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A Note From the Editor

Dear Readers,

We are very pleased to bring you Volume 15 of the Fairmount Folio, a journal made possible by the efforts of undergraduate and graduate students, and the faculty of the Department of History at Wichita State University. These articles were chosen for their sophisticated research and presentation qualities by Editorial Boards. Dr. Robert Weems, Willard W. Garvey Distinguished Professor of Business History, Dr. George Dehner, Associate Professor of History, Dr. Robin Henry Associate Professor of History, and Dr. Travis Bruce, Assistant Professor of History, all gave their time and expertise to choose the papers for publication.

This volume's wide range of topics from early Medieval to the twentieth century reflects the broad range of courses available to our students. Both Kristina Haahr and Lynsay Flory delve into the impact of two Christians, St. Frideswide who became an evolving legend which represented a variety of times, and John Wycliffe who challenged Roman Catholic administration. Jason Herbert, Anna Wood, and Emma Snowden all wrote on basic issues of race and expansion that came to a head in the nineteenth century. Jason Herbert explores the nexus of Native Americans and escaped slaves in the creation of Muskogee society. Anna Wood looked at women abolitionists in Great Britain. Emma Snowden discusses the writings of a prominent American journalist, Henry Watterson, and his views on American Imperialism at the time of the Spanish–American War. We finish with two cultural topics which reflect very serious issues, personal hygiene and food sources. John Skelton's work on pellagra and Carolyn Speer Schmidt's work on food production and the needs of a modernizing world show how important changing food production and medical research was for the twentieth century.

Dr. Helen Hundley
Faculty Editor

Saint *Frideswide*: A Changing Legend for Changing Times

Kristina L. Haahr

St. Frideswide is the patron saint of Oxford, the town and university. According to her legend, Frideswide dedicated her life to God, serving as an abbess in what is now Oxford and its surrounding area. She is credited with performing many miracles such as eliciting a well for a nunnery and healing a leper. Even after her death, people thanked Frideswide for healing them from injury and affliction. Frideswide lived from 650–727 yet the earliest recording of her story is from the early twelfth-century, nearly 500 years after her death. The legend of St. Frideswide was written many times. The most commonly studied primary sources include three versions written in Latin and two in Middle English, the common language of twelfth-century England. While all of the versions contain some similarities, they were each written at a different time, by different authors, for unique audiences, and served different social and political purposes. None of the versions are a clear and truthful biography of Frideswide. As England underwent a Christian Reformation, Frideswide, her legend, and her relics were lost. Once rediscovered, her legend continued to metamorphosize. While the legend of Frideswide can explain some aspects of her contemporary society and its views of women, the legends shed even more light on the authors' societies and the changing status of women. These changes to Frideswide's legend continue today.¹

Because there is not one legend of St. Frideswide, but several versions of a similar legend, retelling her story is complicated. All versions agree that St. Frideswide was most likely born in 650 to

¹John Blair, "Saint Frideswide Reconsidered," *Oxoniensia* 52 (1987), 71–127.

Didan and Sefreth. Didan was either a Mercian king or sub-king who ruled in the Eynsham area. Frideswide was very smart, humble, and loved by all. According to the *South English Legendary (SEL)*, the thirteenth and fourteenth century collection of saints' lives of which many versions are still available, after the death of her mother, she asked her father's blessing to become a nun and may have encouraged her father to dedicate his finances to a new minster built to honor Mary. All versions agree that Frideswide served as abbess of St. Marie church, which her father financed.²

Each version puts a different spin on the trials Frideswide faced. The *Vitas*, or Latin versions, were concerned with God's involvement with Frideswide and His deliverance of her from the Devil. The *SEL* versions emphasize Frideswide's own actions as well as her role as a holy woman. Roughly, the versions record how the Devil, unhappy with Frideswide's saintly habits of fasting and prayer, set out to tempt her. He appeared to her along with his minions claiming to be Jesus and the angels. Frideswide saw through the Devil's disguise and cast him out. Not to be deterred, the Devil then appeared to Algar, either a higher king than Didan or maybe his successor, and tempted Algar to defile Frideswide by either marriage or force. Algar sent his men after Frideswide who was divinely protected. His men were struck blind. They repented and Frideswide prayed for their sight to be restored. They returned to Algar who was now mad with thoughts of Frideswide and vowed he would take her himself. Frideswide escaped Algar and fled the area, taking a boat down the Thames and finding refuge in the wilderness. The *Vitas* said Frideswide was divinely protected in her flight and that God provided her the boat at the Thames. Algar was either also struck blind and healed, or died in a horse riding accident in his pursuit. Either way, Frideswide was saved from his intended defilement.³

²Sherry L. Reames, editor with the assistance of Martha G. Blalock and Wendy R. Larson, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2003; Blair, "Saint Frideswide Reconsidered."

³Ibid.

During her exile in the wilderness, she was taken in by an abbey in either Bampton or Binsey. At this abbey, the nuns had to walk to the river for their water every day and it was exhausting them. Frideswide prayed for a new water source for the abbey and a spring appeared where she stood. She returned home to Oxford either because she heard of her father's grief over her disappearance (*SEL*) or because it was time to die (*Vita*). She again presided over an abbey in Oxford and performed many healing miracles for citizens of the surrounding area. She even healed a leper with her kiss while she made her triumphant return. When Frideswide returned to Oxford, the people lined the streets and welcomed her home with great fanfare. Within the parade, a leprous man approached Frideswide and asked her for mercy. He believed if Frideswide would kiss him, he would be cured. The crowd encouraged Frideswide to keep walking past but she stopped and listened to the leper. Unique to the *SEL* version, out of compassion borne from her own heart, Frideswide kissed him, despite her vows to God. And because of her mercy, the leper was healed. She died on October 19, 750. Because she foresaw her own death, she had her grave prepared on Saturday so no one would have to work on Sunday when she passed.⁴

John Blair has provided the most comprehensive study of the Latin versions including translations. According to Blair, the first worthwhile source on Frideswide was done by William of Malmesbury, one of the greatest early English historians, and included in his book the *Gesta Pontificum* in 1125. The other two Latin versions are called Life A and Life B and comprise a full-scale *Vita* found in the Bodleian Library. Life A is short and was written in basic Latin, most likely not recorded by a professional hagiographer or a local to the area. Life A is missing geographical information, and contains some discrepancies which led to a property dispute in 1139 over whether or not the townspeople or the canons owned the priory at Binsey. The author of Life A attempted to incorporate known miracles from both the town of Bampton and Binsey into the Frideswide legend, most likely

⁴Ibid.

following oral traditions. Both Malmesbury's version and Life A were short, condensed stories, probably re-recording oral histories whose longer versions have been lost.⁵

Life B is longer, resembling other writings for monastic reading complete with stories of miracles and other inspiring elements. The authorship of Life B is credited to Master Robert of Cricklade, a scholar and prior of St. Frideswide. He most likely worked from a copy of Life A but wrote his version for a different purpose. As the prior of St. Frideswide, he wanted to clear up any misunderstandings about the geography of the area as well as deal swiftly with the recent property dispute. Because of the property dispute, Life B contained a unique section explaining the miracles at both Bampton and Binsey and giving the legend a new timeline, stating the clear ownership of the property by the priory.⁶

The Latin versions of Frideswide's legend contain not only information about the lives of their authors, but also about Frideswide's life in the early eighth-century. Frideswide as a king's daughter and the first head of a minster founded by her father in the 700s is plausible. Most likely, her father was a sub-king in the mid-Saxon province called Eynsham which contained both Oxford and Bampton, towns who play a vital role in Frideswide's journey. Beginning in 634, the West Saxons became Christianized. However, the Mercian kings were stronger in the Oxford area and Frideswide would have been under their rule. A Mercian sub-king starting a monastery and making his daughter the abbess is also plausible. Kings kidnapping noblewomen during this time was not unusual. Stories of virginal women hounded by lecherous princes and then saved were common in hagiography. There is also historical record of a Mercian king alive during the eighth-century who seduced nuns for sport. All of the versions of Frideswide's legend included a Mercian

⁵Blair, "Saint Frideswide Reconsidered," Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, 24; Anne B. Thompson, "Shaping a Saint's Life: Frideswide of Oxford." *Medium Aevum* 63 (1994), 34-52.

⁶Ibid.

king desperate to marry or at least have sex with Frideswide no matter the cost. In the twelfth-century, Bisney was known as a “place of ancient sanctuary” and other writing of the time backed up the idea that it was secluded away behind thorns just like Life B claimed.⁷

Robert of Cricklade's goal in recording the longer Latin version of Frideswide's life was probably to make her seem commonplace. According to Cricklade, Frideswide was simply moved by God. She took no ownership of her own actions nor is attributed with any autonomous sense of power, individuality, or self-ownership. Robert of Cricklade attempted to mold Frideswide into a martyr, focusing his *Vita* on Frideswide always moving towards and preparing for her death.⁸

St. Frideswide's legend was also recorded in the *South English Legendary* in two different forms. The shorter version is from Trinity College in Cambridge and written as a poem, in couplets. The longer version, also written in verse, is found in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Both of these versions were written in Middle English. Unlike the Latin versions, there is no geographical confusion from the shorter to the longer. They were however, intended for different audiences. The shorter version is simple and generally monastic, meant for the monks and priests in the church. The author pointed out how quickly Frideswide learned the scriptures, which would have more meaning for the clergy. The author also described Frideswide's austere diet in considerable detail as well as the actions of her father willingly giving his only heir to God, both commentary on the value system of the wealthy, used as a caution for the clergy as well as for their sermons.⁹

The longer *South English Legendary* version tied Frideswide to the Oxford area as their protector and healer, emphasizing lessons between good and evil and the actions of the laity. This version was

⁷Blair, “Saint Frideswide Reconsidered,” 92; Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, 32–5.

⁸Blair, “Saint Frideswide Reconsidered.”

⁹Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, 24; Thompson, “Shaping a Saint's Life: Frideswide of Oxford.”

meant for the citizenry of Oxford to read themselves. The longer version recorded her father as a gentleman, not royalty, letting him stand in as an attainable example to all good fathers. This version is also more focused on the actions of the father, who built and financed a church, remained celibate after the death of his wife, and who gave lands and money to finance the monastery. It is less about Frideswide's virginity than the shorter version, making it more applicable to the contemporary women of Oxford who were married. The author encouraged his lay audience to keep the Sabbath, stay away from temptation, and to be virtuous.¹⁰

In the *SEL*, Frideswide's life and her purposeful choices to maintain her life, are what drive the story forward. The longer *SEL* author understood not only Frideswide's personal experiences, but those of his audience as well. The author seemed to understand small towns and rural communities like the one Frideswide lived in, where both women and men shared power. He does not favor men over women, as was the clergy tradition. The *SEL* version of Frideswide was focused on the everyday lives of typical people just as much as it was about the extraordinary lives of God and the saints. The versions of Frideswide's legend contained within the *SEL* gave Frideswide back some of her agency. These versions, while based on the Latin versions, showed Frideswide as strong and in charge of her own actions. She is less a victim and more the hero in her own story, planning her own escape from Algar and staying away from Oxford until she was ready to return on her own. When she cured the leper in the streets, the author made it clear that Frideswide made this choice on her own, out of her own empathy towards the leper, against the urging of others in her party. She was the agent of change in her life. She was not just a pawn moved around the area by God's good graces.¹¹

A French counterpart to the Frideswide legend was found in Bomy, France. Their documents look like Cricklade's Life B with

¹⁰ibid.

¹¹ibid.

different geography. Archeological evidence of a chapel and spring have been found in the area of Bomy, as well as documentation from 1187 of a woman named Frewisse who lived there and had healing powers. While Blair believed the legend was transported by the English Jesuits to the area and Frideswide herself was never there, Francis Goldie, S.J., recorded in his version of the St. Frideswide legend, in 1881, that the saint herself, as part of a pilgrimage journey to Rome, did stop in Bomy. According to Goldie, Frideswide traveled to Rome before her death and established priories and churches along the way. The priory at Bomy is the only evidence to substantiate this claim. Despite records found by Goldie, there is no other evidence Frideswide traveled through the continent and a church founded by Frideswide in Rome has never been recorded.¹²

Medieval legends are often exaggerations or propaganda of a character, used to strengthen influence over a specific audience, or to influence a particular point about morality. Some hagiographic texts might have been used in daily devotions or read aloud. Many manuscripts survive containing the legends of female saints. These books focused on female piety and virginity. Some hagiographies were used in sermons which contained an element of spiritual truth, a literary quality for performing aloud, and appealed to a lay audience. To this end, the church used folklore from an oral tradition to appeal to its audience and teach them more about church doctrine and theology. However, hagiography was not just a transcript of an oral tradition. It was molded by the recording monks and authors to fit a particular community's needs. Elements of folklore passed down orally were often filtered out or censored in order to shape the legend for a more specific use or address a more specific community issue. For example, it is more probable that Frideswide was the abbess of a mixed gender community. However, because of the changes to monasteries, priories, and nunneries by the time Frideswide's legend was recorded, there is no mention of a mixed gender minster.

¹²Blair, "Saint Frideswide Reconsidered," 92; Francis Goldie, S.J., *The Story of St. Frideswide: Virgin and Patroness of Oxford*, London: Burns and Oates, 1881.

Instead, Frideswide is depicted as living only among other nuns, in a cloistered community, which characterized the twelfth-century more than the eighth-century.¹³

From 650–750, the characteristics of female saints were similar to their male counterparts. Women acquired property and wealth as well as the power that goes with them. Beginning in the ninth-century, the Church limited a woman's power by curtailing her public involvement and leadership opportunities requiring a woman to remain in the newly defined women's sphere and behave within the confines of her female nature. Because of this change in societal attitudes, female saints were recorded differently. Now, their stories were molded to focus more on their chastity, compassion, and nurturing capabilities, attributes associated more strongly with the female sphere. While male saints from the same time period were portrayed in a variety of situations and actions, the women of the era were limited to evading the assaults of lustful men, which is the driving plot of the Frideswide legend.¹⁴

Many women of this time period chose to be nuns as a way to experience independence and freedom. Unlike nuns on the continent, most English nuns were not cloistered until Pope Boniface VIII's call for universal enclosure in 1298. They had freedom to leave the abbey as needed and were expected to contribute to the cost of the monastery. For those women who were cloistered, they remained inside the abbey away from society and eventually lived in their own abbeys, away from the men. Holy men, however, were allowed to go back and forth into villages or towns, making the nuns dependent on

¹³Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*; Hilary Powell, "Once Upon a Time There Was a Saint...": Re-evaluating Folklore in Anglo-Latin Hagiography," *Folklore* 121 (August 2010), 171–189.; A.S.G. Edwards, "Fifteenth-Century English Collections of Female Saints' Lives," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 33, Medieval and Early Modern Miscellanies and Anthologies (2003), 131–41.

¹⁴Thompson, "Shaping a Saint's Life: Frideswide of Oxford;" Jane Curran, "St. Frideswide: Oxford's Patron Saint," http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/oxford/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8403000/8403977.stm, November 4, 2013; Andrew Atherstone, *Oxford: City of Saints, Scholars and Dreaming Spires*, Leominster: Day One Publications, 2008, 7–19.

the men for help. This double standard was purported to protect women against violence as well as assert control and order over the women who were seen as slaves to their own sinful natures. As women became more dependent on others, their public role was diminished. By the time Frideswide's hagiography was written, women had lost much of their independence and standing within society.¹⁵

Frideswide was first recognized as a saint in the early eleventh-century although the original records were lost in a fire in 1002. By this time, most of the nuns at the monastery were gone, and the church was overseen by a secular priest. The priory was re-established in 1004 by Ethelred but it was already well known and had a strong foundation. St. Frideswide's was one of the wealthiest churches in Oxford and Frideswide herself was a familiar and helpful saint. In 1122, Frideswide's priory was re-staffed by canons who followed the Rule of St. Augustine. According to John Blair's research, there were a group of Augustinians who wanted to find Frideswide and came to Oxford to seek out her shrine. They were not sure where to look once they got into town, but after three days of fasting, they set out by torchlight to dig where they thought she was buried. First, they found an empty coffin which would have been a common way to protect against grave robbers in the 700s so they dug deeper. Once they found the skeleton, their torches mysteriously went out and then were relit. The men saw this as a holy sign that they had indeed found Frideswide. They reburied the bones, leaving Frideswide in peace. Once established she was there, miracles happened with more frequency and people began to visit her grave more often. In 1180, with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Henry II, the grave was opened and her bones were moved into a more prominent shrine, where people could more easily gather. From the twelfth through the

¹⁵John A. Nichols and Lillian Thomas Shank, eds., *Medieval Religious Women: Volume One: Distant Echoes*, Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1984.

sixteenth-centuries Frideswide's shrine was housed in what is today the Oxford Cathedral.¹⁶

Over 100 miracles accredited to Frideswide occurred in the following year, drawing pilgrims and followers to her shrine. She cured people from their desire for suicide, anxiety, and women-specific problems like the fear of marriage or moving into puberty. Women were the recipient of these miracles over men two to one. Oxford accepted St. Frideswide and acclaimed her cures. During 1180–90, when most of the Frideswide's miracles are recorded, healthcare, combining science and the supernatural, was popular. She is mentioned in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* as not only the patron saint of Oxford, but also has a healer. It was popular in the Middle Ages to invoke the name of a saint in an oath. The carpenter in *Canterbury Tales* swears an oath to St. Frideswide. Because she was the patron saint of Oxford, it associated the character more firmly with that geography. But because of Frideswide's reputation as a healer, when the carpenter called out for help from her, he was asking for Frideswide's healing power.¹⁷

The town and university of Oxford claimed her as their patron saint beginning in the early 15th-century. In 1525, Frideswide's monastery was closed by Cardinal Wolsey who used the revenues for what would become Christ's Church. Her shrine was destroyed during the Reformation though the bones of St Frideswide remained buried there. In 1552, Catherine Martyr, the wife of a prominent Reformer, was also buried at the site but when Mary became Queen of England, she had Catherine's body exhumed and moved to a dung

¹⁶Blair, "Saint Frideswide Reconsidered," Appendix C, 116–9.

¹⁷Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, 22–24; Thompson, "Shaping a Saint's Life: Frideswide of Oxford;" Jan Ziolkowski, "Saints in Invocations and Oaths in Medieval Literature," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol 87, No. 2 (Apr., 1988), 179–192.; Ruth Huff Cline, "Four Chaucer Saints," *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 60, No. 7 (Nov., 1945), 480–2; Ruth H. Cline, "Three Notes on "the Miller's Tale"," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Feb., 1963), 131–145; Henry Mayr-Harting, "Functions of a Twelfth-Century Shrine: The Miracles of St. Frideswide." In *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.H.C. Davis*. Ed. Henry Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore. London: Hambledon Press, 1985, 193–206.

heap. St. Frideswide's bones were also exhumed and encased in two silk bags which were set aside. Ten years later, when Elizabeth became Queen, she ordered Catherine's body reburied in a Christian manner, and tasked Canon James Calhill with Catherine's funeral. During the planning, he found the two silk bags containing the ancient remains of St. Frideswide. In order to directly confront what he called the "popish sacrilege" of the remaining Catholics in the area and at the same time treat the remains with some respect, Calhill decided to intermingle St. Frideswide's bones with those of Catherine Martyr and rebury them together.¹⁸

Beginning in at least the seventeenth-century, medieval history included separate records for women, suggesting it was already established that the experiences of women were not the same as the age in general. Women in medieval history were used in the Victorian era to argue against their limitations and further document the shrinking women's sphere. In the nineteenth-century, women argued that medieval nuns were independent educated women to bolster their arguments for women in higher education. These same hagiographies were used to support the Civil Rights movements in the twentieth-century, linking the women of the Middle Ages with the contemporary struggle for equal rights. In 1936, Sir Frank Stenton was the first modern scholar to take on the legend of Frideswide. He concluded the entire legend was made up in the late twelfth-century and he found no evidence to suggest any older sources. No other scholars agree.¹⁹

Many British websites' ideas on Frideswide run contrary to the historical record. Several sites as well as contemporary books on Oxford report Frideswide was not a nun but a young girl when the Mercurian Prince asked her father for Frideswide's hand in marriage

¹⁸Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, 4; Thompson, "Shaping a Saint's Life: Frideswide of Oxford;" ; Ziolkowski, "Saints in Invocations and Oaths in Medieval Literature;" Cline, "Four Chaucer Saints;" Cline, "Three Notes on "the Miller's Tale."

¹⁹Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*; Powell, "'Once Upon a Time There Was a Saint...';" Susan Mosher Stuard, ed., *Women in Medieval History and Historiography*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987.

and her father agreed. Frideswide's ladies in waiting were listening at the door and alerted her to this development so she ran away from home in order to become a nun. She stole away on a boat and was taken in by an abbey. When she heard how her father pined for his only child, she returned to Oxford as did the prince. The prince, through divine intervention, was struck blind during his pursuit of Frideswide. He begged her forgiveness so she prayed on his behalf and his sight was restored. He left never to return and no sitting king ever returned to Oxford until Henry II. Frideswide lived out her remaining days as a nun. Several stained glass windows throughout Oxford and one at Kidlington show the restoration of the sight of Algar, lending credibility to this more modern version.²⁰

The most recent version of St. Frideswide's legend while possibly based on the Latin or Middle English versions, takes its own shape and meets the needs of a more modern audience. It contains few of the elements that were so important to the twelfth-century authors such as Frideswide's virginity and makes no mention at all of the Devil tempting her or Frideswide's early dedication to learning scripture. She is instead portrayed living in a more modern royal life with ladies in waiting and marriages arranged between kingdoms. Through these modern sources, the legend continues to grow and change to fit the present society. In this latest version, the emphasis is fully on Frideswide and her beliefs and actions separate from any divine actions. Frideswide was fully in charge of her own destiny. She made the choice to flee from the prince. Frideswide herself wanted to become a nun instead, and took her destiny into her own hands to make that happen. She was bright, and courageous, both attributes highly prized by modern inhabitants of Oxford.²¹

By comparing the many written versions, the picture of what the author's contemporary society needed, emerges. While the real

²⁰Atherstone, *Oxford: City of Saints*; Curran, "St. Frideswide: Oxford's Patron Saint;" Ellen Ettlinger, "Folklore in Oxfordshire Churches," *Folklore*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Autumn, 1962), 160-177.

²¹Thompson, "Shaping a Saint's Life: Frideswide of Oxford;" Atherstone, *Oxford: City of Saints*; Curran, "St. Frideswide: Oxford's Patron Saint."

Frideswide was most likely an independent, educated woman, who was the head of a minster filled with monks, priests, and other nuns, the retelling of her story makes no mention of men in her priory. Instead, versions for the clergy focus on her piety, her study of the scriptures, a divine protection in her life, and her near martyr-like devotion in preparing for her own death. Versions for the laity focused on Frideswide's goodness, chastity, and devotion to others. Modern day versions of her legend have tied Frideswide and her experiences to the early equal rights movement, to furthering women in education and the professions, and to the civil rights movement. The most recent versions of Frideswide's legend focus on her increased agency even within a male-dominated early modern period depiction. Because of these metamorphic qualities, the legend of St. Frideswide will continue to change throughout time, creating for each new society, a view of womanhood less about the England of 727 and more about the contemporary times of its authors.

Wycliffe and Heresy

Lynsay Flory

On December 31st, 1384, a priest died. No loud fanfare sounded, no one paraded through the streets; a stranger in town might not even realize that this man died holding heretical beliefs. Over forty years later his bones would be removed from the church graveyard, burned, and cast into the River Swift. However on that New Year's Eve, John Wycliffe, called by some the "Morning Star of the Reformation," quietly passed away as a baptized church member and Catholic in good standing.¹

Wycliffe's career as a scholar, priest, and political player constitutes the narrative for this article. A narrative that shows how a medieval man could hold deviant opinions - and hold them quite strongly - yet be considered for most of his life as a fairly normal professor. Before beginning this discussion, it will be useful to define the term heresy. Heresy, according to the American College Dictionary, is an "opinion or doctrine at variance with the orthodox or accepted doctrine, esp. of a church or religious system."² In other words, a heretic is an individual whose beliefs lie contrary to what an established religious organization accepts as orthodox. So then, it becomes necessary to define orthodoxy. The American College Dictionary defines it as, "sound or correct in opinion or doctrine, esp. theological or religious doctrine."³ Simply put, then, heresy is deviation from orthodoxy. By definition, all one must do to be accused of heresy is to hold an opinion apart from the orthodox.

In practice, it did not work quite that clearly in fourteenth-century England. Heresy, at least in England, was not only religious but also political. The scholar R. I. Moore believes that heretics

¹ K. B. McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* (London: The English Universities Press, 1952) 106.

² C.L. Barnhart, ed. *The American College Dictionary* (Random House: New York, 1964.)

³ *Ibid.*

suffered and sometimes died for their beliefs, but their persecutors did not punish and kill because of them.⁴ In fourteenth century England only those heretics who constituted a threat to the religious, social, or political order were likely to have action taken against them for their heresy. Even then, provided one had powerful protectors, heretics were not likely to be burned at the stake or anything so extreme.

In John Wycliffe one finds an excellent example of how heretical thought could turn to something punishable. Wycliffe moved through stages in his life, gaining education and popularity, employment by people in high places who provided protection, and eventually losing that protection and popular support. Along the way he met resistance from Church authority, mainly because he spoke too loudly and appeared threatening. As he progressed through life, Wycliffe's ideas on religion, politics, and life in general changed, but through those changes he retained enough of a following to be viewed by the established order as a potential danger. Earlier on, that support came largely from the nobility, and secondarily from other liberal churchmen. As his ideas evolved, he lost most of that support, but gained some from men at Oxford, and more among the common people. The combination of friends, supporters, and the political climate of the time ensured that while heresy hurt his political and social standing, he was not treated nearly as harshly as some later proponents of similar ideas.⁵

A plethora of secondary material is available on John Wycliffe. A few of the prominent twentieth century works include two authoritative biographies: Herbert Workman's exhaustive two volumes, *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church*, and K.

⁴ R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy*, (Belknap Press: Cambridge, 2012) 6-7.

⁵ The most detailed discussion of Wycliffe's life is found in Herbert Workman's *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church* (Archon Books: Hamden, 1966 [1926].) The most accessible for this study's look at Wycliffe's heresy is Joseph H. Dahmus, *The Prosecution of John Wyclif* (Archon Books: Hamden, 1970.)

B. McFarlane's more succinct but also more objective, *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity*. Later authors of note include Anne Hudson, whose many articles on Wycliffe caused late medieval scholars to look at him in a new light, and Anthony Kenny, who focused more on the development of Wycliffe's earlier heresies and how Wycliffe's philosophy influenced his writings. This paper will focus on Wycliffe and heresy in late medieval England, when and why his beliefs first became noteworthy, and the consequences.⁶

As English heresy in the time of Wycliffe was almost inevitably tied up with politics, a bit of space is necessary to divulge the basics of the political situation in fourteenth century England. The English king needed funds for the continuing war with France, while Pope Gregory XI required financing for his military actions in Italy. The pope believed he should be allowed to receive this funding from the Church in England, while the king wanted to tax the English church for his own needs. These discussions rose and fell over the years, but came again to the forefront during the 1370s, when both sides simultaneously felt the need for cash.⁷

Another disagreement came in the form of religious appointments. Theoretically, many Church leadership positions were filled by the agreement of those clergy affected. For instance, when an abbot died, it fell to the members of the abbey to elect the next abbot. In essence, it was a republican - almost democratic - form of governance. In practice, however, many offices were filled bureaucratically, by appointment. Neither the king nor the pope wished to end the appointment system; both enjoyed the benefits of having these positions available as political and financial favors that could be issued to useful servants/subjects. The quarrel came over who should make the appointments. The pope wished to fill several

⁶ A note here is in order on the spelling of John Wycliffe's name. Many variations appear both in primary and secondary sources. This author has chosen to use the spelling Wycliffe, however in quotations from other authors the spelling of their choice remains.

⁷ McFarlane, *Beginnings*, 31, 34.

English offices with clergy who supported his political positions but were also at odds with the English king's politics. The king understandably desired men who agreed with his policies and could be useful to him. In both the matters of taxation and office holders, Wycliffe's religious position on Church and the State appeared beneficial to English noblemen's politics.⁸

At the time he becomes of import to us in the early 1370s, Wycliffe was most likely a sententiary at Oxford. As a sententiary, one of his primary tasks involved devising statements for debate. These statements would be defended and refuted at Oxford while students and others in the university listened. Such debates were a recognized part of the collegiate learning process. Controversial statements induced intellectual discussion, and many sententiaries crafted ones that boarded on the heretical. Wycliffe was no exception. A few of his early assertions serve to show Wycliffe's thought process at this stage of his career; "Temporal lords have the power to take away temporalities from ecclesiastics." "No one prejudged is a part of the church." "No one is bound to give tithes or offerings to bad-tempered priests."⁹ As an Oxford scholar, Wycliffe was doing nothing new, but taking some of these thoughts outside the halls of academia and into the political world could prove hazardous.¹⁰

In spite of this, he chose to publicize his views. Wycliffe, like many others of his social standing, desired a position that could provide a reasonable amount of power and financial support. In the fourteenth century a foray into politics could provide exactly that. While the nobility did not care so much about his philosophical or purely religious statements, many of his opinions on Church and State worked in favor of the current king's predicament with Rome. The following statement is a direct quote, not a modern translation. This author has only made some spelling updates. "Nay grudge not

⁸ Ibid., 37-39.

⁹ All three quotations taken from Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 20.

¹⁰ Ibid., 19-21.

herefore that God is chief lord, for it falleth to his Godhead to be lord of each king and more courteous lord may no man have, no more profitable laws to lead a man by reason. For his lord suffereth he not to less good but by reason may he asks no rent but for thine own profit.”¹¹ This statement not only provides a glimpse into Wycliffe’s thought process, it also insinuates the Church has no right to land taxes.

