

# EAST BAY HISTORIA



**Vol. 6, 2022**

# East Bay Historia



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

**Volume 6, 2022**

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

Dedicated to all those affected by war in our current world, and in acknowledgment of our fellow students who are persevering through these tumultuous times.



*"The struggle persists"*

"History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

*-Maya Angelou*

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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 image by Josh Lake

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

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# Contents

Contents	v
Editorial Staff	vii
Introduction & Acknowledgements	viii
Author Biographies	xi
Oh, These French Kisses: The History and Impact of Atelier Populaire on May 1968	2
<i>by Ari Diaz</i>	
<i>Illustration by Gunnar Kroencke</i>	
Beyond Spectral Evidence: An Examination of Judicial Reform Prompted by the Salem Witch Trials of 1692	34
<i>by Jennifer Shaw</i>	
<i>Illustration by Isabella McMurry</i>	
¿Damas o Putas? Understanding the Root of Californio Women Stereotypes and the Effect on Their Social Identity	56
<i>by Vanessa Armenta</i>	
<i>Illustration by Mari Hokeness</i>	
The Forgotten Past: Native American Code Talkers in the Global Theater and Homefront, 1942-1945	76
<i>by Christine Nguyen</i>	
<i>Illustration by Elizabeth Lo</i>	

The Plague of Segregation: Educational Inequality in Chicago During  
the 1918 Influenza Pandemic 92

*by Elizabeth Stenger Balbin*

*Illustration by Francisca Vargas*

Willful Subjugation: Nazi Propaganda Manipulation 116

*by Alexis Karst*

*Illustration by Ericka Berry*

”Sze Yuen-Ming, alias Star Talbot”: A Eurasian Celebrity in Shanghai’s  
International Settlement 138

*by Alex O. Wood*

*Illustration by Mae Saechao*

From Dirt to Concrete: The Loss of Rural Land in Contra Costa County  
162

*by Melissa Grijalva-Foreman*

*Illustration by Aliyah Ben-Joseph*

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# Introduction & Acknowledgements

For this year's *East Bay Historia* team, the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester brought with it many uncertainties. The Omicron-variant COVID-19 surge had us beginning our course virtually and we did not get to meet one another in-person until the beginning of March. But even as our community begins to feel the tensions of COVID-19 finally beginning to recede, we find our attention torn between new and old wars, with violence on our screens with every scroll. Within our own country, violence plays out in both active and passive ways, through police brutality in our streets and the legislative attacks on our rights to choose, to love, and to learn. In these times of turmoil and distrust in our institutions, my peers and I understand how critical of a position we are in as historians. How do we provide meaningful historical interpretations that can shed light on our current world?

I believe this journal to be the beginning of an answer to this question. Covering an array of topics and time periods, from the Salem Witch Trials to the emerging suburbanization of the outer East Bay region, this journal has helped us and hopefully others see that history is a necessary part of the answer to the problems we have in our current times. While each article offers a unique argument and perspective, we see a pattern emerge of history being told with the intent of it shedding light onto current injustices and failings of our system. I hope you take these lessons with you and partake in active change, as I believe all my peers and I will do.



Thank you to our hardworking authors who shared their research with us and now you. This journal would be nothing though without the authors themselves, who not only shared their hard work but participated in revisions and open discussions with us. I would like to thank Jennifer Shaw as our advisor, who has kept us on track and provided inspiration when we needed it, and Dr. Linda Ivey, who led us as our faculty advisor this semester. A big thanks to Ari Diaz for his help with marketing and social media, and Jessica Spencer for her help formatting our journal. Another part of the *East Bay Historia* that really brings history to life is the gorgeous artwork submitted from art students at CSU Chico. Their art has helped create the interesting and unique look of our journal, and we are so grateful to our artists and Professor Funk for these collaborations.

Without the substantial support and encouragement of the East Bay History department, this journal would not be possible, so thank you to all of the faculty and staff of our department for supporting and investing in our research and professional pursuits. The support from the Friends of History has also been key in being able to publish each of our journal volumes in beautiful paperback, and we greatly appreciate the generous donations and support.

Saving the best for last, thank you to our editorial board this semester. While we faced challenges and setbacks, each individual on our team brought their experiences and perspective to the journal, which allowed it to become a better publication. I want to thank my fellow editors for the incredible hard work they have done this semester and collaborating towards the vision of what the *East Bay*

*Historia* should be. It's this collaborative work of each individual student on our editorial board that brings this journal to life, and I am grateful for having the opportunity to work with each and every one of you this semester. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your dedication.

When reading our journal, I hope you take away a better understanding not only of how our past happened, but how we can create a better future for ourselves and others. Without further ado, I hope you enjoy reading volume 6 of the East Bay *Historia*!

Trix Welch  
Editor-In-Chief

# Author Biographies

## **Vanessa Armenta**

*¿Damas o Putas? Understanding the Root of Californio Women Stereotypes and the Effect on Their Social Identity*

My major is Public History, and I am a graduate student in my second year in the MA program. My historical interests are the Spanish period leading up to the early American period, focusing on the narratives of the BIPOC community and women. I look forward to working with a historical society that would like to expand a narrative with which all its community members can connect.

## **Ari Diaz**

*Oh, These French Kisses: The History & Impact of Atelier Populaire on May 1968*

I am a history major in my final semester as an undergrad. I'm concentrating on social justice and citizenship. My research tends to focus more on student/youth led protests and uprisings. This is my first time submitting to the East Bay Historia but last year I was part of the editorial board for the Historia. My main job was working the social media and website.

## **Melissa Grijalva-Foreman**

*From Dirt to Concrete: The Loss of Rural Land in Contra Costa County*

I am a first year, Public History Graduate student at CSU, East Bay. I graduated from CSU, East Bay with a B.A. in Anthropology with a focus

in Archaeology. My historic interests are diverse; however, I primarily focus on pre-history and California history. Beyond my academic pursuits, I am employed as a Cultural Resources Specialist with a nationwide environmental and cultural consultation firm helping to preserve and document the cultural resources across the country.

### **Alexis Karst**

#### *Willful Subjugation: Nazi Propaganda Manipulation*

I am in last semester and majoring in history with a concentration in migration and globalization. I have always been fascinated in past wars and the events leading up to and after. I believe it is my generation's duty to remember and analyze our past so as not to repeat such disasters in the future. World War II has been a particular interest of mine because it was years in the making and, in hindsight, very much avoidable. History is a lesson for us all and it is our responsibility to listen.

### **Christine Nguyen**

#### *Memories Of the Forgotten Past: Native American Code Talkers, 1940-1945*

I am a Bay Area native. I am currently a senior History major with a concentration in Social Justice and Citizenship. My historical interests are the United States and California history. After completing my undergraduate degree, I would like to pursue an M.A. and perhaps a doctoral degree in History in the future. Ultimately, I want to use my history degree to teach History or work in publishing.

### **Jennifer Shaw**

*Beyond Spectral Evidence: An Examination of Judicial Bias within the Salem Witch Trials of 1692*

Currently I am working towards my M.A. in Public History. I graduated in 2021 with my B.A. from CSUEB in History, and served as the Editor in Chief of the East Bay Historia in 2021. History is my passion, and I happily get to share that with the public by working as an interpreter for the parks department.

### **Elizabeth Stenger Balbin**

*The Plague of Segregation: Educational Inequality in Chicago During the 1918 Influenza Pandemic*

I am currently in my final semester of Cal State East Bay's MA History program with a concentration on Teaching History. I graduated from the University of San Diego in 2016 with a Bachelor's Degree in History and I have earned my CA Teaching Credential. I taught middle school social studies for five years where I was able to teach ancient world history, medieval world history, and United States history. I want to develop history curricula that utilize diverse primary sources and incorporate students' own lived experiences. I am intrigued by how medieval world history, specifically African history, can be taught in the classroom.

**Alex O. Wood**

*"Sze Yuen-Ming, alias Star Talbot": A Eurasian Celebrity in Shanghai's International Settlement*

I am a graduate student in history in my last semester at Cal State East Bay. In the graduate program I worked on a university thesis project incorporating my own family history, titled "Eurasian Experiences in Shanghai and China's Treaty Ports Uncovered Through Family History." The article I submitted for this year's *Historia* is an edited portion of my thesis project covering the life of my second great-grandfather. After graduation, I plan to continue to study history as a teacher, family historian, and lifelong learner.



Illustration Gunnar Kroencke, CSU Chico

# Oh, These French Kisses: The History and Impact of Atelier Populaire on May 1968

By Ari Diaz

A great mass movement emerged during the summer of 2020. In response to the killing of George Floyd, the simple yet valiant cry of Black Lives Matter reverberated across U.S. streets—with about 15 to 25 million people attending at least one protest. These numbers make last year’s protests the largest in U.S. history. As in earlier protest movements in our nation’s history, high school and college-aged youth organized and led these recent mass mobilizations. An earlier example is the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011. I vividly recall high school students organizing marches and assemblies in the times that I attended in San Francisco. Although less appreciated, art has defined the protests of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. One of the most important posters in Occupy Wall Street showed a ballerina dancing on the Charging Bull of Wall Street sculpture. Posters emblazoned with “We Are The 99%” also propelled Occupy Wall Street. Today, the block-lettering style of “Black Lives Matter” inscribed on posters, shirts, and streets expresses the movement’s clear and concise message. With antecedents in twentieth-century labor and anarchist movements, the Spanish Civil War, and the Black Power



### *Oh, These French Kisses*

movement, a raised fist is also a recognizable emblem of the 2020 protests for racial justice.

Similarly, the protests of May '68 in France saw a great pouring of artwork in service of youthful uprising. In this brief movement, art and uprising were inseparable. Young students and workers participating in this two-month uprising decried French society, including workers' lack of rights, inept universities, police brutality, and Charles de Gaulle's overlong stay in office. The Vietnam and Algerian Wars also drew ire. To conceptualize and understand these real but varied concerns behind the uprising was a difficult task. Daily marches, occupations of universities and factories, and street fights with police threatened to devolve into confusion. Leaders needed to communicate swiftly to participants on the touchline what the movement stood for; they also needed to justify this revolutionary struggle to the French people and a global audience. An art collective, with a cloud of mysteriousness shrouding them, by the name of Atelier Populaire provided this much-needed line of essential communication. Despite the uprising's brevity, Atelier Populaire contextualized the French May '68 uprising through art. Their posters supplied the uprising with its unique voice. With a dedicated work ethic and a strict schedule, Atelier Populaire amplified daily and weekly messages. In fact, their art galvanized the movement's revolutionary fervor and inspired other uprisings, including student protests in Mexico City. The reach of their message was global.

Rosa Luxemburg, one of the finest political thinkers from the first half of the 20th century, once said, "Before a revolution happens,

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

it is perceived as impossible; after it happens, it is seen as having been inevitable.” The May 1968 uprising in France was inevitable. Conditions laid bare in French society that made it ripe and ready for students and workers to finally revolt. In *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968*, Daniel Singer chronicled the history of May ‘68 just two years from the conclusion of the protests. Singer examined its roots and consequences and speculated about what lessons the world might take from this seminal moment in history. Singer argued that students’ anger could be traced to hurdles in higher education at the time. In 1966, only 1 in 10 twenty-year-olds was still studying after graduating high school. It almost got worse for prospecting students, from 1965-1966 the Gaullist government proposed new laws for universities that would reduce the number of students they would admit each year. This angered students and teachers. Their fury would make the Gaullist government take back their proposed laws, foreshadowing the events of May ‘68. Students from working-class backgrounds still found it extremely difficult to be admitted. Despite this fact, and with the rise in population after the Second World War, there were more working-class students in higher education than ever before. Before the war, the statistic was one in a hundred working-class students in higher education; after the war, the proportion was one in ten.<sup>1</sup>

This large influx of working-class students also encountered the same inequality inside their classroom that was present outside

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Singer, *Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 1970), 52.

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

the classroom. Students experienced destitute educational environments, not unlike what past generations endured. One former student described his experience this way: “The rigid centralism, leaving the university chancellor very little scope for improvisation; the rigid division of facilities, leaving the student little chance to switch; the ruthless guillotine of examinations; the absence of contacts between professors and students; the total lack of guidance, the routine of set lectures.”<sup>2</sup> Unemployment was rampant among graduating students; this added a new level of uncertainty and uneasiness among current students and students wishing to attend university. Even students who wished to join the small French elite sided and sympathized with the students who wanted to do away with the said elite because their future looked bleak as well.

With the workers, their reasoning for revolting is a bit more complex than the students. Following the years after the Second World War and with an effort to rebuild areas that were damaged, the standard of living for workers rose quite high. This was true for Europe, the U.S., and countries not affected by the destruction of the war. Also, having New Deal-esque acts still in place and social safety nets for workers helped tremendously. If you look at France’s closest economic competitors, England and Germany, their standards of living are similar. Though English and German workers had more TVs, French workers had more refrigerators and cars than their counterparts. So then, what drove nine to eleven million workers (twenty-two

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<sup>2</sup> Singer, *Prelude to Revolution*, 54.

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

percent of France's population at that time) to join the students and strike? One reason for the workers' revolt can be traced to homes and overcrowding. In a 1967 survey, more than half of workers complained they did not have a proper bathroom, shower, and toilet. A fifth complained about overcrowding and another seven percent complained about severe overcrowding. French workers were also working more than ever.<sup>3</sup> Despite having a regulated 40-hour workweek, they were working an average of 46 hours a week. Add this to the over-crowding and you get a ticking time bomb ready to explode. But Singer makes the point that it might be something more, "the main resentment was directed against the factory itself, with its barrack-room discipline," and he goes on to say about their state of mind, "a workman can feel in his bones that it is not his place but a strange surrounding in which he is a thing, an object, a commodity."<sup>4</sup> Their feeling towards the factory is comparable to the way students felt in their mundane and outdated universities. The students spoke out against routine and consumerism (among other things); there was nothing more routine than working in a factory where the demands are high, the tasks are repetitive, and you have to carry out your duties with extreme speed. Also, with the 1950's we saw a rise in consumerism where you needed to purchase a car or tv to have a successful life. How can you live such a lowly life and yet be expected to take part in a consumerist and superficial society? The students spoke to the workers, the workers listened and related, and followed suit.

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<sup>3</sup> Singer, *Prelude to Revolution*, 85.

<sup>4</sup> Singer, *Prelude to Revolution*, 87.

## *Oh, These French Kisses*

The history of the Atelier Populaire is as mysterious and elusive as any art collective (or any group for that matter) that has come before or after them. Even to this day, not much is known about the artists and students who were a part of this collective and what we do know is fairly scarce. Luckily, in Clifford Deaton's journal article "The Memory of May '68: The Ironic Interruption and Democratic Commitment of the Atelier Populaire" we get a look inside, though only briefly, at the art collective that visualized the uprising. Funny enough, Atelier Populaire arrived at the May '68 protests late. As the workers were striking and occupying their factories and the students were marching, setting up their barricades, and fighting the police in the French streets; Atelier Populaire would not yet be created. It wasn't until May 14th, about two weeks into the uprising, that a group of art students from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts would form an art collective called Atelier Populaire. This group would inspire many and sway the masses in France and parts of the world, but their creation would not be possible without the students and workers themselves as the Atelier Populaire took inspiration from them. So much so, their first poster (released on May 14th) combined both movements as Deaton explains, "The poster was the first tangible image that proclaimed the goals of the 1968 student movement—quite simply, the joining together of the workers' movement and the student movement."<sup>5</sup> The title of this specific

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<sup>5</sup> Clifford Deaton, "The Memory of May '68: The Ironic Interruption and Democratic Commitment of the Atelier Populaire," *Design Issues* 29, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 31.

*Oh, These French Kisses*

poster is *Usines, Universités, Union* (Figure 1).<sup>6</sup> This translates to “Factory, University, Union,” which was a call for radical unionization in these areas and went as far as to compare the school to a factory. For the next few weeks, Atelier Populaire would mass-produce about 350 or so posters a day in service of the growing revolt.



Figure 1: “Usines, Universités, Union”

When making the posters, Atelier Populaire had a style and method unique to them. Atelier Populaire needed a method that would allow them to print as many posters as they possibly could and distributed them just as fast. They landed on silk-screen printing. Silk-screen printing is mainly used for clothes

(specifically t-shirts) and signs/displays; needless to say, it’s a cost-effective way to mass-produce anything in a hurry. Though silk-screen printing is a method as old as time, it wasn’t until the 1960s that it became popular in the west, “...silk-screening was common in the United States in both industrial and artistic print production, including the famous works of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, but it was

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<sup>6</sup>Atelier Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution, Paris, May, 1968* (London: Dobson, 1969), 26.

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

almost unheard of in Parisian print studios.”<sup>7</sup> Choosing to use silk-screen printing was revolutionary in and of itself as the preferred method art students used in Atelier Populaire had always been lithograph, but lithograph couldn’t keep up with the ever-demanding and fast-paced nature of the uprising. But with this stressful environment; who decided what was printed and when? This decision was made with the collective effort of students, workers, radicals, and Atelier Populaire. They would meet daily in a general assembly (a decentralized commune where the organization of daily life occurred). While discussing the plan of action for that day they would also discuss the political and social issues troubling them. Atelier Populaire would then listen to the general assembly’s problems, grievances, and debate and vote about what should be printed in the posters; soon after, Atelier Populaire would get quickly to work. They would avoid slogans that are too vague and wouldn’t vote on projects that are hastily conceived. Within the poster-making process, scenes like this are commonly found, “Atelier Populaire embraced democratic participation and explored their ‘policy’ by engaging with one another on a level of equal debate. Those for or against a poster could share, argue, and prevent certain posters from being made.”<sup>8</sup> This uprising was democratic (in the socialist/anarchist tradition) in nature. It was a combined effort and a strong-willed coalition of students, workers, radicals, and others. It was only fair that Atelier Populaire would make

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<sup>7</sup> Deaton, “Memory of May ‘68”, 33.

<sup>8</sup> Deaton, “Memory of May ‘68”, 34.

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

decisions in the same manner. After all Atelier Populaire, and the posters they made, belonged to the revolution and nothing else.

During the month of May '68, the streets of France were strewn with barricades, tear gas canisters, broken bottles from Molotov cocktails, and cobblestones from the streets of the Latin Quarter that students used to hurl at police. Something just as dangerous and sinister covered the walls of French streets: posters. But it was the French government and police who considered the posters to be dangerous and sinister. What was so offensive in the posters? What did they depict? The posters addressed topics ranging from anti-police sentiment, anti-capitalism, worker rights, immigrant rights, the arts, French society in general, de Gaulle government, and much more.



Figure 2: "La Lutte Continue"

When you examine the posters produced by Atelier Populaire, you'll notice they concentrate on workers and the struggle



### Oh, These French Kisses

against capitalism most of all. The uprising had left-wing politics attached to it (dominated by anarchist and Maoist currents) and naturally, the posters attacked capitalism and uplifted the people who toil under it. As mentioned before, 9 to 11 million workers went on strike. Posters criticizing and deconstructing the system in which they lived had to be released to workers not yet



Figure 3: “La Lutte Continue”

involved in the struggle; even more importantly, the posters were designed with a clear message as to not have anything lost in translation. The posters tailored for workers are often decorated with the phrase *La Lutte Continue*, translating to “The Struggle Continues” (Figure 2 & 3). In my research, I counted about eight to ten posters with varying degrees of that phrase. Posters with “The Struggle Continues” and a group of workers in the foreground are common. (Figure 2)<sup>9</sup> is a good example of this. With posters like these, you’ll see the colors of either black or red, the colors commonly associated with anarchism and socialism/communism. This poster shows workers bunched together, holding their tools and raising their fists in the air. Comradery, fraternity, and brotherhood of workers manifest in this

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<sup>9</sup> Johan Kugelberg and Philippe Vermes, *Beauty is in the Street: A Visual Record of the May 68 Uprising* (London: Four Corner Books, 2011), 130-131.

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

poster. You can see also with this poster Atelier Populaire trying to tell workers they are not alone. In *Figure 3*<sup>10</sup>, released on May 29th, instead of workers, there is a factory. There are many posters with factories, it's one of the enduring images found in Atelier Populaire's posters. This poster has the same phrase of "The Struggle Continues" but what's found in this poster is a raised fist in the place of a smoke-stack. Workers resented the factories in which they worked, that being one of the reasons for their strikes. To see a raised fist on top of the factory tells the worker to whom the factory belongs. That is why there were many occupations of factories in France during May '68 and a decentralized and democratic mode of work, that rendered their bosses useless.

A common thread that can be found in these posters is the word "Capitalism" and words related to it, inscribed front and center,



Figure 4: "Capital"

making it visible to the naked eye. For example, let's look at the poster simply titled *Capital* (*Figure 4*)<sup>11</sup> that was released in the third week of May. This poster was specifically made for Citroën (a French branch of automobiles) workers who were either going on strike or trying to persuade them to go on strike. The words "Capital" being laid on an anvil

<sup>10</sup> Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution*, 96.

<sup>11</sup> Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution*, 21.

### Oh, These French Kisses

and being struck by a hammer (presumably belonging to a Citroën worker), which is painted with a purple shading, demonstrates two things: 1. The real power always lies with the workers, and it is them who are in charge and 2. Irony and humor are used a lot in Atelier Populaire posters. The irony of using the tools of work and capitalism, like the hammer and anvil, to destroy capitalism itself is reminiscent of a quote that is attributed to many people, ranging from Karl Mark to Vladimir Lenin, “The Capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them.” This poster is meant to convey that quote. Going forward, you’ll see many posters that are drenched in ironic imagery. Not only that, but the posters will also be colorful and will rarely be dreary despite depicting important and serious topics. A poster with a similar theme is *Continuons La Lutte—Le Capitalisme Sombre* (Figure



Figure 5: “Continuons La Lutte”

5),<sup>12</sup> this translates to “Let’s Continue the Struggle—Capitalism is Sinking.” Again, it’s direct and to the point. The drowning figure adorned with bladed gloves looks sinister despite only seeing one hand; to us modern audiences it may look like Freddy Kruger from the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series. To make the “human” embodiment

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<sup>12</sup>Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution*, 24.

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

of capitalism with bladed weapons says to the person viewing the poster that capitalism will try to hurt you in some form. The tides that are dragging the figure to the shallow depths represent the grand coalition of students and workers. What stands out the most about this poster is when it was released to the public, which is around the fourth week of May. The mass strikes and street battles with the police are already in full swing and with the phrase “...Capitalism is Sinking” one may think the struggle against this system is on the side of the students and workers, but that is not the case. On the fifth week of May ‘68, negotiations for wage reforms called the Grenelle Agreement were underway between the Gaullist government and the CGT (one of the largest unions in France). Both parties agreed to wage increases and unions like CGT would vote to end strikes, to the dismay of many workers.<sup>13</sup> The optimism shown in this poster was to be short-lived with the workers bowing out of the struggle. The purpose of this category of posters was for encouraging workers to see the power in themselves, their ability to overthrow capitalism, and the way solidarity can bring workers together. Their might was demonstrated for France and the world to see and Atelier Populaire was able to communicate that through the numerous posters revolving around worker power and anti-capitalism. The workers had many reasons to get involved in the events of May ‘68, but the first few strikes started as sympathy strikes after workers witnessed students being beaten by the police. But as the workers capitulated to reforms, the uprising

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<sup>13</sup> Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 67.

*Oh, These French Kisses*

itself would die down and it would just become students, alone, fighting the police as they once did back in the beginning of May '68.

The routine abuse unleashed by police on the students occupying their schools turned out to be one of the main catalysts for the May '68 protests spreading like a wildfire across France. The French police, the CRS (riot police), and the CDR (a far-right group closely aligned with the police) made matters worse than they needed to be. Before their intervention, the small



Figure 6: "La Police S'affiche Aux Beaux Arts—Les Beaux Arts Affichent Dans La Rue"

pockets of protests leading up to May and the minuscule occupations of their universities by students would have been little to no consequence at all; it would have been just a tiny blip in the grand French history. But alas, that was not what happened. As the police tactics grew harsh by the day, the participants grew as well. Soon, students now assembled barricades and street fights with the police occurred commonly across France. It is a hard task to capture the daily reality the brave protesters faced but Atelier Populaire managed to do just that. One of Atelier Populaire's most lasting posters is an image of

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

a CRS officer with an SS attached on the shield,<sup>14</sup> it was released on May 18th. Originally released on the 17th, it did not have the SS. Workers at the print shop felt the SS would suit the poster better and thus included the new addition the following day. What sets this poster apart from the other police-related posters is how domineering and baleful the CRS officer looks. As the officer depicted is unidentifiable, consequently, we see no emotions, which gave French people who saw this poster a view of the lack of empathy and humanity the CRS possessed. The SS, which is a reference to the paramilitary organization of Nazi Germany, sums up the totalitarian turn the CRS and French police have taken. The Nazi imagery Atelier Populaire used in this poster would be used in many other posters, some pertaining to the police and other subjects. Another poster that demonstrates the madness of the police is called *La Police S'affiche Aux Beaux Arts—Les Beaux Arts Affichent Dans La Rue* (Figure 6).<sup>15</sup> This translates to “The Police Post Themselves at the School of Fine Arts—the Fine Arts Students Poster the Streets.” This poster was released during the fourth week of June when the protests started to fade. By this time the workers had accepted (some begrudgingly) the small reforms and started returning to their factories. The police now only had to deal with the students. An occupation of schools began by the police, one of the schools being the famed École des Beaux-Arts—the same school where many members of Atelier Populaire had studied in. In the poster, a CRS officer bites down on a paintbrush, in a possible

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<sup>14</sup> Kugelberg and Vermes, *Beauty is in the Street*, 248.

<sup>15</sup> Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution*, 85.

attempt to break the spirits of the still protesting students. But as bottom texts display, despite police occupation, the students are still out in the streets protesting. Above all else, this poster is proof of the resiliency that students showed through the nearly eight months of protests.



Figure 7: "La Police Vous Parle Tous Les Soirs"

The French media often made an appearance in posters of Atelier Populaire. The protesters noticed the close link between the Gaullist government, the police, and the French media. One such poster is called *La Police Vous Parle Tous Les Soirs a 20h* (Figure 7).<sup>16</sup> The text translates to “The Police Speak to You Every Night at 8 pm.” Released sometime between May 25th and June 3rd, a police officer is seen speaking into

a microphone with the abbreviations for the Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française (France’s national radio station during that period). The poster echoed what many protesters believed about the ORTF; controlled by the Gaullist government, ORTF was another totalitarian lackey—just like the French police. Using a policeman as the speaker in this poster tells us there is no separation between the

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<sup>16</sup> Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution*, 14.

police and ORTF. Both are an extension of the Gaullist government, with no agency of their own. Also, the police can be interpreted as the human embodiment of the French media and government. In June, a group known as the Committees for the Defense of the Republic, or CDR, was created. They would routinely assist police by keeping the students at bay. Numerous violent incidents occurred as a



Figure 8: “Halte a La Fascisation—CDR SS—Depot Des Batignolles, 7 Blessés—Fac D’Orleans Saccagée—Marc Lanvin Tué A Arras”

result. A few of those incidents are captured in the poster titled *Halte a La Fascisation—CDR SS—Depot Des Batignolles, 7 Blessés—Fac D’Orleans Saccagée—Marc Lanvin Tué A Arras* (Figure 8).<sup>17</sup> Released on June 30th, the poster translates to “End Fascisization—CDR SS—Batignolles Train Station, 7 Wounded—Orléans Factory Vandalized—Marc Lanvin Killed at Arras.” This poster gives us the violent occurrences carried out by the CDR. Even workers were not safe from their wrath as a factory was attacked as well. Arguably the most tragic event depicted is the killing of Marc Lanvin, who was just 18 years old at the time of his assassination. There are conflicting reports about

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<sup>17</sup> Kugelberg and Vermes, *Beauty is in the Street*, 118.



### *Oh, These French Kisses*

supposed links between CDR, Union des Démocrates pour la République (the Gaullist party), and Service d'Action Civique (Gaullist militia). Sadly, it wasn't possible to absolve or deny the rumors. But it's not farfetched to say CDR members are supportive of the Charles de Gaulle regime. If you look closely at the smoke that comes out of the gun barrel belonging to the CDR assassin, you see the smoke takes the figure of a cross. That is the Cross of Lorraine, and that symbol is commonly associated with Charles de Gaulle and his party. Whether it's the police, French media, far-right goons, capitalism, and the workplace, or whatever the protesters of May '68 thought the problem might have been—Charles de Gaulle and his long reign over France exacerbated these issues.

Charles de Gaulle had been president of France since 1959. Previously serving as prime minister in 1958, and being part of the French resistance against Nazi Germany and ensuing transitional government in the 1940s. It can be said that France owes de Gaulle a debt of gratitude for his service during the Second World War. Contradictorily, de Gaulle is to blame for the events of May '68. From his authoritarian rule, inadequate universities, the stagnant wages for workers, and the horrid conditions in the factories that made the events of May possible. The 1961 massacre of about 40 to 200 people who poured onto the Parisian streets in support of an independent Algeria is still fresh in the mind of French citizens. Charles de Gaulle ruled France during this event and for the duration of his rule no justice would be given to the families of the dead nor the survivors. Then as the events of May unfolded, his treatment of student and

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

workers worsened—only giving more fuel to the revolutionary fire. Charles de Gaulle is at the center of it all; many posters constructed by Atelier Populaire mirror this attitude. In Atelier Populaire’s view, and I’m sure many are in agreement, Charles de Gaulle’s unyielding grip of France is comparable to dictators of the past and present. In a poster issued on May 31st titled *De Gaulle, Franco, Salazar* (Figure 9),<sup>18</sup> Atelier Populaire made a correlation between their country’s leader and the leaders of their fellow neighbors. Charles de Gaulle is pictured next to Francisco Franco, the far-right dictator of Spain, and António de Oliveira Salazar, the ultra-conservative and ultra-nationalist dictator of Portugal. Amusingly, this poster style is meant to mimic the many banners that portray Marx, Engels, and Lenin in the Soviet Union and other related countries. Though de Gaulle is the only leader pictured that was elected democratically, the



Figure 9: “De Gaulle, Franco, Salazar”

poster is telling us his harsh conservative and despotic turn is on par with Franco and Salazar. This can also be interpreted as a comment on the length of Charles de Gaulle’s rule. Both Franco and Salazar have been ruling their own respective countries since the 1930s. By the time of the May events de Gaulle’s rule would have turned nine years old—

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<sup>18</sup> Kugelberg and Vermes, *Beauty is in the Street*, 122.



