the region “Roman Territory.” Not really, but I’m sure Varus would’ve liked the sound of that.

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<sup>11</sup> Velleius Paterculus, *The Roman History*, trans. Anthony A. Barrett and J.C. Yardley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1982), II.CXIX.IV

<sup>12</sup> Paterculus, *The Roman History*, II.CXIX.VII

<sup>13</sup> Mary Beard, *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015), 481.

<sup>14</sup> Nilsson, *Imperial Rome*, 170.

## Leyendas Monstruosas: A Terrifying Collaboration

We always have, and we always will live in a time of monsters. While monsters have taken different shapes and served different purposes depending on the time and culture, their existence helps us more clearly understand humanity. The presence of monsters tells us about a society's greatest anxieties at any given time. Today, we may not fear sea monsters or trolls under bridges, but for many, our news-feeds and nightmares are beginning to blend.

When, we tried to find a topic that would resonate with our students—history majors at CSU East Bay and art majors at CSU Chico—monsters immediately came to mind. We had to find a topic that would be challenging to research but would pique the interests of students in different disciplines. What we did not realize was that for our CSU students, many of whom identify as Latinx, they grew up with the monsters in this exhibit haunting their dreams. These urban legends had been passed down through generations. Our students told us stories of their parents warning them to go to bed or else El Cucuy (the Boogeyman) would eat them, or other accounts of being afraid to go near the water because La Llorona (the Weeping Woman) would drown them. Even though these monsters are imagined, they provoke real actions, in this case, going to bed on time or not swimming alone.

For the history students, the process of intellectualizing fables helped them better understand the unique historical contexts in Latin America. These monsters were not created in vacuums. Instead, they reflected social dynamics and moral codes. The legend of El Sombbrero, for example, outlines expected gender roles and helps us better understand colonial Guatemala. But locating monsters in the archive is a difficult task. They come to life in folklore and oral traditions, rather than official documents preserved by librarians,

thus presenting the history students with the added challenge of finding reliable sources. When the history students finished their research, they gave their essays to the art students to illustrate.

Editorial illustration, or the art that accompanies the written text found in magazines and newspapers, heightens the text's ideas and entices readers. Since the monsters in this exhibition have historically been described in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways, the artists had the difficult task of interpreting the text and creating a coherent image. Students in the digital illustration course first highlighted visually descriptive words from the text and then researched how their assigned monster had previously been depicted through illustration and media. For some monsters, such as El Chupacabra, the contradictory descriptions and adaptable appearance posed challenges. Students thoughtfully considered the research and the geographic origins of the legends, and were tasked with finding the most compelling narrative and composition to entice viewers to read about these monsters.

Overall, this collaboration was eye-opening for everyone involved and helped us, and the students, understand and appreciate the other's craft on a deeper level. We want to thank the CSU Chico Department of Art & Art History, and the CSU East Bay Department of History for generously supporting this creative collaboration and making it possible for us to host a public exhibition at Chico State and print the essays and illustrations here in the *East Bay Historia*. A special thanks goes to Tyler Rust and Andrew Bohan, from the CSUEB History Department, who served as our special section reviewers for the essays, and Suzy Wear and Ian Pollock, from the CSUEB Art Department, who served as jury members for the artwork.

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# El Chupacabra: Embodiment of Fears from Both Sides of the Border

By Dave Harris and Jessica Spencer

In 1995, Madelyn Tolentino of Puerto Rico first reported to authorities a sighting of what she deemed to be *El Chupacabra*. It was not exactly a reliable account, as it seems her description matched exactly a creature from the movie *Species* which she saw only weeks before. Most of the early reports of El Chupacabra come in the form of the discovery of dead farm animals whose bodies have been allegedly drained of blood. Although the tale of El Chupacabra is a relatively new one, its cryptid ancestry goes further back in history. In the 1970s there was a legend in the small town of Mocha, Puerto Rico, where a large number of sheep and goats were killed and bled from a single puncture wound on the neck. The name given to the culprit was *El Vampiro de Mocha*. Another monster tale from natives in South America known as the mosquito man used his long nose to suck the blood of animals. Tolentino's transforming alien style Chupacabra was popular until about 2001 when a Nicaraguan farmer found a hairless canine carcass and called it El Chupacabra. Since then, most sightings have included some quadrupedal dog-like qualities in the description.<sup>1</sup> Reports of the creature are not limited to only south of the border sightings, El Chupacabra seems to accommodate a trans-cultural meaning on both sides of the Mexican-U.S. border and in Puerto Rico.

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Radford, "Slaying the Vampire: Solving the Chupacabra Mystery," *Skeptical Inquirer* 35, no. 3 (May 2011): 45-6.



Figure 1: *El Chupacabra* by Olivia Yee, CSU Chico

Author Benjamin Radford seems to be the leading cryptozoologist and pseudo-historian on the subject of El Chupacabra. Radford has given extended life to the legend through his articles and books on the subject. Radford's research is based on reported sightings and evidence of El Chupacabra that have brought him information mostly from U.S. - Mexican border towns, but also across the country and around the world. Radford's five-year investigation is documented in his book *Tracking the Chupacabra: The Vampire Beast in Fact, Fiction and Folklore*. His acquired reports of the creature are detailed as everything from mutant, rabid, mangy dogs to a bipedal gray skinned alien with large black, or sometimes red eyes.<sup>2</sup> The description of the creature has evolved over time, the same way ghosts and other monsters have changed in popular movies and television. In 2000 a string of dead hairless canines were found in rural Texas. Locals referred to these canine-like animals as Chupacabras, however, they could not corroborate their connection to any blood drained animals and had no resemblance of the original description of the creature described in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup>

In his research, historian Robert Jordan attributes El Chupacabra's Puerto Rican origins to the island's anxious ties to the United States, which translated well to other countries in Latin America. Puerto Rico experiences a tenuous relationship with the United States federal government, and in the 1990s, U.S. military bases and U.S. based industry were both rapidly expanding, causing environmental concerns over their expansion into rural areas and their production of various pollutants.<sup>4</sup> The island's limited acreage was being used up by the U.S. government, in which the island has no

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<sup>2</sup> Radford, "Slaying the Vampire," 46-7.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Radford, "The Mystery of the Texas Chupacabra," *Skeptical Inquirer*, (March-April 2014): 33+

<sup>4</sup> Robert Jordan, "El Chupacabra: Icon of Resistance to U.S. Imperialism," (PhD diss., University of Texas at Dallas, 2008), 8-9, and 20.