John of Ghent, an English duke in the service of the king, agreed with many of the economic and political undertones embedded in Wycliffe’s ideas. Not only should the Church not receive English property taxes, he and Wycliffe also believed the State should be able to confiscate money and property from unrighteous clergy, and that the Church should not interfere in matters of state. In John of Ghent, Wycliffe found not only an employer, but also a true friend. While Wycliffe’s motives were religious and John of Ghent’s political, their end goals for Catholicism were largely the same: a contrite and devout Church, reduced in wealth, and without direct secular power.¹²

John of Ghent and Wycliffe were not alone in their distaste for the current religious situation. Many people in the fourteenth century, clergy and laymen alike, disapproved of unethical practices within the church. In the early to mid 1370s, Wycliffe did not veer too far away from many of his fellow ecclesiastics, especially friars, who applauded the idea of poor and devout clergy serving the people. The relevant difference of note here is that Wycliffe propagated these opinions in the public, political sphere. Not every church official desired to hear such talk, especially from a government employed scholar championing the cause of the English. A Franciscan friar quietly walking about in poor, humble service, and an Oxford scholar

¹¹ Wyclif, John, *Select English Writings*, ed. by Herbert E. Winn, (London: Oxford University Press, 1929) 62. Spelling updated by Lynsay Flory.

¹² Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 8.

paid to discover and discuss methods for the state to acquire church property, necessitated different responses.¹³

Those who disapproved almost always included high ranking church officials. The pope, a few English bishops, and many others in Rome felt that such beliefs were far too drastic, even deviant. According to Joseph Dahmus, “Had Wyclif restricted his activities to oral controversy at Oxford, the hierarchy would probably not have molested him.”¹⁴ But he had not remained in Oxford, rather, he had chosen to enter politics on the side of the nobility. Largely because of that publicity, in February of 1377 Wycliffe was arraigned at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. The specific charges are lost, but in substance they covered the authority of church and state, and added charges about the power of the papacy to excommunicate. Nobility, clergy, and commoners were all present at this meeting, including John of Gaunt. It is likely that Wycliffe would not have been in this situation at all had he not been making these statements in Gaunt’s service. Gaunt knew this, and was present to ensure the safety of his employee and friend. Other supporters included a number of commoners and a few friars. It is unlikely the convention intended to excommunicate Wycliffe. They simply wished to intimidate him into refraining from propagating his opinions outside of Oxford. The London prelates wished to humble him, to send him scurrying back to the relatively safe confines of university halls. His accusers, however, were unable to execute the plan. Again, the exact details have become muddled, but scholars understand that a commotion of some sort, involving the commoners, erupted within the Cathedral. It caused the meeting to end before anyone could pronounce anything definitive against Wycliffe or his teachings.¹⁵

¹³ Gordon Leff, “Wyclif and Hus: A Doctrinal Comparison.” In *Wyclif in His Times*, by Anthony Kenny (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1986) 105.

¹⁴ Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 25–6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22. For a fuller account of the arraignment at St. Paul’s see *Ibid.*, 21–33.

While that fortuitous event ended one arraignment, it did not stop Wycliffe's opponents. His accusers wrote to Rome, and by May of that same year Pope Gregory XI issued five papal bulls against him. Included with the bulls was a list of nineteen separate heresies. When one remembers that Wycliffe studied and taught at Oxford, most of these heresies do not appear beyond the accepted margin of scholarly disagreement. In fact, many held the potential for a good fourteenth century debate. However, due to the political climate of the time, especially with tensions between England and the Vatican, one can see how the pope considered them a threat. These were heresies worth fighting against due to potential political and economic implications. For example, number six states, "If God be, temporal lords may lawfully and with merit take from a delinquent church the blessings of fortune."¹⁶ Keeping in mind the disagreement over paying taxes/tithes, and one can see how this could pose a problem for Roman authority. Especially since the Church rather openly harbored a number of corrupt clergy. Number eight provides another instance of religious doctrinal differences with socio-political implications, "We know that it is not possible for the vicar of Christ [the pope] simply by means of his bulls, or by means of them and his own will and consent and that of his college, to declare anyone fit or unfit."¹⁷ If this assertion grew to be widely accepted, it would mean that high ranking clergy, even the pope himself, would lose the political ability to declare leaders fit or unfit. As this ability often acted as a tool to achieve temporal goals, both secular and religious leaders would have been acutely aware of the political problems and possibilities with such a statement. As if these were not enough, the final statement alone would have been sufficient cause for Church authority to act: "An ecclesiastic, indeed even the Roman pontiff, may lawfully be rebuked by those subject to him and by laymen, and even

¹⁶ Ibid., 49. For a detailed analysis of the purported heresies and some interesting suggestions on how they reached Pope Gregory's attention, see Margaret Harvey, "Adam Easton and the Condemnation of John Wyclif, 1377:" *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 113, No. 451 (April, 1998).

¹⁷ Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 49-50.

arraigned.”¹⁸ Wycliffe asserted that even the pope himself could lawfully be removed from power.

The quote below contains a portion of the first bull, written to Archbishop Sudbury in London. This section holds the gist of the threatened pope’s instructions:

[W]e charge and direct...you, secretly investigate the preaching of said propositions and conclusions, a copy of which we are sending you included under our seal, and if you find [them heretical] have said John seized and incarcerated on our authority and seek to extort a confession from him concerning the same propositions or conclusions, and this confession together with whatever said John may have asserted or written by way of induction or proof of said propositions and conclusions, as well as what you may have done concerning the above, you will transmit to us by trusty messenger under your seals, quietly and unknown to anyone; and you will keep the same John under careful guard in chains until you will receive further instructions from us concerning him.¹⁹

Secret examination, incarceration, interrogation, for the first time in this case it appears the church is giving orders for the traditional medieval prosecution of a heretic. But Rome was a long way from London, and although these directions were written in May, there is no indication they were at all acted upon until December. It may well be that the royalty, Oxford, and many English prelates did not see a need to act any sooner. There is some indication the establishment at Oxford was offended that the matter came up at all. The counts against Wycliffe, while undoubtedly controversial in the

¹⁸ Ibid., 50.

¹⁹ Ibid., 40.

mainstream medieval world, appeared only slightly atypical in the halls of a university. They were provocative, but not exterminable.²⁰

The English authorities never arrested Wycliffe or interrogated him as the pope commanded. Instead, in March 1378 Wycliffe received orders to go to Lamberth and defend his statements. This event was attended by mainstream English clergy, men from Oxford, some nobility, and the general public. John of Gaunt made his customary appearance, as well as Joan, widow of the Black Prince; they both worked towards Wycliffe's liberty. Although not an attendant, the queen mother also made known her desire to see Wycliffe cleared of all charges. Wycliffe the scholar might claim a solid academic defense saved him, but it is not true. In actuality his beliefs were judged to be within orthodoxy not because he gave a brilliant defense but because he had the support of nobility, royalty, commoners, and many men at Oxford. These folk did not see his views as pure heresy, but within the realm of scholarly religious and political debate. This does not mean he got off scot-free. The council instructed Wycliffe not to speak of these things among laymen, because laymen might misinterpret and misapply his position in a heretical way. His theories could not be discussed in the streets, but he could still write and debate among the scholars at Oxford.²¹

Although he emerged physically unscathed, the trial at Lamberth had an emotional effect on Wycliffe. Wycliffe never thought of himself as a heretic. The very fact that Pope Gregory accused him of such a thing disturbed him deeply. If anything, Wycliffe considered himself a better Christian than the pope. He even sent a letter to Pope Gregory in defense of his opinions.²² A short excerpt taken directly

²⁰ McFarlane, *Beginnings*, 73, 77–80.

²¹ Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Trial Procedures Against Wyclif and Wycliffites in England and at the Council of Constance." (*Huntington Library Quarterly* Vol. 61, No. 1 1998): 8.

²² A translation of this letter can be found in John Wickliff, *Writings of the Reverend and Learned John Wickliff, D.D.* ed. by William M. Engles, (Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, 1840.) 48.

from the original (with only updated spelling) shares the letter's flavor.

John and James erred when they conveyed worldly highness; and Peter and Paul sinned also when they denied and blasphemed in Christ; but men should not sue him in this for then they went from Jesus Christ. And this I take as wholesome council that the pope leave his worldly lordship to worldly lords as Christ gave him, –and move speedily all his servants to do so. For thus did Christ, and taught thus his disciples, till the fiend had blinded this world. And it seems to some men, that servants that dwell lastingly in this error against God's law, and flees to sue Christ in this... [are] open heretics.²³

Wycliffe did not mince words. He disapproved of many Church policies, such as heavy, mandatory taxation, the pope's luxurious lifestyle, executing religious war, and the general intermixing of the political and religious. Thankfully for him, Wycliffe did not reside in Rome, where his outspoken views could have put him in an extremely uncomfortable position. He lived in England, where many educated and ignorant people felt similarly, although sometimes for more secular reasons.²⁴

Also fortunate for Wycliffe, a larger event drew attention away from himself and towards Rome. A conflict arose over whom should receive the position of pope. The details of the argument are not important to this paper; it is enough to say that at one point there were three different men claiming the title, a situation which left little to no time for prosecuting men like Wycliffe. The Great Western Schism, as it came to be known, forced the Roman Church's attention inward; it had to resolve the problem at hand. So while Rome

²³ Wyclif, *Select English Writings*, 76. Spelling updated by Lynsay Flory.

²⁴ Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 73.

attempted to determine who should be pope, Wycliffe studied in relative peace in Oxford. The Great Western Schism may have also led Wycliffe to consider further heresies; should the office of pope even exist?²⁵

A combination of his own inquisitive mind, his treatment at the trial, and current events, likely led Wycliffe to probe deeper into well-accepted church teachings. He now began questioning some of the fundamental tenants of Catholicism, especially the legitimacy of immoral clergy, the very position of pope, and the doctrine of transubstantiation. This last denied the “miracle” of the mass, where in essence a priest’s blessing over bread and wine used in the sacrament of communion turned it into the blood and body of Christ. Also, while for years Wycliffe (and many others) publicly claimed the ultimate authority of biblical text, he relied more and more on the authority of *sola scriptoria*, scripture alone. Interpreting biblical texts without consulting over approximately 1,000 years of written analysis, and claiming that any Christian could do so, appeared if not heretical, at the very least dangerous.²⁶

By 1380 his views on these fundamental issues were becoming increasingly deviant, furthering the already present divisions of ecclesiastical and monkish scholars. Wycliffe ran far afoul of even the friars, with whom he had up until this point in time remained amicable. Polarizing as he could be, his teachings also drew a following of their own. Several Oxford men toyed with his new heresies. Some dispersed versions of them among the more ignorant common folk. Generally speaking, peasants were much less interested in his radical beliefs about communion, and more interested in his

²⁵ Workman, John *Wyclif*, Vol.II, 46-7, 52-4.

²⁶ Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 93-95.

ideals of an incorrupt Church and a State where only righteous leaders ruled.²⁷

Various historians maintain markedly different opinions about the role current and personal life events played in Wycliffe's later heresies. It is this author's opinion that major events can and often do influence academic scholars. They can lead to thought processes that might not otherwise enter one's mind; they can make an individual think in ways he or she might never have considered, or at least, not considered at the same level or in that exact same way. In Wycliffe's case, the combination of Pope Gregory's accusation and the Great Western Schism likely did encourage Wycliffe to rethink his ideas on the papacy. However, even before all this, his thoughts were already traveling down a dangerous road, one which could - and did - lead to the rejection of what he perceived as unrighteous church leadership, very serious questions on the doctrine of transubstantiation, and a belief that alms should be voluntary and given only to those who deserve them. He also encouraged those who received alms to take just enough to sustain themselves, not enough to store up revenue for additional expenses.²⁸

One might note that up until 1381, Wycliffe himself did not follow this last ideal. While he had left the political sphere by the end of 1378, in his time there he had hoped to receive a bishopric from the king. That never occurred. By the end of 1378, the political scene no longer needed him, and he no longer desired it. He had been passed over for promotion and the only political patronage he had gained was a living as the rector of Lutterworth. There is no evidence that during the first several years he held this position, he resided at Lutterworth or provided any ministerial services for it; he simply

²⁷ McFarlane, *Beginnings*, 83-6, 88. A more detailed list of Wycliffe's later heresies, in his own words, can be found in John Wyclif, *The English Works of Wyclif, Hitherto Unprinted*. Ed. by F. D. Matthew. (Boydell & Brewer, London, 1998 [1902]) 458-482.

²⁸For a more detailed analysis on Wycliffe's more theological deviance, see Ian Christopher Levy, "Grace and Freedom in the Soteriology of John Wyclif." *Traditio*, Vol. 60, (2005): 279-337.

retained the income. It is difficult not to note the disparity between Wycliffe's beliefs on the separation of church and state and the need for modest, hardworking clergy, and his own position as a scholar accumulating income from an under-cared-for parish.²⁹

Withdrawing to Oxford gave this dissatisfied religious scholar time to study and evaluate his ideas. But his continually radicalizing views escalated a growing tension within the Oxford colleges. During the winter of 1380–81 the situation came to the attention of the university. A committee of twelve was given the task to evaluate many of the teachings Wycliffe (and a growing number of other individuals) were propagating. The verdict was a divided one: seven against and five for their inclusion. It was the minimum necessary to pass judgment. Ten of Wycliffe's teachings –including those on the doctrine of transubstantiation– were condemned, and twenty four additional assertions pronounced erroneous. A few of the ten deemed heretical are listed below, examples of Wycliffe's progressive heresies.³⁰

2. That Christ is not in the sacrament of the altar identically, truly, and really, in his proper corporal presence.

5. That if a man be truly contrite, all exterior confession is superfluous and unprofitable to him.

9. That after Urban VI, no one is to be received as pope, but every man should live after the manner of the Greeks, under his own laws.³¹

²⁹ Anne Hudson, "Wycliffism in Oxford, 1381–1411" In *Wyclif in His Times*, by Anthony Kenny (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1986) 67.

³⁰McFarlane, *Beginnings*, 84, 93.

³¹ Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 94. The full translated lists of heretical and erroneous articles can be found on pp. 93–95.

From even this partial list one can see Wycliffe's movement away from acceptable Oxford debate and into more radical heresy. For instance, in the early 1370s, he simply suggested that there be a mechanism to remove unrighteous church leaders from office. In 1377, he believed the papacy should confine itself to religion and the biblical authority given to bishops. By 1381, he rejected the very office of pope.

Wycliffe did not receive an invitation to the Oxford hearing. He himself was not on trial, only his controversial opinions, which by this time were being taught, discussed, and expounded on both within and without university walls. The pronouncement against these assertions meant that all professors and lecturers were banned from teaching or debating such views. Wycliffe, although not personally attacked, would be prohibited from teaching those things upon which he based his career, arguably his life. He knew full well that this pronouncement was because of his ideas and the following they created. Although not mentioned by name, the university knew who had invented, honed, and popularized these views. Wycliffe had become an officially unspoken but nonetheless recognized heretic. The matter was so serious that John of Gaunt, acting solely as a friend rather than as a political voice, came to Oxford and privately helped convince Wycliffe that it was in his own best interest to step down from his position at the university. In May, 1381, Wycliffe relinquished his professional ties and retreated to Lutterworth where, with the help of Nicholas Hereford, a follower from Oxford, he quietly continued to write and oversee the translation of Latin Scripture into the vernacular.³²

His decision to leave Oxford has made some wonder if Wycliffe publically recanted. Although one cannot be absolutely certain, it is unlikely. At this time the authorities thought it enough to quiet him; they did not require full repentance, something men like Nicholas Hereford would face in the near future. Soon after his departure in

³² Dahmus, *Prosecution*, 90-3. See also McFarlane, *Beginnings*, 84-5.

1382, Wycliffe suffered a stroke which left him partially paralyzed. Less than two years later, near Christmas of 1384, he suffered a second stroke while attending mass in Lutterworth. He fell from his seat onto the stone floor, and the vicar paused the service while others took him home. Three days later, on December 31st, 1384, Wycliffe died.³³

During his lifetime, Wycliffe the man never constituted a threat to the established Church or University. He was only a discontented Oxford scholar and low ranking clergyman. His teachings, rather than his person, were what appeared alarming. Some bishops and parliamentary members had found them so in 1377, and brought the arraignment at St. Paul's. Pope Gregory certainly thought them threatening when he sent the bulls to England that same year. And finally, during the winter of 1380-1 Oxford did not condemn the scholar, but the beliefs.

These ideas on church and state authority, the supremacy of the literal Bible, and the substance and purpose of communion, combined with their appeal to others both within and without the University system, are what made Wycliffe appear on the fourteenth century heretical radar screen. As long as he remained in the good graces of the nobility, or when the Church had to confront the much bigger issue of who is truly pope, Wycliffe remained fairly safe. However, as the combination of a stubborn scholar and devout Christian, "he was prepared without flinching to believe authority wrong."³⁴ This eventually made him unpopular in politics, and as he progressed, even doubted and rejected by most colleagues. Unlike some later heretics who continued to speak boldly at this stage, when people and politics both stacked against him, Wycliffe decided to quietly leave.

³³ Workman, *John Wyclif*, 316.

³⁴ McFarlane, *Beginnings*, 71.

But after his departure and eventual death the heresies he wrote and taught remained. Gordon Leff rightly states “Wyclif himself was never the leader of a sect, nor was he condemned as a heretic during his lifetime. To the end he remained convinced of his own orthodoxy”³⁵ and yet, “Wyclif was the greatest heresiarch of the later Middle Ages.”³⁶ Over the next few decades, Wycliffe’s teachings would continue in various forms as academic and popular Lollardy. The ripple effect forced several men in Oxford to either recant or suffer harsher consequences than the politically connected Wycliffe ever did. Across the English Channel, John Hus would cling to a less extreme version of Lollardy, but his insistence on practical application, the ability of the Church to focus now that the Great Western Schism had been resolved, and a lack of high ranking friends, all combined against Hus and many other dissidents who took inspiration from Wycliffe. But whereas the instigator, Wycliffe, simply resigned, the follower burned at the stake.³⁷

In the end, pure heresy – deviation from orthodox belief – did not kill in fourteenth century England. Only when these views appeared threatening did anyone of influence take note. Even then, a combination of patronage and larger political events could keep one relatively safe from incoming attack. But when radical changes were proposed, propagated, and threatened to perform, traditional authority did what needed to be done to retain the status quo. In the fourteenth century this could mean silencing a professor, or publicly burning a poorer man who read the scholar’s works and practiced a version of them. While Wycliffe could be silenced, his writings endured. Many of his concepts revived in the hearts and minds of future deviants. According to Gosh, “The combination of an academic

³⁵ Leff, “Wyclif and Hus,” 106.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Henry Ansgar Kelly, “Trial Procedures against Wyclif and Wycliffites in England and at the Council of Constance:” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (1998): 10–28. Pages 10–20 go into much more detail on the treatment and trials of Wycliffe’s Oxford compatriots, while 21–28 explain those of John Hus and the Bohemians.

study of the Bible and an inspirational access to the divine mind was a remarkably potent one[.]”³⁸

³⁸ Kantik Gosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2002) 66.

**Rapid Approximation: African Americans
and the Transformation of Muskogee Society, 1700–1819**

Jason Herbert

For historians of the Southeast few questions inspire more debate than that of what role Africans and African Americans played in Creek Indian society. Long ignored by scholars, the interplay between persons of native and African descent recently came back to the attention of academics. However, these studies have thus far failed to recognize certain cultural cues of both Creeks (also known as Muskogees) and blacks in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In fact, contact between these groups led to a transformative process within both ethnic spheres. This paper explores the ways in which Indians and ethnic Africans interacted in the Muskogee world and demonstrates that contact with blacks resulted in the end of one Muskogean confederacy and the rise of another.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the Creek confederacy coalesced in present-day Georgia and Alabama from the remnants of Mississippian-era chiefdoms in response to slave raids from the Westo and Chickasaw Indian groups. The new confederacy was comprised of a very diverse group that spoke a multitude of languages, many of which were not mutually intelligible. Settling upon the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers were the Hitchiti-speaking Lower Creeks, while Muskogee speakers settled upon the Alabama and Flint Rivers and became known as the Upper Creeks. A

third group, the Seminoles, settled in Florida some time afterwards and will be addressed later.¹

Within the confederacy were numbers of Creek towns, called *talwas*, that enjoyed significant autonomy from the rest of society. For instance, should the Lower Creek town of Coweta be attacked by a Choctaw war party, the Upper Creek town of Tuckabatchee was not obliged to come to its aid. Similarly, negotiations with the English on the part of Okfuskees were not necessarily recognized by Cussetas. Along with *talwas* were *talofas*, daughter towns who were obligated to follow the instructions of their mother towns, such as when to go to war, hold festivals, or honor its mother town with tribute. Functioning within the *talwas* and *talofas* was the system of clans which constituted the dominant political structure of Creek society. Muskogee society, like other Southeastern groups, was matrilineal. While men may have held the role of *mico* (town chieftain), women were the dominant voice within the clan and thus played an important part in Creek decision making. For these reasons, Creek foreign

¹ For the formation of Creek society in response to Indian slave raids, see Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 137-140; Robbie Ethridge, "Creating the Shatter Zone," in *Light on the Path: The Anthropology and History of the Southeastern Indians*, ed. Thomas J. Pluckhahn and Robbie Ethridge (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2006), 212-216; Ned J. Jenkins, "Tracing the Origins of the Early Creeks, 1050-1700 CE," in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South*, ed. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 188-189. For a comprehensive description of the location of Southeastern Indian groups in the eighteenth century, see Peter H. Wood, "The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Religion, 1685-1790," in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, ed. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 57-132.

relations often tended to be the work of a town or a mother town and its daughters.²

The domestic lives of Creek men, women, and children featured a distinct sexual division of labor. Men were hunters and warriors while women engaged in small-scale farming, cooking, textile production and child-rearing. Men or women who crossed these lines were subject to public ridicule. Creeks worshipped a deity called the Maker of Breath and held annual celebrations of the Green Corn Dance during which towns invited their neighbors to share in a sense of community. It was here that bonds of friendship were renewed, marriages made, and boys underwent rites of passage to lead them into manhood.³

The establishment of the Carolina colony in the late seventeenth century led to an oft-tumultuous relationship between the Creek confederacy and the English empire. English attempts to develop an agricultural economy in North America led to experimentations with Indian slave labor. However, the practice of Indian slavery was never the success English planters hoped for. The English abandoned it altogether following the Yamasee War in 1715, during which the Yamasee Indians along with Creek and Choctaw allies nearly destroyed Carolina before the English repulsed them.⁴

² For an in-depth look at one particular Creek town in the eighteenth century, see Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

³ John R. Swanton, "The Green Corn Dance," *Chronicle of Oklahoma* 10, No. 2 (June, 1932): 170-195; William Bartram, *The Travels of William Bartram: Naturalist's Edition*, edited by Francis Harper (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 323-328; James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, edited by Kathryn E. Holland Braund, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 142-154.

⁴ Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 330-331.

Following the downfall of the Indian slave trade, South Carolina planters developed a new work force using enslaved Africans. While African slave labor had been used in North America for some time, the high demand for it in the Caribbean resulted in relatively slow growth of the practice before 1715. However, experience with rice cultivation and a relative resistance to malaria made Africans assets that colonists could not afford to be without. Africans also were a logical labor choice for colonial land owners as they could be imported from overseas without upsetting the local indigenous population. The population of African slaves in South Carolina exploded from almost nothing in 1685 to over 40,000 in 1745. By the end of the century the new state boasted a population of almost 120,000 black slaves.⁵

Unlike Native American slaves who could escape and dissolve into the local Indian populations, African slaves had little hope for liberation. The English established the colony of Georgia in 1732 not only to buffer against possible Spanish attacks on South Carolina but also as a seine in which fleeing blacks might be caught. In 1740, a Captain Massey explained to the colony's trustees: "Georgia is a fine Barrier for the Northern Provinces, and especially for Carolina; And is also a great Security against the running away of Negroes from Carolina to Augustine, because Every Negroe at his first Appearance in Georgia must be immediately known to be a Run away, since there are no Negroes in Georgia."⁶

⁵ Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974), 49; Wood, "The Changing Population of the Colonial South," 70-71.

⁶ Wood, *Black Majority*, 260.

Of course, in those Georgia woods were Creek Indians, many of whom were eager to capture African slaves in exchange for British goods. This was all well and good for the British government, which initially promoted hostility between the races as a way of defusing attempts by Indians to arm African–American slaves for revolt against their masters. As the Superintendent of Southern Indian Affairs wrote to British General Sir Thomas Gage in 1767, “To prevent the Indian Country becoming an Asylum for Negroes is a Matter of the utmost consequence to the prosperity of the province.”⁷

British efforts to leverage Creek hostility against African slaves were hampered due to their imperfect understanding of Creek culture. Creek concepts of slavery and their seemingly arbitrary nature of dealing with black faces in Indian country mystified the British. As befit the autonomous nature of their society, Creeks had no one point of view regarding slaves. Often Creeks saw the benefit of capturing escapees and returning them to locales such as Charles Town in exchange for guns, ball and powder. Other times, Creeks simply killed and scalped the fugitives, knowing it would bring them war honors. Yet other times Creeks adopted blacks into their own societies either as slaves or as full members.

Even when Creeks brought blacks into their towns, they treated the new residents far differently than the English did under their system of chattel slavery. Creeks had no need for laborers

⁷ John Stuart to Thomas Gage, 26 September 1767, Gage Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan (hereinafter referred to as GAGE); Stuart to Gage, 27 November 1767, GAGE; Gage to Hillsborough, 10 November 1770 in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763–1775, Volume 1* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 278; Martha Condray Searcy, “The Introduction of African Slavery into the Creek Indian Nation,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 66, No. 1 (Spring 1982), 23–24.

before the American Revolution as they did not engage in large-scale commercial agriculture; hunting for deerskins was still their dominant economic pursuit prior to 1776. Furthermore, Muskogee martial tradition dictated that male war captives (a category into which black males easily fit) were far too dangerous to be left in a *talwa* unguarded. For this reason some were scalped upon capture or ritually tortured in the Creek square grounds. However, most runaways were at least temporarily sheltered within Creek society. Many men became excellent hunters and warriors, the latter role being especially important in light of ongoing feuds with the Choctaws, Chickasaws and Cherokees. Women and children, on the other hand, were typically given menial tasks to perform until they could be married or adopted into a clan. Once they had clan membership, the newly adopted Creeks could ascend the Muskogee hierarchy. For instance, while not of African descent, the single most influential war leader during the American Revolution was Emistisiguo, who was said to be “of the slave race.” However, the Creeks could revoke this new-found freedom should the need arise. Creek *micos* understood that nothing soothed tensions with the British (and later, Americans) better than the relinquishment of African Americans. This was exemplified in 1770 when the Earl of Hillsborough dictated that future treaties with Indians would include the proviso that any runaway slaves be returned to their English masters.⁸

⁸ Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 2003), 115–117; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 50–63; Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees’ Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 71–75; Michelle LeMaster, *Brothers Born of One Mother: British Native American Relations in*

Blacks began to appear under a very different form of slavery in Creek towns after the American Revolution. This change occurred for two reasons: first, overhunting for deerskins resulted in the collapse of the Creek economy, forcing Indians to find a new way to acquire Euro-American goods they coveted. Second, European-American slave holders quickly expanded into the fertile soils of Creek territory. With them came black slaves, and many Creeks saw with their own eyes the prosperity of Southern plantation owners for the first time. Creek men, seeking riches of their own, quickly adapted as they revolutionized their concepts of ownership and property. But these changes ultimately led to war within the Creek nation.

Fittingly, the Creeks were led in this transition to slave and animal husbandry by a man of two worlds, Alexander McGillivray. McGillivray was the son of wealthy Scottish trader Lachlan McGillivray, and was educated in Charleston among British colonists. But his mother was a French-Creek mestizo named Sehoy, of the influential Wind clan. According to Creek custom McGillivray was considered a full member of the nation, despite the fact that three out of four of his grandparents were Europeans. During the war McGillivray supported the British and rose to prominence after Emistisiguo's death. Afterwards, he saw the potential for vast profits by securing a trade monopoly with the Pantan & Leslie trading company. With the merchants' support, McGillivray ushered the Creeks towards European-American means of living, such as sustained agriculture, animal husbandry and ownership of chattel slaves. Upon his

the Colonial Southeast (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 51-83; Searcy, "African Slavery," 22-24.

premature death in 1793, McGillivray was fabulously wealthy, owning several estates, huge herds of cattle, and sixty African slaves.⁹

Creek society continued to transform after McGillivray's death. Sensing a power vacuum within the confederacy, the American government appointed Benjamin Hawkins as agent to the Creeks in 1796. A former Senator from North Carolina, Hawkins's job was to continue to usher the Creek people towards American ways of living. Certainly Hawkins encouraged slave ownership. Upon his arrival in Creek country, he remarked that one Creek leader owned five slaves, "though they are of little use to him." However, other Creeks were expanding the practice. McGillivray's sister maintained thirty slaves on her property and a Mrs. Durant was listed as being in possession of "fourteen working negroes." After his visit, Hawkins described the town of Eufaula:

Several of these Indians have negroes, taken during the revolutionary war, *and where they are, there is more industry and better farms.* These negroes were, many of them, given by the agents of Great Britain to the Indians, in payment for their services, and they generally call themselves "*King's gifts.*" The negroes

⁹ John Walton Caughey, ed., *McGillivray of the Creeks* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), xvii; Creek leaders seeking good terms with Americans almost always had to address African slaves in Muskogee territory. On November 19, 1794 the mico of the Tuckabatchees informed the governor of Georgia that "the most hostile towns" promised to "give up all the property they had taken—and as a proof of the sincerity of their intentions, they delivered a negro which I have brought with me," *The American Minerva*, March 13, 1795.

are all of them, attentive and friendly to white people, particularly so to those in authority.¹⁰

Not every member of the Creek nation readily acceded to what historian Claudio Saunt terms the “new order.” In fact, many in the Upper Creek towns that supported the British during the American Revolution detested Hawkins and his plans to Americanize the Indians. Upper Creeks felt that Hawkins and Lower Creek mestizos betrayed traditional Muskogee customs. Young men from towns like Tuckabatchee, Okfuskee and Tallassee seethed with anger at the decimation of their hunting grounds and their kinsmen’s acceptance of the plow over the bow. Worsening matters was an eight-year drought in Creek country that began in 1804. While wealthy, plantation-owning Creeks survived the ordeal, those who relied upon hunting or small-scale agriculture starved. Poor Creeks witnessed a growing divide between themselves and wealthy, slave-owning Creeks, who refused to help—a stark rejection of Muskogee values. When the drought finally lifted in 1812, tensions between poor and wealthy Creeks were a smoldering tinderbox ready to immolate the entire confederacy. They only needed a spark.¹¹

What they got was a shooting star and an earthquake. In the fall of 1811, the Creeks were visited at Tuckabatchee by Shawnee war leader, Tecumseh (Shooting Star). Here Tecumseh recruited allies for a pan-Indian alliance against the Americans. The Shawnee complained of white antics of stealing Indian lands and harassing Indian women. Worse yet, Indians had insulted their creator by taking

¹⁰ H. Thomas Foster II, ed., *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796–1810* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 30s, 40s, 66s.

