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## From the Editor

Dear Reader:

We are delighted to present to you this thirteenth edition of the *Fairmount Folio*. Awaiting you is an array of historical essays from Wichita State University graduate students. Each of these six outstanding essays was carefully selected by the Editorial Board based upon its scholarship and carefully edited for the readers' education and enjoyment.

This edition is unusual in that each essay deals with American history and two deal specifically with Kansas history. We have grouped the essays chronologically, beginning with David Ferguson's, "No Taxation Without Representation!!! (And Only If Both Can Be Within The Bounds Of Our Legislative Control.)" This essay explores the complex issues of colonial Americans' demand for representation in the British parliament in the 1760s and the repercussions of those demands. The next essay is by Kate Page, "Those Pirates and Muslim Barbarians: The American Public View of the Barbary Nations and the United States Participation in the Barbary War." The author looks at the response and attitude of the United States on pirating and the Barbary Wars in the early nineteenth century. Next, we move into the Civil War era with Karen Powers', "Catholic Nuns in the Civil War." This essay documents the important nursing role Catholic nuns played during this conflict. And Jillian Overstake's essay, "The Nurse, the Soldier, the Spy: Three Women of the American Civil War and the Primary Sources They Left Behind," tells the story of three interesting women and their contributions during the Civil War. In "Race in Kansas," Karen Powers follows the issue of race from the "Bleeding Kansas" days into the early twentieth century. And in the final essay, "Dr. John Brinkley: Quack Doctor, Radio Personality, and Politician," Jason Gilliland looks at the life of this interesting and eccentric Kansan.

Dr. Helen Hundley deserves a special thank you for her help and support throughout the process of compiling and editing these essays. It has been a tremendous learning experience for me and I am grateful for being given the opportunity to serve as Editor. I would also like to thank the Editorial Board -- Dr. Robin Henry, Dr. Ariel Loftus and Dr. Hundley -- for their input in the process of selecting these papers. It has been a joy to work with each of these professors.

Please enjoy the fruits of our labor in these enlightening essays.

Judy Welfelt

April 2011

## **No Taxation Without Representation!!!**

**(and only if both can be within the bounds of our legislative control)**

David Ferguson

A colonial New Englander wrote of the inherited birthrights of British citizens in the March 2, 1765, edition of the *Providence Gazette* in vindication of Governor Stephen Hopkins' "The Rights of the Colonies Examined," that "the subject's right of being represented where he can be taxed, lands almost the foremost." What did he mean? Though twenty-first-century textbooks have summarized his argument in the inherited colonial maxim of "No taxation without representation," this simplification of a prevailing eighteenth-century colonial ideological premise sheds little light on the intellectual milieu in which the concept operated.<sup>1</sup> While even in the second decade of twenty-first-century American politics many have taken up this revolutionary slogan to support their ideologies, few understand what it actually meant within its contemporary usage. It will be the purpose of this analysis to examine this ideological concept, the framework from which it evolved, and more importantly, the construct within which it operated.

Revolving around the years immediately surrounding the Stamp Act crisis of the mid-1760s, I will demonstrate how colonial Americans coupled their representation argument with others to defend what they believed to be their inherited privileges as British citizens, and the perceived parliamentary threats to these ideals. Within this construct, the analysis will then proceed in four parts. Part one will analyze the historical backdrop from which evolving colonial ideals of their inherited rights developed. Beginning with a brief discussion of the historical evolution of British views regarding parliamentary taxation, this section will provide the immediate context for the motivation behind the passage of the Stamp Act, in the form of the Seven Years' War and its impact on skyrocketing British military

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<sup>1</sup> "A Vindication of a Late Pamphlet," *Providence Gazette; And Country Journal* (Providence, RI), March 02, 1765; Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political & Social History 1688-1832* (London: Arnold Publishing, 1997), 189.

expenditures. Part two will take up the British and colonial rational and ideological defenses of parliament's right to tax the British colonies, while part three will analyze the assertions of colonial rights that emanated from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Finally, part four will look at why the British parliament and colonial agents could not come to an agreement on American representation within its body, and will in conclusion, demonstrate that neither side of the argument viewed this ideological struggle in such simplistic terms.<sup>2</sup>

### **No Taxation Without Representation: Historical Construct.**

But if by independence be intended our maintenance of argument against the levying taxes upon us without our own consent, then it is so far true that we do aim at independence. Such independence is the main pillar of our happy frame of government, and hath ever been claimed and enjoyed, from the times of the Saxon down to this day, by our fellow-subjects in Britain... always heretofore acknowledged to be the birth-right of all the king's free subjects without distinction...

*Boston Post-Boy*: July 15, 1765<sup>3</sup>

Within the context of eighteenth-century British political ideology, the notion of an inherited political birthright was not simply a rhetorical flourish, but rather was perceived as a tangible and defensible concept. Taking cues from some of the most eminent political philosophers of the enlightenment, as well as historical British legal precedents, the concept of the inherited birthright permeated eighteenth century political discussions on both sides of the Atlantic. Within Britain's North American colonies "(t)here was no other right, privilege, franchise, or liberty claimed by the colonial whigs that relied more on the concept of personal inheritance... than the doctrine that for taxation to be constitutional it had to be by consent." Furthermore "(t)he doctrine of taxation only by consent was as old as England's ancient constitution," and believing themselves to share equally in the

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<sup>2</sup> \*A note on spelling: (Anachronistic spellings or perceived errors in original documents have not been corrected to suit modern conventions.)

<sup>3</sup> "The following is Said to be a Copy of a Letter, Sent by a Plan Agent in New-England," *Boston Post-Boy* (Boston, MA), July 15, 1765.

English legal heritage, the colonists believed this argument to be self-evident. It would, however, spawn disagreements on what exactly constituted representation, and even to what extent the colonists were entitled to it. These arguments would engender the most ideological disagreement between the two sides of the eventual taxation debate.<sup>4</sup>

With these concepts in mind, it would, nevertheless, be a disservice to opponents of the British parliament's taxation powers over the colonies, to relegate their historical inheritance argument as simply a reaction to their lack of representation within the British parliament. Though some held to this ideological framework, for many there were other aspects of the political inheritance upon which their disagreements were also founded. Colonial opponents of parliament's taxation powers were not so simple as to believe that they should somehow be exempted from taxation. Though some "firmly assert(ed) their right of exclusion from parliamentary taxation, founded on the principles of the *British* government, and the terms of their colonization," (italics in the original) it was not simply the lack of representation in the making of the tax, but also the type of tax that was made, that bothered many of the Stamp Act's colonial opponents.<sup>5</sup> The idea of an internal or "excise tax" was a relatively new concept within the British taxation system. Though "(t)raditionally, British taxes had been collected on land and on foreign goods at the port of arrival," in the mid-seventeenth century parliament began instituting internal consumption taxes on items such as beer, salt and beef. These taxes were extremely unpopular, as many believed they engendered tyranny due to the latitude given the tax collector; into the mid-eighteenth century, even in Britain itself, this form of taxation was highly controversial. Within this ideological framework then, "even before colonists and Parliament confronted each other over issues of taxation, the instincts of opposition to centrally imposed internal taxes," had already imbued itself within the colonial political psyche. It

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<sup>4</sup> John Phillip Reid, *Constitutional History of the American Revolution* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 110.

<sup>5</sup> "The following is Said to be a Copy of a Letter, Sent by a Plan Agent in New-England," *Boston Post-Boy* (Boston, MA), July 15, 1765.



would then take a dramatic shift in events to prompt a hesitant parliament to propose such a measure.<sup>6</sup>

Given the unpopularity of internal taxation on both sides of the Atlantic, parliament's passage of the 1765 Stamp Act seemed to have been somewhat illogical. But when taken within the larger construct of Britain's costly involvement in the Seven Years War, its £140 million national debt, and the fact that "the estimated expense of defending America and Canada amounted to at least £300,000," many within parliament felt that it was reasonable to expect the colonies to incur more of these costs. Unfortunately for the idea's proponents, historical precedent once again proved to be a significant obstacle. Left to their own devices for decades under the unofficial imperial policy of "salutary neglect," the colonies had become accustomed to the system. Colonial assemblies had come to regulate internal affairs, while parliament maintained control of external issues. Believing that "the imposition of internal taxes ought to be confined to their own Assembl(ies)," the undermining of this system by the parliamentary imposition of the Stamp Act threatened to significantly alter the status quo. Unwilling to relinquish what they believed to be their inherited rights as Englishmen, many in the colonies, with the aid of their parliamentary allies, engaged themselves in an ideological debate with their parliamentary and colonial opponents regarding the fundamental rights of parliament, the colonies, and the English citizen himself.<sup>7</sup>

### **Ideological Justification for Parliamentary Internal Taxation of the Colonies.**

Why does not this imaginary representation extend to America as well as over the whole island of Great Britain? If it can travel three hundred miles, why not three thousand? If it can jump over rivers and mountains, why cannot it sail over the ocean? If the towns of Manchester and Birmingham sending no representatives to parliament are

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 12-17.

<sup>7</sup> O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century 189 -190*; Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion*, 17.

notwithstanding there represented, why are not cities of Albany and Boston equally represented in that assembly? Are they not alike British subjects? are they not Englishmen? or are they only Englishmen when they solicit (sic) for protection but not Englishmen when taxes are required to enable this country to protect them?

*Newport Mercury*: May 27, 1765<sup>8</sup>

The overwhelmingly negative reaction among the colonies took many of the Stamp Act's supporters within the British parliament by surprise. When addressing the American objections, many focused "first on the 'strange language' of American arguments against the tax," specifically the usage of the term internal tax. Starting from this point of confusion in which "(m)ost British politicians could not even understand what the colonists were talking about," they began to address the American concerns as they viewed them. Led by First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer George Grenville, the parliamentary majority who supported the tax critiqued and refuted what they believed to be the primary American protestations against it. Though "the parliament would not permit any petitions to be heard from the colonies claiming as a right an exemption from parliamentary taxation," they were aware of the American protests. Agents of the colonial governments in England at the time the bill was appearing before parliament, such as Connecticut's London agent Jared Ingersoll, and Benjamin Franklin, who was in London as an "agent of his province," expressed the colonial disdain for the act. In expressing their displeasure these colonial agents also helped the act's parliamentary supporters gain information regarding the predominate American objections. Positing that there was in fact precedent for the enactment of an 'internal' tax within the colonies, that the colonists themselves should begin to bear some of the financial burden for their protection, and finally that they did have representation within parliament, the act's supporters

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<sup>8</sup> "The Objections to the Taxation of Our American Colonies," *The Newport Mercury* (Newport, RI), May 27, 1765.

attempted to deflect colonial criticisms, and those of their parliamentary allies.<sup>9</sup>

Overall Grenville believed that the colonies had "in many instances encroached and claimed powers and privileges inconsistent with their situation," and that if they were "not subject to this burden of tax," that they were not "entitled to privileges of Englishmen." It is within this conceptual framework that he approached the American assertions, and though he entirely disagreed with their position, due to political necessity, was forced to justify his policy. Though Grenville, even as prime minister, could not "understand the difference between external and internal taxes," believing that "(t)hey are the same in effect, and only differ in name," in humoring the argument of the act's opponents, he made a point of providing precedent. Stating that "the tax will in general be laid upon such instruments as in Great Britain, with some differences and exceptions," Grenville was apparently operating from the assumption that the British version of the tax provided ample legal precedent for its application in the North American colonies. The tax, "in force in England... since the year 1694," had provided "one of the most acceptable ways of raising money." With £290,000 raised in Great Britain in 1760, and the amount increased in 1765 "by raising of some of the duties," Grenville viewed this as one of the most reasonable and attractive options given its history, success in generating revenue, and contemporary acceptance. Grenville even went so far as to offer examples of existing 'internal taxes' levied by parliament then being collected within the colonies. Using as his primary example the colonial post office, which imposed "an internal tax upon North America," Grenville attempted to refute an argument which he himself found confusing. Combining the precedent of the 70-year-old stamp tax in Great Britain, with that of previously enacted 'internal taxes' in the colonies, the prime minister apparently felt that there was ample

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<sup>9</sup> Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion*, 17; "The following is Said to be a Copy of a Letter, Sent by a Plan Agent in New-England," *Boston Post-Boy* (Boston, MA), July 15, 1765; Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution: 1763 \* 1775* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954), 83 - 84.

justification for the Stamp Act's imposition on North America, and that the present situation dictated few other prudent courses of action.<sup>10</sup>

Though Grenville and his ilk may have had trouble grasping colonial resentment of an internal tax imposed by parliament, they nonetheless attempted to placate concerns about its precedent and usefulness. When it came to the question of the necessity of the colonies to begin providing a larger share of the funds needed for their defense, Grenville's attitude, as well as that of his supporters, turned significantly less amiable. One London writer whose work was reprinted in the *Newport Mercury* summed up the supporters' *logos* when he asked, "can any time be more proper to require some assistance from our colonies, to preserve to themselves their present safety, than when this county is almost undone by procuring it?" This was the general assumption from which Grenville operated. Asserting that parliament's right to tax in part emanated from "that great maxim, that protection is due from the Governor, and support and obedience on the part of the governed," supporters of the Stamp Act felt that Great Britain had done its part in providing for colonial defense, and that it was now the American's turn to pitch in. As the Member of Parliament (MP) Charles Townshend curtly asserted, "if she (America) expects our fleets, she must assist our revenue." As they expanded their argument, supporters of the act attempted to solidify their case, and persuade their ideological adversaries.<sup>11</sup>

While Grenville and Townshend did attempt to play to their opponents' *pathos* by invoking concepts of patriotism and duty, they also utilized the disparate financial construct of the colonies as justification for the new round of parliamentary imposed internal taxation. As noted above the Seven Years' War had severely

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<sup>10</sup> George Grenville, February 6, 1765, in R.C. Simmons and P.D.G. Thomas, eds., *Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliaments Respecting North America, 1754-1783* (New York, 1983), II, 11; George Grenville, January 14, 1766, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 87; George Grenville, February 6, 1765, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 11; Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution*, 70; George Grenville, February 6, 1765, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> "The Objections to the Taxation of Our American Colonies," *The Newport Mercury* (Newport, RI), May 27, 1765; George Grenville, February 6, 1765 in *Proceedings and Debates*, 11; Charles Townsend, February 6, 1765, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 13.

impacted the state of British finances, and as administrators searched for solutions to resolve their previously unheard of national debt, their eyes quickly turned to the lack of revenue being raised within the colonies. Given that many of the expenditures were directly or indirectly related to the defense and preservation of colonial interests, they felt that this was not unreasonable. Observing that "(t)he Navy used to cost about 7 or 8 hundred thousand (pounds)," and that it now "costs about 1,400,000 (pounds)," Grenville believed that "this great increase of the Navy is incurred in a great measure for the service of North America." Compounded by the fact that the "debts of North America... amounted to 848,000 (pounds),"<sup>12</sup> Grenville logically turned to the revenue that colonial taxation was bringing in to the treasury. Observing that a North American colonial population of "16 or 1,700,000 inhabitants," paid "only about 64,000 (pounds) a year for its establishment,"<sup>13</sup> Grenville and his followers were immediately struck by the disparity between expenditures and revenue. Coupled with the recommendation of Henry McCullough, former supervisor of royal revenues and land grants in North Carolina, to the Treasury that "a series of stamp duties.... would produce in America alone... some 60,000 (pounds) sterling per annum," the imposition of this tax seemed fiscally unquestionable. With Britain's mounting debt, and the comparatively small amount of taxes then being levied on the colonies, the prime minister believed that these figures provided just one more solid argument for the institution of the controversial Stamp Act. Though detractors continued to assert their belief that the colonies had no representation within the parliament, and that regardless of the financial situation that it had no right to make any decision regarding colonial taxation, the act's supporters disagreed.<sup>14</sup>

Opponents of the Stamp Act (and others in parliament who attempted to impose internal taxes on the colonies) believed that the attempts were inherently flawed. They believed that they had no representation within the body making the decisions, and that their

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<sup>12</sup> This figure excludes Pennsylvania for which Grenville's agent was unable to get accurate statistical data. (See *Proceedings and Debates*, 10)

<sup>13</sup> This figure excludes North Carolina and Maryland for which Grenville's agent was unable to get accurate statistical data. (See *Proceedings and Debates*, 10)

<sup>14</sup> George Grenville, February 6, 1765, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 10; Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution*, 71.

own elected assemblies were more than adequate for imposing internal taxation. It was this ideological difference that provided the primary catalyst for the disagreement over the tax. Supporters believed that the colonists did in fact find tangible representation within parliament in the form of "virtual representation," and philosophically differed on the point of representation itself. The concept being relative in a democratic society, the disagreement seemed to center on the question of degree.<sup>15</sup>

When confronted with the argument that the colonists had no representation within parliament, and "(t)hat House had no right to lay an internal tax upon America, that country not being represented," Grenville and his fellows turned to the British political concept of virtual representation. The prime minister asserted that "(t)he Parliament of Great Britain virtually represents the whole Kingdom, not actually great trading towns," and that "(n)ot a twentieth part of the people are actually represented." Going a step further he pointed to "(t)he merchants of London and the East India Company," neither of which were directly represented. One London editorialist of a like mind argued that the works of "Lock, Sidney, Selden, and many other great names," could be used to "prove that every Englishmen, whether he has a right to vote for a representative, or not, is still represented in the British parliament."<sup>16</sup>

Supporters of the virtual representation argument pointed to the fact that "Copyholders, Leaseholders, and all men possessed of personal property only chose no representative," but that by virtue of the British system, their voices were still heard. In the House of Lords, Lord Mansfield went so far as to assert that "never, by our constitution, was representation adopted as necessary," which he justified by using the examples of "the Counties Palatine of Chester and Durham, which had long been taxed before represented." In a body not known for such things, one observer stated that the argument conducted regarding representation was "the strongest in

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<sup>15</sup> William Pitt, January 14, 1765, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 86.

<sup>16</sup> George Grenville, February 6, 1765, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 10; "The Objections to the Taxation of Our American Colonies," *The Newport Mercury* (Newport, RI), May 27, 1765

reason and the most eloquent in words that ever was heard in that House." That even in the House of Lords the representation argument was being hotly debated illustrates the divisiveness that it imbued. Given the fact that only four percent of the population was actually represented, the Stamp Act's proponents felt strongly that virtual representation was an obvious construct within the British political system. Some took the idea further to assert that constitutionally there was no rationale for the colonial belief that they must be represented for taxes to be levied against them by parliament. But as passionately as the act's supporters believed that the concept of virtual representation was imbued within the British political system, their ideological opponents were equally passionate that it was not. For those who would be directly affected by what they perceived might become a dangerous precedent, as well as their parliamentary allies, the issue took on an elevated sense of importance.<sup>17</sup>

### **Colonial and Parliamentary Justification Against Internal Parliamentary Taxation.**

Here he would infer, that this right of representation in parliament, and the obligation to pay taxes, which between King and subject, at home, are mutual and reciprocal, and consequently inseparable, are here divided. It seems the obligation reaches us, but we have lost the right: The sum of all which is, that this right of representation is born with us, but we must not use it; we have it, but cannot enjoy it...

*Providence Gazette*: March 2, 1765<sup>18</sup>

Though colonial opponents of the Stamp Act as well as their parliamentary allies understood the arguments for it, they were utterly unconvinced of its justifications or legality. Operating for decades under the policy of salutary neglect, each of the colonies had developed "a legislature within itself to take care of its interests and provide for its peace and internal government." Representatives from

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<sup>17</sup> "The Objections to the Taxation of Our American Colonies," *The Newport Mercury* (Newport, RI), May 27, 1765; William Murray (Lord Mansfield), February 3, 1766, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 125.

<sup>18</sup> "A Vindication of a Late Pamphlet," *Providence Gazette* (Providence, RI), March 2, 1765.

the colonies themselves sat in these bodies and made policy decisions with firsthand knowledge of the issues facing their regions. Though they deferred to parliament for "many things of a more general nature, quite out of reach of these particular legislatures," for the most they had been left to their own devices regarding local issues.<sup>19</sup> When this status quo was disrupted as parliament began turning to the colonies to raise funds to combat an enormous national deficit, many of those upon which the new taxes were to be levied, immediately began questioning parliament's authority to enact such measures.

The arguments made against the new round of taxation sprang from a variety of ideological and historical sources within the collective colonial psyche and memory. Many made their arguments within the confines of British legal precedent and interpretation. Some believed that the new taxes would set a dangerous precedent that would eventually lead the "colonists 'to go naked in this cold country' or else clothe themselves in animal skins." Others feared that the Stamp Act would be the gateway to a slippery slope through which parliament would continuously raise taxes in the colonies to ease the burden at home. Underlying all of these fears, however, was the colonial belief that the idea of virtual representation was far from adequate in their situation, and without a voice in parliament, they may eventually be doomed to "the miserable condition of slaves." Given the fact that slavery was still a very real and active institution in mid-eighteenth-century colonial society, this fear was not simply a rhetorical flourish of Governor Stephen Hopkins' pen, but a contemporary idiom, and the apex of degradation in the minds of colonial opponents of the tax.<sup>20</sup>

The idea that the precedent set by this new form of taxation would lead to abuses of authority by parliament and its representatives was a pervasive complaint amongst its opposition. As

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen Hopkins, "The Rights of the Colonies Examined," 1764, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=2428>, accessed November 24, 2010, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion*, 22; Hopkins, "The Rights of the Colonies Examined," 2.



mentioned in part one, the colonies had inherited an innate distrust of internal taxation from their British predecessors. Coupled with the fact that they felt they had no say in the enactment of these new taxes, the fear of arbitrary power and loss of liberty was a real one among the colonists. Given the perceived trajectory of parliaments enactments, the belief that in the future unscrupulous tax men would have arbitrary authority over the colonials property and persons was a truly disconcerting notion. Writing from London, one editorialist asserted his perception of the new tax:

the free constitutions, which the colonists have thus long enjoyed and flourished under, be as it were subverted....by rendering not only the domestic laws of their police and economy of no *certain* effect, but subjecting all their *internal forms* of civil communication, and probably their persons and local properties by and by, to be taxed at liberty by our parliaments, of which they are neither members present nor represented, and to which they are in this respect as strangers.(italics in the original)<sup>21</sup>

The belief that parliament's current course might very well lead to the loss of liberty within the colonies was therefore not confined simply to conspiracy prone colonial political observers. People on both sides of the Atlantic perceived the new tax as an affront to liberty as well as British legal sensibilities.

With the fear of an intrusive tax man came the broader fear that without tangible colonial representation in parliament, that body might extend its latitude of taxation to further enrich its own coffers. The argument that Great Britain might "grow rich by their (the colonies) being made poor," held a good deal of sway with opponents of the taxation legislation both within parliament and the colonies themselves. Governor Hopkins took up this very issue in his 1764 "The Rights of the Colonies Examined," observing that, "if the people in America are to be taxed by the representatives of the people in Britain, their malady is an increasing evil that must always grow greater by time." Further he posited that "(w)hatever burdens are laid

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<sup>21</sup> "From the *London Chronicle*, December 12. to the Printer," *Boston Post Boy* (Boston, MA), March 10, 1766.

upon the Americans will be so much taken off the Britons; and the doing this will soon be extremely popular," to the extent that "those who put up to be members of the House of Commons must obtain the votes of the people by promising to take more and more taxes off them by putting it on the Americans." Though Governor Hopkins took this argument to its logical extreme, there were Members of Parliament who also warned against the future possibilities of abuse of parliamentary power.<sup>22</sup>

During the very session in which prime minister Grenville presented his argument for the passage of the Stamp Act, his political adversaries within the house couched their opposition in very similar terms to those of Governor Hopkins. Taking a page out of Hopkins' own book, Sir William Meredith postulated that "(w)e (parliament) shall tax them in order to ease ourselves," and that "(w)e ought therefore to be extremely delicate in imposing a burden upon others which we not only not share ourselves but which is to take it far from us." Along the same vein MP Rose Fuller doubted "the propriety of laying this tax," and in response to Grenville's precedent argument stated that the "Post Office is a very small instance of a tax forced by this country," while "(t)his tax (the Stamp Act) is intended to be laid upon very different principles." Encapsulating the opposition's argument on both sides of the ocean in this regard, MP Isaac Barre, a veteran of the Seven Years War, proposed, "caution to be exercised lest the power be abused, the right subverted, and 2 million of unrepresented people mistreated and in their own opinion slaves." That MP Barre and Governor Hopkins invoked the same idiom of slavery was in no way a coincidence. Both men realized that the perceived loss of liberty called to mind this very real institution within the contemporary mindset of colonial Americans. As Hopkins once more observed, without representation "they who are taxed at the pleasure by others cannot possibly have any property, can have nothing to be called their

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<sup>22</sup> Hopkins, "The Rights of the Colonies Examined," 12, 15.

own," and "(t)hey who have no property can have no freedom, but are indeed reduced to the most abject slavery."<sup>23</sup>

Arguments by opponents of the Stamp Act that the taxation powers which parliament was assuming might create a dangerous precedent held a good deal of sway. But as has been alluded to throughout this analysis, the underlying premise beneath this and all other indictments of Grenville's plan was the belief that the colonists were not adequately represented within the legislature. While some argued against the concept of virtual representation as it applied to the colonies, others questioned what they perceived to be the inherent legal contradictions which they believed these taxation powers embodied. Citing British constitutional precedent these men asserted that "the colonies had a right to tax themselves, and the parliament (did) not."<sup>24</sup>

To colonial opponents of virtual representation, their geographical remoteness led some to believe that the concept was an absolute "absurdity." Given that there were those within parliament who would have been unable to find the North American colonies on a map, opponents of the tax with a firmer geographical knowledge took the colonies' remoteness as a point of departure for their criticisms. In this regard Governor Hopkins asserted that "the colonies were 'at so great a distance from England' that Parliament could never truly know American conditions and could not become sufficiently representative to levy internal taxes." MP William Pitt, an ardent critic of Grenville's plan and one of the colonies' most vocal supporters in parliament, took his criticisms one step further, asking "by whom is an *American* represented here (in parliament)?" (Italics in the original) Further, he questioned, "(i)s he represented by any Knight of the shire, in any country in this kingdom?... Or will you tell him that he is represented by any representative of a borough - a borough, which perhaps no man ever saw." Believing that this was "*the rotten part of the constitution,*" (italics in the original) Pitt went on to state that "(t)he

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<sup>23</sup> William Meredith, February 6, 1765, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 13; Isaac Barre, February 6, 1765, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 12; Hopkins, "The Rights of the Colonies Examined," 14.