effectual representation, and its resources were being exploited with military and industrial pollutants, like Agent Orange, bombs, radiation, with one resident reporting that she was “nauseated by the odor,” of the river behind her house because of industrial chemical dumping.<sup>5</sup> Important international economic agreements also coincided with surges in El Chupacabra activity. The first documented sightings happened less than a year after the signing of the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and about ten years later, sightings surged more broadly through Central America around the signing of the Central American Free-Trade Agreement (CAFTA). These treaties boosted trade among the countries who signed them, but it was large, often United States-based companies, that gained the most at the expense of small farms and businesses in Spanish speaking countries and Puerto Rico.<sup>6</sup> There was also some cultural predisposition in some areas for such a creature to emerge. The U.S. military's plan in the 1960s, known as “Plan Dracula” has been identified as a possible contributing factor to the rise of El Chupacabra.<sup>7</sup> Plan Dracula, as it was called by a Puerto Rican author, Evelyn Velez-Rodriguez, occurred during the Kennedy Administration. The plan authorized the military to take over a Puerto Rican island called Vieques by removing all of its inhabitants, not only living, but dead as well. Plan Dracula forced residents, and all of their cemeteries to leave the tiny island of Vieques to make way for military occupation, hence the macabre name. In this case, the U.S. inadvertently gave itself a vampiric image in the eyes of Puerto Ricans. In Mexico, another country in close proximity to the U.S., both physically and economically, Mayan tradition had a creature called Camazotz, sometimes also referred to as the “goat-sucker” with lizard or bat-like features and a long snout for sucking blood.<sup>8</sup> Whether or not the contemporary

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<sup>5</sup> Jordan, “El Chupacabra: Icon of Resistance,” 17-18, and 22.

<sup>6</sup> Jordan, “El Chupacabra: Icon of Resistance,” 19-20, and 74.

<sup>7</sup> Jordan, “El Chupacabra: Icon of Resistance,” 13-15.

<sup>8</sup> Marcia Amidon Lusted, “The Island Monster,” *Faces: People, Places, and Cultures* 34, no.1 (Sep 2017).

El Chupacabra can be tied directly to Camazotz, with such a similar mythology already in public consciousness, people may be more open to the idea of such a creature.

Where author Robert Jordan, in his article *Icon of Resistance to U.S. Imperialism*, purports the value of El Chupacabra sightings to the overbearing hegemony of U.S. dominance in the Americas, Carlos G. Gomez, an artist of Brownsville, Texas literally paints a different portrait of El Chupacabra. His paintings insert El Chupacabra into various aspects of society, usually with a Mexican theme. In an interview for the Brownsville Herald, Gomez states that El Chupacabra represents Chicanos. Like his portraits of El Chupacabra, they are often misunderstood and come in all shapes and sizes. Gomez depicts El Chupacabra in the vein of Rodin's *The Thinker* along with various other poses and styles. Gomez also uses the creature to represent Mexicans by draping it in the colors of the Mexican flag; green, white and red. El Chupacabra is a lonely creature with human characteristics. It is also shaped by the environment and society. Gomez states, Mexican immigrants are also feared and misunderstood. It was Gomez' intention to familiarize Americans with Mexican culture through a mutually mysterious creature, El Chupacabra.<sup>9</sup>

Does El Chupacabra exist, or is it something that has culminated only from the unexplained killing of livestock in and around U.S. - Mexican border towns? El Chupacabra does exist! It exists the same way that any other creature of folklore fills an explanatory void. Certainly, after Mrs. Tolentino's report in 1995, the Puerto Rican news media leapt to conclusions that drove further sightings of the creature, and perhaps this provides a look into cryptozoological folklore in the making, but in actuality, puncture wounds on the necks of livestock are most likely those from sick or weakened canines that cannot chase a rabbit or deer, or hunt in the open. And, short of DNA

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<sup>9</sup> Emma Perez-Trevino, "Local artist sees Chupacabra as a metaphor for Mexican-Americans," *Brownsville Herald*, Feb. 19, 2006.

evidence to prove the contrary, El Chupacabra will most likely go down in history as the first internet-age cryptid.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Radford, *Tracking the Chupacabra: The Vampire Beast in Fact, Fiction, and Folklore* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011).

# La Siguanaba: The River Temptress, A Misunderstood Woman

By Jewel Carissa Lopez, Jasmyn Murrell, Pamela S. Rouse

La Siguanaba is a mythical Central American figure, derived from Mayan mythology,<sup>1</sup> who appears in Salvadorian, Guatemalan, Honduran, and Costa Rican folklore.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the Spanish conquest of Central America,<sup>3</sup> She was known as Sihuehet which means beautiful woman in the Nahuatl language.<sup>4</sup> According to legend, Sihuehet was a peasant who used a witch's brew to captivate the Mayan Prince Yeisun, son of the supreme god Tlaloc, into marriage and thus became a queen.<sup>5</sup> While married, she had many affairs, one of which led her to conceive a son named Cipitio.<sup>6</sup> The legend says that Sihuehet was an inattentive mother because she was consumed with her lovers and her need for power. In order to claim the throne for herself, and

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<sup>1</sup> Sylvia Malán-González, "The Judge Torres Study Guide," *Teatro Milagro National Touring Production*, Season 35 (2019), 2, [https://milagro.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/S35\\_02\\_JudgeTorres\\_StudyGuide\\_ENG\\_FINAL.pdf](https://milagro.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/S35_02_JudgeTorres_StudyGuide_ENG_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Maria Herrera-Sobek, "La Siguanaba" in *Celebrating Latino Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Cultural Traditions* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012), 669.

<sup>3</sup> Ana Patricia Rodriguez, "The Fiction of Solidarity: Transfronteriza Feminisms and Anti-Imperialist Struggle in Central American Transnational Narratives," *Feminist Studies* 34, no. 1-2 (2008): 199-226.

<sup>4</sup> Mirna Carrillo, "La Siguanaba Haunts with Bravery and Doubts: Second-Generation Salvadoran Women" (MS thesis., UC San Diego, 2011), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Malán-González, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Malán-González, 2.