Figure 10: untitled

nine years too many, some might say. On May 31st, the same day as the previous poster was released, another poster criticizing de Gaulle hit the French streets (*Figure 10*).<sup>19</sup> Illustrated front and center is Charles de Gaulle giving the infamous “Heil Hitler” salute. Charles de Gaulle fought against Nazi forces in France during the occupation in the

1940s. To see de Gaulle making the same salute his enemies made must have outraged his supporters and maybe de Gaulle himself. This poster is a great example of irony but at the same time, it’s a warning to the citizens of France. Next to the figure of Charles de Gaulle is a question mark. The poster is asking, “How long until fascism comes to France?” De Gaulle’s actions, like using the police as his own security force, conjured up similarities with other dictators. With the Second World War taking place twenty years prior, Atelier Populaire’s use of memory and history struck a chord with the average citizen who viewed their poster.

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<sup>19</sup> Kugelberg and Vermes, *Beauty is in the Street*, 149.

## *Oh, These French Kisses*

Being a president of a country for almost ten years can have a deteriorating effect. What would happen to France if de Gaulle would be ousted? Charles de Gaulle is a nuisance, but the numerous levels of the French government are under the control of the Gaullist apparatus. On top of that, you have the police and gangs loyal to de Gaulle. All this to say removing Charles de Gaulle wouldn't solve much of France's dilemma as you still must deal with a cabal of politicians, police officers, and local foot soldiers that have their tentacles in virtually every part of French society. The Gaullists structure makes frequent manifestations in Atelier Populaire posters—a frequent feature encountered in the posters is the Gaullist structure being represented by the Cross of Lorraine. For example, in this poster titled *La "Mutation" Gaulliste (Figure 11)*.<sup>20</sup> The text translates to "The Gaullist 'Mutation.'" The Cross of Lorraine, a common symbol co-opted by the French resistance of the 1940s and the Gaullist party (UDR), is slowly morphing into the Nazi party symbol, the swastika. This poster has a few possible meanings. It could be commenting on the fascistic slant the county is heading in, which would be in line with

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<sup>20</sup> Kugelberg and Vermes, *Beauty is in the Street*, 241.



Figure 12: "Lutte Contre Le Cancer Gaulliste"

many of the previous Atelier Populaire posters I have discussed. Another possible interpretation is the bastardization of religious imagery as both the Cross of Lorraine and swastika have lost their original meaning, in many

respects. The final interpretation is the way the Gaullists have seeped into parts of French society and corrupted it. The word "mutation" is the proper word for this situation as the Gaullists have mutated France to the point of complete unrecognition. Using the Nazi's swastika as a visual representation of mutation can be a little on the nose, but is effective in telling the viewers how dire the situation in France has gotten; also, the irony of France having a hand in defeating Nazi Germany but



Figure 11: "La "Mutation" Gaulliste"

slowly descending into fascism is an important touch. Another Atelier Populaire poster that makes the same point in a different manner is

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

*Lutte Contre Le Cancer Gaulliste* (Figure 12).<sup>21</sup> This poster, with the text translating to “Struggle Against the Gaullist Cancer,” is a call to action. But the way the Gaullists are portrayed here is important. The Cross of Lorraine is inside of a crab, which is of course the astrological symbol for cancer. Just like the previous poster, the Gaullists are compared to an extreme deviation. Except without the nonspecific use of the word “mutation”; Atelier Populaire landed on the word “cancer”, a distinct disease. Like cancer, the Gaullist have been corrupting France, even to the point they erode the phrase “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity). Charles de Gaulle and his faction have been in charge for nearly ten years at this point, and de Gaulle himself has had an influential role in France since at least the 1940s. The valiant protesters who took part in the May ‘68 events would not get the chance to oust de Gaulle or his clique. Nor were the police changed. Though some concessions were made in terms of workers’ salaries and the universities, it wasn’t a revolution as students and workers hoped it would be. Atelier Populaire would continue to produce revolutionary art for the small pockets of protests in France and for events that unfolded around the world, but nothing in comparison to the art they produced during their nearly eight-week peak. Atelier Populaire became decentralized and spread out around France and in a few areas of the world; in one country specifically, they’d find themselves again at the center of an important struggle.

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<sup>21</sup> Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution*, 45.

## *Oh, These French Kisses*

Apart from the May uprising in France, 1968 saw some of the largest explosions of movements, uprisings, and strikes of the 20th century. From riots that followed Dr. King's assassination, the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, the free speech movement across U.S. college campuses, and to the anti-Vietnam war protests that occurred in various parts of the world; there was an atmosphere of revolution in the air after the inertia of the 1950s. Mark Kurlansky's book *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* covers the seminal events that make the year 1968 an important year for human history. One specific event stands out and that's the student protests of Mexico City. The protests started in July 1968 and ended in October of that year. Both the Mexico City and French protests had many similarities: Students started both protests and one of the main focal points for the mass mobilization can be found in their disgust towards their own authoritarian governments. Another point of comparison can be found in the way the students of Mexico City used art to convey their message to the citizens who didn't see themselves as part of the movement. Jean-Claude Leveque, a French art student who was part of Atelier Populaire, went down to Mexico City. He taught the Mexican students the same fast-paced method of silk-screen printing that was instrumental in pushing the May '68 uprising ever forward. Mexico City started to look similar to the streets of Paris, "Now Mexico City became covered with images printed on cheap Mexican paper of silhouetted soldiers bayoneting and clubbing students, a man with a padlocked mouth, the press with a snaked tongue and dollars over the

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

eyes.”<sup>22</sup> As the quote demonstrates, the themes that Mexico City students decide to highlight are comparable to the themes French students focused on. For example, a theme Mexico City students touched on was the satirization of their President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, “There were even Olympic posters with a vicious monkey, who unmistakably resembled a certain president,



Figure 13: “Information Libre”

wearing a combat helmet.”<sup>23</sup> Looking back at the French posters, you can most definitely find posters poking fun of their president Charles de Gaulle and his government. Though the Mexico City students are resourceful and would have most likely found a way to get their message across Mexico and the world, it was a lot easier to achieve that with the help of Jean-Claude Leveque and the experience he got from working with Atelier Populaire.

The similarities with satirizing presidents did not end there. On May 27<sup>th</sup>, Atelier Populaire released posters decrying the government for its lack of transparency and calling for more freedom

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<sup>22</sup> Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* (New York City: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2005), 336.

<sup>23</sup> Kurlansky, *1968*, 336.





Figure 14. "Prensa Corrupta"

of speech. One specific poster was titled, *Information Libre* (Figure 13)<sup>24</sup> Translated, this poster reads either "Free Information" or "Uncensored Information." An image of a figure—most likely a government official—shouts into a microphone, that is twisted and constricted while wearing a blindfold. The image can be interpreted as the government just "blindly" shouting information that is either not true or half-truths. The students and workers detested the government's exclusiveness, their stranglehold upon the French media, and their ability to stifle positions that threatened their own. "Information Libre" represented these ideas powerfully and accessibly. A poster made by Mexico City students strikes a similar tone. This poster is titled *Prensa Corrupta* (Figure 14).<sup>25</sup> The translation is "Corrupt Press." Both posters make the same points but with contrasting approaches. Instead of asking for a freer press/media, Mexico City students are attacking the institution itself by calling it corrupt. They're not asking for more fairness or candor like their French counterparts. Maybe Mexico City students saw there

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<sup>24</sup> Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution*, 65.

<sup>25</sup> Jose Fresan, "2 de Octubre: México 68 – The Other Graphic Side of History," Alfalfa Studio, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://alfalfastudio.com/2019/09/18/2-de-octubre-mexico-68-the-other-graphic-side-of-history/>.

*Oh, These French Kisses*

was no redeeming their country's media and thus, decide not to demand any substantial change from them. The color scheme and images are also similar. Mexico City students also used a white figure (with a bald head I might add) with a blue and white colorway. The stark differences are the little nuances found in the Mexico City poster. Instead of a common blindfold, you find in the Atelier Populaire poster, we see this figure being blindfolded with a dollar bill. The microphone is replaced by a serpent escaping from the figure's mouth, making the point that the media spews nothing but maliciousness. Unlike the Atelier Populaire's figure, this Mexico City figure has ears (not including ears on the figure might have been a conscious decision on Atelier Populaire's part) and they are plugged with a cork. This Mexico City poster has a lot of imagery and there are much more layers in comparison to the Atelier Populaire's poster.

Both sets of protesters faced unimaginable violence. From the police, army, and local far-right militias; the way the state responded to their demands had frightening similarities. Their posters reflected their realities and the hypocrisy of the state being well-armed and yet, not having money and resources for the average citizen. An Atelier Populaire poster titled *Salaires Legres*—

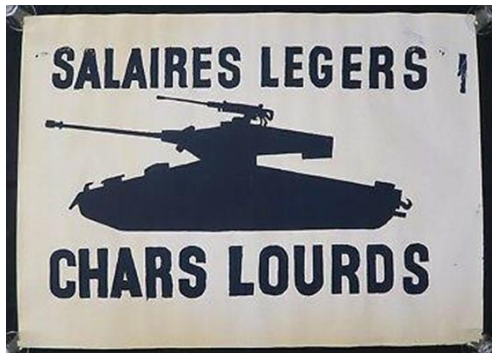


Figure 15. "Salaires Legers Chars Lourdes"



Figure 16. Escuela

*Chars Lourds* (Figure 15)<sup>26</sup> personified this point of view. With the translated text “Light Wages—Heavy Tanks,” a green tank is right at the center of the poster. Workers’ involvement in the May events boiled down to the lack of higher wages. The government had enough money for tanks and military expenses in general but couldn’t funnel that money towards workers and other working-class needs. Also, the tanks can be a symbol of the war machine in which the government is investing and are used to oppress the workers, students, and citizens of France and in other areas of the world, like Algeria and Vietnam. The Mexico City students had their own poster of equivalent significance. This poster is titled *Escuela* (Figure 16).<sup>27</sup> Simply “School” is the translation. In this poster, there are two tanks instead of the one and

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<sup>26</sup> Populaire, *Posters From The Revolution*, 86.

<sup>27</sup> Fresan, “2 de Octubre.”

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

with a school in the background, possibly representing the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the school that was the headquarters of the student movement in Mexico City; much like the way the Sorbonne and École des Beaux-Arts were headquarters of the students in Paris. This poster doesn't necessarily make the same point about money and investments as the previous Atelier Populaire poster did, but instead tells a much more tragic tale. To the right of the poster is a tank and it's charging right at the school. The release date of this poster is unknown but it either depicts or foreshadows the event known as the Tlatelolco Massacre, which saw the killing of about 400 students by the Mexican Armed Forces. The treatment of Mexican students was far more deplorable than the students in France. Even putting up posters would get students shot in Mexico City.<sup>28</sup> They quite literally risked their lives to chronicle the daily struggles in Mexico. The posters created by Mexican City students expressed their anger towards the same issues the French had. With the help of Atelier Populaire, we in the present day get to view both sets of posters from two different countries separated by an ocean, joined together in solidarity with one another.

Influence can be hard to measure, especially in a short window of time. In 2021, on the ten-year anniversary of Occupy Wall Street, participants and commentators debated the movement's legacy. The art that the OWS movement birthed has all but disappeared. Funny enough, the art style of the Egyptian Revolution (part

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<sup>28</sup> Kurlansky, 1968, 336.

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

of the larger Arab Spring) and the protests in Madison, Wisconsin, which all occurred in the early part of 2011, helped the OWS movement find its direction. The Guy Fawkes mask was used in the street arts in the city of Cairo, this too can be found in OWS posters. During the 2011 Madison protests, workers would hold up a poster with a red background and a raised fist in the foreground; similar posters are held by OWS protesters. An argument can be made that precursor to the BLM protests we saw in the summer of 2020 was the fare evasion protests in New York City, which occurred in Fall 2019. After the NYPD cracked down brutally on a person evading the fare for the subway, mass protests ensued that resulted in people refusing to pay the fare and jumping the turnstiles in the New York subways. One of the artworks that appeared during that protest was that of a Black Dog with a red handkerchief around his neck jumping a subway turnstile with the words “Evade” at the bottom. This artwork has its roots in the graffiti and posters made by Chilean protesters during their uprising a month or two before, with the same dog, known as *Negro Matapacos* (Black Cop-Killer). Art communicates a social movement to participants and inspires followers. We saw this in May ‘68. Atelier Populaire was able to do something not seen since. The themes that the General Assembly voted on any specific day needed to be released to the public fast and in large amounts of posters printed to spread across France. Without Atelier Populaire, student and worker demands would not have been known to the average French citizen and global audiences. Atelier Populaire sustained

### *Oh, These French Kisses*

momentum for the uprising and gave it new life each day, colored with irony, humor, and forthrightness.

That momentum even spread to Mexico City, where students contended with the police violence and out-of-touch government rule, much like their French counterparts. Mexico City students needed to define their movement strategically and reliably. They also needed to establish an inexpensive means to mass-produce their message through art and posters. The style and methods created by Atelier Populaire helped Mexico City students enormously in their struggle. In movements led by students and workers of the recent past, posters and graffiti effectively derided police, government, universities, and the wearisome of life. Atelier Populaire perfected a process, one that has been emulated by protesters following in the steps of the infamous art collective. With imagination and creativity, the message of radical movements, uprisings, strikes, and protests enjoyed the clarity and enlisted followers. As a consequence, such movements would never be boring or overly doctrinaire. As French students of May '68 wrote on the walls of their university, "Boredom Is Counterrevolutionary!" Atelier Populaire rendered its revolutionary message in vivid color.



Illustration by Isabella McMurry, CSU Chico

# Beyond Spectral Evidence: An Examination of Judicial Reform Prompted by the Salem Witch Trials of 1692

By Jennifer Shaw

On April 19, 1692 Giles Corey faced trial on suspicion of witchcraft after being accused by six residents of Salem Town of sending his specter<sup>1</sup> to torment them. One accuser's father wrote a letter to a provincial judge claiming his daughter was visited by a ghost who asked the girl that Corey not be given the easy death of hanging. The letter claimed the ghost asked that Corey should suffer the same fate as a man who lived with Corey seventeen years prior who had been found bruised to death. In the letter the ghost was described thus: "Whereupon there appeared unto her a man in a Winding Sheet; who told her that Giles Corey had Murdered him, by Pressing him to Death with his feet; but that the Devil there appeared unto him, and Covenanted with him, and promised him, He should not be Hanged."<sup>2</sup> At Giles Corey's trial the judge asked leading questions assuming his guilt. "Giles Cory, they accuse you, or your appearance, of hurting them, and bringing the book to them. What do you say? Why

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<sup>1</sup> Specter is a ghost or spirit often thought of as harmful or dangerous. In the case of the Salem Witchcraft Outbreak a specter would have been someone astral projecting their spirit to torture another.

<sup>2</sup> Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, Call Number SWP 37.12, Letter From Thomas Putnam to Judge Sewall, 1692.



### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

do you hurt them? Tell us the truth.”<sup>3</sup> The accusers went into hysterical fits acting as though Corey was hurting them in the courtroom. Giles Corey was found guilty and on September 16, 1692 was pressed to death under the weight of stones.

The Salem Witch Trials are the most documented witch trials in American history. Social, economic, political, and religious circumstances aligned to create an injustice not previously seen on a large scale. The Salem Witchcraft Outbreak occurred in a part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony approximately twenty-five miles north of Boston. More than 200 people were charged of witchcraft with no physical evidence provided by the prosecution. The result was a total of twenty-five deaths: nineteen died from hanging, five died while in jail, and one, Giles Corey, died by crushing. Typically, in seventeenth century American colonies witch hunts were brief. An accusation of witchcraft led to an arrest or two, followed by the trials and verdict with life returning to normal after sentencing. The Salem Witchcraft Outbreak received historical notoriety because of the overwhelming number of accusations, and the length of the occurrence from early 1692 until May 1693. Predominantly, the accused faced conviction with spectral evidence, or testimony from the accusers that a witch’s specter, or satanic agent, appeared before them, as the main source of evidence.<sup>4</sup> The courts permitted spectral evidence with the church’s support until October of 1692 when one minister persuaded

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<sup>3</sup> Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, Call Number SWP 37.3, Examination of Giles Corey, April 19, 1692.

<sup>4</sup> Mason I. Lowance, *Increase Mather* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974) p 83.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

the Governor that judges relied too heavily on witness testimony alone. This is an examination of how the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 persecuted those accused through judicial bias resulting in a lack of due process because of religious influence.

### **Understanding the Witchcraft Outbreak**

Settled by mostly Puritans with a handful of Quakers, Salem's residents did not question the existence of witches. Skepticism of the occult is a modern concept. Colonial Puritans genuinely believed that at any given time a witch could walk among them prompting temptation from the devil at any time, in any form. They structured their life around the Geneva Bible which said, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."<sup>5</sup> This acceptance made it commonplace for witchcraft accusations to occur. Witch hunts first began in fifteenth century England, the motherland of most Salem inhabitants. In an article titled "The Devil, Superstition, and the Fragment of Magic" on English superstition in the Early Modern Period, Historian Sean Armstrong writes, "Although the church accepted natural magic, it tended to emphasize the demonic aspect, since the devil was the greatest of all magicians...Everyone acknowledged that Satan was God's creation, and could do nothing outside of nature."<sup>6</sup> When colonial settlers came

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<sup>5</sup> David Levin, *Cotton Mather: The Young Life of the Lord's Remembrancer, 1663-1703* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) p 148.

<sup>6</sup> Sean Armstrong, "The Devil, Superstition, and the Fragmentation of Magic." *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance Et Réforme* 37, no. 2 (2014): 49-80. Accessed March 14, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43446538>.

to the province of Massachusetts Bay they brought this notion of how the devil behaved with them.

One of the key players in the Salem Witch Trials, Increase Mather, wrote the book *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits* in which he detailed the relationship of constant war between God and the devil:

It is not Heresie to believe that Satan has sometimes a great operation in causing Thunder-storms. I know this is vehemently denied by some. The late Witch-Advocates call it Blasphemy. And an old Council did Anathematize the men that are thus perswaded: but by their Favour: An orthodox & rational Man may be the Opinion, that when the Devil has before him the Vapors and Materials out of which the Thunder and Lightning are generated, his Art is such as that he can bring them into form. If Chymists can make their aurumfulminans, what strange things may this Infernal Chymist effect? The Holy Scriptures intimate as much as this cometh to. In the Sacred Story concerning Job, we find that Satan did raise a great Wind which blew down the house where Job's Children were Feasting.<sup>7</sup>

This logic fueled the trials, and the way the courts executed them, as Puritans believed in the intertwinement of God and the devil. Increase

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<sup>7</sup> Increase Mather, *Cases of the Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits* (Boston: Benjamin Harris, 1693) 124-125.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

Mather held influence over the men who acted as judges and the jurors.

According to Cotton Mather, minister and author of the first accounts of the Salem Witch Trials *The Wonders of the Invisible World Being an Account of the Tryals of Several Witches Lately Executed in New-England, to which is added A Farther Account of the Tryals of the New-England Witches*, the witchcraft outbreak began in 1691. Cotton Mather claimed that girls from in town gained access to books of witchcraft stowed away on ships.<sup>8</sup> Proof of these books never existed. Rather, he attempted to justify the actions taken by the court and church by arguing the existence of witchcraft and the devil. The girls Cotton claimed dabbled in sorcery fell ill, afflicted with fits as they called them. These fits started in the early 1692 with two girls: nine-year-old Betty Parris and eleven-year-old Abigail Williams. What they called fits were described as odd speech, twisted movements of their limbs, rigidity, and distemper. When the local doctor William Griggs could not diagnose or help the girls, Griggs turned his attention towards witchcraft as the cause.<sup>9</sup>

The two girls were not the only people who began to have these fits. Seven or eight girls between the ages of twelve and nineteen fell ill. The local Reverend Samuel Parris, father to Betty Parris and uncle to Abigail Williams, described the affliction and spread as “plague-like.” Reverend Parris did not want to take legal action, but

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum. 1974. *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p 1.

<sup>9</sup> Boyer, *Salem Possessed*, p 2.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

rumors spread through the town of the affliction and the supposed cause. Mounting pressure from the townspeople forced the Reverend to act; “On February 29, 1629, warrants went out for the arrest of three Village women whom the girls, under the pressure of intense adult questioning, had finally named as their tormenters: Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne, and Tituba herself.”<sup>10</sup> Described as an enslaved West Indian woman<sup>11</sup>, Tituba labored for the Reverend Parris’s household and made a “witch cake” of rye meal and the urine of Abigail Williams and Betty Parris. The cake was fed to the dog so that it would take the affliction from the girls.

Tituba was the only person accused of witchcraft to confess saying “the devil came to me and bid me serve him.”<sup>12</sup> No records of how Tituba was treated in the Parris house exist, but colonial life was difficult and full of chores. For an enslaved woman, a witchcraft confession may have offered a way to escape enslavement through self-destruction rather than suicide. “Certainly, the power of kidnapping, forced migration, rape, brutality, starvation, natal alienation, and family separation gave slaves readily imaginable motives for suicidal responses to their captors and owners.”<sup>13</sup> In the seventeenth century enslavers disregarded the emotional state of an

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<sup>10</sup> Boyer, *Salem Possessed*, p 3.

<sup>11</sup> Tituba’s ethnicity remains unknown as she is referred to as both Indian and West Indian. These terms could refer to her being indigenous, or someone enslaved from Africa.

<sup>12</sup> Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, Call Number SWP 125.3, Examination of Tituba Recorded by Ezeikiell Cheyers, March 1, 1692.

<sup>13</sup> Terri L. Snyder, “Suicide, Slavery, and Memory in North America.” *Journal of American History* 97 (1): (June 2010) 39–62. doi:10.2307/jahist/97.1.39.

enslaved person, so the court did not make this connection. Puritans justified enslavement through the Bible, and to many the issue was not enslavement, but whether enslaved people of color had souls. Cotton Mather fought to have enslaved people converted and baptized into the church, but this was an uncommon stance.<sup>14</sup> Knowing her soul was the matter of debate, knowing she must convert religions to be somewhat accepted, knowing she was seen as less than human, knowing that after an accusation of witchcraft her life could get worse, Tituba quite possibly felt that her confession meant freedom through self-destruction; however, that did not work out for her. On May 9, 1693, after fourteen months in jail Governor Phips acquitted her of her crimes. Her owner, Reverend Parris refused to pay her jail fees, so she was sold to whomever would.<sup>15</sup>

Tituba's confession solidified the existence of witches, and the transcript of her examination showed judicial bias. The judge from her trial assumed guilt from the onset with his first question of, "What evil spirit have you familiarity with?" When she replied none, his next question was, "Why doe you hurt these children?"<sup>16</sup> These are examples of the questions asked by judges throughout the trials before an entered plea and demonstrate an assumption of guilt. Since witness testimony dominated as the main source of evidence, judges

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<sup>14</sup> Bernard Rosenthal, "Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery." *The New England Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (1973): 62-81. Accessed April 1, 2021. doi:10.2307/364886.

<sup>15</sup> Emerson W. Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) 30.

<sup>16</sup> Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, Call Number SWP 125.3, Examination of Tituba Recorded by Ezekiel Cheyers, March 1, 1692.

pursuing leading questions attempted to manifest an admission of guilt.

### **Politics in Massachusetts Bay Colony**

First founded in 1629, Salem was governed under the Massachusetts Bay Charter of 1629 as established by King Charles I of England.<sup>17</sup> Massachusetts Bay Colony faced inconsistent governing from England and the Massachusetts Bay Colony existed separately under different governance from the Plymouth Colony of Pilgrims to the south. In 1647, the General Court of Massachusetts changed legislation and began to record witness testimony prior to the trial. If the witness lived within a ten-mile radius of the court's location, law required them to be there before the jury and available for additional questioning, especially for a capital case.<sup>18</sup>

In 1684, the original charter was repealed and replaced by King Charles II of England. The 1684 charter lasted until 1689 when the administration put in place was overthrown. Still subjects of England, they did not receive a new charter, or administration until Governor Phips arrived in Boston Harbor on May 14, 1692. It was the newly assigned Governor William Phips from England who first put together the Court of Oyer and Terminer<sup>19</sup> to handle the caseload. After

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<sup>17</sup> The Massachusetts Bay Charter of 1629, The Avalon Project provided by Yale Law School and The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America, Compiled and Edited Under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906 by Francis Newton Thorpe, Washington, DC : Government Printing Office, 1909.

<sup>18</sup> Charles W. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1867) p i.x.

<sup>19</sup> Colonial English terms Oyer and Terminer translate to Hear and Determine.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

establishing the court, Phips appointed established men to the court from Boston and the area surrounding Salem and left his Lieutenant Governor William Stoughton to oversee the trials. Unbeknownst to Governor Phips, Stoughton was an aggressive zealot. In a letter to England Sir Phips described the action of the first trials. “When the Court came to sitt at Salem in the County of Essex they convicted more than twenty persons of being guilty of witchcraft, some of the convicted were such as confessed their Guilt, the Court as I understand began their proceedings with the accusations of the afflicted and then went upon other humane evidences to strengthen that.”<sup>20</sup> However, Stoughton’s actions within the court helped to facilitate the spread of accusations through a continued acceptance of new accusations.<sup>21</sup>

Not having an official charter or governor between 1689 and Governor Phips’ arrival in May 1692 meant that anyone arrested could not be tried. Instead, they were incarcerated in Boston approximately 25 miles south of Salem. Due to the length of the journey the imprisonment went from Salem to Ipswich and then from Ipswich to Boston.<sup>22</sup> For those accused of witchcraft the court did not allow bail, which resulted in those accused of witchcraft being assumed guilty

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<sup>20</sup> “Letters From Governor Phips to the Home Government, 1692-1693,” University of Virginia Library, Accessed May 2, 2021, [http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=modern\\_english/uvaGenText/tei/BurNarr.xml;chunk.id=d23;toc.depth=1;toc.id=d23;brand=default](http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=modern_english/uvaGenText/tei/BurNarr.xml;chunk.id=d23;toc.depth=1;toc.id=d23;brand=default).

<sup>21</sup> Brendon Dignan, “Governor, Sir William Phips,” accessed April 29, 2021, <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/people/phips.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, Call Number SWP 173.12, Petition of John Moulton for Restitution of Giles and Martha Corey, September 9, 1710.



### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

from the initial accusation. In a sixteen-page pamphlet, “Some Miscellaneous Observations on our Present Debates Respecting Witchcraft, In Dialogue Between S. & B.” Samuel Willard wrote:

I am informed that in a Legal Warrant made for the Commitment of a Person, his Crime may not be mentioned under the Lenefying term of suspicion; but the Act or Acts are to be Expressly Charged ; E. G. you are to take into your Custody, &-c. for several Acts of Witchcraft Committed on the body of, &c. now certainly, there is more than a meer suspicion upon fallacious Presumptions, necessary for the doing of this Honestly. Our statute Laws therefore have provided great Cautions against the Committing of persons without Substantial rounds: Besides, it is certain, that on lighter suspicions of Capital Crimes, Bail may be taken; so that if the person be committed to Goal, his Mittimus goes for want of Bail, and doth not directly charge the Crime on him; yea and Bail may Rill be taken after Commitment. Moreover, Reason it self faith, that when a man is Committed without Bail, and may not come off without a Jury; and in order to that an Indictment must be formed against him, where the Acts are again to be Positively & Particularly charged upon him, and Witnesses to be Examined, which exposeth him to open Ignominy, there ought to be something Substantial against him. Yea Conscience will tell a justice, that if he verily believes that a Grand jury ought not, or cannot Legally find *Billa vera* against such a man, he doth him an ineparable wrong in so committing

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

him; since hereby, his Credit is Steined, his Liberty Restreined,  
his Time Lost, and great Charges and Damages come upon him;  
*which, who shall repair?*<sup>23</sup>

Willard chose not to clarify who S. & B. were. Regardless, the point that those accused of witchcraft received different, and by legal standards inhumane, treatment needs no clarification. Anyone accused of being a witch faced legal prosecution, and a lifetime of unrecoverable persecution.

### **The Focus of Other Historians to View the Lack of Attention to Judicial Bias**

While Cotton Mather was among the first to write of the trials, he was certainly far from the last. Historians have searched for an answer to the witchcraft outbreak for over 300 years, yet with each new generation of historians the narrative changes. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “All history becomes subjective; in other words, there is properly no history, only biography.”<sup>24</sup> From the eighteenth century through the early part of the twentieth century historians had great esteem for colonial man. Historians detailed the daily life of the villagers at Salem, yet they did not make the connections between daily life prior to the trials, land disputes, and connections between the accused and accuser that later historians did. After World War II,

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<sup>23</sup> Samuel Willard, “Some Miscellaneous Observations On Our Present Debates Respecting Witchcraft, In Dialogue Between S. & B.” Copyright 2000, Accessed April 9, 2021, <http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/texts/willard/images/index.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Mason I. Lowance, Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Increase Mather*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974) p 2.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

the narrative around Salem shifted towards showcasing the mass hysteria drawing on similarities of the Holocaust. Arthur Miller<sup>25</sup> was not an historian, but it is worth noting that his play *The Crucible* reflects the Red Scare, and the hunt for Communist Americans. Through the Civil Rights era historians began to look at bottom-up history, which became even more predominant after the Vietnam War. In the twenty-first century the narrative has again shifted. Currently, the focus is on the big picture of how the Salem Witch Trials affected Colonial New England as a whole, not just the isolated incident of the trials.

*Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*, by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum changed the way academics viewed the witch trials.<sup>26</sup> They focused on the social causation of the Salem Witch Trials. Boyer and Nissenbaum wanted to focus solely on the history of Salem Village versus Salem Town, and the divide between the two to understand how a small community could allow mass hysteria to set in. Using diaries, church records, real estate records, and legal records they found major rifts within the community. Those rifts set the stage for accusations to spiral. By understanding the social dynamics, and the major town players, more connections can be drawn to find the continued significance of the trials.

