

# THE ELEBAETHAN

A Journal of History



Volume 53 (2026)

California State University, Fullerton

Department of History

Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society)

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A Journal of History

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## Original Cover Art

*A Living Legacy: Honoring the Past, Cultivating the Future*, by Oscar Flores (B.A. History Program, CSUF; [Peterparker13@hotmail.com](mailto:Peterparker13@hotmail.com)). This artwork connects organic roots with digital pathways, inspired by nineteenth-century Cole Haven Seed Company packets and Southern California postcards. The composition also combines classic agricultural imagery with circuit board patterns, merging historical print design with the digital era and paying homage to the United States' Semiquincentennial. The design began as a hand-drawn pencil sketch to convey deliberate symbolism. No generative A.I. was used. Photoshop, Illustrator, and Procreate sharpened the linework and infused bold, stylized neon accents and stark lighting. The result is a carefully crafted piece that honors the past while cultivating the future.

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First published in 1974, *The Welebaethan: A Journal of History* is named after Shirley A. Weleba (1930–1972), a faculty member in CSUF's Department of History. Weleba, a scholar of African history, had received her Ph.D. from the University of Southern California in 1969 for her dissertation "Trial by Jury in Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1912."

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## *Editors' Preface*

As we reflect on the United States' 250th anniversary, we are mindful of the people who shaped this country; their dreams, beliefs, and struggles; their creative expressions, technological achievements, and intellectual endeavors—in short, what it means to be "Americans" in a global context. Echoing this, our colleague Oscar Flores's original cover illustration of this year's *Welebaethan*, titled "A Living Legacy: Honoring the Past, Cultivating the Future," pays homage to the organic roots and digital pathways that impact how scholars develop questions, conduct research, and formulate their historical interpretations.

We are pleased to present volume 53 (2026) of our journal, which features fifteen articles and essays by scholars from California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), as well as other universities across the country, including California State University, Sacramento; Lewis University in Illinois; and Troy University in Alabama. These exciting, imaginative, and comprehensive works include Michael Westfall's inquiry into "Saint or Witch? Douceline of Digne in Thirteenth-Century France;" Arjun Kraft's "deep dive" into "Watery Discourses in Seventeenth-Century England: Fishing, Society, and Divinity in Izaak Walton's 'The Compleat Angler';" Rielly Orrell's study of "Lady Rachel Russell's Beloved, Seditious Husband: Letter-Writing and Advocacy in Seventeenth-Century England;" Grace Engelking's analysis of "More than Canned Meat: The Rise of SPAM in World War II America;" and Bryan D. Eisenbise's exploration of "Mormonism and Constitutional Conflict: The Legal Evolution of an American Religion." The opinions expressed in this volume's articles, essays, editions, and reviews belong, of course, to the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the journal's editors.

Keeping with tradition, our volume also features first-time editions of primary sources from CSUF's University Archives and Special Collections as well as the Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History. "Every—Last—Line: An Indenture of Dr. Peter Shoenberger's Real Estate Legacy in Pittsburgh (1859)" pertains to a Gilded Age aristocrat and his numerous heirs; "Got Seeds? Letters from Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven, Cultivating the U.S. Midwest and Denmark (1875–1878)" highlights agricultural experiments and transatlantic exchange. "North America's Hepatics Fanatics: Alfred H. Brinkman's Letters to Fay A. MacFadden (1932–1944)" showcases botanical taxonomies and personal hardships.

Establishing a dialogue between the United States Semiquincentennial (2026) and Bicentennial (1976), all three oral histories edited here were recorded fifty years ago. Those interested in Southern California's rich mining history may appreciate "Robert Harris Talkin' Rocks in 1976: An Interview with a Southern California Miner, Metallurgist, and World War I Veteran." "Digesting Oriental-Occidental Fusion in 1976: Ching Wah Lee's Memories of San Francisco's Chinatown" reviews local changes over time and Lee's acting career. Meanwhile, "A New Yorker, Communist, and Admirer of C. L. R. James: Walter Goldwater's Candid Recollections in 1976" covers Cold War politics and James's impact on regional Marxists.

Reviews offered in this year's *Welebaethan* address a wide range of topics portrayed in books; exhibitions; films, documentaries, and television shows; as well as video games. They comprise Kolin McVeigh's meticulous assessment of Peter Pomerantsev's monograph *How To Win an Information War: The Propagandist Who Outwitted Hitler*; Jeffrey McMurry's enthusiastic look at CSUF's very own Heritage House; Christine Hoo's glowing review of the television series *When Life Gives You Tangerines*, a Korean 1960s–1990s period drama; and Nathaniel Valenzuela's captivating evaluation of *Assassin's Creed Shadows*, an action-adventure game set during Japan's Sengoku era.

The publication of this year's volume would not have been possible without the tremendous support and guidance from so many people. For that, we extend our thanks and appreciation to—

- our editorial board;
- Jochen Burgtorf, our faculty advisor;
- Lisa Tran, the chair of CSUF's Department of History;
- Patrisia Prestinary and Garrett Fritz at CSUF's University Archives and Special Collections;
- Natalie Garcia at CSUF's Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History;
- Anthony Davis, copyright and policy librarian at CSUF's Pollak Library;
- Mariea Daniell Whittington, a CSUF alumna and our journal's web administrator;
- Oscar Flores, CSUF History major and creator of this volume's original cover art;
- CSUF's Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society); as well as
- all participants (faculty members and alumni) in our journal's triple-blind review process.

We extend our utmost gratitude to all the scholars whose articles, essays, editions, and reviews appear in this volume; without their hard work, this publication would not be possible. Finally, we extend our thanks to you, our readers: Enjoy!

Fullerton, in the summer of 2026

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Laura Groomer

## *The Castle of Safed: Architecture and Socio-Political Landscape in Thirteenth-Century Galilee*

**ABSTRACT:** *This essay assesses the Castle of Safed's effect on the socio-political landscape of thirteenth-century Galilee on the basis of Frankish and Arabic period sources. It seeks to contextualize the castle's reconstruction in the 1240s, examines the relationship between Safed and Damascus, and determines the site's impact on the region's military, economic, and religious spheres.*

**KEYWORDS:** *medieval history; Galilee; Castle of Safed; Damascus; Franks; Templars; Sultan Saladin; Mamluks; Sultan Baybars; reconstruction*

### *Introduction*

The Castle of Safed,<sup>1</sup> located in Galilee, played a pivotal role in establishing Mamluk dominance and hastening the decline of the Crusader States in the latter half of the thirteenth century. Situated strategically between Acre (a city in modern-day Israel) and Damascus (a city in modern-day Syria), Safed was a military stronghold, a center of regional power, and a hub for cultural integration. Although its construction was a costly endeavor, Safed proved to be a valuable asset for Franks and Mamluks alike, ultimately shaping the balance of power in the region. By assessing how the relationship between Safed and Damascus changed in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and how this impacted both the castle itself and the region's various religious groups, I argue that Safed's reconstruction influenced the socio-political landscape militarily, economically, and religiously.

The evidence employed in this essay derives from Frankish and Arabic period sources such as William of Tyre's *History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, completed in the early 1180s,<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Furat's fourteenth-century work *Tarikh al-Duwal wa'l-Muluk* ("History of the Dynasties and Kingdoms"),<sup>3</sup> and two translations of the anonymous 1260s treatise *De Constructione Castri Saphet* ("About Castle Safed's Construction"), one by Hugh Kennedy<sup>4</sup> and the other by Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate.<sup>5</sup> William of Tyre's chronicle offers a Frankish perspective on Safed's early history;<sup>6</sup> Ibn al-Furat's text provides a Muslim account of the region in the thirteenth century;<sup>7</sup> and *De Constructione Castri Saphet* outlines the castle's reconstruction, illustrates its impact on local residents, and highlights its purpose of deterring Muslims from

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<sup>1</sup> While "Safed" is the spelling adopted in this essay, alternate spellings (such as "Safad" and "Saphet") have been retained in the verbatim quotations from various sources. All diacritics of the Arabica have been omitted.

<sup>2</sup> William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, vol. 2, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and August C. Krey (Columbia University Press, 1943).

<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids, Mamluks and Crusaders: Selections from the Tarikh al-Duwal wa'l-Muluk of Ibn al-Furat*, ed. Ursula Lyons and Malcolm Cameron Lyons, vol. 2 (W. Heffer and Sons Ltd, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> "Appendix: *De Constructione Castri Saphet* (Translation)," trans. Hugh Kennedy, in Hugh Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 190–198.

<sup>5</sup> "*De Constructione Castri Saphet* (Translation with Annotations)," trans. Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, in *The Templars: Selected Sources*, ed. Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate (Manchester University Press, 2002), 84–93.

<sup>6</sup> William of Tyre, *History*.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*.

preaching the “blasphemies of Muhammad,” thereby emphasizing the region’s religious divide.<sup>8</sup> While historians usually explore *De Constructione Castri Saphet* for the information it contains about the history of Safed,<sup>9</sup> I view the text in its greater socio-political context to explain why the castle’s reconstruction in the early 1240s was significant from military, economic, and religious standpoints.

Safed features in a wide range of scholarly works that have been utilized for this essay. A short article by Emmanuel Damati, Yosef Stepansky, and Hervé Barbé focuses on the site from an archaeological perspective.<sup>10</sup> The Ayyubid Sultan Saladin’s twelfth-century campaign to take the castle is covered in Carole Hillenbrand’s monograph *Islam and the Crusades*.<sup>11</sup> Various aspects of Safed’s prominent role in the Templars’ regional administration are addressed in Jonathan Riley-Smith’s 1972 article, “Some Lesser Officials in Latin Syria,”<sup>12</sup> in Malcolm Barber’s and Keith Bate’s historical introduction to their collection of Templar sources;<sup>13</sup> and in Kristian Molin’s 1997 article, “The Non-Military Functions of Crusader Fortifications, 1187–circa 1380.”<sup>14</sup> Last but not least, Elizabeth J. Mylod’s doctoral dissertation, “Latin Christian Pilgrimage in the Holy Land, 1187–1291,” investigates how spiritual journeys to the Eastern Mediterranean lands were impacted by the ever-changing socio-political landscape of the time,<sup>15</sup> for example, by Saladin’s 1187/1188 campaign against the Franks in the region, by the Templars’ repossession of Safed in the 1240s, and by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars’s siege and conquest of the castle in 1266.

Structured chronologically, my essay begins with the pre-reconstruction period (1157–1240), continues with the reconstruction period since the early 1240s (1240–1266), and concludes with the post-reconstruction period (1266–1268). Coverage of the pre-reconstruction period focuses on Safed’s origins and provides context for the rising political and religious tensions between the area’s Christians and the Muslim presence in Damascus. The reconstruction period reflects the tensions between Safed and Damascus in the 1240s and demonstrates why Safed was such a valuable site for both Christians and Muslims. Lastly, the post-reconstruction period offers insights into the conflict that led to the Mamluks’ repossession of Safed and how this impacted the area’s future relationship with Damascus.

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<sup>8</sup> “Appendix: *De Constructione*,” trans. Kennedy, 198.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Uri Zvi Shachar, “Enshrined Fortification: A Trialogue on the Rise and Fall of Safed,” *The Medieval History Journal* 23, no. 2 (2020): 265–290.

<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel Damati, Yosef Stepansky, and Hervé Barbé, “Safed,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. Ephraim Stern, vol. 4, [online](#).

<sup>11</sup> Carole Hillenbrand, *Islam and the Crusades: Collected Papers* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, “Some Lesser Officials in Latin Syria” (1972), in Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Crusaders and Settlers in the Latin East* (Ashgate Publishing, 2008), no. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, “Introduction,” in *The Templars*, ed. Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate (Manchester University Press, 2002), 11–12.

<sup>14</sup> Kristian Molin, “The Non-Military Functions of Crusader Fortifications, 1187–circa 1380,” *Journal of Medieval History* 23, no. 4 (1997): 367–388.

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth J. Mylod, “Latin Christian Pilgrimage in the Holy Land, 1187–1291” (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2013).

### 1. Pre-Reconstruction: Rising Tensions (1157–1240)

During the first decade of his independent rule (1174–1184), the Ayyubid Sultan Saladin concentrated primarily on consolidating his authority by overcoming his Muslim rivals and solidifying his family's control over Egypt and Syria.<sup>16</sup> The Franks in the Crusader States of the Eastern Mediterranean lands quickly realized that they needed to seize the moment and obstruct Saladin's plans to rally the Islamic forces of the Middle East in a *jihad* against the Christians.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, the Templars fortified the Galilean crossing of the River Jordan at Jacob's Ford (Chastelet) in 1178–1179, but Saladin took the time out of his busy Ayyubid consolidation schedule to defeat them and destroyed the site.<sup>18</sup> Repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an as a spiritual struggle, *jihad* is occasionally called the "sixth pillar" of Islam; traditionally, there are two forms of *jihad*: while the "greater" *jihad* focuses on internal self-discipline against base desires, the "lesser" *jihad* involves military efforts to defend or expand the world of Islam.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Saladin's campaigns against the Franks should be viewed as manifestations of the "lesser" *jihad*.

In 1185, Saladin turned his full attention against the Franks, thereby marking a strategic shift in his objectives.<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that Safed, by this time, had already been established as a secure and well-fortified site in Galilee. As early as 1157, King Baldwin III of Jerusalem had taken advantage of the location to retreat there during a campaign against Saladin's predecessor Nur ad-Din (d. 1174). William of Tyre described the events of 1157 as follows:

"The king [i.e., Baldwin III of Jerusalem] remained surrounded by a few knights who still clung to him. He perceived, however, that the lines were broken and that the army, disorganized, was everywhere exposed to the fury of the enemy. Moreover, the strength of the enemy was increasing from every direction while our ranks were giving way, as in fact had been the case from the beginning. Accordingly, he wisely withdrew to a hill nearby to provide for his own safety. From there, with great difficulty avoiding the enemy now on his right and again on his left, he succeeded, thanks to the horse which carried him, in reaching the fortress of Safed, which is on the same mountain."<sup>21</sup>

Like Imad al-Din Zengi (d. 1146) before him and Saladin after him, Nur ad-Din had endeavored to expand his territories in the Eastern Mediterranean lands at the expense of the Crusader States, thereby heightening tensions that routinely resulted in military conflicts throughout the region. During these campaigns, Safed was a place of refuge for the Franks and their allies among the locals in Galilee. In 1168, King Amalric of Jerusalem entrusted the site to the Templars who fortified and garrisoned it.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Safed became a critical location both for defending Frankish interests and for symbolizing the larger religious and political struggles in the region, especially since the Templars had been founded in the 1120s to

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<sup>16</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islam and the Crusades*, 165.

<sup>17</sup> Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, eds., *The Templars* (Manchester University Press, 2002), 11.

<sup>18</sup> Barber and Bate, *Templars*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islam and the Crusades*, 232.

<sup>20</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islam and the Crusades*, 165.

<sup>21</sup> William of Tyre, *History*, 261.

<sup>22</sup> Jochen Burgdorf, "The Templars and the Kings of Jerusalem," in *The Templars and Their Sources*, ed. Karl Borchardt, Karoline Döring, Philippe Josserand, Helen J. Nicholson (Routledge, 2017), 33.

protect pilgrims in the Holy Land from attacks by Muslim bandits.<sup>23</sup> In 1187, Saladin famously defeated the Kingdom of Jerusalem's army at the Battle of Hattin and recaptured Jerusalem for Islam. This led to the Third Crusade (1189–1192), which ended in a truce without a clear winner.<sup>24</sup> Although Saladin won major victories throughout the land, including his takeover of Safed in 1188, he was unable to fully expel the Franks from the Holy Land, and by the time he died in 1193, the Franks had regrouped in Acre.<sup>25</sup> While in control of several Mediterranean ports, the Franks managed to influence trade and pilgrimage movements, and they rebuilt the Kingdom of Jerusalem, albeit on a considerably smaller scale.<sup>26</sup>

The resultant shift from Jaffa to Acre as the main port of entry for Christian pilgrims soon transformed travel to and in the Holy Land. What had once been a short overland journey from Jaffa to Jerusalem became a more varied and adventurous route.<sup>27</sup> Pilgrims arriving in Acre often traveled along the coast or ventured on a broader circuit that took them through Acre, Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Galilee.<sup>28</sup> Their freedom of movement was facilitated by military religious orders—like the Templars—who fortified key points, provided armed escorts, and ensured the overall safety on the pilgrimage routes. The Templars' efforts in particular turned a potentially dangerous journey into a much more secure and accessible expedition.

In the decades following Saladin's death, numerous raids were carried out against Safed, leaving the castle in a sorry state. Due to these incursions and a general fear of warfare, people vacated the area around Safed, which left the land virtually uninhabited. While the castle was still useful to some extent, both the Templars—who were now headquartered in Acre—and the Muslim rulers of Damascus were not keen on undertaking the enormous task of reconstructing the castle, so it fell into further disrepair. According to Ibn al-Furat,

"Safad remained a ruin with its lands being held by the rulers of Damascus, none of whom were concerned to rebuild it. Then al-Malik al-Salih 'Imad al-Din Isma'il [d. 1245], who had taken over Damascus, gave it to the Franks together with other places, so as to induce them to help him in his war against al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub [d. 1249], the ruler of Egypt."<sup>29</sup>

This explains why Safed was returned to the Franks in 1240. Following Saladin's death, his relatives had divided the Ayyubid empire among themselves, and by 1240 al-Salih Ismail of Damascus (Saladin's nephew) and al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt (Saladin's great-nephew) were engaged in full-scale dynastic warfare. I would argue that the decision to give Safed to the Franks was driven by political expediency, as al-Salih Ismail of Damascus sought to enlist Frankish support against his rival, al-Salih Ayyub of Egypt, while simultaneously neutralizing (or at least minimizing) the threat of a Frankish incursion into his own territories. This temporary alliance of Franks and Damascene Muslims against Egyptian Muslims reflects the shifting coalitions of the time and exemplifies the saying that "the enemy of my enemy is my

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<sup>23</sup> Barber and Bate, "Introduction," 1–2.

<sup>24</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islam and the Crusades*, 165.

<sup>25</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islam and the Crusades*, 165–166.

<sup>26</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islam and the Crusades*, 166.

<sup>27</sup> Mylod, "Latin Christian Pilgrimage," 6.

<sup>28</sup> Mylod, "Latin Christian Pilgrimage," 6.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*, 88.

friend." In this new constellation of the early 1240s, Safed (now Frankish again) opposed Egypt on religious and political grounds, while Damascus opposed Egypt on dynastic and political grounds. After the so-called Barons' Crusade of 1239, the overall political climate was briefly shifting in favor of the Christians, and al-Salih Ismail of Damascus recognized Safed's potential as a formidable buffer between his own territories and those of his Egyptian antagonist; just as he envisioned, Safed became a magnificent Frankish fortress and a significant force to be reckoned with.

## 2. The Reconstruction: Assets and Ambitions (1240–1266)

Safed's location in Galilee was important for several reasons: it was surrounded by steep terrain, which rendered it more easily defensible, but also by fertile land, which ensured its supplies; it was situated near several pilgrimage sites, which made it attractive to Christian visitors; and it was located on a key trade route between Acre and Damascus, which turned it into a major draw for merchants and, even more importantly, facilitated the movement of workers from afar and the transporting of building materials from its hinterland. The reconstruction of Safed in the early 1240s marked a watershed moment in the history of the religious and political tensions between Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land. Materials for the castle's construction could be found in abundance nearby; however, the lack of people in the surrounding area was one of the biggest challenges the Templars had to take on, apart from the costs associated with the castle's long-term maintenance and garrisoning. According to the treatise *De Constructione Castri Saphet*,

"in the first two and a half years, the house of the Temple spent on building the Castle of Saphet, in addition to the revenues and income of the castle itself, eleven hundred thousand Saracen bezants, and in each following year more or less forty thousand Saracen bezants. Every day, victuals are dispensed to 1,700 or more, and in time of war, 2,200. For the daily establishment [*stablimento cotidiano*] of the castle, 50 knights, 30 serjeants brothers, and 50 Turcupoles are required with their horses and arms, and 300 crossbowmen, for the works and other offices, 820, and 400 slaves. There are used there every year on average more than 12,000 mule-loads of barley and corn apart from other victuals, in addition to payments to the paid soldiers and hired persons, and in addition to the horses and tack and arms and other necessities which are not easy to account."<sup>30</sup>

Safed's location—with its fertile lands and abundant resources—made it not just eminently suited as a military stronghold; it also rendered it a profitable asset, at least in theory. However, Safed's potential for prosperity had been greatly reduced by the recurring raids against the castle itself and its surrounding areas during much of the earlier thirteenth century. While Safed's reconstruction in the 1240s was intended to counter these raids and create a climate of stability, it also highlighted the region's religious and territorial polarization and set the stage for further conflict in the coming years. In the beginning, the Christians viewed the rebuilding of Safed as a religious imperative, symbolized by the actions of Benedict of Alignan, the Bishop of Marseille (in office 1229–1267). According to the treatise *De Constructione Castri Saphet*, which, not surprisingly, interpreted the construction process at Safed from a decidedly Christian perspective,

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<sup>30</sup> "Appendix: *De Constructione*," trans. Kennedy, 196.



"[t]he bishop of Marseilles himself came with those pilgrims he could bring and pitched his tents on the site of the synagogue of the Jews and the mosque of the Saracens so that by this he indicated and clearly showed that the Castle of Saphet would be rebuilt to weaken the unfaithfulness of the infidels and strengthen and defend the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>31</sup>

This demonstrative act of the visiting prelate underscored the polarized atmosphere in the region as the Christians sought to reaffirm their dominance. According to Ibn al-Furat, the Franks also forced Muslim prisoners to work at the site,<sup>32</sup> which suggest that the latter may have contributed significantly to the reconstruction efforts. However, what transpired next highlighted the ongoing tension between the Franks, their forced laborers, the neighboring Muslim rulers, and the Franks' powerful ally, al-Salih Ismail of Damascus. Ibn al-Furat reported the events at Safed as follows:

"When the Franks got possession of it, they called in Muslim prisoners who were in their lands to build it up. There were a thousand of these prisoners, while the Franks there numbered less than two hundred. The prisoners made common cause and agreed on a resolve to attack them. Then they thought that they must have someone to give them shelter, on whom they could rely for defense. So they wrote to the emir Saif al-Din 'Alf b. Qilfj al-Nuri, who at that time was holding the Castle of 'Ajlun [in today's Jordan] on behalf of al-Malik al-Nasir Da'ud, the ruler of Kerak [also in today's Jordan], asking him to write to his master, requesting him to give them the order to attack the Franks and to send them someone to take over the fortress."<sup>33</sup>

While the Franks had secured the manpower needed to reconstruct Safed, the numerical ratio between them and their forced laborers harbored explosive potential. However, the intended uprising did not materialize. The Muslim prisoners' plan was betrayed to the Franks' ally, al-Salih Ismail of Damascus; he informed the Templars; and the Templars seized the Muslim prisoners, took them to Acre, and executed them.<sup>34</sup> The events illustrate al-Salih Ismail's commitment to his delicate alliance with the Franks, and it is worth noting that the Templars, at least in this case, performed the punishment of their Muslim prisoners relatively far away from the actual building site and from any majority-Muslim political entities. This, however, did not stop the grim news from getting out and eventually entering the records that Ibn al-Furat used as his sources.

Economically speaking, Safed's greatest assets were the fertile lands, bountiful crops, ample fresh water supplies, and valuable stone quarries that surrounded it. These assets were, of course, also a major reason why both sides valued Safed so highly. The anonymous author of the treatise *De Constructione Castri Saphet* addressed the economic means by which Safed was able to sustain itself, as these things could be traded and boost local revenue while also keeping the castle's inhabitants from going hungry:

"To show the excellence of the castle so that so much work does not seem useless, burdensome, dispensable and insufficient, or unfit for habitation, it should be noted that the Castle of Saphet has a temperate and healthy climate, rich in gardens, vines, trees and grass, gentle and smiling, rich and abundant in the fertility and variety of fruit. There figs, pomegranates, almonds, and olives grow and flourish. God blesses it with rain from the sky and richness from the soil and abundance of corn, vines, oil, pulses, herbs, and choice fruits,

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<sup>31</sup> "Appendix: *De Constructione*," trans. Kennedy, 194.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*, 88.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*, 88.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*, 89.

plenty of milk and honey, and pastures suitable for the feeding of animals, glades, trees, and woods for making lime-kilns and for cooking plentiful foods, very good stone quarries in the place for building work and irrigation from springs and large cisterns to water animals and irrigate plants, not only outside the castle, but even within where very good fresh water abounds and several great cisterns suitable for any purpose.”<sup>35</sup>

Thus, while the land required a lot of maintenance, it was abundant in commodities, benefiting the local economies and bringing revenue to its inhabitants. This is why both Christians and Muslims placed such a high valuation on the castle and its surrounding areas. Things were quite different once one crossed the River Jordan and traveled east in the direction of Damascus. As the treatise *De Constructione Castri Saphet* explained,

“[b]etween the River Jordan and Damascus, on the other hand, the land remained uncultivated and like a desert for fear of the Castle of Saphet, whence great raids and depredations and layings waste are made as far as Damascus.”<sup>36</sup>

It must be noted that the land to the east, the so-called Terre de Suète, was actually quite fertile. What the treatise’s anonymous author implied, though, was that the Frankish reconstruction of Safed rendered the Terre de Suète uninhabitable to its Muslim population “for fear” of Safed’s Templar garrison’s burning-and-pillaging incursions (commonly known as *chevauchées*). Thus, the Christian rebuilding efforts—while initially the result of an alliance between the Franks and al-Salih Ismail of Damascus—would ultimately fan the flames of war and heighten the tensions between the two sides. Meanwhile, the Templars’ presence at Safed made the local inhabitants of its surrounding areas (many of whom would have been Eastern Christians) feel safer because they could seek shelter in the castle during military campaigns.<sup>37</sup> Safed’s reconstruction in the early 1240s facilitated the return of approximately 10,000 (presumably Eastern Christians) peasants to 260 villages that had been either abandoned or controlled by Muslims ever since Saladin’s conquest of Galilee in 1187/1188.<sup>38</sup>

Offering protection to pilgrims was one of the religious responsibilities of Christian strongholds, and Safed was no exception. In fact, the anonymous author of the treatise *De Constructione Castri Saphet* clearly emphasized the site’s religious significance:

“Likewise near there on a mountain toward Tiberias is the place where, with five barley loaves and twelve fishes Our Lord satisfied 5,000 men, with twelve baskets of pieces left over. Near there is the place where Jesus showed himself to His disciples and ate with them as is read in the Gospel for the fourth Sunday after Easter and that is the place commonly called the Table of the Lord [i.e., presumably, Tabgha] where there is a church and a solemn pilgrimage. Again nearby, by the Sea of Tiberias, is the village called Bethsaida, where Peter and Andrew, Philip, and James the Less were born and where Christ chose Peter and Andrew and the two sons of Zebedee to be Apostles. Again near there by the Sea of Tiberias toward Tiberias City is the place called Magdalon, where it is said Mary Magdalene was born. Places even more holy, like Nazareth, Mount Tabor, Cana of Galilee and many others can be visited more freely and securely because of the building of the Castle of Saphet. Because of this, it can be seen how much was diminished and carried off from the infidel Saracens and how much Christianity grew and expanded because of the construction and establishment of the Castle of Saphet, because it was done to confound, to weaken, and to hold back the infidel and to

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<sup>35</sup> “Appendix: *De Constructione*,” trans. Kennedy, 196–197.

<sup>36</sup> “Appendix: *De Constructione*,” trans. Kennedy, 197.

<sup>37</sup> Molin, “Non-Military Functions,” 379.

<sup>38</sup> Molin, “Non-Military Functions,” 379.

expand, multiply, and comfort the faithful, to the honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the exaltation of the church of the Lord God."<sup>39</sup>

This demonstrates how Safed's reconstruction benefited the Franks both economically and religiously. With so many pilgrimage sites surrounding Safed, its reconstruction was a strategic means to raise revenue, attract able-bodied workers, and provide security—as well as a refuge—for pilgrims.

Medieval castles controlled by the Templars and other military religious orders were more than just mighty fortresses. They served as administrative hubs for the surrounding territories, housing offices where revenues, taxes, and important documents were kept, and where daily operations were organized.<sup>40</sup> For example, the seven towers of the inner bailey at Safed contained numerous offices to handle the Templars' local estates and ensure the smooth governance of the nearby villages.<sup>41</sup> This illustrates the dual role of castles as both defensive structures and centers of economic and administrative control. Supporting this system were officials known as *casaliers*, whose responsibilities included the management of relations between the Templars and the inhabitants of the local villages.<sup>42</sup> *Casaliers* played a vital role in overseeing the economic activities of the villages, such as collecting revenues and ensuring compliance with the Templars' normative texts.<sup>43</sup> The presence of a Templar *casalier* at Safed illustrates that these officials were directly tied to the castle's administrative functions. Thus, castles and *casaliers* were features of governance that balanced military needs with economic administration. On a more tragic note, it was also a Templar *casalier*, an individual by the name of Brother Leo, who betrayed his own garrison when the Mamluk Sultan Baybars besieged and conquered the Castle of Safed in 1266.<sup>44</sup>

### 3. Post-Reconstruction: Religious Repossession (1266–1268)

Safed's reconstruction in the 1240s was not just a strategic military undertaking with strong economic undertones. Its proximity to significant New Testament sites also secured the region of Galilee for Christian pilgrimages, promoted the Franks' economic endeavors, and raised considerable revenue. In short, according to the unknown author of *De Constructione Castri Saphet*, the castle's rebuilding was a means to "expand, multiply, and comfort the faithful."<sup>45</sup> The dynamics shifted dramatically, however, when Baybars and his Mamluks took Safed in 1266.<sup>46</sup> Ibn al-Furat described the scene as follows:

"In the morning, the Sultan took his seat, and the emirs and the leaders from the Egyptian and the Syrian forces came to pay their respects to him. He thanked them for their efforts and told them of his satisfaction with them. 'It may be,' he said, 'that I have blamed some individuals amongst you and issued rebukes or punishments. My only aim in that was to spur you on to this great victory, and from this moment we shall be

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<sup>39</sup> "Appendix: *De Constructione*," trans. Kennedy, 198.

<sup>40</sup> Molin, "Non-Military Functions," 378.

<sup>41</sup> Molin, "Non-Military Functions," 378.

<sup>42</sup> Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 12.

<sup>43</sup> Riley-Smith, "Some Lesser Officials," 12.

<sup>44</sup> *The Templar of Tyre*, trans. Paul Crawford (Ashgate, 2003), 51.

<sup>45</sup> "Appendix: *De Constructione*," trans. Kennedy, 198.

<sup>46</sup> Shachar, "Enshrined Fortification," 280; Mylod, "Latin Christian Pilgrimage," 10.

friends.' Then the Sultan informed the emirs that the prisoners from Safad had come out without a recognized safe-conduct. He told them how an arrangement had been made for them to leave without their armor, how they had broken it, and how they had not made him swear an oath. So he ordered them to behead the prisoners. They rode off and brought up the Templar and Hospitaller knights, together with all the Franks who had been taken out of Safad, and they were beheaded on a hill near Safad in a place where they had been used to behead Muslims. Only two of them were saved, of whom one was their messenger."<sup>47</sup>

This rendition of the events underscores Sultan Baybars's sophistry and sheds some light on the circumstances that led to the Franks' ultimate loss of Safed and to the death of the Templars. It appears that the Templar garrison—ready to surrender—had left the castle "without a recognized safe-conduct," and that an "arrangement" for them "to leave without their armor" (presumably to vacate the area and relocate to Acre) had been broken. Since the Templars had "not made him [i.e., Baybars] swear an oath, he was under no obligation to honor any safe-conduct, which means that the Templars were doomed. The Templars' execution on a hill formerly used by them for the beheading of Muslims added an air of retribution. By sparing two Christian prisoners, including a "messenger" (presumably the Templar *casalier* Brother Leo, who had orchestrated the betrayal of his own garrison),<sup>48</sup> Baybars balanced retribution with an opportunity for diplomacy. According to Ibn al-Furat,

"[a]s for Sultan Baibars, when he had the Franks killed, as we have already shown, he entered the citadel of Safad and distributed amongst the emirs the equipment of the Franks and the slaves, female and male. The armory which he had brought with him was moved to the citadel, and he began carrying in there by himself a load of arrows on his shoulder. The people followed his example, and so the armory and the mangonels were moved there in the shortest possible time. He sought men to garrison it from Damascus, and the costs of this garrison were settled at eighty thousand dirhams a month. The emirs were employed to look after all the lands belonging to Safad; one mosque was built in the citadel there and another in the *rabad*."<sup>49</sup>

Thus, in addition to annihilating the Templars, rewarding his entourage with the plunder gained, restocking Safed's armory, and garrisoning the castle as a Mamluk military stronghold, Baybars commemorated his victory by constructing two mosques, one in the castle itself and the other one in its suburb (*rabad*), thereby connecting Safed both architecturally and religiously to the world of Islam. Consolidating his Mamluks' control over Syria, Baybars severed Safed's ties to Acre and, instead, connected it to Damascus, its most significant urban neighbor to the east. Thus, Safed's history reflects the region's broader conflicts and cultural shifts. According to Ibn al-Furat, Baybars turned Safed into a major center and regular stopover for his military campaigns in Syria during the later 1260s, and he strengthened its defensive capabilities by further rebuilding it:

"When the Sultan reached Gaza [i.e., he was coming from Egypt], messengers came to him from the Franks, bringing a gift, together with a number of Muslim prisoners whom he dismissed after giving them clothes. Then he traveled to Safad (Saphet), and on his arrival there, he heard that the Tartars [i.e., the Mongols] were making for al-Rahba [i.e., the primary Mamluk fortress on the Euphrates]. He organized the rebuilding of Safad and then set off quickly for Damascus, which he reached on the 14th of Rajab (10 April). He concerned himself with the affair of al-Rahba, but he then heard that the Tartars there had been pursued by the people of the place who had killed some of them, taken prisoners, and routed them. One of the Tartar leaders was

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<sup>47</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*, 95.

<sup>48</sup> *Templar of Tyre*, trans. Crawford, 51. Leo apostatized and became a Muslim.

<sup>49</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*, 96.

amongst the dead. When the Sultan verified this news, he returned toward Safad after having stayed at Damascus for five days."<sup>50</sup>

After Baybars had conquered Safed in 1266, he transformed the castle and its surroundings into a military, administrative, urban, and religious center. For example, he fortified the castle by adding an outer defensive wall and constructing a massive round tower, which stood 120 cubits (approximately 60 meters) high and 70 cubits (approximately 35 meters) across.<sup>51</sup> This tower featured a spiral ramp, which was most likely used to facilitate movement and defense. These and other enhancements solidified Safed's strategic importance, enabling its suburb to become a provincial capital and grow into one of Mamluk Syria's most prominent towns.<sup>52</sup>

### Conclusion

Safed's reconstruction in the early 1240s played a crucial role in shaping the socio-political landscape of the Holy Land. Strategically located between Frankish Acre and (first Ayyubid and later Mamluk) Damascus, its fortification served military, economic, and religious purposes. From the Frankish perspective, Safed protected the region of Galilee, secured abundant economic resources, and guarded Christian pilgrimage routes near significant New Testament sites. However, in doing so, it also intensified political, territorial, and religious tensions, particularly with the Mamluks who—from 1250 on—saw the castle as a symbol of Crusader defiance. When Baybars captured Safed in 1266, he refortified it and transformed it into a center of Mamluk military, administrative, and religious authority, thus signaling the end of Crusader influence in the region. Most importantly perhaps, this essay's study of Safed can serve as a paradigm to examine other sites—particularly those located in the Crusader States of the twelfth and thirteenth century—much more holistically, thereby enhancing our understanding of the entire region and its complex and ever-changing history.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibn al-Furat, *Ayyubids*, 101.

<sup>51</sup> Damati, Stepansky, and Barbé, "Safed," [online](#).

<sup>52</sup> Damati, Stepansky, and Barbé, "Safed," [online](#).

Michael Westfall

## *Saint or Witch?*

### *Douceline of Digne in Thirteenth-Century France*

**ABSTRACT:** *This essay reconsiders Douceline of Digne, a popular saint, who lived from c. 1215 until 1274 and was a key figure in France's Beguine movement at that time. Based on the description of her "life" by her disciple Philippine of Porcellet, the essay's three parts, "Women of Status," "The Franciscan Connection," and "Making the 'Impossible' Possible," address possible factors why a person might have been viewed as a saint instead of a witch. The author argues that Douceline's relatively high social status, her connection to the Franciscans, as well as contemporary notions of what constituted a miracle and what amounted to witchcraft all contributed to her popular sainthood.*

**KEYWORDS:** *medieval history; Catholic history; France; Douceline of Digne; Beguines; Franciscans; Philippine of Porcellet; miracles; sainthood; witchcraft*

#### *Introduction*

A young woman in a quiet and quaint village in medieval southern France is soaring through the air to the astonishment of several witnesses. Some come away from the encounter believing they have witnessed the miracle of a saint, others with the idea that they have experienced a case of demonic possession. What determines the miracles of sainthood as distinct from the works of witchcraft when both can manifest themselves in virtually the same way? The story of Douceline of Digne (c. 1215–1274) can at least partially answer this question.<sup>1</sup> This essay argues that the factors in Douceline's life that made her a popular saint rather than a witch were her social status, her connection to the Franciscans, as well as contemporary notions of what constituted a miracle and what amounted to witchcraft. Douceline was, in a sense, a "manufactured" saint.

Douceline's story is one of popular sainthood: she was renowned and referenced as a saint, but she was never officially canonized by the Catholic Church; thus, she is not a recognized saint. Hailing from a small town in the region of Provence (France), she lived from c. 1215 to 1274. Douceline was a Beguine, perhaps even "the" Beguine. Beguines were laywomen who aspired to partially imitate the life of nuns.<sup>2</sup> When Douceline began her adult life and dedicated herself to a pseudo-monastic existence, the Inquisition was becoming a permanent fixture in thirteenth-century France, where it had originally sought to root out Catharism.<sup>3</sup> This, alongside the founding of the Franciscans in 1209, is crucial to consider when examining possible influences on Douceline's life and the creation of her hagiography.

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<sup>1</sup> See Philippine de Porcellet, *The Life of Saint Douceline, a Beguine of Provence: Translated from the Occitan with Introduction, Notes, and Interpretive Essay*, trans. Kathleen E. Garay and Madeleine Jeay (Boydell & Brewer, 2001), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Tanya Stabler Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris: Gender, Patronage, and Spiritual Authority* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 2–3.

<sup>3</sup> Pawel Kras, *The System of the Inquisition in Medieval Europe* (Peter Lang International Academic Publishing Group, 2020), 136. Catharism was a dualist, anticlerical, and ascetic Christian movement in medieval Europe, primarily southern France.



The primary means by which we know of Douceline is her “life,” written by to her disciple Philippine of Porcellet and translated into modern English by Kathleen E. Garay and Madeleine Jeay in 2001.<sup>4</sup> Garay’s and Jeay’s work includes both the hagiography itself as well as a critical analysis of the source by the two translators which provides additional historical context. Douceline’s hagiography (or “life”) consists of several sections, or chapters, in roughly chronological order, starting with a brief description of Douceline’s childhood and family, and then continuing through the rest of her life until her death in 1274, with particular emphasis on her pious nature and reported miracles. While technically anonymous, the hagiography’s authorship and its context is critical to this essay’s theme and therefore expanded upon later. In assessing Douceline’s agency and how it was perceived, Carlos Eire’s 2023 monograph, *They Flew: A History of the Impossible*, has been invaluable.<sup>5</sup> A history and religious studies professor at Yale, Eire explores the dynamics of the “impossible,” and his research on miracles and acts of levitation has largely inspired this essay. As far as other works pertaining to Douceline are concerned, she remains a relatively obscure topic in English-language scholarship. This is regrettable, as her story contains elements that transcend time, space, and religion.

This essay comprises three parts: “Women of Status,” “The Franciscan Connection,” and “Making the ‘Impossible’ Possible.” “Women of Status” covers the lives and social status of the women relevant to the text, namely, Douceline of Digne herself and the aforementioned Philippine of Porcellet, a prominent thirteenth-century noblewoman and hagiographer. “The Franciscan Connection” centers on Douceline’s brother, known as the Franciscan Hugh, a thirteenth-century Friar and preacher, as well as the text’s possible appeal to the Franciscans. “Making the ‘Impossible’ Possible” examines the reported miracles and the respective different—and, at times, not so different—views of the medieval and modern world.

### 1. *Women of Status*

Prior to examining Douceline’s life and story, some additional context should be provided and terms defined. “Witchcraft” is more or less associated with the idea of demonic possession; in essence, it is the channeling or physical manifestation of evil in the physical world, whether intentional or not, into all manner of effects. Witchcraft is thought to be intentional and directly harmful to others. “Possession,” meanwhile, may occur even in non-wicked individuals due to any variety of reasons, such as simply visiting a part of the woods that they should not have visited at all or not at the time when they did so. Possession and witchcraft are, in essence, conditions that are assessed on the basis of communally perceived parameters.<sup>6</sup> These include, but are not limited to, muttering and wild ravings; thoughts to invoke curses; levitation or outright flying; and sickening the environment, whether it be people’s health, plants, or animals. “Miracles,” on the other hand, are thought to be acts of the Divine on earth that directly supersede natural limitations, and they include levitation,

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<sup>4</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*.

<sup>5</sup> Carlos M. N. Eire, *They Flew: A History of the Impossible* (Yale University Press, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, *Demonic Possession and Lived Religion in Later Medieval Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 1.

bilocation, visions of holy figures, and—perhaps most commonly—miraculous healings. Notably, witchcraft tends to be associated with women of low social status or outcasts.<sup>7</sup> Douceline and Philippine were the exact opposite of this.

Douceline's hagiography makes her social connections quite clear. The very opening of her "life" emphasizes her father's status and affluence: "There was a man of the city of Digne [in Provence], a great and wealthy merchant called Berenguier."<sup>8</sup> The remainder of the opening proceeds much as one might expect, listing her mother and her brother Hugh. Hugh himself is referenced as a Franciscan of renown (whose status is further explored in this essay's second part), and it is noteworthy that his position is extolled directly after that of the father. Douceline is highlighted as pious from an early age, engaging in acts of charity and volunteer work, such as aiding the poor. While encouraged by her family to join the Church like her brother Hugh, she rejected this path, instead opting to found her own community, which became known as the Beguines of Marseille.<sup>9</sup> There are several notable aspects to the hagiography's presentation of Douceline's family. The strangest of these—considering that we are dealing with the biography of a popular saint—is perhaps the emphasis on her family's wealth. However, this is intentional: it sets the stage for the introduction of Philippine later on, all the while establishing the concept of pious behavior sponsored by wealth, a theme consistently revisited in the text with regard to Douceline's and Philippine's relationship. Absent from the text is any information about Douceline's early years that does not pertain to the status of her relatives or her pious works as a child and young adult.

As far as Philippine is concerned, one must address the question of the text's authorship. According to previous scholars, including the Abbé Joseph-Hyacinthe Albanés and René Gout, Philippine is either the text's author or, at the very least, its sponsor.<sup>10</sup> As discussed by English translators Kathleen E. Garay and Madeleine Jeay, a variety of peculiar textual characteristics underscore this assessment,<sup>11</sup> such as its casual tone, intimate details, and the usage of the term "saint." The language itself, according to the translators, is not the proper Latin of the Church that one would expect in a formal religious text; in fact, its casual tone suggests someone with a non-clerical background. The intimate details of Douceline's life, particularly the direct quotes attributed to her, suggest someone who interacted with her regularly. For example: "My daughter, do not be ashamed on my account, for I myself would not be ashamed to make you known to my father."<sup>12</sup> The text's details concerning the community's buildings, such as which rooms were adjacent to each other, suggest that the author was a member of Douceline's group of Beguines and knew her personally. Additionally, two central themes permeate the text, namely, an emphasis on Philippine's support for Douceline and the assertion of the latter's sainthood despite any formal

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<sup>7</sup> Anna P. Grelson, "Marginal Heroines: Witchcraft as Resistance" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2018), 60–61.

<sup>8</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 25.

<sup>9</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 26–28.

<sup>10</sup> See Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 16–17.

<sup>11</sup> See Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 16.

<sup>12</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 27.

canonization; taken together, they suggest an author with a personal connection who would have had something to gain from Douceline's canonization. All this makes Philippine the primary contender for the hagiography's authorship. She had the education, wealth, and opportunity. When combined with the previously discussed points, the arguments for Philippine's authorship are convincing.

Philippine is introduced midway into the text, in section five of the hagiography, as follows:

"It happened one time that a noble lady of Provence by the name of Philippine of Porcellet, Lady of Artignols, came to the holy mother [i.e., Douceline] with great devotion, and entered Roubaud [i.e., the Beguines' community of Marseille] to be her daughter. And once she was there, she saw the holy mother living in poverty and receiving the meagre alms that were given to her. And she saw her so destitute that, when she was ill, she often did not have a penny to make herself better. And so, this lady, who was a very rich woman, had compassion for her. And one day she went to her in secret and, kneeling humbly, begged her to accept her help, saying that she was ready and willing to look after her needs and give her the necessities of life for as long as she lived."<sup>13</sup>

This introduction is illuminating when viewed through the lens of Philippine as the text's author. Up until this point, one finds no explicit mention of anyone's name in the narrative, apart from Douceline herself and the members of her family. Thus, the very first non-family member to be introduced and linked to Douceline in the story of her life is Philippine. And here, too, the text alludes to the theme that wealth does not necessarily beget sin or, at the very least, comes with a negative connotation. The "life" links Philippine's pious nature to her willingness to employ personal wealth for Douceline's benefit; thus, one cannot badmouth wealth (as seen earlier with Douceline's father). Another key aspect is the timing when this intervention might have happened. Philippine is being tied to the establishment of Douceline's community. Despite the high probability that it was Douceline's father's funding and her brother's religious life that facilitated the launching of her Beguine community, this quote places Douceline's fortuitous encounter with Philippine center stage and asserts the latter as the pivotal figure who helped establish Douceline's Beguines. This especially makes sense if the text was not just intended to promote Douceline, but to cement Philippine's role as well, thereby furthering the probability of Philippine's involvement and likely authorship.

Of secondary interest to Philippine's role is the language employed in this quote. There is the rather straightforward aspect of asserting the good-natured piety and devotion of both Douceline and Philippine, but there is also a noteworthy subtext, namely, the mentioning of Douceline's destitution. "Meagre alms" suggests that she was receiving less than what she deserved.<sup>14</sup> This appears to be one of the intended takeaways of the entire work, when considering that it was essentially written as a petition to have Douceline canonized. Recalling the previous points about authorship, and factoring in additional considerations, such as the text's assurance of Douceline's sainthood toward any skeptics, as well as the usage of the word "saint" despite her not being canonized, it appears that it may have been the intention to have the text read aloud to a congregation—with clergy in attendance—as a means to petition for the recognition of Douceline's sainthood. Such a recognition would have instantly

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<sup>13</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 38.

<sup>14</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 38.

reflected positively on the noblewoman Philippine who was sponsoring such a thing. Douceline's acknowledgment as a saint would not just have boosted Philippine's own image; it would also have promoted pilgrimage to, as well as membership in, their Beguine community, which would have been an attractive side effect of Douceline's canonization. This much is clear: neither Douceline, the Beguine community's founder in Marseille, nor Philippine, her hagiography's sponsor and likely author, were social outcasts who were viewed with suspicion by their local environment.

## 2. The Franciscan Connection

Before looking at the hagiography itself to examine Douceline's connection—and possible appeal—to the Franciscans, there are several contextual elements one should consider. The first of these are the beliefs and religious styling of the Franciscans themselves. Founded in 1209, they were to follow the life and teachings of Saint Francis of Assisi (c. 1181/1182–1226)<sup>15</sup> by focusing on a life of poverty and outreach to the community. Their ideals came to be revived and associated with the spiritual priorities of the Beguine movement during the later thirteenth century. When seeking legitimacy and asserting authority, leaning on a connection to something—or someone—already established and growing in influence can be helpful. In the case of Douceline and her Beguines, the Franciscans fulfilled this role. Both Douceline's personal connection to the Franciscans as well as the text itself underscore this important link—a fact that would not have been lost on the hagiography's intended audience.

In the "life," Douceline's brother Hugh appears repeatedly, and there is clear importance placed on him. Hugh's introduction at the beginning of the text affords him equivalent status to Douceline, stating that "[b]oth of them, by the brilliance of their light and perfection, shone in the eyes of the sinners and of the just; they were the splendor of all holiness, and, by their example of virtue, they shone and they lit up the estate of holy penitence."<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Hugh was one of two direct influences on Douceline's founding of her community. He was the one who arranged for Douceline to be accepted by the Franciscan Sisters of Genoa when visiting Paris (additionally, she had already been accepted by several religious houses in Provence, though none are clearly specified).<sup>17</sup> One gathers that Hugh was rather well-connected, even if his reputation may have been exaggerated by the text, which evidently intended to emphasize how much Douceline's Beguines had in common with the Franciscans in order to appeal to the latter.

Following a conversation with two traveling holy women, who disappeared immediately after speaking to her but led her to pondering her future (a story likely included to illustrate Douceline's saintly receiving of guidance from those directed by the Divine), it was Hugh who advised his sister against joining any existing religious community and encouraged her to establish her own group instead, thus rendering her the "first Beguine" of Provence.<sup>18</sup> Also of

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<sup>15</sup> Mary Beth Ingham, "Franciscan Theology," in *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, ed. Brendan N. Wolfe et al. (University of St Andrews, 2022), [online](#).

<sup>16</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 25.

<sup>17</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 31.

note is the fact that Hugh was officiating when Douceline took her vow of poverty.<sup>19</sup> Hugh apparently preached at Hyères, the town east of Toulon where Douceline's group is reported to have originated, and his preaching helped attract members.<sup>20</sup>

The text goes to great lengths in asserting Hugh's prominent role in Douceline's life and in the establishment of her community, while touting that she would have become a Franciscan Sister had she not received divine guidance toward her own particular mission. As the text neglects to identify the other religious establishments that had apparently accepted her, the focus on the Franciscan connection is clearly intentional. Considering the geographical parameters of Hugh's preaching, he likely had a hand in establishing the rules and teachings of Douceline's community. Thus, a Franciscan, in effect, helped establish this sisterhood.

The emphasis on the Franciscan connection is not limited to Douceline's brother Hugh; it remains a recurring theme throughout the text, with Franciscan Friars surfacing time and again. Toward the end of the text, when detailing Douceline's death and interment, the Franciscans put in another strong appearance: "The saint [i.e., Douceline] was honored in every way by the clerics, especially by the Friars Minor, who regarded her as a sister, and indeed in Christ she was the true daughter of the lord Saint Francis."<sup>21</sup> Here, the hagiography's author directly equates Douceline with being a member of the Franciscans (despite her never having joined any such community) and goes as far as to say that the Franciscan Friars themselves claimed her as one of their own. This is done in order to further legitimize the Beguines, which, next to the assertion of Douceline's saintly status, is the other primary goal of this text. Recall the reference to Douceline as the "first Beguine" of Provence; it is paired with the statement that "[t]he holy mother wanted to be called a Beguine, through the love of Our Lady, who was her model."<sup>22</sup> This asserts Douceline's embracing of the title of Beguine but also emphasizes that such a title and lifestyle were guided by the example of the Virgin Mary. To counter any doubts that might arise about Douceline's devotion, the text unequivocally stresses her self-identification as a Beguine who was following the example of the Virgin Mary and thereby closely aligning herself with the Franciscans who, in turn, were known for their particular devotion to the Virgin Mary.

Generally speaking, the Beguine movement was one of commoners and laypeople. It did not have a noble background, and it actively catered to the poor. Rather than emphasizing Scripture and education, Beguines promoted a humble and simple lifestyle—one might even accuse them of reveling in destitution. This is certainly evident in Douceline's hagiography, where the Beguines' overwhelming theme is a life of humility and poverty, better yet if attained by the renunciation of one's former wealth. This, however, did not help the Beguines' reputation. Even in the time of Douceline herself, the moniker of Beguine was someone "scorned by the world's pride."<sup>23</sup> By actively adopting the title of Beguine, both the

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<sup>19</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 38.

<sup>20</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 31–32.

<sup>21</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 93.

<sup>22</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 31.

<sup>23</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 34.

hagiography's author (likely Philippine) and its subject (Douceline) sought to embrace the term and transform its negative connotations into positive ones, much in the same way people still do in the modern day with insults, when they embrace the respective stereotypes instead of rejecting them. This also complements the Beguines' secondary goal of attaching themselves to the Franciscans' rising tide.

In keeping with this, the text names Saint Francis as one whose name, even when merely whispered, moved Douceline to ecstasy,<sup>24</sup> a consideration not given to other saints whose names go unmentioned. Thus, the Franciscan connection was intentional, explicit, and profound. While Douceline's Beguines may have shared some of the striking traits generally associated with witches—such as poverty, low social status, and being unmarried or widowed—this was certainly offset by their personal and spiritual ties to the Franciscans.

### 3. Making the "Impossible" Possible

When examining witchcraft and sainthood, there is an inevitable and somewhat problematic issue that arises, namely, supernatural feats. When arguing in favor of someone's sainthood, miracles must have been performed (or occurred) and attested to. These may include anything from simply invoking the name of the candidate for sainthood during a prayer that then results in a miraculous healing to levitating off the ground or even performing feats of bilocation, that is to say, being in two places at once.<sup>25</sup> Among these, levitation stands out as being quite witchlike when compared to the others. After all, there is no obvious physical difference between a saint levitating off of the ground in ecstasy and, say, a witch levitating off of the ground in pursuit of some alleged wickedness. Indeed, the state of ecstasy itself can also be associated with witchcraft.<sup>26</sup> The difference lies in the perception of those present and the circumstances under which the supernatural feat transpires. Of course, this is ignoring a far more glaring and persistent issue: How does one examine that which, by modern secular standards, is impossible? When considering Douceline's hagiography, one is challenged to muster a basic level of (at least partial) trust that that which is being related and attested to constitutes the perceived-as-accurate account of a real person. The issue becomes even more pressing when one considers the fact that nearly half of the hagiography testifies to the miracles that Douceline allegedly performed, including outright levitation in front of Charles I of Anjou (c. 1226/1227–1285), count of Provence and (later also) king of Sicily.<sup>27</sup> While one may not be able to accept, at face value, such acts as actually having occurred, one may not simply dismiss them or gloss over their importance, both with regard to the life of a saint and the original audience for whom the hagiography was intended. For the purpose of assessing these acts, one has to attempt to put oneself into the mindset of those living in thirteenth-century France rather than those living today. To illustrate this, it is

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<sup>24</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 49.

<sup>25</sup> Eire, *They Flew*, 1–3.

<sup>26</sup> Animesh Manna, "Witchcraft: A Survey of Medieval Ecstasy," *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities* 3, no. 3 (2023): 73–78.

<sup>27</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 51.

helpful to consider how such an “impossible” act is recorded in Douceline’s hagiography. The following passage details one of her ecstatic states:

“The first time that King Charles saw her enraptured, he wanted to test if the ecstasy was real. This was at the time when he was count of Provence. He tested it in the following way. He had a quantity of lead melted and had it thrown, boiling, onto her bare feet, in his presence. She felt nothing. The king held her in such affection because of this, that he made her his co-mother. But afterward, when she had come back from her rapture, she felt great pain in her feet, and her anguish was unbearable. She was very ill from it and unable to walk.”<sup>28</sup>

According to this narrative, Douceline experienced such a state of ecstasy—seemingly separated from the world around her—that she ignored molten lead being thrown onto her feet, and the incident was witnessed by a famous nobleman who subsequently favored her because of it. As such, the sequence of events seems sound. Lying about a witness like Charles of Anjou would have been unlikely, especially given his prominence (after all, his brother was the saintly King Louis IX of France) as well as the close and respectful relationship between him, his wife, Douceline, and the Franciscans expressed elsewhere in the text. Even if exaggerated, there appears to have been some measure of affinity between Charles’s wife and Douceline.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, Charles’s “test” reflects the skepticism one might expect toward the authenticity of an ecstatic state, and there are lasting, harmful effects from having the molten lead thrown on Douceline’s feet. The molten lead stands out in particular, as prior ecstatic states mentioned in the narrative had involved her being prodded with spikes to ascertain whether or not she was truly in a trance.<sup>30</sup> It is conceivable that one could train oneself to ignore being jabbed or stuck with various kinds of pins. Molten lead, on the other hand, seems virtually impossible to ignore and represents a far more drastic “test;” in fact, it demonstrates a degree of skepticism and self-awareness in light of a miracle claim that would not seem out of place at all in a modern-day scenario (minus the level of violence involved in this particular “test,” of course).

Yet pain tolerance and ignoring the world around oneself through meditation are not completely “impossible” acts when compared to the feat of unassisted levitation. Here is an example of one of Douceline’s witnessed levitations:

“Many other people observed how far she was above the ground in these ecstasies, and measured the distance with their own hands on different occasions. There were many who, when she was in this rapture, kissed the soles of her feet in devotion, in the same way that was described above.”<sup>31</sup>

Here, the “impossible” is addressed rather matter-of-factly by several witnesses. While still demonstrating elements of skepticism, as evidenced by the assurance of distance measuring and people’s hands coming between Douceline and the ground on other occasions, something far more inconceivable than supernatural pain tolerance is emphasized, namely, the fact that Douceline’s ecstasies were frequently accompanied by levitations.<sup>32</sup> When

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<sup>28</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 51–52.

<sup>29</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 36.

<sup>30</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 51.

<sup>31</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 51.

<sup>32</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 48–57.



examining this passage alongside the previous one, a more complete picture of the medieval worldview emerges. The “impossible” is very much possible and, to an extent, even normalized, yet there is still skepticism; justification (viewed as verification) is required; and witnesses are self-aware that what they are stating to have happened is fantastical. If the choice is between believing that nearly all figures of medieval European religious history were scam artists, who engaged in magic tricks, or accepting that supernatural feats reflect, on some level, sincerely held beliefs, then one must accept medieval European beliefs as genuine. While the text is certainly agenda-driven (i.e., focused on demonstrating Douceline’s sainthood and exalting the Beguines’ devotion to the Virgin Mary as akin to the Franciscans), it is backed by a genuine belief in what is written as witnessed.

Thus far, the focus has been on phenomena considered common to both witchcraft and sainthood—namely, ecstasy and levitation—that merely differ in the perception of those present and the circumstances under which they transpire. Yet the most extensive and physically impactful miracles afforded the saints are their miraculous healings. While ecstasy and levitation may be interpreted differently by different people, that is not the case when it comes to healing, because medieval European witchcraft was generally associated with harm. Meanwhile, healing could come in as many forms as there were health problems. Healing most commonly occurred via the touch of a saint or via the invocation of a saint’s name in prayer, resulting in the miraculous, inexplicable, and sometimes overnight disappearance of the problem. Healing could range from addressing a simple illness to the curing of a child who had been born quadriplegic, as was the case in one of Douceline’s miracles.<sup>33</sup>

Attributed miracles did not have to be in the realm of the “impossible.” There was a category that bridged the gap between the “impossible” and the “ubiquitous,” namely, divine guidance. Douceline herself, according to her hagiography, decided to forgo joining the Franciscan Sisters of Genoa on the basis of the advice of two traveling holy women, who disappeared immediately after speaking to her.<sup>34</sup> In effect, this seems quite similar to following one’s instinct, heart, dreams, horoscope, or superstitious feelings of direction. Whether one is the most devout Christian or the staunchest atheist, people frequently make superstitious (as opposed to “rational”) decisions as trivial as what to eat for breakfast or as important as what to do in life. The element of almost ubiquitous superstitious beliefs pertains to both the medieval European worldview and that of the modern age.

If one is to make sense of witchcraft and sainthood in thirteenth-century France, one must look toward a mixture of self-awareness and true belief that is both similar to and wildly different from modern secular Western thought. Perhaps most importantly, while skepticism existed in much the same way as it does now, a sense of limitation on the wonders and abilities of the natural world did not. Thus, the “impossible” was not quite so far-fetched.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 81.

<sup>34</sup> Philippine de Porcellet, *Life of Saint Douceline*, 29–30.

<sup>35</sup> Fabián Alejandro Campagne, “Witchcraft and the Sense-of-the-Impossible in Early Modern Spain: Some Reflections Based on the Literature of Superstition,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 96, no. 1 (2003): 29.

### Conclusion

Douceline is a popular religious figure whose hagiography is an agenda-driven attempt to argue for her recognition as an official saint, while also promoting the legitimacy of the Beguine movement. Despite being a female mystic, she was never in the running to be considered a witch, as several of her traits were the opposite of what one would expect in a witch: she was well-connected, had affluent parents, and—perhaps most importantly—maintained strong ties to the Catholic Church, and she did all this while catering to a community of poor, single, and possibly widowed women. In her historiography, her feats are legitimized by the reputation of her brother and the apparent Franciscan support she enjoyed. Several of her miracles, while mirroring feats occasionally associated with witchcraft, attained their status due to their particular witnesses, such as Charles of Anjou (as opposed to some suspicious farmers). Despite the agenda and authority backing her, however, one cannot deny the element of true belief that pervades her miracles in a way that seems at odds with a modern secular view but may be closer to it than one might initially think.

Researching Douceline of Digne draws attention to issues beyond those one might expect to encounter in medieval hagiography. Of particular note for future research is the fact that her hagiography was, in all likelihood, written by a woman—Philippine of Porcellet—and that it advocates for a sisterhood of women, something that is highly unusual when dealing with medieval hagiographies, which are overwhelmingly written by men. A comparison of writing styles and self-views between male and female authors may unveil intriguing ways in which holy men and women viewed themselves and each other in their writings, and explore how moral values may have changed over time. Exploring the case study of Douceline shows that, despite an agenda, there can still be true faith and good beneath complicated motivations.

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Jesse Burciaga

## *Hernán Cortés's Nefarious Band of Privateers: Reexamining the Sixteenth-Century Conquest of Mexico*

**ABSTRACT:** *This article examines whether the Spanish conquest of Mexico under the leadership of Hernán Cortés can be reinterpreted as an episode of piracy. The author reviews scholarly works on the subject and compares the operations of the Spanish empire during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to those of other corsair states in the Mediterranean and Atlantic world. Viewing Hernán Cortés's actions alongside those of other early modern pirates, such as Captain Henry Morgan, François l'Olonnais, and Juan Gallardo, suggests that the Spanish conquest of the Mexica (Aztec) empire can be considered a case of piratical imperialism.*

**KEYWORDS:** *colonial Latin American history; Mexica (Aztec) empire; Tenochtitlan; conquistadors; pirates; Moctezuma; Hernán Cortés; Indigenous history; conquest; colonialism*

### *Introduction*

"How can we save our homes, my people?  
The Aztecs are deserting the city:  
the city is in flames, and all  
is darkness and destruction."<sup>1</sup>

On August 13, 1521, smoke and flames lingered in the air of Tenochtitlan, an island city located on the western side of Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico, as more than 200,000 privateers stormed the capital of the Mexica (Aztec) empire. In the city center, where local families used to stroll and buy trinkets from the fringes of the realm, death spread its wings. The marauders, while enjoying their lunch and a musical performance, tortured their *tlatoani* (i.e., ruler) whom they had taken hostage to force him to surrender the gold that his predecessors had hidden away. The invaders burned the city's religious statues and replaced them with the symbol of their own God. Hernán Cortés (1485–1547), their leader, is not someone we are accustomed to labeling a "pirate." Since 1519, at the behest of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (r. 1519–1556) who also ruled the kingdoms of Spain, Sicily, and Naples, Cortés had been spearheading a "crusade" to subjugate Mexico's Indigenous "idolaters" to his Christian God, yet the majority of his ranks consisted of Native mercenaries, such as the Tlaxcalans, who had joined him to advance their own political ambitions.<sup>2</sup>

The employment of private citizens as mercenaries allowed Spain to expand its hegemony in the "New World." Throughout history, imperialist powers have employed state-funded piracy when entering a "new" region to usurp control over the local commerce and its monopoly

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<sup>1</sup> "The Fall of Tenochtitlan," in *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Miguel León-Portillo (Beacon Press Books, 2006), 146.

<sup>2</sup> See Camilla Townsend, *Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs* (Oxford University Press: 2019), 60–133; Fernando Cervantes, *Conquistadores: A New History of Spanish Discovery and Conquest* (Viking, 2021; first published 2020); Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 47; Bernal Díaz, "The History of the Conquest of New Spain," in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahuatl Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Yale University Press, 2000), 218.

holders.<sup>3</sup> This article utilizes the concepts of imperialism and piracy to re-examine how the Spanish expanded their political influence in Mexico between 1519 and 1559. It argues that the Spanish empire, during its expansionist period, functioned as a corsair state that hired private citizens—such as Hernán Cortés—who were ready to seize any opportunity to elevate their own status in Iberian society. To prove this, it compares the Spanish empire's organizational approach to that of other piratical states; it discusses the piratical ambitions of Cortés and his conquistadors; it explores the similarities between conquest and piracy by reexamining the Cholula massacre (1519) and the siege of Tenochtitlan (1521); and it considers the aftermath of the conquistadors' piratical endeavor.

I should like to emphasize that this article does not seek to perpetuate the sixteenth-century "Black Legend." According to historian William S. Maltby, the "Black Legend" was used as a propagandist tool by other imperialist powers to portray the Spanish as violent, fanatical slavers who were exterminating Indigenous populations through their debased forms of governance. Ironically, the British, who resorted to this propaganda to justify their own colonial ambitions in the Americas, carried out similar acts of atrocities against Native Americans.<sup>4</sup> Instead, this article sheds light on imperialism's close affinity to piracy. All empires are inherently marauders who facilitate violence to expand their hegemony. For example, from the eighteenth century on, Britain used the East India Company, a private business, to act on its behalf. In order to accomplish their joint ambition of expansion into South Asia, both entities entered into a contractual symbiotic relationship. Accordingly, the British state supplied the East India Company with soldiers, while the company financed the expeditions. Their monopolies of violence allowed these imperialist powers to flourish in the region for two centuries as they usurped power from the Mughal empire.<sup>5</sup> Spain similarly entered into a symbiotic relationship with private individuals who harnessed the state's violence to displace and destroy Indigenous communities in the "New World."

Scholarly literature on the conquest of Mexico does not refer to the mercantile state—in this case Spain—as a piratical entity. However, the Spanish empire shared similarities with other states that were sanctioning private violence. Mexican historian Fernando Cervantes's 2020 monograph, *Conquistadores*, submits that the Spanish who applied for a license to conquer in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were able to harness state violence to spread their religion and their monarch's influence.<sup>6</sup> The British, while undermining Spain's economic control over the Caribbean during this time, engaged in similar forms of predatory behavior by granting private applicants so-called "letters of marque"—permits to seize foreign vessels on behalf of the state for a prize.<sup>7</sup> The similarities between these two political entities cannot

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<sup>3</sup> Anne Pérotin-Dumon, "The Pirate and the Emperor: Power and the Law on the Seas, 1450–1850," in *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader*, ed. C. Richard Pennell (New York University Press, 2001), 26.

<sup>4</sup> William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558–1660* (Duke University Press, 1971), 11–74.

<sup>5</sup> Alejandro Colas and Bryan Mabee, "The Flow and Ebb of Private Seaborne Violence in Global Politics: Lessons from the Atlantic World, 1689–1815," in *Mercenaries, Pirates, Bandits and Empires: Private Violence in Historical Context*, ed. Alejandro Colas and Bryan Mabee (Columbia University Press, 2010), 93.

<sup>6</sup> Cervantes, *Conquistadores*, 93–101.

<sup>7</sup> Colas and Mabee, "Flow and Ebb," 88.

be ignored. Thus, the conquistadors' licenses to conquer turned them into privateers of the Spanish emperor, who allowed them to exert violence in his name.

Spanish corsairs harnessed the monarchy's violence. According to historians José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez and Gaetano Sabatini, the acts of the Spanish against Native communities came in the form of a "crusade." Those who did not embrace the Christian religious ideology had to face the full wrath of their expansionist power; meanwhile, those who did embrace it were able to obtain special privileges, such as citizenship and the right to create militias.<sup>8</sup> Cortés's actions in Mexico stemmed from this piratical type of holy war, which led him to conquer the Aztecs in the name of his Christian God and his Spanish monarch. In her 2019 work, *Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs*, historian Camilla Townsend emphasizes that the Mexica empire, extending from the Caribbean to the Pacific, wielded vast political and economic control over the Valley of Mexico and exerted influence far beyond southern Mexico and into the Yucatán Peninsula through its trade with independent Maya communities.<sup>9</sup>

Cortés's knowledge of Spanish law allowed him to take the lead with regard to the conquest of Mexico. Historian Matthew Restall has deconstructed the traditional narrative by arguing that those scholars who base their arguments on Cortés's letters are liable to misinterpret the events. Restall argues that Cortés used these letters as a political tool to fashion himself as a larger-than-life protector of the Spanish Crown from the greedy conquistador and first governor of Cuba, Diego Velázquez (1465–1524), who was allegedly working to undermine the emperor's influence in the "New World." In addition, Cortés created the notion that the Mexica needed to be liberated from themselves. By embellishing his actions and building himself up, Cortés persuaded the Emperor Charles V to grant him the right to conquer the Indigenous state.<sup>10</sup> Glen Carmen, a specialist in early modern Latin American literature, claims that Cortés's way with words allowed him to take hold of both the physical world and the metaphysical world. Characterizing his actions as an expansion of the Crown's domain and as an extension of the Catholic faith to the Native peoples pertained to the physical world. As for the metaphysical world, he manipulated the Emperor Charles V's mind by convincing him that the Indigenous *tlatoani* Moctezuma II (1471–1520) had abdicated and relinquished his throne to the Spanish monarch.<sup>11</sup>

Studies have shown that the conquistadors seized economic opportunities through acts of colonization. In his endeavor to debunk the traditional narrative of the conquest of Mexico, Restall has compared the conquistadors to opportunistic entrepreneurs, whose participation in the enterprise enabled them to earn enough wealth to become merchants. Considering the data available for the conquistadors' economic status before their conquest of the

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<sup>8</sup> José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez and Gaetano Sabatini, "Monarchy as Conquest: Violence, Social Opportunity, and Political Stability in the Establishment of the Hispanic Monarchy," *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 3 (2009): 515–524.

<sup>9</sup> See Townsend, *Fifth Sun*.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Restall, *When Montezuma Met Cortés: The True Story of the Meeting That Changed History* (Harper Collins Publisher, 2018), 138–209.

<sup>11</sup> Glen Carmen, "The Means and Ends of Empire in Hernán Cortés's 'Cartas de relación'," *Modern Language Studies* 27, no. 3 (1997): 116–128.

Americas, Restall has shown that around 3% of them hailed from the noble class, 60% from the middle class, and 37% from the peasantry.<sup>12</sup> Most of them seem to have been rather average individuals who joined Cortés's expedition to improve their financial status. This is reminiscent of historian John L. Anderson's analysis of mercenaries; both the latter and the conquistadors were, in essence, impoverished citizens who took up state-sponsored piracy to elevate their economic status.<sup>13</sup>

Their colonizing efforts, especially through *encomiendas* (i.e., royal land grants) enabled these individuals to elevate their socio-economic status in Iberian society. Economists Ronald W. Batchelder and Nicholas Sanchez consider this tributary system a predatory form of taxation: monarchs commonly bestowed *encomiendas* upon their privateers to reward them for their efforts in the conquest of "new" land; the conquered Indigenous people worked the land that had once belonged to them; thus, the former pirates—turned *encomenderos* (i.e., landholders)—exploited the labor of colonized populations to further enrich themselves; the monarchs, for their part, received a fifth of the wealth extracted from these *encomiendas*. As the Indigenous populations diminished, the monarchs abolished this tributary system with the aid of the Catholic Church.<sup>14</sup> For what it is worth, Batchelder's and Sanchez's article uses the *encomienda* system to perpetuate the "Black Legend."

Not a single one of the period sources used in this article refers to the conquistadors as "pirates." This is an original argument that I would like to make: by re-examining the conquistadors as privateers, it becomes clear that the history of the conquest of Native American communities is, in fact, a chapter in the history of piracy. The European incursion and assault on the region undermined the Indigenous communities' economic sovereignty, and the conquistadors used predatory methods to push these communities off their land to acquire a monopoly over the region's commercial trade routes.

### 1. The Corsairing Spanish Empire

In the sixteenth century, Spain operated as a piratical entity that forced its ideology upon the world. The 1493 bull *Inter caetera*, issued by Pope Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503), granted the Spanish monarchs the right to expand their political influence in the "New World;" it also turned the Spanish into the sole missionary force to spread the Catholic faith to so-called "infidels."<sup>15</sup> This papal decree ultimately laid the foundation for the Spanish empire. In order to reap the treasures that awaited them in the "New World," the Spanish monarchs created a system to entice even average private persons to sacrifice their lives in the name of their God and their monarch. Similar to other states that utilized private citizens to expand their domains by granting them "letters of marque," the Spanish monarchs accepted petitions for

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<sup>12</sup> Restall, *Seven Myths*, 34–38.

<sup>13</sup> John L. Anderson, "Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation," in *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader*, ed. C. Richard Pennell (New York University Press, 2001), 88.

<sup>14</sup> Ronald W. Batchelder and Nicholas Sanchez, "The *Encomienda* and the Optimizing Imperialist: An Interpretation of Spanish Imperialism in the Americas," *Public Choice* 156, no. 1 (2013): 46–59.

<sup>15</sup> Edward J. Brennan, "The Ideology of Imperialism: Spanish Debates regarding the Conquest of America, 1511–51," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 47, no. 185 (1958): 69.

licenses to conquer from their civilians. To convince the Crown, petitioners employed religious rhetoric as a façade for their political and economic ambitions. In his first letter to the Emperor Charles V, Cortés described himself as a zealous agent of God's will, intent on pacifying the hedonistic Native communities; this impetus, he believed, would enable him to increase both his monarch's dominions and his own personal revenue.<sup>16</sup> Once a license to conquer had been granted, a strict protocol had to be followed. Before annexing a newly contacted community, the conquistadors publicly read a statement called the *requerimiento* (i.e., injunction), which proclaimed that the region's sovereignty and wealth belonged to the Spanish monarch and the Christian God. Those who agreed to swear fealty became vassals of the Spanish empire, which included converting to Christianity and paying tribute to their new monarch. Those who did not agree were forced by the conquistadors—through destruction and enslavement—to bend their knees to Catholicism and swear fealty.<sup>17</sup> Thus, private citizens became cogs in their monarch's piratical institution to expand the Spanish empire across the globe. The monopoly of violence gave these invasive pirates the right to coerce regions into submission. Indigenous communities either willingly aligned themselves with the freebooters or faced horrific acts of violence. No matter how these communities responded, Spain ensured that it obtained the Natives' land and wealth.<sup>18</sup>

Conquest enabled the conquistadors to better their own economic conditions. The prospect of plunder enticed many of them to take up arms to expand their monarch's dominions and ideology. After subjecting a local community, the pirates divided the conquered land and wealth among themselves. Hoping for their own political advancement or military promotions, the participants in these expeditions routinely wrote to the monarch to present their actions as services to the Spanish empire. The most common reward for conquest came in the form of *encomiendas*. These royal land grants, first devised during the medieval Spanish *Reconquista* (i.e., reconquest) of the Iberian Peninsula from the Moors, allowed the freebooters to harvest the wealth of their newly acquired estates. To enrich themselves further, *encomenderos* conscripted the conquered population to work on these estates. The Crown received a fifth of the wealth extracted by means of this predatory system. Landholders not only oversaw the cultivation and exploitation of their estates, but they also acted as "spiritual guides," euphemistically speaking, in matters pertaining to Christianity to the colonized population. The *encomienda* system enticed the Spanish to take up residence in their newly conquered region to ensure that Native groups did not rebel against their colonizers. The redistribution of land also laid the foundation for new administrative structures.<sup>19</sup> Thus, piracy at the hands of the ambitious conquistadors created an empire that

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<sup>16</sup> Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, ed. and trans. Anthony Pagden (Yale University Press, 1994), 24–35.

<sup>17</sup> Restall, *Seven Myths*, 87.

<sup>18</sup> In his first letter, Cortés mentioned a hostile Maya community that refused the *requerimiento* twice. Following the second battle in which he lost over 200 men, the chieftain submitted to the corsairs, paying them gold and food to get them off his land. Prior to departing, the captain destroyed the Maya idols and replaced them with the Cross. See Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 19–22.

<sup>19</sup> Batchelder and Sanchez, "Encomienda and the Optimizing Imperialist," 47–69; Vitus Huber, "Perpetuating Lands: The Crucial Transition from War to Colonial Settlement in the Conquista of Mexico," in *Beyond Cortés and*

supplanted the rights and monopolies that the Indigenous communities had enjoyed for many centuries.<sup>20</sup>

The conquistadors' economic establishments, purportedly sanctioned by their Christian God and their Spanish monarch, showed similarities with the trade activities of early modern Mediterranean corsair states. According to economic historian Gonçál López Nadal, the North African states along the Barbary Coast established their commercial activities under the guise of "holy wars." Both Christian and Muslim political entities sanctioned private citizens to carry out piratical attacks against rivals who held different ideologies. The pirates then returned a portion of the wealth obtained through plunder back to their respective states.<sup>21</sup> During its expansionist period, the Spanish empire operated in a manner similar to these entities. It sponsored conquistadors to carry out piratical acts in the form of "crusades" against non-Christian communities. It suppressed the "infidels" to exert political dominance over newly conquered regions where it established commercial trade routes. It turned those who did not conform to the freebooters' religious ideology into the property of these raiders.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it surrendered the "New World" to Spanish corsairs who uprooted the economic rights and monopolies of the Indigenous communities.

## 2. The Piratical Nature of the Conquistador

The economic system disrupted and ultimately destroyed by Cortés in 1521 was the Mexica empire. Consisting of thirty-eight provinces across Central Mexico, its bureaucratic system facilitated long-distance trade that sustained the economy. The empire's provinces delivered tributary goods to their *tlatoani*, who received greenstones, rich stones, bundles of rich

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*Montezuma: The Conquest of Mexico Revisited*, ed. Vitus Huber and John F. Schwaller (University Press of Colorado, 2025), 51–58.

<sup>20</sup> Cortés's letters facilitated his ambitions as a conquistador: to obtain the permission to conquer, he described his expeditions in his letters to show his loyalty to the Spanish Crown and the Catholic faith. After the siege of Tenochtitlan, he obtained the governorship of New Spain, where he created a bureaucratic system that later gave rise to the viceroyalty of New Spain. See Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 28–443. Bernal Díaz wrote to the Emperor Charles V to obtain a pension for his role in the conquest. This ultimately led him to publish "The True History of the Conquest of New Spain" to illustrate his close proximity to Cortés and his contributions to the creation of New Spain. See Restall, *Seven Myths*, 13; Bernal Díaz, "The True History of the Conquest of New Spain," in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Yale University Press, 2000), 72.

<sup>21</sup> Gonçál López Nadal, "Corsairing as a Commercial System: The Edge of Legitimate Trade," in *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader*, ed. C. Richard Pennell (New York University Press, 2001), 127–128; James E. Wadsworth, *Global Piracy: A Documentary History of Seaborne Banditry* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 139.

<sup>22</sup> In his third letter to the Emperor Charles V, Cortés mentioned that a fifth of the plundered goods he obtained for the monarch after the siege of Tenochtitlan consisted of infidel slaves. See Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 265. At the Barbary Coast, Joshua Gee had to enter a life of slavery after a corsair master had seized his ship. According to his account, he continued to worship Christ, even though those who converted to Islam were able to obtain their freedom from enslavement. As a slave, he accompanied his master on raids against French vessels. See Joshua Gee, "Narrative of Joshua Gee of Boston, Mass., While He Was Captive in Algeria of the Barbary Pirates," in *Global Piracy: A Documentary History of Seaborne Banditry*, ed. James E. Wadsworth (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 146–149.



feathers of various colors, cacao seeds, and more.<sup>23</sup> The Mexica influence on trade transcended its core territories, as the state maintained trading posts even beyond its borders. One of their trade communities resided on the Yucatán Peninsula, where the Mexica obtained cotton clothing from the Chontal Maya who, in turn, bought enslaved people.<sup>24</sup>

At the time he obtained his license to conquer, Hernán Cortés was occupying no prominent position in Iberian society. Prior to 1519, he had participated in the Spanish conquest of Cuba, where he received an *encomienda* for his contribution to the "crusade" against the "infidels." While on this Caribbean island, Cortés became the secretary of Cuba's first governor, Diego Velázquez, and accumulated considerable debt. He abused his position in order to steal confidential documents and disgrace the governor, yet, despite their strained relationship, Velázquez chose Cortés to lead an expedition to Mexico to establish a trade route with local communities on the mainland. Cortés happily jumped at the chance<sup>25</sup> to erase his tarnished reputation and pay off his debts. As Velázquez was awaiting a new license to conquer, he gave strict orders for the expedition to not engage in any conquest.<sup>26</sup> He presumably sent Cortés to survey the area and learn how the Indigenous communities were organized to prepare his own conquest. Yet, he would never get the chance, as his former secretary seized the opportunity to elevate himself.

Just off the Yucatán Peninsula, Cortés and his band of 500 privateers came across the island village of Cozumel, and its Maya community became the region's first group to be conquered. The Europeans proceeded immediately to destroy the inhabitants' idols and erected a wooden Cross in their stead. The crew's priest then gave a sermon to the community on how they had been worshipping demonic entities. Following this, the Spanish established the mainland colony of Vera Cruz, located on the Caribbean coast, where they elected Cortés as chief justice and general of their expedition.<sup>27</sup> In effect, these actions turned Cortés and his 500 men into outlaws. Under their captain's command, they had illegally conquered a region without the necessary documents to spread their monarch's ideological ambitions. Outlawry or not, Cortés must have felt tempted to take charge: conquest was an opportunity for him and his men to make a name for themselves, to elevate their status, and to earn positions of wealth, power, and even government.

To beat Velázquez to the right of conquest, Cortés relied upon his rhetoric and knowledge of Spanish law to clear his name from all suspicions of wrongdoing. After the founding of Vera Cruz, he composed his first letter to the Emperor Charles V, in which he claimed to have established the new colony to protect the monarchy from Diego Velázquez who, according to Cortés, had sent his former Cuban secretary to steal his majesty's rightful possessions. Along with this letter, Cortés strategically sent the emperor all the material wealth he had

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<sup>23</sup> "Codex Mendoza," in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Yale University Press, 2000), 221; Townsend, *Fifth Sun*, 72.

<sup>24</sup> Townsend, *Fifth Sun*, 87.

<sup>25</sup> Bernal Díaz, "History of the Conquest," 44–46; Restall, *When Montezuma Met Cortés*, 163.

<sup>26</sup> Bernal Díaz, "History of the Conquest," 46.

<sup>27</sup> Bernal Díaz, "History of the Conquest," 52–72.

plundered on the Yucatán Peninsula,<sup>28</sup> thereby exceeding the royal fifth and bypassing the rigorous steps of applying for his own license to conquer. Drawing a clear contrast to Velázquez, Cortés presented himself as the Crown's humble servant who was eager to expand the empire and protect it from Cuba's piratical governor. Should the letter and loot fail to persuade the emperor, the conquistador was relying upon medieval laws to justify the establishment of the new colony. *Las Siete Partidas* (i.e., "The Seven Parts"), a thirteenth-century law from the days of the Spanish *Reconquista*, allowed knights to conquer "new" territory without the Crown's consent, the idea being that—as conquistadors—they were acting in a state of emergency and thereby safeguarding the monarchy's interests.<sup>29</sup> Cortés drew upon this law to justify his actions which, he argued, were not criminal but, rather, evidence of his dedication to protect the emperor from Velázquez's corruption. Cortés's strategic appeal to the law, augmented by the material wealth he had seized on the Yucatán Peninsula, worked in his favor and earned him his own license to conquer in Mexico.<sup>30</sup>

Indigenous groups in the "New World" also took advantage of the Spanish Crown's agenda to further their respective political ambitions. Native conquistadors made up the vast majority of the invading forces led by the Europeans and became integral to the latter's victory in the conquest. Cortés's ranks during the siege of Tenochtitlan comprised around 200,000 Native mercenaries.<sup>31</sup> The Tlaxcalans, who resided in the eastern region of Central Mexico (i.e., today's states of Puebla and Tlaxcala), joined the corsairs to exact revenge against the Mexica empire, whose expansion had cut them off from the greater Mesoamerican trade network.<sup>32</sup> Their alliance with the Tlaxcalans provided the Spanish with the necessary manpower and resources they needed to carry out the conquest of the Mexica empire. Yet the Spanish failed to understand their allies' political ambitions. The latter saw the Europeans as a means to fight against a state that had stunted their own polity's potential. Mercenary work provided them with the opportunity to supplant their enemies' influence and wealth,<sup>33</sup> to expand their own political dominance, and to reestablish trade with their neighbors.

The conquistadors' motives were similar to those of other pirates throughout history. The Tlaxcalans' ambitions, for example, resembled those of Juan Gallardo, a seventeenth-century Native of what is now Costa Rica, who worked under famous early modern pirates such as the Welsh privateer Henry Morgan (1635–1688) and the Frenchman François l'Olonnais (1630–1669). Gallardo took up a life of piracy to fight back against the Spanish *encomenderos* and their emperor, who had stripped his people of their autonomy. While in the employment of European pirates, Gallardo established relations between the buccaneers and other Indigenous communities. His career as a marauder eventually allowed him to live a

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<sup>28</sup> Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 39–46.

<sup>29</sup> Cervantes, *Conquistadores*, 132–133.

<sup>30</sup> John H. Elliot, "Cortés, Velázquez and Charles V," in Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, ed. and trans. Anthony Pagden (Yale University Press, 1994), xxiv–xxv.

<sup>31</sup> Restall, *Seven Myths*, 47.

<sup>32</sup> Bernal Díaz, "History of the Conquest," 105–108; Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 58–67.

<sup>33</sup> R. Jovita Baber, "Empire, Indians, and the Negotiation for the Status of City in Tlaxcala 1521–1550," in *Negotiation within Domination: New Spain's Indian Pueblos Confront the Spanish State*, ed. Ethelia Ruiz Medrano and Susan Kellogg (University Press of Colorado, 2016), 22.

prosperous life on the Caribbean island of Tortuga.<sup>34</sup> Even though Juan Gallardo fought against the imperialist state that the sixteenth-century Tlaxcalans had helped create, they were similar in that they were Indigenous people who seized the opportunity to fight against a repressive state. Meanwhile, Cortés's exploits resembled those of Henry Morgan. Under the private employment of the British Crown, Morgan pursued positions of power by undermining the Spanish empire's control over the Caribbean, and his endeavors ultimately earned him the governorship of Jamaica.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Cortés's career as a conquistador of the Mexica empire eventually led to his appointment as the first governor of "New Spain." Thus, privateer work on behalf of their respective monarchs brought both Cortés and Morgan to the fulfilment of their political ambitions in the "New World."

### 3. *Conquistador Violence and the Allure of Plunder*

The Cholula massacre, committed in 1519 en route to Tenochtitlan, showcased the conquistadors' piratical exploits. In his firsthand account, the Spanish soldier Andrés de Tapia (1497–1561) described the bloodshed. He recalled how Cholula's community had invited the Spanish into their city and presented them with maize and turkeys. As enemies of the Cholulans, the Tlaxcalans warned Cortés against trusting this community. During their stay, Cortés's Nahua interpreter Malintzin (1500–1529) learned that the Mexica had ordered Cholula's inhabitants to kill the Spanish. In response to the alleged betrayal, Cortés ordered his men to seize and kill the Indigenous leaders and warriors and to raze the city, while the Tlaxcalans plundered the city of its wealth,<sup>36</sup> suggesting that the violence ensued because the pirates needed to protect themselves from traitorous Natives who were rejecting Spanish hegemony. Andrés de Tapia may have intentionally omitted the Europeans' role in looting the city to defend himself and other *encomenderos*. His account came about in the 1540s, when Cortés was facing an investigation for his abuse of power, as the Catholic Church was relating the horrors to which the *encomenderos* had subjected the Indigenous communities to the Crown, intending to have the *encomienda* system outlawed and hoping to take control of the region's tributary services.<sup>37</sup> Andrés de Tapia's omission of the Spanish role in looting the city sheltered those whom the Church was investigating; instead, he clarified that the *encomenderos* did not barbarically rob innocent civilians while setting up a system from which they would later benefit.

A Nahua account, recorded several decades later by Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, offered a rather different perspective on the Cholula massacre. It specified that the Tlatelolcans, a Nahua group residing in Tenochtitlan, had reported that the bloodshed occurred due to the city's rivalry with the Tlaxcalans, who persuaded the Spanish to use trickery to murder the

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<sup>34</sup> Arne Bialuschewski, "Juan Gallardo: A Native American Buccaneer," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (2020): 234–243.

<sup>35</sup> Wadsworth, *Global Piracy*, 103–104.

<sup>36</sup> Andrés de Tapia, "Another Spanish View of the Cholula Massacre," in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Yale University Press, 2000), 115–119.

<sup>37</sup> Batchelder and Sanchez, "Encomienda and the Optimizing Imperialist," 54; Andrés de Tapia, "Another Spanish View," 115.

city's lords and warriors.<sup>38</sup> Leaving out Andrés de Tapia's justification of Cortés's violence, the Tlatelolcans' account portrayed the technologically advanced Europeans as a piratical tool for the Indigenous mercenaries to advance their own political ambitions. The Tlaxcalans' motive for ransacking the city was the alliance—with them—that the Cholulans had broken when they joined the Mexica empire. The Tlaxcalans had suffered immensely from the loss of their ally, as the Mexica empire's expansion into the region left them vulnerable during the annual "flower wars," ritual military conflicts between neighbors that were intended to obtain captives to sacrifice to the gods.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the Tlaxcalans' alliance with the Spanish enabled them to harness the necessary violence to free themselves from the Mexica's imperialist grasp. The loss of Cholula hindered the latter's ability to easily wage another "flower war," and it allowed the Tlaxcalans to enrich themselves and expand their territory.

Before addressing the siege of Tenochtitlan, it is important to relate what ultimately caused the Spanish to sack the city. Similar to what had occurred in Cholula, the Mexica initially received the conquistadors in their capital without any resistance. In his second letter to the Emperor Charles V, Cortés mentioned that Moctezuma had gifted them gold, silver, featherwork, and cotton garments. The *tlatoani* allegedly told Cortés that his people had been awaiting the arrival of the Spanish, claiming that they shared a common ancestor—a rightful ruler—who had left the continent to go eastward with the promise that he and his descendants would return one day, which is why the Mexica royal line was saving the throne for that very occasion.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Moctezuma's abdication and relinquishing of the throne was made to appear as compliance with the *requerimiento*. The acknowledgment of the invader's sovereignty on the basis of a blood-relationship made the Emperor Charles V the true ruler of the Indigenous empire. Scholars agree that Cortés fabricated the conversation with the *tlatoani*. He employed rhetoric as a tool to render the conquest as a lawful endeavor and to show that the Mexica empire rightfully belonged to the corsairs. Cortés did so in response to his banishment from Tenochtitlan during the *Noche Triste* (i.e., the "sad night" or the "night of sorrows"), a pivotal event that saw the Mexica driving Cortés and the other conquistadors out of their capital.<sup>41</sup> By the time the emperor received the letter, Tenochtitlan lay in ruins. Cortés's message was intended to explain why the great lake city deserved the brutal punishment that his marauders inflicted upon it: the Mexica had tried to steal the throne that Moctezuma had bestowed upon the Spanish monarch.

The horrors that led to the *Noche Triste* (June 30–July 1, 1520) stemmed from the violence that imperialist doctrines permitted. Indigenous accounts claim that, while Cortés was squashing resistance back in Vera Cruz,<sup>42</sup> his lieutenant Pedro de Alvarado (1485–1541)

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<sup>38</sup> Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, "Florentine Codex," in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahuatl Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Yale University Press, 2000), 120–121.

<sup>39</sup> Townsend, *Fifth Sun*, 53–101.

<sup>40</sup> Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 83–86.

<sup>41</sup> Elliot, "Cortés, Velázquez and Charles V," xxvii.

<sup>42</sup> Over the few months that pirates resided in Tenochtitlan, Moctezuma gave them all the gold they demanded in the hope to get them out of his city and to maintain a peaceful relationship with them. Despite Cortés's claims that he had obtained the throne of the *tlatoani*, the Mexica king continued to rule over the territory. Upon Panfilo de Narváez's arrival in Vera Cruz to apprehend the renegade captain, Moctezuma learned

ordered the slaughter of Mexica warriors in Tenochtitlan who were performing ceremonial dances for their patron god, Huitzilopochtli. Similar to the events of Cholula, the pirates blocked the temple's entrances to prevent the warriors' escape. Innocent men who had come out to celebrate the festival suffered brutality, mutilation, and murder. In one instance, the Spanish cut off the hands of a drummer and then proceeded to decapitate him. In response to this massacre, the Mexica in the capital took up arms against the conquistadors.<sup>43</sup>

The fact that the festival was taking place proves that the *requerimiento* meant nothing to the Indigenous, but the piratical doctrine justified the violence subsequently used against Tenochtitlan's inhabitants. According to historian Anne Pérotin-Dumon, expansionist laws passed by an imperialist state meant little to those outside the power that had orchestrated the law in the first place.<sup>44</sup> Life for the Mexica largely continued "as usual" after Moctezuma's abdication. Despite their acceptance of the *requerimiento*, they continued to worship the idols that the Christians considered demons. The European pirates failed to understand that the people of the Americas were quite accustomed to adopting new gods into their pantheon.<sup>45</sup> The conquistadors' failure to understand the locals' spiritual traditions led them to interpret the latter's continued worship of their gods as a rejection of Spanish hegemony. The same can be said about the Indigenous: their failure to understand the *requerimiento* as a prohibition to continue their traditional spiritual practices led the Spanish to carry out the most aggressive forms of oppression in order to perpetuate their hegemonic power.

Pedro de Alvarado's acts of violence caused the citizens of Tenochtitlan to take up arms and push the Spanish out of their city. In true piratical nature, some of the conquistadors sacrificed their lives to protect their plunder while fleeing from the capital.<sup>46</sup> Above all, the Mexica's move to expel the pirates provided further ammunition to Cortés who was now able to claim that the Indigenous had rejected Spain's hegemony. In his letter to the Emperor Charles V, Cortés purposefully omitted that Alvarado's actions had led to the conquistadors' loss of Tenochtitlan. Consequently, Cortés's contemporary biographer, Francisco López de Gomara (1511–1564), blamed the Mexica for the rebellion, claiming that they wanted to steal back the gold that the corsairs had plundered and to continue the worship of their demonic gods,<sup>47</sup> thereby absolving the conquistadors from accountability for the loss of the city. Placing the blame upon the Mexica allowed the privateers to exert their monarchy's monopoly of violence over the region. The Natives defended themselves against the aggressive, dogmatic invaders who tried to rob them of their wealth, religion, and

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of Cortés's rivalry with Velázquez. The Indigenous king used this information to draw some of the invaders out of his city. The arrival of these other Spanish allowed him to finally muster enough force to push their countrymen out of his city—should the need arise. This never occurred, however, as the *tlatoani* passed away during the *Noche Triste*, either at the hands of his people or the corsairs. See Townsend, *Fifth Sun*, 110–126.

<sup>43</sup> Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, "Florentine Codex," 162–165; "Codex Aubin," in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Yale University Press, 2000), 166.

<sup>44</sup> Pérotin-Dumon, "Pirate and the Emperor," 26.

<sup>45</sup> Cervantes, *Conquistadores*, 124.

<sup>46</sup> Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, "Florentine Codex," 165; Diaz, "True History," 174.

<sup>47</sup> Francisco López de Gómara, "Istoria de la Conquista de México," in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Yale University Press, 2000), 160–161.

sovereignty. Under Spanish law, this gave the corsairs the right to use harsh violence in order to re-establish their Christian monarch's hegemonic rule over the Valley of Mexico.

The revenge Cortés exacted against the Mexica came in the form of a prolonged siege of their capital (May 26–August 13, 1521). Lake Texcoco provided Tenochtitlan with natural defenses. The privateers were initially unable to reach the city walls, as the Mexica were shooting darts, arrows, and spears from their manned canoes at the invaders as the latter were trying to cross the bridges leading to the capital. To bypass these bridges, the corsairs constructed small ships that carried cannons to penetrate the city walls. After two and a half months without access to clean water and food, the Indigenous community fell victim to disease and famine. When the lizards and maize ran out, the Mexica consumed straw, leather, and adobe bricks. The siege officially ended with the Spanish capturing the *tlatoani* Cuauhtémoc (1496–1525), as he was trying to flee the city by boat.<sup>48</sup> The conquistadors' victory stemmed from their ability to control the lake, which usually protected the capital from aggressors, and to cut off all food supplies from the surrounding chinampas. The Mexica's rejection of Spanish sovereignty allowed the pirates to sack Tenochtitlan in the name of their ideology.

#### 4. *An Aftermath Forged in Fire, Blood, and Resilience*

In the immediate aftermath of the siege, piratical horrors continued to plague the Mexica. The Spanish pirates pursued the local refugees, believing that the Indigenous were smuggling gold. The freebooters did not just steal the Mexica's material wealth; they also stole their dignity by raping their women and enslaving some of the population. Back among the ruins of Tenochtitlan, the privateers tortured Cuauhtémoc to learn where Moctezuma had hidden his stockpile of gold.<sup>49</sup> Surrounded by the smoke and flames of their destroyed capital, the Mexica, who had once owned the abundant riches of the Valley of Mexico, lost it all, as their religious idols, material goods, land, and autonomy fell victim to the greed of the Spanish corsair state.

The Spanish violence against the Mexica in 1521 shared similarities with the horrors that François l'Olonnais carried out against Venezuelan communities in 1666. When l'Olonnais's buccaneers reached the city of Maracaibo, they tortured its inhabitants to obtain plunder. Dissatisfied with the amount of plunder they were able to procure, as most of the locals had fled to neighboring Indigenous communities for protection, the pirates turned their attention further south to the lakeside town of Gibraltar. During the ensuing eight-day siege, sixty people lost their lives to the freebooters' violence. Once defeated, Gibraltar's inhabitants informed the raiders that they kept their most prized possessions in the mountains. To ensure the community did not mislead them, the marauders tortured their guides to give them the exact coordinates. Through their relentless use of violence, the buccaneers eventually gained silver, food, and enslaved people.<sup>50</sup> The similarities between these two events illustrate the

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<sup>48</sup> Bernal Díaz, "History of the Conquest," 199–211; Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, "Florentine Codex," 190–195.

<sup>49</sup> Townsend, *Fifth Sun*, 7–133; Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, "Florentine Codex," 196.

<sup>50</sup> Bialuschewski, "Juan Gallardo," 241–242.

true piratical nature of European conquests in the Americas. In the course of their exploits, the conquistadors in the Valley of Mexico committed atrocities which resembled those later carried out by l'Olonnais and his men in Venezuela.

The destruction of the Mexica empire allowed Cortés to achieve the ambitious goals he had set out to accomplish when he betrayed Velázquez. After the conquest of Tenochtitlan, the Emperor Charles V granted Cortés a governorship for his piratical endeavors.<sup>51</sup> His destabilization of the Mexica empire allowed Cortés, a former secretary and mere corsair captain, to quickly climb the Iberian social ladder. His actions expanded the Christian faith and the Spanish Crown's claim on the "New World," enabling him to redeem his reputation as Velázquez's disgraced ex-employee. To ensure Spanish hegemony in the region, Cortés granted some of his men *encomiendas* and appointed them as *alcaldes* (i.e., mayors) and *regidores* (i.e., councilors).<sup>52</sup> These new administrative structures allowed the pirates to fill the power vacuum they had created in the first place. Their endeavors enabled them to transform a pagan empire into a Christian vassal state, where they found themselves at the very top of society, while the Natives became second-class citizens in their own homelands and, in effect, the property of a distant monarch who never set foot on the American continent.

Yet for the average European conquistador, the expansion of their ideology did not result in significant compensation. After the fall of Tenochtitlan, most European conquistadors did not settle in the newly acquired territory for which many of their fellow countrymen had sacrificed their lives. Indeed, most felt disillusioned by the lack of plunder they had been able to gain. Rumors were circulating that their Native allies had seized Tenochtitlan's riches before them, and that Cortés had pocketed most of the remaining treasures for himself. Many of the conquistadors who had helped establish Vera Cruz left for Central America to conquer Guatemala.<sup>53</sup> Their disillusionment illustrated the true piratical nature of the conquistadors. Like many other privateers throughout history, their monarch's ideology meant little to them. As long as the allure of plunder occupied their minds, the pirates were content to expand their monarch's domain across the globe. After all, to them, piracy was primarily a means to escape their own economic constraints.

Meanwhile, the Tlaxcalans' alliance with the pirates greatly benefited them, as they had aspired to replace the Mexica as one of the dominant forces in the Valley of Mexico. The technologically advanced Spanish became a tool for the Native community to pursue this goal. By the 1520s, Tlaxcalan elites, similar to their European counterparts, petitioned the Crown and royal officials to recognize their participation in the conquest. One set of such petitions came in the form of the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* (i.e., the "Canvas of Tlaxcala"), a group of intricate cloth paintings depicting the conquest. One of these paintings suggested that the Tlaxcalan community had always accepted Spanish hegemony; another showed their role in the advancement of Spanish ideology by highlighting their role in the destruction of

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<sup>51</sup> Elliot, "Cortés, Velázquez and Charles V," xxiii.

<sup>52</sup> Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 270.

<sup>53</sup> Bernal Díaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. John M. Cohen (Penguin Books, 1963), 409–413.

Cholula;<sup>54</sup> but none of them presented the community's initial hostility toward the Spanish. This showed the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*'s actual intent: it adopted Spanish rhetoric to safeguard the Tlaxcalan community's autonomy. Through its successful petitions, Tlaxcala, a once small and impoverished city that Cortés had visited in 1519, doubled in size by the 1550s. It became a municipality that functioned similarly to Spanish communities by electing officials and absorbing portions of Cholula and Huejotzingo. The autonomy found in the adoption of European ideology allowed the Tlaxcalans to stave off the forced conscription of the *encomiendas*.<sup>55</sup> Their petitions reminded the viceroy and the emperor that—without the Tlaxcalans—Spanish hegemony in the Americas could have never been achieved.<sup>56</sup> Their embrace of these piratical doctrines allowed the Tlaxcalan mercenaries to retain their autonomy at a time when other Indigenous communities who had rejected the *requerimiento* were losing everything.

Despite the efforts of their new imperialist rulers to squash their autonomy, the former citizens of the Mexica empire managed to survive. During the early years of Spanish rule, many lost their lives as they continued to practice their old traditions. Those who survived learned to adapt under the brutality of the European state. Communities like Cuautinchán in today's Mexican state of Puebla even retained portions of their Indigenous identity by blending aspects of their culture with that of their invaders: their conversion to Christianity ultimately led them to build a Franciscan convent church with murals that feature a complex blend of Spanish and Native iconography. Those who survived learned the European language and began to represent themselves in Spanish courts to address the horrors they were suffering under colonization, and they used the Latin alphabet to transcribe their oral histories and traditions.<sup>57</sup> Despite the pirates' efforts to seize their material wealth, spirituality, traditions, and autonomy, the Indigenous learned to survive. Complicity allowed them to obtain a voice to alleviate their conditions, and to tell future generations who their people used to be before the corsairs came and stole everything from them.

### Conclusion

Re-examining the conquest of Mexico as an episode in the history of piracy—and the conquistadors as pirates—allows for a better understanding of European expansionism and imperialism in the Americas, which shared similarities with predatory violence throughout history. In the sixteenth century, Spain witnessed predation from the British, French, and Dutch, who hired private individuals to carry out their imperialist ambitions in the Caribbean. For its part, the Mexica empire witnessed similar predatory actions at the hands of the

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<sup>54</sup> "Lienzo de Tlaxcala," in *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahuatl Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Yale University Press, 2000), 125–126.

<sup>55</sup> Baber, "Empire, Indians, and the Negotiation," 20–35.

<sup>56</sup> After the collapse of the Mexica empire, the Tlaxcalans continued their mercenary work to expand the Europeans' dominance over the continent, particularly in Cuautinchán, a province that continued to fight the marauders despite the collapse of the Mexica empire. See Townsend, *Fifth Sun*, 131–132. The Tlaxcalans' privateer service to enrich and expand the Emperor Charles V's monopoly in the Americas took them as far as Florida and Guatemala. See Baber, "Empire, Indians, and the Negotiation," 22.

<sup>57</sup> Townsend, *Fifth Sun*, 148–153.



Spanish corsair state which hired private citizens like Cortés to spread its hegemony into the "New World." To rise above their station, ordinary citizens harnessed the monarchy's violence to obtain wealth and positions of power. Piratical imperialism left an everlasting impact on Indigenous Americans, who faced centuries of subjection as a result and became the poorest ethnic group in the nations in which they reside. Their current economic status can be traced back to colonialism, which imposed regressive policies to keep them perpetually impoverished. Meanwhile, the hegemonic powers that deprived them of their original status carried away everything that had once enabled them to thrive. In modern-day Mexico, Indigenous American communities remain among the nation's poorest, as they continue to feel the effects of Hernán Cortés's nefarious band of privateers who plundered their wealth, their land, their sovereignty, and their spirituality.

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Maggie Magaña

## *Subtle Syncretism in Colonial Peru: The Catholic Conversion of Indigenous People since the Spanish Conquest*

**ABSTRACT:** *Through the lens of religious syncretism, this essay analyzes the conversion of Indigenous people—particularly the Inca in the colonial Spanish Viceroyalty of Peru (established in 1542)—from their traditional religious practices to Catholicism. Based on the accounts of several period authors who were of Indigenous or mixed-race ancestry, including Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (c. 1535–c. 1615), Garcilaso de la Vega (El Inca, 1539–1616), and Blas Valera (1545–1597), as well as contemporary artwork and modern scholarship, it discusses how syncretism in religious ritual, art, and specific festivities aided in the conversion process. The author argues that this type of syncretism has been the most lasting and therefore most important method of Catholic conversion in the region.*

**KEYWORDS:** *colonial Latin American history; Viceroyalty of Peru; Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala; Garcilaso de la Vega (El Inca); Blas Valera; School of Cuzco; Indigenous religion; Catholicism; syncretism; religious conversion*

### *Introduction*

In 1532, Spanish conquistadors under the leadership of Francisco Pizarro (c. 1478–1541) invaded the Inca empire, located on the western side of the South American continent, and captured the Inca emperor Atahualpa. By 1533, Atahualpa had been executed, and the land was soon claimed for Spain under the title of the Viceroyalty of Peru (established in 1542). From the moment the conquest began, and only increasing in intensity as time went on, the Catholic Church worked to convert the region's Indigenous people to what they viewed as the "one true faith." Most notably, from a modern-day perspective, the Catholic Church utilized state-sanctioned violence to force the Indigenous people to convert or die. However, the Church also used other, more subtle methods to achieve Indigenous conversion—methods that were arguably more effectively than violence, namely, those of "religious syncretism." The online *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines "religious syncretism" as "the fusion of diverse religious beliefs and practices."<sup>1</sup> I argue that the syncretism of Catholic and traditional Incan/Andean beliefs was the strongest force for the Catholic conversion of the Indigenous people in the Viceroyalty of Peru due to its endurance.

### *1. Syncretism of Various Beliefs and Practices*

Prior to the conquest, common Indigenous beliefs held that the ancestors needed sustenance in their afterlife, which necessitated the making of offerings to the ancestors' mummies in their tombs. The Catholic Church's condemnation did not stop the practice, so its priests pivoted to limiting what could be offered and declared that these offerings were actually useful in reducing a soul's time in purgatory.<sup>2</sup> Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (c. 1535–c. 1615), an Indigenous chronicler who had been raised by the Spanish, wrote about Andean burial

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<sup>1</sup> "Religious Syncretism," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, [online](#).

<sup>2</sup> Gabriela Ramos, *Death and Conversion in the Andes: Lima and Cuzco, 1532–1670* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 85–87.

rituals that involved sacrifices to the dead,<sup>3</sup> although he argued that the Catholic Church's motivation for accepting these traditions was its individual priests' inclination to steal the mummies' offerings when no one was looking and thus enrich themselves rather than contributing the offerings to the operations of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Regardless of each Catholic priest's earthly or spiritual motivations for continuing to encourage the offerings, the merging of Indigenous practices and Catholic teachings regarding the treatment of the dead clearly occurred and ultimately aided in the Church's overall mission to increase its flock.

In his account, Guaman Poma referred to the "guacas"/"huacas," namely, those objects or places held sacred by the Inca, as "stones, demons,"<sup>5</sup> which suggests that people of Indigenous descent like Guaman Poma himself were already conceptualizing the religion of their ancestors as both false and evil. Guaman Poma and other authors of Indigenous or mixed-race descent described their people's traditional customs as simultaneously powerless, typically failing to bring the good effects sought, and powerful, typically bringing some bad effects unsought. Accordingly, the Catholic catechism was updated for usage in the Andes to include not just the customary renouncing of the Devil but also a rejection of guacas/huacas and sorcerers. Old Testament stories used as warnings in the catechism were also updated to refer to condemned oracles as guacas/huacas.<sup>6</sup> In Guaman Poma's work, traditional Inca spiritual leaders were repeatedly labeled as "priest-sorcerers" who were "servants of the demons."<sup>7</sup> Such lexical choices served to merge the worlds of the Spanish and the Andean people, but they also decidedly marginalized and villainized the latter's traditional religious practices. In his chapter on the so-called "sorcery," Guaman Poma consciously demonized traditional Indigenous religious customs, stating: "This is written to punish the idolaters who are against our Holy Catholic faith."<sup>8</sup> He was aware that this caused him to be disliked by members of the Indigenous community who were still devoted to their traditional practices.<sup>9</sup> Thus, people of Indigenous descent—like Guaman Poma—who had converted to Catholicism set themselves apart from those who still engaged in the religious traditions of their forebears. This served the interests of the Catholic Church as it divided the Indigenous people and slowly brought about conversion—both as externally imposed by the Spanish and as internally imposed by the Indigenous converts in the Viceroyalty of Peru.

According to Garcilaso de la Vega (El Inca, 1539–1616), the mixed-race son of an Inca noblewoman and a Spanish conquistador, who was, in turn, reflecting the writings of Blas Valera (1545–1597), the mixed-race son of an Andean mother and a Spanish father, there were various Andean traditions that resembled the Catholic practices of confession and

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<sup>3</sup> Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *The First New Chronicle and Good Government: On the History of the World and the Incas up to 1615*, trans. Roland Hamilton (University of Texas Press, 2009), 226–234.

<sup>4</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 232.

<sup>5</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 201.

<sup>6</sup> Ramos, *Death and Conversion*, 85–87.

<sup>7</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 205.

<sup>8</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 214.

<sup>9</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 214.

fasting.<sup>10</sup> Valera stated that, for the Indigenous people, confession consisted of seeking out a religious leader who would hear one's wrongdoings in private, implore the sinner to seek reconnection with the gods, assign the sinner a penance, and then keep this exchange a secret unto death,<sup>11</sup> which is, in fact, the basic procedure of a Catholic confession minus the polytheistic element. Meanwhile, Guaman Poma claimed that, for religious reasons, the Indigenous people traditionally abstained from fruit, salt, and sexual relations in the month of March,<sup>12</sup> thereby mirroring the Catholic practice of abstinence during their fasting times (such as Lent). De la Vega argued that all these practices, when left incomplete due to a lack of the proper Catholic faith, were mere deceptions of the Devil.<sup>13</sup> However, many Catholic priests in the Viceroyalty of Peru showed little hesitation to take ownership of such preexisting religious rituals to persuade the Indigenous people to convert to Catholicism. After all, it was a whole lot easier to convince people to change their respective reasons for confession or fasting than to induce them to engage in these activities out of nothing. Indeed, this was quite similar to reworking mummy worship into assisting those in purgatory. Thus, existing traditions were given different meanings to ease Indigenous people into the Catholic way.

As the Spanish were pursuing the conversion of the Indigenous people, they had to realize that the Andean communities were very spiritually attached to their homelands, either due to their ancestor worship or due to some other mystical connection with the land. When the Spanish first sought to dissuade the Andean people from their traditional religious practices, they attempted to relocate them to places to which they had no spiritual connection. However, this plan largely failed because many of the Indigenous people simply never moved to these other places. Consequently, the Spanish turned to a process of using Andean traditions tied to the land to convert the people. Friars, particularly Franciscans, began to move into buildings associated with Incan guacas/huacas,<sup>14</sup> thereby literally occupying traditional positions of respect in the hope that the Incan people would listen to them. Additionally, in 1559, within the lifetimes of many who had witnessed the Inca empire fall, the Spanish "corregidor" of Cuzco (a key local official acting on behalf of the Crown) was instructed to divide the Inca's former religious capital into five parishes, each with its own Catholic church that was to be built on an Inca sacred site.<sup>15</sup> Valera recorded that this was indeed implemented, and he mentioned that the Jesuits had established both a school and a church inside a former Inca temple.<sup>16</sup> The result of such measures would have been twofold: firstly, an occupation of Incan sacred spaces and the resultant prevention of traditional worship from occurring at those sites; and secondly, the endowment of the Catholic Church's

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<sup>10</sup> Garcilaso de la Vega, *El Inca, Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, trans Harold V. Livermore (University of Texas Press, 1966), 82.

<sup>11</sup> [Bas Valera], *Gods of the Andes: An Early Jesuit Account of Inca Religion and Andean Christianity*, trans. Sabine Hyland (Penn State University Press, 2011), 69–71.

<sup>12</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 184.

<sup>13</sup> De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, 82.

<sup>14</sup> Ramos, *Death and Conversion*, 92.

<sup>15</sup> Ramos, *Death and Conversion*, 93.

<sup>16</sup> [Valera], *Gods of the Andes*, 58.

new religious structures with a preexisting air of holiness, which would have appealed to those who had long associated these locations with their own, traditional spirituality.

It was not just Spanish Jesuits who displaced traditional Inca spiritual workers in the name of Catholicism. Indigenous people, too, soon engaged in the practice. Guaman Poma,<sup>17</sup> De la Vega,<sup>18</sup> and Valera<sup>19</sup> all referred to Inca women who had taken vows of virginity and secluded themselves together in special buildings to serve the Inca sun god. The writers compared these women's way of life and resultant social honor to that of Catholic nuns and furthermore explained that, at the time of the conquest, many of these women did indeed become Catholic nuns.<sup>20</sup> According to De la Vega, the house of the women who had served the Inca sun god in Cuzco became a convent for nuns of the Dominican Order.<sup>21</sup> The choice to serve a different god was not just made by Indigenous women: Valera himself, the son of an Andean mother,<sup>22</sup> chose to embrace the Catholic faith of his Spanish father and became a priest of the Jesuit Order.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. Syncretism and Religious Art

It was not just in churches and convents that Indigenous and mixed-race people dedicated themselves to Catholicism. Within a century of the establishment of the Catholic parishes in Cuzco, the city's Indigenous and mixed-race painters found themselves attracted to the portrayal of religious scenes. Utilizing both accepted European iconography and traditional Andean aesthetics, these painters developed a unique style that came to be known as the "School of Cuzco."<sup>24</sup> Considering the increasingly syncretic religious world that these painters inhabited, it only makes sense that syncretism would find its way into and eventually permeate their art. Among the most noticeable and impactful syncretic artworks of the School of Cuzco were depictions of the Virgin Mary in her various capacities.

Firstly, in her capacity as the mother of Jesus, the Virgin Mary resonated with both Indigenous people and their descendants as she mirrored the Inca earth mother goddess Pachamama. Pachamama's sacred association with the mountains led to a unique Andean way of depicting the Virgin Mary as wearing a typical Indigenous or Indigenous-style dress that made her silhouette resemble a mountain.<sup>25</sup> Other painters highlighted the Virgin Mary's protective capacity by depicting her not just as a mountain but as one that encompassed and sheltered the Andean people, both great and small. This particular motif is reflected in an eighteenth-century painting known as *The Virgin Mary of [or 'with'] the Mountain of*

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<sup>17</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 223.

<sup>18</sup> De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, 195–196.

<sup>19</sup> [Valera], *Gods of the Andes*, 84–85.

<sup>20</sup> [Valera], *Gods of the Andes*, 84.

<sup>21</sup> De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, 195.

<sup>22</sup> Sabine Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas: The Extraordinary Life of Padre Blas Valera, S.J.* (University of Michigan Press, 2004), 20.

<sup>23</sup> Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 32.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel K. Heath, "Cuzco School of Painting," in *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, ed. Jay Kinsbruner and Erick D. Langer, 2nd ed. (Charles Scribner's Sons, 2008), 2: 739, Gale eBook.

<sup>25</sup> Carol Damian, *The Virgin of the Andes: Art and Ritual in Colonial Cuzco* (Grassfield Press, 1995), 50.

*Potasiama* [or 'Potosí'], in which the Virgin resembles the mountain of Potosí (located in modern-day Bolivia but historically a part of the Inca empire and the subsequent Viceroyalty of Peru) and shelters both the common people and the Inca, the former emperor, himself (see Figure 1).<sup>26</sup> This style of portrayal showcased the Indigenous people's spiritual connection to the land that the Spanish had previously exploited by establishing the parishes of Cuzco, but it also differed in that the connection to the land was now voluntary, deliberate, and self-reinforcing. Works like these were made by converted Indigenous people themselves and served to help convert even more Indigenous persons.



Figure 1: Anonymous, *Virgen del Cerro* [The Virgin Mary of the Mountain of Potasiama/Potosí], eighteenth century, oil on canvas, 47.2 x 39.3 inches, Casa Nacional de Moneda, Potosí, Bolivia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PMa\\_BOL\\_107\\_Potosi.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PMa_BOL_107_Potosi.jpg), Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

<sup>26</sup> Damian, *Virgin of the Andes*, 52. Anonymous, *Virgen del Cerro* [The Virgin Mary of the Mountain of Potasiama/Potosí], eighteenth century, oil on canvas, 47.2 x 39.3 inches, Casa Nacional de Moneda, Potosí, Bolivia, [online](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PMa_BOL_107_Potosi.jpg).

Secondly, in her capacity as the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin Mary appealed to both Indigenous artists and converts. Inca queens and their royal power had traditionally been closely associated with religious rituals that honored lunar deities, so it followed that depictions of the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven by the School-of-Cuzco artists heavily featured lunar imagery.<sup>27</sup> This is particularly interesting when analyzing the history of Inca rulers as told by Guaman Poma, who stated that their first king was the “child of the sun and of the sun’s wife, the moon,”<sup>28</sup> a backstory that, according to the author, was reflected on the Incan coat of arms, which prominently displayed both the sun and moon with human faces.<sup>29</sup> Valera provided a similar narrative of the Inca’s honoring the sun and moon, and he explicitly stated that “Queen of Heaven” served as one of the moon goddess’s titles.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, in a choice that may have been tied to preexisting Indigenous beliefs, both Guaman Poma and Valera alluded to the Virgin Mary’s husband, Saint Joseph. The latter was often depicted by the School of Cuzco with solar imagery as well as in the garb of Inca royalty, such as in the seventeenth- or eighteenth-century work *Saint Joseph and the Christ Child*.<sup>31</sup> While Christian theology does not consider Saint Joseph as Jesus’s biological father, his role as Jesus’s human father figure is nonetheless emphasized. Thus, the School of Cuzco might have utilized it in conjunction with the Virgin Mary’s moon-queen associations to construct an image of the Holy Family that the Andean people would have recognized. Additionally, by portraying both of Jesus’s parents in ways that reflected the parentage of the first Inca king, the Catholic Church’s image of Jesus as the “King of Kings” would have been strengthened. All of these syncretic strategies presumably contributed to the successful Catholic conversion of the Indigenous population.

The painters of the School of Cuzco were, of course, not the first Catholic artists in the Viceroyalty of Peru. The Catholic Church had been utilizing artwork to convert the Indigenous people nearly from the moment the Spanish had arrived. One of the initial obstacles to the Indigenous people’s Catholic conversion was the language barrier. A common way to address this problem was the visual representation of religious concepts by means of art. In 1575, the Spanish Jesuits brought the acclaimed Italian Jesuit painter Bernardo Bitti (1548–1610) to the Viceroyalty of Peru, commissioning him to paint biblical scenes in the region’s newly constructed churches. Bitti’s paintings were reportedly a resounding success for the conversion of the Indigenous people because his graphic depictions of Hell’s torments for nonbelievers created enough psychological distress for the average viewers that they felt the need to convert on the spot. This dark subject matter grew unpopular and largely died out in European church art soon after Bitti’s time, but it endured in the Andes.<sup>32</sup> The continued investment in such works demonstrated that psychological warfare was just as effective at

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<sup>27</sup> Damian, *Virgin of the Andes*, 63.

<sup>28</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 59.

<sup>29</sup> Guaman Poma, *First New Chronicle*, 58.

<sup>30</sup> [Valera], *Gods of the Andes*, 49–50.

<sup>31</sup> Anonymous, *Saint Joseph and the Christ Child*, late seventeenth–eighteenth century, oil on canvas, 43 x 32 1/8 inches, Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA, [online](#).

<sup>32</sup> Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, *The Virgin, Saints, and Angels: South American Paintings 1660–1825 from the Thoma Collection* (Skira, 2006), 43–44.



achieving the Spanish goal of the Indigenous people's Catholic conversion as physical violence and other forms of coercion.

### 3. Syncretism in Colonial Latin America's Corpus Christi Celebration

During this time of ecclesiastical growth in Cuzco, Catholic prelates were meeting at the Council of Trent (1545–1563) to discuss a myriad of issues facing the Church and reach a series of formal conclusions. The assembly's 1551 pronouncement regarding the proper celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi (literally "the Body of Christ") would become an important fixture in Andean Catholicism. To understand Corpus Christi, one must first understand "transubstantiation." "Transubstantiation" is the Catholic spiritual principle (or doctrine) that the bread and wine consumed during Communion become the flesh and blood of Christ, sacrificed for the sins of humanity. This particular teaching was a complicated but important facet of the faith. As early as the Council of Vienne (1311–1312), Pope Clement V (r. 1305–1314) had decreed that transubstantiation was to be celebrated by all Catholics as an obligatory sacred feast known as Corpus Christi.<sup>33</sup> Almost two and a half centuries later, the Council of Trent stipulated that the feast of Corpus Christi was to be celebrated by means of processions as a "triumph over heresy,"<sup>34</sup> a ruling that Catholics in Europe and in Catholic-colonized regions such as the Viceroyalty of Peru were quick to follow.

Indigenous people in the Viceroyalty of Peru were required and compelled to participate in these Corpus Christi processions rather than their own, traditional harvest ceremonies and solar worship (known as "Inti Raymi").<sup>35</sup> To achieve this goal, according to De la Vega, the Spanish allowed the Indigenous people to wear the traditional festival costumes of their culture and also encouraged the rewriting of traditional Indigenous worship songs to honor the Christian god instead.<sup>36</sup> The anonymous seventeenth-century painting *Santa Rosa y La Linda*, one of several in a Corpus Christi cycle of artworks, shows how much Indigenous religious symbolism endured even as Catholic festivities were observed. In this painting, there is a brightly dressed man (off center to the right), likely a local leader, with the sun emblazoned on his clothes.<sup>37</sup> This suggests that the Indigenous people were more inclined to celebrate Corpus Christi if they were allowed to retain some of their traditional heritage in its visual manifestations. Over time and successive generations, the Indigenous religious roots of these symbols would have been slowly eclipsed by the Catholic faith, thereby nearly achieving the erasure of Indigenous beliefs without outright bloodshed.

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<sup>33</sup> Carolyn Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (Duke University Press, 1999), 8, ProQuest eBook.

<sup>34</sup> Dean, *Inka Bodies*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Dean, *Inka Bodies*, 43.

<sup>36</sup> De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries*, 416–417.

<sup>37</sup> Anonymous, *Santa Rosa y La Linda*, c. 1674–1680, oil on canvas, c. 82 x c. 136 inches, Colección Corpus Christi, Museo de Arte Religioso del Palacio Arzobispal del Cuzco, Cuzco, Peru [online](#).



### Conclusion

Through syncretic practices, the Catholic Church was able to convert many Indigenous people and convince them that Catholicism was the “one true faith.” Mixed-race writers and authors of Indigenous descent, such as Valera and Guaman Poma, took the religion of their Spanish fathers and denigrated the traditional religious practices of their Indigenous mothers in their works. In addition, former Inca holy women became Catholic nuns, and artists of Indigenous descent turned their attention to the glorification of Catholic saints by fusing the latter’s iconography with the imagery of the Indigenous people’s original deities. The transition made easier by familiar garb and song, the Indigenous people moreover turned their ceremonial energies toward festivities like Corpus Christi, which is still widely celebrated in the region today. In a similar fashion, Indigenous traditions related to burials and ancestor worship, fasting, and confession were spun into acceptable Catholic versions. In the end, the syncretic method proved incredibly effective. When an independent, modern Peru granted its citizens religious freedom, the vast majority of them remained Catholic—76% according to a 2017 national census.<sup>38</sup> Due to the syncretic practices utilized in the region, Catholicism has largely eclipsed Indigenous forms of worship despite the modern absence of violent colonialism.

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<sup>38</sup> This 2017 census is referenced in the “2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Peru,” U.S. Department of State, [online](#).

Yong (Louis) Choi

## *Gateway to Sixteenth-Century Joseon: The Turtle Ship in Contemporary South Korean Cinema*

**ABSTRACT:** *This article examines the development of the Turtle Ship during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1897), its tactical importance in the Imjin War between Korea and Japan (1592–1598), and its status as a gateway to South Korean historical cinema. Based on period records—including the Joseon Wangjo Sillok, Admiral Yi Soon-Shin's diaries and memorials and Ryu Seong-ryong's Jingbirok—as well as recent scholarship, it first analyzes the vessel's tactical role in Joseon naval campaigns and then evaluates its modern cinematic portrayals in Kim Han-Min's trilogy and the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) television series "The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin," arguing that these visual dramatizations, while stylized, enhance the public understanding of Korean history, reinforce national identity, and connect sixteenth-century innovation to contemporary cultural memory.*

**KEYWORDS:** *early modern history; Korean history; Joseon dynasty; Imjin War; naval warfare; Turtle Ship (Geobukseon); Yi Soon-Shin; Kim Han-Min; cultural history; history of cinema*

### *Introduction*

The Turtle Ship or *Geobukseon* [거북선] holds a prominent place in Korean historical memory and is widely regarded as a symbol of ingenuity and resilience during the Imjin War [임진왜란] (1592–1598), a protracted conflict initiated by Japan's attempted invasion of the Korean Peninsula. Under the leadership of Admiral Yi Soon-Shin [이순신] (1545–1598), one of Korea's most celebrated military commanders, the Joseon Navy played a decisive role in resisting the forces of the Japanese warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), whose long-term ambition was to conquer Ming China (1368–1644) by first subjugating Korea. A major factor in Korea's naval success was Admiral Yi's systematic disruption of Japanese supply lines, which significantly hampered the enemy's inland progress. In response to the shifting demands of maritime warfare, Admiral Yi oversaw the development of the Turtle Ship, a purpose-built vessel intended to counter Japanese boarding tactics and maximize Joseon's artillery capabilities. Although the ship's active deployment was relatively limited, it remains a lasting emblem of Korea's naval innovation and Admiral Yi's military acumen.

Despite its iconic status in Korea, the Turtle Ship remains relatively obscure to audiences outside East Asia. This article highlights the vessel's historical significance and introduces it as a lens through which broader aspects of Korean history can be explored. As a combat vessel, the Turtle Ship exemplifies strategic adaptation, reinforcing the strengths of the Joseon Navy while addressing its vulnerabilities in close-quarters combat. Its legacy has expanded far beyond the circumstances of the Imjin War, and it has become a cultural symbol that continues to resonate in contemporary Korea. In recent decades, the Turtle Ship has gained renewed visibility through South Korean media. Films like *The Admiral: Roaring Currents* (2014), directed by Kim Han-Min, and the television series *The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin* (2004–2005), directed by Lee Sung-Joo and Kim Jung-Gyu, have dramatized its role, often blending historical facts with creative interpretations. While these portrayals sometimes sacrifice strict accuracy, they perform an important cultural function by making historical narratives accessible to broader audiences and reinforcing national identity. I examine how

such representations shape the public understanding of the Imjin War and enhance the Turtle Ship's symbolic power, particularly with regard to the long and complex history of Korean-Japanese relations. By focusing on both the Turtle Ship's battlefield utility in naval warfare during the Imjin War and its evolving depiction in modern South Korean visual media, I bridge the gap between historical scholarship and cultural storytelling. This dual lens serves to deepen an appreciation for Korea's history and helps explore how cinematic narratives influence collective memory and national pride.

