

History in the Making

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Phi Alpha Theta's mission is to promote the study of history through the encouragement of research, good teaching, publication and the exchange of learning and ideas among historians. The organization seeks to bring students, teachers and writers of history together for intellectual and social exchanges, which promote and assist historical research and publication by our members in a variety of ways.

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Introduction

Welcome to the sixth edition of the History Department of California State University, San Bernardino annual journal, *History in the Making*. Every year, California State University, San Bernardino students donate their time and efforts in writing, editing and managing the journal. The board strives to produce a journal that delves into fascinating, important topics in history. Our hope is that the journal will spark a curiosity in readers and ignite passions and interests in the pursuit of historical knowledge. This year's board is honored to present to our readers six full-length articles, two articles on students' travels, three reviews, and a unique student piece on the history of the Inland Empire's transportation systems. This photo essay is available in its complete online format on our journal's website: <http://historyinthemaking.csusb.edu>.

In our first article, "A Historiography of Fascism," Glenn-Iain Steinbeck examines historical debates revolving around the concept of fascism and also explores whether or not fascism continues in the modern political world. This paper won the History department's 2013 Faculty Choice Award.

Our second article moves us to an exploration of black stand-up comedy during a decade of change. In "Black Stand-Up Comedy of the 1960s" Claudia Mariscal looks at the impact black stand-up comedy had in combating racism in the 1960s. She examines the comical skits and performances of black comics during this decade and discusses how jokes did more than just make people laugh; they brought awareness to the absurdity of stereotypes and racial issues of the decade, broke down racial barriers for blacks in entertainment and brought people of different races together through humor.

The next two articles consider the history of labor in California history. Our third article shifts focus from nightclubs in major cities to the beautiful orange groves of the Inland Empire. In "Shared Spaces, Separate Lives: Community Formation in the California Citrus Industry During the Great Depression" David

Shanta contributes to literature relating to California's citrus industry during the Great Depression by exploring community formation among small landholding ranchers and Mexican workers. He demonstrates how communities of growers and works developed separately, and sometimes clashed even though these groups shared the same spaces. In "California and Unfree Labor: Assessing the Intent of the 1850 "An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians," Aaron Beitzel analyzes the development of Indian policies under the administration of the United States in mid-nineteenth century, and demonstrates how the 1850 Indian Act was passed with the intention of maintaining control over Native American lives.

Articles five and six address the topic of slavery. In "Imagining Margaret Garner: The Tragic Life of an American Woman," Cecelia Smith debunks false images and myths of female slaves by exploring the story of Margaret Garner. Her story of bravery, resistance, and strength reveals to audiences an image of a female slave that has been overshadowed by images of "Mammy" and "Jezebel." Our last full-length article "The Deteriorating Treatment of Slaves in the Palmetto State in the Mid-Nineteenth Century" by Samuel Benke, focuses primarily on the deteriorating treatment of slaves in South Carolina during the mid-nineteenth century. He reviews South Carolinian slave codes, the outnumbered whites of South Carolina, rebellions that broke out through the South, and national tensions as reasons for the deteriorating condition of slaves. He also explores the horrific conditions that slaves lived in and the brutal punishments that they endured.

Photos are windows into our past. In a photo essay, "A Photographic Exploration of San Bernardino County's Transportation Legacy," Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz takes us on a journey through the history of the Inland Empire's transportation systems.

History is not just about the exploration of events in time, but also the temporal region of space. This idea is brought to light in our section "Travels Through History," where we feature a pair of short articles written by those who have personally visited the places about which they have written. First, Tristan Murray takes

us on a trip to Panama. He shows us the Portobelo Fort Museum in Colon, Panama through photos and memory, and discusses the history and impact the fort had in Latin America, and the impact it had on him. Next, Ryan Minor does a comparative piece on his travels to Bournville, England and the Ghanaian cocoa fields, and explores the different impacts the chocolate industry has had in these two regions.

Rounding out this year's journal are one film, one book, and one exhibit review. First, Matthew Zemanek reviews Oscar Farner's book, *Zwingli the Reformer: His Life and Work*. Next, the history club reviews the Steven Spielberg's 2012 film, *Lincoln*. Finally, Jonathan Smith reviews the San Luis Rey Mission.

We hope that you find these articles as interesting and informative as we do, and sincerely thank you for reading the 2013 edition of *History in the Making*.

Claudia Mariscal,
Chief Editor

Acknowledgements

Without the hard work and dedication of many hearts and minds, this journal would not have been possible. Behind the cover and through the pages of this journal, staff, faculty and students have donated their time and efforts in its development and completion. From the “call for papers” to the final editing and formatting process, every step, no matter how minor one would think, has played a vital role in this journal and has not been done without gratitude.

I would like to take this time to give thanks to everyone involved. I would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Tiffany Jones and Dr. Cherstin Lyon for overseeing the development and completion of this journal. Their continued dedication to the journal, impeccable insight, support, and computer savvy has made this year’s journal possible. The editing process can be a difficult one, and the editorial staff would like to thank all of the history faculty members and journal staff who helped during this process. Among these guiding lights were Dr. Robert Blackey and Dr. Jeremy Murray. Dr. Blackey and Dr. Murray helped students through the editing process, and gave positive and insightful feedback, and Dr. Murray encouraged the history club to write their collective review of the film, *Lincoln*. Caitlin Barber created the cover of this journal with her artistic talents. Beatrice Longshore-Cook stepped in to help edit and proofread the final product. Laura Sicklesteel, Emily Carnehl, and the staff at Printing Services provide the professional expertise that allows us to print the journal every year. Generous funding for printing the journal comes from the Instructionally Related Programs at CSUSB and the Department of History.

Thanks to all students, especially those who submitted their papers for review and possible publication. The response to the “call for papers” was impressive and I would like to thank you for your interest and support. Also, thank you to authors for working with editors and congratulations on your publications. Lastly, thank you editorial board for your time and efforts. You have done a great job in the reading, selection, and editing process. Your work is appreciated and you have my utmost gratitude.

Claudia Mariscal, Chief Editor

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History in the Making

Articles

History Department's 2013 Faculty Choice Award

A Historiography of Fascism

By Glenn-Iain Steinback

Abstract: A long-standing historical debate revolves around the definition, fundamental nature and historical constraints of the concept of fascism. A wide array of scholarly questions about the political and ideological nature of fascism, the minimum or necessary traits of a fascist movement, arguments over the classification of semi-fascist groups and the concept of generic fascism characterize this debate. The result is a substantial body of scholarly research replete with competing theories for the evolution and origin of fascism as a concept, of individual fascist movements and even over the geographic and temporal application of the term itself within history. This paper is a historiography of fascist studies that illuminates the development of the scholarly narrative and understanding of fascism. Beginning with the historically contemporary Marxist perceptive of fascism, this paper examines competing and complimentary understandings of the phenomenon across the twentieth century, including various theories for the evolution of fascism in Europe, the relationship to and placement of fascism in the broader political spectrum, and the debate over fascism as a form of political religion. Finally, this paper explores whether fascism is a temporally and geographically limited dead historical phenomenon or an ongoing potential actor in the politics of the modern world.

Introduction

Within scholarly circles and popular culture the terms fascist and fascism have had a long and contentious history. One reason for this is that 'fascism' has a somewhat nebulous meaning. Derived from the Latin word *fasces*, it connotes a bundle or union. In addition, unlike liberals, communists, progressives or socialists, fascists, with the noted exception of Italian Fascists, have often declined to use this terminology to identify their movements.¹ In fact, the label has been used or misused more frequently by opponents and detractors as a political epithet meant to broadly paint a rival group or individual as evil, undemocratic or totalitarian, than by fascist movements themselves. All polemics aside, fascism both as an ideological movement and a political force has played an important role in the development of the modern world and left a major imprint on the history of the twentieth century. Now in the twenty-first century events have brought into question whether the zeitgeist of fascism is, in fact, dead as well as the appropriateness of assessing fascism as an exclusively historical concept. As a consequence, fascism has proven to be and will surely remain a significant field of historical inquiry. This paper will explore the evolution of that field of study, highlighting and analyzing some of the important developments that have appeared in the shifting understanding of the history of fascism since it emerged on the world scene in the 1920s.

Attempts to arrive at a universally accepted scholarly understanding of fascism have been plagued by several issues. These include the debate over an appropriate geographic and temporal application of the term, the difficulties in establishing an agreed fascist minimum, the wide range of potentially fascist and proto-fascist groups, arguments over the concept of a generic fascism, the multiplicity of theories for the evolution of fascism, and even debate over the validity of the term itself. As this essay will demonstrate, the scholarly understanding of fascism has changed substantially since the first attempts to document and understand the fascist phenomenon. Today fascist studies have expanded beyond an exclusive application to Italy and Germany,

¹ Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914-1945* (London: Routledge, 2001), 3.

developed alternatives to the early class based Marxist theories, embraced interdisciplinary approaches and explored the concept of minimum ideological and socio-political requirements for the development of fascist movements. Collectively, these often-competing theories have provided a deepened understanding of the development and origins of fascism, as well as more thorough definitions of the subject in a debate, which is likely to continue for some time to come.

The earliest attempts to understand, classify and document the phenomenon of fascism occurred in the early 1920s, catalyzed by the establishment of a fascist regime in Italy and the increasing visibility of similar movements across inter war Europe.² Although a range of theories were advanced at the time by authors from across the political spectrum, the Marxist-Leninist narrative was the most developed and therefore, provided the first generic theory of fascism.³

The Marxist perspective, best represented by the work of Leon Trotsky and Georgi Dimitrov emphasized a connection between fascist movements and business interests, asserting that fascism was the final phase of bourgeois democracy transitioning to dictatorship.⁴ Leon Trotsky was one of the earliest Marxist thinkers to attempt to classify fascism and endeavor to articulate a general theory, although his interest was motivated less by any notion of historical purpose than a desire to understand fascism in order to combat it.⁵ Writing in the early 1930s Trotsky perceived fascism as a symptom of the progression of capitalism and the ultimate undoing of capitalist society.⁶ He argued that wealthy capitalists (finance capital) naturally destabilized their societies by concentrating the means of production at the top, causing increasing amounts of unrest among the proletariat. In response to this unrest, he argued that capitalists allied themselves with the petty bourgeoisie, turning them against the proletariat and creating “special armed bands, trained to fight the workers just as certain

² Constantin Iordachi, ed., *Comparative fascist studies: New Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010), 6.

³ Ibid., 6-7.

⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵ Leon Trotsky, *Fascism: What it is and how to fight it*. (Pioneer Publishers, 1944). accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1944/1944-fas.htm>.

⁶ Trotsky, “Bourgeoisie, Petty Bourgeoisie, and Proletariat,” in, *Fascism*. (Pioneer Publishers, 1944).

breeds of dog are trained to hunt game” – in other words, the fascists.⁷ Consequently, Trotsky viewed fascism specifically within the context of class warfare, arguing that it existed exclusively as a capitalist tool. Fascism was therefore the creation of capitalism used to intimidate, control and repress the proletariat in an attempt to forestall what he saw as the eventual and inevitable proletariat revolution.

As a result, the enduring if simplistic expression of the Marxist position is best encapsulated by Georgi Dimitrov’s assertion that “fascism is the power of finance capitalism itself.”⁸ Marxist theories focused on economic factors while largely ignoring the issue of fascism’s mass appeal and intentionally discrediting its nationalist and revolutionary ideological themes. Despite this narrow focus, Marxist writers were the first to comment on the range of fascist style movements in Europe and consequently pioneered the field of comparative fascist studies.

In the mid-1960s the prevailing Marxist socioeconomic model was challenged simultaneously by several ground breaking theories advanced by American and Western European scholars seeking to expand the discussion beyond a reactionary class driven approach. These theories attempted to account for an expanding understanding of fascism as a distinct social and political phenomenon. Chief among these scholars were Ernst Nolte and George L. Mosse. In *The Three Faces of Fascism*, Nolte attempted to advance a generic definition of fascism and explain the observed rise of Italian and German fascism via a syncretic approach. Nolte's analysis represented fascism as a form of revolutionary anti-Marxism expressed as a “resistance to transcendence.”⁹ Integral to this interpretation was the idea that fascism and Bolshevism were both products of crisis in bourgeois society,

⁷ Trotsky, “The Collapse of Bourgeois Democracy” in *Fascism* (Pioneer Publishers, 1944).

⁸ Georgi Dimitrov, “The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism” (main report delivered at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, August 2, 1935), accessed November 20, 2012.

http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/dimitrov/works/1935/08_02.htm

⁹ Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française Italian Fascism, National Socialism*, trans. Leila Vennewitz (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 429.

operating by similar means but arriving at their positions using different paths.¹⁰

Although both authors made important contributions to the field, Nolte's *The Three Faces of Fascism* proved eminently more controversial; first because of his inclusion of *Action Française* as a fascist movement and second because of the assertion, that fascism and Bolshevism shared social and political methods, a controversial assertion that implicitly normalized fascism. Nolte advanced a Hegelian dialectic approach, drawing on Enlightenment ideas to argue that the intellectual genesis of fascism could be located in turn of the century France as an intellectual anti-modern counter-revolution.¹¹ He identified the functional genesis of fascism as an anti-Marxist evolution of nationalism growing out of the environment of post-World War I Europe.¹² He claimed that developmentally fascism owed key elements of basic political and social methods and procedures; primarily political violence, propaganda, motivating philosophy and a nationalist narrative to *Action Française* and Charles Maurras.¹³ At its basic level, Nolte identified fascism as "resistance to practical transcendence and struggle against theoretical transcendence" that achieves power by the very means it will ultimately seek to deny.¹⁴

Nolte's concept of 'resistance to transcendence', which he argued was a metapolitical aspect of fascism, requires some explanation because it is not self-evident. Nolte asserted that resistance to practical transcendence is common to all conservative societies while he argues that Bolshevism "is the most unequivocal affirmation of material production and at the same time practical transcendence."¹⁵ In Nolte's view, conservative societies resist transcendence while Bolshevism embraces it. Based on the implied parallel with Bolshevism, transcendence, and industrialization, it seems reasonable to conclude that what Nolte terms 'resistance to transcendence' is, in fact, resistance to the concept or spirit of modernity and social progress. Roger Griffin has gone further arguing that Nolte's concept of transcendence viewed as a

¹⁰ Ibid., 450.

¹¹ Ibid., 25-26.

¹² Ibid., 20-21, 25.

¹³ Ibid., 20-21, 69, 140-141, 133-136.

¹⁴ Ibid., 450-451, 453-454.

¹⁵ Ibid., 452.

metapolitical theory is rooted in a German intellectual tendency to favor a phenomenological approach to history by focusing on the “role which key ideas play in the unfolding of events.”¹⁶ In addition, Griffin argues that read in the original German, Nolte’s concept translated as transcendence in English, has a different meaning as a result of “the peculiar genius of the German language for spawning abstract concepts resonant with meanings, which largely evaporate in translation”. Therefore, Griffin concludes that what Nolte means by ‘transcendence’ must be understood as the concept of modernity.¹⁷

Nolte has thus advanced both a syncretic thesis for the inter-war development of fascism, in which the socio-political reality of post-World War I Europe was catalyzed by an intellectual movement from France, filtered through Italy and perfected in Germany, in response to the rise of Marxism, as embodied by the emergence of the Soviet Union, as well as a generic theory of fascism as resistance to the concept of modernity resulting from the denial of both ‘practical transcendence’ - physical change - and ‘- theoretical transcendence’ – the philosophical change of bourgeois society. The contention that fascism evolved as a direct result of Marxism and the suggestion that “without Marxism, there is no fascism” coupled with Nolte’s views on the similarities of fascism and Marxism touched off a massive historical debate.¹⁸ Implicit in *Three Faces of Fascism*, and rather more explicit in his later work, is the idea that Marxism and the Soviet Union caused fascism and Nazi Germany and therefore, caused the Holocaust, as a response to and emulation of the Russian Gulag system.¹⁹ The result was the *Historikerstreit*, which started as an argument over the causal nature of Marxism in the development of National Socialism in Germany but which quickly escalated. The primary focus of this escalation became the normalization of the Nazi period within German history and the argument that conservative historians were attempting to reinterpret and minimize the atrocities of Nazism.²⁰ As the debate

¹⁶ Roger Griffin, *International Fascism: Theories Causes and the New Consensus*, (London: Arnold, 1998), 47.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

¹⁸ Nolte, 21.

¹⁹ Iordachi, 35.

²⁰ Mary Nolan, “The Historikerstreit and Social History,” *New German Critique* 44 (1988): 1, accessed November 1, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/488146>.

evolved, it called into question a diverse range of issues, including what Germany's relationship to its own history should be, the nature of German cultural identity and the relationship to fascism and the appropriateness of studying everyday life and society under Nazi control given the contemporary political implications of the historical normalization of this period.²¹ The centrality, therefore, of Nolte's claim that the Gulags and Holocaust were comparable was that this argument when combined with the normalization of National Socialism reduced the uniqueness of the Holocaust and cast it as a reaction to Marxism potentially shifting ultimate blame away from fascism.²² Independent of Nolte's reason for advancing this argument, the debate it spawned, although acrimonious, was timely and proved a substantial push to open new paths of research and reflection.

Despite this narrowly defined causal relationship, the controversial characterization of *Action Française*, the complex dialectic approach employed, the central focus on Italy and Germany and resultant lack of an apparent explanation of greater trends in European fascism, Nolte's position proved to be significant to the development both of fascist studies and to the historiography of fascism because it offered one of the first non-Marxist attempts to advance both a generic theory and developmental explanation of the fascist phenomenon. It also formed a foundation for the substantial intellectual stimulation provided to the field by the *Historikerstreit*.

Equally important and far less controversial was George L. Mosse's attempt to discern a general theory of fascism. Mosse suggested that in order to understand the pan-European fascist revolution in a more general sense, a wider comparative approach was required. Specifically, he suggested that the research emphasis, then centered on Germany, be widened to look at movements across Europe and further that movements should be compared not only on their relative difference but also on their similarities.²³ Mosse approached the creation of a general theory of fascism by analyzing and critiquing other attempts to establish such a theory. As a result, his argument emerged largely as a response to, as well as an attempt to, go beyond the theory of uni-totalitarianism, the argument that Bolshevism and fascism

²¹ Ibid., 2-3.

²² Ibid., 21.

²³ Iordachi, 8-10.

constitute essentially similar totalitarian systems established by Ernst Nolte and others.²⁴

Mosse asserted that fascism is best understood via a comparative approach as a revolutionary, nationalist, and cultural mass movement.²⁵ He advocated studying fascism across Europe at a basic level by analyzing the use of symbolism and language employed by fascism to understand the essential nature of fascist movements. For example, based on an analysis of National Socialism, Mosse suggested that “the myths and symbols of nationalism were superimposed upon those of Christianity,” further noting that Hitler spoke of the ‘martyrdom’ of party members in the 1923 coup.²⁶ Therefore, Mosse contended that fascism was a synthesis of its own ideology and a revolutionary culture in which “the true community was symbolized by factors opposed to materialism, by art and literature, the symbols of the past and the stereotypes of the present.”²⁷ He further argued that fascism could best be understood from its own perspective as a ‘third force’ which borrowed from both the left and the right while offering unique opportunities for a form of national rebirth and a new cultural continuity.²⁸

In Mosse’s view, fascism must be studied as a pan-European or even global phenomenon emphasizing similarities and differences within a cultural perspective, itself constrained within a general understanding. In this sense, he presaged the cultural focus of later authors such as Payne, Griffen and Gentile. Furthermore, although he doubted whether fascism or National Socialism itself could ever reemerge, he held that nationalism, the “basic force” of fascism, remains strong and that the concepts of mass appeal and use of political mythology and symbolism remain valid concerns today.²⁹

Nolte’s pioneering work on the nature of fascism in France, its intellectual genesis and effect on the greater context of 20th century Europe coupled with Mosse’s comparative emphasis generated a substantial intellectual discussion over the nature and

²⁴ George L. Mosse, “Toward a General Theory of Fascism,” in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed., Iordachi, 63.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 70,81.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

origin of fascism. Although a great deal of scholarship arose as a result, two particularly different and opposing viewpoints stand out.

The first was Zeev Sternhell's *Neither Right Nor Left*. In this work the author argued that fascism represented a unique middle ground as an alternative to liberal democracy and a revolt against materialism, borrowing aspects from both the left and right of the political spectrum, while belonging to neither.

The second, Robert Soucy's *French Fascism: The First Wave 1924-1933*, emerged both as a rebuttal to the 'third way' argument and as an attempt to clarify the nature of fascism in France. Soucy argued that fascism in France was a non-foreign, anti-Marxist, middle-class movement allied to and aligned with the political right wing.

Flowing in part from Nolte's dialectic argument for the origin of European fascism and in response to the, at one time, widely held contention that fascism in Europe, specifically in France, was an accident or an historical aberration, Zeev Sternhell sought to explore the intellectual genesis and development of fascism in France. He advanced two major contentions. First, he challenged the idea that fascism was an accident or an aberration, arguing instead that it "possessed a body of doctrine no less solid or logically defensible than that of any other political movement."³⁰ He argued that the idea that fascism was an aberration of European history is a result of Cold War expedience, a popular desire not to face the idea that fascism might have grown out of liberal democracy, and a result of collaborationists seeking to subsequently re-write their history, especially in France.³¹ Secondly, he argued that the intellectual genesis of fascism had a long history in France growing out of the revision of Marxism as a synthesis of a simultaneous revolt of the left and the right against liberal democracy, creating a new political ideology in fascism, which was therefore, neither wholly of the left nor of the right.³²

Sternhell focused predominantly on the intellectual basis of fascism in France both to understand fascism as a political force and to determine the intellectual origin and creation process behind the ideology. He argued that France was the first country to

³⁰ Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right Nor Left*, trans. David Maisel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), x.

³¹ *Ibid.*, xi-xii

³² *Ibid.*, xviii.

develop the “essential characteristics of fascism” and that fascism had coalesced into a political force there more rapidly than elsewhere.³³ The outcome of the First World War was therefore only the catalyst to the political actualization of fascism and not its origin as others have suggested. The framework of fascism predated the war even if the label did not. The actual genesis of fascism, Sternhell argued, was found in the 1880s as a fully matured intellectual movement arising out of a synthesis of a new nationalism which was breaking away from the traditional right and a new socialism which was breaking away from the left unified in their shared opposition to social democracy.³⁴ This cause was then taken up and expanded upon by French intellectuals. As a result of the writings by Georges Sorel, Maurice Barrès and the Cercle Proudhon French fascism quickly became as much an intellectual endeavor as a mass movement, implicitly conferring a certain respectability and legitimacy.³⁵

Sternhell therefore argued that because of this intellectual tradition, France became a “laboratory in which the original political synthesis of our time was created,” a tradition which drew elements and even people from both ends of the political spectrum.³⁶ This transition, Sternhell, contended was exemplified by the writings of Sorel a leftist and originally a proponent of Marxism who shifted over a period of several years until he went well beyond Marxism to embrace a proto-fascist perspective. Sorel opposed the materialistic elements of Marxism and encouraged a focus on revolutionary moral regeneration, eventually replacing the proletariat mass movement with the personification of the state, creating a revivalist national socialism. In light of this example Sternhell suggested that fascism should be seen as the result of a gradual revision of Marxism toward a national socialism in response to the crisis of capitalism, which spawned revisionist movements on both the left and the right of the political spectrum and forged a middle ground born of both perspectives.³⁷

Consequently, for Sternhell, the key to understanding the rise of fascism was as a revolt against liberal democracy and an attempt to reinvent society along anti-materialist lines. In the

³³ Ibid., 1.

³⁴ Ibid., 5-7.

³⁵ Ibid., 8.

³⁶ Ibid., 14.

³⁷ Ibid., 20.

process Marxism, liberalism and democracy must be rejected as manifestations of the same defective concept.³⁸ As Sternhell stated, the minimum characteristic of fascism, therefore, is that: "fascism derived its power from its universality, from being the product of a crisis of civilization."³⁹ This process, he argues, was gradual, embodied in revisionist waves, created by social upheaval and stress. These included industrialization during the 1890s, the First World War, an economic stress of the 1930s. However, these were only catalysts; the real engine which created groups like *Action Française* and *Sorelian Syndicalism*, he argued was the inability of the movements from which they arose to effectively address the crisis of liberal democracy.⁴⁰

Consequently, in Sternhell's assessment, a political movement evolved based on anti-materialism and was marked by a revolutionary character, which sought to establish itself as distinct from the past, and rooted in its own traditions. As such fascism desired to overcome the class structure and establish a collectivist society in the form of a revitalized nation created through the reformative and almost spiritual power of national will.⁴¹ This society would additionally overcome individualism and provide a unifying morality not found in liberalism or Marxism while simultaneously embracing a modernist or futurist intellectual, artistic and literary trend - in essence, a utopianism.⁴²

He concluded that fascism was a political movement as real as Marxism and liberalism, which possessed a distinct political narrative, including elements from both sides of the political spectrum, but fundamentally independent of both. Fascism, he asserted, can therefore only arise when a sufficient intellectual basis exists and that while an economic or social crisis may advance fascists as a political force, "the most dangerous enemies of the dominant political culture [liberal democracy] were the intellectual dissidents and rebels, of both the new right and the new left."⁴³ The key then to fascist movements, although perhaps not to regimes, is a strong base of fascist intellectual ideology channeled

³⁸ Ibid., 27.

³⁹ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 267.

⁴¹ Ibid., 270.

⁴² Ibid., 271.

⁴³ Ibid., 302.

by a national crisis without which he suggests fascism is not possible.⁴⁴

In response, Soucy suggested that fascism emerged in France between the world wars and evolved in two major impulses. The first impulse started in 1926 and was subsequently followed by a second in 1934. Further he asserted that French fascism did not simply appear, but instead had a long developmental heritage in French political culture. Soucy sought to “lay to rest several misconceptions about French fascism that have dominated much of the scholarly literature on the subject since the Second World War.”⁴⁵ Soucy presented arguments against five major contentions regarding French fascism: first, fascism was a foreign idea with little support; second, nationalist groups were not fascist; third, fascism was in conflict with conservatism; fourth, fascism was anti-capitalist anti-establishment, reactionary and emerging from the left or as a third way and finally; fifth, fascism was a passing cultural fad with poorly articulated goals and doctrines borrowing elements from both ends of the spectrum.⁴⁶

These ideas, Soucy suggested were dated and inaccurate historical understandings resulting from a lack of deep critical inquiry. Instead working from the writings of fascist and proto-fascist movements and from a detailed body of French police informant reports, he argued that a distinction must be made between the rhetoric of socialism employed by French fascists and the conservative content of the fascist message which often saw parliamentary conservatives allied to fascists in times of perceived socio-economic crisis.⁴⁷

Soucy held that fascism in France had a long developmental history reaching back in the most formative sense to the revolutionary period and the Paris Commune from which he argued came the tradition of insurrection and political violence to achieve change, which although originally a tool of the left, came to be embraced by the right in the 1890s.⁴⁸ For Soucy, the origins of fascism are found in the 1880s and 90s among the *Ligue des Patriotes* and similar movements as a middle-class, nationalist,

⁴⁴ Ibid., 294.

⁴⁵ Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The Third Wave*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), xiii.

⁴⁶ Ibid., xiii-xv.

⁴⁷ Ibid., xv.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3-4.

capitalist response to fears of socialism and economic and ethnic changes resultant from the second wave of the industrial revolution in France.⁴⁹ This trend, he argued, found vent in 1898 as a result of the Dryfus Affair in which a Jewish army officer was wrongly accused and convicted of espionage. This catalyzed anti-Jewish sentiment already inflamed by a banking collapse blamed on Jewish bankers and by a railroad workers strike that touched off a wave of labor unrest and once again raised the specter of socialism. The outcome was an alliance of political convenience between proto-fascist groups and monarchists financed by frightened capitalist business interests.⁵⁰ The resulting coup attempt, however, failed. The socialist threat never materialized and the parliamentarian right, once no longer threatened, backed away from extreme rightist movements.

Despite this failure, the event did establish a pattern, which Soucy argued was repeated twice more before the Second World War. Once again, in 1924, following the election of the *Cartel Des Gauches*’ center-left coalition government with a partially socialist agenda that recognized the Soviet Union. They conjured fears of Bolshevism and sought closer international relations with Britain and the United States, while angering nationalists and alienated Catholics because of its treatment of the Vatican.⁵¹ These decisions estranged nationalists, Catholics and conservatives simultaneously. Some of whom once again began to support right wing interests - many of which were now truly fascist, influenced by the establishment of a fascist regime in Italy two years prior.⁵² The second time was in 1932 when a second wave of fascism was generated for similar reasons following the election of a left-of-center government and in response to the depression.⁵³

Consequently, Soucy argued that fascism in France was not an alien concept. It had deep intellectual roots there, arising periodically from the French middle-class in response to periods of economic or social stress and times of apparent rising leftist influence. It was he asserted therefore closely associated with conservative industrialists who simultaneously provided the necessary capital to fund political action and lent form to fascist

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2-3.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 4-5.

⁵¹ Ibid., 20-21.

⁵² Ibid., 22-23.

⁵³ Ibid., 217.

movements, and their speaking tours and newspapers and political action.⁵⁴ In addition, he suggested that fascism in France was not a third way or ‘neither left nor right’ as Sternhell believed. Instead, it absorbed policies and rhetoric from the left, while its core economic and social values remained closely aligned with the right with which it “disagreed only on political grounds.”⁵⁵ Finally, Soucy argued that fascism from a theoretical, if not strictly taxonomic point of view, may be seen as an outgrowth of liberal democracy itself, which when under stress may experience a conversion of existing rightist elements to embrace or at least forge alliances with the authoritarian right.⁵⁶

Building on the comparative approach and cultural focus, beginning in the late 1970s Juan J. Linz advanced a framework for comparative fascism, informed by theoretical as well as historical evidence and grounded in a comparative sociological approach.⁵⁷ Linz’s major contribution was to broaden the field of fascist studies by arguing that fascism was a legitimate socio-political movement and that other fascist style movements in Europe and elsewhere were not simply offshoots of the two distinct fascist regimes, but rather the collective result of similar historical conditions, consequently, suggesting that fascist movements did not necessarily evolve as a direct result of contact with other fascist regimes, but as a result of similar conditions acting on the unique historical traditions of countries around the world. The resulting approach was the first multi-dimensional, ideal-type model of fascism, which would prove a major catalyst to the future direction of research.⁵⁸

Paradoxically, although these new lines of comparative inquiry expanded the view of fascism well beyond the Marxist economic argument or the focus on Italy and Germany, it did nothing to foster agreement. By the early 1980s the consequence was a multiplicity of competing theories, each claiming to have discovered the singular cause of fascism and a series of typological debates over which movements qualified as truly fascist rendering the very concept of generic fascism almost useless.⁵⁹ The effect

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 217-219.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁵⁷ Iordachi, 10.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

was a reductionist search for a ‘fascist minimum’ and division of fascist studies into two broad methodological camps. The first camp was an inductive-observational school, which studied empirical evidence and case studies of inter-war fascism to derive commonalities by evaluating every aspect of a fascist movement. The second school used a theoretical and often ideological model, which was then measured against case studies to evaluate common characteristics in the search for the fascist core and discarding elements specific to individual fascist movements.⁶⁰

Italian historians Renzo De Felice and Emilio Gentile subsequently extended the inductive model. De Felice argued that fascism should be seen as a revolutionary mass movement, which when placed in power became subordinate to a leftist style totalitarian regime. De Felice opposed broad attempts to form an all-encompassing model while acknowledging the idea of a basic fascist minimum.⁶¹ Gentile went further, asserting that the complexity of fascism cannot be simplified to an ideological core but must consider social, political and historical factors simultaneously. He produced a ten point descriptive definition of fascism, which considered fascism as an ideology, a movement and a regime.⁶² Building on this work in the early 1990s, some historians have sought to revive the concept of the fascist minimum and move the discussion away from broad generic models. One of the leading proponents of this approach was Roger Griffin, who attempted to offer an ideal type for fascism by focusing exclusively on ideology to construct a fascist minimum based not on the stated ideological ideas of individual leaders or movements, but at the most basic underlying level of a ‘mythic core’.⁶³ This core, he argued, creates a mythic, paligenetic and nationalist narrative, which serves as an alternative course to modernity. From this he defined a ‘fascist matrix’ to be used as an evaluative heuristic.⁶⁴

As might be expected, Griffin’s ideas stimulated much scholarly debate and research both in support and opposition of his premise. Some, such as Robert Paxton opposed the concept of a

⁶⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁶¹ Ibid., 18.

⁶² Ibid., 19.

⁶³ Roger Griffin, “General Introduction,” in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed. Jordachi, 116-117.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 118.

fascist minimum as too restrictive because it did not account for social and political motivations. Instead, Paxton purposed to “examine the phenomenon as a system” and emphasized the need to consider the evolution of fascist groups by studying their developmental stages, comparing different groups at similar stages.⁶⁵ Paxton divided fascism into five stages ranging from an initial developmental stage to a fully-fledged radical regime.⁶⁶ Others, such as sociologist Michael Mann, objected to Griffin’s theory on the grounds that it has not adequately addressed social composition, organizational structure and the role of fascism in nationalism and the nation-state in the twentieth century.⁶⁷ Mann developed his own theory of generic fascism by studying the socio-political environments of the major fascist regimes of Europe, resulting in a definition of fascism: “Fascism is the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-stateism through paramilitaries,” concluding that fascism was and indeed is part of the “dark side of modernity.”⁶⁸

On the other side of this debate are scholars such as Stanley Payne, who accepted the concept of a fascist minimum but rejected both overly broad and overly specific attempts to define it.⁶⁹ Instead, Payne has argued that in order to understand fascism a dual approach must be taken, utilizing a generic concept of fascism as an analytical aid to the empirical study of inter-war fascist regimes and movements, the result of which is a working definition of fascism.⁷⁰ This working definition, with a proper appreciation for national variance can be used as a measure to assess the nature of right-wing groups and quantify them into one of three broad categories: fascists, the Radical Right and the Conservative Right.⁷¹

Payne, therefore, concluded that fascism was a revolutionary movement originating in the cultural crisis of the early twentieth century and independent of any specific organization or class, characterized by extreme nationalism and possessing distinct political, social and economic goals, which

⁶⁵ Robert O. Paxton, “The Five Stages of Fascism“ in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed. Iordachi, 172.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁶⁷ Michael Mann, “Fascists“ in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed. Iordachi, 190.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 193,213.

⁶⁹ Payne, 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 8,14-15.

placed substantial value on “idealism, willpower, vitalism and mysticism” as well as the “moralistic concept of therapeutic violence.”⁷² The result of this analysis is the Retrodictive Theory of Fascism, a matrix of cultural, political, social, and economic and international factors, which establish the specific circumstances present which are necessary for a country to develop a viable fascist movement.⁷³ This point is qualified with the additional caveat that Payne saw fascism and therefore, his Retrodictive Theory, as applicable only to European nations in the historical moment of the early twentieth century.

Payne’s work is important to the field of fascist studies because he sought to develop an analytical understanding of fascism. He has done this by combining a theoretical and historical approach while acknowledging the unique aspects of fascism in different countries and between different stages of development.⁷⁴ The outcome of this wide-ranging study was a retrodictive theory of inter-war European fascism that posited an alternative to the ideological minimum proposed by Griffin and instead purposed a series of socio-political and economic requirements for the development of a fascist movement in any one country between the wars. In essence, an empirical fascist minimum, additionally providing an essential and flexible tool for the analysis and evaluation of historical fascist or proto fascist movements that attempts to take the broader sweep of fascist characteristics into consideration.⁷⁵

Having now observed several different and often opposing perspectives on the development and origin of fascism as a crisis of capitalism, the result of syncretism, a regenerative mass movement and the result of an early twentieth century revolt against modernity; it is worth considering Steven Aschheim’s discussion of the centrality of ideational motivations to the understanding and development of fascism and specifically National Socialism. Writing in the early 1990s, following the explosion of published literature and developmental theories of fascism during the preceding two decades, Aschheim sought to evaluate the centrality of Nietzsche to the development of National Socialism in Germany. Aschheim argued that an appropriation of

⁷² Ibid., 487-488.

⁷³ Ibid., 488.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 465-468.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 494,495.

Nietzsche's ideas was central to the development and operation of National Socialism. He wrote, "The marriage between Nietzsche and National Socialism was authorized and consummated at the highest levels and accompanied by fanfare and publicity."⁷⁶ Nietzsche's ideas, he suggested, were important to National Socialism because they provided a deep background against which National Socialist policies were modeled. Nietzsche's ideas, especially his later writings, found a very receptive audience in the dynamic intellectual period at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. In response to a social climate increasingly obsessed with decadence he offered a rejuvenative new man and society.⁷⁷ From these ideas Aschheim argued National Socialism drew the rejection of bourgeois society, liberalism and democracy as well as a force for creative regeneration in the form of the will of society. The result would be the total reinvention and revitalization of the German people discarding materialist concepts to be replaced by "an instinctual, renaturalized, vitalistic and tragic culture."⁷⁸

Aschheim also argued that Nietzsche served three other important functions for the National Socialists. First, he conveyed a well-respected and distinguished intellectual element to National Socialism, which allowed the incorporation of cultured intellectuals who might have otherwise been uncomfortable with National Socialist rhetoric.⁷⁹ Simultaneously, Nietzsche provided a body of literature, which could be invoked to rationalize and explain the nature of the movement in intellectual terms. Lastly, Nietzsche's philosophy provided the justification, if not the basis, for euthanasia and the acceptability of racial cleansing as a means to ensure the health of society, suppression of decadents and prosperity of the *Übermensch*.⁸⁰ Aschheim takes care to point out that this last goal was only achieved with a 'careful' and selective National Socialist reading of Nietzsche's works.

Aschheim has acknowledged freely and frequently in his own work, that he is by no means the first historian to discuss the so-called Nietzsche-Nazi link. Traditional Marxist historians

⁷⁶ Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 239.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 243-245.

generally view Nietzsche's influence as an extension of the capitalist suppression of the proletariat.⁸¹ For Nolte, the Nazi policy of extermination is grounded in the legitimization of destruction in the interests of rejuvenation found in Nietzsche.⁸² While others such as Sternhell saw the legacy of Nietzsche creating the road to the mass appeal of fascism and Payne considered Nietzsche integral to the underlying will to power inherent in fascism and the concept of societal superiority.⁸³ However, for these authors and others like them, Nietzsche and his impact on the underlying ideas of fascism were generally only part of a larger explanation, or sometimes only tangential. Aschheim's major contribution, therefore, was the premise that explanations which "entirely dismiss Nazism's frame of mind and render ideational motivations as mere background leave an essential dimension untapped," are ignoring not only a relevant but also critical piece of the puzzle.⁸⁴ For Aschheim, National Socialism in particular, and fascism in general, were multifaceted complex systems, which require equally dynamic explanations. However, he argued that no evaluation could be complete unless it also considers the ideological core; a core which he suggests is based firmly, although not exclusively on an appropriation of Nietzsche's philosophical positions as the "key to explaining national socialism's attraction to the outmost limits."⁸⁵

More recently the debate within fascist historiography has come to focus on the concept of political religions in totalitarian states partly as a result of increased attention given to uni-totalitarianism and comparative studies of communism and fascism and by increased focus on the causes for the Holocaust.⁸⁶ Although the concept of political religion is not new, the application of the concept to recent fascist studies has in large part been due to the work of Emilio Gentile notable for his earlier ten point descriptive definition of fascism. This hypothesis has matured into a groundbreaking theory on totalitarianism and sacralization of politics. Gentile defines the regime stage of fascism as a totalitarian system, which utilizes a palingenetic ideology

⁸¹ Ibid., 323.

⁸² Ibid., 325.

⁸³ Payne, 25.

⁸⁴ Aschheim, 329

⁸⁵ Ibid., 330.

⁸⁶ Iordachi, 35-36.

interpreted as political religion to shape the development of a new man and new society.⁸⁷ In addition, Gentile demonstrated how the politics of the modern nation state can, and in his estimation have, become sacralized in both democratic and totalitarian societies as nationalism creates a religious type belief in the state.⁸⁸ Although his theory is contentious, it has offered a compelling explanation for the mass appeal of fascism as well as the use of mysticism, messianic leadership, and mythical symbolism in fascist movements.⁸⁹

Understandably, this theory has proven controversial, and yet it has also proven to be an important stimulus to new ideas and approaches in the study of fascism in recent years. Although initially, an opponent, Griffin subsequently revised his theory of the fascist minimum to incorporate political religion, arguing that a belief in and veneration of the state was important to fascist movements. He has come to contend that this is especially true early in development as the tool of cultural reinvention underlying the paligenetic nature of fascism.⁹⁰ Other scholars have disagreed with this concept arguing, as Richard Steinman-Gall has, that the return of the political religion theory is a result of post-Cold War revisionism.⁹¹ Instead, he argued that fascism exhibits religious politics not political religion and as such religious elements are appropriated for political purposes but do not, in and of themselves, represent a separate, true secular or political religion.⁹²

As we have seen beginning almost concurrently with the first flowering of fascist movements in Europe during the 1920s, attempts have been made to classify, understand and describe them. This essay has attempted to summarize and analyze some of the key developments in the historiography of fascism. It has not attempted to cover every author or even every argument but rather to highlight a path of historiographic development. As

⁸⁷ Emilio Gentile, "The Sacralisation of Politics: Definitions, interpretations and reflections on the question of secular religion and totalitarianism" in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed. Iordachi, 260-261.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 272-274.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 276-278.

⁹⁰ Roger Griffin, "Cloister or Cluster?: The implications of Emilio Gentile's Ecumenical theory of political religion for the study of extremism" in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed. Iordachi, 293.

⁹¹ Richard Steinman-Gall, "Nazism and the Revival of Political Religion Theory" in *Comparative Fascist Studies*, ed. Iordachi, 298.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 300-301.

demonstrated here, a wide range of theories and ideas have been advanced. The early Marxist theorists presented fascism as a reactionary tool of capitalism. Nolte attempted to set fascism in a broader context via a reactionary evolutionary dialectic, in the process, bringing about a highly contentious and ultimately profitable debate over the nature of fascist studies and Europe's relationship with its past. Mosse as we have seen sought to widen the intellectual field by urging comparison and analysis outside of the major fascist powers of Western Europe and helping to seat fascism as a pan-European phenomenon. Sternhell echoing an element of the controversy of the *historikerstreit* argued that fascism was not an aberration and made a case for its intellectual roots in France as a third way. While Soucy, also addressing France, asserted that fascism was decidedly an outgrowth of the right and argued that the potential for fascism was an outgrowth of liberal democracy. Linz echoed Mosses's appeal for wider study and suggested that fascism was a pan-European phenomenon resulting from a similar set of circumstance and not an intellectual export of Western Europe. Gentile attempted to develop a heuristic for measuring fascist movements by extending the concept of a fascist minimum and then later contributed the theory that fascism was inexorably linked to the concept of political religion which he suggests was inherent in nationalism. Griffin argued for an emphasis on the basic ideology of fascist groups on a 'mythic core' to which he later adapted the political religion theory in an attempt to articulate a better analytical device. While Payne suggested that previous theories of fascist minimums and matrixes were insufficient instead articulating a 'retrodictive theory' which attempted to establish the minimum necessary preconditions for the development of a successful fascist movement. Finally, Aschheim argued that in order to properly understand fascists one must understand their 'mindset,' arguing for the centrality of Nietzsche as an ideological genesis and intellectual justification for fascism and specifically National Socialism.