Even economics professors have investigated the causation of the trials. In his article “Homo Economicus and the Salem Witch

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<sup>25</sup> Arthur Miller, *The Crucible* (New York, 1954).

<sup>26</sup> Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum. 1974. *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

Trials" in *The Journal of Economic Education*, Mixon argued that the church used the concept of the devil, and witchcraft, to increase church attendance and membership resulting in more tithes.<sup>27</sup> While Mixon mostly used financial and church records to support his argument, he also researched Salem history through the works of Starkey and Cotton Mather. His argument for economic stimulation backs the argument presented in *Salem Possessed* that there was high turnover of the town minister, and heavy division among attendance as Salem Village tried to separate itself from the church in Salem Town.

Historian Emerson Baker examined life in Salem Village prior to the witch trials of 1692, and after the last trial ended in 1693 to create a narrative around how the trials impacted Massachusetts Bay colony in his book *A Storm of Witchcraft*.<sup>28</sup> To Baker, Salem Village created a perfect storm that led to the trials, and he credited Cotton Mather, the first to write of the trials, for coining the expression for Salem. Baker used legal proceedings, historical accounts, shipping records, and correspondence. Baker argued that Salem, and its oral history, were influential in Colonial New England. He credits Thomas Maule for setting the precedent of freedom of the press by publishing accounts of the witch trials. Baker helps to establish a connection

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<sup>27</sup> Franklin G. Mixon, 2000. "Homo Economicus and the Salem Witch Trials." *The Journal of Economic Education* 179-184.

<sup>28</sup> Emerson W. Baker, 2015. *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

between the foundations of the United States Constitution and the Salem Witch Trials.

Clive Holmes brought back an important aspect of the Salem Witch Trials by asking what happened to religious context in his article "The Opinion of the Cambridge Association, 1 August 1692: A Neglected Text of the Salem Witch Trials".<sup>29</sup> He noticed that historians no longer focused on religion in their writing but knew that being a Puritanical village with a settling of Quakers played a role in how the trials were conducted. The Opinion of the Cambridge Association is where it was decided that spectral evidence would be admissible. This connects back to the knowledge that witches existed. In late twentieth century historians writing about the trials did not neglect this fact, but rather did not include its relevance. By knowing that Puritans accepted that witches and the devil could be among them it is easier to understand how the inclusion of Spectral Evidence happened.

### **Examining Judicial Bias**

Currently, in the United States, there is a legal separation between church and state. This means that the church, or ones' own religious views, are not allowed to interfere with legal proceedings, or

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<sup>29</sup> Clive Holmes, "The Opinion of the Cambridge Association, 1 August 1692: A Neglected Text of the Salem Witch Trials." *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 89, No.4 (2016): 643-667.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

actions taken on behalf of the government. The Massachusetts Bay Colony had no such regulation. In Europe during the seventeenth century, the standard was to intertwine faith and leadership. England was no exception to this standard as King Henry VIII founded the Church of England to sever ties with the Vatican. Founded during the protestant revolution, Puritans believed that the Church of England reformed too little. They sought stronger reform within the church.<sup>30</sup> Lacking a clear separation of church and state led to judicial bias based on religion.

When Governor Phips appointed men to the Court of Oyer and Terminer he used local reputation to pick those who served. Of the nine men appointed, six graduated from Harvard University. In the seventeenth century, Harvard served mostly as a training ground for those entering the priesthood. The Lieutenant Governor William Stoughton numbered among those graduates and served as a junior minister, as well as an assistant to Increase Mather.<sup>31</sup> Governor Phips established the court but allowed Stoughton to oversee the details while Sir Phips remained in Boston. This was partly due to Stoughton's background in divinity, as Sir Phips did not receive formal

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<sup>30</sup> Neal T Dugre, "Church, State, and Commonwealth: The Transatlantic Puritan Movement in England and America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (2017): 344-351. [muse.jhu.edu/article/657483](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/657483).

<sup>31</sup> Julie Zeveloff, "William Stoughton: Chief Justice of the Court of Oyer and Terminer," Important Persons in the Salem Court Records, accessed April 19, 2021, <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/people/?group.num=all>.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

education until the age of twenty-two.<sup>32</sup> In August 1692, Sir Phips departed for Maine to establish Northern Defenses.<sup>33</sup>

On August 1, 1692 at Harvard University, a group of eleven men met to discuss the use of spectral evidence in the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Increase Mather, Harvard University President, and Puritan minister known for his influence in politics, counted among the eleven. Mather had the reputation of being a witch hunter due to his involvement in earlier witch trials in the New England region. He also crafted sermons around the topic of the devil and his temptations.<sup>34</sup> Having a known witch hunter in the gathering resulted in a push to persecute witches. This group of men unanimously agreed to continue the allowance of spectral evidence. While they all agreed that Spectral Evidence could lead to false accusations, they unanimously voted to allow it. The argument being that Satan might mislead those afflicted with witchcraft, but his ability to do so depended on God. God would not allow a falsely accused person to be brought before an official tribunal.<sup>35</sup>

When Governor Phips arrived back from Maine, he returned to chaos at the hands of the court. Immediately he began to receive

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<sup>32</sup> "Narratives of Witchcraft Cases, 1648-1706," University of Virginia Library, Accessed May 1, 2021, [http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=modern\\_english/uvaGenText/tei/BurNarr.xml;chunk.id=d23;toc.depth=1;toc.id=d23;brand=default](http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=modern_english/uvaGenText/tei/BurNarr.xml;chunk.id=d23;toc.depth=1;toc.id=d23;brand=default).

<sup>33</sup> Dignan, "Governor, Sir William Phips."

<sup>34</sup> Lowance, *Increase Mather*, 93.

<sup>35</sup> Holmes, "The Opinion of the Cambridge Association," 643-667.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

complaints from the friends and family of those accused. In a letter to King Charles II of England Governor Phips write:

I was almost the whole time of the proceeding abroad in the service of Their Majesties in the Eastern part of the Country and depended upon the Judgement of the Court as to a right method of proceeding in cases of Witchcraft but when I came home I found many persons in a strange ferment of dissatisfaction which was increased by some hott Spiritts that blew up the flame, but on enquiring into the matter I found that the Devill had taken upon him the name and shape of severall persons who were doubtless inocent and to my certain knowledge of good reputation for which cause I have now forbidden the committing of any more that shall be accused without unavoydable necessity, and those that have been committed I would shelter from any Proceedings against them wherein there may be the least suspicion of any wrong to be done unto the Innocent.<sup>36</sup>

After Sir Phips began to realize that the courts utilized mostly witness testimony, he sought counsel from Increase Mather.

In October 1692, Increase Mather convened with Sir Phips. After six months of allowing spectral evidence, Mather had a change of heart and persuaded Sir Phips to disallow it. He reasoned that the

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<sup>36</sup> "Letters From Governor Phips to the Home Government, 1692-1693," University of Virginia Library, Accessed May 2, 2021, [http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=modern\\_english/uvaGenText/tei/BurNarr.xml;chunk.id=d23;toc.depth=1;toc.id=d23;brand=default](http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=modern_english/uvaGenText/tei/BurNarr.xml;chunk.id=d23;toc.depth=1;toc.id=d23;brand=default).



### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

judges relied too heavily upon witness testimony alone. With substantial supporting evidence Mather allowed spectral evidence but did not want it to be the sole reason a person was convicted. The supporting evidence Mather sought included an inability to recite prayer and scripture, a witch's teet, i.e., an extra nipple, the ability to float, a touch test where if the accused touched the victim the fit ceased, and in some cases association with a familiar.<sup>37</sup> "Whether it be lawful to bind persons suspected for Witches, and so cast them into the Water, in order to making a discovery of their innocency or guiltness; so as that if they keep above the Water, they shall be deemed as confederate with the Devil, but if they sink they are to be acquitted from the crime of Witchcraft."<sup>38</sup> Mather based evidence on pseudoscience, yet even he knew that witness testimony alone remained problematic.

Regardless of the type of evidence it was problematic. Examinations for a witch's teet consisted of an accused witch receiving a physical examination. Often the witch's teet appeared in areas unverifiable in court under Puritanical standards, and it often mysteriously disappeared prior to a second round of examinations. The case records for accused witch Bridget Bishop indicate that she received two physical examinations. The first on June 2, 1692 showed, "by dilligent search have discovered apreternathurall Excesence of flesh between the pudendum and Anus much like to Tetts & not usuall

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<sup>37</sup> Familiars are animals like cats, or dogs, that are meant to act as protectors for witches.

<sup>38</sup> Mather, *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits*, 281-282.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

in women & much unlike to the other three that hath been searched by us.”<sup>39</sup> Bishop’s second examination presented different results despite the second examination occurring later that same afternoon. “We whose names are Subscribed to the w<sup>th</sup> in mentioned, upon a second search about 3 or 4 houres distance, did find the said Brigett Bishop alias Oliver, in a clear & free state from any p’eternaturall Excrecence.”<sup>40</sup> Despite the contradictory physical evidence, Bridget Bishop was executed June 10, 1692.

Once Increase Mather persuaded Governor Phips to disallow spectral evidence the tone of the trials changed. The court struggled to continue to convict witches, although five more were sentenced for execution after Sir Phip’s orders. Once the trials officially ended in May 1693, Governor Phips acquitted all those who remained in jail, including those sentenced to execution. In a letter to King Charles II, Governor Phips indicated that Lieutenant Governor Stoughton was to blame, “The Lieut. Gov. upon this occasion was intranged and filled with passionate anger and refused to sitt upon the bench in a Superior Court then held at Charles Towne, and indeed hath from the beginning hurried on these matters with great precipitancy and by his warrant hath caused the estates, goods and chattles of the executed

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<sup>39</sup> Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, Call Number SWP 13.20, Physical Examination of Bridget Bishop No. 1, June 2, 1692.

<sup>40</sup> Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, Call Number SWP 13.21, Physical Examination of Bridget Bishop No. 2, June 2, 1692.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

to be seized and disposed of without my knowledge or consent.”<sup>41</sup> Governor Phips was one of many who passed the blame for the trials.

On top of judicial bias indicting the accused based on testimony, the trials proved to be profitable. Beginning in 1710, the victims of the trials, or their family, sought reparations and restitution from the government. Many of the accused had property and land seized and distributed to the church or government. On top of property seizures, those acquitted by Governor Phips were required to pay for the jailing. From 1710-1750 the government issued reparations and restitution to all who filed claims. Governments do not offer reparations if they are free from guilt. After the trials ended everyone involved knew the trials had damaged innocent victims. Court expense records indicate that all those involved with the trial received payment, including those who testified against a witch. While historians have identified the social origins of the witchcraft outbreak, the accusers had economical gains as well as personal vendettas.<sup>42</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Historians continue to study the Salem Witch Trials because new interpretations of the evidence are continuously coming to light. History is interpreted through the lens of the period in which it is

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<sup>41</sup> “Letters From Governor Phips to the Home Government, 1692-1693,” University of Virginia Library, Accessed May 2, 2021, [http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=modern\\_english/uvaGenText/tei/BurNarr.xml;chunk.id=d23;toc.depth=1;toc.id=d23;brand=default](http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=modern_english/uvaGenText/tei/BurNarr.xml;chunk.id=d23;toc.depth=1;toc.id=d23;brand=default).

<sup>42</sup> Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, Call Number 171.2-171.22, 173.1-173.94, Official Expense Accounts 1692, Reversal of Attainder & Restitution 1710-1750.

### *Beyond Spectral Evidence*

written. As such, the Salem Witch Trials, and history of colonial New England, illuminate the origins of early American judicial proceedings. In the modern phase of Salem historiography, historians seek to understand how the Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692 fits into the big picture of Colonial America and the American Revolution. Previous historians have held colonial men in reverence, identified the social origins of the trials, and used the trials to parallel their own society, yet judicial bias remained ignored.

Examining the records of the Salem Witch Trials showed clear judicial bias based upon religion. Most of the men assigned to the court lived in the Boston area and were not invested in the petty land squabbles of the Salem region. Rather, their own religious views made them certain that the accused covenanted with the devil. Tituba's confession confirmed that witches walked among them. The judges were Puritans educated in divinity, did not allow the accused to receive bail, and convicted with witness testimony as the main form of evidence. The events of the Salem Witch Trials remain one of the most tragic and misguided events in Colonial American history.



Illustration by Mari Hokeness, CSU Chico

# ¿Damas o Putas? Understanding the Root of Californio Women Stereotypes and the Effect on Their Social Identity

By Vanessa Armenta

“Husbands could lose their wives easily if persuaded with gifts,” These are the words of Richard Henry Dana, an American from Boston, describing Californio women in 1834. On top of being considered “easy,” Californio women were also seen as man-hungry, living beyond their means, and lazy. The only stereotype with a positive inclination was that Californio women were known for their beauty, but this idea took a negative twist. Californio women consisted of indigenous, *mestizas*, and Spanish.

How did the stereotypes of women during the Californio period begin, and what was society’s expectation of them? Considering all of the possible external forces that could have shaped the social identity of Californio women, I will be looking at government, economy, sex, status, religion, and race. My goal is to determine how these variables played a role in creating an identity for women during this period of time. I argue that despite being portrayed negatively as *putas* (Spanish for sluts), the actions that Californio *damas* (Spanish for ladies) illustrate tactics of survival, many of which

are still being replicated today. To begin examining the social identity of Californio women and their societal expectations, we must first look into the history of how the Spanish occupied Alta California; this information is crucial because it lays the foundation for women's identity and expectations.

### **Spanish Expansion and Desperate for Women**

To expand New Spain, the Spanish implemented a mission and fort system in 1769 through 1822 to lay claim to the area, and a means to defend it.<sup>1</sup> The mission system was a tactic to convert the indigenous into Spanish subjects by removing them from their land, enclosing them within the boundaries of the mission, and forcing them to abandon their culture and way of living. These missions essentially created military towns because there was nothing else surrounding the missions except a nearby presidio to defend them. Knowing this, it developed a significant imbalance of men (soldiers) to women among the population. The few women that were a part of the population were married to a soldier.

As mentioned previously, part of the Presidio's mission was to protect the missions, but many soldiers would continuously rape the neophytes (indigenous being converted into a Spanish subject). It was such a problem that Junipero Serra, the padre who oversaw the development of the missions in Alta California, wrote a letter to the viceroy with the proposal to encourage the soldiers to marry a

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<sup>1</sup> Antonio María Osio, *The History of Alta California: A Memoir of Mexican California* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 31.

### *¿Damas o Putas?*

neophyte. If the soldiers took a neophyte for a wife, they would be granted land and several farm animals.<sup>2</sup> This was the beginning of many failed attempts to increase the population in Alta California and, at the same time, increase the value of women based on their ability to reproduce Spanish subjects naturally. Although some soldiers married neophytes, many refused, making up a small percentage of marriages in Alta California.

Another attempt to increase the women population was by relocating orphans from Mexico to Alta California. “We were passed out to families like dogs,” one Californio woman recounts being given to a family at the age of seven.<sup>3</sup> This method of trying to increase the population did not work either. As one Californio man explains, “the orphans they receive are sad and put a strain on the families.”<sup>4</sup> The Spanish exhausted what they believed to be all methods to increase their population in these, predominantly male, military pueblos. As men were given land, they required an heir to ensure that the property stayed within the family. Women were scarce commodities, and Spanish women were scarcer, significantly increasing women’s value due to their reproductive capacity. However, this did not mean that women had the autonomy to choose who they married.

### **Men with Authority and Baby Brides**

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<sup>2</sup> Antonia I. Castañeda, “Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family.” *California History* 76, no. 2-3 (1997): 230–259, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25161668>.

<sup>3</sup> Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, ed., *Testimonios: Early California through the Eyes of Women, 1815–1848* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015) 1-288.

<sup>4</sup> Beebe and Senkewicz, *Testimonios*, 1-288.



### *¿Damas o Putas?*

Alta California was a significantly male-dominated society and the decision of who women would marry rested upon their father. Although it is insinuated that women had a choice, it simply was not so. Canon law dictated the sociosexual lives of women and contained them in marriage.<sup>5</sup> Men interested in marrying a particular young woman typically contacted her father, stating his intentions. The purpose of contacting the father is that the authority rests with him. This was a patriarchal society, hence, the decision belongs to the “head” of the household.

Due to the lack of women, this led to men marrying girls as young as 14 years of age. This is when many young ladies would begin their menses and can begin to have children. Because there was such a lack of women in the population, many girls’ births led to their betrothal. This rings true as it happened to María Antonia Isabela Lugo, daughter of Marino Vallejo, who was born with the aid of Sergeant Ygnacio Vallejo. Payment to Ygnacio Vallejo for assisting with the delivery of his request to be betrothed to the infant was granted. María was only 14 and a half years old when they married, while Ygnacio Vallejo was 40 years old.<sup>6</sup> Regardless of a woman’s age, her oldest son would become head of the household by default. After having ten children, when Marí Antonia Isabela Lugo’s husband died in 1832, her oldest son, Mariano Guadalupe, an officer in the military,

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<sup>5</sup> Castañeda, “Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848,” 230–259.

<sup>6</sup> Albert L. Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 17.

¿Damas o Putas?



Figure 1. Image of Sistema de Castas indicating placement within society

tion of the family by legitimizing the transference of patrimony.<sup>8</sup>

Although Californio women were racially diverse, the Spanish implemented a Sistema de Castas that appointed a status level to various racial groups. Spanish is at the top, and “Afro-Mestiza” is last, and everything else in between.<sup>9</sup> (Figure 1<sup>10</sup>) Through the Sistema de Castas, knowing where a person ranked in status dictated what a person was allowed to wear. As mentioned previously, Alta California was made up of military towns, and roughly 20% of the men stationed at the Presidio in San Francisco were married and had children.<sup>11</sup>

The pueblos were not well established and solely had a mission nearby. There was nowhere to purchase clothes for their families, so they ordered and brought them by bulk to the Presidio. This created an uprising among those placing higher in the Sistema de Castas. Those living at the Presidio, only wearing what was provided to them, were no longer able to follow the regulations of what they should be wearing, befitting their status. This caused particular laws to be implemented by the aristocratic Spanish and further pushed for the enforcement of social norms outlined by the Sistema de Castas.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Castañeda, “Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848,” 230-259.

<sup>9</sup> María Elena Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza De Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2015): 479-520.

<sup>10</sup> Unknown author. Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán, Mexico, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4642698>

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Voss, “Poor People in Silk Shirts: Dress and Ethnogenesis in Spanish-Colonial San Francisco,” 8, no. 3 (2008): 404-432.

<sup>12</sup> Voss, “Poor People in Silk Shirts,” 404-432.

## *¿Damas o Putas?*

With the gente de razon, “people of reason,” losing the clothing fight, I believe this to be a catalyst for change.

There is much discussion of Californianas assimilating their style of dress. Still, after Alta California could trade freely, I raise the fact that they could purchase clothing and different types of material at their discretion. Whatever was available to them, whether coming from Mexico or ships from all over. Accepting Eurocentric fashion, outsiders critiqued Californianas for not incorporating bodices, bonnets, or long sleeves. Figure 2<sup>13</sup> captures Californio women’s fashion during the 1840s-1850s.

When Mexico gained independence from Spain, it was a devastating change for women. This event caused the laws to change from Napoleonic to canon and civil laws. What this meant for women is that they had rights taken away and essentially became property themselves. Even though Mexico was no longer tied to Spain, the people in Alta California were not seen collectively as one. They were still plagued by the Sistema de Castas, which greatly influenced marriages, and many of the men in power married within their network. Not only did this ensure their place in society, but it strengthened and expanded their network; they would marry a

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<sup>13</sup> Shew, William. *Ambrotype 147. Horizontal Image of Five Female Members of the Peralta Family, Three Wearing Tinted Blue Dresses*. 2003, undated 1840. Yale University Library. <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2005026>.



Figure 2. Horizontal image of five female members of the Peralta Family taken between the 1840s and 1850s

friend's sister or a distant relative.<sup>14</sup> It was not uncommon for Californio women to remarry twice or as many as four times. This custom could have left a negative impression on American men's perspective of Californio women. As I mentioned previously, Alta California was made of militaristic pueblos, so the soldiers' chances of dying were high. Many times, it was through bouts with indigenous groups. Another factor that led to Californio women widows was the drastic age difference between her and her husband; she would out-live him. Without a husband to tether her to the home or a son who is

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<sup>14</sup> Osio, *History of Alta California*, 5.

old enough to inherit the homestead, she and her children faced displacement.

According to Albert Hurtado, he discusses differences in religious views; Mexican Catholic men believed that women were lustful, which led to marrying off women at such a young age. Americans, being Protestant, thought that women naturally did not enjoy having sex, and therefore had to visit brothels to appease their sexual appetites.<sup>15</sup> Catholicism played a significant role in the lives of Californios, and there was a considerable difference in standards that men were held to versus women. The gravity to which women were reprimanded for sinning versus men illuminated the double standard that existed within their society. It was noted that many of the homes in Alta California had windows built significantly higher to keep the young girls from talking to boyfriends.<sup>16</sup> Another example of the lack of autonomy women had over their lives even well into their adulthood is illustrated in how “... Juan Francisco could have considered threatening to beat his mother after learning that she was having carnal relations with Marcelo Pinto, a notorious soldier.”<sup>17</sup> This is directly connected to changes in the laws that allowed mothers to be placed under the control of their adult sons. Women were expected to provide and uphold honor to their families. This meant not engaging in libidinous relations with anyone unless she was married. “Fidelity

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<sup>15</sup> Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers*, 1-203.

<sup>16</sup> Beebe and Senkewicz, *Testimonios*, 282.

<sup>17</sup> Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers*, 28.

was used to ensure legitimate transference of patrimony... along with reproducing the hierarchical, male-dominated social order.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Economic Differences and Siestas**

Americans thought poorly of Alta California’s economy. They saw Californios as “idle thriftless people” and believed that California could be so much more than it was.<sup>19</sup> Americans thought Californios were not taking complete advantage of the soil and climate they had to offer and did not produce their goods. During the Spanish period, the missions were the basis of Alta California’s economy. Neophytes were taught how to make clothing, shoes, cook, among other things, at a novice standing. The goods that the missions sold were not at the level that most of the population was content with. This led to open trading after Mexico declared independence from Spain. It allowed Californios to obtain goods of a higher quality than previously available. Open trading proved advantageous for Californios but also for Americans. Americans reported taking advantage of the Californios and charging them more California banknotes and silver for the goods they had aboard their ships.

Once Mexico became independent, the secularization of the missions commenced, and the distribution of *deseños* (land grants) began. Consequently, it created a distinct pool of elite versus the rest of the population. Since many high-ranking officials were connected

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<sup>18</sup> Castañeda, “Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848,” 230–259.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast* (North Scituate: Digital Scanning, Incorporated, 2001), 38.

### *¿Damas o Putas?*

through marriage or were compadres, these men received the largest *deseños*. Thus, making them leaders in the hide and tallow trade. Since these families ruled this market, it made their daughters only that much more desirable to some. Other Americans like Thomas O. Larkin of Boston made his sentiments clear regarding marrying Californianas: “I had any (say a little) love for the Lady, and the Lady had loot enough for me.”<sup>20</sup>

Financial gain was not the only reason to marry a Californio woman. Still, it crossed their minds with comments such as the one mentioned. At that time, white Americans were considered foreigners, and for them to own land, they had to become Catholic, marry a Californiana, and become a citizen. Many Americans followed through with the process and managed to take over a rancho handed to him by his father-in-law and strengthen the trade between Alta California and America, all thanks to his dark-eyed bride. Many Spanish families that embraced the notion of *Limpieza de Sangre* (purity of blood) accepted interracial marriages with Americans based on their skin color and believed their bloodlines would not be tainted.

Californios had different economic practices that Americans could perceive as squandering their goods or frivolous spending. Whenever a lower financial standing bride was to get married, she would visit someone considered highly influential in the pueblo to dress her for her wedding and it was customary to bring a small offering when seeking assistance. It was also a common practice for people

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<sup>20</sup> Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers*, 30.



traveling to kill a calf along their journey for food and was acceptable as long as they informed the owner of what they did.<sup>21</sup>

Fandangos took place to celebrate weddings, baptisms, and any other special occasions and would last for several days. Americans often spoke of Californios frequently spending on fandangos and the frequency they occurred. With Americans blinded by their ethnocentricity, they failed to see that Californios did not spend money necessarily to showcase their status or as an attempt to impress them. They could not see they were dressing a penniless bride, allowing someone to eat their cattle without concern of compensation or throwing a fandango that the entire town attends, which illustrates a sense of inclusivity of castas and socioeconomic standings. There was segregation among the elite and the poor at the fandangos, but everyone was allowed to attend.<sup>22</sup> These economic inferences speak volumes to cultural differences that Americans overlooked.

Aside from Americans believing that Californios made poor economic choices, they also concluded they were lazy. Americans described Californios as lazy because they thought Californios had the indigenous doing all the hard work, and “even the poorest Mexican can keep one.”<sup>23</sup> It is important to remember that slavery was in full effect on the American East Coast during this time. Although Americans viewed Spanish Californios as having some civility, this

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<sup>21</sup> Beebe and Senkewicz, *Testimonios*, 1-288.

<sup>22</sup> Osio, *History of Alta California*, 1-400.

<sup>23</sup> Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 1-190.

### *¿Damas o Putas?*

brings attention to the double standard implemented or perhaps a means to justify white supremacy. Laziness has been referred to as “California fever.” Americans reveal concern that those that move to California and have their children raised by Mexicans, that the children will catch it.<sup>24</sup> It is apparent that skin color plays a prominent role in how Californios are described. More often than not, laziness appeared to be ubiquitous with darker skin tones. Perhaps, Americans made this association with Californios because the same accusations were made when describing enslaved Black people working on plantations. It is possible that these ideas carried over when traveling to California.

### **Influence and Beauty**

Such ideas spread back to the American East Coast by books, letters, and word of mouth from those working the merchant ships selling goods to the Californios. Many sailors working onboard the mercantile ships received permission to go ashore for liberty once the hides were loaded and stored onboard, which led to gaining personal experience interacting with Californios. Often once ships were seen docked at port, Californianas, primarily indigenous women, prostituted on the beaches. It is believed that many of the indigenous women succumbed to prostitution to be compensated versus raped and beaten. These women were placed in a desperate situation, and it has been noted that some husbands participated in pimping out their

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<sup>24</sup> Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 82.

### *¿Damas o Putas?*

wives to sailors and Spanish soldiers.<sup>25</sup> Sailors have seen who they believe to be the women's husbands, walk them down to the beach, and walk back with her after their wife's shift.

A few books that have been analyzed are *Two Years Before the Mast*, by Richard Henry Dana, *The Californio*, by Robert MacLeod, *California the Wonderful*, by Edwin Markham. This was California A. Sheldon Pennoyer. After reading these books, considerations of the linguistic differences within the written material have been made to comprehend the language used when referencing Mexicans and Californios. These books give great insight as to how white Americans perceived Californios, and these works describe Californios in the most degrading manner.

*The Californio*, by Robert MacLeod, is a fictional novel set during the Californio period and written in 1928. MacLeod portrays Californio women as beautiful, lustful, and scandalous. The Californiana is the object of desire in the novel. The main character that plays the "Californio" is played by a white man taken in as a child by a Mexican family. Even this fictional novel revolved around a white man. MacLeod makes references to how Californios and Mexicans are "almost the same thing."<sup>26</sup> Richard Henry Dana refers to Mexicans with darker skin tones as having a muddy appearance.<sup>27</sup> Macleod describes Mexican women as ugly. Even though Macleod references Californios and Mexicans as being practically the same, he distinguishes the

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<sup>25</sup> Hurtado, *Intimate Frontiers*, 16.

<sup>26</sup> Robert MacLeod, *The Californio* (South Yarmouth: Curley Publishing Inc., 1928), 45.

<sup>27</sup> Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 1-190.

## ¿Damas o Putas?

women. It also illustrates the authority men have over women when the main character's love interest writes a letter to him about how her father would have her arrested if she tried to leave home to be with him.<sup>28</sup>

In the book, *This Was California*, A. Sheldon Pennoyer is a collection of woodcuts and engravings highlighting human achievements and historical events in California. The collection depicts Californians attempting to mimic white men (Image 3<sup>29</sup>).

MacLeod further describes the Indians as docile and that they steal when possible and how the Californian vaquero would prefer to work on the rancho than mine for gold.<sup>30</sup> The collections of works reinforced the stigmatization of Californios and indigenous peoples of California.

In *California the Wonderful*, Edwin Markam, glorifies the Bear Flag revolt. He discusses how, "While the Atlantic colonies were making way



**A CALIFORNIAN SENORITA**  
They absorbed the ways of the white man in dress and cigars.

Figure 3. Depiction of a Californiana woman

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<sup>28</sup> MacLeod, *The Californio*. South Yarmouth, 63.

<sup>29</sup> Pizor, William M. *Street of Memory*. Moving Image, 1937.

<sup>30</sup> A. Sheldon Pennoyer, *This Was California* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1938), 31.

### *¿Damas o Putas?*

in the East for our great experiment in self-government, Spain, out in the borders of the Pacific, was venturing with her experiment of making savages into *gentes de raison*.”<sup>31</sup> Later in his book, Markham states,

Following the path of the padres, Spanish Families drifted into the flowery valleys of California: thus came the first caucasian women to our shores. They shed light of romance over the early pastoral era. ... when the silvery-voiced Spanish lady presided over her estate with so fine and grace and cordiality, when guests thronged at the doors, and fiesta and fandango punctuated the routine of the workday.<sup>32</sup>

Markham’s book supports the attacks that the Americans conducted on the Californios and referred to Spanish women as being white, and he then describes Spanish women as though he described his ideal woman, possessing particular qualities such as grace. Markham also makes a note of the fact that Spanish women have time for parties after work each day. With this statement, Markham could be toying with the notion that a Spanish woman’s workday is not very difficult.