Figure 2: *La Suguana* by Elizabeth Kirby, CSU Chico

possibly one of her lovers, she tried to poison her husband with a potion during a feast. Instead of dying, her husband was transformed into a monster that killed many people but was eventually killed by one of the guards. The god Tlaloc was furious and cursed Siheuhet for his son's death.<sup>7</sup> From then on, Siheuhet (most beautiful woman) became Siguana (a horrible woman). The myth of Siguana appears to have evolved, first with Spanish colonists using it to control the local population by saying that she lures unfaithful men and steals their souls, and later becoming a symbol of strength for Salvadoran women.<sup>8</sup>

During the Spanish colonization of Central America, La Siguanaba was used as a warning or message for men and the unfaithful: to keep thoughts clean and pure of infidelity and curiosities, or else you might fall victim to La Siguanaba's curse. Attractive at first glance, La Siguanaba transforms into a monster with the face of a horse or skull.<sup>9</sup> She is condemned to roam near rivers at night,<sup>10</sup> luring men in with her beauty and frightening them, causing some to go crazy and others to die.<sup>11</sup> This concept of La Siguanaba is enacted culturally to keep men from having affairs or staying out late and getting into mischief.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the Spanish colonization of the Americas, indigenous people were subjugated under European rule and the strict moralization of the Catholic Church, which pressured women to keep chaste.<sup>13</sup> Because of her affairs and betrayal, Siguanaba's son, Cipitio, was also cursed. His curse is that he remains eternally a child, with deformed features like backwards facing feet that he uses to commit harmless

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<sup>7</sup> Malán-González, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Mauricio Interiano, "Central Americano Legends and Folklore," *Arthur Newspaper*, November 1, 2016, <http://www.trentarthur.ca/centro-americano-legends-and-folklore/>.

<sup>9</sup> Interiano, "Central Americano Legends and Folklore."

<sup>10</sup> Carillo, "La Siguanaba Haunts with Bravery and Doubts," 1.

<sup>11</sup> Carillo, "La Siguanaba Haunts with Bravery and Doubts," 1.

<sup>12</sup> Interiano, "Central Americano Legends and Folklore."

<sup>13</sup> Herrera-Sobek, "La Siguanaba," 670-71.

trickery and get travelers lost.<sup>14</sup> Her folklore lives as a moral warning about how one should behave, and how one lives in society.

While La Siguanaba could be an ominous tale warning men and women to remain faithful and pure, for women, it created a narrative of a two-faced enchantress who teased men and then drove them to distraction or death. La Siguanaba's empowerment took a different form in the 1980s and 90s when Latinx feminists, critical of American interventionism in Central America, engaged in solidarity movements and found strength within their communities. According to Ana Patricia Rodríguez, "during those decades, the United States provided military and economic aid to Central American regimes, particularly in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, to fund wars of genocide and general destruction."<sup>15</sup> Throughout the war between the Salvadoran government and left-wing guerillas, the civilian communities were targeted and forced to flee for their lives. Women were essential to this trans-migratory period. Anthropologist Mirna Carrillo talks about the binary of Salvadoran women, who live between two worlds and two cultures, not unlike La Siguanaba: "As an interstice, La Siguanaba's body contains and continually manifests and redefines the conflict between indigeneity and colonialism."<sup>16</sup> Carrillo further explains that La Siguanaba is both frightening and powerful, and "she is an undeniably Salvadoran icon bound to live in between the worlds of the Pipiles and the colonizer."<sup>17</sup> In their new worlds in the United States, Salvadoran women did not completely leave behind these political struggles. Multiple waves of Salvadoran migrants have settled in the U.S. over the years, influencing the West (and Southern California, in particular) creating concentrated regions of Salvadoran-specific vernacular and culture.<sup>18</sup> Her myth serves simultaneously as a

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<sup>14</sup> Interiano, "Central Americano Legends and Folklore."

<sup>15</sup> Rodríguez, "The Fiction of Solidarity," 199-226. 199.

<sup>16</sup> Carrillo, "La Siguanaba Haunts with Bravery and Doubts," 2.

<sup>17</sup> Carrillo, "La Siguanaba Haunts with Bravery and Doubts," 2.

<sup>18</sup> Carrillo, "La Siguanaba Haunts with Bravery and Doubts," 40.

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cautionary tale and source of empowerment for migrant Salvadoran women.

# La Llorona: The Connection Between Latin American Folklore and 19th Century Waterborne Illness

By Bodhi Young and Srishti Sumbly

## Introduction

“Condemned to wander the earth in search of the children she sacrificed”,<sup>1</sup> La Llorona or the Weeping Woman is a traditional folktale told throughout Mexico and the Southern United States as well as other Latin American cultures. La Llorona is the story of a young woman named María who had drowned her two children in a river after finding out her husband, their father, had run off with another woman either as a way of revenge or because of grief. Grief-stricken or guilty herself, María would then drown herself but, instead of passing over into the afterlife, she was punished and forced to search for the bodies of her two children in order to pass over. She resides at waterfronts: lakes, rivers, and streams luring in children and drowning them in hopes they would make a suitable replacement for her lost kin.<sup>2</sup>

The true origins of the weeping woman La Llorona are still unknown, but the first mention of her appeared in the late 1800s sonnet where she is referenced to be killed by the actions of her

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<sup>1</sup> Domino Renee Perez, *There Was a Woman: La Llorona from Folklore to Popular Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), x.

<sup>2</sup> Ryan Bergara and Shane Madej, “The Hunt for La Llorona - The Weeping Woman,” YouTube video, 23:47, “Buzzfeed Unsolved Network,” April 4, 2019, 2:23.



Figure 3: *La Llorona* by Jackson Keen, CSU Chico

husband.<sup>3</sup> This would eventually develop into the ghost story used by adults in order to scare children away from misbehaving and playing near waterfronts. This Latin American folktale of La Llorona, or the Weeping Woman, developed during a time of great fear as this was the period when the waterborne disease cholera had swept through Mexico and the southern United States from Europe and Asia.

### **Cholera Epidemics**

According to the Center for Disease Control, *Vibrio Cholerae* Infection, also known as Cholera, is “found and spread in places with inadequate water treatment, poor sanitation, and inadequate hygiene”,<sup>4</sup> and if left untreated can cause death only hours after the disease’s incubation period. This infection would result in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of adults and children with the latter being the most vulnerable and susceptible to the pathogen.<sup>5</sup> Cholera epidemics would coincide with the housing and city development boom of the mid to late 1800s with cities like New York City and Los Angeles being ravaged by infection. The first cholera epidemic of Mexico would soon follow the arrival of the disease in the port city of Veracruz.<sup>6</sup> The city was susceptible to the disease due to its immediate proximity to water and because the city’s poor water treatment and lack of understanding of germ theory. Cholera would contribute to, “six deaths a day”, with it soon jumping, “to three hundred a day... eighteen hundred people out of an estimated population of six thousand had died.”<sup>7</sup> These types of citywide epidemics would hit almost all major cities in the southern United States and Mexico that had direct proximity to a water source.

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<sup>3</sup> Michael S. Werner, *Encyclopedia of Mexico: History, Society & Culture - Vol. 1* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> “General Information,” Cholera: vibrio cholerae infection, Center for Disease Control, last reviewed: May 11, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> “General Information,” CDC.

<sup>6</sup> C. A. Hutchinson, “The Asiatic Cholera Epidemic of 1833 in Mexico,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 32, no. 1 (1958): 23.