It is therefore, not surprising that fascist studies have moved from an obscure discipline to a major field of investigation complete with its own journals. In the process, it has also undergone a corresponding shift toward broader evaluations of the topic and been subjected increasingly to the addition of much needed inter-disciplinary approaches as it has become clear that fascism is an extremely complex topic incorporating social,

political and economic facets. Correspondingly this has encouraged a much-needed division of fascism into developmental stages and an emphasis on the consideration of movements - especially in Eastern Europe - on their own merits as part of a greater trend. Finally, the introduction of political sacralization and political religion theories, have examined and illuminated the nationalist methodologies of fascism. In summary, within this now rich field of academic inquiry much has been written and remarkable progress made considering the relatively young topic. However, despite this it remains likely that no theory yet offered is able to account for the vast complexity of fascism and therefore, no overarching consensus or definitive narrative is likely to develop at any point in the near future.

A substantial debate has focused on the nature of fascist movements and whether fascism was limited to a specific historical period or represents an ongoing political ideology present even today. Recent events have shown that fascist style movements are currently active in Hungary and Greece and that these groups are well organized with defined political goals. In Greece, a country currently faced with major economic uncertainty and an ineffective government, Golden Dawn, formed in 1985, has recently risen to become the third most popular party in Greece.⁹³ Capitalizing on economic devastation, anti-immigrant sentiment and a loss of confidence in the political system Golden Dawn won nearly seven percent of the popular vote and eighteen seats in parliament during recent elections. More importantly, Golden Dawn is an openly fascist political party that employs familiar tactics, including organized street violence against minorities, maintains a newspaper, cultivates appeal as a mass movement, provides support to disadvantaged persons, and has adopted a paramilitary structure.⁹⁴ Today, Golden Dawn is offering itself as an alternative and rejuvenating political force in Greek society. While in Hungary, Jobbik has emerged as a nationalist, anti-immigrant and anti-Roma political party, which maintains a militia movement, employs hate marches and intimidation while also

⁹³ William Wheeler, "Europe's New Fascists," *The New York Times*, November 17, 2012, 1, accessed December 9, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/18/opinion/sunday/europes-new-fascists.html?pagewanted=all>

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

holding seats in parliament.⁹⁵ Both groups espouse xenophobic, highly nationalistic anti-immigrant, anti-foreign rhetoric and promise some form of national rebirth or reinvention. By any reasonable definition, they are fascists.

For these reasons, the study of fascism remains important. While the perspective one chooses to take of fascism, its precursor right authoritarianism or totalitarianism depends upon the intellectual school to which one subscribes and is thus a complex topic. It is clear, as Sternhell has demonstrated that fascism was not an aberration of late nineteenth–early twentieth-century Europe. It had deeper roots. While, given historical outcomes, it is hopeful that a ‘fascist’ group will never again rise to significance. The ultimate conclusions reached by Soucy, Aschheim and Gentile are important because they suggest that the methods by which fascist type groups gain and wield power may not, in fact, be limited to a specific moment in time. Soucy suggests that right wing authoritarianism is an outgrowth of conservative elements in liberal democracies during times of social and economic stress. Aschheim offers an analysis of the means by which an ideological core can be used as legitimizing justification for atrocities, while replacing or setting aside existing social morés. And lastly, there is continuing relevance to be found in Gentile’s argument that political religion and religious type beliefs, in the character or persona of the state, are inherent concepts of nationalism, which can potentially be exploited to develop mass appeal and justify right wing or totalitarian conversion of a nation. Taken together and given the state of affairs in the United States and Europe today, marked by escalating regionalism, the growth of conservatism and the growing legitimization of conservative fringe movements, as well as increasing acceptance of polarization in contemporary politics, there is reason to suggest that these theories may prove to have an enduring relevance in the twenty-first century.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 3-4.

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Black Stand-Up Comedy of the 1960s

By Claudia Mariscal

Abstract: Vast research can be found on African Americans' culture and their use of humor to overcome struggles within American society. Much of the research found focuses on the study of African American humor in literature, folk tales, art, and theatre, but little has been done on the study of black stand-up comedy in the 1960s and comics' use of humor to overcome and combat racism and social struggles during this decade. Different methods of approach are used to gain a broader understanding of the use of humor as a combative tool by black comics in the 1960s. The comedic performances and styles of Dick Gregory, Godfrey Cambridge, Bill Cosby, Flip Wilson, and Jackie "Moms" Mabley are analyzed as well as newspaper and magazine articles during the 1960s for an in-depth perspective in how their humor impacted American society. The comedic styles and performances combated racism by breaking down racial barriers in stand-up comedy, helped change the image of black comedy, and integrated audiences from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The study of black stand-up comedy in the 1960s allows scholars to broaden their understanding of the tradition of humor within African American culture to overcome struggles in American society and the impact that comedians of the 1960s had on contemporary stand-up comedians.

Introduction

In the 1960s, prominent and successful comedians such as Bill Cosby, Godfrey Cambridge, and Dick Gregory, used humor to address a wide array of issues that minority groups faced, such as racism, family, community, and politics. They galvanized society and laid the foundation for the success of black stand-up comedians and forged a new image for black comedians; one that is articulate and witty. Stand-up comedy is not seen as a viable or traditional source of analysis when interpreting the obstacles that African Americans faced in this decade. However, stand-up comedy is a form of art equivalent to music, literature, and paintings. It is fundamental when understanding the mindset and perspective of those living in the turmoil of the rapidly changing 1960s. Skits and jokes performed on stage can be used as a window into the social and political atmosphere of the day and provides a way of examining how these events were interpreted by prominent cultural figures. This paper will analyze the skits and jokes used in comedic performances by black stand-up comedians and dissect evidence of resistance against cultural hegemony and how comedians reshaped black comedy. These comedians reshaped comedy from a genre that used the physique of blacks as a derogative form of humor, which reinforced negative black stereotypes, into a genre of humor where they resisted using their physique as a source of humor. These comedians based their humor, instead, on the absurdities of racial, social and political issues of the day.

In the 1960s, African Americans engaged in a number of battles to desegregate public institutions and businesses in the South as well as fight for equality, social justice, and liberty throughout the country. Mainstream success in stand-up comedy was not likely for African Americans before 1960, but doors gradually opened after talented African American comedians such as Dick Gregory and Bill Cosby gained national recognition. Though they used comedy in different ways, both were successful in breaking down racial barriers and integrating night clubs and television shows. With the integration of night clubs in major cities and appearances on popular television shows such as “The Tonight Show,” black stand-up comedians had the opportunity to express their views and experiences openly to a wider audience and reiterated to the world the absurdities of racism and negative black

stereotypes, such as those reinforced by images of Blackface caricatures. Black comedy, along with its comedians, evolved with the changing political and social tides of the day and became social activists in their own right.

Historians, such as Lawrence W. Levine, have noted the historical importance of understanding the ways in which African Americans have used humor as a tool against racial oppression. In *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* he focuses on black consciousness and the oral culture that emerged from the days of slavery through the 1960s. He analyzed a number of songs, stories, and jokes used throughout the decades that revealed thoughts and expressions shared among African Americans and how they coped with the issues that they faced. His methodology of analyzing shared expressions and thoughts within the African American community help shed light on ways in which African Americans' reacted and responded to their political and social circumstances. According to Levine in his study of "Black Laughter" people began to identify their problems with others around them thus allowing them to build a community of support and understanding.¹ His study of "Black Laughter" lays the groundwork for defining and understanding Black comedy in the 1960s and how laughter was used as a source of power and agency in a time of significant change in American society.

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, James C. Scott used a similar methodological approach to that used by Levine in identifying the complex relationship between the powerful and the powerless and coping mechanisms used by the powerless to adapt to their position within society. Scott goes further by interpreting forms of expression shared among subordinate groups as forms of resistance against dominant groups. In public, subordinate groups disguise their discontent and criticism of dominant groups behind theatre, literature, songs, and jokes, among other things to avoid punishment from dominant groups. Scott suggested "how we might interpret the rumors, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes, and theater of the powerless as vehicles by which, among other things, they insinuate a critique of power while hiding behind

¹ Lawrence W Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 299.

anonymity or behind innocuous understandings of their conduct.”² Black comics in the 1960s used their jokes to critique, ridicule, undermine and resist the social and political conditions of the decade. Behind each joke and story lay a hidden discourse not easily recognizable to those who identified themselves as the dominant class in America. Subordinate groups in America understood the messages and laughed in recognition. As Levine purported, laughter gave stand-up comedians power and agency. With Scott’s analysis of class relations and hidden discourse, there is enough evidence to suggest that resistance against hegemony can come in many forms, including stand-up comedic performances and jokes from black comics of the 1960s.

When looking specifically at stand-up comedians of the 1960s through the 1970s, Matthew Daube in *Laughter in Revolt: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in the Construction of Stand-Up Comedy* focuses on comedians Lenny Bruce, Bill Cosby, Dick Gregory and Richard Pryor. Daube discusses the background and careers of these comedians and how their stand-up performances were linked to issues of race, ethnicity and identity.³ He gives a thorough analysis of each comedian but fails to discuss how comedians addressed issues that were not entirely linked to race. The comedians he mentioned went beyond stories about racism and ethnicity; they had great insight regarding the politics and economics of the day. For example Dick Gregory’s performance at Berkeley University in 1965, was centered on the Vietnam War and contradictions in foreign policy; not just racism. Daube also fails to mention how Bill Cosby’s background was the main factor as to why he did not highlight racial injustices in his stand-up routines. Cosby’s comedy was different from others such as Dick Gregory because his material did not focus on issues of race; instead he focused on everyday struggles and family as a way to connect with white and black audiences alike. This may explain why his success surpassed that of Gregory.

In 1970, Bill Cosby had been characterized as having a “Blackness of his own” in an *Time* magazine article called

² James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale University Press, 1992), xiii.

³ Matthew Daube, “Laughter in Revolt: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in the Construction of Stand-Up Comedy” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2010).

“Community with Laughter.”⁴ According to the writer for *Time*, Cosby had a unique and appealing comedic style and did not need to follow the comedic trend of going the “racial route,” as other black comedians had done to become successful. The writer also suggested that Cosby’s attitude and perhaps even his unique approach to comedy may have been due in part to his personal background, upbringing status and values. The author wrote:

All ghetto humor is basically ethnic. U.S. minorities have traditionally preserved their identities by laughing at their origins. Cosby's North Philadelphia is as rich in ethnic grist as Manhattan's Lower East Side was for a generation of Jewish comedians.⁵

Cosby’s avoidance of the race issue in his stand-up routines was not merely a career move as Daube suggests, but rather a genuine reaction to circumstances in which he grew up. He recognized that experiences and situations outside of race could be ridiculed. He also understood the importance of developing a universal humor that people of different backgrounds could connect to. Though there are gaps within Daube’s research, his analysis has been helpful in structuring my own research on stand-up comedy of the 1960s. In addition, his analysis reinforces the views of Levine when elucidating the significant role of black stand-up comedy.

Many historians have addressed the issue of comedy as a historical source and have analyzed comedy as evidence of African American intellectual and cultural history. However, my research will fill a critical gap in the literature by analyzing the writings and performances of black stand-up comedians in the 1960s such as *The Redd Foxx Encyclopedia of Black humor* by Redd Foxx and *Nigger an autobiography* by Dick Gregory as well as recordings of stand-up performances from Dick Gregory, Godfrey Cambridge, Bret Williams, Bill Cosby and others. In addition, newspaper and magazine articles along with published interviews with the comedians will provide further insight into the ways in which these comedians transformed black comedy in the 1960s and used this genre to break down racial barriers and diffuse stereotypes. African

⁴ “Communicating with Laughter,” *Time* 95, no. 14 (April 6, 1970): 58, accessed April 20, 2012. <http://web.ebscohost.com.libproxy.lib.csusb.edu/ehost>.

⁵ Ibid.

Americans have used humor throughout history to overcome the trials and tribulations in their lives and in this context, the 1960s were no different than the more thoroughly studied experience of slavery. By using newspaper and magazine articles to interpret the impact of stand-up comedians as well as their own writings and performances, this paper will build on existing research that contextualizes African American humor within the larger framework of intellectual history and resistance to cultural hegemony.

Slave Humor

Shortly after the abolition of slavery, scholars developed a new found interest in collecting and interpreting slave folk tales and songs. In her article “Negro Patois and its Humor,” Mamie Meredith purports that one of the earliest studies of slave humor and language had been conducted by N.S. Dodges. He collected and analyzed traditional slave folktales and presented his analysis in an article featured in *Appleton's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art* in 1870. The collection and interpretation of humorous slave folktales and songs continued well into the twentieth century as scholars such as Henry D. Spalding, Phillip Sterling and Mamie Meredith spent their careers studying slave language, and the development of slave humor during times of struggle. They found that slaves’ humorous response to struggle has helped in the development of a unique African American culture. This led future historians to look at humor as a way to understand the cultural history of African Americans.

Black Culture and Black Consciousness by Lawrence A. Levine and *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* by Eugene D. Genovese analyze the origins of black humor and its importance within black culture. According to Genovese, “Slaves made an indispensable contribution to the development of black culture and black national consciousness.”⁶ There is no doubt that slaves helped develop a unique black culture; they looked to religion, kinship, and humor as mechanisms to combat the oppression they faced on a daily basis. Slaves’ joyous and uplifting attitude helped them overcome the trials caused by slavery, and as

⁶ Eugene D Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 3.

Genovese and Levine argued, it was far better for slaves to laugh than cry. Slaves did not accept slavery and responded to the hegemony of the powerful by using passive and aggressive forms of resistance, one being humor. The strength and unity that developed from laughter allowed slaves to preserve aspects within their community, such as empowerment and self-consciousness. Laughter provided a source of power for them in a world in which they were powerless.⁷

Though humor was used as a form of resistance, which also became a unifying force and a power source for slaves, whites misunderstood slave humor in ways that reinforced negative stereotypes. Slaves used stories and jokes to poke fun at their masters as well as themselves. They would sing songs and dance on the plantations where the slave masters would sometimes sit in, hold competitions and watch, not knowing that slaves were making fun of them. Whites misunderstood the slaves' humor, and mistook their mannerisms as being mere reflections of their true character. Unfortunately this misinterpretation reinforced whites' delusion that slaves were "happy, go lucky folk" who enjoyed their lives of servitude. The Blackface caricature in the nineteenth century would reflect these images in minstrel shows across America.

Minstrel shows

In early minstrel shows, Northern white entertainers performed as black men, painted their faces with burnt cork, and purported that the black songs, dance, jokes, and images that they portrayed were real.⁸ Beginning as early as the 1820s, a group of white men promoted themselves as "Ethiopian delineators."⁹ These performers travelled with circuses and performed in blackface in between acts. Many white audiences in the North had never seen or encountered many blacks in their lives and believed the joyous, goofy, happy, country-talking buffoons were actual characteristics of blacks.¹⁰ Out of these performances, negative stereotypes formed which would affect Blacks well into the twenty-first

⁷ Ibid., 584.

⁸ Redd Foxx, *The Redd Foxx Encyclopedia of Black Humor* (Pasadena, Calif: Ward Ritchie Press, 1977), 12.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Ethnic Notions*, directed by Marlon Riggs (1987; California Newsreel, 2004).

century. According to David R. Roediger in *Wages of Whiteness*, stereotypes were created intentionally by white performers to distinguish themselves from blacks wherein they highlighted physical differences such as skin color. He stated, “the simple physique – elaborate cultural disguise – of blacking up served to emphasize that those on stage were really white and that whiteness really mattered.”¹¹ For white performers and their white audiences, minstrelsy helped to preserve their hegemony over blacks by portraying blacks as unintelligent and incompetent.

Minstrelsy not only reinforced negative black stereotypes, according to historian, Scott Lott, minstrelsy was used to justify racial oppression. In *Love and Theft*, he explains how the depictions of black slaves in minstrel shows reinforced racial oppression as whites believed that blacks were inept or unable to conform to American society and thus, needed to be controlled. According to Lott, “from our vantage point, the minstrel show indeed seems a transparently racist curiosity, a form of leisure that, in inventing and ridiculing the slow witted but irresponsible “plantation dandy” and the foppish “northern dandy negro” conveniently rationalized racial oppression.”¹² The depictions of slaves in minstrel shows solidified whites’ belief that they were a superior race and blacks were their subordinates. These images justified slavery in the South for many Americans and also justified segregation and inequality for freemen and women in the North. Even white performers and club owners who made money taking black people’s image and portraying them on stage, barred black people from attending or performing at minstrel shows.¹³ It would not be until after the Civil War when black men and women would be able to perform on stage; though not as themselves, but in blackface.

According to Redd Foxx in *The Redd Foxx Encyclopedia of Black Humor*, black entertainers appeared on stages all over the country in the 1860s and tried to “out black” white impersonators to gain more work as entertainers.¹⁴ Black minstrel shows traveled

¹¹ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (1991; repr., Verso, 2007), 117.

¹² Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class, Race and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 15.

¹³ Foxx, *The Redd Foxx Encyclopedia of Black Humor*, 15.

¹⁴ Ibid.

the world and became a huge success. Black entertainers conformed to their blackface role to become successful or to be allowed on stage because white audiences would not accept black entertainers any other way.¹⁵ By accepting and reinforcing racial stereotypes through their own performances on stage, African Americans were allowed to enter into spaces previously reserved for whites only. There were few options for blacks in the workforce, and many jobs designated for blacks provided little pay and left no room for advancement. Although these early roles as entertainers were not glamorous, they were a way for blacks to make a decent living. Blackface entertainment marks the beginning of blacks performing on stage in front of white audiences, and it laid the foundation for widespread black entertainment.

One notable and highly successful black who performed in blackface in the 1920s, named Bert Williams, was the first black American to perform in a leading role on Broadway and helped push racial barriers for black entertainers. Williams “produced laughter out of pain.”¹⁶ He formed humor that would enable black audiences to laugh at themselves and at the absurdities of the American racial situation. His humor created a community among black people who were tied by their common experiences.¹⁷ Williams used his comedy in such a way that encouraged blacks to overcome their struggles. Bert Williams was among the most successful and highly regarded black comedian of the 1920s. However, his ongoing battle to be viewed as ‘equal’ to whites was not successful. He faced discrimination and segregation in his daily life and was never allowed to perform on stage outside of blackface. Although Williams and other black minstrel performers gained the opportunity to perform on stage and achieved worldwide popularity, they continued to face limitations. It was socially unacceptable at that time for black performers to portray themselves as anything other than blackface. These limitations reinforced negative black stereotypes and kept black performers from enjoying the full extent of their accomplishments and popularity.

Harlem Renaissance and the New Black Comic

¹⁵ Ibid, 23.

¹⁶ Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 360.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Changes in America at the turn of the century influenced changes in the way African Americans thought and expressed themselves, especially through art. The Great Migration and the First World War motivated blacks to define their world on their own terms, and not how white Americans perceived them. Following this renewed self-determination and consciousness an explosion of art, literature, theatre, music, and other forms of artistic expression emerged among African Americans with the goals of establishing unity and pride within black communities in order to combat racial stereotypes and prejudices. This cultural movement came to be known as the Harlem Renaissance. Large waves of young black artists and writers gathered in Harlem, New York and shared ideas and aspirations through art.

Many prominent black artists during this time understood humor to be a distinct aspect within their culture and made efforts to reclaim it from minstrelsy. *African American Humor: The Best Black Comedy from Slavery to Today* by Mel Watkins discusses a transition in black comedy from minstrelsy to vaudeville acts where instead of poking fun of themselves using blackface, they focused on “black-on-black situations, poking fun at henpecked husbands, unfaithful wives and rural or “country” attitudes.”¹⁸ According to Watkins, their jokes and stage performances were too risqué for white America, thus they were kept from mainstream entertainment and secluded to the black circuit stage.¹⁹ Although whites had not accepted this new form of comedy it is important to note that blacks were taking the initiative in rejecting popular blackface comedy and creating new comedy acts of their own.

Jessie Fauset, a prominent writer during the Harlem Renaissance, recognized the change in comedy and believed that this had been the result of Blacks’ unique gift of laughter.

Through laughter we have conquered even the lot of the jester and the clown. The parable of the one talent still holds good and because we have used the little which in those early painful days was our approach we find ourselves slowly but surely moving toward that most glittering of all goals, the freedom of the American stage.²⁰

¹⁸ Mel Watkins, *African American Humor*, 112.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Alain Locke, *The New Negro*, 167.

Taking control of the stage and producing humor that did not conform to traditional white American ideals was a step towards liberty and equality on and even off the American stage. These changes gave black entertainers a new sense of control and pride in their talents and abilities, and would lead to the gradual shift into stand-up comic routines and styles in the 1940s and beyond.

Black comedy continued to evolve as comics of the late 1940s and 1950s continued to use risqué jokes and antics pioneered by comics during the Harlem Renaissance. Their routines also included criticism of American racism. Most blacks, especially black soldiers who returned home from war, commented segregation, integration, immigrants, and other social and political issues with jokes. By acting as joke-tellers, blacks gained a sense of superiority over those whom they ridiculed. These attitudes and jokes allowed comedians such as Redd Foxx, Slappy White, and Leonard Reed to trade Blackface antics for dialogue that reflected attitudes and events in the 1940s and 1950s. In addition, it enabled them to abandon the image of illiteracy or incompetency that plagued black comedians for decades.²¹

Minstrelsy began its decline after the Second World War. Due in part to the millions of human rights violations and atrocities that had been committed during the Holocaust, society began to view more cognitively the inhumanness of racial oppression. According to Michael Rogin “the racial extermination of Jews during the war called to the attention of African American racial oppression in America.”²² This along with the rise of black pride and consciousness at the turn of the century inspired many blacks to believe that minstrel caricature was a negative portrayal of their image and actively protested against forms of entertainment that displayed such imagery. Their criticism helped to shed light on the negative effects that minstrelsy has had on African Americans. As a result, the entertainment industry and their performers began to look at other forms of entertainment such as variety shows, musical comedies, burlesque, and the circus to replace minstrel shows. Entertainers began to abandon minstrelsy and replaced it with light musical comedies that resembled vaudeville shows. The impact that the Civil Rights movement had on breaking down negative stereotypes and segregation gave black comedians fresh

²¹ Foxx, *The Redd Foxx Encyclopedia of Black Humor*, 149.

²² Michael Rogin, “‘Democracy and Burnt Cork’: The End of Blackface, the Beginning of Civil Rights,” *Representations* vol. 46 (April 1, 1994): 6.

ideas and material to use in their performances. No longer were they constrained by having to mimic the stereotypical roles created by white entertainers in the minstrel era. Black comedians had the freedom to express themselves openly in front of black audiences and found acceptance and understanding. Though they had much more freedom of expression, it was limited to only black audiences in black clubs. The greatest obstacle for black stand-up comedians was to cross over into white clubs and perform in front of white audiences as themselves and as social satirists. White audiences were not ready for this type of black comedy and black comics remained bound by limitations established by whites.

Black Stand-Up Comedy

After the 1940s, black comics began to speak directly to and interact with audiences and used humor to address racial and non-racial issues. Since stand-up comedy is a relatively 'new' artistic phenomenon, scholarly work is scant, especially when discussing the impact comics from the 1960s had on American society. Comics provide unique perspectives of the time and environment in which they live. They also represent the socio-cultural makeup of their specific ethnic and racial groups, and unite people from different backgrounds all through laughter.²³

Scholars such as Lawrence E. Mintz purports that stand-up comedy is a component of visual and oral art and a viable source in defining American society and culture.²⁴ Stand-up comedy has had a long history in the United States stemming from the nineteenth century with minstrel shows, the circus, vaudeville and burlesque theater. Mintz argues in *Stand-up Comedy as Social and Cultural Mediation* that stand-up comedy is a neglected art form that should be studied because it helps to define a society and is a part of American culture. He states, "clearly it is a popular art that is central to American entertainment, but in the universal tradition of public joking rituals it is more than that as well; it is an important part of the nation's cultural life."²⁵ Arguments such as this evidently gained momentum in the twenty-first century as

²³ Bambi Higgins, *Laughing Mad: The Black Comic Persona in Post-soul America*, 6.

²⁴ Lawrence E. Mintz, "Standup Comedy as Social and Cultural Mediation," *American Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (April 1, 1985): 71, doi:10.2307/2712763.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

more scholars have begun to study stand-up comedy, giving power to the cultural and ethnic significance stand-up comedy has played throughout America.

Laughter in Revolt: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in the Construction of Stand-up Comedy by Matthew Daube, *Punchlines* by Leon Rappoport and *Laughing mad: the Black Comic Persona in Post-Soul America* by Bambi Haggins focus on, not just the history of ethnic and racial comedy, but also the performances and material used by influential black stand-up comedians throughout the years. Daube and Rappoport focus on Jewish and black stand-up comedy. These groups may come from different backgrounds, but the comedy that has emerged from these groups is very similar and has similar origins. Daube compares Lenny Bruce, a Jewish comedian, with black stand-up comedians Dick Gregory, Bill Cosby, and Richard Pryor. He argues that the comedic style and success of Lenny Bruce allowed black comedians to follow suit and speak openly in front of white audiences. According to Daube, “Dick Gregory and Bill Cosby built on the approaches established by Bruce as they introduced black comedy to the integrated main stage in the early 1960s, each of them pioneering a model of how African American comics could intervene in a racial discussion within comedy that had been initiated by non-blacks.”²⁶ Both groups have used humor as a means to combat prejudice and stereotypes in America and more than any other ethnic group, these groups have the most successful comedians. According to Rappoport, their use of humor to criticize politics, institutions and society is appealing to the public.²⁷ He mentions comedians such as Jon Stewart, Woody Allen, Dave Chappelle, and Richard Pryor, to name a few, who are successful comedians from black or Jewish backgrounds. Their success is to their comedic analysis and criticism of American society and politics.

Aside from finding connections between different ethnic groups in stand-up comedy, Haggins looks specifically at the black comic, whether their medium is stand-up, film, or television. Haggins discusses how the environment which a comic is from and reflects on his or her comedy. The works of Haggins, Daube, and Rappoport demonstrate how comedians from different minority groups have used humor to criticize and reveal the absurdities of

²⁶ Daube, *Laughter in Revolt*, 177.

²⁷ Leon Rappoport, *Punchlines: The Case for Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Humor* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 70.

American society and political atmosphere. Black and Jewish comedians alike have used humor as a vehicle against the hegemony of the powerful in America. Also due to their continued success over the years it has become socially acceptable for these groups to express themselves openly.

Though a new trend has emerged among historians to study stand-up comedy and its affects within American society and among specific ethnic and racial groups, works focusing specifically on the 1960s black comic and their contributions are lacking. Black comics contributed to the evolution of black comedy by paving the way for contemporary comics in the mainstream, combated racism in American society using humor and helped change the image of the black comic.

Comedians of the Decade

In the 1960s, African Americans encountered struggles for equality and justice under the law and within American society. It had been over a hundred years since the abolition of slavery and yet African Americans remained at the lower echelons of American society and politics. African Americans were ready for change. As black pride and consciousness was on the rise, black comedians found opportunity to move beyond the “blackface” past and to prove that black comedians can still be funny without having to portray themselves as a dancing, babbling, buffoons. Though attempts during the Harlem Renaissance were made to break from blackface imagery in order to defuse negative stereotypes, they were not as successful as black comics from the 1960s. In the 1960s, prominent stand- up comedians, such as Dick Gregory, Bill Cosby, Godfrey Cambridge, Flip Wilson, and Jackie ‘Moms’ Mabley found an outlet using humor to directly or indirectly combat and overcome racial issues of their day. Unlike generations of comics before them, their exposure on television, film, and other media outlets allowed them to reach larger audiences and gain international recognition presenting a respectable black image. Regardless of their success, black stand-up comedians faced criticism within the African American community, along with religious and ethnic groups.

Dick Gregory

For Dick Gregory, having the opportunity and ability to tell racist jokes gave him a sense of freedom and empowerment that would not be there if it weren't for humor.²⁸ "When you're free of fear, man you feel power!"²⁹ These feelings allowed him to openly express his thoughts and feelings about the race issue while also provoking laughter and awareness to his audience. Gregory learned early in his life how humor can be uplifting and used as a mechanism against ridicule and degradation.

Gregory used humor to reveal the absurdities of the race issues in America and made countless jokes making fun of stereotypes, integration, and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) to name a few. When joking about integration he recalls the day swimming pools were integrated in his hometown, St. Louis "Ah, but they were nice to us that day in 1951; they hired a new lifeguard for us. He was blind. We got up on the new diving board and jumped. They drained the pool."³⁰ In addition, no matter how threatening and intimidating the KKK were to a black person's psyche, Gregory was not discouraged from ridiculing them in a number of his jokes: "Nothing free anymore, you can't even hate for free, don't you think it's free to join KKK and hate me; there is a \$250 initiation fee and you buy your own sheet, you even have to keep up your dues."³¹ "A man from the KKK once threatened to burn our house down, his sheet caught on fire. We threw water at him, but we missed. So we went and filled out buckets with gasoline!"³² Not even Santa Claus was safe from Dick Gregory: "Yes well my daughter, she doesn't believe in Santa Claus. She knows doggone well no white man is coming into a colored neighborhood after midnight."³³ Gregory fought the racial issues of the 1960s by confronting them and exposing how truly ridiculous hate and racism were. Both blacks and whites understood these problems in their own ways, either through experience or inner guilt, and laughed in recognition as one people.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Thomas B. Morgan, "Two Worlds of Dick Gregory," *Holiday* 36 (December 1964): 128b.

³⁰ Dick Gregory, *East and West*, 1961.

³¹ Dick Gregory, *In Living Black and White*, 1961.

³² Morgan, "Two Worlds of Dick Gregory," 126a.

³³ Ibid.

Dick Gregory did not just present racial material to his audience. He knew early in his career that if he wanted to become a success in show business he had to reach out and appeal to white audiences, not just black audiences. He strategically developed a style in which he told racial jokes as well as non-racial jokes in his performances to draw in his audiences. “It took me until 1960 to realize that I needed 80% white material; you know mother-in-law jokes and Khrushchev. I bought white man’s joke books to figure out what whitey was laughing at. Then I made a mixture 20% black and 80% white.”³⁴ To keep himself up to date with the political issues of the day, Gregory read newspapers on a daily basis and would later give his take on these issues on stage.³⁵

From the late 1950s to early 1960s, the Cold War led to the unpopular Vietnam War and the nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union. Americans, from all backgrounds, empowered themselves to speak openly about political issues and expose problems, led by Cold War diplomacy, at home and abroad. In an Anti-Vietnam war rally at Berkeley in 1965, Gregory tells a humorous story about a time when he called President Lyndon B. Johnson to talk about the Vietnam crisis: “I call him now and then, it’s very important to me because I am not about to fight the Red Chinese, if you stop and think about it they’ve got 688 million folks in China. They’ve got more census takers than we have people and if them cats ever start saying we shall overcome, they will!”³⁶ At another performance, Gregory jokes about the outer space program. He recalled a newspaper article that he read in which a chimp returns to earth from a voyage in outer space: “The caption read, ‘Chimp returns’, that was a lie, that was a man that we sent up there and that’s how he looked like when he came back.”³⁷ When the U.S.S.R. announced that they had put a man in space, Gregory was ready with some new lines: “Thing that amused me most was when that man reached a state of weightlessness. He floated out of his chair and he had to hold on to the pad. I get like that every Saturday night and it don’t cost this country no two billion.”³⁸ Gregory

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Various Artists, *Berkeley Teach-in: Vietnam*. Folkways Records FD5765, 2009, compact disc. Recorded May 1965.

³⁷ Dick Gregory, *In Living Black and White*.

³⁸ Gilbert Millstein, “Negro Says It with Jokes,” *New York Times Magazine* (April 30, 1961): 34.

exposed the absurdity of Cold War politics and openly criticized them in a humorous way. The issues raised by the Cold War crossed color lines and affected all Americans not just white or black. By using comedy, Gregory revealed to people that they faced political issues together, and that blacks are literate and competent.

Godfrey Cambridge

Godfrey Cambridge believed that if blacks and whites were going to get along, issues involving race had to be displayed and laughed at by everyone. “We must bring things out into the open. There are some people you can’t reach. You neutralize this kind. If two men are laughing at each other, nobody gets stabbed. You people aren’t going back to Europe and we aren’t going back to Africa. We got too much going on here.”³⁹ Like Gregory, Cambridge wanted black and white relations to improve. In addition, he sought to improve the public image of blacks. As mentioned, stereotypes have affected blacks negatively for decades and in the eyes of many Americans at this time, blacks were still lazy, illiterate, slow, and unmannered buffons.

Through the title of his record “Them Cotton Pickin Days is Over,” Cambridge indicates his quest to reveal that blacks were no longer subservient slaves to whites, but were equal members within society and deserved to be seen and treated as such. According to Levine, “. . .blacks used the majority’s stereotypes in their humor in order to rob them of their power to hurt and humiliate. To tell jokes containing the stereotype was not invariably to accept it but frequently to laugh at it, to strip it naked, to expose it to scrutiny.”⁴⁰ In “Them Cotton Pickin Days is Over” Cambridge strips stereotypes of their harmful effect on black images by turning them inside out and exposing them to ridicule and laughter. At the start of his act captured in this recording, Cambridge exposed the lazy and slow black stereotype by running onstage and saying, “I hope you noticed how I rushed up here. We do have to do that to change our image. No more shuffle after the revolution; we gotta be agile.”⁴¹ Another stereotype that he

³⁹ “They Have Overcome,” *Time* 85, no. 6 (February 5, 1965): 100.

⁴⁰ Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 336.

⁴¹ *Godfrey Cambridge -Them Cotton Pickin's Days Is Over, Part 1*, 2011, accessed April 21, 2012,

exposes and ridicules is blacks love for fried chicken: “People used to think of Negroes as going around with fried chicken in a paper bag, but things have changed. Now we carry an attaché case with fried chicken in it. We ain’t going to give up everything just to get along with you people.”⁴² By exposing and laughing at the absurdities behind these familiar stereotypes, Cambridge aspired to revolutionize black images and change common perceptions of blacks’ attributes. This would help diminish any lingering shame associated with being black, and build confidence and pride in people to overcome the racial problems of the 1960s.

Bill Cosby

Bill Cosby used mainly non-racial humor based on everyday topics, such as family, religion, and childhood. Bill Cosby grew up in Philadelphia, and as a college student at Temple University, he made money on the side by performing stand-up comedy at Greenwich Village clubs.⁴³ He began his career by telling racial jokes, but changed when his manager Roy Silver in 1962 told him to change his act.⁴⁴ Cosby would realize that there can only be one Dick Gregory and wanted to bring something to black stand-up that was unique. He also believed that racial jokes made some people uncomfortable and did not want that reaction while he performed. In a 1965 interview in *Saturday Evening Post*, Bill Cosby remembered, “When I began telling racial jokes, the Negroes looked at the whites, the whites looked at the Negroes and no one laughed—and then I had to tell the jokes all over again. So I tried reaching all the public so folks would say, Hey man here’s a Negro who doesn’t use racial material.”⁴⁵ His success increased as many whites felt less ‘exposed’ with Cosby’s humor. He recorded a number of comedy albums and most of his jokes deriving from his experiences in life and everyday characters.

One of Cosby’s albums called “I Started Out as a Child,” reflects on his childhood growing up in Philadelphia. In one skit he

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpOzym0fs3E&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Daube, *Laughter with Revolt*, 149.

⁴⁴ Stanley Karnow, “Bill Cosby: Variety is the Life of Spies,” *Saturday Evening Post* 238, no. 19 (1965): 86–88.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

talks about a childhood friend named Ruddy, who was the first of his friends to have a pair of sneakers, and reenacts a conversation with Ruddy about his sneakers: “They make you run fast, Ruddy says. I can run and stop on a dime and give you nine cents change and see these rubber balls on the side, they keep me from making sparks that’ll set my pants on fire cause’ I run so fast!”⁴⁶ Cosby brings his performances to life as he uses amusing words like “whoosh” and changes the tone of his voice when representing Ruddy in his skit. Aside from telling funny stories about his childhood, Cosby portrays himself as a number of familiar characters such as Superman and the biblical figure of Noah. In his Superman skit, he talks about how a police officer stopped superman from changing in a phone booth. As ‘Kent Clark’ dashes into a phone booth and loosens his tie a police officer says, “what the hell you doin’ in there? Changing my clothes, Superman answers. You can’t change in a phone booth, snaps the cop. Who the hell do you think you are?”⁴⁷ Cosby’s reflections on life and childhood allowed blacks and whites to realize that they have much more in common than they might have thought. People from all backgrounds may not have grown up in the same neighborhoods or with the same amount of wealth, but their experiences are similar and that is what Cosby wanted people to come to terms with. His audiences laughed in recognition and established a brotherhood that may not have existed without this type of humor. Cosby was able to combat the racial issues of the day without using racial comedy. He did not criticize or confront racial issues directly like Gregory or Cambridge. Instead Cosby brought together different races with humor that targeted universal life experiences and situations.

⁴⁶ Bill Cosby, *I Started Out as a Child*. Warner Bros., LP. Released November 1964.

⁴⁷ Bill Cosby, *Bill Cosby Is a Very Funny Fellow...Right!* Warner Bros., LP. Released November 1963.

Flip Wilson

Flip Wilson is another comedian who exposed the absurdities of racial issues in American society, but in a more practical and less controversial form than many of his peers including Gregory or Cambridge. One of his techniques utilized historical events to parody the social climate of the 1960s. For example, when bringing up racial discrimination in America, he used Indians to parody prejudices against blacks.

When I was back there, thinking about what I'd do out here, I asked myself if I should do any racial material. So I decided why not? Why should I hesitate to express my opinion about the racial problem? Why shouldn't I say to you: Ladies and gentlemen, we've got to do something about the Indians! There are some who say the Indians aren't ready yet. Now some say that's a pretty harsh statement, but it depends on how you look at it. Let's ask ourselves questions like, 'How would you like to build a \$50,000 home and have some guy put a wigwam next to it?'⁴⁸

One *Ebony* article in 1968 described this method as "Flip's trick to make the audience laugh first at the ludicrous situation of the Indians being discriminated against by negroes, but when they finish laughing, on their way home in the car, they'll think of what they laughed at."⁴⁹ He wanted to demonstrate to his audiences that, although funny, racial issues can be approached in different ways. He provided various avenues in his performances when approaching racial issues to make people of all backgrounds laugh without feeling threatened.

Jackie "Moms" Mabley

The most successful Black woman stand-up comedian of the 1960s was Jackie 'Moms' Mabley. She connected with her audiences by portraying an image of the universal mother and told familiar jokes to people of different backgrounds. Her jokes targeted

⁴⁸ Ponchitta Pierce, "All Flip over Flip," *Ebony* 23 (April 1968): 64.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 71.

relationships, the community, family, everyday occurrences, and racism. As Lawrence A. Levine stated, “she dealt with her audiences not as a professional entertainer but as a member of their community.”⁵⁰

Before the 1960s, Mabley found success within the black community and performed regularly at Harlem’s Apollo Theatre. Her popularity reached larger audiences after playing at Carnegie Hall in 1962 and making numerous television appearances throughout the decade. She recorded a number of successful albums and was named “The Funniest Woman in the World.”⁵¹ Her ‘mother-like’ persona allowed her to step outside the bounds of “acceptable” behavior and humor for a female comedian and shed light on controversial racial and social issues.⁵²

In “Moms Mabley at the Playboy Club” she raises the racial issue and reveals its absurdities by telling a story about a black man who wanted to join an integrated church in the South.

I want to tell you about this fellow who joined integrated church, down in one of them foreign countries, I think Alabama or Mississippi one of the foreign countries down there, and time comin’ for him to be baptized. The minister dumped him down in the water and brought him up and asked him do you believe? He answers, yes sir I believe. The minister dumped him in again, held him a little longer and brought him up and asks do you believe? The man answers (choking) yes sir I believe. The minister dumped him down again and held him longer and pulled him up and asked do you believe? The man answers (choking harder) yes sir, I believe you tryin’ to drown me, that’s what I believe.⁵³

Along with addressing the racial issues of the day, she also targeted the human condition. She addressed the hardships and sorrows of the black community in a humorous fashion and used

⁵⁰ Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 366.

⁵¹ Elsie A Williams, *The Humor of Jackie Moms Mabley: An African American Comedic Tradition*, Studies in African American History and Culture (New York: Garland Pub, 1995), 48.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Moms Mabley, *Moms Mabley At the Playboy Club*. Chess, Lp 1460. Released 1961.

humor and absurdity make light of hard times. In a skit performed at Sing Sing Prison in New York she addresses hard times by telling prisoners she feels safer with them than on the streets:

I feel safer than I felt in a long time, cause baby it is rough out there. A little boy ten years old walked up to mom and said 'stick em up'. I say 'you to little son to be talkin' on like that.' He says 'momma I don't want that damn jive give me some money!'⁵⁴

She raised the issues of poverty and violence within the Black community in a humorous fashion to not only recognize the fact that situations like this existed, but to also bring the Black community together and laugh in unison over their hardships as a way to overcome them.

Critics

Though black stand-up comedians gained popularity and became successful in their careers, they were not without critics. Most articles of the 1960s, complimented their success, but others found the material used by comedians as offensive and damaging. In the *Chicago Defender* 1961 an article entitled "Comics 'Best Yesterday or Today? Take Your Pick'" highlighted the opposing views on the changes in black comedy. It recognized that people seemed to enjoy the new style that black stand-up comedians like Gregory were using, but others thought otherwise. "There are those who refer to their lines as being crude and downgrading on racial matters and none too clean on many occasions."⁵⁵ Even Cosby, whose material was not as controversial as that of his peers, had to apologize for humor that some found to be offensive; The *Los Angeles Times* published, "Bill Apologizes for Monolog," in which Cosby apologized to the Catholic Church for calling communion wafers "individual pizzas."⁵⁶ Gregory also faced backlash in 1965 after humorous comments on his views on Edgar J. Hoover and

⁵⁴ Moms Mabley, *Moms Mabley Live At Sing Sing*. Mercury Sr- 61263. Released 1970.

⁵⁵ "Comics Best Yesterday Or Today? Take Your Pick," *Chicago Daily Defender*, November 29, 1961, p. 16.