<sup>24</sup> John Pratt, February 3, 1766, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 127.

idea of a virtual representation of American in this House, is the most contemptible idea that ever entered into the head of a man," and that "it does not deserve a serious refutation." Although Pitt may have overstated his point a bit when he went on to claim "that to say America was virtually represented was a nonsensical absurdity," his premise was based firmly in his and his likeminded fellows' understanding of British legal precedent.<sup>25</sup>

Pitt held a dramatically different interpretation of parliament's relationship to the colonies than those of Grenville's mindset. While Grenville believed that parliament was firmly within its rights to tax the colonies regardless of the nature of the tax, Pitt asserted that "The Commons of *America*, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of this, their constitutional right, of giving and granting their own money." (Italics in the original) Though Grenville would most likely have agreed with Pitt's assertion that "the kingdom, as the supreme governing and legislative power, has always bound the colonies by her laws, by her regulations, and restrictions in trade, in navigation, in manufactures, in everything..." where the two men fundamentally differed was in Pitt's assertion that this supreme power did not extend to internal taxation. Pitt and his fellows firmly believed "that taking their (the Americans) money out of their pockets without their consent," was an affront to the law, and that attempting to rectify this contradiction with an argument for virtual representation was illogical.<sup>26</sup>

### Why No Representation?

It is certainly on the Carpet for the British plantations to have the privilege of representatives in the House of Commons in England; but we are told that they are not to be chose by the whole body of the people of our colonies, but by and from the members of the assemblies of the several provinces.

*Pennsylvania Gazette*: February 28, 1765<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion*, 20; William Pitt, January 14, 1766, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 86 & 91.

<sup>26</sup> William Pitt, January 14, 1766, in *Proceedings and Debates*, 86.

<sup>27</sup> Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution*, 73.

When analyzing the incredibly complex ideological argument that surrounded American representation in the British parliament, one must ask the question, why was the most pragmatic, and seemingly obvious, solution not adopted? Why did parliament not simply allow representatives from the colonies to take their places as MP's in the House of Commons? The answer to this question in part lies in the ideological milieu that has been discussed throughout this analysis, but also in part, in some more seemingly innocuous concerns held by both sides of the argument. Though opponents of the Stamp Act held that the colonial assemblies were the only legally sanctioned levers of internal taxes upon the colonies, ingrained in their argument against parliamentary taxation was their lack of representation within that assembly. On the other side of the debate, though many championed the concept of virtual representation and its ability to legitimize their taxation of the colonies, it would seem obvious, and in the interest of political expediency, that the admittance of a few American MP's would have little impact on the overall policy determinations of parliament. In this one compromise, proponents of parliament's colonial taxation powers would have silenced the largest criticism of their perceived mandate, and at the same time enabled themselves to broaden their scope. With the gift of historical hindsight, this compromise seems self-evident, but as often is the case with such divisive ideological conflicts, the realization of this solution was not that simple.

There were those who opposed the Stamp Act who believed that it might be possible to reach some sort of compromise regarding the acceptance of American MP's to parliament. Theirs was a less entrenched position, and they understood that given the nature of the representation argument, such a suggestion would at least require some consideration. Benjamin Franklin went so far as to assert that "if you choose to tax us...give us members in your legislature, and let us be one people." In his own analysis of the prospect Governor Hopkins questioned "(w)hether the colonies will ever be admitted to have representatives in Parliament," and whether or not it would be consistent "with their distant and dependent state." Though he did not dismiss the prospect out of hand he did question if once admitted, if this construct "would be to their advantage." Consciously aware that

"the influence of American representatives in Parliament could not possibly be dominant," given "that they could not hope to have a majority of the seats in the House of Commons," those who opposed the tax who considered the possibility of American representation in parliament, appear to have been dissuaded from the prospect. Many attempted instead to pursue their goal of retaining the perceived exclusive taxation powers of their local assemblies, believing that this would be the only true representation that they could hope to attain within the imperial framework.<sup>28</sup>

Though some opponents of the Stamp Act, such as Franklin and Hopkins appear to have perceived the expediency of the admittance of American MPs to parliament, most came to believe that this would not go far enough in providing for them the representation which they desired. A sizable contingent appear to have intrinsically desired a continuance of the status quo in an attempt to maintain their local assemblies, believing that the representation argument transcended the simplification that some had ascribed to it. Asserting that "the geographical remoteness of Parliament would always, under any conceivable electoral arrangement deny them adequate representation for the purpose of assessing internal taxes," theirs was not a pragmatic view. Some colonial assemblies even instructed their agents in London to oppose the concept of the admittance of American representatives to parliament believing "that the colonials 'neither are or can be represented, under the present Circumstances in that body.'" They were not attempting to compromise with proponents of parliament's newly enacted tax, they were using the representation argument in an attempt to maintain the local hegemony of the colonial assemblies. Though easily misunderstood within the broader context of the ideological debate, their position was intractable, and would further complicate the overall discussion.<sup>29</sup>

For their part parliamentary proponents of the Stamp Act were not so obtuse as to deny the proposition of American MPs, given the possible political advantages. But due to the widespread disdain for

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<sup>28</sup> Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion*, 20; Hopkins, "The Rights of the Colonies Examined," 9; Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution*, 74.

<sup>29</sup> Slaughter, 20; Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution*, 74.

the concept apparent among their ideological opponents, the idea never gained much traction. That it was considered is apparent given the coverage it received in the colonial press. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* in early June of 1765 reported being made aware of some of the proposed details of the arrangement stating that they had received word from a London correspondent that "(w)e hear, should the scheme for introducing American representatives in parliament be laid aside, such colony agents, during their residence here in a public character, will nevertheless be vested with certain privileges," including "exemption from arrests for debts, in common with members of the house." Though this report alludes to the distinct possibility that parliament might lay the plan "aside," the fact that this many details had been suggested at the very least points to some official dialogue regarding the matter. However, this is apparently the extent to which the proposal was analyzed. Though the concept was regarded "as a logical if dubious solution," and was "seriously considered before" the passage of the Stamp Act, given the negative reaction it received from American representatives in London, "the ministry... was discouraged from making any formal proposal " in its regard.<sup>30</sup>

As mentioned earlier, though some opponents of the Stamp Act felt that the possibility of the admittance of American MPs might alleviate their apprehension regarding parliament's new tax, many, and most importantly the majority of colonial representatives in London at the time, regarded the concept with contempt. This disdain was evident to the point that Grenville himself "could not find any evidence that the colonies had the least inclination toward such a representation and was made quite aware that there were 'many Reasons why they should not desire it.'" Though Grenville was willing to investigate the possibility of the admittance of American MPs to parliament for reasons of political expediency, the reaction he received from the colonial agents in London quickly nullified any hopes that he may have had for resolving such a complex ideological conflict with a relatively insignificant gesture. When attempting to understand why no agreement was reached on colonial representation in parliament, it is interesting to note then, that it was

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<sup>30</sup> Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution*, 73.

not for lack of effort on the part of the British, but instead from a lack of interest on the part of the Americans. They desired representation and were aware that in some cases internal taxation was a necessary evil, but what they wanted was authority over both, and that is what they would continue to strive for.<sup>31</sup>

**No Taxation Without Representation!!! (and only if both can be within the bounds of our legislative control).**

According to a new plan of American operations, now under consideration, it is said a parliamentary representation, and the appointment of persons to act as Consuls in the several colonies, are proposed to take place...

*Boston Evening Post*: July 6, 1772<sup>32</sup>

As is often the case, oversimplification of a complex historical concept has left many twenty-first-century Americans with an incomplete understanding of the meaning of one of the American Revolution's most cherished maxims. I myself was guilty of asking the question of why in such a heated ideological atmosphere did someone not come forward to propose what now seems to be the most obvious solution to a complex argument? Though the rationales, ideologies, and motivations of both sides have been discussed at length throughout this analysis, the simple answer is that it really was not that simple.

A debt-laden parliament was attempting to assert an authority that it had neglected for decades. After spending millions of pounds in defense and preservation of colonial interests, British policy makers sought new revenue streams to fill depleted coffers. Looking at home to solve taxation problems in the colonies, men like Grenville assumed that what worked in England would work in the colonies. Also attempting to reassert a dormant parliamentary political authority over the American colonies, British policy-makers felt that their position was not only justified, but necessary. Though willing to compromise regarding the question of American representation within

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<sup>31</sup> Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution*, 74.

<sup>32</sup> "London, April 25," *Boston Evening Post* (Boston MA), July 6, 1772.



parliament, they were unwilling to compromise regarding the necessity of the levying of the taxes themselves.

Unfortunately for parliamentary proponents of new colonial taxation schemes, an American populace grown used to their independence was reluctant to part with rights that they believed parliament was attempting to take from them. Legally and politically, precedent and tradition exert an exceeding amount of force over a societal psyche, and the case of colonial Americans was no different. Left, for the most part, to their own devices for the better part of a century regarding issues of internal taxation, the American legal and political constructs had evolved into unique dynamics that many within parliament either failed or neglected to understand. Though the rhetorical rallying cry of "No Taxation Without Representation!" provided what a modern day political scientist might term a strong bumper sticker slogan, the actual debate was considerably more complicated. Both sides recognized the political expediency of a solution involving tangible American representation within the British parliament, but neither, especially colonial Americans, felt that it would solve the underlying issue. Americans wanted to tax themselves, via the institution of directly representational bodies elected within the colonies, and it would be this desire that would eventually lead them to break with their former colonial masters.

## **Those Pirates and Muslim Barbarians: The American Public View of the Barbary Nations and the United States Participation in the Barbary War**

Kate Page

Although the Marine Anthem is sung quite often throughout the country, relatively few know the extent of its history or the meaning of the phrase, "from the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli." In the early 1800s the United States was at war with the Barbary Nations in what would come to be known as the Barbary Wars. The American public glorified the United States and made the Barbary nations into an evil enemy. The historiography of the Barbary Wars tends to be written from a diplomatic or military approach, and understandably so. The fight against these North African pirates afforded some of the earliest and most celebrated actions of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. This combat also began a long and ongoing U.S. military presence in the Middle East, and the American public's interest in the greater Islamic world. Little has been written, though, on the new nation's reaction to the war. This article will address the American people's reaction to the United States dealing with the Barbary Nations.

From the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Barbary Nations were the crippling controllers of the Mediterranean Sea. Their piratical practices were felt thorough much of the Atlantic World, along the Mediterranean, up to Iceland, and down the Western African Atlantic coast. The four Barbary Nations were Morocco, Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers, and were the scourge of trade and commerce for many of the nations of the time. These piratical states attacked the merchant ships of any country who refused to pay them tribute. The only way to get these nations to stop was to comply.<sup>1</sup> Most of the European nations had succumbed to this, being too absorbed in their own conflicts to be able to effectively force the Barbary Nations to stop this practice.

Prior to the Revolution, American ships were protected by the bribery of Britain to the Barbary Deys (rulers of the Barbary Nations, also referred to as Shaws). After the United States had won its independence, it had to negotiate its own treaties to ensure a modestly safe trade in the Mediterranean Sea. The tributes demanded

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<sup>1</sup> Something to keep in mind, a nation could still be attacked if they paid tribute but there would be repercussions if this happened. Colonies were very susceptible to this because they did not always have the full protection of the mother country.

by each Barbary state could be substantial. In 1801, the last tribute treaty the U.S. signed with a Barbary state, Algiers, granted them \$500,000 and an additional gift of \$21,600 in naval stores.<sup>2</sup> The equivalent of this in present funds is 7.5 million dollars.<sup>3</sup> This was a huge amount for a newly formed nation to have to constantly forfeit, especially since this was only one of the nations that demanded tribute. President Thomas Jefferson never approved of paying tribute to the Barbary nations stating, "I am very unwilling that we should acquiesce in the European humiliation, of paying tribute to those lawless pirates."<sup>4</sup> Many Americans agreed with President Jefferson. One stated as such:

The Dey will make a haul to repay him for his present losses. I hope we shall not be the victims; we are nearly two and a half years in arrear; no funds, we have a valuable unguarded commerce in these seas; we are threatened by all Barbary; therefore we should act with energy, make good our stipulations and annuities have consular friends (not to be depending on mercenary Jews) and show force in the sea.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the actions that aggravated the new nation were, "in addition to the ship *Polly*, the Algerian privateers brought in ten more U.S. ships, which brought the total number of U.S. captives to 119." The Dey ended up demanding \$2.435 million for the prisoners.<sup>6</sup> The Algerians released these US captives on July 13, 1796, but due to delays many prisoners, like that of a man named Foss, did not return to the United States until August 23, 1797.<sup>7</sup> With all this building tension, a breaking point was close at hand. When war broke out between the United States and the Barbary state of Tripoli, it flooded the newspapers. There were articles on this subject from Maine to the Carolinas. For example:

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<sup>2</sup> "Summary. Mediterranean Squadron," *Weekly Wanderer*, June 27, 1801.

<sup>3</sup> Robert C. Sahr, "Consumer Price Index Conversion Factors 1800 to 2016 to convert to Dollars of 2006," <<http://oregonstate.edu/cla/polisei/faculty/sahr/cv2006.xls>>.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1829), 97.

<sup>5</sup> "Extract of a letter from Richard O'Brien to the Secretary of State, dated at Algiers," *New-York Gazette*, January 1, 1802.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 71.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

We are sorry to have to impart to you that the misunderstandings subsisting between your government and the Pasha of Tripoli, have at last involved you in a war with said Barbary State; and intelligence has been received here of several of its cruisers having already sailed, with the view of capturing all the American vessels they can meet with<sup>8</sup>.

Luckily, Jefferson had already seen that the Barbary Nations would turn, and had ordered the construction of a navy.<sup>9</sup> The first squadron would be made up of four ships. The first was the *President*. With 44 guns, it was the flagship of this small fleet. Second was the *Philadelphia*, which had 38 guns. A quartet of ships, the *President* and the *Philadelphia* with a sloop-of-war called the *Essex* (32 guns), and the *Enterprise*, a schooner with only 12 guns, sailed across the Atlantic heading for Gibraltar and then on to the Barbary Coast.<sup>10</sup> A toast on the anniversary of American Independence stated: "The Navy of the United States, May she teach the pirates of Barbary, our favorite doctrine, 'Millions for defense, but not a cent for tribute,'" has become a basis of American foreign policy.<sup>11</sup>

In the book, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy*, Michael Oren states that "the navy was consequently instructed to enforce the existing treaties with North Africa, but also 'to chastise' any aggression by the pirates by sinking, burning, or destroying their ships."<sup>12</sup> The Dey never had much respect for the United States and at one time had said, "The light that this Regency looks on the United States is exactly this; you pay me tribute, by that you become my slaves, and then I have a right to order as I please. Did the United States know the easy access of this barbarous coast called Barbary, the weakness of their garrisons, and the effeminacy of their people, I am sure they would not belong tributary to so pitiful a race of infidels."<sup>13</sup> This point was again emphasized in the *National Intelligence*, "Why then should we come, cap in hand, and kiss the feet of these savages? These pirates are insatiable as the grave."<sup>14</sup> The language of the text above places

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<sup>8</sup> "Extract of a Letter from Barcelona, Dated 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1801, to a Merchant in Philadelphia," *Commercial Advertiser*, August 7, 1801.

<sup>9</sup> This fact is ironic because Thomas Jefferson had previously defunded the Navy.

<sup>10</sup> Glenn Tucker, *Dawn Like Thunder* (Indianapolis/New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Incorporated, 1963), 135.

<sup>11</sup> *American Mercury*, July 9, 1801, No. 888, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 55.

<sup>13</sup> *New-Jersey Journal*, "Algiers, 10<sup>th</sup> October 1800," May 5, 1801, No. 915. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *National Intelligencer*, "Springfield, Sept 8," September 23, 1801, 1.

a strong emphasis on the pirate activities being the reason why these nations were 'savages' and 'barbarians.' One can also see the beginnings of a shift in rhetorical emphasis from the Barbary states' piracy to their 'Islamic barbarism.' The people's opinion was strongly in support of both starting and finishing a war that would bring the Barbary Nations to their knees.

The war with the Barbary Nations received intense coverage and elicited emotional responses in the new nation's newspapers. The first item that drew the attention of the United States was the capture of the Navy frigate *U.S.S Philadelphia*. An officer from the ship made an account of the capture of the frigate. The enemy boarded the ship after they surrendered, and began acting like pirates, plundering everything within sight. "Before we got to shore we were treated most brutally, with some men being stripped down to one shirt."<sup>15</sup> The reactions of the American people to the capture of the frigate *Philadelphia* were outrage and disbelief. One account from a newspaper that could not believe that this happened stated, "We think that if such an occurrence as is reported to have taken place were a fact, it would most probably have been known at Barcelona at that date."<sup>16</sup>

The capture of one of the United States largest and most heavily armed vessels by the Barbary Nations was an abomination and a national embarrassment. It affected the morale of not only the Navy but the American people as well. One article stated, "This unfortunate occurrence has entirely deranged the commodore's [Preble] plans."<sup>17</sup> Demoralized and upset, the American public seemed to falter a bit in its support of its heroes and the war itself. The loss did make the public reevaluate the situation in Barbary, and the government took a chance to push the war forward to another level. President Thomas Jefferson declared that:

I communicated to Congress a letter received by Captain Bainbridge, commander of the *Philadelphia* frigate, informing us of the wreck of the vessel on the coast of Tripoli, and that he, his officers, his men, had fallen into the hands of the Tripolitans. This accident renders it expedient to increase our force and enlarge our expenses in the Mediterranean,

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<sup>15</sup> "Extract of a Letter from an Officer on Board the Philadelphia Frigate, Dated at Tripoli," *Aurora General Advertiser*, March 20, 1804.

<sup>16</sup> "Philadelphia, March 9," *Alexandria Advertiser*, March 15, 1804.

<sup>17</sup> *Centinel of Freedom*, March 20, 1804.

beyond what the last appropriation for the naval service contemplated.<sup>18</sup>

The end result of the capture of the *Philadelphia* was an escalation of the war. To recover from the embarrassment Commodore Preble of the United States Navy needed to do a 180 degree change to gain the respect of the American public. The decision was then made to destroy the *Philadelphia*. It would be far better to have it destroyed than to have the ship in enemy hands. While potentially perilous, this eventually helped turn the tide of the war in America's favor. In the end Preble picked two ships to carry out the mission. A report to the House of Representatives detailed the following:

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 1804 Commodore Preble, lying with his squadron in the harbor Syracuse, gave orders to Lieutenant Stewart, commanding the brig *Syren*, of sixteen guns and Lieutenant Decatur commanding the ketch *Intrepid* of four guns and seventy-five men to proceed to Tripoli to destroy the frigate *Philadelphia* of forty-four guns then lying in the harbor of Tripoli.<sup>19</sup>

The crew of the *Intrepid* distributed combustibles and ignited them on board the ship. The burning ship did more damage than anyone could have anticipated. The *Philadelphia* somehow broke free from her mooring and drifted ashore very near the Pasha's castle before finally exploding.<sup>20</sup> The burning of the frigate had many positive affects. The first was that Commodore Preble regained his good reputation. In an editorial by the *Manchester Spy*, there was a piece that stated, "All the letters from on board the United States vessels in the Mediterranean speak in high terms of the superior skills and indefatigable vigilance of Commodore Preble."<sup>21</sup> This was a major turning point in the war, causing a push toward immediate action against the Barbary Nations. A strong consensus to build on this momentum and to strike the Barbary nations soon swept the nation and military. Thomas Jefferson announced his congratulations and

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *ASP Naval Affairs I*, 122.

<sup>19</sup>"Destruction of the frigate Philadelphia communicated to the House of Representatives," November 15, 1804 in *American State Papers, Class 6 Naval Affairs*, Vol. I 1794-1825, Walter Lowrie and Walter S. Franklins eds. (Washington, D.C.; Gales and Seaton, 1834), 128.

<sup>20</sup> *Victory in Tripoli*, 162-673.

<sup>21</sup> "Massachusetts. Boston, May 18. Interesting Report," *Manchester Spy*, May 23, 1804.

hopes for final success over the Barbary nations: "the activity and success of the small force employed in the Mediterranean in the early part of the present year, the reinforcement sent into that sea, and the energy of the officers having command in the several vessels, will I trust, by the sufferings of war, reduce the barbarians of Tripoli to the desire of peace on proper terms."<sup>22</sup>

Another interesting aspect was how major players in the Barbary War, and also in the future wars of 1812 and the second Barbary War, were viewed in the papers and how the men were idolized by Americans. In between the wars, and sometimes during, these heroes returned to the United States with fanfare comparable to movie stars today. Balls and dinners were thrown for these brave men. Several times these would be accompanied with gifts from thankful citizens. Some of these heroes were Commodore Edward Preble, Captain William Bainbridge, Stephen Decatur, Isaac Hull, Charles Stewart, Thomas MacDonough, and David Porter. The activities of these men were closely followed in the press and they presented their side of the conflict to the nation. The high esteem these officers were given was shown not only during, but after the war as well. This demonstrated how much the American public supported action against the Barbary Nations as well as how they deified their heroes while turning their enemies into bloody barbarians.

The newspapers declared the burning of the *Philadelphia* a huge success, with several proclaiming the virtue of the act. In fact, papers from Maine to Virginia put Stephen Decatur and his men's gallant actions in their papers. At a banquet some time after the burning of the frigate *Philadelphia*, the men were recognized by "Stephen Decatur junior and his brave companions, American heroes of the Tripolitan harbor." He received a one gun salute, which was an honor at that time.<sup>23</sup> The general public were not the only ones who wanted to reward Decatur for his courageous actions. In fact, "It was resolved that the president of the United States be requested to present in the name of Congress to Captain Stephen Decatur, a sword of a certain amount of dollars and to each of the officers and crew of the United States ketch *Intrepid*."<sup>24</sup> President Jefferson decided to add to this, declaring, "Lieutenant Decatur... thereby

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<sup>22</sup> *American State Papers, Message of President Jefferson No. 22.* Washington D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1804.

<sup>23</sup> "Philadelphia. Celebration-Fourth July," *Democrat*, July 14, 1804, 4.

<sup>24</sup> *United States' Gazette*, November 14, 1804, 3.

advanced to be Captain in the Navy of the United States."<sup>25</sup> Upon hearing of these honors, Decatur replied, "I find my services have been far over-rated and I feel myself entirely at a loss for words sufficient to express my gratitude to the President and to yourself on the present Occasion." It was during this period that Decatur first received considerable notice. One paper stated: "Capt. Stephen Decatur, whose gallant exploit; in burning the *Philadelphia* frigate, has been the subject of frequent notice."<sup>26</sup> When Preble was replaced in his post later in the first Barbary War, his letter to Stephen Decatur and his fellow men showed Preble's high regard for them. "There can be no question, but your country will be gratefully impressed by your exertions"<sup>27</sup> Decatur was allowed the honor of bearing an ambassador from the Bey of Tunis on the frigate *Congress*, accompanied "with a present of Horses to the President of the United States" upon the conclusion of the first war.<sup>28</sup> The George-Town citizens even put together a dinner in honor of Captain Stephen Decatur as well as Charles Stewart for their valiant actions against the Barbary pirates.<sup>29</sup>

At another dinner held in his honor at Richmond, the guests raised a toast to Decatur: "may his gallant service ever receive the rewards of his country's gratitude."<sup>30</sup> An example of how much the public loved and respected Commodore Decatur was illustrated upon his death in 1820 (from a duel) when a newspaper wrote a beautiful commemoration: "A hero has fallen! Commodore Stephen Decatur, one of the first officers of our Navy--the pride of his country--the gallant and noble-hearted gentleman is no more! Mourn, Columbia! For one of thy brightest Stars is set-a Son 'without fear and without reproach' -in the freshness of his fame--in the prime of his usefulness--has descended into the tomb."<sup>31</sup> The grief filled response was typical throughout a country that had lost its biggest hero since the Revolutionary War.

Stephen Decatur was by far the most popular hero from the Barbary War, but he was not the only one. Captain Bainbridge of the *Essex* saw both glory and misfortune. He experienced the former

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<sup>25</sup> "From Washington, November 17, 1804," *Evening Post*, November 22, 1804, 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, December 5, 1804, 2.

<sup>27</sup> "From the Philadelphia Register. Tribute of Respect to Our Gallant Navy,"

*Commercial Advertiser*, March 5, 1805, 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Evening Post*, November 13, 1805, 3.

<sup>29</sup> *American Citizen*, December 21, 1805, 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Enquirer*, "For the Enquirer," June 6, 1806, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *American Beacon*, March 27, 1820, 3.



while lying in Gibraltar Bay. An article from Genoa dated January 15, 1802 stated, "If we may give credit to letters from Tunis the Grand Seignior has given notice to all the Powers of Barbary that they must at a fixed period, release all the slaves in their possession, of whatsoever nation they may be."<sup>32</sup> Surprising the people of Gibraltar, Captain Bainbridge fortunately fell in with a ship off Cape de Gat, "with a Moorish ship and an American brig her prize which she had captured off Malaga."<sup>33</sup> The article continued to say that "Capt. Bainbridge immediately made prize of the cruiser and the next day retook the brig, which had escaped while he was securing the Moorish prisoners, with both of which he was proceeding to Gibraltar." An address from the President of the United States to the Senate and House of Representatives declared:

This conduct on the part of that power is without cause and without explanation. It is fortunate that Capt. Bainbridge fell in with and took the capturing vessel and her prize; and I have the satisfaction to inform you, that about the date of this transaction such a force would be arriving in the neighborhood of Gibraltar, both from the east and from the west, as leaves less to be feared, for our commerce from the suddenness of the aggression.<sup>34</sup>

Captain Bainbridge would soon be captured by the Barbary State of Tripoli while in command of the ill-fated frigate *Philadelphia*. The public was deeply moved by the crews capture. One person's response was, "I wish that \_\_\_\_\_ was in chains in Tripoli instead of Capt. Bainbridge, lieut. Osborne, and the other brave fellow who are in slavery there-- there was an ejaculation fervently made, a few days since, by an American tar, upon hearing of the capture, at our very bar, of the American ship *Two Friends*."<sup>35</sup> After the *Philadelphia's* crew was ransomed and the men returned home, a dinner was given in honor of Captain Bainbridge by the citizens of Washington. It was capped with the following toast: "May the powers of Barbary henceforward learn, as all Europe knew before, that the threat of chains to Americans only inflames to victory."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> "New-York, April 10," *American Mercury*, 15 April 1802.

<sup>33</sup> "Extract of a Letter Dated Gibraltar, Sept 1," *Federal Republican*, November 8, 1803.

<sup>34</sup> "New-York, November 9," *Connecticut Journal*, 17 November 1803.

<sup>35</sup> "From the Charleston Courier," *Washington Federalist*, 29 June 1805.