¹¹ Saunt, *New Order*, 205.

up the white ways. Tecumseh challenged Creeks, Cherokees and other Indians to throw down their plows and hoes and take up their weapons against the American intruders. As proof of his power he said he would make the ground shake once he returned home.¹²

While pro-American Lower Creeks largely ignored Tecumseh's calls for action, poor young men of Upper Creek towns were moved considerably. They were moved literally when, shortly after Tecumseh's departure, a massive earthquake rocked all of Muskogee territory. For these young men it was a symbol that it was time to strike out at the Creeks who turned their backs to them in their time of desperation. These warriors, known as Redsticks, took to the trail against mixed-blood and white settlements, burning lands, killing livestock, and encountering slaves. The Redsticks appeared to hold two points of view regarding enslaved blacks: 1) slaves wishing to join the crusade were welcomed as capable warriors; 2) slaves not wishing to join the uprising were captured and kept as war prizes. It appears that Redsticks made a concerted effort not to kill enslaved African Americans. For instance, in the account of one unnamed black slave who escaped a Redstick assault on his home a warrior, spying him in a corner, beckoned him to come out as the Master of Breath had ordered them not to kill anyone other than whites or mixed-bloods.¹³

While the events of the Redstick War are far too numerous to describe here, we should briefly examine the roles that blacks played

¹² John Sugden, *Tecumseh: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), 243–251; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 70–72; Gregory Evans Dowd, “Thinking Outside the Circle: Tecumseh’s 1811 Mission,” in *Tohopeka: Rethinking the Creek War & the War of 1812*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 30–52.

¹³ Gregory A. Waselkov, *A Conquering Spirit: Fort Mims and the Redstick War of 1813–1814* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 132–133, 148.

in the war's zenith, the Battle of Fort Mims. On August 20, 1813, a force of 700 Redstick warriors and their black allies assaulted the hastily-constructed palisade called Fort Mims. Despite warnings from their African-American slaves of a large force of Indians gathering nearby, Americans and Creeks inside the fort were surprised by the arrival of the Redstick army. However, defenders beat back the initial brunt of the assault, and the Redsticks backed off the attack to consider their options. The Redsticks had taken significantly more casualties than expected, and their leadership were inclined to call off the attack. However, the black contingent railed against this idea, convinced leadership to attack again, and in fact led the new assault. What followed was a bloodbath. The attackers set the fort on fire and stormed the palisade, killing or capturing every American and mestizo Creek in the redoubt. Of the 550 settlers inside, only 36 escaped. However, consistent with their previous actions, the Redsticks allowed black slaves the option of either joining their army or becoming their captives.¹⁴

While the massacre at Fort Mims was the high point for Redstick fighters, it also spelled their doom. The carnage that survivors reported finally gave General Andrew Jackson the justification he needed to invade the fertile Creek grounds so coveted by southern planters. On March 27, 1814, Jackson's army and his Creek allies destroyed the Redsticks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. Following the assault, Jackson forced large land cessions from the

¹⁴ Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 154-157; Some blacks inside the garrison assisted the Redsticks from inside, Waselkov, *A Conquering Spirit*, 116-138.

defeated Redsticks as well as his Creek allies.¹⁵ The old Creek confederacy was broken.

While African Americans partly contributed to the downfall of one Muskogee confederacy, farther south they spurred the formation of another. Following the Yamasee War, scores of disaffected Creeks moved south to the Alachua Plains near present-day Gainesville, Florida. They were led by a man known as Ahaya, or Cowkeeper. From 1715 to the mid-1750s these Creeks gained the name “Seminoles” and attracted castoffs from other Native societies such as the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Shawnees and the fractal remnants of Florida’s remaining Indian population. In Florida, however, Seminoles encountered blacks in different ways than did the Creeks to the north. In fact, African Americans lived on the peninsula long before the formation of the Seminoles.¹⁶

Africans had long been part of the Spanish experience in North America. On his final voyage Columbus was accompanied by “Diego el Negro,” and Africans served in the armies that conquered the Aztecs and Incas. In 1526, a group of black slaves rebelled against a newly established Spanish colony in Florida after its founder, Lucas Vasquez de Ayollon, died of disease. Ayollon’s cohorts returned to Haiti by the end of the year, leaving approximately 100

¹⁵ Gregory A. Waselkov, “Fort Jackson and Its Aftermath,” in *Tohopeka: Rethinking the Creek War & the War of 1812*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 158-169; Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 161-163; J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 171-183.

¹⁶ Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 246; Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 166. William C. Sturtevant and Jessica R. Catteling, “Florida Seminole and Miccosukee,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume XIV, Southeast*, ed. Raymond D. Fogelson, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 2004), 429.

blacks to join with the local Indian population. In 1540 Hernando de Soto made his trek through Florida and brought with him 50 Africans. Blacks continued residing in the Southeast as the English began to claim territory. An English group traveling in Tuscarora territory in 1653 found a wealthy Spaniard living among the Indians. Among his possessions he counted a large family and seven black slaves.¹⁷

Unlike the English and later the United States, the Spanish actions encouraged interaction between blacks and Seminoles. Spain wooed runaway slaves to settle south of the St. Mary's River with promises of freedom to those who made the trek. However, Spain's claim to dominion over the peninsula was tenuous at best; they held but tiny portions of land at St. Augustine and in the panhandle.¹⁸ Therefore, when slaves fled Georgia and South Carolina they entered not Spanish, but Seminole territory.

In Seminole country, African Americans were able to obtain a level of freedom unknown to them in the British colonies (and later, American states). While some Seminoles did own chattel slaves, the relationship between African Americans and Seminoles in the 1700s and first decade of the 1800s resembled feudal societies. African Americans set up their own communities outside of Seminole *talwas* and offered an annual tribute of maize or other agricultural goods. In

¹⁷ Wood, *Black Majority*, 5-6; Herbert Aptheker, "Maroons within the Present Limits of the United States," in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. Richard Price (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 149.

¹⁸ Susan Richbourg Parker, "So in Fear of Both the Indians and the Americans," in *America's Hundred Years' War: U.S. Expansion to the Gulf Coast and the Fate of the Seminole, 1763-1858* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 26; Rebecca B. Bateman, "Africans and Indians: A Comparative Study of the Black Carib and Black Seminole," *Ethnohistory* 37, No. 1 (Winter 1990): 3; Rosalyn Howard "'Looking for Angola': An Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Search for a Nineteenth Century Florida Maroon Community and Its Caribbean Connections," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 92, No. 1 (Summer 2013): 33.

return, they were protected from Euro–American slavers by the might of Seminole warriors. Aside from their annual tribute these Black Seminoles were free to do as they pleased.¹⁹

Black Seminole communities proved quite successful. Homes and towns were very similar to that of Native Seminoles, though blacks were apparently far better at agriculture. According to one visitor, “We found these negroes in possession of large fields of the finest land, producing large crops of corn, beans, melons, pumpkins, and other esculent vegetables. [I] saw, while riding along the borders of the ponds, fine rice growing; and in the village large corn–cribs were filled, while the houses were larger and more comfortable than those of the Indians themselves.”²⁰

While Black and Native Seminole communities may have looked similar, they sounded far different. Black Seminoles spoke a creole dialect related to Gullah, with a mix of English–sounding words and a mash of African, Spanish and Muskogean words thrown in. It was substantially different than the Muskogee or Hitchiti tongues favored by the Seminoles. Prayers offered by Black Seminoles were different than those of the Indians. Seminoles believed in origin stories attributing the world’s creation to the Maker of Breath, while

¹⁹ Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 213–217; Laurence Foster, *Negro–Indian Relationships in the Southeast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1935), 21; Bateman, “Africans and Indians,” 9–10; Not all free blacks were associated with the Seminoles, see Jane G. Landers, “Free Black Plantations and Economy in East Florida, 1784–1821,” in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane G. Landers (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 136–149.

²⁰ Kevin Mulroy, “Ethnogenesis and Ethnohistory of the Seminole Maroons,” *Journal of World History* 4, No. 2 (Fall 1993): 297; Brent R. Weisman, “The Plantation System of the Florida Seminole Indians and Black Seminoles during the Colonial Era,” in *Colonial Plantations and Economy in Florida*, ed. Jane Landers (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 136–149.

refugee blacks followed a fusion of Protestant Christian, Roman Catholic, African, and Indian beliefs. Black Seminoles almost certainly did not participate in the Busk, the most important of all Native Seminole religious celebrations. Furthermore, while blacks and Seminoles co-existed they co-mingled socially very rarely. This was largely because blacks did not participate in the Native Seminoles' matrilineal clan system, though some intermarriage occurred.²¹

Native Seminoles benefitted from the presence of Black Seminoles, even if they rarely comingled. In addition to the annual tribute, Native Seminoles were able to call upon Black Seminoles in times of war. Perhaps even more important was the ability of Black Seminoles to serve as brokers between Anglo and Native American cultures. Few Anglo-Americans could comprehend the melodious rhythms of Muskogee or Hitchiti, and Seminoles struggled with English. However, escaped slaves often spoke combinations of Yuchi, Muskogee, Hitchiti, Shawnee, or other dialects. For this reason, Black interpreters often rose in prominence. The most famous of these was Abraham, a black man who carried much weight in Seminole society. During the Second Seminole War, Abraham served as a close advisor to Chief Micanopy. Described as distinguished and cunning,

²¹ Mulroy, "Ethnogenesis," 300; John Bemrose, *Reminiscences of the Second Seminole War* (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2001), 17–20; For discussions on Gullah, see Wood, *Black Majority*, 167–191; For the successes and failures of other Maroon communities in the Americas, see Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736–1831* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 45. An origin story recently published by Seminole historian Susan A. Miller helps to explain native feelings towards other races: "In the story, the Maker of Life creates a hutke [white person], takes pity on him because he is pale and weak, and lets him live. The the Maker of Life creates a black man and tells him, 'I do not like you. You may stand aside.' On the third try, the Creator gets it right and creates the ancestor of the Indian people." Susan A. Miller, *Coacoochee's Bones: A Seminole Saga* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 56.

Seminoles attributed his commanding oratory skills to a higher power. His political acumen was not lost on the Americans with whom he interacted; Colonel William Foster said Abraham “is compared to Martin Van Buren.”²² After the war, Abraham led a band of Black Seminole followers west to Texas.

While Black and Native Seminoles were somewhat separated socially, they were united by a shared hatred of the United States. During the War of 1812, American residents in East Florida, backed by militant Georgians and supported by the Madison administration, attempted to create an independent territory to be annexed to the United States. These “Patriots” invaded the region, quickly controlled the rich soils of northeast Florida, and soon attacked the Spanish position at St. Augustine. Georgia militiamen torched communities throughout the peninsula. Both blacks and Indians suffered mightily; *talwas* and *talofas* relocated deeper into the swamps as a result. Ultimately, Americans were no match for the brutal counterassault of combined Native and Black Seminole war parties. One American man wrote home fearful of the “dreadful lurking Indian,” and described Black Seminoles as “strangers to fear.”²³ Working together, the

²² For black linguists, see John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835–1842* Revised Edition (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1985), 78; Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 231–234; *South-Carolina Weekly Gazette*, December 19, 1783; Abraham was not the only prominent Black Seminole during the Second Seminole War. John Caesar and John Cavallo (John Horse) were greatly feared by American forces, Matthew Clavin, “‘It is a negro, not an Indian war’: Southampton, St. Domingo, and the Second Seminole War,” in *America’s Hundred Years’ War: U.S. Expansion to the Gulf Coast and the Fate of the Seminole, 1763–1858* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 191; Mulroy, “Ethnogenesis,” 299; Frank Laumer, ed., *Amidst a Storm of Bullets: The Diary of Lt. Henry Prince in Florida, 1836–1842* (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 1998), 26, 79; Mahon, *History*, 128–129, 238.

²³ Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 224.

combined Seminole force beat back their invaders and forced an American withdrawal.²⁴

During the Patriot War, Lower Creek leaders called upon the Seminoles to give up their black slaves and not to engage the American militia. Seminole denial of these orders combined with their non-participation in the Redstick War demonstrates that between 1812 and 1814 the Seminoles underwent their own political ethnogenesis and broke away from the old Creek confederacy. Likewise, the relationship between Black Seminoles and Native Seminoles continued to evolve thanks to continued American aggression.

Following the Treaty of Ghent the British abandoned a fort on Prospect Bluff overlooking the Apalachicola River to their former allies, a group of freed slaves, Redsticks, and Seminole Indians. The post was hardly empty. The British left behind a large supply of guns, ammunition and even cannons and howitzers for fort's new inhabitants. Indians came and went but a large contingent of freed blacks made it their home and the redoubt came to be known as the Negro Fort. Its residents lived in a mutually antagonistic relationship with others along the border. Slave-raiding Indians harassed blacks who strayed too far from the fort. In turn, the inhabitants of Prospect Bluff made forays into the United States grabbing cattle and firing on boats that dared move down the Apalachicola River.²⁵

²⁴ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 298; Snyder, *Slavery*, 221–222; Bateman, "Africans and Indians," 4; Saunt, *New Order*, 239–240; The Seminoles also took the war to American plantation owners in Florida, see *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, September 13, 1812.

²⁵ David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, "Mr. Rhea's Missing Letter and the First Seminole War," in *America's Hundred Years' War: U.S. Expansion to the Gulf Coast and the Fate of the Seminole, 1763–1858* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011),

Both Andrew Jackson and General Edmund Gaines believed the Negro Fort threatened the institution of slavery in Georgia and Alabama. In 1816 the United States Army and Navy, joined by 500 Creek Warriors led by William McIntosh, attacked the fort; the Creeks' participation illustrates the extent of their divide from the Seminoles by this time. A lucky cannon shot detonated the fort's magazine, instantly killing 270 free blacks and injuring another 57 who were promptly reclaimed as slaves by their attackers. Most of the blacks who escaped fled deeper into Seminole territory and joined with the Black Seminoles.²⁶

Jackson continued the American assault on blacks in Florida with another invasion in 1818, touching off the First Seminole War. Ostensibly a reaction to Native and Black Seminole attacks on American slave raiders crossing the border, Jackson's objective was clear: kill or recapture blacks in Florida.²⁷ Together with William McIntosh's Creek troops, Andrew Jackson's army burned down almost 400 Native and Black Seminole homes at Bowlegs Town in April. Vastly outnumbered, Black and Native Seminoles staged a desperate battle in order to give their families time to flee deeper into the peninsula.

Jackson's incursion into Florida fostered a shift in the Native/Black Seminole dynamic. What was a feudalistic relationship in the eighteenth century evolved by 1818 to resemble the old Creek

124; Kenneth W. Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 16; Saunt, *A New Order*, 273–290.

²⁶ Foster, "Negro-Indian Relationships," 24–26; After living for a time with the Seminoles some of the survivors eventually made it to the Bahamas where their tradition still remains, see Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772–1832* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 340–342.

²⁷ *New-York Daily Advertiser*, December 18, 1818; Mulroy, "Ethnogenesis," 295; Landers, *Black Society*, 235.

confederacy. In Florida, Seminole *talwas* called upon Black Seminole *talofas*. When mixed Seminole forces confronted Jackson's soldiers they did so with both Native and Black Seminole leaders, demonstrating the shift in status of Black Seminoles.²⁸ This increasingly coequal relationship was reinforced seventeen years later when Americans again engaged Seminoles in an attempt to flush African Americans out of the peninsula and into the waiting arms of white slave owners during the Second Seminole War. Native Seminoles were not willing to trade their black comrades for the promise of peace; what resulted was the longest American war until the mid-twentieth century. When bands of Seminoles eventually quit the fight, they did so on the condition that Black Seminoles be allowed to migrate west with them to Indian Territory.²⁹

The arrival of ethnic Africans in Muskogee territory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries irrevocably changed the social, political, and economic mores of the most powerful Indian nation in the American southeast and muddied once-clear concepts of Indian identity. Amongst the Upper and Lower Creeks, the presence of African Americans offered warriors new ways to obtain war honors by capturing or killing escapees. At the same time, the large rewards for those escapees helped the Creeks develop the economic system of an acquisitive society more like the European settlers'. However, not all blacks returned to their masters. Some runaways were adopted into *talwas* and clans. *Micos* appreciated that runaway slaves made for

²⁸ Foster, *Negro-Indian Relationships*, 27.

²⁹For removal to Indian Territory see Porter, *Black Seminoles*, 97-105. Some Black Seminoles exercised their autonomy and moved to the Bahamas where their tradition remains today. Irvin D.S. Winsboro and Joe Knetsch, "Florida Slaves, the 'Saltwater Railroad' to the Bahamas, and Anglo-American Diplomacy," *The Journal of Southern History* 79, No. 1 (February 2013): 55; Rosalyn Howard, *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).

powerful bargaining chips when negotiating with European powers and sought to exploit Europeans' lust for them. But amongst Upper and Lower Creeks the presence of African Americans was ultimately a contributing factor in the downfall of the confederacy. Lower Creeks came to covet the wealth they could amass plantation slavery and the slaves it required while young Upper Creek warriors rejected this new socio-economic order. The confederacy crumbled between 1811 and 1813 as the two sides engaged in a violent, bloody civil war.

To the south, the presence of African slaves contributed to the opposite result. Seminole castoffs finally broke away from the Creek confederacy during the Patriot War, in part because Seminoles did not share in the Lower Creeks' Europeanizing tendencies, including slavery. Seminoles ignored calls from the Creek National Council to relinquish African escapees. Among Seminoles, runaway blacks found refuge and formed autonomous maroon communities far away from American slavers. Over time this relationship evolved, as Black Seminoles proved themselves indispensable to Native Seminoles. African Americans brought with them improved farming techniques from southern plantations and the ability to bridge worlds with their linguistic acumen. When Seminole lands were invaded, Black Seminoles joined their Native compatriots in defense of their shared lands. No longer junior members of a feudal society, by 1835 African Americans were active participants in a new Muskogean coalition—the Seminole confederacy.

**The Writings of Ladies' Abolitionist Societies In Britain,
1825-1833
Anna Wood**

"In taking a view of the means which may be employed with advantage to effect the mitigation and ultimate extinction of NEGRO SLAVERY, it would be unpardonable to overlook THE LADIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM, of all classes, and especially of the upper ranks, who have now an opportunity of exerting themselves beneficially in behalf of the most deeply injured of the human race."¹

On April 8, 1825, in the home of Lucy Townsend, the wife of an Anglican clergyman, forty four women gathered to establish the first women's anti-slavery society in Britain. Its initial name was the Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves, but later adopted the name Female Society for Birmingham. This society was committed to the "Amelioration of the Condition of the Unhappy Children of Africa, and especially of Female Negro Slaves."² This formation preceded that of the first abolition society in the United States, the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, by seven years.³

The Birmingham society actively helped other societies form through various religious network connections. They "acted more like a national than a local society, actively promoting the foundation of local women's societies throughout England, and in Wales and Ireland,

¹ *Negro Slavery, to the Ladies of the United Kingdom*, London, 1824, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103700186).

² Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (London: Routledge, 1992), 43-44.

³ Wendy Hamand Venet, *Neither Ballots nor Bullets: Women Abolitionists and the Civil War* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 4.

and supplying them with information and advice."⁴ The network of these societies created throughout the 1820s and 1830s moved the women's abolitionist movement from individual convictions to a concerted group effort. National anti-slavery activist George Thompson said concerning women's abolitionist organizations: "Where they existed, they did everything. . . . In a word they formed the cement of the whole Antislavery building -- without their aid we never should have been united."⁵ Between 1825 and 1833, seventy-three women's organizations were formed throughout the British Isles.⁶

These women's organizations had one main purpose: to diffuse information so as to arouse public sentiment. Some of the men's auxiliaries thought that women would be ideal for this task: "The peculiar texture of her mind, her strong feelings and quick sensibilities, especially qualify her, not only to sympathize with suffering, but also to plead for the oppressed, and there is no calculating the extent and importance of the moral reformations which might be effected through the combined exertion of her gentle influence and steady resolution."⁷ Women, it was believed, could feel the pain of the slave, and could help to share that feeling with others to aid their cause.

Women were also seen as good candidates to focus on arousing public pressure for abolition because they were not allowed in the political arena of the time. They could not directly influence Parliamentary decisions. It was only after the debate left Parliament

⁴ Midgley, *Women Against Slavery*, 46.

⁵ George Thompson's letter to Anne Knight as quoted in *ibid.*, 44.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷ *Appeal to the Hearts and Consciences of British Women* (Leicester, 1828) *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS4103708542).

and appealed to the public that women could share their voice and "could help swell the chorus of public support for emancipation."⁸

In the United States, fairs and petitions were most popular because the issue of emancipation had more immediacy for the American abolitionists than their British counterparts as the issue was local rather than abroad. Most of the British women writers had never actually seen a black person, slave or free, whereas American abolitionists had interactions and even varying degrees of relationships with both slave and free blacks. Women in the United States were not just fighting slavery as a moral cause, but also for practical daily purposes. For example, they fought the legality of interracial marriage. This particular point brought some ridicule on these women as they were often accused of being unable to secure a white husband, and so looking for a husband of another color. Women in the United States also had to decide whether or not to allow free blacks to join their abolitionist societies. Some were reluctant to do so and it was pointed out to them that their actions were counterintuitive to their cause. The British women did not have to deal with issues such as interracial marriage and inclusion of blacks in their societies.⁹

While American women's abolitionist societies held fairs and focused on petitions, the disbursement of information in Britain was largely made in the form of pamphlets or tracts, as well as societies' annual reports, many of which were lent to numerous people, one

⁸ Karen I. Halberleben, *Women's Participation in the British Anti-Slavery Movement: 1824-1825*, (New York, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 18-19.

⁹ Louis Ruchames "Race, Marriage, and Abolition in Massachusetts," *The Journal of Negro History* 40, no. 3 (Jul., 1955): 257.

after the other, to gain more readers.¹⁰ In these documents, five main themes that play to the readers' senses emerge: the horrid conditions of the slave, the family, religion, the need for immediacy, and a call to practical action such as abstaining from purchasing slave-produced goods. This paper will discuss these five tactics British women writers used to appeal to the emotions of their readers.

The pamphlets often would begin with a description of the horrid conditions of the slaves in the West Indies. Attempts at describing the enormity of the situation were used by showing numbers of those enslaved: "In the Colonies of Great Britain there are, at this moment, upwards of 830,000 human beings in a state of degrading personal slavery; the absolute property of their master, who may sell or transfer them at his discretion, and who may brand them, if he pleases, by means of a hot iron, as cattle are branded in this country."¹¹

Sometimes the opening descriptions discussed the working conditions of the slaves: The slaves were, "during crop time, which lasts between four and five months in the year, *to labor half of every night at the mill, or the whole of every other night, as well as all the day*"¹² In addition, "To make sugar the poor slaves in crop-time,

¹⁰ Beverly Gordon, "Playing at Being Powerless: New England Ladies Fairs, 1830-1930," *The Massachusetts Review* 27, no. 1 (Spring, 1986): 48; Anti-Slavery Society (Great Britain), *Anti-Slavery Ladies Association*, (London, 182-?), pg 2, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103700364).

¹¹ *Negro Slavery, to the Ladies of the United Kingdom*, 1.

¹² Elizabeth Heyrick, *No British Slavery, or, An Invitation to the People to Put a Speedy End to it*, Bradford, 1825, 5, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103713867).

work both night and day . . ."13 The middle class women authoring the information knew that people, especially those of the working class, would be able to identify with the long toiling hours, and feel pity for their fellow humans who worked even longer hours and with no pay.

Descriptions of treatments and tortures were also commonly used: "The colonial laws arm the master . . . with a power to punish his slaves to a certain extent (generally that of thirty-nine lashes,) for any offence, or for no offence."¹⁴ Others reported: "Some had received, others, were yet to receive--ONE THOUSAND LASHES,--AND WERE CONDEMNED TO BE WORKED IN CHAINS DURING THE RESIDUE OF THEIR LIVES!"¹⁵

These awful descriptions of the conditions under which slaves were forced to work, were used to heighten the sympathies of the reader, and try to regain their interests, especially if they had been appealed to for the abolitionist cause many times before.

Since many of the women writers were addressing other women in their writings (although some writings were intended for both sexes to read), descriptions of family life for slaves was frequently used to draw out sympathies. Many told stories of marriages being torn apart by slave auctions. One such example read: "The slaves, being in the eye of the law mere chattels, are liable

¹³ "What Does Your Sugar Cost?" *A Cottage Conversation on the Subject of British Negro Slavery*, London, 1826, 9, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103704193).

¹⁴ *Negro Slavery, to the Ladies of the United Kingdom*, 1.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition, or , An Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest and Most Effectual Means of Getting Rid of West Indian Slavery*, London, 1824, 43, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103691627).

to be seized and sold for their master's debts, without any regard to the family ties which may be broken. . . . Marriage is protected, in the case of slaves, by no legal sanction, and cannot therefore be said to exist among them . . ."16

Some even went as far as to tell dramatic stories of a slave dying due to heartache after the sale of his family: "Moreover, these defenseless creatures, (who have feelings as tender and affectionate as any of ourselves) are often separated and sold from their wives and children, which they take so deeply to heart as sometimes to pine away and die in consequence."17

Another told the story of a slave woman named Rosa, who, being pregnant, was forced to work anyway. She was beaten day after day, and finally, when the child was born, it was born dead with injuries to its head. It is assumed from the story that these injuries were because of the beatings forced upon the mother.18

Pamphlets contained many such stories. The same one that told the story of Rosa also described a slave auction: "They are sold to pay their master's debts; if he wants money he may take the children, and even the mother, and sell them before the eyes of the agonized father. If the late recommendations of our Government should even take place, the daughter at sixteen in Trinidad, and at fourteen in the thirteen chartered colonies, may, if her master pleases, be sold away from her parents when *she most needs them to protect her*, and when the vilest of men may choose to buy her."19

16 *Negro Slavery, to the Ladies of the United Kingdom*, " 1.

17 Elizabeth Heyrick, *No British Slavery*, 4.

18 "*What Does Your Sugar Cost?*", 11.

19 *Ibid.*, 8-9.

These stories, though perhaps exaggerated, held some truth and were used to play on the emotions of the good English woman, who loved and upheld her family. How could she live in such peace with her family and not feel guilt and the tragedies faced by slave families at the hands of her British countrymen? The call was then issued by the writers to not rest until all slave women could "press a *free-born infant* to her bosom."²⁰

Along with family, religion was a major motivator. In fact, the abolitionist movement overall was predominantly supported by the Evangelicals and the Quakers, although there were other denominations involved as well.²¹ It only makes sense, therefore, to use religion to pull at the reader's heartstrings.

The issue of religion was divided into three arguments: abuse of the Sabbath, religion being withheld from the slaves, and that the institution of slavery itself was against Christian principles.

It was reported by the pamphleteers that slaves were forced to work on the Sabbath day. "[The slaves] are usually obligated to labor for their maintenance on the Sunday; and as that day is also their market-day, it is of necessity a day of worldly occupation, and much exertion."²² The Christian population was outraged by this because of the commandment to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. The Female Society of Birmingham, West-Bromwich, Wednesbury and Walsall declared in one of their writings: "The Divine commandment

²⁰ *Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves*, Wednesbury, 1825, 2, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries, (DS103718105); *Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves*, Birmingham, 1825, 1, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103718025).

²¹ Halberleben, *Women's Participation in the British Anti-Slavery Movement*, 9.

²² *Negro Slavery, to the Ladies of the United Kingdom*, 1.

says, Keep holy the Sabbath-day.--Our Colonial system *insists*, that the slave shall not keep holy the Sabbath-day. The commandment says again, six days shalt thou labor;--the Colonial system declares, seven days shalt thou labor, in ceaseless uninterrupted succession . . ."23 These women declared that the slave was denied the Sabbath because their masters believed that they would not make proper use of it. They questioned this by asking if God's laws were to change to match the desires of humans.²⁴

"Should they, by great exertion and management, procure on [the Sabbath] some little interval of leisure, they are not suffered to attend a place of worship, or even to engage in religious duties in their own miserable habitations, without a special license from their task-masters, which is often refused--*and they may be severely flogged if they dare to worship God without their masters' permission!*"²⁵ The authors insisted that slaves were denied any form of Christian education, or even the freedom to worship.

Religion was also used as one of the abolitionists' main arguments against the institution of slavery itself. Claims occurred frequently that it was in opposition to nature, reason and religion.²⁶ "We are surely called upon alike by sound policy and Christian

²³ Female Society, for Birmingham, West-Bromwich, Wednesbury, Walsall, and Their Respective Neighborhoods, for the Relief of British Negro Slaves, *Ladies' Society, for the Relief of Negro Slaves: Card Explanatory of the Contents of the Society's Work Bags*, London, 1826, 2, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103712705).

²⁴ Ladies' Association for Calne, Melksham, Devizes, and Their Respective Neighborhoods in Aid of the Cause of Emancipation, *The Third Annual Report of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne, Melksham, Devizes, &c., in Cause of Negro Emancipation: With a List of Subscribers*, Vol. 1, Calne, 1828, 10-11, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103715283).