⁵⁶ "Bill Cosby Apologizes for Monolog," *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1969, B2.

elderly blacks at a rally at Bogalusa, Louisiana. The article called “Off the Deep End” in *Christian Century*, condemned Gregory for his remarks, “such rabid extremism sets up road blocks in the Negro’s progress towards peace [...] it betrays the Negro and his just crusade. Frank criticism of the F.B.I.’s activities in the South and Uncle Tomism is needed, but there is a point beyond which frankness becomes destructive acrimony.”⁵⁷ These articles are glimpses into some of the negative views on the content used by black stand-up comedians in the 1960s. They also demonstrate that there was a shift away from criticism of comics on the basis of skin color and for performing outside of blackface, instead critics began to focus on content. This is a major transition from what historians verified before the 1960s when black performers were forced to conform to the images and portrayals that whites accepted for those black performers. This also demonstrates that people did not fully accept or understand the reasoning behind the bold or open remarks that stand-up comedians used and unfortunately, it is likely that many people never will. Black comedians had demonstrated to America that they were as skilled and were able to perform as well as, and at times even better, than white performers. Their jokes and skits were more than just that, they were windows into the trials and tribulations that blacks had faced and combated within American society. Not only did critics fail to recognize this, they overlooked the impact that these comedians had within, not just the entertainment industry, but society as a whole.

Conclusion

Broad study has been conducted on African American culture and their use of humor to overcome struggles within American society, but little has been done on black stand-up comedy in the 1960s and comics’ use of humor to overcome the turbulent social and political atmosphere during this decade. By analyzing black stand-up comedy of the 1960s, this study helps contribute to a wide array of literature that focuses on the social and political atmosphere of the decade as well as the cultural and intellectual history of African Americans.

⁵⁷ “Off the Deep End,” *The Christian Century* 82 (1965): 670.

The 1960s was a transitional period for black stand-up comics on and off stage. On stage, they had been accepted, to some degree, to speak about the social, racial, and political conditions of the day with some limitations. As Dick Gregory explained in one interview, for him to perform in front of white audiences and become successful he had to find out what whites found to be humorous.⁵⁸ He had to create jokes and skits that would appeal to whites and not just blacks. Also, if one would like to compare the success of Bill Cosby with the success of other 1960s black comics, Cosby's use of universal humor and avoidance of racial jokes allowed for his long term success and recognition to surpass those of others. Racial jokes and social satire were popular to many, yet they were too risqué or offensive for some and limited the long-term success and recognition of comedians like Dick Gregory and Godfrey Cambridge. This demonstrates that many within society, particularly whites, were not entirely comfortable with being blatantly confronted with racial issues. Whites laughed at themselves, but preferred to be entertained with humor that they could relate to over humor that clandestinely blamed them for the racial issues in America. Although black comics' limitations are evident, they broke down racial barriers on stage and paved the way for the success of future black comics. They also helped impede negative racial stereotypes by representing themselves.

Further, it is also important to note that black comics of this decade were not criticized for the color of their skin. The focus of criticisms towards them focused more on the content of their jokes than on their appearance. This is evidence of a transitional period in American society where people were shifting away from judging a person by the color of their skin. Although racial tensions continued, the Civil Rights movement and the rise of black consciousness and pride brought attention to the racial oppression that African Americans had faced. Americans began to recognize the importance of social equality and freedom of expression for all regardless of a person's race, gender, background, or ethnicity.

Black stand-up comedians created a community of laughter in which people of different backgrounds came together and laughed in recognition of specific jokes and skits. These comics integrated audiences without focusing on one specific racial or

⁵⁸ Morgan, 126a.

ethnic group. They created humor that people of all backgrounds could laugh at, which contributed to their widespread popularity and success. It had been essential that during this time of turbulence and change, people come together as one and just laugh with one another. This gathering together and community building is defined in *Imagined Communities* by Benedict Anderson where he stated “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each [community] that nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.”⁵⁹ The country had been trying to repair wounds that had been created by social, racial, and political issues of the decade. People wanted to overcome these differences and struggles. They were able to manifest a mutual understanding and establish a sort of brother/sisterhood from laughter. Stand-up comedy helped form a community of people who had been open and willing to laugh at themselves and each other.

Examining and interpreting the jokes and performances of black comics during this decade exposes and broadens one’s understanding of the trials and tribulations African Americans faced during this time. Comics used humor as a tool to bring awareness to the masses, to combat racial stereotypes and to comment on political issues of the 1960s. They fought their battles using laughter just as the slaves utilized it over a hundred years prior. Humor gave comedians a source of power and agency that may not have existed without their gift of story-telling and ability to make people laugh. They reversed stereotypes by making fun of those very stereotypes that degraded them and revealed to the world that blacks were more than just the images that have been portrayed in popular culture. Their gifts led to the integration of audiences and allowed whites and blacks to develop a community of laughter and a mutual understanding of everyday struggles.

⁵⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006), 7.

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Shared Spaces, Separate Lives: Community Formation in the California Citrus Industry during the Great Depression

By David Shanta

Abstract: The California citrus industry was the engine for the economic and cultural development of twentieth century Southern California. Studies have also focused on citrus as specialty crop agriculture. Its labor usage pattern required the economic, social, and political powerlessness of its workers. Growers and workers shared the spaces of the citrus groves and packinghouses, but otherwise led largely separate lives, delineated by class and race. Community formation during the Great Depression is examined from each perspective – dominant Anglo grower society and workers of Mexican descent. Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism provides a cultural anthropological framework, in which community forming processes of the separate groups are examined. This article aims to contribute to the literature by focusing where possible on the experiences of the small landholding “ranchers,” who collectively held the power of large landholders, and on the experiences of Mexican workers, who despite marginalization, pooled their economic and social resources, and persisted in place.

Introduction

On May 5, 1933, the City of Riverside hosted what the *California Citrograph* called a “magnificent spectacle,” a day of celebration honoring the sixtieth anniversary of the planting of the “parent” navel orange trees by Mrs. Eliza Tibbets.¹⁵⁵ The main events of the day were a parade followed by a formal dinner for 300 growers and guests at the Mission Inn. The parade stretched two miles and included over 130 decorated floats, many of which used citrus fruit as the main decorating material.¹⁵⁶ The floats represented packinghouses from local fruit exchanges across Southern California, as well as businesses connected to the prosperity of the citrus industry. Floats also represented the two largest cooperatives: the California Fruit Growers Exchange (CFGE, later Sunkist), and Mutual Orange Distributors (MOD, later Pure Gold). The floats were rolling displays of civic pride in hometown citrus groves, but also a passing in review of the established economic and social order.

Community, hierarchies, and local culture become established by such events. Historian David Glassberg calls historical pageants dramatic public rituals, portraying local community development. The imagery is controlled by economic and political power, and so the dominant culture tells the story. The historical imagery of Eliza Tibbets, as matriarchal pioneer, provides a starting point in an idealized past, leading to prosperity in the present (1933), thus providing context within which to shape and interpret future experiences.¹⁵⁷ The day’s events celebrated and reinforced the sense of community among growers across Southern California.

By the time that Eliza Tibbets planted her navel orange trees in 1873, farmers and businessmen, looking for new cash

¹⁵⁵ Walter Reuther, Herbert John Webber, Leon Dexter Batchelor, eds. *The Citrus Industry, Vol. I: History, World Distribution, Botany and Varieties*, Rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 484-85. The term “parent” navel orange trees derives from the practice of budding, in which a cutting from a parent tree is grafted onto a suitable rootstock. According to Reuther, et al, millions of navel trees in California traced their lineage to these first trees grown in the Tibbets’ yard.

¹⁵⁶ “Riverside Pays Spectacular Homage to Mrs. Eliza Tibbets,” *California Citrograph*, June 1933, 217.

¹⁵⁷ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

crops, were already planting a variety of fruits and nuts across California, made possible by the state's diverse soils and climates. These newer entrants were crops that demanded an intensified investment of capital, scientific research to maximize their potential, and a system of labor usage adapted to this new system.¹⁵⁸ California's potential as agricultural powerhouse in the twentieth century originated in this transition from extensive farming of grains to intensive farming of special crops.

The California citrus industry epitomized the specialty crop agricultural system, and in the late nineteenth century, the economies of Riverside and San Bernardino counties were built on this foundation. The idyllic outward appearances of beautiful groves and fragrant blossoms masked the hard reality of the citrus business, for both growers and workers. Before the cooperatives were formed in the early 1890s, the growers had little control over the chaotic markets into which they shipped their fruit, and they were facing ruin.¹⁵⁹ Survival meant taking control of all aspects of their business: cooperative ownership of the packinghouses and locating their own sales and marketing organization in major U.S. cities and in foreign ports.¹⁶⁰ The cooperatives also gave the growers collective control of labor, which was essential to the maximization of profits. The system formed classes, at least partly based on race or ethnicity, and ultimately formed separate communities of white growers and workers of Asian and Mexican descent. These labor groups were marginalized economically and socially, through segregation, discrimination, and legislation.

In *Bitter Harvest*, Cletus Daniel asserts that no matter the worker's race or nation of origin, California growers sought and shaped a work force that was economically, politically, and socially powerless. They had convinced themselves that their own economic survival depended on such powerlessness.¹⁶¹ In the early twentieth century, Mexican workers were considered desirable for

¹⁵⁸ Paul W. Rhode, "Learning, Capital Accumulation, and the Transformation of California Agriculture," *Journal of Economic History* 55, no. 4 (December, 1995): 773-800.

¹⁵⁹ P.J. Dreher, "Early History of Cooperative Marketing of Citrus Fruit," *California Citrograph*, October 1916, 2.

¹⁶⁰ Grace Larsen and H. E. Erdman, "Development of Revolving Finance in Sunkist Growers," *Journal of Farm Economics* 41, no. 4 (November 1959): 769-780.

¹⁶¹ Cletus Daniel, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 68-69.

their (perceived) willingness to fill this role.¹⁶² Exclusion from the dominant society resulted in limited choices for these workers and their families. Segregation and discrimination were daily realities for Mexican immigrants, yet they were willing and able to create a sense of community in the spaces left to them. Within these spaces of home, neighborhood, church, leisure activities, and work, bonds were formed based on family, shared culture, and economic class. The pageantry of the Orange Day celebration in Riverside contrasts sharply with the scale of a community celebration in a workers' neighborhood, given in honor of a family event such as a wedding or a baptism.¹⁶³

Benedict Anderson's work, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* provides theoretical structure to the study of the community-forming processes of the growers and workers.¹⁶⁴ Understanding Anderson's methodology is a necessary precursor to the application of his theory to the citrus industry. He submits his definition of community "in an anthropological spirit."¹⁶⁵ Community is based on ancient cultural roots; therefore his study of community can be described as a cultural anthropological construct. Imagined community requires the vernacularization of language, and mass communication through that vernacular.¹⁶⁶ Anderson's methodology is to use cultural institutions, such as newspapers, as reflections of daily life in an imagined community.

This study will present myriad ways that growers and workers sent and received signals of commonality. Growers with varying sizes of groves, and from distant locales, read the same monthly trade journals of their cooperatives. They understood that

¹⁶² Daniel, 67; David Vaught, *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875-1920* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 184.

¹⁶³ Gilbert G. Gonzalez, *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 91.

¹⁶⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 6-7. Anderson states "all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined." They are imagined in that members will never know most of their fellows, "yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." Community is conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship, despite inequalities and inequities. Anderson studies how peoples build imagined national communities, leading to the end of their colonization.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 37-46.

while they may never meet, there still existed a feeling of comradeship with fellow growers in the citrus producing regions of the state. Mexican workers¹⁶⁷ would have found similar commonalities in Spanish language newspapers, or through Spanish-language radio broadcasts. In addition to cultural roots and universalized communication, “creole elite” is an element of Anderson’s theory that provides a context through which to examine grower-worker relationships as well as their separate community formations.¹⁶⁸ The consciousness of imagined community awakened both groups to the possibility of independence, but with differing results.

This study aims to increase understanding of each group’s community-forming processes and how these processes reflected pre-existing values, which shaped their self-image, as well as their perceptions of the other group. The growers saw themselves as gentlemen farmers.¹⁶⁹ They valued their Mexican workers for the role they played in a profitable enterprise, but maintained a paternalistic relationship with their workers. Perceptions of the Mexican workers as aliens, by the larger community, led to their treatment as a marginalized ethnic minority.¹⁷⁰ In turn, these experiences shaped the perceptions held by the workers about their economic prospects and their social position within the larger community. Disappointment became bitterness, and tempered the expectations of life in America for immigrants as well as for Mexican Americans.

¹⁶⁷ Use of the term “Mexican” is appropriate when we are discussing Mexican cultural commonalities that apply to all persons of Mexican descent. Historians (including those of Mexican descent) frequently use the term for brevity, when it can be implied that the discussion applies to all persons of Mexican descent. The term has also been used with intent to insinuate that regardless of legal status (citizen or resident alien), the social status of these groups remained undifferentiated. This usage was discriminatory in the 1930s, claiming that all persons of Mexican descent were taking jobs and social services that white Americans were entitled to, as a pretense for Repatriation.

¹⁶⁸ Anderson, 47-65.

¹⁶⁹ Kevin Starr, *Inventing The Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 140-44.

¹⁷⁰ Matt Garcia, *A World of its Own: Race, Labor and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Historiography

The citrus industry had an immense impact on the economic and cultural development of Southern California, and continues to be the subject of studies focusing on both labor history and grower culture.¹⁷¹ Studies of the experiences of immigrant and migrant labor groups do more than describe worker powerlessness and misery; they also document the agency that these groups exercised in their lives at home, in the community, and where possible, in the workplace.

¹⁷¹ In addition to Matt Garcia's *A World of its Own: Race, Labor and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Gilbert Gonzalez has authored numerous studies of the rural Mexican population in Southern California during this period, such as *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994) and Gilbert G. Gonzalez "Women, Work, and Community in the Mexican Colonias of the Southern California Citrus Belt," *California History* 74, no. 1, Citriculture and Southern California (Spring, 1995): 58-67, in which Gonzalez focuses on the day-to-day contributions that Mexican women made to worker village life; see also Jose M. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press: 2006). Margo McBane's "The Role of Gender in Citrus Employment: A Case Study of Recruitment, Labor, and Housing Patterns at the Limoneira Company, 1893 to 1940," *California History* 74, no. 1, Citriculture and Southern California (Spring, 1995): 68-81, is a case study of the role of gender in employment at the Limoneira Ranch in Ventura County, and contributes valuable insights into the role that women (and children) played in the system of labor control that was exerted by growers, for instance through the "lure" of housing; see also Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Studies of grower culture include Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), Anthea Marie Hartig, "Citrus growers and the construction of the Southern California landscape, 1880-1940" (PhD diss., University of California, Riverside, 2001), a study of ten wealthy citrus families in Riverside; see also Ronald Tobey and Charles Wetherell, "The Citrus Industry and the Revolution of Corporate Capitalism in Southern California, 1887-1944," *California History* 74, no.1 (Spring 1995): 6-21. Michael R. Belknap's "The Era of the Lemon: A History of Santa Paula, California." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 47, no.2 (June, 1968): 113-140, is an in-depth look at the oligarchic rule of citrus growers in a small Ventura County town; Charles C. Teague's *Fifty Years A Rancher* (Los Angeles: Anderson & Ritchie, The Ward Ritchie Press, 1944) is the autobiography of a prominent grower and President of Limoneira, who also led CFGE from 1922-1950.

Cletus Daniel and David Vaught both examine the conflict between the profit demands in California's specialty crop agriculture and the agrarian ideal of small family farms that distributed economic and political power. Daniel roots it in the continuation of the pattern of large-scale land ownership from the Spanish-Mexican era, and the same "single-minded, get-rich-quick orientation"¹⁷² of bonanza wheat farms,¹⁷³ a mindset reminiscent of the gold miners. Vaught views history from the perspective of the growers, whom he believes have been less represented or misrepresented in recent, labor-oriented histories. Vaught presents specialty crop growers as horticulturalists,¹⁷⁴ who believed that they were serving a larger purpose by improving the nutrition of the nation. They were not true yeoman farmers in the Jeffersonian sense, but neither were they amoral industrialists, fixated solely on profits.

Citrus growers were horticulturalists, but they were also inheritors of the legacy of the bonanza wheat farmers. The cooperatives enabled the small ranchers to appear as family farmers in the traditional sense, while collectively controlling their labor, in a manner similar to that of the large landholders. The development of the citrus industry in Southern California¹⁷⁵ also created a demand for year-round labor, facilitating a more settled life for citrus workers that allowed them to seek permanent housing.

Histories of the citrus industry in California have tended to focus on the large landholding growers; recent labor histories, of

¹⁷² Cletus Daniel, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 21.

¹⁷³ "Bonanza wheat farm" refers to the large California grain farms that were established as commercial ventures in the early Gold Rush era (1852-1855). California growers so rapidly increased wheat (and barley) production, that local demand was satisfied and the state became a grain exporter in this short space of five years. See James Gerber, "The Gold Rush Origins of California's Wheat Economy," *America Latina En La Historia Economica, Boletin De Fuentes* 34 (December, 2010): 35-44.

¹⁷⁴ Merriam-Webster defines horticulture as "the science and art of growing fruits, vegetables, flowers, or ornamental plants." The root word, *hortus*, is Latin for garden. David Vaught, *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875-1920* (John Hopkins University Press, 1999).

¹⁷⁵ Summer-ripening Valencia oranges were concentrated along the coastal plains, where loss to freezes were less likely; winter-harvested navels were planted in the hot inland valleys, where their yields could be maximized; lemons were planted in both coastal and inland locations.

necessity include growers, but do not study community formation among the small landholding ranchers. This study adds to the literature in its focus on community formation in this specific socio-economic group.¹⁷⁶

Shared Spaces, Separate Lives

On January 31, 1934, the front page of the *Corona Daily Independent* illustrated just how separate were the lives and perceptions of the growers and their workers. In the upper left corner, a photograph shows three local beauties “beaming a smiling welcome to San Bernardino, home of the National Orange Show, California’s Greatest Midwinter Event.” In the very next column, a headline reads “Alleged Agitators Given Boot Out of County After Trial.” The two agitators were arrested by police for “asserted efforts to cause a strike among Mexican orange pickers of this district.” They were charged with vagrancy, and released on the condition that they leave the county immediately and never return.¹⁷⁷

Both stories represented the economic, social, and political order that arose in conjunction with the citrus industry. The former announces a celebration of citrus culture; the latter reports on enforcement of that established order. In the 1930s, citrus culture in Southern California was a way of life, and events like the National Orange Show were tangible expressions of the culture. The backbone of citrus culture, as celebrated by the shows, was the growers. They transformed a desert into a garden, but their success depended on cheap labor, and the workers acceptance of their role in the system. Blaming outside forces for labor unrest made it easier to justify the repression of labor organizing and to rationalize the status quo.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ According to Tobey and Wetherell, the vast majority of growers owned ranches or groves in the range of ten to fifteen acres. Grower is the general class and rancher, in this study, is specific in that it refers to *citrus* growers. Ronald Tobey and Charles Wetherell, “The Citrus Industry and the Revolution of Corporate Capitalism in Southern California, 1887-1944,” *California History* 74, no.1 (Spring 1995): 14.

¹⁷⁷ “Alleged Agitators Given Boot Out of County After Trial,” *Corona Daily Independent*, January 31, 1934.

¹⁷⁸ Jose M. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press: 2006), 127.

It was essential for growers to control labor costs, in order to maximize profits. The best way to control wages was to create competition among workers.¹⁷⁹ California growers welcomed Mexican workers as a plentiful source of cheap labor, and by the 1930s, they had become the dominant ethnic group working in California agriculture. They were also the most numerous group working in the citrus groves of Riverside and San Bernardino counties.¹⁸⁰ Their story of community formation in California begins with their exodus from Mexico to the American Southwest. Pushed by economic and political turmoil, and then a violent revolution, they were drawn northward to better paying jobs and a chance at a new life in the United States.¹⁸¹ The stability of the citrus harvest cycles allowed these immigrants to create a communal life, based on family, their commonalities of culture, and their shared economic class. This was true whether they lived in grower-provided housing or in neighborhoods and villages close to the groves. The paternalistic relationship between growers and workers was bound to become adversarial, as the extraordinary event of the Great Depression put downward pressure on both prices and wages. The growers' efforts to repress labor organizing, backed by the power of the state, resulted in strikes that peeled away the facade of paternalistic concern for worker welfare, which the growers had constructed since the First World War.¹⁸²

Benedict Anderson's concept of a creole elite is useful to the understanding of grower community formation and self-image. Colonial creole elite were educated and trusted administrators and were a key to the stability that was essential for the transfer of wealth to the colonizing power. While they retained bloodlines to the colonizing power, they were treated as inferiors by the pure-born metropolitans. This hard line of demarcation awakened them to the fact that they had more in common with fellow creoles and

¹⁷⁹ Ronald Tobey and Charles Wetherell, "The Citrus Industry and the Revolution of Corporate Capitalism in Southern California, 1887-1944," *California History* 74, no. 1 (Spring, 1995): 18.

¹⁸⁰ Vaught, 184, Daniel, 66-67, Matt Garcia, *A World Of Its Own: Race, Labor and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 46.

¹⁸¹ Mario T. Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 33-35.

¹⁸² Jose M. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press: 2006), 25,130.

natives, than with the metropole.¹⁸³ This element of Anderson's theory has a special relevance for the weak and disorganized citrus growers, before they formed the cooperatives in the early 1890s. Commission brokers, packers, and shippers were enriching themselves at the expense of the growers, and posed an existential threat.¹⁸⁴ By organizing themselves through cooperatives, the growers bypassed the middlemen who were exploiting their weakness. It was a stroke for self-determination.

The organizing efforts of the workers were a challenge to grower paternalism, but were not intended to overthrow the existing system. Their intentions lay only in gaining some leverage and a better life within that system. Ironically, in the grower-worker relationship, the growers had assumed the role of the colonizing power. Their collective control of labor created an exploitive relationship that the growers maintained by repression of organizing, and by refusal to recognize unions, once formed.

A Community of Growers

For David Vaught, specialty crop growers were best described as businessmen who also saw themselves as horticulturalists, with a mission to build "small, virtuous communities and economic development."¹⁸⁵ Their smaller groves and orchards (relative to the bonanza wheat farms) allowed proximity to the neighboring communities. This created a connection that inspired Chester Rowell, editor of the *Fresno Morning Republican*, to declare that public affairs included raisins,¹⁸⁶ implying interdependence between horticulturalists and nearby communities.¹⁸⁷

Horticulture required a "specific 'class of people,' pursuing a 'pleasant and profitable life' in microenvironments where water and other natural advantages were abundant."¹⁸⁸ Vaught points to the frequent appearance of these two phrases in newspapers, farm

¹⁸³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 47-65.

¹⁸⁴ Rahno Mabel MacCurdy and V.A. Lockeby, *Selling The Gold: History of Sunkist and Pure Gold* (Upland, CA: The Upland Public Library Foundation, 1999), 11.

¹⁸⁵ David Vaught, *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 10.

¹⁸⁶ Vaught, 1.

¹⁸⁷ Vaught, 4.

¹⁸⁸ Vaught, 44-45.

journals, and popular literature, as an indication that fruit and nut growers saw themselves as “a select social group.”¹⁸⁹ The California citrus industry embodied the ideals and missions of horticulture. It was a civilized connection to the land, and it appealed to businessmen and professionals from around the U.S. It beckoned them to the land of warmth and wealth, to lead a life that was “at once healthful and refined” in the Mediterranean climate of Southern California.¹⁹⁰ In March 1911, *Sunset* magazine published an article entitled “In the Orange Country: Where the Orchard is a Mine, the Human factor Among Gold-Bearing Trees of California.”¹⁹¹ It was a virtual advertisement of this healthful and refined life. It lauded the pluck, resourcefulness, and industry of the citrus ranchers, and exhibited the beauty of the groves and citrus towns in a photographic tour of citrus country.¹⁹²

Between 1900 and 1920, over 200 letters of inquiry were sent to the Redlands, California Chamber of Commerce, expressing interest in owning citrus groves.¹⁹³ Most came from the northeastern and Midwest states, and Canada. These letters offer a glimpse into perceptions formed about life as a citrus rancher in California. While it is not possible to discern serious intentions from wishful thinking, “California Citrus,” the idea, had certainly intrigued all of the inquirers. Perhaps they imagined themselves as a part of that select social group described by Vaught, and wanted to share in the life they had read about in *Sunset* magazine.

Industry organs such as the *California Citrograph* (CFGE), and conventions and fairs, became spaces for shared experiences. A subscriber to the *Citrograph* saw advertisements for grove heaters, tractors, and chemicals. The ads portrayed ranchers like themselves, giving testimonials of how they had solved one problem or another by using the advertised product. Ranchers could see how their fellows dealt with the everyday challenges of ranching. It was imagined community, through its portrayal of shared experiences. Readership of the *Citrograph* in 1922 was

¹⁸⁹ Vaught, 44-45.

¹⁹⁰ Kevin Starr, *Inventing The Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 142.

¹⁹¹ Walter V. Woehlke, “In The Orange Country: Where the Orchard is a Mine, the Human factor Among Gold-Bearing Trees of California,” *Sunset* 26, no. 3 (March 1911): 251-264.

¹⁹² Woehlke, 251-264.

¹⁹³ Redlands Chamber of Commerce Collection, Box VII, Citrus Collection, Folder C., Letters of Inquiry, A.K. Smiley Public Library.

12,200.¹⁹⁴ According to historians Ronald Tobey and Charles Wetherell, seventy-three percent of growers in 1921 were CFGE growers, with MOD making up another ten percent,¹⁹⁵ so that eighty-three percent of growers had access to imagined community through these institutions.

The National Orange Show was only one of dozens of industry fairs or “shows.” In these spaces, participants were able to see the community of growers and comprehend that their industry was made up of thousands like themselves. Competing districts would build exhibits that looked like floats in the annual Tournament of Roses parade. Instead of flowers, the entire exhibit was covered in oranges or lemons in intricate design patterns. As in the Orange Day celebration, historical pageantry played a role in community formation.¹⁹⁶ The primary purpose of these shows was ostensibly to bring together the entire industry for technical presentations and seminars, and for growers to discuss the many pressing issues of the day in their shared business. These shows also included a celebratory element, in formal dinners and balls, and in informal mingling in the amusement sections such as one would find at any county fair.¹⁹⁷ Attendance at the show during the Depression ranged from 255,000 in 1929, to 136,000 in 1939.¹⁹⁸

Through their cooperatives, growers became business partners, but they were also likely to be lodge brothers, civic leaders, and fellow church members. George Stanley was a lemon grower in Corona, and worked forty-one years for the Exchange Lemon Products Company.¹⁹⁹ He was active in the Lions Club,

¹⁹⁴ Nelson Chesman & Co.’s, *Newspaper Rate Book* (St. Louis: Nelson Chesman & Co., 1922), 12. The “sworn average circulation” for the *Citrograph* in 1922 was 12,200. The same advertisers also patronized MOD’s organ, *Citrus Leaves*, which was published in Redlands.

¹⁹⁵ Ronald Tobey and Charles Wetherell, “The Citrus Industry and the Revolution of Corporate Capitalism in Southern California, 1887-1944,” *California History* 74, no. 1 (Spring, 1995): 8.

¹⁹⁶ Douglas Cazaux Sackman, “By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them”: “Nature Cross Culture Hybridization” and the California Citrus Industry, 1893-1939, *California History* 74 no. 1 (Spring, 1995): 82-99.

¹⁹⁷ Redlands Chamber of Commerce Collection, Box VII, Citrus Collection, Folder B., Orange Show Bills, A.K. Smiley Public Library.

¹⁹⁸ “Great Throng Sees Classic on Final Day,” *San Bernardino Sun*, February 25, 1929; “136,230 At Show,” *San Bernardino Sun*, March 27, 1939.

¹⁹⁹ Tobey and Wetherell, 9. The Exchange Lemon Products Company and Exchange Orange Products Company were wholly owned subsidiaries of the

Toastmasters, the Garden Club, the Corona Concert Association, the Library Board, and the Riverside County Republican Committee.²⁰⁰

Stanley's many affiliations are a testament to his civic-mindedness, but also illustrate a network of business, social, and political groups, wherein affiliation in one realm could be leveraged to open doors or facilitate cooperation in the others. For instance, business colleagues at the local growers association might have found themselves working together on a community service project for their fraternal organization. If one of their lodge brothers was running for public office, their help on his campaign provided future access if they needed help with labor issues or railroad rates. In this example, a circular pattern was created, where relationships in business led to social networking, with political access that returned benefits to the business realm. Relationships like these are built over many years. Such common networking can become hierarchical if other groups are excluded from access to this marketplace, based on race, class, or gender. Workers were not business owners and so would not have joined the Rotary Club, nor is it likely that, based on class, they would have been asked to join fraternal lodges like The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Without these sorts of informal social interactions, they would not be able to establish the personal relationships that give access to business owners and government officials. Exclusiveness creates the perception that certain segments of society, for example Mexican Americans, would not have this type of access to government. Exclusion threatens democratic principles and replaces faith in the social contract with disillusionment.

Community formation among growers has been discussed in the context of shared experiences, including the pivotal establishment of cooperative marketing. Concrete cultural markers also engender community pride, whether they are the result of cumulative efforts to build them, or simply because they inspire a feeling of broad communal ownership. For example, Riverside's Mission Inn was built for the tourist trade, to house visitors who

CFGE, formed to process culls into juice, pectin, citric acid, and lemon and orange oils.

²⁰⁰ George Stanley, Interviewed by Gloria Scott, Corona, California, November 22, 1982. Corona Public Library Oral History Project HR C-039, C-040.

came to enjoy the Mediterranean climate, and to tour the scenic orange groves. Even citizens of Riverside, who could not afford to dine or stay at the Mission Inn, recognized the Mission Inn as a symbol of their town and way of life. As such, it became a focal point of external validation when hosting tourists from around the country and foreign nations. Today, the Mission Inn is a tangible and romantic connection to Riverside's past. Though Riverside's Loring Opera House was lost to fire in 1990, wealthy growers were entertained there by some of the biggest stars of the stage from 1890 to 1923.²⁰¹ In Redlands, a public space contains the A.K. Smiley Library, the Lincoln Shrine, and the Redlands Bowl. Alfred and Albert Smiley - educators, humanitarians, philanthropists, and citrus growers in Redlands - donated the sixteen-acre space to the city in 1898.²⁰²

Many educational institutions owe their existence to citrus benefactors, as well as to the general prosperity of the towns created by citrus wealth. Among them are Chaffey College in Ontario,²⁰³ The Claremont Colleges,²⁰⁴ and the University of California Riverside, a natural outgrowth of the Citrus Experiment Station.²⁰⁵ All of these institutions were founded to contribute to the community: to afford an educational experience equivalent to what the founders had experienced in the east or Midwest; also to be an economic boon, by training future businessmen, scientists, teachers, and clergy. All of them elicit community pride.

The first citrus cooperatives required communal action for survival, and, having succeeded mightily, engendered the sense of community that comes from shared risk.

²⁰¹ Tom Patterson, *A Colony for California: Riverside's First Hundred Years*, 2nd ed. (Riverside, CA: Riverside Museum Press, 1996), 213-220.

²⁰² Larry E. Burgess, *Alfred Albert and Daniel Smiley: A Biography* (Redlands, CA: Beacon Printery, 1969); Phyllis C. Irshay, *The Pride and Glory of the Town: The Story of the A.K. Smiley Public Library* (Redlands, CA: City of Redlands, 1988), 10.

²⁰³ The original Chaffey College, founded by Canadians George and William Chaffey, opened in 1885 in Ontario, the buildings now part of Chaffey High School. Chaffey College relocated to what is now Rancho Cucamonga in 1960.

²⁰⁴ Pomona grower and philanthropist Russell Pitzer provided early endowment funds for the liberal arts college named after his family, founded in 1963.

²⁰⁵ "Dedication of Citrus Station at Riverside, March 27th," *California Citrograph*, March 1918, 97. The article describes, "The official dedication of the graduate school of tropical agriculture and citrus experiment station of the University of California, at Riverside . . ."

The growers had a right to congratulate themselves on their successes, and a closer examination of the realities of farming citrus reveals the constant struggles and risks of being in that business. However, the growers weren't acknowledging the indispensable contribution of the workers who made the dream real. It was *their* hands that turned the plump fruit on the trees into carloads heading eastward, and income returned to the grower and his community. These workers and their families also had hopes and dreams for a better life.

Labor Problem Solved-Racial Problem Created

Labor shortages in California agriculture were often relieved by the use of immigrant workers. The pattern of rejection of the immigrant workers by the non-grower white population could be mitigated, if those non-white workers remained on the move, following seasonal crops throughout California. This was not the case with citrus. Valencia oranges are harvested roughly from June to October and the Washington Navel orange is generally picked from December to April or May. Adding the year-round picking of lemons creates a schedule with very little downtime. This year-round source of income for growers also attracts a work force of family men, looking for a more settled life. Edward Barbo was born in Redlands in 1928 and worked with his father in the groves as a boy. Working and camping in the San Joaquin Valley during the short citrus off seasons was hard. Life was better back in Redlands.²⁰⁶ For Barbo, a settled life, even in modest housing, was better than a migratory life with no roots, disrupted schooling, and no permanent community around them. Year-round labor availability was advantageous to the growers, and the steady work was a source of stability for the worker families.

Mexican immigration into the U.S. in the twentieth century began in earnest during the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920.²⁰⁷ Many fled the fighting and the resultant economic and social disruptions. A second and equally powerful draw from the north

²⁰⁶ Edward Barbo, Interview by Robert Gonzalez, February 14, 1995 Vol. 2, "Citrus, Labor and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley," A.K. Smiley Public Library, Redlands, California.

²⁰⁷ Mario T. Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 33-35.

occurred when the United States entered the First World War in 1917. Millions of American men were in uniform or drawn to war industries. The government's slogan that "Food Will Win the War" meant that an increase in food production was mandatory. Despite concerted state and federal efforts to mobilize all able bodies in California, the numbers were still inadequate, leading growers to advocate for increased Mexican immigration.²⁰⁸ The 1910 census reports the total population of Mexican descent in the United States as over 360,000. This increased to more than 700,000 in 1920 and doubled again to over 1,400,000 by 1930.²⁰⁹ Between 1917 and 1920, over 30,000 Mexicans entered California.²¹⁰ A December, 1919 editorial in the *Citrograph* asserts that the citrus industry was already dependent on Mexican labor.²¹¹ The combination of a world war and immigration restrictions of Asian and European groups, cemented California agriculture's dependence on Mexican labor for the foreseeable future.

The influx of cheap Mexican labor was a boon to California's growers, but the non-grower community was not as welcoming. Restrictions or containments were applied to housing on citrus ranches, separate Mexican villages, segregated schooling, access to markets and restaurants, even to seating in movie theaters. In an early study of a Mexican village known as *Arbol Verde*, researcher Helen O'Brien observed that "the Mexican is economically (but not socially) a part of Claremont,"²¹² that is, they were welcome to provide cheap labor, but were not welcome in mainstream American society. For example, shopping for food was only permitted at stores designated for "ethno racial minorities."²¹³

²⁰⁸ Vaught, *Cultivating California*, 177-184.

²⁰⁹ United States. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. *Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States*. Washington: U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1933.

²¹⁰ Ricardo Romo, "Responses to Mexican Immigration, 1910-1930," *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, *UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press*, 6, no.2 (Summer 1975): 172-194. Romo estimates a total Mexican immigration of over 180,000 into the U.S., during the same 1917-1920 period, using Mexican government sources.

²¹¹ "Growth of Mexican Labor," *California Citrograph*, December 1919, 33.

²¹² Helen O'Brien, "The Mexican Colony: A Study of Cultural Change," 1-2, as quoted in Garcia, *A World of Its Own*, 71.

²¹³ O'Brien, as quoted in Garcia, 52.

Large landholding growers often housed their labor on the ranch, with schooling for the children, a company store, and community-building activities such as baseball teams or bands. These amenities were designed to appeal to the Mexican families. The benefits of a stable home life would supersede occasional higher wages from migratory work, or the temptation to go to work for another citrus ranch. Blas Coyazo worked thirty-five years for the Fairbanks Ranch in the Redlands area. He acknowledged that he might have occasionally missed a bigger payday to be had on some other ranch, but in the long run he did better financially by staying with one employer, because he was not idle in the off seasons. He was able to work for so long, because the management “protected him from the heavier work [as he got older].”²¹⁴ This last statement by Coyazo indicates that his loyal service to this grower was returned in kind, and suggests that worker-grower relations were not invariably exploitive.

The *Citrograph* ran a series of articles on citrus labor housing, authored by A.D. Shamel, Plant Physiologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and resident at the Citrus Experiment Station in Riverside. The motive to provide such housing was certainly based on self-interest; growers wanted to reproduce their family work force. Historian Margo McBane studied the family housing on the Limoneira Ranch at Santa Paula in Ventura County²¹⁵ and concluded that it was part of the system of labor control that was exerted by growers. Families formed a more stable and harmonious labor force than single males, but there were other, more subtle benefits. Families recruited other relatives into the work force; those who worked together trained each other and also maintained a sort of unit discipline in work habits.

Nonetheless, if the housing was of good quality, then it also benefited the workers, intentionally or not. It reflected both the need to keep good help, and also that Mexicans were indeed considered good help, as noted in the September, 1918 issue of the *Citrograph*:

²¹⁴ Blas Coyazo, interviewed by Robert Gonzalez, June 30, 1994, Redlands, California Vol. 4 “Citrus, Labor and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley” A.K. Smiley Public Library, 31.

²¹⁵ Margo McBane, “The Role of Gender in Citrus Employment: A Case Study of Recruitment, Labor, and Housing Patterns at the Limoneira Company, 1893 to 1940,” *California History* 74, no. 1, Citriculture and Southern California (Spring, 1995): 76.

The Mexican laborer, who has a comfortable little cottage in which he may maintain his family, is the contented man, and is less likely to be attracted by the blandishments of another 25 cents a day.²¹⁶

The Limoneira Ranch provided photographs and floor plans for a showcase article in the May, 1920 edition of the *Citrograph*.²¹⁷ It was common to segregate the workers by race, with differing levels of housing quality for each race. An article that featured the neighboring Rancho Sespe in Fillmore, described the housing for white, married men: from four to five rooms, rented for \$5 to \$8 per month, with free plumbing, painting, and repairs. A photo shows a fenced-in cottage, with trees and vines. For the married Mexican man, the ranch furnished a lot of approximately one-quarter of an acre. “The Mexicans build their own houses, sometimes with two rooms, sometimes more.”²¹⁸ The ranch management felt that this arrangement created a home-like feeling. A photo of a family posing in front of one of these “typical homes in the Mexican village on the Sespe Ranch,” bears the caption “seven future employees in this family.”²¹⁹ The cost of workers’ housing was returned in the long-term benefits of having reliable and experienced workers on hand year-round, and hopefully, for a generation. At the Chase Plantation in Corona, the dwelling for a single white male was slightly larger than that provided for an entire Mexican family. Once again, the clear message to the Mexican family was that they were of a lower class, based on their ethnicity.²²⁰

Outside of these exceptional arrangements, most of the Mexicans fended for themselves. If they could save enough money to buy a small plot of land, the location would likely be one that no one else wanted. The *Arbol Verde* village was built in the path of a wash running out of the nearby San Bernardino Mountains,

²¹⁶ “The Well Housed Employee,” *California Citrograph*, September 1918, 253.

²¹⁷ A.D. Culberson, “Housing of Ranch Labor,” *California Citrograph*, May 1920, 212.

²¹⁸ A.D. Shamel, “Employes of California Citrus Ranches,” *California Citrograph*, March 1918, 96-97.

²¹⁹ A.D. Shamel, “Employes of California Citrus Ranches,” *California Citrograph*, March 1918, 96-97.

²²⁰ A.D. Shamel, “Housing the Employes of California Citrus Ranches,” *California Citrograph*, March 1918, 86.

therefore “subject to occasional flooding.”²²¹ They were more likely to build their own homes, using whatever materials could be afforded or that were on hand. Utility services provided by the local municipal governments were limited to water and electricity. Others who were newer and could not afford their own lot would rent, and share the space with extended family or friends.²²²

Leo Mott found poor housing conditions in the Eastside, Casa Blanca, and Arlington districts of Riverside in 1924. As an inspector for the California Commission on Immigration and Housing (CCIH), he rated one hundred and forty-one of the one hundred and eighty houses inspected, as “very bad” under the CCIH rating system. Some houses had four or five families living in them and the Casa Blanca village had no sewer service. The run-down neighborhoods were considered “breeding grounds for disease” that could easily “infest the other sections of the city.”²²³ The CCIH suggested that Riverside would do well to condemn the old, derelict houses and erect housing that would be safe and sanitary, and which could also earn rent for the city, or interest, should the new units be sold to the occupants. Otherwise, the city would attract the “skum (sic) of the Mexican population of the state.”²²⁴ The use of terms like “infest,” or “skum,” make it clear that the priority here was to mitigate the danger to the surrounding community, and only incidentally to benefit the occupants of the overcrowded housing.

Education for Mexican immigrant children placed great emphasis on learning English, and training in vocational skills, based on commonly held beliefs that Mexican children did not have potential in academic studies; the boys should be trained in manual “shop” skills, and the girls in domestic skills. These segregated Mexican schools were also inferior in quality of construction, compared to the standard schools for Anglo-American children. Anglo teachers assigned to them were also considered to be inferior. These differences (deficiencies)

²²¹ O’Brien, 1-2, as quoted in Garcia, 71.

²²² Gonzalez, Gilbert G. *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 59-62; Matt Garcia, 61-65.

²²³ “Better Housing Condition Sought,” *Riverside Enterprise*, June 17, 1924.

²²⁴ “Better Housing.”

expressed biases that the children were not equal in aptitude to white children by virtue of their ethnicity.²²⁵

The Mexicans clearly experienced the difficulties of all new immigrant groups, related to learning the language and adapting to an alien culture, but there was a deeper problem of racial stereotyping that limited assimilation. In an address to the Lemon Men's Club in 1929, George P. Clements, Manager of the Agricultural Department of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, described the Mexican (and "oriental") as fully adapted to tasks in California agriculture, "due to their crouching and bending habits" and desirable in that he is never a "biological" problem, that is, he doesn't marry out of his own race.²²⁶ Clements continues that the Mexican is also honest, responsible, and considerate of his employer's property. Most importantly, to Clements' audience, California's agriculture absolutely depended on their labor.

The pattern of previous labor practices in the citrus belt was being reproduced, with a new group. A cheap labor source was recruited, and their work was proven to be a major contribution to the success of the growers and to the prosperity of the community. The non-white immigrants then faced the rejection of the larger community, in the form of segregation and discrimination. Most importantly, the children learned that they were inferior in school and that, because of their skin color, they were not allowed do the same things that white children do.

Discrimination could present itself in something as simple as taking a swim on a hot summer day. In Redlands, the municipal swimming pool was known as the Sylvan Plunge. Prior to World War II, the Mexican and African American children were allowed to swim there on Mondays only. Blas Coyazo recalled that they were "chased out" about three-thirty or four o'clock in the afternoon, because the pool staff was going to drain and clean the pool. "And we went back on Tuesdays, we couldn't get in, the water was just beautiful every day from Tuesday on."²²⁷ Blatant acts of restriction and discrimination against Mexican immigrants

²²⁵ Gilbert G. Gonzalez, *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 99-113; also Garcia, *Desert Immigrants*, 110-126.

²²⁶ George P. Clements, "Mexican Immigration and Its Bearing on California's Agriculture," *California Citrograph*, November, 1929, 3, 28.