Firsthand records like Admiral Yi's *Nanjung Diary* [난중일기]<sup>1</sup> and the official *Imjin Changch'o*<sup>2</sup> reports provide direct insight into naval operations. These sources are invaluable, particularly given Admiral Yi's dual role as both construction overseer and commander of the Turtle Ship. However, each source also presents its challenges. The *Nanjung Diary*, while rich in detail, reflects Yi's personal viewpoint and focuses primarily on tactical events, thus offering limited analysis of larger political dynamics. Meanwhile, the *Imjin Changch'o*, though an official wartime record, presents selective narratives shaped by bureaucratic priorities. Broader chronicles like the *Jingbirok* [징비록],<sup>3</sup> authored by the Prime Minister Ryu Seong-Ryong [유성룡] (1542–1607), and the *Joseon Wangjo Sillok* [조선왕조실록],<sup>4</sup> the dynastic annals of the Joseon court, provide wider political context but traditionally emphasize civil administration rather than military specifics. Despite their efforts to maintain a modicum of objectivity<sup>5</sup>—at least by premodern standards, these records occasionally exhibit bias or omissions,<sup>6</sup> thus underscoring the need for careful cross-referencing.

Modern Korean historians have produced extensive scholarship on Admiral Yi and the Imjin War's naval dimensions. Park Hee-Bong addresses common misconceptions surrounding the Turtle Ship's battlefield role,<sup>7</sup> while Lee Duk-Il examines political factions within the Joseon court,<sup>8</sup> including Ryu Seong-Ryong's strategic endorsement of Admiral Yi.<sup>9</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil offers a comprehensive study of Yi's naval campaigns, synthesizing fragmented historical records to reconstruct Joseon naval strategy.<sup>10</sup> However, a recurring challenge with regard to Korean-language scholarship is its limited accessibility to non-Korean readers. Moreover,

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<sup>1</sup> Yi Soon-Shin [이순신], *Nanjung Diary* [난중일기], ed. Kim Sung Min (iWell Contents, 2014); Yi Sun-sin, *Nanjung Ilgi: War Diary of Admiral Yi Sun-sin*, ed. Sohn Pow-key, trans. Ha Tae-hung (Yonsei University Press, 1977). For Korean-language works, author (or director) and title are referenced in both English and Korean at their first appearance in the footnotes; all subsequent short citations appear in English only.

<sup>2</sup> Yi Sun-sin, *Imjin Changch'o: Admiral Yi Sun-Sin's Memorials to Court*, ed. Lee Chong-young, trans. Ha Tae-hung (Yonsei University Press, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> Ryu Seong-ryong [유성룡], *Jingbirok* [징비록] [*The Book of Correction*], ed. Gu Ji-Hyun (Olje, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> *Joseon Wangjo Sillok* [조선왕조실록] [*The Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*], [online](#).

<sup>5</sup> National Library of Korea, *Documents of the Joseon Royal Family*, [online](#).

<sup>6</sup> National Institute of Korean History, *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, [online](#).

<sup>7</sup> Park Hee-Bong [박희봉], *Gyogwaseoga Malhaji Aneun Imjinwaeran Iyagi* [교과서가말하지않은임진왜란이야기] [*The Story of the Imjin War Not Told in the Textbooks*] (Non-Hyung, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Lee Duk-Il [이덕일], *Nanseui hyeoksillideo: Ryu Seong-Ryong* [난세의혁신리더:유성룡] [*Revolutionary Leader in Times of Chaos: Ryu Seong-Ryong*] (Wisdom House, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> Ryu Seong-ryong, *Jingbirok*, 28.

<sup>10</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil [황현필], *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada: Geu badaneun mueoseul samkyeonna* [이순신의바다:그바다는무엇을삼켰나] [*Yi Soon-Shin's Ocean: What Was He Able to Accomplish?*] (Yeokbyeon, 2021).

while these studies provide rich contextual analysis, they often treat the Turtle Ship itself as a secondary element within their broader narratives of Admiral Yi's leadership—an imbalance this present study addresses by foregrounding the vessel's combat role.

Despite Korea's long-standing influence in East Asian history, its contributions are often overshadowed by narratives centered on China and Japan. Episodes such as Goguryeo's [고구려] (37 BCE–668 CE) successful defense against the Sui dynasty (581–618 CE) and Baekje's [백제] (18 BCE–660 CE) role in transmitting cultural innovations to early Japan demonstrate Korea's historical significance, yet these events remain underrepresented in global scholarship. Accordingly, English-language research on the Imjin War also remains comparatively sparse. Kenneth Swope's 2009 monograph, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*, provides a detailed account of Ming China's involvement,<sup>11</sup> while Lee Ji-Young's 2016 book, *China's Hegemony*, analyzes the tributary system's influence on regional diplomacy.<sup>12</sup> These studies offer valuable geopolitical context, but they often foreground Chinese and Japanese perspectives at the expense of Korea's military and strategic contributions. Japanese-focused scholarship, including Mikiso Hane's and Louis G. Perez's 2015 survey, explores Toyotomi Hideyoshi's domestic motivations.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, Giuseppe Marino and Rebekah Clements examine the rivalries between key Japanese commanders, including Konishi Yukinaga (1558–1600) and Kato Kiyomasa (1562–1611), in a 2023 article.<sup>14</sup> While Swope has acknowledged the Turtle Ship's significance in a series of publications,<sup>15</sup> and Yi Min-Ung's chapter in James B. Lewis's 2014 edited volume, *The East Asian War, 1592–1598*, provides a rare focus on naval engagements,<sup>16</sup> a detailed analysis of fleet composition, ship design, and battle logistics remains limited due to gaps in the surviving records. Thus, though it is widely recognized within Korea, the Turtle Ship has received comparatively limited attention in Western academic studies.<sup>17</sup>

Over the past two decades, South Korean film and television have significantly shaped public perceptions of the Turtle Ship. Director Kim Han-Min's recent trilogy—*The Admiral: Roaring*

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<sup>11</sup> Kenneth M. Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War, 1592–1598* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Ji-Young Lee, *China's Hegemony: Four Hundred Years of East Asian Domination* (Columbia University Press, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Mikiso Hane and Louis G. Perez, *Premodern Japan: A Historical Survey*, 2nd ed. (Westview Press, 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Giuseppe Marino and Rebekah Clements, "Iberian Sources on the Imjin War: The *Relação do fim e remate que teve a guerra da Coreia* (1599)," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 23, no. 1 (2023): 27–48.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth M. Swope, "Crouching Tigers, Secret Weapons: Military Technology Employed during the Sino-Japanese-Korean War, 1592–1598," *The Journal of Military History* 69, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 11–41; Kenneth M. Swope, "Turning the Tide: The Strategic and Psychological Significance of the Liberation of Pyongyang in 1593," in *Warfare in China to 1600*, ed. Peter Lorge (Ashgate, 2005), 463–484; Kenneth M. Swope, "War and Remembrance: Yang Hao and the Siege of Ulsan of 1598," *Journal of Asian History* 42, no. 2 (2008): 165–195.

<sup>16</sup> Min'Ung Yi, "The Role of the Chosŏn Navy and Major Naval Battles during the Imjin Waeran," in *The East Asian War, 1592–1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory*, ed. James B. Lewis (Routledge, 2014), 120–140.

<sup>17</sup> Marc Jason Gilbert, "Admiral Yi Sun-Shin, the Turtle Ships, and Modern Asian History," *Education about Asia* 12, no. 1 (Asia in World History: 1450–1770) (2007): 29, [online](#); Swope, *Dragon's Head*, 31; Swope, "Crouching Tigers," 14, 18.

*Currents* (2014), *Hansan: Rising Dragon* (2022), and *Noryang: Deadly Sea* (2023)—as well as the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) television series *The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin* (2004–2005), directed by Lee Sung-Joo and Kim Jung-Gyu, prominently feature the vessel, often emphasizing its symbolic power rather than strict historical accuracy. While dramatized, these portrayals serve as highly effective tools for public engagement, translating complex historical events into accessible visual narratives. Their limitations arise from narrative embellishments or simplifications, yet they also foster national pride and stimulate a broader interest in Korea's past. By reconstructing undocumented episodes, these productions contribute to the Turtle Ship's enduring legacy as both a historical artifact and a cultural icon.

Across both scholarly and popular sources, the Turtle Ship's tactical role remains underexplored. Much of the existing literature highlights Admiral Yi's leadership, with the vessel functioning primarily as a symbolic extension of his strategic genius rather than a subject of independent study. The limited duration of its wartime use and the scarcity of detailed naval records contribute to this oversight. This article repositions the Turtle Ship as a central topic by evaluating both its operational significance and its symbolic resonance in modern Korean identity. Using a combination of historical documentation and media analysis, it bridges the gap between academic inquiry and cultural representation. I argue that South Korean visual media portrayals of Admiral Yi and the Turtle Ship—particularly in *The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin* and Kim Han-Min's recent trilogy—serve a dual function: they make a pivotal historical period more accessible to contemporary audiences and reinforce cultural narratives of resilience and historical agency. While these dramatizations blend historical fact with creative license, their symbolic and educational value outweigh their minor inaccuracies as they foster national pride, challenge external distortions of Korean history, and invite a broader engagement with the country's past.

South Korean historical films and television dramas have emerged as influential media for public engagement with Korea's past, particularly for audiences who may not have access to or interest in academic texts. While dramatized, they serve as effective gateways to historical inquiry. By simplifying complex events and filling gaps left by incomplete records, cinematic portrayals make history more approachable, particularly for visual learners. Through emotionally charged storytelling and dynamic visual reconstruction, these productions communicate historical significance in ways that traditional scholarship may struggle to match. As such, historical cinematography plays a crucial role in introducing major historical topics to a broader audience.

Beyond their educational value, these portrayals contribute to the construction and reinforcement of national identity. The Turtle Ship, in particular, has transcended its original wartime role to become a symbol of Korean resilience and cultural pride. Its recurring presence in media reflects a broader effort to reclaim and assert Korea's historical agency, especially in response to external narratives that have minimized or distorted Korea's contributions. By presenting the Turtle Ship as a visual emblem of perseverance, these dramatizations help cultivate a collective sense of historical continuity and identity.

At the same time, media representations raise important questions about the balance between historical fidelity and artistic license. For example, the depiction of the Turtle Ship at the Battle of Myeongryang [명량대첩] (1597)—despite its documented absence—illustrates how narrative embellishments can serve symbolic rather than strictly factual purposes. While such deviations may draw criticism from historians, they also have the potential to spark curiosity and deepen public engagement with historical sources. When approached critically, these portrayals can complement scholarly research by encouraging audiences to explore Korea's complex historical legacy beyond the screen.

### 1. Historical Background: Naval Innovation and the Imjin War

The Turtle Ship, developed by Admiral Yi Soon-Shin during the late sixteenth century, represents one of Korea's most iconic military innovations. Its emergence must be understood within the broader context of the Joseon dynasty (1392–1897), a period characterized by centralized governance, Neo-Confucian reform, and increasing maritime threats along the southern coast. Early naval development in Joseon was shaped by persistent raids from Japanese pirates (*wakō*), which prompted officials to adapt transport vessels such as the Maeng Ship [맹선] into combat-ready designs.<sup>18</sup> By the mid-sixteenth century, the Pan-Ok Ship [판옥선] had become the Joseon Navy's primary warship.<sup>19</sup> Featuring a dual-deck structure that separated rowers from combat personnel, the Pan-Ok Ship allowed for multi-directional cannon fire, a significant advantage in premodern East Asian naval warfare. However, its elevated design left crews vulnerable to Japanese boarding tactics.<sup>20</sup> In response, Admiral Yi modified the Pan-Ok Ship by adding a wooden roof with spikes<sup>21</sup> and a dragon-shaped prow capable of firing cannon rounds, thereby creating the Turtle Ship. Final artillery tests were completed just one day before Japan's invasion in 1592,<sup>22</sup> thus facilitating the vessel's immediate deployment in the upcoming wartime operations.

The Imjin War erupted in 1592 during a period of profound instability inside Joseon.<sup>23</sup> Factionalism—known as *bungdang jeongchi* [붕당정치]—had weakened the central authority,<sup>24</sup> as competing political factions disputed the succession, foreign policy, and internal reforms. These quarrels led to the marginalization of key advisors and delayed crucial decisions, including the appointment of a Crown Prince.<sup>25</sup> Diplomatic miscalculations further compounded the crisis: in 1591, a Joseon envoy had returned from Japan with conflicting

<sup>18</sup> *Joseon Wangjo Sillok*, "King Sejong Records," King Sejong 12th year (1429), September 1, [online](#).

<sup>19</sup> *Joseon Wangjo Sillok*, "King Myeongjong Records," King Myeongjong 12th year (1557), April 3, [online](#); Min'Ung Yi, "Role of the Chosŏn Navy," 122.

<sup>20</sup> Swope, "Crouching Tigers," 32.

<sup>21</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 26; Yi Sun-sin, *Imjin Changch'o*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Park Young-Gyu [박영규], *Han gwoneuro ingneun joseonwangjosillok* [한권으로읽는조선왕조실록] [*Reading the Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty in One Book*] (Woongjin ThinkBig Co., Ltd., 2017), 418.

<sup>24</sup> Park Young-Gyu, *Han gwoneuro ingneun joseonwangjosillok*, 399.

<sup>25</sup> Park Young-Gyu, *Han gwoneuro ingneun joseonwangjosillok*, 399; JaHyun Kim Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, ed. William J. Haboush and Jisoo M. Kim (Columbia University Press, 2016), 27.

reports, one warning of imminent invasion and the other dismissing the threat.<sup>26</sup> The court accepted the more optimistic account, which left the kingdom unprepared for Toyotomi Hideyoshi's military ambitions.<sup>27</sup> On April 13, 1592, Japan launched a massive invasion with an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 troops and hundreds of warships.<sup>28</sup> Early Japanese successes were swift and devastating. However, Hideyoshi failed to anticipate three critical cultural and strategic factors: the rapid mobilization of Korea's civilian militias, the king's evacuation of the capital, and the effectiveness of the Joseon Navy.

The Righteous Army [의병], a civilian militia movement led by figures such as Kwak Jae-Woo [곽재우] (1552–1617), carried out guerrilla operations that disrupted Japanese supply lines.<sup>29</sup> King Seonjo's [선조] (r. 1567–1608) decision to flee the capital Hanyang [한양]—modern-day Seoul—though politically contentious, enabled the government to regroup and formally request military assistance from Ming China.<sup>30</sup> The arrival of Ming reinforcements in early 1593 helped recapture Pyongyang [평양],<sup>31</sup> although coordination between Joseon and Ming forces remained inconsistent. Joseon troops under General Kwon Yul [권율] (1537–1599) achieved a major victory at Haengju [행주대첩],<sup>32</sup> but intermittent Ming withdrawals exposed vulnerabilities in the alliance.<sup>33</sup> These developments set the stage for a prolonged conflict. Recognizing the need for unified naval leadership, the royal court appointed Admiral Yi as the Supreme Naval Commander of Three Provinces [삼도수군통제사], thereby elevating him to the highest naval position in the kingdom.

Admiral Yi's naval campaigns were instrumental in reversing the course of the war. His first major engagements in May 1592—Okpo [옥포], Hapdo [함포], and Jukjinpo [적진포]—resulted in the destruction of dozens of Japanese warships without a single Joseon loss.<sup>34</sup> These early victories secured control over southern waters and significantly boosted national morale. The second campaign marked the combat debut of the Turtle Ship, which played a crucial role in victories at Sacheon [사천], Dangpo [당포], and Danghangpo [당항포].<sup>35</sup> The vessel's "armored" shell and elevated artillery platform allowed it to charge directly into enemy formations, repel boarding attempts, and deliver concentrated cannon volleys. These engagements demonstrated the ship's effectiveness in close-quarters combat and its psychological impact on Japanese forces. The third campaign, launched in July 1592, involved coordinated efforts

<sup>26</sup> Haboush, *Great East Asian War*, 27.

<sup>27</sup> Haboush, *Great East Asian War*, 28–29; Ryu Seong-ryong, *Jingbirok*, 28.

<sup>28</sup> All dates hereafter are based on the lunar calendar, since that is how they were recorded in the primary records; Park Young-Gyu, *Han gwoneuro ingneun joseonwangjosillok*, 422; Haboush, *Great East Asian War*, 24; Hane and Perez, *Premodern Japan*, 157.

<sup>29</sup> Park Young-Gyu, *Han gwoneuro ingneun joseonwangjosillok*, 432; Haboush, *Great East Asian War*, 35.

<sup>30</sup> Ryu Seong-ryong, *Jingbirok*, 50; Ji-Young Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 110; Swope, "Crouching Tigers," 29.

<sup>31</sup> Haboush, *Great East Asian War*, 71, 89; Ji-Young Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 111.

<sup>32</sup> Ji-Young Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 111; Haboush, *Great East Asian War*, 107; Swope, *Dragon's Head*, 224; Swope, "Turning the Tide," 483.

<sup>33</sup> Swope, *Dragon's Head*, 216.

<sup>34</sup> Yi Sun-sin, *Imjin Changch'o*, 32–34; Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Yi Sun-sin, *Nanjung Ilgi*, 5; Yi Sun-sin, *Imjin Changch'o*, 43–49; Shin Chae-Ho [신채호], *Yi Soon-Shin Jeon [이순신전]* [*The Tale of Yi Soon-Shin*], ed. Kim Sung-Min (iWell Contents, 2014), 24.

among the Left Jeolla Navy [전라좌수군], the Right Jeolla Navy [전라우수군], and remnants of the Right Gyeongsang Navy [경상우수군]. Admiral Yi's fleet—now comprising 3 Turtle Ships and more than 50 Pan-Ok Ships<sup>36</sup>—confronted a dispersed Japanese force near Hansan-do [한산도]. Utilizing a feigned retreat to lure the enemy into open waters, Admiral Yi executed the famed crane-winged formation to annihilate the Japanese fleet. Of the 73 enemy vessels engaged, 58 were destroyed.<sup>37</sup> The Turtle Ships played a central role by absorbing enemy fire and breaking formation lines, allowing the larger fleet to encircle and bombard the opposition. The Battle of Hansan-do [한산도 대첩] (1592) is widely regarded as one of the most tactically brilliant victories in Korean history.

Following Hansan-do, Admiral Yi pursued the Japanese forces to the fortified port of Angolpo [안골포]. Despite the challenges posed by narrow straits and defensive structures, the Joseon Navy launched sustained assaults that destroyed or disabled numerous Japanese ships.<sup>38</sup> Although some enemy vessels escaped under cover of darkness, the campaign dealt a severe blow to Japan's maritime capabilities.<sup>39</sup> In response, Hideyoshi ordered his navy to avoid further engagements with Joseon forces, effectively relinquishing maritime control.<sup>40</sup> The fourth campaign culminated in the assault on Busan Harbor [부산포해전] in September 1592.<sup>41</sup> Facing a fleet of nearly 470 anchored Japanese warships supported by fortified artillery positions,<sup>42</sup> Admiral Yi's armada—now expanded to 74 vessels—initiated a direct attack. The Turtle Ships led the charge, absorbing heavy bombardment while creating openings for Pan-Ok Ships to fire upon and destroy enemy vessels.<sup>43</sup> Approximately 100 Japanese ships were demolished with minimal Joseon losses.<sup>44</sup> This operation further demonstrated the Turtle Ship's durability and offensive capacity, solidifying its reputation as an innovative warship.

During the ceasefire period (1593–1596), Admiral Yi expanded the fleet<sup>45</sup> and remained vigilant.<sup>46</sup> However, political interference at the Joseon court resulted in his dismissal in 1597. He was replaced by the military commander Won Kyun [원균] (1540–1597),<sup>47</sup> whose mismanagement led to the disastrous defeat at Chilcheollryang [칠천량해전] (1597),<sup>48</sup> where

<sup>36</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 152.

<sup>38</sup> Yi Sun-sin, *Imjin Changch'o*, 60–61; Shin Chae-Ho, *Yi Soon-Shin Jeon*, 27.

<sup>39</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 48.

<sup>40</sup> Park Hee-Bong, *Gyogwaseoga Malhaji Aneun Imjinwaeran Iyagi*, 138.

<sup>41</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 50.

<sup>42</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 172; Shin Chae-Ho, *Yi Soon-Shin Jeon*, 28.

<sup>43</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 173; Park Hee-Bong, *Gyogwaseoga Malhaji Aneun Imjinwaeran Iyagi*, 139.

<sup>44</sup> Yi Sun-sin, *Imjin Changch'o*, 72–73.

<sup>45</sup> Park Jae-Gwang [박재광], "Haesangui Taengkeu, Geobukseon [해상의탱크, 거북선] [A Sea Tank, Turtle Ship]," *Gwahakgwa Gisul* [과학과기술] [Science and Technology] 9, no. 460 (2007): 46; Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 220.

<sup>46</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 145, 229; Yi Sun-sin, *Nanjung Ilgi*, 22, 29, 41, 45, 56, 59, 66, 74, 241.

<sup>47</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 252; Shin Chae-Ho, *Yi Soon-Shin Jeon*, 39.

<sup>48</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 418, 419, 420.



nearly the entire Joseon fleet was lost, including all Turtle Ships.<sup>49</sup> Reinstated with only 12 Pan-Ok Ships,<sup>50</sup> Admiral Yi quickly rebuilt the navy and, merely two months later, achieved a stunning victory at the Battle of Myeongryang. With just 13 Pan-Ok Ships against more than 300 Japanese vessels, his fleet inflicted heavy losses<sup>51</sup> and halted Japan's northward advance.<sup>52</sup> This triumph marked a critical point in restoring Joseon's naval strength and morale. In the final phase of the war, Admiral Yi and Ming naval forces intercepted the retreating Japanese fleet at the Battle of Noryang [노량해전] in November 1598.<sup>53</sup> The allied armada destroyed or captured hundreds of Japanese vessels,<sup>54</sup> but Admiral Yi himself and several high-ranking commanders—including Ming Naval Viceroy Deng Zilong (1531–1598)—were killed in action. This final engagement effectively ended the war and reshaped the geopolitical balance of early modern East Asia. Admiral Yi's naval legacy is inseparable from the Turtle Ship, which has become a symbol of Korean resilience and tactical brilliance.

## 2. Cinematography as a Gateway to History

South Korean films have emerged as compelling instruments for introducing wider audiences to the country's past, particularly viewers who lack access to or interest in academic scholarship. Director Kim Han-Min's trilogy—*The Admiral: Roaring Currents* (2014), *Hansan: Rising Dragon* (2022), and *Noryang: Deadly Sea* (2023)—as well as the KBS television series *The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin* (2004–2005) dramatize the Imjin War's naval campaigns and Admiral Yi's pivotal role. These productions translate complex historical events into immersive visual narratives, offering accessible points of engagement for both domestic and international audiences.

*The Admiral: Roaring Currents* centers on the Battle of Myeongryang, one of the most perilous engagements in the Joseon Navy's history. The film depicts Admiral Yi confronting an armada of 333 Japanese ships with only 13 Pan-Ok Ships.<sup>55</sup> The initial paralysis of the Joseon fleet is rendered with dramatic intensity,<sup>56</sup> culminating in Admiral Yi's lone command ship initiating the first assault. Although stylized, the film effectively communicates the battle's psychological strain and tactical dilemmas. It also highlights key environmental and structural factors, such as the powerful tidal currents of the Myeongryang Strait<sup>57</sup> and the

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<sup>49</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 420; Shin Chae-Ho, *Yi Soon-Shin Jeon*, 41; Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 289.

<sup>50</sup> Ryu Seong-ryong, *Jingbirok*, 128.

<sup>51</sup> Ryu Seong-ryong, *Jingbirok*, 130–131; Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 313, 318, 323; Shin Chae-Ho, *Yi Soon-Shin Jeon*, 47; Park Young-Gyu, *Han gwoneuro ingneun joseonwangjosillok*, 430.

<sup>52</sup> Swope, "War and Remembrance," 170.

<sup>53</sup> Park Young-Gyu, *Han gwoneuro ingneun joseonwangjosillok*, 430.

<sup>54</sup> Ryu Seong-ryong, *Jingbirok*, 135; Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 355.

<sup>55</sup> *The Admiral: Roaring Currents* [명량], directed by Kim Han-Min [김한민] (Big Stone Pictures, 2014), 0:01:34, [online](#); Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 438; Ryu Seong-ryong, *Jingbirok*, 130; Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 313.

<sup>56</sup> *Admiral*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:05:15 to 1:06:54; Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 438; Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 314–317; Min'Ung Yi, "Role of the Chosŏn Navy," 133.

<sup>57</sup> *Admiral*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:08:17 to 1:11:42.

elevated decks of Joseon warships, which contributed to the Japanese fleet's disarray and the eventual Joseon victory.

*Hansan: Rising Dragon*, set in 1592, dramatizes the Battle of Hansan-do, one of Korea's most celebrated triumphs. Distinct from the other films, *Hansan* emphasizes intelligence gathering, espionage, and long-term strategy, resulting in a more methodical narrative pace. Opening with the Battle of Sacheon [사천해전] (1592)<sup>58</sup>—the Turtle Ship's first historical deployment<sup>59</sup>—the film introduces Wakizaka Yasuharu (1554–1626) as the principal antagonist. While some critics have noted the overabundance of characters and occasional geographic inaccuracies,<sup>60</sup> *Hansan* succeeds in portraying the strategic complexity of East Asian naval warfare. Its climactic bird's-eye perspectives on Admiral Yi's crane-winged formation, featuring the coordinated movement of the Korean fleet, is especially effective in conveying the scale and intensity of this particular engagement.<sup>61</sup>

*Noryang: Deadly Sea* concludes the trilogy by depicting Admiral Yi's final campaign and death in battle. Devoting most of its runtime to the climactic Battle of Noryang,<sup>62</sup> the film underscores Admiral Yi's strategic insight and moral steadfastness. This focus reinforces both the battle's historical significance and the emotional gravity of the trilogy's conclusion. Collectively, these works demonstrate how historical cinematography can function as a gateway to public historical inquiry. By dramatizing pivotal battles and leadership decisions, they encourage audiences to explore Korea's history and reconsider Admiral Yi's legacy within broader cultural and historical frameworks. Although the Turtle Ship's historical deployment was relatively limited, it has transcended its original military purpose to become one of Korea's most enduring cultural icons. Its symbolic power stems not just from its innovative engineering but also from its embodiment of Korean resilience, ingenuity, and resistance to foreign aggression. South Korean visual media—particularly Kim Han-Min's trilogy—portray the Turtle Ship as more than a tactical vessel: it serves as a visual metaphor for national pride and historical agency. Among the trilogy, *Hansan* offers the most detailed and action-oriented depiction of the Turtle Ship. Unlike *The Admiral* and *Noryang*, where its presence is brief or symbolic,<sup>63</sup> *Hansan* showcases the ship in full combat, emphasizing its tactical advantages and psychological impact.<sup>64</sup> The film foregrounds internal debates within the Joseon Navy regarding the ship's capabilities, while portraying both Korean and Japanese forces anticipating its strategic role. Director Kim's decision to feature two models of the Turtle Ship—a gesture toward the ongoing scholarly debate over its historical structure—

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<sup>58</sup> *Hansan: Rising Dragon* [한산:용의출현], directed by Kim Han-Min [김한민] (Big Stone Pictures, 2022), 0:04:55, [online](#).

<sup>59</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 104; Shin Chae-Ho, *Yi Soon-Shin Jeon*, 21.

<sup>60</sup> *Hansan*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:07:05 to 1:08:05.

<sup>61</sup> *Hansan*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:31:50 to 1:32:13.

<sup>62</sup> *Noryang: Deadly Sea* [노랑:죽음의바다], directed by Kim Han-Min [김한민] (Big Stone Pictures, 2023), 0:0:55, [online](#); Ji-Young Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 113; Swope, "War and Remembrance," 189.

<sup>63</sup> *Admiral*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 0:36:52 to 0:39:36; *Noryang*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:08:57 to 1:19:03.

<sup>64</sup> *Hansan*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:40:35 to 1:43:15.

adds interpretive depth and acknowledges the uncertainties that surround the vessel's original design.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the Turtle Ship's absence from the actual battles of Myeongryang and Noryang, its inclusion in both films reinforces its prominence in Korean cultural memory. Originally deployed in 1592, the vessel has evolved into a national icon whose cinematic representation—regardless of historical accuracy—serves as an emblem of Korean resilience. *Noryang* depicts the Turtle Ship charging into battle before being destroyed early in the engagement.<sup>66</sup> Although historically inaccurate, this serves a dual purpose: it challenges the myth of the ship's invincibility while affirming its symbolic importance. By portraying its destruction, the film acknowledges both its vulnerability and its cultural resonance.

The Turtle Ship's symbolic evolution extends well into the modern era. During the Japanese colonial occupation (1910–1945), it reemerged as a representation of Korean technological achievement and resistance. In contemporary Korea, it is frequently invoked during periods of diplomatic tension, particularly in response to Japanese denialism regarding wartime atrocities. Whether intentionally or not, its cinematic representation engages deeply with modern audiences, reinforcing narratives of historical continuity and national pride. Among Korea's historical icons, few have proven as effective in mobilizing public sentiment as the Turtle Ship. Its portrayal in film not only commemorates past military successes but also affirms Korea's enduring resilience. This cultural resonance illustrates the broader role of media in shaping collective memory and sustaining historical consciousness.

### 3. *Balancing Accuracy and Artistic License*

The tension between historical fidelity and narrative symbolism remains central to historical filmmaking, and Kim Han-Min's trilogy navigates this tension through deliberate creative choices. While the films are grounded in documented events, they employ artistic license to heighten emotional impact and compensate for gaps in the historical record. Although such decisions are occasionally contentious, they expand the films' capacity to engage public audiences. In *The Admiral*, the Turtle Ship is depicted as having been reconstructed<sup>67</sup> after its documented destruction in 1597<sup>68</sup>—a clear departure from historical evidence. Similarly, *Noryang* portrays Admiral Yi's youngest son, Myun [이변] (1577–1597), as dying in battle,<sup>69</sup> though records indicate that he had been killed in combat earlier and that his killer was executed.<sup>70</sup> These inaccuracies reflect the director's intent to intensify narrative tensions and underscore the emotional stakes of Admiral Yi's final campaign. *Hansan* adopts a more nuanced interplay between historical facts and artistic interpretations. The film expands a relatively short historical engagement into a feature-length narrative by incorporating

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<sup>65</sup> *Hansan*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:41:05 to 1:42:43.

<sup>66</sup> *Noryang*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:08:57 to 1:19:03.

<sup>67</sup> *Admiral*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 0:36:52 to 0:39:36.

<sup>68</sup> Yi Soon-Shin, *Nanjung Diary*, 420; Yi Sun-sin, *Nanjung Ilgi*, 291; Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 287–289.

<sup>69</sup> *Noryang*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 0:14:45 to 0:22:02, 0:34:31 to 0:38:56.

<sup>70</sup> Yi Sun-sin, *Imjin Changch'o*, 231.

espionage, intelligence strategies, and character development. Though some critics have highlighted the overabundance of characters and occasional geographic inconsistencies—such as the misplacement of land battles in relation to naval stations<sup>71</sup>—the film succeeds in representing the Imjin War’s strategic complexities.

The Turtle Ship’s dramatic entrance—accompanied by a sound design that invokes a “roaring dragon”—illustrates how cinematic techniques can elevate historical artifacts into mythic symbols.<sup>72</sup> Director Kim’s inclusion of both two-deck and three-deck models acknowledges scholarly debate and engages with the ambiguity of historical evidence.<sup>73</sup> This choice allows the film to honor the vessel’s legacy while acknowledging the limitations of available evidence. *Noryang* portrays the climactic battle as a large-scale international engagement involving 80 Joseon Pan-Ok Ships, 300 Ming vessels, and 500 Japanese warships.<sup>74</sup> The film dramatizes Admiral Yi’s decision to commit all available resources, diverging from his usual strategy of preserving naval strength for future operations.<sup>75</sup> This narrative shift underscores the urgency of the moment and the strategic imperative to prevent the Japanese retreat unchallenged. Historically, Admiral Yi sought to intercept Japanese reinforcements led by Shimazu Yoshihiro (1535–1619) to prevent a pincer movement<sup>76</sup> and endeavored to eliminate Konishi Yukinaga (1558–1600), a central figure in the initial invasion.<sup>77</sup> *Noryang*’s climax, including the accidental explosion aboard Ming Naval Viceroy Deng Zilong’s ship<sup>78</sup> and the rescue of Admiral Chen Lin (1543–1607),<sup>79</sup> is dramatized to heighten tension while loosely reflecting historical accounts. The final assault, which traps the Japanese fleet in a landlocked bay near Gwaneum-po [관음포], is portrayed as a moment of tactical brilliance.<sup>80</sup>

The television series *The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin* offers a more comprehensive biographical account, blending documentary detail with dramatized sequences. Its portrayal of the Turtle Ship’s initial failure—capsizing under the weight of an iron roof—introduces a plausible engineering problem,<sup>81</sup> while its subsequent modification with copper adds historical realism and narrative coherence. Across these productions, dramatic embellishments serve to emphasize Admiral Yi’s moral resolve and strategic innovation. His refusal to allow retreating enemy forces safe passage reflects tactical necessity and aligns with earlier Korean military victories—such as those at Salsu [살수대첩] in 612 against China’s Sui dynasty and at Gwiju

<sup>71</sup> *Hansan*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:07:05 to 1:08:05.

<sup>72</sup> *Hansan*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:40:35 to 1:43:15.

<sup>73</sup> *Hansan*, dir. Kim Han-Min, 1:41:05 to 1:42:43.

<sup>74</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 355.

<sup>75</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 359; *The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin* [불멸의이순신], season 1, episode 102, directed by Lee Sung-Joo [이성주] and Kim Jung-Gyu [김정규], written by Yoon Sun-Joo [윤선주] and Yoon Young-Soo [윤영수], aired 2004, KBS Drama Production, [online](#).

<sup>76</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 352.

<sup>77</sup> Swope, *Dragon’s Head*, 351.

<sup>78</sup> Swope, “Crouching Tigers,” 32.

<sup>79</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 357–358; Swope, *Dragon’s Head*, 353.

<sup>80</sup> Hwang Hyun-Pil, *Yi Soon-Shin Ui bada*, 356.

<sup>81</sup> *Immortal Yi Soon-Shin*, season 1, episode 54, dir. Lee Sung-Joo and Kim Jung-Gyu, written by Yoon Sun-Joo and Yoon Young-Soo, aired 2004, KBS Drama Production, [online](#).

[귀주대첩] in 1019 against Khitan's Liao dynasty—which similarly culminated in the decisive annihilation of the invading forces to prevent future incursions. Ultimately, historical cinematography must balance narrative storytelling with historical integrity. Kim Han-Min's trilogy of films and the television series *The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin*, though dramatized, contribute meaningfully to public historical discourse. The Turtle Ship's enduring popularity in visual media—despite recurring simplifications—attests to its profound cultural significance. When approached critically, such portrayals enrich Korea's historical narrative and strengthen collective memory.

### Conclusion

The cinematic revival of Admiral Yi Soon-Shin and the Turtle Ship reshaped how historical memory is constructed, accessed, and emotionally experienced in contemporary Korea. Through films like *The Admiral: Roaring Currents*, *Hansan: Rising Dragon*, and *Noryang: Deadly Sea*, as well as the television series *The Immortal Yi Soon-Shin*, Korea's naval legacy has been reimagined not merely as a record of military victories but as a living narrative of resilience, innovation, and national identity. This study has demonstrated that historical cinematography serves as a vital gateway to public historical inquiry, particularly for audiences who engage more readily with visual media than academic texts. The dramatization of pivotal battles—especially Myeongryang, Hansan, and Noryang—creates an immersive experience that bridges gaps in the historical record and fosters a broader engagement with Korea's past. Although stylized, these portrayals render complex events both emotionally compelling and intellectually accessible. Thus, the Turtle Ship, central to both historical and cinematic narratives, has evolved into a powerful cultural symbol. Its depiction in visual media—whether as a symbolic presence or a fully realized combat warship—reinforces Korea's historical agency and challenges external distortions of its past. Director Kim Han-Min's decision to include various conceivable models of the Turtle Ship in *Hansan* reflects a thoughtful engagement with scholarly debate, while the vessel's dramatic prominence across the trilogy affirms its role as a visual emblem of national pride.

These portrayals also illuminate the ongoing tension between historical fidelity and artistic license. While the films and series employ creative liberties to heighten dramatic impact, such choices can enhance rather than diminish public understanding when interpreted critically. They complement scholarly research by inspiring curiosity, stimulating discussion, and broadening access to historical narratives. They do not supplant history—they amplify it. Ultimately, the convergence of history and media provides a dynamic space for cultural reflection. As Korea continues to articulate its historical narratives in both domestic and global arenas, the Turtle Ship endures as a symbol not only of wartime innovation but of lasting cultural and national significance. Its cinematic journey—from sixteenth-century battlefields to modern screens—underscores the transformative power of storytelling in shaping how nations remember, interpret, and reclaim their past.

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Natalya Rowe

## *A Congregation of Hope:*

### *The Sephardic Jewish Diaspora in the Colonial Transatlantic*

**ABSTRACT:** *This essay explores the Sephardic Jewish diaspora's involvement in early modern transatlantic trade networks and colonial territories. Through a combination of religious tolerance, mercantilism, and visions for a permanent community in a transnational and multilingual scenario, the Sephardic migration illuminates a wider and more nuanced dynamic of early modernity across the Iberian Peninsula, the Dutch Republic, Brazil, and Curaçao. By showcasing how the Sephardic diaspora benefited both economically and socially from this era of rapid globalization and increasing capitalism, the essay reveals the interconnected nature of colonial Latin America, early modern Europe, and the emergence of Jewish influence in the Atlantic world.*

**KEYWORDS:** *early modern history; colonialism; Atlantic world; Dutch Republic; Curaçao; Sephardic Judaism; Jewish diaspora; Eliau Namias de Crasto; Dutch West India Company; trade*

#### *Introduction*

In 1692, a Sephardic Jewish man called Eliau Nahamias de Crasto in death, Elias de Crasto in business matters, and Eliau Namias in the synagogue passed away.<sup>1</sup> An important figure in his faith community on the Caribbean island of Curaçao, Eliau's ornate tombstone in the local Jewish cemetery features a depiction of Elijah—the deceased's famous namesake among the prophets of ancient Israel—as he is being taken up into heaven in a whirlwind, accompanied by the corresponding quote from 2 Kings 2:11.<sup>2</sup> During the early modern period, a small but significant community of Jews was residing in Curaçao. While the respective birth and burial records are incomplete, their number is estimated at around 1,400.<sup>3</sup> Sephardic Jews were closely tied to the island's economic and social systems, often connecting the Americas to Europe. Despite many difficulties, Sephardic Jews in Curaçao were able to establish a strong cultural and religious community in the Americas and managed to take advantage of the emerging transnational trade in the Caribbean, thus helping to transition the Atlantic world into modernity.

#### *1. Cultural and Religious Rebuilding*

While members of the Sephardic Jewish diaspora arrived on the shores of Curaçao as early as 1651, their broader story begins in the Iberian Peninsula, called "Sepharad" in the traditional Ladino vernacular. Sephardic communities were deeply connected to Iberian culture and language, first under the Visigoths as early as the fourth century and later alongside the Moors in Al-Andalus. Over the span of nearly a thousand years, Sephardic Jews experienced considerable prosperity and cultural integration in this religiously diverse area, which is particularly evident in Mudejar architectural syncretism and the multilingualism of

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<sup>1</sup> Isaac Samuel Emmanuel, *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curacao: Curacao Jewry, 1656–1957* (Bloch Pub. Co., 1957), 172. According to Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 172, Eliau was "seventy-six years old on his death," suggesting that he must have been born c. 1616.

<sup>2</sup> Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 169 and image 23 (facing page 169).

<sup>3</sup> Josette C. Goldish, *Once Jews: Stories of Caribbean Sephardim* (Markus Wiener Publishers, 2009), 2.

Ladino, Hebrew, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic.<sup>4</sup> However, a late medieval shift in power eventually threatened the fabric of Moorish and Sephardic society, as well as its interwoven principles of tolerance and pluralism. For Sephardic Jews, the consolidation of the northern kingdoms under Queen Isabella I of Castile and King Ferdinand II of Aragon brought a new period of expulsion, fear, and uncertainty, reminiscent of their ancestors' biblical exiles in Egypt and Babylon. Following the Spanish conquest of Granada in 1492 and under the guise of fervent Catholicism, Isabella and Ferdinand issued the so-called "Alhambra Decree," which exiled Jews from all Spanish "kingdoms to depart and never to return" or to face "penalty of death and the confiscation" of all possessions, thereby cementing anti-Jewish sentiment into both Iberian policies and culture.<sup>5</sup>

Most Sephardic families faced three choices: flee the country to avoid political violence; abandon Judaism altogether and convert to Catholicism to avoid the Inquisition; or assume the role of a "converso" (i.e., become a crypto-Jew). The latter usually involved changing one's name, submitting to a Christian baptism, and outwardly accepting Catholic rituals while simultaneously celebrating Jewish customs in private under the continual risk of violence or expulsion. Many Sephardic families fled west to Portugal, where they lived for nearly a century in relative peace as crypto-Jews. However, following the Portuguese succession crisis of 1578, King Philip II of Spain invaded the country and assumed the throne, thereby forcing most Jews to flee the Iberian Peninsula altogether.<sup>6</sup> This launched the Sephardic migration across the Atlantic. Longing for a permanent settlement, many Sephardic families would initially flee north. The Netherlands, having declared their independence from Spain early during the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648), offered greater religious tolerance.<sup>7</sup> Comprising twenty percent of the population in the Netherlands, the Dutch Reformed Church was tolerant toward other Protestant groups, such as the French Huguenots, and even toward Roman Catholics.<sup>8</sup> Amsterdam proved to be particularly open toward Sephardic Jews, largely due to their wealth and ties to various colonial trade networks that they brought with them from Spain and Portugal. While not allowed to own property or pursue careers reserved for Protestants, Sephardic Jews were permitted to observe their own religious holidays and participate in international trade networks under private charters, such as the *West-Indische Compagnie* or Dutch West India Company. Thus, in the Netherlands, the Sephardic community was able to rebuild itself as a prosperous and unified Jewish congregation.

The story of Eliau Crasto reflects the increasing involvement of Amsterdam's Sephardic community in globalization and collaboration with colonial economic structures. His family, of Portuguese descent, had fled the Inquisition in favor of the Dutch Republic's broader

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<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Gorsky, *Exiles in Sepharad: The Jewish Millennium in Spain* (University of Nebraska Press, 2015), chap. 2 ("The Visigoth Persecution of the Jews").

<sup>5</sup> "The Alhambra Decree: Edict of the Expulsion of the Jews of Spain (1492)," Florida Atlantic University, [online](#).

<sup>6</sup> Goldish, *Once Jews*, 4.

<sup>7</sup> The Netherlands comprised various provinces with varying policies regarding religious tolerance and Judaism, with Holland and Zeeland reputed as being the most tolerant, likely due to their engagement in international trade.

<sup>8</sup> Peter J. Rietbergen, *The New Illustrated History of Amsterdam* (Bekking & Blitz Uitgevers, 2021), 57.

economic and social opportunities for merchant Jews. In 1636, one Manuel Nehemias, a “Portuguese of the Jewish Nation” and most likely Eliau’s father, successfully asked the Dutch West India Company for permission to send a colony of approximately two hundred Jewish merchants and their families to Recife, Brazil.<sup>9</sup> Thus, young Eliau became an original member of the first Jewish congregation—Kahal Zur Israel (“Rock of Israel”)—in the Americas.

Located in northeastern Brazil, Recife was a valuable location for emerging European colonial powers due to its suitable environment for the cultivation of sugar, tobacco, and brazilwood. Furthermore, its relative geographical proximity to both Europe and western Africa ensured that it would become a strategic hub in the transatlantic slave trade. During its early colonial period, Recife was occupied by the Portuguese. However, the Dutch captured the territory in 1630, which effectively transferred the operation of the local sugar mills and all economic policymaking to Dutch actors. Eliau spent his early adulthood in Dutch-occupied Recife, where he served his community in various capacities—including treasurer—until 1654.<sup>10</sup> In that year, the Portuguese retook Recife, forcing Eliau, his family, and many members of the city’s Kahal Zur Israel congregation to leave the territory under a safe-passage agreement, albeit while suffering immense social and financial losses. After witnessing almost two decades of community and business-building in the Americas being wiped away overnight, the Crastos were determined to find a new home for themselves and their coreligionists. Following a brief sojourn in Amsterdam, Eliau arrived on Curaçao in 1659, accompanied by his wife Sara Brandon and their three-year-old son Manuel. Indeed, many of Recife’s Sephardic Jews moved north to Caribbean territories, including Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, and Curaçao, that were—or would soon be—occupied by non-Spanish nations and practiced relative tolerance.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Economic Opportunities

The Sephardic congregation’s key method to rebuild itself as a Jewish center in the Caribbean was by establishing its financial security through transnational trade. After their departure from Brazil, the Jewish community formed the Beth Israel Portuguese “Esnoga” (i.e., “synagogue” in Ladino) in Amsterdam with capital acquired from Brazil’s sugarcane industry and, consequently, from the transatlantic slave trade which provided unfree labor in these sugar mills. The Portuguese synagogue displayed a strong cultural syncretism of Dutch architecture and Jewish faith, offering Sephardic Jews greater safety and deeper cultural integration within the community. A marvel of engineering and city planning, the Esnoga inspired the Sephardic community in the Dutch colonies to establish a unified congregation that was centered on Amsterdam and the economic opportunities provided through

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<sup>9</sup> Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 171; “Genealogical History of the Aboab Family by Isaac de Matatiah Aboab,” copied by his son Matatiah de Isaac Aboab, Amsterdam, 1676–1719, Ets Haim Bibliotheek, Livraria Montezinos, EH 48 E 27, [online](#).

<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 171.

<sup>11</sup> Goldish, *Once Jews*, 5.



negotiations with the Dutch West India Company.<sup>12</sup> Alan P. Marcus, a scholar of geography and urban planning, has characterized this phenomenon as a “new experiment of religious tolerance and economic inclusion in the Atlantic world,”<sup>13</sup> which offered Jews an opportunity to recreate economic growth in Dutch colonies like Curaçao.

Before the Dutch West India Company seized the island in 1634, Curaçao had been a Spanish colony in the Caribbean just north of Venezuela. Unlike Recife, Curaçao was not considered highly valuable and therefore labeled “isla inutil” (i.e., “useless island”). It had primarily been utilized for cattle and sheep herding, so the Dutch were said to have “encountered little resistance” when they captured the island.<sup>14</sup> After its takeover, the Dutch West India Company offered plots of land to entice European settlement and encourage trade. Communities were conditionally permitted to rent land “for 50 persons, 2 miles along the coast, for 100 persons, 4 miles” in increments of four years, contingent upon their “cultivation and improvement” of the Dutch economy.<sup>15</sup> Dutch Curaçao was initially envisioned to be utilized for the cultivation of sugar cane; however, its inadequate terrain and unfavorable weather conditions rendered this both unrealistic and unprofitable. As a result, Curaçao’s residents looked elsewhere for income. In 1651, the Sephardic Jews’ newly established Mikvé Israel-Emanuel (i.e., “Hope of Israel-Emanuel”) synagogue was granted two miles of coastline in Willemstad to establish a fruitful community.

Curaçao offered Sephardic Jews a new opportunity for prosperity. By the end of the early modern period, their Curaçaoan congregation’s approximately 1,500 recorded members constituted one of the largest synagogues in the Caribbean. In fact, about thirty-eight percent of the island’s total European population were Jewish, making them an important minority.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, significant regions of the Caribbean, including Cuba, Santo Domingo, and Puerto Rico, remained Spanish colonies and were therefore subject to the Inquisition’s policies of antisemitism. While this complicated the Jewish Curaçaoans’ trade with larger islands in the Caribbean, it solidified their community internally, with most of its men active as “merchants, insurance agents, shipowners, ship captains, and plantation owners.”<sup>17</sup>

Early modern colonial projects across the globe, particularly in the Caribbean, reflected the mercantilist economic system. Originating in the sixteenth century, this system propagated a European nation’s exporting of colonial goods while minimizing the same nation’s importing

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<sup>12</sup> See Stanley Mirvis, *The Jews of Eighteenth-Century Jamaica: A Testamentary History of a Diaspora in Transition* (Yale University Press, 2020); Stuart B. Schwartz, ed., *Tropical Babels: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450–1680* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Alan P. Marcus, *Portuguese Jews and New Christians in Colonial Brazil, 1500–1822: A New Geography of the Atlantic World* (University of New Mexico Press, 2024), 123.

<sup>14</sup> Goldish, *Once Jews*, 5.

<sup>15</sup> “Grant of Land on Curaçao to Joseph Nunes de Fonseca,” February 22, 1652, in *New Netherland Documents*, Volume XVII: *Curaçao Papers, 1640–1665*, trans. and ed. Charles T. Gehring and Jacob A. Schiltkamp (Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1987), 50.

<sup>16</sup> Goldish, *Once Jews*, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Mirvis, *Jews of Eighteenth-Century Jamaica*, 246, argues that, while the depiction of Sephardic Jews in Latin America and the Caribbean as merchants or slave owners is not inaccurate, one must note that there were “Jewish planters ... poor *despachados*, physicians, metal workers, entertainers, and fishermen” in the Caribbean as well.

of any goods from other European nations. It also viewed the “global supply of wealth,” as measured in gold, silver, and other precious materials, as “finite” and therefore considered the maximum acquisition of these resources a primary interest of the state.<sup>18</sup> The mercantilist economic system propelled emerging nation states into a direct competition for global dominance, both in Europe itself and throughout the colonies overseas. While Sephardic Jews did not invent this system, they benefited from it by collaborating with the Dutch in their effort to control the colonial marketplace. From their favorable geopolitical vantage point, Curaçaoan Jews were “eagerly anticipating” new access to untapped markets.<sup>19</sup>

The economic strength of Curaçao’s Mikvé Israel-Emanuel congregation became evident during Eliau Crasto’s final years. Between 1675 and 1686, he served four terms as its president.<sup>20</sup> After Eliau’s death in 1692, his wife Sara came into a considerable inheritance. However, according to a private letter between her brother-in-law David Levy Dovale and his son (Sara’s nephew) Manuel Levy, written in 1694, Sara did not manage these funds to the satisfaction of her extended family or the wider Curaçaoan Jewish community.<sup>21</sup> In time, however, Sara’s and Eliau’s son Mordechay (d. May 5, 1716) emerged as a prominent member of Curaçao’s Mikvé Israel-Emanuel synagogue.<sup>22</sup>

### Conclusion

While most Sephardic Jewish families were not as wealthy or politically influential as the Crastos, all undertook long and arduous journeys in search of a safer, more prosperous life for themselves and other members of their faith community. Sharing a history marked by displacement and forced migration, the Sephardic diaspora continually demonstrated a sustained hope that the emerging Atlantic world, including the colonies of the tolerant Dutch Republic and the materially rich Americas, could offer them a refuge, thereby echoing the Israelites’ journey from bondage in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. The Sephardic experience in the Americas is often not represented in the wider Jewish story or arbitrarily separated by modern geographical or cultural divides. Yet their journey, like that of many other diasporic people, offers crucial insights into the early modern Atlantic world—and this early modern Atlantic world is best understood by appreciating all its interconnected features, including its economic systems, its religious diversity, and its ideas of community.

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<sup>18</sup> Corporate Finance Institute, “Mercantilism,” [online](#).

<sup>19</sup> Goldish, *Once Jews*, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 172.

<sup>21</sup> Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 173.

<sup>22</sup> Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, 229–230.

Arjun Kraft

## Watery Discourses in Seventeenth-Century England: Fishing, Society, and Divinity in Izaak Walton's "The Compleat Angler"

**ABSTRACT:** The devotion and time spent in recreational activities are a defining trait of humans as a distinct species. Sports, games, and hobbies do not fulfill a biological urge to sustain life, yet for some they make life worth living. In seventeenth-century England, Izaak Walton, a devout Anglican Royalist, passionately explained how recreational fishing had the potential to make one feel content with one's life. First published in the wake of the devastating English Civil Wars, "The Compleat Angler" is one of the most reprinted books in the English language and much more than just an angling manual. Walton's discourse is rife with interpretative potential for understanding the social and religious contexts of a shattered country. This article argues that "The Compleat Angler" is a "symbol" of postwar society, notes its subtle socio-political messaging, and presents it as a moralistic, environmental, and religious text. Through the guise of an angling manual, Walton offered criticisms of English culture and advocated for a more tranquil and contemplative society.

**KEYWORDS:** early modern history; England; English Civil Wars; Izaak Walton; *The Compleat Angler*; angling; Christianity; Anglican Church; literary ecology; morality

### Introduction

"I doubt not but if you and I did converse together but a few hours, to leave you possess with the same high and happy thoughts that now possess me of it; not only of the Antiquity of Angling, but that it deserves commendations, and that it is an Art, and an Art worthy the knowledg and practice of a wise man."<sup>1</sup> This quote from *The Compleat Angler* highlights the great artistry and respect that its author—Izaak Walton (1593–1683)—associated with the sport of angling. Recreational fishing, or angling, is the specific act of catching fish with a rod and hook (angle) for the express purpose of enjoyment rather than the mere procurement of food.<sup>2</sup> According to seventeenth-century cookbooks, England—a place where cured fish had been a staple protein for generations—was undergoing a culinary transformation as fresh fish became a more desired item on people's menus.<sup>3</sup> Also around this time, the most famous angling manual, Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* (1653), was released.<sup>4</sup> To this day, *The Compleat Angler* remains one of the most reprinted books in the English language.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler* [1676], ed. Jonquil Bevan (Oxford University Press, 1983), 189.

<sup>2</sup> Angling refers to catching fish with a line and hook, while "fishing" can include using nets, spearfishing, etc. For the broad history of European fishing in the late Middle Ages prior to the publication of *The Compleat Angler*, see Richard C. Hoffman, *Fishers' Craft and Lettered Art: Tracts on Fishing from the End of the Middle Ages* (University of Toronto Press, 1997). For modern practices of angling and its sustainability, see Jacob W. Brownscombe et al., "Best Practices for Catch-and-Release Recreational Fisheries—Angling Tools and Tactics," *Fisheries Research* 186, no. 3 (2017): 693–705.

<sup>3</sup> Alison Locker, "The Decline in the Consumption of Stored Cod and Herring in Post-Medieval and Early Industrialised England: A Change in Food Culture," in *Cod and Herring: The Archaeology and History of Medieval Sea Fishing*, ed. James H. Barrett and David C. Orton (Oxbow Books, 2016), 99–108.

<sup>4</sup> Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Angler or, The Contemplative Man's Recreation* (Modern Library Classics, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Guyer, "Izaak Walton's 'Holy War': 'The Compleat Angler' in Polemical Context," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 47, no. 2 (2016): 283.

Walton's style is soothingly meditative and presents angling as not just peaceful and gentle but also as an honorable and contemplative recreation that inspires virtuous traits in the angler. *The Compleat Angler* was published during a tumultuous time in English history—following the brutal English Civil Wars (1642–1651), four years after the execution of Charles I (1649), and during the so-called English Interregnum (1649–1660). Izaak Walton, a devoted Royalist and Anglican, subtly yet decisively asserts his ideology throughout the text. *The Compleat Angler* is filled with Walton's commentary on English society, and his definitive work inspired the creation of other angling texts.

*The Compleat Angler* instructs the reader on how to fish for various freshwater fish species found throughout England's rivers and ponds. Walton includes advice on the best baits, techniques, and cooking ideas for salmon, trout, pike, eels, and other game. These lessons, while informative, are not the true essence of the *Angler*.<sup>6</sup> The *Angler* does not read like a pure manual of angling instruction. Its narrative structure features compelling dialogue between characters, songs, and plenty of life lessons. The work's main characters of Piscator, Venator (originally Viator), and Auceps begin the text by sharing about their favored recreations of fishing, hunting, and hawking.<sup>7</sup> Piscator explains the art of angling, which intrigues Venator, and the rest of the book follows Venator's journey of learning the skills and virtues of an angler. The character of Venator represents the reader, who is new to the sport, while Piscator serves as Walton's voice. To better grasp the meaning behind Piscator's commentary, it is necessary to consider the long life of the *Angler's* author.

Izaak Walton was born in 1593 in Stafford (about 24 miles north of Birmingham) and died in 1683 in Winchester (about 60 miles south of London) at the age of ninety.<sup>8</sup> Little is known of his parents except that his father, Gervase (or Jervis) Walton, was an innkeeper with strong connections throughout Staffordshire.<sup>9</sup> At some point in his late teens or early twenties, Walton was living in London and became quite successful in the linen and drapery industry.<sup>10</sup> In 1626, he married Rachel Floud, who provided him with her prominent family connections, thereby enhancing his reputation. Walton was close friends with the poet John Donne (1571/1572–1631) and the diplomat Henry Wotton (1568–1639), who would be honored in Walton's *Lives*, a collection of biographies published in the early 1670s, as well as in *The Compleat Angler*. During the English Civil Wars, Walton held on to his unwavering Anglican and Royalist beliefs, which many scholars have traced in his writings.<sup>11</sup> After the Royalist defeat in the Battle of Worcester (1651), Walton was entrusted with the "lesser George" jewel of Charles II, which he carried to London from the Midlands for safekeeping.<sup>12</sup> Throughout

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout this article, *Angler* (italicized) only refers to *The Compleat Angler*.

<sup>7</sup> The names of the characters are the Latin words for fisherman (*piscator*), hunter (*venator*, originally traveler/*viator*), and fowler (*auceps*).

<sup>8</sup> Stapleton Martin, *Izaak Walton and His Friends* (Chapman and Hall, 1904), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Jonquil Bevan, "Introduction," in *The Compleat Angler* (Oxford University Press, 1983), 1.

<sup>10</sup> Bevan, "Introduction," 1.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Bottrall, "Walton, Izaak (1593–1683)," in *British Writers*, vol. 2, ed. Ian Scott-Kilvert (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979), 134.

<sup>12</sup> Leslie Stephen, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885–1900, vol. 59, ed. Sidney Lee (Elder Smith and Company, 1899), 274.

his lifetime, Walton was impacted by the chaos of the mid-seventeenth century, which undoubtedly influenced his writing style. Around the age of sixty, Walton began writing the *Angler*, and he spent the remaining thirty years of his life refining its text through five editions.

Although Walton's *Angler* ranks as the most popular early modern angling manual, it is not the first. A treatise added to the *Boke of Seynt Albans* (1496) is considered the earliest known text on recreational fishing. This *Treatyse of Fysshynge wythe an Angle* was printed by the London publisher Wynkyn de Worde and contains information on various noble recreations for gentlemen (hawking, hunting, heraldry, and angling). Its prologue may have inspired the narrative format of Walton's *Angler* since it, too, begins by advocating for the supremacy of angling over other recreational activities. The authorship of this early fishing treatise is often ascribed to the late medieval Benedictine Juliana Berners (born c. 1388); however, there is little evidence to support this, and it is completely unknown who authored the treatise's section on angling.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, the *Treatyse* created the trend of connecting morals to angling, a theme that almost every subsequent fishing text would follow. Yet, the 1496 manual had focused on the upper echelons of English society and their recreational activities. Between the publication of the 1496 *Treatyse* and the 1653 edition of the *Angler*, several other authors published angling manuals that clearly inspired Walton.<sup>14</sup> For example, William Samuel's *Arte of Angling* (1577)<sup>15</sup> features a similar narrative structure that includes lengthy dialogue between the characters Piscator and Viator, which Walton borrowed and expanded on in his *Angler*.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, Leonard Mascall's *A Booke of Fishing with Hooke and Line* (1590) offers more concrete angling instructions (taken from the 1496 *Treatyse*) and lacks the meditative tone found in most early modern angling texts.<sup>17</sup> Walton took many of the angling instructions found in Mascall's text and published them in the *Angler*. Last but not least, John Dennys's poetic text, *The Secrets of Angling* (1613),<sup>18</sup> also influenced Walton. Dennys dedicates a considerable portion of his text to the angler's virtues, which happens to be a central theme of *The Compleat Angler*.

Considering all the angling texts that predate the *Angler*, as well as the ample amount of material that Walton borrowed from them, why is *The Compleat Angler* one of the most famous texts of seventeenth-century England? Some earlier scholarship, notably Marcus S. Goldman's chapter in a collection of *Studies in Honor of T. W. Baldwin* (1958), questions the originality of the *Angler* because of its apparent reliance on previous angling texts.<sup>19</sup> While there is some merit to this claim, the true originality of Walton's *Angler* lies in its captivating dialogue and idyllic world, which supersedes the more practical angling advice of its

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<sup>13</sup> Max Lester Loges, "'The Treatise on Fishing with an Angle': A Study of a Fifteenth-Century Document" (Ph.D. diss., Oklahoma State University, 1992), 8–10.

<sup>14</sup> In the introduction to his edition of the 1653 and 1676 versions of *The Compleat Angler*, Jonquil Bevan maps out the long list of angling texts that preceded Izaak Walton's publications. Bevan, "Introduction," 18.

<sup>15</sup> William Samuel, *The Arte of Angling, 1577*, ed. Gerald Eades Bentley (Princeton University Press, 1956).

<sup>16</sup> Bevan, "Introduction," 17.

<sup>17</sup> Bevan, "Introduction," 16–17.

<sup>18</sup> John Dennys, *The Secrets of Angling* (W. Satchell and Company, 1883 [1613]).

<sup>19</sup> Marcus S. Goldman, "Izaak Walton and the Arte of Angling," in *Studies in Honor of T. W. Baldwin*, ed. Don Cameron Allen (University of Illinois Press, 1958), 185–204.

predecessors. Alison Locker has referred to the 1653 publication of the *Angler* as a “second ‘watershed’ moment” for angling texts after the influential *Treatyse*, because Walton’s text reinvigorated the genre.<sup>20</sup> It was John Cooper’s study *The Art of the Compleat Angler* (1968) that thoroughly changed the scholarly assessment of Walton’s text.<sup>21</sup> Cooper’s monograph disputes the earlier claim that *The Compleat Angler* is unoriginal because Walton had borrowed ideas from earlier angling treatises; instead, Cooper contextualizes the literary traditions that Walton followed and expands on the author’s moral and religious beliefs found in the text. Cooper argues that the *Angler* is the meeting place between the “pastoral and georgic ideal” that is being communicated between the characters of Piscator and Venator.<sup>22</sup> Cooper’s analysis has since spurred a series of scholarly research on Walton’s text.

Continuing the analysis of *The Compleat Angler* after Cooper, Jonquil Bevan’s 1988 study argues that Walton concealed the seriousness and artistry of his work, and that the text is both political and an example of escapism.<sup>23</sup> Walton’s treatise offers a rural escape for the defeated Royalist cause, while also softly criticizing the Puritan ideological shift in England. Additionally, Bevan has published a critical edition of both the 1653 and 1676 versions of *The Compleat Angler*, which contains a thorough introduction to the work.<sup>24</sup> A 1992 article by David Radcliffe suggests that *The Compleat Angler* is an early example of social formation and notes its political elements.<sup>25</sup> Steven Zwicker’s 1993 analysis expands on the political aspects of *The Compleat Angler* and argues that Walton’s work is more about presenting an idyllic pastime and resisting the Cromwellian leadership.<sup>26</sup> Gregory Michael Colón Semenza’s 2001 monograph presents Walton’s celebration of angling as a defense of sports during the English Interregnum, when many recreational activities were being scrutinized and banned.<sup>27</sup> A 2016 article by Benjamin Guyer elaborates on Zwicker’s analysis and proposes that *The Compleat Angler* is a work of Anglican royalism and a clear polemical text.<sup>28</sup> Yet Marjorie Swann’s 2023 work challenges the ideas proposed by Zwicker and Guyer, arguing that *The Compleat Angler* emphasizes the human relationship with the natural environment and is a depiction of seventeenth-century social, cultural, and environmental relationships rather than

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<sup>20</sup> Alison Locker, *Freshwater Fish in England: A Social and Cultural History of Coarse Fish from Prehistory to the Present Day* (Oxbow Books, 2018), 78.

<sup>21</sup> John Cooper, *The Art of the Compleat Angler* (Duke University Press, 1968).

<sup>22</sup> Cooper, *Art of the Compleat Angler*, 102. The adjective “georgic” refers to Virgil’s poem “Georgica,” written in the first century BCE.

<sup>23</sup> Jonquil Bevan, *Izaak Walton’s The Compleat Angler: The Art of Recreation* (St. Martin’s Press, 1988).

<sup>24</sup> This particular edition of the *Angler*, also edited by Jonquil Bevan and cited earlier (Oxford University Press, 1983), serves as the main source for this study.

<sup>25</sup> David Hill Radcliffe, “‘Study to Be Quiet’: Genre and Politics in Izaak Walton’s ‘Compleat Angler,’” *English Literary Renaissance* 22, no. 1 (1992): 95–111. For a comprehensive analysis of the gendered language and the cultural context of male friendship surrounding angling, see Sean Herrera-Thomas, “Haunted by Authors: Pretexts and Pleasures in Early-Modern English and Late-Modern American Angling” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Steven N. Zwicker, *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649–1689* (Cornell University Press, 1993), 60–61.

<sup>27</sup> Gregory Michael Colón Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature in the English Renaissance* (University of Delaware Press, 2013), 139.

<sup>28</sup> Guyer, “Izaak Walton’s ‘Holy War,’” 283–303.

a purely political resistance hidden behind the guise of an angling manual.<sup>29</sup> These various scholarly approaches focus on opposing aspects of Walton's text; however, almost all scholarship on *The Compleat Angler* comes from English literature scholars, while historical scholarship on fishing does not pay much attention to Walton's work.

The angling texts that followed the *Angler* have received considerably less scholarly attention. This includes *The Experienced Angler* (1662), written by Colonel Robert Venables (c. 1613–1687), a notable parliamentarian veteran of the English Civil Wars.<sup>30</sup> After fighting for Parliament during the English Civil Wars, Venables was promoted to a leading position during the Western Design campaign in the Spanish West Indies, alongside William Penn.<sup>31</sup> After the Stuart Restoration, his military and political career came to an end, and Venables likely spent more time angling. While Venables and Walton had been on opposite sides during the conflict, their shared love of angling seems to have bridged this gap. Walton wrote an introduction for Venables's book that showed his admiration and respect for the man. *The Experienced Angler* is much more concise in its angling instructions than the *Angler*. Charles Cotton (1630–1687), a close friend, fellow Royalist, and protégé of Walton, added a significant section to later editions of *The Compleat Angler* as well.<sup>32</sup> Cotton is mostly remembered for *The Compleat Gamester* (1674), a manual on different recreational games. Walton's, Cotton's, and Venables's angling texts were eventually combined into *The Universal Angler* (1676).<sup>33</sup> Considering the proliferation of angling texts among writers who were either directly involved in or heavily affected by the English Civil Wars, a pattern emerges. The study of these angling manuals and their authors opens a unique lens to appreciate the connections between angling and English life after a period of violent wars and political instability. For the purposes of this study, Walton's *Angler* takes center stage because its content is the most varied and clear in its commentary on seventeenth-century English society.

*The Compleat Angler* is a multifaceted text that offers Walton's opinions on the natural world, morality, and religion. This study argues that *The Compleat Angler*—and the subsequent angling texts that followed it—aimed to influence others to adopt a peaceful, contemplative, and religious philosophy. Walton's *Angler* and, to a lesser extent, other angling texts offer distinctive insights into the broader cultural shifts of mid-seventeenth-century England after political and religious upheavals.

The present study examines how the subtle, yet frequent commentary found in angling texts can offer a unique perspective on English cultural history. Fishing manuals may not seem to

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<sup>29</sup> Marjorie Swann, *Environment, Society, and The Compleat Angler* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2023).

<sup>30</sup> Robert Venables, *The Experienced Angler: or, Angling Improved* (first published 1662; Septimus Prowett and Thomas Gosden, 1825).

<sup>31</sup> Jennifer Wells, "English Law, Irish Trials and Cromwellian State Building in the 1650s," *Past & Present* 227, no. 1 (2015): 115.

<sup>32</sup> There were five editions of the *Angler* released during Walton's lifetime (1653, 1655, 1661, 1668, and 1676). Charles Cotton contributed to the *Angler* in later editions, including a section on fishing for trout and grayling in a clear stream. Cotton's addition to the *Angler* continues the narrative (pages 266–360 of the Modern Library Classics edition) and follows Walton's style.

<sup>33</sup> Izaak Walton, Charles Cotton, and Robert Venables, *The Universal Angler* (Richard Marriott, 1676).

be the “richest” documents in terms of increasing our understanding of seventeenth-century English history and culture. However, according to Peter Burke, a “common ground” shared by cultural historians is the “concern with the symbolic and its interpretation.”<sup>34</sup> As Burke explains, “symbols, conscious or unconscious, can be found everywhere, from art to everyday life.”<sup>35</sup> This study contends that the *Angler* is a “symbol” of postwar English society, rife with interpretative potential. It also considers the literary impact of Walton’s *Angler* and the historical events that influenced its content and meaning. While the *Angler* offers a variety of historically relevant themes, this analysis focuses on its environmental, moral, and religious undertones. Walton emphasized these central themes in the *Angler* because his idea of a “contemplative” fisherman encompassed an understanding of the natural world, a peaceful spirit, and an unwavering and true devotion to God.

### 1. Literary Ecology

“The Angler’s Wish” in the 1676 edition of *The Compleat Angler* begins as follows:

“I in these flowry Meads wou’d be: / These Chrystal streams should solace me; / To whose harmonious bubbling noise, / I with my Angle wo’d rejoice.”<sup>36</sup>

Descriptions of the beauty and solace of the English countryside course through the pages of the *Angler*. Environmental thought permeates Walton’s style and—in the words of Marjorie Swann—“presents a rich and compelling vision of how humanity interacts with (and within) a complex natural world.”<sup>37</sup> This section explores the literary ecology of *The Compleat Angler*, as the natural world is the core of Walton’s idyllic world. James Meeker, in a 1997 analysis of the relationship between literature and the natural world, defines literary ecology as “the study of biological themes and relationships that appear in literary works. It is simultaneously an attempt to discover what roles literature has played in the ecology of the human species.”<sup>38</sup> As the *Angler* is a fishing manual, much of its text is dedicated to describing the freshwater inhabitants of England’s rivers. These fish, which Walton amusingly nicknames with noble titles—such as the salmon being the “king of the fresh waters” or the pike being the “tyrant”—receive detailed depictions of their natural behavior.<sup>39</sup> Walton’s way of talking about fish in *The Compleat Angler*, which includes accounts of their intelligence and beauty, displays his respect for them. He references the works of both Conrad Gessner (1516–1565), known as the “Swiss Pliny” for his contributions to early modern zoology,<sup>40</sup> and Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626) to explain the varying species’ biology, thereby adding a scientific element to the text. As the *Angler* is one of the most reprinted books in the English language, it

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<sup>34</sup> Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Polity, 2008), 13.

<sup>35</sup> Burke, *What is Cultural History*, 13.

<sup>36</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 262. “Meads” refers to “meadows.”

<sup>37</sup> Swann, *Environment, Society, and The Compleat Angler*, 11.

<sup>38</sup> James Meeker, *The Comedy of Survival: Literary Ecology and a Play Ethic* (University of Arizona Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>39</sup> Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler* [1653], ed. Jonquil Bevan (Oxford University Press, 1983), 122.

<sup>40</sup> Sophia Hendriks, “Ichthyology and Emblematics in Conrad Gesner’s *Historia piscium* and Joachim Camerarius the Younger’s *Symbola et Emblemata*,” in *Emblems and the Natural World*, ed. Karl A. E. Enenkel and Paul J. Smith (Brill, 2017), 190.



warrants an analysis through the lens of literary ecology for its ongoing commentary on the environment. This facilitates an understanding of how the natural world was perceived in seventeenth-century angling texts.

Although Walton expresses occasional environmentalist thought, labeling him an early modern environmental activist would be erroneous. The *Angler* advocates for the preservation of fish, the scaled creatures that make its author's beloved sport possible, yet this appreciation does not extend to all creatures in England's animal kingdom. For example, Eurasian otters primarily feed on freshwater fish that are between ten and fifteen centimeters in length, the size of the freshly spawned fish that later grow into the species that Walton and his fellow anglers so hope to catch.<sup>41</sup> Like overeager "greedy fishermen" (who Walton later chastises) that catch and kill young fish, otters are treated with extreme vitriol in the first few pages of the *Angler*. Expressing himself through the words of Piscator, Walton writes: "My purpose is to bestow a day or two in helping to destroy some of those villanous vermin: for I hate them perfectly, because they love fish so well, or rather, because they destroy so much: indeed, so much, that in my judgment, all men that keep Otter dogs ought to have a Pension from the Commonwealth to incourage them to destroy the very breed of those base Otters, they do so much mischief."<sup>42</sup> Robert Venables also included his thoughts on otters in *The Experienced Angler*. Listing general advice for angling, Venables writes that an angler should "destroy all beasts or birds that devour the fish or their spawn."<sup>43</sup> He then quotes a poem about killing otters from George Gascoigne's *Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting* (1611) that, like angling manuals, instructs the reader on how to hunt England's fauna successfully.<sup>44</sup>

The above excerpt from the 1653 edition of the *Angler* is rather ironic given how Walton portrays the peaceful spirit of anglers elsewhere in his text. After the long rant calling for a culling of Britain's otters, Piscator introduces himself as a "Brother of the Angle" who belongs to a fraternity of men that possess an aura of calm disposition, who pity the "poor-rich-men" that "spend all their time first in getting" and are too busy in the pursuit of money and status.<sup>45</sup> On this topic, Walton writes: "For (trust me, Sir) we enjoy a contentednesse above the reach of such dispositions."<sup>46</sup>

How can one enjoy a superior level of contentment while also showing extremist views toward the natural existence of otters? While it is possible that Walton's tirade against the otters is exaggerated to complement the *Angler's* otherwise congenial tone, it reflects a pattern of anger against anything that threatens the sport of angling. In his comprehensive study of *The Compleat Angler* in the context of the Commonwealth (1649–1660) and the Puritan banishment of sports, Gregory Michael Colón Semenza notes the systematic use of

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<sup>41</sup> Lars-Henrik Olsen, *Tracks and Signs of the Animals and Birds of Britain and Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 156.

<sup>42</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 64.

<sup>43</sup> Venables, *Experienced Angler*, 55.

<sup>44</sup> George Gascoigne, *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting* [1577] (Thomas Purfoot, 1611), 201.

<sup>45</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 64.

<sup>46</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 64.

angling to critique “contemporary laws proscribing communal recreations.”<sup>47</sup> Semenza argues that the “seeming apoliticality” of the *Angler* is what “makes it such a powerful political tool.”<sup>48</sup> The original version of Walton’s masterpiece is much more subdued when it comes to political themes. In fact, the 1653 and the 1676 editions are quite different. Walton’s original publication is more aligned with its title, *The Compleat Angler*, while the final edition is more connected to its subtitle, *The Contemplative Man’s Recreation*. This is because, by 1676, Walton’s philosophical commentary superseded his angling instructions. According to Jonquil Bevan, most of the changes in the subsequent editions of Walton’s text seem to “have been made on literary grounds” and do not add more in-depth instructions on fishing.<sup>49</sup>

The 1653 edition—released on the eve of Oliver Cromwell’s rule as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland (1653–1658), when harsh measures were taken against communal sports—is closely linked to the “consolatory purpose” of late 1640s Royalist literature.<sup>50</sup> According to Blair Worden, Walton’s 1653 text “pays homage to rural retreat” for the defeated Royalist cause.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the first edition focuses more on the simplicity and pleasure of rural life when compared to the rush of England’s urban centers. The *Angler*’s narrative, which has Piscator training Viator (later Venator) in the art of angling through the countryside, starts and ends near Tottenham (North London). In his definitive analysis of the *Angler*, John Cooper associates Walton’s text with the “pastoral and georgic ideal,” arguing that the reality of city life was the final test and the “full meaning” of the companions’ journey.<sup>52</sup> Walton’s writing, it appears, paints the picture of an environmental sermon.

In the 1676 edition, however, the *Angler*’s veiled political messaging and pastoral ideals intertwine in one of Piscator’s lessons to Venator. During this particular lesson, Piscator explains to Venator an essential aspect of the angling brotherhood, namely, to respect the natural spawning of fish and to obey size limitations. To get his point across, Walton purposefully rationalizes the significance of the “Fence Months” in England:

“Sir, they be principally three, namely, March, April, and May, for these be the usual months that Salmon come out of the Sea to spawn in most fresh Rivers, and their Fry<sup>53</sup> would about a certain time return back to the salt water, if they were not hindered by weres and unlawful gins,<sup>54</sup> which the greedy Fisher-men set, and so destroy them by thousands, as they would, (being so taught by nature) change the fresh for salt water.

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<sup>47</sup> Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature*, 139.

<sup>48</sup> Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature*, 144.

<sup>49</sup> Bevan, “Introduction,” 12.

<sup>50</sup> Blair Worden, *The English Civil Wars, 1640–1660* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2009), 113.

<sup>51</sup> Worden, *English Civil Wars*, 113.

<sup>52</sup> Cooper, *Art of the Compleat Angler*, 102.

<sup>53</sup> “Fry” are recently hatched fish.

<sup>54</sup> “Gins” is another term for animal traps. “Weirs” (here: “weres”) are used to control the flow of water on rivers for human needs such as to prevent flooding and change the water’s depth for boats. The changing flow of water can have damaging effects on fish spawning and natural movement, hindering their numbers. Although focused on Sockeye Salmon in Canada, the effects on fish and weirs are thoroughly covered in Douglas Harris, *Fish, Law, and Colonialism: The Legal Capture of Salmon in British Columbia* (University of Toronto Press, 2001), 79–81.

He that shall view the wise Statutes made in the 13<sup>55</sup> [regnal year] of Edw[ard]. the I. and the like in Rich[ard]. the III. may see several provisions made against the destruction of Fish: and though I possess no knowledge of the Law, yet I am sure the regulation of these defects might be easily mended. But I remember that a wise friend of mine did usually say, That which is every bodies business, is no bodies business. If it were otherwise, there could not be so many Nets and Fish that are under the Statute size, sold daily amongst us, and of which the conservators of the water should be ashamed. But above all, the taking [of] Fish in spawning time, may be said to be against nature; it is like the taking the dam on the nest when she hatches her young: a sin so against nature, that Almighty God hath in the Levitical Law made a Law against it."<sup>56</sup>

This excerpt captures the multifaceted nature of the *Angler*. Walton offers a moral opinion on the "greedy" fishermen who angle not for the contemplative enjoyment but instead fish for money. In *The Experienced Angler*, Venables agrees with Walton's sentiment on illegal fishing methods: "And endeavour, whether in authority or not, to see all statutes put in execution, against such as use unlawful nets, or means to take fish; especially bar-netting and night-hooking."<sup>57</sup> Although Walton's and Venables's environmental preservation efforts are selective (and decidedly exclude otters), they show a strong distaste for the destruction of spawning fish and their fry. Walton explicitly refers to the Salmon Preservation Act of 1285, established during the reign of King Edward I (ruled 1272–1307), which includes the following section that closely parallels Walton's own complaints:

"Young Salmons shall not be taken nor destroyed by Nets, nor by the Engines at Millpools, from the midst of April unto the Nativity of St. John the Baptist [i.e., June 24]. And in Places whereas Waters be, there shall be assigned Overseers of this Statute, which being sworn, shall oftentimes see and inquire of the Offenders. And for the first Trespass, they shall be punished by burning of their Nets and Engines. And for the second Time, they shall have Imprisonment for a Quarter of a Year. And for the third Trespass, they shall be imprisoned a Year; and as their Trespass increaseth, so shall the Punishment."<sup>58</sup>

Thus, Walton introduces an environmental and political aspect to his "Discourse of Rivers."<sup>59</sup> By referencing Edward I's 1285 law, Walton uses history to advocate for his environmental worldview and praises past rulers to critique the "defects" of the seventeenth century. According to Steven Zwicker, the *Angler* insists "that true liberty of the spirit follows from a particular moral, social, and political stance," and Walton's decision to bring up the immoral acts of his contemporary fishermen illustrates his moral and environmental philosophy.<sup>60</sup>

When Walton proclaims that he has "no knowledge of the law," yet he is sure that the environmental rules may be "easily mended," he subtly critiques English policy.<sup>61</sup> His personal political opinion, strongly shaped by his experiences as a devoted Royalist during the English

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<sup>55</sup> Salmon Preservation Act 1285, 13 Edw. 1. St. 1, c. 47, in *The Statutes of the Realm: Printed by Command of His Majesty King George the Third in Pursuance of an Address of the House of Commons of Great Britain*, vol. 1 (Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1963 [reprint]), 94–95.

<sup>56</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 213–214. The biblical reference here is Deuteronomy 22:6 (KJV): "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young."

<sup>57</sup> Venables, *Experienced Angler*, 56–57.

<sup>58</sup> Salmon Preservation Act 1285, in *Statutes of the Realm*, 94–95.

<sup>59</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 195.

<sup>60</sup> Zwicker, *Lines of Authority*, 64.

<sup>61</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 213.

Civil Wars, casts great "wiseness" on past rulers. Jonquil Bevan describes Walton's political instinct as shunning public protest and intent on "set[ting] an example of dutiful and quiet obedience to the direction of those whom he looked on as his temporal and spiritual rulers."<sup>62</sup> According to Bevan, this is apparent in Walton's writings, notably the "Life of Sanderson" in *Lives*, where he reflects on the tumultuous events of the 1640s, such as the March of the Covenanters (1643) and the execution of William Laud (1645).<sup>63</sup> Yet, in *The Compleat Angler*, Walton's direct expressions concerning this period are either heavily veiled or nonexistent.

The presence of the natural world is consistent throughout the *Angler*, serving as the tranquil backdrop for all of Walton's instructions and commentary. Walton's perspective on man's relationship with nature follows the idea of the Great Chain of Being, an ancient philosophy that links all elements of the universe in a hierarchical order.<sup>64</sup> According to this, the maintenance of natural order directly relates to "the divine plan of creation," which, when disobeyed by an individual's "pride and ambition," results in the "decay of nature itself."<sup>65</sup> Man is the "central link" in the Great Chain of Being and the world that surrounds him is made for his honor by God.<sup>66</sup> Walton implies this philosophy when he condemns sins against nature, like the killing of young fish by men influenced by greed.

Richard Hooker (1554–1600), an English theologian and a major influence on Walton, communicated the Great Chain in his writings. In *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Hooker explains the consequences of breaking the natural order of nature: "If the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves, by disorder'd and confus'd mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated by heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away, as children at the wither'd breasts of their mothers, no longer able to yield them relief; what would become of man himself, whom these things do now all serve?"<sup>67</sup> Hooker plainly correlated the loss of the natural order with "universal dissolution" that would destroy mankind's existence.<sup>68</sup> The fear of the natural world collapsing was shared by many in the Tudor period, whose worldview was shaped by a strong "sense of hierarchy," and any disruptions to the natural order which fueled human life was met with great fear.<sup>69</sup> Even the "most innocuous acts of nature" were

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<sup>62</sup> Bevan, "Introduction," 4.

<sup>63</sup> Bevan, "Introduction," 3–4.

<sup>64</sup> Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Harvard University Press, 1971), 62.

<sup>65</sup> W[illiam]. H[oward]. Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism, and Politics: Two Traditions of English Political Thought, 1500–1700* (Oxford University Press, 1964), 26–27.

<sup>66</sup> Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism, and Politics*, 27.

<sup>67</sup> Richard Hooker, "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Book One," in *The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine, Mr. Richard Hooker, in Eight Books of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Compleated Out of His Own Manuscripts* (Printed for John Walthoe et al., 1723 [1594]), 5. In this edition of Hooker's writings, an introductory prefix from Walton's biography of Hooker is included.

<sup>68</sup> Paul A. Lombardo, "The Great Chain of Being and the Limits to the Machiavellian Cosmos," *Journal of Thought* 17, no. 1 (1982): 43.

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Collins, "The Influence of the Great Chain of being on the Rhetoric Manuals of Sixteenth Century Tudor England" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 2001), 15.

viewed with the clear presence of God's active role in daily life.<sup>70</sup> Based on Walton's admiration and deep familiarity with Hooker's works, it is evident that the Great Chain influenced Walton's conservationist tendencies. His pleas for fishermen to respect the natural cycles of fish fall under Hooker's idea of respecting God's natural order. From Walton's perspective, sins against the natural order could bring forth the "decline and death" of nature itself.<sup>71</sup> A true angler—who followed the fisherman's code found in Walton's treatise—would practice the recreation in complete harmony with the Great Chain.

Although Walton expresses his dislike of unethical fishing practices and calls for the enforcement of centuries-old laws, this is not a constant message in his work. Marjorie Swann argues that, in order to understand *The Compleat Angler* in "all its fish-filled abundance," it must be read "first and foremost as an environmental text."<sup>72</sup> Still, the multifaceted nature of the *Angler* allows it to be analyzed equally in the context of human morality, religious thought, and—of course—as an angling manual. In his study of literary ecology, James Meeker notes a theme concerning the natural world and literature that permeates Walton's angling masterpiece. Meeker writes: "A literary work is generally based upon a set of ideological assumptions—usually derived from the artist's contemporary culture, although often in conflict with it—that identifies certain principles of nature and defines human relationships to these principles."<sup>73</sup>

Walton's principles of contentedness, peacefulness, and contemplation are all directly associated with nature, a place where these values are created and nurtured. In the first edition, when Piscator explains to Viator the antiquity of angling, Walton writes "That both Rivers, and the inhabitants of the watery Element, were created for wise men to contemplate, and fools to pass by without consideration."<sup>74</sup> Here, Walton directly correlates an angler's virtue with the peacefulness and tranquility of rivers. In *The Experienced Angler*, Robert Venables echoes Walton's nature-associated principles:

"The minds of anglers being usually more calm and composed than many others, especially hunters and falconers, who too frequently lose their delight in their passion, and too often bring home more of melancholy and discontent than satisfaction in their thoughts; but the angler, when he hath the worst success, loseth but a hook or line, or perhaps, what he never possessed, a fish; and suppose he should take nothing, yet he enjoyeth a delightful walk by pleasant rivers in sweet pastures, amongst odoriferous flowers, which gratify his senses and delight his mind; which contentments induce many, who affect not angling, to choose those places of pleasure for their Summer's recreation and health."<sup>75</sup>

Continuing the trend of comparing angling with hawking and hunting, Venables describes the sweet aroma of flowers and pleasant views of nature that fill the angler with contentment. Venables posits that what delights the angler is nature itself; the physical act of angling is supplemental to spending peaceful time in the natural world. Indeed, Venables's description

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<sup>70</sup> Collins, "Influence of the Great Chain," 15.

<sup>71</sup> Greenleaf, *Order, Empiricism, and Politics*, 27.

<sup>72</sup> Swann, *Environment, Society, and The Compleat Angler*, 15.

<sup>73</sup> Meeker, *Comedy of Survival*, 7.

<sup>74</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 70.

<sup>75</sup> Venables, *Experienced Angler*, ii–iii.

of when an angler "hath the worst success" at catching anticipates the modern cliché fishing proverb that "the worst day of fishing is better than a good day at work."

The literary ecology of Walton's *Angler* and Venables's *Experienced Angler* reveals that the respective authors were quite opinionated when it came to how man should engage in recreational pursuits while in nature. Their views on conservation were hyper-focused on the preservation of fish over all else, because angling depends on a healthy fish population. While their hypocritical stance on otter populations shows a lack of understanding of how ecosystems actually function, both angling texts strongly suggest that there needs to be a legal system in place to protect the life cycle of fish. Angling in the seventeenth century was certainly not about catching as many fish as possible; instead, one of the angler's virtues was to be aware of how to sustainably enjoy this recreation. The natural world was there for contemplation and personal delight—but only for the "wise" men who took the time to consider and appreciate its beauty. To achieve this level of wisdom, anglers had to adopt a set of moral virtues that were just as essential to the sport as rods, hooks, and bait.

## 2. The Morality of Angling

The concept that there are certain virtues associated with angling is not original to Walton's text. In 1613, John Dennys had laid out twelve character traits that an angler was supposed to adopt, namely, faith, hope, love, patience, humility, courage, liberality, knowledge, placability, thankfulness, moderation, and memory.<sup>76</sup> Dennys writes: "Here then you see what kind of qualities / An Angler should indued be with all / Besides his skill and other properties / To serve his turn, as to his lot doth fall / But now what season for this exercise / The fittest is and which doth serve but small."<sup>77</sup> Dennys argues that being an angler involves much more than the physical skills of the sport, and—to be a true angler—one must aim to emulate the angler's code of virtues. This type of rhetoric was inspirational for Walton, who frequently refers to his fellow anglers as "brothers" who share a common moral code. Walton also connects the morality of angling to its antiquity and argues that the angler's virtues have been passed down over the centuries. In the first edition of the *Angler*, Walton comments on the moral traditions of angling as follows:

"But (my worthy friend) as I would rather prove my self to be a Gentleman, by being learned and humble, valiant and inoffensive, vertuous and communicable, then by a fond ostentation of riches; or (wanting these Vertues my self) boast that these were in my Ancestors; (And yet I confesse, that where a noble and ancient Descent and such Merits meet in any man, it is a double dignification of that person): so, if this Antiquitie of Angling (which, for my part, I have not forc'd) shall, like an ancient Familie, be either an honour, or an ornament to this vertuous Art which I both love and practice, I shall be the gladder that I made an accidental mention of it; and shall proceed to the justification, or rather commendation of it."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Dennys, *Secrets of Angling*, 52–55. Not surprisingly, these character traits echo biblical models, for example, 1 Corinthians 13:13 (the three virtues of faith, hope, and love) and Galatians 5:22–23 (the nine fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance).

<sup>77</sup> Dennys, *Secrets of Angling*, 55.

<sup>78</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 68–69.

In his statement regarding the ancient traditions of angling, Piscator attempts to show modesty in professing his personal virtues by bringing to light the ancestral virtues of his angling forefathers. This is, in a sense, a point of “sophisticated bragging” used by Walton to show that his beloved sport is endowed with superior values (certainly superior when compared to hunting, as this excerpt appears at the beginning of the *Angler*). Piscator’s “accidental mention” of the “honour” of angling’s history is an intentional point that both advocates for the sport and defends its practice.

Walton spends considerable time in the introduction of the *Angler* explaining to Viator the wonders of the sport and the benefits it provides to those who practice it. Walton writes: “For he that learns it, must not onely bring an enquiring, searching, and discerning wit; but he must bring also that patience you talk of, and a love and prosperity to the art it self: but having once got and practised it, then doubt not but the Art will (both for the pleasure and profit of it) prove like to Vertue, a reward to it self.”<sup>79</sup> Therefore, according to Walton, the skills required to learn angling build the character of the novice fisherman on his journey toward mastery. Thus, angling was not just a recreation: it was a way of life.

A close friend of Walton, Henry Wotton, is described as the epitome of one who has achieved angling perfection. Walton quotes one of Wotton’s sayings regarding angling in the original 1653 edition: “For Angling was after tedious study A rest to his mind, a cheerer of his spirits, a diversion of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a Moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness, and that it begot habits of peace and patience in those that profest and practic’d it.”<sup>80</sup> This quote demonstrates how Walton propagates angling as an avenue to achieve happiness, discipline, and harmony. In the 1676 version, Walton adds a comment after quoting Wotton: “You will find angling to be like the virtue of Humility, which has a calmness of spirit, and a world of other blessings attending upon it.”<sup>81</sup>

When comparing *The Experienced Angler* to Walton’s text, it appears that Venables is much less explicit in the moral teachings associated with the angling lifestyle. Venables’s text is much shorter in length and primarily contains angling instructions without the narrative structure of the *Angler*. Still, in the much simpler *Experienced Angler*, Venables alludes to the calmness of angling: “I am confident it doth not, as many other delights; cast blocks and rubs before him to make his way more difficult and less pleasant. The cheapness of the recreation abates not its pleasure, but with rational persons heightens it; and if it be delightful the charge of melancholy falls upon that score, and if example, which is the best proof, may sway any thing, I know no sort of men less subject to melancholy than anglers.”<sup>82</sup> Venables is clear that anglers enjoy more happiness than others due to the very peaceful nature of their sport.

Why, in 1653, would Izaak Walton be so adamant about the moral virtues of angling? Other angling texts raise similar points; however, the *Angler* is the most direct and descriptive one

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<sup>79</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 67–68.

<sup>80</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 76.

<sup>81</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 205–206.

<sup>82</sup> Venables, *Experienced Angler*, iv.

with regard to these ideas. Walton also makes no statement that angling should be reserved for the higher classes, other than stating that the sport does require “the expense of a little money.”<sup>83</sup> The intense drama of the English Civil Wars and the period’s ideological conflicts offer an explanation for why Walton was so explicit in his writing.

In 1643, the House of Commons ordered that the burning of the *Book of Sports* take place in several areas across London.<sup>84</sup> The *Book of Sports* had been authorized by King James I in 1618 and clarified the lawfulness of English sports and pastimes.<sup>85</sup> It had been reissued under Charles I in the 1630s and had been met with intense opposition by “advanced Protestants” who held “strict sabbatarian views.”<sup>86</sup> Charles I’s *Book of Sports* allowed “dancing, May games, and archery” after the conclusion of divine service on the Lord’s Day, and banned activities like blood sports.<sup>87</sup> Puritans viewed “festive pastimes” on days of religious service as a “celebration of sinfulness.”<sup>88</sup> Michael Braddick calls the book burning a symbol of the “administrative radicalism of the parliamentary cause” to support “social and cultural reformation.”<sup>89</sup> For Semenza, the rejection and burning of the *Book of Sports* “symbolized the end of the old order,” and the attack on recreations under the Puritan regime encompassed almost all activities (other than divine service) that brought large crowds together.<sup>90</sup>

While angling was not specifically named as an outlawed activity by Parliament after the banishment of sports, Walton may have felt a strong desire to defend his passion when writing the first edition of the *Angler*. Steven Zwicker calls the *Angler* a “lament for social harmony destroyed by jealousies and fears; it is an act of self-definition and consolation for the exiled and sequestered community of Stuart loyalists.”<sup>91</sup> While the *Angler*—according to the author’s ideology and that of the individuals named in the text—is a piece of consolatory literature for the Anglican Royalist cause, it is equally a reflection of Walton’s perspective on English society. This becomes most apparent during the later editions of the *Angler* in which Walton shows himself as explicitly concerned with the problematic lifestyles of the non-angling community. By 1676, the monarchy was restored, and the heated temperature of the English Civil Wars’ politics had waned, yet the *Angler* reached its fiercest tone regarding how society should behave. In the final chapter of the *Angler*, Walton discusses how people make themselves miserable:

“And truly, it is so, or might be so, with very many who vex, and toyl themselves, to get what they have no need of. Can any man charge God, that he hath not given him enough to make his life happy? no doubtless: for, nature is content with a little: and yet, you shall hardly meet with a man, that complains not of some want, though he indeed wants nothing but his will, it may be, nothing but his will of his poor Neighbour, for not worshipping, or not flattering him, and thus, when we might be happy and quiet, we create trouble to

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<sup>83</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 362.

<sup>84</sup> Michael Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* (Penguin, 2009), 277.

<sup>85</sup> Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature*, 112–113.

<sup>86</sup> Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire*, 279.

<sup>87</sup> Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire*, 279–280.

<sup>88</sup> Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire*, 280.

<sup>89</sup> Braddick, *God’s Fury, England’s Fire*, 280.

<sup>90</sup> Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature*, 143.

<sup>91</sup> Zwicker, *Lines of Authority*, 64.



our selves. I have heard of a man, that was angry with himself because he was no taller, and of a Woman, that broke her Looking-glass because it would not shew her face to be as young and handsom as her next Neighbours was."<sup>92</sup>

Walton continues this tirade with a story about rich people fighting for the "highest Pew in the church" and concludes by telling Venator that "you must remember that both [people] were rich, and must therefore have their wills."<sup>93</sup> Walton discusses how one will rarely meet someone who does not wish for more than what is already their lot, and he points to the misery people find themselves in when comparing themselves to others. Through angling, Piscator trains these common traits out of Venator's spirit. As a recreation, angling forces its practitioner to slow down, reflect, and enjoy the simplicity of nature.

Some of the core moral themes found in the *Angler* deal with the self-realization and appreciation of being free from pain and suffering. A repeated line in a speech given by Piscator in the 1676 edition of the *Angler* is "every misery that I miss is a new mercy."<sup>94</sup> Conceptions of pain found in early modern English literature show a pattern of acceptance and meaning behind suffering. In *Pain and Compassion in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen analyzes the "cultural laboratory in which the repercussions of emerging theological views on physical suffering were addressed, [how] rival conceptions of pain were confronted, and [how] new ways of attaching meaning to pain were constructed."<sup>95</sup> He reveals the "personal and cultural factors" associated with the timeless human experience of pain and suffering, and the meanings that early modern writers attached to such misery.<sup>96</sup> Walton's *Angler* touches on this topic at the end of the fishing trip:

"And, that our present happiness may appear to be the greater, and we the more thankful for it; I will beg you to consider with me, how many do, even at this very time, lie under the torment of the Stone,<sup>97</sup> the Gout, and Tooth-ache; and, this we are free from. And, every misery that I miss is a new mercy, and therefore let us be thankful. There have been since we met, others, that have met disasters of broken Limbs, some have been blasted, others Thunder-strucken; and we have been freed from these, and all those many other miseries that threaten humane nature: let us therefore rejoice and be thankful. Nay, which is a far greater mercy, we are free from the unsupportable burthen of an accusing, tormenting Conscience: a misery that

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<sup>92</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 364.

<sup>93</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 364.

<sup>94</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 362.

<sup>95</sup> Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen, *Pain and Compassion in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 7. Such patterns of acceptance are, of course, very much in keeping with New Testament precepts; see, for example, 2 Corinthians 1:6 (KJV): "And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation."

<sup>96</sup> Van Dijkhuizen, *Pain and Compassion*, 3.

<sup>97</sup> Van Dijkhuizen's study introduces pain by referring to the famous diary of Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), which includes sections dedicated to his agonizing bladder stones. In 1658, Pepys underwent an operation to remove them. The procedure—done with no anesthetic or alcohol—included a sharp instrument that was inserted in his urethra to locate the stone, followed by an incision between the scrotum and the anus that would be used to remove the stone. Pepys was so thankful for the operation and the end of his constant pain that he planned an annual day to commemorate the bladder stone removal. Perhaps, due to the reality of seventeenth-century ailments and the torturous medical procedures, Walton included gout, stones, and toothaches in the same category as broken limbs, explosions, and lightning strikes. See Van Dijkhuizen, *Pain and Compassion*, 1–3.

none can bear, and therefore let us praise him for his presenting grace; and say, every misery that I miss, is a new mercy."<sup>98</sup>

Piscator celebrates their personal freedom from the agonies that others are experiencing at that same moment. Above all, being free from a "tormenting Conscience" is most crucial for Walton, as he believes this type of suffering to be deeply ingrained in the minds of many of his fellow countrymen. To Walton, the virtues of angling are directly connected to how Piscator and Venator attain their freedom from a tormenting conscience. Walton shows a sense of compassion for others who are suffering by drawing attention to the reality of those "miseries that threaten humane nature." According to van Dijkhuizen, compassion for the suffering of others was a key concern for many early modern writers because of the "correlations between pain and pity."<sup>99</sup> Walton ties this to a particular angling virtue: thankfulness. Piscator teaches Venator to not only accept that misery is an unavoidable aspect of life, but to also rejoice in those periods of time when they are free from the inescapable torments of pain. Thus, in some way, the *Angler* serves as a therapeutic text for those who are experiencing torment. After all, its original release in 1653 had offered a respite to the adherents of the defeated Royalist cause to escape into the world of angling.

Walton's perspective on suffering extends to the misery that rich people inflict on themselves. A central lesson in the *Angler*—often superseding lessons on how to catch fish—is that happiness and wealth are almost always at odds. Walton himself was a rather affluent individual, and it is clear that the angling lifestyle required "the expense of a little money" to eat and drink (and enough free time to enjoy leisurely activities). Considering the social circles frequented by Walton, the moral commentary of the *Angler* is seemingly a reflection of the mental misery prevalent among the rich. Walton writes:

"Let us not repine, or so much as think the gifts of God unequally dealt, if we see another abound with riches, when as God knows, the cares that are the keys that keep those riches, hang often so heavily at the rich mans girdle, that they clog him with weary days and restless nights, even when others sleep quietly. We see but the outside of the rich mans happiness: few consider him to be like the Silk-worm, that when she seems to play, is at the very same time spinning her own bowels, and consuming her self. And this many rich men do; loading themselves with corroding cares, to keep what they have (probably) unconsciously got. Let us therefore be thankful for health and a competence; and above all, for a quiet Conscience."<sup>100</sup>

The inclusion of these specific messages on happiness (as separate from wealth) in the 1676 edition may reflect Walton's personal experiences. As someone who, during his youth and early adult life, had competitively risen through the ranks of English society in the drapery business, Walton incorporated glimpses of his personal growth and wisdom in the *Angler*. The final edition of the *Angler* was published when Walton was in his eighties, and the differences between the first and last editions show a deliberate change in what the author wanted the reader to understand about the recreation. The long sermons that describe the misery that rich people experience on the inside are lacking in the 1653 edition, but they abound in the 1676 version. In the late 1640s and early 1650s, Walton had been more

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<sup>98</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 362–363.

<sup>99</sup> Van Dijkhuizen, *Pain and Compassion*, 7.

<sup>100</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 363.

concerned with crafting an alternate version of life for the defeated Royalists and Anglican clergy during the Cromwellian regime.<sup>101</sup> The 1653 edition came after years of violence and destruction during the wars, and the peaceful tone of the *Angler* created a calm and immersive world for its reader.<sup>102</sup> By the 1670s, Walton's style in the *Angler* becomes more specific, offering wise lessons on how to live one's life with as much happiness as possible.<sup>103</sup>

The *Angler* features many lessons on what virtues a true angler must possess, reflecting Walton's broader outlook on how his contemporaries should live their lives. The public burning of the *Book of Sports* and the banishment of many English pastimes may have inspired Walton to reveal the moral benefits he associated with angling, arguing forcefully that the sport was completely inoffensive to society. The *Angler* shows, from Walton's perspective, a lack of happiness in seventeenth-century high society, showing that the removal of ungodly sports and the proliferation of pious movements did not purify or fix English life. The adoption of the angler's code could mend miserable minds and spread happiness not connected to wealth, property, or status. The morality of angling was supported by its connection to Christianity, a fundamental aspect of Walton's text.

### 3. The Anglican Angler

The "obvious pun" between "angler and Anglican" has been used by scholars to note the religious and political implications of Walton's text.<sup>104</sup> Although Benjamin Guyer shows that this was not intentional, since "Anglican" was not a common identifier of religious practice in seventeenth-century England, there is still a profound connection between Walton's angling and the Christian faith.<sup>105</sup> Walton typically weaves religious points into his moral teachings on gratitude; however, spiritual themes appear throughout the *Angler* to bolster angling's credibility as being the most pious of all recreations. Some scholars have argued that the inclusion of religion in the *Angler* is related to Walton's dislike of Puritan ideals, which attack his "harmless mirth."<sup>106</sup> The division between traditional Protestants and those Reformers who concerned themselves with religious customs, Predestination, and "harmless" practices not specified in Scripture ran deep in antebellum England.<sup>107</sup> In *The World Turned Upside Down*, Christopher Hill outlines the contentious and emerging religious thought that defined the English Revolution.<sup>108</sup> Conflicting ideologies battled over the future of England's Christianity. Radical reforms, like the banning of communal sports by Parliament and the burning of the

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<sup>101</sup> Bevan, *Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler*, 36.

<sup>102</sup> Stephen Porter, *Destruction in the English Civil Wars* (Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994), 65–66. Porter estimates that 11,200 homes were destroyed during the wars, leaving approximately 55,000 people homeless.

<sup>103</sup> Tony Claydon and Thomas Corns, "Introduction: Living with Masquerade: The Recent Scholarship of the 1670s in the Stuart Realms, in *Religion, Culture and National Community in the 1670s*, ed. Tony Claydon and Thomas Corns (University of Wales Press, 2011), 1–2.

<sup>104</sup> Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature*, 146.

<sup>105</sup> Guyer, "Izaak Walton's 'Holy War,'" 287–288.

<sup>106</sup> Guyer, "Izaak Walton's 'Holy War,'" 294; Bevan, *Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler*, 38.

<sup>107</sup> Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire*, 8.

<sup>108</sup> Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (Penguin, 1991 [1972]), 160–162.

*Book of Sports* in 1643, served as a likely catalyst for Walton's decision to write the *Angler*. The consistent use of Christianity in the *Angler* endows the sport with an aura of piety and makes angling appear as the holiest recreation.

In the *Angler's* first edition, Walton connects angling with the traits of the Apostles (*vita apostolica*) and argues that angling is more than a simple recreation; it is, in fact, a faithful activity that channels the Apostles' lives. In his work's final edition, Walton appears increasingly philosophical and adamant about his moral ideology. However, religious themes are already firmly situated in the 1653 version, making it one of the clearest subtexts of the *Angler*. In the introduction, Piscator teaches Viator about the Christian origins of angling:

"As the Patriarks or Prophets of old, and of the Apostles of our Saviour in these later times, of which twelve he chose four that were Fishermen: concerning which choice some have made these Observations. First, that he never reprov'd these for their Employment or Calling, as he did the Scribes and the Money-Changeers. And secondly, That he found the hearts of such men, men that by nature were fitted for contemplation and quietness; men of mild, and sweet, and peaceable spirits, (as indeed most Anglers are) these men our blessed Saviour (who is observed to love to plant grace in good natures) though nothing be too hard for him, yet these men he chose to call from their irreprovable employment, and gave them grace to be his Disciples and to follow him."<sup>109</sup>

Walton then focuses on the four Apostles who were fishermen (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) and writes: "when our blessed Saviour went up into the Mount, at his Transfiguration, when he left the rest of his Disciples and chose onely three to bear him company, that these three were all Fishermen."<sup>110</sup> Walton is quite explicit in his Christian interpretation, emphasizing the profession of the angling Apostles to propagate the religious validity of the sport.<sup>111</sup> In addition, fishing is elevated above other activities—such as the work of scribes and moneychangers—because Jesus "never reprov'd" it as a profession. In fact, Walton argues that Christ approved of fishing as a profession, thus rendering angling a divine sport.

*The Contemplative Man's Recreation* is the *Angler's* subtitle, and through the concept of contemplation, Walton ties angling to God. This idea of inward reflection echoes themes found in Thomas à Kempis's (c. 1380–1471) *The Imitation of Christ* (c. 1418–1427). Specifically, book two in Kempis's work focuses on the "inward life." Kempis writes: "He who knoweth how to walk from within, and to set little value upon outward things, requireth not places nor waiteth for seasons, for holding his intercourse with God. The inward man quickly recollecteth himself, because he is never entirely given up to outward things."<sup>112</sup> The *Angler* mirrors this concept in how Walton preaches for quietness and peaceful escapes in nature, where one can develop a clear and more contemplative mind.

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<sup>109</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 74.

<sup>110</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 74.

<sup>111</sup> Lucy Wooding, *Tudor England: A History* (Yale University Press, 2022), 21.

<sup>112</sup> Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ: Four Books*, trans. W. Benham (John Nimmo, 1886 [c. 1418–1427]), 87–88.

Walton brings up the “ancient debate” on whether “contemplation or action” brings man the most happiness in life.<sup>113</sup> Walton emphasizes contemplation and links it to how man can imitate God: “That the nearer we Mortals come to God by way of imitation, the more happy we are. And they say, That God enjoys himself only by a contemplation of his own infinitenesse, Eternity, Power and Goodness and the like.”<sup>114</sup> However, Walton considers action as instructive as well, since “Cloysteral men of great learning” say that action “teaches both art and vertue.”<sup>115</sup> Thus, sitting in nature provides the contemplative aspect of happiness, while angling itself constitutes a virtuous action. Walton insists that angling is the only sport that satisfies both schools of thought regarding the Christian debate of contemplation versus action. His discussion of proper Christian practices hints at the theology of Richard Hooker. Hooker’s *Polity* is commonly considered the *via media* (middle way) between Catholicism and Protestantism in the Church of England, and his views on ancient Christian customs were often the “antithesis of Puritanism.”<sup>116</sup> According to Michael Brydon, Walton created an “Anglican Church father” of Hooker in the *Life of Hooker*, which “vindicated everything that the Restoration religious settlement stood for.”<sup>117</sup> Brydon argues that Walton created an exaggerated biography of Hooker to emphasize Anglican virtues, which aligns with how the post-Restoration *Angler* openly suggests “proper” Christian practices.<sup>118</sup>

The angling virtues that Walton emphasizes, such as quietness and contentment, are connected to how to please God and oneself. Walton writes: “By being humble and cheerful, and content with what his good God has allotted him: he has no turbulent, repining, vexatious thoughts that he deserves better: nor is vexed when he sees others possess of more honour or more riches than his wise God has allotted for his share; but he possesses what he has with a meek and contented quietness.”<sup>119</sup> Essentially, Walton argues that those who constantly wish for more in their life are destroying their own happiness.

England’s riverbanks were Walton’s ideal locations for contemplation (affording the opportunity to imitate God), and angling invited man to these divine places. Walton references a treatise written by Peter du Moulin<sup>120</sup> (1601–1684), a French-English clergyman, who observed that God revealed divine information to his prophets by taking them to deserts or seashores to get them away from people and distractions, thereby settling their minds in “a quiet repose” and making them “fit for revelation.”<sup>121</sup> *The Compleat Angler* strongly

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<sup>113</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 192.

<sup>114</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 192.

<sup>115</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 192–193.

<sup>116</sup> Michael Brydon, “The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker: An Examination of Responses to the Ecclesiastical Polity, 1640–1714” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Durham, 1999), 8.

<sup>117</sup> Brydon, “Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker,” 90.

<sup>118</sup> Brydon, “Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker,” 90–91.

<sup>119</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 365.

<sup>120</sup> Moulin, who sided with the Royalists, was the anonymous author of *Regii Sanguinis Clamor* (1652) which attacked the works of John Milton (1608–1674), a supporter of the Parliamentary cause during the English Civil War. David Currell, “Milton Among the Satirists,” in *Changing Satire: Transformations and Continuities in Europe, 1600–1830*, ed. Cecilia Rosengren, Per Sivefors and Rikard Wingård (Manchester University Press, 2022), 148.

<sup>121</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 193.

supports the idea that angling and devotion to God are closely attached to each other. Angling not only allows for contemplation, a trait of the divine, but is also a gateway to an idyllic past when, in Walton's mind, people had been more faithful. Walton repeatedly recalls communal values that had existed before the English Civil Wars,<sup>122</sup> especially virtues related to the Christian faith that he longed to see again.<sup>123</sup> This includes the "images and memory" that persist throughout the dialogue, which, according to Anne McIlhane, is a series of exchanges that reflect Walton's personal memories before the devastation of the wars.<sup>124</sup> Many of Walton's angling companions were "dispossessed" Anglicans and Royalists who had been forced into early retirement after the wars; conceivably, the loss of true faith in England was a common topic of conversation among them.<sup>125</sup>

Angling manuals prior to the *Angler's* 1653 publication had presented the sport as a solitary recreation,<sup>126</sup> yet the *Angler* emphasized it as a communal activity.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, the *Angler* made angling more inclusive to a broader audience due to its massive popularity and because, prior to its release, angling had been viewed as a recreation most fit for the nobility.<sup>128</sup> Although the *Angler* opened the sport to a wider range of people beyond the nobility, it remained a pastime of relatively wealthy and literate men. In mid-seventeenth-century England, the literacy rate was roughly thirty percent among men and even less for women.<sup>129</sup> Marjorie Swann argues that Walton excluded women from the angling brotherhood and considered the sport a recreation strictly for men.<sup>130</sup> Indeed, Walton advertised the sport to "male" readers so that they would want to join the "brotherhood."

Throughout Walton's text, Piscator and Venator share the peaceful journey of angling together. Most of the religious teachings expressed in the *Angler* are offered by Walton's stand-in character, Piscator, but by the conclusion of their fishing trip, Venator becomes strikingly similar in his addresses to Piscator. In the last few pages of the *Angler*, Venator says: "For indeed, your company and discourse have been so useful and pleasant, that I may truly

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<sup>122</sup> The later editions of *The Compleat Angler* were released after the 1660 Act of Oblivion which forced limits on how the English Civil Wars could be remembered in writing. Walton never directly brings up the conflict but often hints that the antebellum years were a much better time for virtues and faith. For a detailed study on how the English Civil Wars were remembered in writing, see Matthew Neufeld, *The Civil Wars after 1660: Public Remembering in Late Stuart England* (Boydell and Brewer, 2013).

<sup>123</sup> Anne Elizabeth McIlhane, "Renaissance Acts and Images of Angling: An Anatomy of the British Piscatory, 1496–1653" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1998), 173.

<sup>124</sup> McIlhane, "Renaissance Acts and Images of Angling," 173–174.

<sup>125</sup> McIlhane, "Renaissance Acts and Images of Angling," 173; Bevan, *Izaak Walton's The Compleat Angler*, 28. Bevan argues that *The Compleat Angler* can be read as a book of consolation for the Anglican clergy.

<sup>126</sup> Two angling manuals that predate Walton's work, *The Booke of Seynt Albans* (1496) and *The Arte of Angling* (1577), celebrate the idea of an isolated angler. For a thorough comparison of the communal aspects of *The Compleat Angler* and these earlier texts, see Gregory Michael Colón Semenza, "'Unlawful Recreations': Sport, Politics, and Literature in Early Modern England" (Ph.D. diss., The Pennsylvania State University, 2001), 199–213.

<sup>127</sup> Semenza, "Unlawful Recreations," 209.

<sup>128</sup> John Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (Yale University Press, 1999), 158.

<sup>129</sup> Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire*, 50.

<sup>130</sup> Swann, *Environment, Society, and The Compleat Angler*, 60.

say, I have only lived since I enjoyed them, and turned *Angler*, and not before.”<sup>131</sup> The personal growth and happiness that Venator has experienced throughout their journey have led him to feel a sense of “rebirth” with regard to his perspective on life. The final words of the *Angler* reflect how angling in the natural world has brought Venator closer to God and closer to happiness:

*“Venator: You advised me to the like concerning Angling, and I will endeavour to do so, and to live like those many worthy men, of which you made mention in the former part of your discourse. This is my firm resolution; and as a pious man advised his friend, That to beget Mortification he should frequent Churches; and view Monuments, and Charnel-houses, and then and there consider, how many dead bones time had pil’d up at the gates of death. So when I would beget content, and increase confidence in the Power, and Wisdom, and Providence of Almighty God, I will walk the Meadows by some gliding stream, and there contemplate the Lillies that take no care, and those very many other various little living creatures, that are not only created but fed (man knows not how) by the goodness of the God of Nature, and therefore trust in him. This is my purpose: and so, Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. And let the blessing of St. Peters Master be with mine. / Piscator: And upon all that are lovers of Vertue; and dare trust in his providence, and be quiet, and go a Angling. Study to be quiet, I Thes. 4. 11.”*<sup>132</sup>

Here, Walton directly correlates faith in the “goodness of God” with outdoor recreation. All of the benefits that the natural world offers to those who spend time in it are actually gifts from God’s power and wisdom. Walton defends his mirth of angling by appealing to decades-old “anti-Puritan apologetics” that position his adversaries as opponents to Christian “righteousness.”<sup>133</sup> The idea of religious “righteousness” was a rhetorical strategy employed by both sides during the English Civil Wars. Oliver Cromwell’s speeches during the conflict often used the ideology of the “rightness of war” as being determined by God’s will.<sup>134</sup> Rachel Foxley writes on the religious justifications used by Cromwell: “the first Civil War, and perhaps even more those which followed, were religious struggles for Cromwell, and he, like the Puritan divines, expected a glorious divine issue from these events.”<sup>135</sup> Opposing religious perspectives during and after the wars all relied on appeals to God. Walton’s more “contemplative” approach toward angling finds itself entirely in accordance with Christian values based on imitating God and the lives of the Apostles. According to Derek Hirst, the wanderings of Piscator and Venator serve to “challenge Puritan sourness with values that are obviously inclusive: friendship, fellowship and a concord both social and natural.”<sup>136</sup> Thus, the way in which Walton celebrates the communal nature of angling and directly connects it to God stands in contrast to the Puritan teachings of the mid-seventeenth century.

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<sup>131</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 370.

<sup>132</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 371. 1 Thessalonians 4:11 (KJV): “And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.”

<sup>133</sup> Guyer, “Izaak Walton’s ‘Holy War,’” 293–294.

<sup>134</sup> Rachel Foxley, “Oliver Cromwell on Religion and Resistance,” in *England’s Wars of Religion, Revisited*, ed. Glenn Burgess (Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 260.

<sup>135</sup> Foxley, “Oliver Cromwell,” 260.

<sup>136</sup> Derek Hirst, “Literature and National Identity,” in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, ed. David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 649.

Piscator explains how his fellow anglers possess superior Christian values at the beginning of the *Angler*, when he compares the recreations of hawking, hunting, and angling to Auceps and Venator, stating:

"Gentlemen; let not prejudice prepossess you. I confess my discourse is like to prove suitable to my Recreation, calm and quiet; we seldome make the Welkin to roar, we seldom take the name of God into our mouths, but it is either to praise him or pray to him; if others use it vainly in the midst of their recreations, so vainly as if they meant to conjure, I must tell you, it is neither our fault nor our custom; we, we protest against it. But, pray remember I accuse no body; for as I would not make a watry discourse, so I would not put too much vinegar into it; nor would I raise the reputation of my own Art by the diminution or ruine of anothers."<sup>137</sup>

Walton pretends that he does not want to elevate the reputation of angling over other recreations, yet he spends much of the *Angler* doing just that. Like the ironic discussion about protecting fish at the expense of otters, Walton deliberately praises angling at the expense of other recreations. He discusses how water, the element that Piscator trades in, is the "eldest daughter" of creation that "God commanded to bring forth living creatures abundantly," and mentioned that Moses "appointed fish" to be the "chief diet for the best Common-wealth."<sup>138</sup> When comparing the mental states of anglers and other hobbyists, Robert Venables, too, is quite direct: "The minds of anglers being usually more calm and composed than many others, especially hunters and falconers, who too frequently lose their delight in their passion, and too often bring home more of melancholy and discontent than satisfaction in their thoughts."<sup>139</sup> Perhaps Venables's tone appears more straightforward because his text lacks a conversation between a hunter and a falconer, but the *Angler* expresses the same idea. Venator's growth from hunter to angler during the course of the story also shows the superiority of angling, since Venator expresses his increased spiritual devotion and general happiness only after switching from hunting to fishing.

The contemplation seen in both Walton's and Venables's angling manuals mirrors the "beauty of holiness," a phrase that accounts for the "so-called Laudian 'innovations' of the 1630s."<sup>140</sup> The Laudian view of the "beauty of holiness," named after the Archbishop of Canterbury William Laud (1573–1645), reflected "decent, appropriate worship, not just in the appearance of the place of worship but also in the individual worshipper."<sup>141</sup> This "beauty" in the individual is commonly referred to in the *Angler* and in Venables's manual. In the *Angler*, Venator describes how he "would beget content, and increase confidence in the Power, and Wisdom, and Providence of Almighty God" while walking along flowers and a burbling stream.<sup>142</sup> An angler who possesses Walton's Christian values can emulate the inward "beauty of holiness" through the recreation.

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<sup>137</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 185. "Welkin" is a reference to the firmament or the clouds (sharing its etymology and meaning with the German word "Wolken").

<sup>138</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 185–187.

<sup>139</sup> Venables, *Experienced Angler*, ii–iii.

<sup>140</sup> Travis Knapp, "The Beauty of Holiness between Hooker and Laud: 'Not more holy, than comely, nor more sacred, than sumptuous,'" *Anglican and Episcopal History* 94, no. 1 (2025): 65.

<sup>141</sup> Knapp, "Beauty of Holiness," 69.

<sup>142</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 371.



Izaak Walton's perspective on the environment and morality was completely bound to his Christian faith. Walton was quite forward in how closely he connected angling with the divine during a time of heightened religious tensions. However, Walton was careful not to state that he and other anglers were "better" than other Christians and instead spoke about how the sport brought them closer to God. The natural world had been given to man by God and was therefore a place for appreciation. The ancient art of angling could be traced back to the Apostles, and it was the angler's duty to replicate their virtues. Walton used Christianity in the *Angler* to defend the sport at a time when communal sports were under threat of banishment. Not only could angling be communal and still faithful to the Lord, but its contemplative nature actually emulated the glory and wisdom of God.

### Conclusion

In his "watry discourse," Izaak Walton celebrated angling and sought to attract his reader to the sport. Angling was more than a recreation to both Walton and Venables; it was a way of living that brought happiness and peace—but most of all, contentedness. The *Angler* was not the first angling text, nor was it the first to involve a narrative, characters, and philosophical thought. However, the *Angler* has remained the most famous fishing text because of its beautifully written dialogue, its harmonious descriptions of nature, and its influence on the sport of angling. Walton's legacy continues in the modern era, especially with the Izaak Walton League of America (founded in 1922), one of the oldest and largest conservation societies in the United States.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, various places in North America are named for him, such as Mount Izaak Walton (in California's Sierra Nevada), the historic Izaak Walton Inn (in Essex, Montana), and the Izaak Walton Recreation Site (in Sterling, Alaska). In the United Kingdom, numerous locations in Staffordshire pay homage to his legacy with a statue, a street, and a pub named after him.

Walton expressed his fervent beliefs under the guise of angling instructions and offered subtle criticisms of mid-seventeenth-century English society. This is apparent when Piscator shames the greed of those who overfish for the procurement of wealth, and when Walton's text urges for legal reform to enforce the wise statutes of England's past. Walton's respect for the natural world bled into his moral philosophy. Walton's moral teachings are often tied to the inverse relationship between wealth and happiness, as well as the significance of maintaining gratitude for one's mere existence. Part of his definition of happiness involves one's decision to show thankfulness for being free from pain and mental misery. Perhaps Walton projected some of his personal struggles to find happiness as a wealthy Englishman who associated with high-class people and wanted to share with others how angling could serve as a steppingstone to achieve contentment. By the final edition of the *Angler*, Walton included anecdotes of rich people crafting their own misery by constantly pushing for more and more financial gain. From the perspective of Walton and Venables, anglers adopt a persona that surpasses other recreations because the nature of the sport reshapes their identity. Walking along a riverbank and relaxing in the serenity of the natural environment connects to Walton's discussion of contemplation versus action, and Venables mentioned

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<sup>143</sup> Guyer, "Izaak Walton's 'Holy War,'" 285.

that even when an angler “hath the worst success,” he still found growth and happiness when surrounded by tranquil landscapes.<sup>144</sup>

In some ways, the moral virtues associated with angling after the English Civil Wars reflect a newfound recreation for the defeated Royalist supporters who despised Puritan-based religious and societal reforms. However, angling was not only for Royalists attempting to escape the reality of the Cromwellian regime. Robert Venables, who had fought for Parliament during the wars and served Cromwell’s ambitions in the Caribbean—a direct opponent to Walton’s values—became an angling brother to Walton when he published his own fishing manual. Walton’s introduction to *The Experienced Angler* includes his thoughts on Venables’s text: “I received much advantage in the practice, yet, without prejudice to their worthy Authors, I could never find in them that height of judgment and reason, which you have manifested in this, as I may call it, epitome of Angling.”<sup>145</sup> Walton’s address to Venables hints at the reconciliatory effect of angling. These two men had been on opposite sides during the English Civil Wars, yet angling united them in a shared passion. In the *Angler*, Piscator almost always refers to anglers as members of a collective who behave in a similar fashion and share common values.

Among the values shared by anglers are religious traditions dating back to the days of the Apostles. The mid-seventeenth-century’s complicated religious environment is reflected in how Walton intertwined angling with the divine. The contemplative aspect of the sport imitates God, and spending time in the quietness of nature opens one up to divine revelation. Walton used Scripture to show that angling was never “reproved” by Christ and should therefore be considered a non-threatening recreation as far as Christianity is concerned.<sup>146</sup> Because of his experience with Puritan-influenced attacks on communal pastimes, Walton emphasized the healthy relationship with faith that angling provided. Walton’s focus on the religious aspects of angling likely served as his resistance to the Puritans’ banishment of communal sports on Sundays. The *Angler* showed that angling could be a communal activity that was perfectly in line with respecting the Lord’s Day.

A pattern emerges in the central themes covered in this study and how they relate to angling. The fish conservation arguments protect angling by celebrating the natural world’s beauty and by showing how unchecked overfishing can threaten the sport’s existence. The moral lessons advocate for angling because they promise a social community of anglers who share a common code of humility, gratitude, and happiness over wealth. Religion defends angling as a biblical activity that is meant to be shared with others and that imitates the divine.

As a literary genre, angling texts offer a unique perspective on the cultural history of mid-seventeenth-century England. *The Compleat Angler* is a nuanced and multifaceted piece of historical evidence that offers a glimpse into how Izaak Walton viewed society during a complicated and tumultuous time in England. The *Angler* introduced a new model for living

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<sup>144</sup> Venables, *Experienced Angler*, ii–iii.

<sup>145</sup> Venables, *Experienced Angler*, 14 [unnumbered in the original text].

<sup>146</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1653], 74.

life in a shattered country after years of political and religious instability. Walton used angling as the “hook” to draw his readers in, but the text was almost equally about propagating a certain philosophical and religious way of life that, in his view, afforded tremendous meaning and happiness. Walton’s 1653 *Angler* presented his fellow isolated Anglican Royalists with a guide to a calming recreation that could stimulate them to become more content and peaceful through angling. Its social commentary was brief, however, and angling remained the absolute focus of the text. By 1676, the *Angler* had evolved into a literary masterwork that reflected Walton’s assessment of his contemporary English society. Walton’s final edition was no longer a “pastoral escape” for the defeated faction of the wars; instead, it offered a way out of mental misery for anyone willing to change their attitude. Angling simply served to effect a personal transformation in its practitioner.

Even today, much of the *Angler* remains applicable to our daily lives. The violence, corruption, and despair that persist in the twenty-first century is comparable to the chaos that Walton and his contemporaries experienced. Today, the fear of misery due to physical pain has perhaps dwindled because of modern medicine and technology that have helped alleviate many of the agonizing ailments and diseases that have affected mankind for thousands of years. However, mental suffering is as prevalent as it was when Walton first wrote the *Angler*. Entire diseases may have been eradicated, and procedures exist to soothe the pain of bladder stones, gout, and toothaches, but there is no cure for the torture of mental anguish. Izaak Walton prescribed to his mentally miserable contemporaries a dosage of contemplation, thankfulness, and the enjoyment of the little things in life: it is through simple pleasures like the beauty of a setting sun, quality time spent with loved ones, and, of course, the catching of a fish, that we can be “free from those high, those restless thoughts, which corrode the sweets of life.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Walton, *Compleat Angler* [1676], 334.

Rielly K. Orrell

## *Lady Rachel Russell's Beloved, Seditious Husband: Letter-Writing and Advocacy in Seventeenth-Century England*

**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the language and methods utilized by the seventeenth-century British noblewoman Lady Rachel Russell (c. 1636–1723) in her (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts to save her seditious husband Lord William Russell (1639–1683) from execution after the Rye House Plot (1683). Primarily by analyzing the correspondence between Lady Russell and the English Crown, the author argues that Lady Russell leveraged “soft power” to advocate for her husband and (successfully) promote the interests of her children, especially by wielding her character, her gender, and her social status with careful intention.

**KEYWORDS:** early modern history; England; Rye House Plot; Lady Rachel Russell; Lord William Russell; Charles II of England; William III of England; Mary II of England; letters; advocacy

### *Introduction*

She sat beside her husband during his trial, wrote petitions, called in favors, and threw herself, tears and all, at the feet of the king, but she still could not save him from the executioner's axe. Facing a life without her beloved husband, Lady Rachel Russell set out to defend Lord William Russell's reputation and secure her children's place in the English peerage by using every tool at her disposal. Lady Russell was born Rachel Wriothesley sometime in 1636, descending from two noble families.<sup>1</sup> Her first husband, Lord Francis Vaughan, had died in 1667, leaving Rachel a wealthy young widow.<sup>2</sup> She married her second husband, Lord William Russell, the second son of the (future) 1st Duke of Bedford in 1669.<sup>3</sup> The two were passionately in love and quickly settled into a life of marital bliss, resulting in four children.<sup>4</sup> Dozens of love letters written by Lady Russell survive, in which she often credits her husband for her “perfect happiness” and writes about her hope for them to “be together to a good old age.”<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, this happiness was stripped away in the course of a mere four weeks in 1683.