Books like Dana’s, Markham’s, and MacLeod’s were notorious and only drove home these assumptions for their readers. Other media, such as a short film encouraging tourism to the old

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<sup>31</sup> Edwin Markham, *California the Wonderful* (New York: Hearst International Library Co., Inc., 1914), 12.

<sup>32</sup> Markham, *California the Wonderful*, 321.

### *¿Damas o Putas?*

Mexican Quarter in Los Angeles, highlights the quintessential stereotypes of beautiful flirty señoritas. “Families visit each other daily... Here one stops to read [at the antique bookshop] and remains to admire. Why? Huh, well, look, great-granddaughter of a Spanish don. Her beauty makes one speechless.”<sup>33</sup> Again, here is another example of the emphasis placed on the character and physicality of Californio women. Works such as these reached a broad audience, and many individuals accepted these depictions of Californianas.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

I argue that despite being portrayed in a negative light and the many adversities Californio women faced, their actions illustrate tactics of survival, many of which are still being replicated today. The idea of marriage was previously considered a type of business transaction or a form of securing wealth and status for one’s own family for generations to come. For a white American to marry a Californio woman meant a financial opportunity; but for a widow Californio woman, the difference in remarrying meant having a roof over her head or becoming displaced. Not to forget that many of these girls were betrothed or married off at a young age which was a decision cast by her father.

These women had a significant lack of power and autonomy over their lives. It is no wonder why they would be so interested in their clothing, and it seems that was the only aspect of their lives they

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<sup>33</sup> William M. Pizor, *Street of Memory*, Moving Image, 1937.

### *¿Damas o Putas?*

could control. It is no wonder why they would be so interested in their clothing. Perhaps clothing for Californio women provided an outlet. Even though the Sistema de Casta ranked individuals based on their race and phenotype, mobility did occur by individuals simply declaring it or by changing their outward appearance.<sup>3435</sup>

Californio was more so an umbrella term for those who lived there. There is a significant distinction between Spanish, Mexican, and indigenous. It is as if the Spanish received a pass for having status and some having skin color that often mimicked that of white Americans. This is evident in how white American men describe them. Still, the Spanish reciprocated the sentiment by accepting interracial marriages with Americans based on their skin tone and preferred it over mestizos, but it was not always so. White Americans were initially considered foreigners and needed to be citizens to own land in California, and how the tables turned regarding citizenship when America took over California.

What has not been made clear is why American men felt it was important to continuously mention the beauty of Californio women, and comes off as an obsession or fetish. It is understandable how initially Americans considered Californianas as “exotic” due to the route traveled. It made it feel like they traveled to a far-off land, but it still is unclear why Californio women were still rendered “exotic” after

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<sup>34</sup> Voss, “Poor People in Silk Shirts” 404–432.

<sup>35</sup> Ross W. Jamieson, “Caste in Cuenca: Colonial Identity in the Seventeenth Century Andes,” in *The Archaeology of Plural and Changing Identities*, ed. Eleanor Conlin Casella and Chris Fowler (Boston: Springer, 2005), 211–232.

### *¿Damas o Putas?*

California became part of the United States. I believe cultural differences played a crucial role in othering Californios. It appears that as white American men exerted their power in writing narratives, in doing so, they branded Californio women for all to see. In the future, I would like to further research why the stereotypes have stayed with Latinx women. Considering today's current movements revolving around women's issues and women taking charge and reclaiming their sexuality, are Latinx women viewed differently in this regard? Are Latinx women viewed as reclaiming their sexuality, or are they viewed as conforming to the stereotype of being *putas*?





Illustration by Elizabeth Lo, CSU Chico

# The Forgotten Past: Native American Code Talkers in the Global Theater and Homefront, 1942-1945

By Christine Nguyen

Imagine going to war and having people listen to you saying *wo-tah-de-ne-ih* (air force)<sup>1</sup> and quickly become confused because no one heard of the obscure language or phrase you said. This is what it meant to be a Native American. Throughout United States history, Anglo-Americans oppressed and harbored extremist sentiments toward Native Americans and considered them heathens. Frightened by Native American culture, Anglo-Americans began extermination and assimilation of Native Americans into the “white” American identity. After the assimilation process of Native Americans, the United States decided to use them during World War II to end the war against the Axis Powers. Native Americans began to enlist into the United States military and Navy. World War II changed the dynamic between the United States government and Native Americans from mutual suspicions to allies. This paper will address the experiences of Native Americans serving as Code Talkers on the global war front and serving patriotically as American citizens helping on the United States

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<sup>1</sup> Chester Nez and Judith S. Avila, *Code Talker: The First and Only Memoir By One of the Original Navajo Code Talkers of WWII* (London: Penguin, 2011), 238.

homefront.

By October 1918, the United States military attempted to recruit Native Americans as Code Talkers for the first time in World War I. Code Talkers trained to communicate in a coded manner.<sup>2</sup> William Meadows, the author of *The First Code Talkers: Native American Communicators in World War I*, discusses how the code talker project came about and how Native American Code Talkers aided the United States military. He claimed that the United States military administration became frustrated with Germans breaking and compromising their English encrypted codes.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, the United States military found an answer to their problem when Captain Lawrence listened in on a discussion between two Choctaw military officers talking “in their native Choctaw language.”<sup>4</sup> Captain Lawrence saw this as a brilliant opportunity for the United States military to strengthen and secure military communication. In turn, the United States military administration embraced the idea and recruited Native Americans to participate in the small-scale code-breaking project.

The Choctaws became the first Native American recruits to assist United States military intelligence as Code Talkers. However, the United States military recruiters selectively accepted specific Choctaws who met specific qualifications for the code-breaking

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<sup>2</sup> Ed Gilbert, *Native American Code Talker in World War II* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 62.

<sup>3</sup> William C. Meadows, *The First Code Talkers: Native American Communicators in World War I* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020), 20.

<sup>4</sup> Meadows, *The First Code Talkers*, 127.

project. Throughout World War I, the United States military administration observed that most but not all Native Americans who enlisted did not speak fluent English. In this case, the Choctaws had to speak fluent English and their native language to become Code Talkers, or the United States military refused their enlistment. If the Choctaws did not speak fluent English, they would have challenges communicating and completing active duty or training. The United States military recruiters selected eight Code Talkers from the Choctaw that met these qualifications and already served in the military at the time. This meant that the United States military would not waste time using the Choctaw Code Talkers as a secret weapon during World War I. This code talking project produced two types of Choctaw Code Talkers: 1) those who used their Choctaw native language to formulate specific military codes and 2) those who communicated in their native language "without specially designed encoded terms."<sup>5</sup> The Germans felt perplexed and powerless because they failed to decode the Choctaw's native language and the encrypted military code.<sup>6</sup> The unfamiliar Choctaws' native language differed from European languages. The code talker project turned into a successful United States military tactic, which paved the way for new secret cryptography that would later influence World War II.

On December 11, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan and entered World War II. Once again, the United States military planned to utilize Native American Code Talkers against the

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<sup>5</sup> Meadows, *The First Code Talkers*, 324.

<sup>6</sup> Meadows, *The First Code Talkers*, 26.

Axis Powers. They decided to adopt a particular policy to recruit and train several Native Americans, such as the Navajo, as Code Talkers. For example, an American civilian, Phillips Johnston, conceived the Navajo Code Talkers project. In his plan, *Proposed Plan for Recruiting Indian Signal Corps Personnel*, Johnston discussed his reasons to utilize the Native Americans to help with the war effort. Growing up on a Navajo reservation, he had become acquainted with the culture through his interactions with Native Americans. Johnston observed that “the language of a tribe belonging to one linguistic stock is completely alien to that of another stock; in most cases, variations of the tongue within a linguistic stock may be so great as to be mutually intelligible.”<sup>7</sup> He acknowledged the diversity of native languages, and that not all Native Americans understood and spoke each other’s native languages. Also, Johnston observed another unique feature about the languages of the Native Americans. He claimed that “all [native] languages are classed as unwritten because no alphabets or other symbols of purely native origin are in existence.”<sup>8</sup> In some ways, Johnston saw the native languages as a valuable skill to the United States military as Native American tribes did not write anything down from their language. Taking into consideration that Germans and Japanese could misinterpret native languages as gibberish, using native languages could prevent the Axis Powers from breaking the secret military codes and increase the difficulties for the Axis Powers

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<sup>7</sup> Philip Johnston, “Proposed Plan for Recruiting Indian Signal Corps Personnel, 1942,” *Colorado Plateau Digital Collections*, accessed November 19, 2021, <http://archive.library.nau.edu/digital/collection/cpa/id/44705/rec/1>.

<sup>8</sup> Johnston, “Proposed Plan,” 1.

to learn about the United States military plans. Thus, Johnston's proposal bolstered the efforts behind the Native American Code Talkers project during World War II because the intricate Native American military codes could make the United States military outwit the Axis Powers.

The code-breaking project grew more widespread and popular as the United States military relied on Native Americans for essential wartime communications. The tension between the United States and Axis Powers continued to heighten throughout World War II. In May 1942, the United States Navy began to recognize the significance of Phillips Johnston's proposal. They decided to officially recruit and rely on Navajo Code Talkers. Noah Riseman in "The Navajo Code Talkers: Warriors for the Settler Nation," explains the selective process and motivations behind the recruitment of Navajos to become Code Talkers. The United States Navy recruited Navajos from their reservations or had help from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The United States Navy primarily recruited bilingual Navajos because they wanted Navajos to retain their native language while they "acculturate enough to be considered useful by the military."<sup>9</sup> The United States Navy did not want to devote all their energy to Navajos on the reservation who did not speak fluent English or Navajo. Not all Navajos had the chance to learn the English language or attended boarding schools that eliminated their native language skills. Despite

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<sup>9</sup> Noah Riseman, "The Navajo Code Talkers: Warriors for the Settler Nation," in *Defending Whose Country?: Indigenous Soldiers in the Pacific War*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 178.

this, the United States Navy eventually recruited and trained twenty-nine eligible bilingual Navajos as Code Talkers.

The United States Navy selected the Navajos due to the distinctiveness of the Navajo language. No one outside of the United States understood or could decipher their language. Riseman asserts, “many of the sounds used in Navajo have no easy equivalent in the English alphabet. There are also different inflections within the Navajo language, and some Navajo words can have four inflections, each prescribing a different meaning.”<sup>10</sup> Because of its complexity, the Navajo language became an ideal candidate for the United States Navy code talking project. Other Native American tribes and non-native speakers would have struggled to understand the sophisticated Navajo language. To demonstrate, Chester Nez, a veteran Navajo code talker, recalled and described the creation of the Navajos’ military code. He explained that “[Navajo Code Talkers] tried to make the letter equivalents easy to remember. And we discussed pronunciation—since the emphasis on the wrong syllable, a slight change in tone, or a glottal stop could change a word’s meaning in the complicated Navajo language.”<sup>11</sup> The Navajo Code Talkers worked hard to carefully select and coin military terms to avoid confusion among themselves. Otherwise, Navajo Code Talkers misremembering or misunderstanding the military codes would defeat the purpose of having secret cryptography between the Native American Code Talkers and Anglo-American military officers. They were determined

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<sup>10</sup> Riseman, “The Navajo Code Talkers,” 176.

<sup>11</sup> Nez and Avila, *Code Talker*, 97.

to create an incomprehensible code by using their native languages as a powerful tool to benefit the United States military in warfare. Therefore, the Navajos' native languages became advantageous for the United States military because Americans could count on Navajos to communicate classified codes.

Over time, Native American code breakers' native languages became critical in efficiently and reliably communicating messages to American soldiers fighting in the war. Initially, the United States military relied on code machines but took a while to decipher transmitted codes. Once the United States military considered the Native American code breakers project, they began to doubt its accuracy. Ed Gilbert in *Native American Code Talker in World War II* discusses the development and complexities of Native American cryptography. Several Native Americans had to collaborate in developing the codes as they all had different dialects and languages. Gilbert revealed that Native American Code Talkers made up “about 250 words or phrases.”<sup>12</sup> Native American Code Talkers aided in condensing long messages into brief phrases in their native tongue. In doing so, they worked meticulously in creating unbreakable encrypted military codes to cut down the communication time for the United States. To put Native Americans' codes into action, Native American Code Talkers frequently took rigorous and methodical training by the United States Navy to complete their mission. The Code Talkers memorized all their codes and “could relay complex messages, error-

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<sup>12</sup> Gilbert, *Native American Code Talker*, 15.



free, in a fraction of the time.”<sup>13</sup> Notably, Jack Jones, another veteran Navajo code talker, detailed the systematic training for Code Talkers. He said that “it was not much time [...] given to us to learn code talking. They give a whole bunch of names [...] And then there was alphabet — you got to learn how to spell this and that.”<sup>14</sup> The United States Navy expected Code Talkers to learn code talking fast and did not want room for errors in the Code Talkers’ project. Accordingly, the Native American codebreakers demonstrated their ability to communicate messages quickly and successfully in the field. The United States Navy no longer had to wait for hours to decipher confidential messages. Hence, Native American Code Talkers gave the United States Navy the advantage to send their messages out to their people quickly without delaying the transfer of notable sensitive information. Otherwise, the United States Navy would not have had the ability to plan or prepare ahead of time for its attacks on the Axis Powers.

Furthermore, Native American Code Talkers’ native languages became valuable to the United States military because of the constant changes in their codes, which prevented vulnerability in cryptography. For example, Gilbert noted that “English E, and the other most common letters in English, at least three words were to be used and switched randomly.”<sup>15</sup> The United States military feared that the Axis Powers would intercept and decipher their codes. If the Americans did not change their military codes frequently, the Axis

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<sup>13</sup> Gilbert, *Native American Code Talker*, 18-20.

<sup>14</sup> Riseman, “The Navajo Code Talkers,” 181.

<sup>15</sup> Riseman, “The Navajo Code Talkers,” 21.

### *The Forgotten Past*

Powers could have become aware of Americans communicating in Native American languages. Perhaps, the Axis Powers could have used this opportunity to learn Native American languages or capture one of the Native American Code Talkers as a prisoner of war to disclose the United States Navy encrypted messages. In turn, to prevent this the Americans did everything in their power to prevent the leaking of encrypted codes throughout World War II. They did not want their secret plans to be revealed—that they were utilizing native languages as code during the war. This information could have ended up in the wrong hands (i.e., Axis Powers). Americans did not want the Axis Powers to learn about the United States military movements. They wanted the Axis Powers to have great difficulty deciphering the code spoken by Native American Code Talkers. As a result, Americans made every effort to maintain secrecy and eventually were victorious after World War II because of the indecipherable Native American Code Talkers' codes.

However, the United States government did not always embrace this idea and hesitated to enlist the Native Americans as code-talkers to embark on the code-breaking project. The United States military saw using native languages to communicate military codes posed a risk to the United States military intelligence. For instance, Meadows discussed that Americans did not know if the long-range communication could hear native language sounds. As he noted, "It is difficult at times for two intelligent and quite fluent speakers to understand each other on good commercial telephone circuits; when the circuits are only fair or bad, as they often are under adverse

field conditions, then the quality of the signals becomes so poor that serious misunderstandings are very likely to arise.”<sup>16</sup> Another concern is that the Native American Code Talkers would forget to converse in code regularly. Riseman asserted that Native American Code Talkers frequently rotated, stationed, and transferred to different military units, each with its own set of codes. The United States military commanders worried that Native American Code Talkers became “out of touch with communication methods and procedure.”<sup>17</sup> The United States military hesitated and doubted the security of using native languages for coded communication. If the Native Americans failed to understand and communicate secret information, then the United States military operations were likely to have blamed the Native Americans if anything went wrong. The Americans positioned themselves in a potentially vulnerable state during the war. The United States military was terrified at the thought of trusting Native Americans to decipher and transmit encrypted codes. Americans hoped to defeat the Axis Powers and save the lives of their soldiers on the war front. Despite the opposition, the United States Navy decided to enlist Native Americans as Code Talkers to embrace this idea of developing a unique military intelligence, and Code Talkers quickly became in high demand by the United States government throughout World War II.

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<sup>16</sup> William C. Meadows, *The Comanche Code Talkers of World War II*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 41.

<sup>17</sup> Noah Riseman, “When the War Was Over: Forgetting and (Re)Membering the Code Talkers,” in *Defending Whose Country?: Indigenous Soldiers in the Pacific War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 202.

However, Native Americans experienced hardships, including discrimination during their military service. On the American war front, Riseman highlights the discriminatory experiences of the Native American Code Talkers in World War II. Frequently, Anglo-Americans perceived Native Americans as incapable of assimilating into American culture.<sup>18</sup> The Anglo-American military officers allegedly thought the Native Americans could not speak fluent English. If Native Americans could not communicate in English fluently, how would they transmit, translate, and decipher encrypted codes to their superiors? Anglo-American military officers had concerns if these Native Americans could fulfill their responsibilities as Code Talkers. In reality, most enlisted Native American Code Talkers have spoken fluently in both their native languages and English, but Anglo-Americans racially discriminated against them. Anglo-American military officers viewed Native Americans as "savages"<sup>19</sup> and ranked the cultural group as the lower ranks of society because of their cultural heritage and languages. In a sense, Anglo-American military officers feared Native Americans because both racial groups differed from each other. With this, Anglo-Americans frequently mistreated Native Americans for their heritage. Yet, Native American Code Talkers provided the United States military a special skill, and the Navajos native language provided them a chance to serve the United States military.

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<sup>18</sup> Riseman, "The Navajo Code Talkers," 178.

<sup>19</sup> Riseman, "The Navajo Code Talkers," 172.

### *The Forgotten Past*

Native Americans fought in World War II for patriotism and traditional cultural reasons. In particular, Cozy Stanley Brown, a veteran Navajo code talker, mentioned American patriotism and his native culture motivated him to protect the United States. He said his “main reason for going to war was to protect my land and my people because the elderly people said the Earth was our mother.”<sup>20</sup> Brown sacrificed himself voluntarily for the sake of defending his ancestral land and people. He upheld his tribal traditional values to gain prestige and respect from his fellow tribal members. If not, his tribal community would have shunned him. Another veteran Navajo code talker, Raymond Nakai, reiterated his desire to demonstrate his loyalty to the United States. Nakai explained that “Native Americans are proud to be Americans. We’re proud to be American Indians.”<sup>21</sup> Despite prejudice that Native Americans endured for the past centuries, Native American Code Talkers considered themselves patriotic Americans. They saw their country suffer from fighting against the Axis Powers. It prompted Native Americans to enlist in the military to prevent the Axis Powers from further attacking the military forces of the United States.

Native Americans not only aided the war efforts on an international scale but also at home. Before, Native Americans had a lack of employment opportunities because they faced issues from living and working in inadequate conditions on reservations. Until

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<sup>20</sup> Jeré Franco, “Loyal and Heroic Service: The Navajos and World War II,” *Journal of Arizona History* 27, no. 4 (1986): 394, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41859701>.

<sup>21</sup> Franco, “Loyal and Heroic Service,” 394.

World War II occurred, the United States' industrial workforces demanded workers to assist due to labor shortage. Most Native Americans seized the opportunity, mobilized, and supported the war for economic and employment opportunities. Native Americans began to work in the industrial defense sector, performing tasks like "[loading] ships or [handling] construction machinery."<sup>22</sup> Others worked in various fields, ranging from welding to "other industrial precision skills."<sup>23</sup> These employment opportunities that contributed to the war effort enabled Native Americans to live better lives by obtaining financial stability.

In addition, Native Americans on the homefront contributed to the war in other ways than working in defense industries. Jeré Franco in "Loyal and Heroic Service: The Navajos and World War II," reveals how some Native Americans on reservations made sacrifices for the war effort. Despite being paid low wages, some Native Americans bought war bonds, while others sold their possessions (e.g., jewelry) or gathered iron scraps to give to the United States government.<sup>24</sup> Some reduced their food consumption to ration food for American soldiers and donated their money to Red Cross.<sup>25</sup> Native Americans made sacrifices and improvised their lifestyle for the cause, hoping that the United States would emerge victorious after the war.

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<sup>22</sup> Franco, "Loyal and Heroic Service," 400.

<sup>23</sup> Jeré Franco, "Beyond Reservation Boundaries: Native American Laborers in World War II," *Journal of the Southwest* 36, no. 3 (1994): 242, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40169910>.

<sup>24</sup> Franco, "Loyal and Heroic Service," 398.

<sup>25</sup> Franco, "Loyal and Heroic Service," 399.

In doing so, Native Americans wanted to help as much as possible for the United States government during the challenging times of World War II.

Moreover, Native Americans suffered disillusionment from the United States government. Jeré Franco highlights the United States' mistreatment of Native Americans. Specifically, the United States government barred some Native Americans from joining the military during World War II because they could not speak fluent English. Despite this, Native Americans no matter what expressed a desire to assist the United States through the industrial labor workforce. But this was only permitted if Native American translators or English-speaking Native American officers supervised them.<sup>26</sup> However, the United States government refused to accommodate the requests of the Native Americans. Even though the United States government granted and recognized Native Americans as American citizens, the United States government maintained prejudiced policies against them. Franco argued that employers did not recognize Native Americans for their hard work or skills. Native Americans had a lower salary than their Anglo-American counterparts.<sup>27</sup> Often employers fired or did not hire Native Americans because they believed that Anglo-Americans were better qualified for employment over "racially inferior" Native Americans.<sup>28</sup> Many Native Americans became enraged by this treatment because of the racial inequalities

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<sup>26</sup> Franco, "Loyal and Heroic Service," 395.

<sup>27</sup> Franco, "Loyal and Heroic Service," 400.

<sup>28</sup> Franco, "Loyal and Heroic Service," 400.

### *The Forgotten Past*

and unequal opportunity to obtain higher-paying jobs. The employers and the United States government were not sympathetic to Native Americans, rather they were used as a source of cheap labor. The United States government's priority was the war; they did not want to lose to the Axis Powers, which would compromise their image as a global superpower. Despite Native Americans' resentment of the United States government, they overlooked past trauma to help their country. Ultimately, the United States' structural racism oppressed Native Americans on the homefront, preventing them from fully participating in the war effort.

Therefore, Native American Code Talkers played a critical role in World War II. They contributed to successfully helping the United States win the war by assisting the homefront and using their native language as a strategic tactic to defeat the Axis Powers. Native Americans supported the war for several reasons, such as American patriotism. At the same time, Native American Code Talkers experienced racial prejudice throughout their lives before the war and Americans may have forgotten Native Americans' participation on the homefront and war front. Regardless, the legacy of the code talker program had a lasting impact on these Native American Code Talkers because they pioneered new military intelligence, which altered the trajectory of the war.





Illustration by Francisca Vargas, CSU Chico

# The Plague of Segregation: Educational Inequality in Chicago During the 1918 Influenza Pandemic

By Elizabeth Stenger Balbin

## Then and Now

Face masks are mandated throughout the city. Hospitals are overrun with patients. Some students are in school, and others stay home. Newspapers describe incidents of racially motivated violence, and fear of a deadly virus grips the country and the world. Although readers may conjure recent scenes from 2020 and 2021, this also describes daily life in Chicago in the fall of 1918 during the influenza pandemic. While there are important differences between 1918 and 2021, we live in a time when inequalities continue to plague our society, and we can learn a lot about the present by shedding light on communities of the past.

Pandemics expose inequality in the world of medicine as well as in the educational sphere. “The sudden switch to remote learning wiped out academic gains for many students in America, and widened racial and economic gaps.”<sup>1</sup> This is the analysis from a December 2020

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<sup>1</sup> Roz Edward, “Black and Brown students fall behind on distance learning track,” *Chicago Defender*, December 15, 2020, <https://chicago defender.com/black-and-brown-students-fall-behind-on-distance-learning-track/>.

## *The Plague of Segregation*

article by the *Chicago Defender* that details how African American and Latinx students are being left behind during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This assertion is backed by studies such as one by McKinsey & Company, which found that by December 2020, “students of color were about three to five months behind in learning [while] white students were about one to three months behind.”<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 has exposed many inequalities in our nation, especially when it comes to education. This inequality has existed for generations, and as a teacher in the classroom last year, I was a firsthand witness of this harsh reality. After seeing how the response to COVID-19 was unfolding in schools across the United States, I was curious to investigate the educational experiences of students during the 1918 influenza pandemic. Specifically, how did the pandemic affect communities of color?<sup>3</sup>

As someone who was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area of California, I was eager to research the influenza’s impact on African Americans in Oakland or San Francisco. However, the demographics of these cities in 1918, coupled with the lack of available documentary evidence, forced me to reconsider. As I continued my research, I found a wealth of information about Chicago

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<sup>2</sup> Emma Dorn, Bryan Hanock, Jimmy Sarakatsannis, and Ellen Viruleg, “COVID-19 and learning loss—disparities grow and students need help,” *McKinsey & Company*, December 8, 2020, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-learning-loss-disparities-grow-and-students-need-help>.

<sup>3</sup> Notes about language: I will be using the term “pandemic” instead of “epidemic” because in 1918, the outbreak of influenza was worldwide. Additionally, I will be using “African American students/people” in my paper, but some sources use terms such as “colored”, “race”, “Negro”, and “Black” when referring to African Americans.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

during the pandemic. Given the mass migration of African Americans into the city in the first quarter of the twentieth century, I was able to find sufficient documentary evidence about the experiences of African Americans. I also discovered that Chicago was one of three major cities to keep their schools open during the fall and winter of 1918-1919.<sup>4</sup> Given the struggles schools have had in 2020 and 2021 in deciding when and how to reopen, this historical choice to keep schools open, interested me. Lastly, while it is no secret that racism and discrimination were more overt in the southern United States, many northern cities, like Chicago, have been characterized as the land of opportunity and equality for African Americans. Common narratives portray northern cities as enlightened, and thus somehow immune to the virus of racism. However, this was not always the case; as racism knows no geographic boundaries. I wanted to discover how segregation impacted African American students in Chicago during the influenza outbreak of 1918.

In the early twentieth century, Chicago was rapidly changing due to the Great Migration, the Progressive Movement, and World War I. In the midst of all that upheaval, a deadly pandemic struck the city. As mentioned earlier, Chicago was one of three major cities to keep its schools open during the fall and winter of 1918-1919 at the peak of the influenza outbreak. How did this pandemic impact different communities of Chicago? The full answer to that question is outside the scope of this paper, which will specifically focus on the educational experi-

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<sup>4</sup> The other two cities to keep their schools open were New York, New York and New Haven, Connecticut.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

ences of African American students. How did they experience school during this time?

Given the residential and school segregation enforced in the city in the early twentieth century, African American students faced obstacles that their white peers did not. They were already facing issues at school that the influenza pandemic only compounded: overt racism from teachers and school administrators, older and more crowded buildings, and the countless hurdles placed in their path by discrimination. While rates of influenza were much lower in the African American population in Chicago despite social, educational, and medical inequality, the rates of absenteeism in schools between the North and South Sides were just about even. In addition to protecting their children from influenza, African American families had to protect their students from discrimination and racism as well. This suggests that during the influenza pandemic, African American students and families found ways to survive and thrive outside of the established healthcare and educational structures. The resilience of the African American community in Chicago in the face of virulent segregation and violent racism can guide us today, as many people bravely work to disrupt the systemic racism that permeates our own society.

### **Migration and Idealism**

The experience of African American students during the 1918 influenza pandemic must be understood within the broader historical context of transformation that was then taking place in Chicago at this

## *The Plague of Segregation*

time. Public education and the demographics of the city were rapidly changing in the midst of a world war. There were two great movements taking place in the country and the events in 1918 Chicago are illustrative for describing these broader movements. There was the physical movement of people in the Great Migration, and the push for social reform known as the Progressive Movement.

The Great Migration of African Americans from the South to cities in the North was in full swing by 1918, with the African American population of Chicago increasing 150% between 1910 - 1920.<sup>5</sup> As more African American families moved North, many white residents started getting nervous. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* warned that “2,000 Southern Negroes Arrive in Last 2 Days” and that “A Rush of Negroes to City Starts Health Inquiry.”<sup>6</sup> These unfounded fears of overcrowding and disease led many white residents to embrace segregationist housing and education policies. In his research on educational discrimination in Chicago, historian Dr. Phillip Daniel argues that residential segregation was a tool for “white backlash” to the Great Migration.<sup>7</sup> *Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein documents that residential segregation was widespread in northern cities and directly led to segregation in schools.<sup>8</sup> It is no surprise that as more African

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<sup>5</sup> Raquel L. Farmer-Hinton, “The Chicago Context: Understanding the Consequences of Urban Processes on School Capacity,” *Journal of Negro Education* 71, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 316.

<sup>6</sup> “2,000 Southern Negroes Arrive in Last 2 Days,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 4, 1917;

“Rush of Negroes to City Starts Health Inquiry,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 5, 1917.

<sup>7</sup> Philip T.K. Daniel, “A History of Discrimination against Black Students in Chicago Secondary Schools,” *History of Education Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 152.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Rothstein, *Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017).

### *The Plague of Segregation*

American residents moved to Chicago, many white residents, government officials, and school administrators worked hard to impose division between white and African American students.

In December of 1912, the Superintendent of Chicago Public Schools, Ella Flagg Young declared that she was “opposed to segregation of races in public schools.”<sup>9</sup> She took this stance at a time when the African American population of Chicago numbered just over 44,000 people out of roughly 1.85 million.<sup>10</sup> According to Phillip Daniel, “it can be safely stated that prior to southern migration blacks registered in such low numbers in the high schools that overt segregation was unnecessary.”<sup>11</sup> However, as the African American population of Chicago grew over the next several years, segregation in residential neighborhoods, and therefore in schools, became more apparent and aggressive.

Chicago’s neighborhoods, known as wards, were racially segregated and the majority of schools that served African American students existed in the second, seventh, thirtieth, and thirty-first wards, which are all on the South Side of Chicago.<sup>12</sup> The following excerpt of a map of schools in the South Side of Chicago shows where several schools with significant African American populations were

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<sup>9</sup> “Mrs. Ella Flagg Young Opposes ‘Jim Crow’ Schools,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), December 28, 1912.

<sup>10</sup> Farmer-Hinton, “The Chicago Context,” 316; “Chicago, 1900-1914,” University of Chicago, accessed March 20, 2021, <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/collections/maps/chi1900/>.