²²⁷ Blas Coyazo, 26.

and Mexican Americans alike were found in movie theaters, the skating rink, and in barbershops and cafes with “White Trade Only” signs posted in the window. Eunice Romero Gonzalez remembered more subtle forms of prejudice, such as prices “being hoisted a little more when you were a different color”²²⁸ and the unavailability of better jobs. Blatant discriminatory acts, segregated schools, and restrictions on upward mobility in the citrus industry sent powerful and degrading messages to the Mexicans living in their villages.

Mexican immigrants, their children, and any Mexican Americans who worked and lived in the same spaces, faced a rigid structure of restriction and containment.²²⁹ The workers were hired to fill a specific economic role in the specialty crop agricultural system. Housing and schooling were intended to reproduce generations of citrus workers. Presumably, future generations would be happy living in segregated housing and would be satisfied with schooling that prepared their sons for manual labor and their daughters for domestic or other gender-specific work, such as becoming a seamstress.²³⁰ In villages all across Southern California, Mexicans, by nationality or descent, faced these daunting conditions by first finding strength and support in a community.

Always a Sense of Community

Mexican immigrants came to California in search of a better economic future. Those who found work in the citrus groves of Riverside and San Bernardino counties also had the opportunity to live a fairly settled life, compared to those who followed a seasonal migratory cycle. Nonetheless, they inhabited the same class structure, which preferred them in a subservient role, economically and socially. The Mexican citrus workers were largely unwelcome outside their villages, but from that exclusion, community was created in the spaces left to them, and bonds were forged that would later help to break the grip of prejudice in the community at

²²⁸ Eunice Romero Gonzalez, interviewed by Robert Gonzalez July 8, 1994 Redlands, California. Vol. 8 “Citrus and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley” A.K. Smiley Public Library, 34.

²²⁹ Matt Garcia, 74-75.

²³⁰ Garcia, 68.

large.²³¹ A community may be imagined when the group rises above differences and recognizes their shared cultural roots. Mexican immigrants came to the citrus ranches from diverse locations in their country. Rather than carry those differences into their present circumstances, they drew closer together based on their cultural commonalities and the common enemy of prejudice. Community was built through familial, cultural and economic relationships, in the spaces of home, neighborhood, church, leisure, and work. Further, family events create and embody a sense of community. The Mexican family also provided a cultural bulwark in an alien, and at times, hostile environment. Family included more than immediate kin; it also meant extended family as well as the custom of *compadrazgo*, or god-parentage. This system provided mutual support, the next circle outside of kin.²³² Women particularly felt the absence of their mothers and sisters, who were their immediate support in raising their children in their home villages in Mexico.

Rose Ramos remembered another Mexican tradition, the charitable work performed in the village by the *Cruz Azul* (Blue Cross), a *mutualista* (aid society). They provided benefits to indigent people, such as burial for those with no family; they also provided unemployment relief.²³³ Mutual aid societies burgeoned with the increase in immigration, and though they charged nominal dues, perhaps \$2 per month, the obligations were not treated as legally binding, but rather as a moral obligation of reciprocity.²³⁴ In what might be called their highest form, these societies engendered cohesiveness in the immigrant settlements, providing structure and leadership.²³⁵

Culturally specific events such as *tardeadas* (informal gatherings, often on a Sunday afternoon), *quinceaneras* (the fifteenth birthday and coming out party for young women), and *jamaicas* (street fairs or church charity bazaars), further reinforced ties among people with common roots.²³⁶ Many of these family

²³¹ Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons*, 142-167.

²³² Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*, 57.

²³³ Rose Ramos, interviewed by Robert Gonzalez June 22, 1994, Redlands California. Vol. 16 "Citrus, Labor and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley" A.K. Smiley Public Library.

²³⁴ Weber, 61.

²³⁵ Mario Garcia, 223.

²³⁶ Alamillo, 82, 147.

events would take place in the home, where music, laughter and people often spilled out into the yards.

Cinco de Mayo celebrations were more formalized expressions of Mexican culture and solidarity, which included parades, speeches, performances, and dances. Jose Alamillo described the significance of this expression of ethnic pride in Corona, on May 5, 1936. Corona was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its founding, with a historical pageant portraying the settlement of the citrus colony by European Americans.²³⁷ The Mexican Americans chose *Cinco de Mayo* as their way to celebrate Corona's birthday.²³⁸ In this instance, historical pageantry was enacted by each culture separately. The dominant society did not prohibit alternative pageantry, possibly because it did not specifically challenge the dominant society's "story."²³⁹

The Mexican citrus workers formed a common bond, simply by working with each other in the groves, and in the leisure activities that workingmen pursue: sports teams, the pool hall, and saloons. These venues also provided spaces where the men could network, to find out where the jobs were and who was paying good wages. The Mexican citrus worker community was not monolithic, and different experiences naturally yielded different memories and attitudes about that time; some of these occurred along generational, religious and economic lines. Over time, the first generation of immigrants came to feel an entitlement to the jobs they held, and saw newcomers as competition. These newcomers were referred to as "Texas Mexicans," based on their residence in the El Paso area for their first few years in the United States.²⁴⁰

Another type of generational difference developed between first generation Mexicans and their children. The bilingual second generation, having been born in the U.S., were more able and willing to adapt to the dominant culture. As teenagers, they wanted to go to movies and dances with their friends, to move about in the world around them, and to do the things that other young Americans did. Tradition-minded parents would be restrictive, especially of their daughters. For example, it was forbidden for a

²³⁷ C.C. Johns, "Colorful Pageant Depicts 'Romance of Citrus' at Corona Celebration," *California Citrograph*, June 1936, 282.

²³⁸ Alamillo, 12.

²³⁹ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

²⁴⁰ Matt Garcia, 74.

young Mexican American woman to go out at night without a chaperone. The family's standing in the community depended on the purity of its women.²⁴¹ Tensions between tradition and the expectations of young Mexican American women were particularly manifested in personal appearance and in behavior toward young men. Nevertheless, within these bounds, young Mexican Americans could begin to see themselves as part of the larger community.

The vast majority of Mexicans were Catholic, and churches also provided community dances and movies (with no restrictions on where people could sit!).²⁴² However, not all Mexicans were Catholic. Armando Lopez recalled the division on the north side of Redlands, based on religion. The Catholic priest forbade the Mexican children from going to the House of Neighborly Service, a youth club started by the Presbyterian Church. The club was designed to appeal to them with recreational, cultural and educational programs,²⁴³ but also had designs on converting Catholic children to the Presbyterian faith. Gilbert Rey discussed the competition between the Presbyterian and Catholic religions in the north side and sums up what he thought established the better path (to success):

Many of the Hispanic people in Redlands that came from that original group [of Presbyterians or Presbyterian converts] went on to higher education, became college graduates, and many became professionals and that was very, very noticeable in comparison to Hispanics of the Catholic persuasion.²⁴⁴

This sentiment illustrates a dichotomy within the Mexican community. Rey implied that his success was attributable to his

²⁴¹ Frances Aldama Martinez, "Corona As I Remember," *Hispanic Centennial Review*, 1886-1986 (Corona Public Library, Corona, California, 1986), 1; Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 51-52.

²⁴² Ruiz, 66-67.

²⁴³ Armando Lopez, interviewed by Robert Gonzalez February 9, 1995 Redlands, California. Vol. 14 "Citrus, Labor and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley" A.K. Smiley Public Library.

²⁴⁴ Gilbert Rey, interviewed by Robert Gonzalez February 2, 1995, Redlands, California. Vol. 17 "Citrus, Labor and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley" A.K. Smiley Public Library.

leaving the Catholic Church for the Presbyterian denomination. Vicki Ruiz describes a Methodist-run settlement house in El Paso that was founded in 1912. After failing to gain many converts, the Houchen Settlement returned to focusing on providing social services, such as medical care.²⁴⁵

Memories of a good life among the citrus trees seem to be directly related to the quality of the relationship between grower and worker, and to the economic status of the working family. Because Oddie Martinez' father managed groves for the Langford family, they lived on the ranch. They never lacked food, even in the Great Depression. Their father's managerial role afforded a stability that allowed them to keep animals, improving their diet and outlook on life.²⁴⁶ Eunice Romero Gonzalez had warm memories of life on the Fairbanks ranch, likely tied to her father's position as *majordomo* or manager.²⁴⁷

Just as the Mexican community was not monolithic, neither was there a solid wall of discrimination or uniform support for it. Joe Herrera experienced discrimination, but also saw a voice raised against it. Joe was refused service at a café. When his employer heard about it, he confronted the people at the café. Joe's employer was Frank Gunter, a grower who also happened to be the mayor of Redlands. Gunter's simple reply to "white trade only," was to mingle his money with Herrera's, and then dare the café owner to differentiate Herrera's money from his. After determining that Herrera was not drunk or disorderly, Gunter threatened to close that business down. "I don't tolerate this kind of business while I'm mayor."²⁴⁸ This story suggests that not all members of the dominant society supported discriminatory acts, and that a few were willing to challenge the bigotry underlying such discrimination. Joe Herrera remembered this incident, more than fifty years later.

As the Depression wore on, the reduced demand for citrus fruit and consequent downward pressure on prices, worked its way back to the ranches, reducing the earning potential of the pickers

²⁴⁵ Ruiz, 33.

²⁴⁶ Oddie Martinez, interviewed by Robert Gonzalez April 18, 1994 Redlands, California. Vol. 15 "Citrus, Labor and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley" A.K. Smiley Public Library.

²⁴⁷ Eunice Romero Gonzalez, 3.

²⁴⁸ Joe Herrera, interviewed by Robert Gonzalez April 4, 1994, Redlands California. Vol. 13 "Citrus, Labor and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley" A.K. Smiley Public Library.

and packers. Picking for a given day depended on marketing orders, so work might last only part of a day, or only for a few days in a given week.²⁴⁹ When wages reached a level so low that families could not earn enough to eat, conditions were ripe for union organizing and for strikes to break out. When citrus workers struck, they met organized and fierce resistance from the growers, who were well organized under the guidance and funding of the Associated Farmers.²⁵⁰ The strikers needed the support and solidarity of their communities more than ever.

Communities Clash

North Orange County was the battleground in the largest citrus workers strike in Southern California, over a six-week period in June and July of 1936.²⁵¹ In the inland counties of Riverside and San Bernardino, the most notable citrus labor clash occurred in Corona in 1941. That strike was called when the Jameson Packing House refused to recognize the United Cannery, Packing, Agricultural, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA).²⁵²

In the aftermath of the Orange County strike the CFGE, Mutual Orange Distributors (MOD), and American Fruit Growers cooperatives formed the Agricultural Producers Labor Committee (APLC).²⁵³ The express purpose of the APLC was to thwart any attempts by UCAPAWA to organize the packinghouse workers. Their strategy was to form company unions, through which the workers could seek redress of grievances. Seen as transparent tools of management, they were soon abandoned by workers for legitimate representation.²⁵⁴

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) of 1935, also known as the Wagner Act, excluded farm workers from its establishment of collective bargaining rights, but it did not exclude

²⁴⁹ Blas Coyazo, 13.

²⁵⁰ Nelson A. Pichardo, "The Power Elite and Elite-Driven Counter-movements: The Associated Farmers of California during the 1930s," *Sociological Forum* 10, no.1 (March 1995): 21-49

²⁵¹ Gonzalez, 135-160; see also Carey McWilliams, "The Rise of Farm Fascism: Gunkist Oranges," in *Factories In The Field* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine, 1971), 249-254. "Many Jailed as Rioting Flares In Citrus Strike," *Riverside Daily Press*, July 7, 1936, 1. All of the 150 men arrested were picketers.

²⁵² Alamillo, 123-241.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

canning and packing workers, who were considered to be industrial. A lawsuit seeking to affirm this distinction was brought against the North Whittier Heights Citrus Association in 1937, seeking a ruling that would disallow their exemption from the Wagner Act for fruit packing workers. In 1940, the California Ninth District Court ruled against the exemption and in favor of the organized workers.²⁵⁵

UCAPAWA was successful in winning approval at the Jameson packinghouse, by a 54-14 vote, in July of 1940. The new union faced immediate opposition by the Corona Citrus Growers Association (CCGA), in the form of an anti-picketing ordinance passed by the Corona City Council.²⁵⁶ Associated Farmers was organized as a reaction to the 1933 cotton strike, and was supported by large contributions from bankers and industrialists. Their strategy was to defeat the organizing of farm workers in any shape or form, and to break unions and strikes throughout California. Among their tactics was “localism,” an attempt to invalidate union organizing by claiming that the local workers were being duped by outside agitators, who were most likely Communists, espousing foreign political ideas.²⁵⁷

The Jameson Company refused to meet with the union, and after six months of stalling, the union declared a strike on February 27, 1941. In a case of community in action, the local baseball team used the baseball leagues as a network to urge workers in the region to honor the strike, and not come to Corona as strikebreakers.

The strike reinforced classes and divided the town. Italian employees took the side of management and crossed the picket line. The Mexicans felt especially betrayed by this action, because they believed that the Italians were “motivated by the promises and privileges of whiteness.”²⁵⁸ Neither did all workers in the area join in the walkout.

The nearby Foothill Ranch housed its workers free of charge, and offered other benefits such as company store credit, a

²⁵⁵ National Labor Relations Board, “*In The Matter of North Whittier Heights Citrus Association and Citrus Packing House Workers Union No. 21091*,” Case No. C-310 Vol. 10, no. 113, 1269-1298.

²⁵⁶ Alamillo, 127-128.

²⁵⁷ Nelson A. Pichardo, “The Power Elite and Elite-Driven Countermovements: The Associated Farmers of California during the 1930s.” *Sociological Forum*, 10, no.1 (March 1995): 21-49.

²⁵⁸ Alamillo, 137.

community center and recreational facilities. Consequently, there was less to be gained by unionization there, and it did not succeed. Further, Foothill increased bonus payments and improved conditions, a clear, though indirect, victory for the workers. This practice of using benefits to influence workers may be called paternalistic, but it may also be described as good business. The growers at Foothill firmly believed that decent housing on the ranch was a powerful incentive in keeping families of workers on the ranch, long term. It also deterred organizing, when losing a job also meant losing a home, and proved to be effective in keeping the union out. Foothill made further efforts to keep the workers quarantined on the ranch by offering recreation and entertainment on site. Those workers had little desire to go to town anyway, since they had become “scabs”²⁵⁹ in the eyes of the pro-union workers.²⁶⁰

Despite these divisions, the strike against the Jameson packinghouse held for twenty-four days, until March 21, when picketers pelted a police car with rocks, hitting one officer in the head. The police moved in and arrested forty-nine picketers, who were charged with disturbing the peace, inciting a riot, unlawful assembly, and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.²⁶¹ In the ensuing trial, an all-Anglo jury acquitted all but four of the picketers.

The strike highlighted divisions within the entire Corona citrus community and conflicts within factions, as individuals weighed loyalties to employers, fellow workers, and to families and friends. In the end, the effort to unionize the citrus industry failed, but in mounting a serious challenge to the power of the growers, the Mexican American community learned valuable lessons in organizing strategies and tactics. In doing so, they gained the confidence needed to effect real changes in the advancement of their civil rights in the post-war period, including the election of the first Mexican American to the Corona City Council in 1958.²⁶²

The growers maintained their solidarity and succeeded in keeping the union out, but needed the active support of the city

²⁵⁹ Derogatory term for strikebreakers.

²⁶⁰ Alamillo, 128-134.

²⁶¹ “Charges Filed Against 49 Alleged Rioters,” *Riverside Daily Press*, March 27, 1941.

²⁶² Alamillo, 167.

government, law enforcement, and the mainstream media to do so. Their strategies were driven by fear: first, to characterize union organizers as outside agitators who either intimidate workers into joining the union, or mislead them with unrealistic expectations, and promises that could not be fulfilled; second, to create an atmosphere of impending violence and anarchy in the community, such that, hundreds of local growers and other citizens are sworn in as armed deputies for undefined emergencies;²⁶³ third, framing the allegations and emergency preparations as “news stories” in the local newspapers, to promote fear and to generate support among the town and county population.²⁶⁴

Grower’s Response

In 1941, six thousand citrus workers walked out in Ventura County, including from the famous Limoneira Ranch.²⁶⁵ President of the Limoneira, and also President of the CFGE, Charles C. Teague commented that it was the sole mark in an unblemished relationship with his employees. He believed that innocent workers were simply ill advised: “I am not opposed to organized labor but I am unalterably opposed to exploitation of workers by irresponsible labor leaders.”²⁶⁶ Clearly, the fact that the workers continued to organize and strike was not based on bad advice from outsiders, but on a persistent need for a living wage.

The tone went from paternalistic to threatening, when the vice president of the Associated Farmers, C.E. Hawley, lauded the necessity of the new organization in thwarting agricultural strikes, such as the one that was occurring in Orange County (June, 1936). According to Hawley, such strikes were part of a Communist plan to overthrow the American government. In an article published in the June, 1936 *Citrograph*, Hawley states that the Associated Farmers was not alone in its fight; that it was “shoulder to shoulder” with the American Legion and the American Federation

²⁶³ “125 Deputized To Guard Groves,” *Corona Daily Independent*, February 4, 1929.

²⁶⁴ “County On Guard Against Possible Labor Agitation: 200 Officers Will Protect Groves in Event of Red Flareup,” *Corona Daily Independent*, November 28, 1933.

²⁶⁵ Michael R. Belknap, “The Era of the Lemon: A History of Santa Paula, California.” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 47, no.2 (June, 1968): 127.

²⁶⁶ Charles C. Teague, *Fifty Years A Rancher* (Los Angeles: Anderson & Ritchie: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1944), 148.

of Labor (AF of L). Hawley closes with the remark: “The present situation is more dangerous than at any other time in the history of the state.”²⁶⁷ The violence orchestrated by the Associated Farmers in Orange County in June and July of 1936 was not surprising in light of the threat described by Hawley.²⁶⁸

These two statements embody the growers’ perception of events and their response. Workers who want to work, have become victims of manipulation by outside agitators who are also known to be Communists, and whose master plan is the overthrow of the government of the United States. In light of such overheated rhetoric, it was unfortunate that the growers could not or did not want to see that agitators and organizers cannot succeed if the workers feel that they are being treated fairly by their employers. These strikes, and the growers’ responses to them exposed deep fault lines between the communities of growers and the communities of workers, ostensibly their “children,” based on paternalistic policies. The strikebreaking tactics described herein resembled corporal punishment administered by a very stern father.

Frank Stokes was a grower from Covina, California, who read the biased newspaper accounts of the unequal battle that was being waged in the summer of 1936, by growers and their forces, against striking Mexican pickers in Orange County. He wrote an article, published in the December 19, 1936 issue of *The Nation*.²⁶⁹ In it, he shamed the growers for cracking down on workers, for having done the very thing that had saved the growers themselves – organizing in order to get fair payment for their asset within the capitalist system.²⁷⁰ Stokes was only one man, but possibly represented many other growers who were afraid to speak up, for fear of ostracism by their community, or of being branded as communist sympathizers. Stokes’ challenge of discrimination, like Frank Gunter in Redlands, was a first step in a long journey.

²⁶⁷ C.E. Hawley, “Associated Farmers of California Is Formed For Mutual Protection,” *California Citrograph*, June 1936, 298.

²⁶⁸ McWilliams, 249-254.

²⁶⁹ Frank Stokes, “Let the Mexicans Organize!” *The Nation*, 143, no.25 (December 19, 1936): 731-732.

Conclusion

The cooperatives were the primary structure of economic organizing in the citrus grower communities. A community of growers could be imagined through industry institutions such as the *Citrograph*, and real connections could be made at events such as the National Orange Show. Growers broadened and deepened their networks by building relationships in fraternal, civic, and political organizations. In the groves, cheap labor was needed on a continuous, even a permanent basis. The growers came to rely on Mexican immigrant and Mexican American workers, but growers and the larger communities sought to segregate this group socially. The citrus workers found, through the limited spaces available to them, the ability to create their own communities, just as the growers had done, only separately. Their communities were formed around family, common cultural roots, and their economic class.

These two groups continued to lead separate lives based on class and ethnicity. Flare-ups over wages occurred through the 1930s, but little changed in the basic system of labor usage. The hardships of the Depression had a dampening effect on the social and economic mobility of Mexican workers in the citrus industry. Mobility seems a distant dream when survival becomes paramount.

The citrus industry in Southern California was either in decline or very close to that point, just before the outbreak of World War II. Economic depressions, great or otherwise, tend to freeze people in place. No one wants trouble at work, with a long line of the unemployed ready to fill their spot. Businessmen do not expand operations, and banks are loath to risk the money anyway. The war gave impetus to the forces that relentlessly chipped away at acreage in the old citrus belt; it also opened the door to opportunity for many Mexican Americans, especially the rising second generation that wanted more than picking oranges and lighting smudge pots. For many, wartime service meant educational opportunities. Others landed better paying jobs in new industries like aerospace, or the Kaiser Steel plant in Fontana. Mexican American women became the predominant workers in the packinghouses, but also found work at nearby Norton Air Force Base. They too achieved a small piece of the American Dream.

Finally, as the old growers retired or passed on, and as the groves, one by one, were turned to homes, schools, and shopping

centers, almost all that are left are memories and vestiges of a past glory of an empire of citrus that had once stretched from Pasadena to Redlands. Separate communities of growers and pickers no longer exist. When Redlands High School plays its archrival Redlands East Valley High in football, the prize is a trophy known as “the smudge pot.” It is likely that some of the players on both sides have roots in the local groves.

The institutions that were founded by the wealth of the grower elite, such as the Smiley Library or the Summer Music Festival at the Redlands Bowl, were institutions that once helped to create community for the growers. Today, they provide common ground, where class lines become less recognizable. The broad, horizontal comradeship of imagined communities becomes real, if only for a little while. The grandchildren of the citrus growers and the citrus workers read together in the library and are likely sitting side-by-side in the audience at “The Bowl.” Community is tangible in these common spaces today. Economic, social, and ethnic divisions that were once inherent in Redlands and other towns of the old citrus belt, were broken down by assertive members of the Mexican American community and by fair minded members of the “Anglo” community, in order to foster the formation of a greater community.

The towns that were created by the citrus industry live on, with diversified economies, and with some managing to save small enclaves of citrus groves, so that the heritage is not forgotten. Standing alongside a citrus grove today, it is easy to imagine little Eunice Romero “running through the groves barefooted, and wading in the water of the ‘Sankee,’ and then, of course, eating the fruit, which was supreme, because my Dad was a good orange grower.”²⁷¹

²⁷¹ Eunice Romero Gonzalez, interviewed by Robert Gonzalez July 8, 1994 Redlands, California. Vol. 8 “Citrus and Community in the East San Bernardino Valley” A.K. Smiley Public Library.

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California and Unfree Labor: Assessing the Intent of the 1850 “An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians

By Aaron Beitzel

Abstract: Discussions of unfree labor systems in the United States have long been focused on history of institutionalized slavery on the East coast and plantation slavery in the American South. However, recent scholars have challenged the definitions of unfree labor systems based solely on the framework of American slavery in these areas. Forced Indian labor in the territory of Alta California between the late 18th and mid-nineteenth centuries has offered historians a major counter-example of institutionalized unfree labor within the United States. This paper focuses on explaining the social context under which the 1850 "An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians" developed. It argues that, despite California legislators' rejection of the institutionalized slavery framework then in place in the American South, they nevertheless codified and perpetuated the subjugation of Native Americans that took place initially under Spanish and Mexican administration of California. The primary motivation for Indian policies under the administration of United States citizens, particularly the 1850 Indian Act, was to maintain control over Indian lives. Ostensibly for the protection of the Indians and non-Indian settlers alike, these policies expressly perpetuated established means of extracting resources (labor, land, water, minerals, timber, etc.) from the state's indigenous population.

Introduction

Due to the relationship between the colonization of California in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the decimation of the territory's indigenous population, scholars for over a century have studied the processes by which California Indians were controlled, dispossessed, and very nearly exterminated. Not surprisingly, a considerable amount of work has been done on systems of forced Indian labor existent in the United States period of California history. This research suggests that, on September 9, 1850, California became the thirty-first state in the Union under false pretenses. Though legislators argued for and obtained statehood as a "free" state—thus contributing to the intense conflict over slavery throughout the Union and influencing the 1850 Compromise—they did so in light of California legislation passed nearly four months earlier that provided for the virtual enslavement of Native peoples in the state over the next several decades. The implications of this system—whether or not labor practices established under it could be defined or have constituted formalized "slavery"—would have considerable impact on California's historical legacy. This situation raises an important question: How did California develop a forced labor system while claiming to be a free state?

The answer to this question began to be formulated on April 22, 1850 when California's first civilian governor signed into law one of the state's earliest and most infamous pieces of legislation. As applied to the state's Native Americans, the 1850 "Act for the Government and Protection of Indians" (along with subsequent amendments) contributed to the development of California's onerous and destructive system of legalized Indian servitude. The coerced labor practices it codified and supported spanned a period from the state's formation in 1850 until such practices were outlawed piecemeal, both by acts of the state legislature and the federal government, from 1863 until approximately 1890—though the Act was not fully repealed until 1937.¹

The 1850 Indian Act, however, was as much an extension of labor practices developed throughout California's Spanish and

¹ Kimberly Johnston-Dodds, "Early California Laws and Policies Related to California Indians," *California Research Bureau* (September 2002), 5.

Mexican periods as an invention of California legislators. It represented the desires of California's Mexican landed elite and newly formed non-Indian, United States citizenry to control Indian labor and exploit it. In essence, the act can be seen as a culmination of past practices and new methods of Indian subjugation. By highlighting the contributions of Indian policies from the Spanish and Mexican periods and analyzing the process by which California developed Indian policies under the administration of the United States, it will be shown that the 1850 Indian Act was originally intended to perpetuate previously existent controls over Indian lives and labor in the state.

California's Past Labor Policies through Literature Review

From the time that the Spanish initially began colonizing Alta California, in 1769, until forced labor was formally banned by the federal government of the United States in the years following the Civil War, coercive labor policies were a ubiquitous part of California's past. Many California scholars have thus contributed to the discussions of coerced Indian labor at various points in the region's history. While arguably this discussion begins with the formative works by historians such as Hubert Howe Bancroft and Sherburne F. Cook, in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, this paper focuses on the works of more recent scholars of Indian history. Due to the propensity of California historians to write according to periods, it is easiest to group information on specific periods together, starting with the Spanish period.

While the 1850 Indian Act can be discussed as an invention of the California legislature, the genesis of forced labor in California had its roots in the missionization of Alta California. Spanish colonization introduced a three-institution system consisting of missions, presidios, and pueblos.² Taken together, these three institutions extracted labor from the Native Californian population throughout the Spanish and Mexican periods by various means. In 2004, Richard Steven Street published *Beasts of the Field*, a narrative history of California laborers, which discussed

² These three institutions represented, respectively, the religious, military and civilian developments in Spanish California.

trends throughout California labor history.³ He argued that Indians most often took part in laboring for the missions voluntarily, but that the system did not necessarily exclude forced labor. "Once Indians received the holy waters of baptism, they were required to remain and work for the common good. They could not leave without permission. Those who gave up their faith and fled soon learned that the padres would send soldiers to hunt them down and, if necessary, whip and jail them into submission."⁴ Thus, by taking vows of loyalty to the missions and the Catholic faith, California Indians who took part in the mission system were bound to the missions themselves, essentially owing their labor and profits to the mission.

In *Children of Coyote*, published one year after *Beasts of the Field*, Steven W. Hackel argued conversely that, despite the fact that some may have entered voluntarily, Indians who were associated with the missions in most cases constituted a "semicaptive labor force," held in place by their own subsistence needs and the "Spanish's willingness to make them work and remain at the missions."⁵ There were, however, major points of agreement between Street and Hackel's assessment of the mission labor systems. Both argued that Spanish soldiers and missionaries generally avoided all forms of manual labor, contributing to a racial notion that "manual labor was indeed the province of Indians."⁶ Both also agreed that Indian laborers became the backbone of California's fledgling economy, in which they performed most of the heavy skilled and agricultural labor, often working for subsistence wages or no pay at all.⁷

3 Richard S. Street, *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farm Workers, 1769-1913* (Stanford University Press, 2004).

4 Street, *Beasts of the Field*, 25.

5 Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 281. Hackel also suggested, however, that Indians not affiliated with the missions provided as much as ten times the labor of mission Indians on the presidios and pueblos; although, he argued that this practice was, for various reasons, often left outside the "recorded economy"; see Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 312-19.

6*ibid.*, 319.

7 Hackel also suggests that Indians not affiliated with the missions provided as much as ten times the labor of mission Indians on the presidios and pueblos, although this practice was often, for various reasons, left outside the "recorded economy"; see Hackel, 312-19.

From the outset of the Mexican Revolution in 1810, Spanish administration of California began to decline until 1821. With Mexican independence came the secularization of the California missions (removing them from the control of the church) which provided Indian laborers opportunities to become landed individuals themselves. Indians who were once part of the missions were given opportunities by the Mexican government to apply for tracts of land as mission holdings were broken up. Spanish/Mexican elites, however, seized much of the land promised to the Indian population, which contributed to the establishment of a rancho aristocracy in California.⁸ Ranchos were civilian owned farmlands that ranged in size, though the largest Mexican land grants were several hundred-thousand hectares and were operated as feudal estates. In order to maintain control over cheap Indian labor, Hackel claimed the “*californios*,” or propertied non-Indian settlers, encouraged Indian settlement within the rancho grants to keep them readily at hand while also—as Street points out as well—providing Indians with every-day goods on credit. By binding Indians with credit, *californios* relied heavily on a system of debt peonage by which Indians became formally tied to the land by their debt obligations and were compelled to work.⁹ With little chance of ever repaying these debts, many were bound to labor in perpetuity.

From early on, Anglo-American immigrants began to take part in the Mexican labor system; many ultimately became part of California's landed aristocracy. Prior to the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), these immigrants were largely accepted by the *californios*, and at the war's conclusion, U.S. born immigrants reciprocated this acceptance by offering *californios* United States citizenship. In the meantime, due to the profits inherent in a region with expansive agricultural land, access to cheap Indian labor, and expanding markets, settlers set consolidated authority and control over the physical lives of California's Indians. As non-Indian settlers established themselves in California between the years

8 Street shows that, by 1846, the Mexican government in California had distributed much of California's land, and "Californios controlled virtually all of the best land along the coast, the interior valleys near the sea, and the Napa and Sacramento valleys situated farther inland"—precisely the areas of greatest agricultural development in later years; see Street, *Beasts*, 389.

9 Hackel shows that past scholars have characterized the rancho labor systems as "peonage," "seigneurialism," or "paternalism;" see Hackel, 417, note 79.

1821 and 1846, many became engrossed in the coercive labor practices established earlier. The racialized notion that Indians were useful primarily for labor established during the Spanish period was carried over and vigorously enforced on Mexican and Anglo-American ranchos alike. Many California historians argue that it was the outright involvement in, or at least the general acquiescence of, Mexican labor policies during this period that heavily influenced California's future legislators to perpetuate the practices as the territory became part of the United States.

James J. Rawls addressed this situation in *Indians of California: the Changing Image*, published in 1984.¹⁰ His book provided the non-Indian immigrants perspective of Indians in California and explained their participation in California's labor economy. He suggested that Anglo-Americans immigrating to the region often provided commentary on how easily they procured Indian laborers for low wages, often paying them in material goods and not cash. Rawls made it clear that many later contributors of the California constitution—provisions of which effectively disfranchised Indians in the state—and the 1850 Indian Act were benefactors of the rancho system.

Upon conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848, California was afforded territorial status and placed under the administration of the United States military. During this interim period, between Mexican control and California's ascension to U.S. statehood, *californios* and American immigrants alike looked to the federal military administration to tighten controls on Indian laborers. In 1979, Albert Hurtado evaluated the policy responses from this military administration.¹¹ Hurtado and Rawls came to the same general conclusion: the Indian policy developed under California's state of martial law was heavily influenced by local landowners. Various sources show that the public favored maintaining the status quo of the Mexican system, which by that time was in many cases tipping the scales between legalized "debt peonage" and outright chattel slavery. Hurtado dismissed the impact of the military governors' acts pertaining to Indian labor as protective; both to landowners against injury by Indian raiding

10 James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984).

11 Albert L. Hurtado, "Controlling California's Indian Labor Force; Federal Administration of California Indian Affairs During the Mexican War," *Southern California Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (Fall 1979): 217-38.

parties, and to Indians against coercive labor tactics and indiscriminate violence. Rawls, however, suggested that the provisions of those acts were far more onerous and reflected the desires of California landowners. He showed that military governors instituted three major changes to Indian policy in this interim period.¹² Recognizing that the "changes" in Indian policy under this military administration were not really changes at all, Rawls argued that the policies developed during this period had exact parallels in past Spanish and Mexican labor systems and simply perpetuated those systems, to the benefit of landowning California elites.

The year 1850 witnessed two of the most important events in California Indian history. Civilian Governor Peter H. Burnett signed the 1850 Indian Act into law on April 22. Four months later, California was admitted to the Union as a "free" state, establishing in the constitution that "neither slavery, nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crimes shall ever be tolerated in this state."¹³ Unfortunately for California Indians, the state's constitution provided little tangible protection against forced labor. Provisions of the 1850 Indian Act allowed their subjugation to such an extent that many were forced into legalized bondage, whether it was through debt peonage, vagrant and convict bonding, or illicit child adoption. Native California men, women, and children also faced human trafficking and human rights abuses for which they could seek no redress, because the act stripped their ability to defend themselves in court.

Arguing Slavery in a "Free State"

Modern arguments about the state's role in the dispossession and destruction of Native Americans arose in large part with the works of anthropologist Robert F. Heizer. In 1971, Heizer and Alan Almquist published *The Other Californians*, in which they analyzed early California Indian policy and its impacts on the

12) They dictated that all Indians were required to be employed, and those who were not were forced into public-works projects. 2) By requiring them to get certificates of release from past employers, Indians were limited in their ability to seek new job opportunities. 3) Indians were essentially rooted to their place of employment by a "pass" system which required laborers to receive licenses from their employers to allow travel; see Rawls, *Indians of California*, 84-85.

13) Calif. Const. of 1849, art. I, S. 18.

indigenous population during the Spanish, Mexican and United States periods.¹⁴ Their analysis of these policies suggested that the state was complicit in the destruction of California Indians and prompted further historical inquiry into the nature of California's unfree labor systems. Due to the recognition that California's historical legacy included forced labor practices, more recent scholars have formulated arguments that further suggest the state's complicity in the development of Indian slavery.

In 2002, California Senate President pro tempore John L. Burton commissioned public historian Kimberly Johnston-Dodds to provide a report assessing the state government's culpability in the suppression and annihilation of Native American cultures in the years after statehood. Providing documentation of California's legislative development in the state's formative years—including the state constitution, 1850 Indian Act, vagrancy laws and military actions against Indian groups—her report showed that there was strong correlation between California Indian policy and depredations upon the Indians. While her work was primarily a brief overview of the laws and their impact, it is particularly important as a sign that legislative officials had begun to realize the state's role in this system.¹⁵

Recognizing what he saw as a deficiency in California Indian labor discussions, in 2004 Michael Magliari entered the debate with an overview of how the 1850 Indian Act was utilized by an individual employer, Cave Johnson Coutts.¹⁶ In doing so, he exposed some of the more sinister realities of the act. He argued that the California constitution contained two loopholes that the act utilized to circumvent the state's ban on unfree labor. Because the constitution contained provisions which made convict labor and voluntary servitude legal under certain circumstances, the government condoned the practice. California legislators eagerly implemented the act in such a way as to perpetuate rancho and early American labor systems under these terms. Magliari

14 Robert F. Heizer and Alan J. Almquist, *The Other Californians: Prejudice and Discrimination Under Spain, Mexico and the United States to 1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

15 Kimberly Johnston-Dodds, *Early California Laws and Policies Related to California Indians*, special report prepared at the request of Senator John L. Burton, September 2002.

16 Michael Magliari, "Free Soil, Unfree Labor: Cave Johnson Coutts and the Binding of Indian Workers in California, 1850-1867," *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 3 (2004): 349-89.

highlighted how Coutts, a former slave-owning southerner and notorious abuser of Indian labor, became part of the government's management of Indian affairs through various political appointments. In these positions—one of which was as a federal Indian sub-agent—Coutts was empowered to authorize labor contracts and bind Indian children to himself and other non-Indian Californians under provisions of the law. The implications of this setup were immense; those who oversaw the implementation of the system were also involved in deriving benefits from it. While Magliari concluded that formal indenture and convict labor never comprised Coutts' primary method of coercing Indian laborers, he did extract labor from them through a system of contracted debt obligations and maintained his lordship over them through "legally sanctioned violence."¹⁷ With the backing of state legislation and non-Indian allies, Coutts was able to control the physical being of the Indians in his employ with impunity, even against federal officials.

Another trend in California historiography has been scholars' attempts to frame the state's unfree Indian labor systems in much broader contexts, moving discussions of California Indian abuses into larger areas of debate. Ph.D. dissertations by Stacey Leigh Smith and Benjamin Logan Madley, and an essay by Michael Magliari represent this trend. By branching out, they hope to increase research and debate into topics related to California's early Indian policies.

In "California Bound," Smith tried to facilitate discussion of slavery in the American West within the broader context of slavery throughout the United States.¹⁸ Although California had a major impact on slavery discussions in 1849-1850, she pointed out that discussion on how California was affected by or embroiled in slavery and emancipation in the years after are lacking. She argued that this situation is a development by researchers who tend to frame slavery debates in terms of North versus South and black versus white. In opposition to the idea that California was distanced spatially or racially from the issue, Smith argued that the state's multi-ethnic diversity ensured that it in fact remained involved in broad discussions of slavery, race, and gender during

¹⁷ Ibid., 373.

¹⁸ Stacey L. Smith, "California Bound: Unfree Labor, Race and the Reconstruction of the Far West, 1848-1870" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 2008).

the antebellum period. Within this system, Smith compares the methods utilized by California landowners to bind Indian and African-American children under various legislative acts. She concluded that, while purporting to be a "free" state, California institutionalized labor systems that were anything but free for many non-white residents. Indians and African-Americans were lumped together as undesirable yet still useful classes that were systematically subjugated. Overall, she suggested that while Californian legislators created distinctions in law based on racial and gendered features, they did so as part of an historical past that was highly stratified into racial groups. Thus, it is not surprising that when non-Indian landowners in California called for increasingly harsher modes of labor subjugation, legislators were quick to comply.

Benjamin Logan Madley framed his assessment of the 1850 Indian Act in the broader context of California Indian genocide.¹⁹ In his dissertation, "American Genocide," Madley argued that the destruction of California Indians after the institution of United States administration met all legal categorizations of genocide as defined in the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention. He argued that the Act was not only an intentional method to subjugate Indian labor, but also a means to eliminate Indian defenses against predation. A provision of the Act that stripped Indians of the right to testify against whites in court left the Indians generally open to predatory practices (i.e. assault, rape, murder and enslavement) and often left them unable to seek redress for such abuses. Madley emphasized this fact by showing that few whites were ever convicted of even the most heinous crimes inflicted upon Indians in the state. By creating a legal environment that facilitated these practices, according to Madley, the federal and state governments played an enormous role in the perpetration of these atrocities.

In 2012, Magliari once again entered the debate on Indian forced labor and built upon concepts of Indian slavery that Smith had mentioned in 2008. Magliari's study, "Free State Slavery," provided additional evidence of California's unfree labor systems in the wake of the 1850 Act in a way to, as he iterated, "eventually compel scholars to reframe the story of American slavery to include Native Americans, the West, and the myriad of species of

¹⁹ Benjamin L. Madley, "American Genocide: The California Indian Catastrophe, 1846-1873" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2009).

labor that occupied the long-neglected space between free labor and chattel bondage."²⁰ His study focuses on Northern California's Colusa County's involvement in the overall context of Indian forced labor, which he argued reveals several things about California's forced labor system.²¹ He discussed Colusa County paying close attention to these concepts and highlighted how each individual point was a reality of the system. Magliari's work thus moves scholarship and debate on Indian labor into the future by arguing that it belongs in a broader context, while offering detailed analysis of how the state of California's early labor systems affected the people and their communities.

Although there are disagreements about aspects of Indian labor policies throughout California historiography, most past contributors concede that Indian labor became the basic and primary building block of economic expansion in Alta California. Because of its importance, controlling Indian labor became vitally important to those colonizing the region. This necessity was quickly reflected in the policies put forth by the first military governors of California, shortly after establishing influence in the area.

20 Michael Magliari, "Free State Slavery: Bound Indian Labor and Slave Trafficking in California's Sacramento Valley, 1850-1864," *Pacific Historical Review* 81, no. 2 (2012): 159.

21That "unfree Indian workers never comprised a majority of the rural work force in Gold Rush California;" that "...most unfree Indian labor involved Native women and especially children bound by employers responding to the demographic shortfalls of white women and children in frontier Gold Rush society;" that "most, if not all, of California's bound Indian workers labored under conditions that meet the definition of slavery formulated by modern antislavery activists," including being "recruited into labor by force or fraud, held against their will by the constant threat and frequent application of violence, and provided with no compensation beyond mere subsistence" while financially benefitting their employer; and lastly, "bound Indians provided an essential transitional labor force that made possible California agriculture's phenomenal growth between 1850 and 1870" and was not stopped until demographic shifts facilitated their replacement by other laboring groups. Magliari, "Free State Slavery," 160-161.

The Establishment of Indian Labor Systems under U.S. Policy

California did not officially fall under direct United States authority until July 4, 1848, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.²² However, United States military influence began in 1846; as evidenced by the August 17th decree by Commodore Robert F. Stockton in Los Angeles. Having just taken Monterey California and establishing it as the command center for U.S. military operations, Stockton declared, "the Territory of California now belongs to the United States, and will be governed as soon as [time] permits" by the same institutions then established in other U.S. territories. He provided that, at least for the interim period, the civilian population of the region would elect civil officers expressly "to administer the laws according to the former usages of the Territory."²³ In one fell swoop, Stockton instituted martial law over California, but also extended the territory's management to the discretion of its relatively small non-Indian population.

The short period of time that elapsed between Stockton's decree and the first declaration of Indian labor policy highlights its importance. On September 5, 1846—the same day that *The Californian* published Stockton's declaration—the governing authority of Northern California, Captain John B. Montgomery, issued a proclamation envisioned to end forced Indian labor practices throughout the region.²⁴ In his release, Montgomery declared that Indians within the territory "must not be regarded as slaves." He also acknowledged the importance of Indian labor, deeming it "necessary that the Indians within the settlement shall have employment," though with the added freedom to choose "their own master and employers."²⁵ What made this proclamation extremely beneficial to employers was that it established them as the executors of Indian contract labor, while also criminalizing—with the threat of "arrest and punishment by labor on the Public

22 The Treaty of Cahuenga unofficially ended hostilities within Alta California on January 17, 1847. However, this was still months after the first proposed Indian policies.

23 "To the People of California," *The Californian*, September 5, 1846.