<sup>7</sup> Hutchinson, “The Asiatic Cholera Epidemic,” 23.

## The Fear and Normalization of Death

After the Mexican cholera epidemics of 1833 and 1850, human nature would set in as a way to cope with the loss of so many lives but, also as a way to attempt to reduce the amount lost in future epidemic events. This normalization and fear of death can be seen in all cultures and epochs, and serves the purpose of pushing society past these tragedies. The cholera outbreak in Mexico and the surrounding region would lead to the advancements of water filtration, management, and cleaning as well as creating a new cultural significance to water and the effect it had on the most vulnerable members of society. Despite any advancements that would be made to combat infections and deaths caused by cholera, the fear of the loss of children still permeated in households throughout the southern United States and Mexico. This would lead to the attempt of controlling a child's interaction with water possibly containing the pathogen.

The consumption of infectious water was easily controlled within the home but was more difficult when external factors got in the way. The consumption of water outside of the home was nearly impossible to control due to the lack of understanding of how the pathogen spread during a time before germ theory. In order to protect children from interacting with possibly infected water, something developed in order to caution children of being around rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and other sources of external water. It was the fear and normalization of death that came about during the time of this epidemic that would coincide with the transform the legend of La Llorona into a folktale of infantilism, with parents threatening children the that played too close to water with drowning in those same rivers, lakes, and other water sources.

The idea of excretion till death may not have resonated in children during the 19th century but the story of a La Llorona's affinity and proximity to water may have had an effect on the infection and mortality rates of children in the months following the Mexican cholera epidemics with mortality rates in children drastically

decrease after the epidemic with individual cases popping up sporadically and in isolation.<sup>8</sup> This connection, while admittedly circumstantial at best, may shed some light on the origins of this mysterious folklore monster, and how its evolution and development in the mid to late 19th century may have protected children from the more horrific monster of cholera.

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<sup>8</sup> Hutchinson, "The Asiatic Cholera Epidemic of 1833," 23.

# Loogaroo: The Woman in Cahoots with the Devil

By Pedro Guzman and Ashley Sayat

In the Dominican Republic and Haiti, the word “Loogaroo” has two meanings. On the one hand, it describes a demonic vampire witch who made a pact with the Devil and sucks people’s blood to remain powerful. On the other, the term “loogaroo” is a derogatory term used to describe women, especially powerful women. According to oral tradition, Loogaroo first got her power by making a pact with a Devil. In return, she was obligated to suck the blood of people every night before sunrise and give it to the Devil as an offering. The urban legend of the ghastly vampire Loogaroo is intended to keep women bound to male expectations of the status quo. By labeling powerful, wealthy, and successful women monsters who feed off of innocent victims, this limits women’s abilities to rise in Caribbean society.

The story of the Loogaroo, also known as Soucouyant, varies throughout the Caribbean. The most common description of the Loogaroo tells of a woman by day and by night transforms into a demonic, blue fiery vampire. At night, the Loogaroo sheds her skin and hides it underneath a tree, so that no one can find it. Much like a vampire, she flies off into the night sky searching for victims and feasting on their blood. Despite some inconsistent details from story to story, a couple of factors always remain the same: Loogaroo is a woman, and she selfishly kills people and drinks their blood to maintain her power. In Jeffrey Cohen’s book *Monster Theory*, he explains that society creates monsters to help explain what is out of the ordinary in society and that they are an “embodiment of

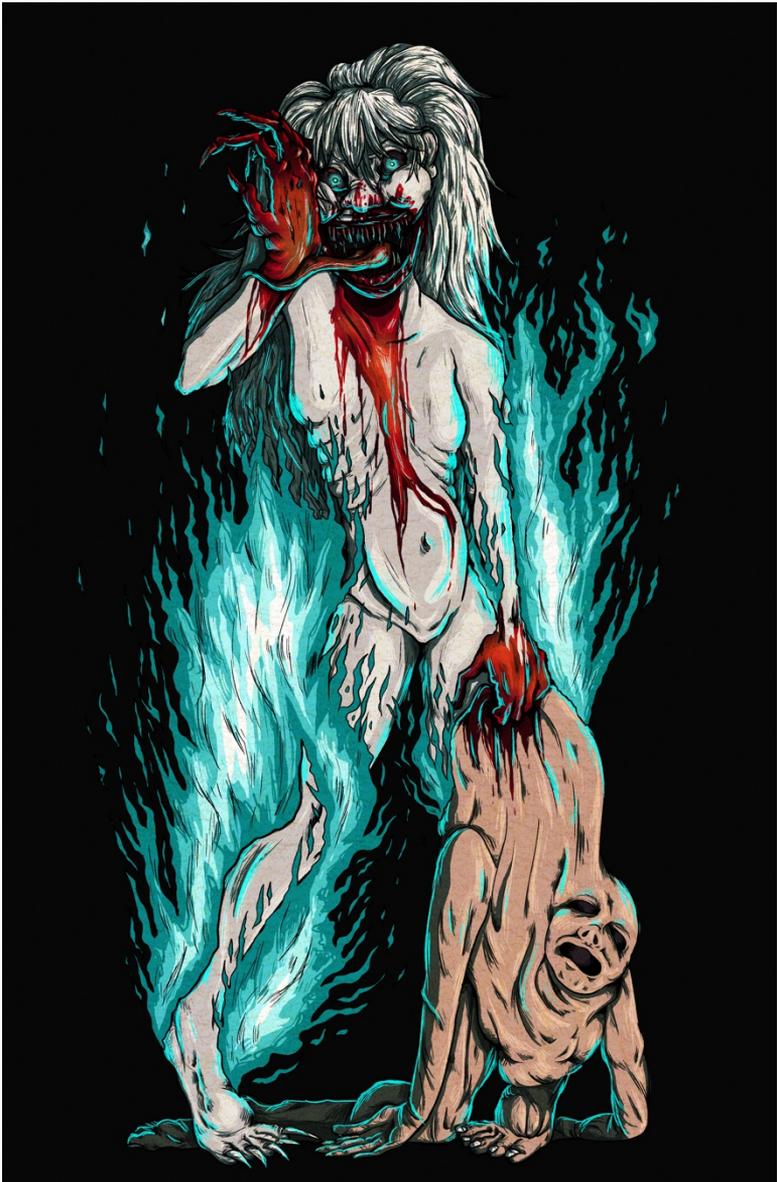


Figure 4: *Soucouyant* by Ericka Berry, CSU Chico

difference.”<sup>1</sup> For Loogaroo, both the monster and the successful Caribbean woman, her power is seen as an unnatural thing made only possible with the help of evil forces.