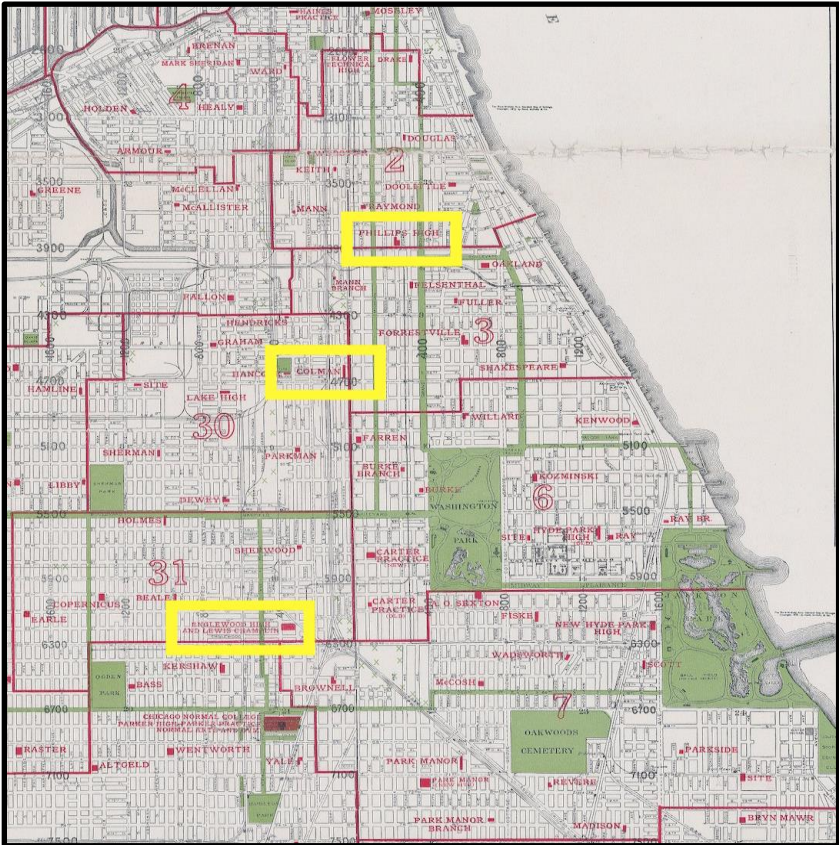
<sup>11</sup> Daniel, “A History of Discrimination,” 151.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel, “A History of Discrimination,” 152.

## *The Plague of Segregation*

located, namely Wendell Phillips High School, Coleman High School, and Englewood High School.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to changing demographics, Chicago also embraced a changing social atmosphere. Chicago was the backdrop



*School map of Chicago, 1914*

<sup>13</sup> Some sources omit the “e” in Coleman High School and write it as “Colman High School”.



## *The Plague of Segregation*

for many Progressive Movement reforms, especially in education.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1910s, reformers focused a lot of attention on school hygiene, which led to the creation of the school nurse position in schools. With nurses in schools, “medical inspections...and physical exams to uncover diseases and defects gradually became the norm in hundreds of cities and towns.”<sup>15</sup> However, as John Barry points out in *The Great Influenza*, during the years that the United States was fighting in World War I, the country experienced a shortage of nurses.<sup>16</sup> All of these factors paint the backdrop for examining the educational environment for African American students in Chicago in 1918.

### **Literature Review**

While there is no shortage of literature about the influenza pandemic of the early twentieth century, there is less about the experience of African Americans, and even less about the experiences of African American students. John Barry and Alfred Crosby have both written extensive works about the pandemic, and while they provide some historical context for this paper, their works are lacking in their treatment of African Americans.<sup>17</sup> In her book, *American Pandemic: The Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic*, Nancy Bristow explores the impact of the pandemic on groups that are traditionally left out of

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<sup>14</sup> Erin A. Hopkins, “John Dewey and Progressive Education,” *The Journal of Educational Thought* 50, no. 1 (Winter 2017): 59-68.

<sup>15</sup> Alexandra M. Stern et. al., “Better Off in School: School Medical Inspection as a Public Health Strategy during the 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic in the United States,” *Public Health Reports* (1974-) 125, (2010): 65.

<sup>16</sup> John Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2005), 143.

<sup>17</sup> Barry, *The Great Influenza*; Alfred W. Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

### *The Plague of Segregation*

historical narratives. She argues that “African Americans...found their struggles during the pandemic made more brutal by racism.”<sup>18</sup> While she does have a brief discussion of schools in Chicago, Bristow focused more of her attention on healthcare and does not address the experiences of African American students specifically.

The two authors that most thoroughly explore the experiences of African Americans during the pandemic are Vanessa Northington Gamble and Elizabeth Schlabach. Both authors focus their research on the medical inequality that African Americans experienced. Gamble’s “‘There Wasn’t a Lot of Comforts in Those Days’: African Americans, Public Health, and the 1918 Influenza Epidemic,” explores the experiences of African Americans in cities across the nation. She argues that African Americans were forced to create their own health infrastructure and networks due to racist public health policies.<sup>19</sup> Schlabach’s “The Influenza Epidemic and Jim Crow Public Health Politics and Practices in Chicago, 1917-1920,” builds on Gamble’s work and focuses more specifically on Chicago. She argues that public health policies, such as keeping schools open, were aimed at surveilling African American communities, and not solely on providing care.<sup>20</sup> There is a gap in the existing literature

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<sup>18</sup> Nancy Bristow, *American Pandemic: The Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 71.

<sup>19</sup> Vanessa Northington Gamble, “‘There Wasn’t a Lot of Comforts in Those Days’: African Americans, Public Health, and the 1918 Influenza Epidemic,” *Public Health Reports* (1974-) 125, (2010): 114-122.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Schlabach, “The Influenza Epidemic and Jim Crow Public Health Policies and Practices in Chicago, 1917-1920.” *Journal of African American History* 104, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 31-58.

## *The Plague of Segregation*

about the educational experiences of African American students during the influenza outbreak and my research will attempt to fill that gap.

### **The Flu Strikes Chicago**

The influenza epidemic of 1918 spread quickly across the United States due to the mobilization of troops who fought in Europe in World War I. To this day, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “there is not universal consensus regarding where the virus originated” but “in the United States, it was first identified in military personnel in spring 1918.”<sup>21</sup> There were two waves of the flu: the first, less virulent wave in the spring of 1918, and the second more deadly wave in the fall and winter of 1918-1919. This virus’s gateway into Chicago was through the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, 30 miles north of the city. On September 23, 1918, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that “100 Sailors at Great Lakes Die of Influenza.”<sup>22</sup> In that very same article, Chicago’s Health Commissioner, John Dill Robertson reported that “we have the Spanish influenza situation well in hand now.” This misleading pronouncement is reminiscent of former President Trump’s statement on January 30, 2020 about the coronavirus: “We think we have it very well under control.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “History of 1918 Flu Pandemic,” <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-commemoration/1918-pandemic-history.htm>

<sup>22</sup> “100 Sailors at Great Lakes Die of Influenza,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago IL), 23 Sept. 1918, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Caitlin Oprysko, “Trump: Coronavirus will have ‘a very good ending for us,’” *Politico*, January 30, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/01/30/trump-close-cooperation-china-coronavirus-109701>

### *The Plague of Segregation*

Unfortunately, both leaders were sorely mistaken. From the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, influenza spread to the rest of the city and over the next eight weeks, over 8,500 Chicagoans would die from influenza and pneumonia.<sup>24</sup>

In response to the increasing rate of influenza in early September, Health Commissioner Robertson called a meeting on September 28 to discuss school closures. This meeting resulted “in the consensus of opinion [being] in favor of keeping the schools open.”<sup>25</sup> Their rationale was three-fold: school environments offered better conditions for students than their residences; staff members could supervise students closely; and schools had physicians and nurses on staff for medical inspections.<sup>26</sup> While at first controversial, this decision was viewed as the best course of action by Robertson and added Chicago to the very short list of cities who decided to keep schools open during the influenza outbreak. However, given the well-documented segregation of urban areas at this time, did all schools have the same, “better conditions”?<sup>27</sup> How did the educational experiences of African American students compare to those of their white classmates at this time?

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<sup>24</sup> John Dill Robertson, *A Report on the Epidemic of Influenza in Chicago Occurring in the Fall of 1918*, Department of Health, 1919, 40.

<sup>25</sup> Robertson, *A Report on the Epidemic of Influenza in Chicago Occurring in the Fall of 1918*, 91.

<sup>26</sup> Robertson, *A Report on the Epidemic of Influenza in Chicago Occurring in the Fall of 1918*, 91.

<sup>27</sup> Robertson, *A Report on the Epidemic of Influenza in Chicago Occurring in the Fall of 1918*, 91.

## *The Plague of Segregation*

When looking at the way that African American students experienced the influenza pandemic, I focused my research on four areas: the conditions of schools with high African American populations, the students' lived experiences in the classrooms and within the school system, the attitudes the parents had toward the quality of their child's or children's education, and the rates of absenteeism in schools during the flu outbreak. During a time when the voices of African Americans were usually deemed unworthy to record, an important source of information for this paper is the *Chicago Defender*. The *Defender*, as it was called, was a prominent Black newspaper in Chicago that had broad circulation across the country.

### **Separate But Not Equal**

The *Chicago Defender* played a large role in promoting the emigration of thousands of African Americans from the southern United States to seek new opportunities in the northern states and escape racial violence.<sup>28</sup> However, racial violence did not stop at the Mason-Dixon line. In the summer of 1919, Chicagoans experienced a deadly race riot following the murder of a young African American teenager, Eugene Williams, who was killed while swimming in Lake Michigan.<sup>29</sup> After this horrific display of racial violence, the city of Chicago commissioned a report on race relations that was published

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<sup>28</sup> James R. Grossman, "Blowing the Trumpet: The 'Chicago Defender' and Black Migration during World War I," *Illinois Historical Journal* 78, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 82-96.

<sup>29</sup> Karen Grigsby Bates and Jason Fuller, "Red Summer In Chicago: 100 Years After The Race Riots," *National Public Radio*, July 17, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2019/07/27/744130358/red-summer-in-chicago-100-years-after-the-race-riots>.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

in 1922. This report attempted to explore the reasons that tensions between white people and African Americans erupted into violence in 1919, and one section of the report focused on education.

The report investigated the physical conditions of schools in the city of Chicago and found that schools that mostly served African American students were in worse shape than schools that mostly served white students. To begin, buildings were older in schools with larger African American populations. In fact, only 5 of these schools (23% of all African American schools) were built after 1900 while 133 schools in white neighborhoods (56% of all white schools) were built since 1899.<sup>30</sup> Older school facilities reveal a couple of different concerns. First, they demonstrate the lack of motivation on the part of the school system to provide the best education for their African American students. Updating the facilities and buildings to accommodate larger classes and improve conditions for African American students was not a priority. Secondly, the physical conditions of the older schools were likely to be run down and in need of improvement. In fact, the 1922 report on race relations describes one school in the South Side as “inadequate, and the buildings are old and overcrowded.”<sup>31</sup> This assertion is echoed in several articles found in the *Chicago Defender*.

Many of the schools on the South Side of Chicago were in states of disrepair. According to a *Chicago Defender* article from 1917,

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<sup>30</sup> The Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922), 243.

<sup>31</sup> Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *Negro in Chicago*, 137.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

citizens of the South Side petitioned for an auditorium to be built at Coleman High School. According to the petition, “the school is in dire need of more room.”<sup>32</sup> This need for more room was not unique to Coleman High School and over a year later in December 1918, Chicagoans would read another *Defender* headline that stated, “New Schools Needed.”<sup>33</sup> The article went on to argue that on the South Side, “where a majority of our children attend,” there were schools where “100 children [are] now crowded into six temporary portables on the yard, which are inadequate for teaching.” These portables are “so dingy, crowded, and badly ventilated that most of the teachers have become ill this fall and unable to teach.” Poor ventilation, crowded rooms, and sick teachers do not sound like the “better conditions” that Health Commissioner Robertson promised when he decided to keep schools open during the influenza pandemic. It is clear that school conditions were a concern for the *Chicago Defender* because that meant students on the South Side, the majority of whom were African American, were not receiving an education equal to that of their peers on the North Side, the majority of whom were white.

It is well-known that segregation and racism were not limited to the southern United States in the early twentieth century. Even the Progressive Movement promoted racist ideologies, such as scientific racism and eugenics.<sup>34</sup> However, as stated earlier, the Superintendent

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<sup>32</sup> “Coleman School Wants an Auditorium Built,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), May 12, 1917.

<sup>33</sup> “New Schools Needed,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), December 28, 1918.

<sup>34</sup> David W. Southern, *The Progressive Era and Race: Reaction and Reform, 1900-1917*, (Wheeling, IL: Harland Davidson, 2005).

### *The Plague of Segregation*

of Chicago Schools felt her city was different since she, personally, was opposed to segregation. In 1912 on a tour of Washington D.C., the Superintendent of Chicago Schools, Ms. Flagg Young, declared that “we have mixed schools and we are proud of them.”<sup>35</sup> However, given the conditions of many schools on the South Side of Chicago, these were not schools about which she should have been proud.

#### **“Race Prejudice is...Ever Prevalent”<sup>36</sup>**

A student’s experience at school is not solely defined by the buildings in which they sit, or stand if you’re in a crowded portable. Their experiences are also shaped by their interactions with teachers, peers, and school administrators. Unfortunately, African American students and their families in Chicago had to contend with racial discrimination at school in 1918 in addition to the influenza pandemic. This discrimination was not limited to schools and, in fact, it permeated nearly all facets of life.

As the African American population of Chicago increased rapidly during and following WWI, racial and school segregation became more apparent. The demographics of many schools in the South Side of Chicago were changing at a pace that made some administrators uncomfortable. In 1918, African American students made up 56% of the student body at Wendell Phillips High School,

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<sup>35</sup> “Mrs. Ella Flagg Young Opposes ‘Jim Crow’ Schools,” *Chicago Defender*, December 28, 1912.

<sup>36</sup> “Color Line Again at Wendell Phillips,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), October 6, 1917.



### *The Plague of Segregation*

which was in the heart of the South Side of Chicago.<sup>37</sup> Mr. Perine, the principal of Wendell Phillips High School, argued that a separate school for “race students” should be built so that “white students...could be easily relieved of the embarrassment of attending a Race school.”<sup>38</sup> This same principal asserted that “by no means can the thought of social equality ever be contemplated” and “race prejudice is natural and ever prevalent.” It wasn’t only principals but teachers who also exhibited prejudice toward African American students. In 1917, the *Chicago Defender* ran an article that describes how teachers ridiculed African American students during class, further shedding light on what students dealt with on a daily basis.<sup>39</sup>

Many parents of African American parents expressed displeasure with how their children were treated within the school system. Historian Philip Daniel cites interviews with parents who felt that teachers were “openly hostile and [refused], in many cases, to help colored pupils.”<sup>40</sup> They go on to say that “the word n\*\*\*\*\* is even heard in the classrooms,” and their children are suspended for trivial offenses.

Additionally, African American students were confronted with discrimination on an institutional level. In order to move their children to schools that had more resources and that were in better condition, families had to apply for permits to transfer. The 1922

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<sup>37</sup> Daniel, “History of Discrimination,” 157.

<sup>38</sup> “Color Line Again at Wendell Phillips,” *Chicago Defender*, October 6, 1917.

<sup>39</sup> “Color Line Again at Wendell Phillips,” *Chicago Defender*, October 6, 1917.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel, “History of Discrimination,” 158.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

report on race relations found that “transfers from schools with a pre-dominant Negro membership” were requested by both white and African American families “due to the reputation of the school for being overcrowded, poorly taught, and generally run down.”<sup>41</sup> However according to this report, “the permits of the Negro children had frequently been revoked.” This assertion is also supported by Phillip Daniel’s research. He cites instances of both African American and white students requesting transfers out of schools like Wendell Phillips, however, “when black students could get transfer permits they were frequently revoked.”<sup>42</sup>

African American students and families were no strangers to racial discrimination. However, one must also consider that this discrimination was occurring in the places where Health Commissioner Robertson argued that students experience “better conditions” than in their homes. African American students were forced to shoulder the burden of a deadly pandemic on top of their daily experiences of racial discrimination at school.

### **Fluphobia?**

After researching the conditions of schools in the South Side of Chicago and learning about the discrimination they faced in medical care, I fully expected to see higher rates of influenza among African Americans in Chicago during the 1918 pandemic. However, this was not the case. In his “Report on the Epidemic of Influenza in

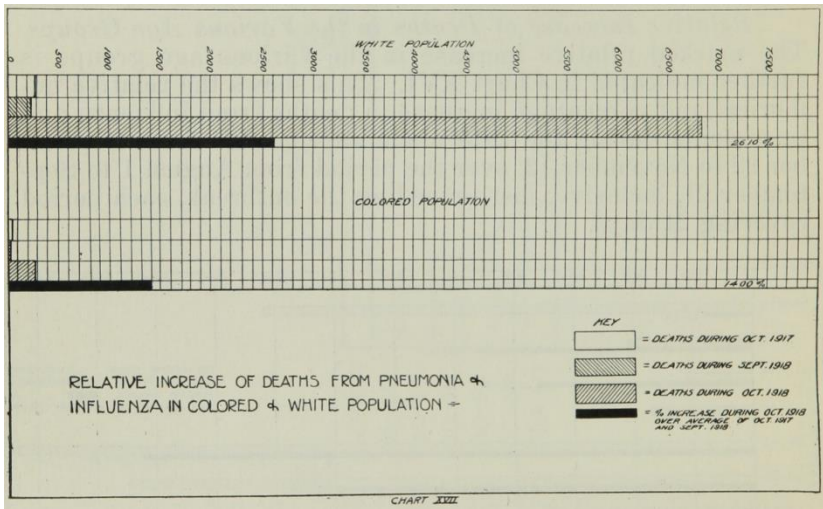
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<sup>41</sup> Commission on Race Relations, *Negro in Chicago*, 252.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel, “History of Discrimination,” 157.

## The Plague of Segregation

Chicago,” Health Commissioner Robertson concluded that when it came to deaths attributed to influenza and pneumonia in 1918, over 6,500 white people died while less than 500 African Americans died.<sup>43</sup> The graph below highlights this wide discrepancy.



*Infection Rate in Chicago between the white and African American population, 1918.<sup>1</sup>*

Many people have offered theories for this, such as underreporting in the African American community or the idea that segregation was a de facto quarantine which kept African Americans separate from white people. Building onto the scientific racism that permeated the Progressive Movement, Health Commissioner Robertson used biological determinism to argue that “the colored race was more immune than the white to influenza.”<sup>44</sup> Historian Alfred Crosby

<sup>43</sup> Robertson, *Epidemic of Influenza*, 70.

<sup>44</sup> Robertson, *Epidemic of Influenza*, 135.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

theorizes that African Americans were exposed to an influenza wave in the spring of 1918 that was less virulent but that made African Americans more resistant to the fall wave. Dr. Elizabeth Schlabach argues that African Americans in Chicago had a lower infection rate because they were able to provide for their own medical needs despite the blatant racism they faced. She states that in face of segregation, “Black Chicago kept itself healthy and thriving despite such Jim Crow public health tactics, bombing campaigns, and state-sanctioned violence of race riots through sheer tenacity and an uncompromising demand for equality.”<sup>45</sup> While historians have not settled on one cause, Schlabach provides the strongest argument for the lower influenza infection rate among African Americans.

This lower infection rate, however, did not have an impact on absenteeism in Chicago’s public and parochial schools. In fact, Health Commissioner Robertson found that the rate of absenteeism was slightly higher in the South Side than it was in the northern parts of Chicago. Between October 4, 1918 and November 12, 1918, five hundred and eighty-three students on the South Side were absent from school while five hundred forty-two were absent from school in neighborhoods in northern Chicago.<sup>46</sup> This nominal discrepancy in absentee rates between the North and South Sides does not match the wide discrepancy in infection rates between African Americans and white people. Along with illness and deaths in the family,

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<sup>45</sup> Schlabach, “Influenza Epidemic,” 32.

<sup>46</sup> Robertson, *Epidemic of Influenza*, 53.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

Robertson points to “fluphobia” as another cause of absenteeism.<sup>47</sup> He felt that students were being kept home from school by parents who were afraid of contracting the virus.

While fear of catching influenza is a completely understandable reason to keep students home from school, I am arguing that for African American families, there was yet another disease to fear: racism. One way African American families chose to protect their children was to keep them out of school during the pandemic. The absenteeism among African Americans does not match the infection rate because African American families chose to protect their children by keeping them at home. How else can we account for the wide discrepancy between rates of infection along racial lines yet nearly equal rates of absenteeism while schools remained open? It is clear that many schools in the South Side had conditions that were unfit for learning, let alone learning during a pandemic. It is also clear that African American students were subject to discrimination in the classrooms and within the school system. In addition to protecting them from influenza, and cloaked under “fluphobia” to avoid white backlash, African American families chose to keep their students home to protect them from racial violence and discrimination.

### **A Story of Resilience**

The resilience of African American students and their families in Chicago during the 1918 influenza pandemic can provide hope for students and families facing the compound issues of COVID-19 and

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<sup>47</sup> Stern, “Better Off In School,” 68.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

educational inequality today. In the face of virulent segregation and racism, the African American community of Chicago was able to survive the 1918 pandemic by turning toward each other.

This resilience took many forms in Chicago. One example was Provident Hospital, which was a hospital founded in 1890 for the explicit purpose of training African American nurses.<sup>48</sup> Historian Vanessa Gamble argues that in 1918, “African Americans assumed the primary responsibility for providing care to race members.”<sup>49</sup> Another example is the *Chicago Defender* where Dr. A. Wilberforce Williams wrote a weekly medical advice column about many issues ranging from sexual plagues to tuberculosis.<sup>50</sup> During the influenza outbreak, Dr. Williams’ columns were full of advice about how to avoid getting sick. Additionally, as we’ve seen, African American families protected their children from influenza and racial discrimination by keeping them home because they knew schools did not provide their children with “better conditions” than they had at home. The African American community of the South Side of Chicago found ways to survive outside of the established health care and education systems.

As we continue to grapple with COVID-19 and confront the inequalities that this pandemic has exposed, it is clear that students across the country are demonstrating their resilience. While this may not translate to state testing results, it is important not to discount the

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<sup>48</sup> “History - Provident Hospital,” The Provident Foundation, <https://provfound.org/index.php/history/history-provident-hospital>.

<sup>49</sup> Gamble, “There Wasn’t A Lot of Comforts,” 117.

<sup>50</sup> Schlabach, “Influenza Epidemic,” 45.

### *The Plague of Segregation*

ability of students to adapt to new situations and environments. Once the dust settles and historians can look back at the COVID-19 pandemic through a historical lens, it will be fascinating to fully compare the experiences of African American students in 1918 to those in 2020-2022, over one century later. We cannot make a complete comparison at this moment in time, however we are developing categories by which to compare. For example, what roles have discrimination, health policies, conditions of school buildings, and absenteeism played in our current pandemic? We can use the past to inform how we understand our present predicament and we can look to the past for examples of hope.

In the face of inadequate educational facilities, discrimination at school, and a world-wide influenza pandemic, African American students and families in 1918 Chicago found ways to protect themselves, albeit briefly, from another virus: racism. While these efforts weren't always successful, as we saw with the murder of Eugene Williams in the summer of 1919, less than one year after the peak of the influenza pandemic, it is important to shine a light on stories of African Americans' resilience nonetheless. I hope this paper inserts African American students and families into the narrative of the influenza pandemic of 1918, and challenges the reader to examine the ways in which they can work to create a safe and equitable learning environment for all students.







Illustration by Ericka Berry, CSU Chico

# Willful Subjugation: Nazi Propaganda Manipulation

By Alexis Karst

*“War makes mass murderers out of otherwise decent people.”*

*- Ben Ferencz*

Imagine living in a country devastated physically, economically, and emotionally. Villainized and humiliated, there is little doubt that you would start feeling more anger and resentment than anything else. Born into a proud country with a rich history, suddenly thrust into a world that despises you would be jarring. Home destroyed, destitute, and hopeless, strong leadership and guidance would be a welcome solution. Now visualize a passionate speaker who promises to guide your once-thriving nation into a shining, powerful beacon that would be the envy of all. This person also tells you that your country contains the most superior race that was wronged terribly by a single group of subhuman, greedy beings who are plotting your demise. This mighty, charismatic orator now swears to you that he will defend and protect you and your family. He urges you to unit with your fellow countrymen and put an everlasting end to

your enemy: the Jewish people. This mindset convinced fifteen-year-old Melita Maschmann to disobey her parents and join the Hitler Youth. Growing up surrounded by the weight of the “shame of Germany’s defeat in the First World War,” Maschmann became increasingly supportive of the ideals of Nazism.<sup>1</sup> Attracted by Hitler’s persuasive rhetoric, Melita Maschmann became a devout Nazi, participating in spying, spreading propaganda, and supervising the forced eviction of Polish families.<sup>2</sup> Images of hideous faces hovering over blond-haired, blue-eyed mothers and children left an impression on German citizens; they were bombarded daily by newspaper articles, films, and radio broadcasts that demonized their Jewish neighbors. Presented with a scapegoat, the Germans now looked for a strong leader who could guide them through, what the media told them, was an immense threat to their livelihood.

Massive banners with black crosses and bright red Swastikas behind a shouting, gesticulating speaker caught the rapt attention of supporters and critics alike.<sup>3</sup> This speaker, Adolf Hitler, instilled feelings of fear and awe. Awe to desperate Germans and fear to neighboring countries. The Nazi government used propaganda so effectively that they convinced an entire nation to despise the Jewish people. Though some were more convinced than others, the Nazis could lead a horrific crusade that was millions strong. The most acces-

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Epstein, “I Was a Nazi, and Here’s Why,” *The New Yorker* (May 29, 2013), <https://www.newyorker.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> Epstein, “I Was a Nazi.”

<sup>3</sup> Edward Rothstein, “Aimed at Minds and Hearts,” *The New York Times* (February 23, 2009), <https://www.nytimes.com/>.

sible target audience was the children. Including antisemitic messages in every subject of the German curriculum proved to be the most effective method. Jews were portrayed as strange and distasteful intruders within Nordic, “Aryan” countries. The Nazis fit antisemitism into students’ daily lessons, from literature to history and mathematics. German public schools used racially charged language and antagonistic messages, as this word problem from a math book displays, “The Jews are aliens in Germany- in 1933 there were 66,060,000 inhabitants in the German Reich, of whom 499,682 were Jews. What is the percent of aliens?”<sup>4</sup> Referring to Jews as “aliens” is just one example of the countless subliminal messages German children were receiving. Young minds are exceptionally impressionable and, depending on their age, do not know any better than to go along with what the adults are telling them to believe. Adolf Hitler’s Nazi government was so effective in its persuasive power that tens of millions of people followed him through six years of absolute destruction.

The Germans did not have the luxury of a free and independent press. Not only did Hitler abolish the free press, causing thousands of journalists to lose their jobs or get arrested before being replaced by “Aryan” citizens.<sup>5</sup> Between 1939-1945, the state-run propaganda

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<sup>4</sup> Marie Corelli, “Poisoning Young Minds in Nazi Germany: Children and Propaganda in the Third Reich.” *Social Education* 66, no. 4 (2002): 228, <https://go-gale-com.proxylib.csueastbay.edu/>.

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Herf, “Building the Anti-Semitic Consensus,” *The Jewish War: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

newspaper, *Der Volkische Beobachter*, released antisemitic front-page articles that vilified people of Jewish descent. Headlines such as March 29, 1941's titled, "The Jewish Question: A World Problem" and October 27's, "They Are Digging Their Own Grave: Jewish Warmongers Seal Jewry's Fate; Their Crimes Receive Deserved Punishment; Antonescu Rejects Impudent Complaints for Romanian Jews" exemplified the inflammatory, hateful language the propagandists used to turn the Germans against one another.<sup>6</sup> In his speeches, Hitler's "abusive use of violent affirmation" was the key to his propaganda's success. Creating an enemy to instill a common purpose was how Hitler gained such awe and obedience from millions of Germans. As Nicholas O'Shaughnessy further explains, "All of this was designed to trigger the adulatory excess of the masses."<sup>7</sup> The simplest, fastest method of spreading dissent was through every communication outlet within Germany. State-run media that only reveals what the government wants the people to know is the first step to creating a totalitarian society that is utterly susceptible to believing toxic information.

Imagery is the most recognizable demonstration of the Nazis' mission to seize the hearts and minds of the German people. Nazis printed and plastered posters all over German street posts and building walls, the pictures, and slogans impossible to ignore. One of the most infamous Nazi propagandists during World War II was Julius

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<sup>6</sup> Herf, "Building the Anti-Semitic Consensus."

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, "Selling Hitler: Propaganda and the Nazi Brand," *Journal of Public Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2009): 58, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxylib.csueastbay.edu/>.

Streicher. Born in Fleinhausen, Germany, Streicher had been a staunch supporter of the Nazi cause and an enthusiastic persecutor of the Jews. A friend of Hitler, he enjoyed the protection of the Führer as the editor of the Nazi propagandist newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, or “The Attacker.”<sup>8</sup> *Der Stürmer*’s prolific campaign to denigrate the Jewish people came in the form of disdainful language and ominous warnings to its readers, informing them of the alleged menace in their midst. One such poster, published in late May of 1942, entitled *Die Drahtzieher!* (“The Masterminds”), blamed the Jews for Germany’s defeat in World War I. The poster included dialogue, stating that the six prominent men pictured, all of whom possessing Jewish ancestry, convinced the Americans and British to join the war.<sup>9</sup> Streicher and the writers under his employment used scapegoating and culpability to merge the German people into becoming a single unit devoted to the State against a vile enemy. History has proven, repeatedly, that challenging times cause people to look for a place to release their frustration and anger. Hitler and his propagandists capitalized on this knowledge and weaponized it to a masterful degree.