<sup>36</sup> "Washington City, September 25. Dinner to Captain Bainbridge Given by the Citizens of Washington," *Alexandria Advertiser*, 27 September 1805.

There are many more examples of the glorification of the heroes of the first Barbary War. There is an important point to be made about the way the public treated these men both during and after the Barbary wars. It seems that the American public wanted to personify themselves with these people to turn our nation into the victorious hero. Lawrence Peskin, author of *Captives and Countrymen* suggested that, "Americans now wished to see themselves as heroic figures in the mold of Stephen Decatur rather than as hapless victims of pirates."<sup>37</sup> This would explain much of the hype over these new national heroes.

When looking at public opinion from any time frame, it is necessary to see what influenced the people's decisions and from where they received their information. As seen above, most of the information and sentiments toward the Barbary Nations and the United States was gathered by either the political statements of the government or written in the newspapers. These were not the only sources of information about the Barbary Nations. Before the wars had started, captivity journals, letters, and narratives were already in circulation around the United States due to years of unbridled attacks on European vessels and their colonies. These only increased in number as more and more of the nation's citizens were captured and enslaved by the Barbary nations. The most notable of these early captivity journals was written by John Foss.

John Foss concentrated his work on his many sufferings at the hands of his Algerian captors. Much of his writing focuses on the severity and frequency of punishment for the captured Christian slaves. The common form of punishment was 150 to 200 Bastinadoes. This was inflicted by "laying the person upon their face, with his hands in irons behind him and his legs lashed together with a rope. One task master holds down his head while another his legs while two others inflict the punishment upon his breech, with sticks. After receiving one held in this manner, they lash his ankles to the pole, and two Turks lift the pole up, and hold it in such a manner, as brings the soles of his feet upwards and the remaining of the punishment he receives upon the soles of his feet." After this punishment, the men would have to go straight back to work with their wounds still exposed. The Bastinado was not the only severe punishment, in fact, the other punishments for the Christian slaves

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<sup>37</sup> Lawrence A. Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen: Barbary Slavery and the American Public, 1785-1816* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 214.

included: impalement upon an iron stick thrust up through his posterior, having ones head chopped off, castration, being cast off the walls of the city upon an iron hook, and nailed to the gallows by one hand and opposite foot. Of course these were the worst of the punishments and often floggings and random beatings were the everyday form of punishment.<sup>38</sup>

John Foss also described his captors: "The Turks are well built robust people, their complexions not unlike Americans, but their dress, and long beards, make them appear more like monsters, than human beings. The Cologlies are somewhat less in stature than the Turks, and are of a tawnier complexion. The Moors, Morescoes, are generally a tall thin, spare sort of people, and of a very dark complexion, much like the Indians of North America. The Arabs are of much darker complexion than the Moors being darker than Mulattoes."<sup>39</sup> This description is important because it shows the author's desire not to align his fate to those of African slaves in America. A reason for this may be because there were black slaves in the Barbary nations as well. Paul Baepler stated that, "On the northern coast of Africa circa 1800, blacks and whites could be sold into slavery."<sup>40</sup> One of these black slaves, Scipio Jackson, can be found in Foss's captivity narrative.<sup>41</sup> Race did not seem to be a crucial issue for the Barbary nations when it came to slavery. One interesting conclusion that can be made by his description of his captors; Foss chose to represent the hierarchy of his nation's standards and apply them to his present situation.

The most popular of the Barbary captive narratives came from the "History of the Captivity and Suffering of Mrs. Maria Martin," published around 1807 to about 1818. Though Western women were enslaved by the Barbary states just like men, this is the only western woman's narrative that has survived. Her tale would have captured the imaginations and hearts of both the women and men of the United States.<sup>42</sup> Her story started with her capture, stating that "the barbarians were no sooner on board, than they began their favorite work, cutting, maiming and literally butchering, all they found on

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<sup>38</sup>Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*, 82-83.

<sup>39</sup>Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*, 92.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Zacks, *The Pirate Coast: Thomas Jefferson, the First Marines, and the Secret Mission of 1805* (New York: Hyperion, 2005), 4.

<sup>41</sup>Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*, 82.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 147.

deck."<sup>43</sup> Her tone described her attackers as barbarian Muslims, and she did not emphasize their piratical activities. She further noted that they labeled her as a "Chefti Oji," which means "Christian bitch."<sup>44</sup> This woman seemed to be a pious person, so her emphasis on the barbaric attitudes of her Muslim capturers may be indicative of her strong beliefs. There were a couple of strong points from these narratives that would have influenced the public opinion of the Barbary nations. The main emphasis in both Foss's and Martin's accounts of their captivity were on Muslim and Christian differential treatment of their slaves. They strongly imply that Muslims hate Christians and that is the reason these people were made slaves. Their "barbaric" captors always referred to them as Christian dogs. Race was established not to have been a big factor in these narratives, although abolitionists at home were making these correlations. Peskin made this observation in his book: "Not everyone who wrote about Algiers shared this concern. Most notably, none of the captives who wrote letters home from Algiers compared their situation to that of Africans in America."<sup>45</sup> They, more often than not, compared the Barbary nations to the 'savage' Native Americans and emphasized that particular struggle, not slavery in the United States. A final point taken from these narratives was the numerous descriptions of the different types of torture and punishment that would have fed negative opinion of the Barbary nations to the United States. The coverage of the material made strong references to the cruel and barbaric torture, and cast Muslims as the devil's own henchmen. The Barbary states were seen as an evil enemy whose image of villainy grew as the war progressed.

Newspapers and captivity narratives were not the only way of expressing public opinion. Often fictional narratives and poetry were a direct outlet of the sentiments of the people. All of the following highlight the captivity of their Christian and citizen brethren, and also demonstrate a call to action against the Barbary Nation. One of these fictional narratives came from Royall Tyler who wrote *The Algerian Captive* (1797), which depicted the horrors of slavery.<sup>46</sup> Another man, David Humphrey, wrote poetry highlighting the Algerian captives or the call to arms to fight off these injustices. One such is "On the Happiness of America" (1786), with the following verses:

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<sup>43</sup> Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*, 82.

<sup>44</sup> Baepler, *White Slaves, African Masters*, 82.

<sup>45</sup> Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, 72.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

How long shall widows weep their sons in vain,  
 the prop of years in slav'ry's iron chains?  
 How long, the love-sick maid, unheeded,  
 rove the sounding shore and call her absent love;  
 and seem to see him in each coming sail?<sup>47</sup>

Francis Scot Key also paid homage to the men who fought against the Barbary powers. One of the verses of his early work honors America's Barbary heroes. The poem contains the words, "the star-spangled flag" and has the same metric composition that would later become "The Star Spangled Banner." The poem was set to the same tune, *To Anacreon in Heaven*, as our National Anthem.

In conflict resistless, each toil they endur'd  
 their foes shrunk dismay'd from the war's desolation:  
 And pale beam'd the Crescent, its splendor obscur'd  
 By the light of the star-spangled flag of our nation,  
 Were each flaming star  
 Gleam'd a meteor of war  
 And the turban'd head bowed to the terrible glare,  
 Now mixed with the olive, the laurel shall wave,  
 And form a bright wreath for the brows of the brave.<sup>48</sup>

There are many reasons why the new republics view of the war was so dynamic and crucial for the time. A careful examination of public attitudes about the Barbary Nations reveals a troubling progression. While at first the American public seemed to be mostly concerned with the piracy of North African states, as the number of Americans in captivity grew, attitudes started to change.

When Americans learned the truth about how captured sailors were pressed into slavery, coerced to convert to Islam, and were cruelly treated, the Barbary states turned from "piratical nations" into "Muslim barbarians" in the public eye. This paper does not presume to say that the Barbary wars were the only reason that the newly formed nation viewed Muslims as barbarians. Christendom had held such views since at least the Middle Ages. The tensions between Christian and Muslim territories only increased after the Crusades. The citizens of the new republic tended to hold the same prejudices towards the

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<sup>47</sup> Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, 72.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Wheelan, *Jefferson's War: America's First War on Terror 1801-1805*, (New York:Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), 195-6.

Muslim world as their European cousins. As recent decades have shown, this prejudice can return to prominence on short notice.

These sentiments helped call the nation to arms against the Barbary states. The peace between the Barbary Nations after the first war concluded did not last long. A continued sense of unease and hostility started to take hold in both North African and American minds. Shortly after the War of 1812, the United States, along with some European nations took up arms yet again with the Barbary Nations. This conflict was called the second Barbary War or the Algerian War. Continued hostility and correlations with military action are the legacy brought forth from these early interactions with the Barbary states. Many scholars have deemed the Barbary Wars as the first war on terror and that these early actions show that America's interest has always been in the Middle East. The general public still views these middle eastern people as "barbarians" and one need only look at the evening news to find evidence of this which was brought on by years of strife.

Having massive coverage of the war's activities and the follow up of the national heroes in the newspapers and the captivity journals show that these items were published for a couple of reasons. First, the public was naturally curious about how the nation would handle its first test of power after the Revolutionary War. Also this was the first coverage of the newly formed United States Navy in action and all hoped to see them succeed. The second reason was that it was the fastest, easiest, and most believable form of propaganda. The government and the papers wanted to keep the American morale up, so naturally the narratives and coverage of the war would be in favor of gaining support for the military. The one exception to this was the public shame of the loss of the frigate *Philadelphia*. Even with this sentiment though, the push towards action prevailed.

One positive outcome of this War was an exchange of cultural ideas between east and west. Peskin believed that "Perhaps it is enough to conclude that events in North Africa had an extraordinary impact on the inhabitants of the new American republic, and globalization or the increasing contact between world cultures was an important phenomenon then as well as now."<sup>49</sup> This one piece of good news does not overshadow the lasting impact of hostility and prejudice between the United States and the Barbary nations. The

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<sup>49</sup>Peskin, *Captives and Countrymen*, 212.

end result is that piracy and Muslim attacks have once again reared their nasty heads in contemporary days. One look at the Somalia Pirates on the evening news show that these sentiments have not lost their hold on the American public. The United States' policy is still to counteract these actions with military force. If these people continue their piratical ways, they may become the newest description of "barbaric."

In conclusion, the public opinion of the United States on the war with the Barbary nations was a united front against their enemy. Americans viewed the Barbary nations at first as little more than greedy pirates, but as the war progressed, the emphasis switched to Muslim barbarians who enslaved Christians while practicing horrendous tortures. The heroes of the war were hyperbolically over glorified, while their enemies epitomized evil. Islamophobic propaganda proved popular and effective for mobilizing public sentiment in Jefferson's time, and remains surprisingly so today.

## Catholic Nuns in the Civil War

Karen Powers

In an era where women were denied any real careers in life except marriage and motherhood, “A prime attraction of convents was a way of life which gave women, who would otherwise have had no such possibilities, access to effect change, a prominent and active role—in short, a vocation in the world. Sisterhood was seen as a great undertaking in the service of an active and enthusiastic faith.”<sup>1</sup> These Catholic sisterhoods gave American girls an “alternative to marriage and motherhood, an opportunity for lifelong meaningful work, and a way to live out their spiritual ideals with an all female community that shared similar goals and values.”<sup>2</sup> Through their travels, their administrative skills, their nursing skills, and their adaptability to any situation, they might have been “sheltered from the world,” but these women were definitely in the public sphere.<sup>3</sup>

Twelve years after taking her final vows to become a nun, Sister Stephana Warde had been transferred from the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to the Mercy Convent in Baltimore, Maryland. From there, she and five other nuns were sent to Vicksburg, Mississippi, to establish a school for young ladies from the finer families in the city. Shortly thereafter, the Civil War broke out and she and her fellow sisters traveled all over the state of Mississippi, tending to Confederate soldiers. When the sisters and soldiers were captured by Union troops, Sister Stephana was taken away as a prisoner of war. In 1865, she made her way back to the Mother House in Pittsburgh, her habit in ruins, and without a veil. After receiving a few weeks rest and good food, she was given a new habit and made her way to Washington, D.C., where Sister Stephana spent the rest of the war working at one of the many military hospitals

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<sup>1</sup> John J. Fialka, *Sisters: Catholic Nuns and the Making of America*, (New York: St. Martin's Press), 61.

<sup>2</sup> Carole Coburn and Martha Smith, *Spirited Lives: How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and American Life 1836-1920*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 66.

<sup>3</sup> Fialka, *Sisters*, 220.



in the capital. According to the annals of the convent in Pittsburgh, no actual quotes from her were recorded; just the story of her imprisonment and reinstatement into the community. Sister simply disappears and we hear no more about her. Thus it was with many of the stories of the nuns who worked as nurses in the Civil War.

For a long time after the war, there was very little written about the nuns in service on either side of the Civil War. Then in 1912, the Ladies of the Ancient Order of Hibernians decided to take it upon themselves to lobby for a monument called Nuns of the Battlefield to be erected in Washington, D.C. This became a reality in 1924. From this came the book, *Nuns of the Battlefield* by Ellen Ryan Jolly. For many years this book and one other by George Barton, *Angels of the Battlefield*, published in 1898, were the only sources available about the services of these brave women.

There were over six hundred Sister-nurses from twelve orders and twenty-two communities across this country that took some part in that terrible conflict. These extraordinary women did so much for soldiers on both sides and yet very little has been written about them. They kept very few records. Some of the orders kept a diary that they called annals. These diaries contained the writings of several nuns. This was not done on any regular basis, but seemed to be filled as the time became available. Unlike an ordinary diary, these contained very little of a personal nature, but much that had to do with the patients, the grace of our Lord, kindnesses from good Christian lay people, and conversions to the Church. The entries were dated by the Saint's day it happened to be. In his book, *Angels of the Battlefield*, George Barton tells us, "The Sisters do not have reunions or camp-fires to keep alive the memories of the bloodiest event in our history, but their war stories are as heroic as any and far more edifying than many veterans tell."<sup>4</sup> As I progressed with my research, I discovered why the nuns kept such sparse historical records. These women were not just doing this service for the country because of their excellent nursing and administrative skills and their sense of

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4 George Barton, *Angels of the Battlefield*, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Catholic Art Publishing Company, 1898).

patriotism. Instead, this experience gave them a chance to put into actual practice what their sacred vows demanded of them, and to practice the real reason they had become nuns in the first place. These women who responded to this "call from God entered into a female world of ritual, commitment, and service."<sup>5</sup> They were asked to "become dead to the world" when they took their final vows and to become brides of Christ, living a life of chastity, poverty, and obedience.<sup>6</sup> First and foremost they had a duty to their fellow man and especially their fellow Catholics. In order to practice the seven Corporal Works of Mercy, and live up to their vows, they deemed it a privilege to sacrifice their lives for the sick and suffering.

It is hard for twenty-first century Americans to realize that the United States was considered, by Rome, to be a foreign mission field until the year 1908. These nuns were originally sent to the United States to be a religious refuge for the poor and destitute immigrants from their own countries. Only secondary were their hospitals, schools and social programs, or their work in the war. Regardless of their original mission, Catholic nuns had a significant impact on medical care during the Civil War.

**Nursing in America During the Civil War.** In the nineteenth century, nursing was not yet looked upon as a worthy profession, and there was no thought given to preparing and training people. There were no professional nursing schools in the United States at that time. This did not happen until 1871, under the auspices of the Catholic hospital system. The sick were usually cared for within the family home by mothers, sisters, and wives. However, when there were epidemics like cholera, measles, or smallpox, the only people who were actually doing any kind of nursing for these diseases in established hospitals were the nuns in Catholic hospitals. Full time service in hospitals was not considered respectable work for a woman. At that time there was "nowhere in the United States that had a strong background, tradition or experience in caring for patients

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<sup>5</sup> Coburn and Smith, *Spirited Lives*, 66.

<sup>6</sup> Sister Mary Denis Maher, *To Bind Up The Wounds: Catholic Sisters During the Civil War*, (New York and London: Greenwood Press, 1989), 9.

among women.”<sup>7</sup> This was especially true in the South. The type of “person who usually cared for the ailing and diseased in lay institutions ranged from ones with little or no experience in the best of them to the meanest sort of character that could be secured in the lowest caliber of hospital.”<sup>8</sup> Even though “Catholic hospitals were equipped with what modern surgery and medicine would call primitive methods, it is a glorious fact that they were blessed with conscientious nurses and ever maintained standards of sanitation and cleanliness.”<sup>9</sup> From 1823 to 1861, there were twenty-eight Catholic hospitals in the United States, all run by nursing sisters.

For over thirty-five years, the Catholic Sisterhood had “volunteered their services...the fear of contagion never phased or deterred them...The terrors of the battlefield were to be no exception.”<sup>10</sup> These holy women saw in the sick, the wounded and the dying, whether “Blue or Gray, regardless of race or color, an opportunity of assisting one of the least of Christ’s brethren...alleviation of the conditions of the suffering victims of war gave the charitable Sisters an opportunity of again conforming their lives to the ideals uppermost in the minds of their founders; the care of the suffering poor and neglected sick.”<sup>11</sup>

Medical historian, Robin O’Conner, in his book, *American Hospitals: The First 200 Years*, tells us “that in contrast to lay nurses, the Catholic sisterhoods trained their own members well, creating educated and disciplined nurses.”<sup>12</sup> What this “prevailing opinion overlooked though, was that the sisters brought something to the battlefields that were rare: more nursing experience than the armies

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7 Reverend William J. Cavanah, “The Hospital Activities of the Sister Nurses During the Civil War and Their Influence on the Catholic Hospitalization Movement up to 1875,” a dissertation submitted to the faculty of Philosophy of the Catholic University of America in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts, 1931, 2.

8 Ibid.

9 Cavanah, “The Hospital Activities of the Sister Nurses During the Civil War,” 4.

10 Ibid., 8.

11 Maher, *To Bind Up The Wounds*, 9.

12 Fialka, *Sisters*, 61.

had."<sup>13</sup> When Florence Nightingale "went to the Crimean Peninsula in 1853, twenty-four of her thirty-eight nurses were from Anglican and Roman Catholic religious orders."<sup>14</sup> British doctors were "loud and emphatic" in their praise for the Catholic Sister-nurses.<sup>15</sup> Unlike their British cousins, the United States had no "real background, tradition, or experience in caring for patients among women."<sup>16</sup> Most of the nursing sisters had had valuable hands-on training in Europe in the nineteenth century; Europe was always at war with some country and these battles gave the sisters valuable hands-on training in battlefield medicine. On the other hand, regardless of their nationalities, nuns came from a long tradition "in which care of the sick was done from a religious motivation."<sup>17</sup> Their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience enabled the sisters to be able to respond quickly to requests from their bishops, and the governments of both sides. They were able to move to a variety of locations and insure top rated nursing wherever they went. The vow "of obedience meant being willing to mobilize oneself in the community to respond to the needs of others as articulated through the requests of legitimate religious authority."<sup>18</sup> The vow of poverty "was expressed by a simple life style, the sharing of goods in common hardships, and the vow of chastity implied an attitude of inclusiveness of all people in the sisters' love and service."<sup>19</sup> The Sisters of Mercy went further. Their founder, Catherine McAuley, insisted on adding another vow. It was called The Mercy Rule and was "one of the first ever approved by the Church to give the Sisters the freedom to be wherever the poor, the sick, and the uneducated needed help."<sup>20</sup> The Orders that had European origins, like the Sisters of Mercy from Ireland and the Sisters of Charity from France, "already had rules in the constitutions that contained sections that served as practical guides to nursing care...their constitutions

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13 Maher, *To Bind Up The Wounds*, 9.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*, 10.

17 *Ibid.*, 11.

18 *Ibid.*

19 Sister Mary Paulinus, *A Primary Source, Angels of Mercy: An Eyewitness Account of Civil War and Yellow Fever by a Sister of Mercy*, (Baltimore, Maryland: Cathedral Foundation Press, 1969), 1.

20 Maher, *To Bind Up The Wounds*, 12.

clearly spelled out how the sick were to be regarded and treated, and above all how the dying should be prepared for death."<sup>21</sup> Seeing to it that patients were well fed, kept clean and linens changed regularly were just little things that were second nature to the Sisters. These simple acts were extremely important for the health and recovery of the patients. Considering the condition of American nursing in the nineteenth century and the availability of decent nursing facilities for lay nurses, it was no wonder that the doctors of that era wanted the nuns' help. And it was a cold hard fact that at the outbreak of the Civil War, the sisters offered both sides the only source of trained nurses. The "sisters were uniquely positioned by their traditions, their experiences, and their community constitutions to provide nursing care when the Civil War broke out."<sup>22</sup>

The Sisters worked very closely with the United States Sanitary Commission, which was in charge of all the military hospitals for the Union. Mary Livermore, a sanitary worker and later woman's rights activist says in her autobiography,

"...I can never forget my experiences during the War of the Rebellion. Never did I meet these Catholic sisters in hospitals, on transports, or hospital steamers, without observing their devotion, faithfulness, and unobtrusiveness. They gave themselves no airs of superiority or holiness, shirked no duty, sought no easy place and bred no mischief. Sick and wounded men watched for their entrance into the wards at morning and looked a regretful farewell when they departed at night. They broke down in exhaustion from overwork; they succumbed to the fatal prison-fever, which our exchanged prisoners' brought from the fearful pens of the South. The world has known no nobler and no more heroic women than those found in the ranks of the Catholic Sisterhoods."<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to note that after her experiences with the Sisters, Livermore attempted to start a nursing order, in collaboration with Dorothea Dix, made up of Protestant women who would devote themselves to the same kind of nursing. They both felt that if the

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21 Ibid., 13.

22 Ibid.

23 Maher, *To Bind Up The Wounds*, 13.

Catholics could offer such nurses surely the Protestant women could. The project never got off the ground.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, the Union Army had only one military hospital and that was in Leavenworth, Kansas. Their nurses were male recruits with no medical experience at all. The “Catholic sisters ran more than twenty, many of them started in converted barns, hotels, and warehouses—exactly what the Army was confronting in 1862, when it was saddled with more than two hundred hospitals and few trained nurses.”<sup>24</sup> The nursing situation in the South was much worse. They were really starting from scratch with a lot less money and supplies. And, they were stymied by their nineteenth century belief in the idea of separate spheres.

**Nuns and the Cult of Domesticity, Separate Spheres, and the Cult of True Womanhood.** In the South, even more so than in the North, this ideal of womanhood presented a whole host of problems for the nursing of their sick and wounded. The belief in those days was “that women could not mentally conceive of the brutality of war, let alone the stark reality of the bloody battlefield.”<sup>25</sup> In actuality, many of their women were seeing the carnage first hand, but still had to carry the additional “burden of the slander that they were ladies of easy virtue.”<sup>26</sup> Many of the lay nurses from both sides could not continue, but the “nuns of both sided stuck it out for the duration. The distinctive habits they wore and their nursing and organizational skill protected them from the slander of easy virtue.”<sup>27</sup> The Union paid their nurses forty cents a day, and the South nothing. It could certainly never be said that loyal Union or Confederate women were in it for the money.

In an article written for *United States Catholic Historian*, entitled, “Maternity of the Spirit: Nuns and Domesticity in Antebellum America,” author Joseph Mannard concluded that “if nuns helped pioneer new variations on traditional roles and greater participation

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24 Fialka, *Sisters*, 63.

25 Fialka, *Sisters*, 63.

26 *Ibid.*, 64

27 Maher, *To Bind Up The Wounds*, 14.

for women beyond the immediate family circle, the effect was only to broaden the meaning of the female sphere without questioning the validity of that concept. Nuns by practicing "maternity of the spirit," fulfilled the functions of domesticity and conformed to its assumptions about female nature."<sup>28</sup> Plus these women "possessed the qualities of piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity and were dedicated to a life of service to others. These were qualities that were seen as a feminine ideal by male and female alike."<sup>29</sup> The communities the sisters lived in, and the Orders they belonged to had their own cult of true womanhood. In both Catholic and Protestant households a woman's sphere centered on her position as "perpetuator of the race and nucleus of the family."<sup>30</sup> To Catholics these women were the exception to the socially expected and approved state of marriage and motherhood. They were "brides of Christ."

Their children were the children they taught in their schools. For over forty years, "parochial schools were identified with the sisters who lived in the local convent, taught in the classrooms furnished by the parish...to many of the local citizens, the schools in the Catholic parishes were referred to as the sister's schools."<sup>31</sup> To nineteenth century American Catholics, their outlook on the cult of true womanhood was only a little different from their Protestant neighbor. Their tradition "held that such a pattern was designed by God, exemplified, and revealed by a Pauline (Papal) interpretation of Scripture and natural law."<sup>32</sup> In Catholic homes, it was an honor to have a child that had a vocation; whether it was a priest or a nun. However, the real value of these women was the special opportunities they had which were unavailable to other nineteenth century women.

**The Sisters of Mercy and Their Duties in and Around Washington, D.C.** Seven Sisters of Mercy came to the United States from Ireland on the feast day of St. Thomas the Apostle on

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28 Ibid., 15.

29 Ibid.

30 Maher, *To Bind Up The Wounds*, 16.

31 Coburn and Smith, *Spirited Lives*, 128.

32 Fialka, *Sisters*, 129.

December 21, 1843 and established the first Convent of Mercy in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Their first Mother Superior was Mother Xavier Ward, aunt to the notable Sister Stephana. They had been requested by the first Bishop of Pittsburgh, the Right Reverend Michael O'Conner D.D. to come and establish schools, social programs, and hospitals for the Irish immigrants in his city. By 1847, just three years after their arrival, they established Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh. All this was done by just seven sisters from Ireland. Included in this small number were two postulants. Miss Margaret O'Brian, a postulant from the original seven, became the Reverend Mother Mary Agatha O'Brian founder of the Chicago Community, who during the Civil War contributed her own sisters to the cause.

Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton requested the Bishop of Pittsburgh, to send some Sisters of Mercy to Washington, D.C. to set up and run a new Army Hospital. So on November 26, 1862, a contingent of Mercies set off for Washington. In addition to a priest, whose salary would be paid for by the government, the Sisters of Mercy laid down some ground rules. These ground rules were the same for all the Orders that ended up nursing in Washington.

- In the first place, no lady volunteers were to be associated with the Sisters in their duties as such an association would be rather an encumbrance than a help.

- That the Sisters should have the entire charge of the hospitals and ambulances.

- That the government pay the traveling expenses of the Sisters and furnish them board and other necessities during the war. Clothing also, in case the war should be protracted.

- Everything necessary for the lodging and nursing of the wounded and sick will be supplied to them without putting them to expense; they will give their services gratuitously.

- So far as circumstances well allow, they shall have every facility for attending to their religious devotional services.

- Provisions, medicines, and utensils supplied for the use of the Sisters and the patients.<sup>33</sup>

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33 Paulinus, *A Primary Source*, 1.