As it is normal for men to have dominant roles in society, women, on the other hand, are discredited when they arrive at a dominant position in society. They are invalidated by men by calling these types of successful women a Loogaroo. But why is it that men need to feel superior and dominant over women? In an article written by Anita Baksh, she describes that maintaining the status quo is part of male society in the Caribbean. She explains that with colonization and the mixing of African, European, and native cultures, masculinity changed and “creolization offered access to certain signifiers of masculine power such as status and privilege,”<sup>2</sup> Although she is not specifically writing about Haiti or the Dominican Republic, she introduces a complex relationship between race and gender, where masculine power is dominant. In a study about masculinity and femininity in the Caribbean, gender expert Rhoda Reddock explains how men perform masculinity, and that this “includes the everyday-as in hegemony over their women as well as in the publicly accepted values of success, e.g. wealth, politics, sport, and sexual performance (not necessarily in that order).”<sup>3</sup> Both Baksh and Reddock’s explanations can actually be seen in how Dominican poet Salomé Ureña was historicized. A female, mixed race, and the first national poet of the Dominican Republic, she was an important and popular figure during her time. However, after her time, her figure went through a “whitening in imagery and sculpture, as well as a simultaneous overemphasis on the aspects of her

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “Preface: In a Time of Monsters,” in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), x.

<sup>2</sup> Anita Baksh, “Indo-Caribbean Working-Class Masculinities at Home and Abroad: David Chariandy’s *Soucouyant* and Ian Harnarine’s *Doubles with Slight Pepper*,” *Journal of West Indian Literature* 25, no. 1 (2017): 94-111,125.

<sup>3</sup> Rhoda Reddock, “Indo-Caribbean Masculinities and Indo-Caribbean Feminisms: Where are We Now?” in *Indo-Caribbean Feminist Thought: Genealogies, Theories, Enactments*, ed. Gabrielle Hosein and Lisa Outar (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 272.

work and life that supported the idea of Ureña as a respectable—that is, asexual, religious, and motherly—woman.”<sup>4</sup> Even with all of her accomplishments, male critics downplayed what she had done, and focused more on what would continue the social roles in society, such as ignoring her sexual poetry to back up the social notion that women are pure and don’t engage in sexual acts or desires.

In the story, in order for Loogaroo to go out into the night and eat her prey, she must shed her skin so she is free to do her evil deeds. If you look at it from a literary perspective, her skin is a symbol of what society wants to see: a woman in the social order. However, she removes her skin to reveal that she’s actually loogaroo, an evil vampire that eats people. This could be a metaphor or symbol for a few different things when we take into consideration the history of colonialism and slavery that occurred in Haiti and the Dominican Republic that spurred a complex relationship with race and identity in the region. One way she can be defeated is through the destruction of her skin by applying salt onto her skin, thus preventing her from putting it back on. This is very similar to when Haiti was still under French colonial rule and during slavery, the Black Codes (Code Noir) stated that after you whip a slave, salt, pepper, and lemon were to be added to the wounds.<sup>5</sup> Another historical connection to Loogaroo’s myth comes from the Haitian Revolution from 1791-1804, which today remains the only successful uprising of enslaved people in world history. In the Haitian Revolution, the enslaved populations rose up against the white plantation owners, giving whiteness a negative connotation. Furthermore, in Haitian Vodou beliefs, “to be without skin is to be white and to be white is to be a devil.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dixa Ramírez, "Salomé Ureña's Blurred Edges: Race, Gender, and Commemoration in the Dominican Republic," *The Black Scholar* 45, no. 2 (2015): 45-56.

<sup>5</sup> Joan Dayan, *Haiti: History, and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 265.

<sup>6</sup> Dayan, *Haiti: History, and the Gods*, 266; Bertin M. Louis Jr., "Haiti's Pact with the Devil?: *Bwa Kayiman*, Haitian Protestant Views of Vodou, and the Future of Haiti," *Religions* 10, no. 464 (2019): 1-15.

Loogaroo is a term associated with women who have obtained roles in society that defy the status quo and puts down women who have achieved and surpassed the limits placed on them by cultural standards. Storytelling is just one of many different tools that society uses to enforce and reinforce social norms, and that those that escape the boundaries of those social norms will be salted and defeated.

# Pishtaco: Peru's Ageless Killer

By Brandon Gutierrez, Hirotaka Tamae, and Travis Van Oosbree

In the highlands of the Andes Mountains, a sinister predator haunts the night. He is Pishtaco and his quarry are the indigenous inhabitants of rural Peru. This pale-skinned hunter can be seen prowling the outskirts of small villages dressed in a leather coat, tall boots, and a wide-brimmed hat. He seeks out natives who have strayed too far from the central village, lost travelers, drunkards or those who are otherwise distracted. Brandishing a long knife, he dismembers his victims, butchers them and harvests their body fat (or *unto* in the native tongue.)<sup>1</sup> He sells this ill-gotten *unto* to foreign industry as material components for their factories and machines. For centuries Pishtaco has terrorized the native Peruvians, all the while adapting his means and motives to keep up with the changing world in which he lives. Pishtaco has evolved as his legend has grown. As his earliest iterations, in the times of the Spanish conquest, used the stolen fat for the mysterious process of metallurgy and the production of church bells, so too did his successors utilize their harvest as lubrication for the machines of the industrial revolution, until today, when his bounty is sold for cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.<sup>2</sup> The legend of Pishtaco has long served as a warning against outsiders and foreigners in rural Peruvian life. As Peru continues to modernize, and contact with the developed world increases, the indigenous communities of Peru show no signs of embracing their light-skinned neighbors, as tales of Pishtaco live on to this day.

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Oliver-Smith, "The Pishtaco: Institutionalized Fear in Highland Peru," *American Folklore Society* (1969): 363.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Canessa, "Fear and loathing on the kharisiri trail: Alterity and identity in the Andes," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 6 (2000): 706.



Figure 5: *Pishitaco* by Linnea Carr, CSU Chico

The word Pishtaco is derived from the Quechua word “pishtac”, which means “to behead.” The tradition of the Pishtaco coincided with the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Body fats from Indians were used for the treatment of wounds and diseases among Spanish soldiers.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Catholic missionaries sought out indigenous body fat to improve the sound of their church bells. Even after these practices vanished, the strong impression left by Spanish culture has never been forgotten by the native people of the Andes. During the nineteenth century, Pishtaco was described as a merchant who seeks indigenous body fats to make soups, medicines, and supplies for factories.<sup>5</sup> By that point in time, Pishtaco had become not only a horrific murderer but also came to typify the members of the political and economic elite. The Pishtaco legend is also representative of the stark differences between social and racial classes. Pishtaco is always described as a white or mestizo male. When considered from the darker-skinned Indians’ perspective, whites and mestizos are believed to have become rich because they have exploited the lowest class of the society, the Indians.<sup>6</sup>

As time went on, Latin American culture began to evolve and grow with the modernization of the industrialized world; Pishtaco evolved alongside it. The shadowy figure began to take a new shape as multinational corporations turned their sights to Latin America, a land rich in profitable resources. Just as big business extracted value from the land, tales of Pishtaco extracting fats from vulnerable communities endured. The parallels between corporate greed and Pishtaco’s violence are highlighted by the native tribes’ inability to resist an invading force and feelings of helplessness that had permeated indigenous culture since the Spanish conquest.