As tantalizing as bright colors and incendiary as a poster or slogan can be, hearing the words are entirely different. There is something hypnotizing about an impassioned speaker, galvanizing a crowd hundreds of thousands strong. To the wonderment of his supporters

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<sup>8</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Julius Streicher: German Politician,” Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. (February 18, 2020), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Julius-Streicher>.

<sup>9</sup> W. Wachter, “Parole der Woche”, *Die Drahtzieher!*, Poster, episode 28 (May-June 1942), <https://collections.ushmm.org/>.

and apprehension of his enemies, Hitler perfected attention-grabbing movements and vocalizations. The Fuhrer was not the only zealot to address the millions of German citizens seeking guidance. Minister of propaganda and public education, Joseph Goebbels, often spoke in front of thousands of Nazi Party members, preaching his disturbing rhetoric. A charismatic personality and passionate words went a long way with desperate people. In Nuremberg, front and center during a gathering of the Nazi Party Congress, Goebbels spoke of a conspiracy orchestrated by the Jews in connection with worldwide Bolshevism.<sup>10</sup> Portraying the Jewish people as bestial was a tactic constantly used among top-ranking Nazis. Goebbels sold his antisemitic sentiments by deeming the Jews traitors whose goal is “the absolute destruction of all economic, social, state, cultural, and civilizing advances made by western civilization...”<sup>11</sup> Referring to members of an entire religious group as “sub-human” and consciously supporting the idea is unthinkable to the vast majority of people who belong to any race or creed. It is challenging to put oneself into the mindset of a person who believes in the inferiority of their fellow human beings. However, this is essential if the Nazis' methods are to be understood. Radicalization, according to a research psychologist at the University of Maryland, Arie Kruglanski, requires three different “ingredients.”<sup>12</sup> The first ingredient is the need for meaning in life, to feel important

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<sup>10</sup> Bundesarchiv, “Front gegen Moskau,” Filmed in Berlin, Germany, September 25, 1935, film, 2 mins. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/>.

<sup>11</sup> Bundesarchiv, “Front gegen Moskau.”

<sup>12</sup> Angela Fritz, “The psychology of how someone becomes radicalized,” *The Washington Post* (November 1, 2018), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/>.

and acknowledged. The second ingredient is a sense of community and justification for one's emotions or motives. The third, and the most insidious, is the consent to utilize violence in the name of glory and honor.<sup>13</sup> All three of these "ingredients" were a perfect receipt for a Nazi-run Germany.

Being the citizens of a defeated country, the Germans were considerably discontented. They felt purposeless after years of standing and fighting for a common cause. Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party gave them a sense of national unity. He created jobs, created organizations, and was immensely flamboyant during his speeches, gaining the world's attention. Germans gained a powerful ego boost as they stood at the forefront of international attention, and for the first time in a decade, Germany was gazed upon with wonder. The speeches, posters, and films promoted togetherness and national pride and encouraged every German man, woman, and child to serve their country. Hitler expected men to work in public duties, rearmament, and join the military.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast, women were highly encouraged to take care of the household and have as many children as possible. Nazis established the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls in short order to fortify children's enthusiasm. Observations found that "between 1933 and 1945, young Germans were exposed to antisemitic ideology in schools, in the (extracurricular) Hitler Youth, and through radio, print,

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<sup>13</sup> Fritz, "Becoming radicalized."

<sup>14</sup> "Life in Nazi Germany 1933-1939", *Bitesize*, BBC, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zpq9p39/revision/1>.



and film... as a result, Germans who grew up under the Nazi regime are much more antisemitic than those born before or after that period.”<sup>15</sup> Whether they were jobs, homemaking, or youth groups, the sense of unity among the German people thrived where it had previously stagnated. The stirring speeches and hypnotizing films convinced millions of people that their newfound pride and power were at risk from a foreign threat living amongst them. This realization promoted anxiety and resentment toward what the Nazi Party dubbed “the Jewish Question.” The idea of a repeated threat to their culture and way of life convinced the Germans that the only way to defend themselves was to resort to violence. Having been incited by the Nazi government, the people of Germany went from a civilized nation of innovative and prideful individuals to a vengeful horde of hateful pawns. Encouraged by Hitler’s rallying cries to protect the Fatherland, German citizens staged anti-Jewish boycotts, book burnings, and support of antisemitic legislation. The Nazi regime successfully radicalized the people of Germany and gave them a common purpose.<sup>16</sup>

Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, did not squander the potential of utilizing the film industry. With Goebbels at the helm, “propaganda became a major thematic element of the films

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<sup>15</sup> Nico Voigtlander, and Hans-Joachim Voth, “Nazi indoctrination and Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Germany,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 112, no. 26 (2015): 7931, <https://www.jstor.org.proxylib.csueastbay.edu/>.

<sup>16</sup> Adolf Hitler, “Reichstag Speech,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, January 30, 1939, film, 57 seconds, <https://www.ushmm.org/learn/timeline-of-events>.

produced... always favoring and advocating the Nazi party.”<sup>17</sup> As Hitler was an admirer of cinema, he highly encouraged his propagandists to employ every method in their arsenal to convince the masses to follow their government into doing and believing whatever the Fuhrer dictated. Films such as *Metropolis* and *Triumph des Willens* (“Triumph of the Will”) directed by Fritz Lang and Leni Riefenstahl, respectively, advocated for the following and power of the State. Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) focused on the “oppressed lower class that rises to rebellion through the inspiration of one individual.”<sup>18</sup> Although Lang, being the son of a Jewish mother, was against the regime, his wife Thea Von Harbou, supported the Reich. While he fled to the United States, Von Harbou stayed behind and wrote more material for the Ministry of Propaganda. Von Harbou twisted the film *Metropolis*’ meaning into a pro-Nazi propaganda film. Her screenplay contained “elements that would seemingly go along with the pro-worker yet anti-communist message of the Nazi Party.”<sup>19</sup> Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph des Willens* was “a propaganda piece about German society fighting outside international oppression and rebuilding itself to a world power under the guidance of ‘their hero,’ Adolf Hitler.”<sup>20</sup> The direction in Riefenstahl’s film of Hitler’s image portrayed him as impressive. The upward angles and focus points gave Hitler a

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<sup>17</sup> William K. Boland, “Hitler’s Use of Film in Germany, Leading up to and During World War II,” *Inquiries Journal* 2, no. 3 (2010): 1, <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/>.

<sup>18</sup> Boland, “Film in Germany.”

<sup>19</sup> Elly Hoffman, “Fritz Lang’s Monster: Was *Metropolis* a Pro-Nazi Film,” (Dec 18, 2017), <https://medium.com/science-technoculture-in-film/>.

<sup>20</sup> William K. Boland, “Hitler’s Use of Film in Germany, Leading up to and During World War II,” *Inquiries Journal* 2, no. 3 (2010): 1, <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/>.

godlike appearance that commanded respect. Historian Dr. Anthony R. Santoro comments that "...really everyone is diminished in size except for Hitler. He's a larger-than-life figure always speaking on top of a large podium."<sup>21</sup> Hitler's enthusiastic speaking and plain uniform stood out from the crowd as a "man of the people" who would fight for the rejuvenation of German glory.

German newsreels accompanied the film in spreading the Nazi message. Siegfried Kracauer's journal article *The Conquest of Europe on the Screen: the Nazi Newsreel, 1939-40*, expressed that the material did not use many words to attract the viewers' attention. Nazi propagandists recognized that "pictures prevail over commentary" and the "preeminence of the visual element is an extremely important and consciously handled device."<sup>22</sup> Text may inform, but words can be forgotten. Images, however, leave an impression. In the case of Nazi Germany, the footage of polished marching soldiers and a man standing above it all with absolute authority beheld the picture that captivated audiences to follow them and what is thought about now. The Third Reich used these newsreels to steer the populace away from the ideals of capitalism, coaxing them into a hatred of democracy that coalesced into a "growing belief that strong leadership was needed to transcend class and sectional interests and

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<sup>21</sup> Boland, "Film in Germany."

<sup>22</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, "The Conquest of Europe on the Screen: The Nazi Newsreel, 1939-40." *Social Research* 10, no. 3 (September 1943): 339, <https://www-jstor-org.proxylib.csueastbay.edu/>.

provide a new start.”<sup>23</sup> The Nazis viewed the democracy of the Weimar Republic as a failure to Germany and strived to convince the citizens to believe the same. It was fairly simple to do so when the average German watched thousands of soldiers marching in perfect unison under the eye of a man behind a large podium, shouting out to them of unity and power. When you consider that the audience of these films went back home to poverty in a society devastated by economic depression, the appeal of a singular leader who could guide them into the glory depicted on the screen, it is not at all difficult to understand their desperate choice.

Film and posters were not the only avenues of spreading their message, and while newsreels were a fairly blatant form of propaganda, music was more subtle and deceptive. As Lynn E. Moller said, music “in such a format, often disguised as entertaining and recreational diversions, was capable of eliciting desired responses from the people almost on cue.”<sup>24</sup> Like school education, propagandists used music to brainwash the minds of the German populace so gradually and inventively that they did not even know it was happening. Not only were there subliminal messages within the lyrics of German songs at Nazi rallies, but they also played up the superiority of German musical ability. Promoting German dominance over the

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<sup>23</sup> David Welch, “Nazi Propaganda and the Volksgemeinschaft: Constructing a People’s Community,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 2 (2004): 214, <https://www-jstor-org.proxylib.csueastbay.edu/>.

<sup>24</sup> Lynn E. Moller, “Music in Germany during the Third Reich: The Use of Music for Propaganda,” *Music Educators Journal* 67, no. 3 (1980): 42, <https://www-jstor-org.proxylib.csueastbay.edu/>.

world through music instilled strong nationalistic sentiments throughout Germany. One of the most compelling examples of musical Nazi propaganda would be the German national anthem from 1933-1945, “Horst Wessel Lied.” The lyrics were not disguised as the other songs since it was written to call the German people to arms and give them hope that things would get better under the leadership of Hitler. Nazis marched through the streets while enamored citizens watched as the triumphant lyrics, “Millions are looking upon the swastika full of hope/The day of freedom and of bread dawns/For the last time, the call to arms is sounded/For the fight, we all stand prepared!” rang through their ears.<sup>25</sup> Music resonates with people, and the Nazis used that to their advantage to spread their message without people even realizing that they were doing it.

Music has always played a large part in the learning process of children. The Ministry of Propaganda in Nazi Germany used that fact to their advantage with the songs written and sung by leaders of the Hitler Youth. *Es zittern die morschen Knochen*, or “the rotten bones are trembling,” written by Hans Baumann, became the official song of the Hitler Youth before World War II. The lyrics of which were profoundly nationalistic and incited a militaristic mentality among Germany’s children, as this stanza displays,

We will continue to march,

Even if everything shatters;

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<sup>25</sup> General Jason, “National Anthem of the Third Reich ‘Horst Wessel Lied’,” *Internet Archive* (September 6, 2015), <https://archive.org/>.

Because today Germany hears us,

And tomorrow, the whole World<sup>26</sup>

And shatter, everything did. Unlike the traditional idea of what one would think of as a normal organization for young boys, the Hitler Youth was more like a method of indoctrination for millions of future SS soldiers. The song encourages young boys to love and defend their country and faithfully follow the Fuhrer to their death. It is continuously demonstrated by our childhood songs such as the *ABCs* and television shows like *Schoolhouse Rock*, that music is a tool that has been used for centuries to teach and jog the memories of those who learn them. Teaching a child a song chock-full of emboldening messages to embrace the call to arms is unthinkable to rational people today. In Nazi Germany, however, millions of young boys and men saw glory and heroism that was denied their fathers during the First World War.

Today, in the United States, students are exposed to many new opinions and facts that dictate their outlook on society. Young people, by nature, are inquisitive and willing to learn. In a democracy, new information in schools and media are easy to come by, and a student may choose what path to follow. Groups such as the Boy Scouts, church organizations, or summer camps can shape a youth's view of the world in a benevolent way. Under the close control of the Third Reich, however, the Nazi regime took full advantage of the

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<sup>26</sup> Community, "Es zittern die morchen Knochen," (January 14, 2016), <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2016>.

impressionable minds of children. Hitler was particularly keen on manipulating the younger generation of Germans. He saw them as pawns for creating a new future in a German society where Nazi ideals reigned supreme. In the early years of the Reich, Adolf Hitler expressed how important the children of Germany were to the future as opposed to the older generation, whom he believed to be “cowardly and sentimental...bearing the burden of the humiliating past...” His opinion on the young was quite clear as he exclaimed, “...my magnificent youngsters! Look at these young men and boys! What material! With them, I can make a new world!”<sup>27</sup> It is clear by these statements that Hitler was planning on shaping a society of citizens fully dedicated to the fascist government run by the Nazi Party. The first step was to exploit the curriculum within the German educational system.

The curriculum in the 1930's and the first half of the 1940's throughout Germany was full of Nazi ideologies. Schools introduced new subjects such as *Erblehre und Rassenkunde* (inheritance and racial science) throughout the country. “The whole school culture was altered to reflect authoritarian and nationalistic principals,” including swastikas, pictures of Hitler, and Nazi slogans with estimations that students said, “Heil Hitler” at least fifty to one hundred and fifty times per day.<sup>28</sup> Greetings among students with antisemitic connotations were commonplace and later joined with sayings such as, “Gott strafe

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<sup>27</sup> Stephen Pagaard, “Teaching the Nazi Dictatorship: Focus on Youth,” *The History Teacher* 38, no. 2 (February 2005): 191, <https://www-jstor-org.proxylib.csueastbay.edu/>.

<sup>28</sup> Pagaard, “Focus on Youth.”

England” or, “May God punish England.”<sup>29</sup> Teaching children about the supposed importance of biological heritage was a must in German schools under the Nazi government. Hitler expressed that “no boy or girl should leave school without complete knowledge of the necessity and meaning of blood purity.”<sup>30</sup> Requirements also included vetting schoolteachers before being allowed to continue their profession. The Nazi's dedicated an immense amount of effort to stress the idea that blood purity and choosing the right spouse were the most important things to focus on when they reach adulthood. From the age of six, students were taught to follow the State without question and report teachers and parents who showed any sign of disloyalty toward the Fuhrer. Nowhere was safe if one opposed the Nazi government, not even in the company of young children.

After-school programs and extracurricular activities are important for a child’s social development. They are meant to shape young boys and girls into productive, thoughtful members of society. In Hitler’s Germany, these associations were used to indoctrinate impressionable minds into believing wholeheartedly in the Nazi’s cause. The Hitler Youth and League of German Girls fulfilled that purpose. Hitler believed that the German people, the “Aryan” race, was the strongest, most superior race in the world. To spread his ideology, he started with Germany’s most malleable population: the children. What better way to advocate his antisemitic message than

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<sup>29</sup> Pagaard, “Focus on Youth.”

<sup>30</sup> C. N. Trueman, “Nazi Education,” (February 12, 2020), <https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/nazi-germany/nazi-education>.



through an organization of indoctrination disguised as an after-school program? To create such a “master race,” Hitler declared, “The weak must be chiseled away. I want young men and women who can suffer pain. A young German must be swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp’s steel.”<sup>31</sup> Hitler was stealthily steering the German people into a warring nation that would fight for him to the death. The activities presented before German boys aged ten to eighteen were “marching, bayonet drills, grenade throwing, trench digging, map reading, gas defense, use of dugouts, how to get under barbed wire, and pistol shooting.”<sup>32</sup> The Hitler Youth was compulsory by the start of the Second World War to train boys as soldiers.

Girls in Nazi Germany were required to join their version of the Hitler Youth. Hitler had a very different idea of women's roles in his ideal version of Germany. At the same time, the boys in the Hitler Youth trained to be unstoppable warriors, girls trained to be the vision of feminine purity. The League of German Girls “focused on developing girls into women who were dedicated to Nazism, dutiful housewives, and whose role within society was to become a mother” and have an “unquestioning understanding of the intended role of women in the Third Reich.”<sup>33</sup> Unlike the boys in Germany, girls were trained for household work and staying fit for childbirth. To increase the population of an “Aryan race,” German girls and young women

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<sup>31</sup> C. N. Trueman, “Hitler Youth Movement,” (February 12, 2020), <https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/nazi-germany/hitler-youth-movement/>.

<sup>32</sup> Trueman, “Hitler Youth Movement.”

<sup>33</sup> *The National Holocaust Centre and Museum*, <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/the-league-of-german-girls>.

were trained in household work and exercise to be ready for motherhood which was considered their primary purpose within the Third Reich.

Being a nameless failed artist, Hitler needed an edge if he were to win the hearts and minds of a desperate country devastated by war. In the early 1930s, Hitler was an unknown figure who had to fight his way to the top with both words and weapons. Not being a particularly charming individual, he relied on playing up the image of a benevolent man of the people. Pictures of the Fuhrer waving to adoring crowds and receiving flowers from little girls painted a rosy picture of the man who would eventually show himself to be one of the vilest men in history. As the biographer Ian Kershaw put it, “Hitler the nonentity, the mediocrity, the failure...had become not only the chancellor of Germany, but a beloved celebrity.”<sup>34</sup> Hitler's promises to build Germany back up and end the economic depression were the main sources of support that allowed him to be democratically elected. The hostility toward the Jewish population before his rise to power “was by no means confined to the Nazi Party.” Antisemitism had existed throughout Germany for several decades before Hitler declared them enemies of the State. Hitler used racism and discrimination as a tool to gain even more support. As “antisemitism, like hatred of the Versailles Treaty, and the refusal to accept the ‘bleeding frontier’ with Poland, formed a general backdrop, a broad world-view

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<sup>34</sup>Stephanie Pappas, “Hitler’s Rise: how a Homeless Artist Became a Murderous Tyrant,” *Live Science Contributor* (April 18, 2016), <https://www.livescience.com/>.

about which many if not most Germans could agree to a greater or lesser extent.”<sup>35</sup> Although antisemitism was a part of why he was elected, Hitler capitalized on the many areas of discontent among citizens of the Reich. Twisting the causes for the hated Versailles Treaty and loss of land onto a scapegoat incited anger from people looking for an outlet for their resentment. The prejudice that lasted through the decades was subtly manipulated into creating a burning hate from a typically nonviolent population. The German people saw a humiliating defeat that ended in the robbery of their rightful territory was shoved on the shoulders of an innocent party that bore the brunt of murderous hostility.

The existence of concentration camps and the atrocities committed there were known to the majority of Germans before and during the Second World War. How could they not be aware of the mass murder of millions of people if the leader they elected and took power continuously advocated for the eradication of an entire race of human beings? The German civilians “...knew these details because they had read about them. They knew because the camps and the measures which led up to them had been prominently and proudly reported step by step in thousands of officially-inspired German media articles and posters...”<sup>36</sup> Although studies *do* indicate that some Germans did not know about the “industrial-scale” methods

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<sup>35</sup> Richard Bessel, “The Nazi Capture of Power.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 2 (April 2005): 170, <https://www-jstor-org.proxylib.csueastbay.edu/>.

<sup>36</sup> John Ezard, “Germans knew about Holocaust horror about death camps,” *The Guardian* (February 16, 2001), <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/feb/17/johnezarad>.

used to commit genocide, they were aware that the Jews of Europe were being slaughtered. Violence toward Jews was widely publicized in Germany throughout the thirties as a noble action for the honor of the Fatherland. It makes sense then that reading about the killing of people they had been convinced were dangerous traitors would be accepted among the populace. Having already existing prejudices being encouraged and growing up under the education system of the Nazis, many Germans were willing in their collaborative efforts to further the power of the Third Reich. Germans were knowingly participating in the evil deeds, from simply informing the Gestapo of disloyal neighbors to working for the government in offices and participating in the running of concentration camps.<sup>37</sup> This demonstrates how effective written propaganda and powerful imagery can be to hopeless people.

One should refrain from letting one's aspirations get in the way of their morality. It is easy for a person to say to themselves, "I would never do such a thing" or "I would never follow such a horrifying regime" from the comfort of a classroom. However, when faced with starvation and homelessness, it could very well be a different story. Fear and panic make people do things that could potentially be detrimental to society. However cynical it may sound, the hopelessness more often than not causes people to look after themselves alone. Combining anger toward a group already labeled as "other" with fear successfully creates a scapegoat. Adolf Hitler used that resentment

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<sup>37</sup> Ezard, "Holocaust horror."

and trepidation to his advantage to reel in Germans like Melita Mauschmann in becoming supporters and purveyors of mass murder. In normal circumstances, millions of ordinary citizens would never condone being controlled under the dictation of such an insidious regime. Joseph Goebbels' "revolution of the spirit" encapsulated the hearts of destitute Germans by utilizing every method possible to win over and indoctrinate them.<sup>38</sup> Having access to only one opinion for months and years eventually took its toll on the German people. Enamored by the bright colors of the banners, discipline of the soldiers, and passion of the speeches, they saw what they had been missing just within their grasp. After years of economic collapse and humiliation, the German people failed to question the source and validity of the claims made by Hitler and his propagandists. That was their mistake. Suppose the people of a nation do not question every bit of information presented to them by their government, accepting it without question. In that case, they may very well walk willingly into their subjugation.

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<sup>38</sup> Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, "How Hitler Conquered Germany," *Slate* (March 14, 2017), <https://slate.com/news-and-politics>.





Illustration by Mae Saechao CSU Chico

# ”Sze Yuen-Ming, alias Star Talbot”: A Eurasian Celebrity in Shanghai’s International Settlement

By Alex O. Wood

Emily and Star Talbot (施德之) claimed in 1935 to be “Shanghai’s oldest foreign couple.” After fifty years of marriage, *The China Press* announced the celebration of the Talbots anniversary and to celebrate the couple hosted guests from Shanghai’s Chinese and foreign communities.<sup>1</sup> *The China Press* did not mention however, that while both Emily and Star Talbot’s fathers indeed arrived from Europe to the Chinese coast in the 1860s, both had Chinese mothers. The term “Eurasian” is used as early as 1878 to refer to “the offspring of a European father and an Asiatic mother” and the term is further used to describe individuals of European and Asian ancestry.<sup>2</sup> Eurasians born in Shanghai and along the Chinese coast, like the Talbots, negotiated their dual cultural background within a unique context. In the aftermath of the Opium Wars fought between the Qing dynasty and the United Kingdom and the signing of the Treaty of Nanking by the two powers in 1842, Shanghai and four other Chinese port cities

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<sup>1</sup> “Local Couple Celebrates 50th Wedding Date,” *The China Press*, May 16, 1935, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

<sup>2</sup> Giles A. Herbert, *A Glossary of Reference on Subjects Connected with the Far East* (Messrs. Lane, Crawford & Co., Messrs. Kelly & Walsh., Messrs. Trubner & Co., 1878), 39.



opened to foreign trade and settlement. Previously, the Qing dynasty limited overseas foreign trade to the southern city of Guangzhou (Canton) however, unrelenting attempts by Western colonial powers to establish more advantageous trading posts led to the formation of Shanghai’s International Settlement and French Concession. A close examination of the lives led by Eurasians within this place and time reveal the development of a cultural identity amongst Shanghai Eurasians. Referred to in English as Star Talbot, Sze Yuen Ming, and Shi Dezhi and in Cantonese as Si Dak-ji (施德之) in the historical record, as a businessman, art collector, photographer, and philanthropist Talbot successfully entered both the Chinese and foreign Shanghai business and social settings.

Foreign presence in Shanghai from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries could not be ignored by its Chinese residents. As historian Marie-Claire Bergère explains, “the British influence was manifest in the rhythm of daily activities, the organization of the living environment, the development of leisure occupations and sport, and the use of English as lingua franca of the foreign communities.”<sup>3</sup> Special privileges granted to foreign settlers in Shanghai allowed them to organize a community which formed a government, police, and armed forces. While the British controlled much of the International Settlement’s bureaucracy and the French similarly in the French Concession, individuals from forty-nine

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<sup>3</sup> Marie-Claire Bergère, *Shanghai: China’s Gateway to Modernity*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 86.

national groups resided in Shanghai.<sup>4</sup> Historian Wen-Hsin Yeh asserts that “tension between the foreign and the domestic was prominent in the material transformation of Chinese lives in Shanghai.”<sup>5</sup> And yet despite the foreign presence and special privileges of foreign residents living within the International Settlement, the relationship between the Chinese and the foreigners in Shanghai is not defined by historians of modern China as colonial. In defiance of the strong influence of foreigners in Shanghai during this era, the city remained fundamentally Chinese. Even within the 8.66 square mile International Settlement, by 1935 foreign residents were outnumbered by Chinese residents by roughly 35,000 to 1 million.<sup>6</sup> Shanghai’s Chinese population included communities from across China. The Chinese population of the foreign settlements increased in the 1860s after an influx of refugees of the Taiping Rebellion. Beginning as a Christian political movement opposing Qing rule in China, the Taiping Rebellion garnered enough support to wage a violent struggle with Qing forces and the Taiping ruled over parts of China for eleven years. The violent conflict caused the dislocation of numerous Chinese, many of whom moved to coastal cities like Shanghai.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, many Chinese from the countryside moved to expanding cities, including Shanghai,

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Feetham, *Report of the Hon. Richard Feetham, C.M.G., Judge of the Supreme Court of the Union of South Africa to the Shanghai Municipal Council*. (Shanghai: North-China Daily News and Herald, 1931), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Wen-Hsin Yeh, *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China, 1843-1949*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007), 71.

<sup>6</sup> Feetham, *Report of the Hon. Richard Feetham*, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, Third Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 170-172.

due to internal rebellions, famine, and social dislocation.<sup>8</sup> Of Shanghai’s total population, including the International Settlement and French Concession, “migrants from other parts of China made up more than 82% of this population in 1910 and more than 90% in 1930.”<sup>9</sup> Despite political demonstrations against colonialism and public opposition to the unequal treatment of Chinese living within the foreign settlements, foreign residents continued to enjoy a better standard of living than most of their Chinese neighbors. The International Settlement’s decades-long existence in Shanghai led to cultural exchanges complicated by the continuous negotiation over the nature of the relationship between foreigners and Chinese. At the same time, the Chinese in Shanghai reacted to changes in culture, technology, and ideology related to and separate from Western influence in Shanghai. Within this context, Talbot raised a family and made a career in Shanghai connected to both the Chinese and foreign communities.

Most encounters between foreigners and Chinese in Shanghai involved business dealings. However, few foreign residents attempted to learn Chinese languages. According to American Shanghai resident F.L. Hawks Pott, they “were content to live their own lives in their own way among a people whom they made little

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<sup>8</sup> Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 202.

<sup>9</sup> Gail Hershatter, “The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution, 1870-1949,” *Modern China* 15, no. 4 (October 1989): 463–98, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009770048901500403>, 465.

effort to understand.”<sup>10</sup> Intimate and sexual encounters provided another meeting point between Chinese and foreign individuals. The early mostly male population of foreign settlers often engaged in sexual relationships with locals. Many of these relationships remained temporary and some involved sex work.<sup>11</sup> As early as the mid-nineteenth century, some of these relationships produced children. Despite a diverse community of foreign nationals, Shanghai’s Chinese and foreign communities existed nearly separately and both communities generally discouraged interracial marriages. Shanghai-born Eurasian Joyce Symons expresses that she “was not totally accepted at best by either culture, nor totally despised at worst.”<sup>12</sup> And, historian Robert Bickers reports that within Shanghai’s foreign settlements “you were judged by your ‘race’. Eurasians - men and women of mixed British-Chinese ancestry, usually British subjects - were generally socially excluded, however prosperous, were routinely discriminated against, and were the subject of public and cultural disdain.”<sup>13</sup> In the mid-1930s, American sociologist Herbert Day Lamson reported on the Eurasian population in Shanghai. Lamson, echoing Symons’ experiences, concludes Eurasians faced social discrimination from both the

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<sup>10</sup> F.L. Hawks Pott, *A Short History of Shanghai: Being An Account of the Growth and Development of the International Settlement* (Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, Limited, 1928), 93.

<sup>11</sup> Emma Teng, *Eurasian: Mixed Identities in the United States, China, and Hong Kong, 1842-1943* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 26.

<sup>12</sup> Vicky Lee, *Being Eurasian: Memories Across Racial Divides* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 49.

<sup>13</sup> Robert A. Bickers, *Getting Stuck in for Shanghai: Putting the Kibosh on the Kaiser from the Bund*, Penguin Specials (Melbourne, Victoria: Penguin, 2014), 10.

Chinese and foreign communities. The discrimination originated, according to Lamson, from a “traditional stigma of illegitimacy.”<sup>14</sup>

The stigma of illegitimacy drove many Eurasians to hide their mixed backgrounds. Resistance to interracial marriages led to discreetly maintained relationships. Historian Emma Teng poses the question central to her investigation in *Eurasian: Mixed Identities in the United States, China, and Hong Kong, 1842-1943*, writing “how did mixed families negotiate their identities within these diverse contexts, in societies in which monoracial identity was the norm and interracial marriage regarded with suspicion, if not outright hostility?”<sup>15</sup> Children of interracial relationships in Shanghai experienced suspicions and hostility from both the Chinese and foreign communities. Eurasians, like the Talbots, likely dealt with suspicions questions about their parentage due to the stigma of illegitimacy. In a society largely segregated between Western and Chinese and even further divided by region, some Eurasians struggled to find their place. The history of Eurasians in Shanghai is obscured because of the prejudice they endured. As Teng explains, “for years, untold numbers of interracial families hid their origins out of shame and a desire to belong. In the words of one Hong Kong Eurasian, ‘We were told solemnly not to disclose these family secrets to anyone.’”<sup>16</sup> A close investigation of primary historical sources, family records, and contemporary historiography reveal family secrets and previously hidden histories.

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<sup>14</sup> Herbert Day Lamson, “The Eurasian in Shanghai,” *American Journal of Sociology* 41, no. 5 (March 1936): 642, <https://doi.org/10.1086/217261>.

<sup>15</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 22.

*“Sze Yeun-Ming, alias Star Talbot”*

As an underexplored part of the Shanghai International Settlement’s history, Eurasian individuals can be traced through family history. Investigating the experiences of Eurasians showcases the racial boundaries present in Shanghai’s International Settlement while at the same time complicating those boundaries through their dual cultural background.