Due to his Whig connections and political activities, Lord Russell was implicated in the failed Rye House Plot of 1683—a scheme to assassinate King Charles II (r. 1660–1685) and his brother James, the Duke of York (and future James II, r. 1685–1688), on their way back to Westminster from watching horse races at Newmarket.<sup>6</sup> Lord Russell was committed to the

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<sup>1</sup> She was born to the 4th Earl of Southampton and Rachel de Massue, a member of the powerful Massue de Rouvigny family. See Catherine Stepney, *Memoirs of Lady Russell and Lady Herbert, 1623–1723* (Adam and Charles Black, 1898), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Stepney, *Memoirs*, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Lois G. Schworer, *Lady Rachel Russell: “One of the Best of Women”* (1988; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), 31.

<sup>4</sup> Three of their children survived to adulthood: Rachel Cavendish (1674–1725), Catherine Manners (1676–1711), and their son Wriothesley Russell (1680–1711). Their first child, a daughter named Anne, had died in infancy (1671–1672).

<sup>5</sup> Rachel Russell, Dorothy Sidney Sunderland, and Mary Berry, *Some Account of the Life of Rachael Wriothesley Lady Russell* (Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1819), 6.

<sup>6</sup> A town 14 miles northeast of Cambridge, world-famous for horse races. John McTague, *Things That Didn't Happen: Writing, Politics and the Counterhistorical, 1678–1743* (Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 87.

Tower of London on June 26, tried on July 13, and executed at Lincoln's Inn Fields on July 21, 1683.<sup>7</sup> Throughout these four weeks, Lady Russell wrote petitions to secure her husband a better treatment in the Tower,<sup>8</sup> assembled an experienced legal team, and actively contributed to his trial strategy.<sup>9</sup> Lady Russell's advocacy continued after her husband's death, as she ordered the printing of Lord Russell's inflammatory final speech on a large scale, cultivated a friendship with the Princess of Orange (later Queen Mary II of England) to help push through her petitions, and fought for her son's right to inherit his grandfather's property and titles. While Lady Russell could not save her husband, she succeeded in winning privileges for him that were rarely given to a prisoner on trial for high treason.

In this article, I explore Lady Russell's letters to understand how she used her writing before, during, and after her husband's trial to advocate for him and his reputation. I argue that Lady Russell intentionally leveraged her character, gender, and social status to support her husband and promote her children's interests. I examine Lady Russell's advocacy predominantly through her own words in the letters she wrote to figures ranging from her husband to the English king (in fact, aspects of Lady Russell's 1683 letter to King Charles II feature in all three sections of this article). In addition, I utilize an epistle written by Lord Russell the night before his execution,<sup>10</sup> an account of his time in the Tower of London by the Scottish cleric (and future Bishop of Salisbury) Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715),<sup>11</sup> and a published copy of Lord Russell's final speech.<sup>12</sup> Lady Russell's letters are sourced from two collections, one originally transcribed by Lady Russell's steward Thomas Sellwood and published in 1773,<sup>13</sup> and another transcribed and published by the English writer Mary Berry (1763–1852) for the Duke of Devonshire in 1819.<sup>14</sup> The Sellwood collection also contains the record of Lord Russell's trial. The original spelling and grammar are preserved in all quotes from these texts, with some minor alterations for clarity.<sup>15</sup> For specific information on the Russells, I have consulted several works by the late historian and Women's Studies scholar Lois G. Schwoerer (1927–2025), which have been instrumental in piecing together the

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<sup>7</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 103.

<sup>8</sup> Prior to his execution, Lord Russell was transferred to Newgate Prison.

<sup>9</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 108.

<sup>10</sup> George Canning, *An epistle from William Lord Russell, to William Lord Cavendish: By George Canning, of the Middle Temple, Esq.*, 2nd ed. (Printed for the author; and sold by R. and J. Dodsley in Pall-Mall, T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt in the Strand, and C. Henderson at the Royal Exchange, 1763), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of his own time: From the Restoration of King Charles II to the Settlement of King William and Queen Mary at the Revolution: To which is prefix'd A Summary Recapitulation of Affairs in Church and State from King James I to the Restoration in the Year 1660*, vol. 1 (Printed for Thomas Ward, 1724), 562.

<sup>12</sup> William Russell, *The Speech of the Late Lord Russel to the Sheriffs Together with the Paper Deliver'd by Him to Them at the Place of Execution, on July 21, 1683* (Printed by John Darby by direction of the Lady Russel, 1683).

<sup>13</sup> Rachel Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell; from the manuscript in the library at Woburn Abbey. To which is prefixed, an introduction, vindicating the character of Lord Russell Against Sir John Dalrymple, &c. The fourth edition, corrected. To this edition is added, (not in the London Edition) the trial of Lord William Russell, for high treason; Extracted from the State Trials at large* (1773; Printed for A. Leathley, in Dame-Street, 1774).

<sup>14</sup> Russell et al., *Some Account*.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the use of the "long s" is common in all of the contemporary texts; however, I have replaced this particular character with a "round s."

timeline. Schwoerer's 1985 article, "William, Lord Russell: The Making of a Martyr, 1683–1983,"<sup>16</sup> and her 1988 biography, *Lady Rachel Russell: "One of the Best of Women,"*<sup>17</sup> are utilized throughout. Additionally, I have incorporated works by Susan Wiseman, John McTague, Marguerite B. Hicks, and others to establish context.<sup>18</sup> The article is divided into three sections—titled "Character," "Gender," and "Social Status"—to reveal Lady Russell's intentional use of these three elements in her letter-writing and advocacy.

### 1. Character: "The Best and Dearest Wife in the World"

Lady Russell was not alone in her love for and skill in letter-writing. Detroit bibliophile Marguerite B. Hicks, in her M.A. thesis, "A Survey of the English Women Writers 1652–1700," asserts that the Restoration Period's "cultured, leisured society" was the perfect environment for aristocratic women to cultivate a letter-writing culture through which they shared news and intimate thoughts, thus categorizing letter-writing under the umbrella of the expected gendered activities for upper-class women.<sup>19</sup> This culture was characterized by relationship building according to proper customs of rank, weaving a web so complicated that literature scholar Paul Trolander has described it as requiring a skillset of "letteracy" to succeed.<sup>20</sup> Lady Russell was certainly a good writer, but I believe that it was her skill in "soft power" that allowed her to secure a better future for the memory of her husband and that of her family.<sup>21</sup> One aspect that she utilized when cultivating her network was her character and, by extension, her own, personal reputation.

Her contemporaries duly noted Lady Russell's virtue, loyalty, and love for her husband, as evidenced in writings about her. Lord Russell endlessly sang the praises of "the Best and Dearest Wife in the World," which I have made the title of this section for its sincerity.<sup>22</sup> Alluding to Lady Russell's virtuous persona, Mary Stuart, then the Princess of Orange, wrote to her in 1687, "I have all the esteem for you which so good a character deserves, as I have heard given you by all people."<sup>23</sup> I contend that Lady Russell intentionally leveraged this reputation in her advocacy. Maintaining "a basis in personal virtue" lent her words and actions credibility, which can be seen throughout her husband's court case and beyond.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Lois G. Schwoerer, "William, Lord Russell: The Making of a Martyr, 1683–1983," *Journal of British Studies* 24, no. 1 (1985): 41–71.

<sup>17</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue: Women, Writing, and Politics in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford University Press, 2006); McTague, *Things That Didn't Happen*; Marguerite B. Hicks, "A Survey of the English Women Writers 1652–1700" (M.A. thesis, Wayne [State] University, 1937).

<sup>19</sup> Hicks, "Survey," 183.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Trolander, *Literary Sociability in Early Modern England: The Epistolary Record* (University of Delaware Press, 2014), 80.

<sup>21</sup> "Soft power" describes a more subtle form of diplomacy which focuses on persuasion, as opposed to the more traditional, demand-based "hard power." Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Public Affairs, 2004), 166.

<sup>22</sup> Russell, *Speech*, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 104.

<sup>24</sup> Wiseman, *Conspiracy and Virtue*, 326.

Lord Russell's trial was held on July 13, 1683, at The Old Bailey in London.<sup>25</sup> Its proceedings have been preserved in Sellwood's collection of Lady Russell's letters and give us a glimpse of the role Lady Russell played during the trial. After deliberating for some time regarding the jury's composition, the following dialogue played out:

*"Lord Russell:* My lord, may I not make use of any papers I have?  
*L.C.J.:* [Lord Chief Justice, Sir Francis Pemberton]. Yes, by all means.  
*Attorney General:* [Sir Robert Sawyer]. Yes, a servant.  
*Lord Russell:* May I have somebody to write to help my memory?  
*L.C.J.:* Any of your servants shall assist you in writing any thing you please for you.  
*Lord Russell:* My wife is here, My Lord, to do it.  
*L.C.J.:* If my Lady please to give herself the trouble."<sup>26</sup>

This dialogue not only confirms that Lady Russell was present and beside her husband but also provides a record of her role as her husband's trial secretary. The wife of the accused having a hand in the trial is significant—even "unprecedented," as Lois G. Schwoerer has argued.<sup>27</sup> Lady Russell placed herself in a visible position at her husband's side to remind the court of their marriage and piety, thus taking advantage of her virtuous reputation to elicit sympathy while assisting her husband in a material way.<sup>28</sup>

The day before his execution, Lord Russell wrote an epistle for his friend, Lord William Cavendish (1640–1707). Three stanzas of the poem are dedicated to Lady Russell, commending her efforts to "save her husband's honest name," even though they knew that she could not save his life.<sup>29</sup> Lady Russell was well known for her respectable character, whose "heav'nly virtues, and unfading charms" were utilized to great effect in her petitions and letters, giving her more credibility.<sup>30</sup> She was considered so trustworthy that, before the trial, she was able to request and was given a list of all the jury members' names.<sup>31</sup> These examples demonstrate the link between Lady Russell's reputation as a virtuous figure and her actions throughout her husband's trial. She continued to use her character as a tool after Lord Russell's execution.

With the help of his wife and that of the Scottish cleric Gilbert Burnet, Lord Russell penned the speech he was to give just before his execution.<sup>32</sup> This speech was highly provocative. In addition to declarations of love for Protestantism and hatred for Catholicism, Lord Russell laid out a final proclamation of his innocence by accusing the government of "kill[ing him] by forms, and subtleties of law," which he dubbed "the worst kind of murther [murder]."<sup>33</sup> In no uncertain terms, he assessed his execution as a judicial murder. While contemporary historians argue that the trial was fair and even generous at times, Lord Russell's speech was

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<sup>25</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 367, 368.

<sup>26</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 368.

<sup>27</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 111.

<sup>28</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 111.

<sup>29</sup> Canning, *Epistle*, 13.

<sup>30</sup> Canning, *Epistle*, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 365.

<sup>32</sup> Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History*, 562.

<sup>33</sup> Russell, *Speech*, 4.

bold and had such a significant impact on popular opinion that it became a thorn in the government's side.<sup>34</sup> Immediately, pamphlets emerged to dissect Lord Russell's speech, calling him an "Enrag'd Mad Dog" and other creative nicknames, as pamphleteers slandered him by claiming the speech had not been written by Lord Russell himself.<sup>35</sup>

Lady Russell addressed this rumor in a strongly worded letter to King Charles II. This letter contains another instance of her relying on her good reputation as a tool. She opened the letter with a bold sentiment: "I find my husband's enemies are not appeased with his blood, but still continue to misrepresent him to your Majesty."<sup>36</sup> She then attacked the rumor head-on, testifying that she had personally heard her husband discussing all the topics covered in the speech, thereby vouching for its authenticity as Lord Russell's own words.<sup>37</sup> She went on to assert that Gilbert Burnet's account also contained a record of Lord Russell having had these conversations. Her evidence for these claims relied entirely upon her character and testimony. Lady Russell wrote phrases like "I can truly say, and am ready in the solemnest manner to attest," and "the paper, which was written at my request," thereby exhorting the king to recall her personal piety and good character.<sup>38</sup> Lady Russell's virtuous traits were not just tied to her reputation, but also to her performance in seventeenth-century gender roles—a topic which I explore next.

## 2. Gender: "A Woman Amazed with Grief"

Another persuasive element appears in the latter half of Lady Russell's letter to King Charles II, from which this section's title is derived. In her letter-writing, Lady Russell purposefully leveraged gendered language and performance for her benefit. Her letter to the king and her correspondence with the Princess of Orange, Mary Stuart, illuminate the unique power that upper-class women were able to wield through letter-writing.<sup>39</sup> Lady Russell utilized her gender performance in a visual sense as well, particularly by highlighting her role as a loving wife and mother during Lord Russell's trial. These actions were intrinsically linked to Lady Russell's gendered position in British society and gave her the persuasive edge she needed to secure some significant victories for her family.

The following excerpt appears at the end of Lady Russell's 1683 letter to King Charles II, written just days after the execution of Lord Russell. It makes up the conclusion of the letter and contains some of the clearest examples of Lady Russell's skill in using her gender as a tool to advocate for her husband's reputation:

"And if after the loss, in such a manner, of the best husband in the world, I were capable of any consolation, your Majesty could afford it by having better thoughts of him, which when I was so importunate to speak with your Majesty, I thought I had some reason to believe I should have inclined you to, not from the credit

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<sup>34</sup> See Schwoerer, "William, Lord Russell," 54.

<sup>35</sup> *A Vindication of the Lord Russell's Speech and Innocence in a Dialogue Betwixt Whig & Tory: Being the Same that was Promis'd to the Observator in a Penny-Post-Letter* (N.p., 1683), 13.

<sup>36</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 92.

<sup>37</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 92.

<sup>38</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 92.

<sup>39</sup> Hicks, "Survey," 47.



of my word, but upon the evidence of what I had to say. I hope I have writ nothing in this that will displease your Majesty. If I have, I humbly beg of you to consider it as coming from a woman amazed with grief; and that you will pardon the daughter of a person who served your Majesty's father in his greatest extremities, [and your Majesty in your greatest posts] and one that is not conscious of having ever done any thing to offend you [before.] I shall ever pray for your Majesty's long life and happy reign. Who am, With all humility, May it please your Majesty & c[etera]."<sup>40</sup>

Lady Russell was keenly aware of the risks in sending these words to the king, as she recognized she was asking for a lot. In just a few days, she denounced the widely-circulating rumor that Lord Russell had not written his final speech, and she asked for and was given permission to "set up an escutcheon [i.e., a commemorative shield] in William's honor," which was "unheard of" in the case of an executed traitor whose attainder was supposed to prevent such heraldic memorialization, all while working to ensure that her husband's property would not be seized by the state.<sup>41</sup> Two days after Lord Russell's execution, the Privy Council, "with the king and the Duke of York in attendance," ordered the interrogation of Lady Russell with regard to 2,500 copies of Lord Russell's controversial speech making their way into Bedford.<sup>42</sup> No record of the interrogation has survived, but this event and the compounding stress of her circumstances surely weighed heavily on her mind as she chose her words. Lady Russell's status as the widow of a convicted traitor made the already daunting task of writing to the king even more difficult. Charles II did nothing to stop the scaffold speech rumor spread by Lord Russell's detractors at court, which may indeed have originated with the government itself.<sup>43</sup> The king was openly in favor of executing Lord Russell and is reported to have said to George Legge (c. 1647–1691), the Baron of Dartmouth and Master-General of the Ordnance, "If I do not take his life, he will soon have mine."<sup>44</sup> Lady Russell may not have heard these words, but she knew Charles II had not looked favorably upon her late husband, and she must have experienced the risks of challenging the government during her interrogation. It is clear she needed to play every card in her hand to advance her goals without offending the king and thereby risking even greater turmoil for herself and her family.

The above excerpt is especially meticulous in its diction, showcasing Lady Russell's use of gendered language. Lady Russell described herself as "a woman amazed with grief" and the "daughter of a person who served your Majesty's father."<sup>45</sup> She intentionally connected her gender with her emotional state, aiming to elicit sympathy for her position as a grieving widow to lessen the impact of her bold tone. Lady Russell described the death of the "best husband in the world" as pushing her to become uncharacteristically "importunate" (i.e., overly persistent) to excuse her bold words and actions.<sup>46</sup> The deliberate attention to diction reveals her care in drafting this letter.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 93.

<sup>41</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 108.

<sup>42</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 138.

<sup>43</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 138.

<sup>44</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 130.

<sup>45</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 93.

<sup>46</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 93.

<sup>47</sup> Given its crossed-out sections, this letter is likely a draft, and the final version sent to Charles II is lost.

The use of gendered language is seen more subtly in Lady Russell's correspondence with Mary Stuart. Marguerite B. Hicks regards the act of letter-writing as especially "within the sphere of women's activities," allowing women to share intimate thoughts with each other in a relatively informal way.<sup>48</sup> Through her letters, Lady Russell built a friendship with the Princess of Orange, who later ascended to the throne and became Queen Mary II of England (r. 1689–1694) after the Glorious Revolution (1688) alongside her co-ruler, King William III (r. 1689–1702).<sup>49</sup> One of the earliest contacts between the two women appears to be a letter from the Princess of Orange to Lady Russell in 1687. Mary Stuart references a previous letter that has not survived, in which Lady Russell's "kindness [she] shew'd [showed] both to the Prince and myself" earned a great deal of affection from the princess, who emphasized her sympathy for "the sad misfortunes" that Lady Russell had suffered.<sup>50</sup> Sellwood's collection of letters includes seven pieces of correspondence between Mary Stuart and Lady Russell, with the latter always apologizing for possibly irritating the former with her letters.<sup>51</sup> The two maintained a warm friendship through their epistolary exchanges. In fact, the Princess of Orange often expressed her admiration of Lady Russell with sentiments like, "I shall be glad to show more than by words the esteem I have for you" and "wishing for any occasion to shew you how really I am and always shall be your very affectionate friend."<sup>52</sup> These tender words certainly paint a pretty picture, and the two may very well have considered themselves friends. However, it is significant to note how often Lady Russell found occasions for Mary Stuart to show her appreciation, especially after the latter had ascended to the English throne.

Both surviving letters from Lady Russell to Queen Mary II include a political request in some form. The first letter, dated July 24, 1691, is filled with friendly sentiments for the queen, along with a request to install Mr. Richard Vaughan (c. 1655–1724, a relative of Lady Russell's first husband, Lord Francis Vaughan) in the position of Auditor of Wales.<sup>53</sup> The second, dated October 23, 1691, almost exclusively concerns a petition. Lady Russell made a point to comment that she had held back on presenting it until it was "fit" and now hoped she could present it to the king and queen.<sup>54</sup> While an argument could be made that this point is moot due to survivorship bias, I assert that—given Lady Russell's sharp social and political skills—it was in her character to intentionally utilize favors or persuasion to achieve her means. This relationship bore fruit quickly after King William III and Queen Mary II had taken power, as seen in the reversal of Lord Russell's attainder "immediately after the revolutionary settlement."<sup>55</sup> With the encouragement of the king and queen, the House of Lords investigated the circumstances of Lord Russell's trial and declared it a judicial murder in 1689.<sup>56</sup> In 1694, the government even elevated Lord Russell's father (1616–1700, also named

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<sup>48</sup> Hicks, "Survey," 182.

<sup>49</sup> Tim Harris, *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720* (Allen Lane, 2006), 333.

<sup>50</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 104.

<sup>51</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 117.

<sup>52</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 117, 224.

<sup>53</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 223.

<sup>54</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 230–231.

<sup>55</sup> Schwoerer, "William, Lord Russell," 60.

<sup>56</sup> Schwoerer, "William, Lord Russell," 60.

William) and styled him the 1st Duke of Bedford, specifically as compensation for Lord Russell's trial and execution.<sup>57</sup> Lady Russell's friendship with Queen Mary II and her effective use of "soft power" through gendered language certainly helped to win these victories.



Figure 1: George Hayter, *The Trial of William Lord Russell in 1683, 1825?*, oil on canvas, 28 x 43 inches, Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston upon Hull, UK, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Trial\\_of\\_William\\_Lord\\_Russell\\_in\\_1683.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Trial_of_William_Lord_Russell_in_1683.jpg).

Lady Russell artfully leveraged both gendered language and gendered performance, as seen with clarity during Lord Russell's trial. Lady Russell rallied experienced lawyers and assembled eleven witnesses for her husband, but her most remembered contribution was visual.<sup>58</sup> She was present at her husband's side throughout the trial, which was a strategic move planned by herself and Lord Russell's friends.<sup>59</sup> When Lord Russell was granted the use of a pen and paper, he declared that his wife would take up the role of trial secretary, as discussed earlier. Lady Russell then presumably rose and walked to a table, where she took her place and began to take down Lord Russell's words.<sup>60</sup> This powerful image can be best understood through a painting by the English artist George Hayter (1792–1871), inspired by the event and created in 1825 (see Figure 1). Lady Russell can be seen seated near the center of the frame, looking up at the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Francis Pemberton (1624–1697), with a quill in hand and ready to take down his words on a few pieces of paper laid out before her. She is the

<sup>57</sup> Schwoerer, "William, Lord Russell," 60.

<sup>58</sup> Stepney, *Memoirs*, 59.

<sup>59</sup> Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell*, 114.

<sup>60</sup> Stepney, *Memoirs*, 59.

only woman in the room, and the attention she commands in such a central location is unmistakable.

The Russells had orchestrated an unusual scene. As the court turned its attention—even for just a moment—to Lord Russell’s loving wife, while she stood and walked across the room to support her husband, the jury was reminded of the Russells’ happy family unit. The play to elicit sympathy may not have saved Lord Russell’s life, but I believe it may have tempered the room of men at least for a moment, given the slightly softened tone of Pemberton’s, “If my Lady please to give herself the trouble.”<sup>61</sup> The incident was likely preconceived by Lady Russell and their legal team.<sup>62</sup> While acknowledging that Hayter’s painting was completed 142 years after the event, it is nonetheless a helpful aid to envision the impact of Lady Russell’s appearance and role. Whether or not she wore the angelic white gown shown in the painting (see Figure 1), the image of Lady Russell rising and taking a prominent seat in a courtroom packed with men cannot be overstated.

### 3. Social Status: “The Right Honorable Rachel Lady Russell”

The title for this section comes from a quote written by Thomas Sellwood in the introduction to his collection of letters and demonstrates the formal way to address Lady Russell. As we have seen, Lady Russell made use of her personal character and her gendered position. One aspect of her life that she paid meticulous attention to was her place in the British peerage, which she used to sway others to bestow favors or grace. Lady Russell hailed from two noble lineages (the Wriothesley earls of Southampton and the prominent French Huguenot house of Massue de Rouvigny), then married into the powerful Bedford family (the Russells), and was therefore aware of how to use her position. This skill is seen in Lady Russell’s mass printing of Lord Russell’s speech, the reference to her father’s service in her letter to King Charles II, and a letter promoting her children’s interests and addressed to King William III.

Lord Russell’s final days were spent in prayer, accompanied every day from noon to sundown by the Scottish cleric Gilbert Burnet. Following Lady Russell’s request, Burnet kept a record of everything they discussed and everything that happened up until the fatal day itself.<sup>63</sup> Burnet helped Lord Russell write a letter to the king, in which he begged for his imprisonment not to reflect badly on his wife and children. Burnet and Lady Russell were present while Lord Russell penned his scaffold speech a few days before his execution. He “shewed [showed] them [drafts of speech portions] to his Lady” and to Burnet himself “before he writ them out fair.”<sup>64</sup> Once finished, Lord Russell had four copies of the speech made and signed them.<sup>65</sup> He gave the original with three copies to his wife and kept one to have on hand at his execution. Lord Russell delivered his speech and calmly laid his head upon the block, where

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<sup>61</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 368.

<sup>62</sup> Stepney, *Memoirs*, 59.

<sup>63</sup> Burnet, *Bishop Burnet’s History*, 562.

<sup>64</sup> Burnet, *Bishop Burnet’s History*, 558.

<sup>65</sup> Burnet, *Bishop Burnet’s History*, 558.

it was cut off in two strokes.<sup>66</sup> Burnet writes that, within one hour of Lord Russell's execution, the speech was already selling in the streets of London.<sup>67</sup> How could this even be possible?

Conveniently, the copy available to me includes a telling detail in its colophon.<sup>68</sup> At the end of the text are the words "Printed by John Darby, by Direction of the Lady Russel. 1683."<sup>69</sup> Given that a lady of means like Lady Russell would have had the ability to ensure that the speech would have been published without any reference to her name, it is reasonable to consider the actual inclusion of her name in the colophon as intentional and significant. Similar to her visibility and role at Lord Russell's trial, the reference to Lady Russell's name in the publication of her husband's inflammatory speech may have been intended to further elicit public sympathy and stoke the murmurings of injustice that had already begun to emerge. Just her name was enough to stir up the public image of Lady Russell's family's service to the Crown, as well as the powerful connections she was constantly building upon with her letters.

Lady Russell's letter to King Charles II further reveals her skill to leverage her position in the British peerage. She pointed out that she was the "daughter of a person who served your Majesty's father" to soften her bold language at the beginning of the letter. Referencing her father's service to the late King Charles I was a notable choice, as she chose to cross out "and your Majesty in your greatest posts."<sup>70</sup> While it is unknown why she decided to remove this section, there are clues that can unearth some informed interpretations. Perhaps she believed that by referencing her father's service to the king's father (who, in 1649, had himself been executed for treason during the English Civil War), she could draw a parallel between the "false" charge of treason against Charles I and the biased charge against her late husband. Perhaps this is why she crossed out the "and your Majesty" section, as it detracted from the power of the previous sentiment. Maybe she believed that emphasizing her family's connection to the Stuart dynasty before and after the English Civil War might more effectively prove her family's loyalty to the Crown.

As we have seen earlier, Lady Russell enjoyed great victories for Lord Russell's memory during the reign of King William III and Queen Mary II. Lady Russell, however, still shrewdly sought better futures for her children. She was adept at cultivating and maintaining what Lindsay O'Neill has described as a fluid "epistolary network" that could be leveraged for favors and relied upon for companionship.<sup>71</sup> Lady Russell's network is clearly visible in one of the final pieces in Sellwood's collection. This letter was written by Lady Russell to King William III on

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<sup>66</sup> The executioner, Jack Ketch, did his job so haphazardly that he later published an apology, proclaiming he had not been drunk and that Lord Russell had distracted him. For more on this, see Jack Ketch, *The Apologie of John Ketch, Esq., the Executioner of London, in Vindication of Himself as to the Execution of the Late Lord Russel, on July 21, 1683* (Printed for John Brown, 1683). Ketch's actual authorship of this text is questionable.

<sup>67</sup> Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History*, 561.

<sup>68</sup> A colophon appears at the end of a work containing the publisher's stamp and printer's information.

<sup>69</sup> Russell, *Speech*, 4.

<sup>70</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 93.

<sup>71</sup> Lindsay O'Neill, *The Opened Letter: Networking in the Early Modern British World* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 78.

March 1, 1701, and it begins by thanking the king for his royal favor bestowed upon Lord Rutland, her daughter Catherine's husband. Following this, Lady Russell wrote the following:

"I earnestly desire my son Bedford may succeed, as he has been first, and early honoured with the marks of your favour. And I hope I may live to see your Majesty has bestowed one more upon him, who appears to me to have no other ambition, except what he prefers above all others, making himself acceptable to your Majesty, and living in your good opinion. I presume to say, I believe there is no fault in his intentions of duty towards your Majesty, nor, I trust, ever will be; and that, as his years increase, his performances will better declare the faithfulness of his mind."<sup>72</sup>

This portion of the letter most evidently illustrates Lady Russell's astute persuasion skills and her understanding of the power of a title. She referred to her son, Wriothesley, simply by his new title as the 2nd Duke of Bedford. Her father-in-law, the 1st Duke of Bedford, had passed away one year earlier—and had been explicitly elevated to this rank as compensation for Lord Russell's trial and execution.<sup>73</sup> So, Lady Russell had good reason to further ingratiate herself with King William III. She stressed that her son's usefulness would only increase with age, evidently intending for him to remain close to the sitting monarch and retain the power so recently bestowed upon the family due to her skills.

The strongest theme seen in this letter is Lady Russell's emphasis on the loyalty of her son and her entire family by extension. Pointing out that her son had "no other ambition" than remaining faithful and dutiful to the Crown was shrewd diplomacy, as she thereby pushed the memory of her husband's conviction of high treason aside in favor of the newly crafted loyal image of her family.<sup>74</sup> Lady Russell clearly understood how her position in the peerage afforded her powerful connections, and she wanted the same privilege for her children.

### Conclusion

Lady Rachel Russell was adept at utilizing various methods to fight for her husband's life and reputation. Leveraging the tools at her disposal—her character, her gender, and her social status—with considerable purpose, she won significant privileges rarely given to a convicted traitor or his kin. Thus, Lady Russell's letter-writing and advocacy won her family continued respect and prosperity. To be fair, an argument could be made that Lady Russell was not intentionally setting out to use aspects of herself as tools and that, instead, her writing was simply a therapeutic outlet for her grief. Certainly, her grief was honest and deeply felt. Her desolate emotional state can be seen in a vast number of letters in both collections. Lady Russell described her grief, writing, "I want him to talk with, to walk with, to eat and sleep with; all these things are irksome to me now; the day unwelcome, and the night so too," with similar sentiments throughout multiple letters.<sup>75</sup> In 1685, she wrote to her friend and former chaplain Dr. John Fitzwilliam (c. 1630–1699) about her struggle to go on, "especially when

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<sup>72</sup> The original letter that this was transcribed from was found in the king's pocket when he passed away in 1702. Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 258.

<sup>73</sup> Schwoerer, "William, Lord Russell," 60.

<sup>74</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 258.

<sup>75</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 8–9.

one has more than one's own miserable carcass to have a regard for, which while my children are, I have."<sup>76</sup>

However, having analyzed her words and actions, I assert that Lady Russell was a talented diplomat and writer who recognized areas in which she could best help her family. The evidence reveals that Lady Russell's words and actions often took advantage of various strategies to best push her agenda while safeguarding against retaliation. It is my hope that this article has put a spotlight on a woman who may have been forgotten as the unimportant wife of a condemned traitor, were it not for the colorful collection of letters she left behind. While it cannot be known whether her family would have prospered as they did after the Glorious Revolution without Lady Russell's efforts, it can indeed be said that her bold determination protected her family's reputation and ensured their security.

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<sup>76</sup> Russell, *Letters of Lady Rachel Russell*, 147.

Grace Engelking

*More than Canned Meat:  
The Rise of SPAM in World War II America*

**ABSTRACT:** *On the basis of letters, government documents, and news magazine coverage, this essay delves into the history of the luncheon meat SPAM in World War II America. Acquiring a ubiquitous reputation, SPAM was used in a myriad of settings and known far and wide by both members of the United States Armed Forces and civilians. The humorous aspects of SPAM and its curious history are put on display, revealing a connection between the canned meat and American identity.*

**KEYWORDS:** *modern history; history of food; United States of America (USA); United States Armed Forces; World War II; SPAM; canned meat; rations; nationalism; identity*

*Introduction*

World War II (1939–1945) resulted in a plethora of food-related changes, and the most infamous product to emerge in the context of this global conflict was perhaps SPAM. This canned luncheon meat, created by the Minnesota-based corporation Hormel Foods in 1937, soon became a staple in the diet of civilians at home and soldiers across the globe once wartime came knocking on everyone's door. As the U.S. government prioritized a strong and healthy America as part of the war effort, attention to diet became a patriotic duty for all American citizens. As a result of contracts between Hormel and the U.S. government, military service members developed an especially close and complicated relationship with SPAM. Driven by the emerging scientific and administrative development of nutritional knowledge, the U.S. government's reliance on Hormel during the war contributed to the ubiquity of SPAM because it promoted patriotic messaging to American citizens and ensured global distribution through military rations. SPAM's widespread and infamous appearances in the daily routines of American life normalized the product's consumption and secured its lasting integration into the country's food culture.

*1. Wartime Effects on Food*

To build a strong and united home front while tensions were increasing across the globe, the U.S. government emphasized nutrition as a key component of wartime strength, with SPAM playing an outsized role. Connections between culture and food predated World War II, as meat had historically been associated with masculinity.<sup>1</sup> During World War II, meat symbolized self-preservation, strength, and growth, and it combined these ideals with taste and appetite.<sup>2</sup> The notion of building strength through diet influenced both civilian and military meals as food culture in the United States began to change. SPAM, the canned pork luncheon meat produced by Hormel, became widely prevalent during this period because it

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Lauren Camilleri, Melissa Kirkovski, Jessica Scarfo, Andrew Jago, and Peter Richard Gill, "Understanding the Meat-Masculinity Link: Traditional and Non-Traditional Masculine Norms Predicting Men's Meat Consumption," *Ecology of Food and Nutrition* 63, no. 4 (2024): 355–386.

<sup>2</sup> Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (University of Illinois Press, 1998), 90.



was nutritious, filling, affordable, and shelf-stable.<sup>3</sup> These four qualities of the canned meat made it particularly appealing to the Armed Forces, who used it to supply soldiers at home and abroad, as well as to civilians, who soon became well acquainted with the product. On March 11, 1941, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (in office 1933–1945) signed the *Lend-Lease Act* after it had been approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate. According to the *Lend-Lease Act*, food was a “defense article,” and the president was invested with the authority to commission and purchase defense articles and to spend money on large contracts with food corporations.<sup>4</sup> This opened the door for the U.S. government to enter into contracts with Hormel. Enacted almost eight months before the United States formally entered World War II, the *Lend-Lease Act* reflected the country’s mobilization efforts and facilitated the funding of the manufacturing and distribution of defense articles, including food (such as SPAM). As meat was central to the meals of most Americans, the government increasingly considered the respective potential strain during wartime and therefore dedicated its resources to the nutritional front.

Studies of American diets at the height of the mobilization for World War II revealed widespread nutrition-related concerns, which prompted the creation of national programs to fight malnutrition and emphasized canned goods (such as SPAM). In May of 1941, President Roosevelt convened a three-day conference on nutrition as a defense problem at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., and “the necessity for closer integration of civilian and military activities relating to health and welfare resulted in a new Executive Order.”<sup>5</sup> The proceedings of this Washington conference provided insights into federal priorities as the country was about to enter World War II, and they reflected the administration’s efforts to align national defense strategies with nutritional efforts. Under the leadership of Paul V. McNutt (1891–1955), the head of the new Federal Security Agency (FSA) and coordinator of “Health, Welfare, and Related Defense Activities,” the conference announced that “hollow hunger” (of individuals who did not have enough food to consume) and “hidden hunger” (of individuals who were malnourished due to ignorance) would both be addressed by the U.S. government.<sup>6</sup> This focus on nutrition reflected a holistic approach to the war effort, as all American citizens had a role to play in their country’s fight, whether at home or at the front.

It was generally assumed that healthy individuals would make for a vigorous, capable, and willing population that would be able to rise to the challenges of wartime.<sup>7</sup> This was especially important as jobs calling for defense workers were opening up across the country, requiring a fully mobilized nation. However, Americans who were likely to become these defense workers often came from areas where the population was found to be improperly nourished.

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<sup>3</sup> Carolyn Wyman, *Spam: A Biography* (Harcourt Brace, 1999), 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Lend-Lease Act*, H. Res. [House Resolution] 77A-D13, 77th Congress 1st session, Congressional Record 233, daily edition (January 10, 1941), approved March 11, 1941, [online](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Proceedings of the National Nutrition Conference for Defense*, May 26, 27, and 28, 1941, Washington, D.C., called by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941), [online](#).

<sup>6</sup> Charlotte Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America: The Cultural Politics of Food and Health* (Duke University Press, 2013), 45.

<sup>7</sup> Biltekoff, *Eating Right*, 46.

On April 28, 1943, the *Victory Bulletin*, a publication of the Office of War Information (and thus intended for the general public), reported that the Nutrition-in-Industry Division of the national Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had found that food improved morale and was therefore to be considered a high priority. Referencing the “nutrition experts in this country,” the article identified adequate food as one of the most important factors in reducing workers’ absenteeism as it prevented “fatigue, labor-turn-over, and slow-downs in production.”<sup>8</sup> This emphasis on nutrition reflected the government’s goal of maximizing industrial output while encouraging civilians to support the administration’s endorsed nutrition standards—especially for workers who were directly contributing to the war effort. Since total strength required total nutrition, the Roosevelt administration’s National Nutrition Program aimed to reduce the loss of man hours on the production front in communities, industrial settings, and homes.<sup>9</sup> As nutritional goals focused on the working population’s wartime efficiency, nutrition was reframed as a social duty and civic responsibility for all Americans.

## 2. SPAM as a Solution

National wartime dietary goals provided a way for all to fulfill their patriotic duty, and soon Americans’ stomachs became accustomed to SPAM. Meat was widely praised, likely due to its association with virility and potency—the very qualities needed to win World War II.<sup>10</sup> Americans had already viewed meat as an essential part of their diet prior to the war, and now meat’s particular qualities reinforced the desire among both soldiers and civilians to consume it. Meat was part of a balanced diet, and the government created nutritional guidelines to help Americans achieve such a balanced diet because “food can win or lose the war ... can ‘make or break’ our nation ... [and] can build or destroy morale.”<sup>11</sup> To frame food in a wartime support capacity and encourage the knowledge of nutrition as a patriotic duty, the U.S. government promoted the so-called “Basic 7,” which divided food into seven groups and encouraged Americans to eat one item from each group every day.<sup>12</sup> SPAM fell into Group 5, which included meat, poultry, fish, and eggs as items of consumption, and it had an even greater appeal when certain desirable cuts of meat became subject to rationing.

Meat rationing reshaped both military and civilian meals, and it created unexpected dietary changes for many individuals. As war jobs employed massive numbers of workers and paid higher wages than many had experienced before, more Americans were able to afford more expensive cuts of fresh meat. This increase in customer demand led to a decrease in fresh meat supply, and the restriction of up to 60% of USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) choice grade cuts of beef to military consumption limited civilians’ access to fresh meat even further.<sup>13</sup> Despite meat being a central component of every meal for

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<sup>8</sup> “Adequate Lunch Service for Workers Helps Maintain Production: FDA Nutrition-in-Industry Division Reports Food Improves Morale,” *Victory Bulletin: Official Weekly Publication of the Office of War Information* 4, no. 17 (April 28, 1943): 452, Illinois Digital Archives, [online](#).

<sup>9</sup> Biltekoff, *Eating Right*, 66–67.

<sup>10</sup> Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 112.

<sup>11</sup> Biltekoff, *Eating Right*, 59.

<sup>12</sup> Biltekoff, *Eating Right*, 58.

<sup>13</sup> Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 91.

Americans, civilians soon found out that it was to be rationed in order to avoid extreme shortages and inflationary pricing.<sup>14</sup> In 1943, the U.S. government began rationing most cuts of beef, pork, and lamb according to a points system.<sup>15</sup> This made it more challenging for families to secure the amount of fresh meat that they had previously consumed, yet meat continued to be expected as an ingredient at every meal. In this context, SPAM presented itself as an intriguing alternative because it was an inexpensive and shelf-stable meat option that was not subject to rationing. While rationing was effectively rewriting the grocery lists of many American citizens, Hormel increased the manufacturing of SPAM to adequately supply the population.

Government contracts further boosted the production of SPAM, ensuring that a steady supply was available in the United States. SPAM was one of only ten canned meats purchased by the military, and by 1944, 90% of all Hormel canned goods were shipped to the Armed Forces or to military aid programs,<sup>16</sup> leading to the rapid growth of Hormel and its SPAM production. Food supply was central to the U.S. government's military logistics and its path to victory in World War II, and the entire country was portrayed as an integral part of the war effort by framing food behavior as military behavior.<sup>17</sup> The military and the civilian population were called upon to work together toward freedom and liberation, as such a massive war demanded "all hands on deck." Thus, SPAM—the canned luncheon meat made from pork shoulder and ham—became a favorite in millions of families from coast to coast.<sup>18</sup> According to a 1939 article published in *Life* magazine, SPAM was primarily and efficiently manufactured at Hormel's plant in Austin, Minnesota, however, to keep up with demand, additional production plants were soon established in other Midwestern towns, including Chicago, Indianapolis, and St. Louis.<sup>19</sup> The same *Life* magazine article, written for a general middle-class American readership, used a light and pleasant tone to promote industrial food production and emphasized Hormel's innovation with regard to SPAM as both efficient and reliable. This illustrates how the positive public perception of SPAM as a modern and family-friendly product—well before the United States directly entered the war—ultimately prepared the canned meat's mass adoption. The expansion of Hormel's production reflected SPAM's growing ubiquity as it quickly became a staple for Americans during World War II. The U.S. government's purchase of vast quantities of canned goods for the Armed Forces further increased Hormel's production and distribution of the product, which also affected civilians. With SPAM stocked on military bases and in civilian kitchens, it became woven into wartime propaganda, encouraging patriotism through food consumption.

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<sup>14</sup> Stan Cox, *Any Way You Slice It: The Past, Present, and Future of Rationing* (The New Press, 2013), 24.

<sup>15</sup> Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 93.

<sup>16</sup> Wyman, *Spam*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Jennifer Wallach, *How America Eats: A Social History of Food and Culture* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 163.

<sup>18</sup> "A Hog Goes to Hormel and to Fame," *Life* 7, no. 19 (November 6, 1939): 58–59, [online](#).

<sup>19</sup> "Hog Goes to Hormel," *Life*, 57, 59.

Wartime propaganda promoted frugality and practicality, and SPAM embodied both qualities and became integrated into American life. As advertisements concerning food choices increased drastically in the 1940s, they proposed “meatless” days as acts of patriotism, with many alternative meals featuring SPAM.<sup>20</sup> Since this canned luncheon meat was not rationed on the home front, it served as a convenient replacement for standard cuts of meat in many homes across the United States. A letter from a mother to her soldier son during the war demonstrates the product’s versatility, as she explained to him how she had incorporated the canned meat in their family’s holiday dinner.<sup>21</sup> This illustrates SPAM’s role in resourceful wartime cooking. As the 1939 *Life* magazine article had predicted, the product found a home in millions of cupboards, “where housewives know that SPAM is quick to prepare, needs no refrigeration, [and] is always handy for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.”<sup>22</sup> Yet while civilian homes often embraced SPAM as a patriotic replacement for meat in their meals and consumed it willingly since it was a meat option that was not rationed, the canned meat was not as well received by soldiers who had no choice but to eat it regularly since it was a staple in their military rations. While both civilians and soldiers experienced the product’s massive proliferation during the war, the stark contrast between its general acceptance at home and its harsh rejection among the troops highlights the complex role of SPAM in the American wartime experience.

### 3. Canned Meat’s Ubiquitous Presence

As the U.S. military increasingly utilized the canned luncheon meat during World War II, Hormel’s flagship product soon developed an infamous reputation. Soldiers received so much SPAM that had been specifically produced for them that, in 1942, when the Army had to purchase a substantial order of “ordinary” SPAM as a substitute for the government kind, members of the Armed Forces noticed it immediately, and the incident subsequently became known as “SPAMgate.”<sup>23</sup> Considering that soldiers were able to distinguish easily between what was—from their vantage point—“real” and “fake” SPAM, their familiarity with the canned meat was certainly unquestionable. During World War II, over one hundred million pounds of SPAM were shipped abroad, demonstrating the canned luncheon meat’s far-reaching influence.<sup>24</sup> But soldiers eating SPAM several times each day grew disdainful toward the blue can, and they made their feelings heard. According to a 1945 article published in *The New Yorker* magazine, Jay C. Hormel (1892–1954), the man widely considered responsible for SPAM, maintained a “scurrilous file, in which he dumps the letters of abuse that are sent to him by soldiers everywhere in the world.”<sup>25</sup> Brendan Gill (1914–1997), the journalist who wrote the article, endeavored to capture a more personal side of Hormel as a corporate

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<sup>20</sup> Terrence H. Witkowski, “World War II Poster Campaigns: Preaching Frugality to American Consumers,” *Journal of Advertising* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 78.

<sup>21</sup> Wallach, *How America Eats*, 168.

<sup>22</sup> “Hog Goes to Hormel,” *Life*, 59.

<sup>23</sup> Wyman, *Spam*, 20.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Smith, “SPAM,” in *Food and Drink in American History: A “Full Course” Encyclopedia* (ABC-CLIO, 2013), 1019.

<sup>25</sup> Brendan Gill, “Spam Man,” *The New Yorker* (August 11, 1945): 19.

executive. By referring to Hormel's "scurrilous file" as a representation of the canned meat's standing in the United States Armed Forces, Gill showed how Hormel's relationship with the U.S. military had created the vast global presence of SPAM, which led to its firm establishment in the cultural wartime memory. While the canned luncheon meat's constant presence sparked many complaints, it also inspired a unique subculture. Tales of SPAM's infamy were heard across the globe, as service members referenced the canned meat in letters, songs, cartoons, and various other forms of war literature.

SPAM became a staple of military culture, and it made appearances in a wide range of literary works authored by enlisted soldiers. Many contributed to the widely disseminated "Ode to SPAM." Consisting of approximately forty lines, it described the various ways in which soldiers prepared the canned meat to conceal its contents, and it ended with a humorous clause that, if a soldier were to return home and his wife would make him SPAM, their marital bliss would cease.<sup>26</sup> For as many cans of SPAM as members of the Armed Forces endured throughout the war, there were almost as many stories, jokes, cartoons, verses, songs, and even prayers mentioning the ubiquitous blue cans. SPAM references eventually permeated the language of the war: colloquially, Uncle Sam became Uncle SPAM; the European invasion fleet was hailed as the SPAM fleet; the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal for service was renamed the SPAM Ribbon; the United Service Organizations (USO) toured the SPAM circuit; food supply depots turned into SPAM Canyons; and multiple U.S. military encampments re-christened themselves as SPAMvilles.<sup>27</sup> In 1945, the prolific American writer Len Zinberg (a.k.a. Ed Lacy, 1911–1968) published a comedic story in *Yank: The Army Weekly* about a man in the Army whose excessive love of the canned meat became the highlight of his military career. This man, a fictional individual by the name of Cyrus Ringer, was not happy about being in the Army, but his attitude changed with his first meal, namely, when he was served SPAM. Ringer's love of SPAM soon attracted the attention of his superior, and he was promoted to T-5 (Technician Fifth Grade) with the special mission to travel from mess hall to mess hall and ask for seconds of SPAM to promote the canned meat. Ringer soon grew "fat and sleek," but he eventually told his commanding general that he was ready to go home. When the general refused to let him out of the Army, Ringer informed him that he was already out—in fact, he had received a "Section 8" (i.e., he had been judged mentally unfit for service) "two seconds" after he had announced that he liked SPAM.<sup>28</sup> Zinberg's story suggests that SPAM was quite unpopular in the U.S. military during World War II—so much so that anyone liking the canned luncheon meat simply had to be deemed mentally unfit. Created by and for American soldiers, *Yank: The Army Weekly* catered to military humor with the intent of boosting morale, and this satirical tale of a soldier's love of SPAM offered an entertaining message and a not-so-subtle critique that would have resonated with many service members. It also underscored that American soldiers during World War II were

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<sup>26</sup> See Wyman, *Spam*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Wyman, *Spam*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> Len Zinberg, "The Man Who Liked SPAM," *Yank: The Army Weekly* 3, no. 32 (January 26, 1945): 16, [online](#).

inundated and saturated with SPAM, which is why their attitudes toward the canned luncheon meat infiltrated many forms of military entertainment and culture.

SPAM's versatility, both as a food item and as a physical substance, engendered a wide range of uses during World War II, enhancing its already dubious cultural prestige and complex status among soldiers. Its fattiness permitted soldiers to employ it as a substitute for Vaseline, as gun lubricant, as a candle if a piece of cloth was shoved in the middle, as bait for fishing, as water-proofing for leather boots, tents, and matches, and, when mixed with gasoline, even as a substitute for Sterno (i.e., canned heat).<sup>29</sup> The uses beyond food consumption that service members discovered for SPAM were extensive. Army mess sergeants made pots and pans out of flattened SPAM cans; one U.S. fighter pilot used SPAM cans to repair holes in aircraft wings and fuselages; and—a most impressive alternative—Corporal Dillon Hopson of the Forty-third Infantry division allegedly threw fifteen slices of SPAM and silverware at a Japanese soldier, thus knocking a grenade out of his hand.<sup>30</sup> These experiences, ranging from necessity to ingenuity, cemented SPAM's place in the wartime experience.

SPAM became part of America's wartime identity, and the U.S. government's contracts with Hormel contributed to the canned luncheon meat's lasting legacy. According to a letter sent by former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower (in office 1953–1961) to retired Hormel President Horace Harold "Tim" Corey (in office 1954–1965), Eisenhower had eaten his fair share of the canned meat and, along with scores of other soldiers, had made some unkind remarks about it; however, he was able to officially forgive the Hormel executive for his only sin, namely, for sending too much of it.<sup>31</sup> This candid personal letter demonstrates the extent to which SPAM became ubiquitous during World War II, but it also shows how SPAM's cultural symbolism was internalized and continued to live on after the war. SPAM acquired its infamous reputation throughout World War II due to the U.S. government purchasing and Hormel supplying so much of it. Wartime identity was shaped by political food choices, and giving up their customary cuts of fresh meat in favor of SPAM's canned variant showed Americans' dedication to the war effort.<sup>32</sup> SPAM's influence eventually extended over many of the territories of the war's Pacific Theater, and the canned luncheon meat became one of the staples of postwar food charity and assistance. This rendered SPAM instantly recognizable to many Pacific Islanders, and it remains popular in Hawaii, Guam, Saipan, and the Philippines to this day.<sup>33</sup> SPAM became ubiquitous as an alternative protein and played a transformative role in American food history.

### Conclusion

The U.S. government's contracts with Hormel during World War II made SPAM omnipresent across the nation. Aided by nutritional campaigns, enhanced production and distribution efforts, and both military and civilian responses, the canned luncheon meat's ubiquity was a

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<sup>29</sup> Wyman, *Spam*, 23.

<sup>30</sup> Wyman, *Spam*, 23.

<sup>31</sup> Wyman, *Spam*, 24.

<sup>32</sup> Wallach, *How America Eats*, 164.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, "SPAM," 1019.

direct result of its infamous appearances virtually everywhere, and SPAM's proliferation during World War II firmly embedded it in American food culture. Today, SPAM is more than just a canned good: it serves as a testament to the way in which wartime policies, nutritional knowledge, and national identity can intersect to leave an "edible" mark on history.

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Carson L. Tomony

## *San Francisco's "First Family": The Legacy of America's Oldest Black-Owned Bookstore and Its Founders*

**ABSTRACT:** *This article explores the history and legacy of Marcus Books, America's oldest Black-owned bookstore. Using six decades of newspaper articles from the San Francisco Chronicle and Oakland Tribune, it addresses Julian and Raye Richardson's journey to opening the store in San Francisco in 1960, their experiences and contributions in the decades that followed, and the lasting legacy of the store and its founders. The author argues that Marcus Books provided Black residents with a sense of community amid urban displacement, that it educated and hosted numerous activists of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, and that the Richardsons played a crucial role in establishing the nation's first Black and Ethnic Studies programs.*

**KEYWORDS:** *modern history; United States of America (USA); San Francisco, California; Oakland, California; Black bookstores; Marcus Books; Julian and Raye Richardson; Civil Rights Movement; Black Power Movement; Black Arts Movement*

### *Introduction*

George Floyd was murdered three miles from my college dorm on May 25, 2020. When I heard the news, I had just finished my freshman year at Augsburg University in Minneapolis and was trying to adapt to living in the COVID-19 pandemic like the rest of the world. While I admired those who regularly participated in Black Lives Matter protests, I ultimately wanted to contribute to the fight against police brutality and systemic racism without jeopardizing the health of my parents, whom I had just moved back in with. As an aspiring teacher, I decided that educating myself on the history of race relations in America would be a good place to start, so I followed dozens of antiracist activists, educators, and authors on Twitter, and I read anything and everything they recommended, especially books by Black authors.

One day, I came across a Tweet by another avid reader in the Twin Cities named Dionne Sims. It read, "Minnesota doesn't have a black-owned bookstore. I think that's my new dream."<sup>1</sup> The post went viral, and by the summer of 2020, Sims had officially established Black Garnet Books in St. Paul, six miles from my college campus and 10 miles from where Floyd's life had tragically been taken. With books from some of my favorite authors, including Jason Reynolds, Angie Thomas, Isabel Wilkerson, and Ibram X. Kendi, it quickly became my preferred bookstore in the Twin Cities.

Many scholars have explored the history of Black-owned bookstores. For example, in *From Head Shops to Whole Foods* (2020), historian Joshua Clark Davis notes that about 100 Black entrepreneurs opened bookstores in the 1960s and 1970s to promote Black consciousness, create safe spaces where Black people could network and socialize, and foster self-

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<sup>1</sup> Gia Vang, "Black Garnet Books looks to be only Black-owned bookstore in Twin Cities," *Kare11*, July 9, 2020, [online](#).



sufficiency.<sup>2</sup> However, the actual bookstores leading this charge, the people running them, and their impacts on their communities have received little more than the occasional case study or sidebar. In this article, I aim to investigate the ways in which Marcus Books, America's oldest Black-owned bookstore, has served its Bay Area community since Julian and Raye Richardson founded it in 1960. By doing so, we can come to appreciate the experiences and contributions of those at Black bookstores on a more meaningful level, understand these stores' roles within their communities, and recognize the importance of supporting such businesses today.

### 1. Julian and Raye Richardson's Journey to Marcus Books

From the beginning of World War I (1914) until the end of the Civil Rights Movement (1968), six million Black Southerners migrated to northern cities to escape the racial caste system of the rural South, an exodus that would come to be known as the Great Migration.<sup>3</sup> During this period, every Black family in the South had to make the difficult decision of staying in a Ku Klux Klan-ridden sharecropping society or leaving everyone and everything they knew to go live in the North, where schools and public facilities were often just as segregated and white folks were often just as racist. Julian Richardson's family chose the former, while Raye's chose the latter.

Julian Richardson was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1916.<sup>4</sup> While Jim Crow infiltrated every part of the South, Birmingham was the mecca of racial discrimination. Julian grew up with segregated housing, public transportation, restaurants, sports, and anything else one could think of. Black residents had no access to parks, libraries, zoos, and other public amenities until after Julian graduated from college.<sup>5</sup> With policies like these, it is no wonder that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. later declared Birmingham the most segregated city in America.<sup>6</sup> Despite the racism they endured, Julian's parents kept him and his seven siblings where they were and carved out an impressive life for themselves.<sup>7</sup> His mother wanted her children to be aware and proud of their people's history, so she gave her boys the names of heroic Black historical figures for middle names. She chose the middle name Attucks for Julian, after Crispus Attucks, a victim of the Boston Massacre (1770) who helped spark the American Revolutionary War.<sup>8</sup> Julian's father was a coal miner who "no one in his right mind would have called 'boy.'"<sup>9</sup> Even beyond his parents, Julian grew up surrounded by Black

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<sup>2</sup> Joshua Clark Davis, "Liberation Through Literacy: African American Bookstores, Black Power, and the Mainstreaming of Black Books," in *From Head Shops to Whole Foods: The Rise and Fall of Activist Entrepreneurs* (Columbia University Press, 2020), 37–38.

<sup>3</sup> Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (Random House, 2010), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Lee Hubbard, "Black Bookstores Fight To Stay Alive," *Atlanta Daily World*, September 10, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Charles E. Connerly, "Planning and Jim Crow," in *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920–1980* (University of Virginia Press, 2005), 36–37.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Luther King Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (Harper & Row Publishers, 1964), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Chauncey Bailey, "Julian Richardson, 84, of Marcus Books, dies," *Oakland Tribune*, August 23, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Lori Olszewski, "Black Bookstore Desperate for Surprise Ending," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 26, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> Brenda Payton, "One for the books," *Oakland Tribune*, October 10, 1982.

excellence. All but one of his siblings attended college, which was almost unprecedented for a Black family in the 1930s.<sup>10</sup>

Raye Gilbert was born four years after Julian, her future husband, in Brinkley, Arkansas. When she was a young girl, her family decided to leave the Jim Crow South, and they headed north in search of something better. In choosing where to go, they followed the path of the Great Migration. According to journalist Isabel Wilkerson's monograph *The Warmth of Other Suns* (2010), the Great Migration had three main streams, which were "so predictable that by the end of the Migration, and, to a lesser degree, even now, one can tell where a black northerner's family was from just by the city the person grew up in."<sup>11</sup> Families from Arkansas most often migrated to Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, or their satellite communities.<sup>12</sup> Raye's family chose the Chicago area, settling down in Waukegan, Illinois,<sup>13</sup> an industrializing city on the shore of Lake Michigan that offered most of the economic opportunities Chicago did, albeit without the traffic, congestion, and extracurriculars. They were not alone in their thinking, as Waukegan became a popular destination for Black families in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>14</sup>

While they took different paths to get there, both Julian and Raye wound up at Tuskegee Institute, a historically Black college in Julian's native Alabama. Raye was a freshman when Julian was a senior, but the school was small enough that everyone bumped into each other sooner or later. Case in point, as part of Raye's scholarship requirements, she looked after an elderly professor emeritus in the school's agricultural department<sup>15</sup> who happened to live in a suite in Julian's dorm.<sup>16</sup> That man was George Washington Carver, the revolutionary agricultural scientist who modernized the cultivation of peanuts.<sup>17</sup>

When Raye first laid eyes on Julian in 1937, she knew he was "the one." She asked him to marry her the day they met. More accurately, she told him he would be marrying her.<sup>18</sup> Julian told her to "go home and grow up," and that she "didn't even smell like a big girl." According to Raye, she went home, grew up, and waited to ask him again.<sup>19</sup> When Julian graduated, he took his lithography degree and his suitcase and went up and down the country looking for a job.<sup>20</sup> During this time, Raye kept tabs on him by having those of her old classmates who worked as Pullman porters write to her every time they saw him.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bailey, "Julian Richardson."

<sup>11</sup> Wilkerson, *Warmth of Other Suns*, 178.

<sup>12</sup> Wilkerson, *Warmth of Other Suns*, 178.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Cobb, "Dr. Raye Richardson 'Woman of the Decade,'" *Oakland Post*, January 7, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> Waukegan Historical Society, Museums and Library, [online](#).

<sup>15</sup> Ishmael Reed, "Keepin' On, the Richardson Dynasty," *Alta*, January 23, 2024, [online](#).

<sup>16</sup> Teresa Moore, "Key Outlet for Writings by and About Blacks," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 27, 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Bailey, "Julian Richardson."

<sup>18</sup> Herbert A. Sample, "S.F. area hopes swinging beat of the past returns," *Sacramento Bee*, October 23, 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Brenda Payton, "Fond remembrances of Julian 'Rich' Richardson," *Oakland Tribune*, August 24, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> "In Memoriam: Julian Richardson," *The Black Scholar* 30, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2000): 66.

<sup>21</sup> Chip Johnson, "Marcus Books Founder Left Blacks a Legacy of Knowledge," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 24, 2000.

Five years later, after Raye graduated, she chased after Julian and proposed to him "with his back to the Pacific Ocean." With World War II under way, Julian figured that being married might save him from being drafted, so he said "yes."<sup>22</sup> They went on to be married for 58 years, and their daughter Blanche, one of their children, said they were in love for every minute of it.<sup>23</sup> When Julian died in 2000, a reporter congratulated Raye on being married 58 years. She replied, "And he owed me five. If he had married me when I asked him, we would have had five more years."<sup>24</sup>

After they wed, Julian and Raye moved to Los Angeles, where they lived until Julian got drafted into the army, despite his marital status.<sup>25</sup> When he returned from the war, they relocated to San Francisco, which Julian thought would be a better place to start a printing business.<sup>26</sup> That may have been true, but San Francisco was not an easy place for a Black couple to find housing in the mid-1940s. With racially restrictive housing covenants barring people of color from buying and renting properties in most of the city<sup>27</sup> and Black people mostly unable to rent hotel rooms,<sup>28</sup> their options were severely limited. Luckily, they met a man at the train station who offered to let them stay with his family in the Fillmore District. Having nowhere else to go, the Richardsons accepted the offer and moved in with the man, his wife, and his wife's 14-year-old daughter.<sup>29</sup> They lived with this family for several years, and Raye and Julian became something of an aunt and uncle to the girl. Once, she wanted to go to a school dance, but her mother said she could only go if Julian chaperoned, so he did. At some point, Julian gave the girl a collection of poetry as a gift. She had been enthralled with books and poetry for years but had never owned her own book, and it became one of her prized possessions. She studied the structure and flow of her favorite poems and practiced writing her own, developing into an exceptional writer and poet over time. One of the best ever. That girl's name was Maya Angelou.<sup>30</sup>

When the Richardsons first arrived in San Francisco in the mid-1940s, the city was predominantly white. In the words of one journalist, "there were almost no black folks and no black-eyed peas."<sup>31</sup> That changed quickly. World War II created a plethora of wartime jobs in the Bay Area that Black people moved to the city for, and the internment of Japanese Americans after the attack on Pearl Harbor resulted in many vacant affordable housing units for them to move into. This was especially true in San Francisco, which had the third-largest

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<sup>22</sup> Susan Lydon, "Bookstore a mecca for city's black readers," *Alameda Times-Star*, January 24, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Tilove, "Changes for King Street," *Oregonian*, January 21, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> Payton, "Fond remembrances."

<sup>25</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>26</sup> Johnson, "Marcus Books Founder."

<sup>27</sup> Eli Moore, Nicole Montojo, and Nicole Mauri, *Roots, Race, & Place: A History of Racially Exclusionary Housing in the San Francisco Bay Area* (Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, 2019), 12, [online](#).

<sup>28</sup> Bailey, "Julian Richardson."

<sup>29</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>30</sup> John McMurtrie, "Poet kept close ties with Marcus Books," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 29, 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Tilove, "Changes for King Street."

Japanese American population in the country.<sup>32</sup> As a result, the Bay Area became a prime destination during the Great Migration, and by the late 1940s, the Fillmore had turned into a bustling Black community.<sup>33</sup> Ironically, the Fillmore was named after Millard Fillmore, the thirteenth president of the United States, who signed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which mandated that enslaved people who had escaped to free states like California be returned to their masters. Raye Richardson would later become one of the main city leaders to advocate for its renaming, but it remains the Fillmore District to this day.<sup>34</sup>

After World War II, the Fillmore developed one of the most prolific jazz and blues scenes in the country. The most popular spot in town was Jimbo's Bop City jazz club, a purple and white Victorian that hosted the likes of Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane, among others.<sup>35</sup> Bop City had the soul of a Black church and the spirit of a Black barbershop, and it remained a nexus for San Francisco's Black community until it fell victim to urban redevelopment in 1965.<sup>36</sup>

Julian loved the Fillmore's energy and desperately wanted to start a printing business there so he could print for all the Black businesses in the district, but first he needed a job to earn the money to do so. He applied to be a Linotype operator at *The San Francisco Chronicle*, a job he was undoubtedly qualified for, if not overqualified, since he had worked at a print shop all throughout college<sup>37</sup> and had a degree in lithography.<sup>38</sup> The only problem was that the newspaper did not hire Black people. However, because he was light-skinned, and perhaps because his hiring managers could not imagine that a Black person could have been as educated and experienced as he was, they thought he was white. As much as it pained him to hide the part of his identity he was most proud of, he needed a job. In addition, he knew that it was merely a launching pad for him to do what he really wanted to do, so he took the job and let them believe he was white.<sup>39</sup>

After a year at *The Chronicle*, Julian resigned. His friends thought he was crazy for walking away from such a position, but he was tired of hiding his Blackness and ready to do his own thing. In 1946, he opened his very own print shop, Success Printing, in the Fillmore.<sup>40</sup> The first thing he published was a book by one of his all-time favorite Pan-African thinkers, *Philosophy*

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<sup>32</sup> "Japanese Population by Nativity or Citizenship in Selected Cities in the United States: 1940," U.S. Department of Commerce, December 10, 1941, [online](#).

<sup>33</sup> Jasmine Johnson and Shaun Ossei-Owusu, "'From Fillmore to No More': Black Owned Business in a Transforming San Francisco," in *Black California Dreamin': The Crises of California's African-American Communities*, ed. Ingrid Banks, Gaye Johnson, George Lipsitz, Ula Taylor, Daniel Widener, and Clyde Woods (University of California, Santa Barbara, Center for Black Studies Research, 2012), 76, [online](#).

<sup>34</sup> Carolyn Zinko, "Big Fight Likely on Renaming S.F. Street," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 10, 1997.

<sup>35</sup> "Six Stores Stocked With Truly Bookish Treats," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 30, 2000. The address of this c. 1893 structure is 1712 Fillmore St, San Francisco, CA 94115.

<sup>36</sup> Sample, "S.F. area hopes."

<sup>37</sup> Bailey, "Julian Richardson."

<sup>38</sup> "Dr. Raye Gilbert Richardson, 99, Founder of Marcus Books, Oldest Remaining Black-Owned Bookstore in America," *Post News Group*, February 27, 2020, [online](#).

<sup>39</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>40</sup> Johnson, "Marcus Books Founder."

and *Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, which had gone out of print since its original publication in 1923.<sup>41</sup> In it, Garvey urges every Black man to "never depend upon others to do for him what he ought to do for himself."<sup>42</sup> Success Printing's beginning was rocky, as the business had to move half a dozen times in its first two years.<sup>43</sup> Yet once it had made a name for itself as the go-to print shop for Black businesses in the Fillmore, it settled in nicely. By the late 1940s, Julian was printing for all the Black businesses that lined the Fillmore, just as he had originally envisioned.<sup>44</sup> From the moment he set up shop, he did everything he could to support the Black entrepreneurs who supported him. In 1959, he published *The Success Directory*, a "Rolodex of black-owned businesses in the city," to help popularize these places.<sup>45</sup>

Julian loved printing, but his and Raye's true passion was books. In fact, according to Julian, their shared love of books is what "caused" them to get married.<sup>46</sup> They had a knack for finding books by Harlem Renaissance authors that no one else could get their hands on. Throughout the 1950s, they would order such books from two Black-owned bookstores in New York and one in Los Angeles, the only three Black bookstores they knew of.<sup>47</sup> They developed a reputation for having the best collection of Black literature in town and often found themselves lending books to their friends and not getting them back. They started ordering multiple copies of each book and putting the extras behind the front window of the shop so that their friends and customers could check them out, and they could hold on to their own.<sup>48</sup> Before they knew it, people came to Success Printing just for these books. Realizing the hunger for Black literature in the community, Julian and Raye decided to turn their side hustle into a business. In 1960, they opened Success Books,<sup>49</sup> which they soon renamed Marcus Books, after their hero, Marcus Garvey.<sup>50</sup>

One of Marcus Books' first employees was a young man who loved to dance. In fact, he danced on the job so much that everyone called him the "danceman pressman." One day, he got so carried away while shaking and grooving that he dropped a monkey wrench into the Richardsons' brand-new press, which cost about \$10,000 to fix. As one might expect, that young man did not work at Marcus Books much longer, but not for the reason most would think. Rather than firing the young employee, Julian gave him the money to go to New York and try to make it in show business. He did. That man's name was Morgan Freeman.<sup>51</sup>

This story may leave the impression that Julian was a man who could afford to send his employees across the country to follow their dreams, but the truth is that Marcus Books' first

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<sup>41</sup> Payton, "One for the books."

<sup>42</sup> Marcus Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, ed. Amy Jacques Garvey (Universal Publishing House, 1923), 38–39.

<sup>43</sup> Johnson, "Marcus Books Founder."

<sup>44</sup> "Marcus Books," featured in Local Content Videos, C-SPAN, November 1, 2015, [online](#).

<sup>45</sup> Johnson and Ossei-Owusu, "From Fillmore to No More," 78.

<sup>46</sup> Payton, "One for the books."

<sup>47</sup> Brenda Payton, "African American bookstore a jewel," *Oakland Tribune*, October 9, 1990.

<sup>48</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>49</sup> Moore, "Key Outlet."

<sup>50</sup> Johnson and Ossei-Owusu, "From Fillmore to No More," 79.

<sup>51</sup> "Marcus Books," C-SPAN.

few years were lean. The one thing Success Printing had going for itself when it first opened was the city's growing Black population. From 1941, the year the United States entered World War II, to 1950, the city's Black population increased from less than 4,000 to more than 50,000, which made it easier for Black-owned businesses like Success Printing to attract customers.<sup>52</sup> But by the time the Richardsons launched Marcus Books in 1960, the city's urban renewal projects were actively driving these Black residents out of the city. From the late 1950s through the 1970s, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency displaced more than 20,000 people, a disproportionate number of whom were people of color. Many minority-owned businesses were forced to shut down or relocate, and even the ones that were not directly impacted struggled to survive where they were, as a sizable percentage of their customers were being run out of town.<sup>53</sup>

In 1963, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency forced Marcus Books out of the Fillmore. The bookstore bounced around the Tenderloin and other districts in the city's Western Addition for years, trying to find its footing.<sup>54</sup> Raye did her best to help keep small businesses like Marcus Books afloat amid urban renewal and gentrification, later joining San Francisco's Small Business Commission to fight against the displacement of minority-owned businesses.<sup>55</sup> Despite efforts like these, Marcus Books found itself on the brink of going under just a few years after its original launch.

## 2. Marcus Books during the Civil Rights, Black Arts, and Black Power Movements

Just as urban renewal threatened to kill the Richardsons' dream, the demand for Black literature skyrocketed thanks to the Civil Rights, Black Arts, and Black Power movements, all of which were especially vibrant in the Bay Area. For example, San Francisco became a center of the Civil Rights Movement in 1963 and 1964 when the United San Francisco Freedom Movement organized protests against discriminatory businesses.<sup>56</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Black Arts Movement exploded in the Bay Area thanks to jazz musicians like John Coltrane, Sun Ra, and Pharoah Sanders, as well as poets like Sonia Sanchez, Ishmael Reed, Nikki Giovanni, and Amiri Baraka.<sup>57</sup> Baraka may have had the greatest impact on both the Black Arts Movement in general and the increased demand for Black literature in particular, as he is known as the "practical inventor of the Black Arts movement" and the "most influential African American author of the 1960s."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Johnson and Ossei-Owusu, "From Fillmore to No More," 76.

<sup>53</sup> Cathy Bussewitz, "Marcus Books blasts to jazz past," *Alameda Times-Star*, March 27, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> Moore, "Key Outlet."

<sup>55</sup> Herbert A. Sample, "Raye Richardson had vital role in S.F.'s new African Diaspora museum," *Sacramento Bee*, December 12, 2005.

<sup>56</sup> "Bay Area Social Justice History Project," San Francisco State University, [online](#).

<sup>57</sup> Cheryl Clarke, "Black Arts Movement," in *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*, ed. Fedwa Malti-Douglas, 4 vols. (Macmillan Reference, 2007), 1:157.

<sup>58</sup> "Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones)," F.B. Eyes Digital Archive: FBI Files on African American Authors and Literary Institutions Obtained through the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)," Washington University in St. Louis, [online](#).

If the Civil Rights and Black Arts movements put Black bookstores on the map, the Black Power Movement put them on a pedestal. In 1966, a group of students at San Francisco State College formed the first ever Black Student Union,<sup>59</sup> and shortly afterward, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton established the Black Panther Party in Oakland.<sup>60</sup> Suddenly, young Black people thirsted for books about Black history and Black liberation like never before, and Marcus Books was uniquely equipped to satisfy this demand. As a result, the Richardsons' store became profitable for the first time in the late 1960s.<sup>61</sup> With the demand for Black literature high, the Richardsons struck while the press was hot and printed a surplus of works by Black writers. In 1964, Marcus Books started publishing *The Black Dialogue*, a journal run by Black students at San Francisco State<sup>62</sup> which became the first major publication of the Black Arts Movement.<sup>63</sup> In 1970, the bookstore published Ovid P. Adams's *The Adventures of Black Eldridge: The Panther*, a graphic novel about the life of Eldridge Cleaver, the Black Panther Party's Minister of Information. It became an instant hit.<sup>64</sup>

During these movements, the bookstore also became a meeting space for Black activists and grassroots organizations. It hosted the Black Panther Party, the Association of Black Psychologists, and the US Organization,<sup>65</sup> a Black nationalist group founded by Dr. Maulana Karenga, the eventual creator of Kwanzaa.<sup>66</sup> In addition, the bookstore became a lecture room for writers like Amiri Baraka and Ishmael Reed, who taught and mentored budding Black scholars and student activists.<sup>67</sup> It should be noted that Marcus Books was not the only Black-owned bookstore to host activists during these movements. According to Joshua Clark Davis, Black bookstores across the United States became spaces where civil rights groups and Black nationalists networked and organized throughout the 1960s and well into the 1970s.<sup>68</sup> One day, a tall, well-dressed man wearing browline glasses came into Marcus Books to see what all the fuss was about. It was Malcolm X. According to Julian, Malcolm had already read just about every book in the store,<sup>69</sup> but he hung around to talk with Julian about current events impacting the Black community.<sup>70</sup> Before he left, Julian offered to buy the Muslim

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<sup>59</sup> Ibram X. Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965–1972* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 108–109.

<sup>60</sup> Kendi, *Black Campus Movement*, 79.

<sup>61</sup> Hubbard, "Black Bookstores."

<sup>62</sup> Simon C. Abramowitsch, "Under the Sign of the Rainbow: Thinking Racial and Ethnic Heterogeneity in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s–1990s" (PhD diss., University of California, Davis, 2018), 68.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Aiello, "Black Arts Movement," *Oxford African American Studies Center*, December 1, 2009, [online](#).

<sup>64</sup> Ovid P. Adams, *The Adventures of Black Eldridge: The Panther* (Marcus Books, 1970).

<sup>65</sup> Johnson and Ossei-Owusu, "From Fillmore to No More," 80.

<sup>66</sup> Thaa Walker, "Kwanzaa Celebrations Growing in Popularity in the Bay Area," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 31, 1993.

<sup>67</sup> Holly McDede, "Marcus Books Is Making a Comeback," *East Bay Express*, August 31, 2011.

<sup>68</sup> Davis, "Liberation Through Literacy," 37.

<sup>69</sup> Olszewski, "Black Bookstore."

<sup>70</sup> Jack Chang, "Bookstore a Landmark in History: African-American Community Helps Marcus Endure," *Contra Costa Times*, January 16, 2005.



minister a porkchop from a nearby restaurant.<sup>71</sup> Few people could have gotten away with such a joke, but Julian did.

From 1958 to 1966, Julian and Raye occasionally sent books to a young man they knew who was serving a prison sentence, and he returned the favor by sending the Richardsons Christmas cards. The man loved these books and began writing his own essays, reflecting on his criminal wrongdoings, race relations in America, and how to move forward as a people. That man was Eldridge Cleaver, who became the Black Panther Party's Minister of Information when he was released from prison in 1966.<sup>72</sup> Two years later, he published a memoir, *Soul on Ice*, consisting of the essays he had written in prison. By the end of 1968, *The New York Times* listed it as a top-ten book of the year.<sup>73</sup> Shortly thereafter, Cleaver and others established the Black House, a Black theater in the Fillmore.<sup>74</sup> Julian became a regular at the Black House, where he mingled with Black Panthers like Cleaver and Bobby Seale, as well as student activists like Jimmy Garrett and Danny Glover.<sup>75</sup> It was around this time that Glover, whose parents were friends with the Richardsons,<sup>76</sup> got his start in acting. Amiri Baraka, who was teaching at San Francisco State, wanted Black student activists in his plays and asked Glover, a member of the school's Black Student Union, whether he would be interested. Glover was not going to turn down his mentor and the pioneer of the Black Arts Movement, so he gave it a go.<sup>77</sup> He became one of the greatest actors of all time, perhaps best known for his starring role in the *Lethal Weapon* series.

As fruitful as the Civil Rights, Black Arts, and Black Power movements were for Black bookstores like Marcus Books, they also triggered backlash from several parties—most notably from the FBI. According to literature scholar William J. Maxwell's monograph *F.B. Eyes* (2015), J. Edgar Hoover directed the Bureau to surveil Black writers and literary institutions throughout the 1960s and early 1970s because he saw them as an extraordinary threat to the status quo.<sup>78</sup> The FBI did everything in its power to criminalize such individuals and establishments.<sup>79</sup> In fact, Maxwell suspects that the FBI exhausted more energy surveilling Black writers during the Black Arts Movement than it did Communists during the height of the Cold War.<sup>80</sup> While we cannot know for certain whether the FBI ever surveilled Marcus Books or the Richardsons, we do know that the FBI accumulated extensive

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<sup>71</sup> Lee Hildebrand, "Family keeps shelves full of black culture," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 31, 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Olszewski, "Black Bookstore."

<sup>73</sup> Steve Wasserman, "Eldridge Back On Ice," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 1, 1976.

<sup>74</sup> Anthony J. Ratcliff, "Liberation at the End of a Pen: Writing Pan-African Politics of Cultural Struggle" (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2009), 151.

<sup>75</sup> Jason Michael Ferreira, "All Power to the People: A Comparative History of Third World Radicalism in San Francisco, 1968–1974" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003), 82.

<sup>76</sup> Judy Masterson, "Raye Richardson among shapers of 20th century culture," *Lake County News-Sun*, April 17, 2003.

<sup>77</sup> Ibram X. Kendi, "Baraka's Legacy: Let's Not Forget Inaugural Black Studies Professor," *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, January 13, 2014.

<sup>78</sup> William J. Maxwell, *F.B. Eyes: How J. Edgar Hoover's Ghostreaders Framed African American Literature* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 5.

<sup>79</sup> Maxwell, *F.B. Eyes*, 59.

<sup>80</sup> Maxwell, *F.B. Eyes*, 60.



surveillance files on several people and organizations closely affiliated with the Richardsons,<sup>81</sup> including Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, *The Black Scholar*, and the Black Panther Party.<sup>82</sup> In addition, the FBI retains more than four decades' worth of files on Marcus Books' namesake, Marcus Garvey.<sup>83</sup> Considering that the height of the FBI's surveillance of Black bookstores transpired during the peak of Marcus Books' popularity and that the Bureau surveilled numerous individuals and organizations associated with the bookstore, I find it plausible, if not likely, that the FBI surveilled Marcus Books and the Richardsons at some point from when the store opened in 1960 to when Hoover died in 1972.

Whether or not the Richardsons were ever surveilled by the FBI, they definitely endured their fair share of racism. In 1965, they moved their store to San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood because the roof on their Fillmore store had developed a bad leak. When they opened shop, they found notes slipped under their door from a hotel owner down the street, asking Julian how he liked Cadillacs and white women.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, Jasmine Johnson, a granddaughter of Julian and Raye, claimed that workers often experienced "white-only-water-fountain-level racism."<sup>85</sup> Impressively, the Richardsons never let such bigotry stop them from serving their community.

### 3. Helping Establish the Nation's First Black and Ethnic Studies Programs

One of the most substantial ways the Richardsons served their community was by helping build Black and Ethnic Studies as disciplines in the Bay Area, which began at the college level in the later 1960s. In 1966, women in San Francisco State's newly created Black Student Union launched free after-school tutoring programs in the Bay Area, which inspired young students of color to seek books from places like Marcus Books.<sup>86</sup> By 1968, many of these students had enrolled at San Francisco State and went all in on trying to swap the school's Eurocentric curriculum for a more inclusive one, which they had been exposed to by the Black literature they read at Marcus Books and similar establishments in these tutoring programs.

In November 1968, students went on strike against the administration, demanding a Black Studies Department and a School of Ethnic Studies. In an attempt to organize enough people for the strike to be successful, students looked to distribute flyers around the Bay Area, explaining their goals and why people should care. But as they went to make these flyers, they realized that the school had shut off their access to its printers. Needing a place that would let them print hundreds of flyers on short notice, they went to Marcus Books and asked the Richardsons for their help. Not only did the Richardsons print the flyers for them,<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> F.B. Eyes Digital Archive: FBI Files on African American Authors and Literary Institutions Obtained through the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)," Washington University in St. Louis, [online](#).

<sup>82</sup> Maxwell, *F.B. Eyes*, 111.

<sup>83</sup> "Marcus Garvey," FBI Vault, [online](#).

<sup>84</sup> Genevieve Stuttaford, "Buttons, Books, Posters," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 2, 1968.

<sup>85</sup> André Wheeler, "'Economic duress is nothing new': Can America's oldest black bookstore survive the pandemic?" *The Guardian*, May 15, 2020, [online](#).

<sup>86</sup> Stuttaford, "Buttons, Books, Posters."

<sup>87</sup> Johnson and Ossei-Owusu, "From Fillmore to No More," 81.

they put up their own house as collateral to bail as many arrested protesters from jail as they could.<sup>88</sup> During finals week in the spring semester of 1969, students felt that the administration was on the verge of settling, so they recruited Raye and other Black leaders in the Bay Area to speak at a rally to try to get them over the edge.<sup>89</sup> The strike ended two weeks later, which set in motion the establishment of the nation's first ever Black Studies Department and School of Ethnic Studies.<sup>90</sup> That fall, Dr. Nathan Hare, Chair of the Black Studies Department, hired Raye as a professor. Coincidentally, Danny Glover was one of Raye's first students.<sup>91</sup> Raye later served as Chair of the Black Studies Department and became its first professor emerita in 1988.<sup>92</sup>

The same year that San Francisco State hired Raye as a Black Studies professor, the Sausalito School District hired her as its multi-ethnic studies coordinator.<sup>93</sup> She used these two platforms to help kids and young adults build cultural literacy and intercultural competence, and she never turned down the chance to expand these programs to other levels. Four years into her tenure at San Francisco State, several of her students approached her and complained about the whitewashed education their kids were receiving in public schools. Rather than sighing it off or passing it on to someone else to try to fix, she took matters into her own hands. She developed the Marcus Saturday School, a program where Black children between the ages of 5 and 10 could learn about Black history and culture while honing their reading and writing skills. Raye recruited a handful of her students at San Francisco State to instruct the children, most of whom were the kids of customers. After two years, Raye turned Marcus Saturday School into Malcolm X School, which taught students the same skills they had been learning on Saturdays but in a formal academic setting. According to Tamiki Johnson, who attended Marcus Saturday School as a kid, students had jumped "two to three years ahead of their age groups" by the time the school transitioned into a public school.<sup>94</sup>

Three decades later, Raye helped to secure the implementation of a historic Ethnic Studies policy in San Francisco's public schools. In March 1998, the San Francisco School Board held a highly contentious meeting over whether high schools should require students to read books by authors of color. Speaking in front of the board, Raye stood up and introduced herself as Raye Richardson, "a product of an education that did not include one black author."<sup>95</sup> She recited a passage by Geoffrey Chaucer, a fourteenth-century English poet, from a book she had been forced to read in high school and challenged the board to tell her

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<sup>88</sup> Crystal Paul, "A guide to Oakland's rich history and resilience, from a waterfront saloon to Lois the Pie Queen," *The Seattle Times*, June 28, 2018, updated September 4, 2018, [online](#).

<sup>89</sup> "U.C. Rally Planned By Black Leaders," *Oakland Tribune*, March 9, 1969.

<sup>90</sup> Helene Whitson, *Strike! A Chronology, Bibliography, and List of Archival Materials Concerning the 1968–1969 Strike at San Francisco State College* (U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, National Institute of Education, 1977), 14–19, [online](#).

<sup>91</sup> Masterson, "Raye Richardson."

<sup>92</sup> "Directory of Instructional Faculty, Administrators, Librarians, and Student Services Professionals," Emeritus/Emerita Faculty, San Francisco State University, 2013–2014, [online](#).

<sup>93</sup> "Multi-Ethnic Coordinator Is Approved," *Mill City Record*, January 29, 1969.

<sup>94</sup> Johnson and Ossei-Owusu, "From Fillmore to No More," 80–81.

<sup>95</sup> Nanette Asimov, "School Board Strikes Deal On Books," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 20, 1998.

how that passage was relevant to any of their lives.<sup>96</sup> After this, she read the summary of Monica Furlong's *Juniper*, a book on the district's required reading list: "Princess Juniper finds her power-mad aunt is using black magic to usurp the throne. Will Juniper's untried white magic be a match for that dark power?" As she explained why it was problematic to teach kids to associate white with good and Black with bad, her opponents began to question their position.<sup>97</sup> Raye's speech was described by those who witnessed it as "the most moving of all," and shortly after the meeting, the school district became the first in the country to require teachers to assign books by authors of color.<sup>98</sup>

Although Julian did not have the title of teacher, he was a teacher in every sense of the word. One day, a young man found his way into the bookstore from a nearby billiards hall and bought a book by Carter G. Woodson, the "father of Black history" who had created Negro history week, which later turned into Black history month.<sup>99</sup> Julian was quite familiar with Woodson, as the historian had taught him and Raye at Tuskegee Institute,<sup>100</sup> and he was glad to see that his customer showed an interest in him. Everywhere Julian saw the young man, he had Woodson's book with him. But Julian could tell by the way he held it that he could not read it. Rather than minding his business, Julian gave the young man a children's book about Woodson to steer him in the right direction. He learned to read it and came back for more, so Julian gave him a more challenging book. He and Julian continued this cat-and-mouse game until, eventually, he was reading adult-level books on a regular basis.<sup>101</sup>

The Richardsons did not just impart knowledge and Black pride to their customers; they instilled it in their employees. A former worker named Solomon Hill said, "Working at Marcus Books changed my life. It taught me about being black. It taught me about who I am."<sup>102</sup> Similarly, Shoshanna Satterfield, Julian and Raye's niece, said, "I was not really black until I started working here."<sup>103</sup> Another time, a woman noticed her 13-year-old daughter was "hanging out with the wrong crowd," so she brought her to the one man she knew could get her on the right track. She went to Marcus Books and asked Julian if her daughter could work for him. Legally, she was too young to work, but Julian gave her a job anyway. That young girl, Sanya Hill (Maxion), went on to be a Stanford-educated civil rights lawyer, which she said Julian and Marcus Books "had everything to do with."<sup>104</sup>

Just as the Richardsons' Black pride and passion for books rubbed off on their customers and employees, Marcus Books paved the way for other Black and minority-owned bookstores to sprout up around it. In the late 1960s, San Francisco State alumnus Jim Gray founded The

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<sup>96</sup> Sample, "Raye Richardson."

<sup>97</sup> Nanette Asimov, "S.F. High Schools to Get Diverse Authors List," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 21, 1998.

<sup>98</sup> Asimov, "School Board Strikes Deal."

<sup>99</sup> Liz Mineo, "Celebrating the founder of Black History Month," *Harvard Gazette*, February 1, 2022, [online](#).

<sup>100</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>101</sup> Moore, "Key Outlet."

<sup>102</sup> Sue Hutchison, "'Rich' Filled the Father's Role in the City's 'First Family,'" *Mercury News*, September 3, 2000.

<sup>103</sup> Olszewski, "Black Bookstore."

<sup>104</sup> Hutchison, "'Rich' Filled the Father's Role."

More Bookstore in the Fillmore.<sup>105</sup> In 1970, the UC Berkeley Asian American Political Alliance opened Everybody's Bookstore in San Francisco's Manilatown-Chinatown to provide books by and about Asian Americans and other people of color.<sup>106</sup> On a national level, approximately 100 Black bookstores emerged in the two decades after Marcus Books had opened in 1960.<sup>107</sup>

#### 4. Marcus Books' Impact after the Civil Rights, Black Arts, and Black Power Movements

Even after the Civil Rights, Black Arts, and Black Power movements had passed, Marcus Books continued to serve as a valuable community asset and a hub for the Bay Area's Black community. First, it opened another store in Oakland in 1976, where Black families from the Fillmore had been migrating for years.<sup>108</sup> It immediately became a "Mecca for black authors and intellectuals."<sup>109</sup> Second, the bookstore leaned into its reputation as a resource for teachers, which it had always been, and not just for Black teachers. In fact, white teachers accounted for as much as half of Marcus Books' customers in some years.<sup>110</sup> However, this partnership reached new heights in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1977, Stanford University's Multicultural Resource Handbook for the San Francisco Bay Area listed Marcus Books as a helpful tool for all educators interested in teaching their students about the history of Africans and African Americans.<sup>111</sup> Throughout the 1980s, teachers across the Bay Area continued to shop at Marcus Books, especially around Christmas time, as they were preparing for Black History Month.<sup>112</sup>

Third, Marcus Books revitalized the Fillmore's original gem in 1981, when it moved into the purple and white Victorian that had been Jimbo's Bop City jazz club all those years before. It brought the soul and spirit back to the space and often paid homage to Bop City by featuring a saxophonist or percussion section in the background to augment its book readings and poetry slams.<sup>113</sup> When the Richardsons left the property in 2014, the city of San Francisco designated the building as a historic landmark, paying respect to both Jimbo's Bop City and Marcus Books. Supervisor London Breed, who made the designation, said he bought his first

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<sup>105</sup> Earl Caldwell, "Black Bookstores' Flourish in Literature-Hungry Ghetto," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 22, 1969.

<sup>106</sup> Harvey Dong, "A Bookstore for Everybody," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, Supplement: *Seizing the Moment: Twentieth-Century Chinese American Activism* (January 2009): 122.

<sup>107</sup> Davis, "Liberation Through Literacy," 6.

<sup>108</sup> Chip Johnson, "Bookstore Awaiting New Chapter," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 23, 1999. The address is 3900 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA 94609.

<sup>109</sup> Johnson, "Marcus Books Founder."

<sup>110</sup> Stuttaford, "Buttons, Books, Posters."

<sup>111</sup> Vivian Sykes and Terese Tricamo, *Reach: A Multicultural Education Resource Handbook for the San Francisco Bay Area* (Stanford University School of Education, 1977).

<sup>112</sup> Marilyn Bailey, "Black History Month is Getting into Gear," *Oakland Tribune*, February 14, 1985.

<sup>113</sup> "Six Stores Stocked With Truly Bookish Treats."

book at Marcus Books, and that being in the space helped him realize that he was "part of a community and a culture bigger than just the housing project"<sup>114</sup> he was living in at the time.

While Marcus Books managed to stay more than relevant during the lull in the demand for Black literature in the late 1970s and the 1980s, it fully capitalized on its comeback in the 1990s. In March 1991, the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles ignited a renewed interest in learning about Black history.<sup>115</sup> That December, Blanche Richardson said it was an excellent year for the bookstore and that she saw more young Black people buying books than she had in a long time.<sup>116</sup> One year later, a jury acquitted the police officers who had brutalized King, which inspired a racial reckoning in which Black literature played a key role. Black bookstores became a place where folks could go to grieve, talk about police brutality and systemic racism, and strengthen their sense of community. Six weeks after the verdict, Marcus Books held a community forum titled "What Lessons Have We Learned?" that drew people from all over the Bay Area.<sup>117</sup> In November 1992, director Spike Lee released his blockbuster film *Malcolm X*, starring Denzel Washington, and the demand for Black literature soared once more.<sup>118</sup> *Malcolm X* was watched by millions of people across the country, but few could say that they had offered the real Malcolm X a porkchop, and only Julian could say that he had gotten away with it.

As Julian and Raye entered their later years, with Julian looking more and more like his idol, Frederick Douglass,<sup>119</sup> and Raye hoping to spend more time with their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, they handed over some of their stores' duties to their offspring: their daughter Blanche took over the Oakland store;<sup>120</sup> their other daughter, Karen Johnson, together with her own daughter Tamiki assumed control of the San Francisco store; their son William (Billy) took charge at the print shop; and their other son, Mac (Julian, Jr.), helped at the print shop when he was not teaching or disc jockeying.<sup>121</sup> While all of them played substantial roles in sustaining their parents' businesses, Blanche has become the new face of Marcus Books in recent decades. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, she managed to book several famous authors and celebrities for readings and events each month, sometimes attracting crowds so large that people had to be turned away.<sup>122</sup> When she got Muhammad Ali, a friend of her parents, to come to the Oakland store in 2004, the line outside of Marcus Books was reportedly "four deep and several blocks long."<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> John Wildermuth, "Marcus Books, Jimbo's Bop City Recognized by City as Historic Landmarks," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 2014.

<sup>115</sup> Walker, "Kwanzaa Celebrations."

<sup>116</sup> Patricia Abe, "A rise that binds: Even increased book prices can't keep buyers away," *Oakland Tribune*, December 29, 1991.

<sup>117</sup> "Panelists to discuss King lessons," *Oakland Tribune*, May 14, 1992.

<sup>118</sup> Walker, "Kwanzaa Celebrations."

<sup>119</sup> Payton, "One for the books."

<sup>120</sup> Johnson, "Bookstore Awaiting New Chapter."

<sup>121</sup> Moore, "Key Outlet."

<sup>122</sup> Payton, "Fond remembrances."

<sup>123</sup> Hildebrand, "Family keeps shelves full."

Blanche did not just become the figurehead of Marcus Books but the figurehead of Black bookstores in general. Right around when Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* was released, another blockbuster Black film was in production: *Made in America*, starring Whoopi Goldberg and featuring Will Smith and Nia Long. In the film, Goldberg plays the role of a Black bookstore owner in Oakland, and to design the set, she and her team reached out to the only woman they knew who ran a Black bookstore in Oakland. Blanche accepted the opportunity and helped build a set that loosely resembled Marcus Books.<sup>124</sup> When *The San Francisco Chronicle* asked Ishmael Reed in 1999 to compile a list of the ten most influential Bay Area Black individuals of the twentieth century, he put Blanche fifth, behind only the late activist Huey P. Newton, former San Francisco Mayor Lionel J. Wilson, *Oakland Tribune* publisher Robert C. Maynard, and Black Repertory Theatre founder Nora Vaughn.<sup>125</sup>

With Julian and Raye's endless connections and Blanche's unparalleled networking skills, the number of cultural icons who have made appearances at Marcus Books is almost unbelievable. Dozens of famous authors have visited, spoken at, or hosted events at the store, including Alice Walker,<sup>126</sup> Angela Davis, Toni Morrison, Terry McMillan, Nikki Giovanni, Ishmael Reed, Michael Eric Dyson,<sup>127</sup> and the Richardsons' old friend Maya Angelou.<sup>128</sup> In addition to *Malcolm X* and *Eldridge Cleaver*, activists like Rosa Parks<sup>129</sup> and Cornel West<sup>130</sup> have spent time at the bookstore, as have some of the greatest athletes ever, including Jackie Robinson,<sup>131</sup> Kareem Abdul-Jabbar,<sup>132</sup> and the abovementioned Muhammad Ali.<sup>133</sup> Musicians who have shopped, performed, or spoken at Marcus Books include B.B. King, Sister Souljah, Chaka Khan, Patti LaBelle, and the members of "Earth, Wind & Fire."<sup>134</sup> With Oprah Winfrey rounding out the list,<sup>135</sup> there may not be another bookstore in the country that has a more impressive all-time roster of customers.

Julian died in his home on August 21, 2000, at 84 years old.<sup>136</sup> According to Blanche, he died while working on the accounting for Marcus Books.<sup>137</sup> The funeral had to be delayed by 10 days because the family struggled to find a venue big enough to fit all the people who wanted to pay their respects.<sup>138</sup> With the service eventually being held at Herbst Theatre in San Francisco,<sup>139</sup> hundreds of relatives, friends, and admirers attended, including San

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<sup>124</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>125</sup> "Ishmael Reed's Alternative List," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 19, 1999.

<sup>126</sup> Bailey, "Julian Richardson."

<sup>127</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>128</sup> Hildebrand, "Family keeps shelves full."

<sup>129</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>130</sup> Chang, "Bookstore a Landmark."

<sup>131</sup> Chang, "Bookstore a Landmark."

<sup>132</sup> Samantha Schoech, "Black-owned bookstore surging," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 6, 2020.

<sup>133</sup> Hildebrand, "Family keeps shelves full."

<sup>134</sup> Reed, "Keepin' On."

<sup>135</sup> "S.F.'s historic Marcus Books to reopen in a smaller space," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 9, 2016.

<sup>136</sup> Bailey, "Julian Richardson."

<sup>137</sup> Payton, "Fond remembrances."

<sup>138</sup> Johnson, "Marcus Books Founder."

<sup>139</sup> "Obituaries," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 30, 2000.

Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, the Reverend J. Alfred Smith of Oakland's Allen Temple Baptist Church, and novelist Terry McMillan. Drummers in traditional African robes played African drums, and the legendary jazz pianist Ed Kelley played the piano.<sup>140</sup> Of all the moving speeches made that day, the one given by a man named Rennie Stockard stood out the most. As he reflected on all that Julian and his family had done for him and the Bay Area community, he pronounced the Richardsons the "first family of San Francisco."<sup>141</sup>

Marcus Books has faced its struggles in recent decades, as people have stopped reading physical books as much as they used to and superstores like Barnes & Noble and Amazon have monopolized the remaining book market. According to Blanche, Marcus Books' sales dropped by 60 percent from 2004 to 2010.<sup>142</sup> On a national level, the number of Black bookstores declined from 325 in 1999 to just 54 in 2014.<sup>143</sup> In 2009, the Richardsons fell victim to a Ponzi scheme in which dozens of businesses in the area lost a combined \$1,035,000 to a fraudster. As a result, they had to move out of the Bop City location, but they managed to keep their Oakland store up and running through the community's support and their own financial sacrifices.<sup>144</sup> With Julian's death in 2000 and the store's financial struggles afterward, the 2000s were a difficult decade for the Richardsons. However, Raye and her family did not stop serving their community, and that did not go unnoticed. In 2010, Post News Group named Marcus Books a "Business of the Decade" and Raye a "Person of the Decade."<sup>145</sup>

Raye died on February 11, 2020, at 99 years old.<sup>146</sup> Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she did not receive the well-deserved memorial service of the same magnitude that Julian had received. When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Marcus Books almost closed its doors for the last time. Poetically, it would be the community that Marcus Books and the Richardsons had served for 60 years that would save them. On April 8, 2020, a GoFundMe campaign was launched by Folasade Adesanya, a regular at Marcus Books and the founder of the Black Syllabus, a Black book club in Oakland. It raised over \$200,000 in its first two months. This sum was not the result of a few massive donors putting the business on its back, but of more than 4,000 customers and supporters who sent in their donations.<sup>147</sup> As a result, the bookstore still stands today at 3900 Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Oakland.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Brenda Payton, "Oakland eulogizes a mentor," *Oakland Tribune*, September 1, 2000.

<sup>141</sup> Hutchison, "'Rich' Filled the Father's Role."

<sup>142</sup> Hildebrand, "Family keeps shelves full."

<sup>143</sup> Alex Green, "A New Generation of African-American-Owned-Bookstores," *Publishers Weekly*, April 6, 2018, [online](#).

<sup>144</sup> McDede, "Marcus Books."

<sup>145</sup> Cobb, "Dr. Raye Richardson."

<sup>146</sup> "Dr. Raye Gilbert Richardson, 99, Founder of Marcus Books."

<sup>147</sup> Schoech, "Black-owned bookstore surging."

<sup>148</sup> For the recent media coverage of Marcus Books (a testament to the store's ongoing relevance), see, for example, Reyna Harvey, "Nation's oldest Black-owned bookstore stands as a beacon," *KRON4 News*, February 20, 2025, [online](#); John Burns, "Blanche Richardson and the Oldest U.S. Black-Owned Bookstore," *1000 Libraries Magazine*, March 31, 2025, [online](#); "The Oldest Black Bookstore and the Newest Fight: From the Fillmore to Oakland, Marcus Books tracks America's shifting ground—economic, cultural, and political," *KOLUMN Magazine*,

## Conclusion

From 1960 through the present, Marcus Books has been a pillar of the Bay Area, a community that the Richardsons have served in a myriad of ways. They kept the Black pride in the Fillmore when redevelopers were driving residents of color from their homes. They educated and hosted the movers and shakers of the Civil Rights, Black Arts, and Black Power movements, and they have continued to circulate Black literature even when it has not been trendy. Their books remain stacked on the shelves of teachers of all races dedicated to using a diverse array of works in their curricula. The Black and Ethnic Studies programs they initiated at every level have broadened the horizons of hundreds of thousands of kids and young adults in the Bay Area and beyond. They have empowered their employees not just to contribute to society, but to be stars, and their kids and grandkids not just to carry on their legacy, but to create their own. As small, independent, minority-owned bookstores fade into the cracks of the Barnes & Nobles of the world, one must not forget the value of enterprises like Marcus Books, nor the power that we as a community have to ensure that they never go away.

While this article has shed light on the importance of Black-owned bookstores within their communities, the historical need for Black-owned bookstores deserves more attention. For example, when Julian was growing up in segregated Birmingham, he had no access to public libraries. When Black people wanted to read, they had to go to formal or, more often, informal Black-owned bookstores or peruse their churches' Sunday School libraries. Hence, I would like to see more research on how segregated libraries and other factors led to the creation of Black-owned bookstores, and how the role and importance of these stores have changed over time.

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Henry Gilson

## Untangling Historiography and Myth: Saint Thomas in India

**ABSTRACT:** This essay examines how the Indian historian Romila Thapar (b. 1931) used scholarly writings by the British-Indian ecclesiastical historian and titular Catholic bishop Adolph Edwin Medlycott (1838–1918) in her treatment of the legend of Saint Thomas, a first-century apostle traditionally credited with traveling to and spreading Christianity in India. Applying a historiographical approach, it analyzes Medlycott's and Thapar's interpretations of the extant sources, as well as their motivations, and provides an alternative, more realistic explanation, namely, that Saint Thomas's journey to India is likely a myth perpetuated by Christians from West Asia who brought it—alongside their faith—to the subcontinent.

**KEYWORDS:** historiography; premodern history; India; Christianity; Saint Thomas the Apostle; Adolph Edwin Medlycott; Romila Thapar; apostolic apocrypha; Acts of Thomas; legend transmission

### Introduction

In 1966, five years after the release of her acclaimed monograph on *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, the Indian historian Romila Thapar (b. 1931) published her first popular survey, *A History of India*.<sup>1</sup> While the latter was well received as an introductory text for the general public,<sup>2</sup> Thapar's treatment of the Saint Thomas legend overstates its historical plausibility. By examining the critiques of Thapar's principal source for the apostle's impact on India, namely, a 1905 book titled *India and the Apostle Thomas: An Inquiry, with a Critical Analysis of the Acta Thomae*, by the British-Indian ecclesiastical historian and titular Catholic bishop Adolph Edwin Medlycott (1838–1918),<sup>3</sup> and by considering the nature of the *Acts of Thomas*, a third-century apocryphal text,<sup>4</sup> it becomes clear that the Saint Thomas legend should not be treated as a factual account but, rather, as a work of historical fiction, as a potential consequence of human migration, and as political propaganda.

While Thapar exercises a certain degree of caution by stating that "it [is] being held by tradition that St. Thomas travelled from Israel to the court of Gondophares," and that "the

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<sup>1</sup> Romila Thapar, *A History of India*, vol. 1 (Penguin Books, 1966). For her earlier work, see Romila Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas* (Oxford University Press, 1961); and Luciano Petech, review of *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, by Romila Thapar, *Rivista degli studi orientali* 37, no. 1/2 (June 1962): 154–155.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, C. Collin Davies, review of *A History of India*, vol. 1, by Romila Thapar, *The English Historical Review* 83, no. 327 (1968): 388; and John W. Spellman, review of *A History of India*, vol. 1, by Romila Thapar, *Journal of Asian History* 2, no. 2 (1968): 161–162.

<sup>3</sup> A[dolph]. E[dwin]. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas: An Inquiry, with a Critical Analysis of the Acta Thomae* (David Nutt, 1905). For the critiques of Medlycott's book used in this essay, see M[ontague]. R[hodes]. James, review of *India and the Apostle Thomas*, by A. E. Medlycott, *The Journal of Theological Studies* 7, no. 28 (July 1906): 635–636; and J[ames]. Kennedy, review of *India and the Apostle Thomas*, by A. E. Medlycott, *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (October 1906): 1020–1029.

<sup>4</sup> For recent scholarship on this text, see *New Trends in the Research on the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas*, ed. Israel Muñoz Gallarte and Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, *Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha* 20 (Peeters, 2024). See also Jonathan Henry, "Acts of Thomas," *e-Clavis: Christian Apocrypha*, [online](#).

coming of Christianity is associated with the *legend* of St. Thomas,<sup>5</sup> a position fully in line with the scholarly consensus, she then asserts that “the story of the second mission appears to be more credible.”<sup>6</sup> Saint Thomas’s second mission allegedly occurred around 52 AD, when he is said to have traveled near Madras (i.e., Mylapore, a neighborhood in today’s southeastern Indian city of Chennai) where he would be martyred in 72 AD for his proselytizing. Thapar is correct in that it is conceivable that one of Jesus’s disciples could have traveled to India. According to the British numismatist and archaeologist Adrian David Hugh Bivar, the Greek philosopher Apollonius of Tyana crossed the River Indus sometime between 39 AD and 47 AD to possibly counter Christian evangelists who had made their way to India.<sup>7</sup> However, a notion that something could have occurred does not justify a claim that it did, in fact, occur. Meanwhile, the American New Testament scholar Clare K. Rothschild emphasizes that “the reports about Thomas in India are legendary and fictitious.”<sup>8</sup>

The only source Thapar cites for her assertion is A. E. Medlycott’s *India and the Apostle Thomas*, published 61 years prior to her own popular survey. The issue with Medlycott’s study is that it proposes to use the aforementioned *Acts of Thomas* as a historical source, and scholars reviewing Medlycott’s work within a year of its original publication—and thus well before Thapar wrote her *History of India*—had already been quite critical of his approach.<sup>9</sup> Thus, while Thapar’s use of terms like “tradition” and “legend” should inspire confidence, her claim—based on Medlycott’s dubious findings—that the story of Saint Thomas’s second mission “appears to be more credible” raises concerns. This essay first explores Thapar’s source (Medlycott); it then considers the nature of the *Acts of Thomas*, archaeological evidence in India, and literary sources; and it concludes with an assessment of Thapar’s motivations. It argues that Saint Thomas’s journey to India is likely a myth perpetuated by Christians from West Asia who brought it—alongside their faith—to the subcontinent.

### 1. Scholarly Critiques of A. E. Medlycott’s Work

It is reasonable to assume that Thapar could have had access to scholarly reviews of Medlycott’s study while she was writing her *History of India*. In 1906, Montague Rhodes James (1862–1936), an eminent English medievalist, and James Kennedy (1842–1920), a historian of India and honorary treasurer of the Royal Asiatic Society, had both published their assessments of Medlycott’s work in *The Journal of Theological Studies* and *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, respectively.<sup>10</sup> While James acknowledges that “this book [...] has interested me more than a little,” and Kennedy states that he is “thankful to him [i.e., Medlycott] for the fulness of his materials,” Kennedy cautions that he is “seldom convinced by the Bishop’s [i.e., Medlycott’s] arguments, and James’s overall verdict

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<sup>5</sup> Thapar, *History of India*, 96, 134. In these quotes, the emphasis on *legend* and *tradition* has been added for effect.

<sup>6</sup> Thapar, *History of India*, 96, 134.

<sup>7</sup> See A[drian]. D[avid]. H[ugh]. Bivar, “Gondophares and the Indo-Parthians,” in *The Age of the Parthians*, ed. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Sarah Stewart (I. B. Tauris, 2007), 26.

<sup>8</sup> Clare K. Rothschild, e-mail message to author, February 11, 2025.

<sup>9</sup> See James, review, 635–636; and Kennedy, review, 1020–1029.

<sup>10</sup> James, review, 635–636; and Kennedy, review, 1020–1029.

is unequivocal: "I cannot, in conclusion, accept this book as a successful critical study either of the Acts of Thomas or of the Indian tradition."<sup>11</sup>

More recent scholarship has also highlighted issues in Medlycott's work that Thapar probably should have recognized. For example, Medlycott states that the ahistorical and non-Indian or non-Hindu names in the *Acts of Thomas* "should be summarily dismissed as fictitious" because "the mention of a woman's name—in the presence of foreigners more especially—never occurs."<sup>12</sup> However, as the American scholar of religion James Frank McGrath points out, this does not always hold true; for example, in the *Ramayana*, a famous Hindu epic poem, "Sita is not simply called 'Rama's wife.'"<sup>13</sup> As McGrath explains, the one exception to these non-Indian and non-Hindu names is that of Gondophares (r. 19/21–46/50 AD), the founder of the Indo-Parthian kingdom, but this is probably due to the fact that Gondophares's rule was known beyond India.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that the *Acts of Thomas* do not constitute a historical recounting of events but, rather, a fiction based upon a body of knowledge about India available in Syria or Upper Mesopotamia (i.e., today's southeastern Türkiye, northeastern Syria, and northwestern Iraq) at the time of the work's original composition. Given her expertise, Thapar probably should have recognized Medlycott's analysis of names as incorrect, which should have led her to question his overall analysis.

Another error occurs in Medlycott's attempt to extract historical truth from the Gnostic<sup>15</sup> legend in the *Acts of Thomas*. Medlycott claims that there is an original version that only later underwent Gnostic reinterpretation. Referencing a work by the German Coptologist Carl Schmidt (1868–1938), he states that, "[f]ortunately, a great German scholar, who has made a special study of Gnostic writings and is considered a great authority on the subject, von Carl Schmidt [...], has arrived at the conclusion that of the Acts of Peter, Paul, John, Thomas, and Andrew [...] all are [composed] by more or less orthodox Catholics; certainly none are of Gnostic origin."<sup>16</sup> If Medlycott's understanding of Carl Schmidt's argument were accurate, a historical account would have to be considered as mixed into the Gnostic fiction. However, as Montague Rhodes James notes in his review, "Dr. Schmidt, I think, would be surprised and amused at the manner in which his theories are interpreted by the Bishop [i.e., Medlycott]."<sup>17</sup> James then proceeds to mention Medlycott's misuse of translations, his dismissal of counterclaims on insufficient grounds, and his use of evidence that, in actuality, counters his

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<sup>11</sup> James, review, 636; and Kennedy, review, 1029.

<sup>12</sup> Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, 283.

<sup>13</sup> J[ames]. F[rank]. McGrath, "History and Fiction in the *Acts of Thomas*: The State of the Question," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 17, no. 4 (2008): 297–311.

<sup>14</sup> McGrath, "History and Fiction," 300.

<sup>15</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. Andrew Louth, 4th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2022), defines "Gnosticism" as a "word of modern coinage (by Henry Moore in the 17th cent[ury].), used to denote a variety of beliefs and practices, especially those propounded in the first cent[uries] of Christian history by teachers such as Basilides and Valentinus, and opposed by others, principally Irenaeus of Lyon, in the struggle to define Christian orthodoxy, although the word is often used to refer to pre-Christian religious trends as well as esoteric teaching throughout the following cent[uries]. The term derives from the G[ree]k word for 'knowledge' (γνῶσις)."

<sup>16</sup> Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, 291–292.

<sup>17</sup> James, review, 635.

own claims, emphasizing that “[t]he assumption of later Church writers that Gnostics had tampered with originally orthodox writings runs directly counter to everything that can be gathered from the documents themselves, and is simply a falsification of history”<sup>18</sup> James’s review constitutes a significant challenge to the authority of Medlycott’s work and should be considered when evaluating historical works like Thapar’s *History of India* and its reliance on Medlycott’s findings.

James Kennedy’s 1906 review is less scathing, but it, too, provides a critical assessment of Medlycott’s methodology. When the latter’s *India and the Apostle Thomas* was published, scholars generally held that “Christianity did not cross the Euphrates until the middle of the second century,” a position that, according to Kennedy, Medlycott “does not discuss,” likely assuming that it “would be sufficiently refuted if the Indian Apostolate of St. Thomas is proved.”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Kennedy indicates that Medlycott does not meaningfully consider the date and composition of the *Acts of Thomas*; rather, without evidence, he goes against the general consensus of the work’s origins. Kennedy quotes the English theologian Francis Crawford Burkitt (1864–1935), an expert on the subject, who had argued “[t]hat the stories in the Acts of Thomas have little or no historical basis is indeed almost self-evident.”<sup>20</sup> Medlycott, however, argues that there is a “historical substratum”<sup>21</sup> in the work, and that the events and locations are simply confused.

Kennedy also highlights Medlycott’s attempt to demonstrate historical accuracy by means of analogy, namely, by referring to the Acts of Paul and Thekla, which had once been considered fictitious but had meanwhile been proven to contain historical evidence.<sup>22</sup> Yet, as Kennedy explains, the “rehabilitation” of the Acts of Paul and Thekla is based on their use of historical names, a feature that the *Acts of Thomas* lack, apart from the case of Gondophares, which, ironically, Medlycott believes to be misattributed. This means that Medlycott’s interpretation of the *Acts of Thomas* lacks the historical elements he is trying to use by comparing them to the Acts of Paul and Thekla. Medlycott also attempts to portray customs mentioned in the *Acts of Thomas* as uniquely Indian, specifically South Indian; this includes carts drawn by cattle, the use of a palanquin<sup>23</sup> or *pālākī*, bathing before eating, holding royal court first thing in the morning, the use of a “garb of grief,” and the Hindu custom of prostrating oneself before the Brahmins, which supposedly led them to do the same so quickly to Saint Thomas.<sup>24</sup> However, as Kennedy observes, “none of them [i.e., these customs] appear peculiar to Southern India.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> James, review, 636.

<sup>19</sup> Kennedy, review, 1021–1022.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Kennedy, review, 1022.

<sup>21</sup> Kennedy, review, 1023.

<sup>22</sup> Kennedy, review, 1023.

<sup>23</sup> The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, [online](#), defines “palanquin” as “a conveyance formerly used especially in eastern Asia usually for one person that consists of an enclosed litter borne on the shoulders of usually four or six people by means of poles.”

<sup>24</sup> Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, 277–281.

<sup>25</sup> Kennedy, review, 1023.

In his review, Kennedy provides his own alternative explanation for the rise of the Saint Thomas legend, namely, that it developed locally in connection with a shrine to the apostle that had existed in Mylapore since the sixth century. As the legend of the apostle's mission to India was "universally accepted" by the fourth century, alongside the notion that the apostle's martyrdom had occurred somewhere other than Mylapore, Kennedy theorizes that endeavoring monks created the Saint Thomas legend's martyrdom at Mylapore to lend credibility to their church and to create a direct lineage to one of the apostles. As Kennedy puts it, "the discovery of the site [at Mylapore], far from awakening the jealousy of the Malabar Christians [on the subcontinent's opposite western shore], would ensure their enthusiastic assent."<sup>26</sup> Thus, while Kennedy's review of Medlycott's work is not as harsh as James's, it is nonetheless critical; it provides plausible alternatives to Medlycott's conclusions; and it suggests that cause and effect are being confused when one argues that the *Acts of Thomas* were written first and became the basis for oral tradition later. When dealing with centuries or even millennia of a region's history, no one can master all the relevant sources and their critical reception, which is why any author writing a popular survey routinely relies on the scholarship of others. However, Thapar's principal reliance on Medlycott's work with regard to the Saint Thomas legend illustrates that this practice can lead to distortions, which could have been avoided had Thapar engaged with James's and Kennedy's reviews.

## 2. The Nature of the "Acts of Thomas"

The *Acts of Thomas* should be treated like other premodern works of fiction that incorporate elements of common knowledge from their time of origin to enhance their credibility. In that, they operate similarly to the Infancy Gospels, which filled narrative gaps in the life of Jesus. As the American New Testament scholar Bart D. Ehrman explains, early Christians created such stories "to answer the question" of Jesus's childhood by inventing episodes not found in the canonical texts.<sup>27</sup> Just as the Infancy Gospels address the silence surrounding Jesus's early years, the *Acts of Thomas* seek to answer the question of where the Apostle Thomas went and what became of him after he disappeared from the canonical narrative. According to McGrath, these Acts also function as a genre, essentially as "what we today would call 'historical fiction.'"<sup>28</sup> This is not to say that they have no historical foundation; much like today's historical fiction, they incorporate actual past events, characters, and phenomena. Like their modern colleagues, premodern authors often used things they knew or texts they had access to. In our case, some of the apostle's letters that the author of the *Acts of Thomas* might have used as sources may have been destroyed during the flood of Edessa in 201 AD. The profound lack of information what Thomas may have done after the events of the canonical Gospels and the first chapter of the New Testament Book of Acts leaves potential authors with a grand opportunity to use their imagination. What compounds the issue is that

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<sup>26</sup> Kennedy, review, 1028–1029.

<sup>27</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *A Brief Introduction to the New Testament*, 5th ed. (Oxford University Press, 2021), 64. The earliest known Infancy Gospel is the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, not to be confused with the Acts of Thomas. For recent scholarship on this text, see *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, ed. David Cielontko, Tobias Nicklas, and Jan N. Bremmer, *Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha* 23 (Peeters, 2025).

<sup>28</sup> McGrath, "History and Fiction," 306.

"India" had a broader meaning in the ancient world: in some translations of the *Acts of Thomas*, the apostle traveled to Parthia (i.e., today's northeastern Iran), but this is further complicated by the existence of Parthian kings in India.

It is worth considering the function of comparable apocrypha in the early Christian Church. Clare K. Rothschild argues that they were used as a "kind of proto-episcopal political propaganda."<sup>29</sup> Thus, they could bestow legitimacy and bolster power. While further textual investigation might be needed, the *Acts of Thomas* seem to reflect the "contrived unity and strength through uniformity" that Rothschild posits.<sup>30</sup> In this case, their purpose is clear: first, to lend legitimacy to the Persian Church by declaring it to be founded by an apostle; second, to explain the Persian Church's connection to the emerging Indian Church; and third, to elevate the former's tradition over the latter's.<sup>31</sup> The sparse information about Saint Thomas's activities at the time made him a suitable apostle to be used by the Persian Church, to be transmitted to the emerging Indian Church, and to be transformed into the latter's own legitimizing force. As Rothschild points out, "[t]oo often, interpretations of early Christian apocrypha proceed as if the texts were composed in a political vacuum."<sup>32</sup> Thus, while it is useful to categorize the *Acts of Thomas* as part of the historical fiction genre, it is essential to understand their author's intentions, namely, to highlight the role of the Persian Church. While somewhat speculative, this provides a strong alternative to merely viewing the *Acts of Thomas* as a work with historical truths that need to be separated from its fictional elements.

### 3. Archaeological Evidence in India and Literary Sources

According to the British Anglican bishop and ecclesiastical historian Stephen Charles Neill (1900–1984), "[a] number of scholars, among whom are to be mentioned with respect Bishop A. E. Medlycott [...] have built up on slender foundations what can only be called Thomas romances, such as reflect the vividness of their imaginations rather than the prudence of rigid historical critics."<sup>33</sup> Unlike Medlycott's work, Neill's posthumously published monograph, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to AD 1707*, sheds light on the historical evidence for the arrival of Christianity on the subcontinent. Neill maintains that it is not uncommon for historical events and characters to be woven into a story that, in itself, lacks historical credibility.<sup>34</sup> An explanation of how the author of the *Acts of Thomas*, who probably resided in Edessa (i.e., today's Şanlıurfa in southeastern Türkiye) or elsewhere in Upper Mesopotamia, might have learned the name of Gondophares is that the Kushans' invasion India led to the collapse of Gondophares's Indo-Parthian kingdom and caused considerable displacement. Those who migrated to Edessa would have known the name of Gondophares,

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<sup>29</sup> Clare K. Rothschild, "Dynasty and the Christian Apocrypha," *Early Christianity* 14, no. 2 (2023): 171.

<sup>30</sup> Rothschild, "Dynasty," 171.

<sup>31</sup> While Parthia and the Persian world were two separate entities, they encompassed much of the same geographical region. This would explain why the Persian Church, located in Parthia, would be considered a foundation of the Apostle Thomas, especially if he went to Parthia rather than India as we know it today.

<sup>32</sup> Rothschild, "Dynasty," 174.

<sup>33</sup> Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to AD 1707* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 28.

<sup>34</sup> Neill, *History*, 28.

as well as some Indian customs, thereby furnishing the author of the *Acts of Thomas* with a realistic, yet exotic setting for the Saint Thomas legend.

While there may have been Christian enclaves in both northwestern India and along the subcontinent's southwestern Malabar Coast early on, especially in trading communities, there is no historical evidence that they did indeed exist. Meanwhile, as Neill points out, "from the middle of the third century there was a strong tradition in Edessa linking India with the apostle Thomas."<sup>35</sup> While the oral tradition of the Saint Thomas legend in India is consistent on several points, it is nonetheless conceivable that the legend was carried by Christians as they migrated and settled in India, where the *Acts of Thomas* and local oral traditions would have merged eventually. The legend of Saint Thomas's martyrdom in Mylapore does not appear in the historical record as being locally believed in India until later, for example, when Marco Polo corroborated it in 1293.<sup>36</sup>

It is true that the Portuguese, in 1523, while renovating a chapel near the supposed location of Saint Thomas's martyrdom in Mylapore, found bones in what could be described as an apostle's tomb,<sup>37</sup> and it could be argued that this is the tomb of Saint Thomas. Still, it remains contested: there is no way to ascertain what religion the person, whose bones the Portuguese discovered, had once belonged to, and despite the oral tradition, the body was buried in north-south direction, which is the Muslim custom. Some Muslim locals even venerated the tomb as a resting place of one of their holy men. Suppose it was originally a Hindu holy man who, through the merging of oral traditions, morphed into a different character to match the locals' "new" faith: in that case, there is no definitive answer one way or the other. In 1547, the Portuguese found a granite cross at the supposed site of Saint Thomas's martyrdom. They initially had the artifact's inscription translated by a Brahman and happily accepted his rendition at the time. Later on, the inscription was revisited, and its currently accepted translation reads as follows: "My Lord Christ, have mercy upon Afras, son of Chaharbukht the Syrian, who cut this."<sup>38</sup> This seems to prove the existence of a local Christian community at some point prior, probably composed of Syrian migrants, which could mean that the *Acts of Thomas* migrated there with Christians from Upper Mesopotamia, where the text had originally been composed.

The earliest evidence for Christians in India derives from literary sources. According to the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260/265–339), the Christian theologian Pantaenus traveled to India around 179 AD.<sup>39</sup> It appears that Pantaenus's presence had been requested in India due to his prestige and knowledge, and Neill posits that he journeyed specifically to southern India. Most notably, Eusebius's account states that the Christians in India claimed it had been the apostle Bartholomew, not Thomas, through

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<sup>35</sup> Neill, *History*, 28–29.

<sup>36</sup> Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, trans. and annot. A[rthur]. C[hristopher]. Moule and Paul Pelliot, vol. 1 (George Routledge & Sons Limited, 1938), 388–400.

<sup>37</sup> Neill, *History*, 34–36.

<sup>38</sup> Neill, *History*, 47–48.

<sup>39</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, vol. 1 (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), 465.

whom they had come to know Christ. This means that while there appear to have been Christian communities in southern India in 179 AD, they were unfamiliar with the Saint Thomas legend, and the *Acts of Thomas* were probably composed later in the third century.<sup>40</sup>

Early literary sources also support a connection between the Christian communities in India and the Persian Church, which is meaningful because the Persian Church subscribed to the tradition that it had been founded by Saint Thomas. Thus, when asserting that they, too, had been founded by Saint Thomas, Christian communities in India were following a broader, pre-established tradition. Neill supplies perhaps the best explanation of how the *Acts of Thomas* reached India, arguing that emigrants from Upper Mesopotamian regions brought the text to India when they were fleeing from persecution; having “found that the local Christians were ignorant of this tradition, they would have imparted it to them and so shared with them the conviction of apostolic origin.”<sup>41</sup> Again, this seems to be fully supported by literary sources, and outside of the *Acts of Thomas* themselves, the first acknowledgment of the legend’s perpetuation comes in 883 AD, when the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* mention that King Alfred sent alms to “St. Thomas of India,” meaning to the shrine in Malabar where the apostle was believed to have been martyred.<sup>42</sup>

#### 4. Romila Thapar’s Motivations and Nationalist Rhetoric

When considering Saint Thomas’s impact on India, why did Romila Thapar rely principally upon Medlycott’s work? One possibility is that Christianity played a comparatively insignificant role in early India, unlike what we now call Hinduism and the mosaic of traditions it came from, as well as Buddhism, and later Islam. Most early Christians were probably migrants and not viewed as sufficiently “Indian” to receive particular attention in a work like Thapar’s *History of India* that was supposed to cover the broad swath of Indian history from its very beginnings to the advent of the Mughal empire (1526). Even as recent as the decades between 1951 and 2011, India retained only a rather low Christian population of approximately two to three percent.<sup>43</sup>

Additionally, Thapar’s rather superficial treatment is not singular. Her principal source for Saint Thomas’s impact on India, Medlycott, had done the same, and he was—at the time he published *India and the Apostle Thomas*—not just a titular Catholic bishop of Tricomia (a now suppressed diocese in Palaestina Prima) but, more importantly, the former Vicar Apostolic of Thrichur in southeastern India. Although one might expect a high-ranking member of the Catholic clergy who had spent most of his career on the subcontinent to possess considerable expertise on the history of Indian Christianity, Medlycott’s interpretation of the historical dimensions of the *Acts of Thomas* was nevertheless misguided. Recounting the Saint Thomas legend, Bivar only supplies numismatic evidence for Gondophares’s reign, which would have been the appropriate time period, and states that “we have little precise

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<sup>40</sup> Neill, *History*, 40.

<sup>41</sup> Neill, *History*, 43.

<sup>42</sup> Neill, *History*, 44–45; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, trans. and ed. Michael Swanton (Phoenix Press, 2000), 79. It is noteworthy that, according to this text, King Alfred sent alms to both Saint Thomas and Saint Bartholomew.

<sup>43</sup> Pew Research Center, “Population Growth and Religious Composition,” September 21, 2021, [online](#).



information about the events of his reign."<sup>44</sup> Even then, as McGrath points out, one of the three kings or unnamed biblical magi who visited Jesus according to the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, might have originally been named Gondophares, and his name might have later been corrupted to Caspar.<sup>45</sup> In the absence of corroborating evidence, it is more likely that Gondophares was the name of a foreign king known to early Christian authors. Despite this, the legend continues to be perpetuated as history, and it is included in Thapar's *History of India* to provide a simplistic account of Christianity's origins in the region.

There may be more speculative reasons for Thapar's promotion of the Saint Thomas legend. For example, in his 1934 book *Glimpses of World History*, India's future prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) suggests that Christianity may have reached India before it arrived in Europe, adding that Indians often behave more in line with Christian ideals than "the loud-voiced followers of today, with their imperialism and armaments and wars and worship of wealth."<sup>46</sup> Nehru's claim can be read as part of a broader Indian nationalist rhetoric, one that positions India as more spiritually advanced or "civilized" than the West, both historically and morally. Thus, promoting an early Christian presence in India could bolster cultural pride and suggest a native connection to a globally prominent religious tradition independent of Western colonial influence.

In the absence of meaningful evidence, there is too much room for hypotheticals. According to Rothschild, many religious scholars lack the language skills to explore the topic in depth;<sup>47</sup> after all, the *Acts of Thomas* are featured in Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, Greek, Latin, Church Slavic, and Syriac manuscripts.<sup>48</sup> McGrath mentions other compounding issues: the scholarship on the topic has been bipolar, swinging from one extreme to the other; there is a lack of prior interdisciplinary work on the subject; and, most troubling, especially considering the earlier context of Thapar's work, there has been no "continuous and longstanding history of scholarship" on the subject.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the reasons why the myth of Saint Thomas is being perpetuated are multifaceted.

### Conclusion

Romila Thapar's treatment of the Saint Thomas legend in her 1966 *History of India* demonstrates a major pitfall of uncritically incorporating inaccurate scholarship in one's work, namely, perpetuating myth rather than history, which results in myth-history. By relying on A. E. Medlycott's 1905 *India and the Apostle Thomas* and asserting that the story of the apostle's second mission "appears to be more credible," Thapar continued a faulty narrative

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<sup>44</sup> Bivar, "Gondophares," 31. See also, Neill, *History*, 27, who provides an informative account of Charles Masson (1800–1853), an English deserter of the British East India Company's Bengal Artillery, who found the coins in 1833.

<sup>45</sup> McGrath, "History and Fiction," 300. The magi's names—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, according to Western Christians—do not appear in any surviving sources until the eighth century AD.

<sup>46</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (Asia Publishing House, 1934), 89.

<sup>47</sup> Clare K. Rothschild, e-mail message to author, February 11, 2025.

<sup>48</sup> See Henry, "Acts of Thomas," [online](#).

<sup>49</sup> McGrath, "History and Fiction," 297–298.

that had already been critiqued by scholars like Montague Rhodes James and James Kennedy decades before the publication of her book. As others have demonstrated, the *Acts of Thomas* should be understood as a work of historical fiction and political propaganda rather than a factual account. More plausible explanations for the spread of Christianity to India involve human migration and trade routes, with the Saint Thomas legend likely brought to the subcontinent by Syrian Christians arriving from Upper Mesopotamia. According to Eusebius of Caesarea's fourth-century *Ecclesiastical History*, the second-century traveler Pantaenus encountered Christians in India who linked their communities' origins to the apostle Bartholomew, not Thomas, further undermining the historical credibility of the latter's legend. Ultimately, the persistent inclusion of the Saint Thomas legend in historical narratives, despite the lack of convincing evidence, serves a rhetorical purpose. Thapar's overstatement of the Saint Thomas legend's plausibility in her *History of India* illustrates how popular surveys can blur the lines between legend and fact. This is the challenge of myth-history: it can be difficult to dislodge a pervasive and appealing narrative, but it is the scholar's responsibility to intercept the latter's adoption into the historical record.