On December 8, 1862, the Sisters opened the doors of the Stanton Military Hospital to one hundred and thirty patients. Soon after, Washington became one vast hospital. President and Mrs. Lincoln made it a habit to visit the military hospitals regularly, but the Stanton was one of their favorites. The President would often come late at night, and just walk the wards, talking and comforting any soldiers that still might be awake. Mrs. Lincoln sent over fresh flowers from the White House gardens and treats from the White House kitchens. In a book entitled *Recollections of Abraham Lincoln*, the President says,

Of all the forms of charity and benevolence seen in the crowded wards of the hospitals, those of some Catholic Sisters were among the most efficient. I never knew whence they came or what the name of their order was...As they went from cot to cot, the medicines prescribed, administering the cooling, refreshing, strengthening draught as directed, they were veritable Angels of Mercy...their words suited ever sufferer...How often have I seen the hot forehead of the soldier grown cool as one of these Sisters bathed it...<sup>34</sup>

The Stanton Military Hospital was also the first of its kind to take care of the soldiers that were suffering from battle fatigue and other mental illnesses caused by the war. The Sisters of Mercy isolated these war-worn soldiers in a separate building and tenderly and bravely cared for them. Soon they were caring for soldiers from all the other military hospitals as well.

In Pittsburgh, the Union established the West Pennsylvania Military Hospital completely staffed and nursed by the Sisters of Mercy of Pittsburgh. This hospital was originally used by the government for the soldiers from Pennsylvania, but soon it became the hospital for "sick and disabled soldiers as were sufficiently recovered to bear the fatigue of transportation from Washington or other places, to make room for cases direct from the fields of battle."<sup>35</sup>

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34 Ellen Ryan Jolly, LL.D., *Angels of the Battlefield*, (Providence, Rhode Island: The Providence Visitors Press, 1927), 12.

35 *Ibid.*, 18.

This freed up the Stanton and the other hospitals in Washington for the more severe cases that involved surgery. The West Penn, as it was called, soon became more than just a hospital for recovering patients. Sometimes, there would be hundreds of emergency surgical cases in one frightful day, with the sisters' duties going on into the wee hours of the morning and then starting all over again the next day.

In the summer of 1912, it was the privilege of a few representatives of the Ladies Auxilliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians to meet in the "Land of Mary" at Mount Saint Agnes Convent, Mount Washington, which was a suburb of Baltimore."At that time (1912) there were four older nuns still alive who served in the Civil War. By the time of the monument's unveiling, all but one of the Mercies was dead. Jolly faithfully recorded their memories. It was during this interview that the sisters showed the visitors some boxes and files that contained several pieces of memorabilia. One of these was a letter from Abraham Lincoln. In another of the military hospitals in Washington, the Douglas, the sister in charge of feeding the soldiers, encountered a problem with one of the guards of the hospital larder. Provisions were short and he refused to let the Sister and her companion in to get food and supplies for the patients. She replied that in that case she would see the President herself. Within an hour, Sister returned with a letter from President Lincoln that said,

To Whom It May Concern,

On application of the Sisters of Mercy in charge of the Military Hospitals in Washington, furnish such provisions as they desire to purchase, and charge same to the War Department.

Abraham Lincoln<sup>36</sup>

As the ladies were shown the contents of the boxes and files, they were carefully writing and "accumulating reliable statistics necessary to prove to the War Department at Washington the justice

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<sup>36</sup> Jolly, *Angels of the Battlefield*, 18.

of the Hibernian appeal to the United States Government for official recognition, however belated, to the Sister's hospital service in the Civil War."<sup>37</sup> Among the files were military discharge papers and pension papers. These papers went a long way in helping to authenticate the sisters' military service. None of the sisters from any of the communities or Orders ever applied for a pension, but the point was that they could have because they were veterans. Almost as an afterthought, one more piece of memorabilia was shown: a bronze medal resting in an exquisitely carved box of Irish Oak that also contained the veteran's tiny faded American flag pin. This medal had been presented to Sister Mary Anastasia Quinn who died June 30, 1910. Here in Jolly's book, she quotes from a newspaper article in the Baltimore Catholic Sun from May 21, 1910, that was also in the box with the medal.

"...in presenting this medal, General King said, 'Sister Anastasia, you were one of those noble women sent of God as ministering angels to alleviate the sufferings of the Union soldier and nurse him back to health, to soothe the dying hero and make smooth his pathway to the grace, we are here as representatives of the Grand Army of the Republic to present to you this small token of our gratitude for services you rendered...services rendered under most trying circumstances, when these noble women abandoned all thought of self and labored to aid the sick and wounded, to sooth the last hours of many a dying comrade. We feel that you were one of us; that your sacrifices were as great as ours."<sup>38</sup>

Exactly ten days later, Sister Anastasia died and the veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic of the Potomac "paid their visit of reverence to Sister's coffin, where they placed a wreath."<sup>39</sup> I was never able to find out if there were any other nuns who were given this medal, although there are records of lay nurses that received them. This medal went a long way to help the cause for the monument. It is interesting to note that of the twenty Sisters of Mercy who served in and around Washington, D.C. during the war,

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Jolly, *Angels*, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 22.

seventeen of them were from Ireland, including Sister Mary Anastasia Quinn.

In 1924, Ellen Ryan Jolly interviewed the only remaining Sister of Mercy in Pittsburgh who had survived the war, Sister Mary Madeline O'Donnell. As dutifully recorded by Ellen Ryan Jolly, in Sister Madeline's own words,

"...Obedience kept me at that time among a large group of my Sisters who nursed the soldiers in the West Penn Hospital in Pittsburgh, in which every available spot, including the corridors, was occupied by soldiers. In 1863, a second large corps of Sister-nurses was engaged in making extraordinary efforts for the sad homecoming of many of Pittsburgh's own, among them whom, there was a large percentage of the Sisters' boys; former pupils in the parochial schools. During this particular period the scourge of the Civil War was cutting deeper wounds into the hearts of all the people. The horrors of combat were constantly increasing and plans were made, which almost overnight, the hillsides of Pittsburgh were dotted with hundreds of tents, serving as emergency stations. There, canvas hospitals dotted the hills as sheep dot the knolls while they graze. My second appointment was to this city of tents which sheltered many thousands of out countrymen who had been brought to Pittsburgh from battlefields, encampments and prisons."<sup>40</sup>

**The Sisters of Mercy in Vicksburg, Mississippi.** In late December of 1860, seven Sisters of Mercy went to Vicksburg, Mississippi, from Baltimore, Maryland to open a girls school. Less than five months later they and the entire population of Vicksburg were under Union bombardment. The Naval bombardment lasted from May 19, 1862, until July 24, 1862. Federal gunboats regularly shelled the city during the period of February second until May 1863. The Maryland annals tell us, "The hardships that this group of Sisters endured cannot be estimated this side of eternity."<sup>41</sup> Sick and wounded soldiers were lying scattered around town without shelter and or help. The sisters gave up their convent and school for use as a hospital. As it was, the convent and school had already come under

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40 Jolly, *Angels*, 23.

41 Paulinus, *A Primary Source*, 48.

fire. Soon it became evident that the number of wounded and sick was just too much for the convent and school to handle. Because of the fear that the city would be taken by the Union, the hospital was moved all over the state. Sisters rode in boxcars with the wounded or in wagons with them. First they moved the hospital to Mississippi Springs, thirty miles from Vicksburg. This involved moving staff and soldiers in boxcars and by wagon. By the time they had settled in Mississippi Springs, they had 400 soldiers. Once again they had to move on because the Union was getting closer. This time they made it to Oxford, which was the home of the University of Mississippi, and closed to the rail lines. They nursed about a thousand sick and wounded from the battles of Shiloh and Corinth. Food was in short supply and the annals talk about eating "our cornbread without salt, and drank our sage tea, or sweet potato coffee."<sup>42</sup> After about six months, they were on the move again. This time "we were warned to prepare in haste for flight, as the Federals were momentarily expected."<sup>43</sup> All in all they evacuated 940 patients. The same day as they left, the Federals overtook Oxford. They arrived at Canton, Mississippi the next night. From there they went to Jackson, took over a hotel that had originally been used by the rich for country vacations. It had been so looted that there was little furniture left. But, once again, the sisters took charge and made the best of the bad situation they were handed. Jackson fell to Grant and that seems to be where Sister Stephana Wards was captured. Finally, after three years absence, the sisters made their way back to Vicksburg, to take up their teaching duties where they had left off.

**Conclusion.** It is important to remember that there were 600 Sister-nurses who participated in the Civil War. They did not just do their nursing in Washington, or safely behind the front lines. They were in the thick of the action sometimes working alone without benefit of doctors. They "nursed soldiers in camps, barns, and abandoned rail way stations, and from the decks of hospital boats. They worked without medicine, supplies, food and even shoes."<sup>44</sup>

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42 Paulinus, Angels of Mercy, 49.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

Father Leray, chaplain for the Sisters at Vicksburg, once made them shoes out of rabbit fur.

A Union Army delegation arrived at the door of the Sisters of Mercy Convent in Columbus, Georgia with a stack of documents. They were oaths of allegiance to the Union that every nun was supposed to sign. "And thus," one of the nuns later said in the annals of the convent, "we, who had never been rebels, were reconstructed."<sup>45</sup>

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45 Fialka, *Sisters*, 69.

## **The Nurse, The Soldier, The Spy: Three Women of the American Civil War and the Primary Sources They Left Behind**

Jillian Overstake

A portrait shows a sturdy-framed soldier with a dark Union jacket and turned-out toes in large boots holding a gun. Completing the uniform are baggy pants indicating shortness and lack of proper tailoring. A flat-topped hat typical of a Civil War soldier rests over slightly protruding ears. Small eyes below the hat's brim are light, flanking a distinctive Roman nose. The mouth is down-turned, crooked, and hugged by the shading of handsome cheek bones. A glance at this photo would not reveal anything out of the ordinary. But with further examination this soldier, Private Lyons Wakeman, in personal letters to family members, is revealed to be a woman.

A closer look reveals a feminine shape - a large bosom held tightly by gold buttons, but the waist of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman is still visible. The cheek bones become feminine, the eyes softer. Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, along with thousands of other young Americans, lost her life during the Civil War. The only difference was her gender.

Women in the Civil War fought alongside their husbands, brothers, and betrothed. They tended the wounds of strangers and friends and spied on the enemy with unprecedented secrecy. Their role in the Civil War was defined and strong. Many Americans are oblivious to the fact that women were active participants in the Civil War, in secrecy as well as in visible action in the roles of soldiers, nurses, and spies. The fact that most of them did their duties in secret makes them endearing patriots in our country, regardless of which side they fought. Sarah Rosetta Wakeman fought as Pvt. Lyons Wakeman for the Union army. Belle Boyd was a self-made spy for the Confederates. Cornelia Hancock nursed the brutal wounds of battle. These three women represent a fraction of the women involved in the Civil War, but their personally documented accounts are what makes them unique. These three women were chosen for this paper because they each provided detailed primary information about their lives during the war itself, be it through letters as with Hancock and

Wakeman, or a memoir in Boyd's case. Wakeman's letters are the only known in existence to highlight a woman soldier's time while enlisted.

Life for these women was often short or scarred. But their patriotism and dedication should not be forgotten in the history of this war. It is important to remember who they were and what they did. This is made easier by Wakeman, who sent letters about her time as a soldier to her family. These letters were preserved in her relative's attic for over a century. During the Civil War, the government did not censor letters and this enabled Wakeman and others to write about their experiences with no hesitation. Cornelia Hancock wrote letters as well, but ordered a bundle of them to be burned on her return from war. Hancock's letters are strikingly different from those of Wakeman's, whose lack of education is quite clear in her erratic spellings, lack of punctuation, and confusing sentence structures. It is charming as well as enlightening to note the differences. Wakeman's letters are no less valuable because of their grammatical errors. In fact, they add to her character and give a contextual background to the kind of education available to women in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

While letters served as important documents, one woman involved with the war wrote a memoir, proving equally as valuable. Belle Boyd wrote her memoirs shortly after the war ended. It was printed in 1865 in New York and was followed by a tour around the country in which Boyd spoke to veterans and interested groups. She billed herself as "Cleopatra of the Secession" and sizable crowds attended her events. She was brave enough to speak of her multiple arrests and her time in prison as well.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cornelia Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse: Cornelia Hancock, 1863-1865*. Edited by Henrietta Stratton Jaquette. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xx; Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, alias Private Lyons Wakeman 153<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, New York State Volunteers*. Edited by Lauren Cook Burgess. (Pasadena, Maryland: The Minerva Center, 1994), xi.

<sup>2</sup> Larry Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War: Extraordinary Stories of Soldiers, Spies,*



It is important to understand why these women were unique to their time. Women in the nineteenth century were considered the lesser sex. Strangely, it was seen as shameful for a woman to don men's clothing and do men's work. It was not socially acceptable for a woman to do hard labor, even though they maintained their own households and helped with agricultural endeavors. Women were expected to be dignified creatures, dependent on men to live their every day lives.

Union records show around 5,600 women called themselves nurses during the Civil War. Although history will never know the exact number of women who fought as soldiers, it is estimated that four to seven hundred put on a man's uniform for both sides of the conflict. It is also unknown how many female spies were active in the war, but a few dozen are estimated. The impact of the actions of women as a whole on the war may never be known, but it is clear that they were not idle citizens. However, women of the nineteenth century were not intended for these roles.<sup>3</sup>

The typical woman of the Civil War era was in charge of running her household, if she was lucky enough to be married. Poor women worked as laundresses, seamstresses, or in the fields of their fathers, as did Wakeman before she joined the army. Middle class women were nurses, like Hancock, or midwives and mill workers. The upper class, particularly in the South, like Belle Boyd, had plantations to help run. They controlled the workings of the household and took care of slaves and children.

The three women in which this paper focuses are different for several reasons. First, they were literate. Secondly, they were active in an event full of political and other "manly" endeavors - something not encouraged for women of their time. War was not seen as a place

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*Nurses, Doctors, Crusaders and Others.* (McFarland & Co., Inc., Publishers: Jefferson, North Carolina, and London, 2003), 92-96.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Gardner Holland, *Our Army Nurses: Stories from Women in the Civil War.* (Edinburgh Press: Roseville, Minnesota, 1998), ii; Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War*, 2.

for women. They were supposed to be in their homes, in the fields, in the factories, and out of sight. These women were different from their archetypes because they became active in the political and war activities of the time. The 1848 Seneca Falls convention that produced "The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" showed how women were treated before the war:

"The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice. He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men--both natives and foreigners. He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead. He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns."<sup>4</sup>

This is just a fraction of the charges the early feminist movement came up with. The full text reveals a harrowing reality: that women in the nineteenth century had few rights and fewer opportunities to help their country, even though help was desperately needed. With primary sources scarce, it is remarkable to find three women who have such detail in their stories. Wakeman, Hancock, and Boyd tell the story of women no longer under a man's thumb.

These three women, though their stories are different, served an important role in the Civil War. They reminded Americans that women were not just wives waiting for their husbands to return. They were active citizens with interests in the war and its outcomes, something women were not traditionally expected to do. While the major players were the men involved, without the involvement of women, the impact of the war on the nation might have been very different. It is key to understand why each of these women did what they did. Their bravery was incomparable, their patriotism blatant, and their lives extraordinary.

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<sup>4</sup> Wayne Franklin, ed., *American Voices, American Lives: A Documentary Reader*. (W.W. Norton & Co.: New York: 1997), 417-430.

**Cornelia Hancock: The Nurse.** Nurses before the Civil War were mostly men. When the war called for men to enlist it was as soldiers and not as nurses. The role of nursing changed to include women, and it was at that time that the duties of the female nurse changed. Nurses in the nineteenth century were often thought of as surrogate mothers: men relied on them for every-day care, company, and a woman's touch. The use of nurses as medically trained individuals is often overlooked. Usually it was the doctors who performed everything medically related. Most often nurses were used as entertainment for the wounded: they read to soldiers in their sick beds and comforted them but provided no real care. The soldiers dictated letters for them to write, the nurses sang to the soldiers, changed their bedding, and developed maternal relationships with them to make them feel at home. During the Civil War, however, the nurse's role changed because of the huge numbers of wounded and sick. As the number of injured grew, war nurses grew more important. They typically had three duties: to feed the men a proper diet, care for their physical needs, and help the soldier mentally and spiritually. Along with this, they were faced with brutal and disturbing daily responsibilities and charged with providing medical care they knew little about.<sup>5</sup>

Once it was clear that these women could actually provide care the soldiers desperately needed, their roles changed drastically. Cornelia Hancock, who was originally told at the age of twenty-three that she was too young to be a nurse, wrote letters to her family describing her time as a Civil War nurse. Hancock was an army nurse for the Second Corps Hospital at Gettysburg. She described her decision to go to war: "After my only brother and every male relative and friend...had gone to the War, I...came to the conclusion that I, too, would go and serve my country." Hancock's desire to serve was helped by her brother-in-law, Dr. Henry T. Child, who was a doctor in Philadelphia. He summoned her on July 5, 1863, just days after the Battle of Gettysburg. Dr. Child wanted Hancock to accompany him to the makeshift hospital.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse*, viii.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-6.

First, however, Hancock had to be inspected by Dorothea Dix, who was appointed Superintendent of Women Nurses in June 1861 and became one of the most famous nurses in the Civil War. Dix looked over the volunteers and had a specific requirement: "No young ladies should be sent at all." Therefore Hancock was denied on the spot. Dix thought it "indecorous for angels of mercy to appear otherwise than gray-haired and spectacled." Hancock was determined, however, and got on the train without permission, ignoring threats to be forcibly removed. When the car full of nurses arrived at Gettysburg, it was obvious she was needed. There were too many injured and not enough nurses. Her age was no longer an issue.<sup>7</sup>

Gettysburg was not an easy place to begin nursing. Every building in the small town had been converted into a makeshift hospital because of the huge number of wounded. Hancock got her first glimpse of war in a church where hundreds of injured men lay on boards covered in straw, the boards stretched over the high back of the pews so that they were almost eye-level with their caretakers. Most of their wounds had not been tended to. They were dying rapidly. Hancock's first task was to go from soldier to soldier with a pencil, paper, and stamps to write letters from the soldiers to their friends and families. Though she did not enjoy it, Hancock "penned the last messages of those who were soon to become the 'beloved dead.'"<sup>8</sup>

Hancock seemed to manage this depressing task well, but the morning sun brought a new horror: the stench of unburied dead. "At every step," she wrote in a letter home, "the air grew heavier and fouler, until it seemed to possess a palpable horrible density that could be seen and felt and cut with a knife." Hancock saw dead

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<sup>7</sup> Alden Whitman, ed., *American Reformers*. (H.W. Wilson Company: New York, 1985), 243; Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse*, 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse*, 5.

bodies in piles after one of the worst battles in American history. She and her fellow nurses were reassigned to the field hospital outside the town, closest to where the battle was fought. As the women made their way to lend what little help they could, Hancock noticed bodies strewn in their path. Men who were still alive yet shot in the head and considered a waste of hospital space were left to die in the fields in piles according to the severity of their wounds. The piles were created by the surgeons, whose job it was to determine who was worth saving. Even those who were deemed worthy of medical attention were thrown in a pile to wait. The beds were full, the surgeons backed up, and the wounded were sorted like dirty laundry.<sup>9</sup>

The surgeons were too busy to teach Hancock anything about nursing. Her lack of expertise was frustrating to her, and as she watched the surgeons she felt "helpless." No one paid attention to the women in her task force who were scattered among different groups of dying soldiers. They barely had time to talk amongst themselves. No one gave them orders or answered questions. Hancock took it upon herself to serve the men bits of bread with jelly she had found and "milk punches" after locating a truck filled with condensed milk and alcohol. Seeing the men eat brought her happiness: "I had the joy of seeing every morsel swallowed greedily by those whom I had prayed day and night...to serve."<sup>10</sup>

Gettysburg was just the beginning for Hancock. In a letter to her cousin she described her circumstances. She was a woman in a man's world - the surgeons, the soldiers, the dead, the volunteers all were men. She wrote of the daunting task of finding hard-tack from the Sanitary Commission and Christian charities. Her bravery was evident. She was soon the only woman within a half-mile radius and after two days on the field she was finally introduced to the head surgeon of the post, but did not spend much time with him. Hancock observed that of the four surgeons at the camp, none were idle for more than fifteen minutes at a time. They were constantly performing amputations, and afterward Hancock fed the soldiers. She did not mind the blood, but when they asked her to write letters to their wives,

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<sup>9</sup> Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

“that I cannot do without crying.” Constantly searching for ways to make the men more comfortable, she asked her cousin to send a newspaper for the bedridden men. And while anxious for news, they were not all anxious for treatment. Hancock reported that many men said, “Help my neighbor first he is worse,” as a show of “Christian fortitude.” Their prayers echoed through the stinking camp, in hopes for “God to take them from this world of suffering.”<sup>11</sup>

In the camp, Hancock’s living quarters were practical. She had a bunk and a tent, a bed of four sticks and pine boughs with blankets. The government bought her a uniform to wear, but she did not have anywhere to bathe, describing herself as “black as an Indian and dirty as a pig.” When Hancock grew ill, she was “treated as a princess” in a hospital tent and her care was so good she was back to work the next day. She described a lack of sheets and certain foods like butter and rusk, yet the charities sent too many bandages. These observations might not have seemed important to her while she wrote them, but now this data reveals a side of the war that we may never have known. Hancock’s simple letters describing what she did every day and the types of things the camps needed provided much more than a typical war report. She was describing the people, the places, the things: the human side of war, and the aftermath of battle. Her letters home are now a treasure.<sup>12</sup>

In a few months, Hancock was installed at the General Hospital instead of the Corps Hospital, a change she appreciated. Her pay was twelve dollars a month which she generally used for washing her clothing and bedding. Working only during the day, Hancock described long hours and blisters on her toes. Her patients called her “Lady-nurse” and took kindly to her, especially when she had looked after their friends before. Hancock even won inspection prizes, though she does not describe the competition, she adds that “sheets were

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<sup>11</sup> Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse*, 8-9.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 12.

most valuable," and that she kept her soldier's bedding clean.<sup>13</sup>

Hancock stayed with the men she first encountered at Gettysburg until they were well. The men in her care had not yet left their beds in the middle of August and the battle was fought in early July. She had a few favorite men who she described lovingly but never romantically. She did not seem to have romantic encounters with any of them, staying professional the entire time. Most nurses reported the same, that the men did not approach them with any advances. But it is true that some, like Hannah Moir, found love in the hospitals. As was common, Hancock wished to care for her original patients from Gettysburg until they were "on their way to heaven or home." Hancock helped with physical therapy, taught the men to use crutches and commented on their unusual patience, "they are jolly even, for the most part."<sup>14</sup>

Hancock's experience at Gettysburg revealed an endearing part of American history: through the brutality of war and one of the bloodiest battles in recorded history, the soldiers in her care were polite, respectful, and grateful for her help. She did not once mention a negative comment or a sexual remark. Hancock wrote of leaving her tent open at night, letting the wind sweep her hair and cool the hot bed she slept in. Not once did a man try anything with ill-will toward her. Hancock herself seemed surprised by this, and it is evident that she became determined to take care of these men, perhaps because of the great amount of respect they had for her, shown here through a glimpse of modesty. After being complimented by a soldier she responded, "If people take an interest in me because I am a heroine, it is a great mistake for I feel like anything but a heroine." Her tenacity was appreciated by the men under her care.<sup>15</sup>

On July 21, 1863, a soldier who was in Hancock's care wrote to her. He addressed her as Miss Hancock and apologized for writing her: "You will please excuse a Soldier for writing a few lines to you to express our thankfulness." The soldier wrote to inform Hancock of his

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 18, 21.

<sup>14</sup> Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse*, 21-22.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 17.

happiness in seeing a woman at the camp, and of regret in not being able to pay her for her services. Hancock's kindness is evident from the soldier's first-hand account. He told her she would never be forgotten, and they (presumably friends of his who also received her care) think often of her kind acts. It is without a doubt that Hancock had several admirers, and this particular soldier signed his letter "your sincere friend."<sup>16</sup>

It is through these letters that historians are able to understand Hancock's life. As a woman in the Civil War, Hancock was appreciated and important, something that might have been overlooked. Although she does mention stress in the relationships between the male surgeons and herself, her role as a nurse was key to the survival of many and it is clear she was needed. Undoubtedly, the tension between the nurses and surgeons was complicated; they were all under a great deal of pressure and politeness was most likely forgotten in times of great stress. While many nurses wrote letters, Hancock is one of the only women whose letters remain intact. It is easier to document her experiences than many other famous Civil War nurses. The letters make it clear how the men felt about Hancock. A dying soldier's mother visited him before his death. As the soldier's last wish, the grateful woman gave Hancock one hundred dollars. Hancock said: "I shall never forget it...He was a splendid looking officer and died a Christian death." It is through Hancock's emotional letters and stories that the historian can decipher her importance in the war.<sup>17</sup>

While it is true that not all nurses had a positive experience and many were deeply disturbed by the terrors of battle, Hancock seemed completely in her element. She even called taking care of the soldiers a "pleasure." She also revealed a side of the injured that is not always evident: that they were emotional, distressed men with death at their door. She described their ability to adapt to poor

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<sup>16</sup> Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse*, 13-14.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.



facilities: "I am writing this in the hospt.(sic) it is in a Methodist church, not a spot on the floor but a wounded hero is lying. They complain very little although they lie on the hard boards."<sup>18</sup>

Hancock's description of the wounded men is not pleasant, but it is vital to the history of medicine and the war. It is clear she was saddened by much of what she saw, especially as emotional connections with the wounded were made. "I saw one of my best men die yesterday. He wore away to skin and bone, was anxious to recover but prayed he might find it for the best for him to be taken from his suffering. He was the one who said if there a was a heaven I would go to it. I hope he will get there before I do."<sup>19</sup> For so many soldiers, the last human connection they had was with their nurse. Even in their darkest hours, they had people caring for them.

Hancock's letters are an invaluable part of Civil War history. They reveal the personality of the soldier, the endearing passion of a young nurse, and the brutality of war. Without the efforts of nurses, the fate of many who survived the brutal war might have been much different. Hancock was, in every sense of the word, a hero. Although different from the heroes of battle, Hancock proved her worth by taking on the duties that many would have found unbearable. Her powerful letters are a testament to her bravery and confirm that the Civil War was a bloody, Godless thing, and few angels existed in the darkness.