Eight years younger than Talbot, his wife Emily White turned fifteen years old just a few months before the couple wed. The fifth child born to Heung Seui (香瑞) and Augustus White, Emily White came from a large and prominent Shanghai Eurasian family. Family sources suggest Heung, who likely passed away before her daughter reached the age of ten, arranged the marriage with Talbot’s mother.<sup>17</sup> If their mothers indeed arranged the marriage, perhaps they foresaw a better future for their children if they married a fellow Eurasian. In Hong Kong, many mothers of Eurasian children arranged marriages with other Eurasian families due to limited options based on their mixed heritage. Author Eric Peter Ho explains that “another consequence of social prejudice was that intermarriage with Chinese or British families was out of the question for most Hong Kong Eurasians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marrying within the Eurasian community was the solution.”<sup>18</sup> A similar pattern may have emerged in Shanghai. However they met, the couple married on May

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<sup>17</sup> André Gensburger, “A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family,” 2005, private collection of Joanna Ollerdedden Wood.

<sup>18</sup> Eric Peter Ho, *Tracing My Children’s Lineage* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Hong Kong, 2010), 10-11.

15, 1885, on Yuen Ming Yuen Road and began what would become a long-lasting relationship.<sup>19</sup>

The only name of Talbot’s mother, as passed down in family records, is Ta-boo. As reported to a family source by her granddaughter, Ta-boo came from the city of Ningbo, born in 1844.<sup>20</sup> Ningbo, like Shanghai, opened to foreign trade after the signing of the Treaty of Nanking.<sup>21</sup> Considering Ta-boo’s Cantonese background and her birthdate just two years after the opening of the port cities to foreign trade and settlement, it is possible her family migrated from southern China to Ningbo as employees in occupations related to foreign trade. While her real name and the names of her ancestors might be lost to history, Ta-boo is pictured in images passed down and preserved by her descendants. As Talbot “was very close to the family of his wife”, he likely benefited from the relationships he built with his wife’s large Eurasian family.<sup>22</sup> Considering White’s mother, step-mother, and two of three of her older sisters passed away when she was young and that she married Talbot at just the age of fifteen, her mother-in-law Ta-boo likely made a significant impact on her life.<sup>23</sup> Teng explains that “the idealized form of marriage in Chinese society involved the exogamous exchange of women. Hence, a bride was

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<sup>19</sup> “Local Couple Celebrates 50th Wedding Date.”

<sup>20</sup> Gensburger, “A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family.”

<sup>21</sup> Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 158.

<sup>22</sup> Zaisin Hong, “‘An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’: Star Talbot and His Innovative Contributions to the Art Business of Modern Shanghai.,” in *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from the Treaty Ports to World War II*, ed. Jennifer Purtle and Hans Thomsen (Chicago: University of Chicago Art Media Resources, 2009), 88.

<sup>23</sup> Gensburger, “A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family.”

*“Sze Yeun-Ming, alias Star Talbot”*

‘given out’ (jia) by her natal family and ‘taken in’ (qu) by the groom’s family. Since a woman belonged to her husband’s family after marriage, becoming one of ‘his people,’ her identity and status were largely determined by his.”<sup>24</sup> If their mothers indeed arranged their marriage, White and Talbot likely followed some of the traditional



Figure 1 "The Talbot Family", 1927, Shanghai

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<sup>24</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 81.



*“Sze Yeun-Ming, alias Star Talbot”*

marriage customs. In 1927 Ta-boo is pictured in Figure 1<sup>25</sup>, now in her eighties, in a family portrait in front of the Talbot’s large Shanghai home. She is seated in the center, surrounded by her family with Emily Talbot to her right and her son to her left, indicating her status as a family elder.

Talbot, “a child of a British seaman and a Chinese woman from Ningbo” likely did not know the identity of his father.<sup>26</sup> Family history sources suggest his father left for Japan and never returned.<sup>27</sup> It was not uncommon for children of Chinese and European parents to be raised without their fathers. Teng describes several phenomena for the origins of Eurasians in China, including, “the children born to Chinese mothers and foreign merchants, consuls, sailors, and other male sojourners on the China Coast. Many of these children were born from ‘temporary alliances.’”<sup>28</sup> Family records state that Talbot had a sister who died in infancy suggesting his parents’ relationship might have lasted at least several years. Writing about the first Eurasians born in the treaty ports, author Peter Hall notes that, “often they were left behind while their father returned to his own shores or went back to sea, or simply perished in alien climes, unable to adjust to, or accept the changed lifestyle.”<sup>29</sup> Perhaps Talbot’s father intended to return to China but met an unlucky fate at sea. Like many Eurasians born in the treaty ports, the origin of Talbot’s mixed background

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<sup>25</sup> "The Talbot Family", 1927, Shanghai, private collection of Joanna Ollerdessen Wood

<sup>26</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 88.

<sup>27</sup> Gensburger, “A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family.”

<sup>28</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 26.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Hall, *In the Web* (Birkenhead, U.K.: Appin Press, 2012), xi.

might have been a mystery to him. Raised and supported by his mother, Talbot attended school in Hong Kong and later established himself in the cosmopolitan society of Shanghai.

Talbot attended Queen’s College in Hong Kong and Teng notes many Eurasians from Hong Kong attended Queen’s College and that along with the Diocesan Boys’ School it “had become the leading institutions for training Hong Kong’s Anglophone Chinese elite.” Despite the inclusion of Eurasian students, “the school divided students solely on the basis of dress—with those in Chinese dress classed as Chinese, and those in European dress classed as non-Chinese.” Teng notes however that, “the division provided incentive for Eurasians to adopt a Chinese social identity in order to receive the bilingual training that was advantageous in career terms.”<sup>30</sup> Talbot, who spoke Cantonese, Shanghainese, and English might have attended the Chinese part of the school given his Eurasian background and language skills.<sup>31</sup> Sometime after he attended Queen’s College and before his marriage in 1885, he moved to Shanghai.

*The China Press* article celebrating the Talbots’ fiftieth-anniversary reports that around the time of his marriage in 1885 Talbot opened a small photography studio on Nanking Road in Shanghai’s International Settlement. Literary scholar Leo Ou-fan Lee writes that “if the Bund was the seat of colonial power and finance, Nanking Road, which stretched westward from the Bund, was its

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<sup>30</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 224-227.

<sup>31</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 93.

*“Sze Yeun-Ming, alias Star Talbot”*

commercial extension.”<sup>32</sup> Art historian Zaisin Hong reports that an advertisement for Talbot’s photography studio, “first appeared in Shenbao on August 24, 1894. Talbot chose a pro-China name—Yaohua (Glorifying China; Yau Hwa in Cantonese)—for his business.”<sup>33</sup> “Photography of China” lists Talbot by the name “Shi Dezhi (施德之)” or Si Dak-ji. The website notes the studio “Sze Yuen Ming & Co was known in Chinese as Yao Hua studio (Shangyang Yaohua zhaoxiang 上洋耀華照相).” Figure 2<sup>34</sup> shows the Yao Hua studio on Nanking Road labeled “Sze Yuen Ming Photographer” around 1895. The photography of Talbot’s studio “ranged from portraits (notably popular hand-tinted photographs of courtesans) and news pictures, to topographical scenes that suited the tastes of both Chinese and Western



Figure 2. anonymous, “Yao Hua Photo Studio”, circa 1895, Snow Collection

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<sup>32</sup> Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), 15.

<sup>33</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 89.

<sup>34</sup> Anonymous, “Yao Hua Photo Studio”, circa 1895, silver salt paper base, 15 x 10 cm, Snow Collection, <https://kknews.cc/zh-sg/history/n5oa2m2.html>

communities.”<sup>35</sup> Figure 3<sup>36</sup> features men sitting at a table in the Yao Hua photography studio and was “made to look like a tea house, the five men are posed as if having a meal.”

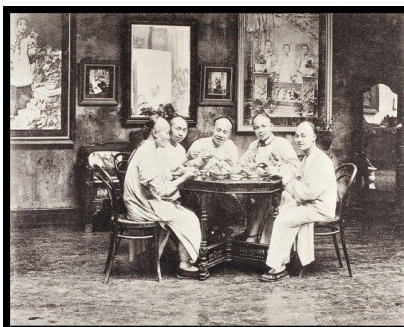


Figure 3. "Men posed in the Yao Hua Studio, Shanghai, with enlarged photographs of courtesans", Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua) Studio, early 1900s, University of Bristol

The image also displays framed photographs of courtesans. Talbot’s studio became known for both

coloring images and producing “larger than life prints.” Figure 4<sup>37</sup> is a portrait of English journalist Leonard Dudeney and his wife Ellen with their child.<sup>38</sup> These images show that the Yao Hua studio served both Chinese and foreign patrons. By choosing a name for his studio that was pro-China, Talbot intended to appeal to Chinese customers. Indeed, Hong writes that “the Talbots did not publicize their English names.”<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, located within the International Settlement, with the studio’s name written in English, Talbot’s studio

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<sup>35</sup> Figure 3 "Men posed in the Yao Hua Studio, Shanghai, with enlarged photographs of courtesans", Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua) Studio, early 1900s, black and white photograph, University of Bristol, University of Bristol's "Historical Photographs of China. <https://www.hpcbristol.net/visual/bk05-06>

<sup>36</sup> "Men posed in the Yao Hua Studio, Shanghai, with enlarged photographs of courtesans", Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua) Studio, early 1900s, black and white photograph, University of Bristol, University of Bristol's "Historical Photographs of China. <https://www.hpcbristol.net/visual/bk05-06>

<sup>37</sup> Figure 4 "Leo and Nellie Dudeney with baby Alvan", Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua) Studio, 1905, black and white photograph, University of Bristol, <https://www.hpcbristol.net/visual/ld01-031>

<sup>38</sup> "Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua Studio)," Historical Photographs of China, 2021, <https://www.hpcbristol.net/photographer/sze-yuen-ming-yao-hua-studio>.

<sup>39</sup> Hong, "An Entrepreneur in an 'Adventurer's Paradise'", 89.

*“Sze Yeun-Ming, alias Star Talbot”*

also served foreigners. It is clear Talbot intended to work with both the Chinese and foreign communities.



Figure 4. "Leo and Nellie Dudeney with baby Alvan", Sze Yuen Ming (Yao Hua) Studio, 1905, University of Bristol

The name printed outside of Talbot’s studio “Sze Yuen Ming” is also a name he may have used. It is not clear what name Talbot used as a child or what name his parents gave him. Art historian Jennifer Purtle contends Talbot “visibly belonged to both Chinese and European worlds” and this is evident, in part, by his aliases.<sup>40</sup>

According to Hong, Talbot “had several Chinese names (e.g., Shi Dezhi, Shi Yuming, and Shi Duzhi), and the best known among them was Shi Dezhi (Sze Tak Chee in Cantonese). Shi is a family name, and Dezhi means to display a charitable virtue.”<sup>41</sup> A Shanghai Municipal Council report from 1899 references Talbot by either his name or one of his studio’s names, listed as “Sze Yuen Ming” occupying 11 Foochow Road.<sup>42</sup> A 1905 article from *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette* accuses Talbot of wrongful entry and mentions a dispute he had over a lease and a rent

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<sup>40</sup> Jennifer Purtle, “Introduction,” in *Looking Modern: East Asian Visual Culture from the Treaty Ports to World War II*, ed. Hans Thomsen (Chicago: University of Chicago Art Media Resources, 2009), 10–19.

<sup>41</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 86.

<sup>42</sup> “Municipal Council, Shanghai: Report for the Year Ended 31st December 1898 and Budget for the Year Ending 31st December 1899” (Kelly & Walsh, Limited, 1899).

“cheque.” The article refers to him as “Sze Yuen-Ming, alias Star Talbot.”<sup>43</sup> Records do not reveal Si or Shi as the family name of Talbot’s mother or if it is a name he adopted. Teng writes that for Eurasians in China, “the choice of names, like dress, could be part of a familial or individual strategy of survival and social mobility.”<sup>44</sup> Given Talbot’s business ventures within both the Chinese and foreign communities in Shanghai, having a European and Chinese name may have proved beneficial. Hong concludes that “the duality of Talbot’s geocultural background was a real business asset, helping him rise from a person of no distinction to a celebrity.”<sup>45</sup>

Eurasians in Shanghai faced a difficult choice in how they presented themselves. As noted, the Chinese and foreign communities in Shanghai rarely interacted with each other outside of business dealings. And while the multitude of cultures influenced each other, cultural differences could be stark and revealing of an individual's background. Teng writes how, “Eurasians disrupt boundaries of colonizer and colonized, white and nonwhite, rendering them problematic figures in accepted paradigms of nationalist and ethnic histories.”<sup>46</sup> From the opening of Shanghai to foreign trade and settlement, settlers exhibited national and colonial identities. Over time a blend of local and colonial Shanghailander identity developed, mostly

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<sup>43</sup> “H. M. SUPREME COURT,” *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette*, May 5, 1905, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

<sup>44</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 241.

<sup>45</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 100-101.

<sup>46</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 28.

*“Sze Yeun-Ming, alias Star Talbot”*

amongst the British settler community. Identifying as “a settler, not a temporary sojourner” set Shanghaianders apart from other foreigners.<sup>47</sup> However, many in Shanghai continued to identify themselves with their own or their ancestor’s country of origin. According to Teng, Eurasians merely by their appearance occupied an “‘ambiguous and uncertain’ status.”<sup>48</sup> While Talbot is identified as Eurasian in the press, it is not certain that he presented himself as Eurasian publicly or within social circles. Given his many different names including both the British family name of Talbot and the Chinese family name of Shi, he may have presented himself differently depending on the company. Many Eurasians claimed Chinese nationality and identified with Chinese culture and traditions.

Referencing the well-known Hong Kong Eurasian Robert Ho Tung, Teng contends that central to his “‘claiming Chineseness’ was his public role as a philanthropist and supporter of political causes.”<sup>49</sup> Talbot may have similarly claimed his “Chineseness” by publicly venturing into Shanghai’s Chinese social communities. Talbot did not limit himself to business, taking part in the art scene in Shanghai and joining community organizations. For example, he joined and later chaired the Martial Arts Association, which according to Hong was “founded by Cantonese in 1909.” Hong reports that upon Talbot’s death in 1935 the “Jingwu congkan (Bulletin of Martial Arts)” published his obituary. The obituary “portrayed him as a native

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<sup>47</sup> Robert Bickers, “Shanghaianders: The Formation and Identity of the British Settler Community in Shanghai 1843-1937,” *Past & Present*, no. 159 (1998): 178.

<sup>48</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 205.

<sup>49</sup> Teng, *Eurasian*, 210.

*“Sze Yeun-Ming, alias Star Talbot”*

Cantonese entrepreneur, philanthropist, and art connoisseur.” Hong further notes that in his obituary Talbot is “primarily remembered not in the Shanghai antiques circle, but through a network of the Martial Arts Association.” Further demonstrating Talbot’s prominence in the Chinese community in Shanghai the Chinese newspaper *Shenbao* announced his death and funeral services which were held, according to Hong, “in the Hall of Overseas Cantonese (Chinese) (Yueqiao shangye lianhe huitang) and was attended by Chu Minyi (1884–1946), who was the chairman-elect of the Martial Arts Association, and Li Dachao (b. 1901), the representative of Wu Tiecheng (1888–1953), a native Cantonese and the mayor of Shanghai.”<sup>50</sup> Referenced as a Eurasian and by his English name in English newspapers and as Cantonese in a Chinese bulletin, Talbot’s cultural identity appears fluid.

By the turn of the century, Talbot established himself in Shanghai within both the foreign and Chinese communities. In 1901 Talbot worked with Li Shutong, also known as Hong Yi, an artist and Buddhist monk who moved to Shanghai from Tianjin in 1898. In Shanghai, Li joined the "Shanghai Painting and Calligraphy Association" and the "Shanghai Scholarly Society", later teaching music at a girl’s school.<sup>51</sup> Li and Talbot likely shared an interest in the many different styles of art present in Shanghai. Together they published the newspaper “Chunjiang huayue bao (Spring River and

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<sup>50</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 87-88.

<sup>51</sup> “Master Hong Yi,” The Information Office of Hangzhou Municipal People’s Government., September 3, 2020, [http://www.ehangzhou.gov.cn/2020-09/03/c\\_271148.htm](http://www.ehangzhou.gov.cn/2020-09/03/c_271148.htm).



Flowery Moon).”<sup>52</sup> Later in life, Li taught Western art, music, and art history and is considered the “first teacher of Western music in China.”<sup>53</sup> Hong asserts that Talbot’s work with Li led to more publicity for his photography studio. Around that same time, Talbot’s Yao Hua studio gained fame as one of the four “Heavenly Kings” or one of the four largest and well-known photography studios in Shanghai.

In 1905, Talbot hired his eldest daughter Mae Talbot to work at his studio and “provide female customers with a more convenient service.” Novelist Li Boyuan wrote two articles in the newspaper “Shijie fanhua bao (Vanity of the World)” about Talbot’s hiring of a female photographer. Referring to Talbot as Shi, Li writes:

Mr. Shi worries about the conservatism in Chinese customs, for women are limited to staying in their homes. They must dress up properly, and they would feel ashamed when they meet men, and especially [think it] improper to touch men’s hands. Therefore, no talented female children are allowed to acquire special professions except needlework. But in Europe the situation is very different. There are female lawyers, principals, chief editors, and other professionals. This is why China is weak and foreign powers are strong. This also relates to the balance of peace and unstableness. When Mr. Shi’s daughter had grown up, she had already mastered the art of photography, demonstrating the civilization of the Teuton nation. If our Chinese

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<sup>52</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 90.

<sup>53</sup> “Master Hong Yi.”

women can all be like Mr. Shi’s daughters, will it be a glimpse of hope for the future of China?<sup>54</sup>

Hong contends Li considered Talbot’s biracial background to be a factor in his modern business practices. Li considers the influence of European culture on Talbot and his daughter Mae, while also viewing Mae Talbot as an example for the future of Chinese women. By hiring his daughter, Talbot responded to the ongoing changes for women, especially Chinese women in Shanghai. By the early twentieth-century, Shanghai offered women a new cultural experience made possible in part by the Western culture of the International Settlement. For example, Lee contends that the use of women in the new style of advertisements in twentieth-century Shanghai was a consequence of Western influence. Influenced by Western practices, Shanghai experienced an increase in department stores and advertisements geared towards women shoppers. Lee writes that “to many, Shanghai’s grandest ‘spectacle’ was the figurative consumption of women and the commodification of their public image” which “derived ultimately from the presence of the Europeans.” Lee quotes film scholar Giuliana Bruno who contends, “going to the cinema thus ‘triggered a liberation of the woman’s gaze’; and, given the analogy between film viewing and window-shopping, the cinema, like the department store, ‘provided a form of access to public space, an occasion to socialize and get out of the house’, thus enabling (women) to negotiate, on a new terrain of intersubjectivity the configuration of

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<sup>54</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 89-90.

private/public.”<sup>55</sup> By hiring his daughter, Talbot considered the viewpoint of the consumers, foreign and Chinese, increasingly comprised of women in the early twentieth century.

In addition to his successful photography studio, Talbot gained fame and fortune in Shanghai from his pharmaceutical business. The article celebrating his marriage states that “seeing the possibilities in patent medicine, he branched out into a new field and from a humble beginning, he was soon able to command a large organization.”<sup>56</sup> Purtle asserts Talbot’s dual business ventures in photography and pharmaceuticals are not unrelated, writing “Talbot’s involvement with pharmaceuticals necessitated his awareness of graphic design in advertising and packaging design.”<sup>57</sup> In his obituary published by the *Jingwu congkan* (Bulletin of Martial Arts), it notes Talbot owned more than ten enterprises including, “Shengong Jizong Shui (Magic Life-Saving Medicinal Syrup).”<sup>58</sup> A family source notes that Talbot possibly developed a medicine intended for Chinese individuals to relieve opium addiction.<sup>59</sup> An article in *The China Press*, written two years after his death describes Talbot as a “prominent Nanking Road druggist of Sino-British parentage.”<sup>60</sup> The article provides further evidence of Talbot’s biracial background as public knowledge within the Shanghai community. An article in *The China Press* from

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<sup>55</sup> Lee, *Shanghai Modern*, 115.

<sup>56</sup> “Local Couple Celebrates 50th Wedding Date.”

<sup>57</sup> Purtle, “Introduction,” 17.

<sup>58</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 87.

<sup>59</sup> Gensburger, “A Pictorial Timeline of the Talbot Family.”

<sup>60</sup> “New Charges Against Master Extortionist,” *The China Press*, March 23, 1937, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

1931 asserts it was from his pharmaceutical business that Talbot grew his wealth and that his “special patent medicine” had been on the market for over twenty years. Consistent with his approach with the photography studio, Star’s pharmaceutical business adapted to the cosmopolitan Shanghai community. The article, written by Nevada Semenza, also notes that by this time Talbot maintained a well-established art collection.<sup>61</sup>

In 1930 Talbot published a book showcasing his art collection titled, *The Marvellous Book: An Album Containing One Hundred Studies of Famous Chinese Porcelains Reproduced in Full Colors*.<sup>62</sup> Hong explains Talbot not only made significant contributions to Chinese photography but also, “to the marketing of Chinese art through his trade in *fashu* (classic calligraphic works), *guhua* (antique Chinese painting), and so-called *gu yue xuan* (lit., “ancient moon terrace”) ware.”<sup>63</sup> At the time the sale of ancient Chinese art or curios was popular amongst both the Chinese and foreign communities. An 1878 glossary and guide for foreign travels to China defines curio as an “abbreviation for curiosity...commonly used on sign-boards exhibited outside the shops of Chinese tradesmen in this particular line who desire to attract foreign customers. ‘The vendor of small and second-

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<sup>61</sup> Nevada Semenza, “Purchase of Two-Dollar Vase Starts Shanghai Man on Track to Amass A Huge Art Collection Which He Now Values At More Than \$10,000,000.,” *The China Press*, October 24, 1931, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection.

<sup>62</sup> Star Talbot, *The Marvellous Book: An Album Containing One Hundred Studies of Famous Chinese Porcelains Reproduced in Full Colors* (Shanghai: S. Talbot & Sons, 1930).

<sup>63</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 85.

hand curios, exposes upon some door-steps his brass trinkets, his vases, his little snuff bottles, and a multitude of trifling articles...”<sup>64</sup> Semenza’s article on Talbot’s art collection, titled “Purchase of Two-Dollar Vase Starts Shanghai Man on Track to Amass A Huge Art Collection Which He Now Values At More Than \$10,000,000” shows how he wanted his collection to be perceived as even in the title it notes that it was Talbot who valued his collection at such a high worth.<sup>65</sup> However, Hong calls into question the claims made by Talbot about his antique collection. Hong writes, “as a Eurasian, he kept abreast of the new trends of a global market for *gubua*. Apparently in the West during the 1910s and 1920s, the older the *gubua* was, the higher its market value would be...that trend also enticed Talbot to relabel all sorts of fakes and misattributed pieces with ancient dates and big names.”<sup>66</sup> In addition to misattributing works of art to famous artists and mislabeling dates, Talbot also invented a fictitious artist he claimed reigned from the Tang Dynasty. Talbot may have used his bicultural background to his advantage in business ventures. Conceivably, Talbot sought to trick foreign buyers by inventing knowledge of ancient Chinese art. Regardless of the veracity of Talbot’s claims, his art collection contributed to his notoriety in Shanghai.

Residing in a multinational yet culturally segregated city, Talbot balanced the influence of his bicultural background surrounded by both cosmopolitan and culturally distinct

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<sup>64</sup> Herbert, *A Glossary of Reference*, 33.

<sup>65</sup> Semenza, “Purchase of Two-Dollar Vase”

<sup>66</sup> Hong, “An Entrepreneur in an ‘Adventurer’s Paradise’”, 95-96.

*“Sze Yeun-Ming, alias Star Talbot”*

communities. Like many Eurasians born in China, Talbot’s ancestral lineage is not preserved. His ancestors’ name may have been Talbot or Shi or he may have invented both names as a strategy to move between the foreign and Chinese communities. Talbot’s notoriety in Shanghai further reveals how being Eurasian could simultaneously be a hindrance and a benefit in business and social realms. A noted art collector, druggist, and photography studio owner Talbot, well-known in the foreign communities, nonetheless is often referenced by his mixed background. The Cantonese martial arts community of Shanghai meanwhile references Talbot as Cantonese. Talbot’s life story showcases how being Eurasian shaped his life, whether in his cultural identity or how others identified him. His story serves as an example of the vast and diverse experiences amongst Eurasians in Shanghai.

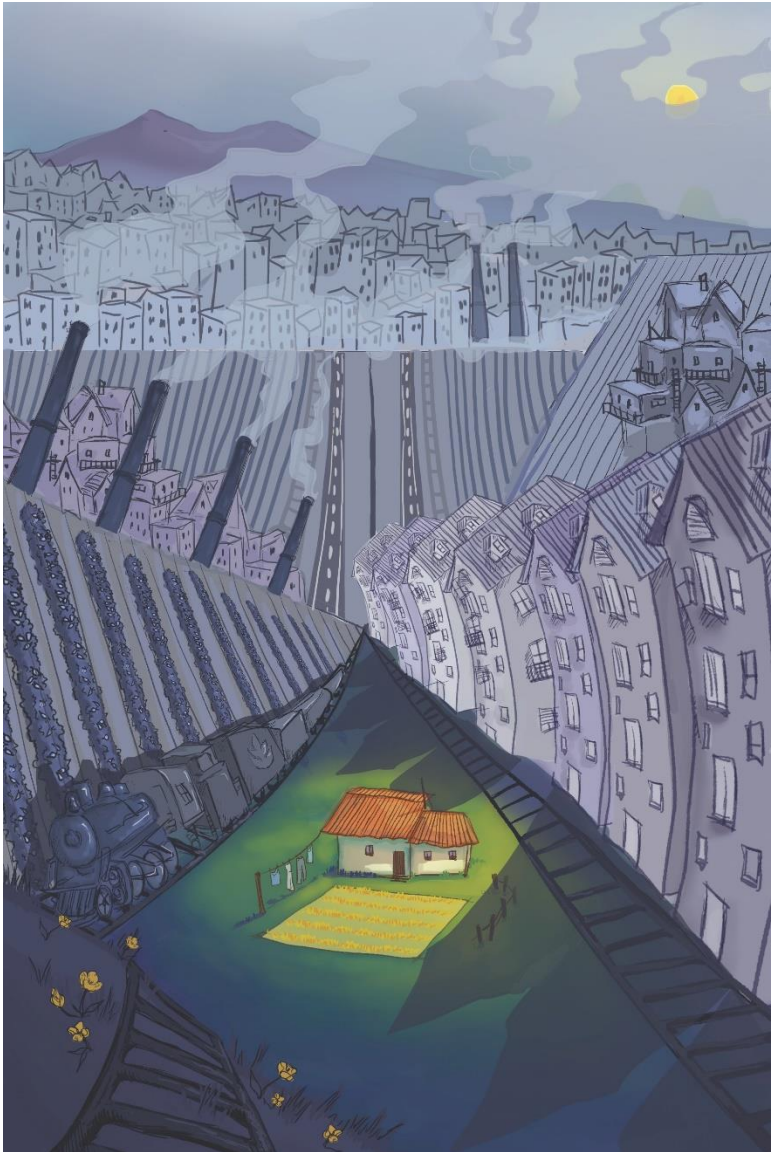


Illustration by Aliyah Ben-Joseph, CSU Chico

# From Dirt to Concrete: The Loss of Rural Land in Contra Costa County

By Melissa Grijalva-Foreman

Nestled between the northern waters of the San Joaquin River, San Pablo and Suisun Bay, and the southern valley of Livermore, Contra Costa County with its marshy shoreline, winding creeks, oak-lined valleys, rolling hills, and towering mountain peak is a region comprised of evolving and at times competing land-use practices. Cultural geographer Nicholas Mirkowich states, “The history of the peopling of California has thus been that of a continuous movement, in number and space, marked by new forces finding expression in new forms of population distribution.”<sup>1</sup> Before the 1940s, agriculture, livestock raising, and small-scale industrialization were mutually prosperous, each having found a niche in the county’s economy and landscape. However, by the mid-1940s, the need for land use changed this balance, opening the floodgate to suburban development across the rural county. This paper aims to demonstrate how infrastructure improvements coupled with increasing population

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Mirkowich, “Recent Trends in Population Distribution in California,” *Geographical Review* 31, no. 2 (1941): 300, [https://csueb-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/v0am8h/TN\\_cdi\\_proquest\\_journals\\_1290303565](https://csueb-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/v0am8h/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_1290303565)



## *From Dirt to Concrete*

growth, housing shortages, and the idealized “ranch and suburban dream” served as catalysts of suburban sprawl. In addition, the paper will shed light on how suburban encroachment exerted life-altering pressures on individuals, families, and communities within Contra Costa County. Although limits were eventually instituted on urban development, the disappearance of farm and grazing land throughout the county's western, central, and north-eastern regions proved inevitable.

### **Agriculture, Ranching, and Community Roots**

Contra Costa County incorporated one of the twenty-seven original counties into the Union in 1850. Geographer Dr. Richard Walker states that during the county's infancy, the economic power-houses were those who dealt with “direct resource extraction and processing,” such as mining, lumber, and ranching.<sup>2</sup> However, by 1860, most Contra Costa County inhabitants had shifted their land-use practices to farming, accounting for 84,120 acres of improved and 121,716 acres of unimproved farmland.<sup>3</sup> Farmers who acquired titles or rented land built wooden framed houses with white painted walls on top of flat expanses of land surrounded by the picturesque rolling hills. The imported “graded stock” of cattle, sheep, swine, and

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Walker, “Industry Builds the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1940,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1, (2001): 37, <https://doi.org/10.1006/jhge.2000.0268>; Mining was an enterprise built not on gold fever but coal, mercury, silver, copper, and silica fever; located in the clustered eastern hill and valley towns of Judsonville, Nortonville, Somersville, Stewartsville, and West Hartley. By 1914, these mining towns had steadily emptied, mimicking those of the gold rush in the north.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Bureau, *Agriculture*, (Washington, D.C., 1860): 10-13, 1860 Census: Agriculture of the United States.