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Mitchell Granger

## *Words for a Revolution:*

### *An Analysis of the Weather Underground's Communiqués*

**ABSTRACT:** *This article argues that the Weather Underground (WU), a prominent anti-war group in the United States during the late 1960s and 1970s, utilized communiqués as an integral component of its armed propaganda campaign. These documents showcase the Weather Underground's relationship between violence and rhetoric, a point that has yet to be fully appreciated in scholarly discourse. The WU communiqués openly promoted the overthrowing of the U.S. government, fiercely supported the Black Liberation movement and prison reform, and denounced the atrocities of the Vietnam War. For the Weather Underground, communiqués were more than just a means to claim responsibility for a bombing; they were a platform to advocate, educate, and—most of all—criticize the U.S. government for its wrongdoings both within the country and globally.*

**KEYWORDS:** *modern history; United States of America (USA); Vietnam War; terrorism studies; New Left; Weather Underground (WU); student movement; radical; anti-war; communiqué*

#### *Introduction: The Weather Underground*

On March 1, 1971, the sound of an explosion at the Capitol building interrupted the early morning hours in Washington, D.C. Two dynamite bombs planted in a men's bathroom blew toilets skyward, destroyed the congressional barbershop, and damaged the Senate Dining Room as well as a painting of George Washington.<sup>1</sup> Moments before the detonation, a switchboard operator received an anonymous phone call instructing everyone to evacuate the building. The caller stated that the ensuing explosion was in protest of U.S. President Nixon's involvement in the devastation of Laos.<sup>2</sup> In its most zealous act of defiance against the U.S. government, the Weather Underground (WU) had successfully smuggled and set off bombs inside the home of the U.S. Congress. A group of young student activists turned radical, the WU waged an underground war across the United States from 1969 to 1976, aspiring to become an international beacon for anti-imperialism and anti-racism during a time of national and global uprisings.

The Weather Underground emerged as a prominent American radical group in June 1969. After the dissolution of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the WU promised to carry out an underground revolution from within the United States. Originally known as the "Weathermen," later as the "Weather Underground," and finally as the "Weather Underground Organization" or simply "Weather," this group of radicals proposed to topple what they considered the imperialist and racist structures of the U.S. government. They believed that the U.S. government sought to maintain power and control over Third World countries, particularly those attempting to form communist or socialist governments. The WU also vehemently condemned the U.S. government's treatment of underrepresented communities within the United States. Black and Brown communities experienced fewer and

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<sup>1</sup> Bernardine Dohrn, William Ayers, and Jeff Jones, eds., *Sing a Battle Song: The Revolutionary Poetry, Statements, and Communiqués of the Weather Underground, 1970–1974* (Seven Stories Press, 2006), 124.

<sup>2</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 124.

unequal opportunities, systemic racism, poverty, degradation, physical violence at the hands of police officers, political assassinations, unjust imprisonment, segregation, the denial of fair access, and other types of discrimination supported and enforced by the U.S. government. The WU was certainly not the only group, either nationally or globally, to feel anger and frustration toward the government. The events leading to the Civil Rights Movement, combined with the activism of a growing number of student and radical groups in the 1960s, provided the WU with a fiery passion for revolution.

In its 1969 founding document, "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows," the WU presented the framework for its uprising.<sup>3</sup> This 13-point position paper outlined the supposed requirements for an anti-imperialist revolution to take place in the United States, among them a call for the Black community to be the leader of this uprising. As the document's authors explained, "[b]ecause blacks have been oppressed and held an inferior social position as a people, they have a right to decide, organize, and act on their common destiny as a people apart from white interference."<sup>4</sup> Thus, the real leaders ought to be the Black revolutionaries, while the White revolutionaries should rally other Whites and garner support for the Black cause. The document's authors hailed the Black community as "part of the international revolutionary vanguard," arguing that

"[i]n defining and implementing this strategy, it is clear that the vanguard (that is, the section of people who are in the forefront of the struggle and whose class interests and needs define the terms and tasks of the revolution) of the 'American Revolution' is the workers and oppressed peoples of the colonies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Because of the level of special oppression of black people as a colony, they reflect the interests of the oppressed people of the world from within the borders of the United States; they are a part of the Third World and part of the international revolutionary vanguard."<sup>5</sup>

As the Black revolutionaries were envisioned in this leading role, the WU tasked itself with forming an adjacent revolution out of the oppressed White population. Weather leaders argued that the oppressed White population was the most in touch with the plight of the Black community;<sup>6</sup> thus, the WU championed this adjacent revolution as the "third path" for White revolutionaries in the United States and deemed it the most opportune strategy for eliminating both imperialism and racism throughout the country.<sup>7</sup> Above all, the WU advocated for a combination of revolutionary forces, regardless of the respective supporters' social class or racial backgrounds. As the 1969 document's authors proposed, "[i]n every case our aim is to raise anti-imperialist and anti-racist consciousness and tie the struggles of working class youth (and all working people) to the struggles of Third World people, rather than merely joining fights to improve material conditions even though these fights are certainly justified."<sup>8</sup> Yet, while these viewpoints permeated the WU's fundamental beliefs,

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<sup>3</sup> Karin Ashley, William Ayers, Bernardine Dohrn, John Jacobs, Jeff Jones, Gerry Long, Howie Machtinger, Jim Mellen, Terry Robbins, Mark Rudd, and Steve Tappis, "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows," *New Left Notes*, 4, no. 22 (June 18, 1969): 3–9, Roz Payne Sixties Archive, [online](#).

<sup>4</sup> Ashley et al., "You Don't Need a Weatherman," 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ashley et al., "You Don't Need a Weatherman," 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ashley et al., "You Don't Need a Weatherman," 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ashley et al., "You Don't Need a Weatherman," 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ashley et al., "You Don't Need a Weatherman," 6.

there is little evidence that the group had any lasting impact on revolutionizing the working class or the White youth. Admittedly, the WU failed to capitalize on many of the proposals outlined in its founding document and eventually fizzled out of existence after the end of the Vietnam War.

What is most striking about the WU's founding document is its rhetoric, which appears to have impacted the group's later writings, known as "communiqués." Some of these communiqués utilize a similar writing style and split arguments into similar digestible and notable points. The communiqués discussed in this article delve further into the oppression of the Black community and are especially concerned with the carceral system and its unfairness toward Black individuals. The WU's women produced their own pieces of writing and made a concerted effort to include feminist topics as revolutionary issues—a point already mentioned in the group's founding document.<sup>9</sup> Other communiqués feature details on the U.S. government's activities and state actors' participation in warmongering in Southeast Asia. While the WU's founding document certainly does not account for the group's sudden and momentous decision to go into hiding and conduct a bombing campaign, its rhetoric and advocacy for revolution permeate the subsequent publications issued throughout the group's existence.

Led by Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, Mark Rudd, and Jeff Jones, the WU rallied from June until December 1969 to convince White youth to join its cause. The group's recruitment tactics capitalized on the countercultural zeitgeist and were particularly geared toward working-class youth. Weather members marched through public parks, brandishing Vietcong flags and practicing karate for self-defense. Other members, notably those of the WU's Women's Brigade, spearheaded so-called "jailbreaks," which involved running through high schools and community colleges to distribute leaflets, give speeches, and start fights with school principals and police officers.<sup>10</sup> The WU also aided in the successful 1970 escape of Timothy Leary, a Harvard researcher and self-proclaimed LSD guru, from the San Luis Obispo State Penitentiary, hoping that this act would draw support from the broader countercultural movement and bolster the WU's own legitimacy. Despite the group's boldness and resolve to go beyond the ordinary, few young Americans were eager to join. Even before moving underground, the WU's fighting force across the country amounted to roughly a few hundred. Once underground, many members were either cut out of the movement or left altogether. An accurate membership count may remain a mystery, as internal WU documents have not resurfaced or were destroyed in the process of the group going into hiding.

Even by radicalist standards, the WU's membership requirements were unorthodox. Recruits seldom withstood the pressure exerted by Weather leaders to fully embrace the revolutionary mindset. Criticism/self-criticism sessions and "wargasm" orgies proved to be the group's most demanding requirements. Criticism/self-criticism sessions consisted of singling out members who were then, sometimes for hours on end, subjected to barrages of insults and

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<sup>9</sup> Ashley et al., "You Don't Need a Weatherman," 6.

<sup>10</sup> Jeff Bloodworth, "The Local Is Global: Philadelphia's Weatherwomen Bring the War Home to Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History* 86, no. 4 (2019): 525.

degrading remarks by their peers. In standard Weather fashion, criticism/self-criticism sessions took their inspiration from Maoist practices of the same name.<sup>11</sup> It was believed that these sessions would enable members to rid themselves of any negative personal traits and thereby build comradeship. They also served as purging rituals to expel members who appeared to lack the spirit of the revolution. Criticism/self-criticism sessions were arduous, and it is reported that around a dozen or so members fled the group as a result of them.<sup>12</sup> The WU engaged in wargasm orgies and enacted "smash monogamy" policies under the guise of committing its members to a group mentality. These policies required members to break off any monogamous relationships held prior to joining and participate in sexual orgies with the entire collective. It is unclear whether they were put in place due to male sexual domination over women or as a form of sexual experimentation; at any rate, they were short-lived, as such chauvinistic acts posing as sexual free will did not sit well with many members.

The rallying of White youth occurred in anticipation of the WU's hallmark mass demonstration—the "Days of Rage" protest—set to take place in Chicago from October 8 to 11, 1969, around the "Bring the War Home!" slogan.<sup>13</sup> Parallel to the ongoing trial of the "Chicago 8,"<sup>14</sup> the WU planned to rampage through Chicago's luxurious Gold Coast neighborhood. Outfitted with lead pipes, baseball bats, bomber jackets, and motorcycle helmets, Weather members and their supporters smashed bank windows and mangled vehicles, all the while fending off and fighting against the police. However, their goal of reaching the Drake Hotel, the residence of Julius Hoffman who was the presiding judge in the trial of the Chicago 8, ended up being thwarted by the police.<sup>15</sup> While it is estimated that 300 protestors gathered over the three nights of unrest, the event was considered a failure and a miscalculation of support for violent mass demonstrations. In total, the Days of Rage caused \$35,000 in damage to public and private property, approximately \$300,000 according to current valuation. The WU suffered more losses than victories with this event, as 287 radicals were arrested and later had to be bailed out. This effectively drained the remaining SDS funds, amounting to \$2.3 million in posted bail alone.<sup>16</sup>

What was supposed to be the dawn of the Weather movement marked, in fact, the decline of its public rallies and demonstrations. According to journalist Ron Jacobs, other New Left radicals denounced the WU's acts, but Andrew Kopkind, the founder of the *Hard Times* newsletter, and Eldridge Cleaver, a leader of the Black Panther Party, voiced their support of

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<sup>11</sup> Bryan Burrough, *Days of Rage: America's Radical Underground, the FBI, and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionary Violence* (Penguin Press, 2015), 70.

<sup>12</sup> Burrough, *Days of Rage*, 71.

<sup>13</sup> A common slogan used by the group during their years of activity, it signified WU's passion for violence and their wish for the U.S. government to focus its attention on the social injustices and violent acts happening on American soil rather than on warmongering in Vietnam.

<sup>14</sup> Rennie Davis, David Dellinger, John Froines, Tom Hayden, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Bobby Seale, and Lee Weiner, otherwise known as the "Chicago 8," were charged with conspiracy, crossing state lines with intent to incite a riot, and other anti-war related charges in relation to the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

<sup>15</sup> John Kifner, "That's What the Weathermen Are Supposed to Be ... 'Vandals in the Mother Country'," *New York Times*, January 4, 1970, 182, cited in Bloodworth, "Local is Global," 529.

<sup>16</sup> Burrough, *Days of Rage*, 74.

WU activities and urged others to pick up the gun and join the revolution.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, dissenting opinions came from the likes of Tom Hayden and members of the countercultural Yippies (i.e., the Youth International Party), who denounced the WU's actions and claimed that radicals embracing such methods of protest would have a limited appeal to most Americans.<sup>18</sup> With declining membership numbers and increased pressure from FBI manhunts, Weather leaders debated their next big move, namely, going underground.

The sentiment of going into hiding was lingering in the movement throughout November 1969 and came to fruition in December of the same year. After the failed Days of Rage protest and the FBI assassination of Fred Hampton, the chairman of the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party, Weather leaders debated what would be the best strategy going forward. From December 27 to 31, the WU hosted a "War Council" meeting in Flint, Michigan. The decision to move underground was hotly debated among Weather leaders, the group's remaining members, and other New Left radicals. Inside the ballroom, a chorus of debates, singing and dancing, and overtly shocking acts consumed the radicals. In what is now an infamous act, Bernardine Dohrn proclaimed her support for the Manson cult and its Tate-LaBianca murders, while gesturing with a fork, indicating the weapon used in the heinous crime. The meeting culminated in the group's official decision to become an underground movement, and with this, a six-year bombing campaign ensued.

The WU's bombings were symbolic in nature or what the radicals called "armed propaganda."<sup>19</sup> A few of its targets included the White House, the Pentagon, the San Francisco office of the California Department of Corrections, and the New York Police Department (NYPD) headquarters. These and similar buildings were viewed as sites of imperialist power and chosen by Weather leaders for their connection to the United States' war effort in Vietnam. By attacking such well-known symbols of American imperialist power, the WU sought to demonstrate that the government could be disrupted on the home front. Targets like the NYPD headquarters responded to the Attica Prison riot, signifying the WU's effort to connect with America's disenfranchised incarcerated population. Between 1969 and 1975, the group claimed responsibility for roughly a dozen bombings;<sup>20</sup> yet, while the bombing of buildings had to be considered inherently violent, the WU emphasized that it did not want to engage in violence against people.

Demonstrating that government buildings could be infiltrated, sabotaged, and destroyed with ease, the WU focused on causing property damage rather than harming or killing individuals. Thus, the group's members showcased that they *could* kill people, if they wanted to, but that they chose not to, and that they did not engage in violence just for violence's sake. Unlike some of its international counterparts, like the West German Red Army Faction (RAF), the WU did not partake in hostage-takings, assassinations, or shootouts with the

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<sup>17</sup> Ron Jacobs, *The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground* (Verso, 1997), 35.

<sup>18</sup> Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, 70.

<sup>19</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 101.

<sup>20</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 23.

police.<sup>21</sup> Rather, the WU wanted to engage in spectacles of violence by exploding concrete and blowing out windows. Thus, among the radical groups of the time, the WU appeared as one of the calmer and less dastardly outfits, not claiming any lives for the sake of the revolution. The only exception to this was the unexpected loss of three Weather Underground members in 1970.

The Greenwich Village townhouse explosion on March 6, 1970, was a deadly and sobering moment for the WU. In this tragic event, Diana Oughton, Ted Gold, and Terry Robbins lost their lives when an accidental explosion of anti-personnel bombs pulverized the New York City townhouse in which they resided.<sup>22</sup> Two Weather members, Kathy Boudin and Cathy Wilkerson, survived the explosion and narrowly escaped before law enforcement arrived at the scene. The event deeply affected the WU, as this was the first time any Weather members had lost their lives in the pursuit of the revolution. It humbled the WU, and from this point forward, no member of the movement and no innocent bystander was harmed in any of the group's bombings. In fact, prior to all its future bombings, the WU called ahead of the explosion to issue an evacuation warning. Thus, Diana, Ted, and Terry remained the only recorded lives lost as a direct result of a Weather Underground bombing.

The WU hoped that its bombings would cause enough outrage that the U.S. government would have no choice but to focus on the issues inside the country and draw down its forces in Vietnam. While there is little indication that the WU alone affected the course of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the group demonstrated that with enough planning and dynamite, the United States could, at the very least, be dismantled from the inside. Adding to its bombings and endeavors to rally the American public, the WU released communiqués, written statements distributed to press outlets for publication. Each bombing was accompanied by a communiqué, a text providing an explanation for the event and offering a scathing critique of the U.S. government. A central component of Weather's armed propaganda, these communiqués often contained messages that openly denounced the U.S. government, condemned the Vietnam War, and supported the Black Liberation movement. The WU communiqués are at the center of this article, as they are under-researched and have received less scholarly attention than the WU's bombings. Supplemented by the occasional crude Marxist rhetoric, they articulated the supposed need for a violent revolution against a powerful government.

### 1. A Typology of the Weather Underground's Communiqués

What follows is a discussion of the communiqué and its function in the WU's tactics. Based in French diplomacy, a communiqué is a text that is commanding and unyielding in tone, yet less dogmatic and less verbose than a manifesto. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, a communiqué is "an official announcement or statement, especially one made to

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<sup>21</sup> Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (University of California Press, 2004), 177.

<sup>22</sup> Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, 95.



the media."<sup>23</sup> It is more powerful than a written claim of responsibility or a mere letter; rather, it is a serious message that directs its readers to listen, think critically, ask questions, and make demands. A communiqué is different from a manifesto. The *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines a manifesto as a "public declaration of aims, especially one issued before an election by a political party or candidate."<sup>24</sup> Thus, the use of a manifesto implies a political entity's attempt to gain political power. While the WU had the intention to overthrow the U.S. government and increase its political power, it never formed a political representation.

During the WU's underground years, communiqués functioned as the primary form of communication between the group itself and the public. Most communiqués were circulated to the underground press and mainstream news outlets shortly after a bombing had been committed. Underground newspapers like the *Berkeley Tribe*, *Madison Kaleidoscope*, *The Liberated Guardian*, and the *Chicago Seed*,<sup>25</sup> as well as mainstream news outlets like NBC and *The New York Times*, received copies of WU communiqués. Historian Dan Berger discusses the distribution of communiqués in his book, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*.<sup>26</sup> Berger writes that, "[i]n addition to the high level of technical skill that went into making bombs and conducting actions without injuring anyone while still attacking major institutions, this professionalism carried over into the organization's public relations. Most of the group's communiqués after 1970 were press packets, often seven or eight pages long and as slick as the press releases of the corporate or government agencies being attacked."<sup>27</sup> In these press packets, the group relayed information about the act committed, its underlying rationale, and a call for the American public to join the fight against U.S. imperialism.

While the WU produced and distributed its communiqués to mainstream news outlets, the editors of these outlets were the ones who ultimately determined the extent to which they published the communiqués. Even when the communiqués were flashy press releases that included photographs of protests and the Vietnam War, the WU struggled to see more than a few sentences of their communiqués published by news networks. For example, the bombing of the U.S. Capitol building on March 1, 1971, should have sent shockwaves across newspapers, yet much of the latter's coverage focused on the physical damage caused by the bomb and a few quotable lines from then U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell (in office 1969–1972). A *Los Angeles Times* article<sup>28</sup> covering the bombing included only three sentences from the 15-paragraph communiqué written by the WU;<sup>29</sup> its author quoted the communiqué as follows: "We have attacked the Capitol because it is ... a monument to U.S.

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<sup>23</sup> "Communiqué," in *Oxford Dictionary of English*, ed. Angus Stevenson, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> "Manifesto," in *Oxford Dictionary of English*, ed. Angus Stevenson, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 96.

<sup>26</sup> Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (AK Press, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> Berger, *Outlaws of America*, 175.

<sup>28</sup> Associated Press, "Conspiracy Doubted in Capitol Bombing: But the 'Weather Underground' Claims Credit for Explosion," *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1971.

<sup>29</sup> The Weather Underground, "We Attacked the Capitol," in *Outlaws of Amerika: Communiqués from the Weather Underground* (Liberated Guardian, 1971), 41.

domination over the planet ... All over the country, revolutionaries are getting ready for the spring. Our plans can be as creative and indigenous as the bamboo booby traps of the Vietnamese."<sup>30</sup> The same article then discussed the improbability that the bombing had been an inside job orchestrated by the FBI and featured a section on the bomb itself and its internal components used for detonation.<sup>31</sup>

Other newspaper articles covering the event largely followed the same pattern. The *Ogdensburg Journal*, a New York periodical, included the same lines from the communiqué quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* but added a few additional sentences from the same communiqué:<sup>32</sup> "The invaders of Laos will not have peace in this country ... Young people here will do everything we can to harass, disrupt, and destroy this murderous government."<sup>33</sup> Another New York newspaper, the *Niagara Falls Gazette*, quoted the same lines as the previous two newspapers with little difference in overall content.<sup>34</sup> Even after its audacious attack on the U.S. Capitol building, the WU received little attention from mainstream news outlets. However, mainstream news outlets were competing with the underground or radical press, which attracted quite a following in the 1970s. According to Berger, "[b]y 1970, the underground press had a readership as high as 6 million, and studies showed that 70 percent of people in the United States did not believe what they read in the mainstream media."<sup>35</sup> While communiqués sent to news networks received little attention there, readers had a choice to find coverage in the underground press and read further messages from the WU and other radical groups.

Admittedly, the WU's tactic of merely hoping that its communiqués would be published by mainstream news outlets was one of its miscalculations. Weather leaders failed to recognize this approach as illusional, which is why the group's communiqués have been largely forgotten—except by academic audiences. For my approach, the quantity of Weather Underground content published in various types of media is not the primary concern. While news networks, both underground and mainstream, contributed to the availability of these texts to the public, the communiqués' content and rhetoric can still be analyzed as an important aspect of Weather history. Thus, the relationship between violence and rhetoric in these communiqués is the focus of this article.

Interlaced with Marxist rhetoric, the WU communiqués detailed specific acts of the United States' warmongering in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and openly criticized President Nixon's "Vietnamization" strategy.<sup>36</sup> When the WU's bombings targeted U.S. sites of

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<sup>30</sup> Associated Press, "Conspiracy Doubted in Capitol Bombing."

<sup>31</sup> Associated Press, "Conspiracy Doubted in Capitol Bombing."

<sup>32</sup> Associated Press, "FBI Isn't Revealing Anything It Knows on Capitol Bombing," *Ogdensburg Journal*, March 3, 1971.

<sup>33</sup> Associated Press, "FBI Isn't Revealing Anything."

<sup>34</sup> Associated Press, "No Clues Turned Up in Capitol Bombing," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, March 3, 1971.

<sup>35</sup> Berger, *Outlaws of America*, 67.

<sup>36</sup> Nixon's policies under this practice brought U.S. soldiers back to the United States while increasing the use of air raids and bombings in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The intention was to shift responsibility to South Vietnamese forces while decreasing the number of U.S. troops involved in boots-on-the-ground combat.

oppression like New York's Attica Prison, its communiqués explained how the government was systematically targeting and incarcerating people of color. The WU also involved itself in the broader countercultural movement through texts that did not accompany any particular bombings. These types of communiqués were infrequent in comparison to those that did accompany bombings. Varying in length and topic, they discussed the anti-war movement in general, celebrated countercultural icons, and showcased the group's support for the Black and feminist movements, and they, too, reflected the relationship between violence and rhetoric, the latter of which the WU commandeered with such finesse.

From an analytical standpoint, the WU communiqués demonstrate the group's ability to form a relationship between violence and speech. While the group's bombings did involve violence against buildings, violence against people was not intended. Its bombings were a spectacle, a grand demonstration of what the group could do, but the WU never went further down the path of violence. Rather, it wanted to create a revolution out of words. The WU hoped that its bombings would draw attention to its communiqués and foster a revolution from within the United States. The rhetoric in these texts orders the American people to join the Weather Underground in its stand against imperialism and racism. Thus, the WU communiqués are, quite literally, words for a revolution. Certain passages in these communiqués detail the chemical warfare and carpet bombing in Vietnam, the harsh treatment and starving of disenfranchised and imprisoned communities in the United States, and the disingenuous health and welfare programs offered to women. Reporting on the violence committed by the U.S. government, the communiqués' authors strategically weave a relationship between their rhetoric and the need for a revolution.

While the WU communiqués are routinely referenced as confirmation of the group's bombings or examples of glaring Marxist rhetoric, their role as a component of Weather's armed propaganda campaign has yet to be fully appreciated. Most historical conversations have focused on the WU's activities, strategies, and challenges. Authors like Ron Jacobs, Jeremy Varon, and Dan Berger have captured the movement's overarching story from its 1969 beginnings as Weathermen to its final days in 1976. Berger has gone beyond this by discussing—in considerable depth—the Weather Underground's 1974 publication *Prairie Fire*,<sup>37</sup> however, *Prairie Fire* is more of a political manifesto than a communiqué. Berger's research does suggest that the WU communiqués deserve further attention, and he devotes more attention to these documents than other authors; in fact, his analysis of the *New Morning-Changing Weather* communiqué assesses these documents as a part of the Weather Underground's survival strategy.<sup>38</sup>

Recontextualizing the communiqués as a central component of Weather propaganda positions them at the forefront of the group's history. Much more than mere diatribes laden with Marxist ideology, the communiqués and other written works produced by the WU operated as a space to advocate for revolution and to openly criticize the U.S. power structure. Produced and distributed in hiding, the communiqués enabled the group to

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<sup>37</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 176.

<sup>38</sup> Berger, *Outlaws of America*, 145.

remain out of the FBI's reach while still planting bombs. Both directly and indirectly connected to the bombings, the WU championed the rhetoric of revolution and thoroughly critiqued imperialism and racism through the written word. In this article, I draw on terrorism studies, sociology, and cultural studies as areas of research that concern themselves with the communication tactics of pro-revolutionary and violent groups. Researchers in the field of terrorism studies seek to understand the operational strategies of terrorist groups, particularly how these groups rationalize and communicate acts of violence; meanwhile, sociology and cultural studies focus on group formation and tactics. I argue that the WU produced communiqués to form a relationship between violence and the written word, to advance anti-imperialist and anti-racist ideologies, and to establish a site for the production and exchange of knowledge. Evidence for this lies in the rhetoric of the communiqués, their political commentary, and the ways in which the WU communicated violence.

## 2. Scholars' Voices

In his 2017 monograph, *The Politics of Attack: Communiqués and Insurrectionary Violence*, sociologist and social justice scholar Michael Loadenthal addresses communiqués as a form of political communication.<sup>39</sup> He shows that radical groups do not just carry out their revolutionary violence by means of physical acts but also by means of communication. Loadenthal centers his research on the communiqué as a site that demonstrates "the social construction of *both* the act (of 'terrorism') and the discourse (*on* 'terrorism')." <sup>40</sup> According to Loadenthal, the communiqué is intertwined with the acts of terror themselves and the pertaining discussions on terrorism. He argues that "[b]y de-sensationalizing the violence, and instead focusing on the movement's political discourse, one [i.e., the communiqué's author] hopes to shift the reader's attention away from the frequency of the bombs, and toward the validity of the critiques."<sup>41</sup> Centering the discussion on the communiqué places less emphasis on the violence *committed* by groups like the WU and more emphasis on how this violence is *communicated*.

The site of the communiqué is what Loadenthal terms "organic intellectualism."<sup>42</sup> Loadenthal believes that communiqués are sites for knowledge on violent attacks and the socio-political forces that shape the reasoning behind them. In other words, radical groups add to the surrounding discussion of attacks and offer critiques that may not be addressed by mainstream news networks or state-oriented actors. The WU participated in "organic intellectualism," as their communiqués openly criticized the Vietnam War, President Nixon's policies, and the overt oppression of Black citizens. The group's communiqués added to the growing cacophony of anti-war rhetoric while enabling the WU to push its own revolutionary agenda. According to Loadenthal, "[t]he communiqué itself becomes a site of resistance, as

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Loadenthal, *The Politics of Attack: Communiqués and Insurrectionary Violence* (Manchester University Press, 2017).

<sup>40</sup> Loadenthal, *Politics of Attack*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Loadenthal, *Politics of Attack*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Loadenthal, *Politics of Attack*, 14.

it is a reaction to structural violence and an urging for additional reactionary violence."<sup>43</sup> Loadenthal's arguments provide the basis for my analysis of WU communiqués. By viewing the WU's texts as a central feature of the group's propaganda, attention shifts away from the bombings toward the written word.

It is also significant for my research that the communiqué is situated in the broader environment of communication tactics used by the revolutionary groups of the 1970s. In his 2018 work, *Guerrilla Networks: An Anarchaeology of 1970s Radical Media Ecologies*, cultural studies scholar Michael Goddard argues that film, TV, radio, and the textual documents of the 1970s form what he calls "guerrilla media ecologies," and that the media produced by some of these revolutionary groups do not fit into standard media conventions.<sup>44</sup> Goddard emphasizes that the ephemera produced by groups like the WU became hotbeds of cultural and political discourse, leading toward an "invention of alternative potential futures, quite contrary to the dominant economic and political ones that actually eventuated."<sup>45</sup> For Goddard, the media created by revolutionary groups were just as important as their physical acts, even if the intended outcomes discussed in these texts never quite came to fruition.

It is at this point that Goddard's and Loadenthal's views on the communiqués and radical media of the 1970s converge. Goddard argues that these forms of media are not mere "ephemera of the neoliberal restructuring of the global economy," but that they remain "vital resources to be reactualized when possible."<sup>46</sup> In other words, the WU communiqués are not just rhetoric-filled anti-imperial ramblings. Rather, they offer a body of knowledge on the thoughts, sentiments, and actions of the radical group itself. This is similar to Loadenthal's perspective that, instead of relegating communiqués to the "trash heap of revolutionary ephemera," they form a "precise revolutionary canon."<sup>47</sup> In conjunction with one another, the arguments of these two researchers form the foundation of my analysis of the WU communiqués.

In his 2014 dissertation, "Dissent through Destruction: American Political Activism and the Utilization of Property Disruption as Protest,"<sup>48</sup> political scientist Lawrence J. Cushnie articulates that, "[i]f property is the right to exclude, destruction served as forced inclusion of and attention to underrepresented voices."<sup>49</sup> Through targeting and disrupting sites of global and local power, the WU rallied for those who did not have the political ability and means to speak for themselves. Cushnie provides case studies of American revolutionaries who used the destruction of property to shed light on systems of oppression and control. He recounts the Boston Tea Party, the Underground Railroad, and the figurehead of the temperance

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<sup>43</sup> Loadenthal, *Politics of Attack*, 221.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Goddard, *Guerrilla Networks: An Anarchaeology of 1970s Radical Media Ecologies* (Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 11.

<sup>45</sup> Goddard, *Guerrilla Networks*, 21.

<sup>46</sup> Goddard, *Guerrilla Networks*, 21.

<sup>47</sup> Loadenthal, *Politics of Attack*, 27.

<sup>48</sup> Lawrence J. Cushnie, "Dissent through Destruction: American Political Activism and the Utilization of Property Disruption as Protest" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Cushnie, "Dissent through Destruction," 50.

movement, Carry A. Nation. Cushnie's case studies situate property disruption not as haphazard actions taken by enraged activists but as methodical and deliberate demonstrations of political protest. Similar to the interventions of historical activists, the bombings committed by the WU were planned actions, targeting specific sites of power.

In developing my approach for this article, I have also benefited from studies on the organizational structures of terrorist groups as well as the utilization of communiqués in the 1970s, respectively. Political scientist Brian J. McFillen's 2013 dissertation, "Shadow Boxing: How the Risk of Government Intervention Shapes Terrorist Organizational Structures," showcases how different New Left radical groups structured their organization in accordance with the pressure applied by governmental forces.<sup>50</sup> McFillen's work addresses two key aspects: the organizational component as structured by the group itself and the intervening forces of government monitoring and infiltration. McFillen posits that the availability of a safe haven, either foreign or domestic, directly affects how a group is organized and whether they are successful in committing attacks.<sup>51</sup> McFillen's analysis of group structure is useful when incorporating the communiqués into the broader narrative of the WU. Due to a multitude of organizational factors, including its existence as an underground cellular model and the presence of governmental forces, the WU was forced to cut ties with its supporters. This led to the proliferation of fiery rhetoric in the WU communiqués, as these documents were the only channels of communication between the group and any potential supporters.

In their 2024 article, "Balancing Act: How Militant Groups Manage Strategic and Ideological Resources," criminologist Hannah Chesterton, counterterrorism expert Tricia Bacon, and public affairs scholar Thomas Zeitzoff distinguish between four different types of militant groups: violent militants, militant opportunists, professional militants, and disciplined militants.<sup>52</sup> They categorize the WU as "disciplined militants" who "emphasize ideological resources and engage in targeted violence."<sup>53</sup> They argue that, although this adherence to targeted violence made the WU actions successful, it also cut them off from their constituents and therefore left the group to drift off into internal disunity.<sup>54</sup> The continued reliance on bombings plunged the WU deeper into hiding. Constantly on the run from the FBI, the WU became increasingly disconnected from the anti-war movement.

Terrorism studies, cultural studies, and sociology all concern themselves with the political functions of communiqués, how militant and terrorist groups structure themselves in the face of adversity, as well as the importance of analyzing the documents produced by violent groups. I incorporate this research into the story of the WU and their communiqués. By shifting the attention away from the WU's physical acts and toward its various writings, I hope to recontextualize the communiqués into the broader history of the Weather Underground.

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<sup>50</sup> Brian J. McFillen, "Shadow Boxing: How the Risk of Government Intervention Shapes Terrorist Organizational Structures" (PhD diss., University of Indiana, 2013).

<sup>51</sup> McFillen, "Shadow Boxing," 40.

<sup>52</sup> Hannah Chesterton, Tricia Bacon, and Thomas Zeitzoff, "Balancing Act: How Militant Groups Manage Strategic and Ideological Resources," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 18, no. 2 (2024): 8.

<sup>53</sup> Chesterton et al., "Balancing Act," 10.

<sup>54</sup> Chesterton et al., "Balancing Act," 14.

While often replete with Marxist ideology, these texts communicated a precise and distinct critique of the U.S. power structure.

While differing in methodology and focus, all major historical works concerned with the WU follow a distinct pattern of capturing the group's trajectory between 1969 and 1976, as they endeavor to understand the presence of the WU in America's tumultuous history with anti-war and revolutionary uprisings during this time. The first major study, journalist Ron Jacobs's 1997 monograph, *The Way the Wind Blew: A History of the Weather Underground*, sets the stage. Jacobs traces the beginning, middle, and end of the WU's lifecycle, dedicating ample time to each phase of the movement. He begins with a brief overview of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and their shift from participatory democracy to action theory. He attributes this turn in strategy and rhetoric to the 1968 protests at Columbia University and the ensuing mass arrest of protesters.<sup>55</sup> Columbia's planned construction of an allegedly segregated gymnasium in a Black community of Harlem drove SDS-ers to overtake multiple campus buildings. Their demonstration was also a response against Columbia's partnership with the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA), a program by which the U.S. government used university facilities to conduct weapons research, riot-control studies, and counter-insurgency tactics.<sup>56</sup> The Columbia protests fueled the already growing tension between student activists and state actors and set the course for the SDS to become radicalized.

Jacobs then follows the SDS's trajectory as the organization split into warring factions. The 1969 SDS National Convention in Chicago gave rise to two main factions: the Progressive Labor Party (PL), and the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM).<sup>57</sup> From June 18 to 21, PL and RYM debated over who should take charge of the radical movement and which ideological path would work best to revolutionize the American public. Once the heated debates had ceased, the RYM officially expelled the PL from the larger caucus and took control over the SDS's national office in Chicago. After this initial power grab, the RYM became the Weathermen movement. From this point on, Jacobs's monograph closely follows the WU throughout the remainder of its lifespan. Key events in the WU timeline receive ample attention, including the Days of Rage protest, the Greenwich Village townhouse explosion, searches conducted by the FBI, feminist concerns regarding Weather's sexist conduct, and the years of bombings committed by the radicals.

Ron Jacobs's study stands out in the academic conversation on the WU because it covers the group's story and events extensively, thereby providing a framework for all future analyses. Subsequent scholars have expanded upon Jacobs's work by utilizing interviews with Weather members, documentaries, and previously classified government documents. The research of Jeremy Varon, an American historian, broadens the conversation on the WU by taking a rare

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<sup>55</sup> Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, 8.

<sup>57</sup> The Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) comprised two different groups, the RYM I and the RYM II. The RYM I eventually became known as the Weathermen Faction and then as the Weather Underground (WU), the Weather Underground Organization (WUO), and simply Weather. The RYM II separated and fell in and out of relevance until 1985 when the group officially disbanded.

international approach and comparing the WU with the West German Red Army Faction (RAF), a Far-left militant group active between 1970 and 1998. According to Varon's 2004 monograph, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*, the internationalism of the New Left consciousness is an underdeveloped area of research and provides an opportunity to analyze the scope of countercultural sympathies and ideas.<sup>58</sup> While the WU and the RAF were spatially separated, the two groups found common ground with their anti-war rhetoric and revolutionary ideologies. Both groups originated out of the broader student and anti-war movements, took violence as their main form of protest, and catastrophically became the catalysts of their own downfall.

Varon states: "As both a cause and a symptom of broad-based crises of legitimacy, their [i.e., the radical groups'] violence constituted an important episode in the histories of their nations, of the developed West as a whole, and of global conflict."<sup>59</sup> In addition to deepening our understanding of the WU and the RAF, Varon posits that comparing these extreme cases of New Left violence shifts the conversation from an analysis of isolated movements to one of global patterns and attitudes.<sup>60</sup> Varon meticulously addresses where the WU diverged from and converged with the broader New Left movement—not just in the United States but also as a global phenomenon. He discusses the actions of left-wing activist Sam Melville and his New York collective of radicals, the Vietnam Moratorium Committee's October 1969 demonstrations, and the "March Against Death" protest in November of the same year.<sup>61</sup> Varon's comparative approach marks a departure from Jacobs's research on the WU, and his analysis of other radical movements adds an important dimension of New Left activity. For Varon, the rapidly changing sphere of radical activity was a deciding factor for Weather's hardening into a militant organization.<sup>62</sup> In the final part of his book, Varon discusses the Flint War Council, the Greenwich Village townhouse explosion, and the ensuing bombing campaigns.<sup>63</sup> Unlike Jacobs, Varon is less concerned with the WU's bombings and more interested in the reactions of the New Left. While Varon's work excels at capturing the broader sentiments felt across the country, it lacks the detailed analysis of Weather's longest period of activity—especially when compared to Jacobs's study—and only returns to the bombings for a brief moment in his conclusion.<sup>64</sup> That said, Varon's research on the WU has played a formative role by expanding the conversation into the broader narratives of both American and international radicalism during the 1960s and 1970s.

Historian Dan Berger's 2006 monograph, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*, aligns with earlier scholarship by examining the WU's entire

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<sup>58</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 13.

<sup>60</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 14.

<sup>61</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 96–105.

<sup>62</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 113.

<sup>63</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 124–134.

<sup>64</sup> Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 250.



lifespan.<sup>65</sup> Unique to his approach, Berger utilizes interviews with the (then) imprisoned Weather member David Gilbert as a throughline in his work.<sup>66</sup> While covering many of the same topics as previous researchers, Berger offers a detailed discussion of the Weather Underground's 1974 publication *Prairie Fire*, which he considers both a critical success as well as the beginning of the end for the movement.

The FBI's role in the history of the WU—particularly its tactics of subversion and illegal spying—has been the focus of two recent explorations, namely, Bryan Burrough's 2015 book, *Days of Rage: America's Radical Underground, the FBI, and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionary Violence*,<sup>67</sup> and Arthur Eckstein's 2016 book, *Bad Moon Rising: How the Weather Underground Beat the FBI and Lost the Revolution*.<sup>68</sup> Burrough's monograph offers a comprehensive analysis of New Left radical groups and their relationship with the FBI. Similar to previous works, it follows the timeline of the WU and traces how the FBI affected the movement. Meanwhile, Eckstein's monograph focuses on the WU, utilizing newly released FBI files and government documents. Both authors' research is valuable in discerning how government intervention shaped the formation of the New Left movement in general and the functioning of the WU in particular. While they are valuable in this regard and to Weather's overall academic narrative, my research is less concerned with the involvement of state actors and more with the WU's written political statements.

Recent academic work on the WU has directed its attention toward more specific aspects of the movement. Historian Cristina Mona Rocha's 2014 dissertation, "Militant Feminism and the Women of the Weather Underground Organization," focuses on the WU's feminist characteristics, arguing that the WU's women were interested in the burgeoning second-wave feminist movement.<sup>69</sup> Rocha writes, "The WUO criticized the role of women in the home, was concerned with the subordination of women to men, attacked the gender pay gap, and supported female bodily integrity."<sup>70</sup> She emphasizes the position of women in the WU's leadership and their achievements of bringing feminist concerns to the attention of other Weather members. In doing so, Rocha shifts the focus from Weather's violent tendencies toward the ways in which women transformed parts of Weather's ideology and rhetoric by integrating both themselves and feminist concerns into the main body of Weather leadership. Similar to Rocha's approach, my research attempts to shed light on a largely understudied area of the WU's history, namely, its communiqués.

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<sup>65</sup> Berger, *Outlaws of America*.

<sup>66</sup> David Gilbert was sentenced to 75 years in prison for his role in the 1981 Brinks robbery and the killing of three individuals. In August 2021, Governor Andrew Cuomo granted Gilbert clemency, reducing his sentence to 40 years. By November 2021, Gilbert was granted parole and released from his incarceration.

<sup>67</sup> Burrough, *Days of Rage*.

<sup>68</sup> Arthur M. Eckstein, *Bad Moon Rising: How the Weather Underground Beat the FBI and Lost the Revolution* (Yale University Press, 2016).

<sup>69</sup> Cristina Mona Rocha, "Militant Feminism and the Women of the Weather Underground Organization" (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 2014).

<sup>70</sup> Rocha, "Militant Feminism," 2. Rocha refers to the WU as the WUO (Weather Underground Organization).

### 3. *The Weather Underground's Communiqués of Violence*

The first communiqué to accompany a Weather Underground bombing was issued on June 10, 1970, and distributed to *The New York Times* and the Associated Press.<sup>71</sup> Referring to the previous day's attack on the NYPD headquarters in Manhattan, its opening lines state, "Tonight, at 7 p.m., we blew up N.Y.C. Police Headquarters. We called in a warning before the explosion. The pigs in this country are our enemies. They have murdered Fred Hampton and tortured Joan Bird."<sup>72</sup> This excerpt demonstrates two patterns of the WU: warning calls before explosions and the use of the word "pig" to denote police officers, government officials, and anyone else opposed by the WU; the latter established an "us versus them" dichotomy, a tactic intended to create revolutionary zeal among the youth.

The communiqué's remainder establishes the extent of violent acts committed by radicals across the country. The Weather members who authored the text comment on the destruction of ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) buildings on university campuses and the closing of schools due to student strikes against President Nixon's involvement in Cambodia.<sup>73</sup> The communiqué closes with the following lines: "The time is now. Political power grows out of a gun, a molotov, a riot, a commune ... and from the soul of the people."<sup>74</sup> With this statement, the WU embraced a rhetoric of violence, calling for radicals to exert forceful revolution by means of throwing firebombs and burning buildings. The WU hoped that its engaging in various forms of violence would convince other radicals and supporters of the movement to do likewise. This is a key principle of WU rhetoric and one the group used frequently. In comparison to later communiqués, *Headquarters* is low on ideological jargon, but it showcases the WU's willingness to appraise violence as a political tool.

In October 1970, the WU launched several successive bombings within the span of just a few days—the first, on October 5, against the Haymarket Square police statue in Chicago (the group's second attack on this particular monument); the second, on October 8, against the Marin County Civic Center in northern California; and the third, on October 10, against the Long Island City courthouse in Queens, New York. These bombings caused extensive damage; they were a bold demonstration of the violence the WU could inflict; and they represented the spectacle of violence that the WU was now openly propagating. The WU followed each of these bombings with a communiqué, and I focus my attention here on two of them. The WU communiqués *Hall of Injustice* and *Criminal Courthouse* provide insight into the group's struggle against American racism and the injustices of the prison system. In contrast to *Headquarters*, these two communiqués are not laden with countercultural zeal. Rather, they are softer in tone, offering feelings of sympathy and strength to the Black Liberation movement.

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<sup>71</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 109.

<sup>72</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 109.

<sup>73</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 109.

<sup>74</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 109.

Both *Hall of Injustice* and *Criminal Courthouse* display a sense of comradeship and common struggle. The authors of *Hall of Injustice* announce: "We dedicate this act to the prisoners of San Quentin, Soledad, and New York, and to all black prisoners of war ... We dedicate it to the heroic prisoners of O Wing and the other inmates of Soledad Prison ... and to the incredible courage of the brothers who seized and held the prisons of New York."<sup>75</sup> This dedication draws attention to two of the WU's signature concerns, namely, prisons as institutions of systemic racism and the suppression of Black communities. Thus, the communiqué goes beyond engaging head-on with physical violence and becomes a voice for those who are trapped under state-sponsored oppression. Its rhetoric demonstrates the WU's ability to recognize that revolutionary struggle is not just waged by means of bombings or even direct harm to individuals, but also by supporting communities that are most affected by the oppressive practices of the state.

In its themes, *Criminal Courthouse* resembles *Hall of Injustice*. Expanding upon the latter's dedication to prisoners, the Weather members repeat their attack on the American prison system by stating: "This week, in the concentration camps of New York City, the courage and humanity of the people broke through the fortress of the pigs ... Soledad, the Tombs, Long Bihn, and Con Thienh, the final solution of the Amerikan state—machines for breaking men and women, and filth, rats, isolation, brutality, and torture."<sup>76</sup> The WU's critique of incarceration systems from around the world demonstrates a strong commitment to aiding the Black Liberation movement, Third World communities, and those mistreated by their government captors. Critically different from earlier communiqués, *Criminal Courthouse* presents a scathing critique of the prison system. The authors label prisons as America's equivalent to "concentration camps" and the "final solution of the Amerikan state."<sup>77</sup> The following year, in August and September 1971, the WU continued its rampage against America's carceral state with bombings in California and New York.

On August 21, 1971, George Jackson, a Black activist and co-founder of the Black Guerilla Family prison gang, was shot and killed by guards at San Quentin State Prison. The guards claimed that he was armed and attempting to escape; however, the pistol that was allegedly in Jackson's possession was never found.<sup>78</sup> One week later, the WU bombed the San Francisco office of the California Department of Corrections and the Office of California Prisons in retaliation. The accompanying communiqué, *George Jackson*, opens with the following lines:

"On Saturday, August 21, 1971, George Jackson, black warrior, revolutionary leader, political prisoner, was shot dead by racist forces at San Quentin. Murdered for what he had become: Soledad Brother, soldier of his people, rising up through torment and torture, tyranny and injustice, unwilling to bow or bend to his oppressors. George Jackson died with his eyes fixed clearly on freedom."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 115.

<sup>76</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 116.

<sup>77</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 119.

<sup>78</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 128.

<sup>79</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 128.

The communiqué continues by speaking critically of what the radicals believed to be the for-profit prison system, comparing its functions to those of slavery and involuntary servitude. Its authors argue that similar to what occurred during slavery, Black citizens are being torn from their families and communities to be “incarcerated in slave labor camps.”<sup>80</sup> To further demonstrate their point, the communiqué’s authors express their views on inhumane prison policies and the treatment of prisoners at length:

“Inside are those who have fought back against the white armies which occupy their communities, those who have experienced the slow death of heroin, those who have not accepted hunger, unemployment, and racism as a normal way of life. Fifty percent of the prison population of California is Black and Brown. There are more Black men in prison than in college. Once in a jail, the point is to keep them there. Thousands of prisoners are serving indeterminate sentences—one year to life is the required California sentence for robbery. There is a high price for parole—that of utter subservience to daily racism and indignities. Prisoners must accept arbitrary transfers, denial of visitation rights without explanation, inhumane medical treatment, atrocious food, overcrowding, and rampant brutality ... The masters would have us believe that violence is a choice in the world, that the best of us choose non-violence as a means of change, and that deviants choose violence. The loudest cries for restraints and non-violence come from the very throats of those bent on violence as a means of control.”<sup>81</sup>

In its subsequent examination of the disproportionate violence committed against oppressed communities, the communiqué highlights the malnutrition and lead poisoning of Black babies, the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican women, and the periodic assassinations of Black leaders like Malcolm X, George Jackson, and Patrice Lumumba.<sup>82</sup>

The *George Jackson* communiqué shows two integral processes. The first is the WU’s commitment to supporting both the Black Liberation and prison reform movements of the 1970s. The second and more subtle process is the establishing of the communiqué as a site to inform and educate others on the symptoms of imperialism and racism. The WU’s persistent documentation of the various methods of oppression forms a distinct pattern in the group’s rhetoric. There is a fixation on highlighting the violence that is happening to both local and distant communities in the hope that sympathizers of these causes will engage in direct and oppositional violence alongside the WU. The WU expanded this process in its future writings and restructured its rhetoric to create a repository of writings that demonstrated the violence committed against others at the hands of the U.S. government. This relationship between rhetoric and violence reframed the communiqué from a presumptuous shouting of jargon into a text designed to inform, educate, and produce an anti-imperialist and anti-racist fighting force among the white youth of America.

The process continued on September 17, 1971, in a communiqué titled *Attica*. In response to the state’s brutal reaction against the Attica Prison riot a few days earlier, the WU attacked the office of the New York Department of Corrections. *Attica* forcefully advances the narrative of state violence across different sectors of American society by highlighting the killing of Black students during protests in South Carolina and Mississippi, the riots in Newark, Detroit,

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<sup>80</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 129.

<sup>81</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 132–133.

<sup>82</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 130.

and Watts, and the assassination of Black leaders.<sup>83</sup> In the communiqué's remainder, the WU vehemently supports prison reform and advocates for the oppressed communities of America. In addition to its support for prison reform, the WU passionately supported the anti-war movement and those international communities plagued by American warmongering. The WU demonstrated this through communiqués that focused on the Vietnam War and President Nixon's war strategies.

Earlier in the year, on February 28, 1971, Weather had released *The Bombing of the Capitol*, a communiqué set to accompany the attack on the home of the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C. The issue with this particular incident was that the first bomb's detonation sequence did not reach completion. With the communiqué already in the hands of the press, the WU reacted quickly, placing a secondary bomb on top of the first one to complete the detonation. Weather members hoped that by creating a grand spectacle and demonstration of violence—namely, by bombing a building replete with American iconography and symbolism—they would motivate even bigger and more violent acts from their supporters. In its communiqué, the WU also furthers the narrative of violence unleashed by the American military. The authors cover the deployment of chemical agents used to defoliate the Vietnamese countryside. They comment that whole swaths of land and crops are being damaged beyond repair, that pregnant women are at risk of having children with birth defects, and that the people of Vietnam are being forcibly relocated to a free-fire zone.

In their reactions to the Vietnam War, the WU communiqués create a sphere of rhetoric in which the U.S. government is held responsible for its wrongdoings. Loadenthal's take on communiqués as a form of discourse offers a useful lens when analyzing the WU's statements. By bringing attention to the injustices and atrocities of the war, the WU attempted to create a space for readers to become not just informed but also radicalized. While this was not uncommon in terms of Weather Underground procedure, it demonstrates the group's adeptness at linking violence, rhetoric, and the means of communication available to them in the 1970s. These communiqués allowed the WU to capitalize on its armed propaganda campaign. The discreteness of writing and publishing while in hiding proved especially useful for the Weather leaders.

By May 1972, President Nixon's military position in Vietnam was steadily deteriorating, and in response, he started replacing American foot soldiers with planes and bombing attacks. For its part, the WU acted on May 19, Ho Chi Minh's birthday, by detonating dynamite in the Pentagon's Air Force section.<sup>84</sup> A communiqué, titled *The Bombing of the Pentagon*, details the powerful resistance of the Vietnamese while being overshadowed by the American war machine. Recounting prior times of Vietnamese resistance, the WU discusses the Vietnamese victory over Japanese and French forces in 1945 and their successful defeat of the French occupation of Dien Bien Phu in 1954.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the authors include details of Nixon's "Vietnamization" policy. This war strategy operated on three fronts: withdrawing

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<sup>83</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 133.

<sup>84</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 134.

<sup>85</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 135–136.

American combat troops to ease tensions within the United States; providing aid to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam to muster support of pro-U.S. forces; and increasing the U.S. air and naval presence.<sup>86</sup> While this gave an impression of U.S. withdrawal, Nixon was merely redirecting military power and presence to regain control during a losing battle. The WU concludes its communiqué by urging readers to reflect on the Vietnamese and their culture:

"The world has been changed forever by the struggle in Viet Nam. Despite all of the U.S. bombs, all the vicious escalation, all the criminal acts of this government, the people of Viet Nam continue to fight, continue to build their society. These are the people we are taught to hate. Look into their eyes, see how they raise their children, how they greet one another. Read their songs and poetry. Reflect on how they face this terrible war machine, how they transform bomb craters into fish hatcheries, how youth brigades mobilize to rebuild bridges and roads as quickly as they are bombed. Try to understand how they persevere. There is a difference between Richard Nixon and Ho Chi Minh, William Porter and Madame Binh, Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. Nixon may be murdering for his pride and his power but the Vietnamese are fighting to be free and to live as human beings in a different kind of world. And because of this, the eyes of the people from every land are focused on Vietnam."<sup>87</sup>

Thus, this communiqué continues to advance the WU's unrelenting rhetoric. By 1973, the frequency of the WU's bombings began to slow, due in part to the steady de-escalation of the Vietnam War. The group committed only two recorded bombings that year, namely, an attack on New York's 103rd Police Precinct and an attack on the headquarters building of the International Telephone & Telegraph (ITT) corporation, also located in New York. While both attacks were accompanied by communiqués, I focus here on the latter of the two, as it highlights the involvement of international corporations in war.

On September 28, 1973, the WU phoned in a warning to the night supervisor at *The New York Times*, noting that a bomb was set to go off at the ITT-American Building fifteen minutes later.<sup>88</sup> The caller reasoned that the attack was in retaliation for ITT's connection to the subversion and overthrow of the President of Chile, Salvador Allende. In a change of tone, the communiqué's authors offer an "indictment" of both the ITT and the U.S. government, implicating the corporation in an attempt to subvert Chile's elections; in a collusion with the Anaconda and Kennecott copper companies to steal wealth and subsistence from the Chilean people; in a successful economic blockade sanctioned by the U.S. government; and in a whole host of other ploys intended to disrupt Chile's socialist society.<sup>89</sup> What we can learn from this communiqué does not come from the text per se, but rather from how it is presented. Its intentional design as an "indictment" gives this communiqué a humorous touch and illustrates Goddard's concept of "radical media ecologies." Alongside subsequent communiqués that also criticize the U.S. involvement in Chile, this text represents a domain in which the WU dictates the conversation and specific narratives on violence.

Between 1973 and 1975, the WU went on a two-year hiatus from its bombing campaigns and published only a handful of statements, among them its 1974 book *Prairie Fire*. With the anti-

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<sup>86</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 136.

<sup>87</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 141.

<sup>88</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 159.

<sup>89</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 160.

war effort dwindling, political bombings lost their popularity among the New Left. It was not until June 16, 1975, that the WU laid claim to another bombing, namely, an attack on the Banco de Ponce in New York, targeted for its connection to Ferré Enterprises, a multimillion-dollar cement company in Puerto Rico which controlled the bank. In the accompanying communiqué, *Victory to the Ponce Cement Strike*, the WU expressed its support for the 500 cement workers who had endured a five-month-long strike against the company.<sup>90</sup>

The shift in revolutionary focus became a hallmark trait of the WU's later communiqués. While continuing to support the Black Liberation movement as well as the anti-war effort, the WU now demonstrated its support for the socialist movement in Chile. This, of course, was a reflection of the times the radicals found themselves in. At home, the lack of eagerness on the part of radicals to engage in bombings and mass demonstrations was challenging the WU's ability to rally support for its own cause. This was compounded by the end of the Vietnam War, a key focus of Weather's revolutionary ideology. To position themselves as leaders of the underground front, Weather members sought to keep up their attacks on what they believed to be global imperialism. Further impacting the movement, Weather members and leaders began to resurface in the hope of resuming normal lives. Because of this, both the targets of attack and the accompanying communiqués increasingly lost their bravado and showed signs of an already waning revolutionary front. In a final attempt to keep the revolution alive, the WU laid claim to a final act of bombing on September 5, 1975.

The attack's accompanying communiqué, titled *Weather Underground Organization Bombs Kennecott Corporation*, constitutes the group's final statement in connection with a bombing. Weather bombed the national headquarters of the Kennecott Copper Corporation in Salt Lake City, Utah, in retaliation for what they believed to be the company's ongoing control of copper mines in Chile, its role in overthrowing the country's Unidad Popular government, and its exploitation of workers in the United States.<sup>91</sup> The communiqué details Kennecott's actions in Chile and is reminiscent of Weather's "indictment" of the ITT in a previous communiqué. The communiqué is indicative of the movement's decline, as its authors' rhetoric of violence lacks strength in comparison to earlier statements.

By analyzing and recontextualizing the Weather members' bombing-related communiqués, I have highlighted the relationship between them, the spectacles of violence they engaged in, and the rhetoric they created. These communiqués demonstrate Weather's propensity for violence, both in physical and in written form. They provide alternative narratives on imperialism and racism, both globally and within the United States. Because the Weather Underground could not lead the movement in mass demonstrations and protests, it found it sufficient to inform, educate, and radicalize America's youth through the written word.

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<sup>90</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 169.

<sup>91</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 169.

#### 4. The Weather Underground's Communiqués of Radical Perception

I now turn to the WU's non-bombing communiqués or, as I call them, the group's communiqués of radical perception. These statements did not accompany particular bombings but, rather, focused on building connections between the WU and its above-ground constituency. The WU produced texts that addressed broader concerns of the New Left, the anti-war effort, and American society in general. While one could argue that these communiqués offer less in terms of revolutionary zeal, they articulate Weather's attempt to garner support from the American public. Not intended to induce violence, they display a commitment to the counterculture and to the New Left, a sphere of influence that the WU hoped to dominate. In this section, I analyze statements from the WU that demonstrate not only the group's critiques of the American imperialist system but also its production of a formalized piece of media or, as Weather would put it, armed propaganda. These communiqués forged a path for the group to rely less on physical acts of violence and thereby draw more supporters to join the New Left's anti-war and anti-imperialist efforts. This is especially true for the final two pieces of media created by the WU before the group dissolved in 1977.

The WU's last two major publications, namely, its 1974 book *Prairie Fire* and the 1975 documentary film *Underground*,<sup>92</sup> break away from the structure of the communiqué in favor of more lengthy and experimental forms of communication. While they are not communiqués, I shall address them further below because they functioned as grand statements and signified a dramatic change from the group's previous tactics. Despite being released toward the end of the group's lifespan, *Prairie Fire* is the most cohesive piece of Weather ideology. It is divided into six parts, each focusing on a different aspect of Weather's critiques of American imperialism and the revolution's changing tide. Meanwhile, the documentary film *Underground* demonstrates Weather's willingness to experiment with alternative communication tactics utilized by revolutionary groups in the 1970s. Its 87-minute runtime features interviews with Weather leaders, interlaced with footage of various demonstrations, protests, and speeches from the 1960s and 1970s. However, before I turn my attention to *Prairie Fire* and *Underground*, there are a several earlier communiqués that need to be addressed.

The WU communiqué *New Morning-Changing Weather* is written in a solemn and reflective tone, which sets it apart from other texts of this format. Released on December 6, 1970, it was the WU's first public statement regarding the Greenwich Village townhouse explosion on March 6, 1970. It states: "The death of our friends ended our military conception of what we were doing ... this tendency to consider only bombings or picking up the gun as revolutionary, with glorification of the heavier the better, we've called the military error."<sup>93</sup> Deeply affected by the event, which had taken the lives of Weather members Diana Oughton, Ted Gold, and Terry Robbins, the WU challenged its own idea of what fosters an underground

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<sup>92</sup> Emile de Antonio, Mary Lampson, and Haskell Wexler, directors, *Underground*, documentary film, Action 75 Inc., 1975, streaming, [online](#).

<sup>93</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 118.



revolution. From this point on, the group diligently called in warnings to switchboard operators, allowing occupants to evacuate buildings targeted for bombing before detonation. In addition to this shift in practice, the WU adjusted its viewpoint on violence and refined its communiqués, henceforth utilizing them as spaces to advocate and educate.

With the release of *New Morning-Changing Weather*, the WU began to overhaul their communiqués and relied more on the creation of propaganda, a transition that signified a change in Weather practices and rhetoric. Goddard recognizes this shift when he explains that, "[i]n some respects, the communiqués were of more significance than the bombings or, rather, the latter served mainly to draw attention to the former."<sup>94</sup> Goddard also states that the WU transformed into a "type of underground media organization,"<sup>95</sup> a point especially true in light of the eventual release of the *Underground* documentary film. The remainder of *New Morning-Changing Weather* addresses the state of the revolutionary movement and the direction the radicals should take from here on out, and it is signed—for the first time—with the group's moniker: Weather Underground.

The WU communiqué *Common Victories* was published on February 23, 1973, one month after President Nixon had announced a ceasefire agreement with the North Vietnamese. It reexamines the war, highlighting the progress the anti-war effort has made since 1961 and what it is still aspiring to achieve. The text's authors appropriately cover the war years in Vietnam, using common anti-war slogans like "Hell No, We Won't Go!," "Bring the Troops Home!," and "Stop the Draft!" as headings throughout the text. Each heading is followed by a discussion of successful acts of resistance that, according to the WU, had aided in the disruption of the war effort. Talk of draft-card burning, the wisdom gained from the Civil Rights and Black Liberation movements, and an inquiry into inhumane war tactics like the deployment of napalm fill the pages of this communiqué. The main point of interest here is the strategic construction of the text as a curated piece of propaganda. The Weather members break away from their usual rhetoric and, instead, use the first page of the communiqué to showcase a poem written by "a sister in the underground."<sup>96</sup> A few lines of this poem read as follows:

"Thi Binh came victorious // her flesh torn and blistered // singed hair skin coarsened // from prison lye, barelegged work in the deltas. // She covered her mudcaked body // with crimson ao dai // dipped in // the blood of women // warriors // sacred red."<sup>97</sup>

The poem commemorates the women of Vietnam for their courage while fighting against the might of the U.S. military. It also points to Vietnamese traditions like the *áo dài*, a formal dress worn by both women and men. The use of poetry to convey solidarity with the women of Vietnam shows the WU's dedication to understanding the global political climate as well as the attitudes of others affected negatively by U.S. policy and actions. By creating a text that is purposeful both in terms of content and design, the WU bridges the gap between

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<sup>94</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 123.

<sup>95</sup> Goddard, *Guerrilla Networks*, 123.

<sup>96</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 139.

<sup>97</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 139.

rhetoric and strategic propaganda. *Common Victories* steps away from the overtly Marxist jargon and the countercultural zeal that the WU is known for; instead, it offers thoughtful reflections on the anti-war movement and the victory of the Vietnamese people:

"The intention of the U.S. government has been total war and genocide against Vietnam. This intention has been countered and defeated. The Vietnamese people have driven an invading army from their country. For the first time in over one hundred years, Vietnamese soil will be free of foreign soldiers. Article No. 4 of the Agreement says: 'The U.S. will not continue its military involvement or intervention in the internal affairs of Vietnam.' The full force of U.S. wealth, the cream of computerized technology, the racial arrogance of Empire has been defeated by an ancient Asian nation, a people who began this stage of their revolution thirty years ago armed with a two thousand year tradition of resistance and bamboo poles sharpened at the ends. The significance of the ceasefire agreement is that the strength of people—in Vietnam, around the world, and inside the U.S. itself—was pitted against a handful of men who control technological power and the means of violence. A small poor country can defeat the largest richest power in the world, provided its people are united and its cause is just. What an ominous message for the American empire. What an inspiration and comfort for all people. The Vietnamese have experience with the forked-tongue of the American government; we are reminded of the trail of broken treaties and the greed which has accompanied peace-and-honor words before."<sup>98</sup>

From a rhetorical standpoint, *Common Victories* demonstrates Weather's developing sense of armed propaganda, a responsible decision to refrain from fervent rhetoric and, instead, engage readers with thoughtful prose and a celebration of the Vietnamese people. By producing a communiqué in this fashion, the WU participated in what Goddard has labeled a "media ecology."<sup>99</sup> The WU produced a refined piece of media that articulates the concerns of the anti-war effort while also engaging in the creative construction of propaganda. Goddard adds that, "[i]n this context, increasingly sophisticated media management techniques and a guerrilla or radical use of the media also assumes a crucial importance in any field of political struggle."<sup>100</sup> Goddard's argument here is useful for assessing Weather's armed propaganda position. The communiqué becomes an integral component of understanding the political struggle and the socio-political confines within which the creation of media takes place. In the 1970s' constant whirlwind of ideologies, critiques, and statements, the communiqués of the WU synthesize the barrage of voices into a singular act of resistance.

The next two communiqués, *A Collective Letter to the Women's Movement*, and *Health Education and Welfare: An Enemy of Women*, were written by the Weatherwomen and are expressly concerned with the issues of feminism and their place in the revolution. Released on July 24, 1973, *A Collective Letter* reframes the WU's outmoded and, quite frankly, sexist stance on women's involvement in the revolutionary struggle. Describing the communiqué as a letter that "bridge[s] the space between us,"<sup>101</sup> the Weatherwomen address the exclusion of women who are not fully committed to the ideology of violence as political protest. The communiqué's authors argue that, for the past three years, the Weatherwomen and the New Left have failed to recognize that women, when empowered to command their lives, are

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<sup>98</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 142–143.

<sup>99</sup> Goddard, *Guerrilla Networks*, 58.

<sup>100</sup> Goddard, *Guerrilla Networks*, 58.

<sup>101</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 149–150.

fundamental to any revolution.<sup>102</sup> Admitting that the WU was in part responsible for the shunning of feminism and women as leaders in the revolution, the communiqué is one part apology on behalf of the Weatherwomen and one part attempt to entwine the ideals of the radical New Left with feminist causes.

The communiqué's authors write: "The purpose of this letter is to mark a change—to commit ourselves as women to the cause of women. We believe that the struggle against sexism demands the destruction of the American state, and that the immediate personal nature of sexism requires struggle against men who enforce that oppression as well as its institutions."<sup>103</sup> A distinctive change from previous communiqués, the Weatherwomen reflect on the position of women within the New Left as well as other facets of social movements. They discuss female revolutionary fighters in Vietnam, the resistance and progression of Black women in the United States, the fight for bodily autonomy, and the ease with which all of their efforts can be taken away. *A Collective Letter* planted the seed of feminism to grow within the WU; however, the Weatherwomen did not capitalize on this until almost one year later with their next communiqué.

In *Health Education and Welfare: An Enemy of Women*, circulated on March 6, 1974, the Weatherwomen attack the government-funded Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), today known as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In their critique, the authors state that the "HEW keeps us below subsistence—not enough food, not health care but health-care-delivery-systems, not decent jobs but endless cycles of dependency and anguish."<sup>104</sup> Utilizing a—by then—standard Weather Underground tactic, the communiqué analyzes the perceived systems of oppression in American society by listing the ways in which the HEW program has continuously degraded women: the financing of between 100,000 and 200,000 sterilizations predominantly affecting women of color; the rising cost of food combined with the increasing number of single-mother families living in poverty; and the mismanagement and monopolization of the program's \$80 billion in funding.<sup>105</sup> The Weatherwomen argued that both the men and the women of the underground needed to commit to change. While they were raising the fundamental issues that women were facing in American society, the New Left's revolutionary zeal of armed propaganda was waning. To remedy this, the WU wrote and published its most audacious piece of communication yet: *Prairie Fire*.

*Prairie Fire* is the culmination of the WU's hardening ideology over the course of the group's lifespan. Published in May 1974, over 40,000 copies of *Prairie Fire* were distributed, and it has come to be lauded as the Weather Underground's magnum opus.<sup>106</sup> The book is divided into six sections, each combining Weather's revolutionary rhetoric with a synthesis of what the group considered to be America's long history of imperialist systems. In their most thorough

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<sup>102</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 151–152.

<sup>103</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 153.

<sup>104</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 163.

<sup>105</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 164.

<sup>106</sup> Jacobs, *Way the Wind Blew*, 160.

critique of the U.S. government, the Weather members argue that the struggle against imperialism is also a struggle against capitalism and the consumerist markets of the American way of life. They maintain that the citizens of the United States no longer have the power to control and shape their lives; rather, that power lies in the hands of government officials, military programs, and U.S.-controlled corporations that all subvert the growth of an underground revolution.<sup>107</sup> *Prairie Fire* displays the WU's ability to analyze and critique perceived imperialist structures. Even though *Prairie Fire* is not a communiqué, it is a lasting piece of Weather ideology, a grand demonstration of the group's rhetoric molded over the course of the previous five years. In the words of Loadenthal, *Prairie Fire* is part of an "organic intellectualism,"<sup>108</sup> a piece of writing that intelligently communicates the need for revolution.

In addition to covering the history of the student movement of the 1960s and Nixon's path to war in Southeast Asia, *Prairie Fire* recontextualizes the history of the United States and its relationship with violence. It does so to demonstrate the WU's interpretation of imperialism and racism as constant instruments to subordinate the poor and people of color. Harkening back to Christopher Columbus and the enslavement of Indigenous people, the WU argues that slavery was a two-pronged system meant to imprison those who were thought to be inferior and bolster the white ruling class.<sup>109</sup> The authors explain that "[t]he institutionalizing of white supremacy created a structure to divide the white worker and small farmer from the Black slave. Coupled with the economic bribe of white privilege, it is the cornerstone of U.S. history, the rock upon which capitalism and imperialism have been erected."<sup>110</sup> *Prairie Fire* traces this position through the dispossession of the North American Indigenous people, the Civil War, and the two world wars. Up until this point, the WU's propaganda had focused primarily on the anti-war effort and the support of the Black liberationists, not the inheritance of a nation built upon the backs of slaves and the exploitation of the common worker. Thus, *Prairie Fire* is Weather's most ambitious piece of media articulating the group's rhetoric.

*Prairie Fire* became a brief flicker of hope for the WU. Its publication spawned an above-ground subdivision of the WU, the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee (PFOC). The PFOC operated as a support network for the underground members, putting together conferences and holding learning sessions to educate above-ground radicals on revolutionary tactics. However, similar to the SDS's PL and RYM factions, the PFOC and the WU clashed over the issue of who should control the movement. Without substantial progress in the New Left movement and the PFOC, the WU's time as a revolutionary group was coming to an end.

Between fleeting moments of success and crushing defeats, the Weather leaders decided on one final push to display their commitment to the revolution. In 1976, the documentary film *Underground*, directed by Emile de Antonio and Haskell Wexler, was released as the WU's last grand communication. It features interviews with Weather leaders Jeff Jones, Kathy Boudin, Cathy Wilkerson, Bernardine Dohrn, and Bill Ayers, interlaced with footage from New

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<sup>107</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 179–180.

<sup>108</sup> Loadenthal, *Politics of Attack*, 14.

<sup>109</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 209.

<sup>110</sup> Dohrn et al., *Sing a Battle Song*, 209.

Left protests and demonstrations. The documentary film's bulk covers much of what the WU had been talking about since its early days as a radical group. At the same time, however, *Underground* embraces a new mode of communication not yet utilized by the WU. Digital Humanities scholar Matt Applegate talks about this in his 2016 article, "Urban Guerrillas on Film: Mediatization, Guerrilla Filmmaking, and Guerrilla Seeing in Emile de Antonio's *Underground*."<sup>111</sup> According to Applegate, "it is precisely through the guerrilla's media campaigns—this is, its insistence on producing manifestos, ephemera, and eventually a film—that it extends itself, pushes itself to its limits, and brings unrealized potential to the fore."<sup>112</sup> Much to Weather's surprise, its documentary film came and went without making much—if any—difference with regard to the New Left's support. Thus, instead of ending with a cacophony of explosions and a fiery attitude, the WU sputtered to a standstill, leaving behind a legacy of bombs and an unforgiving rhetoric documented throughout its history.

### Conclusion

It has been my goal to reposition the communiqués of the Weather Underground as texts that are fundamental to the functioning of this radical group. I argue that the WU produced communiqués and writings to advocate for and engage in the spectacle of violence; to further the ideology of anti-imperialism and anti-racism; and to establish a site that was suitable to educate and inform. The majority of Weather's lifespan as a movement was spent underground, cut off from its constituency. To remain hidden from law enforcement while maintaining an image of revolutionary leadership, the WU engaged in a five-year-long stretch of attacking what it regarded as U.S. sites of imperialist power and global domination. To accompany each act of bombing, the group produced and circulated written statements openly denouncing what it believed to be the imperialist and racist structures of the U.S. government. As demonstrated by both the communiqués of violence and the communiqués of radical perception, the WU hoped that these statements would revolutionize the minds of the American people.

It has also been my goal to interpret the WU communiqués as a necessity for the advancement of an anti-imperialist and anti-racist ideology. Through communiqués like *George Jackson*, *Attica*, and *Common Victories*, Weather members heavily aligned their motivations with the causes of Black Liberation and Third World struggles. While academic discourse thus far has focused primarily on the WU's acts of bombing, I have demonstrated that the WU communiqués became the muscle of the group's armed propaganda campaign. As the WU progressed in its bombing attacks, its communiqués became longer, detailing the symptoms and underlying causes for its attacks. Weather members expanded their thinking, providing commentary on topics like prison reform and the question of feminism in the revolutionary movement. Statements like *A Collective Letter* and *Health Education and Welfare* expanded Weather's approach to women in leadership as well as its examination of how women were affected by the oppressive systems of American society. According to my

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<sup>111</sup> Matt Applegate, "Urban Guerrillas on Film: Mediatization, Guerrilla Filmmaking, and Guerrilla Seeing in Emile de Antonio's *Underground*," *Cultural Critique* 93, no. 1 (2016): 59–85.

<sup>112</sup> Applegate, "Urban Guerrillas," 71.

analysis, communiqués became the focus and site of Weather’s revolution, while bombings served primarily to draw attention to their accompanying communiqués.

Last but not least, the WU communiqués served as a platform to educate and inform. They apprised the American public of various topics that were of interest to the WU. Thus, they became repositories that highlighted social and political injustices, educating the American youth on the extent of war, poverty, racism, and oppression both in the United States and globally. Their scathing critiques of President Nixon’s wartime strategies of “Vietnamization” and air raids on Southeast Asia documented the war as a present-day tragedy. By the 1970s, the youth and young adult population of America were viewing the violence of World War II as a thing of the past. The atrocities of the Vietnam War, however, were happening in the here and now, a fact of life that the youth and young adult population of America had not yet experienced in such a personal manner. To shape their impressionable minds, the WU created documents to educate the radically curious on the extent of the Vietnam War as well as the oppression of Black and Brown citizens in the United States.

My research challenges the academic disinterest in the WU communiqués. While scholars reference these communiqués as admissions to the bombings, they largely neglect to analyze the WU’s use of the written word. Researchers have begun to remedy this by addressing the WU’s feminist stances and how the Weatherwomen’s narratives contributed to the group’s functions; however, they do not focus on the communiqués as historical documents and tools of political protest. Meanwhile, in the realm of terrorism studies and communication studies, communiqués are already being viewed as implements of organization and communication—an approach that I have applied to my analysis in this article. In historical scholarship, this approach should be expanded to include the communiqués of the entire New Left movement to enhance our understanding of the importance and function of these texts for radical groups in the 1960s and 1970s.

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Jillian Devine

## *Conflicting Relations in 1982: The Lebanese Civil War as an American, Global, and Israeli Issue*

**ABSTRACT:** *In 1982, U.S. President Ronald Reagan announced that a "multinational peacekeeping force" was to restore peace between Israelis and Palestinians in the midst of the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990). Since the United States associated a Christian-led government with democracy, they considered Lebanon a natural ally that would promote America's other geopolitical goals. This article argues that U.S. intervention was based on supporting the Lebanese Maronite Christian political party to secure a Westernized Middle Eastern ally for Israel's political and economic interests, better aligned with the United States, because America related Christianity to the West and Islam to anti-American, pro-Soviet sentiments.*

**KEYWORDS:** *modern history; United States of America (USA); Cold War; Lebanese Civil War; Lebanon; Israel; Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO); Maronite Christians; U.S. Marines; democracy*

### *Introduction*

One by one, members of my family left Lebanon and came to the United States during the Lebanese Civil War. They came with just their clothes, their business, and the memories of what had happened to their country. My mother arrived in 1981, one of her brothers in 1982. They returned to Lebanon just a year later. My mother did not officially move to the United States until 1985, when the war was at its worst. The difference between 1975, when the war began, and the early 1980s, when my family arrived in America, was drastic—due to both the Israeli invasion and the arrival of the U.S. Marines in 1982. And yet, for my uncle, what made the war worse was what had essentially started it. Having been expelled from neighboring Jordan, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) arrived in Lebanon in 1975 to attack Israel from Lebanese territory; Palestinian refugees soon followed; and then war erupted, beginning as an Israeli-Palestinian conflict that awakened something with much deeper roots in Lebanese society between Christians and Muslims, upper-class and lower-class alike. It was a clash of various Lebanese factions divided by sectarian identities, Israelis, Palestinians, and Syrians—all vying for power in the region, yet the only question my uncle ever asked was, "What the hell was America even doing there?" Questions like this are relevant because history currently seems to be repeating itself in the region. On September 27, 2024—when I began working on this article—the Israeli bombing of Beirut killed many civilians. Almost a year later, on August 28, 2025, the United Nations announced its plan to withdraw its peacekeeping forces by 2027, hoping to disarm the Hezbollah political party (founded in 1982) which Israel has been at war with since 2023.<sup>1</sup> For many, including my family, it is 1975 all over again. Thus, reviewing the U.S. policy and ideology that led to the American intervention in the Lebanese Civil War is of the utmost importance, because—as Americans, Lebanese, and immigrants—we know the consequences of a war with false predispositions.

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Jazeera, "UNIFIL's mandate in southern Lebanon was renewed. What happens next?" August 30, 2025, [online](#).

On September 20, 1982, U.S. President Ronald Reagan (in office 1981–1989) addressed the nation after the atrocious massacre of Palestinian refugees at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camp in Beirut by members of the Right-wing Lebanese Phalange militia, supported by Israel:

“The scenes that the whole world witnessed this past weekend were among the most heart-rending in the long nightmare of Lebanon’s agony. Millions of us have seen pictures of the Palestinian victims of this tragedy. There is little that words can add, but there are actions we can and must take to bring that nightmare to an end. [...] now is a time for action—to act together to restore peace to Beirut, to help a stable government emerge that can restore peace and independence to all of Lebanon, and to bring a just and lasting resolution to the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors, one that satisfies the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, who are all too often its victims.”<sup>2</sup>

A “multinational peacekeeping force” was to be deployed the following year to ensure that the Lebanese government itself could restore peace to the region. According to Palestinian scholar Naseer Aruri, the United States was in deep diplomatic discussions with King Hussein of Jordan (in office 1952–1999), PLO leader Yasir Arafat (in office 1969–2004), and even Syrian President Hafez al-Assad (in office 1971–2000) during this time,<sup>3</sup> which places the Lebanese conflict and U.S. involvement into a larger global context. Yet the United States sent direct military support only to Lebanon (besides Israel, of course), and it did not withdraw its Marines from the country until after the bombing of their Battalion Landing Team headquarters on October 23, 1983, which killed 241 U.S. soldiers. But what had caused America to deploy its Marines to Lebanon in the first place, or as my uncle so frequently asked, “What the hell was America even doing there?”

In his critique of Reagan’s policy, American political scientist William B. Quandt suggests that Americans severely misunderstood Lebanon’s underlying social and political conditions.<sup>4</sup> The Lebanese government was indeed a Christian government, because the president was supposed to be a Christian—usually a Maronite Christian, as they were the dominant group of that faith—such was the sentiment of the people’s misrepresentation, particularly on a religious scale. Was America supporting liberty and democracy, or simply just Christianity? While Reagan was outspoken about a more humanitarian fight to uphold democracy and end death and violence against civilians, I argue that the United States associated a Christian-led government with Western-style democracy, which is why they considered Lebanon a natural ally that would promote both America’s other geopolitical goals in the region as well as Israel’s interests.

In American culture, there has been a long-standing association of Christianity and democracy with the West and Islam and Soviet communism with the East, which undoubtedly influenced U.S. policy—specifically Reagan’s—in the Middle East in general and in Lebanon in particular. In his essay on “The Clash of Civilizations,” British-American historian Bernard

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<sup>2</sup> Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation Announcing the Formation of a New Multinational Force in Lebanon,” September 20, 1982, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, [online](#).

<sup>3</sup> See Naseer H. Aruri, “The United States’ Intervention in Lebanon,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (1985): 59–77.

<sup>4</sup> See William B. Quandt, “Reagan’s Lebanon Policy: Trial and Error,” *Middle East Journal* 38, no. 2 (1984): 237–254.



Lewis summarizes the cultural understanding that permeated the Iran-Contra Affair, the Lebanese Civil War, and the Cold War, writing that the Muslim world was standing in direct opposition to the West and moving “backwards” instead of “advancing,”<sup>5</sup> while Christianity was linked to Western nations’ democracy and secularism.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the world was divided based on what people were “in relation to who and what they were not,”<sup>7</sup> as American historian Zachary Lockman has put it. During the Cold War, when Soviet communism was already viewed in direct opposition to American-style democracy, Islam fit perfectly into this mold of the “other.” Both Soviet communism and Islam were portrayed as antagonists to the American-led, Christian, and democratic West.

My research considers both government documents on U.S. foreign policy in the region and firsthand accounts of the war itself. My sources consist of Lebanese and Palestinian-Lebanese authors, including Jean Said Makdisi (b. 1940), as well as American voices, namely those of Marines, politicians, and reporters, who were in Lebanon during this time. I aim to explore how U.S. policy and ideology affected the people on the ground. Since most of the respective documents from the Reagan administration have yet to be declassified, I utilize Reagan’s public statements on Lebanon and the Marines deployed to Beirut as part of the multinational peacekeeping force. My approach is that of a political historian, as I am reviewing firsthand accounts and analyzing policy.

### 1. The War

The Lebanese Civil War broke out in 1975. Following a drive-by assassination of one of its prominent members, the Maronite Phalangist party bombed a bus carrying Palestinian refugees, killing at least 27.<sup>8</sup> Contrary to common perceptions, this was not a religious attack. Lebanese economists Samir Makdisi and Richard Sadaka have argued that the Lebanese Civil War was steeped in purely religious “fractionalization.”<sup>9</sup> It seems that the Lebanese constitution had doomed the country from the outset by establishing a religious state that was supposed to represent a multi-religious people. Indeed, Lebanon was host to many Christian and Muslim sects that opposed each other during the war, namely the prominent Maronite Christians, the Druze, Shia and Sunni Muslims, as well as Catholic and Greek Orthodox Christians. Based on demographics, the country’s president was to be a Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the leader of parliament a Shia Muslim. However, the PLO’s arrival in 1975 altered Lebanon’s demographics. Thus, in some sense, the war did have

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<sup>5</sup> Bernard Lewis, “The Clash of Civilizations” (1990), in *The Middle East and Islamic World Recorder*, ed. Marvin Gettleman and Stuart Schaar (Grove Publication, 2003), 346.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, “Clash of Civilizations,” 345.

<sup>7</sup> Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 57.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Chamie, “The Lebanese Civil War: An Investigation into the Causes,” *World Affairs* 139, no. 3 (1976): 176.

<sup>9</sup> Samir Makdisi and Richard Sadaka, “The Lebanese Civil War, 1975–90,” in *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, ed. Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis (World Bank, 2005), 59.

religious connotations, but strife among the Lebanese existed on political and economic levels as well, compounded by various rivaling religious affiliations.

Lebanon's 1970 election highlighted the government's internal issues that would become the main reasons for the war five years later. It established a tripartite alliance "between the three principal Maronite Christian parties and was backed by the Patriarch Ma'usha"<sup>10</sup> to oppose growing Muslim power on both political and religious levels.<sup>11</sup> The alliance represented a new political era as it displaced the Shihabist (Chehabist) political approach,<sup>12</sup> which had dominated the country since 1958, and marked another year in which "the president had gained considerable influence."<sup>13</sup> The situation in Lebanon was fragile even before the war. The country's socio-economic makeup showed Christians at the top, Druze in the middle, Sunni Muslims below, and Shia Muslims at the bottom.<sup>14</sup> The Christian government's growing power and the rising Muslim population (due to Palestinian migration) intertwined religion with political and economic issues. Just as the 1970 election was "between those who advocated to preserve the existing political and economic structure and those who sought to adapt," so too was the Lebanese Civil War; the progressive Left viewed the Rightist Christian government as "corrupt" and "strongly biased in favor of one sectarian community."<sup>15</sup> Instead of simply being a war about religion, it became the determination of past and present realities, conservative and liberal ideologies, and future change.

The Lebanese Civil War lasted from 1975 until 1990, and during this time many different contenders seized control temporarily and attempted to resolve the situation. The United States supported the Christian government's Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), while Syria, Iran, and the Soviet Union supported various liberal militias, which tended to be majority Muslim, as well as the PLO. Many outside regimes favored the establishment of a Lebanese government that would cater to their respective needs, interests, and ideas for future change. As far as Israel, Syria, and the neighboring Arab states, as well as the Lebanese government and the warring militias were concerned, much revolved around Palestine. Liberal and progressive groups, including Lebanon's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP),<sup>16</sup> "resorted to

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<sup>10</sup> Moran Mor Paul II Peter Meouchi (1894–1975), the 74th Maronite Patriarch of Antioch (1955–1975), whose political intent was to reconcile Muslims and Christians in the region.

<sup>11</sup> Meir Zamir, "The Lebanese Presidential Elections of 1970 and Their Impact on the Civil War of 1975–1976," *Middle Eastern Studies* 16, no. 1 (1980): 54.

<sup>12</sup> A political ideology that hoped to build relations between Muslims and Christians in Lebanon through dialogue and moderation.

<sup>13</sup> Chamie, "Lebanese Civil War," 172.

<sup>14</sup> Chamie, "Lebanese Civil War," 180.

<sup>15</sup> Chamie, "Lebanese Civil War," 177.

<sup>16</sup> Tom Russell, "A Lebanon Primer," *MERIP [Middle East Research and Information Project] Reports*, no. 133 (1985): 18. Russell identifies sixteen total militias and parties fighting during the war, namely (in alphabetical order), Amal (Shia); Communist Party of Lebanon (CPL, with strong Shia base); Free Army of Lebanon/South Lebanon Army (Israel-supported); Guardians of the Cedars (anti-Palestinian); Hizb Ullah/Hezbollah (radical Shia); Islamic Amal ("militant split from Amal"); Lebanese Forces ("military wing of the Lebanese Front," Maronite-supported); Lebanese National Movement (progressive); Lebanese National Resistance Front ("leading armed resistance to Israeli occupation"); Murabitun (Sunni-supported, including "October 24 Movement" and "Popular Nasserist Organization"); National Liberal Party (Maronite); Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon (CPL offshoot,

retaliation and armed struggle in conjunction with the more militant elements” of their respective movements and thus allied themselves with the Palestinian cause.<sup>17</sup> The Christian government did not do so, to say the least: not only did it consider the Palestinian presence in Lebanon as encroaching upon Israel-Lebanese relations and drawing Israel into Lebanon, it also viewed the Palestinians as the cause of “the collapse of Lebanon” and its own rule.<sup>18</sup> The Palestinians had allied themselves with progressive Muslims and Christians—as well as with traditionalist Muslims—against the traditionalists within the Lebanese government.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, their presence provoked the Lebanese Right, but it also provoked Israel, which retaliated against Palestinian attacks launched from behind the Lebanese border.

The Lebanese Civil War featured many political and economic factors that ran parallel to religious “fractionalization;” however, it would be too simplistic to call it a war about religion or a war about any one political ideology for that matter. Unlike the impression created by Lewis’s “Clash of Civilizations,” the world in general and Lebanon in particular are too complex to be cast in broad terms without intersection. Misunderstanding the multi-religious and multi-ethnic realities of a country like Lebanon—and thereby misunderstanding the world in general—led the United States under the Reagan administration to greatly mismanage its expectations, goals, and influence in Lebanon. The war was not a grandiose battle between East and West, Muslims and Christians, or even communism and democracy. In reality, the Lebanese Civil War began because of a rigid and static constitutional legacy, which created social inequality on both economic and political levels.

## 2. The Intervention

When the United States intervened in the Lebanese Civil War, it did so at the height of the conflict and after the Carter administration’s years of disregard and neglect. U.S. foreign policy in Lebanon under previous administrations greatly differed from that of the Reagan era. U.S. President Jimmy Carter (in office 1977–1981) had pursued a hands-off, almost negligent approach, because he had deemed the situation in Lebanon as “helpless.”<sup>20</sup> In 1958, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower (in office 1953–1961) had sent troops to Lebanon upon the request of the country’s former president, Camille Chamoun (in office 1952–1958). Eisenhower was interested in military intervention to “protect U.S. resources and interests,” as evidenced by the Eisenhower Doctrine, which promoted economic development in Arab countries to advance U.S. political influence.<sup>21</sup> Reagan’s policy in Lebanon was predicated on his own belief in America’s “role as a leader for world peace,”<sup>22</sup> but his action to enforce it

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Arab nationalist); Phalange Party (fascist, Maronite); Progressive Socialist Party (PSP); Syrian National Socialist Party (Sunni, secular nationalist); and Zghorta Liberation Army (pro-Syrian).

<sup>17</sup> Michael C. Hudson, “The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War,” *Middle East Journal* 32, no. 3 (1978): 268.

<sup>18</sup> Hudson, “Palestinian Factor,” 276.

<sup>19</sup> Chamie, “Lebanese Civil War,” 177.

<sup>20</sup> Corrin Varady, “Discontinuity and Legacy: US Policy in Lebanon and the Middle East,” in *US Foreign Policy and the Multinational Force in Lebanon: Vigorous Self-Defense* (Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), 67.

<sup>21</sup> Varady, “Discontinuity and Legacy,” 65.

<sup>22</sup> Reagan, “Address to the Nation,” September 20, 1982.

was influenced by these former administrations. In an address to the American public regarding the formation of a “multinational peacekeeping force” including U.S. Marines, he condemned Israeli actions and called for their withdrawal from Lebanon, while stating that U.S. intervention would “restore internal security to [...] [Lebanon’s] capital” with the goal of “enabling the Lebanese government to resume full sovereignty over its capital.”<sup>23</sup> Reagan had also asked Congress for \$20 million in relief to Lebanon and \$5 million in emergency assistance.<sup>24</sup> And yet, he declared the need for military assistance in anything but name, inspired by Eisenhower’s approach.<sup>25</sup> From a superficial perspective, Reagan called for U.S. intervention to end the conflict in Lebanon and provide stability to the region. Why then did the war last so much longer, even after the American presence had ended?

When first deployed on September 10 and arriving in the country on September 29, 1982, the peacekeeping mission maintained strict guidelines with regard to what the Marines were and were not allowed to do. In his firsthand account, U.S. Marine Michael Petit, who was stationed in Lebanon in 1982 as part of Reagan’s multinational peacekeeping force, discusses the limits of being a “peacekeeper,” namely, carrying loaded magazines and not firing their weapons unless provoked.<sup>26</sup> U.S. Marines trained LAF soldiers, and it was reported to the American public that they were making great strides. In reality, to the Marines, the LAF were “incapable of spreading its influence outside the city.”<sup>27</sup> The Marines themselves deemed the LAF as incompetent, “scoff[ing] at the Lebanese soldiers behind their backs” with the general consensus being that “[they] couldn’t count on them.”<sup>28</sup> The goal laid out by the Reagan administration prior to the Marines’ deployment fell apart in more ways than one. There was conflict between everyone, even within those sects who—to the casual, non-native observer—were supposed to be on the same side.

The Israeli invasion eventually reached Lebanon’s Chouf Mountains, located to the south-east of Beirut, where Maronite and Druze militias, heavily armed and assisted by Syria, were already at war against each other. According to one scholarly survey, “[s]ome of the worst fighting during the civil war was between militias of the same sect, often over control of a region, economic resources, or positions of power.”<sup>29</sup> Because of their compromising and exposed position backing the Christian forces, the Marines were both sitting ducks and active participants in the war. They left the country in 1984 as a consequence of the October 23, 1983, bombing of their barracks. Yet even after the departure of both the Marines and the PLO, fighting continued between various militias, some belonging to the same sect, including

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<sup>23</sup> Reagan, “Address to the Nation,” September 20, 1982.

<sup>24</sup> Ronald Reagan, “Statement on the Conflict in Lebanon,” June 9, 1982, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, [online](#).

<sup>25</sup> Varady, “Discontinuity and Legacy.”

<sup>26</sup> Michael Petit, *Peacekeepers at War: A Marine’s Account of the Beirut Catastrophe* (Faber and Faber, 1986), 40.

<sup>27</sup> Petit, *Peacekeepers at War*, 93.

<sup>28</sup> Petit, *Peacekeepers at War*, 93.

<sup>29</sup> Lara Deeb, Maya Mikdashi, Tsolin Nalbantian, and Nadya Sbaiti, “A Primer on Lebanon—History, Palestine and Resistance to Israeli Violence,” in *Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)*, January 29, 2025, [online](#).

Shia militias Amal and Hezbollah, as well as Maronite factions backing or opposing Lebanon's future presidents Elias Hrawi (in office 1989–1998) and Michel Aoun (in office 2016–2022).<sup>30</sup> For the native Lebanese, the war was not about religious factions but, rather, about which of these factions should take power and best serve the people's needs. After 15 long years of fighting, the Taif Agreement—also known as the National Reconciliation Act of 1989—formally ended the Lebanese Civil War in 1990.

### 3. The Reasons

The Lebanese government was not—and would not be—able to stand on its own without American intervention and continued external assistance. What is especially interesting, however, is the American support for only one side of the war effort. Rather than work with many militia leaders to achieve a peace treaty, the U.S. Marines were required to support the LAF and the LAF only. Clearly, the Reagan administration did not understand the implications of supporting a Maronite Christian government, for the Lebanese Left would soon deem their internal enemies and American Marines as “all the same.”<sup>31</sup> Many Lebanese militia groups sought out journalists for media coverage of their cause, among them the American TV correspondent Lawrence (Larry) Pintak, whose 1988 monograph *Beirut Outtakes* discusses the legal and illegal ins and outs of militia groups. Various militia members also expressed their respect for American soldiers. According to Pintak, “[l]ater officers privately admitted that the Marines probably wouldn't have become directly involved if they had not been standing alongside the Lebanese army [...] At one point, they said Amal militiamen went so far as to approach the Marines and told them to go back.”<sup>32</sup> Militias expressly did not see the Americans themselves as the problem, simply the side they represented. It was this stance that transformed the U.S. Marines from “peacekeepers” to active agents in the war. The Americans could not just pick a side and remain on the sidelines, and the Marines on the ground knew this well. U.S., Israeli, and Syrian politics were routinely understood in reference to Lebanon, and there were a myriad of peace talks between the various states.<sup>33</sup> Yet unlike what was happening in Lebanon, there were no attempts to force any change upon these states, nor were there any attempts to alleviate Lebanon's political tensions by engaging with the opposing sides among the Lebanese people themselves. The Marines were not there to mediate; they had chosen a side (or, rather, the U.S. administration had chosen for them).

Due to their role as “peacekeepers,” the Marines were technically prohibited from taking part in the fighting, unless it was purely for defensive measures. And yet, contrary to what Reagan was telling Congress, what commanding officers were telling their own superiors, and what radio broadcasters were telling the public, the Marines, as Pintak recalls, “knew how often the line companies returned fire. The Marines were obviously in combat, but the politics of

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<sup>30</sup> Deeb et al., “Primer on Lebanon.”

<sup>31</sup> Larry Pintak, *Beirut Outtakes: A TV Correspondent's Portrait of America's Encounter with Terror* (Lexington Books, 1988), 113, 118.

<sup>32</sup> Pintak, *Beirut Outtakes*, 128.

<sup>33</sup> Magnus Seland Andersson and Hilde Henriksen Waage, “Stew in Their Own Juice: Reagan, Syria and Lebanon, 1981–1984,” *Diplomatic History* 44, no. 4, (September 2020): 664–691.

the situation forced [their] commanders to insist that [they] were not involved."<sup>34</sup> Why lie about the situation on the ground? The 1983 "War Powers" debate between Congress and the President, which questioned whether the latter needed Congressional approval to deploy soldiers to a region and what circumstances would warrant such a deployment, demonstrated the Reagan administration's determination not just to measure presidential power against Congress but also to stay in the war effort. Revealing the reality about the situation on the ground would make Congress either pull out of Lebanon entirely or prohibit deploying more American soldiers. Thus, on the American homefront, the Marines' endeavors were considered a success and continued to focus on "keeping the peace." Setting aside these obvious lies, why perpetuate a failing mission?

Scholars have interpreted the American intervention in the Lebanese Civil War as simply another war intended to support the U.S. administration's international and domestic policies, but not—as Reagan had told the public—as an effort at establishing peace.<sup>35</sup> Economic aid and military training for opposing militias came from Syria, Iran, Israel, and the Soviet Union alike. With the spread of Pan-Arabism throughout the Middle East, Syria, the Leftist Lebanese, and the Palestinians became natural allies, despite the fact that, early in the war, Syria had supported the Maronite Christian government's efforts to drive the Palestinians from Lebanon, because the Palestinians' continued presence and activism in the country brought the Israelis closer to Syria's own borders. The Israelis, for their part, were "arming both sides" during the Lebanese Civil War so that, no matter how it turned out, they could come out on top.<sup>36</sup> This reveals the reasons why America intervened: it saw Lebanon at the center of a broad global struggle. The sheer amount of help from abroad made the Lebanese Civil War, at least to the White House, a part of the greater Arab-Israeli war, which, from the American perspective, was a war between the Islamic world and the Western-associated Israeli state.<sup>37</sup> Israel's consistent involvement on both sides of the Lebanese cause, as well as its relations with Arab states like Syria and Jordan, and with the United States, has led American political scientist Anne Marie Baylouny to conclude that U.S. foreign policy during the Lebanese Civil War was grounded in Israeli priorities as evidenced by both direct and indirect U.S. support for Lebanon's Christian military.<sup>38</sup>

Ever since the U.S. oil pipeline interests of the 1950s, U.S. foreign policy had been consistent in "support[ing] Lebanon's ruling elite who [...] allied] with U.S. interests,"<sup>39</sup> but this changed under Reagan in 1982. It was Reagan's plan to settle the conflict between Israel and Palestine to secure America's interests in the region. According to Quandt, Reagan "chang[ed] priorities" toward "political reconciliation," shifted emphasis "from military engagement" to diplomacy, and promoted a re-focusing "from global strategy concerns to local and regional

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<sup>34</sup> Pintak, *Beirut Outtakes*, 137.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Quandt, "Reagan's Lebanon Policy."

<sup>36</sup> Pintak, *Beirut Outtakes*, 154.

<sup>37</sup> Andersson and Waage, "Stew in Their Own Juice."

<sup>38</sup> Anne Marie Baylouny, "American Foreign Policy in Lebanon," in *Handbook on U.S. Middle East Relations*, ed. Robert Looney (Routledge, 2009), 310.

<sup>39</sup> Baylouny, "American Foreign Policy," 310.

realities."<sup>40</sup> Aruri argues that the American intervention was "intended to shore up a Right-wing minority regime that owed its very existence to the Israeli invasion,"<sup>41</sup> thereby advancing the United States' own "national security" interests in the region.

Thus, scholars have interpreted the American intervention in Lebanon as evidence of a self-interested U.S. appeasement of the state of Israel. But why Lebanon specifically? Reagan's own rationale hints at broader global interests beyond the initial goal of "restoring peace." Condemning the Israeli attacks on Beirut in 1982, Reagan claimed that,

"[d]uring the negotiations leading to the PLO withdrawal from Beirut, we were assured that Israeli forces would not enter west Beirut. We also understood that following withdrawal, Lebanese Army units would establish control over the city. They were thwarted in this effort by the Israeli occupation that took place beginning on Wednesday."<sup>42</sup>

The Reagan administration clearly viewed the Lebanese Civil War as part of the greater Israeli-Palestinian issue. It was not alone in doing so. In her memoirs, Palestinian-Lebanese scholar Jean Said Makdisi argued that the war was indeed an extension of the Israeli-Palestine issue. When Israel invaded in 1982, they forced the PLO out of Lebanon, but—to civilians on the ground—the constant air raids made it "less clear that the Israelis were only after the PLO and not Beirut itself."<sup>43</sup> According to the American political scientist Michael C. Hudson, if the PLO, Israel, and Syria had all withdrawn from Lebanon, peace could have been restored.<sup>44</sup> If they stayed, Reagan argued, LAF soldiers and the American-backed Lebanese government would not be "permitted to restore internal security in its capital."<sup>45</sup> Reagan's perspective linked the strife in Lebanon directly to the presence of external actors, perhaps leading him to the conclusion that American intervention would make a difference. The Reagan administration focused its energies on diplomatic exchanges between Israel and its surrounding Arab countries, as well as Lebanon. Reagan had hoped that the Israeli invasion of 1982 would "build on the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty," and that Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan—all under the "American auspices"—would work to push back the Syrians who were viewed as "Soviet surrogates."<sup>46</sup> Focusing on external actors, however, ignores the actual causes for the outbreak of the war in Lebanon itself.<sup>47</sup> Under the Reagan administration, the Lebanese Civil War was taken into the global arena, where Eastern and Western ideologies were pitted against each other. Subscribing to the notion of Christian states as natural allies of the West, an idea articulated in Lewis's "Clash of Civilizations," the United States—and the larger global community—misunderstood and disregarded the valid complaints of the native

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<sup>40</sup> Quandt, "Reagan's Lebanon Policy," 254.

<sup>41</sup> Aruri, "United States' Intervention," 60.

<sup>42</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Statement on the Murder of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," September 18, 1982, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, [online](#).

<sup>43</sup> Jean Said Makdisi, *Beirut Fragments: A War Memoir* (Persea Books, 1990), 173.

<sup>44</sup> Hudson, "Palestinian Factor," 277.

<sup>45</sup> Reagan, "Address to the Nation," September 20, 1982.

<sup>46</sup> Aruri, "United States' Intervention," 60, 61.

<sup>47</sup> Hudson, "Palestinian Factor," 277–278: "The fishermen's strike, which set off the war in 1975, dramatically illustrated the explosive social inequalities which beset Lebanon and, more importantly, the incapacity of a 'consociational' governmental structure for dealing with them effectively."

Lebanese against their own government, leaving the country's political and economic woes unresolved. What chance did Lebanon ever have to attain the "lasting resolution" so superficially envisioned by Reagan?

One has to remember that the war in Lebanon began as a domestic reaction to the government's failure to alleviate domestic issues before it was internationalized. Failing to appreciate this, the U.S. administration worked diplomatically with external contenders like Syria, Israel, and Jordan to establish peace. Thus, resolving the war in Lebanon was defined by other countries' concerns and interests, specifically Israel's. As Aruri has pointed out, "[w]hile ensuring residual rights for Israel on the pretext of security," the United States did not consider Syrian interests to the same extent, for "not only were Syrian water and hydro-electric resources vulnerable to Israeli raids, but the Syrian capital itself was within Israeli artillery range."<sup>48</sup> The Shultz Agreement (1988) especially focused on what was—and what was not—acceptable with regard to the Israeli-Syrian relations but paid no heed to Lebanese interests. In addition, the Reagan administration did not intervene elsewhere (be it Israel, Palestine, or Syria) when turmoil broke out in Lebanon, nor did they act to resolve the true causes of the war by working with opposing Lebanese militias; instead, they chose a specific side to support, train, and defend, namely, the Lebanese government and the LAF. This points to the conclusion that America did not intervene in Lebanon to restore peace; rather, America intervened in Lebanon to shore up a pro-Western, Christian government that would support Israel and U.S. geopolitical interests in the Middle East and fight any and all Arab, Muslim, and Soviet influences on its doorsteps.

Lebanon's geographical location makes it vulnerable to be caught up in any Israeli-Palestinian crossfire. What is more, scholars tend to view the country as a "Cold-War proxy," because its civil war took place during the Cold War.<sup>49</sup> The respective ideologies summarized in Lewis's "Clash of Civilizations" are certainly evident in President Reagan's public discourse. Reagan's various pronouncements pertaining to Lebanon make it clear that American intervention should halt "Soviet-bloc nations" because "the region is central to the economic vitality of the Western world."<sup>50</sup> In a radio address on December 10, 1983, Reagan insinuated that the PLO, among other Muslim groups, was associated with the Soviet Union, and he used the presence of "more than 7,000 Soviet military advisers and technicians" in Syria as a justification to stay in Lebanon.<sup>51</sup> Thus, U.S. policy was shaped by a binary perception of the Lebanese Civil War's underlying causes, in which—supposedly—Christians were pitted against Muslims, Rightists against Leftists, democracy against communism, the United States against the Soviet Union, and the West against the East. Whether or not it was true, Lebanon—or, rather, the Rightist Lebanese government—represented the Western, Christian democracy of Lewis's "Clash of Civilizations." Anything and everything else had to be considered the opposition. White House officials merely brought Lebanon into this global

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<sup>48</sup> Aruri, "United States' Intervention," 63.

<sup>49</sup> Andersson and Waage, "Stew in Their Own Juice," 665.

<sup>50</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation on the Situation in Lebanon," December 10, 1983, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, [online](#).

<sup>51</sup> Reagan, "Radio Address," December 10, 1983.



conflict of ideologies because of the country's perceived Christian nature—a false understanding of Lebanon's religious makeup. It becomes clear then that there was a misunderstanding of the realities on the ground. The Reagan administration assumed they were fighting on the "right side" simply because of the Lebanese government's Christian and Western attitudes, which aligned with those of the United States and, by extension, supported the Israeli nation. Yet a shared religion did not turn any of Lebanon's warring factions into natural allies: Muslim and Christian groups were not just at war with each other but among themselves as well.

### *Conclusion*

President Reagan's public language clearly underscored his association of Middle Easterners, Arabs, and Muslims with something "other" than the United States, which forced these groups into the Cold War's dichotomies. Because of the religious and cultural association of Christian-led governments—such as that of Lebanon in 1975—with the West, said West believed that these governments would better align with U.S. and Israeli interests. One could speculate to what extent Reagan was aware of these associations and simply wished to restore peace and a stable government to the region; perhaps he himself could not escape the subconscious prejudices of the time. Whatever the case may be, these associations did not just affect foreign policy; they impacted actions on the ground: on October 23, 1983, 241 U.S. soldiers in Beirut were killed in a single explosion after repeated warnings for them to leave the country.<sup>52</sup> More died over the course of their year-long stay, sometimes simply from crossfire between militia groups. Many did not even know what they were dying for, because, truly, there was no reason for them to be deployed there—at least no reason that the White House was willing to admit to. This is not something to be taken lightly. The American intervention in Lebanon serves as a warning against future meddling in other countries' domestic affairs, especially if such meddling arises out of self-interest and not for the benefit of the native populations. Considering the U.S. involvement in the Middle East since the Lebanese Civil War, it appears that this warning is not being heeded and that lessons are not being learned.

It could be argued that the Reagan administration as well as subsequent U.S. administrations knew exactly—to quote my uncle one last time—"what the hell" they were doing in Lebanon and the greater Middle East. Israel's government has repeatedly acted against American promises of ceasefires or treaties with Arab countries in favor of military actions that better suit Israel's own goals, which raises the question of who was and is in control of U.S. foreign policy in the region. None of what has been said here amounts to a critique of religions or their practices. There is, after all, a difference between a religion, a religious people, and a political state that uses religion. Thus, it is far too simplistic to deem the Lebanese Civil War or any subsequent war in the Middle East a mere religious game, in which Christians and Jews side against Muslims. By posing as an international moral compass and a world power, the United States engages in a dangerous balancing act. Public discourse would not admit to any hidden agendas during the Reagan administration, but intervention—then, today, and

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<sup>52</sup> Pintak, *Beirut Outtakes*, 128.

in the future—is a power play for international domination by means of alliances forged under the guise of humanitarian aid and the alleged liberation from governments portrayed as oppressive, non-democratic, and non-Western.

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Matilda Ziegler

## *Respecting Indigenous Humanity: The Academic Treatment of Indigenous Human Remains and Cultural Artifacts*

**ABSTRACT:** *This essay explores the academic treatment of Indigenous Americans' human remains and cultural artifacts, including burial objects, in light of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), a U.S. federal law passed in 1990. The author pays special attention to the "significant cultural pain" that the maltreatment of human remains and cultural artifacts has caused Indigenous communities, as well as how museums and academics have changed their practices in order to give Indigenous communities the respect they deserve.*

**KEYWORDS:** *modern history; Indigenous Americans; Native Americans; United States of America (USA); colonialism; human remains; cultural artifacts; burial objects; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA); academic community*

### *Introduction*

Throughout the history of the United States, archaeologists, archivists, museum curators, historians, anthropologists, and other academics have not always treated Indigenous American cultural artifacts and the human remains of deceased Indigenous individuals with the respect they are due.<sup>1</sup> However, much progress has been made in this regard due to changing attitudes among members of the academic community and the public, as well as the passage of U.S. federal laws that address the handling of these cultural artifacts and human remains, chiefly among them the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990. This essay explores how Indigenous American cultural artifacts and human remains are collected, handled, and displayed, and it examines how they should, in fact, be handled and displayed in a manner that is respectful to each tribe.

The inconsistency with which academics, especially archaeologists and archivists, have treated Indigenous American human remains and other cultural artifacts has caused Native Americans—who place considerable religious, cultural, and personal importance on their deceased ancestors' resting places—a great deal of pain.<sup>2</sup> This pain has been further augmented by the fact that archaeologists in the past did not obtain these human remains and cultural artifacts with the Indigenous people's consent. For example, many of the victims of the 1860 Indian Island massacre of members of the Wiyot Tribe in Humboldt County, California, "had their eternal rest disturbed when their graves were dug up and their skeletons and the cultural artifacts buried with them placed in a museum."<sup>3</sup> The historical maltreatment of Indigenous graves sharply contrasts with the practices stipulated by NAGPRA. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> The collective term "academics" is used in this essay to denote all those potentially or actually involved in the handling of American Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts for the purpose of scientific study and public educational display. This includes (but is not limited to) archaeologists, archivists, museum curators, historians, anthropologists, and other scholars.

<sup>2</sup> National Park Service, "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990," [online](#).

<sup>3</sup> "'They are going to be at peace': California university returns remains of massacred Wiyot Tribe members," *The Guardian*, January 28, 2023, [online](#).

it is vital that academics treat human remains and cultural artifacts in a way that is sensitive, and that they repatriate them either to the lineal descendants of the deceased or to their tribe in accordance with the latter's wishes.

NAGPRA has helped to increase the respectful treatment of human remains and cultural artifacts by academics. NAGPRA requires all federal agencies and organizations in the United States that receive government funding to consult Indigenous American tribal authorities and the lineal descendants of deceased individuals with regard to the handling of these deceased individuals' human remains and cultural artifacts; to protect human remains and cultural artifacts that may be removed from federal or tribal lands; to identify and report them; and to give notice before repatriating or transferring them. Indigenous tribes and the descendants of deceased individuals, who become aware that the human remains or cultural artifacts of their ancestors are in the possession of organizations or individuals subject to NAGPRA, can submit requests to the federal government for the repatriation of these human remains or cultural artifacts.<sup>4</sup> NAGPRA aims to ensure that the human remains and cultural artifacts in question are treated in accordance with the wishes of the respective Indigenous tribes and descendants of the deceased individuals, regardless of whether the latter want them displayed, repatriated, or kept in archival storage.

### 1. *Shifting Views*

According to the National Park Service, "[f]ollowing Native American civil rights movements in the late 1960s, Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act [...] in 1978 to protect Native peoples' basic civil liberties, including practice of their religions and sacred ceremonies."<sup>5</sup> This 1978 legislation ensured that Indigenous tribes would be free to carry out their religious practices, for example, by allowing them to possess cultural items, such as eagle feathers, for their religious ceremonies—items that non-Indigenous Americans, who did not engage in these practices, were not allowed to possess.<sup>6</sup> "NAGPRA provided a next step in recognizing basic civil liberties."<sup>7</sup> Through this 1990 legislation, "Congress acknowledged that human remains and other cultural items in holdings or collections or removed from federal or tribal lands belong to lineal descendants, Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations."<sup>8</sup>

NAGPRA signified a major shift. Prior to its passage, Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts were considered scientific curiosities, and academics routinely collected, studied, stored, and showed them with little, if any, consideration of or respect for the wishes of the

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior: Indian Affairs, "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act: Returning the remains of Native American ancestors, their funerary belongings, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony to their descendants," [online](#).

<sup>5</sup> National Park Service, "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990."

<sup>6</sup> See Elizabeth P. Pauls, "The outplacement and adoption of Indigenous children," Native American, Developments in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, *Britannica*, December 6, 2025, [online](#).

<sup>7</sup> National Park Service, "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990."

<sup>8</sup> National Park Service, "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990."

respective tribes and lineal descendants, because there was no law requiring them to do so.<sup>9</sup> For example, archaeological expeditions targeted Indigenous gravesites, and any discovered human remains and cultural artifacts were “scientifically examined, curated, and put on display in exhibits.”<sup>10</sup> This deeply offended many Indigenous people. According to the American legal scholar Julia A. Cryne, “all cultures value the importance of funerary rites for the dead, and treating human remains as clinically detached ‘specimens’ is sacrilegious—offensive both to the individual and family, as well as to the broader culture among many Native Americans.”<sup>11</sup> The maltreatment of human remains and related cultural artifacts was particularly painful to many Indigenous people due to the level of respect that they were accustomed to giving to their deceased, and it became even greater when the deceased in question were one’s lineal ancestors.

NAGPRA helped to put an end to these abhorrent archaeological practices by requiring academics to consult with the tribes whose human remains and cultural artifacts they were handling, and to repatriate them to the descendants when requested. In addition to writing into law a clear list of definitions pertaining to Indigenous human remains and cultural objects (§3001), NAGPRA established an unequivocal hierarchy of ownership for these human remains and cultural objects (§3002, starting with the lineal descendants of the deceased); it obligated federal agencies and museums to inventory their respective collections (§3003) and summarize any “unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony” (§3004); it outlined the repatriation process for “Native American human remains and cultural objects possessed or controlled by federal agencies and museums” (§3005); it charged the U.S. Secretary of the Interior with the creation of a committee to review the law’s implementation (§3006); it made provisions for penalties in cases of non-compliance (§3007); and it envisioned the availability of “grants to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations for the purpose of assisting such tribes and organizations in the repatriation of Native American cultural items” as well as grants to museums to assist them with compiling the inventories required under the new law (§3008, followed by administrative stipulations in §3009–§3013).<sup>12</sup>

Some may argue that NAGPRA’s 1990 passage did not significantly increase the respectful treatment of Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts, or safeguard the latter from improper treatment by academics. However, such an assertion would be incorrect, as NAGPRA rendered previously legal actions concerning Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts effectively illegal; this included the obtaining of human remains and cultural artifacts from Indigenous graves without the consent of the deceased individual’s lineal descendants or tribal leaders. The prohibition of such actions intended to protect Indigenous people from being caused further “significant cultural pain.”<sup>13</sup> In addition to this, NAGPRA

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<sup>9</sup> Julia A. Cryne, “NAGPRA Revisited: A Twenty-Year Review of Repatriation Efforts,” *American Indian Law Review* 34, no. 1 (2009): 99–122, [online](#).

<sup>10</sup> National Park Service, “Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.”

<sup>11</sup> Cryne, “NAGPRA Revisited,” 100.

<sup>12</sup> 25 USC [United States Code] Ch. 32, “Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation,” [online](#).

<sup>13</sup> National Park Service, “Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.”

required the repatriation of the human remains of deceased Indigenous individuals and their cultural artifacts to those tribes that these individuals had belonged to when they were living, or to their lineal descendants.<sup>14</sup> This requirement helped to rectify much of the harm that had been caused by separating Indigenous human remains and cultural objects from their tribes and lineal descendants. According to Kurt Riley, the Governor of the Pueblo of Acoma in New Mexico, “these items of cultural patrimony [...] aren’t items of art. They have life. When we see them being sold, it’s like they are taking a piece of our family.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, NAGPRA was a wake-up call for academics to confront the significant cultural pain their community had inflicted upon Indigenous Americans, challenging them to go above and beyond in their efforts to engage in an open and respectful dialogue with Indigenous groups and individuals, and to respect Indigenous wishes when collecting, handling, or displaying Native American human remains and cultural artifacts.

## 2. Updates in the Twenty-First Century

Even after NAGPRA’s 1990 passage, academics still had—and have—a lot of work to do to treat Indigenous American human remains and cultural artifacts with the utmost respect. To facilitate this, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) under the leadership of then Secretary Deb Haaland, a member of New Mexico’s Laguna Pueblo tribe, made a number of changes in 2023 to strengthen NAGPRA. According to the DOI, these “revised regulations streamline requirements for museums and federal agencies to inventory and identify Native American human remains and cultural items in their collections.”<sup>16</sup> Museums, federal agencies, as well as other groups and individuals in possession of Indigenous American human remains and cultural objects now had to obtain consent from descendants or tribes before displaying any such human remains or related cultural items. This eliminated the designation of “culturally unidentifiable human remains” and required “deference to Indigenous Knowledge” concerning these matters.<sup>17</sup> All entities subject to NAGPRA were required by law to comply with the DOI’s 2023 updates within five years of their passage. These updates are important to consider when analyzing how academics collect, handle, and display Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts because they constitute the current legal benchmark.

In fact, some museums have already changed their respective practices. According to a 2024 article authored by Julia Jacobs and Zachary Small in *The New York Times*, the American Museum of Natural History in New York is closing two major halls dedicated to Indigenous American cultural artifacts; the Field Museum in Chicago and the Cleveland Museum of Art have covered some of their display cases; Harvard University’s Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology is removing all funerary objects from public view; and New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art is taking approximately 20 items out of its musical instruments

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<sup>14</sup> 25 USC [United States Code] Ch. 32.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Native American Issues: Federal Agency Efforts and Challenges Repatriating Cultural Items,” February 2, 2022, [online](#).

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, “Interior Department Announces Final Rule for Implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act,” December 6, 2023, [online](#).

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, “Interior Department Announces Final Rule.”

exhibition to comply with the DOI's 2023 updates to NAGPRA.<sup>18</sup> As of early 2024, the Denver Art Museum (DAM) has "no specific concerns regarding the current display of items in the DAM's galleries," but DAM's staff members have taken part in a training conference and webinar pertaining to the DOI's updates.<sup>19</sup> The fact that several prominent museums have changed their displays, practices, or professional development opportunities based on the DOI's updates illustrates how NAGPRA compels academics to treat Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts with respect, thereby reversing the repugnant historical practices mentioned above. The concept of "deference to Indigenous Knowledge," as required by the DOI's updates, should be widely applied to the collecting, handling, and exhibiting of Indigenous cultural artifacts to ensure that they are treated in a manner that is respectful to Indigenous people.

### 3. Compliance with NAGPRA

Prior to the DOI's updates, NAGPRA—while already an effective way of protecting Indigenous Americans—had issues with transparency, particularly pertaining to so-called "culturally unidentifiable human remains." A 2022 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) noted that there were over 116,000 Native American human remains with no cultural affiliation.<sup>20</sup> However, according to GAO's related testimony to the U.S. Senate's Committee on Indian Affairs, "cultural affiliation studies and in-depth consultations could resolve the rights to many of these individuals."<sup>21</sup> While academics have made progress in this regard, they must make a greater effort to treat these human remains with respect by conducting the GAO-suggested "cultural affiliation studies and in-depth consultations." Federal agencies, including academic ones (such as museums that employ a wide range of academics), are required to comply with NAGPRA; yet, according to the GAO, this has not always been achieved.<sup>22</sup> For example, these institutions have not always appropriately tracked their repatriation efforts. Thus, non-compliance with NAGPRA is an issue that needs to be addressed to protect Indigenous tribes from further harm inflicted upon them by members of the academic community.

According to the National Park Service's numbers for the 2022 fiscal year, "92% of culturally affiliated human remains have completed the NAGPRA process," a number that suggests significant—albeit far from perfect—progress since the law's passage 32 years earlier; meanwhile, only "31% of museums subject to NAGPRA have resolved all Native American human remains under their control," a less than stellar record, which may, however, reflect

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<sup>18</sup> Julia Jacobs and Zachary Small, "Leading Museums Remove Native Displays Amid New Federal Rules," *The New York Times*, January 26, 2024, [online](#).

<sup>19</sup> John Lukavic and Dakota Hoska, "DAM & New NAGPRA Guidelines," *Denver Art Museum*, January 18, 2024, [online](#).

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Native American Issues."

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Testimony Before the Committee on Indian Affairs, U.S. Senate: Native American Issues: Federal Agency Efforts and Challenges Repatriating Cultural Items," February 2, 2022, [online](#).

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Native American Issues."

the fact that these institutions are notoriously understaffed and underfunded.<sup>23</sup> Yet it is crucial that all museums, as well as other entities that possess a deceased Indigenous person's human remains or other cultural objects, fully comply with NAGPRA to avoid causing Indigenous Americans further grave offense and the aforementioned "significant cultural pain."<sup>24</sup> Some may argue that academics have already done all they can. However, many Indigenous Americans would disagree, and according to the GAO, federal agencies, including museums, could take steps to "better protect Native American cultural items, and take additional actions to facilitate consultation with tribes on infrastructure projects, which may affect tribes' cultural resources, such as sacred sites and burial sites."<sup>25</sup>

Much of the required NAGPRA compliance must be carried out by academics. For starters, academics could treat Indigenous human remains in a more respectful manner by taking steps to resolve the tribal status of "culturally unidentifiable" deceased individuals through the GAO-suggested "cultural affiliation studies and in-depth consultations."<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the GAO report states that federal agencies must consult with tribes and tribal organizations. For example, historians employed as curators in federal agency museums should discuss with the leaders of a tribe that wants a cultural object belonging to them displayed in order to determine how the item could be displayed in the most respectful manner possible. In order to cause Indigenous Americans the least amount of cultural pain possible, academics—especially non-Indigenous academics—engaged in museum work should build relationships that enable them to seek guidance from and listen to tribal leaders before they make decisions concerning Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to exercising discernment with regard to "what" to exhibit, which should always be predicated on guidance from Indigenous stakeholders and contingent upon the requisite permissions having been obtained from those identified as owners under NAGPRA, museums should take great care "how" they design exhibits and "how" they explain cultural artifacts, involving Indigenous people at every step of the curation process. Writing for the Museums Association of Saskatchewan, Cultural Studies scholar Laura Phillips has suggested that, when "planning an exhibit that includes cultural objects or content relevant to their [i.e., the Indigenous] culture," historians should first reach out to the relevant Indigenous communities,<sup>28</sup> thereby ensuring that such activities do not cause the communities and their members any further cultural pain. Continual conversations and meaningful collaborations between academics and Indigenous people, grounded in mutual respect, are essential. They are especially crucial when historians wish to display cultural artifacts that are religious or otherwise sensitive. In such cases, curators should incorporate contemporary cultural items

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<sup>23</sup> National Park Service, "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990."

<sup>24</sup> National Park Service, "Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990."

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Native American Issues."

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Native American Issues."

<sup>27</sup> Laura Phillips, "Responsible Exhibition & Interpretation of Indigenous Artifacts," *Museums Association of Saskatchewan*, December 2017, [online](#).

<sup>28</sup> Phillips, "Responsible Exhibition & Interpretation."



in order to showcase to museum visitors that Indigenous religious practices are not relics of the past but, rather, still practiced by many today.<sup>29</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), a milestone U.S. federal law passed in 1990, has greatly improved academics' treatment of Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts. That said, much work remains to be done. In order to mitigate and eventually minimize the "significant cultural pain" they have historically inflicted upon Indigenous people, academics must maintain an open dialogue with members of Native American communities. Such a dialogue is "essential and non-negotiable."<sup>30</sup> In addition, academics must seek and heed the input of Indigenous stakeholders with regard to collecting, handling, storing, and—when agreed upon and permissible—exhibiting Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts. Only then can academics hope to comply with both the spirit and the letter of NAGPRA and its subsequent updates, and only then will Indigenous human remains and cultural artifacts receive the respect they are due.

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<sup>29</sup> Phillips, "Responsible Exhibition & Interpretation."

<sup>30</sup> Phillips, "Responsible Exhibition & Interpretation."

Bryan D. Eisenbise

## *Mormonism and Constitutional Conflict: The Legal Evolution of an American Religion*

**ABSTRACT:** *This article examines the two-century relationship between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the American legal system, focusing on their reciprocal influence. Drawing on court decisions, congressional legislation, and historiographical works on Mormon and constitutional history, it traces three eras of Church-state interaction: the existential conflicts in Missouri and Illinois; the federal "crusade" against polygamy in the Utah Territory; and the Church's emergence as a sophisticated modern legal actor. The author argues that American law was the primary force shaping the Church's institutional evolution, while the Church simultaneously forced the nation to redefine the boundaries of religious liberty.*

**KEYWORDS:** *modern history; legal history; United States of America (USA); Utah Territory; Mormonism; Joseph Smith; Brigham Young; religious freedom; polygamy; church and state*

### *Introduction*

From its inception in the spring of 1820, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints<sup>1</sup> posed a unique challenge to the American order. When Joseph Smith (1805–1844) claimed to have been called by God to restore the original gospel of Jesus Christ, he introduced a belief system that not only contradicted prevailing Protestant theology but also established a communal structure that clashed with American cultural norms.<sup>2</sup> What began as localized friction in upstate New York quickly escalated into existential legal conflict as the Church grew in numbers and political influence. Tension exploded in 1838 when Missouri issued an executive order to expel the Church, marking the beginning of a forced migration that would eventually reshape the American West. Over the next century, the Church's struggle for survival moved from the battlefield to the courtroom to Congress, evolving from nineteenth-century fights over polygamy and territorial sovereignty to modern disputes regarding civil rights, social issues, and corporate transparency. This article does not aim to provide an exhaustive catalog of the Church's legal battles. Rather, it is a study in reciprocal influence, focusing on those pivotal episodes of acute, dynamic change in which the Church—in order to survive—modified its practices and governance in response to legal outcomes,<sup>3</sup> while the

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<sup>1</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms the divine origin of its name and encourages its use wherever possible. See Russell M. Nelson, "The Correct Name of the Church," address given at the 188th Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 7, 2018, [online](#). Other terms, such as "Mormon," "Latter-day Saint," and "LDS," remain widely used both within and outside the community. Nineteenth-century members of the Church are often referred to as "Saints." This article follows common practice by using these terms interchangeably for stylistic variance or as context permits.

<sup>2</sup> For the Church's official canonical account of this divine manifestation, known as the "First Vision," as well as the early foundational history of the Church, see "Joseph Smith—History," in *The Pearl of Great Price* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2026), [online](#).

<sup>3</sup> Although the Church believes it is led by a modern-day prophet, its major developments align with societal and legal pressures, which is a premise of this article. This notwithstanding, the Church asserts that prophetic revelation ultimately dictates its course. Former Church President Russell M. Nelson (1924–2025) addresses this interplay by stating that "good inspiration is based upon good information," thereby underscoring the Church's

American legal system was compelled to define the constitutional boundaries between protected religious belief and regulated conduct.

This article examines three distinct eras of Church–state interaction. First, it explores the existential conflicts of the 1830s and 1840s in Missouri and Illinois, where the absence of an adequate legal infrastructure led to violence, expulsion, and a radical shift in the Church’s initial trajectory. Next, it turns to the transitional period of the Utah Territory and early statehood, where the federal “crusade” against polygamy served as both a crucible for Church reform and the birthplace of free exercise jurisprudence in America. Finally, it analyzes the contemporary era, in which the Church has emerged as a sophisticated legal actor, both navigating and influencing complex questions of civil rights, employment law, and financial transparency. This article argues that legal conflict served as the primary external force that shaped the Church’s institutional evolution, while the Church’s defiant resistance simultaneously compelled the nation to define and redefine the constitutional boundaries of religious liberty—a reciprocal influence that transformed both institutions.

### *1. Early Conflict in Missouri and Illinois (1831–1845)*

The Church’s foundation coincided with the Second Great Awakening, a period of intense Protestant religious revivalism in the early nineteenth-century United States that shaped both the environment in which it emerged and the fierce opposition it faced. The intense religious revivalism of the time, coupled with the implication that a “restored” Christian gospel would render other movements inadequate, created a fertile ground for conflict. The notion of doctrinal exclusivity, combined with the Church’s strong communal identity, set the Saints apart in every community in which they attempted to establish themselves. In July of 1831, Joseph Smith claimed to have received a revelation that instructed members of the Church to gather in Independence, Missouri, which he identified as the divinely appointed location to establish their Zion.<sup>4</sup> However, the practical application of this theology was far from benign. As the Church began to secure its theocratic stronghold, the political and economic threat posed by its growing numbers quickly became evident to the surrounding communities. Though perhaps inadvertently, the Church was a notoriously difficult neighbor. Church members practiced an insular economic exclusivity that drained resources from surrounding communities and voted as a monolithic bloc, thereby dramatically influencing state and local politics. To the existing settlers on the frontier, this was not merely a religious difference; it appeared as a hostile takeover of local democracy and commerce.<sup>5</sup>

Tensions came to a head the day of state and local elections in Gallatin, Missouri, on August 6, 1838, when local candidate William P. Peniston (c. 1811–1850), fearing that the growing Mormon population would cost him the election, delivered a speech inciting a mob to physically block Church members from the polls. When a group attempted to vote anyway,

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belief that divine will does not operate in isolation but within the temporal framework of its existence. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 95, [online](#).