**Sarah Rosetta Wakeman: The Soldier.** On the battlefields and in the hospitals, women were disguised as soldiers. This dangerous act was not well documented because of the secrecy surrounding it and therefore any primary evidence of female soldiers is rare. Because letters were not censored, Sarah Rosetta Wakeman wrote of her unique experience as a private in the Union army. Though listed on the roster as Pvt. Lyons Wakeman, the five-foot, blue-eyed soldier was a handsome young farm girl from New York

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<sup>18</sup> Hancock, *Letters of A Civil War Nurse*, 140.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

State. She fought, marched, and died in disguise as a male soldier.<sup>20</sup>

Wakeman was poor. She was the daughter of yeoman farmers in central New York, and her grammar and spelling skills as represented in the letters she wrote are surprisingly good for someone who did not receive a formal education. They accurately portray the literacy skills of a poor woman from the nineteenth century. Wakeman joined the army for unknown reasons. It can be assumed the main reason for her enlistment was money, as soldiers were paid a larger wage than she could have earned as a yeoman farmer. Wakeman was no stranger to pretending, especially for cash. Before joining the military, she cross-dressed as a boatman on the Chenango Canal. She was known there, too, as Lyons Wakeman. Lyons Wakeman's identity started before the war did.<sup>21</sup>

In 1862, when Wakeman joined the Union army, the war had been gruesomely escalating for over a year. The Battle of Shiloh was over, and the number of bodies that went home was alarmingly high. The Union needed more troops. President Abraham Lincoln called on state governors to recruit, asking for 300,000 reinforcements in the form of volunteers. When Wakeman joined, she received \$152 for enlisting. She sent every dime to her family, asking them to "spend it for the family in clothing or something to eat" because she could "get all the money" she wanted.<sup>22</sup>

Even in her first letter home, it was obvious Wakeman knew the dangers of war. She questioned whether or not she would return home, and asked her family to keep all of her things for her in case she ever did, particularly to keep the spotted calf she was so fond of. Her letters are peppered with apologies. It seems that before she left

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<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth D. Leonard, *All the Daring of the Soldier: Women of the Civil War Armies*. (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 191.

<sup>21</sup> DeAnne Blanton and Lauren M. Cook, *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 37.

<sup>22</sup> Wakeman, *An Uncommon Soldier*, 17-18.

for the Canal, Wakeman had a falling out with her family. She apologized to her father in her first letter home, and to her mother in the second letter saying: "I want you should forgive me of everything that I ever done, and I will forgive you all the same." Wakeman never specified what issues she had with her family, nor wrote of her past life, but the description of the life she had as a soldier is vivid.<sup>23</sup>

She described cold weather and frozen ground, but being warm in the tents surrounded by her fellow soldiers. Wakeman was in the front lines, and wrote home about the fear of being the first to face the enemy. She sent to her father: "It would make your hair stand out to be where I have been. How would you like to be in the front rank and have the rear rank load and fire their guns over you (sic) shoulder?" Her fear was evident, and her affection for her family is clear. Wakeman wrote of sending them gifts, money, and a "likeness" (picture) of herself. Her younger siblings received individual letters, written carefully by Wakeman in a simpler prose than the letters to her father and mother.<sup>24</sup>

Wakeman's letters, much like elements of Hancock's, are sad. Although both women described the war with a certain fear and disgust, Wakeman was often pessimistic about her return home. In February 1864, Wakeman wrote to her father to tell him her regiment's latest orders: travel to Texas. She ended it with this: "I bid you all good-by. Don't never (sic) expect to see you again." She signed the letter with one of her many aliases, Edwin R. Wakeman, perhaps to disconnect herself emotionally from the content. After all, if she could pretend to be someone else, would it not have been just as easy to pretend she was not afraid?<sup>25</sup>

Wakeman did not write much of the battles, but more of her own health, mentality, and homesickness. When she did write of battle, she revealed a palpable fear. Wakeman was in the front lines during the Battle of Pleasant Hill fought on April 9, 1864. The Battle was part of the failed Red River Campaign led by Major General

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<sup>23</sup> Wakeman, *An Uncommon Soldier*, 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-27.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

Nathaniel Banks in Louisiana. Wakeman survived the battle and was not wounded, but wrote to her family of her experiences, calling them by their titles: "Mother and Father, Brothers and Sisters." She lay on the battlefield all night, listening to the dying soldiers cry. Her friends in her unit were wounded. Some were dead. And yet Wakeman was still hopeful for a return home, and full of prayer: "I feel thankful to God that he spared my life and I pray to him that he will lead me safe through the field of battle and that I may return safe home." God had other plans for Wakeman. This was her last letter.<sup>26</sup>

After the Battle of Pleasant Hill, it was clear the Red River Campaign would fail. The Confederacy gained ground in the tactical side of the war, and the Union officers in Texas were desperate for supplies and troops. Although Wakeman did not record what happened next, it is known that her unit was ordered to march to Alexandria, Louisiana. The Confederates were closing in on them, attacking the 153<sup>rd</sup> New York's rear guard. The Confederates followed them the entire seventy mile journey, never allowing a full on attack to materialize, frustrating the Union troops who did not know if or when they would stop marching. The forces became paranoid, morale was low, and the physical toll on the soldiers was slowing them down.<sup>27</sup>

Louisiana's climate was starting to affect the troops. The few times they stopped to eat, the food only caused illness. The lack of sleep, the mosquitoes, the heat, and the closeness of their quarters made sickness inevitable. Like so many other Civil War soldiers, Wakeman did not die in battle. She was admitted to the 153<sup>rd</sup> Regimental Hospital on May 3, 1864, with the most deadly disease of the Civil War, chronic diarrhea.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Wakeman, *An Uncommon Soldier*, 71.

<sup>27</sup> Gary Dillard Joiner, *One Damn Blunder from Beginning to End: The Red River Campaign of 1864*. (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Harris S. Beecher, *Record of the 114th Regiment, New York State Volunteers*. (Norwich, New York: J.F. Hubbard, Jr., Publisher, 1866), 336.

Wakeman was transferred to the Marine U.S.A. General Hospital in New Orleans, but the trip, which usually took five days, took fifteen because Confederate troops destroyed the river transportation. Wakeman's situation only worsened on the journey to the hospital, but once she arrived, she lived for a month. It is surprising that her secret was not revealed by the nurses and doctors attending to her. Maybe active bodies were so desperately needed to fight, it no longer mattered to the Army whether they were male or female. Perhaps they had no reason to disclose the truth as it must have been obvious at that point that Wakeman would not last long, or perhaps they understood her sacrifice and let her die as a soldier. After all, she was as much as soldier as any man in her company. Perhaps the doctors realized she deserved a soldier's burial.<sup>29</sup>

Rosetta Wakeman died in the hospital on June 19, 1864. Her death was not reported to her unit until August, so it can be assumed her family was left wondering what had happened to their daughter as she had not written them in months. She was given a soldier's burial in Chalmette National Cemetery in New Orleans, where her grave still remains to this day. On her headstone, however, is the name Lyons Wakeman. It is most likely that during the process of preparing her body for burial her secret was revealed, but the army accorded her the honor of a military burial. The army would not have known what other name to use, nor what to do with a woman's body. To them, she had always been Lyons.<sup>30</sup>

To women's history, she represents much more than just a woman in men's clothing. She represents a movement, an urge to gain the same benefits as a man by serving one's country. Wakeman was lucky, in a morbid sense. She was not caught like so many were and discharged, nor was she left to die wounded on a battlefield. The fact that she died in a hospital is both a gift and a curse.

Undoubtedly Wakeman joined for more than one reason (the fight with her family which we will never know details of is a variable), but money was an important factor for her. The ability to send her

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<sup>29</sup> Wakeman, *An Uncommon Soldier*, 81-82.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

paychecks to her family back home was a source of pride for Wakeman. She often wrote of sending them money, and if she did not send it, she mentioned that she would be sending it soon. This was an uncommon thing for a woman to be able to do: provide for her family, go on a wild adventure, and serve her country. Wakeman's bravery is noted, both by the family she helped and the mark she left on history. Her tombstone in Louisiana marks Wakeman's achievements: serving one's country, sending home money to support a family, and earning the respect of the armed forces.

**Belle Boyd: The Spy.** In the rebellious South, a young woman had a tumultuous four years with her involvement with the Civil War. She was not a nurse, nor a soldier, nor a waiting wife. She was a spy, and chose to be one of her own accord. This dangerous and surprising occupation might have gone unnoticed, but Boyd's information passing skills proved vital to the war efforts of the South, and her important contributions are noted by many.

In her memoir, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, Boyd writes to an English audience, telling them of her time as a self-made spy. Her bravery was terrifying, her will strong, and her book compelling. Compelling enough to allow Boyd to tour the United States giving talks on her time as a Confederate spy, gathering audiences from both sides who wanted to hear the novelty of a woman spy.

Boyd was described as not beautiful, but attractive. After being interviewed by Nathaniel Paige, a war correspondent for the *New York Daily Tribune*, in 1862, Boyd's appearance was described, "Without being beautiful, she is very attractive." Her charm and the way she carried herself allowed Boyd to take advantage of soldiers from both sides of the conflict. She was particularly known for stealing information to give to Confederate General Stonewall Jackson.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Belle Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison: A New Edition Prepared from New Materials by Curtis Carroll Davis*. (London: Thomas Yoseloff Ltd, 1968), 67.

Boyd was an avid patriot. Her Southern sympathies were inherited from her parents and never left the woman even after her beloved South lost the war. Her first act of bravery was on the first day of the Federal occupation of the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. Boyd was acting as a nurse in a makeshift hospital, much like Hancock had done in her first days as a Civil War nurse. When a group of Union soldiers walked up behind her, waving the "Federal flag" over the beds of the sick, Boyd stood up to them.<sup>32</sup>

She called the men she was tending to "helpless as babies" and ordered the Union soldiers to leave and stop at once, for they were interrupting their "woman's mission." Boyd, using the charm she would one day be famous for, found an officer among the soldiers and told him to stop, and to order his men to stop as well. Surprisingly, the Union soldiers left the hospital without harming a single patient. Their intention had been to "bayonet them," and Belle Boyd felt "immeasurable" satisfaction when they were left at peace. This satisfaction was undoubtedly the start of a burning desire to stand up for her beloved South. Her passion in rebelling against the Union had begun, and would not stop until the day the war was over.<sup>33</sup>

Shortly after the incident at the hospital, Boyd made a bold move. The Union occupied her hometown, and on Independence Day, 1862, looting was rampant. Boyd's home was broken into while she and her mother were inside. Told that Boyd's bedroom was decorated with the "rebel flag," the soldiers demanded possession of it, but Boyd was one step ahead of them. Her "negro maid" was ordered, quietly and with great haste, to run upstairs and dispose of the flag. Before the soldiers could find it, the maid had ripped the flag from the wall and burned it. The soldiers' next step was to hoist a Federal flag above Boyd's house. Her mother wouldn't tolerate it. She said: "Men, every member of my household will die before that flag shall be raised over us." It is no surprise where Belle got her flickering passion. Her mother was just as full of fire as her soon-to-be famous daughter.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 128-129.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 128 - 129.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

When Belle's mother was then verbally assaulted by a soldier, Belle drew her pistol and shot him. The seventeen-year-old's shot killed the soldier, and the rest of the troops ran but not before plotting to set the house on fire. The Boyd family, even with Belle's father away fighting in his grays, was not to be crossed. These strong women were loyal to the core, and braver than most. Belle ran to the nearest Union officer and explained to him that her house, with all of its inhabitants, was about to be burned to the ground. She convinced him to pardon her murder, stop the soldiers from starting the fire, and on top of disciplining those involved, set a pair of sentries on the house to guard the Boyd women. There was clearly something about Boyd's character that men could not resist.<sup>35</sup>

She became friends with Union soldiers, close enough to them to gather valuable information on positions and battle plans. Boyd was cunning in her endeavors but not the smartest in how she delivered her information. She used no code, no crypt, and often signed the letters with her own name. It could be assumed that Boyd was pretentious in doing so, and her pride would not warrant an objection to that assumption. Boyd was bold in everything she did. When summoned to appear before a colonel after one of her letters was discovered (she calls him "some colonel, whose name I have forgotten," in her memoir), Boyd was threatened, reprimanded, and read the "Article of War:" "Whoever shall give food, ammunition, information to, or aid and abet the enemies of the United States Government in any manner whatever, shall suffer death, or whatever penalty the honorable members of the court-martial shall see fit to inflict."<sup>36</sup>

Boyd was breaking the law by being a source for the Confederate Army, and would eventually be arrested with just cause. She was guilty of passing valuable information and was thrown in jail as she should have been. For now, however, Boyd was lucky to only

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<sup>35</sup> Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 134.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.



receive a warning.

Boyd said she was not frightened, and that her "little rebel heart was on fire" with anger. She was rude to the colonel and the men who read her the Article, and was even more determined to create havoc in her realm. She furiously began spying, actively searching and ready to find some kind of information to pass on to a man she deeply admired, General Stonewall Jackson.<sup>37</sup>

That opportunity came to Boyd on May 20, 1862. Union General James Shields gathered his troops in the parlor of a hotel in Front Royal, Virginia. The cunning Boyd hid in a closet for hours and spied through a peep hole to learn of the General's plans. She knew that her beloved Confederates could not go without this information. Boyd, bearing falsified documents that allowed her into Confederate camps, was soon on her way to the Confederate soldiers whose camp lay just outside town. She delivered her information to a scout for the Confederates, Col. Turner Ashby. She told him everything she had heard, and surprisingly, she was listened to. Two days later, a crowd of Union soldiers filled the streets outside of Boyd's home. Boyd asked one what was going on -- and was told far too much information. The soldier told her that the Rebels were coming, that the Union troops had not been prepared and that their plan of action was to burn the stores in the town and burn every bridge they crossed as they made their way to the next town. Boyd, being the bold woman she was, did not keep this information to herself.<sup>38</sup>

She ran through town, avoiding bullets (though she claimed some put holes in her navy blue dress) and the beginning skirmishes of battle. She had a mission and that was to tell General Stonewall Jackson of the Union army's plan. Nothing would stop her. "Hope, fear, the love of life, and the determination to serve my country to the last, conspired to fill my heart with more than feminine courage, and to lend preternatural strength and swiftness to my limbs."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison* 134.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 150-159.

<sup>39</sup> Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 162-163.

Boyd's courage showed in this monumental occasion in her life. Her description of feminine courage is certainly not a common one. Many would consider a woman waiting for a loved one to come back from war as feminine courage. Boyd was an oddity in her time, and a rare breed of woman.

Belle Boyd ran all the way to the rear of the Confederate forces where she met someone she knew, "an old friend and connection," Major Harry Douglas. She told him to ready the cavalry, to send them ahead to secure the bridges the Union had planned to burn. Boyd turned down the offer for an escort home, knowing that the soldier escorting her would be needed in battle. She went back the way she came, knowing she had done her beloved South some good.<sup>40</sup>

Because of Boyd's message, the Confederates won that battle. The bridges were secured, even though a light had already been lit at the first one, it was stopped and regained by the Confederates. They knew the Union's next move and followed them. A spent Boyd returned from the battle field to a hero's welcome. The Confederates cheered her, and although she was "utterly enervated and exhausted," she turned her own home into a hospital and cared for the wounded.<sup>41</sup>

The same day, a courier gave to Boyd what she called the item she values "far beyond any thing I possess in the world." A short note, only one sentence, from Gen. Jackson that read:

"Miss Belle Boyd,  
I thank you, for myself and for the army,  
for the immense service that you have rendered  
for your country to-day.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 162 - 163.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 165.

Hastily, I am your friend,  
T.J. Jackson, C.S.A.”

Belle Boyd was a servant of the South to the core, and with a system she called the “underground railroad” she was able to pass messages to officers in the Confederate army. The “locomotive on this railway” was an elderly black man (some sources claim it was her slave, Eliza, but Boyd herself never stated so) who hid Boyd’s messages in a large silver pocket watch from which all of the workings had been removed. If anyone looked at the watch, it would have told them the wrong time and seemed like an old man’s trinket. But Boyd’s system, seemingly flawless, failed her.<sup>42</sup>

As night set one “lovely Wednesday,” Boyd saw cavalry men outside. She quickly sent a note via her underground railroad and went to bed. The next morning, she saw the men assembling a carriage near her house. She ignored this, until her servant told her that there were men wishing to speak with her. Boyd was under arrest, from direct orders from the Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton. Her personal affects were searched. One of her loyal servants managed to burn a bundle of her papers before the men could find them, but they still found plenty of contraband, including a pistol given to Boyd for defending her mother so many months ago.<sup>43</sup>

Boyd was given thirty minutes and a trunk to pack. She was escorted to prison in Winchester, Virginia by 550 soldiers. Her notoriety had reached its peak, she was an enemy, but her escort made her feel like a celebrity. She described her first night in prison. “My first night in a prison must be painted in dark colors, unrelieved by the radiance that plays upon the features of the sleeping devotee.” Her pride was higher than ever, after all, she was recognized by those she disliked the most as an enemy. Boyd said she dreamt of angels that night, though she slept few hours. She was, above all, frightened.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 172.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>44</sup> Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 197-198; Ruth Scarborough, *Belle Boyd*:

She was severely punished for her crimes, kept in solitary confinement for what is thought to be weeks until the heat of mid summer forced the prison guards to open her cell door. She was allowed thirty minutes of exercise daily. Her conditions were not terrible, for it is certain that she would have complained of them in her book. Boyd had a way of exaggerating, stretching the truth to make herself seem like more of a hero than she actually was. Her intended audience was not an American one, Boyd wrote her book for the English. Sick of her ramblings on about her heroic rise to fame during the Civil War, Boyd was not superbly popular after the battles had stopped.<sup>45</sup>

Boyd was imprisoned a few more times before the end of the war, never seeming to get her fill of disloyalty to the North and utter servanthood to the South. Boyd married three times, became an actress of moderate success both in the United Kingdom and in America, and died June 11, 1900 of a heart attack. Such a spy was lucky to die the way she did. Many would not have succeeded in continually persuading their captors to release them. Boyd's charm, mystique, and cunning made her one of the most successful spies in all of history.<sup>46</sup>

**Conclusion.** While each woman represents a different aspect of the Civil War, their roles are all important. More importantly, however, are the primary resources they left behind. Without these letters and memoirs, women's history would be lost in the scope of the Civil War. Fortunately, our brave heroines recorded their thoughts, tasks, and emotions in a way that changed the perception toward women in the bloodiest war in American History.

With Celia Hancock's delicately written letters, we are

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*Siren of the South.* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983), 66.

<sup>45</sup> Boyd, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, 201.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

informed of the tragedy she experienced being a nurse. While her role as a nurse was undoubtedly the most feminine of the three women highlighted, it is important to know that the men in her care treated her with utmost respect. Some may have perceived Hancock as an object of sexual desire or disrespected her because she was a woman. Neither of these things ever happened according to her letters, and Hancock's story in its entirety gives an insight to the aftermath of battle.

The descriptions of medical practices, the way Hancock wrote letters from dying men to their wives, and how she asked her friends and family for supplies enables the reader to understand the war was not a singular thing. The war's repercussions were evident and the effect of the sick and wounded rippled through lives and communities. Whether every building was turned into a makeshift hospital or people stripped their own beds at home to send sheets to wounded soldiers, the people in Hancock's life who were not directly connected to the war felt an obligation to help. The American people helped their soldiers, just like they do today.

In the throes of battle, Rosetta Wakeman dedicated her entire life to a secret. Despite being female, Wakeman's impact on the war was no different than any other soldier. She took orders like her male counterparts, marched, ate, slept, fought, and died with them. If we treated our female soldiers today (which we do not - segregation in bunks, barracks, and other discriminatory policies are in place to separate the genders based upon social norms) exactly like our males, it would echo Wakeman's life. It must be considered, then, how tough she was. To not have a soul to confide in besides the letters she wrote home to her family must have been trying. Perhaps a few of her comrades knew, perhaps they did not even suspect her secret. Either way, she lived a life that could have ended very badly, and her bravery should not to be forgotten.

Wakeman's letters also provide an insight into the literacy level of the nineteenth century. For a female who received no formal education, her writing skills are average. Her spellings (like much of those in the mid nineteenth century) are erratic and sometimes hard

to follow. Overall, however, it is remarkable that Wakeman conveyed a strong amount of intelligence and emotion in her letters. They were desperately sad in some cases, and in others, charming. Wakeman's ability to clearly state her emotions without too many words makes her story personable.

Boyd's boisterous memoir is possibly fictionalized in parts. We can only hope that the majority of the stories she tells are not exaggerations, but based on her bold mannerisms this is unknown. At least she told her story - many female spies in the Civil War were not brave enough to do so. For example, Mary Elizabeth Bowser was a known spy for the Union, spying on Jefferson Davis in his own home. While literate and perfectly capable of writing her memoirs, Bowser never did. Her life after the war is undocumented, and her role is only known because of some correspondence.

Boyd was brave, that is certain. She used a different kind of feminine charm to woo her men into submission. It is not clear whether or not Boyd was ever sexually involved with any of her many contacts, but her persuasive techniques rarely failed. She was the perfect candidate to spy, powerful yet unassuming. Perhaps it was because she was female that her task was so easy. There is little doubt that men would not have suspected a woman to be a spy. After all, in the nineteenth century, a woman's place was in the home, tending to the family and household duties. A woman as a spy was the perfect disguise - unassuming and unnoticed.

This helped Boyd be successful in a number of ways. While men were not afraid to speak to women, they probably assumed that Boyd would not understand the context of the information they were passing to her. On top of that, the Union forces who unknowingly passed information to her did not know of Boyd's connection with Confederate troops, something they should have considered because of her reputation.

All three women's experiences represent a terrible time in our country. Over six hundred thousand American soldiers lost their lives. It is certain that the women who participated in the Civil War saw a need and filled it, not an uncommon characteristic in feminine history. Fortunately, their stories were documented by letters. Without these valuable tools, we might never have known the extent to which American women participated in the bloodiest war in American history.

After the war came increased opportunities for women. They were able to keep their jobs as nurses and now the majority of nurses in the United States are female. The establishment of the Army and Navy Nurse Corps at the turn of the century allowed women to use their long-standing patriotic loyalty. And spies will always be abundant. Women in the CIA and FBI exist in capacities of which we may never know. Every woman working in these fields has a petticoat-wearing, rebellious, and courageous Civil War hero to thank.

The images of war might look a little different now -- after all, the likeness that Sarah Rosetta Wakeman sent home was not in curls and a dress, but with short cropped hair and a uniform. Her feminine features discarded to help her country, Wakeman stands out above the typical soldiers of the time. She was a rarity - a woman in the place of a man. She proves that the women of our country were, and still are, beyond brave.

## Race in Kansas

Karen Powers

There is no excuse for denying any American citizen his rights. This is not a project to defend discrimination in Kansas. I will try and show that "the values of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's material wealth and successful competition caused Kansas blacks to determine their process by standards in force for society at large."<sup>1</sup>

The history of race relations in Kansas can aptly be called a paradox. It cannot be put in an either/or box. There can be no blanket statement for Kansas like there can be for Mississippi. "Almost from its birth, Kansas had been synonymous in the national mind with abolitionism and John Brown, where anti-slavery fought a bloody and ultimately successful battle to exclude slavery from western lands. Their efforts precipitated the Civil War in which the Jayhawkers raised the first black regiment for Union service."<sup>2</sup> Kansas residents took their Free State roots very seriously. While lynching rose in the South, Kansas and the Midwest had very little violence connected with race. Kansas blacks, especially in Topeka, used the courts on a large scale for racial wrong doings. In fact, most of the black communities in the larger cities of Kansas became very adept at using the courts. Before Kansas City, Kansas built the first all black Sumner High School, the black parents "organized an extraordinary resistance movement that utilized the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the state government."<sup>3</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, Kansas, and Topeka in particular, were straddling the race line. James Leiker asks the question, "How could the free state that opened its door to fugitive slaves and free blacks be a land of Jim Crow?"<sup>4</sup> Leiker also tells us that Kansans' racial attitudes were "neither consistent nor

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<sup>1</sup> William H. Chafe, "The Negro and Populism: A Kansas Study," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 34, (August, 1996), 404.

<sup>2</sup> James N. Leiker, "Race Relations in the Sunflower State," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Great Plains*, Vol. 25, (Autumn, 2002), 220.

<sup>3</sup> David J. Peavler, "Drawing the Color Line in Kansas City," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Great Plains*, Vol. 27, (Autumn, 2002), 189.

<sup>4</sup> Leiker, "Race Relations," 220.



monolithic.”<sup>5</sup> Most Topekans favored segregation while having integrated YMCAs and YWCAs and being home to a large number of blacks that held important state and political jobs.

Although Americans often think of Kansas as a progressive state in regard to race relations, I argue that Kansas lay halfway between true equality and true segregation. Topeka is a perfect example of this indecision to go either way.

African American Kansans had been loyal to the Republican Party since their emancipation. But by the end of the nineteenth century, they were becoming disillusioned with it. The Democratic Party was out of the question, but the Populist Party looked hopeful. The Populist Party seemed to be willing to give some African Americans what they were looking for, “promises of protection and patronage.”<sup>6</sup> The black Kansans did not really “subscribe to Populist attacks on the rich and wellborn that in the past had been their most dependable protectors. They were conservatives, not radicals.”<sup>7</sup>

In many ways Kansas was the New Canaan advertised in the black newspapers of the South. But in many others it was not the Utopian Garden of Eden. Historians such as Randall Woods concluded that racism “was not as widespread or as pervasive as that experienced by African Americans who chose to remain in the Jim Crow South.”<sup>8</sup> Or even the North. Kansas might have been the land of John Brown, but, “whether they lived in integrated rural settlements or in black neighborhoods in white cities, blacks found themselves members of a Kansas working society dominated by the Caucasian race.”<sup>9</sup>

Race relations are always sticky politically, but in Kansas they were stickier than usual. In the Supreme Court Case *Brown v. The*

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Chafe, “The Negro and Populism,” 404.

<sup>8</sup> Monroe Lee Billington and Roger D. Hardway, eds., *African Americans on the Western Frontier*, (Denver: Colorado University Press, 1983), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Billington and Hardway, *African Americans on the Western Frontier*, 2.

*Board of Education of Topeka, 1954*, the city of Topeka was the main culprit. One might surmise that Topeka was a hotbed of racial injustice. This could not be further from the truth. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had only a small branch office there. But Topeka became the rallying cry for Civil Rights. When it was all over and all the big wigs from the national office had gone home and the case had been settled, the branch office of the NAACP stayed its original size. From 1954 on, however, Topeka and Kansas made great strides in conquering its race problems. Kansas was one of the first states to comply quickly with the Supreme Court decision.