24 "Proclamation," *The Californian*, Nov. 7, 1846; for the exact date Montgomery issued the proclamation, see: Madley, "American Genocide," 167.

25 *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

Works"—what amounted to vagrancy.²⁶ By this order, all Indians were "required to obtain service," and the full powers of enforcement were given to all U.S. authorities, military and civil, within the territory.²⁷ It is possible that Montgomery meant for the proclamation to be a step toward emancipating Native Californians believed to be held in bondage at that point. However, what he succeeded in doing was to become the first U.S. official in California to codify and perpetuate the system of contract and convict labor that was already a historical reality of California's past.

Almost a year to the day after Montgomery's proclamation, military Secretary of State Henry W. Halleck began circulating a proposal entitled "Indian Agents and others," which added to proscriptive Indian labor policies. He proposed an Indian passbook system by which all employers of Indians were required to "give every such Indian [employed] a certificate to that effect." The circular also provided that "any Indian found beyond the limits of the town or rancho in which he may be employed, without such certificate or pass, will be liable to arrest as a horse thief, and if, on being brought before a civil Magistrate, he fail to give a satisfactory account of himself, he will be subjected to trial and punishment." Any other Indian wishing to travel through the settlements was required to obtain these permits from the local Indian agents.²⁸ By putting additional control over Indian movement in the hands of employers, Halleck severely reduced the already limited rights of movement afforded to them a year earlier by Montgomery. Without passes issued by their employers, Indians were denied the ability to seek other employment opportunities, even if it was still considered a legal right. Upon implementation, Halleck's proposal further bound Indian laborers to their employers and the lands they worked.

Despite the passage of these restrictive policies, it is evident that California settlers had opposing notions of how to interact with their Indian neighbors. Calls from California's non-Indian population for the implementation of even more restrictive Indian labor regulations became common. However, due to the

26 Indians were "not to be permitted to wander about the country in idle and dissolute manner." Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 H.W. Halleck, "Circular: To Indian Agents and others," *The California Star*, Sept. 18, 1847.

oppressiveness of the labor situation developing in the territory, some settlers began to speak out about the virtual enslavement of the Indians. Between December 11, 1847 and March 11, 1848 an interesting dialogue between contributors to *The California Star* highlighted the dichotomy developing among settlers over Indian policy. Reminiscing labor controls of the Spanish and Mexican governments in years past, some Californians thought that the Indian population should be completely bound by law to their employers. Others believed that it was within the grasp of the state's new administration to finally free the California Indians from draconian policies.

An open letter to *The California Star*, on December 11, 1847, began what would become an ongoing debate between some of the papers' contributors over Indian policy. An anonymous writer demanded from the current military government "some [stable] and reliable laws enacted, and vigorously enforced and permanently adhered to, for the better governing of the Indian population [of California]—of domesticated or tame Indians."²⁹ From the opening sentence, it can be inferred that the author was displeased with established Indian policies, and that he had no difficulty relating Indians, more or less, to animals. He went on to provide example of the "detriments" of the system that was in place. A valley farmer showed the author's group "how ineffectual were the endeavors of himself and neighbors, to retain [their] Indian laborers, even by the most conciliatory treatment, since it became current that Government did not protect their master's from theft and desertion, and afford no obstacle to a dissolute mode of life, with apparent indulgence of Indian indolences [sic]."³⁰ Though applauding policies recently passed to ban the sale of liquor to Indians, the author concluded that even harsher punishments should be implemented to compel Indians to labor: "The vagrants should be schooled to labor—the criminal offenders to punishment." The author concluded that "the multitude would then be provided for."³¹ What this passage essentially envisioned for the Indians of California was outright enslavement for the betterment of California settlers.

29 "We should like to hear of something being done..." *The California Star*, December 11, 1847.

30 Ibid. Emphasis in original.

31 Ibid.

However, proponents of forced Indian labor were quite careful to refrain from requesting outright slavery. As if to take the sting out of such an unacceptable proposition, another California Star contributor, "Pacific," commented on the matter of Indians throughout the territory a month later. Pacific cordially acknowledged that some would disagree with his ideas on Indian character and policy, but in his opinion, all non-Indians knew how mentally and morally inferior the Indian race was to their own, and the fact that Indians "were *aps de facto* [sic], slaves, and ruled and treated accordingly," under Mexican rule, meant there should be no moral squabbling with the institution of a less severe system of "apprenticing" Indians.³² However, Pacific's strategy fell short of suggesting any real break from outright slavery. He simply substituted the word "apprentice" for slave; all other conditions remained the same. He suggested providing Indian employers with absolute discretionary power over their employees. A failure to do so, Pacific concluded, would necessitate both the expulsion of Indians from the settlements and a "continual war" to "be waged, for depredations committed, till all are exterminated."

Pacific's passage brought up several key issues that would re-emerge in the development of Indian policies in 1850 and beyond. First he suggested the idea of "apprenticing" Indians for the procurement of their labor. Apprenticing, as Pacific saw it, was a way to contractually bind Indians to their employers; making those employers essentially owners, but avoiding such harsh language. Secondly, Pacific propagated the notion that Indian and white societies were mutually exclusive. In fact, he argued that due to the "superiority" of the white race, Indians not properly subjugated and employed by white society would eventually be exterminated. This dichotomous concept of Indian survival—either to provide useful service or be rendered extinct—would be drawn upon to formulate both United States federal and California state policy for decades.

A retort to Pacific's passage was offered on January 29, 1848, penned by a contributor who styled himself "Humanitas." The author took a contrary position to Pacific's, arguing conversely that the enslavement of Indians under all systems prior—including the Spanish, or "Castillian" mission system—were ultimately failures. The Castillian system was eventually

32 "Pacific," "Sir," *The California Star*, January 15, 1848. Emphasis in original.

abandoned, he continued, after those in charge found "they could not succeed in detaining any other than a few old women or children for any length of time."³³ By referring to the failure of past systems of Indian servitude, Humanitas attempted to reason with proponents of forced Indian labor, arguing that what had failed in the past was likely to fail again. Deflecting Pacific's argument that California Indians were of a lower order in society, even of Indians, he insisted that all Indians "are by nature heroes and orators, as history proves..." He dismissed the argument outright, stating that one Indian could not be considered a lower order of being to another in the same sense that, in society, farmers would not be considered of lesser quality and importance as Parishioners. Both retained their redeeming qualities and were thus incomparable.³⁴

Humanitas represented the fact that not all residents of California during this period supported the outright subjugation or destruction of the Indian population. He suggested a much more democratic approach to governing the territory's Indians, intimating that, "if we want to ameliorate the condition of the Indian population of this territory, I say let it lie in honorable fashion as becomes Americans." His powerful closing statement conveyed a belief that the government should implement softer-handed Indian policies, taking into account the Indians' traditional rights and privileges in California:

The policy of our government towards them is leniency, the basis of which is the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, remembering they are the children of nature, the owners and occupants of the soil we inherit and if we want their labor, let it be conditional that they be permitted to change employers at their discretion.³⁵

Humanitas was obviously sympathetic toward the Indians in California who were being forced into labor obligations by the ruling principles of Mexican and U.S. Indian policies.

33 "Humanitas," "[For the California Star.] Mr. Editor," *The California Star*, January 29, 1848.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

On February 10th and 15th, Pacific fired venomous criticisms back at Humanitas.³⁶ In two separate articles, he severely rebuked the "philanthropic" writer for his "naive" ways. The only course for dealing with Indians, Pacific asserted, was to be firm. In response to Humanitas' call for leniency and even-handedness, he suggested only to "treat them [Indians] justly but according to their capacity and condition, and if they be guilty of any gross misdemeanors, the more severely you punish them the better they respect and like you."³⁷ One may draw the inference that Pacific was a Southerner from his vigorous support of Indian subjugation for labor based on racial principles. He was at the very least a staunch racist and supporter of slave institutions. However, his subsequent comments on Humanitas' character likely solidify these assumptions. Comparing his own ideas for Indian policy against those of Humanitas, Pacific concluded that "Americans, and particularly those from that metaphysically mystified, and mock philanthropic portion of the Union, (where I take it "Humanitas" belongs) are, with few exceptions, entirely unfit to have any dealing with, or rule over savages."³⁸ By attacking Humanitas' ideals, Pacific brought into this debate a more regionalized argument, making it seem more like period discussions over slavery in the North and South than the treatment and implementation of Indian labor in California.

Throughout the rest of his article, Pacific suggested many ideas that were discussed over the following two-to-three decades. He sided only with those who favored either enslaving or exterminating California Indians and offered no alternatives between the two extremes. Offering a rebuttal to Humanitas' call to elevate the Indians, he claimed that any amount of time spent attempting to better the situation of the Indians was "labor lost," doubly so considering he believed whole heartedly in their eventual extinction. In these reviews, Pacific became the epitome of the Anglo-American settler who lacked any compassion for Native Americans.³⁹

36 Dates shown are original dates published, as seen reprinted in: "Pacific," "[Cal. Star's Sonoma Correspondence] Mr. Editor," *The California Star*, February 26, 1848, 2 col. 3; "Pacific," "[Cal. Star's Sonoma Correspondence] Mr. Editor," *The California Star*, March 11, 1848.

37 *California Star*, Feb 26, 1848. Emphasis added.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid. Pacific continues his assault on Humanitas in one further article in the March eleventh issue of *The California Star*. However, he does not introduce

The dialogue between Pacific and Humanitas shows that there were different opinions among Californians regarding how best to deal with Indians in the region prior to statehood and the passage of the 1850 Indian Act. However, the way in which future Indian policies were implemented suggests that the majority of political leaders leaned toward Pacific's arguments. Within months of the exchange, the population influx from the California Gold Rush began to strain relations between Indians and Anglo-Americans. The Gold Rush acted as the cultural equivalent of a nuclear bomb, exacerbating hostilities between fast rising numbers of non-Indian settlers and Native Californians. Though the territory was vast, the rising immigrant population, seeking fortune in the mines or through providing for the miners, sought out the most fruitful lands for establishing their claims: often dispossessing the native inhabitants. Increasingly violent conflict between settlers and Indians led the military governors of the region to focus more energy on the "protection" of settler groups, and less so on the development of Indian policies. In order to facilitate the development of California's civil government, on June 3, 1849, Brevet Brigadier General Bennett C. Riley, provisional governor of the territory, announced his intentions to allow Californians to hold a civil constitutional convention, which convened three months later, in September, 1849.⁴⁰

Labor policy did not factor heavily in the discussions at the 1849 California constitutional convention. However, considerations of Indian control and manipulation—outgrowths of the restrictive labor policies—did play a major role in the ultimate disfranchisement of California's Indian population. Up to this point, Indian policies had granted non-Indians considerable authority and power over Indian laborers. That level of control was a primary concern of many delegates when they considered allowing Indians to vote.

On the first day of debate over Indian state suffrage rights, September 12th, several delegates expressed concerns about non-Indians controlling Indian voters. These concerns were generally articulated to argue against enfranchising Native Californians. The

much in the way of new ideas. He simply recapitulates ideas previously established; see *California Star*, Mar. 11, 1848.

⁴⁰ John R. Browne, *Report on the Debates in the Convention of California on the Formation of the State Constitution in September and October 1849* (Washington DC: John T. Towers, 1850), 3.

first delegate to do so was Lansford W. Hastings. Concerned that allowing all Indians to vote would corrupt the system, Hastings iterated his belief that among non-Indian citizens of the territory "there are gentlemen who are very popular among the wild Indians, who could march hundreds of them to the poles [sic]."⁴¹ While Hastings' impression was that men of considerable influence with Indians could entice them to vote in their favor, his fellow delegate, William Gwin, was concerned that the Indians could be directly compelled. Gwin explained it had been intimated to him that, speaking of the many tribes in California, "a few white persons control them; and that they would vote just as they were directed."⁴² To him, this was obviously a situation to avoid at all costs. However, despite his fear that unscrupulous non-Indians would manipulate Indian voters, Gwin was in support of allowing Indians who were already competent voters under past policies to retain that right.

Finally, a Mr. Carver expressed his concern that Indian voters could be easily manipulated.⁴³ In opposition to a provisional clause that would have allowed taxpaying Indians the right to vote, Carver said he "believed the privilege would be greatly abused. Many men who wished to carry an election, would pay the taxes of the rancho," owned by Indians, "and induce the Indians to vote as he directed...by giving him [the taxpaying Indian] the right to vote, he would in nine cases out of ten, be placed in the power of crafty and designing men."⁴⁴ As it stood before Carver offered his criticisms, the voting provision would have to extended to all white male citizens and Mexicans that elected to become U.S. citizens, twenty-one years of age or older, with Indians "not taxed" and blacks excepted. This provision would have provided voting rights for taxpaying Indians. Carver's argument must have had a considerable influence on the other delegates, because a vote was immediately recorded that struck the words "not taxed" from the proposed constitution; effectively removing Indian voting exceptions.⁴⁵

41 Browne, *Report on the Debates*, 64.

42 Ibid., 65.

43 Mr. Carver's first name is unknown to the author of this paper. See Browne, *Report on the Debates*, 478; H.H. Bancroft, "The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft" 23, *History of California: 1848-1859* 6, 288.

44 Browne, *Report on the Debates*, 70.

45 Ibid., 70.

Two weeks later, on September 29th, the convention once again touched upon the issue of Indian suffrage. Henry W. Halleck tried to reintroduce the term "not taxed" in a proposed amendment, but this time J. D. Hoppe offered objections to allowing Indian taxpayers voting rights. He argued that the Indians who would end up voting were those who were "along the Pacific coast, populating the ranchos. There was not a rancho where you would not find fifty or a hundred buck Indians, and the owner could run these freemen up to the polls and carry any measure he might desire."⁴⁶ Halleck offered a rebuttal to this argument, insisting that only taxpaying Indians would be allowed the vote if the proposed amendment were approved. Hoppe, however, offered another vague indication that he opposed Indian suffrage simply because it could be manipulated: "there were ranchos in certain districts where the California proprietors could control at least two hundred votes in favor of any particular candidate; and these votes could be purchased for a few dollars, for the Indians knew no better."⁴⁷ Never offering a straight objection to the vote of taxpaying Indians, Hoppe was arguing out of context. But, he continued to play on the fear of manipulated votes to reinforce his opposition to enfranchising Indians of any class or character. Winfield S. Sherwood also opposed Halleck's amendment, because he thought that "under such a state of things, his friend Captain Sutter, if so disposed, if he desired to become a politician, and wished office, could, by simply granting a small portion of land to each Indian, control a vote of ten thousand."⁴⁸ While this voting number is absurd, it nevertheless represented the same idea that unscrupulous whites could maneuver elections in any way they saw fit by controlling Indian voters.

Reviewed collectively these arguments may have represented a common concern for the manipulation of Indian voters for the principle benefit of non-Indians, but these concerns also signified a collective perception of California's Indians as a subjugated people. None of the delegates seemed to reason that the Indians might have voted as a block in their own self-interests, attempting to protect themselves from white depredations. Or, perhaps, they realized this potential and sought to ensure it could not happen. Arguing in a fashion to suggest they were mitigating

46 Ibid., 306.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

Indians coercion, and thus protecting elections, these delegates fought to hold back the most valuable right Indians could have gained at that time.

Voter manipulation was also not the most discussed issue linked to Indian suffrage during the constitutional convention. However, the fact that opponents of Indian enfranchisement utilized this fear as a tool to bolster their arguments suggests two major points. First, if delegates did not see Indian voter control as an actual possibility, it would have been an easily debunked argument. The fact that delegates ultimately decided to remove all Indian voting rights proves that the majority saw this situation as a feasible threat. Second, it shows that delegates were concerned with maintaining the status quo by not allowing Indian input on Indian policy. Rather than allow Indians the right to vote, and possibly risk some manipulation of that vote, many delegates simply supported disfranchising them. This fear tactic contributed, at least in part, to the overall denial of Indian suffrage, disallowing any future state Indian policy contributions by Indians themselves.⁴⁹

The convention, however, was contentious throughout the debates on Indian suffrage. Several delegates offered arguments in favor of enfranchising the native population based on similar sentiments expressed by Humanitas in 1848. Among the pro-enfranchisement delegates, several were younger California representatives, including Edward Gilbert (26), Lewis Dent (27), and Henry A. Tefft (26). On September 12th, while discussing the exclusionary language of the voting clause, Lewis Dent offered an argument against Indian disfranchisement. Speaking of Indians, Dent argued:

They were the original proprietors of the soil. From them we derived it, and from them we derived many of the blessings which we now enjoy. They have already been deprived of their original independence. Why should we pursue them, and drag them down to the level of slaves? It appeared to [Dent] that the

49 Both times the convention brought forward Indian suffrage for debate it delegates subsequently voted it down, though very narrowly. For vote tallies, see Browne, *Report of the Debates*, 73, 307. In its final form, the suffrage clause of the 1849 Constitution included a provision for, on an individual basis, the enfranchisement of Indians. For the debates and passage of this provision, see Browne, *Report of the Debates*, 323, 341.

Indians should enjoy the right of suffrage, and that they should not be classed with Africans.⁵⁰

Because he associated the California Indians with the bountifulness of the territory, Dent saw them as the racial superiors of Africans. At the very least, he saw providing Indian voting rights as an opportunity to prevent them from being racially categorized with Africans. When the convention revisited Indian suffrage arguments two weeks later, a Mr. Noriega expressed similar sentiments. He suggested that the present condition of Indians was in no way their own fault, but was due to years of oppression:

If they were not cultivated and highly civilized, it was because they had been ground down and made slaves of. They were intelligent and capable of receiving instructions, and it was the duty of the citizens to endeavor to elevate them and better their condition in every way, instead of seeking to sink them still lower.⁵¹

What Dent and Noriega's arguments show is that a number of the delegates believed in the idea of "elevating," "civilizing," or at least maintaining, Indians by providing political agency; though few believed in extending the vote to all Indians. Unfortunately, these arguments did not hold a consensus in the constitutional convention.

On October 13, 1849, the constitutional delegates met to sign and adopt the "Address to the People of California," which effectively instituted California's civil government. From that point forward, until Congress granted California statehood on September 9, 1850, it was the civil government of the territory's duty to re-affirm or re-establish governmental policies thus far put into effect in the region.⁵² California legislators were given the chance to accept or reject past Indian policies. In April, 1850, the newly founded legislature settled on "An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians."

Though the 1850 Act passed only months after the California constitutional convention adjourned, it was not the first

50 Ibid., 70.

51 Mr. Noriega is not identified in the delegate rosters in either Browne, nor Bancroft's accounts of the convention. It is apparent that he speaks through an interpreter, but it is unclear to the author of this paper whether Noriega was a delegate or an observer; Browne, Report of the Debates, 305.

52 Ibid., 474.

attempt at Indian policy legislation. On Saturday, March 16, 1850, Senator Chamberlin—on behalf of Senator John Bidwell, who was ill—introduced Senate Bill No. 54, "An act relative to the protection, punishment and government of Indians."⁵³ General similarities between the S.B. 54 and the Indian Act suggests that the former, though never enacted, at least influenced the language Assemblyman Elam Brown drew on to formulate the latter.⁵⁴ However, Bidwell's bill afforded Indians in the region some general rights that Brown's removed. The fact that Senator Bidwell's bill was indefinitely suspended, while Assemblyman Brown's was discussed and passed through both legislative bodies and signed into law in just nine days, shows that legislators considered provisions of Bidwell's bill unacceptable.

Bidwell's bill marked a small step away from the established Indian policies of California up to that time. While the 1849 California Constitution had disfranchised the majority of the state's Indians, Bidwell's bill was designed to give Indians a modicum of political agency in the management of Indian affairs. It established "Justices of the Peace for Indians," who were to be elected in each county "by the qualified electors of county officers, and the male Indians of the district over the age of Eighteen years and native of California."⁵⁵ Bidwell did not specify if an Indian could fill this elected position, but the exclusion of a specified restriction suggests that he may have intended to allow it. Justices of the Peace for Indians would have been given considerable authority over all Indian issues, including the power to: form labor contracts between Indians and whites; judge cases arising between Indians and whites; promulgate and enforce laws among Indians of their region; and arrange the adoption of Indian children by non-Indian adults. As elected agents of and by the Indians, Justices would have had greater incentive to maintain a fair and conciliatory approach to Indian governance.

S.B. 54 would have also provided extended protections for Indian land and land usage rights. Sections five through seven

⁵³*Journal of the Senate of the State of California at the First Session of the Legislature, 1849-1850*, 224.

⁵⁴ On March 30, 1850, Bidwell's proposed bill "was taken up, read for the second time, and, on motion of Mr. Crosby, was indefinitely postponed." *Journal of the Senate*, 258.

⁵⁵ John Bidwell, "An act relative to the protection, punishment and government of Indians," Original Senate Bill 54, as proposed, 1850, 2, Sec 1.

dealt with the establishment of these protections, stating that "proprietors and persons in possession of lands on which indians [sic] are residing" were in no way allowed to remove or molest them. Resident Indians were to be provided by the land proprietors with their own lands, including their village sites, for cultivation and the maintenance of their families. The proposal would have given Justices of the Peace for Indians authority over the establishment of these lands.⁵⁶ Such contracts would have undoubtedly established legal land holdings, although, due to the Constitution, even land-holding Indians would not have gained the right to vote in state elections. Thus an examination of these sections yields the conclusion that Bidwell was a proponent for the maintenance of Indian societies within the state, at a time when many argued for the enslavement, expulsion, or outright extermination of Indians.

Bidwell's bill would have also provided a system for Indian child adoption. An unfortunate reality is that the adoption provision of the Indian Act would become one of the more destructive aspects of the final wording of the Act. Bidwell dedicated four sections to the establishment of the adoption process. Anyone wishing "to keep and raise" an Indian child would be required to "go before the Justice of the Peace for Indians of the District with such parents or relatives," and obtain a certificate "authorizing him or her to have the care, custody, control and earning of such minor, until he or she shall attain the age of majority." If the Justice was "satisfied that no compulsory means have been used to obtain the child," children could be adopted by anyone that wished to do so, which authorized "him or her to have the care, custody, control and earnings of such minor, until he or she shall attain the age of majority."⁵⁷

Most importantly, Bidwell's proposal would have stripped Indians of at least some rights of legal protection in court. However, section 13 stated, "complaints may be made to a Justice of the Peace for Indians, either by whites or Indians; but in no case shall a white person be convicted of an offence upon the testimony of Indians only."⁵⁸ As compared to the final legislation, this provisional offering of the right to testify in court would have been

⁵⁶ Bidwell, Senate Bill 54, 4-7, Sec 5-7.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 7-9, Sec 8-12. The age of majority, as defined by Section 9 of S.B. 54, was 18 years for males and 15 years for females.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 9-10, Sec 13. Emphasis added.

important in at least allowing Indian testimony to be heard and considered, perhaps mitigating some depredations against Indians. As it turned out, the California Senate was unwilling to pass Bidwell's proposal with such provisions.

Contrary to Bidwell's proposal, Elam Brown's "An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians" proposal was devoid of nearly all conciliatory provisions for Native Californians. Of primary importance, he stripped Indian voting rights from the bill's language. Once enacted, the Act subjugated Indians to the authority of county Justices of the Peace—elected by the non-Indian citizenry—"in all cases of complaints by, for, or against Indians."⁵⁹ Additionally, the Act disallowed the conviction of whites "of any offence upon the testimony of an Indian, or Indians."⁶⁰ Representing a tightened restriction compared to Bidwell's proposal, by these provisions the Act effectively eliminated all legal protection of Indians in California courts, and subjected them to overlordship by non-Indian elected Justices.⁶¹

On the issue of Indian land rights, the Brown bill also granted non-Indian land proprietors and county Justices considerable discretionary powers over the Indians' land. The Act left the definition of "sufficient" lands for the maintenance of the Indians to the discretion of the Justices. While stipulating that Indians were to retain rights to their traditional village sites and had the right to bring complaints against landowners for depredations caused by such land policies, the stipulation against white convictions upon Indian testimony disallowed them from pursuing redress.⁶² Section 10 further limited traditional Indian subsistence patterns by also criminalizing the processes of burning prairie lands.⁶³

As stated earlier, one of the most onerous portions of the Act was the implementation of its child adoption process. The Indian Act, unlike S.B 54, allowed Indian adoption by non-Indians upon the consent of "parents or friends of the child." The substitution of consent by "friends" over "relatives" introduced an

59"An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians," California Statutes, 1850, Chapter 133, 408, Sec 1.

60 Ibid., 409, Sec 6.

61 As Magliari points out, these Justices were sometimes the benefactors of Indian forced labor policy under the 1850 Indian Act; see Magliari, "Free Soil."

62 Chapter 133, 408, Sec 2.

63 Ibid., 409, Sec 10.

extremely vague term that allowed virtually any person to bind Indian children to themselves or others. Also, and echoing Bidwell's proposal, those retaining an Indian child were given the rights to "have the care, custody, control and earnings of such minor, until he or she obtain the age of majority." The age of majority established for males was 18 years of age, and 15 for females.⁶⁴ By providing for Indian child adoption with such lax language, the Act increased the ease of procuring children, which would effectively exacerbated kidnapping and slave raiding throughout the state in the decades between 1850 and approximately 1870.

Additionally, Brown's bill capitalized on the state's acceptance of forced convict labor by establishing a convict auction system. Bidwell's proposal would have provided a less overt system of convict labor, allowing any white citizens to procure Indians for work by providing bail for incarcerated Indians, "and the bail when such permission is given may compel the Indian [sic] to work for him until the day set for his appearance before the Justice."⁶⁵ Brown's bill also included this provision, but took it a step further. In Section 20, the Act provided that any able-bodied Indian considered a "vagrant...shall be liable to be arrested on the complaint of any resident citizen of the county," and upon conviction hired out "within twenty-four hours to the best bidder."⁶⁶ The vague wording of this provision, especially the definition of what constituted "vagrancy," meant that Indians were easily brought into the labor market in this fashion because of the removal of their testimony rights.

Brown's bill was signed into law on April 22, 1850, thus signifying California's civil government's embrace of the region's past Indian policies. That Bidwell's proposal, so similar in language and provisions to the final Act, did not pass shows that the state legislators saw it lacking in one primary component: control. The 1850 Indian Act instituted rigorous controls over Native Californians' land rights, rights to establish their own contracts, practice their traditions, and rights to their freedom.

64 Chapter 133, 408, Sec 3-4.

65 Bidwell, Senate Bill 54, 15-16, Sec 22.

66 Chapter 133, 410, Sec 20.

Conclusion

The development of California's Indian labor systems in the years between United States control and the passage of the 1850 Indian Act reflected, to a large degree, similar policies established in the region in earlier periods. Pressure from settlers desiring to maintain cheap and ready access to Indian labor led the region's U.S. provisional military governors to institute policies that perpetuated vagrancy and convict labor and bound Indian workers to their employers. Despite possible intentions to abolish coercive labor practices, these early proclamations severely limited Indian mobility and legal rights. As explained earlier, however, even these onerous policies did not fully placate all Californians. Many non-Indian residents developed a concept of dual-fates for the regions native inhabitants: either they were made useful to developing societies through their labor or they would be destroyed. By the establishment of the California Constitution in 1849, the lack of control Indians had over their own lives even became a partial cause for their disfranchisement.

The effects of these situations created the atmosphere in which the California legislature developed and implemented the 1850 "An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians." The overall intent of this legislation was to codify and institutionalize control over Indian life. Of primary importance was the control over Indian land and labor. By 1850, Indian labor was immensely valuable in California's developing economy. In order to increase access to that labor, legislators allowed forms of compulsive Indian labor practices, such as the Act's convict and vagrancy labor provisions. They in turn disallowed Indian input into the management of Indian affairs, relegating them to working class peons. In addition, by removing legal protections for Indians, the Act rendered Indians defenseless against depredations by California's non-Indian population. The detrimental effects the Act had on the Indian population, both through its original construction and subsequent amendments through the 1850s and 1860s are the cause for the Act's current historical criticisms.

It is clear that there are still considerable opportunities for future research on forced labor systems in California, especially surrounding the creation of the 1850 Indian Act. Researchers should continue to explore and analyze the regional differences in how the Act was implemented, as well as how it contributed to the

overall destruction of California Indians in the years after statehood. However, another interesting aspect of this history, briefly discussed in this paper, was the existence of arguments in the defense of the Indian population during this period. Although these arguments were seemingly ineffectual, their inclusion in any study of this period provides contextual evidence that not all residents of the state were in support of these policies.

Consideration of these aspects of California history will allow future scholars to continue building accurate portrayals of Indian realities in the state's early periods.

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Author Bio

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Imagining Margaret Garner: The Tragic Life of an American Woman

By Cecilia M. Smith

Abstract: There is limited information on the life of the nineteenth-century female slave with most details compiled from the narratives of well-known women such as Sojourner Truth. Professor Erlene Stetson and other historians argue that scholars treat slavery as a male phenomenon and the female is merely looked upon as a breeder, while noted African-American activist Angela Davis calls for a more accurate portrayal to debunk derogatory myths. This paper addresses the issue of image with the argument that the enslaved African-American woman possessed no image of her own. It focuses on the story of a runaway female slave named Margaret Garner, who chose to murder one of her children rather than return that child to the bonds of slavery. She gained international attention, but quickly disappeared from history. The story of Garner as a slave, fugitive, resistor and heroine were all images of one woman realized through the notion of others; her story required a twentieth-century author, Toni Morrison, to revive her memory. Image plays an important part in how people, places and events are regarded. A new wave of historians has ignited a revolution of study on the still developing image of the African-American female slave, with the goal of employing new methods of thinking and research to form coherent conclusions.

Introduction

In 1856, in a tiny cabin on the outskirts of Cincinnati, Ohio, a small group of frightened slaves, fugitives from Kentucky, were appreciating their last few moments of freedom. The group consisted of four adults and four young children. In time their owner arrived to recapture them under the authority of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law. Before they could be remanded into custody, one of the fugitives murdered one of the children and prepared to kill the other children as well.

The arrest of a slave for murder would not have been an unusual occurrence, nor would it have drawn much interest for anyone other than those involved. However, this fugitive slave was the mother of the slain child. Curiosity was sparked, and the trials and tribulations of the woman, Margaret Garner, drew nationwide attention. After the arrest, free blacks and even white Ohioans called for the immediate release of Margaret and her family. The court proceedings lasted several weeks, and each day the courtroom was completely filled. None of the attendees were black.

During her lifetime, Margaret Garner was celebrated in poetry. Newspaper articles heralded and besmirched her character. A few years after her death, she was depicted in paint. Then her story was seemingly lost. Recently, Garner's life was re-imagined in present day through a novel by a Pulitzer Prize winning author, and a critically acclaimed opera. But what made her story so engrossing? And why was she lost to history?

The chronicle of Margaret Garner is immediately compelling. Faced with the prospect that a slave mother would kill her own child, abolitionists in the free state of Ohio attempted to use sympathy for Margaret's situation to force a reconsideration of the evils of slavery. The courtroom battle over jurisdiction exemplified the issue of state versus federal rights in a precursor to the Civil War itself. Furthermore, it brought to light the sexual abuses that female slaves suffered at the hands of their masters. All of these factors fashioned a sensationalized image of one enslaved female, but not an image of the African-American woman. The enslaved African-American woman possessed no image of her own. The ideals of slavery, fugitive laws and abolitionist movements were all greater concepts than that of an enslaved female. It was not the image of Margaret Garner – the woman,

mother, and murderess – who sensationalized this case, but the circumstances of slavery and the political issues of a nation that were at the forefront. The image of Margaret Garner, created in the nineteenth century, was one that was realized through the notions of others, and required a twentieth-century woman to revive her memory.

Historiography

The historical implications of Margaret Garner's story have found relevance and importance in contemporary ideals. Revived after over a century by Toni Morrison – Pulitzer Prize winner and Nobel Prize for Literature recipient – in her fictionalized novel, *Beloved*,¹ Margaret's story brought new light to the limited history of enslaved females. A new wave of historical studies ignited a revolution on the status of the African-American woman.

Throughout history, image has played an important part in how people, places and events are regarded. Image is often marred by perception and prejudice. While individuals are free to make their own private judgments, they frequently fall into the trap of the mob mentality. They are often influenced by public opinion, which has been molded by media outlets, literature and misinformation. Accurate individual opinions rarely become a matter of historical record. Image has consumed the twenty-first century with a constant bombardment of technology for immediate gratification. Image was also a significant factor during the nineteenth century with specific depictions of women that have lasted through the centuries.

Forced to contend with a scarcity of documentation, historians have traditionally been able to construct only limited theories surrounding the image of African-American women as slaves. What has been gleaned about women was usually found in narratives of the more well-known female slaves that escaped their condition, such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman or Harriet Jacob. The image of the enslaved African-American woman began with an explanation of her perceived purpose.

Professor Erlene Stetson describes the overarching image and purpose of the female slave in an essay entitled, "Studying Slavery: Some Literary and Pedagogical Considerations on the

¹Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, Inc., 1987).

Black Female Slave.” She argues that it is society that has neglected the study of women, and as a consequence, has consigned women’s experiences during slavery to the locked history vault with a limited amount of information inside. Stetson draws attention to how historians traditionally viewed the female slave. She writes, “scholars treat the slavery experience as a black male phenomenon, regarding black women as biological functionaries whose destinies are rendered ephemeral – to lay their eggs and die.”² In essence, this argument mirrors what happened to the history of the African-American female slave. The institution of slavery existed, but knowledge of the role women played died with its extinction.

The theories that were developed from the studies of the institution of slavery did not demonstrate knowledge of the African-American female slave. Ulrich Bonnell Phillips was one of the leading historians to first theorize about the institution of slavery. His work became a standard in historical studies for decades.³ As a professor of Southern history he brought his knowledge of the south and slavery to numerous students. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, herself a professor of Southern history, in her article on historians from Yale University, writes that Phillips’ work was an intellectual effort to justify the white southern political revolution of the 1890s that denied African-Americans the right to vote, segregated them, and relegated them to the lowest rungs of society. His theories would justify white supremacy.⁴ Phillips was biased. His interpretations of slavery and African-Americans gave way to his own prejudiced conclusions rather than providing accurate information on the lives of the slaves, either male or female.

Gilmore argues that Phillips had his own agenda. Her conclusions support an argument that from the beginning of historical documentation slave images have been distorted. As there had not been a significant amount of information on female

² Erlene Stetson, “Studying Slavery: Some Literary and Pedagogical Considerations on the Black Female Slave,” *But Some of Us Are Brave: All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men*, ed. Gloria T. Hull et al. (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1982), 6.

³ Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, “Which Southerners? Which Southern Historians? A Century of Teaching Southern History at Yale,” *The Yale Review* 99, no. 1 (December 22, 2010): 61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

slaves, their image was even less relevant in historians' eyes than their male counterparts.

Perhaps in history's eye the female slave was less relevant than the male, however, many women in today's society are finding their footing and speaking out for women everywhere. One such woman is African-American activist Angela Davis who came to the forefront in the late sixties. Though she presented a radical image of the African-American woman, she attempted to bring a new voice to the plight of the civil rights movement. A noted scholar, Davis writes about the role of the female slave. Her essay, written from prison in 1971, was notable for the attention it brought to the image of the black female slave. Davis recognizes the lack of study necessary to understand what constituted the woman's role in slavery. She calls for an accurate portrait of the African woman in bondage to debunk the myth of the matriarchate, one of the images attached to the female slave.⁵ Davis argues that black women slaves were equal to their male counterparts; however, they were not given an equal voice in history.⁶ Davis' voice was relevant during a time of revolution over civil and feminist rights, calling for an acknowledgement of not only blacks and females, but also the black female. It was an attempt to create a better image of women.

Depictions of African-American female slaves were derogatory and persistent. Historical images of black women in the form of Mammy or Jezebel, have lasted throughout the centuries and still maintain an impact on the image of black women today. The Jezebel image is that of an overly sexualized black woman who made it easy for the white plantation owner to justify rape. Psychotherapist Carolyn M. West describes the Jezebel image as seductive and hypersexual. She tended to be portrayed as a mixed-race woman with more European features, such as thin lips, straight hair, and a slender nose; quite the opposite of the Mammy image, which was the depiction of a bandana clad, obese, dark complexioned woman with African features, and completely asexual.⁷ West argues that the impact of these historical images, in

⁵ Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *The Massachusetts Review Inc.* 13, nos. 1/2 (Winter-Spring): 82.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷ Carolyn M. West, "Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel: Historical Images of Black Women and Their Implications for Psychotherapy," *Psychotherapy* 32, no. 3 (1995): 460-61.

the form of Mammy or Jezebel, has lasted throughout the centuries; they continue to impact the image of the African-American woman today. Her theories remain important as a historical reference, as the images of black women are media controlled and persist in controversy, in light of the numerous degrading images still seen on television and in print.

Just as television and print media are relevant, another area of study that requires evaluation of images is in the realm of literature. Rupe Simms in her article on images and literature argues that slave owners were an influence in a number of literary realms, from religious tracts to natural science, which produced specific controlling images of the African-American female slave.⁸ Simms used over 300 examples of literary sources. The sources were studied for their images of the stereotypical Mammy and Jezebel. She concludes that six realms of literature reflected the dominant ideology generally, and the controlling images specifically. Ideology was white supremacy and white paternalism, while the images were the Mammies and Jezebels. Specifically, Simms finds that these images were justified in the literature. One example she quotes was from religious tracts, which included biblical scriptures interpreting African-American females as Jezebels and describes the Negro woman as the worst woman ever heard of in the annals of mankind. Simms concludes that from intellectuals to novelists there was an agenda to influence literature, which would further exacerbate the image of the African-American female slave, and subordinate these women in every eye.⁹ It is a relevant study even in today's society. So much of what is seen and heard comes from information presented by the media, be it film, television or print. The images that women, particularly young black women, are bombarded with continue to perpetuate ignorant and demeaning stereotypes. With this, it becomes necessary to understand the purpose behind ideologies.

While scientists and ministers were using literature to defend ideologies of slavery, so too were abolitionists found fictionalizing stories to convert readers to the antislavery cause. In her article, "The Blade Was in My Own Breast: Slave Infanticide in 1850s Fiction," Sarah N. Roth discusses strategies that fiction writers used to gain sympathy for their cause. She writes that the

⁸ Rupe Simms, "Controlling Images and the Gender Construction of Enslaved African Women," *Gender & Society* 15, no. 6 (December 2001): 882.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 884-886.

authors confronted strong cultural beliefs about femininity, motherhood, and blackness. In order to make their cause acceptable to the white population these writers would take a tragedy, such as infanticide, lighten the skin of the main character, endow their character with an aggressiveness, and present the killing of the child as a form of suicide.¹⁰ Several authors released publications featuring enslaved female characters that killed their own children. Roth acknowledges that some historians wrote about the importance of gender in considering infanticide, however, they did not come close to considering the impact. The article supports the idea that even white abolitionists, who were purported to be against slavery, felt the image of the black woman was insufficient to present as a cause. It needed to be doctored in order to gain acceptance.

Darlene Clark Hine points out this early racism stating that, “the experiences of Sara Mapps Douglass [black female abolitionist] are a revealing commentary on the racism that existed among white women in the antislavery movement. When Douglass attempted to attend the national meeting of the Female Anti-Slavery Convention in New York City in 1837, she learned that ‘colored members were unwelcome’.”¹¹ The white women congregated under the guise of a noble cause; however, their actions spoke louder than their proposed intentions. With the exclusion of black women, their convention appeared to be more akin to a social gathering rather than a political action committee. This reveals that racism had a substantial impact even amongst those who were supposedly strongly opposed to slavery.

Racism was an issue for the African American female slave; however, it was not the only issue that these women faced. The institution of slavery saw no significance for the female slave; the female slave was invisible. Deborah Gray White, in her book, *Ar’n’t I A Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, modifies the notion that female slaves were an insignificant part of slave history. She writes, “Slave women were everywhere yet nowhere.”¹² With one statement she sums up the status of the

¹⁰ Sarah N. Roth, “The Blade was in My Own Breast: Slave Infanticide in 1850s Fiction,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 8, no. 2 (June 2007): 169.

¹¹ Darlene Clark Hine, *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History* (New York: Carlson Publishing), 10.

¹² Deborah Gray White, *Ar’n’t I A Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company), 23.

female slave – everywhere in slave society, lost in history. This argument is an echo of history following the words of activist Davis before her. Davis stated, “in order to function as a slave the black woman had to be annulled as a woman.”¹³ White provides an intimate image of the black female slave that was groundbreaking in its study. Her introduction sets the stage for conversation. White draws out the historical debates about the image of the male slave, specifically the “Sambo” image, which is a derogatory racial term used to portray black men as dimwitted, humble and happy-go-lucky. It was this image that historians used to define the image of the female slave. The introduction is also powerful for what it did not include, and that is specifics about the female slave. White’s book began the debate over how the African-American female slaves were studied, and was the forerunner for more in-depth investigation into the fragmented documentation of their plantation life.

Hine continues the debate on the development of the image of the female slave in her review of the theses of several prominent historians. Her article looks at the progress that has been made in the study of African-American female slaves. Hine praises White for her groundbreaking work. She introduces seven volumes of material of which she argues further enhances White’s studies. She specifically examines each chapter and presents a more exacting study by historians.

Hine’s argument centers on the impact of White’s book on future historians and includes a discussion of the limited amount of information that is available. An introduction to a second contribution from White emphasizes the difficulties encountered when attempting to locate sources. Hine writes, “she gave future scholars advance warning about the need to knit fragments of data together to craft sophisticated arguments grounded in solid theoretical frameworks in order to bridge the structural limitations of inadequate sources.”¹⁴ Hine’s article further enforces the idea that the image of the black female slave is one that is still developing and requires new methods of thinking and research in order to form coherent conclusions.

¹³ Davis, *The Massachusetts Review, Inc.*, 87.

¹⁴ Darlene Clark Hine, “‘Ar’n’t I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South’: Twenty Years After, Women Slavery and Historical Research,” *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 15.

Studies continue that bring hope for more information about the lives of female slaves, and Jessica Millward paints a more relevant picture of African-American women's history. In her article entitled, "More History Than Myth: African-American Women's History Since the Publication of *Ar'n't I A Woman?*," she argues that White's book, while centering around slavery, was a work that advocated scholarship on current issues such as racism, feminism and violence; all are topics that are germane to any discussion on African-American women today, with domestic violence as a central theme. This article shows that there is a progressive move towards understanding African-American women as a result of historical studies. Millward writes, "Discussions of African-American women's nearly four-hundred-year existence in what became the United States reach back into the colonial era and rush forward into the twenty-first century."¹⁵ Because of this, the enslaved African-American woman's image is beginning to be defined.

Image has far reaching implications. As seen through the eyes of historians it can shape or destroy. Image, for the African American female slave, was a strong factor that had a great impact on how these women were viewed. It dictated attitudes and ensured that they remained subservient. Long lasting effects have reverberated through time and continue to be a factor for the image of the black woman today. In the case of Margaret Garner image was everything.