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

chickens were utilized for consumption and dairy production, horses, donkeys, mules, and oxen for farm operations and travel. Most crops were specialized, such as the high-quality drought and mildew-resistant wheat.<sup>4</sup>

From 1860 to 1880, the population in Contra Costa County had increased from 5,328 to 12,525 individuals.<sup>5</sup> The United States Census Bureau concluded that as individuals became increasingly invested in agriculture as a livelihood, mining and cattle industries decreased, causing a “more even distribution of the inhabitants.”<sup>6</sup> The county's western and central mountain ranges created the desirable and increasingly populated northern Ygnacio Valley, southern Sycamore and Tassajara Valleys, central San Ramon Valley, western Alhambra, and Pinole Valleys. Smaller valleys provided additional areas for farmers and ranchers to settle between these large valleys. Census surveyors recorded 885 farms totaling 310,659 acres, including tilled cropland, pastures, vineyards, orchards, and unused sections.<sup>7</sup> For the remaining ranchers, cattle and dairy production was still lucrative, valued at \$597,970 in 1880, justifying the land use of massive

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<sup>4</sup> J. F. S. Smith, “The California Harvest”, *The Cultivator and Country Gentlemen*,” (1869): 178-179, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008607753>.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Census Bureau, *Statistics of the Population of the United States 1*, (Washington, D.C., 1880): 11, 1880 Census: Volume 1. Statistics of the Population.

<sup>6</sup> Examples include reducing inhabitation in mining settlements and increased inhabitation in the fertile valleys. Francis A. Walker and Henry Gannett, U.S. Department of Interior, Census Bureau, *General Discussion of the Movements of Population 1790-1880*, (Washington, D.C., 1880): 20, 1880 Census: Volume 1. Statistics of the Population.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Census Bureau, *Report on the Productions of Agriculture 3*, (Washington, D.C., 1880): 106, 1880 Census: Volume 3. Report on the Productions of Agriculture.

## *From Dirt to Concrete*

tracts of grazing fields.<sup>8</sup> Although the population was climbing, reaching 18,046 in 1900, agriculture within central and eastern Contra Costa County continued to flourish.<sup>9</sup>

The dawn of the new century was marked by technological advances, which spurred growth, efficiency, and productivity in various fields, including agriculture. Water districts and citywide irrigation systems were in multiple organizing, planning, and construction stages. In 1910, the construction of the Contra Costa Canal, which directs water from the San Joaquin River into the county through a pumped interconnected waterline system, was underway. Massive district projects entailed installing a network of waterlines that branched across cities covering thousands of acres.<sup>10</sup> Urban and rural towns across the county were campaigning for water rights, hoping to offset the cost through bond measures and an annual fixed charge per acre. The advanced irrigation system meant a move towards a reliable water supply, significantly increasing crop cultivation. According to horticulturist and author L. H. Bailey, "Irrigation and

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<sup>8</sup> Census Bureau, *Report on the Productions of Agriculture* 3, 106.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Census Bureau, *Population* 1, no. 1, (Washington, D.C., 1900): 11, 1900 Census: Volume I. Population, Part 1; U.S. Department of Interior, Census Bureau, *Agriculture: Crops and Irrigation* 6, no. 2, (Washington, D.C., 1902): 5, 1900 Census: Volume VI. Agriculture, Part 2.

<sup>10</sup> Examples of projects include: 20,000 acres Walnut Creek, Clayton, and Ygnacio Valley project, 20,000 acres Brentwood and Byron project, and the 9,000 acres Pittsburg project. "Big Irrigation District Planned," *Contra Costa Farm Bureau Monthly Bulletin* 1, no. 10 (1919): 4.; "Irrigation," *Contra Costa Farm Monthly Bulletin* 1, no. 11 (1919): 3, #43 - Contra Costa farm bureau monthly. v. 1-4 1918-22. - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library.

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

Sub-division was now the motto of California.”<sup>11</sup> In addition, the bureaucratic and commerce bodies understood that irrigated land could be sold for triple the price of non-irrigated land.<sup>12</sup> The increased land values would lead to increased property taxes which would eventually be felt predominantly by landowners in the rural regions. This revenue potential altered the perception of land use purposes, creating a pathway for land development, housing construction, and population increase.

By 1930, the population had reached 78,608.<sup>13</sup> At the time, 1,890 farms were operating on 379,338 acres in the county, with an average of 200.7 acres per farm.<sup>14</sup> The cropland accounted for 144,718 acres and pastureland 220,004 acres.<sup>15</sup> Most farm operators were total landowners; however, a group of partial owners and tenants contributed to agricultural and livestock products. The demographics of the owners and tenants were predominately "white", the category including those of Mexican heritage, with a minority consisting of African American, Native American, Chinese, Japanese, and "all other

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<sup>11</sup> L. H. Bailey, *Annals of Horticulture in North America for the Year 1890*, (Rural Publishing, 1894), 27. #7 - Annals of horticulture in North America : a witness ... 1889. - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library.

<sup>12</sup> Riverside County irrigated land was being sold for \$425 an acre whereas non-irrigated was sold for \$80-100 an acre; *Building and Engineering News* 18, (1918): 12, #13 - Building and engineering news. v.18(1918). - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library.

<sup>13</sup> "1850-2010 Historical US Census Populations of Counties and Incorporated Cities/Towns in California", Excel spreadsheet, revised 03/25/13, [www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/2010-1850](http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/2010-1850).

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Census Bureau, *Agriculture* 3, (Washington, D.C., 1930): 516, 1930 Census: Agriculture Volume 3. Type of Farm. By States, Counties.

<sup>15</sup> Census Bureau, *Agriculture* 3, 516.

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

nonwhite races.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the migratory census showed that twice as many individuals had moved to farms from “cities, villages, or other incorporated places than away.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the transplant of urban occupants coupled with the migratory patterns of individuals from out of state to the rural regions meant that agriculture still retained a vital role in the county's economy, land-use practices, and socio-cultural dynamic.

Communities within the rural regions of the county were composed of individuals who not only shared a similar way of life and profession but personal vulnerabilities and values. Horticulturalists, agriculturalists, ranchers, laborers, small business owners, and those who played supportive roles in the communities created a rich and dynamic culture that is historically significant to the county's fabric. Woven tightly and reinforced by clubs, organizations, and associations of varying complexity, such as the Women's Club, Elk's Club, Concord Stockmen's Association, Walnut Grower's Association, Poultry Producers Association, and California Olive Growers Association, these communities were able to be self-sufficient and thrive.<sup>18</sup> In celebration of this rural prosperity, the years were marked by annual fairs, rodeos, agricultural festivals, and events that these groups sponsored. These events included the Contra Costa County Fair, F.F.A. Rodeo, Horse Show, Diablo Valley Apricot Festival, Almond

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<sup>16</sup> Census Bureau, 518.

<sup>17</sup> Census Bureau, 577.

<sup>18</sup> The bureau also played a pivotal role in the organization and funding of the eleven volunteer Rural Fire Companies stationed across the county.

## *From Dirt to Concrete*

Festival, Garlic Festival, Walnut Festival, Blossom Festival, and many others more.

Beyond these community and grower groups, the Contra Costa Farm Bureau, in collaboration with the University of California, American and California Farm Bureau Federation, formed in 1917. The bureau strove to assist with all manner of “work in the county, whether that work be with farm crops, farm animals, or the problems of the home and community.”<sup>19</sup> Numerous committees such as the Livestock, Rodeo, Irrigation and Drainage, Marketing, Grain Growers, Community Improvement, Fruit and Education, assisted with specific aspects of the rural life and farm operations. In addition, the Farm Home Department existed within the bureau, which was an avenue for women to become members. The bureau’s view was that the role and duties of women were critical to the well-being of the home and community.

Membership in the bureau quickly grew, increasing by 30% from 1918 to 1919.<sup>20</sup> Over time, the steady increase of members enabled the bureau to establish twelve farm centers across the county. These centers served as gathering places to collaborate on community projects, carry out fundraising, share information, exchange ideas, provide training, pool resources, and create alliances.

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<sup>19</sup> “The Farm Bureau,” *Contra Costa County Farm Bureau Monthly Bulletin*, 1, no. 2, (1918): 1, #11 - Contra Costa farm bureau monthly. v. 1-4 1918-22. - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library.

<sup>20</sup> “The Farm Bureau,” *Contra Costa County Farm Bureau Monthly*, 1, no. 5, (1919): 23, #11 - Contra Costa farm bureau monthly. v. 1-4 1918-22. - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library.

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

In collaboration with small committees, farm Advisors (male) and Home Demonstration Agents (female) were employed to advise and lend aid to the separate gender-focused spheres of the homestead. From these centers, Boy's and Girl's Agriculture, Corn, Pig, and Poultry Clubs were established to mentor the youth, exposing them to the responsibilities of farm operations, livestock raising, teamwork, and work ethics. Beyond the clubs, centers cooperated with local schools providing agricultural training such as diesel farm machinery operation.<sup>21</sup> Club and youth outreach programs aimed to make rural life exciting and alluring, thereby retaining future generations of farmers.

### **Industrial, Urban, and Suburban Growth**

Although California's agriculture was an economic powerhouse, it was not the only one. By 1915, approximately forty-eight prospering businesses were concentrated in an industrial belt that ran along the county's northern shore from Richmond to Jersey Island.<sup>22</sup> Connected by dirt roads, multiple train tracks, and waterways, these industries were churning out lumber, metal, fish and meatpacking, canneries, sugar, oil, hazardous chemicals, explosives, cement, and various household products that were staples of the East

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<sup>21</sup> In 1919, the Farm Bureau in partnership with Mt. Diablo Union High School created a tractor school with instruction and hands-on training.

<sup>22</sup> *History of Contra Costa County, California with Biographical Sketches* (Historical Record Company, 1926): 114-157, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.c098819167>.; Map of Contra Costa County, *Industrial Belt*, (1915) accessed February 19, 2021, Resources (cocohistory.org).

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

Bay's economy.<sup>23</sup> While the Central Pacific and Santa Fe Railroad benefited the rural settlements by enabling the transportation of agricultural and livestock goods to markets outside of the immediate area, the rail lines were just as pivotal in the operations of the industrial belt.<sup>24</sup> Although functioning in their own economic and regional spheres, momentarily benign to agriculture and ranching, these heavyweights of the industry, such as C&H Sugar, Standard Oil of California (Shell Oil Co.), and Steel Works, would prove to be conspiring promoters behind the future suburban sprawl of Contra Costa County.

The relocation of industrial and manufacturing businesses to the county after the 1906 earthquake, combined with the WWI wartime employment, helped fuel population growth. The expanding industrial and manufacturing workforce required immediate and affordable housing.<sup>25</sup> In limited quantities, gridded neighborhoods of single-family homes, boarding houses, cottages, and bungalows were built within walking distance of the businesses and docks; examples of these small rural towns include Bay Point, Pittsburg, and Antioch. In unique instances, investors and industry power figures built entire towns with dwellings, commerce districts, hotels, and theaters, to

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<sup>23</sup> Richard Walker, "Industry Builds a City: Suburbanization of Manufacturing in San Francisco Bay 1850-1940," *Journal of Historical Geography* 27, no. 1, (2001): 46-51, [https://csueb-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/v0am8h/TN\\_cdi\\_ingenta\\_academicpress\\_ap\\_hg\\_2001\\_00000027\\_00000001\\_art00268](https://csueb-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/v0am8h/TN_cdi_ingenta_academicpress_ap_hg_2001_00000027_00000001_art00268).

<sup>24</sup> W.E. Condo, *The Ad Map of Contra Costa County*, (1915), accessed February 19, 2021, Resources (cocohistory.org).

<sup>25</sup> Census Bureau, "1850-2010 Historical US Census Populations of Counties and Incorporated Cities/Towns in CA".



### *From Dirt to Concrete*

accommodate their employees.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, in the western region of Contra Costa, Richmond, the first recorded urban city in the county, was experiencing a housing shortage.<sup>27</sup> Those who could not locate housing or could not afford the cost were forced to commute via automobile or the East Shore & Suburban Railway, a streetcar and busing system that connected El Cerrito, San Pablo, Richmond, San Rafael, Oakland, and San Francisco. Reactionary measures by the Federal Government were sluggish, but by 1919, approximately \$40 million was spent on government urban housing projects within eleven cities.<sup>28</sup> Although the urban population growth and housing crisis did not directly affect the rural communities, it was a precursor of the times and changes to come.

Wary of these changes, the rural perspective of urban and suburban expansion is exemplified in a speech by Franklin K. Lane, who states, “We are not going to be happy cluttered together in houses banked up against each other in cities. That is not the normal, natural life for us. We are not to have cities made of apartments, boarding houses, and hotels and produce the good, husky Americanism that has fought our wars and made this country and developed those lands....Now, because of the lure of pleasure, because of

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<sup>26</sup> “Construction of an Unnamed Town,” *Building and Engineering News* 18, (1918): 20, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112089631763>;

The 1918 construction of an unnamed town (possibly Ohmer or Clyde) which contained “50 dwellings, a hotel, theatre, store building garage, etc.” located two miles from the Pacific Shipbuilding Co. plant in Bay Point.

<sup>27</sup> “Housing Plan Aid Requested of Uncle Sam,” *Richmond Daily Independent*, March 29, 1918, 3, 29 Mar 1918, 3 - Richmond Daily Independent at Newspapers.com.

<sup>28</sup> “Catholic Call to Reconstruct,” *Richmond Daily Independent*, February 24, 1919, 3, 24 Feb 1919, 3 - Richmond Daily Independent at Newspapers.com.

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

moving-picture shows, and because of the desire to get close together, man is deserting the farm. You reach down and touch the soil and get strength from it; you do not get it from asphalt streets”.<sup>29</sup>

As the city limits of Berkeley, Oakland, and Richmond to the west; Stockton and San Joaquin Valley to the east; and central Martinez and Pittsburg expanded outward with the doubling population, Contra Costa County’s roads and highways acted as “arteries” for the bay area’s extremities which were becoming increasingly congested.<sup>30</sup> The initial 1920s to 1930s city road and state highway projects significantly altered the established dirt roadways that followed the county's natural topography. The bureaucratic and commerce groups hoped that the grading, widening, and paving of the dirt roads would increase travel efficiency and safety and bring "prosperity" to the county.<sup>31</sup> Ben Blow, Manager of Good Roads Bureau CSAA, wrote in 1920: “...this county, in its western end, for miles has deep water frontage upon which some of California’s biggest manufacturing establishments have been located. While in the interior, acres upon acres produce walnuts, almonds, deciduous fruits, and grain of all sorts in such abundance as to insistently

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<sup>29</sup> “Extracts from an Article By Franklin K. Lane in the National Geographic Magazine, “*Contra Costa Farm Bureau Monthly Bulletin* 2, no. 8 (1920): 4, #85 - Contra Costa farm bureau monthly. v. 1-4 1918-22. - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library.

<sup>30</sup> *Building and Engineering News* 18 (1918): 12, #1 - Building and engineering news. v.18(1918). - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library.

<sup>31</sup> “Vote for Bonds: Good Roads Will Promote County Prosperity,” *Contra Costa Farm Bureau Monthly Bulletin* 1, no. 9, (1919): 35, #11 - Contra Costa farm bureau monthly. v. 1-4 1918-22. - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library.

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

demand good roads and eventually require a greater mileage than now is planned.”<sup>32</sup> Although the improved roadways and linking of the forty-eight existing highways, including the Antioch - Byron and the Albany - Martinez, increased agricultural haulage capacity, decreased fuel costs, and provided access to markets and customers, it as well impeded farm operations with the banning of heavy machinery on paved roads, increased automobile traffic and air pollution, and bisected open space, crop, pasture, and woodlands.

At this time, Old Tunnel Road, which connected Alameda County to Contra Costa County by way of the Berkeley hills to Walnut Creek, was no longer sufficient to handle the increasing number of vehicles. Compounding the issue was the potential threat of growing traffic once construction of the Bay Bridge had been completed.<sup>33</sup> In response, the City of Oakland and the Counties of Alameda and Contra Costa County created the Joint Tunnel Engineering Commission, whose duty was to plan and execute the Caldecott Tunnel project. Construction of the first tunnel bore began in 1928 and ended in 1937. The tunnel and highway construction required removing farms within proximity, such as the Claghorn Ranch, whose prime agricultural product was cauliflower.<sup>34</sup> Synchronously, the Bay Bridge construc-

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<sup>32</sup> “Vote for Bonds: Good Roads Will Promote County Prosperity,” (1919).

<sup>33</sup> State of California, *Report of the Joint Tunnel Engineering Commission to the City Council of Oakland, State of California, Board Supervisors of Alameda and Contra Costa County*, (1928), 6, #1 - Report of the Joint Tunnel Engineering Commission to the City ... - Full View | HathiTrust Digital Library | HathiTrust Digital Library

<sup>34</sup> Marjorie Newton, “Caldecott construction killed Contra Costa Cauliflower Crop,” *The Pioneer*, April 25, 2021, Caldecott construction killed Contra Costa cauliflower crop | (pioneerpublishers.com); Records do not indicate whether eminent domain was

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

tion project lasted from 1933 to 1936. The paved, streamlined, and interconnected highways, made possible by the Caldecott Tunnel and the Bay Bridge, allowed those seeking economic and resettlement opportunities to place a hopeful gaze upon Contra Costa County.

The increasing ease of accessibility into the county and rural regions fueled the bureaucratic desire to stimulate growth and revenue. In collaboration with the Industrial, Residential, and Recreation Committees, the Contra Costa County Development Association spearheaded projects that would eventually make this a reality. In 1938, Contra Costa County Development Association's Executive Committee acting on recommendations from the Industrial and Residential Committees deemed it prudent to find ways to stimulate the development of more housing for industrial workers. Industrial leaders argued that "many industrial employees now live outside the county, and the development of proper housing would, it is believed, induce them to live in the county."<sup>35</sup> A study conducted through a voluntary questionnaire was distributed to the industrial laborers to determine whether there was a shortage or surplus of housing, what those housing types were, and where they were located. The survey results confirmed a shortage of at least 1,000 single-family homes and

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utilized for Claghorn Farm, but it was a practice regularly used in other major highway projects.

<sup>35</sup> "Developers to Study Housing in Contra Costa County," *Richmond Daily Independent*, September 12, 1938, 3, 12 Sep 1938, 3 - Richmond Daily Independent at Newspapers.com; "Developer to Discuss County Housing Needs," *Richmond Daily Independent*, September 2, 1938, 6, 02 Sep 1938, 6 - Richmond Daily Independent at Newspapers.com.

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

a high need for rental dwellings.<sup>36</sup> With this information, the committee strategized housing construction in the rural regions surrounding the industrial belt as it toured major industries, rubbing elbows with owners and board members.

Beyond the goal of addressing the housing needs of the industrial workforce, the committee's primary objective was to generate new growth in the county. To achieve this, the Residential and Recreation Committees, with the support of the Development Association Executive Committee, created promotional materials advertising the sites and attractions of the region. These were made available for the public at the county's Commerce Office and annual Exposition with the hope to "greatly stimulate activity in both these lines (residential and recreation)."<sup>37</sup> The eventual construction of housing for the industrial workers and advertising of the county's favorable attributes contributed to urban and suburban development, steadily altering land use needs from food supply to housing and recreation. This shifting view, combined with the desire for economic and population growth, proved to have dire consequences for those living in the rural fringe.

This departure from agricultural land use is reflected in the increased zoning changes of the 1930s. With mixed reactions from those in the surrounding communities, tracks of agricultural and

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<sup>36</sup> "Population in Doubled in Contra Costa County," *Oakland Tribune*, January 10, 1943, 31, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/>.

<sup>37</sup> "Developers to Stress Country Advantages," *Richmond Daily Independent*, April 21, 1939, 8, 21 Apr 1939, 8 - Richmond Daily Independent at Newspapers.com.

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

grazing lands, in varying quantities, were zoned by the County Planning Commission to allow for the sale to or use by industrial, urban, and suburban developers. The zoning requirement did apply to commerce, housing, and recreational areas. Author S.V. Ciriacy - Wantrup states that “urbanization and industrialization have brought about a great increase in demands for land for various types of outdoor recreation.”<sup>38</sup> All did not favor these zoning changes. Residents who felt that they would disrupt the local characteristics, rural feel, increase traffic, be incompatible with the current infrastructure, harmful to the environment and health of the residents opposed them publicly and through the courts.<sup>39</sup> Although public disapproval occurred, the committees typically forged ahead, hoping that the residents would eventually appreciate the prosperity of these changes.

The mass migration into the county coupled with industrial, urban, and suburban development required the construction of new infrastructure, including public and community services. The builders and new homeowners initially shouldered the expense; however, in the mid-1950s, the National Association of Home Builders pushed for legislation requiring these costs to be carried by the community as a whole, thereby providing the developer and home buyer a reduction

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<sup>38</sup> S.V. Ciriacy-Wantrup, “The “New” Competition for Land and Some Implications for Public Policy,” *Natural Resource Journal* 4, no. 2 (1964): 254, accessed March 2, 2021, [www.jstor.org/stable/24879337](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24879337).

<sup>39</sup> “County Faces Injunction Suit Against Picnic Site,” *The Independent*, October, 19, 1954, 6, 19 Oct 1954, 6 - The Independent at Newspapers.com.

## *From Dirt to Concrete*

in fees and taxes.<sup>40</sup> This new expense was just the start of the rural landowners' financial burdens as land use perceptions changed, city limits expanded outward, and infrastructure was ramped up. In the 1960s, the tax levies that utility companies were responsible for were transferred to property owners in the amount of \$2,500,000.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the expenses of Rapid Transit (Bart) and higher education construction projects were funded through tax measures exerted on landowners. These increasing financial burdens pushed the Contra Costa County Farm Bureau to argue against these tax measures calling them “unfair tax burdens on farmlands.”<sup>42</sup> Journalist Gaylor P. Gordon wrote that “the persistent uptrend in farm property taxes is a direct outgrowth of the steadily expanding review requirements of local governments. Rising costs are partly responsible for these increasing needs.”<sup>43</sup> In instances where rural landowners could not pay taxes and levies, more than not, the land was divided, and plots of varying sizes were sold off as means to pay the debt while attempting to retain their family homes.

### **Loss of Rural Land and Community**

The housing boom that accompanied zoning changes and city development projects was concentrated in the county's western,

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<sup>40</sup> “Fight on to Save Home Buyers a Lot of Cash,” *The Independent*, October 29, 1954, 22, [The Independent on Newspapers.com](#).

<sup>41</sup> “Farm Real Estate Tax Levies in 1961 to Show Increase,” *Oakland Tribune*, November 13, 1961, 39, 13 Nov 1961, 39 - [Oakland Tribune at Newspapers.com](#).

<sup>42</sup> “East Bay Political Notes,” *Oakland Tribune*, October 29, 1962, 7, 29 Oct 1962, 7 - [Oakland Tribune at Newspapers.com](#).

<sup>43</sup> “Farm Real Estate Tax Levies in 1961 to Show Increase,” *Oakland Tribune*, 1961.

## *From Dirt to Concrete*

central, and northern regions.<sup>44</sup> The number of dwellings within ten years increased from 31,297 to 90,708.<sup>45</sup> Between 1946 and 1955, 942 subdivisions covering 17,213 acres were constructed in the county.<sup>46</sup> Homebuyers, influenced by the print and newspaper ads, paid for by developers and cities, invaded the rural fringe, desiring to live a country life while bringing their urban biases and expectations with them. A news article from the Oakland Tribune states, “He’s (farmer) in the way of the rubber migration turning California towns into cities and cities into super-cities surrounded by suburban sleeping quarters.”<sup>47</sup> Construction of these suburban and ranch dream homes appeared as pockmarks across the land. Subdivisions built on rich farmland leapfrogged across the valleys leaving plots of crop, orchard, and pasture lands wedged in between. This sectioning of land created physical and social barriers that impacted farming and ranching operations; these manifested in the disruption of irrigation, forced reduction or disuse of pesticides, restrictions on manure usage, harvesting, and product hauling. Beyond operation issues, farmers had to now deal with theft and vandalism.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> State of California, *Important Farmlands, Contra Costa County*, Map, 1982, Resources (cocohistory.org).

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Census Bureau, *1950 Census of Housing: Preliminary Counts of Dwelling Units from 1940 to 1950* (Washington, D.C., 1950): 1. 1940 Census of Housing: Dwelling Units in (State): April 1, 1950

<sup>46</sup> “15 sq. Miles of Land Subdivided in Year,” *The San Francisco Examiner*, October 13, 1955, 5, Clipping from The San Francisco Examiner - Newspapers.com.

<sup>47</sup> George Ross, “The Vanishing Farmer: Rubber-Tired Migration Burying Bay Area Growers,” *Oakland Tribune*, September 4, 1955, 6A, Clipping from Oakland Tribune - Newspapers.com.

<sup>48</sup> Ross, “The Vanishing Farmer: Rubber-Tired Migration Burying Bay Area Growers,” September 4, 1955.



### *From Dirt to Concrete*

The inability of farmers and ranchers to operate their businesses in the necessary capacity added additional pressures to the mounting financial ones they were experiencing. Author Dallas Holmes in the *California Law Review* explains the complex situation that farmers and ranchers faced, "When outside factors increase the value of that resource beyond its agricultural worth, his assessed valuation, and his tax bill, the farmer must reevaluate economic position if he wishes to remain competitive in the free market. When he also considers the additional burden of personal taxes that he must pay on his farm equipment (as well as operating costs), his new economic picture of increased value and increased taxes may make it unprofitable or marginal for him to continue to hold his parcel in agriculture. Frequently, his response is to sell to a developer and move farther from the city, where the same process will be repeated."<sup>49</sup> The decisions farmers and ranchers ultimately had to make are reflected in the census data from 1950 to 1980. A sharp decrease in the number of farms and average acre is apparent when comparing the data.<sup>50</sup> Over this period, the number of farms steadily reduced in number and size, much of the land transitioning from dirt to asphalt and concrete.

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<sup>49</sup> Dallas Holmes, "Assessment of Farmland under the California Land Conservation Act and the "Breathing Space" Amendment," *California Law Review* 55, no. 1 (1967): 273-74, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3479316>.

<sup>50</sup> 1950 Census recorded 2,090 farms (average 161.8 acres); U.S. Department of Interior, *Census Bureau, Preliminary 1950 Census on Agriculture: Farms, Farm Characteristics, and Farm Products* (Washington, D.C., 1951): 73-76. [41632338v1ch4.pdf \(census.gov\)](https://www.census.gov/hhes/indicators/41632338v1ch4.pdf).

## *From Dirt to Concrete*

The land use transformation that was taking place in the county was documented in the headlines of local and regional newspapers. Initially, the reporting of these massive land purchases and developments during the 1940s and early 1950s was written with a tone of awe and amazement as it discussed the new amenities and span of the developments. However, starting in the mid-1950s, journalists began to voice concern over the “fading pasture lands,” “vanishing farmer,” and “Old MacDonald” as subdivisions closed the gap.<sup>51</sup> Journalists were not the only ones to negatively perceive agricultural land reduction and the spread of urban and suburban development. By the mid-1960s, Assemblyman John Williamson sought to restrict development by pushing through the 1965 California Land Conservation Act-AB 2117, also known as the Williamson Act.<sup>52</sup> The act, coupled with the addition of Article 28 (later 13), provided farmers with a tool to secure their businesses, commu-

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<sup>51</sup> George Ross, “Vanishing Farmer: Old Peralta Tract Just Keeps on Dividing Along,” *The Oakland Tribune*, September 5, 1955, 30, Clipping from Oakland Tribune - Newspapers.com.; Dayton Moore, “Pasture Lands Fade as Nation Goes on Big Building Splurge,” *The Independent*, October 13, 1954, 25, Clipping from The Independent - Newspapers.com.; George Ross, “Tracts Cut into Choice Tilling Land of Counties,” *The Oakland Tribune*, September 8, 1955, 37, ygnacio valley - Newspapers.com.

<sup>52</sup> The 1965 Williamson Act, “State agricultural land protection program in which local governments elect to participate. The intent of the program is to preserve agricultural lands by discouraging their premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. Landowners may apply to contract with the County to voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible uses. Restrictions are enforced through a rolling 10-year term contract.”; “Williamson Act and Open Space Easement in Santa Clara County,” County of Santa Clara: Department of Planning and Development, accessed May 4, 2021, Williamson Act and Open Space Easement in Santa Clara County - Planning and Development - County of Santa Clara (sccgov.org).

## *From Dirt to Concrete*

nities, and lifestyle.<sup>53</sup> Although these measures were a step towards agricultural land conservation, debate over the required zoning and resale restrictions made implementation difficult. This lack of participation in the Williamson Act program resulted in the continued development of urban and suburban communities to the east. On its way, developers gobbled up rural lands at a break-neck speed through Antioch, Oakley, and Brentwood, never stopping to breathe, always hungry for more.

### **Conclusion**

Suburban development was born out of the necessity to house a growing population, which envisioned a picturesque suburban lifestyle beyond the urban boundary. Infrastructure improvements, land use, and zoning changes enabled the floodgate of suburban sprawl to open. As the county's roadways, highways, and infrastructure expanded, housing tracks, the services, and amenities that supported them multiplied, spreading out into the rural regions of the county. The resulting suburban encroachment, coupled with the financial burden of urban development, resulted in not only the loss of agricultural land but of homes, communities, and identities. The intricacies of rural living were woven into every aspect of their lives. Although many profited from these changes for the majority of the rural population, the compounded loss far outweighed the

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<sup>53</sup> Article 28, " Article 13 declares the interest of the state in preserving open-space land and provides a constitutional basis for valuing property according to its actual use.", "Williamson Act Program Overview," California Department of Conservation, accessed May 4, 2021, Williamson Act Program Overview (ca.gov).

### *From Dirt to Concrete*

benefits. Knowing the extent and understanding the historical impacts of suburban sprawl in Contra Costa County, we can better assess land use today and hold tight to what agricultural, pasture, woodland, and open space remain.