Topeka had a vibrant and viable black community that mirrored the white community in many ways. Woods has characterized this system of mirroring “as one of parallel development.”<sup>10</sup> Like whites, blacks had newspapers that prospered and were well known throughout the state. Some of them were still around to usher in the Civil Rights Movement and were read by people all over the country.

Following the tenets of Booker T. Washington, black ministers started an institute for industrial arts that morphed into the Topeka Technical, totally supported by the state. This institute became the home to the Topeka School of Nursing that graduated nurses until the 1980s.

Religion has always played an important role in the life of the black community and Topeka was no exception. Even when their ministers were not ordained or seminary trained, they always encouraged their members to build churches. The churches “provided guidance and an understanding of the problems of everyday living.”<sup>11</sup> These black churches gave us some of the best known and respected leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.

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<sup>10</sup> Randall R. Woods, “Integration, Exclusion, or Segregation: the Color Line in Kansas, 1878-1900,” *Western History Quarterly*, 14, (1983), 181.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Mitchell Marshall, *An Account of Afro-Americans in Southeast Kansas, 1884-1984*, (Pittsburg: Sunflower Press, 1986), 6.

The men and women who settled Kansas placed their emphasis on "rugged individualism, enterprise, and pragmatism, allowing human beings to work out their destinies regardless of race."<sup>12</sup> For Kansas, the answer is somewhere in the middle.

**Is It Free or Not?** Racial issues have identified Kansas since its very beginning. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act on May 26, 1854, signed in to law by President Franklin Pierce, opened the territories to popular sovereignty. "The Kansas-Nebraska Act created not only Kansas Territory; it repealed the venerated slavery expansion compromise of 1820 and upset the tenuous 1850 agreement."<sup>13</sup> The citizens of the new settlements would be able to decide for themselves whether they wanted to be free or slave. Would this decision go the way of the abolitionists or the way of the slave holder? As it turned out, for several years it went the way of both. Popular sovereignty was a very volatile concept. Senator Stephen Douglas stated that a territory was "a distinct political community that could pass its own laws on slavery."<sup>14</sup> If Kansas entered the Union as a free state; it would upset the balance of equal free and slave states. This battling of free and slave citizens of the new territory was the reason that Kansas had at least three constitutions in its pre-statehood history. Each side tried to outdo the other. The popularly elected legislature fluctuated back and forth between free and slave.

Because of their geographical closeness, Missouri figured largely in Kansas' business for years to come. Taking advantage of the fact that they had the biggest slice of the pie at the exact time that the territory was opened for settlement, the Missourians crossed the border "and established towns, as a means of making firm their preemptory claim over the territory. They also formed a territorial legislature whose prime directive was to preserve slavery."<sup>15</sup> Missouri

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<sup>12</sup> Billington and Hardway, *African Americans on the Western Frontier*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Gary Cheatham, "Slavery All the Time or Not At All: The Wyandotte Constitutional Debate, 1859-1861, *Kansas History: A Journal of the Great Plains*, Vol. 21, (Autumn, 1998), 154.

<sup>14</sup> Cheatham, "Slavery All the Time or Not At All," 156.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas C. Cox, *Blacks in Topeka, Kansas, 1865-1913*, (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 4.

wanted to make Kansas “an outpost of slavery on its western flank.”<sup>16</sup> Wanting to ensure a firm foothold for slavery, they attempted to settle the matter with legislation. These laws that went into effect on September 15, 1855, “were designed to both protect slavery and menace the Free State movement.”<sup>17</sup> The pro-slavery enthusiasts based these statutes on slavery statutes from Virginia. Not only could settlers own slaves, but if one was against slavery it became a crime to even speak against it. No wonder the Free Staters called it the “bogus legislature.” This statute was in effect until 1857. That year the Free Staters gained control of the legislature and worked with Governor John Geary to repeal it. This they did on February 5, 1857. The pro-slavers ignored this repeal and instead concentrated on the Dred Scot decision. “Pro-slavery Kansans eagerly interpreted Dred Scot as supporting their belief that slavery could not be outlawed in the territory.”<sup>18</sup> The “early settlers did not wish to participate in the free state/pro-slavery contest and hoped to avoid the escalating border war.”<sup>19</sup> Many of the homesteaders came from the South and the Ohio Valley. But these apolitical early settlers that came to Kansas did so for land and opportunities, not to further the politics of the pro-slavers. Most of the settlers from the South did not even own slaves.

At the same time as Missourians were setting up towns and legislatures to promote slavery, the New England Emigrant Company of Massachusetts was bringing abolitionists out to settle the new territory. These New Englanders may have been coming to Kansas “with avowed intentions of rescuing the territory from the clutches of slavery,” but they also were looking for opportunities to make money.<sup>20</sup> The New England Emigrant Aid Company was “incorporated as a stock company after the first few months of its operation. It was a queer combination of philanthropic venture and money-making scheme.”<sup>21</sup> They truly thought that they could make a

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>17</sup> Cheatham, “Slavery All the Time or Not At All,” 158.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel A. Johnson, “The Emigrant Aid Company in Kansas,” *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 5, (November, 1932), 429.

difference in Kansas, capitalize on the rise in land values, and pay off all their loans to their backers in Massachusetts while making a profit. It is a misnomer to believe that all abolitionists were pacifists. A prominent New England minister, Henry Beecher, (his sister Harriett, wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1853), reported to the *New York Times* in February, 1856, that he,

Believed that the Sharps Rifle was a truly moral agency, and that there was power in one of those instruments, so far as the slave holders of Kansas are concerned than in a hundred Bibles. you might just as well...read the Bible to Buffalos as to those fellows who follow Atchison...but they have a supreme respect for the logic that is embedded in Sharpe's Rifles.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, many of these rifles were sent to Kansas in crates marked Bibles, and became known as "Beecher's Bibles" "to be used against pro-slavery 'Border Ruffians' during the time known as 'Bleeding Kansas.'"

On the floor of the U.S. Senate, Senator William Seward told its members, "We will engage in competition for the virgin soil of Kansas and God give the victory to the side which is stronger in numbers as it is in the right."<sup>23</sup> In 1854, Topeka and Lawrence became its biggest strongholds. But the pro-slavery advocates still maintained the majority in population, although the abolitionists were not far behind.

The Free Soil Party, a precursor to the Republican Party in Kansas, was the new political party started by the Free Staters. In 1859, they succeeded in making Topeka the permanent capital of the territory. This was a definite plus on the side of the New England Emigrant Company and a very definite indicator of power and prestige. It is important to remember that being an abolitionist did not mean that you were for racial equality. At this early stage in the

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<sup>22</sup> Johnson, "The Emigrant Aid Company in Kansas," 429.

<sup>23</sup> Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, Kansas, 6.

territory, the Free State Party was advocating for the dissolution of slavery it is true but,

If residents of the territory were prepared to believe that God opposed slavery, they were by no means willing to assume personal responsibility for its consequences. God might well instruct his followers to loose the bonds of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, but he had said nothing about granting blacks free<sup>24</sup>

The Free State Party, which was not made up entirely of abolitionists, "was less about equality of the races and more about how slavery would have negative effects on whites rather than on blacks."<sup>25</sup> The *Kansas Free State*, published in Lawrence, told its readers that slavery was "an institution that paralyzes the hand of moral and intellectual effort, that dries all energy and enterprise from its presence, and substitutes idleness, intemperance and debauchery that decreases the white population...slavery created a backward and stagnant society."<sup>26</sup> By the 1850s, the North believed that their social order was superior to the South. In Eric Foner's book, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, he tells us, "It was an affirmation of the superiority of the social system of the North...a dynamic expanding capitalist society whose achievements and destiny were almost wholly the result of the dignity and opportunities which it offered the average laboring man."<sup>27</sup> On April 7, 1855, the *Kansas Free State* responded to allegations from the South that the Northern poor were no better off than the slaves by editorializing that,

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<sup>24</sup> David W. Johnson, "Free Soilers for God: Newspaper Editors and the Antislavery Crusade," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Great Plains*, Vol. 2, (summer, 1979), 80.

<sup>25</sup> Leiker, "Race Relations," 220.

<sup>26</sup> Bill Cecil-Fronsman, "Advocate the Freedom of the White Man as Well as Well as the Negro: The *Kansas Free State* and Antislavery Westerners in Territorial Kansas," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Great Plains*, Vol. 20, (Summer, 1997), 221.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

...these poor are not deprived of a single inalienable right by law but stand on an equal footing with the rich. They have also a perfect right to flee the country, without being pursued, either by a pack of bloodhounds or a fugitive slave Act, where they could readily better their conditions and live independently.<sup>28</sup>

Kansas has always "had a commitment to black's legal freedom and a hesitation to embrace the full realization of that freedom through the extension of political and social equality." At the Topeka convention, the majority of delegates, Free Soil and pro-slavery alike, passed a resolution called the "Black Laws" that prohibited entrance into the state for either free blacks or escaped slaves. The Kansas Free State newspaper stated that "we are opposed in principal to the Black Laws, but if the majority says that they will go for slavery if we do not give them a Black Law, then we say for the sake of policy, that they should have a Black Law."<sup>29</sup> Predictably, the resolution passed by a large number of votes (1287-453) but the constitution delivered that day failed to be accepted by Congress. There were enough true abolitionists living in the territory, however, that even the threat of those kinds of laws made them very unhappy. Several townspeople became conductors on the Underground Railroad, and many towns in Kansas became depots. The "freedom line ran through Lawrence, Topeka, and Kansas City, into Nebraska and Iowa."<sup>30</sup> Twenty-five years later, Judge Dwight Thacher, the editor of the *Lawrence Republican*, wrote in his personal papers that, "the whole purpose of the Topeka Convention had been to maintain Free-State loyalty until there were enough free soilers in the territory to win by sheer force of numbers."<sup>31</sup> And the editor of the

<sup>28</sup> Cecil-Fronsman, "Advocate the Freedom of the White Man as Well as Well as the Negro," 211.

<sup>29</sup> Cecil-Fronsman, "Advocate the Freedom of the White Man as Well as Well as the Negro," 115.

<sup>30</sup> Cox, *Blacks In Topeka*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Johnson, "Free Soilers for God, 80.

Lawrence-based *Kansas Free State Journal*, wrote that “the free state label was to compromise all those in favor of making Kansas free, not from any peculiar sympathy for the Negro or regard for his rights, but because it would be to the pecuniary gain of the masses to have it free.”<sup>32</sup>

As troubles with Missouri escalated in to “Bloody Kansas,” the settlers, who were originally non-committal, felt that “they were pushed into an uneasy Free State alliance by what they viewed as the heavy-handed effort of pro-slavery advocates, primarily Missourians, to impose the peculiar institution upon them.”<sup>33</sup> On March 30, 1855, over a thousand Missourians crossed the border to vote illegally “Anti-slavery Kansans who might have had little sympathy with slaves could see a clear threat to their own independence from an outside conspiratorial force.”<sup>34</sup> They were afraid of being “trampled by a government determined to impose slavery upon them.”<sup>35</sup>

By 1859, Kansans were meeting yet again to try and get a constitution ready to present to Congress for a presidential signature. This time they came together in Wyandotte (Kansas City, Kansas) to begin deliberations. This constitution was going to settle the question of slavery and Kansas once and for all. The Union was on the verge of a civil war over this very thing and Kansas wanted to be a state before it happened. This time the free staters were in power and it was extremely important to the Republicans to get this passed before hostilities began. On three different occasions, Kansas had attempted to submit constitutions. The first one was the Topeka Convention in 1855, where the Black Laws were instituted. This one was not accepted by Congress because, “proslavery voters boycotted the referendums and because it was the product of an extralegal assembly.”<sup>36</sup> The second one was the Leecompton Convention in

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<sup>32</sup> Cecil-Fronsman, “Advocate the Freedom of the White Man as Well as Well as the Negro,” 108.

<sup>33</sup> Cecil-Fronsman, “Advocate the Freedom of the White Man as Well as Well as the Negro,” 109.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Cheatham, “Slavery All the Time,” 170.



December 1857 and January 1858, which also failed “because various boycotts by antislavery and proslavery voters did not convince Congress of the legitimacy of the document.”<sup>37</sup> Thirdly, there was the Leavenworth Constitution in August 1858, which was not accepted either. By the summer of 1859, the legislature was ready to try for the fourth and last time. In 1861, Governor Charles Robinson commented, “The necessity for so much constitution-making and strife as Kansas had experienced during the last past six years, has been caused chiefly by the question of slavery.”<sup>38</sup> Even though the existence of slavery in Kansas was a proven fact, antislavery voices had become dominant. They hoped that this new constitution would eliminate the question of slavery once and for all. They believed that you could not have it both ways. They wanted this new constitution to make it clear, that if Kansas was going to come into the Union as a free state, that meant that not only was slavery to be a mute question, but owners had to free the slaves they owned. An interesting thing about the convention was that it was the first time the new Republican Party “actually squared off against their Democratic counterparts.”<sup>39</sup> Though the question of slavery was the most important, it was not as hotly debated as some others. The only real serious questions raised about slavery were two-fold: should slavery be outlawed on the day Kansas became a state or would slave owners be allowed “a reasonable time for removing their slaves from Kansas.”<sup>40</sup> Since Republicans were in the majority, the answers to those two questions were yes and no respectively. Slavery was going to be over in Kansas. The *Fort Scott Democrat* reported on September 16, 1859, “As a practical question, the alternative of slavery or no slavery have [sic] been decided.”<sup>41</sup> Democrats from both the North and South then began to work together to “save the state from the despotic rule of Abolitionists and Black Republicans.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cheatham, “Slavery All the Time,” 170.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Cheatham, “Slavery All the Time,” 175.

The Wyandotte Convention “debated the state boundary question, the capital site, the homestead exemption, whether to restrict black immigration and various issues concerning the designs of the legislature.”<sup>43</sup> The Wyandotte Convention was approved by thirty-four of the forty-seven voting delegates on July 29, 1859. The Democrats, who were in the minority, immediately stated that they opposed it “because it was an instrument of the Republicans,”<sup>44</sup> and that they were afraid that it would “open the gates for an influx of free Negroes from Missouri, Arkansas, the Indian Territory, and Texas.”<sup>45</sup> This constitution was very liberal for its time. Blacks were not given the right to vote, but the Black Laws were repealed and blacks were allowed to live and settle in Kansas whether they were free or slave. Likewise, women were not given the franchise, but they were given the right to vote in school board elections, and given the same right to pursue higher education as men, and all state colleges were to be co-educational. The Wyandotte Constitution was accepted by Congress and President Buchanan. Kansas became a state on January 29, 1861.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Kansas was only three months old. Even so, she provided nineteen regiments and four artillery batteries in response to President Lincoln’s call for troops.<sup>46</sup> Kansas suffered “nearly 8,500 casualties and sustained some of the highest mortality rates of any state in the Union: sixty one percent.”<sup>47</sup>

After the war, Kansas began to “reshape the memory of the Free State struggle, framing it as a struggle not only for white political and economic freedom but for the liberation of African-Americans as well.”<sup>48</sup> Most Kansans were not comfortable with the idea of social

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Becky Tanner, “Kansans Serve with Honor,” *Wichita Eagle*, (Front Page, November 11, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Tanner, “Kansans Serve with Honor.”

<sup>48</sup> Brent M.S. Campney, Emory University, “This Is Not Dixie: The Imagined South, the Kansas Free State Narrative and the Rhetoric of Racist Violence,” *Southern Spaces*, (September 6, 2007).

equality with blacks, but at the same time they were equally uncomfortable with denying black people the basic liberties for which their state stood.

By the end of the Civil War, the total population of blacks in Kansas was only nine percent. Whites and blacks coexisted on friendly and equal terms as long as the population numbers stayed low. As Leiker tells us, "Toleration carried little cost in the sparsely settled rural areas of the plains."<sup>49</sup> African-Americans discovered that the further west they went the more racial restraints loosened for them. In 1862, the Homestead Act was passed in Congress and pioneers of both races set out for the West. Under this act, one could "acquire 160 acres of farmland by paying the government a fee of \$16.00, and living on and improving the land for five years to receive the title."<sup>50</sup> Blacks who lived in cities like Dodge City and Caldwell experienced equality in nearly everything they did. They went to the same churches, ate in the same restaurants, stayed in the same hotels and their children went to school with their white neighbors. Racial discord was there of course, but these developing cattle towns had very little segregation. Several African Americans became wealthy ranchers and land owners. Willis Peoples was one of those cattlemen. His ranch won the silver cup at the 1903 Kansas City Stock Show for the finest Hereford yearlings. Peoples had been a slave who migrated here from the south and became a cowboy in Dodge City. By the end of reconstruction, blacks in the South were beginning to see the writing on the wall. Rather quickly,

...Negroes realized that the North's commitment to equal rights was transitory and that the South was merely biding time, waiting for the chance to exclude the freedman from participation in the political process and relegate him to a servile status in the region's economic system.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Leiker, "Race Relations," 222.

<sup>50</sup> Marshall, *An Account of Afro-Americans*, 11.

<sup>51</sup> Billington and Hardway, *African-Americans, on the Western Frontier*, 3.

All too quickly, any political or economic gains they had made were being systematically and violently stripped away. A black man from Mississippi, who went to Kansas after reconstruction, and later returned to Mississippi for his family was "...seized by whites. His hands were cut off and he was thrown into his wife's arms with the comment, 'Now go to Kansas and work.'" <sup>52</sup> In 1878, S.A. Hackworth, a former slave from Texas, wrote to Governor John St. John of Kansas that,

Our masters will ever regard us as legal property stolen and forcibly taken away from then, and if They can't get our labor for nothing in one way, they will invent some other plan by which they can, for they make all the laws and own all the lands... The longer we stay here the worse it will become because our old masters are raising their children to believe and act as they do. We have been free for fourteen years and still we are poor and ignorant, yet we make as much cotton and sugar as we did when we were slaves, and it does us as little good now as it did then. <sup>53</sup>

Mr. Hackworth was one of the many blacks that came to Kansas during the 1870s in the Exodus. He and about a hundred other blacks settled in Graham County and called their town Nicodemus. This city was settled entirely by blacks and was a viable and successful farming community until the horrible dust storms of the thirties. If nothing else, Nicodemus was a story of perseverance, grit and determination, and the belief that freedom and self-government are worth any sacrifice.

**The Military.** The military has always played a big part in the history of Kansas. The Kansas First Infantry, established by James Lane in 1862 was the Union's first black regiments, Illegally as it turns

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<sup>52</sup> William Loren Katz, *Black People Who Made the Old West*, (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1992), 154.

<sup>53</sup> Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1986), 3.

out, but even so, blacks were fighting for Kansas and the Union from the beginning. Some of the blacks were still slaves at that time. The story usually just ends there with the regiment being formed and doing brave things, and James Lane being credited with starting it. It probably should too, because Lane had little altruistic or noble reasons for doing so. He was a true Free Soiler and "in no sense did his actions proceed from an egalitarian impulse. Lane believed that Negroes might just as well be cannon fodder as someone in his own family."<sup>54</sup>

By the end of the Civil War, the military's resources were being stretched to the limit. The South required a military presence as part of Reconstruction, Mexico was in a conflict with France and the border needed to be patrolled, and transportation routes to the goldfields in Montana and California had to be protected. This was all being done with fewer than forty thousand regular Army men. The Army's answer to these problems was to start allowing blacks to sign up. There had been 175,000 black men who had fought and died bravely in the Civil War. The Republican Congress felt the time was right to rescind the ban on allowing blacks to become part of the regular Army. When the Appropriation Act of 1866 was passed, it "provided for an expanded army and it specified that four regiments of infantry and two of cavalry would be composed of colored men."<sup>55</sup> Despite having to serve in segregated regiments, black soldiers "enjoyed a more equal footing with white soldiers than they would see again for decades."<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, by the turn of the century, Jim Crow had raised its ugly head and invaded the military. In 1901, "the Army expanded to include thirty-three thousand men, but provided for no new black regiments."<sup>57</sup>

At the Capitol in Topeka, blacks succeeded in "persuading the legislature to strike the word white from the militia clause in the state constitution. Nevertheless, blacks had to wait until the political unrest

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<sup>54</sup> Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, 10.

<sup>55</sup> William A. Dobak, "Fort Riley's Black Soldier and the Army's Changing Role in the West," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Great Plains*, Vol. 22, (Autumn, 1992), 216.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

of the 1890s and the war with Spain to officially be incorporated into the Kansas National Guard," in segregated units, of course.<sup>58</sup>

There were many influential, prominent white public officials who advocated black suffrage. Governor Samuel T. Crawford asserted that he saw "no reason in law or ethics which should exclude Negroes from all rights that others enjoy who no more are worthy, because of race or color...subjection of Negroes to discrimination in unjust, unwise, and tyrannical and ought to have no toleration, either by parties or legislative bodies."<sup>59</sup> Samuel Wood was a member of the state Senate and had formerly been prominent in the anti-slavery movement. Wood was one of the abolitionists who truly believed that slavery was a godless institution that was against all Christian values. Along with a prominent black attorney, Charles H. Langston, Wood organized the state Impartial Suffrage Association in Topeka in 1867, "to provide an agency to disseminate information and to garner support for equal voting rights, in the broad sense, without regard to sex, race, or color."<sup>60</sup> Former Governor Thomas Carney urged Kansas to "lead in the moral work as she had in the great martial work."<sup>61</sup> In 1869, the electorate rejected an amendment to remove the racial qualifications from the state constitution. Governor James M. Harvey told the state legislature that, "Uniformity in the civil and political rights of its citizens should be required of every government. There can be no justification in the retention of a monopoly of political power in our own favored class or white male citizens."<sup>62</sup> The rejection of black suffrage coincided with the rise in the black population in Kansas. It went from "a mere 627 in 1860 to 12,000 by 1866."<sup>63</sup> This rise was primarily in the larger cities such as Topeka, Wichita, and Kansas City. As mentioned before, the lower the population numbers, the more equal rights were afforded. With this sudden rise in the black population in the larger cities, the more prevalent was the segregation. The passage of the Fifteenth

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<sup>58</sup> Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, 26.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, 26.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>62</sup> Leiker, "Race Relations," 222.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

Amendment in 1870, however took the suffrage issue out of the hands of Kansas. In an odd twist of fate, neither of the two Kansas senators was present. Senator Edmond Ross, who took James Lane's seat, later confessed "to a degree of humiliation at the failure of Kansas to eliminate the race qualifications for suffrage on its own initiative."<sup>64</sup>

**Church Influences in the Black Communities.** The 1870s saw a large growth in the number of black churches that sprang up in Kansas. One of the first things former slaves did after the Civil War was to freely and openly build churches or establish places of worship wherever they could. For the first time blacks were able to put official denomination names on their buildings. They might only have had the use of a dilapidated building, but it would have a recognizable religious name on it. Black ministers who were ordained could now come and set up parishes.

The churches formed the backbone of many black communities. From the African Methodist Episcopal and Baptist churches to the black Pentecostals and the Church of God, and Saints of Christ, their influence with the African American communities, and on the state as a whole has been enormous.<sup>65</sup>

Even though it seems that the two do not belong together, religion and politics were combined in the black churches. In the churches, parishioners could come to air their grievances about discrimination, and find out the feelings of their fellow blacks concerning a possible run for a political office. All church membership became a status symbol. One would never be taken seriously in the black community if not a practicing member of a congregation, because status was not based on occupation alone. Black ministers had a great deal of influence on the social and moral shaping of black Kansas.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>65</sup> Amy Leigh Beecher, "The African American Religious Experience in Kansas," ([http://www.ku.edu/ksreligion/docs/history/african\\_american.pdf](http://www.ku.edu/ksreligion/docs/history/african_american.pdf)),3.

Whatever denomination blacks chose to belong to, Membership in one or the other of the churches was a sign of social success. Prominence in the Church and in social affairs provided a measure of influence in the black community as a whole. The church clearly reflected the dimensions of ascribed and achieved status as well as growth of the Negro community.<sup>66</sup>

Politically, a black man who was considering a run for a political office, or a patronage job, especially in the Capitol of Topeka, would have to be a man that the minister could honestly recommend to the whites. The black churches were where the best of the black community came from. These men were honest, God-fearing, and would come highly recommended. This is where a black politician would find his constituents, and raise money.

In the late nineteenth century, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was the best organized and wealthiest of the black churches. By 1890, it had sixty-eight organized congregations in Kansas with a membership of 3,600. These A.M.E. churches were generally home to the elite of the black community. Black A.M.E. ministers often had the ear of the other race, also. The "ministers of the A.M.E. churches played a key role in city and state government and civic affairs."<sup>67</sup>

There are several A.M.E. churches in Kansas that are historically noteworthy. The first A.M.E. church was in Leavenworth and was a hotbed of pro-slavery sympathy. This church was built in 1859 by the Reverend John M. Wilkerson. It was a frame structure that had an unfilled basement underneath. This basement became a station on the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. St. Luke's A.M.E. in Lawrence also had a stop on the Underground Railroad in 1862. In 1888, the A.M.E. church in Quindaro, (Kansas City, Kansas), founded Western University. This all black university became an industrial college in 1902. Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church of Topeka still sits on the original foundation from 1887. The current church was built in 1930 and has a very interesting architectural feature, "six stained

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>67</sup> Beecher, "The African American Religious Experience in Kansas," 5.



glass windows that chronicle important achievements of blacks throughout American history.”<sup>68</sup> In 1982, the church added two additional windows that honor Martin Luther King, Jr. and the *Brown v. Board of Education* 1954 court case.

The most important role that black churches have played in the history of Kansas and the nation as a whole has been in the Civil Rights Movement. In Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X we have two men who were “strong religious figures for which faith was a major drive for recognition and equality.”<sup>69</sup> The biggest influence of religion in the civil rights movement happened right here in Kansas in the *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. The case that finally eliminated Jim Crow and school segregation was brought to the courts by “among others, the Reverend Oliver Brown, the pastor of St. Mark’s A.M.E. Church in Topeka.”<sup>70</sup> To this day, in the twenty-first century, the black churches are still the backbone of their communities.