<sup>4</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants*, 57:1–3 (revelation received July 20, 1831, at [Zion] Independence, Missouri), [online](#).

<sup>5</sup> Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (Knopf, 2005), 222–223.

a violent melee broke out, injuring several men on both sides.<sup>6</sup> This skirmish marked the first instance of open violence in the “1838 Mormon War.” Tensions escalated on October 28 of the same year at Crooked River, Missouri, where a Mormon rescue party engaged a state militia unit to free three of their own they felt were being unjustly detained. The conflict resulted in fatalities on both sides, including the death of David W. Patten (1799–1838), one of the original members of the Church’s Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (the Church’s second-highest governing body).<sup>7</sup> Because the Mormons had attacked sanctioned state troops, Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs (1796–1860) cited the incident as proof of open rebellion, instantly issuing an “Extermination Order” which declared that “the Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the State.”<sup>8</sup> The legal consequences were immediate and devastating. Three days later, a rogue militia attacked a Mormon settlement at Shoal Creek, killing 17 men and boys.<sup>9</sup> Boggs’s executive order was not just a clear act of state-sponsored persecution; it legally obliterated the Church’s theological goal of a Missouri Zion, thereby uprooting its entire population and forcing a migration that the earlier revelation had not predicted.

Following the violent expulsion from Missouri during the winter of 1838–1839, the Saints regrouped across the Mississippi River in Illinois, hoping to find lasting sanctuary. Initially, the reception was warm, with the Illinois legislature granting the Saints a charter to establish the city of Nauvoo in December of 1840. This charter was remarkably liberal and conferred unprecedented autonomy, authorizing a standing militia along with broad judicial powers that Church leadership viewed as a necessary bulwark against possible future persecution.<sup>10</sup> However, the legal conflicts in Missouri followed them across the river. When Missouri officials repeatedly attempted to have Smith extradited to face trial for alleged treason stemming from the 1838 conflict, the Nauvoo municipal court utilized the charter’s habeas corpus provision (a legal writ requiring that a detained person be brought before a court to determine the lawfulness of their detention) to intervene and block his removal.<sup>11</sup> While the Saints justified this as a defense against a corrupt foreign legal system in Missouri, the surrounding communities in Illinois viewed it as an abuse of power.

The municipal court system of Nauvoo continued to defy standard legal procedure to protect and insulate the Church. And the state-authorized militia, which adopted the name “The Nauvoo Legion,” began to appear to outsiders as more of a private religious army. The perception that Nauvoo was becoming a rogue state within a state soon ignited local

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<sup>6</sup> See Reed C. Durham Jr., “The Election Day Battle at Gallatin,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1973): 36–61.

<sup>7</sup> See Alexander L. Baugh, “A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri.” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1996). For the death of David W. Patten, see Baugh, “Call to Arms,” 236.

<sup>8</sup> Lilburn W. Boggs, “Executive Order 44,” October 27, 1838, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Missouri, [online](#).

<sup>9</sup> Alexander L. Baugh, “The Haun’s Mill Massacre and the Extermination Order of Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 21.

<sup>10</sup> “An Act to Incorporate the City of Nauvoo” (December 16, 1840), *Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1841, 281–286, [online](#).

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey N. Walker, “Habeas Corpus in Early Nineteenth-Century Mormonism: Joseph Smith’s Legal Bulwark for Personal Freedom,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2013): 23–72.

hostilities. These tensions reached a breaking point in June of 1844, when a group of disaffected former Church members published the first (and only) issue of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, a newspaper critical of Joseph Smith and the Church. In a move that proved fatal, Smith and the city council declared the publication a public nuisance and ordered the physical destruction of its printing press.<sup>12</sup> This act was seen as far more than a municipal overstep; it was interpreted as a direct assault on the constitutional freedom of the press. The resulting outrage across the state led to Smith's arrest and imprisonment at Carthage, Illinois. On June 27, 1844, a mob stormed the facility and assassinated both Joseph and his brother Hyrum (1800–1844).<sup>13</sup> Illinois officials, responding to the widespread belief that Nauvoo had become a lawless enclave operating outside government control, moved to strip the city of its protections. Accusing the municipal government of twisting its charter to usurp state authority, the legislature voted to revoke the Nauvoo Charter entirely in January of 1845.<sup>14</sup> This legislative severance ended the Church's experiment with legal sovereignty in Illinois, compelling Smith's successor, Brigham Young (1801–1877), to organize an exodus westward.

This sequence of displacements reveals that the Church's eventual settlement in the American West was less a product of theological destiny and more the result of dramatic entanglements with the established legal and political norms of the communities in which it sought to establish itself. Had the democratic institutions of Missouri or Illinois functioned to protect (or at least better tolerate) minority rights against majoritarian opposition and violence, the Church arguably might have remained a Midwestern phenomenon. Ironically, today, the Church remains the least established in the very regions of its birthplace in the Midwest and Northeast. The expulsion from the (then) United States proper forced the Saints into the relative isolation of the American West, a move that forged a distinct socio-geographic people and fundamentally altered the continent's demographic map.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the Church's modern presence throughout the Intermountain West stands as a monument to the influence that nineteenth-century legal systems had on the Church. This forced isolation, however, would not grant them immunity. By moving to a federal territory, the Church effectively traded the erratic persecution of state mobs for the systematic, constitutional scrutiny of the federal government.

## 2. Theocracy in the West: Religious Freedom and Early Statehood (1846–1907)

Under Brigham Young's leadership, the Church endured a strenuous migration west, seeking not just isolation but sovereign independence. Upon arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, Young immediately organized the "State of Deseret," a proposed independent state encompassing a vast swath of the American West, and petitioned Congress for its admission to the Union.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 529–532

<sup>13</sup> Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 535.

<sup>14</sup> Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 547.

<sup>15</sup> For the Church's impact in the West, see Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Harvard University Press, 1958).

<sup>16</sup> For Brigham Young's early aspirations to create and govern the State of Deseret, as well as the federal government's response, see Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (Knopf, 1979), 161–184.

Congress rejected this bid for statehood and instead established the smaller Utah Territory in 1850. To placate the growing Mormon population, the federal government appointed Brigham Young as the first territorial governor. While intended to integrate the Mormons into the federal system, this move ironically strengthened their separatism. Young treated his federal appointment as a mere formality, governing instead through a *de facto* theocracy that mirrored Joseph Smith's ambitions in Nauvoo but on a grander, territorial scale.

While officially serving as a federal officer, Young maintained the State of Deseret as a shadow government, frequently convening its legislature to dictate policy before the official Territorial Assembly would meet to rubber-stamp the decisions.<sup>17</sup> This created an indistinguishable blend of church and state where ecclesiastical loyalty superseded constitutional allegiance. When non-Mormon federal judges and inspectors arrived to establish national authority, they found themselves powerless against this ecclesiastical machine. These officials sent frantic reports back to Washington, describing a territory devoid of republican principles, where the courts were weaponized to protect Church leaders and the governor openly preached defiance of the very government he was sworn to represent.<sup>18</sup> Young's actions forced a collision course with the federal government that would dominate Utah's history for the next fifty years. Such open defiance inevitably invited a federal response. In 1857, U.S. President James Buchanan (in office 1857–1861) declared that the territory was in a state of rebellion and dispatched a massive expedition of 2,500 troops to forcibly unseat Brigham Young and "restore the supremacy of the Constitution and laws."<sup>19</sup> The Saints, viewing this army not as a legal enforcement but as the harbinger of a Missouri-style extermination, mobilized for war. While the resulting confrontation ended in a negotiated settlement rather than open battle, its political consequences were profound. Young was deposed as governor and replaced by a federal appointee, Alfred Cumming (1802–1873), a former Georgia politician appointed by President Buchanan as Utah's new territorial governor, while a permanent military garrison was established near Salt Lake City.<sup>20</sup> This occupation signaled the definitive end of the Church's attempt to escape American jurisdiction or create a sovereign state of its own. The Saints realized that even in the isolation of the wilderness, they could not outrun the reach of federal law.

While the conflict in Utah initially centered on questions of political sovereignty and theocratic governance, this was soon eclipsed by a moral outrage regarding the Church's growing practice of polygamy. Joseph Smith had quietly introduced the doctrine of plural marriage in the early 1840s. The practice rested on the belief that God had restored the ancient practice of patriarchal marriage, as seen in the lives of biblical figures such as

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<sup>17</sup> Arrington and Bitton, *Mormon Experience*, 163.

<sup>18</sup> Arrington and Bitton, *Mormon Experience*, 163.

<sup>19</sup> James Buchanan, "First Annual Message to Congress," December 8, 1857, in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789–1897*, ed. James D. Richardson (Government Printing Office, 1897), 5:454.

<sup>20</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *The Utah Expedition, 1857–1858: A Documentary Account of the United States Military Movement under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston and The Resistance by Brigham Young and the Mormon Nauvoo Legion* (Arthur H. Clark, 1958), 264.

Abraham and Jacob.<sup>21</sup> As Smith's successor, Brigham Young emphasized that the principle was revealed through divine commandment and tied to exaltation, making it not merely permissible but a sacred obligation.<sup>22</sup> For Utah's growing Mormon population, plural marriage became a central marker of religious identity, bound up with their sense of covenant and separation from the surrounding world. To outsiders, however, it represented moral depravity and social disorder. As the nineteenth century progressed, this moral opposition hardened into a specific political agenda. The Republican Party's 1856 platform famously denounced polygamy alongside slavery as one of the "twin relics of barbarism,"<sup>23</sup> effectively pledging the federal government to its eradication. This ideological stance first materialized in the *Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act* of 1862, which outlawed plural marriage in U.S. territories, attempted to disincorporate the Church, and sought to seize Church assets.<sup>24</sup> However, the law proved largely symbolic, as structural deficiencies in its language and the government's burden of the ongoing American Civil War (1861–1865) made it virtually impossible to enforce.<sup>25</sup> This left the Saints to govern themselves for another decade.

The end of the American Civil War allowed the federal government to redirect its attention toward the "Mormon Problem" out West. Recognizing the enforcement gaps in the *Morrill Act*, Congress passed the *Poland Act* of 1874, which dismantled the Church's control over territorial courts and transferred criminal jurisdiction to federal prosecutors.<sup>26</sup> Facing an impending legal siege, Church leaders orchestrated a strategic "test case" to challenge the constitutionality of such anti-bigamy laws on First Amendment grounds—a constitutional argument that was virtually untested in American jurisprudence at the time. They selected George Reynolds (1842–1909), Brigham Young's personal secretary and a practicing polygamist, to stand trial. However, their confidence proved misplaced, as the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously affirmed Reynolds's conviction for bigamy. The decision in *Reynolds v. United States* (1879)<sup>27</sup> became the foundation of free exercise jurisprudence and remained untested for nearly a century. Writing for the court, Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite (1816–1888), the seventh Chief Justice of the United States (1874–1888), reasoned that while the government could not regulate opinion, it was obligated to regulate actions that threatened the social order, even religiously motivated ones.<sup>28</sup> By declaring polygamy a practice incompatible with civilized society, the court stripped the Church of its constitutional shield.

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<sup>21</sup> *Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:1 (revelation received July 12, 1843, at Nauvoo, Illinois), [online](#); "Discourse," 16 July 1843, as reported by William Clayton, in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844*, ed. Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Brent M. Rogers (Church Historian's Press, 2015), 65.

<sup>22</sup> Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Signature Books, 1986), 92–98.

<sup>23</sup> "Republican Party Platform of 1856," June 18, 1856, in *National Party Platforms, 1840–1972*, ed. Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson (University of Illinois Press, 1978), 27.

<sup>24</sup> *Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act*, 12 Stat. [U.S. Statutes at Large] 501 (1862).

<sup>25</sup> Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 79–83.

<sup>26</sup> Gordon, *Mormon Question*, 131–135.

<sup>27</sup> *Reynolds v. United States*, 98 U.S. 145 (1879).

<sup>28</sup> *Reynolds v. United States*, 167.

As federal efforts to eradicate the practice continued, Congress recognized the *Morrill Act's* overly high evidentiary standard for proving the occurrence of a wedding ceremony, which, in the Church, was an ordinance often performed in private, sacred settings.<sup>29</sup> The result was the *Edmunds Act* of 1882, which criminalized “unlawful cohabitation,” a state of living that was much easier to prove than a solemnized wedding ceremony.<sup>30</sup> This legislation also disenfranchised convicted polygamists, stripping them of the right to vote or hold office. When even these measures failed to break the Church’s resolve, Congress followed with the *Edmunds-Tucker Act* of 1887.<sup>31</sup> This legislation escalated the conflict from individual prosecution to a complete and systematic dismantling of the Church on financial, political, and social fronts. Financially, it dissolved the Church as a legal corporation and authorized the federal government to seize its assets. Politically, it sought to diminish the Church’s influence by stripping the franchise from Utah women who had held the right to vote since 1870. Finally, it struck at the very heart of the Mormon family structure by delegitimizing children born of plural marriages, thereby legally fracturing the households the Church sought to protect. The Church, now legally defined as a defunct entity, sought a final respite from the Supreme Court, arguing that such aggressive measures were unconstitutional. However, in *The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States* (1890), the court upheld the dismantling of the Church’s corporate structure as a valid exercise of congressional power.<sup>32</sup> Facing imminent financial ruin and political annihilation, Wilford Woodruff (1807–1898), the fourth president of the Church (1889–1898), recognized that the faith’s institutional survival was at stake. In September of 1890, he formally ended the Church’s sanctioning of plural marriage by promulgating the new policy in what has since become known as the “Manifesto.”<sup>33</sup> While the unsanctioned practice of polygamy continued throughout the Church, President Woodruff’s policy concession relieved immediate federal pressure and paved the way for Utah’s admission as the 45th state in 1896.<sup>34</sup>

The true fragility of this new détente was exposed a decade later with the election of Reed Smoot (1862–1941), a member of the Church’s Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Republican senator from Utah, to the U.S. Senate. His arrival in Washington triggered a national firestorm, as Protestant ministerial alliances and politicians argued that a high-ranking Mormon official, having sworn to a hierarchy that had historically defied the government, could not offer undivided allegiance to the Constitution.<sup>35</sup> The resulting “Smoot Hearings” (1904–1907) evolved from a standard credential review into an inquisitorial trial of the Church itself, spanning nearly four years and producing over 3,000 pages of testimony. The Senate investigation ruthlessly probed the Church’s inner workings, revealing that

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<sup>29</sup> Gordon, *Mormon Question*, 80–83.

<sup>30</sup> *Edmunds Act*, 22 Stat. [U.S. Statutes at Large] (1882): 30–32.

<sup>31</sup> *Edmunds-Tucker Act*, 24 Stat. [U.S. Statutes at Large] (1887): 635–641.

<sup>32</sup> *The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints v. United States*, 136 U.S. 1 (1890).

<sup>33</sup> Wilford Woodruff, “Official Declaration 1” (1890), in *Doctrine and Covenants*, [online](#).

<sup>34</sup> Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (University of Illinois Press, 1986), 14–15.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Senate Historical Office, *United States Senate Election, Expulsion and Censure Cases: 1793–1990* (Government Printing Office, 1995), 272–274.



despite the 1890 “Manifesto,” key leaders had continued to solemnize plural marriages in secret. This revelation forced Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), the sixth president of the Church (1901–1918) and nephew of Church founder Joseph Smith, to testify under oath, where he faced a withering cross-examination regarding the supremacy of church doctrine versus civil law.<sup>36</sup> In a decisive move to save the Church’s political legitimacy, Smith issued a “Second Manifesto” in April of 1904.<sup>37</sup> Unlike Woodruff’s 1890 declaration, which had functioned as a diplomatic concession, this new edict carried strict ecclesiastical penalties, mandating the excommunication of any member who entered into or performed a plural marriage. This purge finally aligned the Church’s private conduct with its public professions. Satisfied that the “old order” was truly dead, the Senate voted to seat Smoot in 1907. This validation was the capstone of the Church’s early Americanization; it signaled the definitive end of the isolationist theocracy and marked the beginning of a new era in which the Church rose from a separatist kingdom into a patriotic pillar of the American religious mainstream.

This prolonged confrontation left a dramatic dual legacy that fundamentally reshaped both American law and the Church itself, arguably marking the most transformative period in their combined history. For the nation, the Church’s defiant legal resistance forced the Supreme Court to define the parameters of religious liberty decades before the civil rights movements of the twentieth century would otherwise have necessitated such a definition. The resulting “belief-action” distinction in *Reynolds*—holding that, while belief is absolute, conduct must remain subject to neutral law—established a framework that would define free exercise jurisprudence for nearly a century. Simultaneously, this conflict acted as a crucible for the Church, effectively ending its isolationist structure. The relentless application of federal power dismantled the nineteenth-century theocracy, transforming the Saints from a renegade, anti-American enclave into a patriotic, mainstream institution that would come to dominate the culture and politics of the American West—a transformation that was not merely a theological pivot but a survival strategy dictated by this reciprocal influence.

### 3. *Adaptation and Compromise in Modern Society*

By the late twentieth century, the Church had become more directly involved in a range of social and public policy debates. The growing religious pluralism in America was reflected in a series of robust protections for religious practice in landmark cases such as *Sherbert v. Verner* (1963)<sup>38</sup> and *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972).<sup>39</sup> However, the Supreme Court remarkably reversed course with *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990).<sup>40</sup> In that decision, the court ironically relied on *Reynolds*, the very case the Church had once invoked to defend religious liberty, to walk back modern gains and restore the rule that religious free exercise is subject

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<sup>36</sup> Joseph F. Smith, “Testimony,” in *Proceedings before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator from the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat*, 59th Congress, 1st session (Government Printing Office, 1906), 1:92–99.

<sup>37</sup> Joseph F. Smith, “Official Statement [Second Manifesto],” April 6, 1904, in *Conference Report* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1904), 75, [online](#).

<sup>38</sup> *Sherbert v. Verner*, 374 U.S. 398 (1963).

<sup>39</sup> *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972).

<sup>40</sup> *Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 U.S. 872 (1990).

to neutral, generally applicable law.<sup>41</sup> The *Smith* decision stripped constitutional protections from minority faiths, but unlike the isolationist defiance of the Brigham Young era, the modern Church responded with high-level political collaboration. In 1993, as a founding member of the "Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion," the Church deployed its complete legal resources to Washington, with Dallin H. Oaks (b. 1932), a jurist and member of the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (and president of the Church since 2025), testifying before Congress on the necessity of legislative restoration.<sup>42</sup> This pressure campaign resulted in the passage of the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA)* of 1993, which reinstated stricter standards for government interference.<sup>43</sup> Although a 1997 case, *City of Boerne v. Flores*,<sup>44</sup> defanged the *RFRA*'s intended power, the whole experience made it clear that the modern Church was more interested in collaborating with Congress than in fighting it.

Having secured its constitutional standing and place among religious political actors, the Church in the late twentieth century pivoted from defensive survival to assertive social advocacy. No longer content to merely exist within the American system, the Church began to actively shape it, asserting its influence on moral issues it viewed as critical to the family structure. This new dynamic was first tested during the debate over the *Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)*. Passed by Congress in 1972, the *ERA* sought to constitutionally prohibit gender discrimination.<sup>45</sup> However, Church leaders, aligned with a growing coalition of conservative religious groups, feared the amendment's broad language would dismantle legal protections for women and undermine traditional family roles. Deploying its membership in a coordinated lobbying effort, the Church played a significant role in stalling the amendment's momentum in key state legislatures.<sup>46</sup> The *ERA* ultimately failed to achieve ratification by its 1982 deadline, which marked a major political victory for the Church's power as a mobilized constituency on the national stage.

This activism intensified in the twenty-first century as the cultural debate shifted toward the definition of marriage. In 2008, the Church threw its institutional weight behind California's *Proposition 8*, a ballot initiative to define marriage strictly as a union between a man and a woman.<sup>47</sup> Church leadership issued letters urging congregations to donate time and resources, resulting in an estimated \$20 million in member contributions to the campaign.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Employment Division v. Smith*, 879–882.

<sup>42</sup> Dallin H. Oaks, "Statement," in *The Religious Freedom Restoration Act: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, on S. [Senate] 2969*, 102nd Congress, 2nd session (Government Printing Office, 1993), 33–40.

<sup>43</sup> *Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993*. Pub. L. [Public Law] No. 103-141, 107 Stat. [U.S. Statutes at Large] 1488 (1993).

<sup>44</sup> *City of Boerne v. Flores*, 521 U.S. 507 (1997).

<sup>45</sup> H.R. [House of Representatives] J. Res. [Joint Resolution] 208, 92nd Congress, 86 Stat. [U.S. Statutes at Large] 1523 (1972).

<sup>46</sup> Neil J. Young, "'The ERA Is a Moral Issue': The Mormon Church, LDS Women, and the Defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment," *American Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2007): 623–644.

<sup>47</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "California and Same-Sex Marriage," *Church Newsroom*, June 30, 2008, [online](#).

<sup>48</sup> Monica Youn, "Proposition 8 and the Mormon Church: A Case Study in Donor Disclosure," *George Washington Law Review* 81, no. 6 (2013): 2126.

While the measure initially passed, the victory proved pyrrhic. The campaign drew intense backlash and legal scrutiny. Following an investigation, California's Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) fined the Church \$5,538 for failing to report approximately \$37,000 in non-monetary contributions, such as staff time and travel.<sup>49</sup> Though the fine was minor, it marked yet another milestone of active participation in the legislative process.

The eventual legalization of same-sex marriage in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)<sup>50</sup> placed the Church on the losing side of a significant civil rights transformation, necessitating a strategic pivot from opposition to accommodation. Recognizing that the law had settled, the Church strove to adapt by balancing its doctrinal commitments with the new legal reality. In 2015, it backed the "Utah Compromise," a state law that extended anti-discrimination protections to LGBTQ individuals while carving out robust exemptions for religious organizations.<sup>51</sup> This model of mutual respect culminated in 2022, when the Church officially supported the federal *Respect for Marriage Act* (RFMA).<sup>52</sup> By endorsing legislation that codified same-sex marriage rights in exchange for provisions protecting religious institutions from being compelled to perform them, Church leaders declared this balanced approach "the way forward."<sup>53</sup> Unimaginable during the *Proposition 8* era, less than two decades earlier, this endorsement signaled a maturation in the Church's public policy engagement, prioritizing the preservation of its own religious freedom through the pragmatic accommodation of civil rights.

As the Church expanded its institutional footprint, legal conflicts increasingly moved from the realm of theology to the complexities of corporate governance. An early critical victory in this arena was secured in *Corporation of the Presiding Bishop v. Amos* (1987),<sup>54</sup> which tested the Church's right to maintain a distinct religious identity within its secular operations. The case arose when a building engineer at a Church-owned gymnasium was terminated for failing to maintain his membership in good standing. The employee sued under the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964, claiming religious discrimination. In a ruling that cemented the concept of "corporate religious freedom," the Supreme Court upheld the Church's right to preferentially hire co-religionists, even for non-religious positions within its affiliated entities. This decision was practically vital for the Church's vast network of schools, charities, and businesses, affirming that the ability to enforce spiritual standards for employees is an essential component of ecclesiastical autonomy.

The Church's growth into a massive financial entity in the twenty-first century invited new forms of regulatory scrutiny. In February 2023, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) announced a settlement with the Church and its investment arm, Ensign Peak Advisors, a

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<sup>49</sup> California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), No. 08/735 (2010), [online](#).

<sup>50</sup> *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015).

<sup>51</sup> Von G. Keetch, "Toward Collaboration: A Perspective from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," in *Religious Freedom, LGBT Rights, and the Prospects for Common Ground*, ed. William N. Eskridge, Jr. and Robin Fretwell Wilson (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 179–182.

<sup>52</sup> *Respect for Marriage Act*, Pub. L. [Public Law] No. 117-228, 136 Stat. [U.S. Statutes at Large] 2305 (2022).

<sup>53</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Church Applauds Passage of Utah Senate Bill 296," *Church Newsroom*, March 12, 2015, [online](#).

<sup>54</sup> *Corporation of the Presiding Bishop v. Amos*, 483 U.S. 327 (1987).

Church-owned entity responsible for managing the institution's financial reserves, regarding the handling of its massive investment portfolio.<sup>55</sup> The SEC found that the Church, driven by a desire to maintain financial privacy, had directed Ensign Peak Advisors to file public reports through a network of shell companies, thereby effectively obscuring the Church's ownership of approximately \$32 billion in assets.<sup>56</sup> While neither admitting nor denying wrongdoing, the Church and Ensign Peak Advisors agreed to pay a combined \$5 million in civil penalties. This settlement highlighted a modern reality: as a global institution, the Church would be subject to the same rigorous transparency regulations as any secular corporation.

This financial transparency was further tested in the federal courts by disaffected Church members. In 2022, James Huntsman filed a fraud lawsuit against the Church, alleging that his tithing donations (a religious practice in which members contribute ten percent of their income to the Church) had been improperly used to finance the commercial City Creek Center development, contrary to Church assurances.<sup>57</sup> Huntsman sought the return of roughly \$5 million. The Church maintained that the project was funded strictly through the earnings on invested reserve funds, not principal tithing donations; a distinction the courts found legally sound. On January 31, 2025, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the dismissal of the lawsuit, concluding that no reasonable juror could find that the Church had misrepresented its financial practices.<sup>58</sup> Together, these episodes illustrate the modern paradox of the Church's success: its transformation into a financially robust institution protects it from the existential threats of the nineteenth century, but simultaneously exposes it to the secular demands of regulatory compliance and corporate litigation.

This trajectory from the frontier to the boardroom illustrates a profound metamorphosis in the Church's relationship with American law. Where the nineteenth-century Church had sought to supersede the legal system with theocratic sovereignty, the modern Church has learned to master the machinery of the state to secure its interests. This influence has been reciprocally constructive: just as federal mandates forced the Church to abandon polygamy and adopt corporate transparency, the Church's sophisticated advocacy has significantly shaped the contours of modern religious freedom—from the legislative architecture of the *RFRA* to the employment protections of *Amos*. The existential battles for survival have thus been replaced by the regulated friction of a major institutional player. By trading the sword of defiance for the tools of litigation, legislation, and compromise, the Church has achieved what Smith, Young, Woodruff, and others ultimately could not: a secure, permanent, and influential home within the social, cultural, and political fabric of the United States.

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<sup>55</sup> U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, "In the Matter of Ensign Peak Advisors, Inc., and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Administrative Proceeding, File No. 3-21306, Release No. 96951 (February 21, 2023), [online](#).

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, "In the Matter of Ensign Peak Advisors, Inc."

<sup>57</sup> *Huntsman v. Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, No. 21-56056 (9th Cir. January 31, 2025).

<sup>58</sup> *Huntsman v. Corporation of the President*, No. 21-56056.

## Conclusion

The two-century legal odyssey of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands as a testament to the coercive power of American law and the resilient adaptability of the Church. The Church's trajectory was not solely determined by revelation or theology; it was forged, in significant part, in the crucible of constitutional conflict. From the extrajudicial violence of the Missouri frontier to the Supreme Court battles of the nineteenth century and the regulatory settlements of the modern era, the American legal system has acted as the primary external force shaping the Church's institutional character. This relationship, however, has not been one-sided. In its struggle to survive, the Church has repeatedly forced the United States to confront, define, and redefine the boundaries of religious liberty, thereby leaving an indelible mark on the nation's jurisprudential architecture. The reciprocity of this influence is evident in the stark contrast between the Church's origins and its current reality. In the nineteenth century, the Church's attempt to construct a sovereign, isolationist theocracy exposed the fragility of early American federalism and the limits of the First Amendment. The federal government's response with a campaign of legislative and judicial dismantling, culminating in *Reynolds* and the "Manifesto," proved that no religious entity could exist outside the legal framework of the United States, regardless of how underdeveloped that legal framework was. Yet, in crushing the Church's early separatist ambitions, the law inadvertently perfected the Church as an institution. The *Edmunds-Tucker Act* stripped away the radical economic and marital practices that had made the Saints pariahs, forcing them to adopt the structures of American corporate and civic life. The result is a historical irony of the highest order: the legal system designed to destroy the Mormon kingdom out West ultimately facilitated its survival, transforming a radical frontier sect into one of the most financially robust and politically integrated religious organizations in the world.

The Church's journey also elucidates the evolution of American religious freedom itself. Its legal resistance provided the test case—namely, *Reynolds*—that established the "belief-action" doctrine, a standard that guided judicial reasoning for a century until the very precedents used to suppress the Saints were cited in *Employment Division v. Smith* to curtail the rights of all religious practitioners. This doctrinal reversal highlights a profound maturation in the Church's strategy. Having learned that isolation invites persecution while engagement yields protection, the modern Church has pivoted from being a defendant in the courtroom to a drafter in the legislative chamber. Its pivotal role in the passage of the *Religious Freedom Restoration Act* and the *Respect for Marriage Act* demonstrates that the Church has mastered the very secular tools that were once weaponized against it.

Ultimately, the history of the Church and American law is a narrative of mutual accommodation. The Church survives today not because it successfully escaped America, but because it successfully became American. It navigated the transition from a despised minority, protected only by its own militias, to a mainstream institution, protected by effective legal counsel and political compromise. As the Church faces the twenty-first-century challenges of secularization, corporate regulation, and evolving civil rights, it does so within a legal framework it helped construct. The conflict has not ended, but the terms of engagement have fundamentally changed, and the existential wars of the past have been

replaced by the procedural engagement of a permanent stakeholder in the American democratic experiment.

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Arjun Kraft, Jeffrey McMurry, Fergus O'Connor, Dania Trippi, and Ali Zaki (editors)

*Every—Last—Line:*

*An Indenture of Dr. Peter Shoenberger's Real Estate Legacy in Pittsburgh (1859)*

*Shelfmark*

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).

University Archives and Special Collections (UA&SC).

SC-RF-0-13, Box 1, File 8.

Indenture (1859).

September 10, 1859 [indenture date], to November 2, 1859 [final recording date].

1 document (folded).

*Introduction*

The legal document edited below offers an intricate look at how the affairs of Dr. Peter Shoenberger (1782–1854) were settled after his death. The manuscript is housed in the University Archives and Special Collections (UA&SC) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), is in excellent physical condition, and—based on a pencil entry on the document—may have been acquired by CSUF's Patrons of the Library in October 1976. There is some ink bleed-through, but this does not interfere with the text's legibility. In addition to the document's main text, there are sections containing the signatures of the executors, family members, and lawyers involved in the proceedings. The main text consists of 103 lines, and the remaining sections feature an additional 75 lines. When fully unfolded the document measures 46 x 58 cm, and when folded it measures 23 x 11 cm. Almost all of the document is written in black-ink legible cursive, and there are several different hands involved in the proceedings.

Dr. Peter Shoenberger—a prominent Pennsylvania iron baron, who had accumulated considerable wealth, acquired multiple properties, and become a well-known figure in Pittsburgh society—had made his last will and testament on June 14, 1852. Five years after his passing in 1854, the indenture edited below was drawn up on September 10, 1859, and recorded on November 2, 1859. It involved three parties who had an interest in the late Dr. Shoenberger's property affairs: firstly, his acting executors, John G. Miles and Michael Berry; secondly, John W. Duncan and his wife, Martha K. Duncan, Shoenberger's daughter; and thirdly, the trustees of the Orphans Court (i.e., the probate court) of Philadelphia, Richard R. Bryan and Nathaniel Holmes. The indenture shows that most of Dr. Shoenberger's real estate was to be sold by his executors at public or private sale, except for a house on Penn Street in the city of Pittsburgh, which was to be given to his wife Sarah as a residence for her coachman. Part of the indenture serves to rectify mistakes made in an earlier property distribution. Beyond this, the document reveals the precise details of Dr. Shoenberger's last will, describing how his properties were distributed, sold, and settled. The additional notes and signatures outside of the main text show how many individuals were involved in the legal proceedings pertaining to Dr. Shoenberger's estate.

This indenture should be of interest to scholars of America's early Gilded Age, the society of nineteenth-century Pennsylvania, the urban history of Pittsburgh, and legal history. The document's original paragraphs, spelling, punctuation, underlining, and occasional bolding have been retained as much as possible. In the original text, capitalization is not always clear. All editorial insertions, including expanded abbreviations, added punctuation, and page numbers, appear in square brackets. Identifiable individuals, locations, and technical terms have been referenced in the footnotes, usually when they first appear.

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*The primary-source edition published below originated in the "History and Editing" course offered by CSUF's Department of History.*



**This Indenture**, in partile, made the twelfth day of September Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and fifty nine, between John C. Wiley and Michael Berry, acting Executors of the Last Will and Testament of Doctor Peter Shoenberger, late of the City of Philadelphia, deceased, of the first part, John W. Duncan and Martha W. his wife daughter of the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, deceased, of the second part, and Richard R. Bryan and Nathaniel Holmes, trustees under proceeding in the Orphans Court of Philadelphia County, of the third part.

Whereas, the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, by force and value of a certain deed of conveyance from Follen DeForest made to the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger dated the 5<sup>th</sup> day of January A.D. 1852 made on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of May 1859 in the office for recording of deeds in the County of Allegheny in said Book Volume 139, page 196, became in his lifetime seized in his demise as of fee of and in a certain piece of land situate in the City of Pittsburgh, in the County of Allegheny aforesaid and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, described in said deed as follows, that is to say: Beginning on the Northwardly side of Town Street at the distance of seventy five feet Eastwardly from Barclay Street, extending thence Northwardly parallel with Barclay Street one hundred feet to Market Street, thence along said Market Street Eastwardly, one hundred feet, thence parallel with Barclay Street Southwardly, one hundred feet to Town Street, and thence along Town Street Westwardly, one hundred feet to the place of beginning. And being so then seized as aforesaid, the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger made his Last Will & Testament in writing, bearing date the fourteenth day of June, Anno Domini 1852, and therein directed that, whereas and whereby (amongst other things) he devised as follows: And further, he devised to my dear wife Sarah, for and during her natural life, as a residence for her coachman, the house next to the Canal, (being one of the blocks of yellow house purchased from Follen DeForest) together with the grounds thereto belonging, situate on Town Street in the City of Pittsburgh, and further (inter alia) the said testator the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, directed the residue or remaining portion of his real estate, not therein before specifically devised, the said testator having therein before specifically devised a large amount of his real estate, to be sold by his Executors, either at Public or Private Sale, whenever they should consider it most to the interest of his said Estate to sell the same, that is to say, having specifically devised to certain named persons a large amount of his real Estate not including therein the above described premises except the above described house & grounds next to the Canal, devised to the above named Sarah, his wife, during life, he directed the remaining portion of his real Estate, not included in his specific devise, to be sold by his Executors, either at Public or Private Sale, whenever they should consider it most to the interest of his said Estate to sell the same; and of his said Last Will & Testament the said Doctor Shoenberger, George W. Shoenberger, John W. Duncan and Martha W. his wife, and the above named John C. Wiley and Michael Berry to be the Executors, as by the said Will and Testaments, duly proved and remaining in the Register's Office in the City of Philadelphia, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania aforesaid, reference thereto being had, more fully and at large will appear.

And whereas the said George W. Shoenberger, John W. Shoenberger and Henry W. Waddy severally renounced the executorship of the said Will (Testament), and the said Sarah W. Shoenberger, has been discharged by the Orphans Court of Philadelphia County from the said Executorship, upon her own petition, as by reference to said several renunciations, and discharge and the record thereof remaining in the respective Offices of the Register of Wills, and Clerk of the Orphans Court in the City of Philadelphia, will fully and at large appear. And whereas in pursuance of a special decree of the Orphans Court of Philadelphia County aforesaid at a public sale made at Pittsburgh on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1857, by the Executors above named, parties of the first part, five houses and lots of ground fronting each on Town Street in the said City of Pittsburgh, measuring in the whole eighty feet on said Street (being part of the heretofore first described piece of land) were (inter alia) purchased by Martha W. Duncan one of the above named parties of the second part, she being one of the necessary legatees of the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger deceased, and allowed by the special terms of the decree of the Orphans Court aforesaid to buy under the limitations therein contained. It is also to be noted that the said Martha W. Duncan has previously made a signment of certain portions of her share of the residue of the Estate of the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, deceased, under the said Will & Testament, to certain persons for whom the said parties of the third part are trustees, as designated and provided for in a special report of an auditor, Joseph A. Hay Esq. to the Orphans Court aforesaid, from whose said report the following is an extract, viz: It was agreed by Mr. J. R. Holmes, Bryan and Duncan's present lawyer, Mr. Duncan, and the signers under the two signments that deeds for the property purchased by Mrs. Duncan should be made to Richard R. Bryan and Nathaniel Holmes, in trust, and that said deeds and the proceeds thereof should be held in trust for the respective signments. And Whereas by a certain deed between the parties to these presents dated December the 2<sup>nd</sup> A.D. 1858 & recorded in the Recorder's Office of Allegheny County aforesaid in record Book Vol 137, page 198, made in pursuance of the aforesaid sale, to which reference is herein and hereby made as explanatory of these presents, the ground enters

Figure 1: Image of Edition, page 1.

*Edition: Indenture (Estate of Dr. Peter Shoenberger)  
September 10, 1859, to November 2, 1859.*

[Page 1]

**This Indenture**,<sup>1</sup> tripartite,<sup>2</sup> made the tenth<sup>3</sup> day of September Anno Domini<sup>4</sup> one thousand eight hundred and fifty nine, between John G[eorge]. Miles<sup>5</sup> and Michael Berry<sup>6</sup> acting Executors of the Last Will and Testament of Doctor Peter Shoenberger,<sup>7</sup> late of the City of Philadelphia,<sup>8</sup> deceased, of the first part, John W[illiam]. Duncan<sup>9</sup> and Martha K[rug].<sup>10</sup> his wife[,] daughter of the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, deceased, of the second part, and Richard R. Bryan<sup>11</sup> and Nathaniel Holmes,<sup>12</sup> trustees under proceedings in the Orphans Court<sup>13</sup> of Philadelphia, of the third part.

Whereas, the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, by force and virtue of a certain deed of conveyance<sup>14</sup> from Pollard M[c]Cormick<sup>15</sup> & wife<sup>16</sup> to the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger dated the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January A[nno]. D[omini]. 1842 recorded on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of May 1859 in the office for recording of deeds in the county of Allegheny<sup>17</sup> in Deed Book Volume 139, page 196, became in his lifetime seized in his demesne<sup>18</sup> as of fee of and in a certain piece of land situate in the City of Pittsburg[h],<sup>19</sup> in the county of Allegheny aforesaid and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,<sup>20</sup> described in said deed as follows, that is to say, "Beginning on the Northwardly side of Penn Street,<sup>21</sup> at the distance of seventy five feet Eastwardly from Factory Street,<sup>22</sup> extending thence Northwardly parallel with Factory Street one hundred feet to Mulberry Alley,<sup>23</sup> thence along said Alley, Eastwardly, one hundred feet, thence parallel with Factory Street, Southwardly, one hundred feet to Penn Street, and thence along Penn Street,

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<sup>1</sup> Legal contract between two or more parties.

<sup>2</sup> Involving three parties.

<sup>3</sup> The word "tenth" is in a different hand and followed by blank space.

<sup>4</sup> Latin for "in the year of the Lord."

<sup>5</sup> (1797–1877), attorney.

<sup>6</sup> (1818–1863), second executor of Dr. Peter Shoenberger's estate.

<sup>7</sup> (1782–1854), medical doctor, "Iron King of Pennsylvania."

<sup>8</sup> City in the southeastern part of the U.S. state of Pennsylvania.

<sup>9</sup> (1826–1887), major, Dr. Peter Shoenberger's son-in-law (married to Martha).

<sup>10</sup> (1826–1863), Dr. Peter Shoenberger's daughter.

<sup>11</sup> Presumably Richard Rush Bryan (1817–1891).

<sup>12</sup> Presumably Nathaniel Holmes Jr. (1820–1866).

<sup>13</sup> Probate court.

<sup>14</sup> Legal document about the transfer of ownership.

<sup>15</sup> (1799–1860), Dr. Peter Shoenberger's son-in-law (married to Rebecca).

<sup>16</sup> Rebecca Shoenberger McCormick (1807–1844), Dr. Peter Shoenberger's daughter.

<sup>17</sup> County in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of Pennsylvania.

<sup>18</sup> Property ownership, possession, domain.

<sup>19</sup> City in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of Pennsylvania.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. state in the Mid-Atlantic region, uses the title "Commonwealth."

<sup>21</sup> Today's Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh's Strip District.

<sup>22</sup> Today's 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Pittsburgh's Strip District.

<sup>23</sup> Today's Mulberry Way in Pittsburgh's Strip District.

Westwardly, one hundred feet to the place of beginning."<sup>24</sup> And being so thereof seized as aforesaid, the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger made his Last Will & Testament in writing, bearing date the fourteenth day of June, Anno Domini 1852, and Six Several<sup>25</sup> Codicils<sup>26</sup> thereto, wherein and whereby (amongst other things) he devised as follows "And further, I do devise to my said wife Sarah,<sup>27</sup> for and during her natural life, as a residence for her coachman,<sup>28</sup> the house next to the canal,<sup>29</sup> (being one of the block of yellow houses<sup>30</sup> purchased from Pollard M[c]Cormick,) together with the ground thereunto belonging, situate on Penn Street, in the City of Pittsburg[h]," and further (inter alia)<sup>31</sup> the said testator,<sup>32</sup> the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, directed the residue or remaining portion of his real estate, not thereinbefore specifically devised, (the said testator having thereinbefore specifically devised a large amount of his real estate,) to be sold by his Executors, either at Public or Private Sale, whenever they should consider it most to the interest of his said Estate to sell the same, that is to say, having specifically devised to certain individuals therein named a large amount of his real Estate not including therein the above described premises except the above described "house" & "ground" next to the canal, devised to the above named Sarah, his wife, during life, he directed the remaining portion of his real estate, not included in his specific devises,<sup>33</sup> to be sold by his Executors, either at Public or Private sale, whenever they should consider it most to the interest of his said Estate to sell the same; and of his said Will appointed Sarah K[rug]. Shoenberger,<sup>34</sup> George K[rug]. Shoenberger,<sup>35</sup> John H[opson]. Shoenberger,<sup>36</sup> Henry M[iller]. Watts,<sup>37</sup> and the above named John G. Miles and Michael Berry to be the Executors, as by the said Will and Codicils, duly proved and remaining in the Register's office<sup>38</sup> in the City of Philadelphia, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania aforesaid, reference thereunto being had, more fully and at large will appear. And whereas the said George K. Shoenberger, John H. Shoenberger and Henry M. Watts severally renounced the Executorship of the said Will & Codicils, and the said Sarah K. Shoenberger has been discharged by the Orphans Court of Philadelphia County<sup>39</sup> from the said Executorship, upon her own petition, as by reference to said several renunciations, and discharge and the records thereof remaining in the respective offices of the Register of Wills,<sup>40</sup> and clerk of the Orphans

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<sup>24</sup> Approximately the plot of today's 1421 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

<sup>25</sup> Distinct.

<sup>26</sup> Amendments modifying the stipulations of a will.

<sup>27</sup> (1789–1879), Dr. Peter Shoenberger's wife.

<sup>28</sup> Carriage driver.

<sup>29</sup> Presumably the Pennsylvania Canal, today's 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Pittsburgh's Strip District.

<sup>30</sup> As of today, no longer standing.

<sup>31</sup> Latin for "among other things."

<sup>32</sup> Person making a will.

<sup>33</sup> Stipulations.

<sup>34</sup> Sarah Krug Schoenberger(1789–1879), Dr. Peter Shoenberger's wife.

<sup>35</sup> (1808–1892), Dr. Peter Shoenberger's son.

<sup>36</sup> (1809–1889), Dr. Peter Shoenberger's son.

<sup>37</sup> (1805–1890), Dr. Peter Shoenberger's son-in law (married to Anna Maria).

<sup>38</sup> Keeps public legal documents.

<sup>39</sup> County in the southeastern part of the U.S. state of Pennsylvania.

<sup>40</sup> Keeps last wills and testaments.

Court in the City of Philadelphia, will fully and at large appear. And whereas in pursuance of a special decree of the Orphans Court of Philadelphia County aforesaid at a public sale made at Pittsburg[h] on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1857, by the Executors above named, parties of the first part five houses and lots of ground fronting sixteen feet each on Penn Street in the said City of Pittsburg[h], measuring in the whole eighty feet on said street, (being part of the hereinbefore first described piece of land) were (inter alia) purchased by Martha K. Duncan one of the above named parties of the second part, She being one of the residuary legatees<sup>41</sup> of the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger[,] deceased, and allowed by the special terms of the decree of the Orphans Court aforesaid to buy under the limitations therein contained. And whereas the said Martha K. Duncan had previously made assignments of certain portions of her share of the residue of the Estate of the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, deceased, under the said Will & Codicils, to certain persons for whom the said parties of the third part are trustees, as designated and provided for in a special report of an auditor, (Joseph A. Clay Esq[ui]re<sup>42</sup>) to the Orphans Court aforesaid, from whose said report the following is an extract viz.<sup>43</sup> "It was agreed by Mess[ieu]rs<sup>44</sup> Holmes, Bryan and Duncan representing Mrs. Duncan, and the assignees<sup>45</sup> under the two assignments that deeds for the property purchased by Mrs. Duncan should be made to Richard R. Bryan and Nathaniel Holmes, in trust to sell and dispose thereof, and hold the proceeds in trust for the respective assignments." &c[etera].<sup>46</sup> And whereas by a certain deed between the parties to these presents dated December the 21<sup>st</sup> A[nno]. D[omi]ni. 1858 & recorded in the Recorder's Office<sup>47</sup> of Allegheny County aforesaid in record Book Vol[ume] 137 page 198, made in pursuance of the aforesaid sale, to which reference is herein and hereby made as explanatory of these presents, the ground intended to be conveyed to the parties of the third part herein named, is erroneously described as beginning at the distance of seventy five feet Eastwardly from Factory Street (and by such misdescription the said deed is made to include the House and Lot of Ground hereinbefore described as devised during life to Mrs. Sarah K. Shoenberger, the said House & Lot of Ground of sixteen feet in width, being the Westernmost part of the piece of land herein first described and being "the house next to the canal" and one of the block of yellow houses purchased (by the testator) from Pollard M[c]Cormick, with

[Page 2]

the ground thereunto belonging situate on Penn Street, in the City of Pittsburg[h]) whereas the same should have been described as beginning at the distance of ninety one feet Eastwardly from Factory Street, so as to have excluded the House & Lot devised to Mrs. Sarah K. Shoenberger during life as a residence for her coachman, and to have included other sixteen feet in width of the Easterly part of said piece of land. And whereas the purpose and

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<sup>41</sup> Beneficiaries of leftover assets once all other heirs have been satisfied.

<sup>42</sup> Presumably Joseph Ashmead Clay (1806–1881).

<sup>43</sup> Abbreviation of the Latin "videlicet," meaning "that is to say."

<sup>44</sup> Plural of "Mr.," from the French "Messieurs."

<sup>45</sup> Receivers of rights, properties, or duties.

<sup>46</sup> Abbreviation of the Latin "et cetera," meaning "and others."

<sup>47</sup> Keeps public legal documents, especially property deeds.

intent of this Instrument are that said mistake and misdescription in said conveyance shall be rectified and remedied, and the said deed in effect reformed by the conveyance, by said parties of the first part with the consent and concurrence of the parties of the second part, to the said parties of the third part, of the before described Easterly sixteen feet of ground fronting on Penn Street aforesaid which ought to have been included in said deed, and the reconveyance and release by said parties of the third part to the said Executors, the parties of the first part, as of their former estate, of the said Westernmost Lot of Ground devised as aforesaid during life to the said Sarah K. Shoenberger, and which ought to have been excluded from said deed. Now This Indenture Witnesseth that the said parties of the first part, in consideration of the premises and of one dollar to them in hand now paid, have granted, bargained, sold, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents, under and by virtue of the powers conferred upon them by the Last Will and Testament of their testator, the said Dr. Peter Shoenberger, deceased, in accordance with the decree of the Orphans Court hereinbefore recited, and by and with the consent of the said John W. Duncan and Martha K. his wife, testified by their joining in the execution hereof, do grant, bargain, sell, alien, release, convey and confirm unto the said parties of the third part, all that certain lot or piece of ground, parcel of the hereinbefore first described piece of land, and bounded and described as follows: to wit,<sup>48</sup> Beginning at a point on the Northwardly side of Penn Street, distant one hundred and fifty five feet Eastwardly from the Eastern line of Factory Street aforesaid extending thence Northwardly and parallel with said Factory Street, by the Easterly line of said five lots of ground as described in the deed hereinbefore recited dated the 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1858 (but as corrected and reformed by these presents, by the Easterly line of the fourth lot intended to have been conveyed by said deed,) one hundred feet to Mulberry Alley, thence along said Alley Eastwardly sixteen feet, thence Southwardly, parallel with Factory Street, by the line of a small strip of land five feet in width parcel of the hereinbefore first described piece of land not included in the purchase aforesaid of the said Martha K. Duncan, one hundred feet to Penn Street, and thence along Penn Street, Westwardly, sixteen feet to the place of beginning: **TO HAVE and TO HOLD**<sup>49</sup> the same with the Hereditaments<sup>50</sup> and appurtenances<sup>51</sup> unto the said parties of the third part, and the survivor of them, their and his heirs and assigns<sup>52</sup> forever: **In trust**<sup>53</sup> nevertheless to see and dispose of the same at public or private sale, at their discretion, and to pay over the net proceeds thereof to the assigns of John W. Duncan and Martha K. his wife aforesaid, or to those entitled, according to their priorities under the auditor report hereinbefore referred to, without liability, however, on the part of the purchasers, for the application of the purchase money.

And the said parties of the third part, the said Richard R. Bryan and Nathaniel Holmes, for and in consideration of the premises, and of one dollar to them in hand by the said John G.

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<sup>48</sup> That is to say.

<sup>49</sup> Legally own.

<sup>50</sup> Hereditary properties and property rights.

<sup>51</sup> Accessory items or rights.

<sup>52</sup> Receivers of rights, properties, or duties.

<sup>53</sup> Describes property held and administered by a trustee or trustees.



Miles and Michael Berry acting Executors as aforesaid and parties of the first part, do hereby grant, bargain, sell, reconvey and confirm unto them, as of their former estate therein, prior to their execution of the deed hereinbefore recited dated the 21<sup>st</sup> day of December A[nno]. D[omini]. 1858, and as of the Estate of their testator prior to the execution of the said recited deed, with like effect as of said deed had never been executed, and have hereby granted, bargained, sold, reconveyed, confirmed, remised, released and forever quit claimed,<sup>54</sup> unto the said John G. Miles and Michael Berry acting Executors of the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger, deceased, and to their heirs and assigns, all that the hereinbefore described Lot of ground of sixteen feet in width being the Westernmost part of the piece of land hereinbefore first described and being the Lot of ground devised during life to the hereinbefore named Sarah K. Shoenberger: **Together** with all and singular the buildings, improvements, ways, woods, waters, water courses, rights, liberties, privileges, hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever thereunto belonging, or in any wise appertaining,<sup>55</sup> and the reversions and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof, and also all the Estate, right, title, interest, property, claim and demand whatsoever of them the said Richard R. Bryan and Nathaniel Holmes, parties of the third part, of, in, to or out of the same, under the deed hereinbefore recited dated as aforesaid, the 21<sup>st</sup> December A[nno]. D[omini]. 1858. **TO HAVE** and **TO HOLD** the same unto them and the survivor of them, Executors as aforesaid, their heirs and assigns forever, to the only proper use, benefit and behoof,<sup>56</sup> of them the said John G. Miles and Michael Berry as the survivor of them, Executors as aforesaid, their and his heirs and assigns forever as of their former Estate prior to the execution of the deed hereinbefore recited dated as aforesaid the said 21<sup>st</sup> December A[nno]. D[omini]. 1859 [sic]<sup>57</sup> - and with like effect as if the said recited deed had never been executed. **In trust** nevertheless to dispose of the same - or hold the same under the trusts created by the Last Will & Testament of the said Doctor Peter Shoenberger deceased

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with like effect precisely as if the hereinbefore recited deed had never been executed.

In Witness whereof the said parties have hereunto set their hands<sup>58</sup> and seals the y day and year first hereinbefore written.

Sealed & Delivered in the presence of

J[ohn]. Geo[rge] Miles (Seal)<sup>59</sup>

Michael Berry (Seal)

John W. Duncan (Seal)

Martha K. Duncan (Seal)

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<sup>54</sup> Released of legal claims or property interests.

<sup>55</sup> Relating.

<sup>56</sup> Advantage, benefit, or profit.

<sup>57</sup> Should be "1858" (see a few lines above).

<sup>58</sup> Signatures, which appear in different hands.

<sup>59</sup> "(Seal)," here and hereafter, written and circled with a flourished line.

Nathaniel Holmes (Seal)

Richard R. Bryan (Seal)

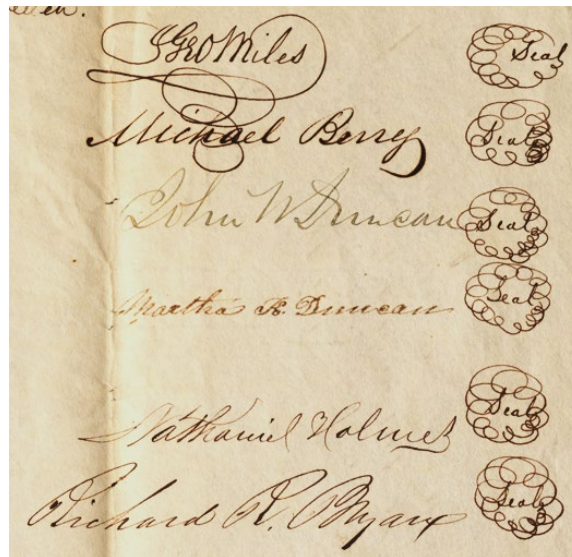


Figure 2: Image, Excerpt of Edition, page 3.

Witness to the signature of John G. Miles[:] David Snare<sup>60</sup>

Witness as to the signature of Michael Berry[:] W[illia]m Smith<sup>61</sup>

The Com[monweal]th of Penn[sylvani]a

Huntingdon County<sup>62</sup> ss.<sup>63</sup>

Before me the subscriber one of the Justices of the Peace<sup>64</sup> in and for Huntingdon County afore said - personally appeared, on the tenth<sup>65</sup> day of September Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and fifty nine, John G. Miles one of the above named parties of the first part, and acknowledged the forgoing instrument - or Indenture tripartite, to be his act and deed, and desired that as such it may be recorded according to law. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year aforesaid.

David Snare J[uris]. D[octo]r. (Seal)

Pennsylvania

Blair County<sup>66</sup> ss.

Be it remembered that on the twenty first day of September A[nno]. D[omini]. 1859 Michael Berry one of the above named parties of the first part, personally appeared before me the subscriber one of the Justices of the Peace in and for the County aforesaid and

<sup>60</sup> Presumably David Snare (1798–1874), justice of the peace, Huntingdon County.

<sup>61</sup> Presumably William Smith (dates unknown), justice of the peace, Blair County.

<sup>62</sup> County in the south-central part of the U.S. state of Pennsylvania.

<sup>63</sup> Abbreviation of the Latin "scilicet," meaning "namely," "it is permitted to know."

<sup>64</sup> Local judicial officers.

<sup>65</sup> Blank space before and after "tenth."

<sup>66</sup> County in the south-central part of the U.S. state of Pennsylvania.

acknowledged the foregoing instrument or Indenture to be his act and deed[,] and desired that as such it may be recorded according to law [-] In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal the day & year aforesaid Witness  
W[illia]m Smith J[uris] D[oc]tor] (Seal)

City of Pittsburgh, ss. -

Before me, an alderman<sup>67</sup> of said city personally came John W. Duncan and Martha K. Duncan, his wife, and acknowledged the foregoing indenture to be their act and deed, and desired the same to be recorded as such. And the said Martha, being by me examined separate and apart from her said husband, and the contents of said indenture first made fully known to her, upon such examination, being of full age declared that she did sign, seal and as her act and deed deliver the same of her own free will and accord, without any coercion or compulsion of her said husband. Witness my hand and seal this 21<sup>st</sup> day of October, 1859.

R. MORROW<sup>68</sup> (Seal)

[Page 4]

City of Pittsburgh, ss. -

Before me, an alderman of said city personally came Nathaniel Holmes, and acknowledged the foregoing indenture to be his act and deed, and desired that the same might be recorded as such. Witness my hand and seal the 25<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1859.

R. MORROW (seal)

Blair County ss. -

Before me, a Justice of the Peace in and for said County, this day came Richard R. Bryan and acknowledged the foregoing Indenture to be his act and deed, and desired that the same might be recorded as such - Witness my hand and seal this 26<sup>th</sup> October 1859

J. Gourley<sup>69</sup> J[ustice of the] P[ea]ce]. (Seal)

3256-141-181 Nov 2/59

## DEED

John G. Miles & Michael Berry[,]

Acting Ex[ecuto]rs of Dr. Peter Shoenberger[,] of the 1<sup>st</sup> part &

John W. Duncan & wife of the 2<sup>nd</sup> part

to Rich[ar]d R. Bryan & Nathaniel Holmes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> part -

&

Rich[ar]d R. Bryan & Nathaniel Holmes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> part -

to

---

<sup>67</sup> Member of a municipal council or assembly.

<sup>68</sup> Presumably Robert Morrow.

<sup>69</sup> Perhaps a John Gourley, must have been 21 or older in 1859 to qualify.



John G. Miles and Michael Berry[,]  
 Acting Ex[ecuto]rs of Dr. Peter Shoenberger[,] dec[eased]  
 [flourish]

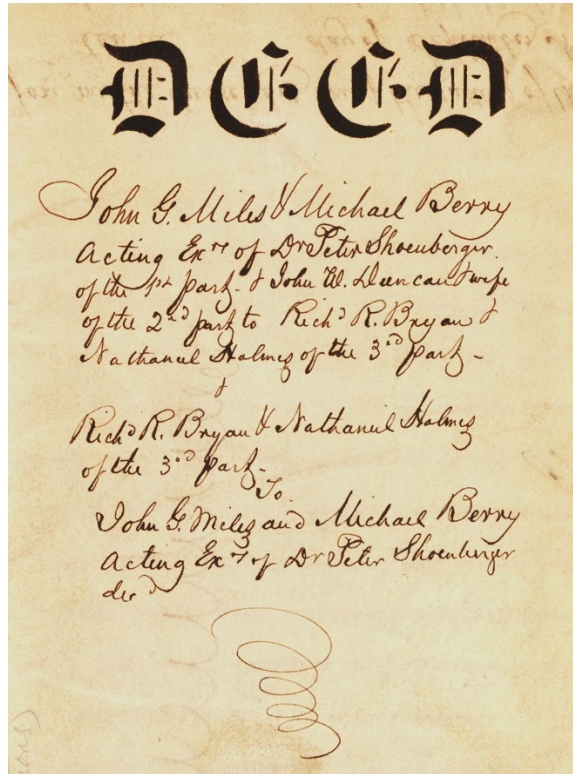


Figure 3: Image, Excerpt of Edition, page 4.

Tax & fee 3.25 paid

[in pencil]

21<sup>st</sup> Oct[ober]

[ink]

Alleghany County

Received in the office for the Recording of deeds in and for said county in deed book  
 vol[ume] 141 page 181 Given under my hand and the seal of said office the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of  
 November A[nno] D[omini] 1859

H. Patterson[,]<sup>70</sup> Recorder

[in pencil, modern hand]

10-76 Nash Coll[ection]. (Patrons 5.—) 3 0500 00814 6220

<sup>70</sup> Presumably Henry Whitely Patterson (1836–1882).

Parker Maisterra, Nicholas Murray, Xavier Nunez-Sundara,  
Brianna Sparks, and Chase Thomas (editors)

### *Got Seeds?*

*Letters from Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Cultivating the U.S. Midwest and Denmark (1875–1878)*

### *Shelfmark*

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).  
University Archives and Special Collections (UA&SC).  
Haven Seed Company Records Collection.  
LH-2014-01, Carton 2, File 13.  
Letters from Jens Pedersen Bjergaard to Edwin Melancthon Haven.  
June 4, 1875, to July 25, 1878.  
15 correspondences (numbered 1 to 15 below).

### *Introduction*

The fifteen correspondences edited here were addressed by the Danish agricultural economist Jens Pedersen-Bjergaard (1843–1930) to the American agricultural pioneer Edwin Melancthon Haven (1855–1917) between June 4, 1875, and July 25, 1878. They are housed in the University Archives and Special Collections (UA&SC) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), and belong to the “Haven Seed Company Records” Collection. Purchased by CSUF from the Orange County Historical Society (OCHS) in 2014 for \$5,000, this collection had been donated to the OCHS between 1978 and 1981 by Randy Ema of Anaheim on behalf of his stepfather, Archibald B. Haven Jr. (1914–1986), who was Edwin Melancthon Haven’s grandson. It includes the business records of the Haven Seed Company (1873–1946) and the personal papers of the Haven family (1849–1980). The letters, postcards, and envelopes edited here are, for the most part, written in black-ink cursive on paper; their specific measurements are included below; and they are in good condition apart from some stains, tears, folds, stamp smudges, and areas of discoloration. For their vital assistance in identifying and tracking down the historical Jens Pedersen-Bjergaard (who in these manuscripts only appears as “J. Pedersen”), the editors wish to thank professors Jeppe Nevers (Syddansk Universitet, Denmark) and Kurt Villads Jensen (Stockholms Universitet, Sweden); see also [online](#).

The series begins as formal business communication and gradually develops into a personal friendship. Eleven correspondences hail from Rockford (Illinois), one from Chicago, and three from Denmark (Aarhus, Odense, and Copenhagen). While employed by the seed company of J. B. Root in Rockford, Pedersen writes primarily for business purposes, requesting seed samples and information on plant varieties, as he is envisioning their suitability for the Danish environment. Pedersen mentions his travels, which include a visit to the 1876 “Centennial International Exhibition,” a world’s fair in Philadelphia 100 years after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence; he refers to news from the Root, Haven, and Pedersen families; and he indicates his difficulties settling back into professional life in Denmark after a ten-year

stay in the American Midwest. In his final letter, Pedersen mentions a visit to Denmark by former U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant and hints at his brother's plans to travel to the United States.

These correspondences should be of interest to scholars of nineteenth-century migration and interpersonal networks between Europe and North America, agricultural and economic history, and epistolography. The manuscripts' original paragraphs, spelling, punctuation, and underlining have been retained as much as possible. In the original text, capitalization is not always clear. All editorial insertions, including expanded abbreviations, added punctuation, and page numbers, appear in square brackets. Identifiable individuals, locations, and technical terms (but not botanical specimens mentioned by their English names) have been referenced in the footnotes, usually when they first appear.

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*The primary-source edition published below originated in the "History and Editing" course offered by CSUF's Department of History.*

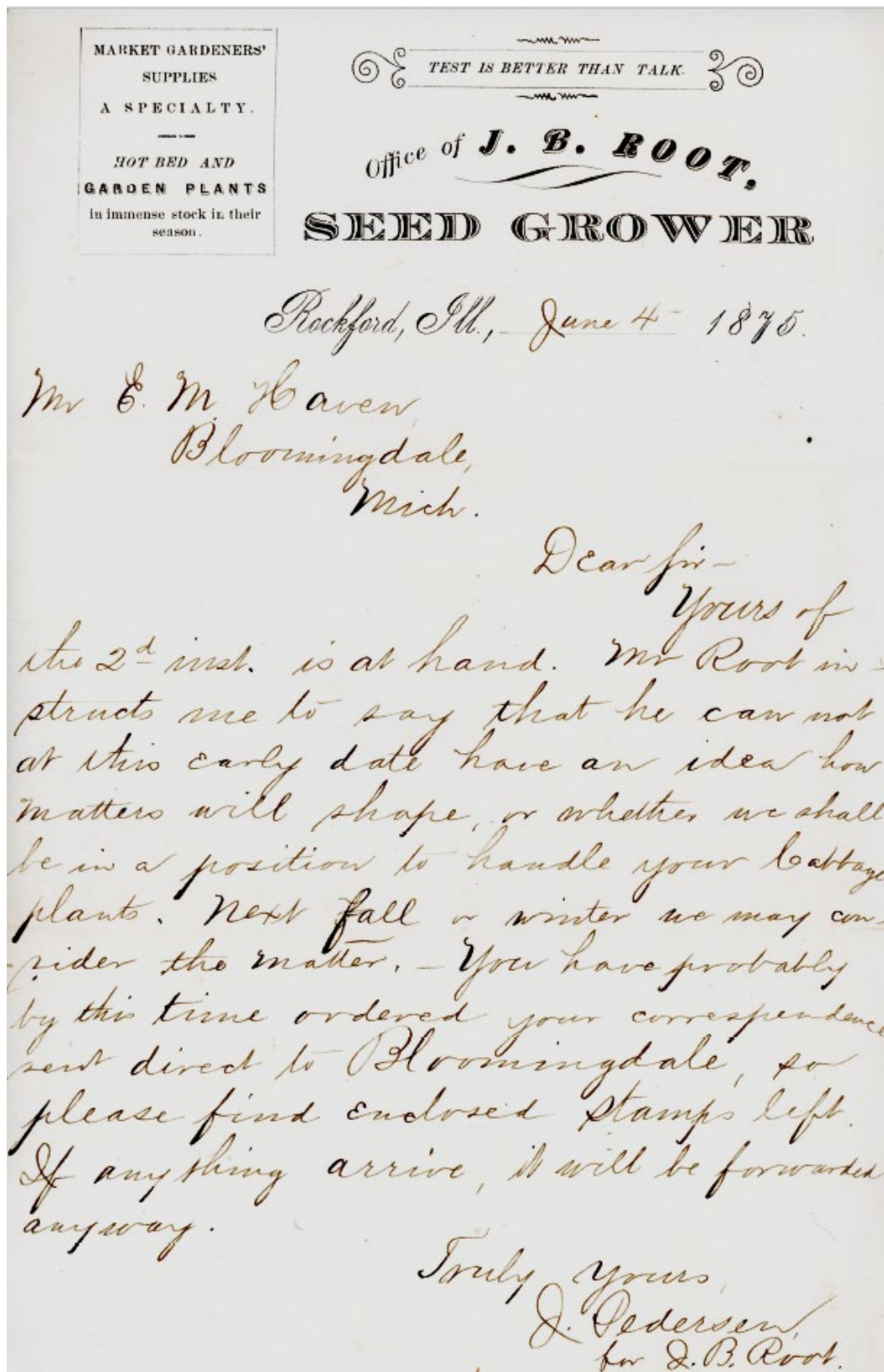


Figure 1: Image of Edition No. 1, stationery.

*Edition No. 1: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, June 4, 1875.*

*[envelope, front; 6" x 3.5"; top left corner, sender's address, printed: J[ohn]. B[arnes]. ROOT<sup>1</sup> / SEED GROWER / Rockford;<sup>2</sup> Ill[inoi]s.<sup>3</sup> / Return if not called for in 10 days; top right, round postal mark, stamped: ROCKFORD / ILL[INOIS] / JUN[E] 5; top right corner, green postal stamp, canceled, featuring a side-view portrait of George Washington:<sup>4</sup> U.S. POSTAGE / THREE CENTS / 3; text, ink (crossed out in pencil/different hand/Edwin Haven):]*

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven,<sup>5</sup>  
Bloomingtondale,<sup>6</sup>  
Van Buren Co[unty].<sup>7</sup>  
Mich[igan].<sup>8</sup>

*[stationery; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: MARKET GARDENERS' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY / HOT BED AND / GARDEN PLANTS / in immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS BETTER THAN TALK / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_ 1875; text, ink:]*

June 4

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomingtondale,  
Mich[igan].

Dear Sir -

Yours of the 2<sup>[n]d</sup> inst[ante mense].<sup>9</sup> is at hand. Mr[.] Root instructs me to say that he can not at this early date have an idea how matters will shape, or whether we shall be in a position to handle your Cabbage plants. Next fall or winter we may consider the matter. - You have probably by this time ordered your correspondence sent direct to Bloomingtondale, so please find enclosed stamps left. If anything arrive, it will be forwarded anyway.

Truly yours,  
J[ens]. Pedersen,<sup>10</sup>  
for J[ohn]. B[arnes]. Root.

---

<sup>1</sup> (1845–1876), seed grower and gardener.

<sup>2</sup> City in the northern part of the U.S. state of Illinois.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. state in the Midwest.

<sup>4</sup> (1732–1799), first U.S. president (in office 1789–1797).

<sup>5</sup> (1855–1917), American agricultural pioneer.

<sup>6</sup> Village in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of Michigan.

<sup>7</sup> County in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of Michigan.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. state in the Midwest.

<sup>9</sup> Latin, meaning "of the current month."

<sup>10</sup> (1843–1930) Danish agricultural economist. Jens Pedersen Bjergaard (1843–1930).

*Edition No. 2: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, June 14, 1875.*

*[envelope, front; 6" x 3.5"; top left corner, sender's address, printed: J[ohn]. B[arnes]. ROOT / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inoi]s. / Return if not called for in 10 days; top right, round postal mark, stamped: ROCKFORD / ILL[INOIS] / JUN[E] 14; top right corner, green postal stamp, canceled, featuring a side-view portrait of George Washington: U.S. POSTAGE / THREE CENTS / 3; text, ink (lines 1–4) and pencil/different hand/Edwin Haven (lines 5–6):]*

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven,  
Bloomingdale,  
Van Buren Co[unty].  
Mich[igan].

ans[wered] June 16  
1875

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: MARKET GARDENERS' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY / HOT BED AND / GARDEN PLANTS / in immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS BETTER THAN TALK / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_ 1875; text, ink:]*

June 14

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven,  
Bloomingdale,  
Mich[igan].

Dear Sir:

Having been ill and absent for a couple of days, I find this morning at the office a letter for you which please find enclosed.

And now, being about writing to you, I would like to ask you a question or two, which you will oblige me by answering at your leisure: What kinds of trees do you find to do best on poor sandy land? and what is their comparative value and use? They are contemplating to plant an extensive tract of barren sandy heath<sup>11</sup> in a certain part of Denmark with useful forest trees. I have just opened correspondence with several

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink (with a flourish at the bottom of the page):]*

of the most prominent and leading men in the country in regard to the matter. It will of course take quite a while before any decision can be made, and I would like to be prepared to meet enquiries as promptly as possible.

Were any of the trees you may propose to recommend for a poor soil represented in the samples of wood you so kindly furnished me? If not, I would be greatly obliged for such

---

<sup>11</sup> Open, uncultivated land.

samples, and if you can furnish them without going to too much trouble, please let me know, and I will send on the required stamps.

If, in return, I can favor you, I will be pleased to do so.

Yours truly,  
J[ens]. Pedersen.

P[ost].O[ffice]. Box 2089

*Edition No. 3: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, July 3, 1875.*

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: MARKET GARDENERS' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY / HOT BED AND / GARDEN PLANTS / in immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS BETTER THAN TALK / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_ 1875; text, ink:]*

July 3<sup>rd</sup>

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven,  
Bloomington,  
Mich[igan].

Dear Sir:

Thanks for your favor<sup>12</sup> of the 16<sup>th</sup> ult[imo mense].<sup>13</sup> with kind suggestions. I felt like expressing my acknowledgement long ago, but then again I have not been in good health and have been indisposed to almost anything. I thoroughly appreciate your offer to furnish further samples of wood. If it be not "encroaching too much on good nature,[" I would be glad to have you send me duplicates of very small (thin) specimens of what I have already got and such others as your own judgment will suggest, as I have proposed to send samples to various prominent parties at home.<sup>14</sup> Another

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink and (last line) pencil/different hand/Edwin Haven:]*

thing, that would be very acceptable is foliage (pressed) of the different kinds, for flowers of the Tulip Tree &c[etera].<sup>15</sup> I presume it is too late now. For whatever you may send, in the way indicated, I beg you to accept my thanks in advance.

This summer I shall, in all probability have to stay nicely at home. Next year, by this time, or perhaps somewhat later, I propose, if Providence be willing, to start for Europe. The fates may then carry me round your way.

---

<sup>12</sup> Nineteenth-century synonym for "letter" or "correspondence."

<sup>13</sup> Latin, meaning "of the last month."

<sup>14</sup> In Denmark.

<sup>15</sup> Abbreviation of the Latin "et cetera," meaning "and others."

Mr[.] Johnson left here for Chicago<sup>16</sup> a couple of days ago.

Do not put yourself to too much trouble for the sake of obtaining specimens.

I am

Yours very truly,

J[ens]. Pedersen.

Stamps enclosed!

(July 29: asked 2<sup>nd</sup> time for wood list.)

*Edition No. 4: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, August 4, 1875.*

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: MARKET GARDENERS' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY / HOT BED AND / GARDEN PLANTS / in immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS BETTER THAN TALK / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_ 1875; text, ink:]*

Aug[ust] 4<sup>th</sup>

Mr[.] Edwin M[elancthon]. Haven

Bloomington, Mich[igan].

Dear Sir:

Your card of the 29<sup>th</sup> ult[imo mense]. came to hand a few days ago - your former Postal, referred to, never reached me. Having the list of samples at home, I forgot it time after time. On the next page is a copy of samples received[.] If you have any new ones to add, will be pleased to receive them. Mr[.] Root has returned after a short roundabout to sundry places. Everything is very quiet at Rockford just now. There is hardly anything for any one to do for some time to come. I should rather prefer a steady routine the year round. The see[d] harvest will probably commence by the first or middle of September.

With thanks for favors, I remain

Truly yours,

J[ens]. Pedersen.

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink and (final word at N° 12) pencil/different hand/Edwin Haven:]*

N<sup>o</sup>17

- 1A Plain Sugar Maple
- 1B Birds. Eye "[Sugar Maple]"
- 1C Curly "[Sugar Maple]"

<sup>16</sup> City in the northeastern part of the U.S. state of Illinois.

<sup>17</sup> This list constitutes the "copy of samples received" by Jens Pedersen from Edwin Haven, referenced on the previous page.



- 2 White Ash
- 3 White Oak
- 4 Snow Wood
- 5 Hickory. - What variety? -
- 6 White Birch
- 7 Hemlock
- 8 Beech - What variety? -
- 9 Rock Glen
- 10 Black Walnut
- 11 Sycamore
- 12 White Pine - is this the same as Michigan Pine? - Yes.
- 13 Cherry
- 14 Basswood or Linden
- 15 Butternut or White Walnut
- 16 White Wood or Tulip Tree
- 17 Soft Maple
- 18 Tamarack.

*Edition No. 5: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, August 12, 1875.*

*[envelope, front; 6" x 3.5"; top left corner, sender's address, printed: J[ohn]. B[arnes]. ROOT / SEED  
GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inoi]s. / Return if not called for in 10 days; top right, round postal mark,  
stamped: ROCKFORD / ILL[INOIS] / AUG[UST] 22; top right corner, green postal stamp, canceled,  
featuring a side-view portrait of George Washington: U.S. POSTAGE / THREE CENTS / 3; text, ink:]*

Mr[.] Edwin M[elancthon]. Haven,  
Bloomingtondale,  
Van Buren Co[unty].  
Mich[igan].

*[envelope, back; text, pencil/different hand/Edwin Haven, with "x" marks in ink:]*

~~Onion~~  
Cabbage  
Cucumber X  
Melon X  
Tomato X  
  
Pear  
Beans, D.  
Corn  
Cabbage X  
Quince X

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: MARKET GARDENERS' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY  
/ HOT BED AND / GARDEN PLANTS / in immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS*

BETTER THAN TALK / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_\_  
1875; text, ink:]

Aug[ust] 12

Mr[.] Edwin M[elancthon]. Haven,  
Bloomingtondale,  
Mich[igan].

My dear Sir:

Samples came to hand several days ago. Accept my thanks for the pains you have been at and the very neat and accurate way in which you have disposed of the task. I really feel ashamed to have troubled you and know not how to requite your favor. I know not whether I shall find occasion to use the samples in a commercial way, but, at any rate, they are interesting to me. - I have been speaking with Mr[.] Root about you. He is of opinion that the work will be altogether too rough and driving for you. He feels the necessity, too, of cutting down expenses as much as possible; and as he of course will oversee the operations himself, he calculates to get along

[stationery, page 2; text, ink:]

with a corps of strong, active, unskilled boys whom he can get a moderate rate of wages. He has expressed that you might come here and witness the manipulations if that would be any object with you, and enough so to justify, in your opinion, the expense of travel &c[etera]. - You will perhaps recollect that I rented a private room a few days before you left Rockford. If you would be content to live in the same frugal manner that I have to do and share room with me, the monthly expenses would probably not exeeed \$11 or 12<sup>00</sup> - and might perhaps be kept below that.

The prospects for seed crops here are very promising, especially if we get some warmer weather soon; otherwise it is questionable if Melons and the like will ripen. We have quite a show of flowers - Petunias, Phlox, Asters (very fine), Portulacas[,] Balsams, Verbenas, Pansies &c[etera]. - but the weeds are fully up to them in luxuriance, and refuse to be kept down. - If you think of making any arrangement with Mr[.] Root, I would recommend that you write him personally.

With thanks for favors, I remain  
Yours very truly,  
J[ens]. Pedersen.

*Edition No. 6: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, August 25, 1875.*

*[envelope, front; 6" x 3.5"; top right, round postal mark, stamped: ROCKFORD / ILL[INOIS] / AUG[UST]  
26; top right corner, green postal stamp, canceled, featuring a side-view portrait of George  
Washington: U.S. POSTAGE / THREE CENTS / 3; text, ink:]*

Mr[.] Edwin M[elancthon]. Haven,  
Bloomingtondale,  
Van Buren Co[unty].  
Mich[igan].

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: MARKET GARDENERS' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY  
/ HOT BED AND / GARDEN PLANTS / in immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS  
BETTER THAN TALK / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_  
1875; text, ink:]*

August 25<sup>th</sup>

Mr[.] Edwin M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomingtondale,  
Mich[igan].

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 24<sup>th</sup> (yesterday) just received. I do not think it necessary for you to come here in person in order to obtain a contract; and as to the gathering and curing<sup>18</sup> of seeds, common sense and some experience will afford all needed teaching.

In writing to Mr[.] Root in regard to seed-growing, it might be well to set forth what you have special facilities for growing in utmost perfection.

Truly yours,  
J[ens]. Pedersen.

*[stationery, page 2; text, pencil/different hand/Edwin Haven, crossed out, presumably a draft:]*

Mr. J[ohn]. B[arnes]. Root:

Dear Sir Enclosed is five (\$5.00) doll[ars.] for E[arly]. J[ersey]. Wak[efield] cab[bage]. seed. Brill<sup>19</sup> sends us increased prices - cause, short crops.

Send to Geo[rge]. W[ashington]. Haven<sup>20</sup>  
Bloomingtondale  
Mich[igan].  
Van Buren Co[unty].

<sup>18</sup> Drying.

<sup>19</sup> [Francis] Brill Seed Company, established 1828 in Jersey City, New Jersey, by John Brill, Francis's father.

<sup>20</sup> (1831–1906), Edwin Haven's father.

Mr. -

Kind friend When I left you

*Edition No. 7: Jens Pedersen on behalf of J. B. Root to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, December 9, 1875.*

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: MARKET GARDENERS' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY  
/ HOT BED AND / GARDEN PLANTS / in immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS  
BETTER THAN TALK / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_\_  
1875; text, ink:]*

Dec[ember] 9<sup>th</sup>

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst[ante mense]. is at hand. I know no cause to assign for the failure with cabbage you mention, but have heard of somewhat similar cases with overgrown cold-frame plants; something, perhaps, may be in the season. We should think that by replanting the Lima Beans another season or two, you can bring them up to earlier maturity, as southern grown seeds generally require a longer season than northern grown. Hathaways<sup>21</sup> Tomato was with us the least satisfactory this year; the quality was good, but the yield not quite satisfactory. I think next year will be very favorable for

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink:]*

growing onions for Market, as so many quit the business owing to low prices this year.

I would be well pleased to make some arrangement with you for growing seeds for me, and would make you the best terms I possibly can. Still I wish you to bear in mind some of the disadvantages (if I may say so) of seed-growing, among which is the long credits. I would not advise you to give your attention much to the vines, as we grow them so largely here; but would more especially recommend Cabbages and biennial crops and such other kinds as your climate and circumstances seem especially to favor. Please give me an idea of what you think you can grow to best advantage. If we make an arrangement, I would try to visit you once or twice during the growing season.

We are all well and send you our best regards.

Yours Truly

J[ohn]. B[arnes]. Root

[Jens] P[edersen].

---

<sup>21</sup> The origins of the name for the "Hathaway Excelsior" heirloom tomato are unclear.

*Edition No. 8: Jens Pedersen on behalf of J. B. Root to Edwin Haven, Rockford, Illinois, January 4, 1876.*

*[envelope, front; 6" x 3.5"; top left corner, sender's address, printed: J[ohn]. B[arnes]. ROOT / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inoi]s. / Return if not called for in 10 days; top right, round postal mark, stamped: ROCKFORD / ILL[INOIS] / 2; top right corner, green postal stamp, canceled, featuring a side-view portrait of George Washington: U.S. POSTAGE / THREE CENTS / 3; text, ink:]*

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomington  
Van Buren Co[unty].  
Mich[igan].

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: MARKET GARDENERS' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY / HOT BED AND / GARDEN PLANTS / in immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS BETTER THAN TALK / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_ 1875 (with the "5" overwritten with a "6" in ink); text, ink:]*

Jan[uary] 4

Mr[.] Edwin M[elancthon]. Haven,  
Bloomington,  
Mich[igan].

Dear Sir:

You may make your own choice as to what kinds of seed you would rather grow. I shall have occasion for the different kinds you mention, and will be glad to make arrangements with you. The contract price will depend somewhat on the varieties elected. The customary time of settlement with seed growers is the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. I intend to visit you once or twice during the summer; we may then confer on various matters in detail.

Yours Truly,  
J[ohn]. B[arnes]. Root  
[Jens] P[edersen].

Over<sup>22</sup>

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink:]*

Have you ever tried Carrot?

---

<sup>22</sup> Like the one-liner question on the next page, this word is written in a different, less regular hand, presumably J. B. Root's. Root would die later that year, on November 29, 1876, of heart disease.

*Edition No. 09: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, March 2, 1876.*

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: Market Gardeners' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY / Hot Bed and / Garden Plants / In immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS BETTER THAN TALK. / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / Seed Grower / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_ 1876; text, ink:]*

Mar[ch]. 2

E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomingdale, Mich[igan].

Dear Sir:

It is in the midst of our hurry that I write these lines, and I shall therefore be curt as possible: I am sorry I did not commission you in due time to save me a few Black Walnuts and Shellbark Hickory Nuts with which to make a little inexpensive experiment in Denmark. Do you know how they are to [be] kept in order to preserve their vegetative Power? and do they grow in your vicinity? You are not in a position, I suppose, just now to send by mail to Denmark about a pound each of the

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink:]*

of the named sorts of nuts? If you are, be kind enough to advise me at once, and I will remit your price by return mail. Postage is the same as within the boundaries of the U[nited]. S[tates]. - They would have to be packed as light as possible in pasteboards 2 lbs<sup>23</sup> 3 oz<sup>24</sup> is the most that can be sent in one package. They might be divided.

Please advise me and oblige

Your Truly

J[ens]. Pedersen

*Edition No. 10: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, March 16, 1876.*

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: Market Gardeners' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY / Hot Bed and / Garden Plants / In immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS BETTER THAN TALK. / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / Seed Grower / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_ 1876; text, ink:]*

Mar[ch] 16 -

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomingdale, Mich[igan].

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<sup>23</sup> Abbreviation for "pounds."

<sup>24</sup> Abbreviation for "ounces."

Dear Sir: -

Your letter of a few days ago was received, but is not just now at hand. A person employed here has promised to obtain a few Black Walnuts to send home<sup>25</sup> for trial, also some Maple seeds, which I shall send with other matters. The maximum that can be sent in the package by mail to Denmark is 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounces, packing and all. Postage is 2 c[en]ts for every 2 oz or fraction of 2 oz. - I have had so many things sent home this year for trial that it is perhaps best not to undertake any more until I get home myself and can assist in carrying

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink:]*

the experiments. Though I do not calculate on it as a source of income, I am interested even to enthusiasm in introducing some of our excellent American forrest trees in Denmark. Before I start for Denmark - via Philadelphia<sup>26</sup> - I would perhaps wish to ask a favor of you, and leave a small amount with you to pay for just a few seeds by mail, to my address in Denmark, next fall. - Business is driving just now. Most of the "boys" are here yet; Chally<sup>27</sup> among others; one or two have left the city. Mr[.] Johnsen is here again as packer. There is one male and one female assistant in the office. Two ladies beside Mrs[.] Root<sup>28</sup> in packing room. Mr[.] R[oot]. built last fall a handy little green-house. I think if I were in your situation, I would not wish much more. "Free and independent"<sup>29</sup> - room and chance for experiments - and opportunity to prepare yourself for a local "Florist's" business in some city in your vicinity (?) and now, in the mean time, seed growing - Enough, you ought to be real happy. And here punctum finalum.<sup>30</sup>

I will be glad to hear from you at your leisure  
Yours Truly,  
J[ens]. Pedersen

*Edition No. 11: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Rockford, Illinois, April 30, 1876.*

*[envelope, front; 6" x 3.5"; top left corner, sender's address, printed: J[ohn]. B[arnes]. ROOT / SEED GROWER / Rockford, Ill[inoi]s. / Return if not called for in 10 days; top right, round postal mark, stamped: ROCKFORD / ILL[INOIS] / MAY 11; top right corner, green postal stamp, canceled, featuring a side-view portrait of George Washington: U.S. POSTAGE / THREE CENTS / 3; text, ink:]*

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomington

<sup>25</sup> To Denmark.

<sup>26</sup> City in the southeastern part of the U.S. state of Pennsylvania.

<sup>27</sup> There were several members of the Chally family (of Norwegian descent) in Grundy County and Kendall County, Illinois, at this time, including John R. Chally (1862–1941), Louis R. Chally (1855–1885), Rasmus A. Chally (1857–1930).

<sup>28</sup> Ella Amanda Giddings Root (1845–1942), John Barnes Root's wife, who carried on their family's seed business after his passing.

<sup>29</sup> Edwin Haven was still unmarried in 1876.

<sup>30</sup> Incorrect Latin, meaning "the final point" (should be "punctum finale").

Van Buren Co[unty].  
Mich[igan].

*[envelope, back; text, ink/different hand/Edwin Haven:]*

Negundo aceroides.<sup>31</sup>

2089

*[stationery, page 1; 9" x 6"; top left corner, printed: Market Gardeners' / SUPPLIES / A SPECIALTY / Hot Bed and / Garden Plants / In immense stock in their season; top right, printed: TEST IS BETTER THAN TALK. / Office of J[OHN]. B[ARNES]. ROOT, / Seed Grower / Rockford, Ill[inois], \_\_\_\_ 1876; text, ink (first sentence written in the top left corner):]*

Does the box elder maple flourish in your vicinity?

April 30 -

My dear Sir: -

I owe you thanks for your last kind favor of the 10<sup>th</sup> inst[ante mense]. I would have answered it long ago, but alas for time! Every minute seems to be preoccupied. I have got a good deal of correspondence and matters to arrange in view of my proposed homeward journey.<sup>32</sup> In about 5 or 6 weeks I intend to start laying my way round Philadelphia. Accept my thanks for your hospitable invitation to visit you on my way thither, and be assured that I would have been much pleased to accept, but for one reason, and I think you can appreciate it: I find it necessary to practise the strictest

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink:]*

economy and to plan my traveling accordingly. I shall be encumbered by a great deal of baggage, and it is therefore desirable to go over the most direct route. I have spent quite considerable on plants and seeds and implements that I wish to try, and which will yield no immediate return, if they do not fail entirely, and then there are thousand unthought-of things wanted in a new business. I have a faint hope, in the progress of time, to visit America on a business tour; I will then take pleasure in endeavoring to "look you up." When I have reached home, and after I have got matters tolerably arranged, I wish to correspond with you with regard to forest tree seeds &c[etera]. I know not what may be wanted in this direction, until I have consulted with ~~fl~~ forest culturists. Before I close, let me congratulate you! I infer from your remarks that you have chosen your lady companion for life.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Type of box elder, boxelder maple, Manitoba maple or ash-leaved maple.

<sup>32</sup> To Denmark.

<sup>33</sup> Possibly an early reference to Edwin Haven's future wife, Ludema "Dema" Delphine Pelong (1859–1934), although the two did not start courting until the following year (after her eighteenth birthday); they married on February 27, 1878. See Matthew Nguyen, Rielly K. Orrell, and Gregorio Ivan Urueta, eds., "Seeds of Faith in a Midwestern Diary (1877–1878, 1881): The Recollections of Edwin M. Haven as a Young Man," *The Welebaethan: A Journal of History* 52 (2025): 207–208 (entry for August 31, 1877).



Mr[.] and Mrs[.] Root have lost their sweet little girl, Stella.<sup>34</sup> She was buried about a week ago. Mr[.] Chandlers have encreased their family with a daughter.

I wish God-speed!

Yours truly

J[ens]. Pedersen.



Figure 2: Image of Edition No. 12, envelope.

Edition No. 12: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Chicago, Illinois, June 23, 1876.

[envelope, front, torn on right; 6" x 3.5"; top right, round postal mark, stamped: CHICAGO / ILL[INOIS] / JUNE 23 6PM; top right corner, blue postal stamp, canceled, featuring a side-view portrait of Benjamin Franklin:<sup>35</sup> U.S. POSTAGE / ONE CENT / 1; red postal stamp, canceled, bottom torn off, featuring a side-view portrait of Andrew Jackson:<sup>36</sup> U.S. POSTAGE / TWO CENTS / 2; text, purple ink:]

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomingdale  
Van Buren Co[unty].  
Mic[higan]

[stationery, page 1; text, purple ink:]

Chicago, Ill[inois]. June 23 - [18]76

Mr[.] Edw[in]. M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomingdale, Mich[igan].

<sup>34</sup> Stella F. Root (1872–April 17, 1876) died of "brain fever."

<sup>35</sup> (1706–1790), one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

<sup>36</sup> (1767–1845), seventh U.S. president (in office 1829–1837).

My dear Sir: -

Your last favor was duly received at Rockford. I have been driven with business and put off writing, and here I am so beset by friends that I can do no more than just say bid you a cordial good-bye! I left Rockford yesterday. All is well there. I hope to meet Mr. and Mrs[.] Root in this city<sup>37</sup> Monday next<sup>38</sup> on their way to Philadelphia.

Enclosed please find \$1<sup>00</sup>, just one dollar, for which I may wish you to send me a few seeds for growing specimen plants when I get home<sup>39</sup> and find out what I want. Black Walnut, Tulip tree and White Pine I am especially desirous

*[stationery, page 2; text, purple ink:]*

to get some of, but I will write you further when I get rested a little at home.<sup>40</sup>

I appreciate and return the sentiments expressed in your last letter, and remain  
Cordially yours  
J[ens]. Pedersen

Please pardon my hurried scribbling. I have not got the least rest.

*Edition No. 13: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Aarhus, Denmark, Aug[ust]. 30, 1876.*

*[envelope, front; 6" x 3.5"; top right, round postal mark, stamped, text illegible except for: SEP[TEMBER]  
16; text, purple ink:]*

Mr[.] Ed[win]. Haven  
c/o Geo[rge] H. (?) Haven<sup>41</sup> Esq[ui]re.<sup>42</sup>  
Bloomingdale  
Van Buren Co[unty].  
Mich[igan].  
Nord Amerika

*[stationery, page 1; text, ink:]*

Aarhus,<sup>43</sup> Denmark, Aug[ust]. 30 - 1876

Mr[.] Ed[win]. Haven  
Bloomingdale, Mich[igan].

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<sup>37</sup> Chicago.

<sup>38</sup> June 26, 1876.

<sup>39</sup> To Denmark.

<sup>40</sup> In Denmark.

<sup>41</sup> George Washington Haven (1831–1906), Edwin Haven's father.

<sup>42</sup> General courtesy title, used for any respectable gentleman.

<sup>43</sup> City on the eastern shore of Jutland in central Denmark.

My dear Sir:

According to promise I write you a few hurried lines after sufficient delay; the fact is, it is very difficult to fall into the writing mood. The grandeur of the Centennial Exh[ibition]<sup>44</sup> surprised me, of course, beyond expectation; pity, I could not afford to stay there for a greater length of time. - The voyag[e] across the Atlantic was very fair. I went via England by rail, then across the North Sea to Hamburg,<sup>45</sup> and thence direct by rail home.<sup>46</sup> I am well pleased with matters generally in Denmark. Vast improvements have been made in many

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink:]*

directions during my ten years' absence.<sup>47</sup> Many of my relatives and friends I found it difficult to identify, so changed had they become. Life in Denmark is proportionately quiet and regular and flows on at an even tenor; there may be stoppages, but there are but few and slight convulsions. I have just returned from a very pleasant trip to Copenhagen.<sup>48</sup> A more pleasant city to visit or live in is hardly to be found. In some respects it is unique. I spent much of my time in the museums of arts and science.<sup>49</sup> Not only the city itself but its surroundings for miles are beautiful beyond any preconceived idea. The Sound between Denmark and Sweden,<sup>50</sup> all along from Copenhagen to Elsinore<sup>51</sup> is studded with picturesque villas looking out from their moderate elevations

*[stationery, page 3; text, ink:]*

amid clumps of woods and larger forests on the hundreds of vessels and steamers that continually ply up and down the Sound. The only drawback to my enjoyment was and is the anxi[e]ty of mind one is conscious of until settled in permanent business. To reach this point is more difficult than I had anticipated, partly because a small amount due me has not been paid promptly as promised. The winter will have to be spent mainly in preparatory work. The question of planting forest trees for shelter, timber and ornament is becoming very popular, as is also the laying out of orchards, and there will doubtless be much to do in this direction in years to come. I will be much obliged if you will send me a small lot in such proportion

*[stationery, page 4; text, ink:]*

as you think best, of the following tree seeds for trial and sample grounds, viz:<sup>52</sup> Black Walnut, Tulip Tree, ~~and~~ White Pine and Hemlock, and if there are any other Kind or variety in your

---

<sup>44</sup> Centennial International Exhibition, world's fair in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 10–November 10, 1876, 100 years after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, in the same city.

<sup>45</sup> City in northern Germany.

<sup>46</sup> To Denmark.

<sup>47</sup> Suggesting that he stayed in the United States from 1866 (post Civil War) until 1876.

<sup>48</sup> Capital city of Denmark on the islands of Zealand and Amager.

<sup>49</sup> This would have included the National Museum (established 1807), possibly the Thorvaldsens Museum (established 1848), as well as other institutions.

<sup>50</sup> Known as Øresund.

<sup>51</sup> Helsingør, city in northeastern Denmark, north of Copenhagen.

<sup>52</sup> Abbreviation of the Latin "videlicet," meaning "that is to say."

vicinity that you think much of for ornament or use, you might add a small proportion. I would be very glad for an opportunity to render you services in return for your kindness. Perhaps we may have occasion to transact business together in coming years.

I bear in mind your kind invitation before I left America and wish you to present my cordial compliments to your parents.<sup>53</sup>

Sincerely and regardfully

Yours,

J[ens]. Pedersen

Østergade N<sup>o</sup> 20<sup>54</sup>



Figure 3: Image of Edition No. 14, postcard, front.

Edition No. 14: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Odense, Denmark, Feb[ruary]. 14, 1877.

[postcard, front; 5.5" x 3"; blue decorative framing on all four sides; top left corner, the state version of the royal coat of arms of Denmark in blue, with a crown, three lions passant, and the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece; top left, round postal mark, stamped: ODENSE<sup>55</sup> / 15 - 2 [February] / 2 [Hamburg] POST; top center, printed in blue: BREV-KORT. [postcard] / (Paa denne Side skrives kun Adressen.) [On this side, write only the address.]; top right corner, blue postal stamp, canceled, featuring a crown, a wreath of wheat, and a postal horn: DANMARK [Denmark] / 4 / POSTFRIM 4 ØRE [Postage 4 Øre]; to the left of the stamp, two side-by-side stamp-shaped sections of yellowed discoloration; text, printed: Til [To]; text, ink:]

Mr[.] E[dwin]. M[elancthon]. Haven  
Bloomingdale  
Van Buren Co[unty].

<sup>53</sup> George Washington Haven (1831–1906) and Lucia Amanda Haven, née Wilmot (1836–1899).

<sup>54</sup> Address in central Aarhus, Denmark; today without any historic structures.

<sup>55</sup> City on the island of Funen in Denmark.

Mich[igan].  
Nordamerika

*[postcard, back; text, ink:]*

Odense, Denmark, Feb[ruary]. 14-1877

Dear Sir: -

Both your favors of the 20<sup>th</sup> of Dec[ember] and the 19<sup>th</sup> ult[imo mense]. are received and also seeds. Thanks for the pains you have taken. I am sorry for having caused you so much trouble. Lack of necessary funds and other unforeseen difficulties have prevented my establishing a seed business. I am managing the office business of a wholesale Grocery House. I am looking out for some good article in this line for importation to Denmark. Can you put me on the track of something? Glad your prospects are bright. Can you recommend me a first class wholesale House in Clover and Grass seeds?

Your friend  
J[ens]. Pedersen

*Edition No. 15: Jens Pedersen to Edwin Haven,  
Copenhagen, Denmark, July 25, 1878.*

*[envelope, front; 6" x 5"; top center, printed header: KONTORET FOR FÆLLESINDKJØB AF UNDERSØGT MARKFRØ [Office for the Wholesale Purchase of Inspected Field Seeds]; underneath, right of center, red postal stamp, canceled, featuring a crown, a wreath of wheat, and a postal horn: DANMARK [Denmark] / 8 / POSTFRIM 8 ØRE [Postage 8 Øre]; on top of the latter, round postal mark, stamped: [K]JØBEN[HAVN] [Copenhagen] / 26 - 7 [July]; bottom left corner, round postal mark, stamped: CHICAGO / ILL[INOIS] / AUG[UST] 11; text, ink (lines 1–5) and pencil/different hand/Edwin Haven (line 6):]*

Edw[in]. M[elanchthon]. Haven, Esq[ui]re  
c/o Geo[rge]. H. (?) Haven, Esq[ui]re  
Bloomingdale, Van Buren Co[unty].  
Mich[igan].  
Nordamerika

June 2 - 1879

*[stationery, page 1; 11" x 8"; top left corner, printed (with the first three lines underlined in red): KONTORET / for / Fællesindkjøb af undersøgt Markfrø. / Post-Adresse: MARKFRØKONTORET [Field Seeds Office] / Amaliegade Nr. 8.<sup>56</sup> / Kjøbenhavn. / K. [Copenhagen Center]; top right corner (crossed out in ink): ~~Kjøbenhavn~~, den [the] 187; bottom left corner, printed: Telegram-Adresse: / MARKFRØKONTORET / Kjøbenhavn.; text, ink:]*

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<sup>56</sup> Address in central Copenhagen, Denmark; existing building dates from 1785.



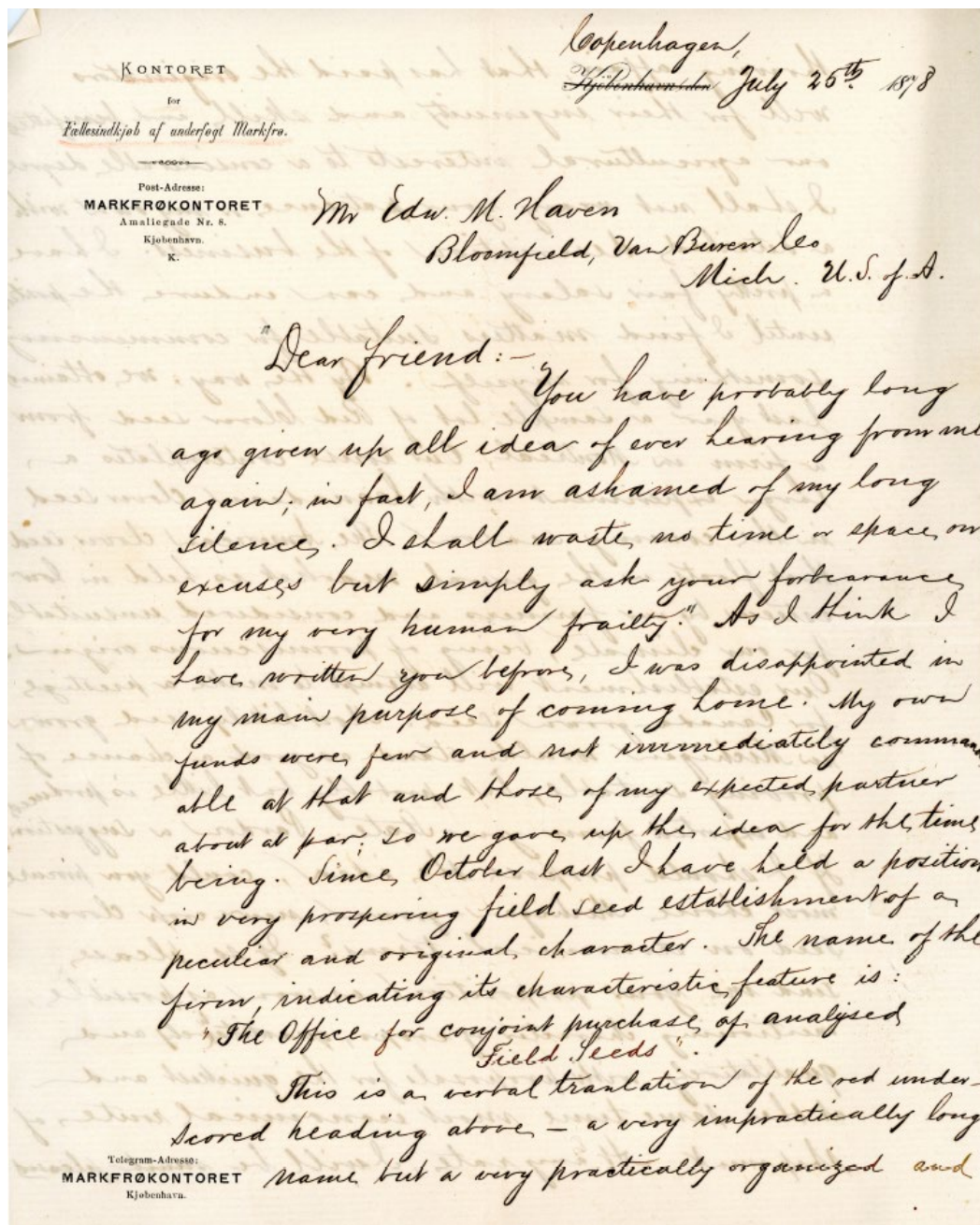


Figure 4: Image of Edition No. 15, stationery, page 1.

Copenhagen, July 25<sup>th</sup> [187]8

Mr[.] Edw[in]. M[elancthon]. Haven

Bloomfield, Van Buren Co[unty]

Mich[igan]. U[nited]. S[tates]. of A[merica].

"Dear friend: -

You have probably long ago given up all idea of ever hearing from me again; in fact, I am ashamed of my long silence. I shall waste no time or space on excuses but simply ask your forbearance for my very human frailty." As I think I have written you before, I was disappointed in my main purpose of coming home. My own funds were few and not immediately commandable at that and those of my expected partner about at par; so we gave up the idea for the time being. Since October last<sup>57</sup> I have held a position in very prospering field seed establishment of a peculiar and original character. The name of the firm, indicating its characteristic feature is:

"The Office for conjoint purchase of analysed Field Seeds"

This is a verbal translation of the red underscored heading above - a very impractically long name but a very practically organized and

*[stationery, page 2; text, ink:]*

thriving affair, that has paid the originators well for their ingenuity and skills and benefitted our agricultural interests to a considerable degree. I shall not weary your patience or my own with a detailed description of the business. I have a pretty fair salary and can endure the position until I find matters suitable for commencing something for myself. By the way; we obtained last year a sample lot of Red Clover seed from a firm in Montreal.<sup>58</sup> Our house contemplates a larger experiment with Canadean clover seed in the coming season. The American clover seed that floats in the general market is held in low esteem by our farmers and considered unsuitable for our climate, being of promiscuous origins. Our establishment will attempt to make a prestige for Canada-grown seed. Most likely seed grown in Michigan would stand as good a chance of proving suitable, but probably but little is produced and exported from your State. Pardon a suggestion: If I should propose the idea, could you procure most choice Michigan-grown, new-crop clover-seed on economical terms? If so, please send me your proposition as soon as possible, mentioning character of crops, quantitatively and qualitatively with proposals for the quickest and at the same time most economical route of shipment. At any rate, I will be much pleased

*[stationery, page 3; text, ink:]*

2 /

to hear from you at some convenient time, I hope you are getting on well and feel happy.

I feel better, I think, physically and mentally since coming home than ever I did before. Do you ever hear anything from Rockford? Wonder how matters are proceeding with Mrs[.]

---

<sup>57</sup> October 1877.

<sup>58</sup> City in the southeastern Canadian province of Québec.

Root? Your soldier hero, Ex President U[lysses]. S. Grant<sup>59</sup> has visited our charming city within a few days.<sup>60</sup> I now regret that I did seek opportunity to see him.

How are times in America just now? My youngest brother - we are quite number<sup>61</sup> - has about made up his mind to go to America - Whether to remain or only for a shorter or longer space of time is undecided. He has no fixed program but feels convinced that a stay over there will do him good and help to make plain to him what sort of earnest life work he ought to choose. He is, like myself of course, of farmer-blood, but has been brought up a joiner. I think, however his inmost inclination goes in quite a different direction. He is religiously disposed, and much interested in educational matters. He will, of course, to begin with, take any kind of manual work that he can find, until he has made sufficient proficiency in the English language which he has only just commenced to study in leizure hours. He is able-bodied, diligent and frugal and of - I / over

*[stationery, page 4; 11" x 8"; top left corner, printed: KONTORET / for / Fællesindkjøb af undersøgt Markfrø. / Post-Adresse: MARKFRØKONTORET [Field Seeds Office] / Amaliegade Nr. 8. / Kjøbenhavn. / K. [Copenhagen Center]; top right corner: Kjøbenhavn, den [the] 187]; bottom left corner, printed: Telegram-Adresse: / MARKFRØKONTORET / Kjøbenhavn.; text, ink:]*

do believe literally - uncorruptible moral character. I know he has been corresponding with one or two Danish ministers - college-colleagues of his - perhaps he goes to one or the other of them this fall or next spring; if not, where would you advise him to go for a start, keeping in mind that he wants to do manual labour, in his trade or any other kind, till he is somewhat familiar with the English language and American life? Excuse my lengthiness.

May I hope to hear from you soon?

Cordially Your Friend  
J[ens]. Pedersen

Bryggerlongen N<sup>o</sup> 6 - 4<sup>d</sup> Sal [level]  
Copenhagen  
K.

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<sup>59</sup> (1822–1885), eighteenth U.S. president (in office 1869–1877).

<sup>60</sup> A visit during Grant's world tour (1877–1879).

<sup>61</sup> Jens Pedersen's parents, Peder Sørensen (1797–1866) and Christiane Hansdatter (1812–1902), had sixteen children.



Isabel Carson, Kolin McVeigh, Jade Phillips, and Nathaniel Valenzuela (editors)

*North America's Hepatics-Fanatics:*

*Alfred H. Brinkman's Letters to Fay A. MacFadden (1932–1944)*

*Shelfmark*

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).

University Archives and Special Collections (UA&SC).

SC-RF-0-13, Box 6.

Letters from Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden.

25 correspondences, January 28, 1932, to September 15, 1944 (numbered below).

*Introduction*

The twenty-five letters edited below were addressed by Alfred Henry Brinkman (1873–1945), a British bryologist and farmer in Canada, to Fay Agnes MacFadden, née MacDonald (1888–1964), a U.S. botanist and photographer, between January 28, 1932, and September 15, 1944. They are housed in the University Archives and Special Collections (UA&SC) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), as part of the MacFadden Collection, which was acquired from MacFadden in 1964, when she sold her extensive correspondences and research materials to CSUF. Macfadden's lasting legacy on campus includes a Herbarium that is named after her and features over 30,000 plant specimens.

The letters edited below are generally in good condition and range in size from 8.3 x 2.75 inches to 8.5 inches x 12 inches. The first four are handwritten in black-ink cursive on paper, the remaining ones are typewritten with added handwritten remarks and signatures. For more letters from the MacFadden collection, see (thus far) *The Welebaethan* 52 (2025), [online](#). While they were exchanging letters and specimens, Brinkman was residing in Craigmyle, located in the Canadian province of Alberta, while MacFadden was residing in southern California. Both Brinkman and MacFadden (albeit less so) published their research on mosses and hepatics (liverworts) in scholarly journals, engaged in field work, and corresponded extensively with others in their fields of interest, including John W. Bailey (1870–1933), Elizabeth Gertrude Britton, née Knight (1858–1934), George Hall Conklin (1866–1940), John Michael Holzinger (1853–1929), Alys Sutcliffe (1895–1969), and Arthur Oliver Wheeler (1860–1945). Apart from their detailed bryological discourse, Brinkman's increasingly personal letters include references to his and MacFadden's health and families, their respective fieldwork, the hardships of the Great Depression, as well as World War II. Brinkman passed away a few months after the last letter edited here; for more on him, see his obituary: Ezra Henry Moss and William Copeland McCalla, "Alfred Henry Brinkman, 1873–1945," *The Canadian Field Naturalist* (September–October 1946): 107–108, [online](#).

These letters, which provide valuable insights into life in North America during the 1930s and earlier 1940s, should be of interest to historians of science, scholars of interpersonal relations, botanists, bryologists, ecologists, environmentalists, Gender Studies researchers, American

Studies scholars, and epistolographers. The letters' original paragraphs, spelling, punctuation, and underlining have been retained as much as possible. All editorial insertions, including expanded abbreviations, added punctuation, and page numbers, appear in square brackets. Identifiable individuals, locations, and technical terms have been referenced in the footnotes, usually when they first appear.

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*The primary-source edition published below originated in the "History and Editing" course offered by CSUF's Department of History.*

Craigmyle, Alta  
Canada  
Jan 28 - 32

I A Mac Fadden Esq  
9001 La Tuna Canyon Rd  
Roscoe  
Calif

I was  
indeed pleased to hear that Mr  
Wheeler was looking & feeling well. My  
last from him, just before his journey  
South, seemed to show him as pretty well  
"off colour". My respects to him, & regards  
to Mr & Mrs Wheeler from all here.  
Tell him not to forget me with a reprint  
of his article on B.C. glaciers. He must  
know I am interested. I always blamed  
myself for not obtaining, somehow or  
other, copies of the two volumes that  
used to exist in a huge case in the  
cellar of the Banff Club House. I  
suppose working so much among B.C.  
mountains & scenery made me very  
much interested in the work. Re exchange.  
I have always wondered at lack of Hepatics  
in ~~the~~ California, it seems to me there  
should be a great wealth of them among  
the mountains & foothills. <sup>any</sup> ~~any~~ & all  
will be welcome, for I shall be pleased  
to exchange widely with you.

Figure 1: Image of Edition No. 1, page 1.

*Edition No. 1: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, January 28, 1932.*

[page 1; text, handwritten, ink:]

Craigmyle,<sup>1</sup> Al[ber]ta<sup>2</sup>  
Canada  
Jan[uary] 28 - [19]32

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden<sup>3</sup> Esq[ui]re<sup>4</sup>  
9001 La Tuna Canyon R[oa]d<sup>5</sup>  
Roscoe<sup>6</sup>  
Calif[ornia]<sup>7</sup>

I was indeed pleased to hear that Mr[.] Wheeler<sup>8</sup> was looking & feeling well. My last from him, just before his journey south, seemed to show him as pretty well "off colour." My respects to him, & regards to Mr[.] & Mrs[.] Wheeler<sup>9</sup> from all here. Tell him not to forget me with a reprint of his article on B[ritish] C[olumbia]<sup>10</sup> glaciers.<sup>11</sup> He must know I am interested. I always blamed myself for not obtaining, somehow or other, copies of the two volumes<sup>12</sup> that used to exist in a huge case in the cellar of the Banff<sup>13</sup> Club House.<sup>14</sup> I suppose working so much among B[ritish] C[olumbia] mountains & scenery made me very much interested in the work. Re[garding] exchange. I Have always wondered at lack of Hepatics<sup>15</sup> in ~~B-C~~ California, it seems to me there should be a great wealth of them among the mountains & foothills. [illegible deletion] Any & all will be welcome, for I shall be pleased to exchange widely with you.

[page 2; text, handwritten, ink:]

If you only have patience with me, I believe I can promise 400 species of Alberta plants. As a matter of fact I have some 200 odd put up for someone else, & if they do not decide on an

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<sup>1</sup> Hamlet in the southeastern part of the Canadian province of Alberta.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian province in the West.

<sup>3</sup> Fay Agnes MacFadden, née MacDonald (1888–1964), U.S. botanist and photographer.

<sup>4</sup> Used here as a general courtesy title.

<sup>5</sup> Now 9001 La Tuna Canyon Road, SunValley, California 91352.

<sup>6</sup> Now SunValley, a neighborhood in Los Angeles, California.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. state on the West Coast.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Oliver Wheeler (1860–1945), Irish land surveyor in Canada.

<sup>9</sup> Emmeline Wheeler, née Savatard (1880–1976), Wheeler's second wife (m. 1924).

<sup>10</sup> Canadian province on the West Coast.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur O. Wheeler, "Five Great Glaciers in the Canadian National Parks," in *Glaciers of the Rockies and Selkirks*, 2nd ed. (1914; Canadian Department of the Interior, 1921), 30–36.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur O. Wheeler, *The Selkirk Range*, 2 vols. (Govt. Print Bureau, 1905).

<sup>13</sup> Town in the southern part of the Canadian province of Alberta.

<sup>14</sup> Alpine Club of Canada on Sulphur Mountain in Banff (est. 1909; demolished 1974).

<sup>15</sup> Botanical term for liverworts (plants).

exchange reasonably soon, I will send them on to you. So Hepatics, mosses, & flowering plants will be welcomed from B[ritish] C[olumbia] & California -

Just a few words however. My methods are somewhat crude, I most decidedly have to study economy, even money for stamps is not easy to obtain. So I put the flowering plants on ordinary newspapers, two species to a sheet; being careful only not to put closely allied species such as Potentillas[,]<sup>16</sup> Chrysopsis,<sup>17</sup> Poa,<sup>18</sup> on the same sheet, as in such a case, a shifting of the labels will certainly badly complicate matters. So I ask no better from you, it's the plants, not the paper that count. believe you always put the names, it helps lots, kind of hallmark, so to speak.

I am now working over your B[ritish] C[olumbia] Scapanias,<sup>19</sup> they are beautifully put up, & make mine look shabby, do not try to duplicate such methods, or you will make me feel rather ashamed of my material. Just put up in clean paper, & well labelled, is plenty good

[page 3; text, handwritten, ink:]

enough. But why, oh why, & oh why, are they not all numbered, could you please number all you send, your own & mine, I'll try to explain. I am now working on s[capania] dentata<sup>20</sup> var[ietas],<sup>21</sup> it is named undulata,<sup>22</sup> & I believe there is another undulata from the near vicinity on the same day, so I have to go through an whole "legend," & then I am not sure the two may be mixed. If I could quote number 902, (or any other blessed number) it would prevent an whole lot of circumlocution,<sup>23</sup> & I should be sure we both understood & were dealing with the same plant. (Bar mixtures) By the way, had some correspondence over one, named x, & there were three different scapanias in it, none of which were x. your s[capania] cordifolia<sup>24</sup> & no[s.] 196 & 198 of mine are the same, and are not cordifolia, so the Dr[.]<sup>25</sup> & I, & Miss Haynes<sup>26</sup> are trying to agree. I have got the Dr[.] so far, that he is inclined to agree it is not cordifolia, & is probably related to paludosa,<sup>27</sup> either a well marked var[ietas], or new sp[ecies],<sup>28</sup> another, s[capania] paludosa, is, I am reasonably sure, s[capania] obliqua,<sup>29</sup> & a fine specimen<sup>30</sup> of it. Now if, among those you send me, are specimens of these, numbered, I can keep you in touch with the final result if the Dr[.] does not. He tells me your

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<sup>16</sup> Genus of the Rosaceae family.

<sup>17</sup> Genus of the Asteraceae family.

<sup>18</sup> Genus of the Poaceae family.

<sup>19</sup> Liverwort genus of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>20</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Scapania undulata.

<sup>21</sup> Botanical taxonomic rank below species and subspecies, but above form.

<sup>22</sup> Latin term, meaning "wavy." Scapania undulata is a liverwort species.

<sup>23</sup> Wordiness.

<sup>24</sup> Latin term, meaning "heart-shaped." Scapania cordifolia is a liverwort species (a.k.a. Scapania paludosa).

<sup>25</sup> Likely George Hall Conklin (1866–1940), U.S. physician and bryologist.

<sup>26</sup> Caroline Coventry Haynes (1858–1951), U.S. bryologist and painter.

<sup>27</sup> Latin term, meaning "swampy." Scapania paludosa is a liverwort species.

<sup>28</sup> Basic, lowest principal rank and fundamental unit in botanical taxonomy.

<sup>29</sup> Latin term, meaning "asymmetrical." Scapania obliqua is a liverwort species (a.k.a. Scapania uliginosa).

<sup>30</sup> Biological specimen of a plant (or part of a plant) used for scientific purposes.

[page 4; text, handwritten, ink:]

nemorosa<sup>31</sup> is americana<sup>32</sup> (believe det [?] Evans<sup>33</sup>) not examined by me yet. "Lots of fun in our backyard." I can understand about your feeling of regret at not being able to go to your own collecting grounds. That feeling is always with me, not of the fine finds I have made, but of the wonderful things I must have missed, that must still be there to find. So I feel it is a pity you cannot get there to continue your fine work.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman<sup>34</sup>

Flowering plants with me include grasses & sedges,<sup>35</sup> for I have rather specialized in the Alberta grasses & have collected fairly heavily the Carices,<sup>36</sup> though unfortunately not always heavily enough to have duplicate material left of them all.

Edition No. 2: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
*Craigmyle, Alberta, February 14–16, 1932.*

[page 1; text, handwritten, ink:]

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Canada

Feb[ruary] 14 1932

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden Esq[ui]re]

Tua Junta R[oa]d<sup>37</sup>

California

Just been examining no.s<sup>38</sup> 7494, 7496, 7491 [?], 7497. I do not notice any structural difference of importance between them. They all agree in 1 obtuse<sup>39</sup> leaf, 2 coarsely toothed or at least projecting coarse crenulations,<sup>40</sup> 3 leaf obtuse, 4, nerve, stout, ceasing below apex, 5 paraphyllia<sup>41</sup> on back of nerve, 6, nerve structure, outside cells much as in leaf, inside differing

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<sup>31</sup> Latin term, meaning "of the woods." *Scapania nemorosa* is a liverwort species.

<sup>32</sup> *Scapania americana* is a liverwort species.

<sup>33</sup> Alexander William Evans (1868–1959), U.S. botanist and bryologist.

<sup>34</sup> Alfred Henry Brinkman (1873–1945), British bryologist and farmer in Canada.

<sup>35</sup> Grass-like, flowering plants (a.k.a. Cyperaceae family).

<sup>36</sup> Plural of *Carex*, genus of Cyperaceae family.

<sup>37</sup> Presumably a misspelling of La Tuna Canyon Road (now SunValley, California).

<sup>38</sup> Numbers.

<sup>39</sup> Blunt, broadly rounded.

<sup>40</sup> Leaf edges with small, rounded notches.

<sup>41</sup> Latin term, plural of paraphyllum. Tiny branched or stipuliform (i.e., outgrowth-type) organs between the leaves of some leafy bryophytes (i.e., mosses, liverworts, etc.).

in size, structure, colour, & usually 3 larger hyaline<sup>42</sup> cells in centre, 7 narrow [illegible deletion] cells at base near nerve, at edge much as those higher up.

Barnes<sup>43</sup> & Heald,<sup>44</sup> in Am[erican] Mosses,<sup>45</sup> page 283, says "a narrow band on margin elongated (of leaf cells) prosenchymatous,<sup>46</sup> -----, superposed by rounded small cells." I do not find either latter character in your plants. As a matter of fact I should not care to place definitely without good type material to compare with, but what one is, all four are.

My literature is too woefully scarce for this class of work. 74983 [7493]. Unfortunately descriptions available do not cite capsule. This has decidedly no peristome<sup>47</sup> teeth, &, on younger leaves at least no prosenchymatous cells, & even on older leaves little sign of same. Leaves are not paraphyllose,<sup>48</sup> or, as Barnes seems to quote it, radiculose;<sup>49</sup> No[.] 7498 agrees with

[page 2; text, handwritten, ink:]

7493 in lack of paraphyllia, & cells at base mostly rectangular. But differs in acute leaves coarsely serrate<sup>50</sup> at apex. Possibly both also differ in nerve structure, seems to me looser celled[.]

Both however have some little tendency to lengthened cells at base. I suppose it would require a copy of Bull[etin] For Bot[anical Torrey] Club [Volume] 22. 36–[43] 1895,<sup>51</sup> E[lizabeth] G[ertrude] Britton,<sup>52</sup> to clear up. I can only say first 4 seem same species, but lack two characters mentioned by Barnes for marginata,<sup>53</sup> & last 2 are similar, & may be same species, but if presence of peristome teeth be taken as necessary for aquatica?<sup>54</sup> & its varieties then I do not see just where it does come.

Do you wish packets returned, or kept for any future reference. Have some scouleria<sup>55</sup> somewhere, but do not know where to place my hands on it. Possibly Barnes may mean the elongated cells do not reach to margin, in which event the first 4 would agree with marginata except in superposed cells. I should not care to tackle Bryums,<sup>56</sup> it would take a wealth of

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<sup>42</sup> Glassy in appearance.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Reid Barnes (1858–1910), U.S. botanist.

<sup>44</sup> Frederick DeForest Heald (1872–1953), U.S. plant pathologist.

<sup>45</sup> Charles Reid Barnes and Fred[erick] DeForest Heald, *Analytic Keys to the Genera and Species of North American Mosses* (The University of Wisconsin, 1896).

<sup>46</sup> Relating to tissues formed of elongated cells.

<sup>47</sup> One or two rings of tooth-like appendages surrounding the opening of the capsule of many mosses.

<sup>48</sup> Covered in paraphyllia.

<sup>49</sup> Producing numerous rootlets.

<sup>50</sup> Notched or toothed on the edge.

<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth G. Britton, "Contributions to American Bryology. IX," *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club* 22, no. 1 (1895): 36–43.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Gertrude Britton, née Knight (1858–1934), U.S. bryologist and educator.

<sup>53</sup> Latin term, meaning "bordered, edged."

<sup>54</sup> Latin term, meaning "in or near water."

<sup>55</sup> Moss genus of the Scouleriaceae family.

<sup>56</sup> Moss genus of the Bryaceae family.



literature & authentically named specimens that there is no chance of me obtaining. Sorry indeed to hear Dr[.]Andrews<sup>57</sup> is unwell, hope he soon regains full health, he is our only Bryum man one can be reasonably sure of. Re[garding] exchange. Parcel of flowering plants put by for you, & will. I at least hope, be sent you within a month. They were put up nearly a year ago, so if I am not asking too

[page 3; text, handwritten, ink:]

much, I should much like it if you would, as you unpack them, just write down numbers, that will save me sending you too much duplicate material in next parcel, & enable me to possibly dig up species not represented. I believe you will find the naming is good, that is their chief value. Mosses & hepatics I hope to put up at the end of March, time is not available at present, for all my spare time is much occupied with Scapanias. As an instance. Evans says no nemorosa grows West, your nemorosa seems good to me, & so it means going over British material, next American, and Canadian, probably comparing with good Americana (if I can get really reliable specimens) & gracilis,<sup>58</sup> & so it will probably mean nearly a weeks spare time spent over that one plant, possibly followed by a paper. So I should be unwise to try & spread myself too far. The hepatics may quite well take up all the spare time life will allow me, unless a different & more congenial occupation should fall to my lot.<sup>59</sup>

15<sup>th</sup> [February, 1932]. Undid the mosses today, they are a fine lot, & I am wondering how far I can reciprocate. I see you have been very good,

[page 4; text, handwritten, ink:]

& shared some of your treasures with me. There were a few I should have liked to examine, had time permitted. Perhaps later on. No[.] 5 Dic[ranum] neglectum.<sup>60</sup> Has nardia scalaris<sup>61</sup> with it, tho[ugh] recorded for B[ritish] C[olumbia], I have never gathered it myself or seen B[ritish] C[olumbia] specimens. No[.] 714. Dic[ranum] longifolium,<sup>62</sup> has a regular little puzzle. I am inclined to think it might be a marsupella ruicensis [?] (= capillaris)<sup>63</sup> but have no specimen to compare with. If so, new to N[orth] America, as far as my knowledge goes. When next writing to Conklin,<sup>64</sup> you might try him with a bit, or I will try to remember to do so. neckera Douglasii,<sup>65</sup> is a Wash[ington]<sup>66</sup> plant, but has a little Frullania<sup>67</sup> in it that would interest, if from B[ritish] C[olumbia]. I see you have been over some of my collecting grounds.

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<sup>57</sup> Albert LeRoy Andrews (1878–1961), U.S. philologist and bryologist.

<sup>58</sup> Latin term, meaning “slender.” Scapania gracilis is a liverwort species.

<sup>59</sup> “fall to my lot” is written in pencil; next line starts with fresh ink.

<sup>60</sup> Obsolete name for the moss species Dicranum spadiceum.

<sup>61</sup> Liverwort species of the Gymnomitriaceae family.

<sup>62</sup> Obsolete name for the moss species Paraleucobryum longifolium.

<sup>63</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Marsupella boeckii.

<sup>64</sup> George Hall Conklin (1866–1940), U.S. physician and bryologist.

<sup>65</sup> Moss species of the Neckeraceae family.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. state on the West Coast.

<sup>67</sup> Liverwort genus of the Frullaniaceae family.



Kamloops,<sup>68</sup> Fish Lake,<sup>69</sup> Tranquille Valley,<sup>70</sup> Chase,<sup>71</sup> Paul Lake,<sup>72</sup> & have from them stuff fresh to me, which only goes to show the wealth that must be there yet undiscovered. I have some duplicate lichens,<sup>73</sup> possibly I will rake them out, they may be acceptable to you but I hardly expect to go further with that group. I suppose you never touched rusts<sup>74</sup> & smuts,<sup>75</sup> I have quite a few of those, & have definitely decided to quit them, so if I get an opportunity to exchange for material I am more interested in, I will do so. The whole blessed lot will go, letters

*[page 5; text, handwritten, ink:]*

(lists of namings) & all. Some are in poor shape, the damp got to them, but I have found out that such specimens placed in very hot (almost boiling) water for a short time, & redried have a tendency to recover most of their original condition. I wish I, like you, had my plants even sheeted & cataloged, it's damnable, but one simply has to have a little money to make cabinets, get mounts, buy labels, etc[etera]. so each time I want to study a group, I have some sweet little job. As for comparing single plants, that is almost hopeless, unless very pressing for some reason. However, I can appreciate the pleasure your collection properly arranged, & handy for reference, must give you.

It is good to hear your good man<sup>76</sup> will soon be at work again, one can rejoice in the silver lining that shows for others, even tho[ugh] wishing it would show for themselves. Mr[.] Wheeler has greater faith in my future than I have, I must admit I only wish I could share his optimism. Scoulerias, with you, I think the two separated off are different specifically from marginata, but my literature is insufficient to decide just where they should go. Recently heard Dr[.]Rydberg<sup>77</sup> is death [sic].<sup>78</sup> Can only hope it is not true. Tho[ugh] he is getting on in years. I believe he just finished the flora of the

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<sup>68</sup> City in the southern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

<sup>69</sup> Lake the southern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia (a.k.a. Težtan Biny).

<sup>70</sup> Scenic area in the southern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia on the northeastern side of Kamloops Lake.

<sup>71</sup> Village in the southern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

<sup>72</sup> Lake the southern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

<sup>73</sup> Hybrid colonies of algae or cyanobacteria living symbiotically among filaments of multiple fungus species.

<sup>74</sup> Fungal plant pathogens.

<sup>75</sup> Multicellular fungi.

<sup>76</sup> Fay's husband, Joel Parkhurst MacFadden (1883–1959), a mining engineer.