Imagining Margaret Garner

One hundred and fifty four years ago, an American woman named Margaret Garner died from typhoid fever.¹⁶ Her death closed a tiny chapter in the history of slavery, relegating her to the annals of old newspaper offices, an artist's canvas, and a few remnant memories. While the events of her life had gained international attention, with an unusual trial that lasted for weeks, she quickly disappeared from the forefront of history, replaced by women like Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. It was not until author Toni Morrison

¹⁵ Jessica Millward, "More History than Myth: African-American Women's History Since the Publication of *'Ar'n't I a Woman?*," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 162.

¹⁶ Steven Weisenburger, *Modern Medea: A Family Story of Slavery and Child-Murder from the Old South* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 277-278.

resurrected her story that the memory of Margaret was revived. But who was Margaret Garner? Why then did she fade into obscurity? The answers lie in the images that created this woman and her history.

Margaret as Slave

It is necessary to understand the slave society in which Margaret Garner resided in order to understand the image of the woman as a slave. There are many forms of slavery, ranging from chattel to sexual. The slave society that was America in the nineteenth century was an institution that deprived people of their heritage, their freedom, placed them under generational ownership as property, and forced them into service for the profit of said owners. As much as slavery from this era was about labor, it was also about the degradation and denigration of a people, ensuring that they were sufficiently subjugated in order to maintain necessary control over the millions who were enslaved. The auction block, chains, whips, slave quarters, and cotton are terms that alone do not constitute a definition for the period of antebellum slavery in the nineteenth century. They do, however, remain prominent in the memory as images of suffering and injustice.

There are limited resources detailing the daily life of the enslaved African American woman. All women were deemed second-class citizens, subservient to the male; the enslaved African American woman would rank even lower. Narratives from prominent women such as Harriet Jacobs and Harriet Tubman reveal a closer look into their daily lives. It is, however, the words of Sojourner Truth in her speech, *Ar'n't I A Woman?* at the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851, which offers a brutal perspective into life on the plantation: "Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ar'n't I a woman? I could work as much as a man... and bear the lash as well."¹⁷ Sojourner's speech provides insight into the workload of the enslaved woman. While her duties may or may not have been different than those of her male counterpart, it is quite clear from Truth's speech that her enslavement was comparable and no less important.

¹⁷ Internet Modern History Sourcebook, "Sojourner Truth, '*Ar'n't I A Woman?*,'" (December, 1851), accessed November 8, 2012. www.fordham.edu/halsall.mod/sojtruth-woman.asp.

The little that is known about Margaret Garner's life prior to the incident is gathered from the genealogical archives of the Gaines family. According to the 1850 Slave Census, she was an unnamed mulatto listed as the property of Archibald K. Gaines, residing on the Maplewood Plantation, in Richwood, Boone County, Kentucky.¹⁸ Steven Weisenburger, whose research spawned the book, *Modern Medea*, does not include a detailed list of her duties; however he does indicate that Margaret was a domestic. Her duties would have included gardening, cooking, cleaning, laundering, sewing and mending, spinning and weaving.¹⁹ Weisenburger also concluded that Margaret was probably wet-nurse for Archibald's second wife, Elizabeth, and would have had to abandon nursing her own children. Genealogical records indicate that Margaret's pregnancies mirrored Elizabeth's.²⁰

The physical appearance of Margaret's children was of importance in the case, but Margaret had also been described in documents. Levi Coffin, an influential member of the Underground Railroad, provided descriptive details that begin to create a mental image. He wrote that, "[she] naturally excited much attention. She was a mulatto, about five feet high, showing one-fourth or one-third white blood. She had a high forehead, her eyebrows were finely arched and her eyes bright and intelligent, but the African appeared in the lower part of her face, in her broad nose and thick lips."²¹ From this brief description not much can be discerned about her appearance, but as Coffin was more specific about her African features, one can only deduce that she was of a lighter complexion. These are the first images of Margaret Garner.

During this period of time slave owners chose not to understand the emotions, desires or needs of the slave, male or female. As they were thought to be savages, and residing in a system that was good for them, anything that they might have wanted or needed was simply superfluous. Frederick Douglass questioned this argument in his speech, *The Hypocrisy of American Slavery*. He asked: "What, then, remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it? That which is

¹⁸ Stephen Weisenburger, *Modern Medea* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

²¹ Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, The American Negro, His History and Literature* (1880; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1968), 562.

inhuman cannot be divine.”²² Understanding those men and women to be anything but slaves was not a consideration. Margaret was first and foremost a woman who happened to be a slave. The image that antebellum slavery created, however, was that of a slave, a piece of property with no wants or desires, and whose only concerns should have been the performance of her duties.

Slavery was not an institution that was conducive to Margaret and her family. There are many stories of fugitives and revolutionaries, finding it easier to run away or revolt, rather than face such indignities. Whatever conditions the Garner family faced, Margaret found it necessary to leave the Gaines plantation with her children, seeking freedom at all costs, and with the resolution to die before returning to the dredges of slave life.

Margaret as Fugitive

On a cold day in January 1856, Margaret and her husband along with fifteen other slaves from the Gaines and Marshall plantations escaped. Margaret’s husband, Robert, was owned by James Marshall, and resided on a plantation approximately one and one-quarter miles from the Gaines plantation.²³ There is no documentation on the reasons for her escape, only speculation that comes from understanding the brutality of slavery.

Weisenburger used documents and letters from the Gaines family archives to show the instability of their plantation. Archibald K. Gaines owned several hundred acres on which he raised pigs and cows. The male slaves were responsible for moving those animals to market, but also for managing the crops. Because winter had set in, there was little work, other than tending the animals, and Gaines himself was in “poor spirits.” This led to financial instability, which caused concern for the slaves.²⁴ Financial instability often led to the sale of slaves, disrupting their established family life, and tearing them apart. With the possibility that Gaines might have needed to sell his slaves in order to stabilize his business endeavors, the idea that Margaret or her children would have been sold off was likely a major concern for her.

²² The History Place, “Frederick Douglass, *The Hypocrisy of American Slavery*,” accessed November 9, 2012. www.historyplace.com/speeches/douglass.htm.

²³ Weisenburger, *Modern Medea*, 35.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41-44.

Another possible reason for running away could have been physical abuse from Margaret's master. Coffin provided one possible reason. He wrote that, "on the left side of her forehead was an old scar, and on the cheek-bone, on the same side, another one. When asked what caused them, she said, 'White man struck me.' That was all, but it betrays a story of cruelty and degradation, and, perhaps, gives the key-note to Margaret's hate of slavery, her revolt against its thralldom, and her resolve to die rather than go back to it."²⁵ Sojourner Truth brought to light the physical abuse that she suffered; the assumption could be made that Margaret, too, had suffered such abuse, and resolved not to see her children suffer the same lot.

A Maplewood neighbor to the Gaines' plantation seemed to imply feistiness that was inherent to Margaret, and blamed it on her father, Duke. The neighbor, Benjamin Franklin Bedinger, wrote an editorial to the *Covington Journal*, offering his opinion on why Margaret ran away. He wrote that, "Peggy [Margaret] is a very common cross tempered, flat nosed, thick lipped Negro woman whose father was a very bad character." He continued his editorial by stating that the beginning of her fury was her father's meanness and the meddling abolitionists who taught her the beautiful morality found in the higher law, and that it was noble to cut the throat of her offspring.²⁶ There is no concrete evidence of any prior escape attempts on the Gaines' plantation by Margaret or any of her family members, or any prior contact with abolitionists. Bedinger's statements amount to racist opinions, especially in the description of Margaret, but it does offer another possible scenario in which Margaret was influenced by family to run away.

Another possibility was sexual abuse. Margaret was the mother of four children, and was pregnant with her fifth child. Robert sired her first child, Thomas. The rest of her children were described as nearly white, and with no other white males on the plantation it was assumed that their father was Archibald Gaines.²⁷ Weisenburger makes this conclusion based on speculation, but acknowledges that there is no supporting documentation, rumors or otherwise to indicate who was the father of Margaret's children. Whereas Weisenburger bases his conclusion on speculation, abolitionists of the time felt they knew for sure that Margaret was

²⁵ Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin*, 562.

²⁶ Weisenburger, *Modern Medea*, 33.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

sexually abused. Lucy Stone, a prominent white abolitionist of the day, offered her opinion as the key to the Margaret's action. She stood up to address the audience in Commissioner Pendery's court at Margaret's trial. Stone noted that, "the faded faces of the Negro children tell too plainly to what degradation female slaves submit."²⁸

In her study of more than five hundred interviews with female ex-slaves, Thelma Jennings found that female bondage was more severe than male bondage because those women had to bear children and cope with sexual abuse in addition to doing the work assigned to them; work that was often similar in type and quantity to that of male slaves.²⁹ There is no concrete evidence or interviews with Margaret that would explain why she chose to run away. Physical or sexual abuse was a possible reason, along with ideas planted by other family members or abolitionists. What is clear is that the conditions had become unbearable enough for her to risk her own life and the lives of her children to become fugitives. Freedom lay over the frozen Ohio River, but the law would prove to bar her hopes.

The 1850 Fugitive Slave Law

As part of the Compromise of 1850, Congress enacted the Fugitive Slave Law in September 1850.³⁰ The law was a part of a compromise needed to compensate for the addition of territory won in the Mexican-American War. Politicians feared an imbalance of power would occur between an unequal number of "Northern" or "Southern" territories allowed into the union. The compromise rested upon the issue of slavery, allowing new territories to choose whether they would be free or slave states. Several years before the start of the Civil War, states' rights were already coming to the forefront and beginning to divide the union.

²⁸ Mark Reinhardt, *Who Speaks for Margaret Garner? The True Story that Inspired Toni Morrison's Beloved*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 642.

²⁹ Thelma Jennings, "'Us Colored Women Had To Go Though a Plenty': Sexual Exploitation of African-American Slave Women," *Journal of Women's History* 1, no. 3 (Winter, 1990): 46.

³⁰ "The Fugitive Slave Law and Its Victims" *Anti-Slavery Tracts*, no. 18 (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1856): 1.

Several issues were addressed along with the compromise, one of which was the issue of the fugitive slave. Millard Fillmore, acting President of the United States, approved the Fugitive Slave Law, generally attributed to James M. Mason, a senator from Virginia.³¹ In short, the law allowed and compelled anyone to pursue a fugitive slave by seizure, warrant or arrest, and take that person before a judge or commissioner in order to return him or her to the state or territory from whence they came. It also addressed the penalties for persons obstructing the arrest, or the harboring and concealing of a fugitive slave.³²

The Fugitive Slave Law was harsh for all concerned. The *New York Evening Post* called it “an act for the encouragement of kidnapping.”³³ No one could refuse to assist anyone attempting to recover a slave. Any free African-American could be accused of being a slave and would not be able to offer testimony to defend him or herself in a court of law. This was the law that granted Archibald K. Gaines and James Marshall authority to follow the trail of their runaway slaves to return them to the state of Kentucky.

Margaret as Resistance

In total seventeen slaves would make their escape from the Gaines and Marshall plantations. Of those, nine made it through to Canada, while Margaret and her group were holed up in Ohio. It would not take long for Archibald K. Gaines and Thomas Marshall (son of owner James Marshall) to establish a posse in order to capture their runaway slaves. On January 28th, 1856, the Garner family waited in a cabin belonging to the Kite family, distant relatives, and the midpoint for their journey on to the Underground Railroad.³⁴ After warrants had been sworn out, according to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, and surveillance had been conducted, the Garner family of fugitives was finally confronted.

The act of running away was a common form of resistance. There are, however, many other forms that slaves take in order to free themselves from the confines of slavery. Everyday resistance amounted to work slowdowns, feigning illnesses, breaking tools,

³¹ Ibid., 2.

³² Ibid., 3-4.

³³ Ibid., 2.

³⁴ Weisenburger, *Modern Medea*, 63.

religious practices, and manumission. Some, mostly women, practiced “truancy” which was a form of running away temporarily from overwork and abuse on the plantation.³⁵ Historian Mary Ellison theorizes that black women sought and fought every means possible of resisting the cruelty and inhumanity of a system that matched economic profit with racial control. They often succeeded in making an intolerable institution more bearable and they evolved subversive techniques that were varied and devious enough quite frequently to make a mockery of the system itself.³⁶ At the extreme end of resistance is death.

The story of resistance, and the image of Margaret, is outlined in the *Enquirer*, a prominent Cincinnati paper partial to defense of the Fugitive Slave Act.³⁷ Inserted into the title of the *Enquirer* article were the words, “A Tale of Horror!” and the ending exclamation, “Great Excitement!” The article itself details the particulars of the case, reporting the fugitives’ activities before they were encountered at the Kite cabin. Of great importance in this article is the description of the scene in which Margaret herself was confronted. The following excerpt was written in the *Enquirer*:

But a deed of horror had been consummated, for weltering in its blood, the throat being cut from ear to ear and the head almost severed from the body, upon the floor lay one of the children of the younger couple, a girl three years old, while in a back room, crouched beneath the bed, two more of the children, boys, of two and five years, were moaning, the one having received two gashes in its throat, the other a cut upon the head. As the party [slave catchers] entered the room, the mother was seen wielding a heavy shovel, and before she could be secured she inflicted a heavy blow with it upon the face of the infant, which was lying upon the floor.³⁸

³⁵ Stephanie M. H Camp, “‘I Could Not Stay There’: Enslaved Women, Truancy and the Geography of Everyday Forms of Resistance in the Antebellum Plantation South,” *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 3 (2002): 3.

³⁶ Mary Ellison, “Resistance to Oppression: Black Women’s Response to Slavery in the United States,” *Slavery and Abolition* 4, no. 1 (1983): 56-58.

³⁷ Reinhardt, *Who Speaks for Margaret Garner?*, 731.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 747-756.

The paper also included two opinion statements, which showed how the parents of the infant were viewed. In the eyes of abolitionists they were regarded as hero and heroine, who would rather imbue their hands in the blood of their offspring than allow them to wear the shackles of slavery. Others looked upon them as brutal and unnatural murderers.³⁹

A second newspaper source, the *Cincinnati Columbia* – political leaning unknown but seemed to favor the fugitives – also reported the incident, though some of the details were not entirely accurate. Its title, “Horrible Affair! Desperate Resistance! A Child Slain by its Mother!” acknowledged that the mother did indeed slay the child, but reported the child as male instead of female. This paper also reported that a glance into an adjoining room revealed a Negro woman holding in her hand a knife literally dripping with gore over the heads of two little Negro children, who were crouched to the floor and uttering the cries whose agonized peals had first startled them.⁴⁰ Clearly the scene in the room was horrific as evidenced by the gory details provided in both articles, but the second paper actually defines her deed as resistance. The first paper did not use the specific word “resistance,” but it was not a necessary addition to convey the idea.

Margaret’s decision to kill her child became a very public matter. In order to keep them from returning to slavery she demonstrated the greatest form of resistance. Newspaper articles of the day, whether sympathetic with her deed, or horrified, show a discrepancy in reporting; both papers demonstrate bias, and were more interested in the gore factor, rather than answering the question of why this crime occurred. Because of this tactic, the newspapers effectively created an image of Margaret that was nothing more than a knife and shovel-wielding murderess, and set the nation eagerly awaiting more details.

Margaret as Heroine

After her arrest Margaret gained support from abolitionists. Praised in poetry and lauded in song, hers was a story steeped in tragedy, a beacon exposing the atrocities of slavery, and a catalyst for abolitionists to espouse anti-slavery jargon. One of the more prominent activists was African-American, Frances Ellen Watkins

³⁹ Ibid., 756-773.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 794.

Harper. She used poetry to showcase Margaret's story, and revealed her to be a tragic heroine.

Harper first came to prominence as an abolitionist lecturer and poet during the 1850s.⁴¹ Her poem entitled, "The Slave Mother: A Tale of the Ohio," was written as an homage to Margaret and her tragic situation. This was the second poem dedicated to the slave mother; however, her first poem brought light to the separation of mother and child. Harper's poems were mostly written in the classic rhyming form of a quatrain. The sixteen stanza poem relates the story opening with the line, "I have but four, the treasures of my soul." Right away Harper draws attention to Margaret's status as a mother and demonstrates her love for her children. Harper laments slavery as the cruel hand that would rip the slave from her children. The poem continues the tale, detailing the escape, the brief glimpse of freedom, the slave catchers on their trail, and the issue of the free state of Ohio not being able to save them. Harper calls Margaret a heroic mother, setting the stage to gather sympathy for the tragic deed. As the poem ends, Harper cries out for justice, against treacherous slavery, and for men and Christians to stand on the side of freedom.⁴²

Harper used her talents to paint a glowing and honorable image of Margaret, deeming her heroic, brave, and essentially blameless in her deed because of her situation. While Harper's poem purports to endorse sympathy for Margaret, it has an underlying rhetoric for an abolitionist agenda, and therefore has a dualistic meaning. She has portrayed Margaret in the image of a heroine whose love was so great for her children, and slavery so reviled, that she needed to kill them. There is no indication that Harper ever met Margaret, but she, like other writers of the period, used a tragic situation to speak out against the injustices of slavery. This is not to discount the heroic work Harper and abolitionists engaged in the freeing of the enslaved. It is only to show that abolitionists also sought the most tragic and horrific events to showcase the atrocities inflicted. In doing so they created an image

⁴¹ Eric. L. Haralson and John Hollander, ed., "Frances E. W. Harper," *Encyclopedia of American Poetry: The Nineteenth Century* (Illinois: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 184.

⁴² Frances E. W. Harper, *Complete Poems of Frances E. W. Harper, The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers*, ed. Maryemma Graham, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1988), 28-31.

of heroic, and sometimes blameless, men and women who fit into a generalized abolitionist agenda, not specific to that of a woman in a slave society who had to resort to murder.

Margaret as Conflict

From the warrants issued for the arrest of the fugitives, to the battle in court over which authority had jurisdiction, the newspapers of the day recorded the proceedings. At issue was whether the state of Ohio had jurisdiction over Margaret to try her for capital murder, or whether the state of Kentucky had jurisdiction because of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.

The *Cincinnati Columbian* reported that a writ of *habeas corpus* was produced requiring the fugitives to be brought forth and deputies to show just why they made the arrest.⁴³ This paper produced several articles that were specific to the proceedings, discussing the jurisdiction issue.

Meanwhile, the *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, which was considered an anti-slavery paper, seemed to support the Garner case. Two of its entries, from January 29th and 30th, 1856, are the only documents that concern themselves with the fugitives and their wellbeing.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* from January 31, 1856, reported on the legal maneuvers. Extra deputies were paid to control the growing crowds outside.⁴⁵

One important aspect from the trial came from an affidavit for Margaret, reported by the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*. The abolitionist lawyers who were defending the fugitives presented evidence that Margaret had been taken into the city of Cincinnati by John Gaines, Archibald K. Gaines' father, and his wife Eliza when she was a young child.⁴⁶ This was an important issue because it was validation that the Gaines family had taken their slaves into a free state.

The Garner's lawyer, John Jolliffe, was knowledgeable in his defense of fugitives. His main argument was that slavery was a sin. He used biblical passages to argue his points, and hoped to

⁴³ Reinhardt, *Who Speaks for Margaret Garner?*, 828.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 834.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 933.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 950.

sway the court's opinion against the Fugitive Slave Law.⁴⁷ Jolliffe also argued that since Margaret had been voluntarily taken into a free state, she was now free. He claimed that, "the maxim of the law was 'once free always free.'"⁴⁸ If this were proved true, Margaret was already free; and if Margaret was free, so too were her children.

The Garner trial lasted for several weeks. In the end Archibald K. Gaines and the state of Kentucky were victorious. Commissioner Pendery offered the final ruling. His conclusion stated that while Gaines voluntarily took his slaves to the free state of Ohio, the slave voluntarily abandoned freedom by returning to Kentucky. He continued: "The question is not one of humanity that I am called upon to decide. The laws of Kentucky and of the United States make it *a question of property*."⁴⁹

The legal wrangling of states' rights versus federal rights in this case was a precursor to the issues that arose at the start of the Civil War. Margaret as a slave was not allowed to testify for herself according to the Fugitive Slave Law, and was therefore not a viable participant in the proceedings. Coffin described her demeanor in the courtroom stating, "she would look up occasionally, for an instant, with a timid, apprehensive glance as the strange faces around her, but her eyes were generally cast down."⁵⁰ Margaret, seated with her children, was the image of a tragic figure, caught up in the conflict.

Margaret as Art

Artist Thomas Satterwhite Noble in his piece entitled, *The Modern Medea, 1867*, depicted Margaret's image in art.⁵¹ Completed eleven years after the Cincinnati incident, Noble's painting was a re-imagining of the scene in the room in which the fugitive and her dead child were found.

Thomas Satterwhite Noble (1835-1907) was the son of a prominent slave owning family from Kentucky. He studied art in France, fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War, and

⁴⁷ Weisenburger, 100-101.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁵⁰ Coffin, 563.

⁵¹ Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *The Modern Medea, 1867*.

subsequently took up slavery as the subject in his main series of work.⁵² For this particular piece he created two pencil sketches and two painted versions, of which the first was lost. The final 20" x 16" canvas was completed in oil (Figure 1).

Noble's painting depicts a cloistered room in which fugitive Margaret Garner is standing to the right, and a group of four men (authorities) are standing across from her. Two young children cling to her in desperation. Lying on the floor is the body of a child, its blood pooled beneath its head as the adults in the room look on with horror. Lost in the shadows of the floor and its mother's dress is the body of another child face down on the ground.

Noble was not present during the Cincinnati incident, so it would appear that he needed to rely on newspaper renditions and word of mouth to fashion this painting. The artist has manipulated history to fit his conception of the scene. The young child on the floor is a boy, appearing to be 5-6 years old. The children and Margaret all possess darkened complexions. Nowhere is there evidence of the knife that was used in the crime.

Noble's painting brings the viewer directly into the middle of the action just after the fugitives have been discovered. Browns, greens, and black dominate the color palate, creating an overarching darkness that becomes an allegory not only for the darkness of the institution of slavery, but also for the slaves themselves, as the light of freedom had now slipped away. Though intricately painted it lacks vibrant hues, except for the red blood on the floor and in the headscarf worn by Margaret. The red is a reminder of the violent pain that is not only evident in the room, but also in the everyday lives of the slaves. Small hints of red on one of the men, presumably Archibald K. Gaines, suggest a collusion of sorts in the crime itself. The other men are staring and pointing at the child on the floor, while Gaines has directed his anger at Margaret, gazing fiercely at her across the room. Margaret does not cower, staring back at him and challenging his authority. She is drawing attention to the dead child and almost seems to be blaming him.

⁵² Leslie Furth, "'The Modern Medea' and Race Matters: Thomas Satterwhite Noble's Margaret Garner," *American Art* 12, no. 2 (Summer, 1998): 37.



Figure 1: Thomas Satterwhite Noble, *The Modern Medea*, 1867.

At first glance it is unclear exactly who was responsible for the deceased children on the ground. Margaret stands outnumbered with her hands outstretched, bloodless, guiltless, palms facing upwards, bemoaning her fate. She seems innocent, filled with wonderment at what has taken place.

While there is only speculation as to why Noble would choose slavery as his subject, there is no indication that he had an abolitionist's agenda. There are some historians who have concluded that Noble might be atoning for the sins of his slave-owning father. Others have implied that Noble's work was a stepping-stone for his own career advancement.⁵³ Leslie Furth, art historian, writes that Noble was elected to the National Academy of Design based on the strength of this painting.⁵⁴

Conceding that all artists have the right to artistic license, Noble portrayed Margaret Garner in a manner that served his purpose rather than hers. An in-depth, close-up examination of the main character reveals a face contorted in anger. Margaret's eyes are exaggerated, perhaps to show shock or horror, however this technique has the opposite effect. She instead possesses a crazed

⁵³ Jo-Ann Morgan, "Thomas Satterwhite Noble's Mulattos: From Barefoot Madonna to Maggie the Ripper," *Journal of American Studies* 41, no. 1 (April 2007): 84.

⁵⁴ Leslie Furth, *American Art*, 37.

appearance. Her face is harsh with sharp angles at her nose, brow and chin. She is painted with a dark complexion, and her clothes are slightly tattered.

This image of Margaret leaves an indelible image of the African-American female slave as angry and crazed. Noble has revealed his stereotypes and prejudices in his imagination of Margaret on canvas, perhaps recalling his own plantation experiences. He has also forced a different meaning to the scene by placing a male child on the floor. By changing the sex of the victim he has reiterated to his audience the superiority and intrinsic value of males over females, including Margaret herself. Finally, choosing to paint such dark complexions on Margaret and her children remind the observer that these are indeed slaves. Noble would have needed to at least paint the children lighter, if he were to be consistent with sources that describe them as nearly white. Levi Coffin reminisced that “the murdered child was almost white, a little girl of rare beauty.”⁵⁵ But Margaret’s life and children were far removed from memory at the time Noble completed his work. If he were to paint the children nearly white, doing so might have an adverse effect on the observer, causing them to misconstrue the scene even further by believing that the children did not belong to Margaret, or that Margaret had murdered a white child.

The title of Noble’s work is also of significance. In order to understand why Margaret was compared to the classical mythological legend, Medea, it is necessary to understand Medea’s story. Written by Euripides, Medea is the tale of a woman scorned. A refugee from her home in Colchis, she became the wife of Jason (of Troy fame), and bore two children with him. When Jason chose to marry a royal princess he cast off Medea, whose obsessive love for him turned to anger and rage. In order to strike at his heart, she killed their two children with a sword.⁵⁶

It is clear to see why Noble would use this reference; however, the murder of children is where the comparison ends. Noble’s use of Medea does not cast a favorable light on Margaret. Margaret’s love for her children was described as so strong and all-consuming that she would rather see them die than end up back in the bonds of slavery. Medea was said to hate her children and took

⁵⁵ Levi Coffin, 563.

⁵⁶ Euripides, *Medea*, accessed November 12, 2012, www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/EuripidesMedeaLuschnig.pdf.

no pleasure in seeing them.⁵⁷ She was motivated by obsession and extreme hatred towards Jason, while Margaret was motivated by her love of her children and a hatred of her situation. Margaret is cast as both a heroine and villainess for her deed, dependent upon who is speaking for her. Medea can only be seen as a villain. Noble's act of giving Margaret the title of a modern Medea was his subtle way of besmearing her image, while at the same time declining to voice an opinion and appearing to be impartial.

Jo-Ann Morgan argues in her article on Noble's paintings that the artist adapted historic scenarios to the changing public discourse on the status of mulattos in the nation. She also writes that it is important to remember that his works sold for as much as \$2,000 each.⁵⁸ It is significant to note that Noble's *Medea* was completed two years after the Civil War had ended, and long after the Garner incident. As the time had passed for any abolitionist movements to free the slaves, this leads to the conclusion that Noble was not attempting to show any great sympathy over the status of slaves, mulattos or otherwise, but was using his talent to increase his own notoriety and status. While Margaret's story disappeared over time, Noble's artwork remained. He created an image of Margaret Garner – villainess and crazed murderess – that had a lasting impression, but his painting did not foster the true image of the woman. It would require nearly two centuries for history to reconnect and remember.

Margaret as Memory

Hers had been one of the more acclaimed fugitive tales of the period, exposed in newspapers, court transcripts, interviews, poetry and abolitionist tracts. But Margaret Garner's story faded into history after her death, her image resurfacing briefly as mahogany paint at the tip of an artist's brush. In the years following her death, slavery as an institution would be dissolved. Fugitives would no longer fear for their freedom; resistance would not need to be used as a tool for defiance of the master. The conflict between the North and the South would be resolved with the bloody Civil War. It was not until author Toni Morrison came across an interview with Margaret nearly a century and a half later, and was intrigued

⁵⁷ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁸ Jo-Ann Morgan, *Journal of American Studies*, 84-85.

enough to create a character loosely based on her life, that she was reintroduced to the world.

In 1973, Morrison was part of an editorial team that was in charge of gathering together an assortment of documents, photographs, advertisements of slave auctions, songs, stories, interviews and letters, for a collection entitled, *The Black Book*.⁵⁹ She came across an article in the *American Baptist*, written by P. S. Bassett of the Fairmount Theological Seminary. The piece entitled, “A Visit to the Slave Mother Who Killed Her Child,” was an interview with Margaret Garner, whom he deemed, “that unfortunate woman.” Bassett had been preaching at the prison and knew of her story. He inquired as to her demeanor, asking “if she was not excited almost to madness when she committed the act. ‘No,’ she replied. ‘I was as cool as I am now, and would much rather kill them at once, and thus end their sufferings, than have them taken back to slavery, and be murdered by piece-meal.’”⁶⁰ The interview that Morrison found was a fragment of newspaper history that had once been a part of a larger fascinating story. The resulting masterpiece created by Morrison was her novel, *Beloved*.

Just as Margaret had cut the throat of her young daughter to free her from the horrific conditions of slavery, so too did *Beloved*'s main character, Sethe. Parallels between Margaret and Sethe's story, however, are limited. In an interview with Morrison in the *New York Times*, the author talks specifically about deciding not to delve into and regurgitate Margaret's past, but to create a story based on an incident in her life. Morrison stated, “I did a lot of research about everything else in the book – Cincinnati, and abolitionists, and the Underground Railroad – but I refused to find out anything else about Margaret Garner. I really wanted to invent her life.”⁶¹

The need to invent a life is an important aspect of Morrison's work as it creates a different image, far removed from the complexities of history. Kimberly Chabot Davis in her study on Morrison and postmodernism writes that, “in *Beloved*, she is more concerned with origins, cycles and reconstructing agency than with

⁵⁹ Middleton A. Harris, et al., *The Black Book* (New York: Random House, 2009).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶¹ *New York Times*, *Toni Morrison in Her New Novel Defends Women*, accessed November 20, 2012, www.nytimes.com/books/98/01/11/home/14013.html.

decadence and self-parody. Although Morrison demystifies master historical narratives, she also wants to raise “real” or authentic African-American history in its place.”⁶² By taking Margaret Garner’s interview and reconstructing her story, she has created a new view of life – a new image – not the perception of history. Morrison’s fiction empowers the image of Margaret Garner. Instead of researching her history and relating a world of circumstances that had already been written about, she brought Margaret Garner to the forefront, reinforcing her image as an African-American woman and mother.

Morrison’s work has had an important and profound impact on African-American history and culture. The issue of slavery, often swept under the rug, has been perceived as a history too difficult, painful, or perhaps even embarrassing for memory. Morrison’s novel drew critical praise, winning several prestigious awards, including the Pulitzer Prize and the Nobel Prize for Literature, and it became a powerful voice for the significance of memory.

Toni Morrison is a believer in memory. She states that, “if we don’t keep in touch with the ancestor, we are, in fact, lost. Memory is not an effort to find out the way it really was – that is research. The point is to dwell on the way it appeared and why it appeared in that particular way.”⁶³ She also stated that *Beloved* is not about slavery as an institution; it is about those anonymous people called slaves.⁶⁴

Morrison reveals Sethe’s story in flashbacks. Her placement of a ghost in the story adds complexity and has several meanings. Firstly, the lingering ghost is an obvious reminder that a child has died, both in the fictionalized version, and in real life. Morrison forces the reader to recognize not only Sethe, but also the child that she killed. As Margaret’s story unfolded, supporters and detractors became so consumed by a whirlwind of issues – the horrors of the institution of slavery, the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, state versus federal rights and master-slave relationships – they neglected to acknowledge the true victim. By creating the ghost

⁶² Kimberly Chabot Davis, *Post Modern Blackness: Toni Morrison’s Beloved and the End of History*, *Productive Postmodernism: Consuming Histories and Cultural Studies*, ed. John Noel Duvall (New York: State University of New York), 79-80.

⁶³ Ashraf H. A. Rushdy, “Daughters Signifyin(g) History: The Example of Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*,” *American Literature* 64, no. 3 (1992): 567.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 569.

character, Morrison brings attention to Margaret Garner's daughter, Mary, who received virtually no acknowledgement after her death other than vague descriptions of her appearance. Morrison acknowledges the child as a person, not merely a piece of property.

Secondly, the ghost is a source of pain for the character Sethe; her child's spirit lingers, reminding her of a horrific past and a physical mother-child bond that she could no longer possess. Lastly, the ghost is a metaphor for history itself, the essence of memories long forgotten. Like the ghost, history is something that has passed on, something intangible, but always hovering. The acknowledgement of the ghost is a recognition that history, while always in the past, is something that resides in the present and must eventually be confronted.

Beloved invites curiosity and a means for African-Americans not only to remember the past, but also to consider the circumstances in which their ancestors lived. Morrison's fiction calls attention to slavery's victims, and is a reminder that these were flesh and blood people who lived, loved, fought, killed and died. It is her way of invoking the ancestors as a reminder of where African-Americans came from. It also can be seen as a means for intellectual and spiritual growth.

Because Morrison did not recreate the circumstances of Margaret's life, in a way she was suggesting that Margaret could have existed in any time period; the history itself was not as important as the person. Morrison invented Sethe and in the process gave Margaret a voice and a new image, reminding readers that she was a thinking, feeling woman. *Beloved* became a portal for Margaret, ensuring a niche in popular culture through Morrison's words.

Oprah Winfrey also played a part in reviving Margaret. As one of the most influential female voices in twentieth-century media, Winfrey brought Margaret's story to national attention by including Morrison's book in her popular book club. She subsequently produced the film, also named *Beloved*, and even portrayed the main character, Sethe.⁶⁵ While not a major box office success, the movie was responsible for not only exposing a younger generation to unconditional motherly love, and the effects

⁶⁵ *Beloved*, directed by Jonathan Demme (October 16, 1988; Touchstone Pictures/Harpo Films).

of extremities on a person, but also re-generating an interest in that period of history.

Margaret Garner's legacy remains relevant today; she is found in books, documentaries a mural and even an opera. On May 7, 2005, *Margaret Garner, A New American Opera in Two Acts*, debuted its first performance in Detroit, Michigan. With music by award-winning composer Richard Danielpour, and the libretto by Morrison herself, the opera presents a storyline that is a closer rendition of the historical facts, but still allows for artistic license. Although set in Kentucky in April 1856, Act I opens in complete darkness. This supports Morrison's original concept of creating a character and not the history; the stage does not allow for any sense of location or concept of time. Some of the discrepancies are as follows: Margaret is depicted returning to Kentucky to stand trial for theft and destruction of property, as the child was considered property of the owner, Archibald Gaines; she is led to the gallows, but is granted clemency; even after winning her freedom, she decides to take her own life and hangs herself.⁶⁶ Even though Morrison's opera is not historically accurate, she does more to define Margaret's image as a woman, mother and a wife, thus allowing the audience a better understanding of the trials and tribulations that she had to endure. The opera was critically acclaimed and enjoyed sold-out audiences, renewing interest in this tragic story.

The state of Ohio also is responsible for keeping Margaret Garner's story current. Presumably selected to depict the point of their escape across the frozen Ohio River, a mural painted by Robert Dafford of Louisiana on Covington's Ohio River floodwall, stands as homage to Margaret and her family (Figure 2).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Richard Danielpour, with a libretto by Toni Morrison, *Margaret Garner, A New American Opera in Two Acts* (May 7, 2005) accessed November 20, 2012, www.operacarolina.org/content/operas/libretto/207.pdf.

⁶⁷ Robert Dafford, *Mural on Covington's Ohio River Floodwall*, accessed November 23, 2012, www.cincinnati.com/blogs/ourhistory/2012/02/20/slave-chose-death-for-child.



Figure 2: Robert Dafford, *Mural, Margaret Garner escapes*

Conclusion

Margaret Garner was returned to Kentucky and eventually sent to Arkansas by Gaines. En route, the ship, *Edward Howard*, carrying Margaret, her husband and children, collided with another vessel, the *Henry Lewis*. What happened next is not clear. Margaret and her daughter, Cilla, were either thrown overboard by the collision, or Margaret saw an opportunity to finish what she had begun and tried to jump to her death with her child. The young child perished, but Margaret was rescued.⁶⁸ Thus she would remain enslaved, though at least two of her children were now freed from bondage. Above all else Margaret Garner was a woman and a mother. These categories provide for their own images and descriptions, but unfortunately, they were not considerations in the factors of her life. She was seen in a multitude of ways, all images conducive to others rather than Margaret the woman. The ideas of slavery, laws, revolutions, avidity and ambition, and activists' agendas are concepts whose philosophies and interpretations last through time. The woman that was Margaret faded in history.

As a slave Margaret was born into an institution that did not value her unquantifiable worth as a human being, but considered her and her offspring to be property. For any number of reasons she chose to free herself from that condition; in the end it did not matter why or how, but only that she ran. Becoming a fugitive was a chance for freedom, a chance to rebel against the

⁶⁸ Weisenburger, 223-224.

institution and resist those who would deny her status as a woman, as a human being. It was a chance to give her children a new life away from the horrors that had been inflicted upon her.

Greek legends such as Medea lasted across the centuries because they were just that, legends, created to relate a specific story or moral, or to entertain, but Margaret had no true legend until Toni Morrison resurrected her memory. Morrison herself speaks of the importance of memory. Memory defines history, and without it history is lost. It is a necessary tool for understanding the past and finding something useful for the present. Even though there are very few similarities in Morrison's story to the real life drama that belonged to Margaret, it provides enough perspective to begin a dialogue and offer some insight into who she was.

Margaret was lost to history because she was not the slave, fugitive, resistance, conflict, heroine or art that had developed in around her and her story. She was a woman whose plight was complicated enough to cause her to fall into a churning abyss that pulled her deep into obscurity. But with all things considered, in the history of mankind, Margaret Garner was an American woman with a story to tell, and is no longer lost.

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Author Bio

Cecelia M. Smith was born and raised in Los Angeles County and attended Howard University after high school. She relocated to San Bernardino County as an adult and resumed her pursuit for higher education at Chaffey College and California State University at San Bernardino. While studying African-American history, she became interested in the life stories of the female slave, and eventually hopes to conduct further research in this area. She graduates in June 2013, from CSUSB, with a Bachelor of Arts in History, with a focus in ancient and medieval Europe. She plans to seek her Master's degree in the social sciences and a certificate in creative writing. She intends to pursue a secondary career in instruction. She currently resides in Fontana with her husband, Lydell, and two children, Alycia and Cameron. She has been employed by the City of Los Angeles as a dispatcher for the police department, for over 30 years.



The Deteriorating Treatment of Slaves in the Palmetto State in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

By Samuel Benke

Abstract: Slavery, in and of itself, is a despicable institution. It degraded the enslaved and inflated the power of the owners to near omnipotent levels. Slavery has been portrayed in two different ways: one, as a fantasy on thinking where slavery was a benevolent institution that taught slaves how to be civil and Christian, while the other takes a more realistic approach exposing the harsh brutalities of slavery and the adverse effects that the institution had on the enslaved. This paper seeks to give the reader a more thorough understanding of slavery as it existed in the antebellum South Carolina and how the conditions of slavery worsened as the nation grew further disunited. Research for this study draws from major authors throughout the twentieth century, such as Charles W. Joyner, Ulrich B. Phillips, Herbert Aptheker, and Kenneth M. Stampp all of whom played a major role in shaping American thought on slavery. The research encompasses why slave treatment worsened, the punishments handed down upon the slaves, and the general treatment of slaves during these changing circumstances in antebellum South Carolina.

Introduction

Slavery is an institution that has existed throughout history. This ancient practice enabled some civilizations to become dominating empires while leaving others ravaged, as their populations were carted off into enslavement. Within these slave-owning societies, the treatment of slaves varied considerably over time. Some performed light work in cooperation with their masters, while others experienced maltreatment and workloads so brutal that they died as a result. Due to slavery's extended history throughout human existence, it is often challenging to arrive at a universal definition of what constitutes being a slave. One particular definition of slavery that developed during the 19th Century, in the United States of America, was known as race based chattel slavery.¹ States in the southern part of the country took special interest in this form of slavery because of the advantages that the institution provided to large-scale, plantation style agriculture.² Generally, slaves in the South were treated very poorly at this time, but South Carolina, in particular, developed a reputation for excessive brutality.³

Before the 1850's, the most common form of punishment was the whipping of slaves, and while this treatment was brutal, the punishments usually matched the severity of the crime committed. For example, if a slave committed the same infraction multiple times, the amount of lashes put on the slaves would increase accordingly; it would take a drastic act, such as running away from the plantation, before a slave would be chained or mutilated. However, as southern states entered a path toward secession and rebellion during the 1850s, with South Carolina at

¹ This manifestation of bondage occurred when a white man or woman owned a black man or woman and treated the latter as if they were property. The slave's value was measured simply by how much product he/she produced.

² On the other hand, the northern states decided that slavery was not worth the economic cost and outlawed the institution. It is important to note that the racism that had fostered slavery did not disappear, and that blacks still had difficult lives even if they were technically free, however, this subject will not be covered in this paper.

³ Men and women as a whole were treated horrifically as slaves; women more often than not were treated worse than men were. However, this paper will focus more on the overall treatment of both sexes and less on the individual ordeals and for each sex.

the helm of the ship, the maltreatment of black slaves worsened. As tensions rose, so too did the severity of these punishments. Debates about slavery nearly ripped the nation in two by mid-century, but the Compromise of 1850, which introduced the idea of popular sovereignty and balanced Slave and Free states, would postpone the division for another eleven years. Despite this lull, slaveholders still treated their slaves worse than earlier in the century. The ill treatment of slaves continued to escalate in South Carolina, which by this time had been fervently advocating secession from the United States. This study will highlight three factors that led to the worsening conditions of slaves in South Carolina during this time: first, the reasons as to why the treatment of slaves deteriorated; second, the general treatment of slaves in everyday life under these changing conditions; and third, the punishments handed down upon slaves as a result.

Historiography

The first major historian to write extensively about the treatment of slaves was Ulrich Bonnell Phillips. When Phillips wrote *American Negro Slavery; a Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Régime*, in 1918, he included a chapter titled “Plantation Management” which was about the way the plantation was run and how slaves were treated.⁴ Within this chapter, Phillips explains that slaves had a good life. His main argument stems from a two different quotes, the first of which is from Virginian Richard Corbin in 1759:

The care of negroes is the first thing to be recommended, that you give me timely notice of their wants that they may be provided with all necessarys [*sic*]. The breeding wenchens more particularly you must instruct the overseers to be kind and indulgent to, and not force them with child upon any service or hardship that will be injurious to them,... and the children to be well looked after,... and that

⁴ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, “Plantation Management,” in *American Negro Slavery: a Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Régime* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1918), 261-290.

none of them suffer in time of sickness for want of proper care.⁵

While the second is from P.C. Weston, a South Carolinian in 1856:

The proprietor, in the first place, wishes the overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and wellbeing of the negroes. The proprietor is always ready to excuse such errors as may proceed from want of judgment; but he never can or will excuse any cruelty, severity, or want of care towards the negroes. For the wellbeing, however, of the negroes it is absolutely necessary to maintain obedience, order and discipline, to see that the tasks are punctually and carefully performed, and to conduct the business steadily and firmly, without weakness on the one or harshness on the other.⁶

Phillips builds upon these two men, stating that slaves had healthcare and that whenever they were sick or injured their master's would pay the bill for them. He also describes the master's generosity in giving slaves houses to live in, and states various benefits to being pregnant. For example, Phillips wrote that slave women who had become pregnant were not given the most laborious tasks and were given time to rest. The women were also given three forty-five minute periods each day after giving birth for a period of twelve months to allow for suckling and were never required to be more than half a mile from their house so they could allow their child to suckle.⁷ Phillips sees the slave/master relationship as benign and patriarchal. To Phillips, slaves could be no more than children, as they were given nearly everything and cared for by the master. He also states that the sometimes-harsh punishment of slaves was only a reflection of a crime or unacceptable action.