**Fraternal Orders and Civic Clubs.** In March, 1775, a free black man named Prince Hall and fourteen other free blacks, were made Master Masons in the Army Lodge attached to one of General Gage’s regiments, then stationed near Boston. This same Mason’s Lodge granted these blacks authority to meet at their lodge, to go in procession at St. John’s Day and as a Lodge to bury their dead; but they could not confer or perform any other Masonic work. For nine years these men, together with other free black men who had received their degrees elsewhere, assembled and enjoyed their limited privileges as Masons. Finally in March, 1784,

Prince Hall petitioned the Grand Lodge in England, through a Worshipful Master of a subordinate lodge in London for a warrant or charter. On September 29, 1784, the Warrant was issued. It was not delivered, however, until three years later owing to the fact that the brother to whom the

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>69</sup> Beecher, “The African American Religious Experience in Kansas,” 6.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

matter was entrusted, failed to deliver it. It was not delivered. However, until the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, 1787, by Capt. James Smith, a seafaring man, who was incidentally the brother-in-law of John Hancock one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>71</sup>

On May 6, 1787, by virtue of the authority of this charter, African Lodge, number forty-nine was established and began to work as a regular Masonic body. Soon after that, a General Assembly of Black Masons met in Mason's Hall, in Boston, and formed African Grand Lodge with Prince Hall as its first Grand Master. Prince Hall died in 1807, and in his honor their Grand Lodge changed from African Grand Lodge to Prince Hall Grand Lodge.

Fraternal organizations of all kinds were important status symbols to the prominent black man. But the Mason's were especially important because they had been open to black men since before the Revolution. For the black man this fact was a confirmation that they were as much true Americans as their white counterparts. Large cities like Topeka, Wichita, and Kansas City, all had Masonic Orders. Even the smaller cities like Dodge City and Olathe had chapters. Other large cities in the Union also had orders and like all Masons traveling between chapters was done on a regular basis. Yearly meetings were held in various cities just like they were for their white brothers. The Masons of any city were obligated under Masonic fraternal rules to allow any Masons, black or white, the right to hold their meetings in any Masonic Hall available. This included the use of the hall for social gatherings as well. In Topeka, to abide by this rule, white Masons had the bottom floor and black Masons the top. In Dodge City, the black Masons were the first to build a hall so they got the bottom floor and the whites the top. Along with the Masons, the larger cities were host to several different fraternal organizations such as the Knights Templars, Knights of Pythias, and the Oddfellows.

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<sup>71</sup> "Beginnings of Free Masonry among Negroes in America," a souvenir program, 99th Annual Communication Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F. and M. of Kansas Jurisdiction, June 5-6-7, 1974, (Wichita State University Archives).

All of these men's fraternal organizations had ladies' auxiliaries attached to them. These women, like their white female counterparts, handled all the social concerns and programs for their own race. Keeping in mind that black women, like white women were an extension of their husband's reputation and class, wives and daughters of prominent black men, especially minister's wives, were well aware of their role in the cult of true womanhood. Without significant exception, the wives of these men did not work. "Indeed as an indicator of leadership status, the wife's use of leisure time in social and philanthropic affairs was as important a criterion for status as her husband's activities."<sup>72</sup> The life of a black middle class woman in late nineteenth century Kansas was every bit as confining as her white sister in Boston. In Topeka, the Woman's Benevolent Society Number Three boasted of being "the largest in the city and with proper management could be a powerful force for good."<sup>73</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham wrote that "Largely through the fund raising efforts of women, the black church built schools, provided clothes, and food to poor people, establishes old folks homes and orphanages, and made available a host of needed social welfare services."<sup>74</sup> It was the black women who initiated charity and reforms, and the black man who tended to invest their reforms energy in politics and law.

In 1896, the year of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, a group of black women from across the country got together in Washington, D.C. and the National Association of Colored Women was born. Kansas was represented by Elizabeth Washington from Topeka. By 1900, Kansas had ten different chapters of the Kansas Federation of Colored Women's Club. The biggest and most prestigious was the Gold Leaf chapter in Topeka. The Kansas Federation of Colored Women's Clubs "offered black Kansas women the opportunities for self-expression and education increasingly denied them by white society."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, 108.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>74</sup> Carol K. Coburn, "Women and Gender in Kansas History," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Great Plains*, (Summer, 2003), 142.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Not a lot of historical research has been done about this national club because of the scarcity of public and personal records. In Kansas, "this problem is alleviated somewhat by the reports of club activities which found their way into black newspapers and national magazines."<sup>76</sup> The editor of the *Topeka Plaindealer*, Nick Charles, "favored the growth of women's clubs, printed stories about them, and vigorously urged them to concern themselves with domestic science and service to their race."<sup>77</sup> These clubs were mainly in the large cities, like Topeka and Wichita, but Washington and her members would go to rural areas like Nicodemus and recruit many farm women. Rural women, whether black or white, were very misunderstood when it came to what they did for their families and communities. Women's economic contributions became "subsumed under 'head of household' production records."<sup>78</sup> These records told little about the actual role that rural women played in the maintenance of "families, farms, ranches, small businesses, schools, hospitals, and social agencies" and all the other things it took to be part of a rural community.<sup>79</sup>

The first of the black women's clubs formed in Kansas was the Ladies Refugee Aid Society, organized in Lawrence in 1864. Another important one was the Coterie, which was established in Topeka in 1889. Like the KFCW the Coterie was composed of the elite of black society. The Coterie was not based on social programs, but on cultural ones. These literary clubs

provided an outlet for the cultural interests of black Topekans. In addition to readings from Shakespeare and Tennyson, the association sponsored lectures, art exhibitions and musicals which were carried off with some sophistication even at home.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Marilyn Dell Brady, "Kansas Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1900-1930," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Great Plains*, Vol. 20 (Spring, 1986), 20.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Coburn, "Women and Gender," 143.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Coburn, "Women and Gender," 143.

*The Plaindealer*, on May 18, 1900, reported that “the Negroes of Kansas, like all persons in this and every other civilized country, are aspirants for higher literacy and educational qualifications commensurate with the spirit of the age.”<sup>81</sup> The Coterie, in conjunction with the *Plaindealer*, would sponsor music camps for talented children, and established scholarships for deserving and talented black children.

**Politics.** Black Kansans fared better at the hands of whites in politics than in any other state. Although they were only six percent of the population, they cast from fifteen to twenty percent of the vote. The political clout of the black population was enhanced “by the fact that it was concentrated in the state’s populous eastern counties. In 1880, one out of every six persons in Topeka and one out of every five in Kansas City was a Negro.”<sup>82</sup> When a large number of blacks joined the Populist Party they did so “only because Populism directly appealed to their own immediate self-interest, a self interest not shared by whites, through promises of protection and patronage.”<sup>83</sup> The black population had since the time of the Fifteenth Amendment always voted Republican. By 1880, there were 43,000 black voters in the state. Kansas Republicans “could ill afford to ignore black voters and politicians.”<sup>84</sup> Cox, in his book, *Blacks in Topeka*, lists several reasons that blacks were drawn to the Populist Party.

1. Populists opposition to lynching and the brutal convict leasing system, even though those were not an issue in Kansas.
2. Black Populists endorsed the party line exalting the virtues and addressing the problems of labor.
3. Populists viewed the coalition of Republican and monied interest

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>82</sup> Billington and Hardway, *African Americans on the Western Frontier*, 6.

<sup>83</sup> Chafe, “The Negro and Populism,” 404.

<sup>84</sup> Billington and Hardway, *African Americans on the Western Frontier*, 7

as a revocation of the nations' sacred bargain with freed and common men.

4. Populists validly proclaim themselves to be friends of the Negro laborer and advocate the causes of the laboring man throughout.

5. Populists would protect the lives of many helpless blacks even at home.

6. Populists had a more generous black participation in state and municipal politics.

7. The Populists endorsed active black involvement in the political voting Process and partly in access to offices.<sup>85</sup>

The promises proved as false as the ones that convinced the ex-slaves that they would find the Garden of Eden in Kansas. By the 1880s, the black population was becoming disillusioned by the Republican Party and "its indifference and prejudices."<sup>86</sup> Even so, the black Kansans did "not subscribe to the Populist attacks on the rich and wellborn who in the past had been their most dependable protectors. They were conservatives, not radicals."<sup>87</sup>

However, the race card was always at the forefront of the agenda. Blacks and whites "had a different perception of reality and therefore different definitions of self-interest."<sup>88</sup> When one considers that the People's Party in the South derived their leadership from the Democratic Party, one can see that equality was not on the table for long. White Democrats and Populist members "promised to abide by the white supremacist ideal that this is a white man's country."<sup>89</sup> But there was that large black vote to consider. Both white Democrats and white Populists "made election promises to African Americans of

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<sup>85</sup> Cox, Blacks in Topeka, Kansas, 162.

<sup>86</sup> Chafe, "The Negro and Populism," 402.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 404.

<sup>88</sup> Chafe, "The Negro and Populism," 416.

<sup>89</sup> Charles Postel, San Francisco State University, "American Populism, 1876-1896: Populism and Race: Separate and Unequal," (2009 Illinois During the Gilded Age Digitization Project), (<http://dig.lib.edu/gildedage/populism/popessay7.html>), 1.

economic opportunity and other reform.”<sup>90</sup> In states such as North Carolina it was essential for the Populists to court the black vote so they could overrun the Democrats in the next election. The white populists knew that the black vote could always be counted on to vote against the Democrats. Now all they had to do was get them away from the Republicans.

**Conclusion.** In this paper I have shown that black communities in Kansas have had a much easier time with racial discrimination than in other states in the Union in the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. I have shown that status in the black community was different than status in the white community. In the black community status was based on “more subtle, intangible forces than occupations and wealth.”<sup>91</sup> The moral way one lived one’s life and membership in community institutions like churches or clubs indicated respectability. “Fulfilling most of these criteria for status and prestige, ascended positions of authority in many organizations and thereby constitutes a leadership elite.”<sup>92</sup> Kansas also had a high literacy rate for all its citizens, which enabled its black population to be more aware of current events throughout the state and the world. Kansas lay in the wake, not the eye of the Jim Crow storm.

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>91</sup> Cox, *Blacks in Topeka*, 101.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

## **Dr. John Brinkley: Quack Doctor, Radio Personality, and Politician**

Jason C. Gilliland

“What a little tinkering with his character, a little more honesty here, a little more intelligence there—would have made him a real leader of men.”<sup>1</sup> William Allen White, the famous newspaperman from Emporia never was an ardent fan of Dr. John R. Brinkley. During much of the 1930s, White, along with other news writers, newspaper owners, medical journal writers, radio men, and other various commentators, engaged in a campaign to destroy the famous “rejuvenation” doctor. Others considered Brinkley to be the greatest doctor in North America, if not the world. Brinkley indeed, could have improved on his honesty and his character. However, he was not unintelligent or backwards. On the contrary, he was one of America’s first true media moguls. He had a true *savoir-faire* for self-promotion and understanding for the awesome possibilities of mass media marketing. Brinkley saw potential in new technologies and devised new methods to exploit them to their fullest. He used both good and bad press to further the world’s knowledge of himself and his work. He pioneered mass advertising by utilizing America’s modern postal system, newspaper advertisements, pamphlets, radio, and recorded media. With the same zeal that he exuded in his medical practice, he unintentionally became an innovator in radio broadcasting, modern American political campaigning, mass media advertising and “get rich quick” schemes. Much of what we are familiar with today in the world of “as seen on TV”, quack medicines and cures, contemporary political campaigning and the modern day country music industry, can be traced, in part, back to Dr. John Brinkley, the goat-gland doctor.

In this paper, I will look at Brinkley’s rise and fall through the lens of the media, and explore his use of it for self-promotion and as an advertisement tool. I will also look at how the media reacted to Brinkley and how those in the media who did not support him, helped lead him to his eventual downfall.

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<sup>1</sup> William Allen White, *Emporia Gazette*, May 28, 1942.



**A Brief History.** John Romulus Brinkley (he would later change his middle name to Richard, the same as his father), was born July 8, 1885, in North Carolina. He was the illegitimate child of John Richard Brinkley and Sarah Candace Burnett, the niece of Brinkley's wife, Sarah Mingus. Burnett died when Brinkley was five years old and his father five years after that. In 1907, Brinkley married Sally Wike, a former classmate and they had three children who grew to adulthood. They divorced in April, 1913, Sally keeping the children. Brinkley briefly posed in Greensville, Tennessee as an "electric doctor," a 'doctor' who used electrical devices to treat patients or in Brinkley's case, blue colored water. He eventually went to jail for practicing medicine without a license and writing bad checks. After his brief stay in jail, he ended up in Memphis, Tennessee. While there he met Minnie Jones, whom he would later marry.

During World War I, Brinkley briefly worked as a field surgeon in the Army Reserve Medical Corps. Ironically, it was a typographical error in a newspaper that set Brinkley on the path to his destiny. After Brinkley was discharged from the Army Reserves, he spotted an advertisement in the *Kansas City Star*. The town of Milford, Kansas, population 2000, was in need of a town physician. A typesetter at the *Star* had accidentally added an extra zero to the town's population which was only 200.<sup>2</sup>

Brinkley opened a 16-room clinic in Milford in 1918. According to his biography, Brinkley was approached by a local farmer who complained that he had lost his "manly vigor." Brinkley legend, which was mostly self-authored, tells of Brinkley joking with his patient that his problems in the bedroom would cease if he had "a pair of those buck glands in you." "Well, why don't you put 'em in?" asked his patient.<sup>3</sup> The farmer then offered him one hundred and fifty dollars to perform the operation, which Brinkley did. Later on the farmer's son told the *Kansas City Star* that Brinkley had offered to pay the farmer a substantial fee if he would allow Brinkley to carry out his

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<sup>2</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2002), 27.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Carson, *The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 33.

experiment.<sup>4</sup> As word of mouth circulated, more and more people began to request this unique new operation. When Brinkley advertised that the farmer and his wife had given birth to a baby boy (named Billy after the goat), even more patients began showing up in Milford. Now Brinkley was promoting his operation as a cure for over twenty ailments. Brinkley's clientele also included some of Hollywood's most famous actors, politicians and business men from all over the globe. He was quickly became famous and a household name.

Brinkley was invited to visit Los Angeles in 1922 by Harry Chandler. Chandler owned the *Los Angeles Times* and KHJ, a local radio station, of which there were relatively few in the world at that time. Chandler had invited Brinkley to Los Angeles to perform his operation on himself and some of his editors. Brinkley was not licensed to practice medicine in California, one of many states that did not recognize his eclectic degree. Eclectic medicine was a style of medicine that utilized herbal medicines, chiropractic therapy, and various folk remedies to heal patients. Chandler however, managed to pull some strings and got Brinkley a thirty day permit to practice medicine in California. Chandler told Brinkley that if the operation was a success, Chandler would give him free publicity that would further his fame and clientele. If he failed, Chandler would ruin him. Chandler was thrilled with the results. He paid Brinkley his \$500.00 fee but suggested that he should raise the price for such a wonderful operation, so Brinkley did. From then on, Brinkley would ask for \$750.00.<sup>5</sup>

Like Chandler, Brinkley saw the potential in owning a radio station. He initially claimed that he just wanted one to entertain his guests at his hospital. Soon, however, he began advertising his operations and his own special surgical talents over KFKB, his Milford radio station. With each new idea his fame and fortune reached new heights. Brinkley operated one of the most popular radio stations in America. He gave medical speeches and advertised his operation and medicine from his group of affiliated pharmacies. Brinkley's radio

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<sup>4</sup> Gene Fowler and Bill Crawford, *Border Life: Quacks, Yodelers, Pitchmen, Psychics, and Other Amazing Broadcasters of the American Airwaves* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 20.

<sup>5</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 46.

station broadcast a wide range of information and music including classical and country music performances, French lessons, and farm commodity reports. Another popular feature on the station was his Medical Question Box. Radio was still a relatively new entertainment medium in the 1920s. Most radio stations' programming mirrored the tastes of the stations' owners, not its audience. Brinkley saw the potential growth of radio's popularity and tailored his programming for his targeted audience: rural Americans who appreciated his station, the entertainment it offered, and potentially looked to him for their medical needs. All of this publicity and Brinkley's outlandish claims caught the attention of the American Medical Association and their up and coming "quack" hunter, Morris Fishbein. Fishbein would gain acclaim as the member of the AMA who tracked down, researched, and exposed medical quacks and frauds.

By 1930, Brinkley was at his peak, and then the bottom began to fall out. Diagnosing patients over the air waves was a dangerous public nuisance, but the AMA had no authority to censure him. They began to look at Brinkley's medical practice more closely. The association began a campaign to discredit him and enlisted the help of the *Kansas City Star*. This brought Brinkley to the attention of the Kansas Medical Board, which would eventually hold formal hearings to decide whether or not to revoke Brinkley's medical license, which they did. Soon afterwards the Federal Radio Commission held hearings and revoked his broadcasting license as well. Brinkley, unfazed, planned his next venture. He decided to run for Governor of Kansas. Brinkley ran both in 1930 and in 1932, losing both times, although there is some debate about the results of the 1930 election.

At this point, Brinkley moved his practice to Del Rio, Texas and built a new radio station just across the border in Mexico. His new station was christened XER and later XERA. Brinkley continued his unique blend of advertisements, health talks, music, astrology, and psychics. By this time, Brinkley no longer performed goat-gland operations. The Doctor now specialized in prostate operations, although he would forever be known for his goat gland work, due to his extensive use of advertising and self-promotion. Brinkley however, could not escape his nemesis at the AMA.

In 1938, Morris Fishbein attacked Brinkley in a series of particularly critical articles in which he questioned Brinkley's career and medical credentials. Brinkley sued Fishbein for libel and

\$250,000. The trial began in March of 1939. The jury found for Fishbein and Brinkley was legally labeled a “charlatan and a quack.”<sup>6</sup> Soon after, due to the court’s decision, a deluge of wrongful practice lawsuits were filed against Brinkley which cost him millions of dollars in payments to former patients and out of court settlements. In 1941, Brinkley filed for bankruptcy, and the Mexican government shut down XERA due to pressure from the American government. The U.S. Postal Service began investigating him for mail fraud due to his mass usage of advertisements, pamphlets and form letters all of which made questionable medical claims. Brinkley suffered three heart attacks and one of his legs had to be amputated, due to poor circulation. He died on May 26, 1942 before he could be brought to trial for mail fraud.

**The “Brinkley Effect.”** In today’s high tech, media-saturated world it has become commonplace to see a public figure in the newspaper, hear them on the radio, buy their books, and see their pictures plastered everywhere. The field of public relations did not really exist before the 1920s. The radio and advertisement industries were both relatively new fields. Much of what we take for granted today in the world of media, was created, tested and implemented during the 1920s. Brinkley sensed the possibilities and put an advertisement in the *Kansas City Star* to hire a promotional expert to help him promote his operation. This ad man explained to Brinkley that he needed to use newspaper articles, advertisements, and direct mailing to make his name known.<sup>7</sup> Brinkley wasted no time and quickly began to implement these suggestions. He mailed out pamphlets and books to describe his hospital and medical prowess, and increased his presence on the radio. Brinkley and his public relation team made sure that his name and his operation were constantly in some newspaper or magazine.

By 1920, Brinkley had performed many of his “rejuvenation” operations and was quickly obtaining a reputation for his work. The chancellor of the University of Chicago Law School, J.J. Tobias, by chance read an article about Brinkley’s operations and decided that

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<sup>6</sup> Eric Junke, *Quacks & Crusaders: The Fabulous Careers of John Brinkley, Norman Baker, & Harry Hoxsey* (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 2002), 33.

<sup>7</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 34.

he could benefit from such an operation. Tobias traveled to Milford and received the operation, which he deemed a great success. He prepared a statement for the press which was published in the *Chicago Herald Examiner*. This article brought Brinkley more renown and more importantly business.<sup>8</sup> Brinkley quickly realized that he could increase awareness of his medical practice by utilizing free press of this nature. However, his plans were not to come to fruition in Chicago. Brinkley wanted to build a hospital with biological research labs and a four year school to teach his technique to prospective "Brinkley" doctors. Another Chicago newspaper, *The Chicago Tribune*, interviewed several prominent Chicago physicians who gave Brinkley the thumbs down and said his operation was impossible and a sham.<sup>9</sup> While this put an end to his dream of a sprawling Chicago medical complex, it did not stop the public from wanting to believe, or Brinkley gladly giving them, what they wanted.

In another article in the *Chicago Herald Examiner*, from Feb 8, 1920, Brinkley was portrayed as a medical savior. During this period he began to implant goat glands into women as well. "More than 1,000 letters from persons who see the star of hope in the Brinkley discovery lie unanswered in the doctor's office." According to the article, Brinkley, his staff, and several extra workers sorted through and classified letters that he had received. Brinkley said that out of all the letters received, there "was little or no hope for more than half the number [of women who had written to him]." Brinkley said that the most remarkable thing about these stacks of letters "is the proof offered by them that there are so many women in the world who are unable to bear children and that these women are willing to make any sacrifice to become mothers." Brinkley claimed that he could not help many of these women because they had been deprived of the chance to have children due to hysterectomies. This would become a common theme throughout Brinkley's career. He would often claim that he could not help a certain percentage of his patients due to the malpractice of mainstream doctors, and that if patients would only have come to him sooner, he could have saved them time, money, and pain. Although written by Steve O'Grady, a staff writer for the paper, the article has Brinkley's guiding touch all over it. It uses typical Brinkley methods for sizing up, and selling to his intended

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<sup>8</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Gerald Carson, *The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley*, 45-47.

audience. "One would not guess that there were so many women in the world who so crave the halo of motherhood...." Dr. Brinkley pointed out that the letters, with an occasional exception, were written by women of character, refinement and high intellect. "This sex misery is not to be found among the so-called poorer classes. It exists with the more cultured element of our population."<sup>10</sup> Brinkley was making it clear to prospective patients that they needed to be able to afford his treatment before wasting his time. The article concludes that if more doctors would embrace this "revolutionary theory", this "Brinkley theory", he could lessen their workload. Brinkley would "do the best he can to meet the demands...to take immediate care of all the patients who are clamoring for attention."<sup>11</sup>

As Brinkley historian, Gerald Carson wrote in his book, *The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley*, these types of articles were the result of what may be called "the Brinkley Effect". Brinkley took every opportunity to further public awareness of himself, his operation, and his increasing fame and profit potential. Times were good and the money was coming in. In 1921, Brinkley went to New York where he bought Minnie a new Stutz Bearcat automobile and a fur coat. "We are prospering, because our keynote is service."<sup>12</sup> This mass infusion of media awareness also effected Milford. On a good day at least five hundred people showed up in Milford, crowding into the only

restaurant in town. Many would sleep in their cars, and many pictures can be seen with cars surrounding the Brinkley Hospital grounds. During 1928, the Brinkley Hospital grossed \$150,000! Brinkley had city water installed, made Milford an electric-light town and said that he would eventually pave the highway to Junction City.<sup>13</sup> Brinkley truly excelled at using every method at his disposal to increase his fame and fortune, keep those around him happy and supporting him.

One of the best examples of how Brinkley manipulated the press came from an unsigned full page article in the *New York*

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<sup>10</sup> Steve O'Grady, "Thousands Seek Babies by Goat Gland Operation," *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, February 8, 1920.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Gerald Carson, *The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley*, 82.

<sup>13</sup> Carson, *The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley*, 77.

*Evening Post* from 1926. A huge goat head takes up most of the top of the page. One of the horns spells out "Preaches Fundamentalism" while the other horn spells out "Practices Goat Gland Science." The subtitle of the piece is "How a Famous Surgeon Combines Old-Time Religion and New-Fangled Operations on a Strange Medico-Gospel Farm." On one side it shows Brinkley holding the Billy Goat Baby and on the other side it shows Minnie holding a white goat and a black goat. The article states that Brinkley held a degree from the University of Pavia, in Italy. This was true, but the degree was later revoked by Benito Mussolini, although Brinkley would claim it for the rest of his life. Across the street from the Brinkley Hospital, Dr. Charles Draper, a fundamentalist preacher (hired by Brinkley) gave sermons against evolution and the need to follow the Bible. Naturally, the reader was invited to Milford to meet "the most unusual scientist-fundamentalist in the whole world, Dr. John R. Brinkley of Milford, Kansas, who saves souls with the word of God and repairs human bodies with glands from lively goats."<sup>14</sup>

Brinkley kept several public relations men on staff at this point. One in particular, H. Roy Mosnat, specialized in keeping Brinkley's name in the newspapers. Minnie once said that it was Mosnat that "got Dr. Brinkley into that 'crooked' work."<sup>15</sup> In a set of articles from 1921 to 1924 in the *Junction City Union*, claims were made that Brinkley transplanted an eye from one rabbit to another. Helping the blind was of the greatest importance to Brinkley, according to the article. Brinkley also was working on a cure for cancer, which if he could perfect, "To Kansas will come the honor of a cancer cure."<sup>16</sup> While newspapers and radio broadcasts helped Brinkley to advertise, he also took advantage of another mass advertising medium, the United States Postal Service.

Brinkley inundated his radio listeners with advertisements for pamphlets and books that detailed his modern and luxurious hospital, his groundbreaking operation, and his skills as a surgeon. Once received by prospective clients, there usually was a questionnaire to fill out with information about their health issues. There were often

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<sup>14</sup> "Preaches Fundamentalism-Practices Goat-Gland Science," *New York Evening Journal*, February 8, 1920.

<sup>15</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 45.

<sup>16</sup> Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 45.

questions about the potential patient's financial health as well. Once received back at the Brinkley Hospital, Brinkley would then bombard prospective patients with a barrage of form letters, coupons for free books or discounts on operations. He mailed out pamphlets and books "at no obligation", except for a small fee of a few dollars to cover printing and shipping costs. This example of one of Brinkley's form letters is from 1940, when Brinkley was in Arkansas. However, it was typical of letters he would send out throughout his career.

Dear Mr. Brooks: Have you thought of trying our \$250.00 prostate work.... Of course, I cannot say that we would accept you for the \$250.00 work until after you were here and had our complete examination which will cost you \$60.00 if you do not stay; but only \$50.00 if you do stay. The hospital rates are \$35.00 Weekly.... It is your health or your funeral.... You cannot take your money with you when you die.... Let me hear from you at once. Sincerely yours, J.R. Brinkley, M.D.<sup>17</sup>

Brinkley sent out similar letters to people who wrote in for information, then their name would be added to a mailing list. If he received no response, he would mail out additional letters, each one written in more harsh language, asking the recipient why they had not written back or if they were wasting his time.<sup>18</sup> Brinkley often worded his letters to make his clients believe that it was necessary for them to get treatment quickly at his hospital. They were in a race against time only he could help them avert. The Brinkley advertisement campaign, alongside more positive newspaper coverage, helped Brinkley become famous. However, not all of Brinkley's press was positive. In the coming years, newspapers, radio broadcasters, and others would be instrumental in both Brinkley's successes and his downfall.