²⁵ Heyrick, *No British Slavery*, 4.

²⁶ Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 30.

principle, to do all in our power to remove this stain from our national character, and to free ourselves from the awful responsibility that must attach to us, if, by our supine-ness, we permit an evil to exist which, by our active interference, we may have it in our power to mitigate or remove."²⁷ How could good Christians, supposedly like those in Britain, allow this horrid practice to continue? They called on the public to "raise one united, determined and solemn protest against the repetition of these barbarities, which blaspheme the sacred name of justice,—and seem to imprecate Almighty vengeance."²⁸

Above all, the women pamphleteers admonished their fellow countrymen and women to follow the Golden Rule: "...nothing can be more contrary to that DIVINE LAW, which commands us to LOVE OUR NEIGHBOUR AS OURSELVES, and to DO UNTO OTHERS WHATSOEVER WE WOULD THAT THEY SHOULD DO UNTO US."²⁹

The Evangelicals and the Quakers had won a bit of success in 1807 when Parliament passed the Abolition Act. This act ended the transport of slaves on British ships, and made it illegal to import new slaves into British colonies, at least on paper.³⁰ This partial abolition was not enough for the abolitionists. They desired total emancipation. "An *immediate* emancipation then, is the object to be aimed at;—it is more wise and rational,—more politic and safe, as well as more just and humane,—than gradual emancipation."³¹ The

²⁷ *A Picture of Colonial Slavery, in the year 1828, Addressed Especially to the Ladies of Great Britain*, London, 1828, 7, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103692807).

²⁸ Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 44.

²⁹ Heyrick, *No British Slavery*, 8.

³⁰ Karen I. Halberleben, *Women's Participation in the British Anti-Slavery Movement*, 14.

³¹ Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 39.

common idea amongst those in Parliament was the idea of "gradual" emancipation, where slowly slavery would be weeded out in small steps. The women's societies of Great Britain declared that this was not good enough. The most prominent woman pamphleteer, Elizabeth Heyrick, wrote in her pamphlet, "Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition, or, An Inquiry into the Shortest, Safest and most effectual means of Getting Rid of West Indian Slavery,": "But must it therefore follow, by any inductions of common sense, that emancipation out of the gripe of a robber or an assassin,—out of the jaws of a shark or a tiger, must be gradual? Must it, therefore, follow, that the wretched victim of slavery must always remain in slavery?—that emancipation must be so gradual, that the blessings of freedom shall never be tasted by him who has endured all the curses of slavery, but be reserved for his posterity alone?"³² In the same pamphlet she also proclaims "The slave holder knew very well, that his prey would be secure, so long as the abolitionists could be cajoled into a demand for *gradual* instead of *immediate* abolition. He knew very well, that the contemplation of a *gradual* emancipation, would beget a *gradual indifference to emancipation itself*. He knew very well, that even the *wise* and the *good*, may, by habit and familiarity, be brought to endure and tolerate almost anything."³³

Those in favor of immediate emancipation believed that the gradual emancipation would do nothing but make the institution of slavery stronger. "The very able mover of the question in Parliament last year, proposed that our colonial slavery should be suffered—to expire of itself,—to die a natural death.—But a natural death, it will never die.—It must be crushed at once, or not at all. While the

³² Ibid., 20.

³³ Ibid., 15-16.

abolitionists are endeavoring *gradually* to enfeeble and kill it by inches, it will discover the means of reinforcing its strengths, and will soon defy all the puny attacks of its assailants."³⁴

Those with the gradualist approach believed that if the slaves were all immediately freed at once, there would be social unrest and perhaps uprisings against the slave owners. The women refuted this belief by saying: ". . . from the facts which have come to our knowledge of the peaceable demeanor of liberated Slaves, we should be inclined to believe, that by giving them their freedom, and paying them wages for their labor, their gratitude would ensure fidelity to their masters, whilst their own interest would continually urge them to work with more alacrity and cheerfulness."³⁵ They admitted that they did not know of any immediate danger, but that the circumstance above was what they imagined would happen from what they had read in the newspapers.

These women blamed those in Parliament who supported the gradual approach claiming that they were not gaining any ground, but rather losing it. "*Unsuccessful opposition, to crimes of every description, invariably increases their power and malignity.*"³⁶ Truth and justice, they said, would not be heard if not spoken boldly, and that the government and slave owners would have to concede to their demands if only they proclaimed them wholeheartedly. They also accused them of asking too little, out of fear of losing it all. Rather, Ms. Heyrick declared this sentiment had driven them into the danger of losing all of their requests because they started by asking too little

³⁴ Ibid., 38.

³⁵ *The Fourth Annual Report of the Sheffield Ladies Anti-Slavery Society for 1829*, Vol 2, Sheffield, 1829, 5, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS103715517).

³⁶ Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 39.

and had no room at all for bargaining.³⁷ The women, however, were not interested in compromise. They wanted immediate emancipation, and nothing less.

They used the idea of immediate emancipation to call out the public: "This method of eradicating slavery will admonish governments that no force can resist the force of public principle, when vigorously exerted;--that neither fleets nor armies, nor protecting duties, can uphold oppression, when the people have virtue enough to resist it. It will afford to other tyrants, besides West-Indian, a most salutary warning of the weakness as well as wickedness of cruelty, by shewing them how suddenly the tyrant's rod may be converted into an instrument of punishing the tyrant . . ."38 The women were calling out their fellow citizens to pressure their government so that all could see that slavery would not be tolerated.

Perhaps the largest call of the women pamphleteers to the public was the call for abstinence. In 1791, a boycott began that lasted two years. This boycott was on slave grown sugar. Approximately 300,000 people participated in this boycott.³⁹ When the women's societies formed, they again called for a boycott. It was the one practical action that women could take against West Indian slavery, as they were not permitted to be in Parliament. However, they were admitted to their local shopkeeper's and could choose

³⁷ Ibid., 32-35.

³⁸ *An Enquiry Which of the Two Parties is Best Entitled to Freedom?: The Slave or the Slave-Holder?: From an Impartial Examination of the Conduct of Each Party, at the Bar of Public Justice*, London, 1824, 26-27. *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University Libraries (DS100144690).

³⁹ Louis Taylor Merrill, "The English Campaign for Abolition of the Slave Trade," *The Journal of Negro History* 30, no. 4 (Oct., 1945): 394; Karen I. Halberleben, *Women's Participation in the British Anti-Slavery Movement*, 12.

where and how they spent their family's money. Ms. Heyrick encourages her readers saying:

Is there nothing to be *done*, as well as said? Are there no tests to prove our sincerity,--no sacrifices to be offered in confirmation of our zeal?--Yes, there is *one*,--(but it is in itself so small and insignificant that it seems almost burlesque to dignify it with the name of sacrifice)--it is ABSTINENCE FROM THE USE OF WEST INDIAN PRODUCTIONS, *sugar*, especially, in the cultivation of which slave labor is chiefly occupied. Small, however, and insignificant as the sacrifice may appear,--it would, at once, give the death blow to West Indian slavery. When there was no longer a market for the productions of *slave labor*, the, and *not till then*, will the slaves be emancipated.⁴⁰

The abstinence of sugar from the West Indies, they said, could in fact put an end to slavery. Charging their readers, they wrote: "Will you continue to purchase *West India sugar*, when told on good authority, that the refusing to purchase it is the *only means now in our power, of putting an end to BRITISH SLAVERY?*"⁴¹ They hoped that it would become the general approach to shopping to reject any sugar from the West Indies⁴² and claimed that if one tenth of people would

⁴⁰ Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 6-7.

⁴¹ Heyrick, *No British Slavery*, 5.

⁴² Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 48.

abstain from the use of West India Sugar, there would be an end to slavery.⁴³ The women recognized that abstaining from sugar seemed but a simple way to fight for emancipation, but argued for its full implementation nonetheless. "Zeal and promptitude, harmonious combination, and determined resolution, will be requisite to give energy and efficacy to the measure. . . . They will never emancipate their slaves till they see us united and firm in the *rejection of their sugar*."⁴⁴

Whether this was actually possible, one cannot know, but the women's organizations believed it completely: "Think, but for a moment, at what a trifling sacrifice the redemption of *eight hundred thousand of our fellow creatures from the lowest condition of degradation and misery may be accomplished*. Abstinence from *one single article* of luxury would annihilate West Indian slavery!! But *abstinence*, it cannot be called;--we only need to substitute *East India*, for *West India sugar*,--and the British atmosphere would be purified at once, from the poisonous infection of slavery."⁴⁵ Substitution of East Indian sugar, produced by free laborers, was often suggested, however, if no substitute was available, women were encouraged to not purchase any sugar at all.⁴⁶

Even in regards to sugar, the women played to the emotions of women by giving testimonies of people who stated that they could not look on West India sugar without seeing it as "stained with human blood" from the slave labor.⁴⁷ By purchasing this "blood-stained"

⁴³ Heyrick, *No British Slavery*, 6.; *An Enquiry Which of the Two Parties is Best Entitled to Freedom?*, 23.

⁴⁴ *An Enquiry Which of the Two Parties is Best Entitled to Freedom?*, 27-28.

⁴⁵ Heyrick, *Immediate, Not Gradual Abolition*, 49.

⁴⁶ Heyrick, *No British Slavery*, 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

sugar, they claimed that all Britons were guilty of upholding the institution of slavery.⁴⁸ In fact, they went so far as to claim that eating West Indian sugar was equal to breaking the law and eating stolen goods, as the slaves who produced the sugar were indeed stolen from their homes for the purpose of making the sugar.⁴⁹ The cost of sugar, they wrote, was that of lives of men, women and children.⁵⁰

For those who professed to be abolitionists, abstinence of West Indian sugar was to be the "test of their sincerity."⁵¹ Sugar purchased from the slave owners was seen as supporting slavery itself, and could not be tolerated from an abolitionist. "If they who profess to wish for the termination of slavery would only give these proofs of their sincerity, that grievous scourge of humanity would reach the close of its existence at no very distant day."⁵² The women hoped that friends and neighbors, seeing the example set by and the persuasion of the abolitionist ladies, would too join in the boycott.⁵³

They would often end with the charge: "And now my . . . countrywomen, will you unfeelingly turn aside . . . and care not for these things? Will you not only do nothing to deliver the poor negro out of the hands of these merciless tyrants--but will you, also,

⁴⁸ *Negro Slavery, to the Ladies of the United Kingdom*, 2.

⁴⁹ Heyrick, *No British Slavery*, 8; "What Does Your Sugar Cost?", 7.

⁵⁰ "What Does Your Sugar Cost?", 10.

⁵¹ *An Enquiry Which of the Two Parties is Best Entitled to Freedom?*, 24.

⁵² *An Enquiry Which of the Two Parties is Best Entitled to Freedom?*, 24.

⁵² Ladies' Association for Calne, Melksham, Devizes, and Their Respective Neighborhoods in Aid of the Cause of Emancipation, *The Third Annual Report of the Ladies' Association for Salisbury, Calne, Melksham, Devizes, &c.*, 8-9.

⁵³ Heyrick, *No British Slavery*, 8.

encourage and *bribe* them to keep him in slavery? This, you are all now doing by *purchasing West India sugar*."⁵⁴

Women's abolitionist organizations used their writings to spread the word of emancipation and arouse the public. Through these writings by women such as Elizabeth Heyrick and other abolitionist leaders, public pressure mounted on Parliament. In 1833, Parliament finally passed the Emancipation Bill, although the gradualist approach was the one accepted.⁵⁵

The women abolitionists of Britain did not cease in their crusade when emancipation was won for the British colonies. They continued to write and responded to the requests for support from their fellow abolitionists in the United States. In these writings, they continued to focus on slave conditions, religion, family matters and the idea of immediate emancipation.⁵⁶ One such writing was the *Stafford House Address* which included a petition of 562,848 signatures comprised in twenty six volumes.⁵⁷ These supporting actions continued until the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.

Although the women's societies of Britain could not directly vote on the Emancipation Bill or directly influence votes in the United States, they accomplished their contribution through arousing public pressure through their writings. They played to the emotions of their

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁵ Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free and Empire's Slaves* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 47.

⁵⁶ Harriet Elizabeth (Beecher) Stowe, *A Reply to 'The Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, to their Sisters, the Women of the United States of America*, London, 1863, 5, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, Gale, Wichita State University, DS 4102939844.

⁵⁷ Venet, *Neither Ballots nor Bullets*, 69.

audience through describing slave working and living conditions, religion, the urgent need for immediate emancipation. They called their audience to action by challenging them to abstain from slave produced sugar. By playing to the local citizens' emotions and by giving them a practical way to boycott slave-produced goods, the women of the British abolitionist societies played an important role in the demise of slavery.

Instant History: The Spanish–American War and Henry Watterson’s Articulation of Anti–Imperialist Expansionism

Emma Snowden

The two contradictions encompassed in the title of this essay reflect those to be found in Henry Watterson’s *History of the Spanish–American War, Embracing a Complete Review of Our Relations with Spain*. Published in 1898, with a preface dated a full two months before the signing of the Treaty of Paris that officially concluded the war, this “history” is one that Watterson freely admits was written concurrently with the events it purports to describe impartially. Watterson himself was something of a contradiction: a Confederate war veteran who supported a strong and undivided Union; a fervent southern Democrat who advocated expansion, though not imperialism, as a means of attaining free trade; and a longstanding editor of the *Louisville Courier–Journal* whose colorfully-worded and impassioned editorials impacted political discourse on a national level, but who scorned the trends of sensationalism and yellow journalism. Indeed, it should be noted that initially Watterson’s own opinions on the war and the acquisition of overseas territories were far from the crystallized viewpoint he presents in his not-unsubstantial 660–page volume. Nor were they as coolheaded as the book’s clear attempts to offer balanced accounts of motivations and causes of events in the war, which certainly tones down the enthusiasm Watterson had progressively developed for the war and the expansionist opportunities it presented.¹

¹ Henry Watterson, *History of the Spanish–American War, Embracing a Complete Review of Our Relations with Spain*, (New York: Werner Company, 1898), ix; Allen Johnson and

Nonetheless, the overall value of Watterson's work is without question more historiographical than historical. Interestingly, this view is shared by a contemporary review of the book, which predicts that its chief merit in the future would be its insight into the national mindset at one of the most significant turning points in the history of the United States.² The aim of this paper is to examine the conception of imperialism presented by Watterson in his book, and to identify the place this conception occupied in the larger scheme of national imperialist policymaking. Furthermore, discussion will be devoted to the extent to which the book was in a position to influence public opinion in the United States, and to what extent the ideologies and interpretations promoted in the book were or were not comparable to those being disseminated in political discourse, in other similar contemporary works, and even in later historical works. Ultimately, such an examination would seem to suggest that in a number of respects, the interpretations of Watterson and his contemporaries prevailed to a significant extent in the twentieth-century historiography of the Spanish-American war.

Watterson's book constitutes an important and unique part of the historiographical and ideological movement towards United States imperialism, in that it was illustrative of the emerging ambitions of overseas colonialism, while also attempting to foster in the larger population a particular understanding of the war that supported these same ambitions. This "history" must necessarily be viewed as distinct

Dumas Malone, "Henry Watterson," *Dictionary of American Biography, Authors Edition* vol. XIX, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936): 552; Daniel S. Margolies, *Henry Watterson and the New South: The Politics of Empire, Free Trade, and Globalization* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 14, 139.

² Alfred Shaw, review of *History of the Spanish-American War*, written by Henry Watterson, *The American Monthly Review of Reviews* 20 (1899): 120, *Google Books*, accessed October 9, 2013.

from a large portion of Watterson's editorials and orations in the sense that it was written for, and indeed reached, a more geographically and ideologically varied readership. Notwithstanding this, it seems clear that the idea of the United States taking a more active supervisory role, not in world affairs so much as in a limited colonial context that nonetheless had broad international implications, was not one that would necessarily have surprised U.S. citizens—though certainly there were those who objected to it. Imperial and colonial ambitions of course often masqueraded behind republican paternalistic rhetoric, and their proponents absolutely split hairs and skewed traditional interpretations of history (perhaps not entirely inaccurately—the new trend of viewing manifest destiny as the establishment of a continental empire, which was certainly embraced by Watterson, is a prime example), but it was nonetheless in the last years of the nineteenth century an increasingly familiar and even favorable concept to a considerable and influential body of politicians and the public. And indeed even after the war, Watterson continued to agitate for maintaining a presence in the United States' newly acquired territories, because he believed that to do otherwise was “antagonistic to Jefferson and Jackson, both ‘apostles of National expansion.’”³

Watterson's *History of the Spanish–American War* is structured largely chronologically, and consists of thirty-two chapters, beginning with a discussion of the causes and the declaration of war and ending with a summary of the peace negotiations. The former is simplified almost to the point of distortion, skating over events prior to 1898, and mentioning only that the U.S. public had sympathized with Cuban

³ Margolies, *Henry Watterson*, 124; Theodore Roosevelt, *Colonial Policies of the United States*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.: 1937), 39–40; “Watterson's Warning,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1899, pg. 6.

attempts at insurrection “as a general thing, and in a general way.” In fact, Cubans had been making active attempts to enact revolution at various intervals as early as 1825, including a number of filibustering expeditions, and upon the renewal of such efforts in 1895, the U.S. press began to maintain a significant presence in Cuba.⁴ As editor of a prominent newspaper that covered in-depth events leading up to the war, it is inconceivable that Watterson would not have been capable of conveying in more detail the historical and political context of the struggles of the *independentistas* against Spain, had he chosen to do so. Moreover, the U.S. government had a long diplomatic history of expressing its interest in Cuban affairs, dating as far back as John Quincy Adams. As Henry Cabot Lodge made a point of noting, “the Cuban question is not a new one.”⁵

It is highly significant, then, that Watterson chooses instead to emphasize the sense of surprise following the explosion of the *Maine*, rather than to establish a more detailed chronology of Spanish–U.S.–Cuban relations. And indeed, throughout the book it is his marked tendency to underline instances in which the U.S. government and public were taken by surprise in the face of both the actions it deemed as necessary to undertake, and the (colonial) responsibilities which resulted from these actions. Without necessarily making a statement on the genuineness of this surprise, it can be viewed as a clear attempt to minimize the impression of a calculated imperial policy. Such is certainly the case with regard to what Watterson refers to as “the Philippines question,” which is his first real mention of

⁴ Watterson, *History*, 22; Charles H. Brown, *The Correspondents' War: Journalists in the Spanish–American War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 6.

⁵ Henry Cabot Lodge, “Our Duty to Cuba,” *The Forum* XXI (1896): 278; Amos S. Hershey makes the same point in “The Recognition of Cuban Belligerency,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 7 (May 1896): 76.

imperialist ambitions. (Here, additionally, it is noteworthy that Watterson chooses to devote considerable discussion in the same vein to another question—the “Eastern” one, which concerned the balance of power between European nations, China, and Japan following the Shimonoseki treaty and its implications for these powers to become involved or intervene in the Spanish–American War. It also concerned the possibilities for establishing U.S. trading rights, a point Watterson does not fail to make. Incidentally, this same situation led to the Russo–Japanese War in 1904, in the peace negotiations of which the United States under Theodore Roosevelt played a significant role.)⁶

This is all in line with Louis A. Pérez’s conception of the historiography of 1898. Pérez holds that historians and contemporaries posited one of two versions of the sequence of events following the infamous explosion. According to one version, public opinion was galvanized towards war immediately; in the other, the U.S. public waited calmly for the verdict of the naval inquiry before bowing to the necessity of war with Spain. Watterson presents somewhat of a combination of these two ‘versions.’ He praises the military and administrative leaders for their prudence and restraint in not taking immediate action, but also notes that “whilst the trend of public opinion was not long shaping itself, and falling into the theory of treachery, the more thoughtful among the people of the United States could not bring themselves to believe this possible.”⁷

An understanding of overall trends in the historiography of the war, beginning as early as 1898, is especially important given that

⁶ Watterson, *History*, 404–407.

⁷ Louis A. Pérez, *The War of 1898: the United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 67; Watterson, *History*, 37.

Watterson's book is far from the only one of its kind. A goodly number of other "histories" of the Spanish-American War were published in the two years after the war, and Watterson is not even unique in having published a history the same year as the war itself—a feat he only managed by omitting the finalization of peace terms, as will be discussed.⁸ In the July to December 1899 issue of the *American Monthly Review of Reviews*, three of sixteen books in the history and biography section were explicitly about the war. While this number in itself may not seem especially significant, another two books in this section were about the recently annexed Hawaii (which was very relevant to the Spanish-American War in several ways that will be discussed below), one discussed U.S. "prospects, problems, and duties" in the Pacific, and yet another concerned the beginnings of the colonial system. Furthermore, under the travel and description section, three books were devoted to the nation's new possessions in

⁸ Examples include but are by no means limited to: Elridge S. Brooks, *The Story of Our War with Spain*, (Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1899); Henry Cabot Lodge, *The War with Spain*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1899); Nathan C. Green, *The War with Spain and Story of Spain and Cuba*, (Baltimore: International News and Book Co., 1898); Prescott Holmes, *Young People's History of the War with Spain*, (Philadelphia: H. Altemus Co., 1900); Henry F. Keenan, *The Conflict with Spain*, (Philadelphia, C. W. Ziegler & Co., 1898); Fitzhugh Lee, Joseph Wheeler, Theodore Roosevelt, and Richard Wainright, *Cuba's Struggle Against Spain*, (New York: The American Historical Press, 1899); James Rankin Young, *History of Our War with Spain*, (Philadelphia: National Publishing Co., 1898); Theodore Roosevelt, *The Rough Riders*, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1899); John Randolph Spears, *Our Navy in the War with Spain*, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1898); Trumbull White, *Our War with Spain for Cuba's Freedom*, (Philadelphia: Monarch Book Co., 1898); Marrion Wilcox, *A Short History of Our War with Spain*, (New York: F. A. Stokes, 1898). It is interesting to note the overwhelming similarities in many of the titles of these works, and their implicit understanding of the war as "ours," that is, being the domain of the United States against Spain, often without any mention of Cuba or other affected territories.

the Caribbean and the Pacific. Four books were also about the recent discovery of gold in the Klondike. Overall, U.S. writers (and, it seems safe to assume, readers as well) in 1898 and the years immediately after displayed a notable preoccupation with not only the war, but also with newly acquired territories and the economic possibilities they offered. With regards to both the Spanish–American War and the Klondike, the element of adventure as a source of interest should not be overlooked either.⁹

Watterson’s final chapter does not even mention the peace treaty in its official document form, which was signed in Paris on December 10, 1898—likely after the book had already been sent to the printers. Instead, Watterson closes his narrative with an account of the treaty terms verbally agreed upon on November 28, followed by a brief reiteration of the main arguments for and against imperialism, which he also summarizes earlier in the book subsequent to his description of the victory at Manila Bay. It is of note that in each case, Watterson makes a clear effort to present both sides, without explicitly expressing support for either, and observing that only time would tell which arguments were more valid. Nonetheless, in his final paragraph, Watterson employs rhetoric reminiscent of earlier proponents of manifest destiny when he expresses his confidence that

the untoward events of the war with Spain were brought about for some all-wise purpose by the Supreme Ruler of men, and that that hand which has

⁹ Shaw, *Review of Reviews*, 118–120; Frank Freidel, *The Splendid Little War* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1958), 10.

led American manhood through every emergency to the one goal of the American Union, has in store for that Union even greater uses and glory than irradiated the dreams and blessed the prayers of the God-fearing men who gave it life.¹⁰

Indeed, ideological polemics surrounding the imperialist debate are one of the few pertinent divisive categories of classification within the United States Watterson addresses in any depth. Others are scarcely mentioned, or are omitted entirely, throughout *The History of the Spanish-American War*. These include distinctions between southerners and northerners, between Democrats and Republicans, and between whites and racial minorities. Watterson's regional and party identity as a southern Democrat are readily identifiable in the vast majority of his writings; what can be deduced from their scant presence in this volume is the scope and diversity of his intended audience.

The book was in fact published in a variety of locales throughout the United States. Watterson's own *Courier-Journal* Press printed copies in Louisville, but in 1898 no less than thirty-one other companies also printed the book in at least seventeen other cities ranging as far from the South as San Francisco. Nor can one ignore Watterson's status as a prominent opinion leader whose editorials were sought out by New York newspapers upon which the rest of the country's periodicals were typically modeled.¹¹ In fact, tickets to a

¹⁰ Watterson, *History*, 623–24.

¹¹ "Formats and editions of 'History of the Spanish-American war; embracing a complete review of our relations with Spain,'" *WorldCat*, accessed October 9, 2013; Margolies, *Henry Watterson*, 2.

speech he gave to the Patria Club on the issue of colonial expansion were so sought after that the club was compelled to “depart from its custom,” charging for a limited number of guest tickets. The same speech was also written up in a *New York Times* article, further underlining the interest Watterson’s opinions held for the reading public.¹² Watterson’s prominence as a writer and an orator, along with the widespread publication of his *History*, therefore demonstrates the extent to which the U.S. public would have been conscious of, and had access to, the book. Its collection of seventy photos and illustrations, some in full-color foldouts, accentuate the impression of a book intended to inform a large and varied readership in an entertaining and persuasive manner. It is thus unsurprising that Watterson would have moderated his rhetoric somewhat with this in mind, so as to avoid alienating readers from his overall attempt to chronicle the events of the war and their significance for the nation’s future.

Divisions between North and South are mentioned only in order to represent them as a thing of the past. Watterson makes direct reference to the Civil War and praises the emergence of a “regenerated Union” no longer torn apart by sectional controversy; moreover, he characterizes the Spanish–American War as an ideal opportunity to demonstrate, to the world and to the nation itself, the strength of a unified democratic population. Rather oddly, he describes the nonpartisan feeling of cooperation that accompanied the massive rush of voluntary enlistment following the declaration of war as “exhilarating and at the same time pathetic.” Thus it can be inferred that Watterson was perhaps not so unequivocally in favor of

¹² “Henry Watterson on Expansion,” *New York Times*, (December 6, 1898): 11; “Watterson on Expansion: Great Questions of External Policy May Lure the American Spirit Away From Money Worship,” *New York Times*, (December 10, 1898): 3.

political unity as he may have liked to affect. Moreover, this discussion is immediately followed by the contradiction-laden declaration that

the swaddling clothes of National babyhood were gone. The giant stood forth in all the pride of his manhood...arrayed on the side of liberty and humanity, ready, willing, and able to give battle to all comers who might challenge his supremacy, wherever he might plant the star-spangled banner or set up the standards of free government.¹³

The United States is thus characterized as seeking to establish liberty and humanity along with supremacy, free government along with territorial claims. The use of flag-planting imagery is especially strong in its imperialistic associations. Nonetheless, what is perhaps most significant about the views presented in this passage is the fact that, to Watterson (and perhaps to many of his readers and contemporaries as well) they do not appear to have been perceived as necessarily conflicting.

Race as a divisive category is mentioned in the *History*, but only in the context of relations with Britain, and as a means of asserting the homogeneity and Anglo-Saxon origin of the population of the United States. When Watterson makes a point of praising U.S. democracy for its inclusion of "any male child born in the United States" in the political process to the point of being eligible for the presidency, in contrast to the prevalence of "privileged castes" under

¹³ Watterson, *History*, 79-80.

the monarchical government in Britain, he rather blatantly ignores the racially motivated political oppression of black Americans and other minorities.¹⁴ This is a tactic Watterson employed not only in his *History of the Spanish–American War*, however. In a speech he gave at the seventy–fifth anniversary of General Ulysses Grant’s birthday, he asserted, “it has taken but a few weeks to impress upon the reunited section of the Union that we are the most homogeneous people on the face of the globe.” Watterson’s expression of a U.S. identity constituting part of a larger Anglo–Saxon racial and cultural heritage was by no means unique for this period.¹⁵

On the other hand, however, many anti–imperialists in the United States worried that to follow Britain’s example in establishing overseas colonies was to abandon the country’s traditional commitment to republican values, and with this in mind they invoked arguments of national exceptionalism. Watterson’s twofold solution to this is a most interesting one. First of all, rather than accepting this view of the United States following Britain, he reversed the model and contended that, in fact, “the British people have studied the United States, and have themselves erected a great republic attired in the robes only of monarchy and imperialism.” Secondly, he maintained that any empire built on the foundations of free trade was naturally also a free empire.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 393.

¹⁵ “Grant Birthday Dinner: Monument Association Honors the Memory of the Dead Soldier and Statesman,” *New York Times*, (April 28, 1898): 5; Paul A. Kramer, “Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo–Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880–1910,” *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1315–16.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1339; Watterson, *History*, 398.

Watterson was certainly an ardent supporter of free trade, which he viewed as the means of “achieving prosperity and stability through expanding global markets and the open door.”¹⁷ Even before 1898 and the opportunities it offered for overseas markets, Watterson was quite vocal against a number of tariffs, asserting his belief in 1896 that “the American manufacturer no longer needs protection.”¹⁸ This part of his political program was very much rooted in his desire to see the South come into its own economically. Watterson was in a way quite anticipatory in his understanding that this would require a number of modern elements, including the incorporation of as many free trade markets as possible, though it is of note that he was not always an advocate of U.S. colonial expansion. Some evolution of opinion is only to be expected from a man with as enduring a career as Watterson. Indeed, his role as a regional and national opinion leader in the model of earlier ‘personal journalists’ began with his transition into newspaper editing following his service in the Confederate Army, included a brief foray into elected officialdom as a Democratic congressman in 1876, and was marked a year before his retirement by his being awarded a 1917 Pulitzer Prize for his editorials.¹⁹

Watterson in fact exhibited a similar shift in opinion concerning the question of the annexation of Hawaii, which was in many ways connected to various crucial issues of the Spanish-American War. Thomas Osborne refutes the traditional military explanation for Hawaiian annexation, which holds that the United States viewed Hawaii as strategically necessary to the war effort

¹⁷ Margolies, *Henry Watterson*, 14–15.

¹⁸“Watterson on Politics: Union of Republicans and Democrats Cannot Last,” *New York Times*, November 29, 1896, pg. 5.