Phillips was born in La Grange, Georgia in 1877 and was very sympathetic to the Antebellum South. This sympathy affected his writings, which painted Southern slavery in a romantic and benevolent light. Moreover, Phillips' writings would help perpetuate these views for over forty years, as a number of scholars

⁵ Ibid., 261.

⁶ Ibid., 261.

⁷ Ibid., 264.

agreed with him, which in turn helped to sway public opinion. This all ended in 1956, the year Kenneth Stampp wrote *The Peculiar Institution*, which is considered a groundbreaking work in that it disagreed with Phillips' views on slavery, and began the process of rescinding the foundations of his long accepted arguments.

While Stampp's work is often praised for its break from traditional analysis of slavery among scholars of his day, his work was not the first to challenge Phillips' claims. In 1943, Herbert Aptheker was beginning to write his dissertation for his doctoral degree when he wrote, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, which focused on slave revolts in the South and pointed out that there were hundreds of other revolts similar to the famous Nat Turner rebellion.⁸ He attacked Phillips, dismantling the idea that slaves were docile and child-like. Aptheker gives a detailed account of the revolts that occurred throughout the first half of the 19th century. He uses two chapters to detail why slaves revolted in the first place, which includes many instances where slaves were being mistreated.⁹ Aptheker also delves into the types of individual resistance that slaves practiced against their masters, such as not working as hard as possible or damaging tools to get breaks.¹⁰ Aptheker shows that slave communities were more nuanced than what the early Southern sympathizer historians would have the public believe.¹¹

The evidence that Aptheker presented about slavery and the South was revolutionary for the topic, because it debased Phillips' thinking that slavery was benevolent and good for slaves. The work also helped set the foundation for works such as *The Peculiar Institution* and *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*, which completely dismissed earlier Southern sympathetic writings, and set a new tone for the way historians thought about slavery and the South. Kenneth Stampp published

⁸ Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (1943. Reprint. New York: International Publishers, 1963).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 79-139.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹¹ There is an abundance of material on slave revolts in the South, however, this study will not divulge too much into them. It will look at revolts as a form of slave resistance and how those resistances affected slave treatment in South Carolina leading into the Civil War. It does not touch upon how the resistances formed or how they were put down. For further reading on Slave revolts please refer to John K. Throton's paper, "African Dimensions Of The Stono Rebellion" or Herbert Aptheker's book *American Negro Slave Revolts*

the book, *The Peculiar Institution*, to directly counter what Phillips was trying to convey. Stampp argued that slavery was not a benign, paternalistic institution, but rather a brutal, barbaric one that treated slaves horrifically and gave their masters nearly unlimited power. Stampp quotes many different slaveholders about the treatment of slaves.¹² The massive use of primary sources is seen throughout the book. For example, Stampp starts section six with a quote from an Arkansas slaveholder:

The management of Negroes, [...] now, I speak what I know, when I say it is like ‘casting pearls before swine’ to try to *persuade* a negro to work. He must be *made* to work, and should always be given to understand that if he fails to perform his duty he will be punished for it.¹³

Another quote from a South Carolinian states, “The overseer whose constant and only resort is to the lash [...] is a brute, and deserves penitentiary.”¹⁴ Stampp uses quotes such as this throughout the chapter to point out the absurdness of Phillips’ claims and attacks the notion that slavery was benevolent and passive. Stampp is thorough and broad in his attack of Phillips, which was necessary, as Phillips’ version of slavery was a common point of view among Americans at the time. Stampp used rather simple points like the previous quote, as well as brutal portrayals of what slaves had to endure as punishments for not doing exactly as the master, or overseer, pleased.

The Peculiar Institution, and Stampp, ushered in a new era of historical thinking about slavery; historians began to challenge the romanticized views of Dixie sympathizing historians, as they worked to reveal the truth about American slavery. One author who stands out in this assault of the old ways of thinking was Stanley Elkins. Elkins’ writings take a slightly different turn, portraying the slave as a victim rather than attacking the whole idea of paternalistic slavery itself. Elkins argument was that slaves were essentially turned into adult infants living in totalitarian

¹² Kenneth Stampp, "To Make Them Stand In Fear," *The Peculiar Institution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 141-191.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 179. Although this one South Carolinian seemed to believe that over punishment was a problem, it would not stop others from over extending their power over slaves with extremely harsh punishments.

environments who eventually lost the will to resist. In short, Elkins viewed slaves as equal to that of the Jews while being systematically murdered by the Nazis. He felt the environment of slavery was similar to that of Nazi concentration camps and the way the inmates were treated there.¹⁵

Charles Joyner was also part of the movement of historians who were determined to right the wrongs set down by their predecessors nearly a half century before. Joyner wrote the book, *Down by the Riverside*, which details life for slaves and masters in All Saints Parish in South Carolina from the mid-eighteenth century to the Civil War. Joyner writes about the geology of All Saints Parish, as well as the chattel slave system that was set up, and how the South Carolina town's economy completely intertwined with the slave system.¹⁶ Joyner next writes about the idea of "off time" in South Carolina, which is not necessarily leisure time, but rather time for the slaves to take care of any additional needs they might have: activities such as hunting, fishing, gardening, religious worship, or hiring oneself out for work.¹⁷ Joyner continues his work with ideas about the "Afro-Christian" faith and how Christian ministers and evangelists were encouraged to convert slaves, the folklore that developed among slaves and whites, and the formation of the Gullah language.¹⁸ Joyner's last chapter focuses on resistance movements and tactics by slaves in South Carolina. He suggests that even though there were few outright acts of rebellion or revolts in the region, the desire of the slaves was always to be free.¹⁹

Joyner wishes to communicate to the world that slavery was more than just slaves being the victim of a cruel and barbaric system. He is a part of a new wave of thinking that counters Phillips' school of thought in a more thorough manner than the works of Stampp, Elkins, or Aptheker. The former authors argued against Phillips by presenting additional primary source, and at times, using Phillips' own sources against him to prove that slaves were victims and unhappy with their involvement in the slave

¹⁵ While some comparisons can be made between Jewish prisoners and slaves, other historians contend that the comparison is not legitimate.

¹⁶ Charles W Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: a South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 9-126.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 127-140.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 141-224. The Gullah Language is a mix of English and African roots that slaves used to communicate to each other.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 225-240.

institution. Joyner takes the next step, exposing the reader to details regarding slave communities and how slaves lived. He reveals that slaves could grow their own gardens, hunt, and fish for their own meat, and even do additional work outside the plantation to earn money, provided that master allowed it. Joyner accepted and agreed with Stamp, Elkins, and Aptheker, in that slaves were treated horribly and that nothing about slavery was justifiable, but believed that further, more nuanced discussions of the topic were still necessary.

Ira Berlin, a modern historian of Southern slavery builds upon Joyner's school of thought with his own works such as *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*. Throughout the book, Berlin details what happened in slave communities and how they evolved through American history.²⁰ He does this by separating each category into a different generation in chronological order. By detailing the slaves' lives, Berlin delves into how slaves were treated throughout American history and how that treatment helped to form these societies. His focus also presents the worsening conditions as time progressed in the South. Furthermore, Berlin discusses how politics and economics affected the treatment of slaves. For example, the advent of the cotton gin allowed for the production of cotton to expand causing the then dying form of chattel slavery to have renewed life. By extension, this created a divide between the North and South, which continued to grow until the South seceded and civil war began.²¹ During that time, cotton production was rapidly growing and the treatment of slaves deteriorated in lieu of the master's own comfort. Berlin is able to capture the deteriorating condition of slavery throughout American history and provides analysis of legislation and events that contributed to the slaves' condition.

Berlin also writes about the reinforced Fugitive Slave Law. This slave law was in effect for nearly 100 years within the United States and demanded that captured slaves be returned to their owners if the slave ran away. Northern abolitionists were able to dissent before the strengthened law was passed, but afterwards they were legally obligated to help slaveholders recapture their slaves. The penalty for failure to do so resulted in jail time. Slaveholders in states such as South Carolina took advantage of

²⁰ Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

this law and were able to recapture many of their runaway slaves due to the unwilling help of Northerners.

Slavery has long been a popular topic among scholars in the United States, but has often proven to be difficult to discuss. Phillips was the first to attempt to portray slavery in history through his own bias by portraying Southerners to be gentlemen and paternal towards their slaves. He believed that slavery was an institution that benefited all the slaves because it helped to “civilize” and care for them. It took nearly thirty years for historians to deviate from Phillips’ thinking. Aptheker laid the foundation for the new era of thought; Stampp, Elkins, and Joyner built on Aptheker’s ideas and attacked Phillips viciously, effectively dismantling Phillips’ school of biased thinking. Ira Berlin attacks Phillips as well, but also brings revisions to the aforementioned writers all the while, bringing along the idea that not everything is black and white when discussing slavery. This paper will build off the ideas of the latter five historians on the slave system in South Carolina: the Palmetto State.

Background

Forced labor first appeared in the United States in the form of indentured servitude during the early colonial era. Many of these migrants became indentured servants to wealthy individuals, who in exchange for the migrant’s labor, paid for their passage to the new world. Under this system, servants gained freedom after a certain amount of time and were usually able to obtain a portion of land and money from their old master when their contracts reached an end. This is where the first vestiges of slavery appear in the history of the United States. Slowly, the need for indentured servants waned as former servants began populating the land along with those who were able to migrate on their own. At this same time, prejudices against blacks started to grow and slowly race based chattel slavery gained a foothold as an institution in the American colonies. Chattel slavery became widespread throughout the colonies, and became a problem during the writing of the Constitution. Signatories from both the Northern and Southern States agreed to compromises concerning slavery such as having three of every five slaves count as one free person, and ending the slave trade by 1808. These compromises were the first of many

that were made concerning the institution of slavery within the United States.

In the late eighteenth century, slavery had begun to lose its stronghold on society. In fact, many opponents of the system believed it would end naturally, because it could no longer self-perpetuate itself. This idea changed, however, with the invention of the cotton gin in 1793. After its invention, the demand for slaves increased again. Tensions soon arose between the North and South. While some concessions were made by slave owners, prior to the Civil War, such as the Mason Dixon line, which divided future slave states from future free states, it must also be understood that slave owners still held great political power at this time. Dr. James Horton said in an interview with the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS):

[...] in the 72 years between the election of George Washington and the election of Abraham Lincoln, 50 of those years sees a slaveholder as president of the United States, and, for that whole period of time, there was never a person elected to a second term who was not a slaveholder...²²

The realization that over half of the presidents in this period were slaveholders helps explain how slavery was able to gain and retain such a strong foothold in the United States.

Analysis

The mistreatment of slaves within South Carolina was not an immediate process. It took nearly a century for slave conditions to deteriorate, and was due to numerous factors. Such reasons include slave codes set by the South Carolina government in the colonial period, the fact that black slaves outnumbered whites in South Carolina, rebellions within the South, and national tensions about slavery in the mid-nineteenth century that eventually drove the nation apart.

South Carolina was the first colony to establish a slave code in colonial America, a code that other colonies would emulate

²² James Horton, Interview with Gwen Ifill, *PBS Newshour*, (Public Broadcasting Station, PBS, January 25, 2007).

when establishing their own.²³ The 1712 slave code of South Carolina declared that blacks were “of barbarous, wild, savage natures, and ... wholly unqualified to be governed by the laws, customs, and practices of this province.” They had to be governed by such special laws “as may restrain the disorders, rapines, and inhumanity to which they are naturally prone and inclined, and [as] may also tend to the safety and security of the people of this province and their estates.”²⁴

South Carolina originated the idea, among those that would eventually form the United States that slaves were barbaric and needed to be civilized, and believed it was their duty to “civilize” and Christianize the African slaves.²⁵ In South Carolina, in order to accomplish this, they would punish the slave for wrongdoing and try to attain “Christian” and civilized behavior through force. Charles Christian lists the many different provisions that the slave code covered, but one that is of particular interest is the search of slave homes. He states that the code called for the search of slave homes every two weeks to search for stolen goods or weapons; the punishment for finding such an item started with whippings and eventually escalated to losing an ear, branding on the third offense, and death on the fourth offense.²⁶ This provision of punishment was justified to South Carolinians because they believed it helped to teach good morals to slaves, and while the use of harsher punishments, such as death, were not utilized in the early-eighteenth century, they were prevalent later on when slaves lived longer lives and the slave population was replenished through families rather than importation.²⁷ Slave codes allowed South Carolinians to punish slaves without having any guilt on their moral or ethical conscience, because the codes cited that it was right to punish the slaves in these instances. The codes essentially allowed the masters to punish slaves without restriction in South

²³ Charles M Christian, and Sari Bennet, *Black Saga: The African American Experience: A Chronology* (Basic Civitas Books, 1998.), 27-28.

²⁴ John C Hurd, *The Law of Freedom and Bondage in the United States* (Boston, 1858-62), I, 299 in Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 11.

²⁵ Other Southern states soon followed suit and the idea spread rapidly.

²⁶ Christian, 27-28.

²⁷ It is important to note that in 1712 slaves were not as numerous, nor were they as capable of fighting off disease. It was not often that a slave was even able to make it to a fourth offense let alone a third during this time due to high mortality rates.

Carolina. In fact, the earliest codes of the colony allowed a master to kill his slave if he saw fit. Slaveholders were able to push the limits of the codes for decades and escalated the maltreatment of slaves up until the mid-nineteenth century.²⁸ Ironically, it would be these same codes, which were initially created to keep slaves downtrodden and in fear, that would act as fuel to fire rebellions against the system.

A major reason why South Carolinians mistreated slaves was that black slaves outnumbered their white slave-owners in the state, which frightened the whites. To counteract their fears, slave-owners felt the need to establish control over their slaves. To do this, South Carolinian slaveholders used violence and punishment to keep slaves passive. For the most part this type of punishment worked, with the majority of slaves staying passive enough for slave-owners to maintain control. However, there were exceptions to this rule. These unexpected occurrences, when mistreatment of slaves did not turn out the way South Carolinians theorized it would, horrified them and drove them into a panic. Revolts and uprisings demonstrate this fear.

Slave rebellions in the United States were not commonplace within the nation, but there were enough that it concerned slave-owners.²⁹ Aptheker writes in his book, *American Negro Slave Revolts*, about more than 250 rebellions or uprisings that were similar to Nat Turner's Rebellion.³⁰ Rebellions directly

²⁸ Just because slave codes were enacted in the colony and state did not mean that slaveholders had to follow them by the letter. In the example of the slave codes concerning the searching of a slaves home, a slave-owner could very well kill his slave at the exact moment the owner found a weapon or stolen good. This was also a way that slave-owners were able to escalate maltreatment. Slaveholders could do whatever they wanted and constantly pushed the limits of the slave codes because they had no opposition, which made life endlessly more difficult for slaves.

²⁹ Rebellions refer to the traditional sense of armed possibly organized uprisings. Slaves also had their own little ways of rebellion that included doing things that would give them a break during work hours. For example, breaking a tool, working slow enough to not get whipped, constantly getting pregnant, faking illness, or any number of things. In slave testimonies there are examples of slave being able to get what they wanted because they acted insane around the master or mistress. However, these types of personal rebellions will not be elaborated on in this paper. Reading Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, William Wells Brown's *The Narrative of William Wells Brown*, or any other narrative concerning a slave's life will give further insight to personal slave rebellions.

³⁰ Aptheker, ix.

influenced the treatment of slaves because throughout American history the uprisings made slaveholders fearful. Aptheker proves this when he quotes an 1812 letter from a resident in Charleston, South Carolina that is conveying the person's fear of the uprising:

Consider, I beseech you, that the coast of S. Carolina and Georgia is principally inhabited by a black population, which it is not to be denied, the whites are not able to controul[sic] ... A regiment of militia has been sent us from the interior for our protection, but they have mutinied ... tho'[sic] the mutiny is arrested for the moment, the spirit of it is by no means quelled.³¹

Aptheker also writes that in January 1961, an outstanding South Carolinian, James L. Petigru learned with anguish that his sister was unwilling to come home from the North because "she says she lives in fear of insurrection."³² Aptheker continues to write that the wife of Senator James Chestnut Jr. of South Carolina felt the same way.³³ Slaveholders were outwardly stoic; no slave rebellion could usurp the system, but inwardly, they were fearful of the possible success of such a rebellion. Slave-owners resorted to punishment and fear to control their slaves and prevent uprisings. Slaveholders in South Carolina, as well as the South in general, believed that punishment would make slaves utterly afraid to rebel. This idea was especially unfounded as the punishments often made slaves wish to escape their condition even more, which led to more rebellions.

As more rebellions began to occur, slaveholders, especially in South Carolina, increased punishments for slaves. Aptheker shows this when he writes that in 1751 South Carolina passed a law that gave slaves the death penalty for attempting to poison a white person.³⁴ After rebellions, masters would be paranoid about another uprising occurring, and in response, would punish their slaves through harsher means than before the rebellion. For instance, after the Vesey Rebellion in South Carolina, slaveholders decided to punish their slaves severely for common misdeeds. Instead of receiving five or ten lashes for not working hard enough

³¹ Ibid., 23.

³² Ibid., 27.

³³ Ibid., 27.

³⁴ Ibid., 143.

the master increased that number to twenty or twenty-five. This increase in lashes was commonplace in South Carolina after rebellions so that slaves would be dissuaded from starting new rebellions.

Slaveholders in South Carolina also based their treatment of slaves on national quarrels between Southern and Northern states. The list of events and debates that drove the nation apart is vast and cannot possibly be covered in full, but there are a few key events that divided the nation and fueled South Carolinians to be fearful. Those events and debates were the Compromise of 1850, Bleeding Kansas, and the Presidential election of Abraham Lincoln.³⁵ The Compromise of 1850 was a major victory for the South in political terms. It allowed California to enter into the United States as a free state, opened up the territories of Utah and New Mexico to vote on slavery through popular sovereignty, and most importantly strengthened the Fugitive Slave Law of the country to force Northerners to help capture runaway slaves or suffer the consequence of jail.³⁶ In South Carolina, however, the Compromise of 1850 was not as great of a victory. South Carolinians may have been able to use the new Fugitive Slave Law to their advantage, but the outrage from Northerners, especially abolitionists, caused them to be fearful. South Carolinian slaveholders thought that if slaves heard about the outrage amongst Northern abolitionists that they might organize themselves and revolt against their masters.

The event in American history known as Bleeding Kansas also had the same type of impact but in a more direct way. When Kansas became a territory for Americans to settle, droves of abolitionists and pro-slavery settlers flooded into the land. The United States government decided that popular sovereignty would decide whether slavery was allowed in the state. This is when the situation turned from debate to outright violence.³⁷ Southern pro-slavery settlers and Northern abolitionist settlers started attacking

³⁵ These topics have extreme depth on their own and will not be covered in their entirety. It is important to note that while the major reason for Southern secession is because of slavery, state's rights also had a large part to do with it as well. To read further on these topics look to Kenneth Stampp's edition of *The Causes of the Civil War*, and James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*.

³⁶ Kenneth M Stampp, *The Causes of the Civil War* 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 117.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

each other. Eventually, the Southern settlers convened for a fraudulent constitutional convention in which they decided that slavery would be allowed, however the federal government rejected the state constitution sent in by the fraudulent Southern convention. In South Carolina, this mini-Civil War stirred patriotism and panic. Again, in the minds of slaveholders, if slaves were to hear about whites fighting for the idea of black freedom, then the slaves would start to rise up as well.

The remaining event, the election of Abraham Lincoln, was the last event before South Carolina seceded from the United States. In the election process, before the votes were cast, South Carolina led most of the other Southern states in promising to secede if Lincoln became president. The reasoning behind this ultimatum was again driven by fear. Lincoln was a Republican and most Republicans at the time were abolitionists. South Carolinian slave-owners feared that the Republicans, if elected to power, would incite slaves in the South to revolt, while also attempting to abolish slavery altogether. All these events caused great fear among South Carolinians, which in turn caused slaveholders to punish their slaves in order to keep them submissive, to pass laws to limit slaves' rights on gathering, and make daily lives for slaves so daunting that they would have little to no time to think about rebelling.

Being a slave in South Carolina, a state that ferociously defended slavery during the mid-nineteenth century, was not an enviable position. Slaves were constantly under the watchful eyes of their masters, mistresses, or overseers if the master made enough money.³⁸ In South Carolina, most slaves worked in rice or cotton fields, but also performed various other jobs that their masters would require of them. A slave's quality of life depended on where the plantation was located as well as the type of crop the slave worked on.

Working conditions in South Carolina were abysmal for slaves. Joyner quotes an Englishman, William Wyndham Malet, who describes rice planting as, "...easy work: Begin at sunrise, breakfast at nine, dinner at three; by which time the task-work is usually finished."³⁹ Joyner counters this claim by describing the

³⁸ For future reference whenever the word "master" is referring to someone who has authority over slaves as well as the ability to punish slaves, which includes mistresses, overseers, and of course the master.

³⁹ Joyner, 44.

brutally difficult work of rice planting. Joyner uses the example of the groundbreaking task, which requires an able-bodied slave to break up 1,200 square feet of ground with a spade after a previous slave had plowed the ground.⁴⁰ Slaves did not have an easy work life as Malet describes. He assumes that slaves would get up at sunrise and have their work done by three o'clock in the afternoon leaving them with plenty of time to do as they please, as long as the master sees fit to allow it. This is theoretically true, but Sam Polite, a freed slave, says when describing the task system on cotton plantations:

Every slave have task to do, sometime[sic] one task, sometime[sic] two, and sometime[sic] three. You have for work till[sic] task through. When cotton done make,[sic] you have other task. Have to cut cord of marsh grass maybe. Task of marsh been eight feet long and four feet high. Then, sometime[sic] you have to roll cord of mud in cowpen.[sic] Woman have to rake leaf from wood into cowpen[sic] If slave don't do task, they get licking with lash on naked back.⁴¹

Polite's quote further refutes Malet's idea that the task system allowed for easier work.⁴² Polite makes the point that many times a slave was tasked with several different jobs, which could take all day to accomplish, and if those tasks were not completed then the slave would be punished. Another man, James R. Sparkman master of Mt. Arena, "said that tasks on his plantation were 'easily accomplished, during the winter months in 8 to 9 hours and in summer my people seldom exceed 10 hours labor *per day*.'"⁴³ By a slaveholder's own admission, his slaves worked long hours throughout the entire year. Slaves did not get the luxury of time off and were overworked constantly. To a slaveholder slaves were not useful unless they were working, so they made sure slaves always had something laborious to do.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 44. (See 44-45 for further examples).

⁴¹ Michael Trinkley, "South Carolina - African-Americans - Brutal Work Regimen" (SCIWAY - South Carolina's Information Highway - SC., accessed November 6, 2012, <http://www.sciway.net/afam/slavery/work.html>).

⁴² The work Sam Polite describes is for cotton, which is different from rice, but the work system is still the same while the individual tasks are different.

⁴³ Joyner, 44.

Generally, in the South Carolina rice industry male slaves did most of the heavy lifting and difficult tasks.⁴⁴ Joyner specifies that only men did the “ditching, embarking, and other tasks that prepared the fields for rice cultivation.”⁴⁵ One such task was the previously mentioned groundbreaking that was backbreaking work for the slaves. The slaves had to bend over all day and did not have any significant break time to relax or let their muscles rest. Furthermore, the spades the slaves used were heavy and difficult to use. Other tasks such as embarking or ditching involved shoveling and digging trenches five feet deep and as long as five feet wide. This work was not easy despite what Malet thought, and it exhausted slaves. Exhaustion is exactly what the masters wanted; as Joyner writes, “for their part the masters wanted more from their slaves than the grudging performance of only enough work to avoid being beaten.”⁴⁶ This in turn would make it difficult for the male slaves to hunt, manage some sort of garden, or sell their labor to earn money. Along with wanting slaves to do as much work as possible, masters were fearful that if they did not exhaust their slaves physically and mentally with long workdays, they would start thinking of rebellion. In the master’s mind, the slave who has time to think is dangerous and must be put to work or punished for not working because there is a chance that the slave could be thinking of ways to escape or start a revolt.

The slave-owner’s fear also affected slaves’ living conditions, which were often horrendous. Slave quarters had evolved from a one-room building; to maybe two rooms so that the master could separate males and females, and at the very least allow two families to live in one building. Ira Berlin states, when talking about slave quarters in the lower Mississippi valley, “. . . eighty-five slaves in all – living in two buildings no more than thirty-three feet in length.”⁴⁷ Although this was not the universal configuration of slave quarters, it describes, in a very accurate sense, how little space slaves actually had in the quarters and how cramped it would have been. “Married” slaves would usually get to

⁴⁴ It was naturally common throughout the South to make male slaves do difficult or strenuous labor, but there were times when women did strenuous labor as well.

⁴⁵ Joyner, 45.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁷ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 87.

stay in their own house or at the very least be in the same barracks together.⁴⁸ Jacob Stroyer, a slave, describes the slave quarters on his plantation in Columbia, South Carolina, as being able to “contain two families.”⁴⁹ This is a rather large improvement from the barracks described by Berlin, but in reality, the situation was still undesirable. Stroyer also explains that some of the cabins had walls while some did not. He says that families would have to put up old pieces of wood, or hang up old clothing to provide dividing lines.⁵⁰ The situation became more stressful if the two families did not trust each other or were in “disagreement” as Stroyer put it.⁵¹ It would be as if a person lived with a hated neighbor, they would always be at each other’s throats and would not be able to live a normal life in any semblance of the words.

Slaveholders allowed for such small living areas because they were inexpensive and the upkeep was not a tedious task for slaves. The almost claustrophobic area that slave families had to live in also served as a way to keep slaves occupied with trivial matters rather than thinking about rebelling or running away. With the families so close to each other tensions often ran high and masters who feared uprisings would use this to their advantage. For instance, a slaveholder might give one family warmer clothing than the other, in the same room, to purposely promote jealousy between the two families, who would then concentrate on quarreling with each other rather than rebelling against the master.

Most slaves wore ragged clothing and had barely enough food to survive. In general, masters purposefully under fed and clothed their slaves, as the lack of provisions both reduced the cost of maintenance, and perpetuated the idea that blacks were sub-human individuals who were undeserving of equality with the white man. The quantity and quality of clothing that a slave wore depended on what the slaveholder decided was permissible. This differed greatly throughout the South including within South

⁴⁸ Slaves were not allowed to be legally married in the South. They held their own ceremonies, had their own rituals, and sometimes even a minister would marry the couple, but no state would recognize the marriage legally. Also, the term “house” is used very loosely.

⁴⁹ Jacob Stroyer, *My Life in the South* enlarged edition (Salem, Mass: 1898), in “Excerpts from Slave Narratives - Chapter 14,” (VGSkole: Startside for videregående undervisning og informasjon), accessed November 8, 2012, <http://www.vgskole.net/prosjekt/slavrute/14.htm>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Carolina. Stroyer details that as a boy he had only an osnaburg, a single piece of woolen fabric sown together for slave children, to wear during the summer.⁵² This lone piece of clothing symbolized the degradation Stroyer and other slaves were constantly subjected to. Joyner further supports the claim that quantity and quality depended on the master's decision. Joyner writes, "some planters purchased clothing for their slaves readymade, but most ordered woolen cloth from England and had clothing made on the plantation. Cloth was also woven on the large, generally self-sufficient rice plantations"⁵³ Joyner also writes that "J. Motte Alston [a slave-owner] maintained that cotton was used only for summer wear; winter clothing was all wool, with no admixture of cotton."⁵⁴ Male slaves usually wore a shirt and trousers or overalls.⁵⁵ Joyner describes these shirts as ranging "from fine and coarse shirts described by Emily Weston [daughter of a slaveholder] to the 'weave shirt – die with blue indigo boil with myrtle seed' – that was worn by Rodrick Rutledge [a slave owner]."⁵⁶ Women mostly wore dresses.⁵⁷ Most slaves' clothing was largely inadequate for general conditions, let alone the strenuous amounts of work they had to perform. Cotton shirts, while more comfortable than the woolen shirts, were worn during the summer months only, when it became too hot to wear woolen shirts. The reason for this seasonal shift in clothing did not stem from benevolence on the part of the master, but rather, from a system of distribution intended to keep male slaves from heat exhaustion or death, as they worked in the fields during the grueling South Carolinian summer. In the same light, Joyner mentions that flannel underwear was distributed to slaves to wear during the winter to keep them from freezing.⁵⁸ Shoes were another provision that varied widely on the master's preferences. Dave White, a former slave, said in an interview with Samuel Addison for the Works Progress Administration, "I nebber[sic]

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Joyner, 108.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 109.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 114. Joyner is clear that the majority of men wore trousers and shirts rather than wearing overalls with shirts.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 114.

⁵⁷ Joyner, 109.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 114. Female and child slaves were also given flannel underwear for the same reasoning.

know nothin'[sic] 'bout[sic] shoes.”⁵⁹ Joyner points out that even though there were some slaves in White’s position, others had shoes ordered for them by their masters. Joyner writes, “Ellen Godfrey recalled that her master sent to England to get slaves on his plantation good shoes. William Oliver said that the big plantations purchased shoes readymade.”⁶⁰ Shoes were a big part of life, and vital during the winter months. If a slave did not have shoes during those cold, frosty months his feet would surely freeze off, or at the very least be so painful that they would be unable to walk. This would render the slave useless to the master and be counterproductive and unprofitable for the plantation.

The type and amount of food was also very important to a slave’s living condition. In All Saints Parish, Joyner details that slaves had food rationed from their master on Saturday afternoons, which were expected to last until the next Saturday.⁶¹ Joyner explains that most slaves were allowed to raise their own animals and grow their own gardens to supplement the rationed food, and that if a slave ran out of food; he had to steal or go without food until the next Saturday.⁶² The master of the plantation determined the type and quantity of food their slaves received similarly, to how they made decisions about clothing. For example, Joyner explains that James R. Sparkman [slave owner] gave out ten quarts of meal, eight quarts of rice or peas, one bushel of sweet potatoes per week, while John D. Magill [slave owner] gave his slave families, “...a peck of sweet potatoes, a dozen salted fish.”⁶³ These foods were not the only things the masters would give their slaves, but it was their basic diet, aside from vegetables or animals grown to supplement them.⁶⁴ As rations were typically minimal, slaves

⁵⁹ Dave White, “Ex-slave 91 years old, Congaree, South Carolina. There was no God but Mossa an' Missus.” Federal Writers’ Project, South Carolina Narratives, Volume XIV, Part 4, Project 935, accessed November 1, 2012, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mesn&fileName=144/mesn144.db&recNum=194&itemLink=D?mesnbib:2:/temp/~ammem_i5fO

⁶⁰ Joyner, 114.

⁶¹ Ibid., 91.

⁶² Ibid., 91.

⁶³ Ibid., 91.

⁶⁴ Masters all around South Carolina gave their slaves different foods to eat. Some gave the slaves rice daily while other would give differing types of meat. Seafood was very popular amongst the slave population of South Carolina. For more information on the diversity of food look in Joyner’s *Down by the Riverside* in chapter three “Sit at the Welcome Table.”

had to be frugal in their consumption of food. For parents, this could lead to skipping meals in order to allow their children to eat. Certainly, this was a large sacrifice for slave parents because of the energy consuming tasks forced upon them each day. Furthermore, the ways in which slaves ate their food was unsanitary. Most slave quarters did not have a table, nor was there room for one. White says, “Ma[sic] would den turn[sic] mush[sic] an’[sic] clean a place on de[sic] floor, she make a paddle[sic] an’[sic] we eat off de[sic] floor.”⁶⁵ Eating on a dirty floor greatly increased the risk of food contamination, which could make slaves sick, which in turn could threaten the health of all slaves on the plantation involved. By modern sanitation standards, cleaning a place on the floor to eat would be considered a safety hazard, but for slaves it was a common part of life.

Everyday interactions between slaves and their owners depended immensely on how temperamental their master was, as well as the amount of interaction the slave had with each member of the master’s family or hired laborers. An example of this comes from Govan Littlejohn of South Carolina who said of his master, Captain Sam Littlejohn, “Marse[sic] was a good man and he love his darkies[sic].”⁶⁶ Govan also says earlier in the document, “Capt. Sam Littlejohn whipped Miss Sallie H’s[sic] slave. His name was Amus H. Cap’[sic] tied him to a tree.”⁶⁷ Govan demonstrates clearly how the temperament of the master determined how a slave would be treated, or in this case punished. In Govan’s case, his master was probably angry or upset with the slaves he punished, but Govan seemed to believe that despite those two instances his master was still a good man and a good master. Therefore, slaves usually had to face the wrath of their masters if they had a difficult day or were upset about something. Slaves were much more likely to have a peaceful and less painful day, when their master was also in a pleasant mood.

Despite the impact temperament had on the conditions and treatment of slaves, there were also other factors: such as how the masters felt racially about their slaves.⁶⁸ To most South Carolinian

⁶⁵ White, “Ex-slave 91 years old” 1.

⁶⁶ Littlejohn Govan, “Stories from Ex-Slaves” (1937) Federal Writers’ Project Dist. 4, WPA Project 1885-1, accessed November 1, 2012, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?mesnbib:5:./temp/~ammem_dxks::

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ This is in the context of racial superiority.

slaveholders it did not matter if they were joyful, angry, upset, etc., they treated their slaves horribly because they considered blacks as second-rate humans who were undeserving of the same respect whites received.⁶⁹ Also, there were many people who had no reason, wherewithal, or purpose to own slaves, who ended up with many in their possession. Stamppp writes, “bondsmen were owned by persons of unsound minds, such as the South Carolinian who had his chattels ‘throw dirt upon [his] roof [...] to drive off witches.’ They were owned by a woman ‘unable to read or write, [...] scarcely able to count ten,’ legally incompetent to contract marriage.”⁷⁰ Anyone could own a slave if he or she had enough money to buy one, or if the person had a slave willed to him or her through a relative. These two cases suggest that some slave owners were not mentally sound to care for another person’s life, let alone control it. Stamppp goes on to list more instances of mentally unstable people owning slaves and even “normal” slaveholders who were corrupted by the power they possessed.⁷¹ An example of such an owner is a South Carolinian who put his slave in solitary confinement in the local jail for running away from the plantation.⁷² Slaves lived in perpetual fear of these types of slaveholders. Slaves received punishment for minor things such as working too slow or digging a trench an inch too deep. These corrupt masters made punishment a sport of sorts and loved to use the whip on slaves. These types of owners helped perpetuate the perception that slavery in South Carolina was much worse than the rest of the South.

Punishment of slaves in South Carolina was generally more brutal than the rest of the antebellum South; however, the methods used to carry out these punishments were generally the same. Punishments for slaves could be the result for a variety of reasons: the master was upset for any rational or irrational reason, the slave did a task wrong, the slave was ‘uppity’ with the master, the slave ran away and was recaptured, or limitless other reasons.⁷³ Stroyer confirms this when he says,

⁶⁹ The same sentiment is seen in the Northern States, despite the huge pushes for abolition.

⁷⁰ Stamppp, 182.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 182. “Normal” in the sense that they were not mentally unstable.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 173.

⁷³ “Uppity” is a term generally used by slaveholders to describe slaves rebelling against the institution of slavery or the slaveholder.

One day, about two weeks after Boney young [the white man who trained horses for Col. Singleton] and mother had the conflict, he called me to him....When I got to him he said, "Go and bring me the switch, sir." I answered, "yes, sir," and off I went and brought him one...[and] he gave me a first- class flogging....⁷⁴

He continues saying, "I said to father, "But I don't know what I have done that he should whip me; he does not tell me what wrong I have done, he simply calls me to him and whips me when he gets ready."⁷⁵ Whippings and floggings were the most common form of punishment in South Carolina, but slaveholders employed other methods as well. Owners would use harsher punishments depending on the severity of the misdeed or perceived misdeed. For example, a slave who did not collect his or her quota of rice or cotton might get twenty-five lashes, while a slave who ran away might get 100 lashes; a full iron ball chained to him, and placed in solitary confinement. In other situations, the punishment did not fit the misdeed at all. For instance, if a slave did not collect his or her quota of rice or cotton for the day; he or she might get anywhere from fifty to one hundred lashes depending on how the master felt that day. The master ultimately decided how harsh the punishments would be and handed those rules down to his subordinates or carried them out himself. Stampff confirms the idea of masters controlling the punishment of their slaves and while matching the punishment to the misdeed by writing:

The majority seemed to think that the certainty, and not the severity, of physical 'correction' was what made it effective. While no offense could go unpunished, the number of lashes should be in proportion to the nature of the offense and the character of the offender. The master should control his temper. "Never inflict punishment when in a passion," advised a Louisiana slaveholder, "but wait until perfectly cool, and until it can be done rather in

⁷⁴ Jacob Stroyer, *My Life in the South*. enlarged edition; Salem, Mass., 1898 in "Excerpts from Slave Narratives - Chapter 15." VGSkole: Startside for videregående undervisning og informasjon (21.08.12). <http://www.vgskole.net/prosjekt/slavrute/14.htm> (accessed November 8, 2012).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

sorrow than in anger.” Planters who employed overseers often fixed the number of stripes they could inflict for each specific offense, or a maximum number of whatever the offense.⁷⁶

Stampf goes on to explain many other examples of masters setting limits and boundaries when it came to punishments.⁷⁷ The masters felt that the reasoning for not whipping or flogging in anger was because the punishment would be much more brutal than if the master was calm and collected. If a master would lash out in anger at the slave, then the punishment would not fit the action or behavior. Therefore the master would wait to calm down before punishing his slave. The master would wait to be fairer to the slave and make it seem as if the master did not enjoy the flogging.

South Carolinian slaveholders made a name for themselves through their brutality against slaves. Charles Ball writes in his narrative:

From my earliest recollections, the name of South Carolina had been little less terrible to me than that of the bottomless pit. In Maryland, it had always been the practice of masters and mistresses, who wished to terrify their slaves, to threaten to sell them to South Carolina; where, it was represented, that their condition would be a hundred fold worse than it was in Maryland. I had regarded such a sale of myself, as the greatest of evils that could befall me...⁷⁸

Slaves felt that being sent to South Carolina was one of the worst things that could happen in life.⁷⁹ The main way that slaves discovered how poor the treatment was in South Carolina, was by simple word of mouth. Slaves from the Palmetto State who were sold or taken to other states would share their stories about how horrible and brutal treatment was in South Carolina. Another

⁷⁶ Ibid., 175.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 175-176.

⁷⁸ “Charles Ball, ‘Slavery in the United States: A Narratives of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man ...’”, n.d.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/ballslavery/ball.html>, 68

⁷⁹ Being “sold down the river” to one of the Deep South states such as Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana was also considered to be one of the worst events of a slave’s life, but that will not be covered. *Solomon Northup’s Odyssey* is a television movie that details the trauma of being sold to the Deep South.

confirmation of this sentiment comes from South Carolina's own judicial system, which did not agree with the way owners in the state treated their slaves. Stamp writes, "as a South Carolina judge sadly confessed, there were 'men and women on earth who deserved no other name than *fiends*,' for they seemed to delight in brutality."⁸⁰ Slaves in South Carolina encountered slaveholders that were different from slaveholders from other states with many taking it to heart to punish slaves heartily for their misdeeds.

Conclusion

In conclusion, fear caused slave-owners in South Carolina to mistreat their slaves. When slavery was first implemented in colonial America, colonial governments would draft laws to govern the treatment of slaves, known as Slave Codes. These codes, for the most part, were not enforced because it was impractical for colonial policing forces to do so. It was neither cost effective nor efficient for these units to travel to the different plantations to enforce laws that protected people who were considered sub-human. The codes also did not call for the better treatment of slaves, particularly in South Carolina. They did however allow owners to push the negative treatment of slaves over the limits of these laws and the mistreatment of slaves started down a slippery slope. For South Carolina, another reason for the persistent declining condition of slaves is the fact that they outnumbered the white populations. Masters felt the need to constantly remind their slaves of who was in control and used violent punishment to do so. Being outnumbered would lead South Carolinian slaveholders to treat their slaves worse and tighten laws governing slaves whenever an uprising broke out. National tensions also played a role in creating fear in the minds of South Carolinians. They feared that if slaves discovered the North wanted slavery abolished; they would rise up and destroy the South.

The constant maltreatment of slaves was evident in South Carolinian society. With harsher working conditions slaves had to work increasingly longer days, sometimes up to fifteen hours a day. The work done was difficult; it consisted of shoveling or picking, both of which forced slaves to bend over all day with little to no breaks. The mistreatment was also evident in the living

⁸⁰ Stamp, 181.

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quarters, which became smaller and more cramped as time went on. Clothing, because of its poor creation, symbolized the status of slaves, showing that they were below the master, while food was also used to control slaves and was a form of maltreatment through its poor quality and low quantity. These factors were all heavily controlled by slaveholders, who feared their slaves would rise up and revolt. South Carolinian's believed that slaves would be pacified if maltreatment like this took place. Physical punishment was also seen as a way to pacify slaves and masters punished slaves for any number of reasons. Usually, the punishment fit the misdeed, but this was not always the case. South Carolinian slaveholders felt that making the slaves fear punishment would alleviate the fear that slaveholders had of resistance. Ultimately, white South Carolinian fear caused the slave-owning population of the Palmetto State to mistreat their slaves continually, which by the 1850's, in the prelude of secession, had become increasingly worse.

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Author Bio

Samuel Benke was raised in Highland, California. He attended school in Redlands and graduated from Redlands East Valley High School. Samuel went to Crafton Hills College prior to attending CSUSB, where he graduated 2012. During his time in school, Samuel developed a love for two things (aside from his fiancé): Basketball and History. Samuel played basketball most of his life including some time with the Glendale Community College team before injuries prevented him from playing. Samuel was invited to join the coaching staff at his Alma Mater, REV, where he is now Head Coach of the Freshman Boys Basketball team. History, particularly American history, became one of Samuel's passions when he learned of who his ancestors were and what roles they played. Mainly: Thomas Sumter, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and his Great Grandpa Cherry, who fought in World War II, influenced young Samuel, and led him to the path he is on now. Samuel plans to continue his education at California State University Fullerton, where he will pursue a Master's Degree in History. He hopes to eventually teach at a two-year college. Samuel would like to thank his fiancé, Katie, his parents, Steve and Sally, and the rest of his family and friends for their continued support throughout his life, as well as God for the opportunities that He has opened. Samuel would also like to thank the reader for taking the time to read this article and hopes it was as enjoyable to read as it was to research.



Photo Essay

A Photographic Exploration of San Bernardino County's Transportation Legacy

By Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz

Photos by Michelle D. Garcia, Cecilia Smith, and Lydell Smith

Introduction

San Bernardino County is most noted for its picturesque mountains and its fast food pioneers, but its impact on the transportation industry is often overlooked. The San Bernardino County region has made a significant mark in the automotive, railroad, and aviation industries. California history was changed forever because of the people who traveled or flew among the regions rails, trails, and skies. Exploring this history photographically is a visual reminder of the stories hidden within the San Bernardino Mountains and in throughout its valleys.