At first, the negative press was minimal compared to the positive. However, in 1923, the *Kansas City Journal Post* and the *St. Louis Star* begin a series of articles about eclectic schools in Kansas City, Chicago, and St. Louis. Several schools were found selling degrees for up to \$1,000.00 to people whose attendance to classes

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<sup>17</sup> Dr. John R. Brinkley to R. Miles Brooks, 16 May, 1940. John R. Brinkley Papers, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>18</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 74.



were minimal. "Doctors" with similar degrees would get licenses through reciprocity licensing in other states.<sup>19</sup> The article in the *Kansas Journal Post*, "Brinkley Asked about Diploma Deal," stated that Brinkley was asked by the prosecutor's office to come to Kansas City to "throw what light" he could on the operations of the medical diploma mill, run by one Date Alexander. According to the article, Brinkley outshone his fellow alumnus in both fame and fortune. It goes on to say that Brinkley also owned a "big radio broadcasting station" and had talent in running it, and that "anyone who can play or sing gets a chance." The article continued by saying that because of his lack of pedigree, the nature of the operation, and the cold reception in Chicago, Brinkley went back to Milford because of the seclusion it offered. *The Post* stated that Brinkley had the townspeople of Milford in his pocket. The family that ran the post office was backed by Brinkley, who raised the monthly pay from \$20.00 to \$120.00 a month and built a new post office to accommodate the deluge of letters Brinkley received. The town also benefited from the Brinkley Hospital, which *The Post* estimated received forty to forty-five patients a month. *The Post* article also noted with some incredulity that "After the first 'write-up' in *The Journal-Post*, many people from the town of Milford discontinued *The Journal-Post* and Dr. Brinkley barred it from the hospital."<sup>20</sup>

Brinkley found great success during this time period, and believed that his fortunes would continue to grow. He received thousands of letters a day with people asking him a wide variety of medical questions and treatment options. "I was getting three and four and five thousand letters a day," Brinkley would later say. "...Why not have a Medical Question Box reading and responding to inquirers' letters over the air... It was an immediate success." Brinkley selected a few of his listeners' letters and prescribed over the air waves of KFKB what he thought they should do. Usually he recommended "special" medicines that one could only get from his pharmacy in Milford, and later from a Brinkley Pharmaceutical Association member pharmacy. Naturally, the prices were inflated and the pharmacies were raking in the money. Brinkley also made a cut from the medications. People complained to the AMA after getting

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51.

<sup>20</sup> "Brinkley To Be Asked About Diploma Deal," *Kansas City Journal-Post*, October 30, 1923.

sicker when taking Brinkley's prescriptions. The AMA's hands were tied, as they could only inform the public at this point of Brinkley's practices. They were however, keeping files on Brinkley's activities.

The AMA was not the only group concerned with the growing popularity and thriving business of Brinkley. Business began to dry up for local pharmacies. In response to numerous protests, Brinkley started the Brinkley Pharmaceutical Association, which was in effect, a huge money racket. Patients came to a Brinkley pharmacy and asked for a prescription based on what Brinkley prescribed to them or other patients with similar symptoms over the radio. The local pharmacists were pleased as they were reporting, in some cases, a \$75-100.00 a day increase in profits. In an interesting move, which did not pay off in the long run, Brinkley made Percy Walker, a Topeka druggist, the president of the Association. Walker was the brother-in-law of William Smith, the Attorney General of Kansas.<sup>21</sup>

Patent medicine manufacturers were also displeased with his success. Shortly after the formation of the Brinkley Pharmaceutical Association, they began writing letters of protest to the *Kansas City Star* that Brinkley was ruining their business. They told the *Star's* owners that if someone did not do something soon, that they would have to pull their advertisements from the paper, which were a major source of income for them.<sup>22</sup> Brinkley began prescribing over the radio with the Medical Question Box. Fishbein and the AMA's concern for the public's well-being and their focus on the negative side of Brinkley's activities convinced them that someone needed to protect the public.<sup>23</sup> Fishbein began to publish articles in the AMA's journal, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* about Brinkley. He was joined by the *Kansas City Star's* ace reporter, A.B. McDonald.<sup>24</sup> Besides influence from Fishbein and the AMA, the *Star* might have had other ulterior motives for critical articles about Brinkley. In 1927, KFKB and WDAF, a station owned by the paper, both applied for 5,000 watts of power. At this time, KFKB was the

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<sup>21</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 76.

<sup>22</sup> Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 83.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>24</sup> Eric Junke, *Quacks & Crusaders*, 11-13.

strongest with 1,500 watts. KFKB was awarded the increase in wattage, WDAF was not. Another interesting fact connected to this incident is that, Sam Pickard, a Kansas State University alumnus and acquaintance of Brinkley, was working in Washington, DC for the FRC when Brinkley's application was approved.<sup>25</sup>

Both the *Star's* campaign and the AMA's prodding influenced the Federal Radio Commission's decision to revoke his broadcasting license, and the Kansas Medical Board's decision to look into revoking Brinkley's license to practice medicine.

**Coverage of the Federal Radio Commission and Kansas Medical Board Hearings.** In a June 14, 1930 article, *The Wichita Eagle* reported that the Federal Radio Commission decided that very day to close down Brinkley's radio station by a vote of three to two. According to the article, Commissioners Robinson and Sykes voted to place the station on probation "with the stipulation that it discontinued broadcasting individual prescriptions." Commissioner Robinson pointed out that if the commission was going to take away Brinkley's license, "it had better go right down the line.... Westinghouse, General Electric, Henry Field of Iowa and many others do the same thing." The other three commissioners, Saltzman, Lafount and Starbuck, voted to take the station off the air completely. The article continued by saying that "Attorneys for Dr. John R. Brinkley tonight prepared to carry to the highest court in the country the Milford hospital owner's efforts to enjoin the Kansas Board of Medical Registration and Examination from proceeding on a complaint seeking revocation of the certificate authorizing him to practice medicine and surgery in this state."<sup>26</sup> Brinkley was allowed to continue to broadcast pending appeal. In an article from February 2, 1931, *The Wichita Beacon* reported the denial of Brinkley's appeal. "The Radio commission's refusal to renew the license of Station KFKB at Milford, Kansas, was upheld today by the District of Columbia court of appeals." It continued by saying that the Farmers & Bankers Life Insurance Company of Wichita was in negotiations to buy KFKB from Brinkley which it eventually would.<sup>27</sup> Farmer & Bankers Life relocated the station to Abilene, Kansas where it operated for many years until it

<sup>25</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 83.

<sup>26</sup> Associated Press, "KFKB Is Ordered Off Air," *Wichita Eagle*, June 14, 1930.

<sup>27</sup> Associated Press, "Court Upholds Act Silencing Brinkley Radio," *Wichita Beacon*, February 2, 1931.

was sold. Eventually the equipment and expertise wound up in Wichita, Kansas where it became popular country station KFDI.<sup>28</sup>

On April 29, 1930, the *Kansas City Star* reported that authorities in Kansas were seeking to serve Brinkley a citation to appear before the Kansas Medical Board.<sup>29</sup> In another article, this one written by A.B. McDonald from May 2, 1930, the *Star* claimed to have had received many letters from druggists refusing to fill his over-the-radio prescriptions on moral grounds. The druggists argued that any reputable physician would examine their patients, learn their past medical history, and then diagnose them. Brinkley however, "would not be bothered with such trifling details." The article also described how Brinkley advised listeners not to go to a doctor who would perform surgery, but to instead take one of his prescriptions. "Any Doctor that would cut into you for that should be in the penitentiary." McDonald goes on to say that Brinkley's chief aim was to create "distrust and suspicion of all doctors, except himself...." Dr. L. Dawson of Ottawa, Kansas, told McDonald that local doctors and druggists were not trying to "strangle Brinkley," but they felt he was a danger to the health of the people of Kansas. Dawson also stated that members of the Kansas medical profession disapproved of Brinkley's unprofessional methods. "... If he were proceeding along scientific paths, if he was in any manner constructive in his work, the profession would not be opposing him."<sup>30</sup>

On May 4, 1930, McDonald, in an article entitled "Brinkley Plots," claimed that Brinkley, in a "desperate effort to head off testimony", was sending out his men to "persuade" former clients into giving positive testimony in the hearing over his medical license. "Desperate, He Sends out Agents to Get Affidavits to Block the Medical Board," the article read beneath the title.<sup>31</sup>

Brinkley's upcoming medical board hearing was not the only issue causing him trouble at the time. On April 10, 1930, Fishbein

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<sup>28</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 103.

<sup>29</sup> Topeka Branch, "A Quackery Brand: The Complaint Against Dr. Brinkley Is a Review of His Professional Life," *Kansas City Star*, April 29, 1930.

<sup>30</sup> A.B. McDonald, "A Giant Racket," *Kansas City Star*, May 2, 1930.

<sup>31</sup> A.B. McDonald, "Brinkley Plots" *Kansas City Star*, May 4, 1930.

wrote an editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in which he described Brinkley as "a charlatan of the rankest sort."<sup>32</sup> Junction City physician William S. Yates distributed the article in and around Geary County, in efforts to discredit Brinkley.<sup>33</sup>

On May 7, 1930 summons were served to Fishbein and Yates. Brinkley sued the two men for libel. Fishbein was in Topeka to give a speech on the topic of "medical quack and charlatans." Fishbein, who that very afternoon had been served with papers for the \$500,000 libel suit against him, never mentioned Brinkley by name. He talked about charlatans and quacks in general. He tells the audience how they operated and how they all have a radio station because "when the charlatan gets on the air the people are helpless. They must take the filth and the rot along with the entertainment. The radio should be regulated by the government for the protection of the people against the quack and the charlatan and not for their exploitation." He did, however, mention Brinkley after the speech was over as he was answering questions from the audience.<sup>34</sup>

In a different article from May 8, 1930, McDonald stated that "Physicians and surgeons of Kansas, in convention here, are indignant at the arrogance and effrontery of Dr. John Brinkley, the Kansas goat-gland quack in suing Dr. Morris Fishbein."<sup>35</sup> With the upcoming medical board hearing and the libel lawsuit, Kansas doctors at last found the opportunity to publicly unite against Brinkley.

On October 8, 1930, the case of *John R. Brinkley v. Morris Fishbein* and William Yates, No. 6949, was tried in the Geary County courthouse. He eventually dropped the suit on a technicality and his upcoming hearing in front of the Kansas Medical Board.<sup>36</sup>

Now with the state medical board hearing looming in the background, newspaper articles became more negative. May 13, *The Kansas City Star* reported, "Brinkley's Deliberate Open-Faced Quackery Almost Unbelievable."<sup>37</sup> On May 26, *The Star* printed an

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<sup>32</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 84.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-89.

<sup>34</sup> Staff Reporter, "Expose of Quackery," *Kansas City Star*, May 8, 1930.

<sup>35</sup> A.B. McDonald, "Doctors' Ire Up," *Kansas City Star*, May 8, 1930.

<sup>36</sup> Gerald Carson, *The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley*, 130.

<sup>37</sup> A.B. McDonald, "Amazes a Nurse," *Kansas City Star*, May 13, 1930.

article entitled "The Charlatan in Big Business" in which a former Brinkley secretary told an investigative reporter of Brinkley's mail order methods and how he hired a former patient, not to write paid testimonials but work in the advertisement department for thirty dollars a week. "Imagine such a charlatan getting away with a scheme of that sort." On June 13, 1930, the Kansas Supreme Court "handed down a decision in which it denied J.R. Brinkley, alleged rejuvenation specialist, an order restraining the state medical board from taking action next Tuesday to revoke his license." The article gave a list of charges being brought against Brinkley. They ranged from gross immorality to selling liquor during prohibition. "These charges grew out of the alleged goat gland operation... and out of the charge that he was prescribing over the radio and was engaged in unprofessional conduct in so doing."<sup>38</sup> "Come-on Experts", from July 17, 1930, tells the testimony of one John Zahner. Zahner spent \$500.00 on a "Brinkley" operation the previous November. He recounted how he was rushed through the hospital examination, and how the doctors and even Minnie pressured him into getting the expensive operation. Brinkley and his colleague, Doctor Osborne, operated and removed part of his prostate. When the incision would not heal, Zahner went back and was told by Osborne that he needed to go to a shoemaker and bind a rubber heel to the cut. Zahner went to a regular doctor who discovered a stone in his bladder the size of a pigeon egg as well as that only a small piece of his prostate had been removed.<sup>39</sup> In another article, "Sworn statements and affidavits by former patients and others relating unfavorable results of operations performed at Dr. John R. Brinkley's hospital were read today at the Kansas Medical Board's hearing on a complaint seeking revocation of the physician's license to practice in this state."<sup>40</sup> In "Edgerton Raps Dr. Brinkley", E.S. Edgerton, the head of the Kansas Medical board testified that in his professional opinion, Brinkley's operation "has no value...no good can come from the transplanting of goat glands into human patients."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Universal Press, "Deny Brinkley Appeal For License Stay," *Wichita Eagle*, June 13, 1930.

<sup>39</sup> Topeka Bureau, "Come-On Experts," *Kansas City Star*, July 17 1930.

<sup>40</sup> Associated Press, "Patients Tear Into Brinkley," *Wichita Eagle*, July 18, 1930.

<sup>41</sup> Associated Press, "Edgerton Raps Dr. Brinkley" *Wichita Eagle*, July, 17, 1930.

Brinkley was not without his supporters, and many testified in the hearing. For example, in "Doctor Brinkley's Character Lauded by Home Town Men", it described how three men who knew Brinkley when he was young and living in North Carolina, testified positively on his early life and character.<sup>42</sup> In another article, this time from the *Kansas City Star*, E.S. Davis, from Meridan, Kansas told reporters that "One Operation Cured Half a Dozen Ailments.... Heart Trouble, Kidney Trouble, Aches, Even a Rupture, Disappeared Overnight.... Well In Just One Day."<sup>43</sup> A similar article appeared in *The Wichita Eagle* on July 24. "Former patients testified today they had received benefits from treatment and operations at his Milford, Kansas hospital which in some instances were said to have involved implanting of goat glands in their bodies."<sup>44</sup>

At the end of the hearing, Brinkley stunned the medical board. He invited them to his Milford hospital to witness one of his operations in person. A delegation of twelve doctors went to Milford as official spectators and reported their findings to the entire medical board. They witnessed the entire operation, from the removal of testicles from a goat to their implant into a human male patient. Then Brinkley preformed a second operation that took longer than usual because of complications. The committee testified on their findings, which basically stated that the operations were useless and potentially dangerous, due to the possibility of infections. One unnamed member of the board did say that although the operation offered no benefit to the patient, it was "as skillful and deft a demonstration of surgery as he had ever seen witnessed."<sup>45</sup> It did not take the Kansas State Medical Board long to revoke his license saying, "The licensee has performed and organized charlatanism...quite beyond the invention of the humble mountebank."<sup>46</sup>

**Brinkley for Governor.** "I get fat off my enemies.... The harder they hit me, the higher I bounce."<sup>47</sup> Most men would have

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<sup>42</sup> Associated Press, "Doctor Brinkley's Character Lauded by Home Town Men," *Wichita Eagle*, July 19, 1930.

<sup>43</sup> Topeka Bureau, "He Lauds Brinkley", *Kansas City Star*, July 24, 1930.

<sup>44</sup> Associated Press, "Former Patients Rally To Aid of Doctor Brinkley," *Wichita Eagle*, July 24, 1930.

<sup>45</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 112-113.

<sup>46</sup> Gene Fowler and Bill Crawford, *Border Life*, 27.

<sup>47</sup> Eric Junke, *Quacks & Crusaders*, 2.

given up and faded into obscurity after facing the trials and tribulations that John Brinkley went through. After losing both his radio station and his right to practice medicine, Brinkley looked for a new way to combat his enemies. "Why, I think I'll go back up to Kansas and get on my radio and get myself elected governor."<sup>48</sup> Brinkley never thought he had a chance of winning his run for governor. However, he did feel that he could use the opportunity to put his case in front of the people of Kansas and tell them a few things about their elected officials in Topeka and the *Kansas City Star* newspaper.<sup>49</sup>

In 1930, Brinkley ran for governor in the Kansas gubernatorial race. With the primaries over and with general elections only a little over a month away, he ran as a write-in and called himself "The People's Candidate." He explained to listeners, "You often hear about the efficiency of the two party systems, because the Republicans watch the Democrats and the Democrats watch the Republicans. Vote for me and you'll get double protection. They'll both watch me."<sup>50</sup>

Kansas was in the middle of the Great Depression, and many Kansans looked to the state government for relief. As one *Kansas City Star* editorial theorized, people had come upon hard times, "through no fault of their own." When Brinkley lost his medical and broadcasting license, and preached daily on the radio how he was being persecuted, perhaps many voters felt a kinship with him.<sup>51</sup> Even more likely, his popularity stemmed from the fact that Republican candidate Frank Haucke and Democrat candidate Harry Woodring were politically inexperienced and favored running the state government the same as it had been run in past administrations.<sup>52</sup> Political journalist and Brinkley supporter W.C. Clugston wrote that Kansans were ready to throw off the yoke of the two-party political system and were ready for something new.<sup>53</sup> Emporia editorialist William Allen White stated that the people were not voting for Brinkley the man or Brinkley the goat-gland doctor, but for the promises he

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>49</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 121.

<sup>50</sup> Eric Junke, *Quacks & Crusaders*, 18.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*



made. Brinkley's promises and platform appeared to meet the needs of many Kansans during the Great Depression.<sup>54</sup> Brinkley combined religious fundamentalism with a persecuted martyr complex, and the warmth and trustworthy intelligence of a country doctor. Brinkley's political style was as entertaining as the radio broadcasts he made, and just as modern. Brinkley began traveling to political speeches in his plane, dubbed "The Romancer" or by limousine. In a scene that would come to define Brinkley's run for governor and influence modern American politics, Brinkley flew "The Romancer" over the field of Cash Davis, a farmer from Augusta, Kansas, and Brinkley supporter. The plane landed close to the on-looking crowd. With his Bible in tow, Brinkley stepped out of his plane with his Van Dyke goatee, his tortoise shell glasses, his diamond rings, and his immaculate white suit. Perhaps presaging modern times, he awed his crowd much in the same way a modern television evangelist would his congregation.<sup>55</sup> Brinkley gave political talks several hours each morning on the radio, and arrived to rallies with typical Brinkley panache. Brinkley changed the way Kansas political campaigns were run.<sup>56</sup> He was a game changer, and his opponents took notice.

To help run his campaign, the *Wichita Beacon* sent H.G. Hotchkiss, a publicist who worked for the *Beacon* and its owner/publisher, Max Levand who supported Brinkley.<sup>57</sup> Brinkley historian, R. Alton Lee noted in his book, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, that Hotchkiss thought Brinkley relied too much on his radio advertisements "...and did not realize the tremendous impact Brinkley was making with this significant innovation."<sup>58</sup>

What issues exactly did Brinkley stand for and what was his platform? He wanted free textbooks for schools, free medical service for the poor, pensions for the elderly and the blind, and pensions for those who were unable to work. He wanted a manmade lake in every county in the state. He pleaded to his constituents that they should buy products made in Kansas. Brinkley also promised to abolish "unnecessary boards and investigative bodies, organizations, such as

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<sup>54</sup> Francis W. Schruben, *Kansas in Turmoil, 1930-1936* (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1969), 43.

<sup>55</sup> Eric Junke, *Quacks & Crusaders*, 18-19.

<sup>56</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 122.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

the Kansas Medical Board. One of his election campaigns was "Clean Up, Clean Out, and Keep Kansas Clean."<sup>59</sup> Brinkley's platform was very perceptive of the political climate of the 1930's, especially considering that he was a political novice. His platform predated a Californian politician of the same era, Dr. Francis Townsend's, very similar plan by three years and social security by six years.<sup>60</sup> He ran his campaign as a Kansas doctor who was being persecuted for being on the outside of the medical and political machine, and who had the citizens of Kansas's best interests in mind. A Milwaukee newspaper said that although "the old wooly days of Populism" were no longer in Kansas, Brinkley was still a torch carrier for the movement.<sup>61</sup>

Three days before the election, the Kansas Attorney General (the same Attorney General who prosecuted Brinkley at his medical license hearing) altered the rules for write-in candidates on the ballot. The name of a write-in candidate had to be written in a specific way. Any deviation from this pre-determined spelling would discount the vote. In Brinkley's case, it needed to read "J.R. Brinkley." Immediately he flooded the radio waves with commercials telling his loyal listeners the correct spelling of his name. He even passed out pencils that said "J.R. Brinkley." Approximately 50,000 votes were discounted due to the changes in the law. It was later suggested in various newspaper articles, and even by Harry Woodring, who won the election, that if those votes had counted, Brinkley would have won.<sup>62</sup> The official election results had Woodring receiving 217,171 votes, Haucke 216,920, and Brinkley 183,278.<sup>63</sup> Brinkley ran again for the same office in 1932 as an independent candidate and lost. His platform, for the most part, remained the same.

**Brinkley and Radio.** Radio was the medium in which Brinkley's influence could be felt the most. When Brinkley first built and operated KFKB in Milford, radio was a relatively new technology. Most stations played various styles of uplifting music and news reports. Advertising was frowned upon by many in the world of

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<sup>59</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 122.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>61</sup> Eric Junke, *Quacks & Crusaders*, 35.

<sup>62</sup> Francis W. Schruben, *Kansas In Turmoil, 1930-1936*, 42.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

broadcasting; it was not considered a profitable way to utilize the new technology. In 1924, seventy-six percent of all existing radio stations refused to take corporate sponsors.<sup>64</sup> Brinkley saw the great potential in radios vast air waves for advertising and getting his message across to a large number of people. According to historian Francis Chase, Brinkley was “the man who, perhaps more than any other foresaw the great potentialities of radio as an advertising medium.”<sup>65</sup>

KFKB began broadcasting in September, 1923. Brinkley had two guiding principles in his initial running of KFKB. First, he would have no advertisements (this would later change as he realized the potential goldmine he had) and secondly, there would be no recorded music, only live musicians and entertainers. Brinkley felt that his listeners deserved the best.<sup>66</sup> Initially, Brinkley wanted to have three basic programming concepts: personal travel talks, advise on child-rearing for mothers and literature discourses by Kansas State University professors.<sup>67</sup> As R. Alton Lee pointed out, Brinkley was one of the first to have medical talks on child care on the radio.<sup>68</sup> Brinkley understood that his female audience was very important, and strove to make them loyal listeners. He believed that for many of the men who might want to be treated for “lack of sexual vigor”, there was a frustrated wife at home who might influence him to come to the Brinkley Hospital. On occasion, he also performed gland transplants on female customers. In a strange way, Brinkley was very modern in his views concerning the sexual needs of the American housewife. It was not just about the husband; Brinkley was an equal opportunity doctor, as long as he was paid for his services. Or perhaps, he knew enough about male and female sexual psychology to manipulate men and women into getting his operation. This idea deserves further study, but is outside the scope of this paper.

Brinkley was often ahead of his time. In modern times, internet based college courses and tele-courses are an integral part of the collegiate experience. In the 1920s however, it was unheard of. Again, Brinkley was an innovator. A Kansas State University student, Sam Pickard contacted Brinkley and they worked out a new idea. At a

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<sup>64</sup> Gene Fowler and Bill Crawford, *Border Life*, 4.

<sup>65</sup> Eric Junke, *Quacks & Crusaders*, 12.

<sup>66</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 63.

<sup>67</sup> Gerald Carson, *The Roguish World of Doctor Brinkley*, 48.

<sup>68</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 74.

great cost to them, Pickard and two other students purchased a phone line that went from the university into Milford. They set up a receiver at the university and Brinkley broadcast whatever came from the Manhattan side of the phone line over KFKB's airwaves. Teachers could give French lessons or other course material over the radio, which students could listen to at home and be tested on at a later date. The college offered college credit for these first "distance learning" classes.<sup>69</sup> Pickard later went to Washington, DC to work for the FRC but left before Brinkley's radio license hearing.

According to Gerald Carson, when Brinkley sold KFKB and opened XER (later XERA), he branched out with some new advertising ideas. The station offered many new and exciting products, sure to make the listeners life better and more exciting. One could send in a dollar and a handwriting sample, and a handwriting expert would answer three questions and send a book that would help answer all of life's questions. Or there was a business opportunity: Gas Saver was looking for agents to sell its product which claimed to help increase gas mileage in cars. There was a high-school correspondence course. One could also buy autographed pictures of Jesus, or a wind-up doll of John the Baptist, which walked around until its head fell off.<sup>70</sup> Research for this paper led to the discovery of everything from hair tonics, home garden kits, healing crystals, cold remedies and more. Only a brief sampling is included here to give the reader a taste of what was being advertised on Brinkley's radio station.

Before the Great Depression "hillbilly" music enjoyed a limited popularity, mostly with poorer country people who lived in Arkansas, Kentucky, Kansas, and other rural states. During the Great Depression, the market for "hillbilly" records dried up and performers began to find it difficult to get their music heard. Brinkley believed that his listeners might appreciate this type of music, so he started to invite musicians on XER to entertain his listeners. Many acts got their start on XER and a partial list is a who's who of early country music. The Carter Family, Leonard Slye (Roy Rogers), Gene Autry, Red Foley,

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<sup>69</sup> R. Alton Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 70-71.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

Eddie Arnold, Hank Williams, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Little Jimmie Dickens, and many more got their start on XER or were featured on the station many times.<sup>71</sup> In many ways, Brinkley introduced a wider audience to country music because his station was heard all over America (at an eventual 1,000,000 watts, it was the largest station in the world and could be heard as far away as Russia). Throughout his career, Brinkley adjusted the format of his radio programming to fit his current situation. However, Brinkley always attempted to cater to a more rural audience. It was this same audience that he surrounded himself with throughout his career. He built hospitals in their communities, and marketed and sold his medical procedures to them. Throughout the years, many stations, disk jockeys, and station owners used Brinkley's programming savvy as a reference to run their own stations.

**Conclusion.** John R. Brinkley will forever be known as the goateed doctor from Milford who performed goat-gland operations. This reputation is due to the quality and quantity of his advertising. His life was much more fascinating than that simple epitaph however, and his influence on modern day America deserves to be studied in greater detail. Years after the death of Brinkley, Lawrence Fishbein wrote in the *Journal of American Medical Association*: "The centuries to come may never produce again such blatancy, such fertility of imagination, or such ego."<sup>72</sup> Although not the most ethical, respectable or trustworthy individual, John R. Brinkley was the epitome, in many ways, of the modern individual. He capitalized on changes in technology and society, and in the process created or refined many of the techniques that are still used to this day. His influence can still be felt today in everything from "quack" and natural medicine to modern country music and political campaigning. Whatever one's opinion of Brinkley, it is clear that he is an important figure in twentieth century American history.

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<sup>71</sup> Lee, *The Bizarre Careers of John R. Brinkley*, 161.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.