¹⁹ Johnson and Malone, “Henry Watterson,” 552–555.

because of its location between the continental U.S. and the Philippines, and because it could be used to defend the West Coast during and after the war. Moreover, Osborne asserts in its place a less direct explanation that has its roots in trade. He demonstrates that overall it was the desire to control more markets for U.S. manufacturers, so as not to glut the domestic market, which motivated the annexation of Hawaii even before a decision had been made with regards to the Philippines.²⁰

Of course, the small islands of Hawaii themselves would not be the location of these new markets, but rather would facilitate opening up trade with China and other Asian nations. Watterson's similar concern with this possibility has already been discussed in the context of the "Eastern question," and Daniel Margolies asserts that Watterson's shift to support annexation illustrated the salience of his free trade ambitions over his reservations about the racial dissolution of the United States that could accompany annexation of a nation of peoples he perceived as being inferior. In his *History*, Watterson understandably makes no mention of such concerns, and represents the need for annexation on terms very similar to those used by the McKinley administration in its (intentionally misleading, in Osborne's analysis) attempts to win Congress over to its cause—that is, he argues that "if the Philippines were to be held, the annexation of Hawaii was logically necessary for strategic and economic reasons." It would seem, then, that the long-held historical view of the annexation of Hawaii as a military expedient, rather than as commercially motivated, cannot be entirely separated from

²⁰ Thomas J. Osborne, "Trade or War? America's Annexation of Hawaii Reconsidered," *Pacific Historical Review* 50, no. 3 (August 1981): 287, 298.

contemporary attempts in 1898 to make it understood in that context.²¹

In his assessment of the motivations for the Spanish–American War, Louis Pérez makes an important distinction between U.S. policymakers and popular sentiment. As demonstrated above, at times Watterson very knowingly represented situations in the same ways as U.S. policymakers, and for the same reasons. For the most part, however, his *History of the Spanish–American War* anticipates the marked trend in U.S. historiography of 1898 to attribute the movement of war to public opinion as a kind of overwhelming force that was in many ways influenced by the press.²²

Interestingly, a good deal of the historical literature on the war is either unaware of, or chooses to ignore, the well-established historical precedent of U.S. interest in Cuba. As previously mentioned, both Henry Cabot Lodge and Amos S. Hershey, writing in 1896 in favor of U.S. support of Cuba, demonstrate a clear understanding of this aspect of U.S. interests. Cabot Lodge, of course, was a long-term player in U.S. foreign policy, while Hershey was a Harvard-educated political scientist. As such, both were clearly in a position to comment on the motivations of the administration for involving itself in the Cuban struggle against Spain.²³

Watterson's portrayal of the U.S. popular response, on the other hand, presents a public opinion that was overwhelmingly in favor of war for the purpose of liberating Cuba. Such a portrayal should by no means be viewed as inaccurate or disingenuous—as

²¹ Margolies, *Henry Watterson*, 190; Watterson, *History*, 418; Osborne, "Trade or War?", 290.

²² Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 35–36.

²³ "Dr. A. S. Hershey, Educator, Is Dead," *New York Times*, June 13, 1933, pg. 19.

Pérez notes, contemporary popular narratives and music provide ample evidence of the genuine desire on the part of many individuals in the U.S. to see Cubans freed from what they perceived as the despotic and oppressive rule of the Spanish. Nonetheless, it is essential to understand that in many ways the views presented by Wattersson and his contemporaries, of the war having been entered into on Cuba's behalf, have been perpetuated despite only representing partial truths. (In this vein, the advent of the Anti-Imperialist League will also be examined below.)²⁴

Pérez also points out, rightly, that the name given to the war itself is not without significant implications regarding the United States' motivations for, and popular conception of, the war (and indeed, it is no doubt for this reason that he chooses to refer to it instead as the "war of 1898"). The construction "Spanish-American War" makes no reference to any of the territories acknowledged as falling under the control of the United States in the 1898 Treaty of Paris. Moreover, its use even before the advent of the war anticipates to some extent its expansion out of the domain of Cuba and into Pacific territories distributed over a wide geographic expanse. That is to say, it rather conveniently allowed for the acquisition of territory on the sole basis that such territory was previously under Spanish control. Jill Lepore makes the same point in her study of the 1675 King Philip's War, asserting that "acts of war generate acts of narration, and...both types of acts are often joined in a common purpose: defining the geographical, political, cultural, and sometimes racial and national boundaries between people." This idea is central to

²⁴ Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 24.

this paper's approach to studying Wattersson's *History* in the larger context of the historiography of the Spanish–American War.²⁵

And indeed, even the choice of title of Wattersson's history of the war has similar implications that are worth examining. It of course includes the name of the war itself—which, incidentally, most contemporary books on the war did not (see footnote 12). But beyond that, its subtitle is also of interest, claiming as it does to embrace a complete review of the United States' relations with Spain. One could argue that the book simultaneously achieves a great deal more and less than that. It displays an impressive consciousness of international politics and relations involving various European powers, to be discussed in more detail below, while also presenting a decidedly United States–centric and narrow impression of Spain's government and population. The former is perhaps surprising, the latter most certainly is not.

Throughout the *History*, Wattersson makes use of a wealth of international and historical examples and parallels. For the most part, these display Wattersson's broad knowledge base of world power relations. His understanding of the intricacies of Russo–Anglo–Sino–Japanese relationships and their implications for U.S. trade interests are notable, and have already been mentioned. Nonetheless, his examples are not always historically accurate. His claim that in Manila, “at a distance of 6,000 leagues from Toledo and Granada, the same ancient hatreds have brought European Spaniards and Asiatic Saracen into the same relentless antagonism that swayed them in the days of the Cid and Ferdinand the Catholic” shows a basic ignorance (or disregard) of, for one, the cultural and ethnic differences between

²⁵ *Ibid.*, xii; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998), x.

Filipinos and medieval Arab and Berber conquerors. For another, having made this erroneous equivalence, it ignores the fact that in the cases cited it was the Iberians who were the conquered and the “Saracens” the conquerors who were eventually driven out, an ironic reversal (according to Watterson’s own assumptions, of course) one might expect him to make more of.²⁶

Relevant to his assessment of the significance of the Spanish–American War is Watterson’s characterization of the battles of Waterloo, Gettysburg, and Sedan as “incidents of locality” and “mere skirmishes” compared to the Battle of Santiago. He does concede that “Waterloo was, perhaps, greatest of all,” but immediately mitigates this by adding “but the world of 1814 was much smaller than the world of 1898.” Perhaps more precisely, the United States was involved in the world on a much larger scale in 1898 than in 1814. (It is also worth noting, of course, that the battle of Waterloo took place in 1815, not 1814.) Nonetheless, the (rather inappropriately) grandiose nature of this assertion provides valuable insight to the weight given to the outcome of the war by Watterson, and presumably by many of his contemporaries.²⁷

Certainly other countries were aware of the import of the U.S. victory in 1898. As has been discussed, Britain’s involvement and promotion of an exercise of Anglo–Saxon imperialism by the United States certainly demonstrates its awareness of the possibilities of U.S. success against Spain. Other European nations such as Germany, Russia, and France made moves to intervene in the conflict before British support of the United States made this diplomatically undesirable. That the United States became a consideration in this

²⁶ Watterson, *History*, 86–89.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 382.

tendency to defend the status quo and maintain a balance of power with known quantities was a shift of which the European powers unquestionably took note. In Spain, a new literary movement known as *la generación del 98* (“the generation of ’98”) emerged in response to the loss of territory and imperial status that resulted from the war. This movement was characterized by a disenchantment with and sharp criticism of Spanish political, literary, and educational institutions, all of which were seen as being in crisis. A similar literary movement can be seen even in France, where the Spanish defeat by the United States “triggered a wave of books warning that all of European civilization was now threatened by the rise of foreign ‘barbarians.’”²⁸ Apparently even Pope Leo XIII was “much affected by the Spanish–American war,” and the *Times* of London reported, “in view of his advanced age and the nervous condition in which his Holiness has been for some time past, his entourage feel some anxiety.”²⁹ And of course it goes without saying (though it should not) that those territories which now found themselves subject to U.S. occupation and oversight were unquestionably aware of the significance of the war. In many cases, this significance was not one of liberty or humanity, as proclaimed by Watterson and other idealists.

²⁸ “Lord Salisbury’s Speech,” *The Times* (London), November 11, 1898, pg. 3; Watterson, *History*, 439–465; Manuel Durán, “La técnica de la novela y la generación del 98,” *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, 23 no. 1 (January 1957): 15; Jeremy D. Popkin, *A History of Modern France, Fourth Edition* (New York, Pearson: 2013), 188.

²⁹ “Court Circular,” *The Times* (London), June 30, 1898, pg. 6. Incidentally, the article goes on to assure readers that “his Holiness’s physician declares, however, that there is no ground for alarm,” and indeed Leo XIII’s lengthy and productive pontificate, having begun in 1878, was to last five more years until his death in 1903; for a discussion of his reforms and encyclicals, see: Robert P. Kraynak, “Pope Leo XIII and the Catholic Response to Modernity,” *Modern Age* 49, no. 4 (September 2007): 527–536.

The Spanish–American War represented not only the physical expansion of U.S. territory, but also the ideological expansion of the nation’s perception of its role in the larger world. Just as Anglo–Saxonism proved to be a remarkably short–lived phenomenon, so too was the public consciousness of U.S. attempts to engage in direct oversight of colonial possessions. Nonetheless, affairs in the newly acquired territories remained intimately tied to U.S. policymaking for decades after the end of the war. Cuban elections in 1900 saw an overwhelming victory by the *independentistas*, which was recognized by the U.S. Even so, political ‘autonomy’ was contingent on conceding to U.S. economic interests, and this state of affairs lasted until Castro’s 1959 revolution. The Platt Amendment, which in 1901 nullified the earlier Teller Amendment (which prohibited the annexation of Cuba and guaranteed Cuban autonomy) and established a precedent for U.S. oversight in Cuban commercial, foreign policy, and military affairs, was the embodiment of this arrangement.³⁰ The Philippines, having been directly purchased by the U.S. government, fought for several years against a colonial authority which refused to recognize its status as a Republic, was the site of substantial U.S. missionary efforts, and only gained full independence in 1946, after having been invaded and occupied by the Japanese during WWII. Puerto Rico, of course, remains a U.S. commonwealth.³¹

³⁰ Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during U.S. Colonialism* (Durham, Duke University Press: 2008), 7–10; Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 129–131.

³¹ Sharon Delmedo, *The Star–Entangled Banner: One Hundred Years of American in the Philippines* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 10–11; Shinzo Hayase and David Levinson, “Philippines—History” *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia* 4 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2002): 505–508; Susan K. Harris, *God’s Arbiters: Americans and the Philippines, 1898–1902* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 33–37.

Significantly, however, initial moves towards imperialism in 1898 did provoke widespread political discourse and debate on the matter from various elements in the United States, as is amply evidenced for example by the significant contribution of women to the efforts of the Anti-Imperialist League. The League was also supported by such diverse and prominent members as former president Grover Cleveland, steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, and American Federation of Labor president Samuel Gompers.³² Moreover, the question of what to do with the newly-acquired territories of 1898 was a highly polemical one in electoral politics immediately following the war, and even prompted some individuals to consider voting against their party affiliation. This was the case with Carnegie—though he ultimately supported a second term for McKinley, he freely admitted to having some initial doubts on this point, and in a *New York Times* interview in 1900 rated the question of imperialism as rather higher priority than the infamous silver issue, which he considered “a back number.”³³ While Watterson’s *History* does address the arguments both for and against imperialism, without explicitly favoring either, he does not discuss the demographics of support for either side, and certainly does not give the impression that the debate was so polemical. And ultimately, as has been discussed, Watterson’s own political views, his use of Anglo-Saxon rhetoric, and his depiction of the United States as a major power and player in world affairs all certainly placed him

³² Erin L. Murphy, “Women’ Anti-Imperialism, ‘The White Man’s Burden, and the Philippine-American War: Theorizing Masculinist Ambivalence in Protest,” *Gender and Society* 23, No. 2 (April 2009): 245; “Anti-Imperialist League, Mr. Cleveland Consents to Serve as Vice President,” *New York Times*, December 13, 1898, pg. 1.

³³ “Mr. Carnegie Stands by His Own Party: Believes Americans May Trust it to Retrieve Errors,” *New York Times*, September 30, 1900, pg. 4.

squarely on the side of imperialism, even if he preferred to euphemize it as “expansionism.”³⁴

Another interesting rhetorical device present in pro-war arguments of the last years of the nineteenth century, and certainly also evident in Watterson’s *History*, exists in the new conceptualization of “American manhood.” Kristin Hoganson notes the way politicians in the 1890s began to play up any war experience they may have had, and that a new category of classification emerged before the war for those who had not served and were perceived as having become overly effeminate as a result of the comforts of their wealth. This category was the “dude,” and such dudes were typically found in the Northeast. A distinction between “manly” and “moneyed” was often drawn, and it became more desirable for politicians to portray themselves as “manly” and “rough.” Theodore Roosevelt’s increased political prominence in the years and decades following his role as leader of his “Rough Riders” attests to this quite well, and his autobiographical writings clearly serve to remind the voting public of his “manliness.”³⁵ Interestingly, Admiral George Dewey also entered the presidential lists in 1900, but unlike Roosevelt he was not successful in turning his brilliant reputation after the war into political capital. Watterson was in fact the first to propose Dewey as a potential presidential candidate, but by April 1900 his enthusiasm for this idea had cooled and he was quoted in the *New York Times* saying that “Admiral Dewey’s time to come out was two years ago, when his praises were on every lip.” One rather wonders if this did not also

³⁴ Watterson, *History*, 619–624.

³⁵ Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish–American and Philippine–American Wars*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 118; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Rough Riders*, (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1899).

have something to do with Dewey committing a number of political blunders, and his loss of support from most quarters as the campaign progressed.³⁶ To be sure, his autobiography, published in 1913, made no mention of his failed political aspirations, and it of course came too late to have the same kind of impact as did Roosevelt's memoir.³⁷

Certainly Watterson, as a Colonel who had served in the Confederate army and hailed from the South, would not have been considered a dude. It is quite easy to find references to both "American manhood" and "dudes" in his *History*, as Hoganson herself points out, as well as in his orations, such as the speech he gave at a Board of Trade Banquet in 1897. In a sense, the use of such rhetoric in Watterson's *History* can be viewed as a more oblique means of asserting both imperialistic aims and his desire for the South to resume a leading economic role, both within the country and internationally.³⁸

Though Watterson does not include a discussion of the peace treaty itself, having apparently finished work on the book before the document's official promulgation, he does provide an outline of the main points agreed upon in Paris on November 28. These points included the cession of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, the Sulu Archipelago, and Guam by Spain to the United States, the

³⁶ "Western Leaders' Opinions," *New York Times*, April 5, 1900, pg. 2; "Dubious Outlook for 'Dewey Arch' Fund," *New York Times*, April 21, 1900, pg. 1; "McLean Deserts Dewey? States Positively in Columbus that the Admiral's Candidacy is to be Gradually Abandoned," *New York Times*, May 5, 1900, pg. 1.

³⁷ George Dewey, *Autobiography of George Dewey, Admiral of the Navy* (New York: AMS Press, 1969).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 121; Watterson, *History*, 79–80, 623–24; "Board of Trade Banquet: Henry Watterson's speech," *New York Times*, January 21, 1897, pg. 2.

unconditional relinquishment of sovereignty of Cuba, and the understanding that the United States would pay \$20,000,000 to Spain in return for the cession of the Philippines. Furthermore, no indemnity would be obtained from Spain by the United States. All these provisions were indeed included in the December 10 peace treaty. Watterson's discussion is solely focused on territorial concessions and monetary concerns, however, and omits any mention of Spanish efforts to protect the personal, civil, religious, and property rights of its citizens residing in the conceded territories. These concerns are the subject of no less than seven of the treaty's seventeen total articles; another two articles address the merchant and commercial rights of both countries, and one article addresses Spain's right to establish consular offices in all of the conceded territories.³⁹

Indeed, Watterson's emphasis on the monetary implications of the peace negotiations merits further discussion. In a chapter titled "Interesting Facts About War," more than two pages are devoted to establishing the historical precedent for exacting indemnities from a defeated nation. The subsequent seven pages involve a series of calculations attempting to approximate the total U.S. expenditure on the war—including such minutiae as the fact that, apparently, "to fire one 13-inch armor-piercing shell costs \$560; to fire an 8-inch shell costs \$134," followed up by the somewhat less precise observation that "many thousands of the latter and hundreds of the former were discharged during the war." The subtext of such a discussion seems clear: the United States had invested heavily in the war, and would have been perfectly justified in requiring Spain to pay a hefty

³⁹ Watterson, *History*, 618; "Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain; December 10, 1898," *The Avalon Project*, 2013, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/sp1898.asp, October 9, 2013.

indemnity. That it did not do so, and in fact paid Spain for the privilege of assuming control of the conceded territories, was to be a sign of the nation's largesse and fair dealing; moreover, it distinguished the United States from European tradition and in so doing reinforced their moral high ground. No mention is made of Cuban expenditures or loss of life.⁴⁰

Watterson certainly seems to fall into the category of historical writers who lauded the conduct and preparedness of the U.S. military in the war, and viewed the U.S. victory as the result of a combination of U.S. strengths and Spanish weaknesses. Cuban participation is hardly mentioned, and disparaged when it is mentioned, as Pérez notes is characteristic of the vast majority of the historiography of the war. Watterson equates the massive enlistment of volunteers with army preparedness, and fails to mention at all the fact the short amount of time available to train these volunteers did not lend itself to the formation of a particularly effective fighting force. Indeed, recent historiographical reassessments of U.S. army and navy performance in the Spanish–American War have not been especially favorable. Watterson's inclusion of an anecdote from Camp Wikoff, in which it takes General Chaffey a mere three minutes to have a gun-shy young soldier "fighting like a veteran and cool as a cucumber," demonstrates a rather idealistic outlook of the process of training and preparing soldiers for war. The Spanish, on the other hand, Watterson characterizes categorically as a "race...skillful only in the cunning of cruelty and deception." To be fair, he does make a point on several

⁴⁰ Watterson, *History*, 575–584, the quote is from pg. 581.

occasions to note the bravery of the Spanish officers and soldiers but always follows this with an assertion of their “utter incompetence.”⁴¹

An examination of Frank Freidel’s *A Splendid Little War* can be interesting and useful as a comparison to the narrative of the war set out by Watterson, and in the context of Louis Pérez’s assertion that historiography of 1898 remained relatively static over time and underwent few significant revisions. Freidel’s book—long a classic in the field, reprinted as recently as 2002—was published exactly fifty years after the Spanish–American War and Watterson’s book, but there are some interesting parallels that can be noted. Freidel, too, presents the war as “basically...a popular crusade to stop a seemingly endless revolution which was shattering Cuba.” If anything, Freidel’s account of events leading up to the war, and even of the infamous explosion of the *Maine*, is even more brief (and, frankly, reductionist) than is Watterson’s. Unlike Watterson, he does not describe U.S. public opinion as waiting on the results of the naval inquiry, but rather paints a picture of an immediately “enraged” populace pointing its finger at Spain. *A Splendid Little War* takes even more advantage of the opportunity to depict the war visually, and includes more than three hundred photographs and illustrations.⁴²

Perhaps one of the most striking similarities between Freidel and Watterson’s depictions of the war is their nearly complete omission of any mention of the Cuban contribution to campaigns following the U.S. entrance into hostilities. Both tend to attribute the U.S. victory to the qualities and preparation of Spanish and U.S.

⁴¹ Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 83; Joseph Smith, “The ‘Splendid Little War’ of 1898: a Reappraisal,” *Historical Association* (1995): 23–24; Watterson, *History*, 77, 100, 594–595.

⁴² Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 109; Freidel, *A Splendid Little War*, 5, 8.

soldiers, officers, governments, and vessels. Watterson is more glowing in his assessment of U.S. preparedness than is Freidel, to be sure, but even Freidel asserts a general competency on the part of the Navy that more recent scholars have disputed to some extent. Both authors also cite Spanish weakness as a major factor; Freidel claims that “only the incredible ineptitude of the Spaniards and the phenomenal luck of the Americans kept it from stretching into a struggle as long and full of disasters as the Boer War became for the British.”⁴³

A more specific and very telling example of this tendency to neglect and diminish the import of Cuban contributions exists in the case of the Daiquiri landing. Pérez observes that Freidel and other historians of the Spanish–American War tend to view this event with some puzzlement, questioning why the Spanish failed to prevent the U.S. landing. Indeed, Freidel begins his chapter on this event by stating that, “if the Spanish army had displayed even moderate initiative, it could have turned the landing at Daiquiri into one of the most costly and painful military disasters in United States history.” Pérez stresses the importance of the Cuban role in securing the landing site, and makes much of Freidel’s failure to acknowledge this. Interestingly, Freidel does in fact acknowledge this contribution, asserting that General Shafter chose to make the landing on the basis of information provided by the Cubans that Daiquiri was only lightly defended by the Spaniards, and with regards to these “a Cuban regiment had promised to drive them out.” Nonetheless, his repeated characterization of the lack of Spanish opposition to the landing as “almost miraculous” does demonstrate the relatively little weight he gave to this Cuban contribution, and Pérez’s point holds even if it is

⁴³ Smith, “A reappraisal,” 23; Freidel, *A Splendid Little War*, 3.

perhaps overemphasized. Watterson, for his part, mentions the ease of the Daiquiri landing, noting that “the troops were disembarked without meeting the slightest resistance,” but he does not make as much of this fact as does Freidel. Nor, for that matter, does he make any mention whatsoever of the role played by the Cubans in securing this landing.⁴⁴

Another significant similarity in the works of Freidel and Watterson is the distinction each makes between U.S. goals in Cuba and the Philippines, respectively. As has been discussed, Watterson introduces the idea of imperialist motivations or territorial ambitions only with what he calls the “Philippines question.” Freidel does the same, asserting at the beginning of his book that the declaration of war was in no way motivated by expansionist concerns, but stating rather plainly that “already [in July] in Washington there was a disposition to feel that although the war was being fought to free Cuba, the Philippines would be legitimate spoils.” Watterson’s *History* was of course published too soon to include a discussion of post-1898 developments, but Freidel certainly could have devoted more analysis to the fate of the Philippines, not to mention Cuba or any of the other acquired territories. Instead, he spares little more than a paragraph to mourn the money and time necessary to put down the Filipino insurrection (ironically similar to the Boer War he cites as a contrasting image of the Spanish–American War at the beginning of his book), and the cruelty U.S. soldiers resorted to in so doing. Still, he characterizes even this as merely “the sad prelude to the establishment of a model colonial administration and a slow preparation of the Filipinos for self–government,” and he goes on to

⁴⁴ Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 86, 102–104; Freidel, *A Splendid Little War*, 81–88; Watterson, *History*, 196.

say “the insurrection did little to mar the great victory celebrations when Admiral Dewey finally returned home.”⁴⁵

Though of course Freidel is only one example of a historian of the Spanish–American War, it is striking to see the similarities between his treatment of events and that of Watterson. Indeed, it is remarkably difficult to find a U.S. history of the war, regardless of when it was written, that gives a detailed account of the process by which the United States assumed and relinquished administrative authority in its new territories after the Treaty of Paris was signed. The “legacy” of 1898 inevitably seems to be interpreted as referring narrowly to the subsequent military restructuring or more generally to the U.S. assumption of a new place in world affairs and international politics. The specifics of the nation’s foray into overseas colonialism are ultimately neglected, and perhaps contemporary historians have not moved so very far from the basic assumptions and interpretations present in the kind of instant history written by Henry Watterson in 1898. More so even than imperialist rhetoric and aims, the legacy of the Spanish–American War in United States historiography seems to be the prevalence of an almost exclusively U.S.–centric treatment of events.

In conclusion, then, Henry Watterson’s *History of the Spanish–American War* is interesting primarily for two reasons. First of all, it differs considerably in tone and approach from Watterson’s stridently opinionated editorials and orations, omitting mention of or skating over divisive categories related to race, region, and party affiliation. In so doing, Watterson aligned himself with the general—though by no means uncontested—trends in contemporary efforts to explain the war’s causes, its relatively quick success, and its implications for

⁴⁵ Freidel, *A Splendid Little War*, 280, 304–306.

foreign policy in the future. Specifically, emphasis was placed on the entrance to the war as something of a spontaneous occurrence, on the decisive nature of U.S. contributions to the war effort, and on the country's responsibilities (rather than opportunities) in the administration and oversight of acquired territories. The second main point of interest exists in the appearance of many of these same themes, relatively unchanged, in the work of later prominent historians such as Frank Freidel. Indeed, to this extent it would seem that Henry Watterson and his contemporaries were successful in branding as "history" their take on events that were at the time still quite current.

Poverty or Privies? The Pellagra Controversy in America

John Skelton

In 1908, Dr. Charles Wardell Stiles, Chief of Zoology for the United States Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, visited Columbia, South Carolina. The stop was part of a fact finding mission dispatched to the southern United States to determine the etiology of indolence; the so-called “disease of the cracker,” widely blamed for the long-term economic malaise in the postbellum South. If hunting for the “germ of laziness” seemed a laughable notion, the credentials of the well-connected Connecticut and European-educated acolyte of Pasteur certainly were not. Stiles was widely considered the nation’s foremost expert on hookworm disease and was no stranger to the South by 1908. Indeed, he was an anomaly to the uneasy egoism of the New South; he represented a rare sort of progressive Yankee expert, never deriding Southerners for their perceived backwardness, but rather, demonstrating a heartfelt desire to do whatever was in his power to alleviate rural and small-town misery. During his many visits, Southern newspaper editors and local politicians came to know him and looked forward to his calls, offering what support they could to his cause.¹

In short order, Stiles positively identified hookworm in some twenty-four local townspeople, most of whom were being uselessly treated for anemia. However, a new scourge dominated the fears of the area—pellagra.² Symptomatically similar to hookworm infestations, characterized by eczema, yellowish skin, and a distended stomach, pellagra also visibly marked its sufferers with peculiar skin eruptions on the arms, feet, and around the neck and face. Unlike

¹F. G. Brooks, Charles Wardell Stiles, *Intrepid Scientist Bios*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Oct., 1947): 157–160, 164–165 04/19/2012

² *The State*, “Investigating the “Hook Worm” the Parasite Which Causes Shiftlessness. Pellagra Also Found,” (January 7, 1908):9

hookworm, caused by the already-identified parasitic roundworms *Necator americanus* (first identified by Stiles) and *Ancylostoma duodenale*,³ pellagra, a long-standing disease of the European poor, had no certain causative agent. Upon pellagra's arrival in America, Southern news men were quick to correlate the two maladies, likening a possible parasitic cause for pellagra, a disease popularly connected with the European agricultural poor, to that of the hookworm outbreak. Soon, various theories of parasitosis infested local newspapers. Even as Stiles continued his investigations, *The State* (Columbia, South Carolina) posited the consumption of maize infested with weevils, "which find their way into the human stomach and burrow into the muscles," as a possible cause.⁴ This possible association between hookworm disease, an ailment linked with the lack of proper sanitation in the South, and pellagra, a disease synonymous with poverty, led the Rockefeller Foundation to create the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission. In 1909, an endowment of \$1,000,000 was disbursed to fund an investigation of the problem.⁵ Stiles, the scientific secretary for the commission, was soon confronted by the high hopes of an uninformed public that the anti-parasitic thymol treatment for hookworm might be the panacea for pellagra as well.

Perhaps the death-by-weevil supposition of *The State* was a bit far flung, but not so far as the idea presently seems. The turn of the twentieth century was marked by a geometric growth in medical knowledge, which in turn, spawned a renaissance in medical thought. The breakdown of millennia-held humoral and miasmatic theories left a gaping hole in the bastion of the medical sciences and new theories, approaches, and practices flooded the breach. A surprising number of these new sciences proved their mettle over the forty years

³ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001653/> (accessed 04/19/2012)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Elizabeth W. Etheridge, *Butterfly Caste*, Westport, Connecticut (Greenwood Publishing Company:1972)13; F. G. Brooks, "Charles Wardell Stiles, Intrepid Scientist" *Bios*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Oct., 1947), 164.

between 1880 and 1920: viruses such as yellow fever were identified and equated with insect vectors, as was the protozoan responsible for malaria; the cholera bacterium, *Vibrio cholerae*, was identified in contaminated drinking water; *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* was isolated and its mode of transmission described. Even if outright cures for such afflictions remained evasive, the widespread application of preventative measures became possible for the first time ever. Pellagra, described in European medical literature since the eighteenth century, was not immune to these speculative vicissitudes. Indeed, conjecture became pellagra's greatest collaborator. Its unproven etiology spawned a raging and dichotomous argument amongst social and scientific theorists. Upon its discovery in America, new investigators reacted vigorously and swiftly, initially confident that they would solve the puzzle in a few years at most,⁶ only to find themselves stuck fast in the dogmas of their personal fields. The rise of pellagra in America is not a story of epidemiological conquest, but rather, a story of intellectual conflict, made all the more tragic because the solution to the problem was known, if not understood, by nearly every party involved.

Pellagra was indeed a frightening disease, its symptoms described by period authors as *the three D's*: dermatitis, diarrhea, and dementia.⁷ The most prominent symptoms of pellagra were dermatological—burn-like eruptions on the face, the tops of the hands and feet, forearms, and around the neck. In essence, these markers appeared any place where sunlight made normal contact. Before, during, following, or sometimes in the absence of the skin eruptions,⁸ sundry gastronomical conditions arose—loss of appetite,

⁶ South Carolina State Board of Health, "Transactions of National Conference on Pellagra Held Under Auspices of South Carolina State Board of Health at State Hospital for the Insane, Columbia, S.C. November 3 and 4 , 1909," Columbia, S.C.(The State Co.: 1910) 19.

⁷ Daphne A. Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, Ithaca, New York (Cornell University Press: 1973)3.