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<sup>3</sup> Ernesto Vasquez del Aguila, “Pishtacos: Human Fat Murderers, Structural Inequalities, and Resistances in Peru,” *América Crítica*, 2, no. 2 (December 2018): 143.

<sup>4</sup> Oliver-Smith, “The Pishtaco,” 363-364.

<sup>5</sup> Vasquez del Aguila, “Pishtacos,” 144.

<sup>6</sup> Vasquez del Aguila, “Pishtacos,” 144.

The legend has again gained new life in a string of crimes committed by Latin American gangs. According to CNN, gang members were arrested having been found harvesting human fat with the intention to sell it illicitly to cosmetic and pharmaceutical companies on the black market.<sup>7</sup> While those responsible for the crimes were connected to gangs and not Pishtaco directly, the similarities are abundant. The publicity of this crime wave gave rise to a new round of Pishtaco narratives. In them, Pishtaco received a transportation upgrade in the form of a car instead of a horse. The mirrored evolution of Pishtaco and industry is critical to his long-lasting relevance. As technology becomes rapidly more pervasive, the future of Pishtaco is unclear.

For centuries the legend of Pishtaco has served as a warning amongst the aboriginal communities of Peru against the invading influence of European culture. With Pishtaco's long history of adapting and evolving to continuously represent the current industry in which foreign powers operate, the Pishtaco of the twenty-first century may take on an entirely new *modus operandi*. A digital Pishtaco may not be too far away. Instead of preying on drunkards or lost travelers, perhaps he will find his victims in those who are too deeply distracted by their smartphones and tablets. The instantaneous exchange of ideas provided by the internet has created an age in which cultural barriers have become more porous. Peruvians have seen their traditional ways of life disintegrating ever since the introduction of white men to the Americas and the constant fear of Pishtaco has served to distance native Peruvians from the erosive nature of their corrupting force. But with more of the outside world reaching the heart of indigenous Peruvian daily life, one is left wondering what new forms Pishtaco will take, who will be his desired target, and where will he strike next.

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<sup>7</sup> Arthur Brice, "Arrests Made in Ring That Sold Human Fat, Peru Says," CNN (Cable News Network, November 21, 2009), <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/11/20/fat.dead.humans.peru/index.html>

# El Sombrerón: Stolen Innocence Woven in Braids

By Shirley Davis and Karla Vega

A figure wanders the streets at night, ambling past the houses that are found in the village he has chosen to explore. In those houses, are young women whom he is hoping to seduce and impregnate.<sup>1</sup> This figure, when presenting itself in human form, looks like a short indigenous man who dons a large hat made of *petate* (material made of dried palm leaves), and sometimes has backwards facing feet.<sup>2</sup> When not presenting himself as a human, El Sombrerón is seen as a ball made of *hule* (rubber), that bounces of its own accord.<sup>3</sup> Carrying around a guitar when in human form, El Sombrerón seduces women who have long hair and large brown eyes.<sup>4</sup> He sings to them by their window, and when they fall under his spell of seduction, he enters their home and impregnates them, whether they realize that he has done so or not.<sup>5</sup> Once he has done what he wants with them, he leaves their hair braided or entangled. These women can only be saved before they have been impregnated by El Sombrerón if their fathers cut their hair and take them to the church to be blessed.<sup>6</sup>

The exact origins of the legend of El Sombrerón are unclear. Some sources claim that the legend was inspired by a Mayaquiché legend.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Beatriz Mariscal Hay, "La Mascara Culta de Folclor," *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana* 42 (January 2013): 166.

<sup>2</sup> Hay, "La Mascara," 166.

<sup>3</sup> Hay, "La Mascara," 166.

<sup>4</sup> Hay, "La Mascara," 166.

<sup>5</sup> Hay, "La Mascara," 167.

<sup>6</sup> Hay, "La Mascara," 167.

<sup>7</sup> The Mayaquiché are Mayan people who reside in Guatemala. Edward John Mullen Jr., "A Study Of 'Contemporaneos: Revista Mexicana De Cultura' (1928-1931)" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1968), 154.



Figure 6: *El Sobreron* by Antonio Chase Rosario, CSU Chico

The legend tells of a Mayan woman who is seduced by the grandson of the god of fertility, who is represented by El Sombrerón.<sup>8</sup> Another source places one of the tales in the church La Recoleccion, which was finished in the eighteenth century. In a novel by author Miguel Ángel Asturias, he describes the origin of El Sombrerón as happening just outside a church, which would have been built after the Spanish arrived in Latin America.<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the differing origin stories, it is clear that this legend is a cautionary tale for indigenous women. They are the victims in the stories of El Sombrerón, and they have no choice in the matter. These women lack agency in these tales, and are only portrayed as weak individuals who succumb to seduction of a demonic and dangerous man. The women are also powerless to save themselves and must wait for the men in their lives to rescue them from the clutches of El Sombrerón.<sup>10</sup> The moral seems to be that women should not trust any men, except those in their family. El Sombrerón could be a representation of men who want to take the virginity of young women. Strange and intricate braids in a woman's hair after a visit from El Sombrerón, also represent how he has toyed with the women in a perverse way, as hair often represents sexuality in women.<sup>11</sup>

Aside from the overtly gendered lessons from the encounters with El Sombrerón, his presence in oral histories and folklore reveal traces of the Spanish overlords and their relations to the native Guatemalans. It comes into focus how the legends continuously single out El Sombrerón's indigenous description and preference for indigenous women. The women he kidnaps are described as the embodiments of a native woman, who were known to wear "abbreviated skirts"<sup>12</sup> with their uncut long hair; which is sometimes

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<sup>8</sup> Mullen Jr., "A Study Of 'Contemporaneos,'" 155.

<sup>9</sup> Miguel Angel Asturias, *Leyendas de Guatemala* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada 1957), 47-51.

<sup>10</sup> Hay, "La Mascara," 167.

<sup>11</sup> Hay, "La Mascara," 167.