Photo Essay



Figure 2: Side of the 15 Freeway in the Cajon Pass. Photo by author.



Figure 3: Union Pacific Train as it Travels through the Cajon Pass. Photo by author.

The Automotive Industry

San Bernardino is considered the gateway to California, but San Bernardino has its own gateway, the Cajon Pass. This famous pass is where the story of San Bernardino County's transportation legacy begins.



Figure 4: Route 66 Sign located on Foothill Boulevard in Rancho Cucamonga, CA. Photo by Cecelia Smith and Lydell Smith.



Figure 5: A portion of Route 66 that travels through the Cajon Pass. Photo by author

Photo Essay

One of the United States' most famous trails is Route 66. This legendary highway is immortalized in a Nat King Cole song of the same name. It is often called the "mother road." Route 66 begins in Illinois and ends in California. It travels through the Cajon Pass and San Bernardino County and is the road many travelers used to migrate to California. Traveling along this route, motorists can encounter many famous landmarks in various cities in San Bernardino County that commemorate the heyday of this famous highway.



Figure 7: Entrance to the Wigwam Motel. Photo by Cecelia Smith and Lydell Smith



Figure 6: Wigwam Motel guest bedrooms or teepees. Photo by Cecelia Smith and Lydell Smith.

The Wigwam Hotel located in San Bernardino is one of the many motels that opened along Route 66 during its boom period. This hotel opened in 1950 and is rumored to be the basis for the “Cozy Cone Motel” featured in Disney’s animated feature film: “Cars.”



Figure 8: The Bono’s Historic Orange Stand located on Foothill Boulevard in Fontana, CA. Photo by Cecelia Smith and Lydell Smith.

Photo Essay



Figure 9: The Bono Family Restaurant located on Foothill Boulevard in Fontana, CA. Photo by Cecelia Smith and Lydell Smith.

The Citrus industry is a trademark of the San Bernardino region. The Bono family restaurant opened in 1936 and though it is no longer operating, it is one of the few historic Route 66 orange stands left in existence.

The Railroad Industry

Glancing at the Cajon Passes myriad of trails, it is impossible not to notice its rails as they run through the San Bernardino Mountains. Today Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Union Pacific, and the Southern Pacific run through it, but it was the arrival of the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe that brought civilization and cargo to the west. More importantly, the railroad brought with it a much needed boost to the San Bernardino economy.



Figures 9-13: Interior and Exterior of the San Bernardino's Historic Train Depot. Photos by Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz.

The original San Bernardino Sante Fe Depot no longer exists. It was built in 1886, but was destroyed by a fire in 1916. The depot was rebuilt in 1918 and was designed to have a mission style appearance. In its heyday from the 1920's to the 1950's the depot hosted everyone from soldiers to celebrities. In the 1960's the Sante Fe Railroad Company shifted its focus from passengers to freight and the station fell into disrepair. The station was newly renovated in 2004 and hosts Amtrack passengers as well as freight trains.¹

The Aviation Industry

In the world of aviation, San Bernardino County has had a tremendous impact which is due in no small part to March Air Field. This United States Air Force (USAF) Base served as an important training facility through the majority of the United States wars, and was especially important to the United States' victories during both World Wars. The base opened its doors during World War One when America needed to respond to the German threat to take to the skies and turn the

¹ Jensen, Joel, "California's legendary Cajon Pass," *Trains*, (1995): 62

Photo Essay

tide of the war in their favor. Many influential Californians, including Frank Miller, the owner of Riverside's Mission Inn campaigned to have a military base in Southern California. March Air Field is most noted for its tremendous impact during World War Two, not only for the many famous bomb squadrons that trained their prior to shipping out, but also as the main testing site for new combat planes. Today this reserve base is still a training center. As the base is not often accessible to the public the rich history can be examined at the March Air Field Museum located adjacent to the base.



Figure 14: Entrance to March Field Museum. Photo by Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz.

The entrance to the March Field Museum located in Riverside, CA is attached to the base itself. By traversing its grounds visitors can become spectators to aircrafts that train at the base. The museum features planes and artifacts from every war the United States has participated in since World War One.



Figure 15: Boeing B-52D Airplane located at March Air Field Museum (February, 2013)
(Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz)

The Boeing B-52D had its initial testing at March Air Field. It has been part of the USAF's arsenal for almost fifty years. It can be refueled in the air and has completed non-stop flights around the world.²



Figure 16: Historic March Field License Plates on display in March Field Museum. Photo by Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz.



Figure 17: Soldier's Uniform on display in March Field Museum. Photo by Michelle D. Garcia-Ortiz.

The March Field Museum features artifacts not only from the historic base, but also pictures, memorandums, uniforms, and Prisoner of War garments from a variety of major wars that the United States participated in.

Conclusion

San Bernardino County is not just a stopping point on the way to Los Angeles. The uses of its rails, trails, and skies have long been used to pioneer innovations that have shape and altered American culture. Examining this history photographically is a picturesque way to bask in San Bernardino's transportation legacy. San Bernardino County is more than the famous fast food restaurants and citrus groves. Its picturesque landscape holds significant pieces of American History.

² Unknown, "Boeing B-52 Stratofortress" (Information Placard, March Field Museum, Unknown).

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Travels Through History

Portobelo, Panama

By Tristan Murray



Figure 1: Portobelo Fort Musuem in Colon, Panama.
Photo by author.

Flying into Panama City, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. I had never traveled outside of the United States borders prior to my Latin American adventure in Panama. I sat nestled against the window seat of a crowded single isle Jet Airliner not sure what the next 10 days would bring me. As I pondered my inquiry into the unknown, the familiar puff of the airliners ventilation system sputtered as the plane prepared for takeoff.

Arriving in Panama was a bit of a shock for me, as I wasn't expecting the symphony of insects and animals that awaited me outside the airport doors; birds, beetles, and all types of animal cries that one would expect in a Science Fiction film. The equatorial heat was apparent from the moment I walked off of the plane, as the air conditioning systems struggled to keep the dampness out of the airport. My plans were not concrete, so I was unsure where my quest would take me. Within the next few days I found myself at a historic fort that signified much of Panama's legacy as a Spanish colony.

Nestled along the Caribbean coast of Panama is Fort Portobelo. We drove down winding tropical roads, through large canopied rainforests occupied by toucans, howler monkeys, spider monkeys, and various other animals that brought nothing but wonder to my mind. As we wound through small beach town villages with rustic stranded ships and fishing vessels, a clearing in the forest brought into view a village sitting on the site presuppose of an old fort that stretched several hundred yards in either direction. Our driver informed us of our arrival, found a small parking space on top of coral cement and from there I began my journey into this mysterious place.



Figure 2: Portobelo Fort Museum in Colon, Panama. Photo by author

We wandered the fort, which was populated by local market sellers and teenagers. I was surprised at the lack of upkeep for a place with such historical significance. We stopped in at a small museum covered with small dusty examples of firearms, cultural icons, religious trinkets and other small historical tidbits of information with display cases and informative brochures. Also included in the museum tour was a short video of which I found myself drawn to. I learned that the fort was a significant site in Spanish and Central American history. It was a noteworthy site for Spanish forces in Latin America during the push for Latin American silver during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Most silver siphoned out of the America's via Spanish colonialism made its way to the fort before shipping to Europe. This made the small fort a target for many pirates, including Captain Henry Morgan who plundered and looted the fort in 1688. Several other small battles took place here in the name of profit for countries in Europe. It has a natural inlet harbor that allows for excellent defense, but was still a prime target for battles to gain the vast treasures inside the fortifications en route to Europe. For Central America, it established a permanent presence of Spanish cultural influence that would color the civilization of Central America through today.

The small fort itself was ghostly in appearance. It maintained a tint of moss green as the humid climate seemed to breathe life into anything left stagnant in the tropical heat. Dozens of bronze cannons lay pitched where they were left abandoned by the Spanish armadas upon leaving the Americas, their wooden supports long decayed away. The small rifle and watch towers stand idle and alone overlooking a small beautiful, but deadly tropical cove. The fort overlooks a deep blue inlet with land on either side and smaller fortifications on the lips of the inlet. This allowed for cross fire onto any hostile armada entering the harbor. Small modern fishing vessels were scattered throughout the small harbor, anchored sporadically across the inlet. Some were half sunk, others still functioning, but all in all a beautiful view.

I began my small adventure near the fort to investigate the mysteries that lie ahead. Walking around the fort, one of the first things I noticed was the rather ragged state this historical site was in. I understood that this was indeed an old Spanish ruin hundreds of years old, but after years of visiting other historical sites I couldn't help but notice the lack of preservation efforts on the fort.

Trash and litter were rampant while climbing the heavy walls. One observation turret appeared to have been turned into someone's private bathroom. Parts of the fort's walls had slowly become supports and stands for local residents to build their homes and shops. This was a rather depressing and unfortunate site as I began to understand the economic situation of most Panamanians throughout the country. The residents of the small town of Colon, nestled in and around the fort, have little choice but to use portions of the fort for shelter because of the low income of the local populace.

Another interesting observation over the course of my investigations was the walls of Portobel itself. The walls are made from coral reef, which one can plainly see upon a close inspection of the walls. The tour of the museum explained that coral was used because it has the natural ability to diffuse the momentum of cannon fire better than brick or stone. Rather than falling apart or crumbling like stone and brick, coral absorbs the cannon ball along with the momentum and stands fast upon prevailing cannon fire. The old coral had different types of moss and lichen growing consistently within the crevices of the walls and decaying foundations. Years of tropical environment had certainly taken its toll on the old ruins of a fort.



Figure 4: Portobelo Fort Museum in Colon, Panama. Photo by author



Figure 3: Portobelo Fort Museum in Colon, Panama. Photo by author

While my tour of Fort Portobelo was short, I learned a great deal about Latin American history, and the Spanish influence in Central America. The people in Colon were amiable and welcoming. The tour guides seemed more than willing to answer questions and comments regarding Portobelo and admitted openly that they were pleased Americans were taking an interest in Panamanian history. The greatest observation I made in my short visit to this fascinating piece of history was the lack of preservation efforts being made. This is easily understandable given the current economic strain that Latin America is experiencing. It is unfortunate that countries worldwide must often allow priceless pieces of human history to decay under the heavy strain of economic burdens. This lesson, along with many others gained through a love of history, has cemented in me, and hopefully those I contact throughout my life, the importance of preserving our human history worldwide.

English Chocolate, Ghanaian Cocoa

By Ryan Minor

On September 4th 2012 I visited the village of Bournville, England, the home of Cadbury Brothers Chocolate. Bournville was created in the 1890's as a safe haven for the company's employees, who, like most factory workers of the day, were subjected to the oppressive and polluted living conditions of England's newly forming industrial cities. The Chocolatiers founded the village on Quaker Christian principles and believed in the equality of all people. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the village consisted of approximately three hundred homes, a dining hall, a polo field, a swimming and fitness facility, shops, parks, schools, churches, and the Cadbury's factory. The Cadburys themselves personally financed most of these projects, including the homes. To this day Bournville is considered one of the most beautiful villages in England.



Figure 1: Cadbury factory, Bourneville, England. Photo by author.

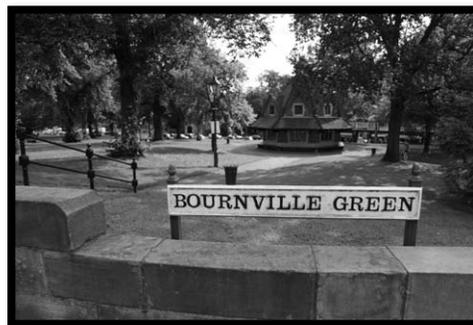


Figure 2-3: Row houses and pre-school & primary school in Bournville, England. England. Photos by author.

Walking down the streets it is hard to not fall in love with the surroundings. Trees line most of the well-kept streets, and at every turn there are open fields of wispy grass, or manicured parks and lawns. With clean appearances and uniform lines the original row houses still stand straight and tall, reflecting the sense of pride their Victorian reformers must have felt when they first saw them completed over a century ago.

The pre-school and primary school are housed in beautiful brick buildings from this same era, and boast one of the most elaborate bell towers in the nation. Next to these schools is a large park, with a lawn-bowling club at one end, a large playground on the other, and the Bourn brook cutting through its center. Across the street from this park is the factory itself. A large, freshly mown lawn stretches out in front of the massive factory complex, which is partially hidden from view by numerous mature trees of various shades of green surrounding its perimeter. As I approached the factory I was struck by the sweet smell of chocolate infused with the summer breeze; I thought to myself, even the air in Bournville has benefitted from the benevolence of the Cadburys.

I spent the rest of my day touring the factory, walking the streets enjoying the parks, visiting Selly Manor (a thirteenth century home the Cadbury's had moved to Bournville and restored), and soaking in the experience of witnessing, firsthand, one of the greatest social reform projects of Victorian England.



Figures 4-6: Selly manor / church / Bournville green and pavilion. Photo by author.

In the mid-afternoon, somewhere around three o'clock, as I was heading for the train station, I passed by the central park one last time. By then dozens of school children were running and climbing on the playground, while others played football (soccer) in the open field next to it. An equal number of parents stood by, watching them play, happily talking with each other in the soft light of the mild English sun as it peaked through scattered clouds. As I was listening to the children laughing, as they ran in lush green grass, a hint of chocolate passed by my nose once again. This combination of sight, sound, and smell, triggered an unexpected smile on my face. In that moment I realize the full weight of what this village would have meant to the working poor of 19th century England; it would have seemed like a fairytale come to life.

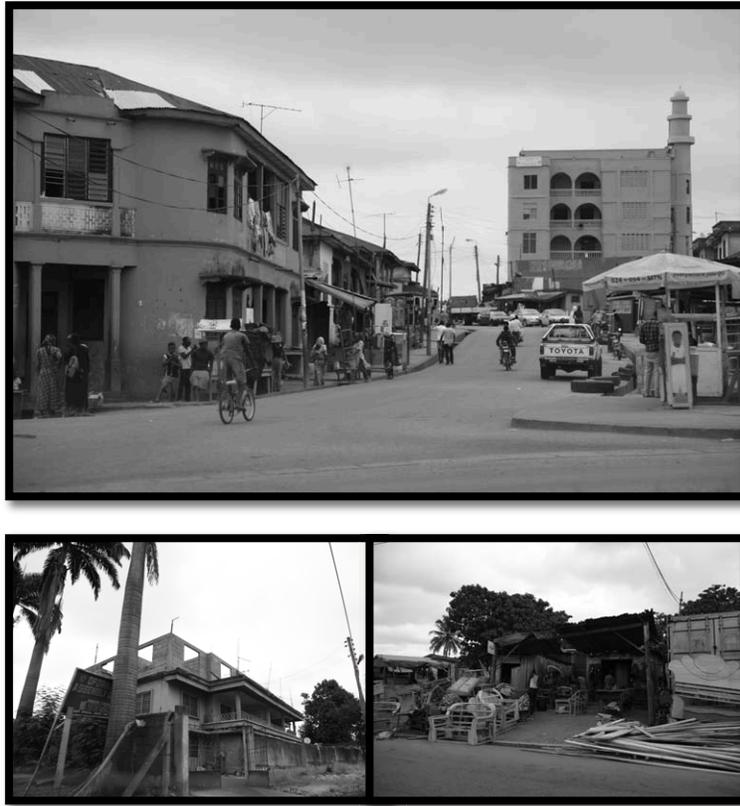
The next week I boarded a plane and headed for Ghana, in West Africa. Since 1911 Ghana has been one of the leading producers of cocoa in the world. Cocoa comes from a bean, which grows on a tree, which will only produce its spoils in equatorial climates under proper conditions. In other words, cocoa will not grow in England, or any part of Europe for that matter.



Figures 7-8: Cocoa pod / Cocoa before and after fermentation. Photo by author.

Cocoa is the primary ingredient in all chocolate products and has long been the largest export of Ghana. Literally hundreds of thousands of Ghanaians cultivate cocoa each year. While in Ghana I visited two cities, and some of the surrounding countryside. The first city I visited was Accra, which is the capital, and the second was Kumasi, in the region of Asante. Accra is situated on the coast and is home to 2.2 million people. Kumasi is an inland tropical city, with thick forest zones, and fertile soil perfectly suited for

growing cocoa. Kumasi was once the capital of the great Asante Empire and today is home to roughly 1.5 million people.



Figures 9-11: Kumasi streets and businesses. Photos by author.

The contrast between the appearance and standard of living in the chocolate producing city of Bournville, and the cocoa growing regions in Ghana could not be more startling. Both Kumasi and Accra are architectural hodgepodes of buildings (many unfinished or in disrepair), endless traffic jams on dirt or roughly paved roads, open sewers, constant power outages, and rivers heavy laden with garbage. In fact, many people live in previously abandoned structures, or in the back of the stores they work out of. And while Accra is also home to one of the largest airports in West Africa, one of the most modern universities on the continent, and multiple large scale development projects, including an indoor shopping mall that is similar to those in the United States; on the whole, the city, and much of the nation, remain without many simply

conveniences we have come to consider necessities in the Western world.



Figures 12-13: University of Ghana Balme library / Accra street view from window. Photos by author.

Many Ghanaian farmers have long battled poverty and live in regions that lack basic sanitation, clean water sources, and adequate schools for their children. Beyond that, numerous farming families are also heavily in debt from lean harvesting years, as cocoa is expensive to farm, requiring fresh soil, fertilizers, pesticides, and hired labor to cultivate each season.

As I walked the streets and rode in taxicabs around Accra and Kumasi, I was confronted time and again by the question of why Ghana has remained largely poor or undeveloped, despite the fact that the country has provided a substantial percentage of the core ingredient of the multi-billion dollar chocolate industry for over one hundred years. Furthermore, visiting Bournville, Accra, and Kumasi, all within a week's time, forces one to ask questions regarding both the historical and current fairness of the international chocolate commodity supply chain; as well as, general questions pertaining to the ethics of capitalism,

industrialization, imperialism, colonization, racial hierarchy, international labor exploitation, corporate responsibility, purposeful underdevelopment, and post-colonial government corruption. Questions that cannot be answered in this writing, but that are related to my current research, and the reasons why I visited these locations in the first place.

The Cadburys were obviously interested in labor reform and equality, but they were also part of the British Empire of the 19th and early 20th century; and as such, appear to have subscribed to Western values of invasive paternalistic rule and enlightened socio-cultural “reforms” that, in most cases, involved the removal of African autonomy in exchange for forced colonial submission. If nothing more, the constant struggle among African cocoa farmers for financial stability points to the fact that English chocolatiers never took the same initiative in alleviating Ghanaian hardships as was the case for their British factory workers. These contradictions regarding the treatment of labor at various stages of the cocoa/chocolate supply chain continue to this day, as debates over fair trade practices continue to be waged. Regardless of the debates, theories, or accusations, regarding this topic, the longstanding inequalities within the industry can tangibly be seen simply by examining the current state of Bournville, which was built on profits made from chocolate, and has continued to maintain its reputation as one of the finest villages in all of England; compared to that of Accra and Kumasi, as well as the whole of Ghana, which has continued to remain largely underdeveloped by modern standards, despite annually producing over half the world’s cocoa for several decades.

Reviews

***Zwingli the Reformer: His Life and Work.* By Oscar Farner. (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books: 1968).**

Zwingli the Reformer: His Life and Work, by Oscar Farner, is a biography of the sixteenth-century humanist reformer Ulrich Zwingli, and his attempts to reform the Catholic Church in Switzerland. This biography gives a detailed explanation of Zwingli's birth, childhood, education, personality and life. However, the distinction Farner makes in addressing Zwingli as a reformer is not indicative in the text due to a lack of contextual comparisons to Zwingli's contemporaries on numerous issues that were central to the Reformation. Although this aspect of comparison is briefly addressed, many obvious, important observations remain unelaborated. Furthermore, addressed aspects within Zwingli's life are not done in the same detail as the biographical portion of the book, which begins with his birth.

Huldrych Zwingli was born on January 1st, 1484 to a bailiff father and a previously widowed mother, both referring to their son as Ulrich. Ulrich came from a large family of seven brothers and three or four sisters; the exact number of siblings is unknown. His birthplace, Lisighaus, was a small town in Switzerland surrounded by nature and animals. Having been fond of these surroundings, Ulrich later used them in his sermons and writings. He often used nature and animals as subjects for metaphors when teaching, similar to Jesus Christ who used common social institutions and objects in His parables so people can understand them. As a boy, Ulrich's father instructed him in citizenship, running, jumping, and fencing. Zwingli's Uncle Bartholomew was a priest who educated him in Latin beginning at the age of six. Priestly influence upon Ulrich's education would continue as he got older.

Ulrich was first inspired to enter the novitiate to the priesthood during his early teens. His desire began at a humanist school where he received his first formal education. However, when he sent news of his decision to his family, his father and uncle were 'averse to papal desires' and sent Ulrich to the University of Vienna instead. In Vienna, Zwingli was educated in

Greco-Roman history, wisdom, and philosophy. Records at the University indicate that he may have been expelled for an unknown reason, but was allowed to return. He graduated in 1504 with a Bachelor's degree and received a Master of Liberal Arts degree in 1506, which is the equivalent of a doctorate in philosophy today. During his formal education, Ulrich associated with a group of progressive humanists. During this time, he discovered that humanistic ideals did not oppose his theological pursuit; instead, he found that they could complement one another.¹ These two aspects of his life and personal philosophy came together when he finally became a priest at the age of twenty-two.

Ulrich Zwingli's first priestly position was in Glarus, where he served as a parish priest for ten years. While in Glarus he continued his humanist studies and learned Greek language so he can read the writings of Ptolemy and Aristotle. His interests ranged from music to politics to poetry. In his political poems, he used animals from his childhood to represent actual rulers of France, Switzerland and Germany. Due to his outspoken nature, he became one of the first people to preach evangelically with the assistance and friendship of the humanist leader Erasmus.² His leaning toward Christian humanism, a renaissance within Christianity that fostered a desire to return to early Church practices, caused him to criticize the selling of indulgences and other unsuitable priestly behaviors. He became fascinated with Martin Luther and was amazed by his rejection of salvation by papal mediation. Zwingli began comparing Luther with the Biblical figure David, who was justly opposing the Goliath figure of the papacy.³ After years of service and study, Zwingli left Glarus and served at Zurich Cathedral. After disputes with local bishops, he converted to his own form of Protestantism which brought all of Zurich with him.

As a reformer, Ulrich had religious icons and images removed from churches and artwork painted over. He burned relics and rejected the central Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist. Zwingli forbade luxury, gambling, and promiscuity, and eventually abolished Catholic worship in Berne after holding a council there. He emphasized 'correct' reading of the Scriptures and the proper

¹ Oscar Farner, *Zwingli the Reformer: His Life and Works* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books: 1968), 16.

² *Ibid*, 25.

³ *Ibid*, 32.

practice of its words and teachings. Political and religious opposition arose against him when he started drafting war plans against the Catholic Confederation, who eventually declared war against him in Switzerland. As a result, Zwingli rode into battle and stood his ground, even as his compatriots were driven back. He was killed in 1531 in the civil war caused by his reforms⁴.

Despite the detail with which the author writes about Zwingli's life and work, including his many writings, his role as a reformer compared to the other principal reformers of the time is largely ignored. The title of the book gives the reader the impression that they would be reading a biography on Ulrich Zwingli, with emphasis on his role as a reformer, and that the writer would provide a comparison of Zwingli's reforms with other principal figures of the Reformation while also providing a context in which their roles could be understood. Although the detailed biographical information is impressive, especially concerning a figure people know little about, the many potentially interesting points and comparisons that were missed or left out by the author results in disappointment. For example, one of the principal and lasting aspects of Protestantism is the doctrine of *sola fide*, the belief that salvation is justified by faith alone as opposed to both faith and works, which was professed openly by the reformer Martin Luther but was rejected by Ulrich Zwingli.⁵ Further comparison with Martin Luther would have revealed that, like Luther and his *Ninety-Five Theses*, Zwingli wrote *Sixty-Seven Conclusions*, which addresses the urgency for reform within the Catholic Church. Although Zwingli addresses many of Luther's concerns, such as the selling of indulgences, he begins his *Conclusions* with fifteen positive statements about the Catholic Church.

There is one brief mention of the reformer John Calvin, who created a new sect within Christianity, called Calvinism, and whose ideals and reforms were far more successful and long-lasting than any of Zwingli's reforms. There is almost no mention of the effects of Zwingli's reforms after his death and religious developments in Switzerland, if any, that followed his life. The only instance in which Zwingli is compared to one of his contemporaries occurs in a description of his meeting Luther at a council and their argument over the validity of the doctrine of the

⁴ Ibid, 131.

⁵ Ibid, 111.

Eucharist. Another fact that is not discussed is that Zwingli rejected the doctrine of Eucharist, which is rejected by mainstream Protestantism today, but was supported by Luther, the most prominent of the figures of the Reformation. How, then, did Zwingli's ideas become inherited by mainstream Protestantism? Or, did this later rejection come from elsewhere? After reading *Zwingli the Reformer*, one may know the person Ulrich Zwingli, but will have more questions than answers regarding his role as a reformer, and his lasting effects on religious practice in Switzerland and the rest of Protestant Europe. This may be a result of the author's prevalent bias and admiration of Zwingli.

Granted, many people would not choose to write a detailed biography on a figure they did not admire or have interest in. However, an unbiased assessment of an admirable figure can still be achieved despite an author's prejudices. This is not the case in Farner's interpretation of Zwingli's life and work. Farner offers an unabashed, amicable impression of Zwingli as a person and of his actions, about which he has nothing negative to say. Zwingli's unrelenting actions on the field of battle, in a conflict he instigated, brought about his own death. This could easily be interpreted as a sign of mental and spiritual instability. Farner concludes his book by referencing the perseverance of Zwingli's spirit, which is both 'purifying and fructifying,' and his heroism. As a result of his bias, Farner is able to delve deep into the psychology of Ulrich Zwingli, but, unfortunately, his observations yield some inconsistencies and contradictions.

Farner's observations regarding Ulrich's personality and behavior show that he strove to deeply understand the reformer's psychology. It was part of Zwingli's cautious peasant nature that, in everything he did, he set to work with great care; there was nothing he disliked more than rushing into things heedlessly and dashing at things impetuously.⁶ However, this observation seems to contradict the fact that Zwingli lost his life impulsively riding into battle against the Catholic Confederacy, and taking on the responsibilities of a soldier rather than maintaining his required role as a chaplain. In the end, Farner seems to have been blinded by his admiration for the man Ulrich Zwingli. He focused more on Zwingli's life than on how he and his work varied from his

⁶ Ibid, 39.

contemporaries and whether it left an impact on religious practice in Europe.

Oscar Farner's *Zwingli the Reformer: His Life and Works* is an in-depth homage to a historical figure rather than a contextual analysis of Zwingli's role in history as a reformer. Apart from the contradictions and unanswered questions the reader is left with, Farner's admiration of Zwingli left him deeply entrenched in the reformer's mind, causing him to disregard how this man differed from the other more prominent reformers of his day and why those differences were significant. A context for comparison is lacking and leaves the reader with an in-depth understanding of a historical figure, but with little information to guide him as to where to place Zwingli in history and his impact on the Reformation as a whole.

Matthew Zemanek

Reviews

Film Review: *Lincoln* (2012)

Note: This paper is the result of diverse minds and individual opinions. What started as a social activity, evolved into a collaboration of ideas of the film. One of the many discussions we had was what did Steven Spielberg and Tony Kushner want to accomplish in this biographical sketch of Abraham Lincoln? After a late night screening, the History Club met at a local coffee shop to debate the strengths and weaknesses of the film. The discussion resulted in the threading of various perspectives into a historian's critical analysis of the film. We dedicate this work to our History Department, the journal, and especially to our professor and mentor Dr. Jeremy Murray, who inspired us and guided us throughout.

Hollywood legend Steven Spielberg has found himself under sharp criticism for his adaptation of Abraham Lincoln in his Academy-Award nominated film *Lincoln* (2012). The film stars Daniel Day-Lewis as the older, weary president, and retells the story of Lincoln's role in the passing of the 13th Amendment. The script, written by acclaimed screenwriter, Tony Kushner (*Angels in America*), and based in part on Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals* (2006), is contextually set in 1865, the last year of the Civil War and more specifically the months leading up to the passage of the amendment. The film also features Hollywood titans Sally Field as Mary Todd Lincoln, David Strathairn as William Seward, and Tommy Lee Jones as Thaddeus Stevens.

In the film, Day-Lewis takes on the role of an old, squeaky-voiced, intelligent, and burdened president, who collaborates with his cabinet and hired men to advance the Amendment to abolish slavery, which was already passed in the Senate, to passage through the House of Representatives. Aside from Lincoln's dealings with his political friends and enemies, the film pays attention to the many facets of Lincoln's personality: his loving nature with his son Tad; his irritation and affection for his wife; his passion for politics; and his often unappreciated ability to tell long but thoughtful stories. The film also places emphasis on his nature as a politician. Through his dealings within his own cabinet and

with Congress, the film offers an uncommon depiction of the 16th President. He is portrayed as a man who was unafraid to use dishonest, underhanded politics to suit his purpose, nor afraid to assume power, even when it meant challenging his restrictions under the Constitution.

Spielberg, Kushner, and Day-Lewis deftly succeed in humanizing Lincoln on many levels. In addition to his pragmatic politicking behind the scenes, Lincoln is shown dealing with the everyday conflicts of a father and a husband. In the scene where he takes Robert to the Veterans Affairs hospital, there's a moment where they argue about Robert's desire to join the Union forces. Lincoln, who refuses to allow Robert to join, strikes his son in a fit of frustration. While this may be seen by some as typical father and son behavior, it is not typical Presidential conduct. This effective and moving display of domesticity is often lacking in this style of epic production. It is vital in the service of making Lincoln more relatable to the audience – he is a creature susceptible to emotions as are the rest of us.

Why then are respected historians like Eric Foner critical of Spielberg's work? Often when a historical figure like Lincoln is deeply and effectively personified, directors and writers like Spielberg and Kushner may enter into the realm of “the great man theory of history.” A theory that's often attributed to the 19th century Scottish historian, Thomas Carlyle, the argument this theory poses is that powerful individuals shape their times and societies.¹ The theory is often used to place full credit, or full blame, on one individual for some significant period in history. Herbert Spencer, who presented a counter to this theory, argued that the times and society shaped these men, and not the other way around.² Because notable historical figures are often labeled as heroes or villains, it is arguable that the unintended consequence of Spielberg and Kushner's work was to continue his myth.

Eric Foner, a history professor at Columbia University, won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 2011 for his work, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (2011). Foner's historical criticisms of the film's depiction of Lincoln and the Civil War era hold considerable weight, as he is one of the foremost

¹ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1907).

² Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics* (London: John Chapman, 1851; New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1883).

living authorities on the subject. Foner's ultimate critique is that in lionizing Lincoln, a great deal of disservice is done to other individuals who played a significant role in the abolition of slavery.³ In an op-ed published in the *New York Times*, Foner cites Lincoln's refusal to consider the Amendment before 1865, when Susan B. Anthony and Women's Rights organizations proposed it.⁴ Also, Foner reminds us that free slaves, most notably those in the south that took over plantations and redistributed land to other slaves, were very effective in leading the struggle for abolition.⁵ These points are well taken and valid when we consider this film's historical recount of the passage of the 13th Amendment. Foner is correct to bring these criticisms to our attention for two main reasons: first, this movie implies that the passage of the 13th Amendment was, at the moment, in the hands of a few skilled men, which is misleading because in many ways slavery was already ending. In other words, Foner reminds us that the momentum for change was already in play and perhaps this drama overstates a pivotal moment in history. Second, the film puts Lincoln at the moral center of the passage for the amendment. This is especially problematic because of Lincoln's past. The man in this film was shown to be perhaps his better self, especially when you compare him to his earlier years; he was much more evolved as a human being and, metaphorically speaking, the times had moved him. While these are valid points that Spielberg and Kushner would have us consider, the unintended consequence could be that Lincoln's role in the passing of the amendment is over credited. The result would be a continuation of an arguably false legacy, one that often titles him the "Great Emancipator."

In light of these points, is it fair to degrade Lincoln's role in this critical moment of history? Absolutely not. Whether it is the villains or heroes, the so-called "great men" of history and their influence over the times in which they inhabited, is a subject that encourages a debate on the actual degree of importance of the presiding figure in shaping the course of history. This debate is appropriately applicable to Lincoln and his larger than life status.

³ Eric Foner, "Lincoln's Use of Politics for Noble Ends," *The New York Times*, November 26, 2012, accessed April 15, 2013, accessed April 15, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/27/opinion/lincolns-use-of-politics-for-noble-ends.html?_r=0.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

While it is necessary to look beyond theory and realize that the causality of history is not exclusive to one man, historians must also be careful to not marginalize the influence that these figures had over the times in which they inhabited. Arguing in abstraction, as Foner and many other historians do, is engaging in food for thought that adds a necessary dynamic to historical debate. Nevertheless, it does, to a degree, marginalize Lincoln's involvement and skills as the political genius he was. Throughout her book *Team of Rivals*, upon which the film is based, Doris Kearns Goodwin makes it abundantly clear that Lincoln was a master of political timing and managing/manipulating personalities in order to achieve his goals. These aspects of Lincoln's Lincoln's managing of personality are apparent in his timing of the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) and shifting the purpose of the Civil War to be defined as a war to end slavery as well as preserve the Union. This is referenced in the film in Lincoln's basement meeting with Thaddeus Stevens; timing was everything with the stakes so high and national sentiment so fragile. Therefore, although Lincoln was not the only reason for passage of the 13th amendment, he was heavily involved in its success. So when considering Foner's valid analysis, it is also necessary to give Lincoln's role its proper due.

Though it is understandable to rely on the wisdom of Eric Foner to shed light on the complicated history of the film, one can still see the value in Spielberg's efforts to make Lincoln better known to his audience. Spielberg and Kushner have been interviewed since the film's release. And although they are two separate artists with different talents, both of them revealed in their interviews that the reason they came together to make this film was to bring Lincoln to life. Unlike other Hollywood historical films, which often follow a cradle-to-grave format, their film took a very slim part of Goodwin's book as inspiration and created a character that audiences can relate to; as a husband, a father, and a politician. By humanizing a historical figure in a way that is clearly and strongly sympathetic, Spielberg, Kushner, and Day-Lewis, provide a great service to the present-day audience by allowing them to connect to the past in a way that is memorable, engaging, and evocative. At its best, this film will remind audiences that this mythologized, historical figure was in fact more human than we might recall; at worst, this film will spark interest and debate as to

how important Lincoln was to his time and the course of American history.

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Reviews

**Visiting Mission San Luis Rey and Remembering the California Native American System
San Luis Rey Mission, Oceanside, CA.**



Figure 1: San Luis Rey Mission. Photo by author.

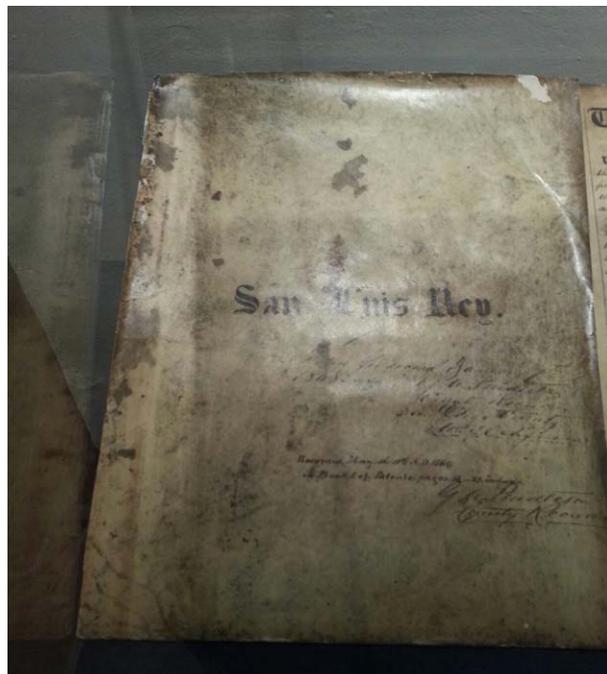


Figure 2: Display case with religious text. Photo by author.

California Native American Indians were heavily affected and influenced by Spanish domination in constructing Catholic

Missions throughout the California coastline. During the early colonization period Spain established religious outposts to claim an imperious foothold in the frontier and California territory. The idea behind Spanish expansion was to create Mission centers, where the local native population could assimilate, and become good Spanish citizen laborers by learning religious and moral virtue. By historically examining the memory and portrayal of the Mission San Luis Rey while considering the California Native American Indian labor system that was implemented, concise analysis can be obtained about its inhumanity.

Mission San Luis Rey provides a beautiful secluded historical retreat from the modern momentum of surrounding city areas. The Mission exudes valuable and unique insight to a period of history that may have been otherwise lost. The Mission San Luis Rey is also involved in obscuring important facts about this period and distributing distorted information of California Native American Indian treatment under the Mission system. Withholding essential information regarding the treatment of California Native American Indians under the Mission system is equally misleading. The significance of maltreatment in the California Mission system may often be overlooked by Americans because there is not nearly enough unbiased emphasis made to inform the masses about its past. In the California State curriculum the California Native American Indian and the Spanish Mission system are only implemented and taught at the fourth grade level.¹ The notion that the California Native American Indians were coerced into religious conversions and inducted into a physically demanding labor institution that was validated through the idea that it was “god's will of conquest” is not present in the curriculum. Through observation, research, and analysis this exhibit review will provide a descriptive visiting experience of the Mission San Luis Rey in relation to the inhumane atrocities of the California Native American Indian labor system.

Today, when one visits the Mission San Luis Rey they will be presented with institutional and structural facts. Mission San Luis Rey was the eighteenth of twenty-one missions built in California and was established on June 13, 1798 by Padre Fermin Lasuen. The mission was named San Luis Rey in honor of the French Saint King Louis IX. The tragic history of the California

¹ National Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/pacific/education/curriculum/4th-grade/>

Native American Indian tribes and the evidence of their often forced assimilation under the Mission system is underrepresented in this Mission and many of California's historical sites and elementary education programs. The Mission San Luis Rey was no different. There was a variety of tribes that fell under the mission's jurisdiction. Under the mission plan they became known as the Luiseno band of Mission Indians.

Historically, Mission San Luis Rey was a vast property claiming ownership of miles of land in the surrounding area. These lands would be incorporated as part of the mission territory for which all inhabitants of that area were required to abide by Church tides, law and authoritative demand, including coerced labor. When surveying land for prospective locations, missionaries took into consideration the best optimum land for gathering labor for agriculture and infrastructure development while incorporating the relative location to sea accessibility. Under the direction of Father Junipero Serra the inclusive Spanish Mission plan was systematically implemented and became successful.

Arriving at the Mission San Luis Rey is a transformative experience. Visitors first begin to notice the welcoming white church tower set in green pastures, which is a strong contrast to the improprieties that mar its history. Mission San Luis Rey had just re-opened its "Exhibits Relating to the Colorful History of Mission San Luis Rey de Francia". The collections include artifacts from [California] Native American [Indian], Spanish Mission, Mexican Secularization and American Military periods.² Public parking is available near the museum exhibit entrance located by an outdoor garden and courtyard featuring one of California's oldest pepper tree.

The public has the option of following a self-guided tour of the interior of the museum, which consists of multiple living quarters, historic locales, excavated sites, statues, and exhibits for five dollars or exploring the perimeter of the Mission for free.

The tour begins in a room containing several hand woven baskets and labeling cards describing the alternative uses of these baskets by the Luiseno Indians for such tasks as cooking acorn mush or retrieving water with a tightly woven basket. One important aspect of the first room in the exhibit was establishing what the Luiseno diet consisted of prior to the European influence

² Old Mission San Luis Rey De Francia, accessed February 12, 2013, <http://www.sanluisrey.org/Museum/Tour-Info>.

of systematic sedentary agriculture. The vast territory incorporated into the Mission property included various cohabiting California Native American Indian tribes spanning from deep into the inland valleys to the Pacific coast. A culmination of various foods for a diverse diet can be attributed to a vast trading network infrastructure amongst tribes that was prevalent even before European contact was made. Another interesting informational placard in the same room was “The Lord's Prayer” translated into Luiseno. This is an important example outlining the extent of religious conversions to Native California Indians for the Spanish Missionaries.



Figure 2-3: Baskets and pottery by Luiseno Indians.
Photo by author.

The self-guided tour continues with several display models portraying the likeness in living quarters of the Padres and Soldiers during the Mission system. The beds of the Padres and Soldiers appeared unappealing and uncomfortable, but there was no section of the museum dedicated toward displaying the living conditions or hardships that the Luiseno Indians had to endure during their required tributary labor conscriptions.

The final portion of touring Mission San Luis Rey includes visiting the Solider Barracks and Indian "Lavenderia". There are

many informational placards describing this area. One sign describes The Soldier Barracks as consisting of “adobe ruins that had once housed the Spanish soldiers that were assigned to protect the Mission”.³ Another marker indicates that the barracks had once, “included apartments and a look-out tower, and housed the American troops stationed in San Luis Rey at the time of the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848.”⁴ Whereas the "Lavanderia" is described by another placard as being an “Elaborate Laundry” where Mission members bathed and washed their clothes”.⁵ This part of the historic landmark sits across from the Mission chapel. Its front entrance facing the museum contains a gated arch followed by a grand staircase leading down to the wash area.



Figure 4: “Lavanderia” pathway. Photo by author.

Despite its numerous omissions, visiting Mission San Luis Rey can be considered an enjoyable learning experience. The landscape and historical artifacts that are on the property are truly a beautiful sight for see. It is essential that historical landmarks such as the Mission San Luis Rey are maintained because without the cumulative efforts put fourth focusing on preserving the Mission,

³ Old Mission San Luis Rey De Francia, accessed February 12, 2013, <http://www.sanluisrey.org/Museum/History>.

⁴Old Mission San Luis Rey De Francia, accessed February 12, 2013, <http://www.sanluisrey.org/Museum/Tour-Info>.

⁵ Ibid.

all of its historic insight may have been lost. This site provides an interesting and informative introduction to the subject matter. It is highly recommended for everyone to visit this historical landmark, or any of the original twenty-eight California Spanish Missions. Going to Mission San Luis Rey is an informative learning experience that one will never forget. It is also necessary to be critical of the limited portrayal of that historic period depicted at Mission San Luis Rey and other important California Historical Landmarks, but it is only fair to give the Mission credit for its efforts towards maintaining the site and providing an immersive educational experience to the public. Understandably, the Mission atmosphere is geared toward a neutral and pleasant experience for all. Withholding such graphic information in an effort to be universally inoffensive, limits the Mission's audience's ability to fully comprehend this complex subject matter. The Mission museum exhibit and historical landmark are essential efforts initiated to maintain coherent insight to that time era, but undermine the extensive repercussions that its continued labor system had on California Native American Indians throughout various political transitions.

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