<sup>77</sup> Per Axel Rydberg (1860–1931), Swedish-born U.S. botanist.

<sup>78</sup> Per Axel Rydberg had passed away on July 25, 1931.

[page 6; text, handwritten, ink:]

great plains<sup>79</sup> E[ast] of the rockies.<sup>80</sup> He has done great work botanically for Western America, & his loss will be felt. Have yet to undo flowering plants, am reserving that treat. No good of being a glutton, & wasting to enjoy all at once.

For the time being adieu<sup>81</sup>

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

16<sup>th</sup> [February, 1932]

Undid part of flowering plants today. The Californian flora is absolutely foreign to me, I should be in a new & strange world (botanically speaking) there. Thank you for putting them up for me. May write later of some of your Scapanias. A bit of 714 enclosed, to make some there is no misunderstanding as to the plant meant[.]

adieu

*Edition No. 3: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, May 29, 1932.*

[page 1; text, handwritten, ink:]

May 29 1932

Craigmyle

Al[ber]ta

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden

Roscoe

Calif[ornia]

3 packets are not yet finished, one cannot be named with anything like certainty at present.

7151: Asterella californica<sup>82</sup>

7148 [ditto marks]

7148b [ditto marks]

8164 [ditto mark] Palmeri<sup>83</sup>

8159 ? [ditto marks] & mostly Fossombronia hispidissima, Step[hani]<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Likely a reference to Per Axel Rydberg, *Flora of the Prairies and Plains of Central North America*, with Marshall A. Howe (New York Botanical Garden, 1932), published posthumously. The "Great Plains" are a broad expanse of flatland in North America to the east of the Rocky Mountains.

<sup>80</sup> The Rocky Mountains, the largest mountain system in North America.

<sup>81</sup> French for "farewell" (literally "to God").

<sup>82</sup> Liverwort species of the Aytoniaceae family.

<sup>83</sup> Liverwort species of the Aytoniaceae family.

<sup>84</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Fossombronia longiseta) of the Fossombroniaceae family, described by Franz Stephani.

8160 [ditto marks]

7142 Fossombronia,<sup>85</sup> possibly longiseta,<sup>86</sup> but unsafe to name without spores<sup>87</sup>

8165 Cephaloziella: byssacea<sup>88</sup>

8166 [ditto marks]

8166b [ditto marks] believe as named but no perianth<sup>89</sup> or infl[orescence]<sup>90</sup> found

8163 Targionia hypophylla<sup>91</sup>

8161 Riccia trichocarpa, M[.] A[.] Howe<sup>92</sup>

8158 [ditto marks]

8162 [ditto marks]

& [ditto mark] nigrella<sup>93</sup> mostly

No No[.] [ditto mark] sorocarpa<sup>94</sup>

& [ditto mark] trichocarpa

7169 Lophozia porphyroleuca<sup>95</sup> & Scapania: curta var[ietas] geniculata<sup>96</sup>

7167 L[ophozia] ventricosa<sup>97</sup> approaching porphyroleuca & L[ophozia] Hatcheri<sup>98</sup>

7164 L[ophozia] porphyroleuca & L[ophozia] incisa<sup>99</sup>

[page 2; text, handwritten, ink:]

7071 Scapania, maybe be curta v[ariety] geniculata<sup>100</sup> & Jungermannia sphaerocarpa<sup>101</sup>

7488 Diplophyllum? albicans forma<sup>102</sup> much off type

An interesting lot which came to hand in good condition. S[capania] curta v[arietas] geniculata is a plant I am very uncertain about till I can get [a]hold of really well named material from Europe, so many of my plants have been so named & were not that species at all. Am awfully behind with my botany program, but some day I hope to send some hepatics & if possible, mosses also, but it is a very busy time with me now, & only Sundays are available.

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<sup>85</sup> Liverwort genus of the Fossombroniaceae family.

<sup>86</sup> Liverwort species of the Fossombroniaceae family.

<sup>87</sup> Single-celled reproductive unit, can grow into a new organism without needing to fuse with another cell.

<sup>88</sup> Liverwort species of the Cephaloziellaceae family.

<sup>89</sup> Non-reproductive part of flora, enveloping its sexual organs.

<sup>90</sup> Cluster of flowers.

<sup>91</sup> Liverwort species of the Targioniaceae family.

<sup>92</sup> Liverwort species of in Ricciaceae family, described by Marshall Avery Howe.

<sup>93</sup> Liverwort species of in Ricciaceae family.

<sup>94</sup> Liverwort species of in Ricciaceae family.

<sup>95</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophoziaceae family.

<sup>96</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>97</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophoziaceae family.

<sup>98</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophoziaceae family, described by John Bell Hatcher.

<sup>99</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophoziaceae family.

<sup>100</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>101</sup> Liverwort species of the Jungermanniaceae family.

<sup>102</sup> Variant of a liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

7071. *Scapania*, may be *culta* v. *geniculata*  
+ *Jungermannia sphaerocarpa*  
7488. *Diplophyllum*? *allicans* forma  
much off type.  
an interesting lot  
which came to hand in good condition.  
*S. curta* v. *geniculata* is a plant I am very  
uncertain about till I can get hold of really  
well named material from Europe, so many  
of my plants have been so named & were not  
that species at all. am awfully behind with  
my botany program but some day I hope to  
send some *hepatias*, & if possible, *masses* also,  
but it is a very busy time with me now, &  
only Sundays are available.  
Have some duplicates of Rapps, Florida  
Schallert, Carolina, Gullon, Vermont, &  
Rhodes, England, if you have not corresponded  
with any of these, please let me know, &  
I can send on. Will return the *Riccia*  
*sorocarpa*. If any others you wish returned,  
please mention numbers, & I can return in  
part at least. You have an interesting  
flora to work over  
Respects & regards  
Yours sincerely,  
Atkinson

Have some duplicates of Rapps<sup>103</sup> Florida[,]<sup>104</sup> Schallert,<sup>105</sup> [North] Carolina, <sup>106</sup> Dutton,<sup>107</sup> Vermont,<sup>108</sup> & Rhodes,<sup>109</sup> England, if you have not corresponded with any of these, please let me know, & I can send on. Will return the Riccia sorocarpa. If any others you wish returned, please mention numbers, & I can return in part at least. You have an interesting flora to work over[.]

Respects & Regards

Yours sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 4: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, August 28, 1932.*

*[page 1; text, handwritten, ink:]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Canada

Aug[ust] 28 1932

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden

9001 La Tuna Canyon R[oa]d

Roscoe

Calif[ornia]

I was pleased to get your letter, received some time ago, over a month since, I see. I too can do little tricks with letters, but nothing to measure up to your experience. Tho[ugh] it did not matter, I just put it down that you were busy for the time being, & would write fully as time permitted. Am sorry indeed to hear the mining position failed.<sup>110</sup> "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,"<sup>111</sup> & I am afraid there are many of us with sick hearts these days. I am afraid you would think me exaggerating were I to tell you of my own personal hardships. A world of lunatics, not starving & going without in the midst of plenty, incredible as that would seem to sane beings, but starving and going without because of that plenty. I do not see how you are to convince a future

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<sup>103</sup> Severin Rapp (1853–1942), German-born U.S. botanist.

<sup>104</sup> U.S. state on the Atlantic Coast.

<sup>105</sup> Paul Otto Schallert (1879–1970), U.S. physician and botanist.

<sup>106</sup> U.S. state on the Atlantic Coast.

<sup>107</sup> Dura Lewis Dutton (1883–1929), U.S. plant collector.

<sup>108</sup> U.S. state on the Atlantic Coast.

<sup>109</sup> Philip Grafton Mole Rhodes (1885–1934), British bryologist.

<sup>110</sup> Reference to the job pursuits of Fay's husband Joel, a mining engineer.

<sup>111</sup> Holy Bible, Old Testament, Proverbs 13:12a.

[page 2; text, handwritten, ink:]

generation of the possibility of such imbecility, their minds will be unable to envisage it. It is deuced hard to have the cup to the lip, & then have it taken away. The one bright spot seems to be the recovery of your daughter Barbara.<sup>112</sup>

I suppose in one way we ought to be thankful, we have plenty of flour, potatoes & usually other vegetables when the gardening is successful, meat, eggs, milk, butter, & a roof over our heads. But the years pass leaving us older, & less able to recuperate. With water available, you must have a splendid garden, & fruits that we should envy you, for even small fruits are very difficult to raise here.

Am glad plants were satisfactory, it was part of a larger parcel, returned because of overweight. More will come as time permits. Am sending on a few hepatics. Mosses some other time as time & opportunity permits, plenty of them knocking around when I can get to them. Spent several Sundays

[page 3; text, handwritten, ink:]

cleaning up, a job badly required, but I am still missing Rapps & Dutton's duplicates & an important article I wanted to send away. My rusts & smuts was one of the jobs I straightened out, mostly named, but a large parcel still unnamed, but am "off" them now, have enough to do without touching them, & I lacked the co-operation I have continually found with the other groups.

Three of your hepatics were left unnamed. One was Ast[e]rella Palmeri, (number & packet mislaid).

No[.] 7149 seemed to be Grimaldia californica<sup>113</sup> & 7152 Astrella Bolanderi<sup>114</sup> but as both were without fruit, I was left doubtful. I sent small specimens on to Conklin, thinking he might have duplicate material to compare with, but have not heard from him, I think he is very busy & can only hope he is in good health. I should miss him indeed, after so many years of correspondence. Do not hesitate to send Hepatics at any time, I find them interesting, & shall

[page 4; text, handwritten, ink:]

learn more as I study more. I should have liked to get into correspondence with some Japanese with Hepatics, ~~my~~ am rather keen about it, in fact, but I know no Japanese, & recently even postage for exchange has been difficult to get. I think examination of Japanese material may help solve some of the problems of Western Canadian material 1500 species of mosses sounds pretty considerable to me, I doubt whether I have 1000. I have plenty more material to send on, the great trouble is to find time to get at them, so you will understand there is more to come. It would be a pity for you to even partially drop your botany, if time, permits carrying it on, for you will often find in its study a relief, if only partial, from the

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<sup>112</sup> Barbara Edwin Moselle, née MacFadden (1918–2007), Fay and Joel's younger daughter.

<sup>113</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species *Mannia californica*.

<sup>114</sup> Liverwort species of the Aytoniaceae family, described by Henry Nicholas Bolander.



constant worry & thinking over a world gone made. I suppose Mr[.] Wheeler has had Oliver<sup>115</sup> with him by now, I know he was looking forward to his coming

Sincerely Yours

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

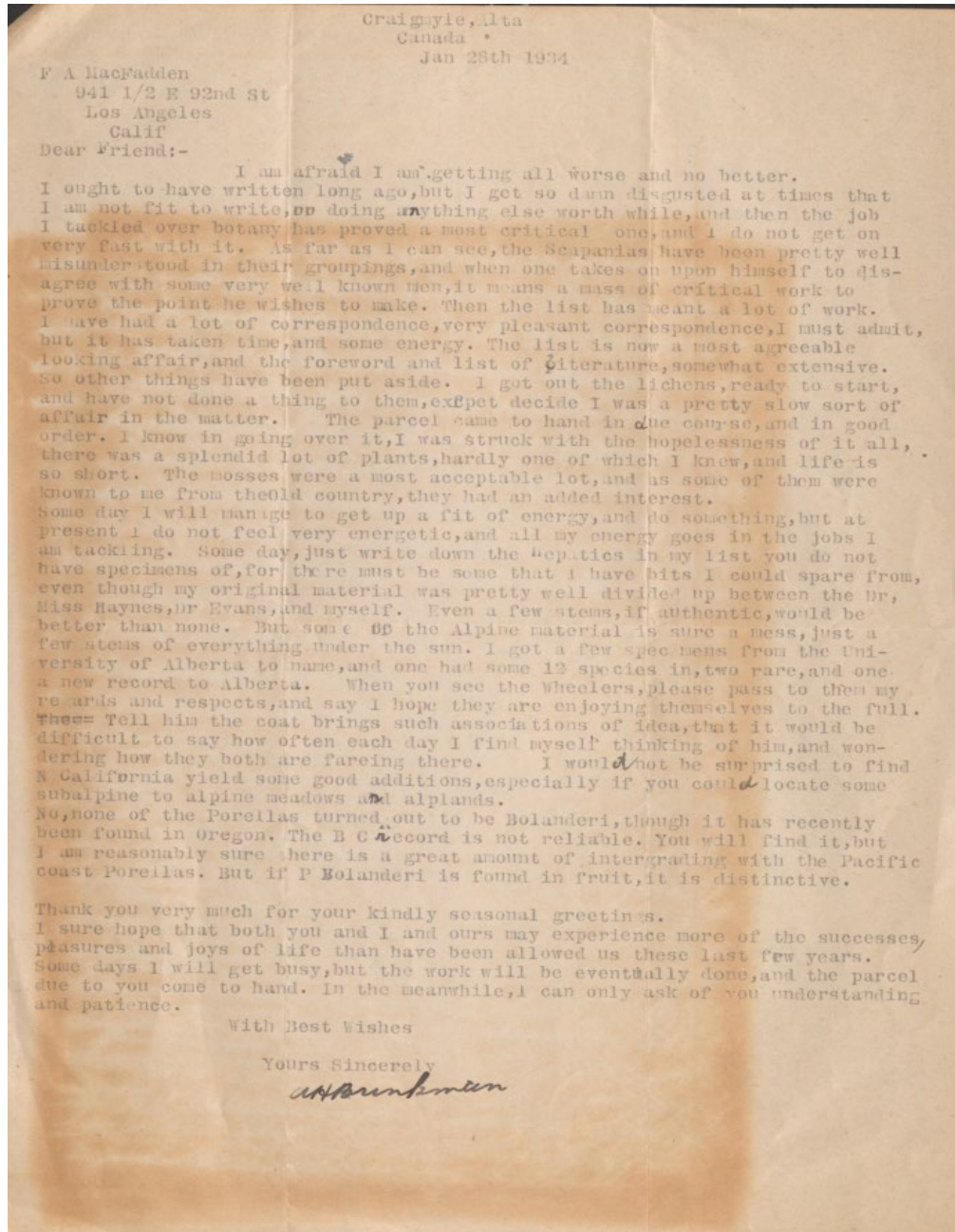


Figure 3: Image of Edition No. 5, page 1.

<sup>115</sup> Edward Oliver Wheeler (1890–1962), Canadian surveyor, mountain climber, and soldier.

*Edition No. 5: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
 Craigmyle, Alberta, January 28, 1934.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
 Canada  
 Jan[uary] 28th 1934

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden  
 941 1/2 E 92nd St[reet]<sup>116</sup>  
 Los Angeles<sup>117</sup>  
 Calif[ornia]

Dear Friend: -

I am afraid I am getting all worse and no better. I ought to have written long ago, but I get so damn disgusted at times that I am not fit to write, or doing anything else worth while, and then the job I tackled over botany has proved a most critical one, and I do not get on very fast with it. As far as I can see, the Scapanias have been pretty well misunderstood in their groupings, and when one takes on upon himself to disagree with some very well known men, it means a mass of critical work to prove the point he wishes to make. Then the list has meant a lot of work. I have had a lot of correspondence, very pleasant correspondence, I must admit, but it has taken time, and some energy. The list is now a most agreeable looking affair, and the foreword and list of literature, somewhat extensive. So other things have been put aside. I got out the lichens, ready to start, and have not done a thing to them, except [sic] decide I was a pretty slow sort of affair in the matter. The parcel came to hand in due course, and in good order. I know in going over it, I was struck with the hopelessness of it all, there was a splendid lot of plants, hardly one of which I knew, and life is so short. The mosses were a most acceptable lot, and as some of them were known to me from the Old country,<sup>118</sup> they had an added interest.

Some day I will manage to get up a fit of energy, and do something, but at present I do not feel very energetic, and all my energy goes in the jobs I am tackling. Some day, just write down the Hepatics in my list you do not have specimens of, for there must be some that I have bits I could spare from, even though my original material was pretty well divided up between the Dr[.], Miss Haynes, Dr[.] Evans, and myself. Even a few stems, if authentic, would be better than none. But some of the Alpine material is sure a mess, just a few stems of everything under the sun. I got a few specimens from the University of Alberta<sup>119</sup> to name, and one had 12 species in, two rare, and one a new record to Alberta. When you see the Wheelers, please pass to them my regards and respects, and say I hope they are enjoying

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<sup>116</sup> Now 941 E 92nd Street, Los Angeles, California 90002.

<sup>117</sup> City in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>118</sup> England.

<sup>119</sup> University in Edmonton, Alberta, established in 1908.



themselves to the full. ~~Thee~~ Tell him the coat brings such associations of idea, that it would be difficult to say how often each day I find myself thinking of him, and wondering how they both are fareing there. I would not be surprised to find N[orthern] California yield some good additions, especially if you could locate some subalpine to alpine meadows and alplands.

No, none of the Porellas<sup>120</sup> turned out to be Bolanderi,<sup>121</sup> though it has recently been found in Oregon.<sup>122</sup> The B[ritish] C[olumbia] record is not reliable. You will find it, but I am reasonably sure there is a great amount of intergrading with the Pacific coast Porellas. But if P[orella] Bolanderi is found in fruit, it is distinctive.

Thank you very much for your kindly seasonal greetings. I sure hope that both you and I and ours may experience more of the successes, pleasures and joys of life than have been allowed us these last few years. Some days I will get busy, but the work will be eventually done, and the parcel due to you come to hand. In the meanwhile, I can only ask of you understanding and patience.

With Best Wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] *Brinkman*

*Edition No. 6: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, April 8, 1934.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Canada

Ap[ri]l 8th 1934

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden

6126 Melvil St[reet]<sup>123</sup>

Culver City<sup>124</sup>

Calif[ornia]

I have been waiting for an energetic fit to arrive, but none will happen. As a matter of fact, I feel more lazy than usual, so thought I had better write you before you started searching the obituaries for a notice to the effect, etc[etera]. I have marked off your list on a list of my own, and have made notes against some four plants. Some of them I have no specimens of myself, others I have only scraps of, but as long as you are content with small pieces, I can manage to put up quite a few for you, I believe. As and when time permits. The old rule.

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<sup>120</sup> Liverwort genus of the Porellaceae family.

<sup>121</sup> Liverwort species of the Porellaceae family, described by Henry Nicholas Bolander.

<sup>122</sup> U.S. state on the West Coast.

<sup>123</sup> Now 6126 Melvil Street, Los Angeles, California 90034.

<sup>124</sup> City in Los Angeles County, California.

I am enclosing 4, that were under my hand, Three of the Scapanias are those I was treating. The paludicola<sup>125</sup> is interesting. Not quite typical but goes there As a matter of fact, I am not sure you will feel able to separate till you get a copy of mine, as others are troubled over them.

The list of Hepatics is being printed,<sup>126</sup> And I believe one copy will be sent you in due course. It is being printed by the Provincial Museum,<sup>127</sup> Vicotria<sup>128</sup> [sic], so you should have no trouble in obtaining a copy, if one is not sent, when printed. A brief note. S[capania] irrigua,<sup>129</sup> stem of almost uniform sized cells, not noticeably thick walled, antical<sup>130</sup> lobe, transverse,<sup>131</sup> postical [postical]<sup>132</sup> lobe, transverse or but slightly decurrent,<sup>133</sup> trigones<sup>134</sup> small. Paludosa. Stem, outer row of smaller cells, not thick walled, inner cells decidedly larger. Antical lobe, oblique<sup>135</sup> to [illegible] *paludicola* round oblique at insertion, postical lobe, arched decurrent, the decurrency not, or but little lower than heel of keel. Vogesiaca.<sup>136</sup> Stem with a row of coloured small cells, with internal cells distinctly and ~~app~~ suddenly larger Antical lobe attachus<sup>137</sup> long decurrent, postical lobe attachus arched-long decurrent. Trigones usually none, apical<sup>138</sup> cells of lobe thick walled.

I am still busy at list of Scapanias, it is proving a most difficult task. A plant will set me out on a search of several, to make sure no relationship exists, or where the differences are, and it sure does consume time, and then I am not feeling any too fit. Still decided progress has been made.

You write re[garding] Mrs[.] Britton.<sup>139</sup>

One of my correspondents with flowering plants is Dr[.] Weigand,<sup>140</sup> [sic] Cornell University.<sup>141</sup> He puts some very nice specimens. I asked him about his California Material. His answer is in full as follows. "We have considerable Californian material, but I don't doubt but that Mrs[.] MacFadden's plants would be very acceptable, if she has made good specimens, as I suppose she has. Most of our Californian material has come from Southern California and the bay

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<sup>125</sup> Latin term, meaning "marsh-dwelling." *Scapania paludicola* is a liverwort species.

<sup>126</sup> Alfred H. Brinkman, "List of Hepatics of Pacific Coast and Adjoining Territory," *Report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History of British Columbia* (for 1933; published 1934): 24–33.

<sup>127</sup> Now the Royal B[ritish] C[olumbia] Museum in Victoria, British Columbia, established in 1886.

<sup>128</sup> City in the southwestern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

<sup>129</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>130</sup> Oriented toward the apex.

<sup>131</sup> Crosswise.

<sup>132</sup> Oriented toward the base.

<sup>133</sup> Plant or fungal parts extending downward.

<sup>134</sup> Thickenings of the cell wall at the angles where several cells join.

<sup>135</sup> With the sides unequal.

<sup>136</sup> Moss species of the Bruchiaceae family.

<sup>137</sup> Attachment.

<sup>138</sup> Related to the uppermost tip.

<sup>139</sup> Elizabeth G. Britton had passed away on February 25, 1934.

<sup>140</sup> Karl McKay Wiegand (1873–1942), U.S. botanist.

<sup>141</sup> University in Ithaca, New York, established in 1865.

region.<sup>142</sup> We shall be glad to have you communicate with Mrs[.] MacFadden, and if she cares to send a preliminary set as the beginning of an exchange, we can send her a similar set in return. That will give us a chance to decide whether the exchange is worth while." So there you are. I put my specimens up on white paper, news print, and a dollar will buy enough for several hundred sheets, and the labelling is always as well done as materials permit. However[,] he did register a little protest about my last labels, for they were on similar paper to that in the Hepatics enclosed, and I must admit it is not good, but it was the best I had at the time, or could afford. Still the protest was all in good order.

So there is your chance to exchange with one whose naming is pretty reliable if you so wish. He does not exchange mosses, etc[etera]. By the way, I owe Rapp a letter, and when writing, will try and find out whether he is still interested in exchange, as he has much rare material, and is altogether a nice fellow to exchange with. By thr [sic] way again also, Dr[.] Weigand [sic] is not any more prompt than myself, so you are forewarned. It always comes

*[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics);]*

eventually. And that is all I can say.

Where so much naming is unreliable, good naming is a well worth asset. By the way, yet again. Do not take my naming in the plants sent as definite, as in many cases they may be Conklin, Haynes, or Evans, and I am only responsible for my own naming, so do not hesitate to raise a point where you may not see eye to eye with the naming, and I will do my best to go over and give an opinion. For example[,] two of your *Nardia Hyalina*<sup>143</sup> are *Jungermannia sphaerocarpa*. Dr[.] C[onklin] agrees with one, and I am reasonably sure the other goes there also. In the case of *S[capania] americana*, there is a good excuse, as that species is only now being separated, and at that I must confess I do not always follow the naming given, but yours as noted on list is good *S[capania] americana*. With you, I was indeed sorry to hear of the passing of Plitt.<sup>144</sup> He was a most pleasant fellow, pity he had to go.

Well, I do not wonder at your not having an excess of spirits. I consider you have stood up well under a load of misfortune, better than I could have, so a little giving way is permissible. Myself, I feel rotten, no energy for anything, because I cannot see that all the work I must do is going to bring any adequate money reward, but only a further addition to the load of debts. But I may as well go on with it, though as I say spirit for the work is lacking.

Yes, botanical work does take time and energy, and it is, as you suggest, largely it's own reward. Just work as well done as my knowledge permits. I especially want to get hold of Japanese *Scapanias*, does not matter how small, as long as reliable. There are two that ought to turn up here, and I have now a *B[ritish] C[olumbia] Scapania* that I am in great doubts about, I know it is new, but am wondering just whether it may not be something published.

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<sup>142</sup> San Francisco Bay Area, California.

<sup>143</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. *Solenostoma hyalinum*) of the *Solenostomataceae* family.

<sup>144</sup> Charles Christian Plitt (1869–1933), U.S. botanist and lichenologist.

Thus parvitexta<sup>145</sup> and Hirosaoiensis<sup>146</sup> (wgich [sic] Dr[.] Evans thinks may be synonyms) are wanted. I have Stephanii<sup>147</sup> from you, I believe.

Do not forget some time about Peltolepis,<sup>148</sup> does not matter how small, as long as trustworthy, as I am reasonable sure I have it, but want material for comparison, as Dr[.] Conklin thought not.

Once I can settle down after the Scapanias are out of the way, you may expect to hear from me. Working season is on us now, but I usually manage to put Sundays aside.

Respect~~a~~ and Best Wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 7: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Canada, August 5, 1934.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
Canada

Aug[ust] 5th 1934

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden  
6126 Melvil St[reet]  
Culver City  
Calif[ornia]

What a life, what a dog's life, I get so damn disgusted I want to bite someone. I ought to have written long ago, but lacked ambition to do anything much, for things have not gone any too well, and I was so busy with the Scapania paper<sup>149</sup> that even yet I have not finished it, but as the essential parts are finished, and on paper, I am not worrying s[o] much over it.

Glad you got the N[ardia] scalaris var[ietas], it was not scant in the packet.

So far I have not put up anything else, but am waiting for an energetic fit to arrive, and start me on the way, as everything else is reading but the ambition. That was a nasty joke for fate to play on you, to go for an holiday, and collect the flue.<sup>150</sup> Flue is wretched because of it's after effects, it seems to always leave one depressed, as though the times were not

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<sup>145</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>146</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>147</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family, described by Franz Stephani.

<sup>148</sup> Liverwort genus of the Cleveaceae family.

<sup>149</sup> Perhaps Alfred H. Brinkman, "Notes on Pacific Coast Hepatics," *Report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History of British Columbia* (for 1934; published 1935): 14; or "Some Notes on Grimmia," *Report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History of British Columbia* (for 1934; published 1935): 14–15.

<sup>150</sup> Influenza.

depressing enough already. Hope you manage to get part of the summer in collecting, for I am hoping to find some additions to the Hepatic Statr [sic] list among your gatherings[.]

Thanks for the Peltolepis. When I get round to the problem, it will help to decide; without a specimen for reference, I could not be sure. It may be that the plant I have in mind is something different yet. I do know that when going over the material I could not make it all as named.

I am very sorry to say that the drought, and the grasshoppers got to us also, and that this district is an extension of that of the States,<sup>151</sup> so you may guess we are in for a poor time. I cut my oats to save them from the hoppers, and while they made fine greenfeed, it leaves me without oats, and the wheat, between the drought, the hoppers, and an exceptionally bad plague of gophers, is not likely to yield much over seed and feed. So I am pretty well short on ambition, and initiative, just completely fed up on it all. Afraid to spend even a few cents for stamps, compelled to go without literature, unable to pay dues to anything, wretchedly clothed; it sure does go hard against the grain. Still, there are others worse off, but I do not see that that helps me any, in my hard times. So I can understand how you, after the tough time you have had, and with the flue to help depress, are not feeling any "too chirpy" either.

One by one they go, Dr[.] Bailey,<sup>152</sup> Mr[.] Plitt. We seem hard hit especially over the lichen men, as three have gone in a short span of years. I think I would suggest you write to S[everin] Rapp, who tells me that Mrs[.] Riddle,<sup>153</sup> wife of the late Prof[fesor]. Riddle,<sup>154</sup> is working over Riddle and Merrill[.]<sup>155</sup> material. Possibly he can tell you whether it is of any use trying to get in touch with her. Certainly I know of no one else among my acquaintances. So the dog was interested in the matter of the letter you wrote me, well, he at least did not leave it unfit to read.

You will understand that under circumstances I do not find it easy to write, or to study, yet study I must, if only to keep my hold on life, for there seems so very little worth living for, with one long drawn out continuous and unsuccessful struggle for an half decent living.

It seems so excessively stupid, with an abundance of the things that make life pleasant all around us, yet having to go without amidst the abundance, because what we have, and what others want from us, is worth too little to enable us to purchase the necessities of life with. Guess [George] Bernard Shaw<sup>156</sup> was right when he suggested that this earth is peopled with

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<sup>151</sup> United States of America.

<sup>152</sup> John W. Bailey (1870–1933), U.S. physician and bryologist. See Melissa Fite Kuld, Sebastian Hoang, Vicente Ramos, and Chance James Sanford, eds., "Conversations of a Mossy Kind in the Pacific Northwest: John W. Bailey's Correspondences to Fay A. MacFadden (1921–1929)," *The Welebaethan: A Journal of History* 52 (2025): 216–240.

<sup>153</sup> Gertrude Hollister Riddle, née Paine (1878–1976), wife of Lincoln Ware Riddle.

<sup>154</sup> Lincoln Ware Riddle (1880–1921), U.S. botanist and lichenologist.

<sup>155</sup> Presumably Elmer Drew Merrill (1876–1956).

<sup>156</sup> George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), Irish playwright.

imbeciles too excessively stupid to keep on the other planets.<sup>157</sup> , So they just fire them on to us, and they pose as great statesman, great bankers, great industrialists, etc[etera]. etc[etera]. Oh well, what's the use. Might as well take it [sic] with an attempt at a smile as we seem pretty helpless to cure the rotten mess.

Some time, when in a writing humour, please let me know how things are with you. I hope more cheerful than when you last wrote[.]

Respects and Best Wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 8: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, September 22, 1934.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics; all underlinings are by hand):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
Canada  
Sep[tember] 22nd 1934

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden  
6126 Melvil St[reet]  
Culver City  
Calif[ornia]

I was pleased to get your letter, and enclosures. I am treating of a few, but my eyes are not in very good shape just at present the result of worry and indifferent health, I think, rather than anything functionally wrong, anyhow, I am giving them a little rest, but am keeping only the *Platyphyllas*<sup>158</sup> unnamed.

9659. This is, I think, *Asterella Ludwigii*,<sup>159</sup> a plant you have gathered elsewhere. There is only one fragmentary perianth, so that it is *Asterella*,<sup>160</sup> and the surface has the thin walled cells of that species. I was not able to get a satisfactory ~~side~~ *slide* of sections, it was just that which suggested I give my eyes a little rest. If you have Clark<sup>161</sup> and Fryes<sup>162</sup> book,<sup>163</sup> and can make sections, it should be possible to verify by that, as other characters are right, but lacking good

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<sup>157</sup> "The longer I live, the more firmly I am convinced that the other planets use our earth as their lunatic asylum." Quoted in, for example, *The Christian Century: An Udenominational Journal of Religion* 42, no. 28 (July 9, 1925): 893.

<sup>158</sup> Presumably *Porella platyphylla*, liverwort species of the Porellaceae family.

<sup>159</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species *Mannia gracilis*.

<sup>160</sup> Liverwort genus of the Aytoniaceae family.

<sup>161</sup> Lois Clark (1884–1967), U.S. botanist, bryologist, and professor.

<sup>162</sup> Theodore Christian Frye (1869–1962), U.S. bryologist and professor.

<sup>163</sup> Lois Clark and Theodore C. Frye, *The Liverworts of the Northwest* (University of Washington, Pudget sound biological station, Publications, 1928).

fruit, it is hard to determine otherwise. 9663 *Targionia hypophylla*. the characteristic perianth is present.

9660 B, I could not find spores, except mixed in tissue of plant, and so spore surface markings could not be certified, but the long seta, and the prevalence of the plant in California, suggests it as *Fossombronia longiseta*.<sup>164</sup> The fruit was too young, in perhaps two months, it would have ripe spores. With it is a small fragment of *Anthoceros Carolianus occidentalis*,<sup>165</sup> not quite characteristic, but with the spores of that species. If your part has not got it in, I will send the fragment to you it is well marked. 9664. *Calypogeia trichomanis*,<sup>166</sup> making an approach to *C[alypogeia] fissa*,<sup>167</sup> *Fossombronia*<sup>168</sup> sp[ecies], and *Pellia*<sup>169</sup> sp[ecies], fragment.

9660, *Fossombronia* sp[ecies]. It was this I examined most closely. It has anterids<sup>170</sup> and unripe capsules. The others I will work over later on, I expect some little difficulty with them.

Well, the grasshoppers, etc[etera], made a fairly good job of it here, so we are in for a difficult winter. But there it is. Of course it is very depressing, and reacts on the botanical work, besides cutting off the source of supplies for everything, but I have enough material on hand to do a lot of botanical work yet, so shall not need to stop that yet awhile.

It must have been very disappointing to have Mac<sup>171</sup> leave, after only two weeks, but I guess work comes first in these difficult times, and of course it's cash rewards. Am glad you were please with report.

It is, of course, nice to find the work done appreciated, though I acknowledge the great help given all round.

You have got a pretty good impression about the work, for I do feel that it is up to me to do work within the limits of my powers, in return for the help so generously given to me during many years by other workers, and I, of course, hope it is of sufficient merit to be worth quoting. I find I have lost the list I made of Hepatics wanted by you, for last week I went over the terrible mess of correspondence, etc[etera], and straightened things out a bit, but failed to find the marked list. Some time later on, when you find the opportunity, you might mark off by a -, those plants you are lacking, and when I can rouse up a little ambition, I will get busy on some of the plants long owing you.

I am enclosing a description of 8936, the plant I tentatively name *Jungermannia riparia* forma,<sup>172</sup> but doubted. Recently I had a specimen sent me by Mrs[.] Sutcliffe<sup>173</sup> of a plant

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<sup>164</sup> Liverwort species of the Fossombroniaceae family.

<sup>165</sup> Hornwort species of the Notothyladaceae family.

<sup>166</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species *Calypogeia azurea* or *muelleriana*.

<sup>167</sup> Liverwort species of the Calypogeiaceae family.

<sup>168</sup> Liverwort genus of the Fossombroniaceae family.

<sup>169</sup> Liverwort genus of the Pelliaceae family.

<sup>170</sup> Male reproductive organs in certain plants, including ferns and mosses.

<sup>171</sup> Likely a nickname for Fay's husband Joel (MacFadden).

<sup>172</sup> Liverwort species of the Jungermanniaceae family.

<sup>173</sup> Alys Sutcliffe (1895–1969), horticulturist at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

suggested as J[ungermannia] Schiffneri<sup>174</sup> by Dr[.] Evans some 10 years ago, or else a new species. Unfortunately it was not in fruit, so it was not possible to be quite sure, but as far as I could make it out, by careful comparison of vegetative structure, it was th[e] same as yours.

It seems reasonably safe to suggest it as a new species. How would you like to try you hand at describing it.

P[lease] T[urn] O[ver]

[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]

I am assuming you have and use a microscope, and have access to Macvicars<sup>175</sup> handbook of British Hepatics.<sup>176</sup>

The original is the second examination, the copy is a copy of the first. They differ but very little, examination showed some of the bracts as large as 1.1 mm [millimeter], and description was emended, but it did not mention, that the lower leaves were as little as .35 mm, or the plentiful rhizoids, neither did it add the male bracts.

If you care to undertake this, you have these descriptions to go by, and verify, then you can compare with J[ungermannia] riparia,<sup>177</sup> pumila,<sup>178</sup> Schiffneri, which seem the only three likely to be confused, though reference can be made to J[ungermannia] atrovirens.<sup>179</sup> J[ungermannia] Schiffneri, with dimorphous<sup>180</sup> leaves, broader than long on fruiting plants, & *definitely narrower than long on infertile branches* and perianth suddenly beaked, not long attenuated, as is this; J[ungermannia] riparia with rather more suddenly contracted perianth, diocous [dioecious],<sup>181</sup> leaves not so sharply narrowed at [the] base, narrower in comparison, and with larger cells, J[ungermannia] pumila would have to be examined too, so there is a nice interesting littel [sic] job, if you feel inclined to tackle it, but it means careful comparison, so that you can make the descriptions and notes your own. If you have no J[ungermannia] Schiffneri, I can send you a little of mine, I have recently hunted up among the awful accumulation in this room. Then there is a Latin description, as brief as possible, as long as it covers the salient facts, which should at least include those parts ticked off. If Miss Brown,<sup>182</sup> (or was it Mrs[.], I really forget, though I remember seeing her at Banff) can do it, so can you, and get broke in to it. Have recently been working over a very puzzling plant, which I can only make a form of S[capania] cordifolia. I send you a fragment. It reopens the question of

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<sup>174</sup> Liverwort species of the Jungermanniaceae family, described by Victor Félix Schiffner.

<sup>175</sup> Symers Douglas Macdonald Macvicar (1857–1932), Scottish botanist.

<sup>176</sup> Symers D. M. Macvicar, *The Student's Handbook of British Hepatics* (V. T. Sumfield, 1912).

<sup>177</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Jungermannia atrovirens) of the Jungermanniaceae family.

<sup>178</sup> Liverwort species of the Jungermanniaceae family.

<sup>179</sup> Liverwort species of the Jungermanniaceae family.

<sup>180</sup> Occurring in two distinct shapes.

<sup>181</sup> With male and female reproductive parts on different plants.

<sup>182</sup> Margaret Sibella Brown (1866–1961), Canadian bryologist.



J[ungermannia] cordifolia,<sup>183</sup> which I had hoped I had finished with. Also a little S[capania] subalpina<sup>184</sup> closely approaching S[capania] intermedia.<sup>185</sup> These happen to be close at hand.

This is all for the present, so adieu  
Respectfully and sincerely Yours  
A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 9: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, November 11, 1934.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics; all underlinings are by hand):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
Canada  
Nov[ember] 11th 1934

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden  
6126 Melvil St[reet]  
Culver City  
Calif[ornia]  
U S A

No[.] 9662 B Porella navicularis<sup>186</sup>  
9662 [ditto marks]  
9661 [Porella] Cordeana,<sup>187</sup> depauperate<sup>188</sup>  
9665 [Porella] Cordeana  
9666 [ditto mark]  
9667 [ditto mark]

There seems no Roelli or Bolanderi among the lot.

I have used the following characters for Cordeana

Thin cell walls, small recurved ventral<sup>189</sup> lobe, distant underleaves, green, dull and for navicularis, larger rounded ventral lobe, imbricated underleaves, large, trigones, shining, and at base of antical lobe, an area of distinctly smaller cells. There is a range of variation among the Cordeana, but I do not think any will go elsewhere. I had half expected to hear from you,

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<sup>183</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Jungermannia exsertifolia subspecies cordifolia) of the Jungermanniaceae family.

<sup>184</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>185</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Scapania undulata) of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>186</sup> Liverwort species of the Porellaceae family.

<sup>187</sup> Liverwort species of the Porellaceae family.

<sup>188</sup> Undeveloped, stunted.

<sup>189</sup> Designating the lower or inner surface of a structure.

about the *Jungermannia*,<sup>190</sup> and as Mrs[.] Sutcliffe had written me, I was waiting till I heard from you before answering her.

Briefly, a plant put by for some years, and tentatively suggested by Evans as *Schiffneri*<sup>191</sup> or new, was sent me by her, on the supposition it might be the same species as yours. It proved to be without perianths, but the vegetative characters were so similar to your plant, that I could only suggest it as probably the same species. ~~She~~ She also tells me Howell<sup>192</sup> has gathered it this year, but I have not seen the specimen.

I am writing her suggesting she write you, to see what you are doing, and if you are publishing, that you add her notes on her two gatherings, if both you and she are agreed that it is the same species. That will obviate making two separate series of notes.

*[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Well, I am threshed, 178 bushels of wheat, so you can imagine the sort of year there is before me. It has come to the point where I am suggesting a composition to my creditors, as there is no chance of a payment in full, or anything near it. Not a pleasant record after 26 years of work here, is it. So you will understand it has been, and is a worrying time with me. However, I shall soon settle down to botanical work, if only to get my mind off things here. But being in that unsettled frame of mind does not help botany any, especially as I want to continue the critical work on the *Scapanias*. Should I hear from Mrs[.] Sutcliffe re[garding] the *Jungermannia*, I will probably get in touch with you, unless the letter indicates that she has done so in this matter.

We are having a lovely fall, so that outdoor work is a pleasure. Usually we have pretty cold weather at this time of year. There are always a million and seventeen things to do before winter, but quite a number of them are done. We run short on vegetables, but were able to work out relief enough to get a good supply. It is going to be rough on clothing, but I think I can get in touch with those who will help, as far as possible.

Just at present I feel too gloomy to write a pleasant letter, so you will please excuse the atmosphere of this. Hope you and yours are in good health and spirits, and the provider in steady work, with, I hope, a sufficiency of the necessary.

Best Wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] *Brinkman*

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<sup>190</sup> Liverwort genus of the *Jungermanniaceae* family.

<sup>191</sup> Liverwort species of the *Jungermanniaceae* family, described by Victor Félix Schiffner.

<sup>192</sup> John Thomas Howell (1903–1994), U.S. botanist and taxonomist.

*Edition No. 10: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
 Craigmyle, Alberta, December 10, 1934.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
 Canada  
 Dec[ember] 10th 1934

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden  
 6126 Melvil St[reet]  
 Culver City  
 Cal[ifornia]

I went over my mosses hunting out Grimmiaceae,<sup>193</sup> to solve a puzzle, and enclose fragments of a few. *Tayloria splachnoides*<sup>194</sup> was in such small quantity that it would not admit of sharing. Most of my 1908 material is decidedly scanty, the bulk finding its way to Macoun.<sup>195</sup> However, the material sent will fill a gap, till better specimens come your way. Also I enclose a fresh *Grimmia*, *Grimmia subgracillinervis*, kindb[erg].<sup>196</sup> It is not shown by Macoun, or Jones.<sup>197</sup> Just a very small fragment, as my own material is decidedly scanty, but there was no possibility of your getting it elsewhere. It belongs to the pleio-neuron group.<sup>198</sup> By the way, were you able to get the books of Jones<sup>199</sup> and Grout.<sup>200</sup> Unfortunately I have not been able to afford Grout's book,<sup>201</sup> or his list,<sup>202</sup> much to my disgust. But Jones was very good, and sent me on a copy, which I am enjoying. I got a list of *Brachythecium*s<sup>203</sup> from Wyoming<sup>204</sup> (Porter)<sup>205</sup> and that set me looking up records. I hunted over your published list in Museum report,<sup>206</sup> then added my own, and together it made a very goodly total. Some of your finds I have not got, and the same is probably true in your case with mine. I found that your *Grimmia ambigua*<sup>207</sup> was not recorded, as it is not shown for B[ritish] C[olumbia], also

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<sup>193</sup> Moss genus of the Grimmiaceae family.

<sup>194</sup> Moss species of the Splachnaceae family.

<sup>195</sup> John Macoun (1831–1920), Canadian botanist.

<sup>196</sup> Obsolete name for a rock moss of the Grimmiaceae family, described by Nils Conrad Kindberg.

<sup>197</sup> Marcus Eugene Jones (1852–1934), U.S. geologist, mining engineer, and botanist.

<sup>198</sup> Perhaps a reference to marsh ferns of the Thelypteridaceae family.

<sup>199</sup> Likely a reference to Marcus E. Jones, *Revision of North-American species of Astragalus* (by the author, 1923).

<sup>200</sup> Abel Joel Grout (1867–1947), U.S. bryologist.

<sup>201</sup> Likely a reference to Abel J. Grout, *Moss Flora of North America, North of Mexico*, 2 vols. (by the author, 1928–1933).

<sup>202</sup> Perhaps a reference to Abel J. Grout, *Mosses with Hand-Lens and Microscope* (by the author, 1903).

<sup>203</sup> Moss genus of the Brachytheciaceae family.

<sup>204</sup> U.S. state in the Mountain West.

<sup>205</sup> Perhaps Cedric Lambert Porter (1905–2000), U.S. botanist, in Wyoming since 1929.

<sup>206</sup> Likely a reference to Fay A. MacFadden, "Hepaticae of the Selkirk and Rocky Mountains of Canada," *Report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History of British Columbia* (for 1925; published 1927): 28–32.

<sup>207</sup> Moss species of the Grimmiaceae family.

Pennsylvanica,<sup>208</sup> and anomala.<sup>209</sup> G[rimmia] ambigua is shown as apocarpa var[ietas] ambigua<sup>210</sup> by Jones, G[rimmia] anomala is shown as G[rimmia] Martmani, var[ietas] anomala,<sup>211</sup> and G[rimmia] pensilvanica as G[rimmia] pilifera.<sup>212</sup> The latter would be a notable extension. I have not got Ambigua or Pensylvanica among my material.

They are as follows

9806 Kantia trichomanis<sup>213</sup>

9778 Anthoceros fusiformis<sup>214</sup>

9779 A[nthoceros] fusiformis plus Blasia<sup>215</sup>

9777 A[nthoceros] fusiformis<sup>216</sup>

9780 Porella rivularis<sup>217</sup>

9789 Do not think an hepatic:

*[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

I believe I got your lists at last. When hunting up the moss desiderata<sup>218</sup> I found an Hepatic list there also, so I expect it is your desiderata, so do not trouble further. When next writing will you please tell me whether Stenholm<sup>219</sup> takes Lichens, if so, when I am at yours, I will put him up some also, and ask for mosses or Hepatics in exchange. A desire from Michigan<sup>220</sup> is expressed for exchange, so I shall probably get busy at last, in very shame.

Re[garding] description of N[ew?] Sp[ecies?]. I think I will give Mrs[.] Sutcliffe the offer, as it is a Californian species, and she has gathered what seems to be the same species, also Mr[.] Howell. That deals with most.

I think you were wise not to tackle the Jungermannia if you had not got a pretty good working acquaintance with the group, though I could have gone over the material when written. As a matter of fact, I do not think we can tackle too wide a ground and tackle it closely, that is my belief at least. It requires so minute a study to specialize, that any wide ground is impossible unless one has one's whole time to give to ti [sic], and a

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<sup>208</sup> Obsolete name for the moss species Grimmia pilifera.

<sup>209</sup> Moss species of the Grimmiaceae family.

<sup>210</sup> Moss species of the Grimmiaceae family.

<sup>211</sup> Moss species of the Grimmiaceae family.

<sup>212</sup> Moss species of the Grimmiaceae family.

<sup>213</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Calypogeia trichomanis (with pencil mark).

<sup>214</sup> Hornwort species of the Anthocerotaceae family.

<sup>215</sup> Hornwort species of the Anthocerotaceae family in endophytic symbiosis with the liverwort species Blasia pusilla of the Blasiaceae family (with pencil mark).

<sup>216</sup> With pencil mark.

<sup>217</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Porella cordaeana.

<sup>218</sup> Latin term, meaning "things wanted."

<sup>219</sup> Carl Stenholm (1862–1939), Swedish botanist.

<sup>220</sup> U.S. state in the Upper Midwest.

[page 3; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]

very much larger literature than I possess. I will keep you in touch with it, anyhow. I see, you are like me, trusting to your eyes to show you the small differences in habit and colour of a specimen, and to your memory to repeat, when you have gained knowledge of the specific name. Wonderful how many plants one can come to know that way.

Your remarks re[garding] grasses are interesting. It is a pity I do not live somewhere near, we could then have gone over the grasses and place them with a tolerable amount of accuracy. I spent a number of years tackling the grasses here, and had the great help of Hitchcock,<sup>221</sup> and Rydberg earlier. So that there are very few Albertan grasses with which I am not well acquainted. when the time comes to study the Hepatics, you should be well prepared, for you must have by now quite a fine collection of them. Your weed garden is interesting, 1 out of 40 native is pretty good, and itself makes a good lesson. Mac<sup>222</sup> with his 4 jobs in 18 months may seem worrying to him and to you, but there seems another way to look at it, just try and think what the calibre of a man must be who can land 4 jobs in 18 months of such times as these, there can be nothing wrong with such a man, at least in the direction of work.

Hope the Wheelers get to California, they seem to enjoy their stay there so fully, and the old boss has my affection.

Well, will quit, with the seasons wishes for an happy time for you all

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 11: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, January 22, 1935.*

[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Jan[uary] 22nd 1935

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden

6126 Melvil St[reet]

Culver City

Cal[ifornia]

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<sup>221</sup> Albert Spear Hitchcock (1865–1935), U.S. botanist.

<sup>222</sup> Likely a nickname for Fay's husband Joel (MacFadden).

By this mail I am sending a parcel of mosses and Lichens. They are finished at last. The method used was, where only one duplicate was available, you had it, and in a few cases, where my own material was sufficient, I shared it. The Lichens are extra, part payment for plants received. That leaves two boxes of mosses and one of Hepatics to go over when time is available, besides some 3 or 4 boxes of plants, but time is hardly likely to be available this winter, as I am behind already with so much of my other work.

Can you give me Stenholm's address, when you write. I seem to have mislaid it, also when you write, if you know, please say if Stenholm accepts lichens,. I have a parcel put up for him, but shall not send till I hear from him.

Just at present have a nice little bunch of troubles. Wife<sup>223</sup> went into hospital for a change, but am glad to say, she is out, though not home, and much better, then there are something like bankruptcy proceedings, and out of it I shall emerge minus some land. But if the debts are cut down sufficiently I do not know that I shall worry unduly. Hope all is going well with you.

Weather here damnable. Over a month now of cold weather, mostly sub-zero, said to have been as low as 50 below. And no sign of let up. What a country.

For the time adieu, with best wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 12: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, April 21, 1935.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Ap[ri]l 21st 1935

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden

6126 Melvil St[reet]

Culver ~~St~~ [City]

Cal[ifornia]

I thank you for your letter of 30th ult[im]o [mense].<sup>224</sup> I am glad you found the mosses and lichens satisfactory.

The parcel of mosses and paper came to hand in due course. All very acceptable. It was a kindly thought on on your part to enclose the paper. I sure do seem to get rid of a lot of paper, and I expect the same is your experience. Wrote an~~e~~ article on drifting soil, with 6

<sup>223</sup> Ada Brinkman, née Rowe (1874–1975), married to Alfred H. Brinkman since 1899.

<sup>224</sup> Latin for "of the last month." Here referring to March 30, 1935.

copies, and it took over 100 sheets of paper.<sup>225</sup> Thank goodness however that this is a rare experience.

No, I have not received any flowers or mosses of 1934 gatherings, till receipt of mosses recently. only Hepatics. Am very glad to hear that the good man<sup>226</sup> of the house has a permanency, it will be a great relief after the uncertainty of recent years. Hope it is found satisfactory all round. That will mean some more B[ritish] C[olumbia] gatherings in due course, I expect. Well, there is plenty of room for additions, and you are pretty certain to find some interesting things. How many times I have wished that I had the chance to rework the Selkirks,<sup>227</sup> so rich did I find it that I am certain that very many fine additions are there for the gathering.

You did not include Stenholms address, and I have mislaid it, so please give it to me, if at all handy. I seem to remember it as Gotenborg,<sup>228</sup> but I may easily be wrong, and prefer to be sure, if possible.

I heard from Mr[.] Wheeler not long ago, before their journey home, and I thought he seemed to have got less satisfaction than usual from his Californian holiday, though that may have been either the weather, or something outside California. Probably the latter, as you speak of them as being "in the pink of condition". U S A sure is getting a very full share of agricultural diasaster,<sup>229</sup> and it must be heartbreaking. We here seem to think we have more than our fair share, but at least, we have enough soil left to continue farming with some prospect of satisfactory returns, if ever prices and weather coincide to help us along a bit. Certainly farming is a terrible gamble for many of us. By now you are well on the way with your desert holiday, and I hope are finding very many things of interest. What a change it would be to me to be amidst such surroundings, with nearly everything new to me.

I quite recently heard from ~~M~~ Dr. A[.] S[.] Hitchcock, and he tells me the proof reading is over, and the material in the printing room, so that the issue of the U S Grass Flora<sup>230</sup> should not be long delayed. He has handled my grasses for years, does so still, to my very great advantage, so I look forward to it's issue. Like you, I wish for so many books, that I feel very hopeless about ever even remotely catching up with my literature wants.

By the way, Jephson's<sup>231</sup> Flora of California, Part 3<sup>232</sup> contains what strikes me as a very full list of Californian grasses, over 100 pages, probably well over 400 species and var[ietie]s, that should be the grass book for you to get. Issued 1912, Dep[artmen]t of Botany, University of

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<sup>225</sup> Perhaps Alfred H. Brinkman, "Mosses in Relation to Cajander Theory of Forest Types," *Forest Chronicle* 12 (1936): 300–314.

<sup>226</sup> Fay's husband Joel.

<sup>227</sup> Mountain range in the southeastern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia, the northern part of the U.S. state of Idaho, and the northeastern part of the U.S. state of Washington.

<sup>228</sup> Gothenburg (Göteborg), city in southwestern Sweden.

<sup>229</sup> This was the peak of the Dust Bowl, a severe drought in the U.S. prairies.

<sup>230</sup> Albert S. Hitchcock, *Manual of the Grasses of the United States* (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1935).

<sup>231</sup> Willis Linn Jepson (1867–1946), U.S. botanist, professor, and conservationist.

<sup>232</sup> Willis L. Jepson, *A Flora of California*, vol. 3 (Associated Students Store, University of California, 1912).

California.<sup>233</sup> Rich in Phalaris, Aristida, Stipa, Agrostis, Calamagrostis, Bouteloua, Melica, Agropyron, Bromus, very rich in "~~Poa~~ Poa and Festuca."<sup>234</sup> 72 Genera, Price \$1.50, well worth having.

Well, my case of debt composition is over, not as satisfactory as I had hoped, but still a fighting chance. Hoped that it might have been sufficiently good to reinstate some amount of ambition, but it was not so. A very late spring, thank goodness, for all seed and feed has to be supplied to me by Government, which means a great lot of hauling, and much delay. Some home, but more yet to come. But it does mean more than usual moisture so far, not so much blowing and perhaps a better than usual chance for a crop. For the time adieu, hoping and expecting to hear from you later on, with a few *Hepatics*, for if the desert can grow flowers, it can also grow *Hepatics*.

For the time being, adieu, with many thanks for your kindly thoughts, and the ~~also~~ kindly gift

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Had some interesting correspondence with Dr. Grout recently over Grimmias & Brachytheciums*

*Edition No. 13: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden*

*Craigmyle, Alberta, June 28, 1935.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Canada

June 28th 1935

F[ay] A[.] MacFadden

6126 Melvil St[reet]

Culver City

Cal[if]ornia]

I thank you for the parcel of flowering plants. Also for the grasses and Carices enclosed. They are fine.

They bring home the same tale as before, the differences in the flowering plants, southern apparently, and the likeness in the grasses, apparently western. There are two or three I want to study, they seem different. Also some unknown to me hitherto. Thank you for the whole collection. They leave me in your debt heavier than ever. I at last managed to hunt up the address of Stenholm, and have got a latter [sic] off to him. When once a letter gets misplaced or forgotten, it gets pretty hopeless, until I have a clear up. Did you by any means keep lists

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<sup>233</sup> University in Berkeley, California, established in 1868. Its Department of Botany was established in 1890.

<sup>234</sup> Phalaris, Aristida, Stipa, Agrostis, Calamagrostis, Bouteloua, Melica, Agropyron, Bromus, Poa, and Festuca are grass genera of the Poaceae family.



of your own gatherings of flowering plants. I have made up my mind it is time to get together a list of the flowering plants of Alberta, and want to get on the traces of lists, and if you have kept lists of the Albertan gatherings, it ~~h~~would be helpful, as recent collections are more valuable, less likely to have been revised. While my own list is over 1000, there must be many others, if I can get on the track of them. Co-operation is promised elsewhere, so I hope the final result may be acceptable. It must be summer work mostly, for me, as I must reserve the winter for Hepatics mostly. I suppose by now, you are gathering the loose ends together,

*[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

preparatory to the trip Northward, which I hope will be thoroughly enjoyable for all concerned. I expect you will not be botanically inactive while there either.

We got rather promising weather here, lots of rain to start things on the way but nature is not too prodigal, so sent along a few wind storms, to ~~partly~~ destroy the results of her prodigality. Also the hoppers are pretty bad, and gophers are more numerous than ever, despite poisoning. Still, we may easily get seed and feed, and that will be a great improvement on last year, while there are still quite good chances for a fair [sic] crop.

Glad to say I am feeling better in myself lately, and more mentally alive, or acute. The worry left me feeling pretty rotten all round.

Well, here is best wishes for a real good time, for you and yours

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*I see Mrs[.] Chase<sup>235</sup> has been busy on your grasses, that should add to their value. The California list is an extensive one, so there are lots to find. Salix Go[o]ddingii<sup>236</sup> seems little different from the sandbar willow, which is a variable species with many forms.*

A[lfred] B[rinkman]

*Edition No. 14: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden*

*Craigmyle, Alberta, January 9, 1937.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Canada

Jan[uary] 9th 1937

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

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<sup>235</sup> Mary Agnes Chase (1869–1963), U.S. botanist.

<sup>236</sup> Willow species of the Salicaceae family.

I thank you for your kindly letter of 17th ult[im]o [mense], and for the kind wishes expressed. This has been an extremely difficult year for me, we got no crop, so you can imagine how things must be. One wonders what the end must be, after so many years struggle.

Yes, please send on Hepatics, I shall be interested.

I think I can understand your feeling with the botanical work, for I also have had a fit of inertia, I have by my side a box of duplicate hepatics, they have been there a year, ready to put up and send off, but somehow I cannot get to the starting point. True, have not been entirely ~~idle~~, idle, for other botanical work has had precedence, but if things had gone better I am sure I should have had that particular job done long ago, and to that extent have paid off part of my debt to you and others.

Gosh, digging two feet, and over 60 sacks of leaf mould, you must be keen on gardening, and I can hope the results justify the pains taken I can imagine that with a scarcity of rain, collecting was not so good. I was fortunate enough to get out three times, through the kindness of a neighbour who was interested, and I really think he enjoyed the trips as much as I did. Met a lot of old plant friends quite unexpectedly, or in other words I found a Parkland flora on the N[orth] face of the handhills,<sup>237</sup> almost touching the very bald prairie. It must indeed have been a pleasure to have a visit from Dr[.] Verdoorn,<sup>238</sup> one that you must have thoroughly enjoyed. He wrote me ~~asking~~ asking for a set of the originals in an exsiccata<sup>239</sup> of Hepatics, I had to answ[e]r they were not available, but offered a complete sets of spare duplicate material in return for literature. Have not heard from him, and may not. I wrote to Mr[.] & Mrs[.] Wheeler recently[,] asking them to remember me to you. Mr[.] Wheeler is not rolling in riches, judging from his letters, always enjoyed by me. Yes it is heartbreaking to be hit by drought so often, and then have the grasshoppers eat off what little did remain after the drought had taken its toll. Like you, we were blessed in the matter of fall and early winter weather. It sure was appreciated. Helped tremendously with the stock, and also, incidentally, agreed well with me. But recently we had a cold spell, to 35 below. Just now it is around zero, not at all too bad. You must think me a laggard, but will not be altogether surprised when you hear how things have been with me, I expect. Well, I hope you have nothing but good news to tell of things material, that your good man<sup>240</sup> has been continuously employed at good salary, and the children so full of health as to be somewhat of a problem to you. Except ~~of~~ for a very trying bout of rheumatism,<sup>241</sup> I am feeling well, while it lasted, it laid me by the heels. Things could be worse, but I feel bitter at times. Luckily botany does help me tremendously in times like these.

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<sup>237</sup> Range of hills in Alberta, Canada.

<sup>238</sup> Frans Verdoorn (1906–1984), Dutch botanist.

<sup>239</sup> Consecutively numbered collection of dried herbarium specimens.

<sup>240</sup> Fay's husband Joel.

<sup>241</sup> Medical condition causing pain affecting the joints or connective tissue.

Had a nice compliment paid me, was told that if Canada could find the finance they would be glad to have *me* at the Smithsonian<sup>242</sup> to write an handbook of grasses of N[orth] of 49.<sup>243</sup> Whether anything will matrialize [sic] I know not, but within my little sphere I am doing what I can to get the idea through, but not building too greatly on the result. I have been disappointed so often that I hardly dare even hope.

Well, heres wishing you and yours a full measure of happiness during the coming year

Sincerely Yours

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 15: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden*

*Craigmyle, Alberta, September 18, 1937.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Canada

Sep[tember] 18th 1937

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

Just a few lines to ask questions.

First, I hope your were able to collect plentifully. To me here, you seemed to have in California an ideal collecting season, plenty of spring rains, which seems the ideal condition for Californian plants, so I am hoping in due course to handle some more finds in the Hepatic line.

Well, at last I have made a beginning on the Hepatics. Only a beginning, but enough to suggest that perhaps they will be finished and got out of the way as time permits. It is not doing much permitting at present, for my daughter<sup>244</sup> is with us for a month, and a paper on the floral districts of Alberta is consuming a terrible amount of time in studies not forseen when started. However, I know from experience that the start is the worst part. But now I forget just what *Hepatics* I have sent you. Did I send you any of Holzinger's,<sup>245</sup> I seem to remember that I did, but am not sure. Also I am reasonably sure I sent you spare specimens of the *Slave Lake*<sup>246</sup> collections, so please refurbish my memory by letting me know if these were received by you.

Also can you let me know a few of the numbers of the last lot of mosses sent you. I have two boxes of duplicates, one of which was dealt with, but not the other, and for the life of me I cannot remember which I did deal with. So if you can give me a few of the numbers, it will

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<sup>242</sup> Group of Research and educational institutions, established in 1846 by the U.S. federal government.

<sup>243</sup> The 49th parallel north forms most of the international border between the United States and Canada.

<sup>244</sup> Either Ada Louisa Grace Crowley, née Brinkman (1900–1987), or Violet Emily Foster, née Brinkman (1903–1981). The Brinkmans' third child was a son, Alfred Theodore "Alfie" Brinkman (1914–1985).

<sup>245</sup> John Michael Holzinger (1853–1929), German-born U.S. bryologist.

<sup>246</sup> Town in the central part of the Canadian province of Alberta.

put me right, ready for the time when I am able to get at them. Another year of failure, with all the consequences that go with failure, and I am very tired of it all. Still, there seems nothing I can do about it, except just go on.

I hope you can tell me that the good man<sup>247</sup> is still in the position last mentioned, and improving his position, and that things generally with you are good. Mr[.] Wheeler has his son, with the family, with him, so is generally happy, I expect. I do not know how long Oliver is home for, but I think he is probably at Shushwap Lake<sup>248</sup> with his dad, as he, like me, retains an affection for the place. Mrs[.] Mackenzie<sup>249</sup> is continuing your work, with success. Found *Diplophyllum plicatum*.<sup>250</sup> I must try and spare a stem or two. Also an interesting form of *Scapania intermedia*. By the way, at last Dr[.] Evans agrees that the B[ritish] C[olumbia] record of *S[capania] Evansii*<sup>251</sup> will not stand up, and is, as pointed out by me, *S[capania] intermedia*. Now he wants to swing to the other extreme, and deny validity to *S[capania] Evansii*. No chance to get out this year, so no collections, outside some interesting willows I was watching, and a few goldenrods. By the way, the Ottawa<sup>252</sup> people publish a paper on Golden rods that is worth writing for.

Please at your leisure let me have the information asked for

Best Wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Did I even send you any Slave Lake mosses, and any Sphagnums.<sup>253</sup> I have quantities of both, but cannot remember if I sent any duplicates out of either[.]*

*Edition No. 16: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, January 5, 1941.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Canada

Jan[uary] 5th 1941

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

Here are the records up to date, I believe I have overlooked noting two or three numbers, if so, when going over them again to put them in order, I will report on them. Two of the

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<sup>247</sup> Fay's husband Joel.

<sup>248</sup> Shuswap Lake, lake in the southern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

<sup>249</sup> Elizabeth Constance Mackenzie (1875–1949), Canadian bryologist.

<sup>250</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>251</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. *Scapania nemorea*) of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>252</sup> National capital city in the southeastern part of the Canadian province of Ontario.

<sup>253</sup> Moss genus of the Sphagnaceae family.

numbers are 17854 & 17855, One or both are [are] *Ptilidium ciliare*,<sup>254</sup> I feel sure from memory, anyhow, you will hear later on.

8183 *Anthoceros fusiformis* forma

17354 [ditto marks] *fusiformis* forma

I compared with good [c]arolianum,<sup>255</sup> and that had the sproes [spores] decidedly yellow, while these were dark spored, still, there remains a doubt in my mind, as the spore case has not the numerous stomata<sup>256</sup> usual in *fusiformis*.

17362 Possibly *Anthoceros laevis*,<sup>257</sup> but uncertain.

*Scapania curta*,<sup>258</sup> across the lake from New Denver<sup>259</sup> is *Scapania mucronata*<sup>260</sup> and a few stems and perianths of *Cephalozia serriflora*,<sup>261</sup> and a few scraps of others[.]

*Diplophyllum apiculatum*,<sup>262</sup> sandon Road,<sup>263</sup> New Denver June 31 1924 is *Diplophyllum taxifolium* forma,<sup>264</sup> with some apiculate<sup>265</sup> serrated leaves. This species varies a lot.

17853 *Sphenolobus minutus* [forma,<sup>266</sup> possibly by a new variety, with very broad ventricose<sup>267</sup> obtuse lobed leaves.

*Cephalozia pleniceps*<sup>268</sup>

*Lepidozia trochoclados* forma<sup>269</sup>

*Cephaloxiella* ? *Starkii*<sup>270</sup>

*Jungermannia sphaerocarpa*

*Lophozia Lyoni*<sup>271</sup> depauperate

[ditto marks] unknown, small fragments

17856 *Lophozia Hatcheri* depauperate

17857 *Ptilidium ciliare*

17858 *Scapania curta*

*Lophozia*<sup>272</sup> unknown, seems to h[a]ve underleaves, but not fit group *Leiocolea*<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Liverwort species of the Ptilidiaceae family.

<sup>255</sup> Presumably *Anthoceros carolinianum* (a.k.a. *Phaeoceros carolinianus*), hornwort species of the Notothyladaceae family.

<sup>256</sup> Pores found in the epidermis of leaves, stems, and other organs.

<sup>257</sup> Obsolete name for the hornwort species *Phaeoceros laevis*.

<sup>258</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>259</sup> Village in the southeastern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

<sup>260</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>261</sup> Liverwort species of the Cephaloziaceae family.

<sup>262</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>263</sup> Hiking trail in New Denver, British Columbia, Canada.

<sup>264</sup> Variant of a liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>265</sup> Related to the uppermost tip.

<sup>266</sup> Liverwort species of the Anastrophyllaceae family.

<sup>267</sup> Swollen.

<sup>268</sup> Liverwort species of the Cephaloziaceae family.

<sup>269</sup> Obsolete name of the liverwort species *Kurzia trichoclados*.

<sup>270</sup> Obsolete name of the liverwort species *Cephaloxiella divaricata*.

<sup>271</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species *Trilophozia quinquedentata*.

<sup>272</sup> Liverwort genus of the Lophoziaceae family.

<sup>273</sup> Liverwort genus of the Lophoziaceae family.

17859 Lophozia porphyroleuca

Jungermannia sphaerocarpa

Scapania curta, stem or two

17862 Ptilidium Californicum<sup>274</sup> *The two I have named Ptilidium Californicum, while not quite typical, seem to fit there best, I have found it in B[ritish] C[olumbia]*

Lophozia lycopodioides<sup>275</sup>

Scapania undulata forma (toothed and colored)

17860 Diplophyllum incurvum<sup>276</sup> *This is should call [sic] your most interesting find*

Lophozia ventricosa

Cephalozia pleniceps

[ditto marks] unknown

17863 Blepharastoma tricophyllum<sup>277</sup>

Jungermannia sphaerocarpa Both depauperate

17864 Diplophyllum incurvum

17865 Blepharastoma tricophyllum

Jungermannia sphaerocarpa

17866 Mannia fragrans<sup>278</sup>

17867 Cephaloziella<sup>279</sup> ? see 17905

17868 Calypoegeia Neesiana<sup>280</sup>

Lophozia ventricosa

Blepharastoma tricophyllum

17869 Could find no Hepatic

~~QUUP~~ Scapania subalpina

17870 Calypoegeia trichomanis

Lophocolea minor<sup>281</sup> all three 17870

17871 Porella navicularis

17872 Mannia fragrans

17873 Lophozia confertifolia<sup>282</sup>

17874 Mannia pilosa<sup>283</sup> or new has abundant hyaline scales almost hiding thallus<sup>284</sup>

[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]

17875 Lophozia ventricosa

17876 Lophozia ventricosa

<sup>274</sup> Liverwort species of the Ptilidiaceae family.

<sup>275</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophoziaceae family.

<sup>276</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Scapania gymnostomophila.

<sup>277</sup> Liverwort species of the Blepharostomataceae family.

<sup>278</sup> Liverwort species of the Aytoniaceae family.

<sup>279</sup> Liverwort genus of the Cephaloziellaceae family.

<sup>280</sup> Liverwort species of the Calypogeiaceae family.

<sup>281</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophocoleaceae family.

<sup>282</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Lophozia ventricosa.

<sup>283</sup> Liverwort species of the Aytoniaceae family.

<sup>284</sup> Latinized Greek term, meaning "green shoot."

- 17877 Porella Roellii<sup>285</sup>  
17878 Porella Roellii  
17879 Lophozia lycopodioides  
17880 Lophozia lycopodioides  
17881 Lophozia Floerkii<sup>286</sup>  
17882 Sphenolobus minitus approaching var[ietas] cuspidatus<sup>287</sup>  
 Bazzania tricrenata<sup>288</sup> fragment  
17883 Sphenolobus minitus approaching var[ietas] cuspidatus  
 Bazzania tricrenata depauperate  
17884 Scapania subalpina  
17885 Sphenolobus minitus var[ietas] cuspidatus  
17886 Lophozia confertifolia  
17887 Bazzania tricrenata (*Whal.*) Pears.<sup>289</sup>  
 Sphenolobus minitus both depauperate (*Crantz*) Steph[ani].<sup>290</sup>  
17889 (or 17889) Sphenolobus minitus var[ietas] cuspidatis [sic]  
17888 Preissia quadrata<sup>291</sup>  
17890 Lophozia alpestris<sup>292</sup>  
17891c Marsupella Sullivantii<sup>293</sup>  
 Cephaloziella Starkii<sup>294</sup> ?  
17892 Ptilidium Californicum  
17893 Chiloscyphus polyanthos<sup>295</sup> ~~var rivularis~~  
 Pellia Neesiana<sup>296</sup>  
17895 Scapania subalpina forma (decurrentia)<sup>297</sup> antical lobe often decurrent  
17896 Chiloscyphus polyanthos var[ietas] rivularis<sup>298</sup>  
17897 Scapania dentata var[ietas] purpurescens<sup>299</sup>  
17898 Diplophyllum taxifolium<sup>300</sup>  
17899 Marchantia polymorpha<sup>301</sup>  
17900 Targionia hypophylla (uncertain without fruiting organs)

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<sup>285</sup> Liverwort species of the Porellaceae family, described by Julius Röhl.

<sup>286</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Neoorthocaulis floerkei, described by Heinrich Gustav Flörke.

<sup>287</sup> Liverwort species of the Anastrophyllaceae family.

<sup>288</sup> Liverwort species of the Lepidoziaceae family.

<sup>289</sup> Described by (Göran (Georg) Wahlenberg) William Henry Pearson.

<sup>290</sup> Described by (Heinrich Johann Nepomuk von Crantz) Franz Stephani.

<sup>291</sup> Liverwort species of the Marchantiaceae family.

<sup>292</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Mesoptychia collaris.

<sup>293</sup> Liverworts species of the Gymnomitriaceae family, described by William Starling Sullivant.

<sup>294</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Cephaloziella divaricata) of the Cephaloziellaceae family.

<sup>295</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophocoleaceae family.

<sup>296</sup> Liverwort species of the Pelliaceae family.

<sup>297</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>298</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophocoleaceae family.

<sup>299</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>300</sup> Liverwort species of the Scapaniaceae family.

<sup>301</sup> Liverwort species of the Marchantiaceae family.

17901 Lophozia porphyroleuca

Cephalozia pleniceps

17902 Plagiochila asplenoides<sup>302</sup>

17903 Lophozia lycopodioides

17904 Sphenolobus minitus var[ietas] nov[a] (see 17853)

17905 Cephaloziella could be var[ietas] asperifolia<sup>303</sup> of Starkii,<sup>304</sup> but to me it looks different, will take up when and as possible elsewhere I think it is the same as 17867 *found a few immature perianths*

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<sup>302</sup> Liverwort species of the Plagiochilaceae family.

<sup>303</sup> Latin term, meaning "rough-leaved."

<sup>304</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Cephaloziella divaricata) of the Cephaloziellaceae family.



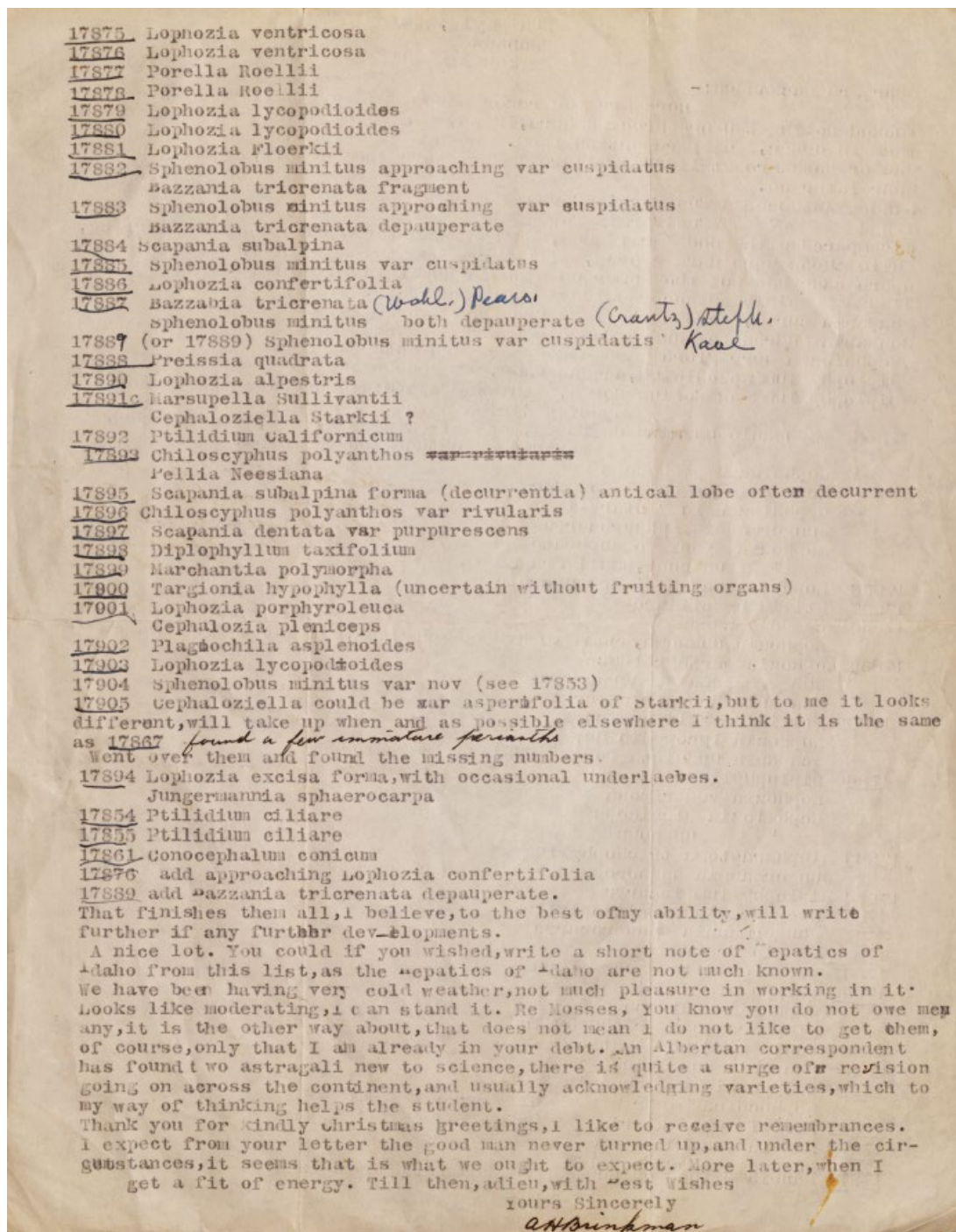


Figure 4: Image of Edition No. 16, page 2.

Went over them and found the missing numbers.

17894 Lophozia excisa forma,<sup>305</sup> with occasional underleaves.  
 Jungermannia sphaerocarpa

<sup>305</sup> Variant of a liverwort species of the Lophoziaaceae family.

17854 Ptilidium ciliare

17855 Ptilidium ciliare

17861 Conocephalum conicum<sup>306</sup>

17876 add approaching Lophozia confertifolia

17889 add Bazzania tricrenata depauperate.

That finishes them all, I believe, to the best of my ability, will write further if any further developments.

A nice lot. You could if you wished, write a short note of Hepatics of Idaho<sup>307</sup> from this list, as the Hepatics of Idaho are not much known. We have been having very cold weather, not much pleasure in working in it. Looks like moderating, I can stand it. Re[garding] Mosses, You know you do not owe me~~n~~ any, it is the other way about, that does not mea I do not like to get them, of course, only that I am already in your debt. An Albertan correspondent has found two astragali<sup>308</sup> new to science, there is quite a surge of~~r~~ revision going across the continent, and usually acknowledging varieties, which to my way of thinking helps the student.

Thank you for kindly Christmas greetings, I like to receive remembrances. I expect from your letter the good man<sup>309</sup> never turned up, and under the circumstances, it seems that is what we ought to expect. More later, when I get a fit of energy.

Till then, adieu, with Best Wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 17: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden*

*Craigmyle, Alberta, April 4, 1941.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Ap[ri]l 4th 1941

Dear Mrs[.] M[a]cFadden: -

*series 1909 & 1910* Can you, as a favour to me, give me the number of a few B[ritish] C[olumbia] mosses sent to you, I have got the labes about ready, and want to put up, but do not want to put up material already sent, hence the request. I had hoped Steere<sup>310</sup> could have given it to me, but evidently he is very rushed with work. I heard from Mr[.] Wheeler who was in touch with you, and he suggested sending a paper of mine to you, in the belief it might interest you. That paper opened up a possibility that has taken up a great deal of my time,

<sup>306</sup> Liverwort species of the Conocephalaceae family.

<sup>307</sup> U.S. state in the Northwest.

<sup>308</sup> Genus of vascular plants.

<sup>309</sup> Fay's husband Joel.

<sup>310</sup> William Campbell Steere (1907–1989), U.S. bryologist.

or the mosses would have been done before this, and out of the way. And at that there is no certainty the time is not being wasted, that is, the thing may never reach the public eye. Snow nearly gone, spring should be here in about a week, if this keeps up, I mean, it might be possible to get on to the land by then, if sufficiently energetic. However my crop is still out and unthreshed, so goodness knows when I shall start, at any rate it will be under severe handicaps. I hope the winter has not been too unkind with you, and that things material have been reasonable favourable. It seems we dare not ask more than that.

Till later, adieu  
With Best Wishes  
Yours Sincerely  
A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 18: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Canada, May 7, 1941.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
Canada  
May 7th 1941

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

Thank you for yours of 17th ult[im]o [mense], and for information contained therein. It was much fuller than I expected, and even now it has left me "fuzzy" in my mind, for I felt so sure that I had sent the contents of one box to you, but so far, the details do not show it, so perhaps my memory is at fault. Anyhow, I am well on the way with the packets, and it looks as though there will be around ~~199~~ 100. Besides duplicates of a number of them, when the differences were enough to suggest them being interesting.

So the good man<sup>311</sup> is at work in a position that seems ~~see~~ worth while, I am very glad to hear that. You have had your full share of, shall we say, indifferent luck, so a little good luck is due your way. Let's hope it is a fixture this time, and it well may be, with the trend of things in the U.S.A[.], and their "all out" effort.<sup>312</sup> The war<sup>313</sup> is very near them now, pretty well all see now what they should have seen before, that this is eventually their war, that it will not stop short of the U.S.A. But then, Britain has been slow, so I could not blame [the] U.S.A, further off, and in mind at least, at first detached. Thank you for Hepatics. I am putting them by, reluctantly, for I dare not touch them yet; else the mosses would be delayed, and the rush of work is on ~~us~~ us now, so it is evenings and Sundays "for me", if I want to do anything. You have some interesting stuff there, some seems quite new to me, so I am in for an interesting time. I imagine you will make some finds at Idaho, for as far as I know, that State is but little

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<sup>311</sup> Fay's husband Joel.

<sup>312</sup> The United States funded the Allies through the Lend-Lease Act of March 11, 1941.

<sup>313</sup> World War II (1939–1945).

worked, you could find new things there. I feel sure your keen eyes will not miss much you meet with. Glad you enjoyed the "Handhills article".<sup>314</sup> Yes, it did entail some work in the Geological field, the Botanical was known to me. An interesting sideline developed. The local High School<sup>315</sup> took up Geology, and the Handhills was their objective. Would I come along? I did, and enjoyed myself. There were two high schools there, Craigmyle and Handhills, I can only hope that a little of what I tried to tell them stuck. It shows the unexpected things that can happen in the West. Till two days ago, we had no rain, it was getting dry. Part of the crop is in now. So the oldest daughter<sup>316</sup> is married.<sup>317</sup> It will make you feel, let us say, not younger. The years do pass. But perhaps, with me you think of botany as a wonderful carry over, with its botanical friendships[.] Well, in a rush now, so adieu for the time. By the way, another article on "education" may possibly interest [sic] you, though I am afraid I can only loan it, it is one of a few, if you are interested in that sort of stuff.

Best Wishes

*Yours sincerely*

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 19: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, July 22, 1941.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

July 22nd 1941

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

Mr[.] Wheeler writes he expects to meet you at the camp this year, hence this short letter.

I was there in 1908, and the feeling I then had, and which has remained with me was not so much what I gathered, tho[ugh] the gatherings were fine, but what I must have missed. So I am hoping you will find many things I did not. I shall be disappointed if you do not make at least 25 additions to my list of mosses and hepatics. I know at the foot of the glacier, I felt I should follow up the small watercourse up the mountain side, and find goodness knows how many truly alpine mosses and hepatics, then the woods were very rich in them, and I only scratched, so to speak, the surface. So here's hoping. I should very much like to be there, but alas. *Hope* mosses came to hand in due course. As other two parcels did, I think they did. I expect Idaho has claimed you for a while, I hope so anyhow, as you would find a number of things unreported for that state, unless I miss my guess. Of your plants sent, two seem outstanding. 17361 is an *Azolla*,<sup>318</sup> the first I ever saw. Did not compare with the only two

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<sup>314</sup> Perhaps Alfred H. Brinkman, "The Study of Hepatics (Liverworts) in Canada," *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* 54 (1940): 40–42.

<sup>315</sup> Presumably a reference to the high school in Craigmyle.

<sup>316</sup> Louise Parkhurst Kimble, née MacFadden (1914–1997), Fay and Joel's oldest daughter.

<sup>317</sup> Charles Grant Kimble (1909–1973) had married Louise Parkhurst Kimble c. 1941.

<sup>318</sup> Fern genus of the Salviniaceae family.

descripttions I had, so Dr[.] Fulford<sup>319</sup> has promised to take to N[ew] Y[ork] Bot[anical] gardens,<sup>320</sup> and compare with material there. Then there was a Cephaloziella 17352, which is new to me, but looks so like C[ephaloziella] interrigma<sup>321</sup> that I have hunted up British material for comparison, but have not had time to compare yet, rest named, at least tentatively, and when I get a note from you at home, I will send on list. Some interesting things among them. If you can grow more weeds in California than we can here, then I do not wish to live in California. Suppose you know we have had an extra intensive heat wave, and what it has dome [sic] to the crops. Another year gone wrong.

In the meantime, I shall be thinking of you at Glacier,<sup>322</sup> and wishing, and shall look forward to your list of finds. So for the time being adieu [sic]

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 20: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
December 5, 1941.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

Canada

Dec[ember] 5th 1941

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

Parcels to hand in due course, you sure "have been a doing of it". Reminds me of the earlier days when I sent just such parcels to Dr[.] Conklin, and his enthusiasm as he turned up good thing after good thing. And you also are going to have your share of good things.

17864 Siplophyllum [Diplophyllum] incurvum First record for West I believe

17860 Diplophyllum incurvum

Lophozia ventricosa

Cephalozia pleniceps

Cephalozia<sup>323</sup> unknown, perhaps a form of bicuspidata,<sup>324</sup> but ?

17894 Lophozia excisa forma

Jumgermannia [Jungermannia] sphaerocarpa

17861 Concephalim [sic] conicum<sup>325</sup>

17855 Ptilidium ciliare

17864 Ptilidium ciliare.

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<sup>319</sup> Margaret Hannah Fulford (1904–1999), U.S. bryologist.

<sup>320</sup> Established in 1891 in the Bronx, New York City.

<sup>321</sup> Liverwort species of the Cephaloziellaceae family.

<sup>322</sup> Perhaps Glacier National Park (established in 1910) in the U.S. state of Montana.

<sup>323</sup> Liverwort genus of the Cephaloziaceae family.

<sup>324</sup> Liverwort species of the Cephaloziaceae family.

<sup>325</sup> Liverwort species of the Conocephalaceae family.

I had the Anthoceros<sup>326</sup> material put by for comparison, and had dig out some material for comparison but somehow I did not get round to it. I enclose a paper on Scapania irrigua, not a very good copy, but readable with care. From it you will see something of the mess I have had to wade through in trying to study the group, and it sure does eat up time.

When in Calgary<sup>327</sup> recently I hunted up Mr[.] Reader,<sup>328</sup> wish I had done so years ago. I spent a most pleasant evening with him, and he showed me I think literally hundreds of coloured photos of his beloved plants. And in conversation he told of having met you, and your energy in collecting, and something about A.O.W.<sup>329</sup> So its not such a big world after all.

Well, if the Lord is good, and the devil has no very great objection I shall in due course, whenever that may be, have gone over the material, and shall report, either entirely, or more probably in parts of the finds. A splendid fall for work and stock, I am yet fencing, theres always such a lot of it to do, and as stock gets out on the roads if neglected, well, running all over the country after missing stock is no particular joke in the winter. Crops rotten again, but failure payment ‡ will I hope see us through, but we shall not be "wallowing in abundance" I am afraid.

Hope things are going well with you and yours, and, even if a bit prematurely may I wish you and yours sll [sic] the pleasures of Christmas, and years, not a year, of at least comparative happiness for you all, and with it a fair share of the good things of this world.

For the time, adieu  
Yours Sincerely  
A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 21: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, April 9, 1943.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
Canada  
Ap[ri]l 9th 1943

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

I am enclosing list examined again, and making an extra copy, so that if you are in the mind to send to Dr[.] Clarke,<sup>330</sup> you can do so. The Pellia I will write on later, as I wish to catch this mail.

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<sup>326</sup> Hornwort genus of the Anthocerotaceae family.

<sup>327</sup> City in the southern part of the Candian province of Alberta.

<sup>328</sup> William Rowland Reader (1874–1943), superintendent for Calgary parks.

<sup>329</sup> Arthur Oliver Wheeler (1860–1945), Irish land surveyor in Canada.

<sup>330</sup> Likely Lois Clark (1884–1967), U.S. botanist, bryologist, and professor.

I sent the box of mosses away last Saturday, but some underling at the Calgary post office is making a bit of a damn nuisance of himself, and while the local post master has explained the case, and I have sent a letter to the Postal Director also, giving an explanation, I cannot say at the present whether the parcel has left. I am sorry for the delay, it is the first case of its kind.

Before long I hope to get at the Jungermannia. Last Saturday I sent away the "List of the Willows of Alberta", and wasn't I glad to see the back of it? Well, our snow has almost gone, but on Thursday I could not restock [restock?] the fallen bundles, they were still frozen to the ground. Today (Friday) it is again raining, so we shall not want for moisture when the spring sowing commences. I suppose you will be well on with your garden by this time, ours is still in the distance, and water was still running across it Thursday from the melting snow. I imagine, with this rain, you have had, you must have an unusually fine collecting season, as far as growth is concerned, plants with you should be at their best under such circumstances.

They are going to ration us also on meat now, but as we still have a few chickens and plenty of eggs, we shall not starve.

It would be nice if the daughter<sup>331</sup> took up collecting, I mean really like it, for you could teach her so much she would not always find easy to learn by herself [sic]. I cannot imagine my son<sup>332</sup> taking up botany, he isn't interested in it, but is in machinery, does quite a lot of his own repairing, takes after the ~~grand~~ grand dad my father,<sup>333</sup> and my brotehr<sup>334</sup> [sic] is the same, but it seems to have missed me. The Americans are doing some fine work in Africa<sup>335</sup> now, looks like the beginning of the end there. I sincerely hope so, for there's lots to do after Africa is cleared up. And until it is, France will have to be watched.<sup>336</sup>

Regards and best wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*notes on back*

*[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

17905 and 17867. Clarke, Cephaloziella byssacea Warnst.<sup>337</sup> I cannot agree. Even if the plants came under the byssacea<sup>338</sup> complex, the very distinct papillae would place them under the var[ietas] a[s]perifolia (Jens) Macv[icar]<sup>339</sup> of Macvicar (the C[ephaloziella] divaricata var[ietas]

<sup>331</sup> Either Louise Kimble, née MacFadden, or Barbara Moselle, née MacFadden.

<sup>332</sup> Alfred Theodore "Alfie" Brinkman (1914–1985).

<sup>333</sup> Alfred Henry Brinkman (1846–1916).

<sup>334</sup> William John Brinkman (1875–1960).

<sup>335</sup> Operation Torch or the North African Campaign (1942) during World War II.

<sup>336</sup> Parts of France were occupied by Germany from 1940 until 1944.

<sup>337</sup> Liverwort species of the Cephaloziellaceae family, described by Carl Warnstorf.

<sup>338</sup> Latin term, meaning "cobwebby."

<sup>339</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Cephaloziella divaricata) of the Cephaloziellaceae family, described by (Christian Emil Otto Jensen) Symers Douglas Macdonald Macvicar.

scabra<sup>340</sup> of Howe).<sup>341</sup> As I understand Macvicar C[ephaloziella] papillosa (Douin) Schffn<sup>342</sup> is a less distinct form, and I think I would rather refer [refer] to your plants as C[ephaloziella] byssacea var[ietas] asperifolia (Jens) Macv[icar] forma.<sup>343</sup> The underleaves are not at all well developed. Had the perianths been mature one could perhaps have come to a more definite decision.

1928 The Lophozia. I am afraid I must disagree with Dr[.] Clarke. I am separating out parts for you to put in your packet, and you can then refer to them. The plant seems to me good L[ophozia] porphyroleuca, for while a few of the leaves were obtuse, most are typical, and even the obtuse lobed leaves have the fair sized trigones of L[ophozia] porphyroleuca, while nearly all had the dark reddish back part of the stem usual in L[ophozia] porphyroleuca. Of L[ophozia] obtusa<sup>344</sup> I saw nothing, it is rather a distinct plant.

Another part had Aplozia lanceolate<sup>345</sup> in it, not typical, both the leaves and the cells being rather small, but the perianths were typical.

A third part had what I am calling A[plozia] sphaerocarpa<sup>346</sup> ? It seems out of its place where found, but I cannot make it anything else.

Of Aplozia atrovirens<sup>347</sup> I can find nothing, and cannot say whether I made a mistake, or whether it was in very small quantity, and I failed to find it again. Anyhow, you had better scratch out that record, or if present it must be in very small quantity, or I should have refound it. And yet I hardly think I could have mistaken it, though I remember at the time thinking it was an off type form.

19278. Scapania curta of ~~Clarke~~ Clarke, mucronata of myself. I am in doubt. Evans uses two points, margin of thick [thick] walled cells without trigones for curta, other cells with small trigones; no margin but large trigones for mucronata. The leaf characters are admitted by ~~Evans~~ Evans to be unstable in both species.

The trigones are small ~~are~~ in your ~~sp~~ specimen, but there is no definite border shown, and some of the border cells show trigones. It is not good curta. But then it is not good mucronata, trigones too small. I am inclined then to agree with Dr[.] Clarke to this extent, Scapania curta ? for 19276 I still think this may be ? Lophozia heterocolpa<sup>348</sup> It definitely is

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<sup>340</sup> Liverwort species of the Cephaloziellaceae family.

<sup>341</sup> Marshall Avery Howe (1867–1936), U.S. botanist and taxonomist.

<sup>342</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Cephaloziella divaricata) of the Cephaloziellaceae family, described by (Charles Isidore Douin) Victor Félix Schiffner.

<sup>343</sup> Liverwort species (a.k.a. Cephaloziella divaricata) of the Cephaloziellaceae family, described by (Christian Emil Otto Jensen) Symers Douglas Macdonald Macvicar.

<sup>344</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophoziaceae family.

<sup>345</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Liochlaena lanceolata.

<sup>346</sup> Obsolete name for the liverwort species Solenostoma sphaerocarpum.

<sup>347</sup> Liverwort species of the Jungermanniaceae family.

<sup>348</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophoziaceae family.



not L[ophozia] incisa. L[ophozia] incisa is so distinct a plant that I do not think Dr[.] Clarke could have had the same plant in her specimen.

19275 Looks like a difference of opinion. The margin between L[ophozia] porphyroleuca and L[ophozia] ventricosa can be very small, or in other wordsm [words,] I think they intergrade. I think the large trigones bring it under L[ophozia] porphyroleuca, while the perianth mouth is about intermediate.

A[lfred]. H[enry]. Brinkman

*[page 3; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics). This is an exact carbon copy of the previous page and therefore not repeated here.]*

*Edition No. 22: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, November 12, 1943.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
Canada  
Nov[ember] 12th 1943

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

I thank you for determinations, received during my abcence from hone [home], which will account for very tardy acknowledgement and that I got home yesterday, after a stay that was to have lasted for a month, but lasted over 3 months, for when at my daughter's<sup>349</sup> place in Kelowna,<sup>350</sup> I had to have an operation, and convalescence took some time; even now I am not better, but good enough to work around a little.

Some were new to me, for instance Physcomitrium Hookera,<sup>351</sup> Encalypta apiculata,<sup>352</sup> while Brachythecium collinum<sup>353</sup> and another was unexpected. Others were more or less expected or known from European material. Tortula mucronifolia<sup>354</sup> seems abundant, yet I do not remember to have gathered it elsewhere.

I got as far as Seattle<sup>355</sup> while at Vicotria [Victoria], and had a pleasant time with Dr[.] Frye. All too short of course, for my whole stay in Seattle was but 3 days, and I could have profitably spent 3 months in the Botanical part alone. Wonder how your /daho trip succeeded. It would in all probability add a number of interesting things to your previous collections. Did your daughter<sup>356</sup> accompany you as proposed? and did she find it as interesting as expected?

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<sup>349</sup> Ada Louisa Grace Crowley, née Brinkman (1900–1987), lived in Kelowna.

<sup>350</sup> City in the southern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

<sup>351</sup> Moss species of the Funariaceae family, described by William Jackson Hooker.

<sup>352</sup> Encalypta vulgaris, moss species of the Encalyptaceae family.

<sup>353</sup> Moss species of the Brachytheciaceae family.

<sup>354</sup> Moss species of the Pottiaceae family.

<sup>355</sup> City in the northwestern part of the U.S. state of Washington.

<sup>356</sup> Either Louise Kimble, née MacFadden, or Barbara Moselle, née MacFadden.

Crops here are indifferent, most of the oats [are] a total failure, but I personally am in receipt of old age pension, so we shall not go broke.

Got quite a pile of correspondence to catch up with now. Had an unexpected stroke of luck while away. Visiting Dr[.] Eastham<sup>357</sup> at Vancouver,<sup>358</sup> he asked me whether I would like Braithwaite's<sup>359</sup> British Moss Flora.<sup>360</sup> (Would I.? Well, I could have it at the price he paid, and as he got it cheap I consider myself very fortunate in getting a book I had hoped to get for many years, but did not expect to. Then I finished up the Moss Flora,<sup>361</sup> including the other book by Grout<sup>362</sup> with the remainder of the plates. Then I am getting Mackenzie's<sup>363</sup> Carex book,<sup>364</sup> and am putting them down to my holiday, as in fact I was frugal in other respects, and as I was staying with brother,<sup>365</sup> sisters,<sup>366</sup> or daughters,<sup>367</sup> I not only had a very pleasant time, but a cheap one also, so I felt I was going to spare something for reading, which I proceeded to do. I am hoping to hear from you upon your return from Idaho, and settling down to normal life at

[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]

home. I have a very extended program, but just how far I shall get with it; goodness knows, certainly not 100%, for I never have. I do feel the cold after my stay in B[ritish] C[olumbia] though as a matter of fact it is quite fine for the time of the year here. Got part 2 of Frye and Clark's Hepatic Flora,<sup>368</sup> and am enjoying it in spoonfuls, so to speak. Hope this finds you well, self not too bad.

Regards and Respects

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 23: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, March 2, 1944.*

[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta

M[ar]ch 2nd 1944

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<sup>357</sup> John W. Eastham (1878–1968), British botanist in Canada.

<sup>358</sup> City in the southwestern part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

<sup>359</sup> Robert Braithwaite (1824–1917), English bryologist.

<sup>360</sup> Robert Braithwaite, *The British Moss Flora* (by the author, 1887).

<sup>361</sup> Abel J. Grout, *Moss Flora of North America, North of Mexico*, 2 vols. (by the author, 1928–1933).

<sup>362</sup> Perhaps a reference to Abel J. Grout, *Mosses with Hand-Lens and Microscope* (by the author, 1903).

<sup>363</sup> Kenneth Kent Mackenzie (1877–1934), U.S. lawyer and botanist.

<sup>364</sup> Kenneth Kent Mackenzie, *Keys to the North American Species of Carex* (New York Botanical Garden, 1941).

<sup>365</sup> William John Brinkman (1875–1960).

<sup>366</sup> Eliza Sena Jessie Davies, née Brinkman (1879–1965), and Rose Grace Hopkins, née Brinkman (1882–1977).

<sup>367</sup> Ada Louisa Grace Crowley, née Brinkman (1900–1987), and Violet Emily Foster, née Brinkman (1903–1981).

<sup>368</sup> Theodore C. Frye and Lois Clark, *Hepaticae of North America*, vol. 2 (University of Washington, Publications in Biology, 1943).

Dear Mrs[.] MavFadden [sic]; -

Got parcel yesterday, I expect you looked at them on the way home and said "thank God it's gone," for it must have been a tedious job. Seems more Bryums than I expected; I notice the ubiquitous caespitosum [caespitosum]<sup>369</sup> was everywhere, but there is one I didn't think I had got, cirratum.<sup>370</sup>

One or two of the *Brachytheciums* were rather unexpected, as also one or two *Amblystegiums*.<sup>371</sup> Thank you very much for the time spent over them for me. Got in touch with an old correspondent who is now in Arizona,<sup>372</sup> so am trying to persuade him to gather Hepatics, for Arizona should be comparatively unexplored, though I expect the flora will be very similar to that of California. By the way, I yesterday finished going over the parcel sent some 10 years ago, putting the plants between double news sheets and naming and numbering them outside so as to know where to place them, according to Rydberg. Some I couldn't find in Rydberg,<sup>373</sup> but did in the Arizona flora, and some I couldn't find in either. Apparently there must have been a number of Californian finds since Rydberg issued his last edition. Quite a number of plantd [plants] shown in Rydberg were among them, and it is nice to have them by one, for perhaps you find it as I do; *when* hunting down a plant one comes across a description that seems it might possibly fit, but with no specimens to compare with, then if the specimen is there, it wither is or it ain't, definitely as a rule. By the way with this very watery winter, the growth in California must be unusually luxuriant, and I wonder whether you have been out gathering or whether you are still too unwell to go far. Your last [letter] showed you still undergoing treatment. By the way, the Hepatics in the mosses, two of them, were rather usual, one a usual *Marchantoid* plant *Reboulia*<sup>374</sup> (I forget its name right now) not unusual around Calgary, the other *Lophocolea cuspidata*,<sup>375</sup> common in the island (Vancouver) the other seems new to me, so I have it soaking ready for an examination, seems new to the district, for the prairie is most barren of Hepatics. Got some snow a few days ago, must be around 10 inches. What an hell of a mess there will be if the wind comes. Wonder if you were able to get to see the good man,<sup>376</sup> or if at least he was able to get home with you all at Christmas. Hope so. Well, the time goes along quite fast, soon I suppose it will be gardening; it must be that with you before now. Heard from Oregon, seems as though there may be a few Hepatics there, hope so, I just feel like working over them, after such a long lay off. Well, had better close, not much to say. I hope to get over some 1926 collections, there must be quite a few of them, anyhow you will know, for if I do you will get some of them in

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<sup>369</sup> Moss species of the Bryaceae family.

<sup>370</sup> Moss species of the Rhabdoweisiaceae family.

<sup>371</sup> Moss genus of the Amblystegiaceae family.

<sup>372</sup> U.S. state in the Southwest.

<sup>373</sup> Likely a reference to Per Axel Rydberg, *Flora of the Rocky Mountains and Adjacent Plains, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Neighboring Parts of Nebraska, South Dakota, and British Columbia* (by the author, 1917).

<sup>374</sup> Liverwort species of the Aytoniaceae family.

<sup>375</sup> Liverwort species of the Lophocoleaceae family.

<sup>376</sup> Fay's husband Joel.

due course; usually I bite off too much, so am never quite sure. Have been reading up on Paleobotany, trying to fix some points in my, interesting, but slow reading.

For the time then, adieu  
With Best Wishes  
Yours Sincerely  
A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

By the way, there were three mistakes, *Apocynum sibricum*<sup>377</sup> should be *A[pocynum] androsamarfolice* [sic],<sup>378</sup> *Aragallus Richardsonii*<sup>379</sup> should be *Astragalus Drummondii*,<sup>380</sup> and and [sic] *Argentina subarctica*<sup>381</sup> a *Potentilla*<sup>382</sup> whose name I will hunt up before closing this. Went over Rudberg's [Rydberg's] naming of a bundle, and discovered the last mistake, along with some of his. Seems one never knows, at least I don't.

A[lfred] B[rinkman]

*Potentilla camporum*<sup>383</sup> named by Rydberg seems similar to the plant, named *Argentina subarctica*[.]

*Edition No. 24: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, June 9, 1944.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
Canada  
June 9th 1944

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

I suppose by now you are in Idaho, and well away with the collecting, hope it proves a good season for that.

The p[a]rcel came to hand in due course, thank you for the trouble you have taken with them. Some day perhaps I may find time to go over them and put them in the shape they should be, but that certainly does not appear to be in the near future. Getting my grasses slowly into shape, and am more and more surprised at the richness and quality of the collection. I knew I had much material, but apparently a six foot cupboard, double partition, is going to be

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<sup>377</sup> Plant species of the Apocynaceae family.

<sup>378</sup> Plant species of the Apocynaceae family.

<sup>379</sup> Plant species of the Fabaceae family, described by John Richardson.

<sup>380</sup> Plant species of the Fabaceae family, described by Thomas or James Drummond.

<sup>381</sup> Plant species of the Rosaceae family.

<sup>382</sup> Plant genus of the Rosaceae family.

<sup>383</sup> Plant species of the Rosaceae family.

about filled, to my dismay, for goodness knows just what cupboard room I shall eventually want. Wonder whether your daughter<sup>384</sup> is with you?.

Well, we are still praying for rain, one and an half inch, as near as I can make out, since spring opened, on top of a dry fall and winter, does not seem so good, does it? Oh well, that is farming, and no good is done by melting troubles beforehand. Again my thanks for trouble so kindly taken.

Yours

Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

*Edition No. 25: Alfred H. Brinkman to Fay A. MacFadden  
Craigmyle, Alberta, September 15, 1944.*

*[page 1; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

Craigmyle, Al[ber]ta  
Canada  
Sep[tember]15th 1944

Dear Mrs[.] MacFadden: -

Thanks for your pleasant and interesting letter. I had thought of you as being in Idaho, you must have had a nasty turn of it to be two years under the weather. Let's hope the end of it is near in sight. Have they finally decided what is the matter with you? Looks sometimes like a trial and error case. Doctors do not know it all yet.

Thank you for the list, a very pleasant one, *as* it shows some additions to my B[ritish] C[olumbia] mosses, and also shows that the old eyes are still functioning pretty well. Some I should have known as Plagiothecium undulatum.<sup>385</sup> Some I partly guessed, some I was mistaken in, thus Rhy[tidiadelphum] triquetrum<sup>386</sup> I thought was one of the other closely related species. Tortula princeps<sup>387</sup> is new, as also are Bestia Breweriana,<sup>388</sup> Homalothecium Nuttallii,<sup>389</sup> and probably Scler[oderma] caespitosum.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Either Louise Kimble, née MacFadden, or Barbara Moselle, née MacFadden.

<sup>385</sup> Moss species of the Plagiotheciaceae family.

<sup>386</sup> Moss species of the Hylocomiaceae family.

<sup>387</sup> Moss species of the Pottiaceae family.

<sup>388</sup> Moss species of the Lembophyllaceae family, described by William Henry Brewer.

<sup>389</sup> Moss species of the Brachytheciaceae family, described by Thomas Nuttall.

<sup>390</sup> Fungus species of the Sclerodermataceae family.

There may be an occasional other among the few remaining. I am hoping to do a little moss work this winter. I have Grout, Husnot,<sup>391</sup> Sullivant,<sup>392</sup> Dixon<sup>393</sup> (of whose death I regretfully learned recently) Braithwaite, Lesquereau<sup>394</sup> [sic] & Barnes, so I have at least a tolerable amount of literature to refer to. I have been minded to type out plates with references to script, for Grout is a bit of a nuisance that way, one has to hunt over to find the plates, only to find they are at times in his other book, which I have at last got. Also I got and so far have enjoyed Jepson's Californian Flora, also Henry's B[ritish] C[olumbia]<sup>395</sup> Which is undergoing slow revision by Mr[.] Eastham of Vancouver. I never came across a Rydberg,<sup>396</sup> they seem real scarce, could wish they would put out a new and revised issue, there is room for it. Glasses scratched. When examining I put off my glasses, just for that reason, I am afraid of scratching of eye pieces. Don't know whether it is wise, but I do it. Another valued correspondent is having trouble with eyes, I suppose we are all growing older, and to us all as botanists the eyes are of such tremendous value.

I am writing to catch you before leaving for Boise.<sup>397</sup> You are worse than us, true we do get difficulty in travelling, but we do not have to give any notice, just go and take our chances. They discourage travel, that is all. Still, I suppose that having got your ticket you are at least assured of a passage, and I hope in more comfort than was my experience. I see you, like me, are weather temperamental, I am almost a weather-cock in my response to weather conditions.

You should get a few fall plants in Idaho, while, as you say, the early spring plants should show many additions. I have gathered but little this year, but hope to work over some of my old stuff. Trouble is it is so long ago that I do not know to whom [it was] sent, thus I am reasonably sure I sent you the 1922–25 gatherings, but shall just have to note a few of them an[d] ask if you received them. With your herbarium<sup>398</sup> in order it should not be difficult to say, or in your absence, your daughter,<sup>399</sup> if she knows your arrangement. Your arrangement seems good to me. Mine are just put in order, usually in small groups, easy to handle and get at, in newsprint, with name outside, so I can easily find what I want, and the double paper prevents rubbing of the plants. By the way, I got those Vitamin B, and they stopped that dopey feeling alright, and though my improvement is slow, I put down part of it to ~~the~~ the capsules. The crops have not behaved, rarely they do. An hot spell in July pretty well scorched the crops, and cut down the yield considerably. On the clay land it was worse, on the light lands (mine is light) not so bad, but bad enough, thus oats recovered remarkably, and the

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<sup>391</sup> Pierre Tranquille Husnot (1840–1929), French botanist.

<sup>392</sup> William Starling Sullivant (1803–1873), U.S. botanist.

<sup>393</sup> Hugh Neville Dixon (1861–1944), British bryologist.

<sup>394</sup> Charles Léo Lesquereux (1806–1889), Swiss-born U.S. bryologist.

<sup>395</sup> Joseph Kaye Henry, *Flora of Southern British Columbia and Vancouver Island* (W. J. Gage & Co., 1915).

<sup>396</sup> Likely a reference to Per Axel Rydberg, *Flora of the Rocky Mountains and Adjacent Plains, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Neighboring Parts of Nebraska, South Dakota, and British Columbia* (by the author, 1917).

<sup>397</sup> State capital city in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of Idaho.

<sup>398</sup> Collection of preserved plant specimens and associated data.

<sup>399</sup> Either Louise Kimble, née MacFadden, or Barbara Moselle, née MacFadden.

early ripe ones are overtopped by the later growing and now considerably advanced oats, so we hipe to gather a decent crop of oats. The garden did well after the rain. Got lots of tomatoes, nearly ripe, and I am hoping the frost will keep off long enough for us to enjoy some of them. We had a real warm spell recently, but yesterday it storme[d] and today is drizzling, hence the letter in part.

Yes. I can imagine your good man<sup>400</sup> will be as pleased to see you as you are to go to him[.] it isn't much of a life to be separated like that, but there is plenty of it now, not always perforce either. So he, like me, found out that defective teeth do make bad rheumatism. With them out, I just take small doses of Kruschen's Salts,<sup>401</sup> and while they do not cure entirely, the result is bearable, in fact during warm spells I do not take it at all. Your daughter's<sup>402</sup> good man<sup>403</sup> must be getting on, a group leader is something. B[omber] 17,<sup>404</sup> that should be a Boeing.<sup>405</sup> My daughter is working at

*[page 2; text, typewritten (handwritten additions and corrections appear in italics):]*

a Boeing plant at Vancouver, and pulling down more money than I did except when in government service.

Yes, germany must be feeling pretty sick. It was just marvellous the way the troops went through [F]rance,<sup>406</sup> adter [after] the break through by Paton [Patton].<sup>407</sup> I began to think that was only the privelege of the Russians, but apparently not. And now they are in Germany, while your Pacific men are in the Palaus<sup>408</sup> and in the Halamira<sup>409</sup> group~~t~~, which makes the Phillipines<sup>410</sup> pretty close. Well, we can all surely wish a an [sic] end to it, but not before Germany and Japan are utterly smashed; if a few more lives now will save many lives in 20 to 30 years time, it would be unwise to call it off before an utter smashing had occurred. I bet the British are overjoyed at the stoppage of the Robot Bombs;<sup>411</sup> nigh a million house destroyed and damaged is an awful toll to pay, though it must be worse in Germany, when we know the truth from there. "A lot of women who are working should be home attending to their children". I smiled, but it is the truth. We in Cananda are at least trying to do something about it, for starting next July a children's allowance comes into force, thus making it easier for those who do have children, as it should be. It is entirely undair to expect parents to have children and hnadicap [handicap] themselves and their children, while the more

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<sup>400</sup> Fay's husband Joel.

<sup>401</sup> Pharmaceutical product, based on sodium chloride.

<sup>402</sup> Barbara Edwin Moselle, née MacFadden (1918–2007), Fay and Joel's younger daughter.

<sup>403</sup> Arnold P. Moselle (1919–1999) had married Barbara Edwin MacFadden in 1942. He served with the U.S. Army Air Corps 303rd Bomb Group (H) (a.k.a. "Hell's Angels") in World War II.

<sup>404</sup> Also known as the B-17 bomber, a war plane that emerged during World War II.

<sup>405</sup> U.S. aircraft manufacturing company, established in 1916.

<sup>406</sup> Allied invasion following D-Day (June 6, 1944).

<sup>407</sup> George Smith Patton (1885–1945), U.S. Army general.

<sup>408</sup> Republic in the Pacific Ocean, made up of approximately 340 islands.

<sup>409</sup> Presumably Halmahera, the largest island in the Maluku Islands (Indonesia).

<sup>410</sup> Archipelago country in Southeast Asia.

<sup>411</sup> German V-1 flying bomb used in World War II.

selfish refuse, and have a good time, though I expect in old age they are not so sure of the wisdom of their course. If children are a national asset (and we have had to find out how important a national asset they are), then the nation should see they are at least partly provided for, as we at present provide for their education. Louis<sup>412</sup> husband<sup>413</sup> and the ladies. I expect he isn't the only one who is not sorry to be among men, for the ladies (at least some of them) seem unable to resist making a passe at a man. It is quite natural, It has lasted for thousands of years when their only means of offence and defence was their sexual appeal, but surely now when they have equal rights with men, it is not so necessary. Of course the women do have the right to expect to fill jobs they are efficient to fill, as is the case now in Russia, that is where a family allowance comes in, they are made to feel they are filling a most important job raising the children for our future n-ational wellbeing. In Britain the report stresses that point strongly, that women by their family life are (Beveridge report<sup>414</sup> I am referring to) as important to the nation as by them or the men working. But many women will not like to be without the money they have had become used to, though I am wondering whether the price paid in the deterioration of many of the children is not a pretty high one.

Well, 10 X 12 seems a lot, but with your numbers at around 25.000 and the exchange material it isn't a bit too large, I am thinking of making a 20 X 16 shack to house my plants, books, typewriter and numerous papers, and to have a little nook where I can rest when and as I please. It may not materialize, but *that* doesn't rprevent me thinking of it. Yes, the grasses are rich here. I have to go over a box of Hordeum<sup>415</sup> group, and a smaller box of Festufa<sup>416</sup> [Festuca] group, ~~an~~ and don't know what there is there is to exchange. Willows are funny (or rather the people who gather them, I am afraid) I got a new one recently on my own place, while another which should be around somewhere, I found on my neighbour's place in a clump I had been going to examine for years, but never did, so it leaves the feeling that goodness knows what may still be around. I am keeping your address in Idaho by me, in case I wish to write you later. In the meantime, good hunting, and a pleasant and happy time together.

With best wishes

Yours Sincerely

A[lfred] H[enry] Brinkman

~~Ging~~ Going over Husnot, he seemes to have an sstonishing [sic] number of Orthotrichums,<sup>417</sup> I thought the British were bad enough, but France seems to have them beaten. Braithwaite is a treat, but his cell pictures are of little use, his plates are pieces of artistry. I also got

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<sup>412</sup> Louise Parkhurst Kimble, née MacFadden (1914–1997), Fay and Joel's oldest daughter.

<sup>413</sup> Charles Grant Kimble (1909–1973) had married Louise Parkhurst Kimble c. 1941.

<sup>414</sup> Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services, *Social Insurance and Allied Services* [The Beveridge Report], Cmd. [Command paper number] 6404 (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1942), drafted by the British economist William Henry Beveridge (1879–1963).

<sup>415</sup> Grass genus of the Poaceae family.

<sup>416</sup> Grass genus of the Poaceae family.

<sup>417</sup> Moss genus of the Orthotrichaceae family.



(through the kindness of Hitchcock a number of years ago) a copy o[f] Vasey's<sup>418</sup> work on grasses of the Pacific Slope,<sup>419</sup> and that is a piece of artistry, makes anything later look almost tawdry, though a ~~Californian~~ Florida man is turning out splendid work, also a[n] Indiana man, I have got their works)[.]

A[lfred] B[rinkman]

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<sup>418</sup> George Vasey (1822–1893), English-born U.S. botanist.

<sup>419</sup> George Vasey, *Grasses of the Pacific Slope* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1893).

Colin Ashe, Moses Albert Miranda, Ryan Mize,  
Brenna O'Toole, Jackson Giovanni Saieva, and Ben Wainscott (editors)

*Robert Harris Talkin' Rocks in 1976:  
An Interview with a Southern California Miner,  
Metallurgist, and World War I Veteran*

*Shelfmark*

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).  
The Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History (COPH).  
Project: Science and Technology.  
O.H. 1550.  
Oral interview with Robert Harris, conducted by Debra Pierce,  
October 24, 1976, Red Mountain, California.

*Introduction*

The oral history transcribed below belongs to a collection held in CSUF's Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History (COPH), titled "Science and Technology." The interview with Robert Harris was conducted by Debra Pierce on October 24, 1976, in Red Mountain, California. It is 1 hour, 15 minutes, and 59 seconds long, and it is archived as a digital recording/audio file at COPH (see "Copyright Advisory" below). The verbatim transcript edited here was prepared in the fall of 2025 by Colin Ashe, Moses Albert Miranda, Ryan Mize, Brenna O'Toole, Jackson Giovanni Saieva, and Ben Wainscott.

The evidence from this interview, combined with data available through internet research (including FamilySearch.org and Findagrave.com), suggests that the Robert "Hard Rock" Harris of this interview was the assayer Robert Joseph Harris, born on April 3, 1895, in Ohio, and deceased on May 18, 1978 in San Bernardino County, California (i.e., two years after this interview). He was reportedly married to Lillian Mary Harris (1905–1992) from Pennsylvania, and they had two sons (Norman R. and Joseph G.). His 1942 World-War II draft registration card states his place of work at that time as the Morrow Aircraft Corporation in Rialto, California. His last known residence was Red Mountain, California. He was buried in the Rand District Cemetery in Johannesburg, Kern County, California.

According to the interview, Robert Harris attended St. Jerome's College in Berlin (now Kitchener), Ontario, flew various types of aircraft in World War I, but spent most of his career as a metallurgist in the American Southwest. He arrived in California's Randsburg district in 1930 as a mining engineer and, due to his expertise, had no problem getting hired at Atolia. Harris gives us an incredibly detailed account of his work with scheelite, a calcium tungstate mineral, and the pertaining assaying tests and processes of refinement. He includes anecdotes about a husband-and-wife team who struck it big, finding \$250,000 worth of gold nuggets in Goler Canyon; about various mining characters, such as "Ballarat Bob" and "Seldom Seen Slim," as well as Calvin Harrison "Slim" Riffle, the founder of the historic "Owl

Café" and various other enterprises in Randsburg; and about the challenges of living and working in these Kern County mining communities. Thus, this oral history should be of particular interest to historians of science and technology in California (especially mining), to scholars of social memory (including World War I and desert communities), and to metallurgists, geologists, and assayers curious about the history of their respective fields.

Only identifiable individuals, locations, and technical terms have been referenced in the footnotes, usually when they first appear.

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*Verbatim Transcript (O.H. 1550)*

LAWRENCE DE GRAAF CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: Robert Harris [RH]  
INTERVIEWER: Debra Pierce [DP]  
DATE: October 24, 1976  
LOCATION: Red Mountain, California  
PROJECT: Science and Technology  
TRANSCRIBERS: Colin Ashe, Moses Albert Miranda, Ryan Mize, Brenna O'Toole,  
Jackson Giovanni Saieva, and Ben Wainscott

- DP: This is an interview with "Hard Rock" Harris<sup>1</sup> for the California State University, Fullerton, Randsburg<sup>2</sup> Project by Debra Pierce at Post Office Box 816, Red Mountain,<sup>3</sup> California,<sup>4</sup> on October 24, 1976, at 5:00 p.m. And, Mr. Harris, I'd like for you to start off telling me about your experiences in World War I,<sup>5</sup> please.
- RH: Well, I don't know as I care much about talking to that, I thought we were goin' to talk about mining.
- DP: Would you like to do that? I thought—
- RH: Yeah.
- DP: —maybe you'd like to start off with it.—
- RH: Yeah.
- DP: —You don't? You just wanna start off with mining.
- RH: Well, yes, I would, because World War I in 1930 is a long way off, uh, in other words to start this off, uh, I'd like to talk about the things I heard in 1930 about Randsburg, Johannesburg,<sup>6</sup> and Red Mountain, see, which is a mining community, and me being an engineer of mining and metallurgy, why I was very interested, so I started out on 66 highway<sup>7</sup> and, uh, when I got off to turn off to Red Mountain, I found a dirt road that was very, very rough for the car to get into. Well, I went along on that the first ten miles, I had to get out and put my shirt back. It was really that bad, see? And, uh, nothing with miners went over that particular road, and it took hours, well right now on a good road, which is 395,<sup>8</sup> it takes you two hours on that same course, so you

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Joseph Harris (1895–1978), miner, metallurgist, and World War I veteran.

<sup>2</sup> Unincorporated community in the U.S. state of California, east of Bakersfield.

<sup>3</sup> Unincorporated community in the U.S. state of California, east of Bakersfield.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. state on the West Coast.

<sup>5</sup> (1914–1918).

<sup>6</sup> Census-designated place in the U.S. state of California, east of Bakersfield.

<sup>7</sup> A.k.a. "Route 66" between Chicago, Illinois, and Santa Monica, California.

<sup>8</sup> North-south highway between Hesperia, California, and the Oregon state line.

- can imagine what it'd be on a rough road, see? Well, we re—ri—arrived at Atolia,<sup>9</sup> right, which was the first mining project, and a very good one. Oh, they'd taken millions of dollars out of it, see? And, uh, I went in there, and I had no trouble at all getting employment, being a metallurgist and being a—uh, being able to assay<sup>10</sup> materials and being so far from Los Angeles<sup>11</sup> and San Bernardino<sup>12</sup> and all of the ma—major towns that had materials you could buy. In other words, they couldn't buy a tee, uh, 2 by 4<sup>13</sup> out here without going a hundred or two hundred miles—
- DP: Sure, yeah.
- RH: —well, I had no trouble at all getting a job, and, uh, I built the laboratory down there, and altogether I spent, uh, oh, say, nine and a half years in the laboratory, see?—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —And, uh, see, on the ore<sup>14</sup> that these people were handling is a calcium tungstate, known as scheelite.<sup>15</sup> Schee-lite, that's the name of it, see? Mineralogical name, see? And, uh, the, uh, chemical formula is calcium tungstate. So—we managed to get the laboratory all arranged for this particular ore, which is a chemical operation and takes about three days, see? Three long days of it, due to the precipitation of the, uh, tungsten,<sup>16</sup> see, it's very hard to get out of solution. So, I spent, uh, three days. Now, then, I would get the sample, while that comes from a mill which is, uh, Barker Mill<sup>17</sup> here in, uh, south of where we are right now and, uh—the, uh, tailings<sup>18</sup> out there run about three tenths of one percent, which they're trying to do something with now, see, and they could, if they knew how, see, and, uh—the ore was put into the mill, and it went through a crusher. And from the crusher it went through a ball mill,<sup>19</sup> right? A ball mill is a revolving tank like, a large tank that's revolving, and it has iron balls in it, so, it reduces this stuff down to any mesh<sup>20</sup> that you wanna put the screen on the end of it. There, the screen goes on the end. You can have it 16 measure,<sup>21</sup> 20 measure, fly screen, which is 14 measure, see,—
- DP: Mmm. Okay.
- RH: —well, it all depends on how you're going to recover this material, right? Alright, from there it goes to a jeg.<sup>22</sup> (pauses) The jeg concentrates all the heavy material out, see? In fact, you look at the jeg, which you can see it all the time and, uh, there's, uh, probably, uh, oh, anywhere to—eight to ten inches of, uh, scheelite, which is our

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<sup>9</sup> Former mining town in the U.S. state of California, south of Red Mountain.

<sup>10</sup> Assess qualitatively and quantitatively the presence, amount, or functional activity of a target entity.

<sup>11</sup> City in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>12</sup> City in the southern part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>13</sup> Piece of dimensional lumber with a nominal (not actual) size of 2 by 4 inches.

<sup>14</sup> Natural rock or sediment containing valuable mineral(s), often including metal(s).

<sup>15</sup> Calcium tungstate mineral, named after Carl Wilhelm Scheele (1742–1786), Swedish chemist.

<sup>16</sup> Chemical element, metal (a.k.a. Wolfram).

<sup>17</sup> Former mining place in the U.S. state of California near Randsburg, named after proprietor Clarence Barker.

<sup>18</sup> Materials left over after extracting an ore's valuable fraction.

<sup>19</sup> Type of cylindrical grinding machine.

<sup>20</sup> Barrier made of interlaced steel wires.

<sup>21</sup> Openings per linear inch.

<sup>22</sup> A.k.a.jig, apparatus for jigging ore (i.e., separating materials by gravity).

calcium tungstate that we were talking about in the beginning, see? Now then, from there, being a very fine mesh, it goes to tables. And these tables are oscillating back and forth, and they are probably, oh, say to—let's say ten foot long and, uh, five foot wide for the average individual to vi—visualize, see? Now then, as this material goes down there and is jiggling back and forth, the black sands that're in this ore go in one category, see? The quartz,<sup>23</sup> which is a white material and it goes in another category, and the scheelite and calciums go in another material, see, so it separates all these things, see? Now then, when it gets off that table—the mere fact that you can't—not get anything a hundred percent, see—it goes on another table, see? Which is, uh, a lot for efficient, see? Uh, sometimes, in some mills, they had to make a regrind in order to, to make the separation, but we sent it over five tables. Alright, right after it was over the five tables, right, it was ready to go to what we call the dry room, which was down by the main buildings, right? Alright, after it had gone in the dry room, why, they put it through the drying process and screened it all into different categories, see? Well, some of those categories would be richer than others you—due to the screening see? And that's one of, one of the methods they use in processing. In fact, sometimes, some of the stuff that don't assay correctly, that was my job to find out what all these pro—different screenings were, see?

DP: Mmm.

RH: Alright, some screens didn't go too high, went back to the mill, see? And they dump right in with the process, see. Alright, after, uh, after it went through the dry room it went through all the screening, see? And its separation, the stuff that assayed by my assays 60 percent that—was sacked in a hundred-pound sacks, so I used to buy high grade from miners, see, that, uh—itinerant miners would come around, you know, I would buy high grade from them, and we put six pounds of high grade in, so it'd be over the 60 percent, because if you were under 60 percent, they would fine you, the mill would, where you sent the final concentrates, see? Well, the same thing applied to gold. Now, in the old days, when gold assay was thirty-five dollars an ounce, see? Alright, they paid you 90 percent of the assay value at thirty-five, thirty-three dollars, see?—

DP: Mmm.

RH: —See, well, just about thinking about sending it there costs you money, see? Plenty, see? Now, this tungsten and everything else that you do in the mining business is the same way. They never if it, say, that, uh, gold was a hundred dollars now, you can't get a hundred dollars for it if you had the twenty-four carats, see.

DP: That's right.

RH: They would give you that deduction, see. All the, uh, deducts are in there, see? Now if, the—alright. (microphone static) See, in the Atolia laboratory, which was primarily built for tungsten, which is calcium scheelite, uh, we also had facilities for doing gold and silver assays, see. Uh, the mere fact that the company didn't pretend to do any gold or silver mining, while they stuck entirely to the, uh, the scheelite, which is a

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<sup>23</sup> Hard mineral, a.k.a. silicon dioxide.

tungsten assay, but it was always, uh, necessary to find out whether these materials carried gold or silver for future reference, see? Well, when you come right "down to brass tacks"<sup>24</sup> around Red Mountain and Randsburg and Johannesburg, you can find almo—almost any there. In fact, I can take you to a place, uh, in Randsburg right next to the post office, which used to be the old post office originally in 1895. And there's a ten-foot ledge, runs right over that, or a hundred rather, pardon me, that nobody has ever even sampled—

DP: (giggles)

RH: —and there's gold in it, see.

DP: Is that right?

[00:10:20]

RH: Oh yes. There's gold in it, see, because it runs up towards the Yellow Aster Mine,<sup>25</sup> which was a big producer in the old days, alright? In this country, everywhere that you find quartz, which is no good, which is, uh, bull quartz, you find a mine near it, see? And if you haven't found a mine near it, it's because they didn't prospect it enough. Because everywhere you look, where there is bull quartz, which is the white silicate<sup>26</sup> coming out of the ground, you'll find a mine or a hole or something, see?

DP: Now, is that just in this area you're talking about, like in Randsburg,—

RH: Yeah, right.

DP: —not in other?—

RH: —Red Mountain, Johannesburg, and Randsburg,—

DP: —Now, this doesn't necessarily mean then in other parts of the country, but just here?—

RH: —right here, that's the geology of this area, see? Uh, uh, mineralogical conditions, see? Now then, uh, the Yellow Aster Mine from 1895 to, uh, World War I, see, it's necessary to quit gold and silver mining during a war. All you can have is strategic minerals. You can't have—see, gold and silver isn't strategic. You need something like Atolia, which has that material, see? That they have there, see? Now then, getting back to the Yellow Aster, from 1895 to World War I, it averaged, as I understand, about three dollars a ton. Well, in those days, three dollars a ton was alright, now it would be ridiculous, see? Alright, a miner made a dollar a day, and his mucker<sup>27</sup>—the mucker is his helper, see, that's what they called—

DP: Okay.

RH: —mucker, see? Alright, the helper got fifty cents a day, see, and—alright, a lot of people are working right now, see. Uh, in fact, my wife<sup>28</sup> worked so many years for fifty cents a day that now that she's making seven dollars a day in the post office, she won't quit,—

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<sup>24</sup> Idiom, meaning "cut to the chase," "get right into it."

<sup>25</sup> Gold mine, south of Randsburg, established c. 1895.

<sup>26</sup> Presumably sodium silicate.

<sup>27</sup> Person loading material into mining carts.