⁸ George M. Niles, *Pellagra: An American Problem*, Philadelphia (W. B. Saunders Company: 1912) 88. The concept of pellagra-sine-pellagra or pseudo-pellagra was a

ulcerated mouth, cramps, diarrhea, constipation, and bloody stool were all common markers. Adding complexity to the mystery was pellagra's seasonal nature, seeming to increase in spring, ebb during high-summer, resurge in the fall, and disappear in winter. Although in many cases, pellagrous delirium, the third D, set in at once, for some victims, many seasonal eruptions might pass before the neurological symptoms associated with the disease set in. Marked by forgetfulness, depression, fantasies of persecution, and suicidal tendencies, the neurological symptoms of pellagra turned many underfunded state institutions, particularly in the American South where pellagra was most prevalent, into ill prepared nexuses for the seasonally mad.⁹ If the three D's were insufficient in their fearsome rages, over time many physicians augmented the list with a fourth D: death.¹⁰ During the thirty year reign of pellagra in America, death seemed to be the inevitable result for forty to seventy percent of those diagnosed.¹¹

Today, it is understood that pellagra is a nutritional deficiency disease caused by a diet lacking in niacin, commonly called vitamin B3. Ironically, the chemical structure of niacin had been understood

much disputed topic in both Europe and America; see also Daphne A. Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 67.

⁹ Botho Sheube. *The Diseases of Warm Countries*, Edited by James Cantlie, Translated by Pauline Falcke, London(John Bal, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd., 1903)314-315; J. W. Babcock and W. Cutting jr, *Prevalence of Pellagra*, Washington (Government Printing Office: 1911) 17;

¹⁰ E. W. Patterson, "The Treatment of Pellagra," *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, Vol. 14, No. 6 (Feb. 1915), 284-287, p. 287 Accessed 04/07/2012.

¹¹ Carl Voegtlin, "Recent Work on Pellagra," *Public Health Reports* (1896-1970), Vol. 35, No. 25 (June 18, 1920), 1435-1452, p. 1437. Accessed 04/05/2012.; J. G. Wilkinson, "Pellagra—Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment," *Southern Medical Journal*, vol. 4 no. 8 (September 1911) 609; Daphne A. Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 78, 88; Etheridge, *The Butterfly Caste*, 6; C. W. Garrison, "Economic Aspects of Pellagra" *Southern Medical Journal*/vol. 21 no. 3 1928. Dr. C. W. Garrison stated that by 1928, pellagra mortality in Arkansas had reached 85-90%; Sheube simply notes prognosis as "generally unfavourable." Sheube, *The Diseases of Warm Countries*, 320; Illinois Pellagra Commission. *Pellagra in Illinois: Condensed Report*, Chicago (American Medical Association: 1912)7.

since the 1870s (the first major vitamin to be synthesized) and the vitamin isolated by 1911, a scant four years after pellagra's first known appearance in America. However, the nutritional functions performed by niacin were only nominally studied until the 1930s. In fact, until the 1920s, no nutritional deficiency diseases at all were understood except in the most general terms, i.e. specific foods added to marginal diets seemed to prevent certain diseases. By the time pellagra was discovered to be active in America, the weapon for its speedy defeat had been in hand for nearly forty years, but nobody knew to use it, nor would they for nearly two more decades.¹²

Perhaps the strangest impediment facing American pellagra researchers was that the disease was not a new phenomenon, but rather, was merely new to America. Pellagra was first observed some 170 years before its American visitation by the Spanish physician, Dr. Gaspar Casal, for whom one of its dermatological symptoms, "Casal's collar," is named. Concluding that the disease was prevalent in several impoverished provinces in Spain, Casal devoted the lion's share of his remaining years to studying the disease. It is noteworthy that Casal, unable to provide a definite cause, though he believed the maize-intensive diet of the poor responsible, was able to deduce that the addition of milk, cheese and meat to the diet improved pellagrous conditions and prevented further outbreaks. Following the posthumous publication of Casal's life work, the *Historia natural y medicia de el Principado de Asturias* in 1759, other physicians began noticing similar maladies among the rural poor throughout Europe.¹³ Pellagra went by many regional names such as *mal de la rosa*, *mal el monte*, *mal de la Teste*, and *flema salada*, before being conclusively linked together as the same disease by the French physician Théophile Roussel in 1861. Roussel opted for a single name, *pellagra*,

¹² Richard D. Semba, "The Historical Evolution of Thought Regarding Multiple Micronutrient Nutrition," *The Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 142, no. 1 (January 2012) 144S.

¹³ Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 30-31; Arturo Warman, *Corn & Capitalism: How a Botanical Bastard Grew to Global Dominance*, Translated by Nancy L. Westrate, Chapel Hill (University of North Carolina Press: 2003)132-133.

coined earlier by Dr. Francisco Frapolli, in 1771.¹⁴ The etiology of this now clearly defined and wide-spread ailment, long a source of heated debate among European physicians, grew increasingly contentious as the numbers of the diagnosed swelled. In time, the European debate settled into two camps, those of the *Zeists* and the *anti-Zeists*. This dichotomous situation would come to dominate the research of American physicians just as it had their European peers, an argument that worked to the detriment of pellagrins on both continents.¹⁵

The Zeist theory, as originally promulgated in 1810 by the Italian Dr. Giovanni Battista Marzari, held that maize was in some way related to pellagra, hence the term *Zeist*, derived from the maize genus *Zea*. However, Marzari blamed the disease principally on poverty, believing it neither hereditary nor contagious. Presciently, Marzari also contended that any diet so restricted as that of the rural Italian poor was likely to cause the infection. As the century progressed, nutritional studies seemed to confirm Marzari's theories, maize having been found very low in protein, widely believed to be the key nutritional element.¹⁶ Unfortunately, there was one hole in Marzari's theory; the rural poor had always had a monotonous, high-

¹⁴ A. Marie, *Pellagra*, Translated by C.H. Lavinder and J.W. Babcock, Columbia, South Carolina (The State Co. Publishers: 1910) 19–20. Marie stated that the name pellagra was a vernacular term used by farmers living in central Lombardi and Milan. Pellagra is derived from *pelle* –“skin” and *agra* –“rough.”; Daphne A. Roe, *Plague of Corn*, 34–35, 37; Arturo Warman. *Corn & Capitalism: How a Botanical Bastard Grew to Global Dominance*, 133; a more complete list of synonyms is provided in Sheube; Botho Sheube, *The Diseases of Warm Countries*, 311.

¹⁵ Pellagra was also ravaging North Africa by the 1890s, but the English epidemiologist Dr. Fleming Sandwith seemed the only interested party. Sandwith's expertise, however, proved pivotal for the American study of pellagra as it was primarily through his efforts that any English language literature on the subject was available at all. See Daphne A. Roe, *Plague of Corn*, p. 69–76, for Sandwith's experiences in Egypt.

¹⁶ Arturo Warman. *Corn & Capitalism: How a Botanical Bastard Grew to Global Dominance*, 133–135; Renato Mariani–Costantini and Aldo Mariani–Costantini. “An Outline of the History of Pellagra in Italy,” *Journal of Anthropological Sciences*, Vol. 85 (2007) 167; www.isita-org.com. (Accessed 04/23/12).

starch diet. If a low protein dietary was the cause, how had pellagra not been noticed much earlier? Under the guidance of Dr. Lodovico Balardini, the Zeist theory matured at the Italian Scientific Congress of 1844. Likening pellagra to ergot, Balardini posited that the true cause of the malady was neither poverty nor maize, but rather, a toxic fungal infestation of improperly stored maize or flour. Following in Balardini's footsteps, Zeist theorists unsuccessfully attempted to isolate the mysterious intoxicant, referred to as *pellagrozeina*, well into the next century.¹⁷

The anti-Zeist camp reflected the opinions of a range of naysayers rather than a single, cohesive theory. Indeed, the arguments among their own ranks were often as rancorous as their debates with the Zeists. Essentially, as noted by W. Bayard Cutting, American vice council in Milan in 1908, the anti-Zeists fell into two categories. The first, primarily economists and social activists, held firm to Marzari's original theory, believing pellagra a disease wholly caused by poverty, the maize argument seeming to them

not so much false as inadequate. . . it appears in districts where corn is either not cultivated or constitutes only a small part of the peasant's diet. In France, the inhabitants of the Landes used to eat corn, but other grains as well, and in far larger quantities. Even in Italy, some of the largest corn-growing districts have the least pellagra, or none at all.¹⁸

¹⁷ Babcock and Cutting, *Prevalence of Pellagra*, 19–20. The term *pellagrozeina* was coined by the physician/psychologist Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909), likely the most respected and published zeist theorist. Lombroso's influence over time caused many publications to cite the maize-toxin theory simply as "Lombroso's Theory." Lombroso's Darwinian psychological theories regarding the physiognomy of criminals were also lent in support of heredity as a predisposing condition of pellagrins. See Daphne A. Roe, *Plague of Corn*, 59, 63.

¹⁸ Babcock and Cutting, *Prevalence of Pellagra*, 20.

The second anti-Zeist camp included traditional miasmatic theorists following the teachings of the eighteenth century physician Pierre Thouvenel, who contended that contaminated vapors lifted from pools of torpid water, spreading the disease among the poor. Several more modern concepts concerned unseen germs. Other anti-Zeists implicated the generally filthy and miserable living conditions of the poor, referring to the phenomenon as *morbus miseriae*.¹⁹ Among the most modern, and best received, of the anti-Zeist theories was that of the English entomologist Louis Sambon, whose investigations of pellagrous Italian districts in 1900, led him to conclude that the disease was caused by a microorganism spread by biting-flies of the *Simulium* genus.²⁰ Sambon's insect vector theory was considered by many publications as the most likely cause of pellagra well into the 1920s.²¹

All of this, however, received little attention from physicians in the pellagra-free United States. Naturally, news articles with fearful headlines occasionally drifted into nineteenth century American newspapers. But such anecdotes as an 1881 Chicago *Daily Inter Ocean* article about the ongoing epidemic in Italy, "The Terrible Pellagra," also tended to emphasize the different "soil, climate, race, social regulations, manners, and customs" of the victims, implying that the century-long scourge resulted in some way from the *Italianness* of the sufferers rather than the maize they consumed.²² Whether bitten by the ethnocentric media-bug or not, American physicians had no experience and only scant knowledge of pellagra. One of the better sources available to American physicians was a translated German text, Dr. Botho Sheube's, the *Diseases of Warm Countries* (1903), which offered a fair diagnostic of pellagra and a typical range of Zeist-preferred treatments including salt-baths,

¹⁹ Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 65-67; Sheube, *The Diseases of Warm Countries*, 311.

²⁰ Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 84-86.

²¹ G. Howard Bailey, *The Etiology of Pellagra*, 3; A. Marie, *Pellagra*, 139-141.

²² "The Terrible Pellagra," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, no. 131 (August 1881).

appropriate dietary changes, and arsenical treatments.²³ In her 1972 retrospective of the pellagra years, *The Butterfly Caste*, Dr. Elizabeth Etheridge asserts that most American medical texts failed to mention pellagra at all, or at best, provided brief accounts of the strange and foreign ailment. For Americans, pellagra was simply another exotic affliction for Old World peasants and savages.²⁴

Pellagra remained an Old World disease until 1907 when a definitive diagnosis was made by Dr. George H. Searcy, following an investigation of an unknown epidemic spreading among the patients at the Alabama Institution for Negroes. Of the eighty-eight cases so-diagnosed, fifty-seven died.²⁵ Soon after, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* published Searcy's findings, detailing the course of the disease. Following the publication, many American physicians began looking back on some of the more puzzling cases they had encountered over their years of practice.²⁶ As stated by Dr. J. W. Babcock, Physician and Superintendent of the State Hospital for the Insane in Columbia, South Carolina, the realization quickly grew that pellagra had "probably occurred in general practice, and especially in asylums and hospitals, for the last half-century, although the diagnosis may not have always been correctly made."²⁷

The initial reaction of the American medical community to the arrival of pellagra was marked by a frantic search for information.

²³ Sheube. *The Diseases of Warm Countries*, 314–318, 320–321.

²⁴ Etheridge, *Butterfly Caste*, 4. Etheridge cites examples from Flint's *A Treatise on the Principles and Practices of Medicine* (1866–1894), Musser's *A Practical Treatise on Medical Diagnosis* (1904), and Osler's *The Principles and Practice of Medicine* (1892–1909). With the exception of English translations of Scheube's *Diseases of Warm Countries* (1903), I found Etheridge to be correct. Standards such as Vierordt's (translated by Stuart) *Clinical Textbook of Medical Diagnosis* (1892) make no mention; indeed, even later publications such as Cole's 1913 *Mental Diseases*. . . frequently offer only a paragraph or so of information, Cole noting that "occasional examples have been reported in Scotland and in this country."

²⁵ Etheridge, *Butterfly Caste*, 4; Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 78–79

²⁶ Etheridge, *Butterfly Caste*, 5.

²⁷ Babcock and Cutting, *Prevalence of Pellagra*, 10.

Among the first physicians to grasp the importance of the Alabama outbreak was the aforementioned Dr. J. W. Babcock. Using his personal friendship with South Carolina Senator James W. Tillman as a lever, in 1908 Babcock requested and received a synthesis of European statistics and thinking about the disease in the form of a consular report compiled by W. Bayard Cutting, American vice council in Milan. Babcock attached Cutting's informative report detailing the frightening pervasiveness of pellagra in Italy to his own investigations of pellagra's domestic incidence. In 1910, both documents were published together as the "Prevalence of Pellagra in the United States," first by the *Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association* and several months later as a public document disseminated by order of the United States Senate. Citing initial estimates of 1,000 victims spread over thirteen southern states, with over half the cases lodged in insane asylums, as grossly inaccurate, Babcock produced tables indicating that at least 3,000 sufferers were spread out over thirty-four states and the District of Columbia.²⁸ Moreover, noting that "it is no surprise for us to find, in running down one case, four or five additional cases in the same house," Babcock conservatively posited that the real number was likely 5,000 or more. Equally disconcerting, Cutting's donation to the document noted that the most compelling European scientific contributions to the issue were "insusceptible of direct proof and of direct disproof," and the popular European social critiques were "almost too indefinite to criticize." Cutting asserted the argument in toto as "little more than a criticism."²⁹ If American physicians were hoping for any meaningful input from European expertise, they were sadly mistaken—all they had to go on was European clash and criticism.

More than any other voice, J. W. Babcock drew attention to pellagra in America. Impugning his own practice in *The Prevalence of Pellagra* by declaring that "I know now that I should have made the

²⁸ Babcock and Cutting, *Prevalence of Pellagra*, 10; Niles, *Pellagra: An American Problem*, 27–31.

²⁹ Babcock and Cutting, *Prevalence of Pellagra*, 7–9, 20–21.

diagnosis of pellagra in South Carolina nearly nineteen years ago,” Babcock invited a response to the problem: “Shall we not learn a lesson therefrom and hereafter be on the alert for other so-called tropical diseases?”³⁰ Babcock’s early bravery in vocally arousing concern over pellagra should not be underestimated. As Physician and Superintendent of the State Hospital for the Insane (Columbia, South Carolina), Babcock was the party most responsible for the health and welfare of his patients. Moreover, many powerful voices, such as Josephus Daniels, the editor of the strongly pro-New South *Raleigh News & Observer* (Raleigh, North Carolina), were already expressing anger over the growing national ridicule lately heaped on the South over hookworm; Daniel’s writing that “many of us in the South are getting tired of being exploited by advertisements that exaggerate conditions . . . Let us not canonize Standard Oil Rockefeller by putting laurels on his head because he seeks to buy the appreciation of the people whom he has been robbing for a quarter of a century.”³¹ Obviously, an additional association with a distressing disease of poverty was the last thing anybody wanted. Unfortunately, as the disease spread to affect some 16,000 people in eight Southern states by 1911, the South became popularly derided as “the land of hookworm and pellagra.”³² Although no criticism seems to ever have been leveled at Babcock, or Superintendent Dr. George Zeller, similarly opening the doors of his Peoria State Hospital

³⁰ Babcock and Cutting, *Prevalence of Pellagra*, 10

³¹ William J. Cooper Jr. and Thomas E. Terrill, *The American South: A History, Volume II*, New York (Rowman & Littlefield: 2009) 614. Daniels was quite well connected, becoming Secretary of the Navy under Wilson and Ambassador to Mexico under Franklin Roosevelt. His negative critique of the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission, however, fails to mention that over one million southerners were ultimately examined and 440,000 of them freely treated.

³² William J. Cooper Jr. and Thomas E. Terrill, *The American South: A History Volume II*, 615; Southern fears of this stigma were well founded. The conceptual “Land of Hookworm and Pellagra” outlasted the prevalence of both diseases, regularly being plied against the South at least into the 1950s. A fine example can be found in the song “I Wanna Go Back to Dixie” by Tom Lehrer. Tom. Lehrer, “I Wanna Go Back to Dixie,” *Songs by Tom Lehrer*, 1953.

in Illinois to outside investigators in 1909, doing so clearly imperiled their professional reputations.³³

With several cities and counties having been proven endemic to pellagra, the strongest initial response from the scientific community came from the 1909–1912 Illinois Pellagra Commission, primarily studying at George Zeller’s Peoria asylum.³⁴ Many of the Illinois researchers, such as Drs. W. J. MacNeal, Henry Nichols, and Joseph Siler became synonymous with the pellagra investigations that followed for the next two decades.³⁵ With no information beyond European theories to start them off, the Illinois commission’s avowed initial efforts were set toward disentangling European thoughts on pellagra:

With regard to the etiology of pellagra numerous views have been promulgated and it is well to say that the members of this commission entered on this study without prejudice or preconceived ideas with regard to the nature of the disease or its causation. The plans on which the work has been organized have been aimed toward the consideration of all the manifold theories which have evolved in order, if possible, to

³³Daphne A. Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 88.

³⁴ *Pellagra in Illinois: Condensed Report of the Illinois Pellagra Commission*, 6–7, 8. It is also noteworthy that the State of Illinois was far better equipped to fund such research than any of the more seriously impacted Southern states.

³⁵ *Pellagra in Illinois: Condensed Report of the Illinois Pellagra Commission*, cover sheet. Interestingly, sitting on the board of the Illinois Pellagra Commission was Dr. Howard T. Ricketts, noted for his discovery of the *Rickettsiaceae* family of bacterium. Not long after, Ricketts died from typhus contracted incidental to his research on that disease. The presence of Dr. Ricketts and other noteworthy pathologists on the ground floor of American pellagra research indicates the seriousness which State governments (and soon after, the Federal) assigned to the disease. A professional relationship with Ricketts may also correlate to W. J. MacNeal’s relentless pursuit of a sanitation related cause to pellagra.

narrow down the lines of research into some more or less definite channel.³⁶

However, on the very same introductory page of their report, the commission discarded nearly the entire Zeist argument, alluding to the failures of Zeist-inspired Italian government programs and paraphrasing the *Simulium* vector theorist Louis Sambon's snide comment that "the Italians have been studying corn rather than pellagra."³⁷ Thus, several of America's top researchers determined at once that a biological agent of some sort was responsible for the disease; a dictum preordained to cause argument. Polarization set in quickly as American pathologists became embroiled in debates, each doggedly pursuing his theory to the near-exclusion of all others. An early example of this unfortunate tenacity took place in the search for an enteric cause of pellagra. Likely inspired by the gastric anomalies symptomatic to pellagra, the most promising early Illinois research centered around Dr. Henry Nichols' search for intestinal diseases. Theorizing protozoan infections as a likely predisposing condition to pellagra, in 1909, Nichols scrutinized and cultured stool samples from 88 pellagrins at Peoria State Hospital against a control group of 101 presumably healthy patients. Although 85.3 per cent of the pellagrous samples proved positive for parasites, so too did 48.6 per cent of the control group. An outside control group of 453 soldiers was added to the test. Neither pellagrous nor open to any exposure peculiar to the Peoria hospital, 51.2 per cent of the soldiers tested similarly to the positive test group. Moreover, the varieties of intestinal flora discovered varied greatly between many of the subjects and too few were found in subsequent blood tests to be a discreet cause.³⁸ Over the next three years, several more exhaustive

³⁶ *Pellagra in Illinois: Condensed Report of the Illinois Pellagra Commission*, 4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁸ *Pellagra in Illinois: Condensed Report of the Illinois Pellagra Commission*, 28; Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 87-88.

examinations ensued at different Illinois institutions. All shared similar results, leading the team to officially conclude in their 1912 report that “in all probability, the majority of these organisms are non-pathogenic.”³⁹ However, Nichols remained unconvinced, maintaining his theory that the harmful effects of the intestinal parasites might offer an infectious conduit for a yet-to-be identified maize-toxin.⁴⁰ By doing so, his theory called into question the commission’s oblique disavowal of the Zeist pellagrozeina theory. Moreover, Nichols left the possibility of enteric causality open and valuable time and resources were subsequently squandered by the recently formed Thompson–McFadden Pellagra Commission.

Formed in 1912, the Thompson–McFadden Pellagra Commission represented the federal government’s first foray into pellagra research, although it was largely funded through the private donations Col. Robert M. Thompson of New York and Mr. J. H. McFadden of Pennsylvania. Both men had been approached to this end by Dr. George M. Miller, president of the New York Post–Graduate Medical School. The contribution of the federal government was represented in the salaries of Dr. Philip E. Garrison of the U. S. Navy and Captain Joseph. F. Siler of the U. S. Army Medical Corps, formerly of the Illinois Pellagra Commission, as was Dr. W. J. MacNeal, representing the New York Post–Graduate Medical School. Henry Nichols was notably absent from the line–up. The commission was formed, in part, to investigate the disconcerting increase of pellagra in the general populations of several southern states. Siler and Garrison were to head up the direct investigations in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, a known pellagra hotspot, while McNeal would handle the biologic and pathologic investigations in New York. Two Department of Agriculture entomologists, A. H. Jennings and W. V. King, already searching for a pellagrous insect vector in South

³⁹ *Pellagra in Illinois: Condensed Report of the Illinois Pellagra Commission*, 30.

⁴⁰ Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 87–88.

Carolina were also redirected to Spartanburg.⁴¹ Many observations and conclusions from the commission's several annual progress reports are of particular interest, less for what was learned than for the singular logic with which the findings were interpreted.⁴²

The Thompson–McFadden team was charged with two missions: first, to uncover any socioeconomic contributions to the spread of pellagra. Barring any significant findings, they were then to move on to epidemiologic investigation. However, the group discarded any serious socioeconomic studies out of hand, noting in their 1914 Progress Report only that “in the majority of the cases (85 per cent.) economic conditions are poor and the disease is most prevalent among people of insufficient means,” and moving on to loosely connect the observation to poor sanitation.⁴³ This is actually of little surprise, as all three of the principle members were bacteriologists, MacNeal, the group's de facto leader having taken a lecturing position in this study with the New York Post–Graduate Medical School in 1911.⁴⁴ There were some half–hearted attempts made to ascertain whether diet was a significant causal factor presented in the 1915

⁴¹ J. F Siler, P.E. Garrison and W. J. MacNeal, “Pellagra: A Summary of the First Progress Report of the Thompson–McFadden Pellagra Commission,” In *Pellagra [I]–III. First–Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital*, by New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital, (1914) 3–4.

⁴² The Thompson–McFadden reports were individually published documents disseminated upon each study's completion, generally in the Archives of Internal Medicine (AIM) or in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Each completed year from 1914–16, the commission issued an annual compilation of all their work in the form of an Annual Progress Report. This essay makes use of these annual reports rather than the individually published releases, so studies cited to a particular year were actually conducted in the preceding year.

⁴³ Siler, Garrison and MacNeal, “Pellagra: A Summary of the First Progress Report . . .,” 6–7.

⁴⁴ American Society for Microbiology, *The Ward J. MacNeal Papers*, 2012, <http://www.asm.org/asm/index.php/membership/the-ward-j.-macneal-papers.html?title=The+Ward+J.+Macneal+Papers> (accessed 5 may, 2012). MacNeal, a full professor by 1912, went on to perform valuable penicillin research during WWII. Accessed 05/05/2012.

Progress Report, but the food studies were conducted solely by uniform census cards filled out by Spartanburg County pellagrins themselves and built around vague food quality judgments and whether particular foods were eaten daily as opposed to the quantities in which they were eaten. No direct observations of the pellagrins' diets were made by the Thompson–McFadden team members. Moreover, much of the limited information that was gathered was dismissed; grits, for example were disregarded entirely because the poll indicated a local preference for wheat flour. The most telling observation of the food study was a well-documented pellagra corollary. Since 85 per cent of the pellagrins were quite poor, animal protein featured only a meager portion their daily fare.⁴⁵ The dietary study was nonetheless adequate for the Thompson–McFadden Commission to determine that “the supposition that the ingestion of good or spoiled maize is the essential cause of pellagra is not supported by our study”⁴⁶ and to dismiss dietary deficiency altogether as a possible cause.

Confident that such European contentions as maize diets, the mythical *pellagrozeina* toxin, and miserable poverty had been answered to, the Thompson–McFadden Commission moved on to epidemiological inquiry. The major foci of the work centered on the possibilities presented by the deplorable sanitary conditions of many of the mill villages in Spartanburg County. Noting in the 1915 Progress Report that that the twenty-eight villages with the highest rates of pellagra also seemed to have unscreened privies, the

⁴⁵ J. F. Siler, P.E. Garrison and W. J. MacNeal, “A Statistical Study of the Relation of Pellagra to use of Certain Foods and to Location of Domicile in Six Selected Industrial Communities,” In *Pellagra [I]–III. First– Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital*, by New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital (New York: 1915) 15–95, 17

⁴⁶ J. F. Siler, P.E. Garrison and W. J. MacNeal, “Further Studies of the Thompson–McFadden Pellagra Commission: A Summary of the Second Progress Report,” In *Pellagra [I]–III. First– Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital*, by New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital (New York: 1915) 1.

possibilities for bacterial contamination of food or for an insect vector to directly transmit the offending germ seemed likely.

Beginning in June of 1912, the Department of Agriculture entomologists Jennings and King began their studies of possible insect vectors for the Thompson–McFadden Commission. A series of tests and questionnaires were designed to winnow down the list of likely contenders; ticks, lice, bed–bugs, cockroaches, horse–flies, fleas, mosquitoes, buffalo gnats (*Simulium*), house flies and stable flies (*Stomoxys*) were under consideration. The two realized at once that Sambon’s choice of *Simulium* as a likely vector was couched in observations of the prevalence of pellagra among Italian farmers. The majority of the Spartanburg cases, however, were village dwelling mill–hands not likely to be in regular contact with the generally rural *Simulium*.⁴⁷ Jennings and King were able to eliminate many other candidates due either to their high local prevalence or lack thereof. Fleas, for example, were eliminated due to a surprising scarcity among the pellagrins, few of whom could afford to keep livestock, or even dogs.⁴⁸ In a truly masterful exhibition of deductive reasoning, several possible vectors were eliminated because of an etiological peculiarity of pellagra in Spartanburg, where the disease seemed to strike women, mostly housewives married to mill hands, some four times more than their husbands.⁴⁹ Eventually, the two settled on *Stomoxys*, or the stable fly, as the likely culprit. Unlike *Simulium*, *Stomoxys* was not a picky breeder and happily propagated anywhere that feces could be found. Furthermore, the stable fly was a daytime

⁴⁷ Alan H. Jennings and V. W. King, “An Intensive Study of Insects as a Possible Etiologic Factor in Pellagra,” In *Pellagra [I]–III. First– Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital*, by New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital (New York: 1914) 94–100.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 91

⁴⁹ J. F. Siler, P.E. Garrison and W. J. MacNeal, “Pellagra: A Summary of the First Progress Report of the Thompson–McFadden Pellagra Commission,” In *Pellagra [I]–III. First– Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital*, by New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital (New York: 1914), 5–6.

feeder known to frequently enter the unscreened windows of homes, often biting the wives of mill hands.⁵⁰ Logically, *Stomoxys* seemed the perfect culprit. However, like the already highly contested *Simulium* vector theory, no amount of blood testing was able to find a protozoa or bacterium common to both host and insect.⁵¹

Easily connected to the *Stomoxys* theory, but also attractive as a stand-alone means of transmission was the general filth associated the aforementioned open privies. Even without the stable fly, enough opportunities for food and water contamination were offered by the squalid sanitary situation to encourage a round of intensive blood and fecal surveys. From his lab at the New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital, MacNeal picked up where his former colleague Nichols left off, performing an additional 2000 agglutination tests and isolating 693 bacterial strains, ultimately concluding that "there was no indication of a substitution of the normal intestinal bacteria by an abnormal invader. The abnormal types were various in nature and in no case dominant in numbers."⁵² Undaunted by his negative findings, MacNeal summarized the commission's overall conclusions for 1912 through 1913 by announcing that pellagra, nonetheless, was "in all probability a specific infectious disease communicable from person to person . . . we are inclined to regard intimate association in the household and the contamination of food with the excretions of pellagrins as possible modes of distribution of the disease."⁵³ These convictions, made in spite of extensive contrary evidence, were in part bolstered by observations made over the previous two years which indicated that the communities with the most primitive means

⁵⁰ Jennings and King, "An Intensive Study," 100-110.

⁵¹ Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 87.

⁵² W. J. MacNeal, "Observations on the Intestinal Bacteria in Pellagra," In *Pellagra [I]-III. First- Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital*, by New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital (New York: 1914).