<sup>12</sup> John Lloyd, *Guatemala: Land of the Mayas* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1963), 31.

worn in braids.<sup>13</sup> Why would the legend specify one descriptive group of people? Why not the “restrained, pious, and chaste” Spanish colonial women?<sup>14</sup> Why is El Sombrerón depicted as a mestizo, a “person of mixed Indian and Spanish descent,” instead of a creole, or an Español?<sup>15</sup>

According to Nyrop, the indigenous in Guatemala “adhere to a syncretic set of beliefs that combines elements of Mayan and Roman Catholic ritual and mixes the aboriginal pantheon with Catholic saints.”<sup>16</sup> If El Sombrerón is dated back to the *Mayaquiché* legend, but the modern tale speaks of an indigenous spirit preying on indigenous women who are only saved by the will of a priest and his power of God through him, then the legend’s intended audience becomes clear: El Sombrerón is almost exclusively a warning to native women. If she continues to participate in her “pagan” beliefs and strays from the decorum of civilized society, she is then exposed to his desires and evil.<sup>17</sup> A woman would be safe if she listened to the words of her father and of God and lived a pious life like that of a proper European lady.

Why would the Spanish bother in appropriating an ancient Mayan legend? Perhaps, since the natives continuously refused to abandon their pre-Christian beliefs and practices, the Spanish conquerors used the natives’ own legend to help further assimilate them.<sup>18</sup> The legend could incite fear in young native women and persuade them to cut their long braids or wear longer European skirts when alone, or perhaps all together. El Sombrerón vanished if their wild hair was cut and blessed in the name of God. Indigenous deities held no power over El

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<sup>13</sup> Lloyd, *Guatemala: Land of the Maya*, 81.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara L. Voss, “Gender, Race, and Labor in the Archaeology of the Spanish Colonial Americas,” *Current Anthropology* 49, no. 5 (October 2008), 868.

<sup>15</sup> Amos Megged, “The Rise of Creole Identity in Early Colonial Guatemala: Differential Patterns in Town and Countryside,” *Social History* 17, no. 3 (October 1992), 421-422.

<sup>16</sup> Richard F. Nyrop, *Guatemala: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1983), 68.

<sup>17</sup> Nyrop, *Guatemala: A Country Study*, 68.

<sup>18</sup> W. George Lovell, *Conquest and Survival in Colonial Guatemala: A Historical Geography of the Cuchumatán Highlands, 1500-1821* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1985), 87.

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Sombrerón and only the Spanish had the means to protect the women.

In the end, the legend of El Sombrerón speaks of the gendered standards women were and still are held to today. However, it also tells of Guatemala's history and the ways in which its native people were forced to change to the standards that their European rulers saw fit.

# El Cucuy: The Boogeyman's Boogeyman

By Brianna Devlin and Jia Yu Wang

Most countries in Latin America have their own version of El Cucuy, but his myth varies depending on the region. El Cucuy has become an all-encompassing umbrella term for many of the behavior correcting legends that have been retold in Latin American communities, including the supernatural monsters of *La Llorona*, *El Chupacabra*, and even the Devil.<sup>1</sup> El Cucuy is a monster created to correct misbehavior, as his tale warns children to listen to their parents lest they are ready to face his wrath. El Cucuy has become a summation of universal mistakes and lessons that children face as they grow in life.

Originating in Spain and Portugal, it is believed that the legend of El Cucuy is derived from other Christian legends, including that of *La Vibria*, a female dragon in the fourteenth century who symbolized the essence of evil and temptation.<sup>2</sup> The name El Cucuy derives from *La Cuca Fera*, which was a diverse representation of dragons, extending from Tortosa to Valencia on the Mediterranean Coast.<sup>3</sup> The legend of El Cucuy made its way from the Iberian Peninsula to the New World during the early colonization of Latin America. During the colonization, the indigenous folklore and myths were intertwined

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<sup>1</sup> Redfern Garza, *Creepy Creatures and Other Cucuys* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jo Farb Hernandez, *Forms of Tradition in Contemporary Spain* (Oxford, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 94.

<sup>3</sup> Farb Hernandez, *Forms of Tradition*, 95.



Figure 7: *El Cucuy* by Isabella McMurry, CSU Chico

with those from Europe and Africa.<sup>4</sup>

An older illustration of El Cucuy, drawn by Francisco de Goya, advocates the correction of moral education in order to break a child's cycle of ignorance and false beliefs through the usage of superstitions.<sup>5</sup> El Cucuy is a monster that is adaptable to fit a parent's needs, and his tale can be used to enforce whatever lesson they see fit. Throughout time, El Cucuy's lore has changed drastically from one person to the next, as he is at his most feared when he is reimaged by an individual's fear and circumstance. The legend of El Cucuy has transformed throughout the centuries with many different cultural influences, but it still serves as a warning against disobedience, misbehavior, and giving into the temptations of evil.

The following short story is a retelling of Sarah Melissa's version of El Cucuy. She states that El Cucuy is well-known among Mexican-American communities, with parents telling their children a fragmented story, leaving their children to fill in the rest of the tale with their own fears.

One evening, Juan and Rosie were walking back home from school and decided to take a shortcut through the town's cemetery. As the night sky grew pitch black, Rosie and Juan began to sing and dance among the dried flowers and dusty tombs in an effort to scare away the shadowy darkness.<sup>6</sup> While they sang, they saw a faceless figure, cloaked in several sheets walking towards them.<sup>7</sup> As the disturbing figure came closer, the cloaks covering him fell away and revealed a monster with a hummingbird like tongue and two rows of

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<sup>4</sup> Amelia Meyer, "Brazil - Mythology And Folklore," last modified 2010, <https://www.brazil.org.za/mythology-and-folklore.html>

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Anne Steward, "Stoicism and Goya's Los Caprichos," (BA thesis, University of Louisville, 2007), 57-58.

<sup>6</sup> Tey Diano Rebolledo and Eliana S. Rivero, *Infinite divisions: an anthology of Chicana literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), 314.

<sup>7</sup> Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, "Que viene el Coco," Metropolitan Museum of Art collection, accessed January 26, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/90028505>.

reddish teeth. The monster slowly and deliberately stalked around the couple, knowing that he was instilling fear in them. Juan gulped and asked the creature who he was, trying to keep his voice steady as he did so. The haunting creature made itself known as El Cucuy, and began to make its way towards Rosie. Juan jumped to her defense, and Rosie was able to escape. Unable to escape from El Cucuy himself, Juan was taken to the creature's lair. El Cucuy began carving into Juan, and his blood began to seep from the cuts. The scent of dairy in Juan's blood reached El Cucuy and he recoiled from the smell. While El Cucuy was distracted by his own disgust, Juan was able to escape the monster's lair. Juan had never been more thankful that he listened to his mother and drank his milk. When retelling their horrid experience to other children, they would always remind them to listen to their parents, as listening to his mother was the only reason Juan survived to tell the tale.<sup>8</sup>

Many cultures have their own version of El Cucuy but El Cucuy holds a unique trans-atlantic fable. The stories and myths of El Cucuy are never fully complete, allowing for the imaginations of children to seep into his legends and fame. As a result of this partial incompleteness in the El Cucuy stories, El Cucuy is uniquely his own monster in his own right, but is additionally an umbrella title for other monsters and legends.