<sup>28</sup> Lillian Mary Harris (1905–1992) from Pennsylvania.

- DP: (laughs)
- RH: —yeah, it's ridiculous, isn't it?—
- DP: (laughs)
- RH: —She don't have to work, and here I am home all alone, and she gets me up at six o'clock in the morning, (laughs)—
- DP: (laughs)
- RH: (pause in recording) It's, it's, hard to say too much about that because it lasted so long, see, from 1895 to World War I. There is a whole lot of things that happened that—uh, in conjunction with the Yellow Aster, that was more interesting than the Yellow Aster, see. Like Goler Canyon.<sup>29</sup> Uh, Goler Canyon is, uh, a placer operation,<sup>30</sup> not a hard rock, see? Uh, hard rock mining was down in tunnels and shafts and, uh, very difficult stuff, required powder<sup>31</sup> and everything. Well, we were, uh, a long way from Los Angeles and San Bernardino, where you could buy powder, see? Well, to give you some idea, uh, in those days powder wasn't too hard to get, but right now, if you went to San Bernardino, which is a hundred miles down and a hundred miles back, they would charge you for the box of powder, see? Now then, you would wanna take it out and put it in your car, and the man would say, "We're sorry, you can't do, we have to deliver it to you, and it'll cost you fifty cents a mile, round trip."—
- DP: Well, how about that?
- RH: —See?—
- DP: Yeah.
- RH: —That's one reason why it's pretty hard to mine right now, see? Because of the expense. Such is the miner: I'll, I'll just give this, uh, uh, union fee of forty dollars a day for a miner, and his insurance is fifteen dollars a day, see? And as you can see now, it's all pretty high to mine, see. Well, getting back to Goler Canyon, see. And this was in 1895, alright? And these people become friends of mine afterwards. A man and his wife who, uh, mined out at Goler Canyon—250,000 dollars, right? Now, he mined in the ground eighty feet below the surface on placer, see, placer ground is different than hard rock. In other words, anything that sits on the base rock, all the dirt above the ground is placer.—
- DP: Mmm. Okay.
- RH: —Alright, let's get back to—the mama's on top and the papa's down digging the hole, and he sends up a water bucket full. Well, a water bucket full is so many shovels to her, see? Alright, she had a canvas, and she dumped this bucket out on the canvas and picked the nuggets out. Now, I saw some of the nuggets—I didn't see 'em in 1895—but she held out all the big ones. Then she showed 'em to me ye—years later, see? And some of them was as large as my thumb, see?—
- DP: Isn't that something.
- RH: —And she'd pick out these large nuggets and then all the fine stuff and screen it, and then throw the tailings away. Now the tailings is stuff you don't want. See, I have to

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<sup>29</sup> Gold mine, northwest of Randsburg and north of Goler Heights, established c. 1895.

<sup>30</sup> Surface mining.

<sup>31</sup> Explosives.



- explain that because, lest you people know what tailings are, like in the mill, you have the heads,<sup>32</sup> which is the ore going into the mill, see? You have the mediums and concentrates, and you have the tails,<sup>33</sup> which is the material you throw away, see. Very understandable, see? Because it's an impossibility to obtain a hundred percent. Can't be done, right? No matter what kind of equipment we've had over all these years, we've never, well, in some lab where a guy got as high as 80 percent, which I figured was very good, see?—
- DP: It really is!
- RH: —Yeah, I, uh, I have a book here that, uh, is very precious to me, and it's some of the work I had done on the Atolia mill,—
- DP: How interesting.
- RH: —yeah. Now this, this explains all of the processes, see, to recover this ore. Now, uh, this will show you, uh, who the test was run by and all of the material and its screen (unintelligible) (paper rustling) See? Uh, here's another page. This was in 1956,—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —and, uh, there's something wrong when I reported down here to repeat the test, see? And, uh, here's another one, run at 35 mesh. And, uh, well, let's see, what was the test on this? Page five. That—this book here will give you an idea of what you have to go through. These are all—this takes months to do,—
- DP: Oh sure it does.
- RH: —yeah. Uh, (pauses, paper rustling, talking under breath) uh, we'll get back to this thing in just a minute, when I locate it here. Uh, plus 10 mesh was 8.9 percent, see? And minus 10 mesh was 1,211 pounds of 91 percent, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —that's, that's good work,—
- DP: Yeah, it certainly is.
- RH: —awfully good work, see,—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —yeah. Uh, all of the reagents, see? Alketan, oleic acid,<sup>34</sup> all the stuff that was necessary to run the mill down here, was flotation, (paper rustling) uh, this book has a lot of work in it. Recovery of 61.9 percent on this test, see?—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —It's awfully hard to get a hundred percent,—
- DP: Sure.
- RH: —even in a laboratory, now then, let's say, we were out in the mill with a lot of men that don't care, they're getting so much an hour and, well, they don't care whether they got the right amount in there, or whether they (mumbles)—
- DP: They're not that particular.
- RH: —yeah. They're not that particular, see? But in the lab, we made 61 percent on that, see?—

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<sup>32</sup> Large, uncrushed rocks.

<sup>33</sup> Tailings, materials left over after extracting an ore's valuable fraction.

<sup>34</sup> Naturally derived fatty acid used primarily as a mineral collector in froth flotation.

DP: Mmm.

RH: —All—maybe out in the mill, they would only make fifty, see? In fact, I had one occasion, the day before I left down there, which is one of the reasons why I left, was because the heads went in at three-tenths of one percent, and the tails went out at five percent. Material we threw away went out at five percent. Well, somebody in the mill goofed off.—

DP: (laughs)

RH: —I mean, that's, that's it, see?—

DP: Yeah, sure is.

[00:20:01]

RH: —Well, let's get back to Goler, see, which is awfully interesting because the two people, made 250,000 dollars, see, they built a, they built a beautiful home in San Bernardino, all with—and being mining people the way they were, they lived in the garage, hey. Alright, everything was fine, they had it all furnished, beautiful, see? The—this basement was all concrete and had five rooms, I saw it, it was wonderful, see. And, uh, that night, before they moved in the next day, the husband died, see. Very sad, because it was—they were awfully nice people and hard-working people. And all the time he was over here, he was the recorder for the county, see? In other words, you wanted to stake a mining claim, see? And he acted for the county and for the government by recording the claims at Goler, right. Now, another very interesting thing about Goler is the fact that there is a place by the name of Summit,<sup>35</sup> eight miles away, which is the foot of Goler. In other words, Goler was a canyon, still is a canyon, but it was a canyon at one time that was running down. Well, the Garlock Fault<sup>36</sup> runs through there, and it's a horizontal fault. And uh, I wou—I would say maybe over a million years or two million years of it, it moved eight miles, see? Well, at Goler, that we've just been talking about, there is a real rich deposit, see? Now then, Summit is the tailings from Goler. And the best we've ever found was a dollar a yard. Now, a yard is a ton now, see? Twenty, Twenty-seven cubic feet, something like that, see. And, uh, to this day, when a little miner goes over there with a dry-washer,<sup>37</sup> which is, uh, some of 'em are handcranked outfit and others has a little one-cylinder engine on 'em, and, uh, at their best they'll recover about 50 percent. I showed you in here—tried to show you, uh, roughly, that it's hard to get a hundred percent, see? It don't happen, unless it would happen by accident, see. And that's because we'll say that we ground this ore to 14 mesh, that would be like a fly screen, so people will understand that we'd go down as high as two hundred mesh,—

DP: Mm-hmm.

RH: —now then,—

DP: Wow.

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<sup>35</sup> A.k.a. Summit Diggings Placer, gold mine, south of Searles.

<sup>36</sup> 160-miles-long fault along the north margins of California's Mojave Desert.

<sup>37</sup> Apparatus separating free particles of placer gold from dry sediments by using air and vibrations.

- RH: —in that tailings from that mesh there, there might be five more dollars, see? That makes it a very understandable and—
- DP: Mmm. Yes.
- RH: —Yeah. Well, so you see why it's not possible at any time to make a hundred percent unless it's by accident. (pause in recording) Now, we, uh, we were talking here about the wet screen test on minus 30 mesh material. Five hundred grams in the tailings, uh, three hundred and thirty-three of lake water. In other words, while you're milling, you have to use the same ma—water in your test laboratory that you use in the mill because, uh, water—the specific gravity of water and the different chemicals that are in water—have effect on these particular ores because, as I mentioned today to a certain party that everything is moving in this world, no matter whether it's wood or stationary, or bolted, and everything has a chemical action to it, see? So, during the process of all these tests, we have to use the water we're going to use—
- DP: Yeah.
- RH: —in the particular mill, right? Alright, the grind was ten minutes in a ball mill. Now, this is a laboratory ball mill, a small one. A ball mill is seven inches by seven inches. The charge was 6,585 and a half—balls in the mill, the iron balls that was going to crush the ore was that weight, see? Now, if you change that weight, you have something else happen to it, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —The rpm<sup>38</sup> was seventy-seven rpm's, see? Result weight plus three twenty-five wet, equals 234.4 grams. 46 and a half percent. Uh, the weight of minus three hundred twenty five wet, 268.5, which is 53.5 percent. Now those two added together makes a hundred percent, see. So, you see, everything was worked out in accordance. Now then, the, uh, grams weight of, uh, the different perc—percentage, like minus 48, uh, plus 48, plus 65, minus 65, plus a hundred, and all these different ones went down to run this test, see? And we can probably pick out another one here that, uh—
- DP: Well, um, would you mind if I asked you an—another question about—as far as, how many years did you spend, um, like, you would work in the lab, you would go out on the field—
- RH: Yeah.
- DP: —and then do your research there, and then bring it to the lab, and then really do the testing there, right?
- RH: Yes. In other words, at Atolia here, I sampled the tailings. Now, remember the tailings is what we throw away, see? It's those big, beautiful dumps that you see down there now that do the high, uh, percentage of, uh, exchange right now, that dump runs three tenths of one percent, well, uh, when we used to get five and ten dollars for twenty pounds. Now we're getting, uh, eighty and ninety dollars for twenty pounds,—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —see? Well, that makes sense, doesn't it?—
- DP: (laughs)

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<sup>38</sup> Abbreviation, meaning "revolutions per minute."

- RH: —The tailings that we threw away years ago are worth, uh, quite a bit of money,—  
 DP: Mmm.  
 RH: —providing that you have a man or personnel that can work out the process to get it out of there, see? Now, there are a lot of times in the old days that three-tenths, we'll say, was thrown away in the tailings because it required a little too much money. And back, back in those days, money was quite a thing.—  
 DP: Mm-hmm. Sure.  
 RH: —Money, money was the thing that operated all these processes, see? Now this one here. The recovery was 78.6 percent.—  
 DP: Mmm.  
 RH: —Alright. Treated with lake water. Now, that's water pumped from east of Atolia down on the dry lake down there. See, there's subterranean water down there, and most of the subterranean waters around here carry arsenic, see? In fact, uh, when I was down in number one<sup>39</sup> at Atolia at the six hundred level, the water was up to the seve—to the five hundred level, and I could down in the water a hundred feet, while ordinary water I couldn't do that, but in that arsenical water, it makes it like a lens,—  
 DP: How about that?  
 RH: —and it's beautiful! I could see the nails in timber and all that stuff—  
 DP: Mmm.—  
 RH: —underwater, which is very hard to do, see? Well, this, uh, this particular test here (paper rustling), uh, let's see, there's calcium oxide<sup>40</sup> in this ore, there's sodium carbonate,<sup>41</sup> and we precipitated all the—filtered it all out, see? Five hundred grams of tails. 3.333 percent of treated lake water. A half gram of sodium carbonate, see. Try salt water, see. The grind was ten minutes. Now, with salt water, we got 78.6 percent, see?—  
 DP: Mmm.  
 RH: —That's pretty good!—  
 DP: Mm-hmm.  
 RH: —Because, uh, you don't have the selection of water, it comes—it comes with the mineralization that happens in that area, see? And some of it's, uh, charged awfully heavy in lime.<sup>42</sup> In this case down here it's arsenic. Very poisonous. If you drank a cup of that water that—  
 DP: Mmm.  
 RH: —that would be it, see? See, well, there's five hundred grams a tail. Tails, and three hundred and three cc's<sup>43</sup> of lake water. A half a gram of sodium carbonate, see? Alright, uh—it worked out for 20 percent solids and five hundred cc's of water, see? Uh, sodium silicate,<sup>44</sup> uh, pelletan and oleic acid was used for the flotation, see?

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<sup>39</sup> Presumably Union No. 1 Mine at Atolia, started mining tungsten in 1915.

<sup>40</sup> A.k.a. quicklime; white, caustic, alkaline, crystalline solid.

<sup>41</sup> A.k.a. washing soda; white, odorless, water-soluble salt.

<sup>42</sup> Inorganic material composed primarily of calcium oxides and hydroxides.

<sup>43</sup> Abbreviation, meaning "cubic centimeters."

<sup>44</sup> Chemical compound; colorless transparent solid or white powder, water-soluble.

Flotation time was ten minutes on 20 percent solids see? Uh, we used, uh, these materials are named like A eighteen and, uh, oleic acid and, uh, fun names like that that the manufacturers have. The assays of the tails was point 0625, and the con was 1.220, see? And that is very good, see? In other words, it worked out to 78.6 percent on that particular test, see? (chair creaks)

[00:30:49]

DP: Um, didn't you have problems there with the arsenic water? I bet people didn't realize—

RH: —Oh yeah, (talking over each other) that's, that's, uh, that's a separate chemical procedure to, to, uh, not—you can't eliminate it because it's there, but you have to put some reagent in that will counteract it, see? In other words, uh, uh, you'll have, will say, a solution of sodium chloride,<sup>45</sup> and all you want's the chloride so you gotta find out how to get rid of the sodium.—

DP: Mmm.

RH: —That's chemistry, see?—

DP: Mmm.

RH: —And, uh, it may take you a little time to work out some of the problems, but it's always, uh, it's always worked out. If it isn't worked out a hundred percent, it's worked out 50 percent. See, how it works? As I say, you never get perfect. That's the thing I had to learn years ago,—

DP: That's right.

RH: —although I try my best to do everything absolutely perfect, it's an impossibility, see?

DP: I would also like to go back, at the very, very beginning, and—did you get your training as a metallurgist—is that how you—

RH: Yes.

DP: —pronounce it? You got that training, um, when you got out of service? Or did you get it in service? Or how did you—

RH: Well,—

DP: —get that?

RH: —I, I, took chemistry in college. At, uh, St. Jerome's College<sup>46</sup> in—it was Berlin,<sup>47</sup> t—Ontario,<sup>48</sup> but it's Kitchener<sup>49</sup> now, see?

DP: Mmm.

RH: And, uh, in my time that was a little different. In fact, I was in the first grade, and I knew the multiplication tables, see?—

DP: My goodness.

RH: —Yeah,—

DP: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>45</sup> Ionic compound, transparent or translucent; in its edible form a.k.a. table salt.

<sup>46</sup> Now St. Jerome's University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada (1865–present).

<sup>47</sup> Former name (until a 1916 referendum) of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>48</sup> Province in the east-central part of Canada.

<sup>49</sup> City in the southeastern part of the Canadian province of Ontario.

- RH: —I had to know. Even nowadays, to, uh, of course I'm getting older and, uh, it's much harder to memorize, see. But, there was a time here in the, oh, say back in the fifties, I could memorize this, this whole page here, see? And, and nothing flat, see? Because I understood the chemistry and, uh, the mathematics of the thing, see? Uh, now this one here—did I answer your question alright?
- DP: Well, okay, so you did go to a college in—
- RH: Oh yeah.
- DP: —in Ontario, alright. And then from there, you just came down again, as you said, and found this area that you wanted to work in?—
- RH: —Yes, (talking over each other) after I graduated, I, well, not only here, I went a lot of places. See, I used this, this trail right here, and, uh, I traveled all over, uh, Nevada,<sup>50</sup> Arizona,<sup>51</sup> and California to different mines. I worked for hundreds of 'em,—
- DP: —Oh, see, I—
- RH: —and, uh—
- DP: —didn't know that, okay.—
- RH: —Of course, they don't say you work for one. Say, that I went to work today for you in your mine, and you work in a mine, and you go broke two weeks from now, well, I have to move on,—
- DP: (giggles) Mm-hmm.
- RH: —see? That's, that's how the thing worked. The mining—mining industry is an entirely different than anything else because of so many failures, right. There's so many smart men that go all about it, see, and they find out in two weeks or a month or maybe it's six months, if they don't know. In other words, tests like I'm showing you on this paper here. Now, this particular one here is a sample of minus 35 mesh, using the lake wash—water, and the sodium carbonate, and calcium cyanide,<sup>52</sup> and a few other chemicals like that. And our recovery was only 19 and a half percent, see. Everything was wrong on this particular page, but it's necessary for records, see?—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —In order to say we don't do this because, why. On, uh, HFT<sup>53</sup> number six, we did a certain thing and we only got 19 percent, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.
- RH: —Isn't that wonderful? How—
- DP: Isn't that something? Yeah.
- RH: —I keep. Right? Like I mean, if you do there's a lot of people who don't keep records so they just go ahead and do things.—
- DP: —Well then you don't make the same—
- RH: —Sorry,—
- DP: —mistake again.—
- RH: —We didn't do so good, see?—

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<sup>50</sup> U.S. state in the Southwest.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. state in the Southwest.

<sup>52</sup> Inorganic compound, highly toxic.

<sup>53</sup> Perhaps "Hydraulic Fracturing Test."

- DP: —That's right. (paper rustling)
- RH: Yeah, see. Alright, let's go to this one now. This one is interesting, see? Atolia tails. Five hundred grams of it was taken for sample. The lake water was 333, see? Uh, a half a gram of sodium carbonate. In fact, uh, salt water seemed to be, uh, hell, see? But it had to be in the right percentage, see? Well, all of these materials went in, and the float time was eight minutes. (banging noise in background) Uh, yes, as I was saying about the Atolia tails, uh, a sample run of five hundred grams and, uh, three hundred and thirty-three cc's of lake water, see? Well, the time on this particular assay was eight minutes. And there was two drops of oleic acid. And, two minutes later, there was two more drops of oleic acid. And then one cc of eighteen. That's, uh, a term for, uh, flotation materials, see? Which, if you wanted to go to a place where they sold these materials, you'd ask for so much of A eighteen and they'd give it to you, see? Well, and, uh, one cc of oleic acid, see? While the concentrate amounted to twenty-seven and a half grams, which was 5.5 percent. And the tailings amounted to four hundred and seventy-six and a half grams, which was 94 and a half percent, which the two added together represents a hundred percent. Now the recovery was 73.8,—
- DP: My goodness.
- RH: —see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —Was using this particular method, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —Now, is there any more things you wanna ask me on, uh?
- DP: Um, can you remember some very, very odd tests happening that were very phenomenal? Or—
- RH: —You mean—
- DP: —real unusual?—
- RH: —in the mineralogical tests?—
- DP: Yeah. Mmm.
- RH: Oh, uh, oh, that happens at times due to, uh, to, uh, sometimes you purchase materials like nitric acid,<sup>54</sup> hydrochloric acid,<sup>55</sup> and different chemicals that are so old that they have no reaction, see? So, you go through all the tests, which might require as much as two days, see? Or maybe more. And you—you get no answer. You get a nullification because, due to material that wouldn't react chemically, it wouldn't precipitate, see?—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —And, uh, that's—you've lost, see? You've lost a couple of days' work,—
- DP: —That's—
- RH: —and you have to then go to find out what is wrong, see? What's happened? see?—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —See?—

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<sup>54</sup> Inorganic compound, highly corrosive, used for explosions.

<sup>55</sup> Aqueous solution of hydrogen chloride.

- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —Well, you might run it again and get the same results, so then you know that it's in chemistry and you have to find the category. Is it in the acids? See? Or is it in the sodium silicates, or the oleic acid, or what, see? So, you have a standby, what I call a standby. I used to use these things, see? And they were materials that I knew was perfectly alright, see.—
- DP: Wow. Mmm.
- RH: —Couldn't go wrong, see? In other words, when I was running an assay, say, I was running twelve of them all nicely bunched out on the hot plate, see? Alright, right in the center, I had my standard, see? A—An assay that I had run a thousand times, as I knew was absolutely right, see?—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —And if that didn't come out right, something was wrong. But if it come out right, I could go home and sleep.
- DP: (laughs)
- RH: Does that answer your question?
- DP: Yes, it does.
- RH: —Yeah, yeah,—
- DP: —It's interesting—
- RH: —all these things are, uh, are very particular. I mean, uh, most of the assays that I run against the government assays, see? Now the government assays at times would be a sample split ten ways and sent one to Chicago,<sup>56</sup> one to New York,<sup>57</sup> and all over the country, and then they'd bring 'em together, add 'em up, and divide 'em by, uh, ten, see? Well, I had one assay that I brought against 'em, and,—
- DP: Oh.

[00:40:12]

- RH: —and at the most I wasn't anymore than a hundred to two hundredths of a percent off, see?
- DP: My goodness.
- RH: —Very, very, uh, exact see? So, I had a very good process that I was working—
- DP: That's interesting.
- RH: —and good materials because, if some of them got too old, well, I'd order new materials and renew them, see? And work a standard, uh, a standard I was telling you about, see? That couldn't be any different. Uh, the material in the standard is taken down to way—minus two hundred mesh. And it's—say I had ten pounds of it. Well, I have a splitter, a metal splitter that you put that ten pounds in, and it divides that into ten different portions, see?—
- DP: Mmm. Okay.

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<sup>56</sup> City in the northeastern part of the U.S. state of Illinois.

<sup>57</sup> City in the southeastern part of the U.S. state of New York.



- RH: —See? Well, then you take that tenths and divide it again, see, until you get it down to, well, I told you one here, I took, what, five hundred grams or something like that.—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —Alright, take first sample, whatever you want, a hundred grams, five hundred, whatever it is, see? Well, running it through those splitters make an ideal mixing, okay. You can't, you can't go wrong, see? The splitter does the, does the job, see? And every good lab has one, no matter whether they're running organic materials or what it is, even if they were assaying salt, they would split the sample to a small quantity, very sys—systematically, see? Instead of just grabbing a handful out, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —Now, to give you an example of how, how hard it is to—and how you can a mistake. You see these big dumps, down here, the tailings dumps with the—
- DP: Yes.
- RH: —level ground on 'em. Say, the level ground was covering five acres, see? Alright the winds, the prevailing winds, go over this ground, and they loosen up all of the very light materials. Now, the heavy materials carry values, but the light materials don't. And these materials go off into space. If you go to Randsburg, you can see 'em spread out for two miles. The light materials, see? Alright, on, uh, top of that material, the black sand don't move, see? Or the scheelite, which is heavy, see? Scheelite is very heavy, you tried that yourself, see. Alright, all of those light materials are gone, and the heavy materials there, so they come along, and they sample right on top. Well, it's richer than what's down below because of the natural concentration.—
- DP: How about that?
- RH: —The heavy materials that carry the values are left right up on top of the ground. So, what do you do instead of sampling that way? You dig down about five feet, see? And take a sample down there where the wind can't get at it. And—even the rain, moisture, and water going on down through it, see? Now, two particles, let's say one is gold, and one is a very light material. They will stay in the same place for thousands of years until they are moved. Minute they're moved, the heavy particle goes down,—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —see? Unless it had happened to be on concrete or something like that. But in natural sequences, all of the material underground there, if it becomes wet, things settle down, see? It wants to go with the water, the heavy particles, see? Light particles stay up on top. I guess we can—(pause in recording). Yes, in Red mounting—Mountain, it's necessary to acquire the liking of the individual you are talking to, see? Alright, if he's an Englishman, well, you try to put on a little accent, see?—
- DP: (laughs)
- RH: —Like, it's not the 'opping over 'edges what is 'urts the 'orse's 'ooves, it's the 'ammer, 'ammer, 'ammer on the blinking 'ighway.<sup>58</sup>
- DP: (laughs)

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<sup>58</sup> A Cockney rendition (i.e., the traditional working class accent of London, which famously drops the letter "h" at the beginning of words): "It's not the hopping over hedges that hurts the horse's hooves; it's the hammer, hammer, hammer on the blinking highway."

- RH: —And so, if you, uh—  
 DP: Now what did you say?  
 RH: (laughs)  
 DP: (laughs)  
 RH: So it,—  
 DP: Uh.  
 RH: —it's necessary to talk to some of the miners who don't have any kind of education, see? The pick and shovel men, see? If you don't talk in their sense, they dislike you, see?—  
 DP: Sure.  
 RH: —If you're at a bar, and they're there, and you don't buy 'em a drink, they, they also dislike you. (laughs)  
 DP: Could you tell me some things about some of these characters,—  
 RH: Characters? Oh,—  
 DP: —some good stories about some of them,—  
 RH: —yeah, about "Ballarat Bob."<sup>59</sup>—  
 DP: —Yeah, he—  
 RH: —I'll tell you about him, see.  
 DP: —sounds good.  
 RH: He was a character, lived here, he come from Ballarat,<sup>60</sup> and, uh, he was here with, uh, his partner. And it was three o'clock in the morning. This is a short story because it ends very rapid,—  
 DP: (laughs)  
 RH: —see? It was three o'clock in the morning, and he had a bottle of whiskey. You know, I, I don't know how much was out of it. Maybe a half full, see? And his partner dropped it. Well, he shot him and killed him, see?<sup>61</sup> (laughs)—  
 DP: (laughs)  
 RH: —(talking over each other) Well, that, that's about as exciting as you'd want it, see?  
 DP: It certainly is.  
 RH: Yeah.  
 DP: Oh my goodness.  
 RH: Yeah.  
 DP: How about, um, did you ever hear any, know, uh, "Seldom Seen Slim?"<sup>62</sup> Was that his name?—  
 RH: —Yes,—  
 DP: —Now, did you meet, uh—  
 RH: —yeah, "Seldom Seen Slim,"—

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<sup>59</sup> Robert Bernard "Ballarat Bob" Dunlap (1922–2010), prospector.

<sup>60</sup> Unincorporated community in the U.S. state of California, just west of Death Valley National Park in the Panamint Valley.

<sup>61</sup> "Ballarat Bob" was convicted of voluntary manslaughter in 1973 for shooting his friend and fellow prospector, Martin Dale Erman.

<sup>62</sup> Charles "Seldom Seen Slim" Ferge (1889–1968), prospector.

- DP: —now—
- RH: —“Crooked Neck Tony,” and all those fellas see? The old timers, see?
- DP: What were they like?
- RH: Well, they, they were mining people, see? Just like the sheriff we had here. It was , um, quite a big individual and, uh, well capable of handling the toughest miner that’d come along, see? And, uh, we had a minimum of trouble due to the fact that he was able to handle ‘em, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —It wasn’t just talk. He would go in there and clean out the whole s’loon. And “Slim’s” s’loon<sup>63</sup> down here at times had as many as a hundred people in it—
- DP: Wow.
- RH: —all, all drinking from beer, wine, and everything else, see? Well, another very interesting thing is that I lived in number one here in Red Mountain. That’s a little cabin, one room and a kitchen, see? And I had bachelor quarters in there, uh, (laughs) when I went to work in the morning, which was down in Atolia, a lot of times I’d pull as much as five drunks over in the shade, see? Go over and grab ‘em by their arm and pull ‘em in the shade. Well, they’d pass out during the night, and when the sun come up, why, it was too bad, see?
- DP: (laughs) Sure.
- RH: Oh, that’s some of the, some of the things I would say was a little bit exciting.
- DP: That’s right.
- RH: Yeah.
- DP: For sure.
- RH: Yeah. Most of these, uh, men that were really alcoholics, a, a quart a day was nothing,—
- DP: Oh yeah.
- RH: —quart a day, that, and some of ‘em would drink wine and beer, along with it, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: Well, then, something happened to an individual like that, it’s just a matter of, uh, hauling him away, and he didn’t come back again, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: Of course, they hauled them away a lot of times. We have a few now; right now, that are alcoholics that, uh,—
- DP: Is that right?
- RH: —every now and then, they go to the hospital and. Oh, I think, during—people like that, uh, uh, the intelligent amount is alright, see? But, uh, in excess of, uh, a quart a day, that’s—there’s, uh, bothering their health, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm. What would you account for the drinking problem? Were they just kind of bored at times and wanted to get away—
- RH: Well,—
- DP: —from it?

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<sup>63</sup> The historic “Owl Café” (701 US-395, Randsburg, CA 93554), established in 1921 by Calvin Harrison “Slim” Riffle (1890–1978), pioneer, entrepreneur, and proprietor of multiple businesses in Randsburg.

- RH: —yeah. Here's what would happen, see? They would work all day, uh, say, the eight-hour shift, see? And a lot of 'em wouldn't even clean up. They'd be dirty and have sand in their ears and everything—
- DP: (laughs)
- RH: —they'd lined up to get a drink, see? And it—they'd bunch up, four or five of them. Well, I'd buy you one, and you'd buy me one, and the first thing you know, why,—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —that's how it started, see?—
- DP: Okay.
- RH: —and in the meantime, old "Slim" Riffle<sup>64</sup> become a very rich man—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —because he'd run "The Owl" garage<sup>65</sup> and he'd also run "The Owl" saloon<sup>66</sup> and "The Owl" barber shop,<sup>67</sup> see,—
- DP: Right.
- RH: —so did out—he made out pretty good. Of course, now "Slim" is, uh, pretty old and not very well, and he's been going down to Mexico for treatment, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: I'd like to see him, uh, uh, make out but, uh, I don't know. I doubt it, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —Yeah. You have any more that I—
- DP: It's all real interesting. Um, how did you get the name "Hard Rock?"
- RH: Well, it's, it's funny thing out here if, uh, if you work at, uh, definite material and the people, uh, don't know your name or can't remember your real name they—
- DP: (unintelligible)

[00:50:11]

- RH: —they give you one, see? And, uh, the mere fact that all my work was in hard rock, see? All of the mechanical work, the assay works, everything was in that. So they christened me "Hard Rock."
- DP: Okay. (laughs) Mm-hmm.
- RH: Yeah, that's, uh, "Dry-wash Beck" over here. Why, he makes dry-washers, see?—
- DP: Okay.
- RH: —And he sold 'em for years, alright. Everybody said, well, Beck, who's he? Let's call him "Dry-wash."
- DP: (laughs) Mm-hmm.
- RH: (laughs) That's how those things happen.

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<sup>64</sup> Calvin Harrison "Slim" Riffle (1890–1978), pioneer, entrepreneur, and proprietor of multiple businesses in Randsburg.

<sup>65</sup> Riffle owned a car dealership across the street from his saloon.

<sup>66</sup> The historic "Owl Café" (701 US-395, Randsburg, CA 93554).

<sup>67</sup> Riffle's saloon featured a barbershop as well.

- DP: Okay. Mm-hmm. That's neat. (pauses) I would like to, um, know what your feelings are about the mining in this area now? Do you feel that someday another big strike<sup>68</sup> might happen? Or do you have any idea?
- RH: Well, uh, the economy, as I told you before on this thing here—about how much a miner makes a day and how much his insurance is and how much the powder costs. Well, those are just incidentals, see? Uh, now, in the old days, in the underground mining here, it was pretty hard because they had 'em mine in the sense of protecting everybody underground without having timbers, twelve by twelves.<sup>69</sup> Can you imagine back in, uh, 1895, what it'd cost to bring a twelve by twelve from Los Angeles, see?—
- DP: Yikes!
- RH: —It'd be impossible, see? Now that is one thing, see? Right now, it's the same thing, see. Due to our inflation and the high costs of labor and money and everything. I wouldn't give you ten cents for all the mining in Red Mountain,—
- DP: —Johannesburg.—
- RH: —Johannesburg. (simultaneously) Yes. In other words, it'd be a struggle, uh, if you had something that was really good.
- DP: Okay. So, in other words, the minerals are here?
- RH: They're here, but you can't do anything due to the economy and the high wages and so on, see? See, it—it's just impossible. Now, there's a lot of people that is, uh, fooling around here see? But they're promoters. They're not people that are wanting to get in and bring the actual ore out and put it through a mill, process it in every sense, and get the money for the stockholders. They can't do it because of the expenses.—
- DP: Okay.
- RH: —It's an impossibility, yeah. Uh, now then, I, I—here's the answer to the thing. I find men around here now that are supposedly a company, I think they're a company, but they're a stockholding outfit that are trying to mine stuff that was thrown away fifty years ago, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: Now, if the wages they had then—they couldn't make that pay, how are they gonna do it now? See, doesn't it sound impossible?
- DP: Yes. Mm-hmm.
- RH: Yeah.
- DP: Sure does.
- RH: Good, see? Can't be. Anyone, anyone that has a knowledge of mining or engineering of any sense, they'll tell you the same thing that it's awfully hard, see? To make money when, when—it's the expenses are like they are now, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: Yeah. Now, I think I told you, forty dollars a miner gets. I think he gets more than that due to the union.
- DP: Probably so.

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<sup>68</sup> Presumably a highly profitable discovery.

<sup>69</sup> Used for structural purposes to stabilize mine shafts.

- RH: They, they keep bumping it up see? Alright, the consequences that, uh, if I wanted a miner to do something for me, I couldn't go out and get one here in all of the three towns, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: Because anyone that is any good at mining has gone somewhere else, see?
- DP: Oh, I see.
- RH: They're going somewhere else to make a living, but they're not making it in mining because it's the same all over.
- DP: Mmm. That's too bad.
- RH: Yeah.
- DP: It really is.
- RH: It's a sorrowful thing, see, that here's all the stuff lying around out here, see?
- DP: Yeah.
- RH: I could go out, I know, I could go out, all I need is a helper, and I'd go out for two hours and, uh, picking it up right off the ground, I could have a, a nice amount of money, see.
- DP: Isn't that something.
- RH: There was a time—one time, another fellow and I went out. When we were out, two and a half to three hours, it was—and, uh, we picked five units. A unit is twenty pounds, see? Well, right now it's selling for around eighty dollars, see?—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —Somewhere around there, I don't know just what the market price is now, see, but there was a time that it was only five dollars a unit, and—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —it went right on up. And it's gone up and kept going up, see?—
- DP: That's a lot of money.
- RH: —In fact, the market—if you, if you, uh, checked the market, why, you'd find out that it changes every day, see? It's like any other stock, market stocks.—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —Yeah. This, uh, oh, I saw a time it was only five dollars a unit,—
- DP: Well, that's something.
- RH: —Yeah. Five dollars a unit was nothing to compared to now, see,—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —but, at that time the school kids were rich. Yeah. They'd pick it up off the ground. They knew, they understand the weight, and they'd a feel of it, everything,—
- DP: Sure.
- RH: —they'd pick it up, and they'd sell it to these miners, huh,—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —and they'd make money. A lot of them made money.—
- DP: Sure, they would.
- RH: —Yeah. Now, there's another very interesting story about the "Pit Man," see, there's a name for you, see,—
- DP: (laughs)

- RH: —which you wanna know about, see? And his real name was Alexander, see? Now, to every miner down at Atolia and all the leasers<sup>70</sup> and everything—he was a dope, see? He didn't know anything, see,—
- DP: (gasps)
- RH: —Well, I ran all the assays and all of the material, and I knew what each man made, see? Alright, our dope—who was the "Pit Man," see, and his real name Alexander—was making, in 1957, he was ma—(laughs) making seventeen to eighteen thousand a year.—
- DP: How about that?
- RH: —Yeah. All alone. Now he didn't use modern tools like a compressor, see? Or any of the things that're real modern—he used hand tools,—
- DP: How about that?
- RH: —all hand-picked. Well, he was what we call a real high grader, see? In fact, when I told you in the beginning of this program that, uh, I bought high-grade from some of the miners—well, he was a man I bought high grade from, so that we could boost up this material we were going to ship over 60 percent, see?—
- DP: Mmm. Is that right?
- RH: —Now, we'd have these sacks, and they were all ready and sealed and everything. And there was hundreds of them, see. Alright, a lot of 'em, a hundred pounds in each one, see? Well, they let everybody know that they were gonna ship the next day, well, no one would show up, see,—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —'cause all those sacks weighed a hundred pounds a piece, and they had to load them on the trucks. (both laugh) Oh, it's all interesting.—
- DP: Oh, it sure is.
- RH: —The company knew, if they let it out they were gonna have a shipment, that they wouldn't get a soul on the premises. (both laugh) Well, they could do it in those days, because they were the only people that, uh, could handle the material. Right now, if you handle mine, that was very rich, see—I, I mean immensely rich—you couldn't go out and get men enough to handle, that knew what they were doing. That's another thing on your question that answers why you shouldn't do it.
- DP: Yes.
- RH: Very few of them understand or know. In fact, if you walked up to a miner on the street anywhere in these towns here and say, "What's calcium tungstate?" They wouldn't know, see?
- DP: Isn't that something.
- RH: Yeah, that's right. (pauses) Finished (unintelligible) (pause in recording) Uh, just say, a rough idea. I was down at "The Owl" one night, that's "Slim's" place that I was telling you about, see? And there is a woman there that fell off of her stool,—
- DP: (laughs)

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<sup>70</sup> Presumably meaning "lessees."

- RH: —and the fella next to me picked her up and took her out in his car and took her home, see?—
- DP: (laughs)
- RH: —Well, when he came back, he had two black eyes, see. Her husband was home, see? (both laugh) It'll give you an idea of some of these things, see? Now that's a mild one, see? (both laugh) Oh yeah, I mean—I don't know if I told you about the storm and "Slim" Riffle, the owner of "The Owl." See, there was a terrible storm outside and, uh, lightning and thunder, oh, a brutal thing, see? And everything was quiet after this big crash, and "Slim" says, "I guess I better shut that TV off," and he got about five feet in front of it, and the whole front blew out. See, lightning hit the antenna.—
- DP: Oh my goodness!
- RH: —Yeah, so, if he had touched that TV,—
- DP: —He would have,—
- RH: —yeah,—
- DP: —oh dear, the shock of his life, huh?

[01:00:04]

- RH: —yeah. He'd have, he'd have had it, see?
- DP: Oh my goodness.
- RH: Oh yeah, there is, oh, there is a, a lot of things that happened as I told you, uh, I, I don't care to tell them on here, because—
- DP: Mmm. Sure.
- RH: —I know a bunch of miners that would be awfully funny, see. (both laugh) Oh yeah, us, we had some accidents here due to mine, uh, leasers who failed to buy the proper materials like—(pauses) or stuff that holds the ceilings up.—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —See, the ceiling of a mine is called the backs, see. It's another expression, see? Alright, it takes material, and some of them are twelve by twelves. Well, the twelve by twelves cost a lot of money, see? Especially if you have to ship it a hundred miles see? Alright, this boy went in there, and a piece come out of the backs—which is the ceiling—and flattened him out till he was only about two inches high, see?
- DP: How horrible.
- RH: Yeah, see.
- DP: How horrible.
- RH: Well, that's, uh, now, now the government has come in, and the state has also come in, and, uh, they've put a lot of these under restriction due to improper mining, see?—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —So there'd be a big percentage down there that you couldn't mine, see, if you wanted to. You couldn't mine 'em legally, you could do it other ways, but not legally, see? You think we got it? (pause in recording)
- DP: (unintelligible) area. At one time were there just a lot more people here?—
- RH: —Oh yes, see. See, according to the, uh, estimate now, there's about three hundred people, but I would say that, uh, at, uh, one time there was thousands of them here,—
- DP: Right.



- RH: —uh, in other words, the—uh, everybody that was doing some mining had a partner, see? Or his helper was his partner, see. And there's quite a few houses around here, see. And, uh, oh, some of them has four or five people to, to a house because they didn't care much how they lived then, and a lot of them even slept on the floor. Just throw a mattress on the floor—
- DP: Is that right?
- RH: —and slept, see? And, uh, even now some of these houses, there, there is a shock if you go in. The way people live, see? In fact, these old buildings we didn't care to live in, that's why we live in this trailer, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —And I've had the trailer a long time, and I used it to go from one mine to another—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —during the employment, see. And, uh, it was decent living. It wasn't,—
- DP: Right.
- RH: —it was—started, uh, eight by thirty, and it's all dural metal,<sup>71</sup> see.—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —And, uh, right now—it, uh, was built in 1950, see. So, uh, it's, uh, what, twenty-six-years-old, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —Right now, it's in pretty good shape. The mere fact that it's out here in the desert, see,—
- DP: Yes, it is.
- RH: —and, uh, you can start, you can clean it up, you start at one end and just eliminate, see, and everything goes out the door, see?—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —Yeah, and, uh, far as moving, the reason I selected a trailer in the beginning was that, if you don't like your neighbors, you can—
- DP: (laughs)
- RH: —hook on and pull away. I've got that Chevy<sup>72</sup> out there, see.—
- DP: —(both laugh) You could just go.
- RH: —Oh, as the neighbors are terrible, see?—
- DP: Oh, they are?
- RH: —Yeah, that's uh, that's the thing.—
- DP: Oh that's,—
- RH: —We just got over a siege year where, uh, we had neighbors that, uh, pretty hard to live with,—
- DP: —that's too bad,—
- RH: —two or three hundred feet away from them.
- DP: —that's too bad.
- RH: Yeah. Now the people that are moved there is pretty nice, see. At least they mind their own business, see?

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<sup>71</sup> Duralumin, age-hardenable aluminium-copper alloy.

<sup>72</sup> Chevrolet, American automobile division of General Motors (GM).

- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: All, all these things that, uh, happened around here. Oh, there's troubles, there's, in the old days there was plenty of, uh, fighting, see.—
- DP: I'm sure.
- RH: —Of course we had, we never had any, uh, in—which you call a real constable, right, see,—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —see, or a sheriff or anything, but now, uh, you can pick up the phone and call Barstow<sup>73</sup> or any one of those towns, and they, they send a sheriff right over.—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —But local police or anything, we don't have here, see. And, uh, mere fact that it's government ground, uh, you're a squatter, see? Now, we have three buildings, and according to the law, we're allowed, when we buy this property, an acre and an eighth, see. So, we'll have three and three-quarters acres if they ever get to it, see.—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —In fact, for a little town of three hundred people, why, uh, it's before Congress now to settle it since it's been so long.—
- DP: Is that right?
- RH: —Yeah. And course, uh, I would rather lease it from the government. Let it be government land, see. Then everything there remains just as it is, see? But, if we buy it, the county's gonna come out and condemn all these buildings.—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —They're gonna say, "Each one has to have a cesspool."<sup>74</sup> Well, a cesspool, now, the cheapest one you can buy is about fifteen hundred dollars, see?—
- DP: My goodness.
- RH: —Right? Now I got one here that I built myself years ago but, uh, it's worked perfectly for, uh, oh, let's say fifteen years, see? But still, they won't pass that, they want me to put in a brand new one, see.—
- DP: How about that?
- RH: —It's ridiculous because I know how to treat 'em chemically, see,—
- DP: Mm-hmm. Sure.
- RH: —so that the thing will operate properly.—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —Now the average person around here don't, so they have to pay to have these people come and pump 'em out.—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —Now I don't know if this is alright on there, but,—
- DP: It's interesting, sure.
- RH: —yeah, see. But that's some of the things that, uh, that happens around here, see. Now, up on the hill, there's a party up here, a man and his wife and their son, see. And they have nothing. They have kerosene lamps. They have to haul their water see.

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<sup>73</sup> City in the southeastern part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>74</sup> Underground container for raw sewage and household wastewater.

- DP: He was a miner?
- RH: No,—
- DP: Oh.
- RH: —no, he works for the water company, see,—
- DP: Mmm.
- RH: —and, uh, very nice people they are. But, that's one way, see. Now, we've been here, uh, well, I, I, I guess I've lived in that one since the thirties, and I've never paid a cent rent.—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —We pay taxes, though. But the ridiculous part of it is, on the three buildings, the tax reads buildings and our land, and we don't own one square inch of land, see?
- DP: Isn't that, isn't that ridiculous? (both laugh)
- RH: Every one of them is that way, see,—
- DP: That's right.
- RH: —see?
- DP: So, you have enjoyed your work, haven't you?
- RH: Oh yeah.
- DP: All through the years, you wouldn't trade it for anything?
- RH: No, I wouldn't select any other profession. Uh, in fact, I quit all my flying to go into this—
- DP: Is that right?
- RH: —natural process, which is mining, see? And, uh, I would rather go and, uh, be a, an operating engineer on a mine than I would go back flying,—
- DP: Is that right?
- RH: —and I could go back flying, see. Although I'm pretty old now, I, uh, still maintain all my, uh—well, for instance, like this, see? I have perfect coordination, see,—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —and do all of those things that a, that a, a left-hand man can do or a right-hand man can do, see.—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —Fly left-handed or drive a car. Of course, anybody—they, they naturally come to that, driving left-handed and right-handed, but airplane's a different thing, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —'Cause the way they're built now—in the old days, the throttle was on the left side, but now their throttle is in the middle, see?
- DP: You flew during World War I, is that right?
- RH: Oh yeah, all through World War I,—
- DP: Okay.
- RH: —yeah. And, uh, course the aircraft, now, as you see, these up here. There's, uh, what they call a Fokker fighter<sup>75</sup> in World War I,—
- DP: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>75</sup> Fokker D.VII, German World War I fighter aircraft.

- RH: —see,—  
 DP: That's right.  
 RH: —had a BMW<sup>76</sup> engine in one. Well, BMW is still operating today—they make motorcycles—and, this was a six-cylinder overhead valve engine. Richthofen,<sup>77</sup> see, German ace, flew that type of airplane, see.—  
 DP: Mmm. Isn't that neat?  
 RH: —Yeah. And, uh, all of these different ones. There's, uh, the S.E.5.<sup>78</sup> And, uh, SPAD<sup>79</sup> and, uh, Jenny.<sup>80</sup> So, Jenny was a train—a training plane, JN4.<sup>81</sup> That had Curtiss<sup>82</sup> eight-cylinder engine. In fact, just like you're having an eight-cylinder engine in a car now. There's no difference in them. Only that these were overhead valves, and they were out in the open. Now, if they have overhead valves they're all covered with a sort of metal cover to keep the lubrication inside, stuff like that, see? But the old Curtiss engine in the Jenny—which was this one there by that old hangar, see,—  
 DP: Mm-hmm.  
 RH: —and there's here, on my seventy-fifth birthday,—  
 DP: (giggles) That's cute.  
 RH: —one of the boys drew a picture of a Jenny with me in it see?  
 DP: (laughs) Isn't that cute?

[01:10:06]

- RH: Yeah.  
 DP: So that is what you flew then?  
 RH: Yeah, I, I flew Jennys and, uh, S.E.5.s and, uh, SPADs and Nieuports,<sup>83</sup> and all those old timers, yeah.  
 DP: I do have a question. I was wondering, then, you did do some of your, um, mineral work in—during the war years?  
 RH: Oh yes,—  
 DP: —Okay,—  
 RH: —yes, (talking over each other) I was always interested in mineralogy.—  
 DP: —you flew, you flew, and then, yet, you did like work in a lab, too.—  
 RH: —Oh yes. The geology and the mineralogy was an interesting factor to me, see?—  
 DP: —And in the war, they really needed that, of course, too, didn't they?—  
 RH: —Well, yes,—  
 DP: —The information—

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<sup>76</sup> Abbreviation, meaning "Bayerische Motoren Werke."

<sup>77</sup> Manfred von Richthofen (1892–1918), German World War I fighter pilot.

<sup>78</sup> Royal Aircraft Factory S.E.5, British World War I biplane fighter aircraft.

<sup>79</sup> S[ociété] P[our L'] A[viation et ses] D[érivés] S.XIII, French World War I biplane fighter aircraft.

<sup>80</sup> Curtiss JB "Jenny," American series of biplane fighter aircraft (1915–1927).

<sup>81</sup> America's most famous World War I aircraft.

<sup>82</sup> Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company (1909–1929).

<sup>83</sup> French World War I fighter aircraft.

- RH: —in the war, uh, all of the strategic minerals. Ah yes, strategic mineral is those minerals that is not gold or silver or diamonds or anything like that. Something that you can use in the production of aircraft or tanks or something like that, see? Now, scheelite, which is a tungstic acid that we were talking about down here, is one of the prime things. Tungsten, see? In fact, uh, there's one thing that I missed, uh. With one outfit that I worked for down here. Uh, when we had, uh, a low steel market—in other words, the price of steel was very low. We used to take those six-hundred-pound, six-hundred-and-six-pound sacks that I was telling you about, and put 'em down the hole in number one mine on the six-hundred level, see? Then, when the market price of steel went up, they'd bring 'em out and sell 'em, see, —
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —which was a clever idea for those people,—
- DP: Yes, it was.
- RH: —because, uh, they were very rich, and they had plenty of money, and they, they would store this stuff down there, and they could bring it out when the market was right. Which is a crazy thing in a lot of people's ideas, but they didn't realize that those people had plenty of money down there. Well, the one outfit I worked for was three young fellas. And we, we took out—each one of 'em had a million dollars when they left there, see?—
- DP: My goodness.
- RH: —They took out three million dollars, see? With tax paid and everything, see?
- DP: Wow.
- RH: Sounds ridiculous, but—to look at that place down there now with all the buildings collapsed and everything's neglected, see?—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —In other words, the man that has it now could, uh, maintain a, a crew of say, oh, once a week for—every month, see, to keep that place in first-class shape, see? Get, uh—at least keep the roofs on the buildings instead of letting them blow off, see. 'Cause all of this stuff is very expensive, see,—
- DP: I see.
- RH: —especially when you have to haul it a hundred miles. San Bernardino, see? Los Angeles is ridiculous. They don't even think of going there, see? Bakersfield<sup>84</sup> and San Bernardino is the supply point, see, for this area.
- DP: So, the main product or mineral here is tungsten, right?
- RH: I would say "yes." I would forget all about the gold and silver, see. Because the Kelly Mine,<sup>85</sup> just a little south of here, (recorder noise) was operated years ago and, uh, they got shy on ore. Now when they started this mine, it was a gold mine, and after they got down a ways, it turned to a silver mine, which changed all of their e—equipment, see?
- DP: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>84</sup> City in the south-central part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>85</sup> A.k.a. California Rand Silver Mine, south of Red Mountain, established c. 1919.

- RH: Well, they worked the thing down to where it was, uh, what they thought was more ore, see? Well, they went out, here, to the northeast and they put a, you see, a big mining dump up here east of here?
- DP: Yes.
- RH: You see one out over here, and you see one back over here. Well, they were looking for an extension to the Kelly Mine, see? Well, there were no extension,—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —see, it wasn't possible, uh, to locate anything that was ore, see. Well, in my estimation, what really happened, they failed to get down more,—
- DP: Oh.
- RH: —see, mine, mine went down instead of elongating, yeah? That was, uh, what happened to that—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —beautiful silver that'd come out of there,—
- DP: Mm-hmm.
- RH: —see, plenty of it, see? In fact, I would say that the Kelly and the adjacent mines that were associated with the Kelly was built better than the Yellow Aster.—
- DP: Is that right?
- RH: —Yeah, being silver. And silver didn't have the price of gold then, just 'cause, in the old days gold was twenty dollars and sixty-seven cents an ounce. Then it went to thirty-five dollars. Yeah. Now it's ridiculous. It's controlled by the stock market.
- DP: Mm-hmm. (pauses) Well, this has been extremely interesting, and do you have anything else that you're just burning to tell about, or anything else you'd really like to share?
- RH: Oh, I don't know, I'd have to have some starter, see.
- DP: Yeah, I think that, um, we've covered most everything you wanted to and I wanted to, I think.
- RH: Yeah, well, here's the thing: if you, uh, uh, read this over and, uh, there's something else you want us to put in, why—(recording stops).

[01:15:59]

END OF INTERVIEW

END OF INTERVIEW

Cynthia Doan, Christine Hoo,  
Christopher Musnick, Christopher Quan, and Omer Zia (editors)

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February 16, 1976, unspecified location.

*Introduction*

The oral history transcribed below belongs to a collection held in CSUF's Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History (COPH), titled "Diversity Collections [Chinese American]." The interview with Ching Wah Lee was conducted by Julie Lam on February 16, 1976, at an unspecified location; however, based on its contents, it probably took place at Ching Wah Lee's gallery (a.k.a., "Museum of Chinese Art," 9 Old Chinatown Lane, San Francisco). It is 55 minutes and 53 seconds long, and it is archived as a digital recording/audio file at COPH (see "Copyright Advisory" below). The verbatim transcript edited here was prepared in the fall of 2025 by Cynthia Doan, Christine Hoo, Christopher Musnick, Christopher Quan, and Omer Zia.

In this interview, Ching Wah Lee (June 28, 1901–January 2, 1980) recounts his life in San Francisco's Chinatown from his early childhood until his mid-seventies. He recalls the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, which resulted in his family's temporary displacement from the Bay Area, as one of his earliest memories; he details his family's struggles, such as living in makeshift dwellings and working on a farm in Sacramento; and he discusses his educational journey, the schools he attended, and the various jobs he held while attending middle school, high school, and the University of California, Berkeley. Mr. Lee talks about the impact the Great Depression had on his life and the Chinese American community. He explains that the curios and art objects that passed through his father's firm sparked his interest in Chinese art and culture at a young age, which eventually led him to manage a tour agency and art gallery—initially in response to racist, anti-Chinese sentiments from American tour agencies. While describing his agency's tours, he demonstrates his knowledge of and deep appreciation for San Francisco's monuments, historic landmarks, and Chinese culture. He compares the differences between the older and newer generations of Chinese Americans and briefly talks about the 1911 Chinese revolution and the Tong Wars. He recalls his time working in Hollywood, specifically recruiting Chinese actors, as well as his role in the film *The Good Earth* (1937). He then addresses his motivations for creating the *Chinese Digest*, the work they did, and how it was funded. He explains that the publication's readership consisted

of later generations of Chinese Americans who could not read Chinese but were still interested in news about China, along with local news and accomplishments of the Chinese American community. He also details the struggles they faced financing the publication and how it ceased operations after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, because staff members and readers were drafted to fight in World War II. He briefly talks about his time in the military as an interpreter, before ending his interview by reflecting on the Americanization of Chinese Americans and the influence that Chinese culture and especially Chinese cuisine have had on American society.

This oral history should be of particular interest to sociologists, anthropologists, scholars of Asian American studies and Asian American history (especially those focusing on Chinese Americans), and historians of San Francisco. Those studying economic change, societal change, and the concept of "Americanization" on a generational level (particularly the preservation and acquisition of language and culture) should also find a good amount of material here for their research.

Only identifiable individuals, locations, and technical terms have been referenced in the footnotes, usually when they first appear.

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*The primary-source edition published below originated in the "History and Editing" course offered by CSUF's Department of History.*



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*Verbatim Transcript (O.H. 1472)*

LAWRENCE DE GRAAF CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: Ching Wah Lee [CL]

INTERVIEWER: Julie Lam [JL]

DATE: February 16, 1976

LOCATION: unspecified

PROJECT: Diversity Collections [Chinese American]

TRANSCRIBERS: Cynthia Doan, Christine Hoo, Christopher Musnicky,  
Christopher Quan, and Omer Zia

JL: (sounds of tape turned on and paper rustling) This is an interview with Mr. Ching Wah Lee,<sup>1</sup> former publisher and editor of the *Chinese Digest*,<sup>2</sup> for the Chinese American Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton. The date is (noise) February 16, 1976, and the time is 2:30 p.m. The interviewer is Julie Lam. (sounds of recorder turned off and back on, and paper rustling) Okay, Mr. Lee, can you tell me something about your family background and your childhood days?

CL: Well, first, I was born, uh, June 28, (sound of surface brushing against the microphone) 1901 in San Francisco.<sup>3</sup> Um, I, uh, am the second son in a family with six sons and three daughters.<sup>4</sup> Uh, one of my earliest recol—lections is the earthquake of 1906.<sup>5</sup> Uh, my, uh, father and mother started packing as much of the important things as possible, uh, ready to leave the house because, uh, it was shaking quite violently. But father insist on having some hot tea, uh, before we leave. Unfortunately, uh, the gas was just petering out on the stove. However, the gas light above, uh, is still burning quite vigorously. So we took the kettle with, uh, about two cups of water in it and held off the gas light until the water is, uh, nearly hot,—

JL: Mm-hmm.

CL: —then we all have a sip of tea before we leave. Um, a peculiar thing happened when we were at the doorway. All the neighbors were shouting, “Don’t get out into the street because there’s a wild bull running loose.”

JL: (chuckles)

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<sup>1</sup> (1901–1980), Asian American publisher, editor, art collector, and actor.

<sup>2</sup> Cultural magazine published in English (1935–1942) by and for Chinese Americans.

<sup>3</sup> Coastal city in the northern part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>4</sup> His five brothers were Dr. Chang W. Lee, Rev. Edward Lee, King W. Lee, Horace W. Lee, and Edward W. Lee; his three sisters were: Agnes Sue, Cora Chan, and Marion Eng; see [online](#).

<sup>5</sup> Great San Francisco Earthquake (magnitude 7.9; April 18, 1906).

- CL: Apparently, a man has, um, taken this cow to the butcher town for slaughter. But, uh, because, uh, of the earthquake, he, uh, apparently left the bull and ran for his own life,—
- JL: (chuckles)
- CL: —so the bull was running, uh, wild. Now this is not important, but among the Chinese there's a belief that when the end of the world come, uh, uh, a giant bull will be, uh, seen on Earth,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —so we consider it a very bad omen.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: But eventually, uh, ox ran off to another street, and we proceed on to the waterfront. Uh, we got to what is now, I guess, Fisherman's Wharf<sup>6</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and my father hired launch and took us to a friend of his over in Richmond<sup>7</sup> across the Bay.<sup>8</sup> This friend has a sh—shrimp fishery, uh, and was, uh, uh, operating a pretty large, uh, fishery at that time with several vessels and drying, uh, plot for the shrimp and so on.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, we stayed there a month or thereabout, but we know that, uh, we cannot stay there definitely. Um, so we, uh, my father thanked the owner who was very hospitable to us and we, uh, sailed to, uh, Stockton,<sup>9</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, then to Sacramento,<sup>10</sup> and then to a farm, uh, along the Sacramento River.<sup>11</sup> Uh, if—if my memory serve me correctly, the farm is called On Sun Yin.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: (noise) Um, there we had the—the run of, uh, the farm, and we, uh, we felt very happy with the produce coming in,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —um, cherries were being picked and potatoes being harvest, so—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —but, uh, eventually we make our way to, uh, Oakland.<sup>12</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And when we got there, there was no living quarters. The only, um, place we could find was a makeover<sup>13</sup> barn,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>6</sup> Neighborhood on the northern waterfront of San Francisco.

<sup>7</sup> City in the northern part of the U.S. state of California, northeast of San Francisco.

<sup>8</sup> Tidal estuary between San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland.

<sup>9</sup> City in the north-central part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>10</sup> Capital city in the north-central part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>11</sup> Largest river in California, flows into the San Francisco Bay.

<sup>12</sup> City in the northern part of the U.S. state of California, east of San Francisco.

<sup>13</sup> Presumably meaning "makeshift."

- CL: —so, we stayed there for a couple weeks, uh, during which my sister, the oldest in the family, was born.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, humorously, uh, when we grew up, we called her “Lady Jesus Christ.”
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Because she was born in a stable.
- JL: (laughs)
- CL: Uh, my father, uh, who was a herbalist,<sup>14</sup> has many client in Oakland because, um, many of the Chinese were sick and need his help.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, then, uh, eventually, we moved back to San Francisco.
- JL: Mm-hmm. When was that when you moved back to San Francisco?
- CL: Uh, latter part of 1907.
- JL: Uh-huh. Was, um, Chinatown<sup>15</sup> much changed after the fire<sup>16</sup> in 1906?
- CL: I don’t know, because I was too young to remember what old Chinatown looked like.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: But, uh, they had just built some, uh, uh, very, uh, temporary dwellings,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and, uh, we stayed there until more permanent dwelling were made.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: I remember this temporary dwell—ing has a tin roof, and it leaked constantly.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: But we were glad to, uh, have a place to live anyhow.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And, uh, we, we called the Red Cross,<sup>17</sup> uh, offered to help.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And all the Chinese were interviewed, and they were asked what they would like to have.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And my mother says, “Just one thing, a sewing machine.”
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, she was given a white sewing machine, and she made clothes for all of us.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Okay, can you tell me something about your edu—back—uh—cation background and some of your work experiences?
- CL: Well, we went to the, uh—first of all, to, uh, a school run by the Baptists.<sup>18</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>14</sup> Historically significant occupation in Chinese culture, linked to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), using plants and herbs for medicinal purposes.

<sup>15</sup> Neighborhood in San Francisco, enclave of Chinese immigrants (1850s–present).

<sup>16</sup> Following the Great San Francisco Earthquake (April 18, 1906).

<sup>17</sup> American Red Cross, humanitarian organization (1881–present).

<sup>18</sup> Protestant Christian denomination, originated in the sixteenth century.

- CL: Then we, um, went to a grammar school<sup>19</sup> run by the city, and at that time it's called the Oriental Public School.<sup>20</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, the building was a pretty large one, but still, it's, uh, it's a temporary wooden, uh, building.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Um—and it's, uh, quite drafty and chilly in the winter. But, uh, we didn't think anything of it at that time. That was on Clay Street,<sup>21</sup> uh, corner Joice Street<sup>22</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —where the YWCA<sup>23</sup> stands today.<sup>24</sup>
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: Then in 1915, I believe, uh, a permanent, uh, building was, uh, uh, constructed in Chinatown, and we moved there. And, uh, it's still known as the Oriental Public School but the, uh, Native Sons organization,<sup>25</sup> known as "Tongmenghui"<sup>26</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —petitioned the, uh, city supervisor to give us a more Occidental name.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And so it was changed to the Commodore Stockton School,<sup>27</sup>—
- JL: Oh, so that's the one—
- CL: —yeah, and it's still standing on the same site today, except the annex was built across the street.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: And another annex, uh, behind the building reaching into, uh, Clay Street.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Okay, so how many years did you study there?
- CL: We studied until we reached the eighth grade and—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —graduated. Then we went, uh, to high school.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: Uh, my first intention was to register at the lower high school—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —because, uh, it's noted for, uh, its scholastic work.
- JL: Mmm.

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<sup>19</sup> Elementary school or primary school.

<sup>20</sup> Founded 1859 as a segregated school for Chinese (and later, Korean and Japanese) children, destroyed in 1906, rebuilt 1915, named Commodore Stockton School (1924–1998), now Gordon J. Lau Elementary School (950 Clay Street).

<sup>21</sup> Major (East-West) street through Chinatown.

<sup>22</sup> Small (North-South) street in Chinatown.

<sup>23</sup> Young Women's Christian Association (1855–present).

<sup>24</sup> (965 Clay Street), now Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) Museum.

<sup>25</sup> Native Sons of the Golden State (1895–1915), now Chinese American Citizens Alliance.

<sup>26</sup> Revolutionary alliance (1905–1912) to overthrow China's Qing dynasty.

<sup>27</sup> See above, note 20.

- CL: But, uh, ninety percent of our friend were enrolled at the Polytechnic High School.<sup>28</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So I changed my mind and joined the crowd instead.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: I have no regret because it does teach many crafts—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —which, uh, uh, helped a lot, of course.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, I took, uh, woodwork, uh, uh, electricity, uh, practical, um, physics, and so on.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Okay, and then, what was the first job?
- CL: Well, even when I was going to the, uh, seventh grade, uh—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —I went out and got a job as a, uh, house boy—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —helping, uh, the head of the family, uh, in the kitchen and doing all the janitorial work.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, I walk about a mile each day to, uh, reach there and, uh, return to Chinatown to enroll—uh, to take part in the grammar scho—school.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, later on, when I was in high school, then I slip out.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Um, first as, uh, a chef, and then, uh, I had two jobs. Uh, one being the, uh, volunteer worker, uh, at the YMCA,<sup>29</sup> but also, uh, was paid for taking, uh, care of the gymnasium.
- JL: Mm-hmm.

[00:10:06]

- CL: And I gave, uh, lessons in, uh, wrestling and acrobatics.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Then, when the YMCA have a permanent building constructed on Sacramento Street,<sup>30</sup> where it stand now,<sup>31</sup> um, with this, uh, gymnasium, uh, swimming pool, and dormitory, I was, uh, elevated to boy secretary. (chuckles)
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And, uh, of course, at that time, I was also, um, at that time, was enrolled at the university.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, uh, I would, uh, commute. Uh, in those day, there was no Bay Bridge<sup>32</sup>—

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<sup>28</sup> (1884–1973; since 1915 located at 701 Frederick Street).

<sup>29</sup> Young Men's Christian Association (1844–present).

<sup>30</sup> Major (East-West) street through Chinatown.

<sup>31</sup> (855 Sacramento Street), current building dates from 1926.

<sup>32</sup> San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, constructed 1933–1936.

- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —but, uh, we took the ferry.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And then the train to reach, uh, the campus.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: But, uh—
- JL: —So, is that Berkeley?<sup>33</sup>—
- CL: —Yeah, Berkeley.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: And, uh, I was very lucky be—because being boy secretary, I have, um, a salary of two hundred dollars a month—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —which is—
- JL: —That's pretty good at that time. (speaking over each other)—
- CL: —Yeah,—
- JL: —Mm-hmm.—
- CL: —in those day, yes. Um, then, uh, due to a change in policy, I left the, the YMCA, uh, chiefly because they, uh, were antagonistic to my running a Boy Scout<sup>34</sup> troop at the same time.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And although the Boy Scout work is volunteer work, still, the Y<sup>35</sup> felt that, uh, it's in conflict with their boys' work.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, uh, and also, at that time, it was at the height of the Depression,<sup>36</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —so they were only too glad to let me go and save (chuckles) themselves a, a salary.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: So, uh, in, uh, an emergency, I worked as a cook—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —for one of the sorority.<sup>37</sup>
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: It's one of big sorority, Tri Delta,<sup>38</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and the girls, uh, were about twenty-four or five in number.
- JL: Mm-hmm. What were you studying at Berkeley then?
- CL: Uh—Anthropology, but at—in the beginning, I didn't know what I wanted. I just, uh, take general courses only.

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<sup>33</sup> University of California, Berkeley (1868–present).

<sup>34</sup> Boy Scouts of America (1910–present; a.k.a. Scouting America since 2024).

<sup>35</sup> Acronym for “YMCA” (Young Men’s Christian Association).

<sup>36</sup> Great Depression (1929–1939), worldwide economic downturn.

<sup>37</sup> Social organization for women at colleges and universities.

<sup>38</sup> Delta Delta Delta (ΔΔΔ), sorority (1888–present).

- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: I also audit many classes, which, uh, I got no credit for.
- JL: Mm-hmm. How did you get interested in, you know, all this Chinese art and culture?
- CL: Well, my father, besides being an herbalist, uh, had partnership in a firm, Tai Chong Company,<sup>39</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —which import, uh, curios and art objects.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, uh, naturally, I took great interest in the things that come through.
- JL: Mm-hmm. So, that was the beginning, when you started—
- CL: Yeah.
- JL: Uh, have you ever been outside of United States?
- CL: Uh, yes, I have, uh, uh, been to, uh, Formosa,<sup>40</sup> Hong Kong,<sup>41</sup> uh, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, India, and then around the world, back to, uh, Boston.<sup>42</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And then Florida<sup>43</sup> and back to, (chuckles) to California.<sup>44</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: On the way back, I tried to visit the pyramids—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —in, uh, Mexico, but I was taken sick, so—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —the trip was called off prematurely.
- JL: Uh-huh. What was that trip for? Was it on your own? Was it a special—
- CL: Uh, partly on my own, partly I have a, uh, partner who wanted to buy some art objects in the Far East,<sup>45</sup> so, uh, I went, uh, with her in this buying trip.
- JL: I see. Just now, uh, you were talking about the Depression. Uh, were the Chinese very much affected by the Depression?
- CL: Yes, they were greatly affected, uh, but they managed, uh, better than most other, I think, because our economy was simple, and the jobs are the kind that, uh, American don't want, even during the Depression.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: They serve as domestics and, uh, janitor, things of that sort. Not that they wouldn't like to get it, but they were already established as cooks and janitors, and—
- JL: Mm-hmm.

---

<sup>39</sup> Tai Chong & Co. Oriental Goods, established in the early twentieth century (743 Jackson Street). See, for example, *Polk's Crocker-Langley San Francisco City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1930), 1393, [online](#).

<sup>40</sup> Former name of Taiwan.

<sup>41</sup> Coastal city and special administrative region in China, former British Crown colony (1841–1982) and dependent territory (1983–1997).

<sup>42</sup> Capital city on the Atlantic coast of the U.S. state of Massachusetts.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. state on the East Coast.

<sup>44</sup> U.S. state on the West Coast.

<sup>45</sup> Historical term for the easternmost portion of the Asian continent.

- CL: —they managed to retain their job. But I recall, uh, in my Boy Scout troop, uh, ninety percent of the boys were trying to get a school job—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —without any success.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, uh, on one occasion, I, uh, organized a restaurant and, uh, put the boys to work as waiters and, uh—
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: —assistant cook and so forth.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: Uh, but we just barely paid, just managed to pay the rent—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —so, we discontinued that.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Uh, did you have, uh, sort of a tour agency, something like that, too?
- CL: Uh, when I was in high school, I had already started to take tour, free of charge.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: The reason we do that is because we were very *incensed*—
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: —by the commercial guides—
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: —who misrepresent us.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: They're, uh, ne'er-do-well<sup>46</sup> Americans who just want to find a quick way to make money.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So they used their vivid imagination—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and painted us as a weird race, either bloodthirsty or—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —opium-smoking,<sup>47</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —things like that. And, so, uh, I got a group of Boy Scouts together—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and put out a—post a free tour—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, at such and such an hour.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Then, the demand was so great that, uh, I finally had to charge.
- JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>46</sup> Lazy, irresponsible, good-for-nothing.

<sup>47</sup> The Chinese became associated with smoking opium primarily due to the British opium trade with China (1770s–1917), leading to widespread addiction in China and later to the establishment of opium dens in the West run by Chinese immigrants.



- CL: And at first, uh, we charge just a nominal sum because it didn't cost us anything.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: But then, when we have to maintain a gallery and so forth, then we do have to—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —charge. But still, we, uh, take our tour for less than half, uh, a—a similar tour would cost commercial—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —even to this day,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —it is still, uh, about half of what any other would charge.  
 JL: Mm-hmm. What did you show them, you know, on the tour?  
 CL: Well, at present, uh, I take care of only school, uh, students.  
 JL: Uh-huh.  
 CL: Uh, prior to that, we, uh, worked with the Gray Line<sup>48</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, Cook's Tour,<sup>49</sup> American Express,<sup>50</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and hotels.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: And they charge a full price, but we only charge those company, uh, one fifth.  
 JL: Uh-huh.  
 CL: So that they—of course, they have greater expenses—  
 JL: Uh-huh.  
 CL: —so that's only natural. And, uh, we, uh, were very successful in that regard—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, the Gray Line, uh, having me till I was past sixty-five.  
 JL: Uh-huh.  
 CL: But now, uh, I, uh, take care only of, uh, school children—  
 JL: Mmm.  
 CL: —or private clubs.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: And uh, we charge, uh, only fifty cents per person—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and we arrange lunch for them at cost, whatever the restaurant charge.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: But what we do, we meet at Portsmouth Square<sup>51</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and we started out, uh, inspecting historical landmarks,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>48</sup> U.S.-based sightseeing company (1910–present).

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Cook (& Son), British travel company (1841–2001).

<sup>50</sup> (1850–present; a.k.a. AMEX), first a U.S.-based freight forwarding company, added a travel division in 1915.

<sup>51</sup> First park in San Francisco (1833–present) in Chinatown.

- CL: —like where the American flag was first raised,<sup>52</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —um, where the vigilante, uh, have their trials and do the hanging,<sup>53</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, the site of the first, uh, public school in our state,<sup>54</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, the place where gold—the discovery of gold, was announced<sup>55</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —by Mr. Brannan,<sup>56</sup> a Mormon,<sup>57</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and, uh, we showed them the monument to Robert Louis Stevenson.<sup>58</sup>  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Of course, Stevenson wrote his famous story, *Treasure Island*,<sup>59</sup> only six blocks south of the square.<sup>60</sup>  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Then we, uh, visit a produce market,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and we, uh, pointed out a dozen vegetables or so, which were transplanted from China,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —now grown here.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: And sometime, uh, if it's an older group, we suggest how they can cook them.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Uh, then, we walk along Grant Avenue,<sup>61</sup> the main street,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —for one block, just to study street signs and symbols.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: And we point out the dragon,<sup>62</sup> the phoenix,<sup>63</sup> and the bamboo,<sup>64</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, shaped lampposts, things of that sort.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>52</sup> Portsmouth Square (1846) by Commander John B. Montgomery of the *USS Portsmouth*.

<sup>53</sup> Portsmouth Square (1851) by the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance.

<sup>54</sup> Portsmouth Square (1848).

<sup>55</sup> Portsmouth Square (1848).

<sup>56</sup> Samuel Brannan (1819–1889), American settler, businessman, and journalist.

<sup>57</sup> Member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1830–present).

<sup>58</sup> Portsmouth Square (1897), memorializing Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894), Scottish author.

<sup>59</sup> (1883), historical adventure novel.

<sup>60</sup> Portsmouth Square. Stevenson visited the city but wrote the novel in Scotland.

<sup>61</sup> Major (North-South) street through Chinatown.

<sup>62</sup> Associated with prosperity, protection, and good health by the Chinese.

<sup>63</sup> Associated with virtue, harmony, and good fortune by the Chinese.

<sup>64</sup> Associated with virtue, resilience, and integrity by the Chinese.

- CL: We also analyze a Chinese-style building,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, to point out the salient facts of architectural design—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —in the Far East.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Then, we visit a Buddhist<sup>65</sup> temple,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and we demonstrate the rituals used in the worship of the Buddha.<sup>66</sup>  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Also, a short description of the teaching of Confucius.<sup>67</sup>  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: And we mention Daoism<sup>68</sup> as being a backward religion,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —although, it has a lofty beginning.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.

[00:20:09]

- CL: Then we visit three industries.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Uh, we take them to a fortune cookie<sup>69</sup> factory, where they can see how they're made,—  
 JL: Uh-huh.  
 CL: —and the front of a newspaper plant,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and we show them how they read the newspaper vertically instead of horizontally.<sup>70</sup>  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: And we give a five-minute chalk talk<sup>71</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —on the writing of the ideographs,<sup>72</sup>—  
 JL: Mmm.  
 CL: —starting with very primitive, uh, pre-Song,<sup>73</sup> uh, ideographs to the modern—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>65</sup> Ancient Indian wisdom tradition, based on the teachings of the Buddha.

<sup>66</sup> Siddhartha Gautama (6th or 5th century BCE), founder of Buddhism.

<sup>67</sup> (c. 551–c. 478 BCE), Chinese philosopher, inspired Confucianism.

<sup>68</sup> Ancient Chinese wisdom tradition, emphasizes living in harmony with the “Dao.”

<sup>69</sup> Folded cookie containing a slip of paper with a prediction written on it, popularized by Chinese American restaurants, with possible roots in nineteenth-century Japan.

<sup>70</sup> Chinese is traditionally written in columns (top to bottom, and right to left).

<sup>71</sup> Talk in which the speaker uses a blackboard and chalk.

<sup>72</sup> Symbols representing abstracts, ideas, and objects.

<sup>73</sup> Before the Chinese Song dynasty (960–1279 CE).

- CL: —characters.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, but it's only a five-minute talk, so it has to be very *sketchy*.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, then we visit this alley, which was once a notorious district,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, and it's, for a while, it's named Cameron's Alley,<sup>74</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —because the late Donaldina Cameron,<sup>75</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —a Presbyterian<sup>76</sup> reformer, used to send the police here to clean up this alley.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, then we visit this gallery,<sup>77</sup> which, uh, believe it or not, has three million dollars of rare jade,<sup>78</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —Ming Dynasty<sup>79</sup> porcelain,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —old brocades, uh,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —bronze casting, and sculpture.
- JL: Mm-hmm. How long have you had this gallery here?
- CL: Since, uh, 1934.
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: And, uh, when we first moved in here, the rent was only sixty dollars.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: Today, we pay a hundred—uh, we pay eleven-hundred dollars a month.
- JL: My goodness.
- CL: Uh, we talk about bronze earlier.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Here's a bronze dragon, which may be of interest.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, there are only two such dragon in the whole world.
- JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>74</sup> Old Chinatown Lane (a.k.a. Donaldina Cameron Alley), small (North-South) alley in Chinatown, north of Washington Street and south of Jackson Street, between Stockton Street (west) and Ross Alley (east).

<sup>75</sup> (1869–1968), New Zealand-born American missionary and social reformer who ran a home for Chinese immigrant women and girls in San Francisco (1895–1934) and rescued many from human trafficking.

<sup>76</sup> Protestant Christian denomination, originated in the sixteenth century.

<sup>77</sup> Ching Wah Lee's gallery (a.k.a., "Museum of Chinese Art," 9 Old Chinatown Lane).

<sup>78</sup> Decorative rock used for jewelry and ornaments.

<sup>79</sup> Chinese Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

- CL: It was order-made by the Emperor Meiji<sup>80</sup> of Japan to celebrate the Year of the Dragon,<sup>81</sup>—
- JL: I see.
- CL: —but the bronze caster made *two* because they had to make more for, uh, the different—different scales and—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —claws of the dragon. There were—there are 4,500 movable pieces of bronze,—
- JL: Ah.
- CL: —and this bronze is *Sakatu* bronze.<sup>82</sup> It's a warm-colored bronze. Uh, you can compare it with, uh, Dancing Shiva<sup>83</sup> on the left. The bronze of that dancing figure is of just, uh, uh, copper and tin—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and perhaps some impurities,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —but this *Sakatu* bronze is copper, tin, plus gold and silver,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and so this has, uh, this dragon has a very warm color. It's almost silvery, and all the parts are movable, (clinking of objects being moved)—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and the tail is almost like it's alive. (continued clinking noise)
- JL: Mm-hmm. So you must have paid a handsome price to get all these things in here.
- CL: Yes, uh, we have, uh, earliest, uh, pottery, uh, Neolithic time,<sup>84</sup> clear down to the end of the nineteenth century.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So we have a very representative collection of pottery, porcelain, stoneware, and fine porcelain.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Have you ever showed any of these items outside of, uh, San Francisco, outside of California?
- CL: Yes, we have shown some in, uh, Portland,<sup>85</sup> Oregon,<sup>86</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, over in Berkeley.<sup>87</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —Uh, we've shown, uh, them, uh, in San Jose<sup>88</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>80</sup> (1852–1912, r. 1867–1912).

<sup>81</sup> Part of the twelve-year Chinese zodiac cycle.

<sup>82</sup> Presumably shakudō bronze, a unique gold-copper Japanese billon (alloy).

<sup>83</sup> Nataraja, depiction of the Hindu deity Shiva as the divine cosmic dancer.

<sup>84</sup> New Stone Age (c. 10,000–c. 2,000 BCE).

<sup>85</sup> City in the west-central part of the U.S. state of Oregon.

<sup>86</sup> U.S. state on the West Coast.

<sup>87</sup> City in the northern part of the U.S. state of California, northeast of San Francisco.

<sup>88</sup> City in the northern part of the U.S. state of California, southeast of San Francisco.

- CL: —and, uh, one of the colleges south of L.A.,<sup>89</sup> I think, uh—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —not Pomona,<sup>90</sup> but one sister college,<sup>91</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, I forgot the name. (chuckles)
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And also at the Los Angeles County Museum.<sup>92</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm. Are any of these items, you know, uh, for sale or just for display?
- CL: They're not for sale.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Okay, um—what are your feelings as a Chinese American?
- CL: Well, uh, I think we have made big progress, although not as much progress as the Negroes,<sup>93</sup> but, uh, let's make a comparison.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: During World War I,<sup>94</sup> I think there were only two, uh, Chinese, uh, who were officers in the armed force.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: In the last war, uh, during the, uh, Korean conflict,<sup>95</sup> we have, uh, hundreds of officers.
- JL: Mm-hmm. I see. Uh, what kind of opportunities were there for Chinese Americans, say, in the—you know—
- CL: —In the early days—(speaking over each other)
- JL: —thirties to—
- CL: —we had no opportunity at all.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: You could be well-educated and could be *jobless*.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, the doors for the white-collar<sup>96</sup> work are completely close to us—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —with maybe one or two exception. That stem from the early days of the anti-Chinese agitation<sup>97</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —when, uh, this, uh, orator, Kearney<sup>98</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>89</sup> Los Angeles, city in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>90</sup> Pomona College (1887–present) in Claremont, California.

<sup>91</sup> Presumably Scripps College, Claremont McKenna College, Harvey Mudd College, or Pitzer College.

<sup>92</sup> Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA; 1961–present).

<sup>93</sup> Now considered unacceptable, this term was still widely used in 1976.

<sup>94</sup> (1914–1918).

<sup>95</sup> Korean War (1950–1953).

<sup>96</sup> Work in an office or similar setting.

<sup>97</sup> Hostility toward immigrants in the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including violence and passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882).

<sup>98</sup> Denis Kearney (c. 1840s–1907), Irish-born American labor leader and anti-Chinese agitator in California.

- CL: —uh, would, uh, get a crowd at sandlots<sup>99</sup> and shouted that the Chinese must go.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Now, um, in the early days, the Chinese started many factories,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —even after the fire, there were still some that I recall seeing—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —were shoe factories, cigar-making factory, broom factory, uh, trunk and suitcase-making factory, so on,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —but the—the unions<sup>100</sup> started making it impossible for the Chinese to sell these outside of Chinatown.—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —They do not have the union label,<sup>101</sup> and they are—therefore, uh, badly handicapped,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —so, one by one, these, uh, important business fold,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and the Chinese were left to their own wits. Uh, they, uh, run restaurants and laundries,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, they worked in the, uh, farms and orchards.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, and the *best* of the—the most *able* Chinese return to China,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —that is the, I think, the most unfortunate—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —part of the, um, anti-Chinese agitation,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —because what they did is to make the, uh, more capable Chinese realize that there's no opportunity here,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and so they returned to the Orient,<sup>102</sup>—
- JL: I see.
- CL: —leaving mostly working people, you see,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —industrious, hard-working, but perhaps, uh, lacking in some of the initiatives of, uh, of the entrepreneurs.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Uh, were there any conflicts in values and ideologies with older generation?

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<sup>99</sup> Vacant lot in front of San Francisco City Hall, gathering place for anti-Chinese labor protests (1877–1880).

<sup>100</sup> Presumably California's "Anti-Chinese Union"(1876) and others.

<sup>101</sup> Symbols printed on goods, marking them as made by unionized labor.

<sup>102</sup> East Asia.

- CL: You mean—  
 JL: —As a Chinese American. (speaking over each other)—  
 CL: —between the older and the new? Right.—  
 JL: —Uh-huh.  
 CL: Oh yes, there were many, but they were gradually dissolved.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Uh, there is, uh, the, uh, regret that the Chinese are not keeping up with the language,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, that they no longer follow the older religion,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and not so much the religion, but the, uh, moralistic teaching of Confucius.—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —And the older generations,—  
 JL: Mmm.  
 CL: —and they, uh, to some extent, uh, opposed the, uh, Christian churches,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —although there were no act of intolerance that I ever witnessed.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Uh, and they, uh, uh, do not approve of, uh, dancing, for example.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: But gradually, these are dissolved.  
 JL: Mm-hmm. Okay, what was the general social condition in Chinatown like during the Depression period?  
 CL: What was the general—  
 JL: —social condition.  
 CL: Oh. Uh, we were slightly more ingrown. Uh, we had no reason to go outside of Chinatown, so we develop many social clubs, and, uh, we, uh, arrange for our own outing, picnics,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and we have, uh, annual banquets, uh, for different clubs and so forth.  
 JL: Mm-hmm. Uh, did Chinatown get any help from the state or the federal agencies at all?  
 CL: Practically not.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: There were some, but very little.  
 JL: Mm-hmm. Were there any, um, political factions existing in Chinatown then?  
 CL: Well, at the time of the revolution,<sup>103</sup> uh, 19—say, 1910 or 1912,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, there was the conflict between the pro-monarchists and the, uh, Republicans.<sup>104</sup>  
 JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>103</sup> (1911–1912), ended China's imperial system, established the Republic of China.

<sup>104</sup> Those seeking to establish a republic and end imperial rule.



- CL: Uh, but the, uh, pro-monarchists were in the minority—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —because after all, the monarchy, uh, are composed of Manchus,<sup>105</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —an alien group. Uh, but still, I recall there was some conflict. There were many who refused to cut off their queues,<sup>106</sup> for example.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Uh, I think *way* after the revolution,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, but I think there's the matter of inertia.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.

[00:30:09]

- CL: Uh, the, uh, growth of, uh, participation in, um, American, uh, political parties, uh, has a rather slow start,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —because they usually know us anyhow.  
 JL: Mmm.  
 CL: Um, we would, uh, send petition to city hall,<sup>107</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and they would perhaps thank the delegate profusely, but nothing is done.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Uh, and nationally, uh, we have a, uh, Native Sons organization.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Uh, we send delegate to, uh, Washington, D.C.,<sup>108</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —urging for lifting of some of the restrictions.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Uh, the Chinese immigrant were treated very poorly,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, stuck away in Angel Island<sup>109</sup> for many months,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and the majority of them, uh, who didn't qualify were sent back—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —to China, so there's a great deal of bitterness.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Furthermore, there is a disproportionate amount of male versus female,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.

---

<sup>105</sup> Ethnic minority in China from the region of Manchuria.

<sup>106</sup> Manchu hairstyle enforced during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912).

<sup>107</sup> Metonymy for San Francisco's municipal government.

<sup>108</sup> Capital city of the United States in the District of Columbia.

<sup>109</sup> U.S. immigration station (1910–1940) in San Francisco Bay.

- CL: —uh, in California,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, and this large popu—uh, population of bachelors, uh, didn't help, uh, the tranquility of Chinatown very much.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: I think that more than anything else resulted in the Tong War,<sup>110</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —because, uh, uh, without a social life, uh, worth anything, uh, they turn to gambling,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —narcotic,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and prostitution,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and these require, uh, armed men to back up their territories,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and these are the Tong men.<sup>111</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: I have witnessed perhaps the last Tong War in Chinatown.
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: Well, maybe not the last, one of the last.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: It was at the corner of Stockton and Washington.<sup>112</sup>
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, I was looking out the window and saw the two group line up across the street,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —shooting at each other.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: No one was killed, but I think two were, uh, injured, one lying—
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: —on the street, unable to move.
- JL: Mm-hmm. What was the cause of that?
- CL: I have forgotten. (chuckles)
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: It's typically a matter of temperament, more than the two assessing each other.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Um, I understand that you were involved in several Hollywood<sup>113</sup> productions, too.
- CL: Yes, I have always enjoyed acting.

---

<sup>110</sup> (1800s–1930s), violent conflicts between rival Chinese immigrant factions in major U.S. Chinatowns, especially in San Francisco.

<sup>111</sup> Members of various Chinese immigrant factions.

<sup>112</sup> Major intersection of Stockton Street (North-South) and Washington Street (East-West) in Chinatown.

<sup>113</sup> Metonymy for the American film industry.

- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: So when, uh, the late Irving Thalberg,<sup>114</sup> um, one of most important producer of our time, uh, uh, wanted to make *The Good Earth*,<sup>115</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —they, uh, were unable to get enough, uh, talented actors in Hollywood.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, so I was asked to comb the Chinatowns<sup>116</sup> from Seattle<sup>117</sup> down—
- JL: (chuckles)
- CL: —to San Diego,<sup>118</sup>—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —looking for actors or actresses.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Now, uh, unlike the American, the Chinese do not, uh, seems eager to participate.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, usually when you put a notice in an American paper and say there's a tryout,<sup>119</sup> there will be, uh, people lined up around the block.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: But, uh, if you put a notice in a Chinese paper about a tryout, you're lucky if you have two or three that go.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, we had to interview them—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —to try to find more.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And it's strange to say it's not easy to find,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —because they, uh, if they look the part, uh, they don't speak English,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and if they speak English, they can't act,—
- JL: Mm-hmm. (chuckles)
- CL: —or if they can act, they don't want to act.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: So, uh, the net result is we sent only half a dozen—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —candidates down to Hollywood for the screen test.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Were they used, then, in the film?

---

<sup>114</sup> (1899–1936), American film producer (a.k.a. "The Boy Wonder").

<sup>115</sup> (1937), film about Chinese farmers struggling to survive in China, based on Pearl S. Buck's eponymous novel (1931).

<sup>116</sup> Enclaves of Chinese immigrants.

<sup>117</sup> Coastal city in the northwestern part of the U.S. state of Washington.

<sup>118</sup> Coastal city in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>119</sup> Audition.

- CL: Were they what?
- JL: Were they—
- CL: Yes, uh, uh, about two or three. In fact, three were used.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: And, uh, still, there weren't enough, so, uh, in the meantime, I was, uh, uh, more or less coaching, uh, Paul Muni<sup>120</sup> to, uh, put in a slight Chinese accent—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —to his utterances.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And also to suggest certain behavioral patterns.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And, uh, he was the one that urged me to take a screen test.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, uh, fortunately, I passed.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: A funny thing happened in Hollywood. Uh, I was dressed up as a typical farmer friend<sup>121</sup> of Paul Muni,—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —uh, Wang Lung.<sup>122</sup> And, uh, every time I passed Luise Rainer,<sup>123</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —she and her brother<sup>124</sup> would, uh, gawk at me. And I didn't know why.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: You see, Luise Rainer is from Vienna<sup>125</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and speaks very little, uh, uh, English.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, uh, she felt very lonely,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and the studio has, uh, hired her brother to keep her company.
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: And so the two always whisper whenever I walk by.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: But after I become friends with them—two of them, they told me why.
- JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>120</sup> (1895–1967), American stage and film actor.

<sup>121</sup> Ching, supporting character in *The Good Earth*, played by Ching Wah Lee.

<sup>122</sup> Main character in *The Good Earth*, played by Paul Muni.

<sup>123</sup> (1910–2014), German-born film actress, played Wang Lung's wife, O-Lan, in *The Good Earth*.

<sup>124</sup> Presumably her younger brother, Robert Fritz Rainer (1915–2008), who worked in San Francisco and later served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Her older brother, Rudolf Hans Rainer (1909–1997), was working on the East Coast.

<sup>125</sup> Capital city of Austria. In fact, Luise Rainer was born in Düsseldorf (Germany) and raised in Hamburg and Vienna prior to moving to Hollywood in 1935.

- CL: They said I was the splitting [*sic*] image of their father.<sup>126</sup>
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: And I said, "I'm not too surprised because, uh, Luise Rainer, when you dress up as a, as a Chinese lady, you look like my mother."
- JL: Oh! (laughs)
- CL: So, that was a strange reason,—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —a family resemblance.
- JL: Mm-hmm. That's interesting. Um, how did you get involved in the *Chinese Digest*?
- CL: Well, it was an experiment. Uh, there was, uh, Tommy Chinn<sup>127</sup> and, uh, a Mr. William Hoy,<sup>128</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and I, and we often talked about the possibility of having a publication in English because there's none, uh, in English at that time.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, we, uh, organize the *Chinese Digest*.
- JL: Mm-hmm. What were the goals of the *Chinese Digest*?
- CL: Uh, to record interesting event in Chinatown,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, and to, if possible, name some of the achievements of the American Chinese,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and, uh, print important facts or happenings in China that may be of interest to the second or third or fourth-generation Chinese here.
- JL: Mm-hmm. So, who were the main audience of the *Chinese Digest*?
- CL: I would say mostly A—American-born Chinese.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Do you have any idea how many American-born Chinese there were then in San Francisco?
- CL: No, uh, I don't think there's any accurate survey,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —but, say, around the time of the *Chinese Digest*, uh, 1933 or -4, uh, perhaps *half* of the Chinese are American-born.
- JL: Mm-hmm. As many as that, huh? Okay—um, in several instances, the *Chinese Digest* res—referred to itself as a progressive publication. How was it progressive?
- CL: Uh, we don't emphasize the old, uh, social structure here.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Practically, we ignore the, uh, Chinese Six Company,<sup>129</sup> the district association, the family association.
- JL: Mm-hmm.

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<sup>126</sup> Heinrich Rainer (1875–1956).

<sup>127</sup> Thomas W. Chinn (1909–1997), historian, editor, and publisher.

<sup>128</sup> William J. Hoy (1911–1949), historian, journalist, and editor.

<sup>129</sup> A.k.a. the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), organized in the 1850s and formally established in 1882 to advocate for Chinese immigrants.

- CL: Uh, but instead, we, uh, describe activities in the different churches. We, uh, describe the latest dance,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, the contest between, uh, tennis player, uh, uh, Berkeley and San Francisco,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —or San Francisco and Stockton,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —things of that sort.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Did the publication have any political, um, affiliations?
- CL: No, none whatsoever,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —we try to keep it purely neutral.
- JL: Uh-huh. What were some of the problems that the publication encountered?
- CL: Uh, we couldn't get enough advertisement—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —to make it worthwhile. The cigarette people, uh, and any, uh, big corporation will not advertise in a local paper. They say you have to have a national distribution—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —before we would even consider it.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And then downtown, among the clothiers<sup>130</sup> or restaurants, uh, they usually says, "Well, we might give you, uh, a quarter-page ad,"—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —"if you give us a full page"—
- JL: —Oh, (inaudible) (speaking over each other) it was just, uh huh—
- CL: —"at a discount." They say, "We don't need it, but just to help you." You see.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, we were at a great disadvantage.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And the local shops, they're all part of my story—they don't have enough, and they don't need the ad, because you see them every day.

[00:40:05]

- JL: Right, uh-huh. Then how was the publication financed?
- CL: It was financed chiefly by subscription—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —and, uh, small ads,—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —and I subsidize it the best I can.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, because, at that time, I was earning good money every month.

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<sup>130</sup> Cloth merchants, tailors, and garment retailers.

- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, it came to an end when, uh, World War II<sup>131</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —was declared.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Then, uh, shortly after, practically all the writers and most of the readers were in the armed forces.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, we just had to collapse.
- JL: Mm-hmm. When did you put out the last, uh, issue of the magazine?
- CL: If my memory serve me correctly, 1941.
- JL: 1941, uh-huh.
- CL: Right after Pearl Harbor.<sup>132</sup> Perhaps '42.
- JL: Uh-huh, I see. (sound of paper rustling) Okay, can you tell me something about, um, William Hoy, his background and his personality, something like that?
- CL: William Hoy is a self-educated, uh, young Chinese who had a flair for writing,—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —and he has many fine articles, uh, and he, uh, was the editor.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Thomas Chinn, who did most of the work as a Linotype<sup>133</sup> operator, also took care of many of the ads—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and so forth.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, my role is chiefly to raise money and furnish this, the front part of this, uh, gallery—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —as a office.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Um, why did Thomas Chinn resign from the paper after the first year? First and a half year, I guess.
- CL: He didn't resign.
- JL: Oh—
- CL: He stayed—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —until the end.
- JL: Mm-hmm. But he just wasn't working as editor then, maybe.
- CL: Yeah, you're right.
- JL: Uh-huh. And when William Hoy, uh, took over the editorship, did the magazine differ in any way from its beginning stage?

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<sup>131</sup> (1939–1945).

<sup>132</sup> (December 7, 1941), Japanese attack on the U.S. naval base in Oahu, Hawaii.

<sup>133</sup> Hot-metal typesetting machine (patented 1884, first built commercially 1886).

- CL: Uh, I think there might be a little more emphasis on the literary quality of the magazine,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and maybe more book review—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and things like that.
- JL: Mm-hmm. (sound of paper rustling) Then who did the typesetting then?
- CL: That was done by Thomas Chinn. He is a Linotype operator.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: And also we have a, uh, uh, Mr. Fong<sup>134</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —Fong Yim Hing,<sup>135</sup> who is a fine photographer,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and he do the cover pictures for us.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Okay. Um, how was the magazine received by, you know, the audience?
- CL: Very well.
- JL: Uh-huh. What about from the older generation? What did they think of the publication? (speaking over each other)—
- CL: —Very few. Most of them don't read English,—
- JL: —I see.—
- CL: —so they're not interested.
- JL: Okay. Can you tell me something about, uh, Lim P. Lee?<sup>136</sup>
- CL: Yes, uh—Mr. Lim P. Lee helped, uh, a great deal also.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: Um, he was, uh, interested in, uh, the Democratic Party,<sup>137</sup> uh, but he would not let politics influence, uh, the paper,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —so, he chiefly helped in, uh, getting, uh, the paper to publish, uh, social progress, and, uh, he attended as delegate to many, uh, conventions and gave a summary of them to our paper.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Okay, I have been reading the *Chinese Digest*, and, um, I couldn't find any copies between June to December of 1939. Did the publication, you know, stop for a while then, or—?
- CL: Not that I know of.
- JL: Uh-huh. Maybe the copies were just missing. Mm-hmm. And at the later stage, I think in, uh, 1940, the magazine start to take on a different format, and it became the organ of the Chinese cultural society. Uh—why was that, you know, why did that happen?
- CL: Uh, it really didn't represent any cultural society,—
- JL: Uh-huh.

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<sup>134</sup> Yim Hing Fong (1905–1980; a.k.a. Wallace H. Fong), photographer.

<sup>135</sup> Surname "Fong" listed first, a common practice in East Asian culture.

<sup>136</sup> Lim Poon Lee (1911–2002), writer, postmaster of San Francisco (1966–1980).

<sup>137</sup> Liberal political party in the United States (1828–present).



- CL: —it's simply my interest in Chinese art—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —that, uh, more, uh, cultural articles were written,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —that's all.
- JL: Mm-hmm. And then you were editing the publication then?
- CL: I only edited, uh, one issue. That's all.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: I think the last two issue, rather.
- JL: Mm-hmm. I see. (sound of paper rustling) Can you remember, more or less, you know, how much you have put into the publication, you know, throughout its—
- CL: —Financially? (speaking over each other)—
- JL: —publication period? Yeah, uh-huh.
- CL: Uh, I think, uh, I subsidized at an average of, uh, fifty dollars each publication,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —each issue.
- JL: Each issue, uh-huh.
- CL: There are time when there's more,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and there's times when there's less.
- JL: Uh-huh. But it's around that figure. Would you say the publication was a success?
- CL: It certainly is a success, uh, in, uh, that we met our objective, but as a moneymaker, no.
- JL: Mm-hmm. What kind of satisfaction did you derive from working on the magazine, you know, personally?
- CL: Yeah. Uh, I think, it give us a chance to, uh, express our feeling,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and the satisfaction is that we have a pretty good running record of what's going on—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —in Chinatown, and it will remain as long as there are issues of the paper there.
- JL: Mm-hmm. What was the impact of the magazine, say, in other words, uh, was the magazine able to effect any changes in the community?
- CL: I doubt it. It may help, but I doubt it—we exert a very strong force.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, we fought against the "Podii,"<sup>138</sup>—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —who will fee charge of a new tenant,—

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<sup>138</sup> A practice that had led to abuses, defined as follows: San P. Tu, "About All This 'Podii' Business," *Chinese Digest* (February 21, 1936), 8: "In Chinese business parlance, a "podii" is the intangible asset created by the tenant of a business establishment through his effort in increasing the economic value of that location either by physical improvements or by establishing a goodwill. When this tenant is ready to move or retire from business, he usually negotiates with a prospective newcomer to recover this intangible asset in a definite sum of money."

- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —uh, we, uh, opposed, uh, elaborate funerals,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, things of that sort.
- JL: Mm-hmm. But it didn't really bring about any significant changes.
- CL: No, not too much.
- JL: Uh-huh. (sound of paper rustling) Um, how did the publication portray the Sino-Japanese situation?<sup>139</sup>
- CL: Uh, we kept a pretty good running record of, uh, the, uh, war. From the very beginning, we have always had the latest news from the Orient.
- JL: Mm-hmm. And, uh, did it try to, uh, do any campaigning for the war or participate in the war relief fund and things like that?
- CL: Uh, it goes without saying that we do,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —but even if we didn't do a thing, the local Chinese were very patriotic and, uh,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —wanted to do their best.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: They, uh, participated eagerly in the boycott of s—shipping scrap iron to, uh, Japan,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —even before the war started.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And, uh, during the war, we, uh, cooperated with the *Chronicle*,<sup>140</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, in maintaining the Rice Bowl Festival,<sup>141</sup>—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —which raised a huge sum of money for the war effort.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: And we publicized the first, uh, China clipper<sup>142</sup> to, uh, the Orient. Actually, the clipper didn't land in Chinese territory,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —because the Chinese cannot, uh, grant, uh, privilege to any one country, like the United States,—
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: —without granting it to England, France, and Russia, and Japan,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —so, therefore, as a safe precaution, uh, they, uh, would not let Pan Am<sup>143</sup>—
- JL: Oh.

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<sup>139</sup> Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945).

<sup>140</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle* (founded 1865; 1872–present under this name).

<sup>141</sup> Annual charitable events in Chinatown to support China (1938–1941).

<sup>142</sup> First of three Martin M-130 four-engine flying boats built for Pan American Airways.

<sup>143</sup> Pan American (World) Airways (1927–1991), American international airline.

CL: —land there. But then, they landed in, uh, Hong Kong—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —uh, Macau,<sup>144</sup> I've forgotten which,—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —and that enabled, uh, Pan Am to call the early planes "the China clipper."  
 JL: Mm-hmm. Did you participate in World War II?  
 CL: Yes.  
 JL: Uh-huh.  
 CL: I was past the, uh, draft age.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: But, um, I was made an interpreter.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: And, so, I was the oldest, uh, (chuckles) uh, enrollee in, uh, in my division.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: I'm older than even, uh, commanding officer.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: But, uh, it's, uh—uh, easy job for me because I was stationed at the Presidio of Monterey,<sup>145</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —where I interviewed, uh, incoming draftees.

[00:49:53]

JL: Mm-hmm. Uh, were a lot of, uh, local Chinese drafted for the war?  
 CL: Oh, yes.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: Proportionally, it's the same as anywhere else.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: All those who are born here are subjected to the draft.  
 JL: Mm-hmm. Um—how is the present generation of Chinese Americans different from, say, your generation?  
 CL: Oh, they're much more Americanized.  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: And, uh, many of them, uh, now marry American mates,<sup>146</sup>—  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —whereas before, it's a rarity, not that there weren't *any*, —  
 JL: Mm-hmm.  
 CL: —but it's very rare. Whereas today, it's quite a commonplace thing.

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<sup>144</sup> Special administrative region in China, former Portuguese lease (1557–1887), colony (1887–1987) and dependent territory (1987–1999).

<sup>145</sup> U.S. Army installation south of San Francisco (1846/1902–present).

<sup>146</sup> Interracial marriage was largely illegal in many U.S. states until the 1967 Supreme Court decision, *Loving v. Virginia*, which declared anti-miscegenation laws to be unconstitutional.

- JL: Mm-hmm. Uh, as far as job opportunities is concerned, you know, is there still the discrimination there?
- CL: Oh, there must be, but, uh, it's very slight, so,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —there's no cause for complaint,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —but undoubtedly, we still encounter resistance.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Um, what is your personal opinion on this Americanization of Chinese Americans here?
- CL: Oh, it's inevitable.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, all the, uh, record history will indicate that, that is inevitable.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Now the Chinese in, uh, Southeast Asia, uh, where there are no restriction, they intermarry very freely.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: So, uh, in America it's not gonna be different.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Okay. (sound of paper rustling) Well, I think that's about all the questions I have here. Mmm, is there anything else that we have not covered and you would like to include?
- CL: Uh,—
- JL: Any comments?
- CL: —uh, not much, I might say, uh, it's surprising, uh, what great influence, uh, the Chinese cooking has upon our neighbors.
- JL: Mmm.
- CL: Many Americans are now hooked to Chinese cooking.—
- JL: Mm-hmm. That's true.
- CL: —I know some families that, uh, plan to move but they say they will not move to any, uh, town where there isn't a good Chinese restaurant. (chuckles)—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —So—and it also influence their American diet,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —whereas before, uh, there's a sharp demarcation between Chinese and American—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —cuisine. Uh, today many American housewives,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, are using bean sprout and winter melon,—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —uh, and, uh, dried, uh, mushroom.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, so there's a terrific, uh, blending—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —in that direction.
- JL: Mm-hmm. Oh, one more thing. Um—how has Chinatown changed over the years?

- CL: Uh—if you were to compare pictures of Chinatown—  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: —shortly after the fire, for example, and now,—  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: —you will find that, while the buildings are substantially the same,—  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: —uh, the, uh, exterior and interior has definitely changed.  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: Of course, that's very obvious, we now have neon lights.  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: Uh, we have, uh, very modern gift shops.  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: The grocery store, uh, has also changed.  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: When I was a kid, there's only a dozen things in a Chinese grocery store that are American. You could get, uh, salt and ketchup,—  
JL: Mmm.  
CL: —uh, and perhaps, uh, oil, uh, and a few things like that.  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: Uh, otherwise, every item is, uh, imported from China—  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: —that are not vegetables.  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: Um, even the wrapping paper—  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: —is, uh, imported from China,—  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: —and so are the bags. The bags, in fact, were made right there at the store.  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: Uh, and they do not use string unless it's a big bundle. They use that long, dry straw—  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: —to tie up their bundles.  
JL: Mm-hmm. Uh, I've heard a comment, you know, some people say that Chinatown is about, you know, fifty years—  
CL: Behind time.  
JL: —behind time.  
CL: That isn't so at all.  
JL: Uh-huh.  
CL: Uh, it only appears so,—  
JL: Mmm.  
CL: —actually, uh, they are quite, uh, subjected to change.  
JL: Mm-hmm.  
CL: Perhaps always, uh, a *little* behind, but not much. Certainly not fifty year behind.

- JL: Mm-hmm. Um, what about the kind of people who are living in Chinatown? Are they any different from those before?
- CL: Yes, uh, I think the old-timer who live here, uh, myself included, always have a little accent left.
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: Uh, one great change that is noticeable is the disappearance of the laundries.
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: Uh, there used to be, uh, *hundreds* of laundries all over town.—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —Today there's not a one. It's replaced by the laundromats—
- JL: Mm-hmm.
- CL: —and so forth.
- JL: I see. Well, do you have anything else you'd like to say?
- CL: (laughs)
- JL: (laughs)
- CL: I can't think of any—
- JL: Uh-huh.
- CL: —just now.
- JL: Okay. Well, thank you, Mr. Lee, on behalf of the Oral History Department at California State University, Fullerton.
- CL: I enjoyed doing this.
- JL: Thank you.

[00:55:53]

END OF INTERVIEW

Siennah Cervantes, Lauren Eissing, Jennifer Sanely Galarza,  
Christian M. Hernandez, and Lyann Martinez (editors)

*A New Yorker, Communist, and Admirer of C.L.R. James:  
Walter Goldwater's Candid Recollections in 1976*

*Shelfmark*

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).

The Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History (COPH).

Project: African American History.

O.H. 1688.

Oral Interview with Walter Goldwater, conducted by Joan V. Feeney,  
July 29, 1976, New York City, New York.

*Introduction*

The oral history transcribed below belongs to a collection held in CSUF's Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History (COPH), titled "African American History." The interview with Walter Goldwater was conducted by Joan V. Feeney on July 29, 1979, in New York City, New York. It is 39 minutes and 7 seconds long, and it is archived as a digital recording/audio file at COPH. The verbatim transcript edited here was prepared in the fall of 2025 by Siennah Cervantes, Lauren Eissing, Jennifer Sanely Galarza, Christian M. Hernandez, and Lyann Martinez.

In this interview, the American bookseller, publisher, and political activist Walter Goldwater (born July 29, 1907, in Harlem, New York; died June 24, 1985 in New York City, New York) details his involvement in the Trotskyite movement, his personal experiences with Trinidadian writer and Marxist activist Cyril Lionel Robert James, better known as C.L.R. James (1901–1989), and divulges details about James's contributions to the movement, his battle against deportation, his difficult family life, and his return to the United States as a sought-after academic. Goldwater affirms James's positive impact as an activist but lampoons much of his personal behavior, specifically his tendency toward pettiness and his irresponsibility with regard to familial obligations. He sheds light on James's drawn-out deportation by the U.S. authorities and the United Kingdom's lackluster response to his appeal for aid. Anecdotal information in this interview includes an interesting logistical connection between members of the Trotskyite movement and Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin of U.S. President John F. Kennedy; James's respective relationships with a number of prominent activists, such as James Boggs, Ernest Rice McKinney, George Padmore, and Richard Wright; and James's literary forays into the sport of cricket and the themes of Herman Melville's writings as societal metaphors.

This interview is relevant to those who wish to learn more about the early 1930s Trotskyite movement in New York City, the expansion of workers' rights during the sharecropper movement, and C.L.R. James in particular. As such, it should be of interest to scholars of American social and intellectual history, interpersonal networks, and cultural memory.

Only identifiable individuals, locations, and technical terms have been referenced in the footnotes, usually when they first appear.

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*Verbatim Transcript (O.H. 1688)*

LAWRENCE DE GRAAF CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: Walter Goldwater [WG]

INTERVIEWER: Joan V. Feeney [JF]

DATE: July 29, 1976

LOCATION: New York City, New York

PROJECT: African American History

TRANSCRIBERS: Siennah Cervantes, Lauren Eissing, Jennifer Sanely Galarza,  
Christian M. Hernandez, and Lyann Martinez

JF: This is an interview with Walter Goldwater<sup>1</sup> in New York City<sup>2</sup> on July 29, 1976. Mr. Goldwater, will you please tell us a little bit about your background?

WG: This could be a little bit too long, I'm afraid. Uh, I, uh, I, I am a New Yorker, born and bred, and I was in the communist movement, although not in the Communist Party,<sup>3</sup> when I left college<sup>4</sup> in Ann Arbor<sup>5</sup> in 1927. In 1930, I went to, uh, Europe and then to Russia to work there for the Communist International.<sup>6</sup> Uh, later on, I became disaffected with the official Communist Party and, uh, little by little, uh, drifted towards the Trotskyite<sup>7</sup> and Socialist movement.<sup>8</sup> Uh, I met C.L.R. James<sup>9</sup> first in London,<sup>10</sup> in 1936, uh, at a meeting of the, uh, fraction of the, uh, Labour Party,<sup>11</sup> which was composed of Trotskyites there. Uh, I remember C.L.R. as a very imposing, uh, tall, beautiful Black man with a wonderful presence and a wonderful diction, and, uh, he always, uh, uh, had a, a kind of, um, charisma, we didn't know the word at that time, but that's what he had and, uh, uh, declaimed whenever he talked, and I remember quite well, the first time I met him, he told us that the king<sup>12</sup> was going to abdicate,<sup>13</sup> because Mr. Baldwin<sup>14</sup> was going to force him to do so. Uh, as you probably know, in

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<sup>1</sup> (1907–1985), American bookseller, publisher, and political activist.

<sup>2</sup> Metropolitan city in the southeastern part of the U.S. state of New York.

<sup>3</sup> Communist Party of the United States of America (1919–present).

<sup>4</sup> Goldwater graduated from the University of Michigan.

<sup>5</sup> City in the southeastern part of the U.S. states of Michigan.

<sup>6</sup> Political organization (1919–1943, a.k.a. Comintern and Third International).

<sup>7</sup> Followers of Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), Russian revolutionary and intellectual.

<sup>8</sup> Political and economic movement, originated in the late eighteenth century.

<sup>9</sup> Cyril Lionel Robert James (1901–1989), Trinidadian writer and activist.

<sup>10</sup> Capital city of the United Kingdom (UK) in the southeastern part of England.

<sup>11</sup> UK political party (1900–present).

<sup>12</sup> King Edward VIII of the United Kingdom (1894–1972; r. 1936).

<sup>13</sup> Resign.

<sup>14</sup> Stanley Baldwin (1867–1947), UK prime minister (1923–1924, 1924–1929, 1935–1937).

the radical movement—in the political movement generally—everybody likes to make predictions, and, uh, even Trotsky<sup>15</sup> used to like—make, make predictions, about one third of which came true. Uh, in the case of C.L.R. this was the only prediction that he had made, and it did come true, so I remembered that for the forty years since, because within the next couple of weeks the king did indeed abdicate due to, uh, (static from microphone) Mr. Baldwin's pressure. Is there an off thing?

JF: (inaudible)

WG: Uh, as I say, I met him, uh, with, with a group of Trotskyites, uh, whom I'd been in—introduced to, uh, a, uh, I think on my way back from Russia in 1932, and I kept in tru—tac, in touch with ever since, in fact, I have kept in touch with them until this very day, the ones that are still alive. Uh, a—uh, at that time, C.L.R. seemed to indicate that, although he was a very big fish in the small British puddle, he wanted to expand his horizons and suggested that he come to America. I don't think I had any part in this, uh, i—in any, in any way. I was only a very modest member of the movement that time and indeed remained so. But, uh, of course, I thought it would be interesting, actually, in—in our movement in America, we did very badly need Negroes.<sup>16</sup> We had only really one s—uh, important Negro in our group and that's Rice McKinney,<sup>17</sup> and a very few others who drifted in and drifted out, so, um, I knew quite well that C.L.R. would make his mark as soon as he came. Uh, I don't remember exactly when he did arrive, but I think it was next year, probably 1937,<sup>18</sup> that can be verified, and, uh, he—whe, when he came, uh, he immediately, uh, had differences of opinion with, uh, Ernest Rice McKinney, who at that time was called David Coolidge,<sup>19</sup> and the two of them never got along, during the wh—wh, never got along well during the whole period of, uh, C.L.R.'s being in the movement here. Uh, I was not in the upper echelons<sup>20</sup> of the movement enough to know what the politics of it were, but I do know that shortly after that, C.L.R. was sent by the movement out to Missouri<sup>21</sup> with the idea of organizing certain very, uh, poorly paid workers there—

JF: Was the sharecropper movement,<sup>22</sup> right?—

WG: —and at that time. I'm not sure it was the sharecropper movement. Uh, however you have to find the pamphlet which is called "Down with Starve"—which we always called—

JF: —"Down with Starvation Wages." (both talking at same time)—

WG: —"Down with Starvation Wages in South-East Missouri."<sup>23</sup>—

JF: —(laughs)—

WG: —(both talking at same time) We always loved that—we always loved that title.

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<sup>15</sup> Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), Russian revolutionary and intellectual.

<sup>16</sup> Now considered unacceptable, this term was still widely used in 1976.

<sup>17</sup> Ernest Rice McKinney (1886–1984), American labor activist.

<sup>18</sup> It appears that he arrived in the United States in 1938.

<sup>19</sup> McKinney's pseudonym.

<sup>20</sup> Ranks.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. state in the Midwest.

<sup>22</sup> Activities by the Southern Tenant Farmers Union (1934–1960) and its supporters.

<sup>23</sup> 1941/1942 pamphlet supporting the local sharecroppers' strike, [online](#).

JF: Yes.

WG: Uh-huh, uh, and he stayed there for a comparatively short time, and then, uh, he never really was one for, um, uh, uh, agitation, uh, in the masses, at least, uh, in my opinion, uh, that there are more than one opinion about that, I'm sure. But, uh, he did come back because it was quite obvious that C.L.R. was going to be a captain or a general and not a private. Uh, most of us, as a matter of fact within the movement at that time, there were more captains and generals than there were privates, I happened to be one of very few, very few privates at that time, and I have written something about, uh, my, uh, adventures in the, uh, movement at that time because, uh, I was one of the people who was deceived by the generals when the, uh, movement, uh, decided that they would go into the Socialist Party,<sup>24</sup> and, uh, uh, this was one of my differences with, with the, uh, higher ups in the movement, although I always kept on good terms with them, because, uh, uh, those of us in the lower echelons were never told, uh, the ins and outs of the, uh, uh, complicated political maneuvering, which the other people had and, uh, C.L.R. was, of course, one of the people in the upper echelons at that time. He had simply made himself so as soon as he arrived. Um, the, uh, uh, the question of the Trotskyite movement and the Workers Party<sup>25</sup> and the, and the entrance into the Socialist Party and the exit from the Socialist Party are a different story, which I cannot now go into. As far as C.L.R. was concerned, however, uh, he generally was his own man and did not hesitate to, uh, have differences with Shachtman<sup>26</sup> and Cannon,<sup>27</sup> who were the leaders of the movement, or even with the "old man," as it was called, who was Trotsky, who has left the Soviet Union<sup>28</sup> and had left, uh, after leaving Alma-Ata,<sup>29</sup> had gone down to Turkey,<sup>30</sup> from Turkey to Denmark and eventually to, uh, Mexico City.<sup>31</sup> Uh, uh, there is extant a considerable correspondence between Trotsky in his various, uh, pseudonyms.<sup>32</sup> During that period the main pseudonym that he used was Crux, C-R-U-X, although he had a great many others. Uh, and C.L.R. who had named himself J. R. Johnson<sup>33</sup> and various other, other, names, also for the purposes of the correspondence.

JF: And he had actually given himself these names.

WG: As far as I know he had,—

JF: Uh-huh.

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<sup>24</sup> Socialist Party of America (1901–1972).

<sup>25</sup> Workers Party of the United States (1934–1936).

<sup>26</sup> Max Shachtman (1904–1972), American Marxist theorist.

<sup>27</sup> James P. Cannon (1890–1974), American Trotskyist.

<sup>28</sup> Post-Russian Revolution communist country in Eurasia (1922–1991).

<sup>29</sup> Now Almaty, city in southeastern Kazakhstan.

<sup>30</sup> Now Türkiye.

<sup>31</sup> Capital city of Mexico in the south-central part of the country.

<sup>32</sup> Fictitious name (a.k.a. alias).

<sup>33</sup> One of James's pseudonym.

- WG: —yes, I believe that to be the case. I don't know, I—and I wouldn't know, but I assume that what happens in those cases is that people get together and, and say what's, what's a good name or something like that—
- JF: —Well, that was certainly a real common one (unintelligible)—
- WG: —(both talking at same time) and J. R. Johnson is, is exactly the kind of name—
- JF: —(both talking at same time)—common, yeah—
- WG: —that, that one would h—uh, would use in such a thing. Uh, in the, in the case of one of the pamphlets or, or perhaps two, he called himself Native Son.<sup>34</sup> Uh, uh, uh this—
- JF: —Then he called himself Jane Myer,<sup>35</sup> and other times (unintelligible)—
- WG: —(both talking at same time)—Yes, well, he had, he had very, as I say, he took various names, we have—you have to check up on those, them, I think, uh, uh, a young man in California<sup>36</sup> has now found seven names at least that he had.
- JF: (laughs)
- WG: And, uh, over twenty that, that Trotsky had.
- JF: Uh-huh.
- WG: So that, uh, I can't promise about any of these. I ne—I never, I never really knew then. I just—we just had to figure out from the tone of the thing who, who was writing them in most cases.
- JF: Um-hm.
- WG: Also, having that many names al—al—also made it appear the—to any bo—to any outsider, who might be interested, that we had more members to the party than we did. It was always actually very small.
- JF: Mm-hmm.
- WG: Uh, of course. Now, uh, early in this period he began to attract certain satellites or disciples to himself and, um, uh, he, uh, was for a time very close to, to one of my closest friends, Prescott Daniel, uh, who—and, and used to come to his house and, uh, fondle his child and so on. Uh, uh, Daniel's wife was my first cousin, didn't care for C.L.R. terribly well, but it wasn't on a personal basis so much as that she was afraid that her husband was being weaned away from family and, uh, and friends, and, and into the movement. Uh, so, uh, I became quite, quite well acquainted with, with C.L.R. during this period, uh, but he, as I say, he always, uh, uh, was his own man and went his own way. Uh, but, uh, he demanded loyalty of his disciples and, uh, and he got it from a great many of them. Uh, uh, he married, or whatever it was, this—the very beautiful Connie Webb,<sup>37</sup> who was a, a, a, uh, a model, and, uh, really a, a very beautiful, blonde girl, at that time, uh, and had a child, uh, whom he named Robert,<sup>38</sup> uh, his third name is Robert, as you know, uh, and, uh, who was going to be the apple of his eye. Actually, as, as it turned out, why—the apple didn't turn out to be so whole

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<sup>34</sup> One of James's pseudonym.

<sup>35</sup> One of James's pseudonym.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. state on the Pacific Coast.

<sup>37</sup> Constance "Connie" Webb (1918–2005), James's second wife (1946–1953).

<sup>38</sup> Cyril Lionel Robert "Nobbie" James Jr. (b. 1949).

throughout and, uh, this, uh, represents a, a, a sadness in Connie's life, a good deal more than it does in C.L.R.'s because actually, uh, C.L.R., uh, uh remained his own man even when it was a question of family. He never uh, uh, ugh—this is one of the points that's, that's involved about, uh—

[00:10:05]

JF: (unintelligible)

WG: —whether we should have it down, actually as to, as to C.L.R.'s, uh, responsibility, he was very irresponsible towards, towards all his family obligations, and uh, uh—

JF: Walter, now this child Robert, the way you put it,—

WG: Um-hm.

JF: —uh, was he retarded?

WG: No, quite the contrary, he was very bright, but, uh, he went in—he therefore went into drugs, he went into, uh,—

JF: Yeah, yeah.

WG: —he went into Ayn Rand,<sup>39</sup> he went into, um, uh, that, that kind of thing about y—your mind, uh, a—that phony thing with a, uh, ph—parapsych—not parapsychology,<sup>40</sup> but, uh, scien—Scientology<sup>41</sup>—

JF: —Oh yes, yes, yeah. (both talking at same time) Yeah, that whole thing—

WG: —(both talking at same time) He, he went on a tri—he went on, he went on a boat with, uh, with, with the Scientologists, uh, as, as the—of, of course, the Ayn Rand thing was particularly de—depressing to, to Connie because it's really a semi-fascist—

JF: Um-hm.

WG: —kind of thing, so this was, this was a terrible thing—

JF: Yeah, yeah.

WG: —and then he became, of c—for a while, of course, he was, was ultra, ultra Negro-radical and all that sort of thing, much more his—and—than his father had been, but it was only a game really, he, he—it wasn't, uh, you know, it was the thing to do.

JF: Mm-hmm.

WG: Uh, he was a very charming boy if, uh, or, or could have been a very charming boy and very intelligent, but what has happened to him now, I don't know actually, uh, he's probably, he's certainly over twenty-five, he's probably something between twenty-five and thirty now and probably still finding himself for all we know. Uh, we have that—

JF: —Well, it takes a lot of, uh, youngsters a long time to grow up and reach maturity, (both talking at same time) so—

WG: —Yeah, and some of them don't. (laughs)—

JF: —(both talking at same time) Right.—

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<sup>39</sup> Alice "Ayn Rand" O'Connor (1905–1982), Russian-born American writer, developed the philosophical system of "Objectivism."

<sup>40</sup> Study of alleged psychic phenomena.

<sup>41</sup> Religion created by American author L. Ron Hubbard (1911–1986) in 1953.

- WG: So, uh, anyway, that's, that's that, but, as for C.L.R., he never, uh, tried to support or help support the boy, or even when he was put in jail, uh, for, uh, uh, a combi—as far as I know, a combination of, of drugs plus, uh, uh, plus deser—plus either desertion or refusing to, uh, to go to Vietnam,<sup>42</sup> I'm not sure which. Uh, it was mostly Connie who had to do all this.
- JF: Um-hm.
- WG: Uh, she never really seemed to bear a grudge, actually; she s—sort of took it for granted, and that was the point about C.L.R., which I always found most difficult. Uh, he's so very self-centered, that he—and has, has always been, that he always felt that he—that the world owed him a living—
- JF: Um-hm.
- WG: —and did not recognize his great virtues and great, uh, and great talents. Now, that is of course perfectly true. Nobody—people, people don't recognize great virtues and great talents but, uh, most of us grow up, think—see—in the case of C.L.R. at, at his present age, he doesn't have to grow up any longer. (both laugh)
- WG: (laughs) Obviously, he, he has grown up, and he has been successful mostly in this because, he himse—he's really very talented, his, his, um, uh, his cricket material<sup>43</sup> is very good, very intelligent.
- JF: Um-hm.
- WG: But he would get these kind of goals, like in the case of Melville<sup>44</sup> or, or, or cricket, uh, where s—cricket would be life or Melville would be life or (both talking at same time) something, something else, something else would be—
- JF: —(both talking at same time) Yeah, I don't quite understand this Melville thing. Cricket, I don't understand at all, but the Melville (unintelligible)—
- WG: —well, that's the thing; that's one of the reasons I think—I'm gonna turn it off, but that's one of the reasons, I think—(recorder stops and starts) Uh, he and George Padmore,<sup>45</sup> who both came from Trinidad<sup>46</sup> and were both almost exactly the same age and both had gone through pretty much the same kind of political feelings. Uh, George had stayed with the Communist Party a little bit longer than, than C.L.R. had, but, uh, eventually they came to the same f—pretty much to the same thing, uh, had always been, uh, uh, very strong, uh, not opponents but, uh, competitors, uh, uh, Ge—uh, C.L.R. did think very highly of Padmore, uh, uh, I remember quite well his telling me that he was going to write this life of Padmore because Padmore was the second greatest West Indian.<sup>47</sup> And I said, "Who is the greatest West Indian?" And he said, "Marcus Garvey."<sup>48</sup> But actually, in the back of his mind, I always felt that he

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<sup>42</sup> Reference to the Vietnam War (1955–1975).

<sup>43</sup> C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Hutchinson, 1963), a memoir on cricket.

<sup>44</sup> C.L.R. James, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* (by the author, 1953), a study on Melville's novel *Moby Dick* (1851).

<sup>45</sup> (1903–1959), Trinidadian journalist.

<sup>46</sup> Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, archipelagic country in the Caribbean.

<sup>47</sup> Inhabitant of the West Indies or Caribbean islands.

<sup>48</sup> (1887–1940), Jamaican political activist.

- wanted me to say—or anybody else to say, “Actually, you are the greatest West Indian,”—
- JF: (laughs)
- WG: —or at least, “You are the second greatest West Indian,” and I think that he aimed—
- JF: —remove Padmore down a notch. (both talking at same time) Yeah.—
- WG: —And I think that, that, that, that, that, that he tended to do that. Uh, I remember very well, uh, a, a, a very pleasant evening I spent, uh, with my wife,<sup>49</sup> and, uh, uh, Padmore and Dorothy Padmore<sup>50</sup> and C.L.R. in a club in London.<sup>51</sup> The word “club” was a special, was a special word at that time because it wa—didn’t mean anything fancy but it was a place where you could go and be in an evening and have a good, uh, and sort of be around and, and talking without people complaining about it because, uh, there were blue laws<sup>52</sup> in England, so much at that time that they had to get, get around them this way and, uh, we sat at this long table in the basement and, uh, C.L.R. wanted to be the, the, uh, the, the object of all our attention, which he was whenever he talked because, as I say, he always declaimed.
- JF: Um-hm.
- WG: But every once in a while, George would want a word, too, and so George would start to either tell a story or, or say something, uh, political or otherwise, at which C.L.R. would turn away from the table and stare off into space, uh, without looking at George at all.
- JF: Oh my goodness.
- WG: Uh, and, uh, then when George finished talking then he would turn back to the table and, uh, uh, I remember telling a joke at that time, which, which they both laughed at, and uh, but, uh, but George laughed heartily, and C.L.R. laughed because he was supposed to laugh. Uh, and, uh, later Dorothy Padmore didn’t care for, for C.L.R. terribly much. Uh, and, uh, I remember quite well that, uh, th—this was after C.L.R. had been deported in 1953<sup>53</sup> or whatever it was, and uh, she said to me, “You know that when they were holding those hearings for deportation, C.L.R. kept on saying how really American he had become and how he loved America, and he loved everything they did, and, and he said he even loved their comic strips.” Now he didn’t have to say that. (both laugh)
- JF: No, I, I recall reading that, in the, in the book, you know, *Mariners, Renegades*<sup>54</sup>—
- WG: —(both talking at same time) was in that I, I—
- JF: —(both talking at same time) (unintelligible)—Yes, oh yes, he said he loved the comic strips.—

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<sup>49</sup> Ethel, Goldwater’s first wife.

<sup>50</sup> Dorothy Pizer (1906–1964), Padmore’s domestic partner (not wife).

<sup>51</sup> Perhaps a reference to Charles Lahr’s bookshop (Camden Town); see [online](#).

<sup>52</sup> Statutes restricting or banning specified activities on Sundays.

<sup>53</sup> In 1953, James was deported from the United States to the UK.

<sup>54</sup> C.L.R. James, *Mariners, Renegades and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* (by the author, 1953), a study on Melville’s novel *Moby Dick* (1851).