⁵³ Siler, Garrison and MacNeal, "Further Studies of the Thompson-McFadden," 1.

of sewage disposal were also those with the highest prevalence of pellagra.⁵⁴

For the 1914 study-year, it was decided that the best means of testing this hypothesis was to install a modern sanitary disposal system in the town of Spartan Mills, “a conspicuous endemic center of pellagra for as long as the disease had been recognized in this region.” The numbers of newly diagnosed cases in Spartan Mills had indeed increased steadily from five in 1909 to thirty in 1913; poor hygienic conditions along with the close contact between the sick and the healthy seemed the obvious cause. In August of 1913, construction began. By May of the following year, the entire town, except for six poorly situated homes, was connected to a modern sewage system. The six non-connected homes were equipped with “fly-proof pail closets” and the town’s older privies were knocked down and carted away. Over the following two years, the incidence of new pellagra cases did indeed decline, from thirty in 1913 to only two in 1916. The team painstakingly interviewed the newly infected parties and in all cases was able to place them in close proximity with previously diagnosed pellagrins, either through familial connections or through visits with nearby friends. For example, Pellagrin 1377, stricken in June, 1916, lived across the street from Pellagrin 1356 who seemed to have contracted the disease from her daughter, an established pellagrin (# 1167) with whom she was previously living. The 1916 numbers suggested that with modern sanitation and a little caution, the disease would soon fade away.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ J. F. Siler, P.E. Garrison and W. J. MacNeal, “The Relation of Methods of Disposal of Sewage to the Spread of Pellagra,” In *Pellagra [I]-III. First- Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital*, by New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital (New York: 1915): 97.

⁵⁵ J. F. Siler, P.E. Garrison and W. J. MacNeal, “The Relation of Methods of Disposal of Sewage to the Spread of Pellagra,” In *Pellagra [I]-III. First- Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post-Graduate Medical School and*

On the surface, it seems that the Thompson–McFadden Commission thoroughly tackled the pellagra problem and arrived at a reasoned etiological determinacy for pellagra. However, the structure of the theory was entirely framed in preconceived notions and unproven theories. For example, MacNeal, Siler and Garrison, bacteriologists one and all, only noted in a general way that the vast majority of the Spartanburg County pellagrins were very poor and that the food they could afford was limited in nature. Only the frequency of consumption for certain foods was tracked, not the quantities which were consumed. Furthermore, no consideration was given to the varied definitions applicable to the food consumed. For example, to the impoverished pellagrins, “fresh meat” essentially meant pork fat, or at best, bacon. One of the most glaring considerations omitted from the food study was the peculiar prevalence of pellagra among the wives of the mill-hands. The best explanation for this inconsistency is that the wives saved the best and most plentiful portions of the daily repast for their husbands and children, not that they were any more regularly bitten by the ubiquitous swarms of *Stomoxys* at home than their husbands were at work.⁵⁶ But perhaps the commission’s most egregious scientific sin was the use of an unproven human contagion hypothesis to verify the seemingly positive results of their sewage disposal test at Spartan Mills. The continuing, though reduced, incidence of new cases of pellagra was explained by contact with known pellagrins in the area—were pellagra a human contagion, the density of the population in the area would have been adequate to foster its spread alone, regardless of the sanitary upgrades. A far more likely explanation for the decline in

Hospital, by New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital (New York: 1917): 155–166.

⁵⁶ Female mill-hands tended to demonstrate susceptibility roughly equal to that of the men. See J. F. Siler, P.E. Garrison and W. J. MacNeal, “Pellagra: A Summary of the First Progress Report of the Thompson–McFadden Pellagra Commission,” In *Pellagra [I]–[III]. First– Third Report of the Robert M. Thompson Pellagra Commission of New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital*, by New York Post–Graduate Medical School and Hospital (New York: 1914): 6.

pellagra incidence in Spartan Mills was the year-long economic infusion that the construction project offered to the local denizens. In short, the extra work provided additional earnings, likely spent to supplement their meager daily rations which were no longer being tracked by the commission.

At around the time that the Thompson–McFadden Commission was razing the primitive privies of Spartan Mills, Surgeon General Rupert Blue, responding to requests from several southern Congressmen, commissioned the United States Public Health Service (PHS) to launch their own investigation. Because much of the then-current epidemiological debate was divided between Sambon and Jenning’s vector theories, the assignment was given to Dr. Joseph Goldberger, a relatively unknown PHS officer, likely chosen because his earlier work with yellow fever and *tabardillo* qualified him as an insect vector specialist.⁵⁷ However, Goldberger proved quite different from his colleagues. Likened by Dr. Joann Elmore, co-author of the textbook *Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Preventative Medicine*, as “an American John Snow,” Goldberger entertained no predilections about pellagra at the onset of his studies.⁵⁸ Indeed, Goldberger was a fearless researcher who thrice fell ill from the maladies he studied, contracting and surviving typhus, yellow fever, and dengue fever during his career.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Roe, *A Plague of Corn*, 99.

⁵⁸ Joann G. Elmore and Alvan R. Feinstein, “Joseph Goldberger: An Unsung Hero of American Clinical Epidemiology,” *The History of Medicine*, (September 1, 1994: 372); *University of Washington Department of Epidemiology* (2008) http://depts.washington.edu/epidem/fac/facBio.shtml?Elmore_Joan%27 (accessed May 6, 2012); Milton Terris, then–Professor of Preventative Medicine at New York Medical College and editor of a compendium of Goldberger’s reports, *Goldberger on Pellagra*, made a similar comment in his introduction. See Joseph Goldberger, *Goldberger on Pellagra*, ed. Milton Terris, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press; 1964): 5–6.

⁵⁹ Alan M. Kraut, *Goldberger’s War: The Life and Work of A Public Health Crusader*, New York (Hill and Wang: 2003) 7.

Goldberger's first step was to critically analyze nearly two-hundred years of literature, familiarizing himself with everything from the earliest work by Casal to the latest contributions by the Thompson-McFadden Commission. Taking Marzari's early-Zeist dietary critiques at face value, Goldberger considered the contributing role that a maize-only diet might play and studied the latest literature on scurvy and beriberi as well. Finally, Goldberger isolated an often noted, but little considered fact common to much of the literature:

although many inmates develop pellagra after varying periods of institutional residence, some even after 10 to 20 years of institutional life, and therefore it seems permissible to infer, as the result of the operation within the institution of the exciting cause or causes, yet nurses and attendants living under identical conditions appear uniformly immune. If pellagra be a communicable disease, why should there be this exemption of the nurses and attendants?⁶⁰

There was only one clear answer to this question. Pellagra was neither communicable through close contact nor through an insect vector. Upon his earliest visits to various institutions and orphanages in Mississippi, Goldberger was further able to conclude that, since the attendants and inmates took their meals from the same trays in the same cafeterias, the likelihood of the disease resulting from the ingestion of contaminated food was remote. Apprehending that the attendants generally enjoyed first pick of the served dishes and the inmates portions were thus largely reduced to starches, Goldberger "gained the impression that vegetables and cereals form a much greater proportion" of the diets of the poor than "in the dietaries of well-to-do people; that is, people who are not, as a class, subject to pellagra." Pending further study, Goldberger's immediate suggestion

⁶⁰ Joseph Goldberger, "The Etiology of Pellagra. The Significance of Certain Epidemiological Observations with Respect Thereto," *Goldberger on Pellagra*, ed. Milton Terris, Baton Rouge (Louisiana State University Press: 1964): 20.

was an improvement in the diets of the most susceptible Southern populations, in and out of institutions, including “a reduction in cereals, vegetables, and canned foods . . . and an increase in the fresh animal food component, such as fresh meats, eggs, and milk.”⁶¹

Resisting the temptation to singularly follow his dietary theory without first following up on similarly compelling evidence that pellagra might be caused by an infection, Goldberger enlisted the services of C. H. Lavinder, Passed Assistant Surgeon of United States Public Health and Marine–Hospital Service to perform a series of communicability tests on rhesus monkeys. Goldberger described the experiments in his second progress report to the PHS, noting that “although every kind of tissue, secretion, and excretion from a considerable number of grave and fatal cases was obtained and inoculated in every conceivable way into over a hundred rhesus monkeys, the results have so far been negative.”⁶² Having satisfied himself for the moment that pellagra was non–communicable, Goldberger launched his first round of “Human Experiments” in two Mississippi orphanages and at the Georgia State Sanitarium in the summer of 1914.

Understanding that the Mississippi and Georgia institutions were already grossly underfunded (and believing this a likely cause for pellagra therein) and would be unable to participate in the study otherwise, Goldberger secured additional funding from the PHS to defray the costs of additional and higher quality food. Beyond funding the studies, Goldberger also had to overcome concerns that pellagra was communicable, a fear made all the more real by the published suppositions of the Thompson–McFadden Commission. Motivated by these concerns, many institutions isolated pellagrins in

⁶¹ Ibid, 21–22.

⁶² Joseph Goldberger, “The Cause and Prevention of Pellagra,” *Goldberger on Pellagra*, ed. Milton Terris, Baton Rouge (Louisiana State University Press: 1964): 24. Lavinder, though not a big part of this essay, was a major contributor to pellagra research throughout the entirety of its prevalent years in America

locked cells or quarantine wings. Thus, the three test sites were chosen based on their willingness to follow Goldberger's protocols for the proper management of pellagrins and secondly for their established histories as endemic centers for the disease. Two wards of the sanitarium patients and all of the children in the orphanages enjoyed better rations; oatmeal "replaced grits as the breakfast cereal and the allowances of fresh animal protein foods (milk, meat and, at the orphanage, eggs) and legumes was greatly increased. The allowance for maize was thus reduced but not abolished." By October of 1915, toward the end of the first year of the study, out of 172 orphans affected, only one retained any pellagrous symptoms. None of the 72 pellagrins tested at the Georgia State Sanitarium showed any signs of the disease at all. Conversely, almost half of the sanitarium's pellagrin control group continued suffering recurrent attacks from the disease.⁶³

Having demonstrated that a diet enriched with animal foods and generally reduced in carbohydrates seemed to cure pellagra, half of Goldberger's deficiency hypothesis seemed proven. Notably, Goldberger had also proven that maize alone was not culpable as a cause of pellagra. In order to complete his deficiency hypothesis, however, he would have to prove that a poor, excessively starchy diet actually caused the disease. Finding a group of people desperate enough to try out an experimental cure is one thing; finding a group of healthy people willing to be sickened is quite another. Goldberger's answer to this dilemma was found at Rankin Farm, one of the many gang-labor colonies operated by the Mississippi State Penitentiary System. Beginning in April of 1915, twelve participants underwent a rigorously monitored dietary experiment in exchange for pardons to be granted them by Mississippi's Governor Earl Brewer

⁶³ Joseph Goldberger, "Pellagra Prevention by Diet Amongst Institutional Inmates," *Goldberger on Pellagra*, ed. Milton Terris, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press: 1964): 45,46,47, 48-53.

(1912–1916).⁶⁴ The Pellagra Squad members, as they came to be known, were not starved but to the contrary, were well fed by all appearances. A typical meal, served three times daily, included “fried mush, biscuits, rice, gravy, sirup [sic], coffee, sugar,” or any number of other variations including sweet potatoes, grits, and gravy thickened with cornmeal.⁶⁵ The major difference between the control population diet and that of the Pellagra Squad essentially came down to a complete lack of “animal protein” in the latter.⁶⁶ By the end of October, six of the volunteers had contracted pellagra, as verified by two outside physicians. The control group, as well as the *general population of Rankin Farm, remained healthy.*⁶⁷

Anxious to inform the public about the dietary cure for pellagra, Goldberger and the PHS contacted news outlets nationwide prior even to the causal experiments at Rankin Farms. This was not a spontaneous act on the part of the PHS, but rather, a reaction to a growing national fear of the disease for which the organization believed it had a cure. Goldberger’s “cure” was published often within weeks or months of such articles as a December, 1912 *New York Times* piece putting national prevalence in excess of 50,000 victims; or another, published in October of 1915 bleakly noting Surgeon General Rupert Blue’s estimation of 100,000 victims across the nation.⁶⁸ The media reception was indeed warm. Papers across the nation judged Goldberger’s triumph “epochal.” The Biloxi *Daily Herald* and others circulated interviews with the celebrity scientist: “It is all so simple,” said Dr. Goldberger, “that many people refuse to believe in our theory . . . I have been flooded by letters from every

⁶⁴ Jon M. Harkness, “Prisoners and Pellagra,” *Public Health Reports*, vol. 111, no. 5 (Sep.–Oct.: 1996): 463.

⁶⁵ Joseph Goldberger, “The Experimental Production of Pellagra in Human Subjects by Means of Diet,” *Goldberger on Pellagra*, ed. Milton Terris, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press: 1964): 45, 46, 47.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 65, 69.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 72–73.

⁶⁸ *The New York Times*, “100,000 Cases of Pellagra,” (October 10, 1915); *The New York Times*, “Put Cases in South at 50, 000,” (December 3, 1912).

part of the South asking my advice as to what prescriptions to offer . . . I reply that it is a question of a balanced and proper diet. Now that all seems so simple some people want to laugh.”⁶⁹

But others in the scientific community were not laughing, especially W. J. MacNeal of the Thompson–McFadden Pellagra Commission. Part of this resistance is understandable, even if it seems petty. These were among the best and brightest medical researchers in the world; if it were *all so simple*, they would have produced the same results in the same short amount of time. The first salvos from the Thompson–McFadden contingent came swiftly, MacNeal publicly accusing Goldberger of falsifying the results of the Rankin Farm experiment during a meeting at Bellevue Medical School, *Goldberger’s alma mater!*⁷⁰ Writing to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) a year later, MacNeal challenged the accuracy of the Rankin Farm diagnoses as well as the reliability of Goldberger’s outside medical verification. To the JAMA readership, MacNeal warned that “the claim that pellagra had been produced by a restricted diet should be regarded with suspicion and it would be well for those who have not yet acquired knowledge of this disease by personal observation or by a somewhat comprehensive study of its literature to retain an open mind concerning the essential factors of its causation.”⁷¹ Goldberger shot back that due to “the tone and personal character of MacNeal’s criticism we have not felt that it required any special notice, preferring to let the record of our work

⁶⁹ *The Daily Herald*, “Diet Cure of Pellagra Epochal, Is Opinion of Government Physician,” *America’s Historical Newspaper*, (September 9, 1914), <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/HistArchive>. Accessed April 2, 2012.

⁷⁰ *A Plague of Corn*, 108. Roe cites this event to M. F. Goldberger, “Dr. Josef Goldberger: His Wife’s Recollections,” *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 32 (1956): 724–727. I was unable to obtain a copy of this article for personal review.

⁷¹ W. J. MacNeal, “Correspondence,” *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 66, no. 13 (1916): 976–977.

speak for itself.”⁷² With no middle ground between the camps, the ongoing European Zeist/anti-Zeist conflict fully emerged in the American medical community.

The flames of the dispute, unfortunately, were fanned by certain questions left unanswered by Goldberger’s theory. The most obvious of these detractions was that if pellagra was entirely the result of an impoverished diet, it seemed that nearly every sharecropper, tenant farmer, and urban laborer in the nation should have had the disease. Obviously, this was not the case. Instead, it was often pointed out, pellagra tended to arise among specific communities or in other limited geographic areas. Clearly, pellagra resulted not from indigence, but from infection. Goldberger’s rigid association of pellagra with poverty was further undercut by story after story of well-heeled pellagrins. Typifying such stories are those of Dr. Toulmin Gaines of Mobile Alabama. Speaking out at the 1927 annual meeting of the Southern Medical Association, Gaines described that “a lady in the best of circumstances and with proper diet lived next to an infirmary and was visited by one of the inmates who had pellagra. This lady developed an uncontrovertible case of pellagra.” Gaines continued, telling the tale of a girl “from one of the best families in town” who was wont to associate with pellagrins, contracted the disease and died.⁷³ Naturally, the long-standing customs of doctor/patient confidentiality prevented such concerned medical men from proffering specific details! To the remarks of Gaines and others at the same meeting, Goldberger wearily replied,

⁷² Joseph Goldberger, “The Experimental Production of Pellagra in Human Subjects by Means of Diet,” In *Goldberger on Pellagra*, ed. Milton Terris, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press: 1964): 73.

⁷³ C. W. Garrison, “Economic Aspects of Pellagra,” *Southern Medical Journal*, vol. 21, no. 3 (March 1928): 239. The argument of the ‘well-heeled pellagrin’ was very successfully bandied about well into the 1930s. The Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Encyclopedia for 1931 observing that, “The theory of a deficient diet as responsible for this disease has been partly exploded by the discovery that, in California and Louisiana, prosperous and well-nourished people had developed pellagra . . .” Funk & Wagnalls, 458.

“What I have to say about pellagra I have already said, and it is in print. I would really appreciate it as a high compliment if some of you people who apparently differ from me would read what I have printed.

...

Sometime ago, (probably two or three years ago) Dr. Justine, of Boston, in a paper appearing in one of the journals reported on a very interesting case. He reported that somewhere in Massachusetts there was a house in which a family at one time lived and a member of the family developed diabetes. That family moved from that house; another family came and occupied it again. A case developed in this household. Another family, and again diabetes developed in this third family. I cannot recall how many generations of tenants moved in and out of this house, and each time at least one case of diabetes developed. This is exceedingly excellent evidence that diabetes is a highly communicable disease.⁷⁴

Such mudslinging was by no means unusual; particularly as the majority of the public health forums regarding pellagra tended to take place where the disease posed the greatest problems—in the South. This regional importance also encouraged continuing resistance. Acutely aware of the Southern reputation as the “land of hookworm and pellagra,” many Southern physicians adamantly refused admission that the malady correlated with poverty. To do so was tantamount to an admission of Southern backwardness. MacNeal used such provincialism to his advantage, commenting at a 1922 symposium of the Southern Medical Association that Goldberger’s “proposition has come from a source [the PHS] such as to give it wide

⁷⁴ Garrison, “Economic Aspects of Pellagra:” 239–240.

currency in the Northern portion of our country, where the physicians are generally less familiar with pellagra.”⁷⁵ Exactly how his own status as a full professor and lecturer at the New York Post-Graduate Medical School failed in offering MacNeal a similar measure of influence among Northern physicians is left for us to ponder.

The schismatic debate of Goldberger and MacNeal aside, the lion's share of the American failure in dealing with pellagra lay in government inaction. Whether one espoused the theory that pellagra was a dietary deficiency disease of impoverished people, or an enteric disease caused by primitive public sanitation measures was immaterial. The actual issue was poverty and the unwillingness or inability of any organization of governance, be it local, state, or federal, to act on the problem. To be sure, various government agencies defended their inaction by using the apparent lack of certainty posed by the ongoing scientific argument. Typifying such schismatically induced government inertia, in 1921 President Warren G. Harding responded to a request from South Carolina Representative James F. Byrnes for federal support in dealing with the growing pellagra epidemic. Harding responded to the request in a letter dated July 28, 1921 and published in the *New York Times* two days afterward:

While assuring you that I speak the views of our people in expressing gratitude to you for the generous spirit that prompted you to make this appeal for aid, I am confident in South Carolina there exists at this time no necessity for any greater cooperation on the part of the Public Health Service than is rendered at all times. And as the existence in South Carolina at this time of either a plague or a famine is an utter absurdity, there is no necessity for the Red Cross furnishing aid. Should the State ever be unfortunate enough to suffer a disaster

⁷⁵ W. J. MacNeal, "The Infectious Theory of Pellagra," *Sothorn Medical Journal* 15, no. 11 (November 1922): 899.

with which the people of the State cannot cope, we will gladly welcome aid and ask for it, but I think it would be unfortunate if the Red Cross is called upon to relieve a plague and a famine of which the people in South Carolina are unaware.

Harding went on to suggest a full investigation of the problem, warning that "if these reports have misrepresented conditions in any part of the South . . . a full and official refutation of them would be highly desirable."⁷⁶

Tragic in its absence, government follow-through on either Goldberger's or MacNeal's theories would have been of enormous public benefit. Any sizeable public sanitation effort in the South would unquestionably have saved a magnitude of victims from the ravages of hepatitis A and E, typhus, Legionellosis, and dysentery, to name but a few diseases. With our present understanding of its veracity, the benefits of acting upon Goldberger's theory would have been self-evident. Instead, pellagra's decline in America had almost nothing to do with direct government or scientific action. Ironically, the beginning of the end for pellagra was ushered in by the collapse of the Southern cotton economy during the Great Depression. The economic disaster forced many tenant farmers and sharecroppers off of their land and into urban areas. Many of those who stayed on the land were relieved of cotton-only planting requirements and their resulting crop debts, creating room for livestock and gardens. More and better nutrition opportunities arose for both of these beleaguered groups even as their actual earnings plummeted. This especially became the case in the 1930s as New Deal labor programs such as the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and its sundry offspring provided earnings for millions of displaced American laborers. Tax dollars flowed into CWA sponsored public works and sanitary programs nationwide. MacNeal, no doubt, was beside himself.

⁷⁶ *The New York Times*, "Harding Favors Pellagra Inquiry," (July 30, 1921).

Finally, the mass population movements associated with the Second World War shut the door on pellagra completely. In the meantime, another New Deal bill, the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938 empowered the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to create standards of identity for the fortification of flour with a range of only recently understood nutritional components—vitamins. Based on recommendations provided by the FDA, in 1943 the War Food Administration promulgated Food Order Number 1, standardizing and requiring flour fortification with niacin, thiamin and riboflavin (the major B vitamins) and iron. ‘Enriched flour’ was officially born. Following the war, most states passed laws requiring maintenance of these expired wartime standards.⁷⁷ It became quite difficult for Americans to *not* get their daily dose of pellagra-preventing niacin! Goldberger, dead since January of 1929, no doubt would have nodded in approval.

In the end, it took the greatest economic disaster in modern history and the largest military conflict in human history to compel the United States government to act on the conflicting theories of Goldberger and MacNeal. Perhaps the only triumphs to be found in this story of scientific deadlock are that, right or wrong, both propositions were disseminated with the purest of intentions for the least represented of social classes. Furthermore, in spite of their egos and emphases, both the theorists and their theories demanded of an apathetic government a more active role in vouchsafing the health and welfare of all citizens—a role which the federal government eventually embraced, guided in part by the controversial ideals of Joseph Goldberger and William J. MacNeal.

⁷⁷ The Historical Evolution of Thought Regarding Multiple Micronutrient Nutrition, 147.

Canned Nostalgia: The Myth of “Of Course I Can!” and the Rise of the Commercial Food Industry in the United States

Carolyn Speer Schmidt

On June 10, 2011, the National Archives exhibit, “What’s Cooking Uncle Sam?” opened for a six-month run in Washington D.C., and subsequently, it has toured the United States.¹ The exhibit, which contains numerous artifacts, government documents, and images, explores the attempts the American government has made to impact what people eat. From the turn of the twentieth century forward, the U.S. government “... has ... attempted, with varying success, to change the eating habits of Americans.”² Its many efforts have included governmental calls to increase the home production of food during wartime. Images such the iconic “Of Course I Can!” poster from the World War Two era evoke a nostalgia that remains powerful in the modern United States. In fact, reproductions of these images are readily available for sale.³

¹ National Archives, “What’s Cooking, Uncle Sam?” <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/whats-cooking/index.html>, March 18, 2013.

² Ibid.

³ Zazzle, “Vintage Victory Garden: ‘Of Course I Can!’ Poster,” http://www.zazzle.com/vintage_victory_garden_of_course_i_can_poster-228754620204758817, March 18, 2013.

Figure 1 "Of Course I Can!"⁴



Modern efforts to change the way Americans eat harness the power of this nostalgia by suggesting Americans adopt such things as "Meatless Mondays," to fight the "War on Obesity."⁵ Even the First Lady, Michelle Obama, has called for families to embrace the home production of fresh foods and vegetables.⁶ But gardening and

⁴ Corey Bernat, "War Era Food Posters from the Collection of the National Agriculture Library," Accessed http://www.good-potato.com/beans_are_bullets/index.html, November 4, 2012.

⁵ Morgan Korn, "Has the 'War on Obesity' Gone Too Far?," <http://www.cnn.com/id/49810996>, March 18, 2013.

⁶ Michelle Obama, *American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America* (Boston: Crown Publishing, 2012), 3. The phrase "home production of food" is used throughout this discussion. It should be read broadly unless otherwise indicated. Home production of food can include home gardens, cooking at home with fresh produce and other non-processed or minimally-processed ingredients, and home preservation such as canning, freezing, and drying.

cooking are both hard work, and over the last 150 years, commercial enterprises have largely taken over these duties:

Gardening – whether as a community or an individual – is difficult, backbreaking work. (Michelle Obama has many helping hands at her disposal.) Once you successfully harvest a crop, you then have to figure out what to do with it, and it’s worth recalling that techniques such as canning, which are being enthusiastically resurrected in the 21st century, are incredibly time consuming, and kept women tied, literally and figuratively, to the kitchen. Packaged and frozen foods may seem like a modern blight, but in reality they freed women and helped them move into the workforce.⁷

In fact, even during the world wars, American government efforts to encourage gardening, canning, and other home food production techniques met with only limited success. In many ways, the nostalgia for Victory Gardens and other efforts in wartime home food production is misplaced; because “[b]y the late nineteenth century, even the most self-sufficient of lives had come to require goods obtained on the market. Most urban people purchased significant amounts of their food.”⁸

⁷ Erika Christakis, “Michelle Obama’s Garden and the Problem With Growing Your Own Food,” <http://ideas.time.com/2012/05/30/the-problem-with-growing-your-own-food/>, November 3, 2012.

⁸ Tracey Deutsch, *Building a Housewife’s Paradise: Gender, Politics, and American Grocery Stores in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 19.

There was certainly a time in American history where the home production of food, from the farm to the pantry, was common, but that home food production was driven by need: there were very limited commercial options in the United States. When the first English colonists arrived in North America, they faced a number of challenges. Not only did they need to decide where to establish settlements, but they also had to work to clear fields and prepare to produce enough food to survive. These were new skills for the settlers, and not all of them approached them with zeal.⁹ But home food production was the norm in the Colonies and remained so through the middle decades of the nineteenth century when technological advances made commercial food production and preservation possible and then profitable. As these food products became more affordable and better accepted in the marketplace, they began to replace their home-produced analogs, and as the twentieth century dawned, a revolution in the kitchen was well underway.

Today, Americans use commercially prepared foods as a matter of course, both in their home production and as a substitute for it. A 2010 Harris poll found that 20% of Americans do not enjoy cooking and/or never do it, while only 40% of Americans, most of whom tend to be older, cook a meal in the home five or more times a week. Of those who do prepare meals in the home, 75% use commercially prepared food items, such as frozen foods, in their cooking.¹⁰ The First Lady may be trying hard to encourage Americans

⁹ The degree to which settlers embraced the need to farm, preserve, and cook varies tremendously by region, time of settlement, reason for settlement, and so on. For a comprehensive look at the food production habits of North American European settlers, see James McWilliams, *A Revolution in Eating: How the Quest for Food Shaped America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ Harris Interactive, "Three in Ten Americans Love to Cook While One in Five Do Not Enjoy it or Don't Cook",

to produce more of their own food, but the impact of her efforts is unclear at best.

As commercial food production increased its market share throughout the early twentieth century, American tastes and food production skills changed, and these changes impacted the U.S. government's ability to increase the home production of foods, even in wartime.¹¹ Popular war images of Victory Gardens and competent women "putting up" in the kitchen illustrate an ideal of food production self-sufficiency. But the experiences of both World War One and World War Two do more to illustrate the rise of the commercial food industry than to serve as support for the nostalgic idea that the mid-twentieth century was a Camelot in home food production.

Historiography of Food History

Within the discipline of history, the study of food history did not become popular until the mid 1980s, after the social history movement spawned wide-spread interest in broad cultural topics that deepened academic understanding about the way people in the past actually lived. But that does not mean that interest in the history of food has dawned only recently. Prior to the formalized, academic work of authors like Sidney Mintz and Harvey Levenstein, a group of independent scholars, some of whom were associated with public history venues like living history farms, had long been collecting,

<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/NewsRoom/HarrisPolls/tabid/447/mid/1508/articleid/444/ctl/ReadCustom%20Default/Default.aspx>, October 3, 2012.

¹¹ Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 131. Bentley points out that by the 1930s, cookbooks regularly "listed canned goods as ingredients, proving how important and common they were to women's cooking," (131).

analyzing, and cooking from historical recipes.¹² These two distinct areas of investigation, one recent and academic, and the other long-standing and independent, are increasingly becoming one field called alternately "culinary history" and "food history."¹³ Today, the stronger academic work in the area of food/culinary history works to contextualize food through an understanding of the food itself and the time it represents.¹⁴ The work that follows draws from both of these intellectual traditions, representing the cultural history of the more modern food historians as well as an understanding of the realities of cooking and canning from scratch, reflecting the interests of traditional culinary history.

A Brief Review of Food Preservation in American History

It is well known that early arrivals to the New World had struggles with having enough to eat. The earliest colonists came

¹² Sidney Mintz's work is interdisciplinary and that combines fieldwork and historical methods to examine the history of sugar as a food product. Harvey Levenstein's research is a work of cultural history. Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (New York: Penguin, 1986). Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

¹³ Culinary history is the older of the two terms, and was the one adopted by independent scholars who have long been interested in the recreation of historical meals and the preservation of traditional tools, ingredients, and techniques. Food history is a term that has developed since the 1980s. Food historians are academics who often show little interest in the actual preparation of historic foods. As this academic field develops, it is becoming increasingly clear within the food history sphere that ignorance of cooking techniques has led to some pretty shocking errors in the scholarship. Consequently, increased value is now being placed on food historians who can also cook. For an excellent short discussion of these two related areas of scholarly investigation, see Barbara Haber's short article "Culinary History vs. Food History" in the Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink: Barbara Haber, "Culinary vs. Food History," 179–80, *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, ed. Andrew. F. Smith.

from an environment where many foodstuffs could be purchased at local shops, and only the rich hunted. Learning how to acquire, prepare, preserve, and store food became the first priority for colonists. Early newspaper accounts indicate the home preservation of meat and vegetables, particularly peas, was a priority for colonists until at least the end of the eighteenth century. Salting was a popular form of food preservation both in the home and commercially.¹⁵ The early nineteenth century cookbook, *The Virginia Housewife or, Methodical Cook* by Mary Randolph contains directions for curing beef, bacon, and herring, as well as recipes twenty-two preserved fruit items and nineteen recipes for pickles.¹⁶

At about the same time that Randolph's book was published, advances in food preservation were underway in France. In 1795, Napoleon's government offered a prize to anyone who could substantially improve the preservation of food.¹⁷ In 1810, Nicholas Appert, a French chef and confectioner turned food technologist, published his methods for preserving food through a canning process that used glass jars, heat, and sealing.¹⁸ Almost immediately, English food producers seized upon Appert's techniques, improved them, and launched the commercial canning industry, which quickly spread to

¹⁵ For a fascinating look at a specific use of salt as a preservative, see Mark Kurlansky's *Cod*, in which he argues the, "...first draw of the Caribbean for New Englanders was the salt from the Tortugas" (p. 81). Salt was a necessary material in the cod trade. Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (New York, Penguin Books, 1998).