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<sup>8</sup> Sarah M. Murray, "Please Obey All Traffic Laws: Stories" (MA thesis, University of California, Davis, 2016), 42-49.

# La Pisadeira: Beware of Full Bellies

By Karissa Cherry and Alexis Karst

Imagine a night where you just had your favorite meal, the type of meal where it's just so good you can't stop eating and leaves you feeling stuffed. You are so full that when you go to sleep you aren't comfortable sleeping on your stomach and you turn around to sleep on your back. You drift away. In the middle of the night, you awake only to be unable to move. You see an old woman wearing a red cap with red glowing eyes and long yellow fingernails sitting on your chest. You want to scream for help or run away, but nothing will move. You are stuck just staring at *La Pisadeira*! At least that's what they call the sleep paralysis monster in Brazil. Different countries and cultures around the world have their own versions of sleep paralysis monsters or hallucinations seen when in that state of being. While it doesn't actually do anything to harm anyone, it is still a frightful experience and can leave people feeling uneasy about going back to bed. Before medical professionals discovered these symptoms were purely scientific, different cultures throughout the centuries wholeheartedly believed that these terrifying events were an entirely supernatural occurrence. This gave birth to folklore about the Old hag, demons, and La Pisadeira.

When the Portuguese colonized what is now Brazil, they brought with them myths from their culture. Back then they had "Fradinho da Mão Furada," which translates to "Little Hand-Hole Friar." The Friar



Figure 8: *La Pisadeira* by Natasha Martin, CSU Chico

would lay his heavy hand on one's chest while you slept leaving them unable to move. Over time and with the people of Brazil having their own experiences, they developed *La Pisadeira*. *La Pisadeira*, in Brazilian folklore, is often described as an old woman with glowing red eyes and long yellow finger-nails who lurks on people's roofs and sneaks into their homes in the middle of the night. She has also been known to watch people from outside their homes at night. She is said to sit on the chests of people who are sleeping on their backs with full stomachs making it difficult to breathe and leaving them unable to move. She is sometimes described as tall and thin and occasionally seen wearing a red cap. Some say that if someone steals her cap she is required to grant them a wish in order to get it back. *La Pisadeira* is often described as a hallucination attributed to the symptoms of sleep paralysis. There are not very many documented sightings of *La Pisadeira* because the stories are mostly passed down orally through family members in rural Brazil<sup>1</sup>. One of the few written recordings is from Cora Coralina, a famous Brazilian poet, who wrote about her own experience with *La Pisadeira* in her first book *Poemas Dos Becos De Goiás e Estórias Mais*. Coralina recalls being told to sleep on her side and "you fill up your breadbasket, the Pisadeira comes, won't let you sleep, and in the morning you're broken like hell", which has been translated from her native language of Portuguese.<sup>2</sup> For many people, especially before the days of modern science, creating monsters in their heads for the strange things they are experiencing helps them cope with whatever is happening.<sup>3</sup> Having things be unknown, particularly when it's dark outside, makes just about everyone uneasy.

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<sup>1</sup> Jose F.R. De Sa and Sergio A. Mota-Romlin, "Sleep Paralysis in Brazilian Folklore and Other Cultures: A Brief Review," *Frontiers in Psychology* 7 (September 2016): 1-6.

<sup>2</sup> Cora Coralina, *Poemas Dos Becos De Goiás e Estórias Mais* (São Paulo: Global, 2014), 52.

<sup>3</sup> Josh K. Elliott, "Why the paralyzing 'sleep demon' still haunts humans in the age of science," *Global News*, April 20, 2019, <https://globalnews.ca/news/5177498/sleep-paralysis-demon-science/>

Sleep paralysis isn't something only people in Brazil get to experience, it's a human experience. People all around the world in all of history have been fortunate or unfortunate, depending on the point of view, to experience sleep paralysis.<sup>4</sup> It's still unclear exactly how many people suffer from sleep paralysis, but it's estimated that 7.6% of the population will experience it at least once in their life and when suffering from stress, the likelihood increases.<sup>5</sup> Throughout history other cultures have attributed the cause of sleep paralysis to demons or other monsters. In 1781, Henry Fuseli painted "The Nightmare" which shows a figure sitting on the chest of a woman when she sleeps.<sup>6</sup> In northern Canada, the Inuit people believe shamans are responsible for the experience, while in Japan they believe it's a summoned spirit.<sup>7</sup> Ghosts and spirits of various names are popular reasoning for the experience from China to Egypt.<sup>8</sup> In Nigeria, they have a female demon named *Ogun Oru* which causes sleep paralysis and in Newfoundland, they have an old witch that sits on the sleeper's chest. No matter which country, the experiences are quite similar to each other. All describing what is now known as sleep paralysis.<sup>9</sup>

These are all hallucinations of course but it is admittedly very frightening and it is easy to see why victims of these episodes mistook them for supernatural happenings. In any part of the world, going through sleep paralysis is terrible and people develop an explanation for the hallucinations they see when suffering it. If one is not familiar with the scientific knowledge of how and why sleep paralysis works, it is understandable that their explanations are of terrifying monsters. Although these hallucinations can now be explained in a scientific

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<sup>4</sup> Robert T. Miller, "Sleep Paralysis: Not the Stuff Sweet Dreams Are Made Of," *The Trauma and Mental Health Report*, March 8, 2019, <https://trauma.blog.yorku.ca/2019/03/sleep-paralysis-not-the-stuff-sweet-dreams-are-made-of/>

<sup>5</sup> De Sa and Mota-Romlin, "Sleep Paralysis in Brazilian Folklore," 4.

<sup>6</sup> De Sa and Mota-Romlin, 4.

<sup>7</sup> De Sa and Mota-Romlin, 5.

<sup>8</sup> De Sa and Mota-Romlin, 5.

<sup>9</sup> De Sa and Mota-Romlin, 5.

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fashion, it is interesting to note that no matter where you are on the globe, whether it be the icy tundra of Canada, the savannas of Nigeria, or the rainforests of South America, the folklore attributed to sleep paralysis tends to pertain mainly of a witch or an old woman. Science has yet to explain why people from all over the globe have been experiencing similar apparitions over the course of centuries with no contact with one another to spread such stories. So next time you go to bed with a full belly, be careful...