¹⁶ Fruit was typically preserved as a jam or jelly, but Randolph included recipes to dry fruit and also to preserve it in alcohol. Randolph's pickle recipes did not include recipes for fermented vegetables, and all of her pickle recipes call for vinegar.

¹⁷ Andrew F. Smith, "Canning and Bottling," in *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, ed. Andrew Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 91–93.

¹⁸ Sue Shephard, *Pickled, Potted, and Canned: How the Art and Science of Food Preserving Changed the World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 226–244.

the United States with English immigrants. By 1821, William Underwood, a pickle maker who immigrated to Boston from England, was providing the market with canned luxury foods as well as ships' provisions.¹⁹ By the mid nineteenth century, the American commercial canning industry was up and running. The Civil War (1861–1865) provided a large and hungry market for these commercially canned goods, and the industry reacted to the demand by building inland packing plants for both fruits and vegetables. Soldiers and sailors who ate canned goods brought home the taste for, and acceptance of, these foods when they returned from the war. As a consequence, commercial canning was able to establish itself as an American industry, with the statistics to prove it: in 1860 five million commercially canned items were produced; by 1870, the canning industry was producing in excess of thirty million cans a year,²⁰ and by "1910, production of canned goods accounted for roughly 20 percent of U.S. manufacturing output and more than 3 billion cans of food."²¹

Nevertheless, canning was not solely a commercial enterprise. Home cooks also benefitted from the advances in food preservation science. In 1858, Philadelphian John Mason patented the Mason "fruit jar," and it, along with improved cookstoves, specialty kettles made for canning, and other canning materials made home canning much easier. As it became easier, it also became less expensive with an unrelated drop in the cost of sugar. Early on, home canned items were preferable to commercially canned foods, which were expensive

¹⁹ Smith, "Canning and Bottling," 91.

²⁰ Richard Hooker, *Food and Drink in America: A History* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1981), p. 207, 214.

²¹ Deutsch, *Housewife's Paradise*, 19.

and typically designed for a specialty/luxury market.²² Canning allowed the home cook to preserve the harvest for year-round consumption, and the quality of the food was superior to fruits and vegetables that had been preserved through the earlier preservation techniques of drying and salting. The year-round availability of something close to fresh fruits and vegetables had a direct impact on what Americans ate.²³ Typical meals included an additional vegetable dish year-round, and desserts were more likely to include berries, syrups, and fruits such as peaches. Home cooking began to rely on home canning, and women would enter their canned items in fairs and other contests where they would be judged on overall appearance and sometimes also on flavor. Cookbook publishers began including instructions on how to safely and effectively can foods in the home, and in 1887, the first dedicated canning cookbook, Sarah Tyson Rorer's *Canning and Preserving*, was published in the United States.²⁴

But the increased availability of commercially canned items put downward pressure on home canning, and Rorer notes this change in the preface to the 1912 edition of *Canning and Preserving* where she bemoans how much the relationship between the home cook and her preserved food had changed by the early twentieth century. In the preface, Rorer paints a picture of the choices available to the early twentieth century home cook:

This book, a missionary to the country folk, will, if used carefully and wisely, save many a dollar, and enable them to have always on hand the best of

²² Ibid. Hooker also argues that commercially canned foods offended home cooks who, he says, saw cooking as a form of self expression (p. 214).

²³ Deutsch, *Housewife's Paradise*, 19.

²⁴ Alice Ross, "Home Canning," in *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, ed. Andrew Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 91.

canned goods, jellies, preserves and fruit juices. It will also be useful to the town dweller where fresh vegetables can be purchased, at moderate prices, during the summer months. It is unfortunate that so many people use food put up at factories. Many of these are clean and use fruit of good quality, to be sure; but if the work is done at home, one knows that all materials are first-class, and then there is comfort in having a closet filled with materials easy of access.²⁵

Rorer's observations presaged the continued acceptance of commercially canned items. Writing in *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity*, Amy Bentley points out that home canning, while possibly providing an "aesthetic indulgence" was also very, very hard work: "Canning was both time-consuming and labor intensive, and this work fell almost exclusively to women."²⁶ By the 1920s, even rural families were relying on commercially canned foods for at least some of their food supply, and cookbooks were incorporating them into their recipes. By the 1930s, commercially canned food items were commonly called for as basic ingredients in most cookbooks.²⁷ This increased demand expanded the market, dropping costs and improving overall quality. By the mid-twentieth century, Americans had come to prefer the taste of canned food from the store over things canned in their own kitchen. Only the crises of

²⁵ Mrs. S. T. Rorer, *Canning and Preserving (Revised and Enlarged Edition)*, (Philadelphia: Arnold and Company, 1912).

²⁶ Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1998), pp. 129-130.

²⁷ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 131.

the World Wars and the Depression kept the practice of home canning alive in the United States.²⁸

Limiting Food During the First World War

When the United States entered the First World War, it was already facing food shortages due in part to providing food for some European countries already and to the failure of the Kansas winter wheat crop in 1917.²⁹ Just two weeks after the U.S. entry into the war, President Woodrow Wilson called on Americans to aid the war effort by producing and conserving food: "We must supply abundant food for ourselves and our armies ... but also for large part of the nations with whom we have now made common cause..."³⁰

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁹ Katherine Eighmey, "Food Will Win the War": Minnesota Conservation Efforts, 1917–18," *Minnesota History* 59, no. 7 (2005): 273.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 272.

Figure 2 Food Conservation Was a Theme in WWI Propaganda.³¹



In fact, it was not just starving Belgians and a bad Kansas wheat harvest; when the U.S. entered the war, wheat prices rose immediately due to speculation on the Chicago Board of Trade.³² The United States was facing possible food restrictions as it geared up to send food to American troops in Europe, but the immediate push for food conservation and production was probably as much about fostering feelings of patriotism through a shared “spirit of self-sacrifice” on the home front as it was about the actual production of food.³³

³¹ Taken from the National Archives, “Teaching with Documents: Sow the Seeds of Victory! Posters from the Food Administration During World War I,” <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/sow-seeds/>, October 4, 2012.

³² Kara Newman, “Historical Overview: World War I,” in *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, ed. Andrew F. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 289.

³³ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 20.

Regardless whether there was an “actual need” for the conservation of food or whether the government’s efforts in this area were more propaganda than anything else, it is clear that food conservation and the home production of food became an immediate government priority. In May, 1917, Wilson appointed Herbert Hoover to lead the newly-forming U.S. Food Administration, and although it did not receive Congressional approval and funding for four more months, Hoover began working immediately, taking advantage of the wave of early patriotism that swept the United States.³⁴

The government’s food program, soon under the auspices of the U.S. Food Administration, stressed voluntary conservation, home production of food, and home preservation of food. Newspapers immediately took up these points, and an opinion piece in the *Wilkes Barre Times Leader* is representative of the tone of the newspaper reporting:

‘The world food crop is deficient and the situation is becoming alarming,’ is the word which has been sent from Rome where the International Institute of Agriculture is now in session. This Institute is the highest authority there is on world food conditions. ... When the International Institute of Agriculture speaks it is not guessing; it knows. ... The question that every individual should ask himself, in view of this alarming warning is: What can I do to increase and conserve the food supply? The answer is obvious. Cultivate every

³⁴ Eighmey, “Food Will Win the War,” 274. Also “Hoover Will Proceed with Organization,” *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, 47, (6-17-1917), 1, America’s Historical Newspapers. “Food Law in America Now in Progress,” *The Wyoming Tribune*, 23, (8-11-1917), 1, America’s Historical Newspapers.

square foot of soil that you possibly can and do not waste food. The secretary of agriculture [sic] recently stated that the experts in his department estimated the food waste in this country as reaching the enormous total in value of \$700,000,000. Think of it! Nearly three quarters of a billion dollars worth of food wasted in a year!³⁵

The figure of \$700,000,000 of food waste appears to have been particularly startling to people, although as the *Wilkes Barre Times Leader* pointed out, that came out to be only \$35 a family a year.³⁶

In addition to getting the message out through newspaper coverage, the federal government published war recipe booklets that focused on conservation and the use of those food resources that remained abundant. In a typical recipe pamphlet from May 23, 1918, the U.S. Food Administration explained the need to conserve wheat: "Wheat is one of the very few foods we can ship successfully. From now until harvest we must SAVE, SAVE, SAVE, in order to keep up our shipments to the other side. Every day we must put aside more wheat for our boys over there. Do not be satisfied with a little saving. Do all you can."³⁷ The booklet goes on to provide 32 bread recipes, all of which were wheatless or nearly so.

Although the propaganda of conservation and home food production was widespread, the nation remained divided in actual

³⁵ "Stop Wasting Food if You Want to Help Win the War," *Wilkes Barre Times Leader*, (4-13-1917), 12, America's Historical Newspapers.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ United States Food Administration, "Without Wheat," Form no. 100, (5/23/1918). Accessed from the United States Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/northeast/nyc/education/food-wwi.html>, September 25, 2012.

practice. Newspaper opinion columns tended to blame the wealthy for wasteful food practices,³⁸ although there was blame enough to go around, “Why not yoke the food speculator, the gourmand, the slacker and extravagant housewife together for a double team to earn their living and to curb their waste of food? This would conserve sustenances equal to doubling the present production.”³⁹ A point of heated contention centered on the use of grain in the making of spirits and beer, and also the use of grapes in the making of wine. Of course, the historical context of these disagreements has to be taken into account as they occurred during the rise of prohibition sentiment in the United States, but it is telling that opposition to the use of raw foodstuffs for alcoholic beverages was so controversial.⁴⁰

In fact, the American public was asked to do very little when the government’s actions are considered in historical context. There were calls for conservation, but the government did not institute mandatory rationing, and the limited rationing that was considered was purely voluntary.⁴¹ For the most part, the government encouraged conservation and home food production and preservation through supportive policies, like allowing vacant lots to be turned into gardening space and providing free classes in bread baking and

³⁸ See for example “Annual Food Waste in U.S. \$700,000,000,” *The Wyoming Tribune*, 23, (4-11-1917), 2, America’s Historical Newspapers.

³⁹ “If Dietician Had Full Control,” *Oregonian*, (8-28-1917), 8, America’s Historical Newspapers.

⁴⁰ “Senate Forbids Use of Cereals or Grain to Make Intoxicants,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 176, (5-13-1917), 1, America’s Historical Newspapers. “Food Bill Debate Centers on Liquor: Whisky Believed Eliminated as Issue, Beer and Wine are Factors,” *Oregonian*, (6-29-1917), 1, America’s Historical Newspapers.

⁴¹ Newman, “Historical Overview,” 289.

canning, rather than through anything that comes close to being mandatory.⁴²

Whether handled through government programs directly or through public/private partnerships, educational initiatives appear to have been particularly popular. For example, in Oregon a “preparedness train” travelled the state providing canning demonstrations.⁴³ Canning demonstrations received wide-spread coverage in the newspapers during 1917, and in the South, these demonstrations were available for segregated audiences: “The first canning demonstration for negro women in the county food conservation campaign was given at the Central High School Monday at 2:30 p.m. by Miss Eloise Berry. Another demonstration for their benefit will be given at the same place Tuesday...”⁴⁴ General “war cooking” schools were also popular, and these appear to have been focused on cooking bread without wheat and preparing nutritious, “wholesome” meals with little waste from scratch rather than through the use of commercially-prepared ingredients.⁴⁵ In fact, an investigation of three World War One recipe pamphlets printed by the U.S. government yields eighty-seven separate recipes, none of which use commercially-prepared ingredients other than those difficult or impossible to produce in the home (e.g.: chocolate, cheese, and

⁴² Ibid. Also, “Patriotic League to Provide Food: Conservation Committee Reports Having Use of 20,000 City Lots for Gardens,” *Oregonian*, (4-14-1917), 14, America’s Historical Newspapers.

⁴³ “Crowd Greets Train: Canning Demonstration at Wasco Best Attended So Far,” *Oregonian*, (4-14-1917), 2, America’s Historical Newspapers.

⁴⁴ “Negroes Instructed in the Canning of Food,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, 37, (6-11-1917), 3, America’s Historical Newspapers.

⁴⁵ “War Cooking School Will Begin its Sessions Today,” *The Charlotte Observer*, (10-22-1917), 8, America’s Historical Newspapers.

baking powder) and only one recipe, for “corn flake macaroons” that used an ingredient that was a proprietary, commercial product.⁴⁶

With all of this government emphasis on home food production, it would seem likely that commercial food producers would have suffered during the War, but the reverse is true. Even though the home cook may have had occasional limitations in her ability to buy commercially produced items, particularly canned items due to a tin shortage in 1917,⁴⁷ war contracts more than made up for the lack of retail sales for commercial food producers.⁴⁸ Although there was some hostility from commercial food producers toward the government policy of conservation, some companies even embraced government recommendations, as can be illustrated in this Kellogg’s Corn Flake advertisement:

⁴⁶ United States Food Administration, “Without Wheat.” Also, United States Food Administration, “Potato Possibilities,” (n.d.), from the United States Archives on 9/25/2012: <http://www.archives.gov/northeast/nyc/education/food-wwi.html>, September 25, 2012. United States Food Administration, “Sweets Without Sugar,” form 108, 3, (9-1-1918), from the United States Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/northeast/nyc/education/food-wwi.html>, September 25, 2012.

⁴⁷ “Economize in Tin, is Federal Appeal: Chief Manufacturers Asked to Save That Full Canning Supply be Assured,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 176, (4-8-1917), 2, America’s Historical Newspapers.

⁴⁸ Newman, “Historical Overview,” 290.

Figure 3 Eat More Corn 49

Put Salt
When will be advanced after three sales.

**Government
Food Experts Say
EAT MORE CORN**

From Washington the call has gone forth to "Eat more corn," and women throughout the Nation are responding.

- Kellogg's—the original Toasted Corn Flakes—is the quality Corn Flakes of America, and has been for over ten years. Its millions of homes it has introduced corn in its most delicious form.

These thin, crisp flakes with their fresh-drum-stove taste are entirely unlike any other corn flakes. They are made from the hearts of the finest selected corn—the quality in every way is first maintained.

**A Serving of Kellogg's
for Less than a Penny**

The economy of corn, its high food value, and the tempting flavor of Kellogg's Toasted Corn Flakes are doing for the use of this national cereal in these days of food conservation.

Kellogg's, for breakfast, is delicious with cream or milk, and the low fatness, or as a dinner dessert, it is a natural food to be peached or baked.

**Kellogg's
TOASTED
CORN
FLAKES**

If there had been an actual need for food conservation in the United States during World War One, it is good that the country was not involved in the war for very long. As pervasive as the government measures were, they were not particularly effective.⁵⁰ In contrast to contemporary newspaper claims, it was not the "wealthy" who eschewed the government call to conserve, it was the lower classes, whose incomes went up through war work. The extra income allowed them to increase consumption of foods the government was trying to

⁴⁹ "Government Food Experts Say: 'Eat More Corn,'" *Kansas City Star*, 346, (8-29-1917), 4, Accessed from America's Historical Newspapers.

⁵⁰ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 20.

see conserved: “Evidence suggests that voluntary rationing of food in World War I simply did not work. While many better-educated and more affluent Americans did observe wheatless and meatless days, immigrants and those in the working classes, whose war industry-related jobs produced higher incomes, increased their food intake; beef consumption, for instance, actually went up during the war.”⁵¹

Once the war ended, food production habits went fully back to normal in the United States. Commercial food producers, who had done so well during the war, were poised to expand their capabilities and their market share in the years after the war. Restaurants also grew in popularity in the 1920s, as incomes went up and women gained more societal rights and began the early rejection of some historically “feminine” roles such as preparing meals in the home.⁵² And in 1930, frozen convenience foods joined canned items in American grocery stores as the work of the American food scientist, Clarence Birdseye, finally proved its commercial viability.⁵³ At home, kitchens got markedly smaller and were designed for “assembly cooking” rather than “scratch cooking” or project cooking such as canning.⁵⁴ Although the Great Depression limited some families’ ability to purchase food, for those who had money, the years between the wars brought abundant, cheap food, and an increased rise in the

⁵¹ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 20–21.

⁵² Anne Mendelson, “Historical Overview: World War I to World War II,” in *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, ed. Andrew F. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 290. See also Richard Hooker, *Food and Drink in America*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1981), 323–323.

⁵³ Betty Wason, *Cooks, Gluttons & Gourmets*, (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 315–317. See also Sue Shephard, *Pickled, Potted, and Canned*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 306–310. In her work, Wason says that frozen food made a “gourmet in every split level” although frozen foods were initially expensive and met with limited success in the early years due to the Great Depression.

⁵⁴ Mendelson, “Historical Overview,” 290.

importance of commercially prepared items like bakery breads.⁵⁵ In the absence of the government propaganda and the wave of patriotism it exploited, American home cooks sided with commercially prepared foods over their home-produced analogs on a daily basis.

Rationing, Gardening, and Canning During the Second World War

Upon the U.S. entry into the Second World War, the federal government immediately understood the need for food rationing and even price controls.⁵⁶ There had been lessons from the First World War: Americans could be encouraged, through an appeal to their patriotic duty, to accept the idea of changes in their diet to support the war effort, but accepting an “idea” is not the same thing as actually changing a behavior. The “spirit of self-sacrifice” that was called upon the first time around was simply not enough, and if the U.S. was facing the possibility of a long war, the best course of action was to initiate changes in food availability right away in case food shortages became a reality in the future. In May 1942, the government instituted sugar rationing, and the rationing of meat and other food items such as coffee followed. The government issued

⁵⁵ Hooker, *Food and Drink*, 318–319. Commercially available bread provides a good case study in the way taste preference changes in response to food availability. The famous writer Henry Miller said the following about commercially prepared bread: “I say we make the foulest bread in all the world. We pass it off like fake diamonds. We advertise it and sterilize it and protect it from all the germs of life. We make a manure which we eat before we have had time to eliminate it,” (as cited in Hooker, 319).

⁵⁶ Amy Bentley, “Historical Overview: World War II,” in *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, ed. Andrew F. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 290. See also Richard Hooker, *Food and Drink in America*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1981), 291–292.

rationing stamps to be used for sugar, and it instituted a complex points system for other restricted foods.⁵⁷

But the issue of food rationing and other conservation measures remained more one of fairness rather than one of actual need to control the food supply in the United States. In fact, in comparison to other Allied countries, "... rationing in America had less impact on the structure and content of meals than in any other country. American soldiers and civilians alike consumed significantly more food than their allies or their enemies."⁵⁸ But inequities by social class remained a potential problem with regard to food in the U.S., so the government harnessed the fresh wave of patriotic feeling in the country to institute a policy that ostensibly was about keeping food available for the "boys overseas"⁵⁹ but which was actually about, "... spread[ing] shortages fairly across the different socio-economic groups within the population."⁶⁰

Although getting enough food was not a real problem in the United States during the war, having access to commercially prepared foods was another issue. Commercially produced foods, with their durable packaging and stabilized contents ship well, and government "set asides" of fruits and vegetables canned in the factory meant that families who wanted to eat these items were going to have to produce them at home.⁶¹ As a consequence, the government calls to plant "Victory Gardens" and to use the harvest, either immediately or

⁵⁷ Ibid., 291.

⁵⁸ Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012, 415–416).

⁵⁹ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 114.

⁶⁰ Collingham, *The Taste of War*, 419.

⁶¹ Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 125.

through canning and other preservation techniques, do appear to have been somewhat effective.

The home production of food during the Second World War began with the Victory Garden, an idea that is indelibly linked to this war but which actually has very deep roots, dating back to at least the seventeenth century in England.⁶² In the United States, gardening as a way of producing food for the family was part of the American experience and narrative, but post industrialization, "... gardening functioned less as a source of vital foodstuffs and more as a form of recreation, exercise, and most important, therapy – a release from the strains of civilization."⁶³ In the U.S. only the very poor had to garden for food in the early twentieth century, but rather than being associated with poverty, the idea of gardening was bound up with the country's vision of itself as wholesome and even righteous nation. As a consequence, the government's Victory Garden program met with some success. In 1942, 2.0 million more Americans reported keeping a garden in comparison to the previous year. The overall increase was small from 14.5 million gardens in 1941 to 16.5 million in 1945, but still substantial. The Victory Garden program then hit its peak the following year with an estimated 75% of the adult population reporting they grew a garden, and their efforts produced over eight million tons of food: 40% of the fresh produce consumed in the U.S. that year.⁶⁴

But this impressive outcome did not come as a result of government encouragement alone. Instead, public/private partnerships helped to encourage Victory Gardens, educate

⁶² Ibid., 116.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 117.

individuals on basic gardening techniques, and provided space to garden. Not only did the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) print educational brochures, so did The Beech-Nut Packing Company, Firestone Tire Company, Standard Oil, and B&O Railroad, just to name a few.⁶⁵ Private companies knew an opportunity when they saw one: by linking their name to such a wholesome activity as Victory Gardening, they could keep their name in the public eye even during times of rationing.

Even in the face of the 1943 statistics, it is important to note that Victory Gardening was always more popular with those who had been gardening all along, namely the poor and especially African Americans.⁶⁶ Victory Gardening was also very popular in the South where the tradition of gardening for food, even post industrialization, was more vigorous even among the middle class.⁶⁷ Propaganda did do an impressive job in getting Americans to support and even attempt gardening; nevertheless, available evidence indicates that as many as half of all war gardens would be rated as only “poor” or “fair.” Perhaps this bad outcome was because in 1943 approximately one third of those growing a Victory Garden were gardening for the first time in their lives.⁶⁸

Gardening is, of course, only part of the story when it comes to home food production. Once items have been grown, they have to be processed for immediate and long-term use, and this required the reviving of skills that were still available in the population but were on the decline:

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 119–120.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

While home canning in the twentieth century decreased in importance, world crises kept the practice alive. World War I provided a stimulus for women to maintain their canning skills, and with the Great Depression, women who had once canned but quit took out their pressure canners and glass jars to make sure their families had an adequate food supply. World War II only increased this need for canning because significant portions of the nation's canned goods were sent overseas to the military and Allied countries. ... The majority of American women who canned during the war already possessed canning skills (only 8 percent had never before canned). Although experienced canners, some 40 percent of women polled had difficulties, including spoilage problems and faulty thermometers; locating equipment, especially pressure canners; and maintaining it in working order.⁶⁹

To support women in their canning and other food preservation efforts, both the government and private groups printed booklets and books with extensive food preservation instructions. Of these, *Home Canning For Victory, also Preserving, Pickling, and Dehydrating*, edited by Anne Pierce stands out in its comprehensive nature.⁷⁰ The information in *Home Canning* could teach or remind any competent home cook about the four methods of home canning then advocated by the U.S. government: canning low and high acid foods, preserving fruits in jams and jellies, pickling items with vinegar and through

⁶⁹ Ibid., 131–32.

⁷⁰ Anne Pierce, *Home Canning For Victory, also Preserving, Pickling, and Dehydrating* (New York: M. Barrows & Company, Inc, 1941).

fermentation, and dehydration of fruits and vegetables with or without “sulphuring”.⁷¹ The foreword to *Home Canning* indicates there was a contemporary realization that the call to home food production represented a change in the American way of eating by asking consumers to shift from commercially prepared foods back to the home prepared foods of an earlier age:

All over the country the preserving kettle, the wash-boiler with a rack and tight cover, the doughty pressure cooker, glass jars, and rubber rings or tight-sealing covers are marching out to volunteer in the save-the-food drive. The victory gardens and the surplus crops that the farmer has been urged to raise are waiting to be used. It will be of no use unless the women get behind them. Despite the wonderful mass production by the commercial canner ... commercial canned foods may not be available next winter and you must feed the family. ... Important as home food preservation has always been, for years to come it will be a necessity.

Note the difference in tone between the forewords of two otherwise very similar books, Pierce’s 1941 *Home Canning For Victory* and Rorer’s 1912 *Canning and Preserving*. Where the earlier book reflected derisiveness toward food that was made “in factories,” a very

⁷¹ “Sulphuring” (or “sulfuring” in the modern spelling) is a process by which sulphur (sulfur) is applied to a fruit prior to drying it. In the mid twentieth century, actual sulfur fumes were used to “sulfur” fruit, although today sulfur dioxide gas is more common. Sulfur fixes color and flavor in fruit before drying, and is associated with commercial drying preparations rather than home drying. Pierce makes the argument that sulfuring is not necessary or desirable in small-batch drying like that done in the home (63). Both “sulfured” and “unsulfured” fruits are commercially available today.

similar book written three decades later shows respect and appreciation for the “wonderful mass production” of commercially-canned items. Both books focus on skills and recipes, but the change in tone helps to illustrate a shift in attitude away from distrust of the commercial food producer to an acceptance and appreciation of the commercial role, even during a time of increased need for home production.

The societal encouragement to preserve the harvest through home canning and other preservation means appears to have been somewhat successful during the World War Two era. In 1942, at the start of the government efforts to strongly urge home preservation as an obligation of war, 64% of all women reported canning for their family’s use. This number rose to 75% in 1943, and these women canned an average of 165 jars of food, although by 1944, this output dropped.⁷² But it is instructive to look closely at who was doing the canning. Much like with gardening, canning was very popular with those who were doing it already: the very poor who relied on canning to feed their families and families in the South who still had home food preservation as part of their culture. In addition the years of 1942–1944 saw a rise in the canning efforts being made by upper-middle-class households: in contrast to middle-class and lower-middle-class women who were working too much to have the time and making too little to have the money to spend it on canning.⁷³ Statistics regarding canning “schools” and classes bear out this observation: although government agencies from the federal to the local levels were providing canning classes all over the country, they tended to be sparsely attended during this era, even though the

⁷² All statistics from Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 131–32.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 136–37.

increase in canning had led to an increase in problems with spoilage.⁷⁴

As soon as it became clear in the U.S. that the war was winding down, interest in both gardening and home preservation dropped off precipitously, and commercial food producers were well-placed to take advantage of the home cook's desire to get out of the kitchen.⁷⁵ During the war, commercial food producers had kept their names alive in the marketplace through wartime advertisements and community outreach, and they had also provided the government with new "nutritional science" information that both underpinned the size and character of military food rations and helped to guide civilian food recommendations during the war.⁷⁶ As the war came to a close, the commercial food industry was successful popularizing a pseudo-scientific message about "nutrition" to the mass market, so that the message became clear: not only was commercially produced food easier and tastier than the home-produced varieties, it now was "healthier" too.⁷⁷ All the more reason for the home cook to put her pressure canner back in storage and spread grass seed over her garden plot.

The years after the Second World War saw the meteoric rise of the commercial food industry. What started as a small industry that provided somewhat dubious luxury canned items to a small market in the mid nineteenth century was now a multi-faceted international business that provided every kind of food that had once been prepared in the home and more. McDonalds's, Kentucky Fried

⁷⁴ Ibid., 136.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 138.

⁷⁶ Collingham, *The Politics of Food*, 420.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 421–22.

Chicken, and Pizza Hut all got their start in the years immediately following the war, and American families began to rely on inexpensive take-out meals. Swanson introduced a similar idea with the “TV dinner” in 1953.⁷⁸ An argument can be made that women would not have been able to enter the workforce in such great numbers during the 1960s and 1970s without these commercially prepared food items taking over the burden of feeding the family.⁷⁹

Conclusion

The modern United States is conflicted about its food. In 1986 an Italian journalist launched Slow Food, an anti-fast food, anti-industrial agriculture movement.⁸⁰ Although it faces criticism for being an “elitist” idea, the Slow Food movement has been very popular in the United States where the idea that food should be grown locally by organic farmers and should be cooked in the home. In fact, it appears that the ideas of the Slow Food movement, especially in times of economic distress such as the United States has faced since late 2007, might be changing American food production behaviors. Although there are no reliable statistics about how many people are canning and otherwise preserving food in the home, according *Wall Street Journal* reporting, the National Center for Home Food Preservation received an unprecedented number of requests for canning demonstrations in 2009, during the height of the “Great

⁷⁸ Sylvia Lovegren, “Historical Overview: World War II to the Early 1960s,” in *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, ed. Andrew F. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 290. See also Richard Hooker, *Food and Drink in America* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1981), 292–93.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁸⁰ Bryan Walsh, “Can Slow Food Feed the World?” *Time.com*, (9–4–2008), www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1838757.00.html, November 4, 2012.

Recession.”⁸¹ Nevertheless, the story of the decline in home food production from the mid eighteenth century through the Second World War should be instructive here: changing wholesale food behaviors is difficult and takes more than a desire. The home production of food is labor intensive, time intensive, and knowledge intensive, and the modern world has changed from the days when all three of those things were abundant in the United States.

Even in the face of the world wars of the mid twentieth century, and all the patriotic fervor that surrounded the U.S. entry into those wars, the actual behavior of American cooks was difficult to modify. The changes that did happen were short-lived and supported by the fact that even by World War Two, most home cooks still had basic knowledge about food preservation techniques such as canning. In a modern setting, making the case for home production of food is much more difficult, as the First Lady no doubt understands by now. The rise of the commercial food industry has shifted the burden of food production from the home cook and gardener to the factory and factory farm, and in part as a result, Americans’ expectations about who can work outside the home have changed too. Commercial food production has also standardized the flavors, colors, and textures of food and has changed what Americans expect when they sit down (or stand up!) to eat. In future food crises, the U.S. government will have more to deal with than it did during the world wars of the twentieth century if ever hopes to rely on the home production of food in the United States again.

⁸¹ Ana Campoy, “Putting Up Produce: Yes You Can,” *The Wall Street Journal*, *WSJ.com*, (10-15-2009), Accessed <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703787204574449160079437536.htm>, November 4, 2012.