WG: —(laughs) Yeah, so, uh, she, she kind of felt that he didn't really, that he didn't really mean that (laughs) and that, uh, and that, that he was just saying that to be able to stay. Uh, the, the story about the deportation, I think, might as well be told here because we wanna,—

JF: —Yes I wish you would (both talking at same time) bring that up.—

WG: —(both talking at same time) we wanna, we wanna make sure that it—that this particular part of the story be on record permanently, and as it is why it's only on record with everybody I've told about it. It's really quite, quite a lovely story, and if we don't have any other story this should be told. (takes deep breath) Uh, they had tried to deport him years and years before, actually before the war.<sup>55</sup> But when the war came, they, they were busy with other things, and they were interested in, in doing something to Japanese or to, or to Germans, or whatever it was, but C.L.R. was no longer a person in whom they were interested. So, the matter dragged out and dragged out and dragged out throughout the whole war, and in the meantime, as I say, he had married this typical American girl, and, uh, and there was no particular rush about it. After the war, the immigration department<sup>56</sup> began to get around to this again, and, uh, and, uh, C.L.R. was here and there and everywhere, and, uh, they would make an appointment, and maybe he would show up and maybe he wouldn't, and, uh, and then he had friends, uh, who would, uh, sort of help him to, to put off the thing and, uh, and who would learn—and would, uh, teach him how to, to use the proper legal thing, to say he was sick this day, and he wouldn't be able to come for three months, or he actually had a special appointment, which he had to keep, or whatever it was, until the thing dragged out and dragged out for years. And, uh, however, the time eventually came. Come in. (door creaks as someone enters the room) (unintelligible) (recorder stops and starts) However, little by little, the inexorable grasp of the immigration department closed in, and, finally, I don't remember the dates anymore, I used to remember them quite well but, let's assume that it was early in the 1950s, because it dragged out for that many years. Uh.

JF: Yeah so, it's 1951, he's actually on Ellis Island.<sup>57</sup>

WG: Yeah,—

JF: Uh-huh.

WG: —a—and, so that, that's, alright, that's, that's correct, anyway, and, uh, they finally said, "Now, look here, (laughs) why don't you just go (both laugh) and not, and not, keep bothering us anymore."

JF: (laughs)

WG: And he said, gee, he didn't want to go, he really loved it here, and he really felt American and so on. And finally, he was reduced to his last resort. He was a great friend of Fenner Brockway.<sup>58</sup>

JF: Um-hm.

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<sup>55</sup> World War II (1939–1945).

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (1933–2003).

<sup>57</sup> U.S. immigration processing station (1892–1954) in the Upper New York Harbor.

<sup>58</sup> (1888–1988), UK politician.



[00:20:00]

WG: And, uh, and Fenner, uh, by this time uh, had become an, an elder statesman<sup>59</sup> over there, he had been actually in the government, uh, in the Labour government<sup>60</sup> of Attlee,<sup>61</sup> and, uh, as you know, in England they don't have the same enmity for each other as they do here. So, uh, uh, C.L.R. appealed to Fenner to see what he could do about, about this matter. And his claim—and, and what he said to Fenner was that, uh, he is being persecuted by the American government.

JF: Um-hm.

WG: And so Fenner went to Eden,<sup>62</sup> who was then the prime minister,<sup>63</sup> and so—and to see what he could do about it. And a certain correspondence took place, which I used to know all of, but now I only remember the very high spot of it. And that was this. It was a letter from Sir Anthony<sup>64</sup> to His Majesty's<sup>65</sup> subject<sup>66</sup> C.L.R. James in New York. "My dear Mr. James, uh, certain representations have been made to His Majesty's government from the ambassador<sup>67</sup> to the Court of St. James.<sup>68</sup> The tenor of this conversation is that you, one of His Majesty's subjects, is being per—are being persecuted by the government of the United States. Inquiries into this matter elicit the fact that the alleged persecution consists of the government of the United States wishing to de—deport you to the United Kingdom. His Majesty's government can in no sense consider this persecution (both laugh) and therefore cannot act any further in the matter." (both laugh) Uh, uh, we will telescope the question of the deportation right now, simply this, to, to, uh, point this out, that he went back to, uh, Great Britain and stayed there reluctantly, uh, writing and, uh, uh, keeping in touch with his disciples here in Detroit<sup>69</sup> and, uh, in Los Angeles,<sup>70</sup> one or two other places, for several years.

JF: What, how were their names called at that time? The group that—

WG: —Uh, Bill,<sup>71</sup> my friend Bill knows that, but I don't remember, it was, uh, the, uh, there were too many names, uh.

JF: I know one of the later names was the Friends of Facing Reality.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Fenner was a Member of Parliament (1929–1931, 1950–1964).

<sup>60</sup> UK government led by the Labour Party. Fenner never served in government.

<sup>61</sup> Clement Attlee (1883–1967), UK prime minister (1945–1951), Labour leader (1935–1955).

<sup>62</sup> Anthony Eden (1897–1977), UK prime minister (1955–1957).

<sup>63</sup> Eden was, in fact, deputy prime minister at the time (1951–1955).

<sup>64</sup> Eden was, in fact, not knighted ("Sir") until 1954.

<sup>65</sup> King George VI of the United Kingdom (1895–1952; r. 1936–1952).

<sup>66</sup> Trinidad and Tobago was, at the time, still under British rule.

<sup>67</sup> Sir Oliver Franks (1905–1992), UK ambassador to the United States (1948–1952).

<sup>68</sup> Official royal court for the UK's Sovereign.

<sup>69</sup> City in the southeastern part of the U.S. state of Michigan.

<sup>70</sup> City in the southwestern part of the U.S. state of California.

<sup>71</sup> Likely William "Bill" French (1943–1997), Goldwater's friend and employee, who took over Goldwater's "University Place Bookshop" in New York City after his death.

<sup>72</sup> Publishing arm of James's "Facing Reality" leftist group (1962–1970).

WG: Yes, it was, it was Facing Reality and then, and then Friends of Facing Reality, and then prior to that there had been—it, it had been the Johnson (both talking at same time) the Johnson Forest Tend—The Johnson Forest Tendency.<sup>73</sup>—

JF: —(both talking at same time) Yeah, there was another one, right, right.—

WG: —In my book,<sup>74</sup> I have something about, uh, about this stuff, uh, when, when it comes to the, uh, to the, uh, periodicals, in which I, in which I sort of indicate this, this kind of thing for the period up to 1950, not after. Uh, and uh, and he stayed there in Britain, once in a while going down to Africa, where he was very well received, uh, and he told, he told me with great enthusiasm about how he would, uh, go out in a car there, in an open car and stand up and, and, uh, say things in English, and nobody would understand what he was talking about, but they all cheered him because he waved his arm and, and they, they knew that, uh, it was a question of “uhuru,”<sup>75</sup> and so on. He had a, really a joyful time there, whenever he went down to—particularly to Ghana, Gold Coast.<sup>76</sup> A—and then of course, when Padmore became, uh, the, uh, like the grey eminence beside, uh, behind, uh, uh, Nkrumah,<sup>77</sup> then uh, uh, he wasn’t—he wasn’t invited, I believe that—I’m not sure about the timing of all that, thank you. In any case, at about that, why—(shouting in the distant background) time his close friend Er—Eric Williams<sup>78</sup> became prime mini—or, uh, uh, uh, b—was put in charge of Trinidad and later on became the prime minister and invited C.L.R. to come back and C.L.R. was then his right-hand man and, uh, wrote a column in every issue of the PNM<sup>79</sup> paper, PNM being, uh, Williams’s party, and, uh, and C.L.R. did just what, uh, uh, Eric Williams wanted, which was to have a picture of him in almost every column and to talk about him every day as the doctor and so on, so—under those circumstances they got along quite well.

JF: Um-hm.

WG: Many of us, however, felt that this could not last because C.L.R. did no—not want to be Williams’s man he wanted to be his own man.

JF: Right.

WG: And, uh, after a num—uh, it, it lasted, even as it was, it lasted longer than we thought it would, uh, but after a given period, I don’t remember whether it was two years or three years, but it wasn’t just a few months, it was, it was a, a, a couple of years. The column started to change a little bit and, uh, there would be very, very mild queries,

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<sup>73</sup> Radical left faction in the United States (1945–1962), “Johnson” being one of James’s pseudonyms and “Forest” being one of the pseudonyms of Raya Dunayevskaya (1910–1987), Russian-born American writer.

<sup>74</sup> Walter Goldwater, *Radical Periodicals in America, 1890–1950: With a Genealogical Chart and a Concise Lexicon of the Parties and Groups which Issued Them: A Bibliography with Brief Notes* (Yale University Library, 1964; 2nd ed., 1966; 3rd ed., 1977).

<sup>75</sup> Swahili word, meaning “freedom,” and the name of a radical Black student group at Wayne State University, associated with James’s teachings.

<sup>76</sup> British Crown colony (1821–1957), subsequently known as Ghana.

<sup>77</sup> Kwame Nkrumah (1909–1972), prime minister of Gold Coast (1952–1957), prime minister (1957–1960) and president (1960–1966) of Ghana.

<sup>78</sup> (1911–1981), prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago (1962–1981).

<sup>79</sup> People’s National Movement, political party in Trinidad and Tobago (1956–present).

then finally, uh, complaints and then finally what were almost attacks, and when they became to almost attacks then we all knew that it was time that the break was going to come. Uh, uh, I don't wanna go into the whole thing of down there because—partly because it's much too complicated and much too long, and (both talking at same time) partly because—

JF: —(both talking at same time) Uh, it doesn't really pertain too much to the subject.—

WG: —Eventually, however, uh, C.L.R. was invited to leave, which he did, and he went back to England, not to America. However, I believe that he had made a couple of trips to Canada in the meantime. And, uh, then, the mid-1960s came with the great uh, uh, Black explosion in America,<sup>80</sup> both physically and spiritually, and, uh, in various places C.L.R. was known. Uh, there were after all not very many Negro leaders with charisma at that time, and C.L.R. was there, very intelligent, uh, with a s—a following, although it was a small one, uh, with several books behind him.<sup>81</sup> Uh, the book on cricket, uh, had had a great vogue,<sup>82</sup> particularly in England of course, but, uh, since it was about life, it also had a great vogue here, it had, had some vogue here, I should say. Uh, he had—he was continuing to write his books and his pamphlets and his, uh, calls-to-arms or non-arms. Uh, uh, actually, when I spoke to him at one time in Trinidad, he said, uh, "They claim that we want socialism. I have at no time said that we want socialism in Trinidad." I remember his saying that because it was a very pointed thing for him to say. Uh, uh, uh, and, uh, then with this great, uh, explosion of the Negro movement, Black movement here, uh, several people got the idea of getting C.L.R. to come and speak. Now, he was absolutely forbidden to cross the border but, at a certain point, somebody new somebody in Washington<sup>83</sup> and said, "What harm would it do if C.L.R. came across at Detroit and gave a talk and then went back across the border." And the answer eventually was given: "If he comes across on the morning of the given day and talks and goes back in the—at the end of that day, we don't have to know he was here." And so, he did that, once or more times. Well, that was the opening wedge. And at, and at, and about that time, the students at Northwestern,<sup>84</sup> who were particularly militant, said they wanted a course given in Black history or something of the sort,—

JF: Yeah.

WG: —and they wanted it to be given by C.L.R. James and the people in Northwestern said, "Who is C.L.R. James," and they soon told 'em who he was. And so various other inquiries were made and eventually, due entirely to pressure and threats of the Black community there, they were going to, uh, boycott the, the school, they were going to sit in, they were going to do other threatening things, which, uh, would be better left unsaid.—

JF: —It all got pretty drastic (both talking at same time) (unintelligible)—

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<sup>80</sup> Black power movement, part of the civil rights movement in the United States.

<sup>81</sup> For James's books, see [online](#).

<sup>82</sup> C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Hutchinson, 1963), a memoir on cricket.

<sup>83</sup> Capital city of the United States in the District of Columbia.

<sup>84</sup> University in Evanston, Illinois, established in 1851.

- WG: —(both talking at same time) They, they finally—it was finally agreed, oh well, what's the use of sticking on to, to all the, uh, uh, all these formalistic conventional things. Okay, let him come back. And so, although I don't know how legal his stay is here—actually, it was understood that he was to be able to come back and teach there, and he did. And shortly after that, after a great deal of burnings and other things down in Washington, the people down in Washington said they wanted him to be there,—
- JF: Now this is Federal City College?<sup>85</sup>
- WG: —professor down in Federal City College in Washington. And so, he became not only a full professor there, but the, uh, um, but almost the, the basis of, of, of, uh, Black Studies at, at Federal City College. And went down there, and of course we all thought it was a very amusing, uh, denouement of this thing because, uh, without C.L.R., there probably wouldn't even have been any Federal City College to, to get goin'. Uh, and so, uh, I visited him down there also and, of course, he was in his element, uh, in, in charge and all that kind of thing down there. (unintelligible) I'm gonna have to leave in a few minutes.
- JF: You want me to stop?

[00:30:19]

- WG: Turn it off. To go back a little to the connections of C.L.R. within the movement. Uh, many of these took place after I had left the movement and therefore, I'm not completely, uh, *au courant*<sup>86</sup> about them. However, one of his most firm disciples was a Chinese American girl called Grace Lee,<sup>87</sup> a very intelligent, bright girl who wrote a good deal of material and who stuck to him through thick and thin. Uh, uh, another, uh—she later on, as far as I know, married a Negro man called Boggs, James Boggs,<sup>88</sup> I believe, who has written a number of articles and, uh, pamphlets for whatever splinter of the Trotskyite or, or splinter of Trotskyite splinters they may be. Their cent—their center is in Detroit. Uh, uh, during the earlier period and even continuing on till much later, uh, a, uh, a real American type, uh, Lyman Paine,<sup>89</sup> the brother of Alfred Paine,<sup>90</sup> who was a, a book seller, and the, the scion of a, of a, a rather well known wealthy, uh, American family,<sup>91</sup> uh, became one of C.L.R.'s disciples and, uh, he was an architect and presumably still is. He married a young Jewish girl from our movement who called herself Freddy Drake,<sup>92</sup> I never knew what her real name was, uh, whom I know quite well and was very nice, and the two of them have been living

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<sup>85</sup> Liberal Arts College in Washington, D.C. (1966–1977), then incorporated into the University of the District of Columbia.

<sup>86</sup> French term, meaning “aware of what is going on” or “current.”

<sup>87</sup> (1915–2015), American author, philosopher, and feminist.

<sup>88</sup> (1919–1993), American Marxist activist, auto worker, and author.

<sup>89</sup> (1901–1978), American architect and activist.

<sup>90</sup> (1903–1944), died January 1, 1944, at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, while serving on a torpedo boat destroyer as 2nd lieutenant.

<sup>91</sup> The Paine brothers' great-great-great-grandfather was Robert Treat Paine (1731–1814), a signatory of the Declaration of Independence.

<sup>92</sup> Frances “Freddy” Drake Paine (1912–1999), second wife of Lyman Paine.

in California now for, uh, twenty or thirty years or more. Uh, it, uh, uh, the—there was an interesting connection there between, uh, the Paines and, uh, Oswald,<sup>93</sup> the assassin of, uh, President Kennedy,<sup>94</sup> because it was, presumably, uh, to the—to some relative of the Paines' house<sup>95</sup> that Oswald, uh, had—or in, in their house that Oswald had lived just prior to the time, uh, when he went to, uh, uh, to Dallas<sup>96</sup> and, uh, where indeed, uh, if I remember correctly, Marina<sup>97</sup> actually spent some time afterwards. Uh, the connection there was, was rather, was, was not so far-fetched as it may seem because the Trotskyites at that time, uh, were very much involved in the, uh, Fair Play for Cuba Committee,<sup>98</sup> and, uh, as is known, why, Oswald was also involved with that, and that is probably how the—where the connection, where the connection came. Uh, at the present time, why, Lyman is considered very old and feeble and presumably drunk almost all of the time. Uh, but, uh, when he's, uh, lucid, he's still as bright as he ever was and, uh, can perhaps give some, uh, uh, fill in some materials about C.L.R., and it's certain that Freddy Drake can do so, no question about that, whatever. Uh, you will, uh, presumably have to get hold of C.L.R. first in order to get in touch with these people and then, and then do that, I think, I think that would be wise. I'll have to be going, I got this—

JF: Um, can I ask you one last question (both talking at same time) that you might just briefly reply to?—

WG: —(both talking at same time) Yeah, yeah, yeah.—

JF: —I was interested in the fact that, uh, the Jameses and the Richard Wrights<sup>99</sup> were such close friends. (both talking at same time) Do you know this came about?—

WG: —(both talking at same time) Well, they, they weren't as close friends as you might think.

JF: Uh-uh.

WG: And that's one of the things that I'm a little bit dubious about putting on tape, but I will tell you anyway, and you can, you can have it for your purposes. One of the times when C.L.R. was in very bad shape, as you, as you may know he—a, he was reported dead at least twice.—

JF: —(both talking at same time) No, I'm n—not aware of that.—

WG: —(both talking at same time) Yes, yes. And in fact I, I, at one time, I spread the news that he was dead because I had been told that he was dead, and then, happily, we found out that it was not so. Uh, one time he was found in a gutter over here and

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<sup>93</sup> Lee Harvey Oswald (1939–1963), U.S. Marine veteran, assassin of John F. Kennedy.

<sup>94</sup> John F. Kennedy (1917–1963) thirty-fifth U.S. president (in office 1961–1963).

<sup>95</sup> In fact, Ruth Paine, the wife of Lyman Paine's son Michael, let Oswald's wife Marina and children stay at her house (2515 W 5th St, Irving, Texas 75060) for several months prior to the Kennedy assassination, while Oswald himself was staying at a rooming house in Dallas (except for weekends, when he stayed with his wife and children).

<sup>96</sup> City in the northeastern part of the U.S. state of Texas.

<sup>97</sup> Marina Oswald, née Prusakova (b. 1941), Oswald's wife.

<sup>98</sup> Activist group in the United States and Canada (1960–1963).

<sup>99</sup> Richard "Dick" Nathaniel Wright (1908–1960), American author, and his second wife, Frieda "Ellen" Poplar Wright, née Poplowitz (1912–2004).

was taken to, to, uh, uh, to Bellevue,<sup>100</sup> and they thought he wasn't gonna recover. Another time was, uh, ef—in an automobile accident, that was the second time, and I had been told quite definitely by Felix Morrow,<sup>101</sup> who was one of his friends in the movement, that he, that he had, that he had died, and, uh, later on it turned out, as I say, not to be so. Uh, well, uh, one of the times, uh, but he was very often broke, and sometimes, when he was broke, he got money from friends, and sometimes—in one case, he sold the, uh, some of his, uh, typed scripts—

JF: Um-hm.

WG: —and that th—thing which I later on sold to Northwestern, and, uh, other times, he would sort of, uh, uh, be helped by other people. Now one of those people that he was helped by was Richard Wright.

JF: Um-hm.

WG: And I remember quite well, this one anecdote is worth, as I say, telling anyway, although, uh, let's see, uh, C.L.R. was living in a top floor of a brownstone<sup>102</sup> in Brooklyn,<sup>103</sup> and one of his disciples was acting as his bodyguard, although there was no particular reason for thinking that he needed—needed a bodyguard. And Richard Wright came to me and said, "I wanna get hold of C.L.R., I've got some money for him, at least I wanna see him and, and see if he needs some money."

JF: Um-hm.

WG: And so, I said, "Well, C.L.R. is under strict, uh, uh, care (laughs) or something, and I'm not sure he wants to see anybody, but I think I can find out where he is." And so, I, somehow or another, I don't remember how, found the address. He hadn't told me, I, I, I had to get it through—either through Freddy Drake or, or, or some other person, I don't know just how I got it. And, uh, Richard Wright took the trip on the subway to Brooklyn and came back later and reported to me and said, "I got out to this place, and I rang the bell, and there was no answer. So, I rang again, and I rang again, and there was still no answer. So, I hammered on the door, and I yelled, and finally somebody leaned out of the top floor and said, 'What the hell are ya making all this noise about,' and I said, 'I wanna see Nello,'<sup>104</sup> and he said, 'Who are you,' and he said, 'I'm Dick Wright,' and so, he went back in again, and he came out, and he said, 'Nello isn't seeing anybody. Goodbye,' and he closed the window. (both laugh) And, and here I am back again. (laughs) What's the matter with that guy anyway?" Now I said, "I can't tell you that." I, I said, "They, they're peculiar sometimes, that's all." (laughs) So, uh, I don't believe that they were close friends,—

JF: Ah.

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<sup>100</sup> Hospital in New York City (1736–present), oldest public hospital in the United States.

<sup>101</sup> (1906–1988), American author, editor, and political activist.

<sup>102</sup> Type of nineteenth-century sandstone-built townhouse.

<sup>103</sup> One of the five boroughs of New York City.

<sup>104</sup> One of James's nicknames.

- WG: —uh, the family. Uh, I don't think that um, uh, that Ellen<sup>105</sup> cared for C.L.R., I'm, I'm sure she didn't care for him. And, uh, and Ellen certainly, uh, is very sore at, at, at Connie. Uh, because Connie wrote the biography of Wright,<sup>106</sup> you know?
- JF: Yes, I know.
- WG: And, uh, uh, I, uh, I'm fairly good friends with both of them, actually, and I don't, uh, try to badmouth either of them in the other, in the other's presence. They both have faults, obviously, and, uh, uh, I think that, uh—
- JF: Well, you would assume from that biography of Constance Webb's that, uh, Wright's widow<sup>107</sup> had really helped her out no end and that (both talking at same time) (unintelligible) very friendly.—
- WG: —(both talking at same time) She did help her out, and later, and later on she got sore and said that, uh, that, that, that Connie had betrayed her and had—
- JF: Uh-huh.
- WG: —put stuff in that she wasn't supposed to and that, that she had stolen stuff from her, and that she had done this and that. And, actually, later on, why, when, um, uh, uh, Fabre<sup>108</sup> wrote the life<sup>109</sup> of, of Wright (both talking at same time)—
- JF: Yes, his was, uh, excellent, and it stuck—
- WG: —then, then, then she felt this is, this is the thing, and let's, let's forget Connie's altogether,—
- JF: Uh-huh.
- WG: —she was very, very bitter against Connie's stu—stuff. I don't know how long that will last or whatever it is, they, they do have their ups and downs with these things.
- JF: Um-hm.
- WG: But, uh, each one of them has his axe to grind, you see, uh, uh, Connie wanted to feel that she was a close friend of, of Richard Wright and, uh, but, uh (both talking at same time)—
- JF: —(both talking at same time) That's certainly not that impersonal of a book.—
- WG: —But, but, uh, Ellen, but Ellen, uh, uh, feels that she has a proprietary right in, in Richard Wright.
- JF: Well, naturally.
- WG: And, uh, a—and that, uh, Connie has no business intruding in that kind of thing. Alright, I think we better cut it—(recorder stops)

[00:39:07]

END OF INTERVIEW

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<sup>105</sup> Frieda "Ellen" Poplar Wright, née Poplowitz (1912–2004), Wright's second wife.

<sup>106</sup> Constance Webb, *Richard Wright: A Biography* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1968).

<sup>107</sup> Frieda "Ellen" Poplar Wright, née Poplowitz (1912–2004), Wright's second wife.

<sup>108</sup> Michel Fabre (1933–2007), French literary scholar.

<sup>109</sup> Michel Fabre, *The Unfinished Quest of Richard Wright* (William Morrow & Co., 1973).

## Reviews (Books)

Camarillo, Albert M.

*Compton in My Soul: A Life in Pursuit of Racial Equality.*

Stanford University Press, 2024.

284 pages. eBook. ISBN: 9781503639317.

Southern California's city of Compton has been nicknamed the "hub city" due to its location at the center of the surrounding communities of Paramount, Lynwood, and Long Beach. In the early 1900s, Compton was considered an "All American city, a designation that was bestowed in 1952 by the National Civic League." (49) While Compton is well known, there is a rich and stark history behind its notoriety. Albert M. Camarillo's new monograph, *Compton in My Soul: A Life in Pursuit of Racial Equality*, is a reflective, personal memoir that navigates the author's childhood, upbringing, and career, while examining the racial inequalities of Compton's incorporation. Due to Camarillo's deep roots in the community of Compton, his narrative is enriched by personal stories, historical analysis, and reflections on race, inequality, and the relentless pursuit of social justice. His story is not just that of one individual; it reflects a broader spectrum of the ongoing struggle for racial equality in the United States. Camarillo is an emeritus professor of History from Stanford University, where he taught for forty-two years and is regarded as one of the pioneers in the development of Mexican American History and Chicano Studies. He earned both his B.A. (1970) and his Ph.D. (1975) in History at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and he has authored several books that examine the Mexican American narratives through an ethnic studies lens.

Camarillo's understanding of the world around him began in the early 1950s in Compton, a city that, at that time, was not as racially diverse as it is today. For Camarillo, Compton was a formative place, where the complex dynamics of race unfolded and helped to shape his opinions of the community that surrounded him. Growing up, he was acutely aware of the tensions between his Mexican American heritage and other groups that lived in the same area. He describes how he learned about America's dark history later on in life, namely, while he was pursuing higher education at UCLA. However, it was through his pivotal upbringing in Compton that he came to understand the convergence of race, class, and identity in a profound and personal way. Through impactful anecdotes, Camarillo explores his early life and offers readers insights into the challenges he faced, including racial discrimination, identity struggles, and the systemic barriers that plagued his community. His book's title—*Compton in My Soul*—captures his deep connection and feelings about his hometown, which provided him with a foundation for his later pursuits in activism and scholarship.

Camarillo's memoir consists of three main parts. Part 1, "Rooted in Compton," explores how his family immigrated from Mexico during the Great Depression and discusses his life before adolescence. In Part 2, "Pursuing a Social Justice Passion," he talks about his early academic career and shares personal anecdotes of becoming involved in the Chicano civil rights movement in Los Angeles County. This involvement helped solidify his passion for social justice and change. Part 3, "Circling Back to My Origins," discusses his attempts to enact



change in his community through understanding the difficulties of growing up in a segregated Compton. His lived experiences further inspired his passion for history and social justice through the exploration of race and ethnic studies.

One of the most compelling aspects of Camarillo's memoir is his assessment of the evolution of his racial identity and his increasing involvement in activism. As a young man, he was drawn to the civil rights movement and the overall push for social justice that was gaining momentum in the 1960s: "My intellectual and social justice awakening involved strife as well as soul searching." (124) On both local and national levels, this served as a decisive movement that inspired his life's work. Camarillo describes how encounters with racism motivated him to seek solutions not only for himself but for his entire community. He describes being in elementary school and experiencing mistreatment by his teacher because of his race, when he accidentally injured a classmate: "I felt a sharp pain in my back. As I screamed, 'Ouch!' and quickly turned to see who had done this, there stood Mrs. Bailey with a horribly mean look on her face and a sharp pencil in her hand that she'd used to stab me." (68) Camarillo's quest for racial equality was driven by a belief that the rights of marginalized peoples could be realized through a combination of education, advocacy, and policy change. His memoir recounts the pivotal moments in his life that steered him toward academia, where he would become an influential scholar on race relations, specifically in Mexican American and African American communities. His commitment to racial justice is evident in his focus on social and political causes, including school desegregation, the empowerment of minority communities, and the push for equal opportunity in employment and housing. What makes his activism particularly moving is his insistence on understanding race relations through a multiethnic lens. Through this method, Camarillo stresses the importance of recognizing the diverse experiences of people of color in America. He believes that addressing inequalities requires acknowledging multiple forms of racism that affect different minority groups, specifically toward African Americans, Mexican Americans, and other ethnic minorities, and creating alliances across these communities to work toward a more inclusive society.

While *Compton in My Soul* is undoubtedly a memoir rooted in personal experience, it is also rich with academic insights. Camarillo, who has spent much of his life studying race and social inequality, enriches his narrative with historical context, connecting scholarly analysis and research to deepen his readers' understanding of racial issues. Through this method, he dissects not just the individual impact of racism but also its structural complexities. Policies, institutions, and historical narratives have perpetuated inequality over time, which he analyzes through reflections of his academic career and the role of higher education. In this way, he provides ways to promote social change that are both enlightening and inspiring. He discusses his work as a historian, his contributions to the study of Mexican American and African American communities, and his commitment to using education as a tool for liberation. His memoir emphasizes the importance of scholarship in shaping public discourse on race and social justice, and it serves as a testimony to the importance of intellectual participation in the fight for equality.

While studying this book, I quickly realized that I had chosen the wrong medium to read it, namely, my Kindle, in an attempt to save space in my ever-growing collection of books. This

was a mistake for a few reasons: first, I felt that I needed to highlight and annotate my thoughts almost immediately because Camarillo's reminiscences in describing his narratives were so fascinating; second, reading on my Kindle made the text undesirable and lacked a personal touch. I am not sure if others do this as well, but with a physical book, I can see how much I have left in a chapter, which motivates me to keep reading and reach my goals for the day. If I were to read this book again, I would, without question, opt for a physical book. In recommending this book, I believe that *Always Running: La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A.* by Luis A. Rodriguez (1993) would complement it beautifully, because it explores similar themes and narratives. Camarillo's writing style provides a clear understanding of the main points and themes, and he easily takes readers through his life experiences. Because Camarillo is a historian, be prepared to encounter a lot of contextual details that facilitate his analysis on the issues of racism and inequality during his early years in Compton. His decision to write his memoir in this way offers readers an insightful look at the intersection of personal experiences and historical analysis.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: *Jennifer Sanely Galarza of Lakewood, California, earned her A.A.s in History, Political Science, and Social and Behavioral Sciences (2024) at Cerritos College, California, and her B.A. in History (2026) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where she is a member, former vice president, and former president of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society).*

Chang, Kornel S.

*A Fractured Liberation: Korea under U.S. Occupation.*

The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2025.  
304 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780674258433.

Kornel S. Chang's new book, *A Fractured Liberation: Korea under U.S. Occupation*, provides insights into maneuverings during 1945–1948 at the end of World War II that directly influence today's Korean Peninsula. Chang tells the political and personal stories of this short period of time, while also describing possible turning points that might have led to different outcomes, maybe even a united Korean Peninsula. On August 8, 1945, the Korean people listened in awe to Emperor Hirohito's announcement that Japan would surrender to the Allies. After forty years of Japanese occupation, the Korean people felt free to reestablish their own government and restore their own culture. Disillusionment came quickly. Japanese occupation was replaced by two other occupiers, dividing their nation at the 38th parallel into North Korea, occupied by the Soviet Union's military, and South Korea, occupied by the U.S. military.

All this is a personal story for Chang, a Korean American. His grandparents fled from the northern part of Korea in 1946 to relocate to Seoul, and they later emigrated with their children to the United States, settling in Queens, New York. Family gatherings not only celebrated their Korean culture but also lamented the loss of the opportunity to attain a united Korean state, arguing as to which alternative—communism, capitalism, or something in between—would have been the solution. Growing up, Chang heard and absorbed the question of what might have been, and now, as a professor of History at Rutgers University, he presents it to us. Using a combination of personal narratives, cultural documents, official

records, photos, and scholarly accounts, Chang tells a detailed story, focusing on South Korea in the immediate three years after Japan's surrender. Most of us view the years of Korean occupation in the international context of an emerging Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Chang's narrative, however, focuses on the Korean people themselves, especially the many political groups among them who were struggling for power. He analyzes the role of the U.S. military in the context of competition between these local groups and explains missed opportunities that might have led to a different outcome for Korea. Chang sets the stage for Korea's liberation. At the end of World War II, many Koreans had never known independence. Japan had first made Korea its protectorate and then formally annexed it in 1910. Japanese colonization meant substituting the Japanese language, religion, and other parts of Japanese culture for anything Korean. Chang documents the underlying presence of Korean culture regardless of Japanese efforts to eliminate it. Throughout their country's occupation, Korean activists of every persuasion—whether communists, socialists, nationalists, or anarchists—kept the idea of an independent and unified Korean state alive in people's minds. Chang mentions that many of these activists—both men and women, upper class as well as peasants—held firmly to the idea of Korea's independence, even though their efforts often led to exile, to prison, and, for some, to death. He also emphasizes the divisions and tensions among these activists, divisions due to differing social backgrounds, as well as ideological divisions.

For a few weeks in the late summer of 1945, Koreans saw and felt their independence as a unified state, but that reality would not come to pass. Even before Japan's official surrender on September 2, 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union had reached an agreement to share the occupation of the Korean Peninsula. The United States would occupy the peninsula's southern part, below the 38th parallel, and the Soviet Union would occupy the peninsula's northern part. Both imposed military control. Despite this agreement and the imposition of military control, Korean activists continued their efforts for independence and unification. Chang explains an important characterization that the victorious Allied nations shared with regard to Korea. After World War I, colonization was accepted as a right of victorious nations. Japan wanted to be part of those victorious nations, so Korea became a "colony" governed by Japan, economically and culturally dominated. After World War II, Japan was seen by the United States as a defeated nation that had to be resurrected as a democracy, whereas Korea was seen as a "colony" that could be passed on to victorious nations, namely, the United States and the Soviet Union. Chang refers to this brief period of Korean hope and expectations as Korea's "Asian Spring," when the Korean people could have or should have reestablished an independent Korea as one nation. During the Japanese occupation, the Korean people had not stayed silent. Many groups had emerged, each representing different ideologies and parts of society, including anarchists, traditionalists, democrats, and communists. Their inability to unite and work together to overthrow the Japanese occupation continued into the brief period available to establish one Korean government after Japan's surrender.

The divisions among the Korean activists were one factor that thwarted unity, but another, crucial factor, as described by Chang, were the military leaders of the U.S. occupation forces. General Douglas MacArthur had taken responsibility for rehabilitating Japan but had little

interest in Korea. His main concern in 1945 was that the Soviet Union had immediately moved into the northern part of the Korean Peninsula, as agreed with the United States. Thus, MacArthur needed to move U.S. military troops and a military administration into South Korea before the Soviet Union could decide to occupy the entire peninsula. The closest U.S. military force was the XXIV Corps of the Tenth Army, at that time in Okinawa, Japan, under the command of Lieutenant General John Hodge. Hodge became the leader of South Korea's military government during the transition period, simply because his Corps was the physically closest and could arrive there fastest. MacArthur gave Hodge full authority in South Korea to do whatever he deemed appropriate. Hodge was conservative in his beliefs and actions, considering anything that opposed his approach as rebellious and supporting communism. Once the Japanese surrender had been accepted, the American flag was raised above the government buildings. Any efforts on the part of Koreans to regain their farming land or take control of their factories were opposed by Hodge, who sent troops and police to stop these actions, and had Koreans participating in them, or in protests, arrested. Hodge kept the colonial system, being more comfortable in taking advice from the Korean conservative elites, even though many of these had previously collaborated with the Japanese during their colonial rule. Hodge considered communism the basic threat, and his actions were guided by that belief. He disbanded workers' committees in factories, giving control to many of those who had supported the Japanese, and reappropriated land seized from landlords by peasants.

Chang's concluding chapter summarizes the many decisions taken during this short period of time, mostly by Hodge and his administration. The United States had already made one crucial decision by agreeing to split the peninsula into two separate regions under the control of the Soviet Union and the United States. The second crucial factor was to allow Lieutenant General Hodge to make policy decisions from his own perspective. These actions could have been different under a less rigid, less conservative administration, including allowing the establishment of a government by the Joint Commission and by maintaining the success of land reapportionment and workers' factory committees. Hodge also allowed the return of Syngman Rhee, which led to Rhee's eventual control of South Korea's government. Thus, decisions taken during these first three years after the end of World War II and the end of Japanese occupation set Korea's fate in motion.

Chang's writing style makes his work easy to read, and his references to his own family's involvement make it feel more direct to readers. His use of popular stories, music, photos, and other forms of popular documentation, along with historical scholarship to explain Korean culture, language, and traditions, makes the story both personal and informative. Connecting the story of these few years of transition to present-day Korea is one of the most eye-opening aspects of this book. Korea went from Japanese colonialism to a divided peninsula occupied by two victorious allies who became enemies. For recent generations who have only known today's North Korea and South Korea, this is a must-read book. All we have known are two states, divided by something called a "demilitarized zone" (DMZ). Chang's book provides a deeper understanding of why a divided Korea emerged from World War II from the perspective of the Korean people themselves, rather than just another chapter of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. More research on

this topic might expand beyond the transition period to examine the consequences of some of the decisions made by General Hodge, such as the authoritarian regime of Rhee, which lasted until 1960. It might also include more about how Kim Il-sung took control of North Korea. While both Kim and Rhee established authoritarian administrations, their goals and methods were different and had different consequences. Examining these differences would help us better understand the situation we see on the Korean Peninsula today.

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Davis, Elisabeth C.

*Catholic Sisters, Narratives of Authority, and the Native American Boarding Schools, 1847–1918.*

Lexington Books, 2024.

186 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9781666952520.

When I think about Indigenous boarding schools in the United States, both Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania and Sherman Indian School in California come to mind. While both of these are Christian by design (though not really anymore in the case of Sherman), neither was Catholic. Elisabeth C. Davis explores the Catholic Indigenous boarding schools in the United States in her new monograph, *Catholic Sisters, Narratives of Authority, and the Native American Boarding Schools, 1847–1918*. To attain a more holistic history of what it was like in these boarding schools, she analyzes four different schools, located from the Midwest to the West Coast. Davis writes chronologically, for the most part, with the beginnings and endings of her chapters having some overlap in the narrative. She also dives into how these schools began, along with how the Civil War and anti-denominationalism impacted them. Davis is a historian who specializes in women's history, Catholic history, and cultural history. She earned her Ph.D. (2020) and her Master of Science in Library Information (2022) at the University at Buffalo. Her area of expertise is the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century.

The first chapter, "A Brief History of Religion, Assimilation, and Education Prior to 1860," provides readers with background on how Indigenous boarding schools began in America. Davis accomplishes this by comparing traditional Christian schools with these Catholic ones in their approach to students. She emphasizes that the Catholic nuns tried not only to educate the children but also to ascertain what level of whiteness they could achieve by assimilating them into white society, therefore rendering them "civilized." (21) This echoes Richard Henry Pratt's infamous statement, "Kill the Indian, save the man," when he first proposed the creation of Carlisle, and thus launched the Indigenous boarding school program across the United States. ("Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections at the Nineteenth Annual Session Held in Denver, Colorado, June 23–29, 1892," ed. Isabel C. Barrows, Virginia L. Franks Memorial Library, 1892, 47.)

Davis's first case study pertains to the Osage Mission in Kansas between 1847 and 1870. There, a Jesuit by the name of John Schoenmakers was the primary driving force behind creating boarding schools for the Osage people to assimilate them better. Realizing he needed help

with this endeavor, he asked the Sisters of Loretto, a Catholic religious community in Kentucky, to educate the girls at the Indigenous schools. (29) The Sisters focused on teaching the girls domestic tasks and how to fit into white society, which included morals and “good Christian values.” (31–32) Many of the Sisters feared the Osage and having to live near them, resulting in a need to assert control over them through various forms of violence, including corporal punishment, cutting off the children’s hair, and enforcing white values. (33) Although this represented an effort to scare the girls in their charge, they still received pushback from them, mostly during the Civil War, when the Osage got tired of their land being taken away and committed to getting their land back. It was mostly Indigenous women who resisted the Sisters; however, the latter only used this as ammunition in their schools to show the difference between a good Indian and a bad Indian. (41) The stories about the Sisters of Loretto and their relationship with the Osage seem tumultuous and often contradictory. Since the accounts of this relationship largely come from the records that the Sisters kept, it is largely unknown how the Osage people felt about these Catholic women in their community.

The third chapter details the changes that occurred in the boarding schools after the Civil War. It explores imperialist ideas, such as Manifest Destiny, that were promoted to reunite the nation and settle the West. (49–50) Due to Westward expansion, the federal government created President Ulysses S. Grant’s Peace Policy of 1869. Ultimately, this policy placed reservations and Indigenous schools into the hands of religious groups. To ensure that schools would offer similar education, Grant invited representatives from the various denominations that took control over the Indigenous groups to attend education conferences. (51)

Davis’s second case comes in the fourth chapter, “Authority, Narrative, and Performance at the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus Missions in Avoca, Minnesota, 1884–1890.” State and federal policies changed how Indigenous people in the area were able to practice their culture and interact with the boarding schools, but another big invention impacted them as well: the railroad altered the landscape for those living away from both coasts. It made it easier to travel and facilitated the establishment of new towns. (60) The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus (SHCJ) strove to not only educate immigrants, usually Irish at the time, but also the Indigenous people in the area. This was done so they could become “upstanding citizens [...] which [...] was only possible through education.” (63) Although immigrants and Indigenous people both went through the same education program, their educators had very different plans for them. Immigrants were to become upstanding citizens, well adjusted to American society. Meanwhile, Indigenous people were expected to become docile and always look up to their white counterparts for aid and direction. SHCJ schools had their Indigenous students put on performances about being “noble savages” who had assimilated and held no qualms toward white people. (67) These performances were intended as demonstrations of their success in assimilating the girls in their charge. (72) Yet, while we know that these performances took place, there is no record of how successful they actually were. (70) What is more, Indigenous voices are lacking, as they were not invited back then to contribute to the narrative.

Chapter 5 explores the “Rise of Anti-Denominationalism, 1880–1918,” which was a new policy by the federal government to transform schools from denominationally controlled institutions into secular entities. While Catholic schools resisted this, some of them were slowly being defunded to implement this new idea. The eventual goal was for Indigenous students to attend regular public schools instead of boarding schools; (88) however, this was not something that many Indigenous families opted for when given the choice between a boarding school and a public school. (88) In chapter 6, “Constrictions on the Sisters of St. Francis and the Pawhuska Mission, Oklahoma, 1887–1915,” we learn that, while the Sisters of St. Francis did have some control over their charges, this control was being diminished by the federal government and Indigenous people resisting institutionalization. In the early 1900s, the school received less funding, and its contracts regularly came in late, causing financial issues. (99) Funds also became attached to how many students were enrolled at the school: fewer students meant less money. (102) While the school run by this group of nuns did struggle, this was not a unique occurrence for educational institutions at that time. By 1915, the drive to almost fully defund Catholic boarding schools became apparent, heralding the end stages of their existence.

Chapter 7, “The Sisters of St. Joseph at the Fort Yuma School, 1886–1900,” is a special case when examining Catholic Indigenous schools, for the nuns there became highly involved in tribal politics. They found it important to change Quechan politics to foster better relationships with those around them. When there was a power struggle between a few factions over who should lead the Quechan, the Sisters got involved and recommended someone who would be an ally to them. (117) However, the man they chose, Miguel, later tried to chase them away. (121) It was only once Miguel had been arrested that the Sisters left the region, since the new leader threatened to kill the woman in charge. (122) Thus, the mode of assimilation that the Sisters of St. Joseph chose ended up being a failure. This particular school lasted for the shortest amount of time and fostered resentment much more quickly than its predecessors.

Davis’s book joins those histories that seek to fill silences in the historical narrative, especially those pertaining to Indigenous people. A similar theme permeates *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* by David Wallace Adams (2024). When compared to Davis’s work, Adams’s book has a wider scope and does a better job of utilizing the Indigenous perspective. A resource for readers who enjoy Davis’s book or want to learn more about Indigenous boarding schools is a PBS Utah documentary, which can be found on YouTube: “Unspoken: America’s Native American Boarding Schools,” released in 2023; it uses oral histories from former boarding school students, thus offering a good baseline understanding of the Indigenous boarding schools, the ideals of assimilation, and the pursuit of whiteness in these institutions.

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Dieterich-Ward, Allen.

*Cradle of Conservation: An Environmental History of Pennsylvania.*

Pennsylvania Historical Association, 2024.

140 pages. Paperback. ISBN: 9781932304381.

William Penn, the founder of the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania, is quoted as saying, "Leave one acre of trees for every five cleared," but did it really happen that way? Environmental history is powerful, as it studies the relationship between the natural environment and how humanity has interacted with it through time; it allows us to reflect on where we have been and where we should go when it comes to our treatment of the earth. In his 2024 monograph, *Cradle of Conservation: An Environmental History of Pennsylvania*, Allen Dieterich-Ward teams up with the Pennsylvania Historical Association to bring us the fifth installment in a series pertaining to the history of Pennsylvania. Dieterich-Ward is a historian and director of graduate studies at Shippensburg University. *Cradle of Conservation* focuses on Pennsylvania's environmental history since the time when Indigenous people first used the land, through colonial times, the emergence of the United States, the industrialization of the nineteenth century, the era of conservatism, and more modern times.

*Cradle of Conservation* allows us to reflect on how Americans have related to the land of Pennsylvania over time and highlights its value when the Covid-19 pandemic hit and social distancing made parks and nature trails invaluable to people seeking open spaces. It is divided into five main chapters. Chapter 1, "Creating Penn's Woods," introduces readers to the first "Pennsylvanians" by using Algonquian and Iroquoian creation stories. When Indigenous people first inhabited the region, long before it became Pennsylvania, there was an important relationship between them—for example, the Haudenosaunee and the Lenape—and area's great river basins, including the Great Lakes basin, the Potomac River basin, the Susquehanna basin, and the Delaware basin. These great river systems and the "medieval optimum," which, as the author tells us, was a gradual increase in temperature followed by a time of cooling, facilitated a substantial population increase by about 1500 CE. According to Dieterich-Ward, while Indigenous people revered nature more than the Christians, both religiously and culturally, one should not romanticize their relationship with the natural environment. In fact, they, too, depleted the soil because of their agricultural practices, which, in turn, made them susceptible to warfare and tensions when they set out to seek other lands. This chapter also addresses how the newly arrived Europeans strove not just to survive but to exploit the land for as much monetary gain as possible.

As they expanded into the Americas, Europeans constantly sought new lands. *Cradle of Conservation* does a great job of introducing William Penn and the land grant he received as "Penn's Woods" or, latinized, Pennsylvania. In colonial times, Pennsylvania became a mining hub, and iron ore was one mineral of great significance. Dieterich-Ward takes readers to the historical site of Cornwall Furnace, where coal was processed for the production of iron. As the colony entered the transatlantic trade, the tanning of hides caused environmental damage. In southern Pennsylvania, farmers began producing food for export, particularly wheat, which was shipped to feed enslaved people in the Caribbean and other areas. Wheat was a key food source as it also fed local miners and iron workers. Dieterich-Ward tells us



that colonial Pennsylvanians soon started to mirror the Indigenous people's actions by abandoning fields once crop yields started to decrease due to soil depletion. This led to more and more land being cleared, and furnaces sprouted along the riverbanks. By 1760, Benjamin Franklin wrote in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* that fish were turning up dead in the rivers and that pollution needed to be regulated in some form. According to Dieterich-Ward, by the time of the American Revolution, much of Pennsylvania had passed from being communal Indigenous land to privately owned land.

Chapter 2, "Working Landscapes," conveys just how much of the Pennsylvania landscape was dominated by industrialization in the nineteenth century. Canals, railways, and roadways proliferated, but water travel remained much easier and quicker than overland travel. As canals were built, lumber had to be cut and dams were placed, and they interfered with the natural flow of rivers and, along with the urban centers, created the state's "industrial geography." The author refers to these as "sacrifice zones," defined by scholars as "regions where environmental quality is disregarded to provide cheap and abundant resources for distant areas." (45) By 1800, steam-powered waterworks provided Philadelphia with its first public water supply. This, in turn, facilitated a population increase from 68,000 in 1800 to over 350,000 by 1850. Dieterich-Ward's account of the state's industrialization and changing landscapes is though-provoking.

Chapter 3, "Conservation in the Keystone State," relates that, by the late nineteenth century, city dwellers in Philadelphia and elsewhere started to notice the damage urbanization was doing: due to corruption, the best sewer and water lines were routed to the richest neighborhoods; cities were dirty; and diseases were rampant. Dieterich-Ward describes how various factions of the population now began to work toward improvements, cleaning, giving lectures, and even planting trees. These were the roots of both progressivism, a left-leaning ideology concentrated on social reform, and conservatism, a concerted effort to preserve many of the open spaces left in the country. By the 1920s, there was even more collaboration to conserve "fish, wildlife, water, and forests." People invested in the beautification of cities by maintaining beautiful gardens. Progressives fought to improve the environment, but pollution and natural disasters continued to persist. In response to the Great Depression, the "New Deal" program changed the landscape yet again, as more infrastructure was built. The continued use of automobiles, the increase in pollution, and the concern for the environment led to the environmental movement in the latter part of the twentieth century.

In chapter 4, "Environmental Movements," the author describes how, during the 1930s and 1940s, more and more of the farmland of Pennsylvania was developed for suburbs. During the post-World War II era, environmental challenges were increasingly countered with politics and legislation. In chapter 5, "Post Industrial Pennsylvania," Dieterich-Ward focuses on Pennsylvania after the mines and other manufacturing plants had closed, and addresses the tension between environmental improvements and people trying to make a living. This chapter also touches on the delicate subject of "remediating former industrial sites." In the conclusion, the author reflects on how it remains difficult to balance "natural resource consumption" with conservationism. Continuing issues include fracking and oil drilling, the reuse of old industrial sites, and global warming. Dieterich-Ward argues that humanity still

needs natural spaces, as evident during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, when social distancing was implemented: as everything closed, people sought out the trails, the parks, and the nature reserves that we have today, thanks to the conservatism of the past. It would be a shame to return to a more polluted state, where even nature makes people sick.

The strength of *Cradle of Conservation* is its chronological and easy to follow historical approach. Dieterich-Ward uses a wide range of sources and quotes from well-known historical visitors, including Charles Dickens, and he explores writings in the *Philadelphia Tribune* and the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Overall, *Cradle of Conservation* is a great example for history students of how to use scholarly sources to create a narrative, and the book's notes suggest a lot of research material for further study. The book itself does not feel like a quick read because the material is very dense, and it brings forth information in such a way that it does not feel like a textbook nor does it feel like a novel. Even though this book highly suitable for history students, it is also recommended for the general public. It offers a great introduction to environmental history and the history of the state of Pennsylvania. A similar book, accessible to both history students and the general public, is *An Environmental History of the Civil War* by Judkin Browning and Timothy Silver (2020). Both books are very detailed and constructed in ways that make them both educational and enjoyable.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: Dania Trippi of Los Angeles, California, earned her A.A. in History and American Studies (2023) at Santa Ana College, California, and her B.A. in History (2026) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where she is a member of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society). She is a first-generation college student.

Graeber, David.

*Pirate Enlightenment, or the Real Libertalia*.

Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2023.

175 pages. Paperback. ISBN: 9781250321879.

The public image of the "pirate" has long been debated by experts and nonexperts alike. Some think of pirates as treasure hunters, following a map into unexplored territory, looking for buried valuables and generational wealth, all while sipping rum and sailing the high seas. Others think of piracy as an unsanctioned business operation that involves armed robberies, kidnappings, and hijackings. Seldom does anyone mention piracy and "democracy"—or "functioning society"—in the same breath. However one thinks of pirates, it is likely different than what David Graeber has discovered through his extensive research of early pirate activities. In the early modern period, European piracy flourished, with pirates flocking to Madagascar and establishing communities, governments, and social systems that have largely been overlooked. In *Pirate Enlightenment, or the Real Libertalia*, David Graeber explains what pirate life in the late 1600s and early 1700s was like, compares it to the Enlightenment in Europe, and challenges the idea that the Enlightenment was a purely European phenomenon.

The late David Graeber (1961–2020) was a professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics. He used to describe himself as both an anthropologist and an activist who put his thoughts to paper. Graeber published on a variety of topics, however, *Pirate*

*Enlightenment, or the Real Libertalia* is a collection of essays about the fieldwork he carried out in Madagascar between 1989 and 1991. Graeber passed away in 2020, leaving behind this great work, which was put together into a chapter-by-chapter book and published posthumously in 2023. Drawing from an incredible number of archival sources that pair well with his hands-on field research, Graeber skillfully makes his case. As a result, we are left with a detailed analysis of the main towns, characters, clans, and societies that flourished in the Malagasy region.

*Pirate Enlightenment, or the Real Libertalia* consists of four parts. In Part I, Graeber sets the stage for his research. He begins by discussing the idea of pirates and some of the characteristics of early Malagasy pirates. The latter were able to obtain their wealth or “booty” by executing raids and then bringing their newfound wealth to Madagascar. The issue for them was how to turn this material wealth into liquid currency. Turning up with literal boatloads of material wealth would have been suspicious, and the authorities would soon have been onto them, so the pirates had to find other ways to use their net wealth for their benefit. Consequently, when pirates landed in Madagascar with their riches, they used their wealth to assimilate with the natives. This practice led to many more connections and trading between the Malagasy people and the pirates. They traded goods and slaves, intermarried, and, before long, developed new societies—societies that were free of official government to begin with and, rather, developed into self-governed regions. Graeber successfully speaks about all of this by sharing the lived experiences of real towns like Foulpointe (Mahavelona) and Sainte-Marie (Nosy Boraha). He also shares valuable information about some of the main figures of these towns, such as Nathaniel North and Ratsimilaho, two people from completely different backgrounds who exemplify the culture clash between European pirates and Malagasy natives, and how they were able to assimilate with one another to create communities.

In Part II, Graeber takes a deeper dive into the Malagasy side of the story. He achieves this by insisting that the Enlightenment was not purely a product of the European mind; the Malagasy people also influenced and reflected the Enlightenment ideas of some of the most renowned Enlightenment thinkers, such as Rousseau and Montesquieu. One of the most evident arguments for this is how Malagasy society viewed and treated women. Women in Malagasy society were allowed to marry whom they chose, which is a very “enlightened” concept, proving Graeber’s claim that such ideals were not purely European. Bearing this in mind, Graeber explains that pirates intermarried with Malagasy women to establish connections and network their way through the society. In Malagasy culture, women and their lineage implied particular power, thus marrying women from powerful families was beneficial for the settling pirates. On the other hand, the women were attracted to the pirates because the latter had a lot of capital. Thus, there were trade-offs for both parties: the pirates gained social status, and the Malagasy women gained wealthy men. An example of the offspring from these alliances was Ratsimilaho, a central figure in Graeber’s work. Ratsimilaho was the son of a Malagasy queen and an English pirate. He became the ruler of the Betsimisaraka Confederation, which Graeber identifies as one of the most prominent examples of an enlightened society on the island of Madagascar, created by both native Malagasy and settlers together.

The study of the Betsimisaraka Confederation and its leader Ratsimilaho, takes up Part III of the text. Graeber notes immediately that the Betsimisaraka Confederation was “to some degree [...] a political experiment, fusing political models and principles derived from the pirates, and from other foreign sources, with the existing political traditions of the coast, to create something with little resemblance to what came before.” (88) According to Graeber, there was really no solid political system in place. At the time, Madagascar was experimenting with a form of socialism, which was rejected by the Betsimisaraka Confederation. Also, there were many rivalries between various pirate clans, which caused conflict. This was not beneficial, so Ratsimilaho organized what became known as the “Great Kabary,” a political meeting that called upon the leaders of pirate clans, particularly the aggressive Tsikoa, and neighboring clashing clans around the greater Saint-Marie area, to stop fighting and help each other, thus establishing the Betsimisaraka Confederation. The Betsimisaraka had a disseminated government, which saw elites and leaders of smaller groups within the Confederation work together and trade with each other. This rejection of a centralized government aligns with Enlightenment ideals. And Ratsimilaho’s reign was not short-lived. The Betsimisaraka Confederation lasted thirty years, a long time in an age when conquering and wars were common. Here, the author does include a refutable point that women were explicitly excluded from this society and only served in lesser capacities, which counters Enlightenment thought and the book’s earlier argument that women played an important role. It shows that, while many enlightened ideas were present in the pirate scene, it was not always a perfect representation. This is central to the author’s argument, and it is refreshing to see him admit flaws, while also following this point up with evidence that women did take part in some aspects of Betsimisaraka life.

In Part IV, Graeber collects his thoughts on his essays. He recognizes that most people credit the Enlightenment to “full flowering in cities like Paris, Edinburgh, Königsberg, and Philadelphia.” (141) Graeber then finalizes his argument, stating that the Enlightenment was, in fact, a worldwide phenomenon that started well before the publicly recognized time of the European Enlightenment, and that the “Pirate Enlightenment,” as he calls it, was a prominent example of this. Graeber highlights political experiments and decentralized power in major pirate confederations and clans as examples. One other point that Graeber targets is the issue of “Libertalia,” namely, the myth of a “pirate utopia” that is said to have existed. Graeber asserts that, while there may not be concrete evidence that Libertalia existed, the “Real Libertalia” was the Betsimisaraka Confederation, which may well have been the inspiration for the legend. Taken together, the author’s arguments are well assembled in his conclusion.

*Pirate Enlightenment, or the Real Libertalia* is a truly fascinating work that provides an extremely unique perspective on an otherwise sore subject. No doubt, piracy is a brutal and immoral practice. It involves stealing, slavery, and sometimes death. This makes it so impressive that David Graeber was able to look past all of this and find an intellectual perspective for readers to take in about piracy. Fellow author Marcus Rediker of *The Nation* has also written on the subject in his book titled *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (2004), and he calls Graeber’s work “one of the most creative books ever published on the history of piracy” in his short review on the back of Graeber’s monograph. This kind of appraisal is a confirmation of Graeber’s significant accomplishment and

advanced thinking about both piracy and Enlightenment thinking. As far as the book's structure is concerned, Graeber himself admits that its chronology is not perfect, but the events are organized sensibly to flow with the author's arguments—and the author's arguments are strong, well-supported, and make for a fascinating read.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: Jackson Giovanni Saieva of Buena Park, California, earned his B.A. in History (2026) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).

Ina, Satsuki.

*The Poet and the Silk Girl: A Memoir of Love, Imprisonment, and Protest.*

Heyday, 2024.

312 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9781597146265.

"It was love for their children that guided my parents' decisions, some of which had painful consequences." (286) Satsuki Ina's memoir, *The Poet and the Silk Girl: A Memoir of Love, Imprisonment, and Protest* (2024), intricately weaves her family's story into the historical backdrop of the unjust World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans. Through historical archives and the unearthing of her deceased parents' ephemera of poetry, letters, photographs, and diary entries, Ina's memoir conveys the vulnerable and intimate emotions the Japanese American community faced as they navigated wartime hysteria, incarceration, systemic racism, resistance, and the struggle for survival. Ina's use and interpretation of her parents' letters and diaries are especially beneficial in providing a richer and more human dimension to the historical analysis of World War II Japanese American incarceration, filling the gaps of traditional history and providing a more nuanced understanding of this public injustice. Through its interdisciplinary approach and use of personal narrative, *The Poet and the Silk Girl* not only recovers Ina's family's story but also sheds light on how Japanese American incarceration and its resulting trauma have and continue to shape Japanese American identities across generations.

Dr. Satsuki Ina is a professor emeritus at California State University, Sacramento, a consulting psychotherapist specializing in trauma, a community activist, an Emmy Award-winning documentarian, and a co-founder of the action project Tsuru for Solidarity. Her documentaries, *Children of the Camps* and *From a Silk Cocoon*, both focus on the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans. Along with her academic and work experience, Ina's personal background as a Sansei born in the Tule Lake Segregation Center during World War II gives her a unique positionality, allowing her to shed light on the effects that incarceration had on those in camps, including children, and how it affected the generations that followed. With her expertise and lived experiences, she can accurately explain the cultural nuances and why historical silences have long since burdened the Japanese American community. Ina's interdisciplinary approach, which combines history, psychology, and Asian American studies, facilitates a more holistic understanding of the Japanese American incarceration, thereby building upon previous scholarship and contributing to those fields.

Having unearthed her parents' ephemera, Ina is able to piece together the story of her parents' wartime experience and better understand their actions and the consequences of their choices, which have shaped her own life. Chapters 1 through 8 showcase how her

parents' belief and hope in the U.S. government deteriorated over time. Their sense of belonging in America was tried, tested, and ultimately severed as their own government repeatedly let them down. Despite being American-born citizens, Ina's newlywed parents, Shizuko and Itaru, were taken from their San Francisco home and forcibly held in six different prison camps between 1942 and 1946. Like the other prisoners, Shizuko and Itaru had no control over their circumstances. They knew little about the consequences of their decisions, resulting in them being repeatedly traumatized by the shifting sands of government whims. (219) Ina explains that her parents' No-No responses to the loyalty questionnaire were never an indicator of a "crisis of loyalty;" instead, they "reflected a crisis of faith in their own country, faith that their government would protect them and afford them the rights and privileges guaranteed to all U.S. citizens." (86) After years of repeated betrayal of their trust and charges of disloyalty, along with the birth of their two children, Ina's parents decided that the best path for their family's future was to renounce their American citizenship and repatriate to Japan. However, after the war, many renunciants, including Ina's parents, sought to have their citizenship restored, since they had been coerced under duress. Ina's parents eventually had their U.S. citizenship reinstated thirteen years after having been released from the camp. (281)

While Ina's memoir employs a chronological framework, it draws connections between the past and more recent events, thereby enhancing its impact and supporting the author's argument that incarceration continues to affect the Japanese American community and subsequent generations. Chapter 4 opens with an anecdote from Ina's time at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1964, during the Free Speech Movement, describing how her mother and father vehemently urged her not to participate in the protests. It was during this time that Ina's parents, who seldom discussed their camp experiences, revealed how they had renounced their citizenship during the war. Ina states, "my mother gently put her hand on mine. When she spoke, I was surprised in the sternness of her voice. 'Do not protest. Bad things will happen.'" (98–99) Ina explains that, like others who survived the punishment of mass incarceration, her mother passed on survival lessons to her children that required them to respect authority and never challenge it, work harder than others to prove their worthiness, and keep their heads down to not attract attention to themselves. (232) This mentality also took shape in the erasure of Japanese identity to appear "more American." In chapter 8, Ina states that it was only in her thirties that she discovered that her first name was not "Sandy" but actually "Satsuki," which she thought was her middle name. After the war and entering school in Cincinnati, teachers advised Ina's parents that she and her older brother needed "real American names" to be "real Americans." (281) Ina's reclaiming of her birth name distraught her mother as "anything seemingly 'un-American' would trigger her fear for our safety and security." (281) For Ina's parents' generation, silence was a form of protection, erasure of Japanese identity was a means of survival, and loyalty could only be proven by keeping one's head down. Japanese American incarceration had hammered these beliefs into their being and unintentionally passed these "dire lessons for how to live and survive in an unsafe world" (286) on to the next generation. To conclude the memoir, chapter 9 discusses Ina's journey of reclaiming her identity and her present-day involvement in activism. She closes her work with a profound statement: "When we weave our stories into

the fabric of our American history, unfettered by euphemisms, distortions, and denials, truth and healing will follow." (287)

Like *The Poet and the Silk Girl*, the film *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige* (1991) also involves the struggle to uncover one's family story. It centers on the Sansei director Rea Tajiri's search to uncover her family's story due to the absence of oppositional media, the overwhelming presence of dominant media, and her struggle to recall memories that she did not personally experience. With this poetic composition of recorded history and non-recorded memory, Tajiri is left to re-imagine and re-create what has been stolen and lost, prompting questions about collective history, collective memory, and postmemory. Ina and Tajiri were both left in the dark regarding their family stories. However, Ina's parents' ephemera offered the opposing evidence that Tajiri so desperately sought, enabling a more detailed account of Ina's family's story and allowing her questions to be answered. In contrast, Tajiri's film highlights her lack of documentation and unanswered questions, revealing another dimension of the Japanese American experience—one I find relatable as a Yonsei searching for my own answers. Despite their different approaches, both works challenge their audiences to question the long-term effects of the World War II Japanese American incarceration. They complement each other when compared, highlighting the multifaceted experiences of Japanese Americans as they attempt to recover their lost history.

*The Poet and the Silk Girl: A Memoir of Love, Imprisonment, and Protest* is a heartbreaking and reflective read. One can feel the emotions of Ina's parents, Shizuko and Itaru, through their ephemeral poetry, letters, and diary entries as they navigated such uncertain and tumultuous times. While focusing primarily on Ina's own family and experience as a case study, the memoir invites broader reflection on Japanese American collective memory and identity. Each chapter takes readers on a journey of understanding Japanese American history more intimately, the cultural nuances and complexities of the community, and the psychological impact incarceration had on the victims and the generations that followed them. The central theme of intergenerational trauma and the long-term effects of incarceration is thoroughly depicted and explained without feeling overwhelmingly academic. The narrative retelling of her parents' story and her own journey of healing makes the work compelling and inspirational, humanizing history and ongoing trauma. It is an essential read for students of Asian American history, trauma psychotherapists, and all those who yearn to reclaim their own family history. Sansei and Yonsei continue to suffer from their ancestors' incarceration, as many incarcerated victims avoided discussing their camp experiences with their children and grandchildren due to shame, trauma, and fear. These later generations are left with questions that cannot be answered, as the stories of the Issei and Nisei die alongside them. With the population of incarcerated World War II Japanese Americans dwindling, Ina's memoir is more relevant than ever, encouraging others to discover and claim their own family stories to "collectively challenge the distortions and lies that have suppressed the truth and the facts of our traumatic history" before it is too late. (287)

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MacDonnell, Francis.

*Policing Show Business: J. Edgar Hoover, the Hollywood Blacklist, and Cold War Movies.*

University Press of Kansas, 2024.

328 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780700637935.

The premise of Francis MacDonnell's *Policing Show Business* is a potent and timely one: it posits that the political divide and turmoil fragmenting the United States today are not unique to our era but were just as intensely prevalent during World War II and its aftermath. MacDonnell's 2024 publication looks critically at the history of Hollywood at the beginning of the Cold War, specifically analyzing the complex and often clandestine dynamics of J. Edgar Hoover's concerted campaign to ensure that the perceived communist agenda was meticulously and ruthlessly expunged from the American entertainment industry. This period represents a crucial intersection of national security fears, cultural production, and the abuse of executive power, establishing a precedent that would have lasting effects on American society and artistic freedom. *Policing Show Business* is of profound importance precisely because it serves as a historical mirror, demonstrating a deep and recurrent ideological schism within the nation. The book's comprehensive examination of the Cold War political divide clearly indicates the current political landscape of the United States as a direct comparable to the struggles of that era, highlighting how polarized political differences continue to challenge the nation's integrity and cultural output. The historical anxiety over "un-American" activities during the 1940s and 1950s finds its modern echo in today's polarization, giving the historical narrative compelling contemporary relevance. The depth of MacDonnell's analysis lies in connecting the historical mechanisms of fear and control directly to present-day social divisions, making the study of the blacklist more than just a closed chapter in history, but rather an ongoing lesson in the fragility of democracy under pressure.

MacDonnell's work brings to light how numerous influential Hollywood figures actively participated in this ideological policing, acting as confidential informants or sharing the political fears of officials determined to keep American film "free of outside influence," defined specifically as communist ideology. Among the most prominent collaborators with the G-men—a colloquial term for FBI agents—were cultural giants such as Walt Disney, John Wayne, and Cecil B. DeMille. These individuals were profoundly influential and willingly aligned themselves with Hoover's campaign, believing they were acting as patriotic gatekeepers. MacDonnell's scholarly rigor is founded on extensive archival research, utilizing FBI documents and correspondence. Excerpts from these materials are particularly illuminating, revealing power dynamics where Hoover maintained a calculated distance, while many stars viewed collaboration as an honor and a testament to their loyalty. Cecil B. DeMille's eagerness to serve the federal cause is starkly illustrated by his letter to Hoover, promising, "I shall be ready at any and all times to be of further service in any way you care to call upon me." This mindset exemplifies the Hollywood elite who saw themselves as patriotic ideological sentinels. The intelligence gained from these loyal stars was crucial in



constructing and maintaining the infamous blacklist: a comprehensive ledger used to mark actors, directors, screenwriters, companies, and even specific movies believed to harbor communist influences. The ultimate objective was nothing less than to prevent American citizens from being “turned toward the ways of communism” through cinematic messaging, establishing a pervasive culture of suspicion.

The public phase of anti-communist fervor began not with the FBI’s internal lists, but with the actions of the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Its highly publicized 1947 hearing led to the blacklisting of the “Hollywood 10,” signaling that ideological nonconformity would result in professional ruin. HUAC extended its terrifying reach beyond the movie industry, often targeting individuals with differing political ideologies, effectively using its platform as a tool for political conformity rather than purely investigating espionage. As Cold War anxieties deepened globally, HUAC’s hearings became public spectacles, punishing dissent and further polarizing the industry. The dragnet often targeted anyone who simply held different political ideologies than the Republican party, which controlled the committee. In Hollywood, powerful organizations served as internal allies to ideological conservatism. The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Directors Guild actively aided Hoover’s scrutiny. By collaborating with federal investigators, they placed Hollywood’s creative output under intense pressure, ensuring that the anti-communist narrative was promoted or went unchallenged. This collaborative dynamic underscores the terrifying efficacy of the blacklist as a political and economic weapon. The ensuing ideological warfare transformed filmmaking into a battleground for the American soul, setting a profound precedent for how political anxieties could penetrate and control the realm of entertainment. The combined monitoring by the FBI and HUAC enforced a widespread culture of self-censorship, leading to an era of cultural production defined by thematic conformity where the perceived threat of communism overshadowed creative freedom.

MacDonnell’s decision on the book’s structure makes for an immersive reading experience that elevates *Policing Show Business* above a standard historical account. The organization of the material is highly effective: each of the parts and sections builds upon the last, progressively revealing the terrifying scope of Hoover’s influence from initial intelligence gathering to the full implementation of the blacklist. While the table of contents suggests a traditional chronological flow, MacDonnell’s internal chapter progression is sophisticated. The author justifies that some dates are presented out of chronological order to give necessary context and ensure that the emotional and political stakes are immediately clear, prioritizing thematic coherence over a strict sequence of events. This structural choice is key to the book’s effectiveness, allowing MacDonnell to draw connections across disparate events and demonstrate the cumulative impact of political repression. The methodology underscores the book’s commitment to presenting a cohesive narrative about the nature of ideological control, rather than just the sequence of its implementation. The book’s critical strength lies in its archival depth, utilizing quotations pulled directly from FBI archives and personal correspondence. This approach provides a deep and visceral understanding of the events, avoiding the dry enumeration of facts. Instead, MacDonnell gives an inside view into the attitudes of both the patriotic zealots and the fearful targets of their surveillance. By organizing the work around key themes—such as the role of informants, the mechanics of

the blacklist, or the profile of dissent—MacDonnell successfully translates abstract ideological conflict into a series of compelling human struggles. The inclusion of parts dedicated to the legacy of the blacklist and its eventual, gradual erosion provides the necessary structural closure, demonstrating the long-lasting professional and personal damage inflicted on the industry.

Despite the pervasive atmosphere of conformity enforced by the FBI and HUAC, a critical figure who emerged as a powerful counterforce was Dore Schary, the liberal head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). Schary was an enormous ideological threat to Hoover and the MPA, seen as the biggest obstacle to their complete control over Hollywood's ideological output. Using his powerful position, Schary fostered a culture of resistance, deliberately allowing for the creation of message movies—films that injected liberal themes into traditional escapist fare. This was an active act of ideological defiance, characterized by intellectual boldness and managerial protection for writers and directors who shared Schary's progressive viewpoint, briefly carving out a sanctuary within the monolithic studio system. Schary's studio became known for tackling difficult or socially relevant topics, a stark contrast to the escapist and often propagandistic content favored by the anti-communist crusaders. At a time when virtually all movies were under the watchful eye of Hoover and the MPA—films were being scrutinized for a single line of dialogue or a subtle plot point that could be interpreted as un-American—MGM was bravely creating movies that went against the grain. They were placing new spins on the traditional movies that Hollywood had been making, often advocating for themes of social justice, civil liberties, and individual rights. Ultimately, the relentless political pressure proved too great, and Schary was removed as head of MGM. Following his departure, the political opposition he faced was relentless, haunting him until his retirement in 1961. Schary was the face of executive opposition to Hoover, and his story is a poignant testament to the personal cost of standing up for one's principles. He risked everything—reputation, career, and livelihood—to hold fast to what he believed was right. MacDonnell uses Schary's resistance to humanize the political conflict, showing how abstract national security fears translated into professional ruin for an executive who valued creative freedom. His eventual resignation is a somber testament to the total victory of the anti-communist forces in the studio system. The detailed account of Schary's resistance highlights the devastating effectiveness of the Cold War machine, even against those at the pinnacle of cultural power.

The most commendable aspect of MacDonnell's writing is its impartial tone. The text avoids taking a side when assessing Hoover and his war against perceived communism in Hollywood. Given the intensely charged nature of the subject, the author achieves a masterful balance by letting the facts and archival quotes speak for themselves, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions on Hoover's actions. This intellectual honesty is the book's greatest strength, enabling it to function as a genuine historical resource and a thoughtful commentary on the perennial clash between security, loyalty, and freedom of expression in the United States.

The meticulous details concerning power dynamics, the chilling impact of the blacklist on individual careers, and the complicity of powerful institutions make *Policing Show Business*

an essential text for understanding how ideological paranoia can corrode cultural integrity and democratic principles. By presenting evidence without over moralizing, MacDonnell enhances his credibility, providing a nuanced portrait of historical actors motivated by a complex mix of patriotism, ambition, and fear. The book avoids judging past figures solely by modern standards; instead, it places their actions into the heightened context of the early Cold War. This balanced approach allows MacDonnell to detail the abuses of power, the surveillance, the blacklisting, and the infringement on civil liberties, while simultaneously providing the political framework that made these actions seem justifiable to their proponents. Ultimately, this neutral perspective transforms the book into a profound and lasting examination of how the forces of national security, when unchecked, can be wielded to enforce political conformity, making its historical lessons timeless. The author's restraint in judgment ensures that the horror of the blacklist speaks for itself through the documented experiences of those who suffered professional and personal ruin. *Policing Show Business* is a must-read that shows the dangers of political fear and how easily it can divide a company, as well as a nation. The book's comprehensive scope, covering the dual threats of both FBI investigation and HUAC spectacle, coupled with the internal complicity of powerful Hollywood figures, creates a complete picture of the censorship mechanism. The depth of the archival research elevates the work beyond standard Cold War histories, making MacDonnell's monograph a defining work on the intersection of culture, power, and political paranoia in the mid-twentieth-century United States.

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Nolan, Rachel.

*Until I Find You: Disappeared Children and Coercive Adoptions in Guatemala.*

Harvard University Press, 2024.  
310 pages. eBook. ISBN: 9780674270350.

Some of the darkest stories live behind the façades of righteousness. Throughout the twentieth century, humanitarianism influenced interventions, adoptions, and aid programs. Compassion soon fell to coercion, leading to one of Latin America's legacies of violence: systematic trafficking and international adoptions. The unsettling occurrence that led to thousands of children's disappearances has sparked many scholarly works—including Laura Briggs's *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (2012) and Erin Siegal McIntyre's *Finding Fernanda: Two Mothers, One Child, and a Cross-Border Search for Truth* (2011)—that explore how adoption industries reproduced colonial hierarchies. In 2024, Rachel Nolan published the scholarly monograph *Until I Find You: Disappeared Children and Coercive Adoptions in Guatemala*, uncovering how the disappearance of Mayan children were disguised as rescues who needed homes. From 1960 to 1996, Guatemala experienced a civil war in which the state pursued military campaigns that disproportionately affected the Indigenous Mayan region. Displacement and the weakened legal protection defined everyday life, separating many children from their families. By tracing how false humanitarian aid intertwined with Cold War policies, Nolan

reveals how Guatemala's adoption industry grew out of counterinsurgency and ended only after an international scandal forced change.

Nolan, a historian and journalist who currently teaches international relations at Boston University, is an expert in modern Latin American history, with a focus on U.S.-Latin American relations, and uses an archival and oral history approach. She earned her Ph.D. in Latin American and Caribbean History at New York University (NYU) and has extensive experience reporting on Latin American human rights violations for *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*. *Until I Find You* is her first book, and it has already reshaped scholars' understanding by showing how national identities are constructed through politically influenced memories to create compelling national narratives, especially in post-conflict periods. Using interviews, criminal case files, and social reports, Nolan's work reconstructs the operations of lawyers, brokers, and orphanages that facilitated thousands of adoptions over a period of thirty years.

Rather than following a simple chronology, Nolan structures her book as a three-part investigation, tracing how disappearance became policy and how memory became resistance. The opening chapters explain how falsified paperwork and a motto emphasizing the "best interest of the child" led to coercion and the legalization of abduction during the Guatemalan Civil War. (34) Children were sent to countries like the United States and Canada, as well as all over Europe. *Until I Find You* then moves into the adoption business, linked to privatization and global demand in the 1980s and 1990s. Nolan details high-profile incidents like the infamous Piñata case, a kidnapping with multiple murders, showcasing how far the adoption rings were willing to go. (91) These organizations made up to \$15,000 per child with little to no remorse, which can be seen in the chilling interviews with adoption lawyers. (90, 172) The book's final chapters center on postwar Guatemala, when mothers and adoptees stood with human rights advocates to confront the crimes that had been committed. One of Nolan's strongest contributions is her focus on revealing that thousands of children had already been placed with families in the United States before efforts to halt these kidnapping adoptions even began. (223) Rumor and memory functioned as an alternative archive. Nolan fills in the gaps in falsified files and missing documents to reveal authentic stories of the Mayan communities. (172) Her ability to transform manipulated and fragmented records into historical evidence helps her achieve the central goal of showing how humanitarianism and violence can be joined together. By using a range of sources from state records to social reports, she gives a comprehensive and reflective history of what happened to the disappeared children in Guatemala.

*Until I Find You* has several strengths that make it stand out for its scholarship and subaltern narrative. Nolan transforms archival fragments into critiques of power and memory. By reinterpreting adoption files, Nolan illustrates how social workers and lawyers fabricated and falsified paperwork, thereby facilitating the disappearances of children. (28) By shedding light on the false adoption record, once seen as the official story that erased Indigenous identity, she exposes how bureaucracy itself enabled violence. (134) For decades, Latin American elites tried to rid their countries of Mayan communities, but the latter's stories and resistance will no longer be silenced or obscured because of the work of scholars like Nolan. Her interpretive precision turns official documents into moral evidence and advances the historiography on

state archives and humanitarianism. (139) Nolan writes a powerful, empathetic history that allows readers to grasp how institutions normalize coercion.

Another defining strength of *Until I Find You* is its control of narrative and scale. The story of Dolores Preat, kidnapped in 1984 and rediscovered decades later, functions as more than a biography; it becomes a lens for Nolan to expose how morality, capitalism, and empire converge to commodify children. (3) Nolan's argument that "colonial and Cold War violence marched in lockstep" captures the link between humanitarian rhetoric and centuries of anti-Indigenous policies, reframing adoption as a continuation of this colonial domination. (155) Nolan's clarity and restraint let emotion strengthen her analysis rather than overwhelm it, giving the book lasting power and credibility. The combination of narrative intimacy and documentary rigor grounds her argument that the adoption industry's success relied on the same hierarchy of race, gender, and class that fueled Guatemala's decades-long violence.

Nolan uses comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to reinforce her book's strengths. While other scholarly works, including Briggs's *Somebody's Children* and McIntyre's *Finding Fernanda*, discuss how humanitarian language conceals systems of inequality, Nolan broadens the context. By connecting Francoist Spain, Nazi Germany, and settler colonies' Indigenous child removals, she elevates Guatemala's horrific adoptions from a national strategy into a global framework. (155) The way she draws on feminist and postcolonial theories makes *Until I Find You* a model of comparative microhistory that is detailed in its research and creative in its scope. Unlike other works on similar topics, Nolan demonstrates with striking precision how humanitarian language itself became a mechanism of disappearance and other violence committed against the Indigenous communities. Nolan's strong analysis comes from a strong moral conviction that threads through her writing, giving the book an emotional force even as it raises questions about the limits of representing trauma in historical narratives. Her handling of falsified documents, survivor testimonies, and state complicity translates absences into arguments, ensuring that those who disappeared are not only remembered but become actors in the historical narratives. (194) Nolan combines empathy with academic discipline, something few scholars successfully achieve. (195) *Until I Find You* allows history to recognize how far the mistreatment went with Indigenous children, but it opens the door to challenges that accompany such an ambitious scope, which becomes apparent when considering the book's few limitations.

While *Until I Find You* succeeds in reframing humanitarianism and the history of coerced adoptions, its broad scope sometimes stretches the balance between emotional detail and analytical focus. Nolan's decision to weave local testimonies into a global framework sometimes leads to an uneven pacing and her argument being overshadowed by a larger theoretical lens. (168) Her moral clarity can also simplify the mixed motives of adoption lawyers and social workers, whose actions reflected self-interest and their own twisted justice during Guatemala's instability. (171) At certain points, the density of her archival evidence and global comparisons can overwhelm readers, especially during abrupt moves between testimonies and policy discussions. These moments of tension also reflect the scale of Nolan's ambition to put this story into a single frame, which is often difficult for historians to achieve. Beyond this, Nolan faces methodological constraints that reveal the difficulty of

reconstructing history on contested memories and partial archives. Her use of oral histories and rumor over traditional archives raises questions about the limits of memory, even though she is careful to acknowledge these gaps. (193) In the field of oral history, scholars face the question of what is considered fact, but it is essential to remember that there are entire societies who would not have any history were it not for their oral traditions. These issues show how difficult it is to write about a past shaped by incomplete records and lasting trauma, a challenge Nolan tackles with methodological care and moral awareness.

Few works confront the contradictions inherent in humanitarianism with the precision and decolonial effort of *Until I Find You*. Nolan has transformed what might have been a rescue story into a penetrating investigation of how moral authority can serve as a vehicle of domination. Through rigorous research and a strong ethical focus, she has exposed the blurred line between protection and coercion, revealing how humanitarian ideals were ultimately corrupted by the pursuit of power and financial gain. Her narrative does more than just document Guatemala's coerced adoptions; it illustrates the global structures that allowed for additional layers of exploitation and violence against the Mayan communities rather than showing them long-overdue compassion. *Until I Find You* is essential reading for scholars of modern Latin America, particularly those focused on Central America and Indigenous studies. Beyond that, it is a valuable resource for those engaged in human rights studies, adoption and family histories, genocide studies, and memory studies, as well as legal and advocacy communities. *Until I Find You* stands as both evidence and warning—a testament to how truth can emerge from silence and how scholarship can reclaim the voices that history has sought to erase.

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Olsson, Tore C.

*Red Dead's History: A Video Game, an Obsession, and America's Violent Past.*

St. Martin's Press, 2024.

288 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9781250287700.

Tore C. Olsson's 2024 monograph, *Red Dead's History: A Video Game, an Obsession, and America's Violent Past*, is a history professor's attempt at fusing academic history with the media analysis of video games—a reconstruction of post-Civil War America through the lens of Rockstar Games' *Red Dead Redemption II* (2018). The result is a discussion of the United States from Reconstruction to Jim Crow, set against the backdrop of the video game. Olsson's core strength lies in connecting the video game to history, particularly the violent economic and racial transformations of the late nineteenth century. I think he falls short when using *Red Dead Redemption II* to teach history, failing to fully address the field of game design or the developers' own intentions and interpretations. Also, he has little to say about the original *Red Dead Redemption* (2010), to which *Red Dead Redemption II* serves as a prequel. Maybe he is fortunate enough to interview some game developers in his class, but they are not to be found in this book. These absences ultimately shape the book's strengths and limitations as a work of historical interpretation rather than media studies.

Olsson opens by recounting how he returned to gaming during the COVID-19 lockdowns and was drawn into *Red Dead Redemption II*. He acknowledges that much of what he discusses in the book is peripheral to the game itself, but it interested him, nonetheless. For readers, the feeling is mutual. As a professor of History at the University of Tennessee, Olsson leveraged his interest into a course on the period from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, which—due to its positive reception—helped generate this book. Its structure follows the game's geography: the West, the Deep South, and Appalachia. Each region anchors a series of historical essays framed by moments from the game: the Pinkerton pursuit, industrial expansion, racial violence, and the decline of frontier autonomy. Olsson's method resembles that of a guided lecture. Thus, the game functions less as a text for close reading than as a narrative map that links familiar topics in U.S. social and political history. The work's pedagogical origin explains both its accessibility and its methodological limits. Its *Kirkus* book review observes that Olsson "connects the past to the present in ways that are novel and fun," introducing readers to the intersections of industrial capitalism, race, and violence through using familiar pop culture as its vehicle. The book's accessibility and anecdotal pacing invite readers who might never open a monograph on the Gilded Age. Olsson uses the Van der Linde gang's eastward flight as a proxy for the end of Reconstruction and the imposition of Jim Crow, mapping their journey onto the contraction of freedom and the consolidation of state power. Yet his analytical depth fluctuates. Where his historical narrative is strongest—on convict leasing, disenfranchisement, and the Lost Cause—the connection to Rockstar's fictional universe can feel secondary, sometimes appearing only as a transitional hook between chapters.

Olsson's interpretation of the American West grounds the first third of the book. He defines "the West," and positions the game's imagined frontier alongside what he terms the "harnessing of the West," a phrase denoting both economic incorporation and cultural domestication. This term, as Andrew R. Graybill notes in the *Wall Street Journal*, overlaps heavily with Richard Maxwell Brown's earlier concept of the "Western Civil War of Incorporation." Graybill praises Olsson's enthusiasm and narrative skill but criticizes his limited citation of foundational historians, something I also noticed in my readthrough but did not think much of at the time. The omission suggests that Olsson writes for a general readership rather than the historical profession. Still, his thematic choice is sound, namely, the West of *Red Dead II*: corporate railroads, resource extraction, and Pinkerton surveillance all mirror the shift from frontier exceptionalism to systemic exploitation. Olsson highlights this tension effectively, showing that the mythic outlaw exists precisely because the state has closed the frontier.

The book's central section, dealing with the Deep South, is its most substantial. Here, Olsson ties *Red Dead's* Louisiana-inspired Saint Denis and Lemoyne to the real history of Reconstruction's collapse. He surveys racial terror, lynching, and chain gangs with clarity, citing the Thirteenth Amendment's loophole permitting involuntary servitude "as punishment for crime." He contextualizes the game's white convict gangs and absent Black prisoners as an elision of race in late-nineteenth-century carceral labor. These chapters make his thesis explicit: *Red Dead Redemption II* can serve as a starting point for exploring the continuity between slavery and incarceration, even if the game itself skirts that racial reality. As Olsson

argues, the player's white-centered perspective reflects broader patterns of historical forgetting. Yet the limits of his approach become visible here. Robert Whitaker's *History Respawned* review sharply criticizes *Red Dead's History* for "sidelining Red Dead itself" and for neglecting the ostensible scholarship of Esther Wright and John Wills on Rockstar's mythmaking. Whitaker, also known under the alias "Reviewer 2" on his review site, argues that Olsson's failure to engage the aforementioned literature undermines his claim of originality and weakens his critique of the game's politics. The absence is indeed glaring. Wright's *Rockstar Games and American History: Promotional Materials and the Construction of Authenticity* (2022), and the collection *Red Dead Redemption: History, Myth and Violence in the Video Game West* (2023), co-edited by Wills and Wright, came out before Olsson's book and directly address the issues Olsson raises—authenticity, nostalgia, and violence—yet he cites neither. As a result, he sometimes reproduces the game's preferred reading rather than interrogating it. His assertion that Rockstar "resists the recycling of tired myths" overlooks the studio's history of aestheticizing brutality for entertainment in its games. (207)

By contrast, non-academic reviewers have been more forgiving. Writing for *Irresponsible Reader*, H. C. Newton describes the book as "a great way to approach American history" and praises Olsson's engaging prose and wit. Newton notes that Olsson avoids pedanticism, by explaining terms such as "Jim Crow" and "antebellum" for audiences unfamiliar with historical jargon. This accessibility aligns with Olsson's public history ambitions, namely, to bridge the gap between the classroom and entertainment. Indeed, his choice of *Red Dead Redemption II*, a mass-market entertainment product rather than a documentary, mirrors earlier pedagogical uses of film in history teaching. His claim that the game is "the most influential American history video game since *The Oregon Trail*" may sound hyperbolic, but it reflects a genuine cultural reach. (introduction)

Olsson's treatment of race and memory in the later chapters approaches the book's most unsettling material. His discussion of the Lost Cause, Confederate monuments, and vigilante nostalgia exposes how the post-Reconstruction South mythologized defeat as virtue. The game's Lemoyne Raiders, bandits dressed as Confederate holdouts, serve as avatars of this delusion. I wish Olsson had focused more on the development of Confederate monuments, as plenty were built long after the Civil War, but he makes it clear that the statues were intended to intimidate. The final chapters on Appalachia trace how the region's stereotypes—violence, feuds, and backwardness—emerged from industrial incursions and class conflict. Olsson's analysis of the Hatfield–McCoy feud situates it within the broader exploitation of Appalachian resources, paralleling the Van der Linde gang's doomed attempt to survive modernization. The game still serves as a thematic starting point, but here Olsson's writing achieves the clarity of a social historian translating complex processes into narrative form. The book concludes by suggesting that a hypothetical prequel set in the 1870s might align with historical chronology, an implicit admission that Rockstar's execution undermines its own premise to a certain extent.

In over 240 pages, *Red Dead's History* teeters between academic enthusiasm and public-facing simplification. Historians may be underwhelmed by the minimal secondary literature and the lack of game developers as interviewees; meanwhile, general readers will be satisfied



by the combination of accessible prose and serious topics. Olsson's achievement lies less in original scholarship than in demonstrating how digital media can reframe historical inquiry. Graybill's *Wall Street Journal* review rightly calls his approach "an inspiring example of what can be done to bring the past to life," even if specialists might prefer more rigorous contextualization. Taken together, these responses outline the paradox of *Red Dead's History*. It succeeds as outreach, humanizing history through interactive culture, but falters as accurate historiography, repeating rather than dissecting Rockstar's ideological scaffolding. The book's optimism about video games as "powerful tools in teaching serious historical content" is well-founded. (6) When history is made interesting to students or teachers, it will make them more engaged. For students and casual readers, *Red Dead's History* offers an engaging introduction to Reconstruction-era themes. For scholars of historical media, it marks an entry point still waiting for the next, more critically literate step. Overall, Olsson's monograph is recommended—be it for public historians, educators interested in teaching history via popular culture, enjoyers of the *Red Dead* games, and general audiences interested in the intersections of U.S. history and storytelling.

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Polanco, Edward Anthony.

*Healing like Our Ancestors:*

*The Nahua Tiçitl, Gender, and Settler Colonialism in Central Mexico, 1535–1660.*

The University of Arizona Press, 2024.

282 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780816553426.

Like prisoners freed from Plato's cave, Edward Anthony Polanco asks his readers to step out of their shadowy world of common historical narratives and misinterpretations to look toward the light of Nahua epistemologies. Following the Nahua peoples of Central Mexico, in honor of his Indigenous grandfather, Polanco's 2024 monograph, *Healing like Our Ancestors: The Nahua Tiçitl, Gender, and Settler Colonialism in Central Mexico, 1535–1660*, challenges historians to rethink how the use of language, particularly Nahuatl, Kuna, and Spanish, can reshape the past as we believe we know it. It opens a window into sixteenth and seventeenth-century Central Mexico, revealing hidden complexities that have been lost or omitted from colonial records of medicine and gender since they had been skewed through colonizers' distorted lenses. By reading against the grain and in conjunction with native peoples' own sources, Polanco constructs a history that is inclusive to the Nahua people through linguistic and cultural means. Utilizing linguistic analysis and postcolonial methodology, Edward Anthony Polanco reconstructs the world of the *tiçih* (healers) and *tiçiyotl* (the body of healing knowledge), restoring agency and nuance to Nahua practitioners once dismissed through an Anglo-Christian lens or, in the case of female practitioners, reduced to midwives. Polanco calls for historians to change the way they see language, advocating for the use of alternative languages' terms to "eschew colonial terms." (xxi)

Edward Anthony Polanco is a historian specializing in Indigenous history, Nahua peoples, and the ways in which gender, medicine, and healing interact within the context of colonial Latin America. Polanco earned his Ph.D. in History, with a minor in Anthropology, at the University of Arizona. He holds both an M.A. and a B.A. in History from the University of California, Riverside, and he currently works as an associate professor in the Department of History at Virginia Tech and as the director of the Indigenous Studies program, overseeing the university's Indigenous Studies minor. He has published widely in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes, and he remains an active participant in the study of Nahua languages and Indigenous studies more broadly. *Healing Like Our Ancestors* was awarded the 2025 Phi Alpha Theta Best First Book Award. It explores Nahua healing traditions, the role of female healers, and the impact of Spanish colonial and settler practices on Indigenous medical systems. As such, it serves as a testament to the resilience of Indigenous knowledge and underscores the importance of decolonizing historical narratives. Polanco seems to be building on and inspired by scholars like Linda Tuhiwai Smith, adding more nuance to the historical discussion she has had with historian Stuart Hall regarding the underexplored roles of female *titiçih*. Historians interested in Polanco's work may indeed be interested in Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), which explores the many techniques, like oral histories, that may be employed by members of Indigenous communities to make their voices heard more broadly.

Polanco's book opens with a vivid account of his visit to the Real Jardín Botánico (Royal Botanical Garden) in Madrid, where plants from both the Old and New Worlds are displayed. He observes that their descriptions are strikingly two-dimensional, noting that the placards for the potato and tobacco emphasize only "[their] European 'discovery' in the Americas and the untapped knowledge about its [i.e., the potato's] nutritional attributes, unknown to Europeans until the eighteenth century. One short sentence explained that papas [potatoes] had been domesticated in the Chilean and Peruvian Andes eight thousand years ago." (3–4) Polanco critiques this Eurocentric framing for overlooking the plants' cultural and medicinal significance. For instance, tobacco had long served Indigenous peoples as a remedy for asthma, pain, and uterine irregularities. By contrasting these rich Indigenous understandings with flattened European narratives, Polanco establishes his central argument about the persistent erasure of Indigenous epistemologies.

Chapter 1, "The Hispanizing of Definitions of *Titiçih* and *Tiçiyotl*," explores how the Spanish settlers who interacted with the locals portrayed the scientific and healing works of the Nahua people. He calls them by the name they wish to be called, *titiçih* (healers) of the *tiçiyotl* (traditional Nahua healing practices), to return agency to them and avoid using terms shaped by Western ideas of medicine and culture. Using the Nahuatl terminology allows him to present a more accurate account of their practices and the social roles these *titiçih* held. The female *titiçih*, for instance, were often underrepresented or mischaracterized in Spanish-language sources, which mentioned them almost exclusively as midwives. This framing diminishes their authority, reshaping them to fit European understandings instead of Nahua realities. Polanco draws on colonial sources such as Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general* and early Nahuatl–Spanish dictionaries, reading them critically to show how translation distorted Indigenous knowledge systems. Translators have reduced the female *titiçih* by

masculinizing the term when translating it into Spanish. Polanco clarifies that *tiçih* was a gender-neutral term encompassing diverse healing and spiritual practices, with women playing major roles in communicating with life forces and diagnosing illness. In doing this, he reveals women's role as central to Nahua systems of healing and balance. His decision to leave key Nahuatl terms untranslated serves as both an ethical and scholarly resistance to colonial simplification. Through these sources, Polanco demonstrates how language itself became a colonial instrument of control. Translators, priests, and lexicographers reframed *tiçiyotl* within the vocabulary of European medicine. This imposed hierarchy diminished the legitimacy of Nahua healing practices while reinforcing Spanish authority. In restoring terms like *tiçih* and *tiçiyotl*, Polanco returns voice and complexity to Nahua healers whose work bridged the physical and spiritual realms. Although the study's attention to definitions enriches its analysis, the frequency of such explanations sometimes disrupts the argument's flow; using endnotes could help maintain readability.

Chapter 2, "The Trivializing of Women in Records of *Tiçiyotl*," explores the ways in which case studies, as detailed in Spanish sources, treated these female healers. Polanco illustrates how Western notions of healing differed from the Nahuas' perspectives. European practices at the time saw the body as a balance of the four humors: "[blood], phlegm, yellow bile, and black [bile], and some illnesses were deemed to be either hot or cold. Hot illnesses were treated with cold remedies, and cold illnesses with hot remedies. This resonated with, but differed from, Mesoamerican ideas of hot and cold." (78) Accordingly, Spanish officials, such as the physician Francisco Hernández, in his *De antiquitatibus Novae Hispaniae* and in his *De historia plantarum Novae Hispaniae*, detailed the dangerous practices that the Nahua midwives recommended to women who had just given birth. Their practices aligned with the ideas of hot and cold, but rather than counteracting either temperature, "*tiçih* asked women who had recently delivered children to take a steam bath, followed by an ice bath. Furthermore, *tiçih* permitted new mothers to use cold and astringent medications to 'supposedly' revitalize the kidneys." (38) Hernández's reaction reveals that colonial physicians viewed Indigenous medicine as threatening and inferior, a knowledge system to be reinterpreted or erased to uphold European and Christian authority. His text underscores the cruelty and epistemic violence that Catholic authorities inflicted upon women *tiçih* following the discovery of their "heretical" practices. The case of Ana of Xochimilco, a *tiçitl* or medicine practitioner, is particularly striking. Ana was accused of consorting with the devil after performing a healing ritual in which she pinched an ill woman's body to remove supposed illness-causing objects, specifically, pieces of paper she claimed had been placed there by Tezcatlipoca (the god of war). While Ana's actions aligned with established Nahua medical and spiritual traditions, inquisitors reinterpreted them through a Christian lens that equated Indigenous cosmologies with diabolism. Her forced confession that "the devil had misled her" (79) exemplifies the pressures Indigenous women faced to renounce their practices under colonial interrogation and to conform to the spiritual hierarchies imposed by the Church. Her actions, interpreted by inquisitors as blasphemous, demonstrate a coherent system of diagnosis and ritual intervention deeply rooted in Nahua understandings of illness and balance. Through cases such as Ana's, Polanco exposes how colonial institutions

weaponized Western religious thought to dismantle Indigenous authority, particularly that exercised by women healers.

Chapter 3, "The Framing of Tlapohualiztli as Guesswork and Diabolic Activity," is significant because it reconstructs Indigenous epistemologies of healing, diagnosis, and spirituality as coherent systems of knowledge rather than the mere "superstitions" that Spanish sources had made them out to be. Through skillful and highly detailed engagement with colonial and Nahua sources, Polanco reclaims the intellectual and cultural sophistication of *tiçitl* (healers, diviners), showing how colonial writers distorted the latter's practices through Christian moral frameworks. One beautiful aspect of this chapter is its employment of Nahua artwork from the Codex Magliabechiano, which Polanco incorporates as a source to showcase a female *tiçitl* performing cultural rituals to predict the fate of a sickly man. The man is seen to cry upon the results, as there is "a small void in the center of the corn and beans, implying that the woman [...] has informed the man [...] that he will perish." (125)

Chapter 4, "The Invisibilizing of *Titçih* in the Extraction of Native Materials," is similarly important, though it shifts away from predictions of fate, delving instead into the significance of Nahua *tiçiyotl* remedies for ailments, especially the environmentally sourced remedies Nahua *tiçitl* curated for struggling women going through arduous labor. There were multiple ways these healers could alleviate and mitigate the pain of this process, including the use of the *cihuapaht* plant, for example: "[the] *Historia general* describes *cihuapahtli*, which grew everywhere [...] an infused beverage created by boiling the leaves in water would help a woman give birth." (164) Unfortunately, this text, alongside others, fails to mention specifically who applied these remedial techniques, which Polanco attributes to "an erasure or concealment of Nahua practitioners when discussing Nahua "'medical' materials," urging readers to "read between the lines and cross-reference multiple sources to understand the full scope of *titçih* in Nahua communities." (166) Overall, Polanco's research powerfully decolonizes historical narratives and restores Indigenous agency, especially that of women healers. His call for linguistic and methodological precision challenges historians to confront colonial biases embedded in their sources.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: Brianna Sparks of Westminster, California, earned her B.A. in History (2024) and her M.A. in Public History (2026) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where she is a member of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society). She also served as an editor for volume 53 (2026) of *The Welebaethan: A Journal of History*.

Pomerantsev, Peter.

*How To Win an Information War: The Propagandist Who Outwitted Hitler.*

Public Affairs, 2024.

304 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9781541774728.

Propaganda is not something that occasionally appears; it persists. According to Peter Pomerantsev, "[i]t is a tool to tap into human fears, vulnerabilities, and secrets, often violent and cruel desires, and twist them to the benefit of the powerful forces they serve. Fact-checking doesn't stand a chance." (xv) As we live through an era of rapidly expanding internet use, in which the validity of information and the denial of facts continue to grow,

Pomerantsev seeks to define how propaganda is used to both divide and unite populations. His new book, *How To Win an Information War: The Propagandist Who Outwitted Hitler*, follows the life of Sefton Delmer (1904–1979), a German-born British subject who grew up in Berlin during World War I and went on to become a journalist-turned-propagandist during the rise of the Nazi Party and World War II. Delmer's secret radio station, *Gustaf Siegfried Eins* (GS1), was designed to attack Nazi morale from within and pit the German population against party leaders. Delmer employed what was considered "black propaganda" (164)—or covert operations—to spread this information under the guise of a German named *der Chef* (i.e., "the boss"). Pomerantsev, a Ukrainian-born British journalist, uses Delmer's methods as an analytical lens through which to reflect on our modern era of disinformation, digital manipulation, and authoritarian media.

Pomerantsev is in a unique position to write about the consequences of propaganda. Born in Kyiv, Ukraine, his family moved to West Berlin in 1978 after his father had been arrested by the KGB for disseminating anti-Soviet propaganda. Growing up in Munich and then London, Pomerantsev eventually moved to Moscow in 2001, where he worked in television until 2010. His work in Russia has made him acutely aware of how common manipulation of reality is in our digital age. He is clearly drawn to morally gray individuals who inhabit the space between honesty and strategy, sincerity and performance, such as Sefton Delmer. Pomerantsev's background in media production and policy research enables him to craft a vivid narrative that carries undertones of analytical concerns about how belief is formed and fractured in times of crisis. He writes that, in Weimar Germany, "[t]he Nazis' evidence-free claim to 'purity' could be alluring in a time of disorienting change [...] it promised a simple way of knowing who you were." (28–29) In his book, Pomerantsev directly compares the propaganda and word use of the Nazis to that of the Russians throughout the buildup to and during the ongoing Russo-Ukraine war, stating that, "[i]n the propaganda to justify the 2022 Russian invasion [...] any Ukrainians who [...] [did] not admit to being 'one people' with Russia had to be eliminated." (29)

Pomerantsev is not a typical historian. His focus is less on archival completeness and more on human resonance. Therefore, *How To Win an Information War* is written with a hybrid lens of history and lived psychology. It is arranged in relatively chronological order, with interludes on different themes interspersed throughout the chapters. It begins with Delmer's early life in Germany and his journalistic career between World War I and World War II, where he first encountered Hitler and the Nazi machine. These formative years made it clear that Delmer's later mastery of propaganda was deeply rooted in his intimate understanding of how it worked upon the general population. Pomerantsev describes how "Hitler's power stemmed not so much from his ability to win people over with clever arguments, but from his articulating the feelings that already lay within them and taking them on an emotional journey from feeling humiliated to humiliating others." (42) Delmer viewed people's relationship with propaganda as "slightly faking their fanaticism—and their fascist leaders are also somewhat fake." (47)

The wartime portions of the book are the most vivid. Pomerantsev reconstructs for his readers how Delmer's radio networks, approved by British intelligence, were mock stations

designed to sound like authentic German voices of protest. Delmer's broadcasts were theatrical, blending dark humor, scandals, and a sense of colloquial authenticity. They targeted German soldiers' frustrations with their leaders and the cynicism developing among civilians. The idea behind such a tactic was that "[o]ne needed to climb into Germans' relationship with the Nazis—not lecture them from outside." (63) Pomerantsev describes how once the Nazis gained control and were once again able to use the radio, "they could further spread their new language. Words like *Führer*, *Volksgemeinschaft*, and *Volksgenosse* entered Germans' everyday vocabulary," (86) which was "[t]he sort of language that would work effectively in today's social media." (86) Such an argument warns us that, as technology has transitioned from radio to social media, propaganda has remained relatively consistent.

From a historiographical standpoint, the book works through synthesis. Pomerantsev draws upon a range of source materials, including Delmer's memoirs, wartime documents, personal letters, and period broadcasts, to craft a narrative that not only feels authentic but also convincing in its reconstruction. However, the book's power lies in its interpretive framing. Pomerantsev's approach to history is a moral allegory. Each chapter, each story is chosen for what it reveals about the mechanisms of persuasion. It almost works as a microhistory. The life of Sefton Delmer can be viewed within a broader cultural and ethical context. Although some readers may hope for a deeper engagement with existing historiography, such as a comparative analysis between Allied and Axis propaganda, I believe that pursuing such an approach would have yielded a different book. Pomerantsev's effectiveness lies in drawing a line of continuity between wartime radio and today's social media ecosystems, which invites historians to see propaganda as an evolving technology of the human mind rather than an isolated phenomenon. Pomerantsev compares how with social media, "creating 'sock puppets' like *der Chef* is easy [...] botnets, troll farms, and online mobs have become ubiquitous from Mexico to Manila." (136) Another strength of the book is Pomerantsev's ability to capture Delmer's personality: his showmanship, his wit, and his occasional arrogance.

*How To Win an Information War* belongs to a growing list of works that explore propaganda as both a historical phenomenon and a contemporary concern. It distinguishes itself from other works by focusing on a single practitioner rather than an institution and by treating propaganda as a moral rather than a technical problem. Unlike dense archival studies, Pomerantsev's narrative is living and breathing with personality and reflection, and it does something rare: it humanizes the machinery of information warfare. I found the book also to be comparable to the cultural histories of wartime art and film, where questions of persuasion and representation intertwine in a similar fashion. Pomerantsev's Delmer is a figure as theatrical as he is strategic. He is a creative artist working in the shadow of moral compromise. Thus, the book bridges the fields of propaganda studies, biography, and intellectual history, appealing to readers across multiple disciplines.

Pomerantsev's *How To Win an Information War* is a historical work that refuses to be confined by its period. Reviving Sefton Delmer's life and craft, it illuminates the enduring struggle over the truth of public life. The combination of biography, analysis, and moral inquiry makes a rich contribution to both historical and contemporary debates. For historians, the book

effectively uses a single case study to raise questions regarding ethics, media, and national identity. Those interested in communication and political culture can follow the history of disinformation that predates the internet. For general readers, it delivers a narrative that is exciting, suspenseful, and sobering. Sefton Delmer was a man who fought lies with lies, emerging victorious but haunted. Major themes of the book include the moral cost of persuasion, the power of performance, and what remains in the aftermath of victory.

The book's only real limitation is that the narrative momentum can often be halted by the scholarly depth, considering that Pomerantsev prioritizes insights over documentation. His writing does not aim to settle current debates on the topic, but rather to reopen them. It forces readers to confront their own complicity in the stories they believe and spread. Overall, *How To Win an Information War* teaches us that the contest for truth is never purely intellectual. The fight for truth is emotional, ethical, and requires imagination. We cannot simply state the truth or use better facts; we must meet people where they are and understand why they need to believe alternative facts in the first place. I fully recommend this book to those looking to understand the lasting lessons of how to "win" the information war; it makes this book an essential read in an age where propaganda has once again defined the political battlefield. Scholars, those interested in the long-term effects of social media, and all who have major concerns with how propaganda is being used across the world would benefit from adding this book to their collection. Additional books to look out for on the subject include Pomerantsev's other book, *This Is Not Propaganda: Adventures in the War Against Reality* (2019), and Thomas Rid's *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare* (2020). Ultimately, Pomerantsev's *How To Win an Information War* is a contemporary and elegantly written study of propaganda's moral paradoxes

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Prentice, David L.

*Unwilling to Quit: The Long Unwinding of American Involvement in Vietnam.*

University Press of Kentucky, 2023.

242 pages. eBook. ISBN: 9780813197760.

"Let me make this one point, some public men are destined to be loved, and other public men are destined to be disliked." (122) This quote comes from the now unpopular Richard Nixon interview with CBS, in which he discussed his handling of the Vietnam War and domestic unrest. To Richard Nixon, the Vietnam War came at a time when there was growing civil unrest at home, while U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia was seen as a strategic necessity to combat the potential domino effect that North Vietnam could have on the entirety of Vietnam. Fifty years after the Vietnam War, it is remarkably easy to be blinded by our own hindsight and the dominant historical perceptions of the matter. David Prentice's new book, *Unwilling to Quit: The Long Unwinding of American Involvement in Vietnam* (2023), aims to lift this veil and shed more light on the intricacies and truths of the time in both the United States and Vietnam. One of the strengths of this work is its ability to flesh out the characters

and motives of certain historical figures, who are often overlooked and diluted due to an America-centered stance, such as the president of the Republic of Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thieu. Prentice's analysis of diplomatic affairs utilizes an extensive array of source material, made possible through government publications, archives, interviews, memoirs, and historical speeches. This creative combination of sources from both the press and official government channels provides a more intimate and well-rounded perspective of the war.

David Prentice is a historian at Oklahoma State University. He holds a Ph.D. in the history of the United States' foreign relations and has published widely in journals and numerous edited volumes. The monograph under review here, *Unwilling to Quit*, examines the complex domestic and international contexts surrounding the United States' withdrawal from Vietnam. It belongs to a series of thirty-six books, titled "Studies in Conflict, Diplomacy and Peace," and it is invaluable for its unique insights that looks at the inner workings of South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the United States' political spheres, utilizing many sources that were also recently declassified, to provide quite a well-rounded and global depiction of the Vietnam War. Thus, his monograph runs contrary to many works that focus primarily on either the United States or Vietnam, making this more balanced perspective on the whole ordeal.

One of the main points of contention that arose around the time Nixon had assumed office was the public upset surrounding the number of U.S. soldiers that were being drafted and killed in Vietnam. Vietnamization focused on shifting the burden of the war to South Vietnamese forces, allowing for a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops. Prentice explains how this process, while implemented by Nixon, was largely influenced by Defense Secretary Melvin Laird in his formulation of the Vietnamization strategy. The goal of Vietnamization was to maintain the United States' global credibility while reducing the domestic discontent with the war. This is a key theme that runs through Prentice's book, and it illustrates how U.S. officials and policymakers struggled to balance strategic objectives abroad with political pressures at home. Prentice's work is invaluable to historians interested in researching the Vietnam War due to its well-rounded scope of research—employing perspectives from North Vietnam and South Vietnam, as well as accounts from U.S. government officials. *Unwilling to Quit* explores the complex political, military, and diplomatic process behind the United States' eventual withdrawal from the Vietnam War, particularly focusing on the period between 1969 and 1971. It challenges simplistic narratives that view President Richard Nixon's policy of "Vietnamization" as an inevitable, teleological process. Instead, Prentice contends that the Nixon administration's withdrawal of American troops was neither straightforward nor preordained, but was instead fraught with contradictions, domestic pressures, and international dilemmas. Prentice utilizes newly declassified documents and an expanded array of perspectives, including Vietnamese sources, which adds considerable substance to this monograph. In doing so, Prentice sheds new light on the interplay between domestic and foreign influences shaping U.S. strategy in Vietnam and contributes to the historiographical debate over the efficiency, motives, mind games at play, and consequences of Vietnamization.

Chapter 1 examines the context in which Nixon assumed the presidency in January 1969. Nixon inherited a stalled war, rising casualties, public fatigue, and a complex international



situation. Successive American presidents had deepened the United States' entanglement in Vietnam, making it even more difficult to find a clear or easy solution. Prentice elaborates on the struggles that Lyndon B. Johnson had faced as president, assuming office at a rocky moment in Vietnamese politics. Nixon was left with limited choices, namely, either escalating the conflict to secure a military victory or begin disengaging, a path his predecessors had largely refused to take. As Prentice notes, Nixon struggled to end an unpopular war while preserving U.S. credibility and safeguarding South Vietnam from a communist takeover. In chapter 2, Prentice analyzes the internal divisions within Nixon's administration in early 1969. While figures such as National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger advocated escalating the conflict to force Hanoi to the negotiating table, Defense Secretary Laird stressed the importance of phased de-escalation and the need to address domestic antiwar sentiments. Nixon himself remained torn between these approaches, initially siding more with Kissinger's tactics, thus planning covert bombings in Cambodia to "punish the North Vietnamese for the ongoing mini-Tet offensive, [to] prod them to negotiate." (41)

Chapter 3 highlights the surge of student and youth activism in 1969, a year marked by widespread antiwar demonstrations and counterculture movements. These protests intensified Nixon's domestic challenges but also offered his administration opportunities to frame dissent as a threat to American values. Nixon himself interpreted the unrest as symptomatic of a broader cultural decline, remarking, "[t]his is the way civilizations begin to die." (53) The year saw escalating campus violence: "[t]here were at least eighty-four bombings, attempted bombings, and acts of arson on campuses in the first half of 1969, twice as many as the previous fall. America's high schools were the scenes of twenty-seven bombings and attempted bombings [...] Talk of armed revolution was as common as hot dogs at a baseball game [...] Most of this turmoil was unrelated to Vietnam, but the unrest increased fears that a dramatic, public escalation of the war in Indochina would worsen the disorder." (53) Prentice ties these events closely to the broader wave of home-front protests, cultural unrest, and polarization. Chapter 4 takes up the biggest chunk of the work, diving into the progression of Vietnamization and the cultural shifts in both American and Vietnamese societies regarding the war. The summer of 1969, Prentice argues, marked a critical time as Nixon navigated between escalation, negotiation, and the enduring challenge of Vietnamization. As domestic dissent grew in the United States, Nixon planned to bolster public support for the war. Military plans for escalation were developed in secret, and Nixon delayed troop withdrawals as a show of toughness toward North Vietnam. Prentice highlights the complex political dynamics and strategies surrounding the Vietnam War during this period, as the United States' and South Vietnam's global reputations were on the line.

Chapter 5 takes us into the fall of 1969, when the debate over Vietnamization and "Duck Hook"—the code name for an operation to bomb North Vietnam's ports and food supplies—reached its climax. President Richard Nixon faced tough decisions regarding the war in Vietnam, including troop withdrawals, escalating military actions, and negotiations with Hanoi. While some advisors like Henry Kissinger favored decisive escalation, there was dissent within the cabinet, as Laird staunchly disagreed, with his heart still set on Vietnamization. As tensions escalated both domestically and abroad, Nixon ultimately decided to abandon "Duck Hook" and embrace Vietnamization as the administration's strategy moving forward.

This decision, influenced by various factors such as public sentiments and congressional scrutiny, marked a significant turning point in the Vietnam War. As seen in chapter 6's coverage of the period between late 1969 and early 1970, America saw a surge in cautious optimism surrounding the Vietnam War due to the implementation of Vietnamization. As the North Vietnamese and United States navigated the complexities and uncertainties of the conflict, the optimism in America contrasted with the renewed determination in Hanoi, where leadership remained determined to continue the fight until victory, even as they faced internal challenges and setbacks.

Prentice contributes to the growing body of scholarship that incorporates Vietnamese perspectives into the historiography of the Vietnam War. His work should be of interest to all historians looking to close the gap in knowledge on Vietnamese war-time diplomacy and its interplay with policymakers in the United States. Prentice's book complements Cheng Guan Ang's work, *The Vietnam War from the Other Side: The Vietnamese Communists' Perspective* (2002). Overall, *Unwilling to Quit* is an excellent read that provides a fascinating take on the interplay between the governments of the United States and Vietnam during Richard Nixon's presidency.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: Brianna Sparks of Westminster, California, earned her B.A. in History (2024) and her M.A. in Public History (2026) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where she is a member of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society). She also served as an editor for volume 53 (2026) of *The Welebaethan: A Journal of History*.

Schultz, Kevin M.

*Why Everyone Hates White Liberals (Including White Liberals): A History*.

Chicago University Press, 2025.  
279 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780226824369.

Do white liberals make your skin crawl, leave you embarrassed, cause you to cringe, or rile you up, and would you do just about anything other than embrace them? It does not matter whether you are a Black Lives Matter activist or a three-time Trump voter: everyone has an opinion on what a white liberal is. Ironically, Kevin M. Schultz's 2025 monograph, *Why Everyone Hates White Liberals (Including White Liberals): A History*, points out that you likely cannot define liberalism. More importantly, you certainly cannot get society to agree on what liberals stand for. If that is the case, where did the term "liberal" come from? In his book, Kevin M. Schultz walks us through how the term was born in the 1930s, why it dwindled in the late 1960s, and how it was attacked by the Republican Party as the equivalent of communism until the end of the twentieth century. Schultz concludes this history of liberalism in the United States by displaying how "sticking it to liberals" has become conservatives' predominant political tactic in the twenty-first century. Schultz is an award-winning historian, whose work focuses on twentieth and twenty-first century American history with a special emphasis on political culture. He is the former president of the Society for U.S. Intellectual History and, as of October 2025, the chair of the Department of History at the University of Illinois, Chicago. As a respected scholar in the field, he is eminently qualified to analyze the history of liberalism in the United States.

The book's introduction and first chapter, "It's Just a Word" and "The Birth of the White Liberal," respectively, focus primarily on the origins of liberalism and what the term triggers in people when they hear the word. Put best by Schultz, "it quickly became clear as I did my research that how one defines a white liberal is really just a Rorschach test of one's own political allegiances." (7) In these opening sections, Schultz surveys what people's views on white liberals reveal about their likelihood of being emotionally influenced by certain groups or media organizations. Interestingly, Schultz suggests that most Americans have liberal views that reach across the aisle but would not dare embrace the term because they consider it repulsive. However, this is a small portion of a much broader field of what the word "liberal" means and where it originates. As it turns out, the first real introduction of the word "liberal"—and "white liberal" in particular—came from the thirty-second president of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR). FDR started calling himself a liberal and his plan for the future of the United States "liberalism." Make no mistake, Roosevelt understood that his New Deal plan was borderline socialism; Schultz points out that the reason why FDR coined the term "liberalism" was to make it more difficult for opponents to call it out as socialism. Using "liberalism" was a diversion from socialism with its strong negative connotations. That said, Roosevelt's opponent, former Secretary of Commerce Herbert C. Hoover, wanted to argue on the field of capitalism versus socialism. Knowing that this would create a bad frame for his plan, FDR spun the entire rhetoric into a binary battle between conservatives and liberals. This is crucial because it set up the parameters for the American binary political system and its eventual deep polarization. So, not only did FDR "birth" the white liberal, but he can also be credited with launching liberalism as a whole in American politics. Schultz finds that, by the end of the 1950s, liberalism was largely regarded with fondness, because of the positive sentiments built into the label due to the economic success the country was experiencing after World War II. However, this giddy age of the self-proclaimed liberal swiftly came to an end at the turn of the decade.

The 1960s did not emerge as a continuation of popular liberalism because certain conservatives, including political commentator William F. Buckley Jr., changed American politics forever by critically altering Republicans' strategy. In chapter 2, "I Smell the Blood of a Liberal," we learn that Buckley—a young conservative who was not the brightest intellectual—actually contributed quite a bit to changing the political landscape of the decades to come. As Schultz points out, "Buckley knew that what would unify his ragtag bunch of conservatives better than anything else would be to locate an enemy they could all agree on and then pillory it mercilessly." (35) It is not difficult to see how this particular strategy would both support the ongoing McCarthyism (1947–1959) and spell the beginning of the end for "liberal" as a proudly held identity. Truth be told, popular history does not really reflect President Truman's effectiveness in eliminating communists from the government in the late 1940s. But, as Schultz notes, this was mostly due to Truman's lack of public relations, compared to Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. By the early 1950s, Whittaker Chambers, a journalist, was stirring up the rhetoric by arguing that liberalism was the Democrats' last step before full-blown communism. Since this rhetoric continued throughout the 1960s, many Americans left their proclamation of liberalism behind them and soon refused to be associated with its ideals completely.

Both Republicans and Democrats distanced themselves from the term, but for different reasons. According to Schultz, conservatives saw those who still claimed the title of liberal for themselves as dupes of communism. (59) Meanwhile, leftists also developed a disdain for those white liberals who were still aligning themselves with it as their identity. Diving further into this, Schultz finds that white liberals were, for the most part, genuinely confused as to why fellow leftists were beginning to look down on them, observing that Black activists disdained white liberals mostly out of fatigue when it came to explaining structural racism: white liberals were simply too moderate. Then, in the 1980s, a new term—or brand—arose that few, if any, Americans had never heard of, namely, “neoliberalism.” On paper, this new faction of political views seemed somewhat genius. Neoliberals prioritized the economy, deregulation, lower taxes on individuals, and businesses. Well-known politicians, including Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas and Senator Joe Biden from Delaware, embraced neoliberal ideology. Considering the era’s focus on balancing budgets and the complicated nuances of social issues, it was difficult for conservatives to continue their old strategy of pinging leftists as communists. After all, what communist nation would ever lower taxes? The lesson Democrats learned, at least for the time being, was to become proud centrists and slander only their own party’s radicals as liberals. So, the label “liberal” never went away; it was just replaced, rebranded, and skewed. However, liberals had no cornerstone to lean on, so the term became very wishy-washy. According to Schultz, the term “liberal” really should have died by then, as it had lost most of its original meaning. However, it would not need to die until conservatives changed their strategy once again, sealing the fate of white liberals.

Instead of the later 2010s becoming an extension of Barack Obama’s era of centrism, conservatives changed their strategy and elected Donald Trump in 2016 with the new goal of “owning the libs.” At this point in time, the term “liberal” was used to categorize just about anything and anyone on the left as a manifestation or pawn of communism. Was evidence required for these claims? Absolutely not. Evidence did not matter, as Schultz argues, because liberals were historically weak. Thus, the Republicans’ strategy became: paint your enemies as weak, blame them for likely bipartisan problems, and hope it sticks. And it did stick, rendering it the most successful political strategy from the right in this century thus far. It makes Democrats work too hard to refute claims, so they spend less energy on what they actually want done for the country, while further polarizing the country. Schultz ends this book with his vision for the future. Ever since FDR ushered in a political culture of “us vs. them,” the ball has been rolling toward a divided America. With political parties fanning division, Schultz argues that a social democracy needs to rise. Let the white liberal ideology die. It ventured too far toward idealistic freedom, always falling short. Its image is beyond saving. Letting it die might just allow the framework for a true multiparty system to rise, which, in Schultz’s eyes, might very well save the United States from destruction.

For people interested in political culture, I would strongly recommend this book because it provides deep insights into why certain ideologies arose and where our current political culture comes from. *Why Everyone Hates White Liberals* also does a wonderful job of putting yourself into the shoes of those with differing opinions; it is always more important to know “why” someone thinks the way they do rather than “what” they actually think. Throughout the book, you read quotes from historical figures you might have never heard of, but in

retrospect, they added tremendous value and somewhat shaped our culture today. If this review has sparked any interest in the topic, I would also recommend *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era* by Gary Gerstle (2022); it is a good read and examines political culture very similarly. Overall, Kevin M. Schultz has done an amazing job with *Why Everyone Hates White Liberals*, and if you like the subject, you will definitely find his writing style captivating.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: Colin Ashe of Dana Point, California, earned his A.A. in Social and Behavioral Sciences, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Liberal Studies (2024) at Saddleback College, California, and his B.A. in History (2026) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).

Sheehan-Dean, Aaron.

*Fighting with the Past: How Seventeenth-Century History Shaped the American Civil War.*

The University of North Carolina Press, 2025.  
210 pages. Paperback. ISBN: 9781469690759.

"We do not alter the past itself, of course, but we change the meaning of the past by connecting it to the present." (148) A great power lies in the reinterpretation of past events in the modern world. History is commonly used to warn others about the potential consequences of an action that mirrors a past event, or it can be utilized to strengthen an argument through an appeal to the greatness of the past. The cultural memory of the past is often favored over pure historical facts and is an effective tool in shaping the beliefs and identities of social groups. In *Fighting with the Past: How Seventeenth-Century History Shaped the American Civil War*, Aaron Sheehan-Dean shows that this phenomenon, which continues to persist in the twenty-first century, was omnipresent during the American Civil War. Specifically, nineteenth-century Americans, plagued by a bloody civil war, looked toward the English Civil Wars of the seventeenth century to "'define,' 'justify,' 'anticipate,' and 'understand'" their current predicament. (2) Sheehan-Dean argues that history was itself a battleground during the American Civil War, with Northerners and Southerners both appealing to English history to defend their respective positions.

Aaron Sheehan-Dean is a professor of History and Southern Studies at Louisiana State University. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Virginia, and his research primarily focuses on mid to late nineteenth-century U.S. history. His current research interests revolve around violence, morality, and the laws of war, and his latest publications are almost exclusively focused on the U.S. Civil War. Recent books by Sheehan-Dean include *The Calculus of Violence: How Americans Fought the Civil War* (2018) and *Reckoning with Rebellion: War and Sovereignty in the Nineteenth Century* (2020). Although *Fighting with the Past* primarily concentrates on how Americans employed the historical memory of the past to understand their position during the war, Sheehan-Dean utilizes different aspects of seventeenth-century English history to support his argument.

*Fighting with the Past* is organized by how nineteenth-century Americans used the English past before, during, and after the U.S. Civil War to compare it to their contemporary political situations. Sheehan-Dean shows that Confederates associated themselves with the Royalists of the 1640s, while the Radical Republicans in the North heavily favored the imagery of Oliver

Cromwell, a figurehead they attached to because of his aggressive and violent strategies to remake English society. (143) Still, these attachments to Royalist and Parliamentary causes were not strictly defined. Sheehan-Dean explains that more moderate Republicans aligned with the Parliamentary ideas of “popular rights,” but they were less militaristic and Cromwellian in the postwar goals of remodeling society. (144) Southerners used Cromwell’s invasion of Ireland to spread fearmongering about Lincoln, who, in their eyes, would wreak havoc and violence against the South. Sheehan-Dean notes the strategic aspects of how both sides of the conflict weaponized history to fall into their favor. Northerners aligned with the Parliamentary rebels but found paths to delegitimize acts of rebellion, while Southerners, siding with the Royalists, legitimized acts of rebellion. (158) *Fighting with the Past* shows further ironic retellings of the past, where history becomes a flexible source to be manipulated.

*Fighting with the Past* consists of eight core chapters outside of the introduction and conclusion. In chapter 1, Sheehan-Dean sets the stage with an outline of how Americans came to understand the English Civil Wars and history in general during the nineteenth century. He explains the flexibility of historical consciousness and understanding during the nineteenth century and in the modern era. Chapters 2 and 3 explore how the cultural differences between North and South manifested in the formation of identities based on the English Civil Wars, and how the violence of the English past could be legitimized—or delegitimized—in the context of an American war. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on how the past was referenced in preparation for war, with both sides aligning themselves with varying aspects and players of the English past. The imagery of Oliver Cromwell was particularly controversial for the Republicans, especially among abolitionists who celebrated his “willingness to use terror and murder” to achieve his goals. (83) Chapter 6 includes the infighting between Northern conservatives and their radical counterparts, where conservatives could use seventeenth-century English history to attack policy. Sheehan-Dean explains that, because 1640s English society did not involve race, conservatives could critique Republican motives in a “purely political” sense. (91)

Chapters 7 and 8 of *Fighting with the Past* deal with the postwar era and how Americans looked to the conclusion of the English Civil Wars and the Stuart Restoration. After the bloody American Civil War, Northerners had to justify the immense suffering and death for the cause. Drawing on English history, they were able to rationalize the war as a reality to reshape the nation. (124) Some standout sections in *Fighting with the Past* are when Sheehan-Dean explores the imagery of King Charles I and Oliver Cromwell. Southerners considered the execution of the English king a regicidal act of anarchy, while Northerners applauded the Parliamentary opposition as a “virtuous resistance to tyranny.” (40) The pervasiveness of seventeenth-century English history in the speeches of nineteenth-century American politicians and in newspapers is astonishing. Sheehan-Dean notes that English history—to nineteenth-century Americans—was deeply attached to the American experience. (137) From the migration of English Puritans to North America, the American Revolution, and a shared language, the history of the United States and Britain was deeply intertwined in the minds of contemporary American writers. For his study, Sheehan-Dean relies on journals and newspapers from the Civil War and the writings of “historically minded individuals” who were

well familiar with English history. (19) Charles Sumner and Wendell Phillips, two Radical Republicans, are frequently cited because of their recurrent writings throughout the war that refer to the past. Samuel Cox, a Northern Democrat, often rivals Sumner and Phillips with his analogies to the English past that favor different perspectives. (20) Sheehan-Dean incorporates an impressive amount of period newspapers and periodicals. The use of newspapers shows that references to the English past were not limited to educated politicians who were well versed in European history. Although a majority of sources come from individuals during the American Civil War, there are some sources from the English Civil Wars. Sheehan-Dean's use of nineteenth-century historical books on English history is intriguing since this is where American politicians and writers learned about seventeenth-century England. *Fighting with the Past* relies on a diverse range of scholarship that covers both the seventeenth century in Britain as well as the American Civil War.

*Fighting with the Past* is a truly unique text with an approach that stands out from other works on the American Civil War. Publications that compliment Sheehan-Dean's argument include Paul Springer's monograph, *Propaganda from the American Civil War* (2019). Although Springer's text is not focused on the memory of English history, it provides a variety of source documents throughout the war with analysis. James McPherson's classic work on the American Civil War, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (1988), offers a much deeper dive into the individuals and events of *Fighting with the Past*. Those who are unfamiliar with the history of the American Civil War may find Sheehan-Dean's book difficult to comprehend since he does not explain the progression and key moments of the war in much detail. *Fighting with the Past* does attempt to contextualize and explain the events of the English Civil Wars; however, the complexities of this period are, at times, difficult to grasp, given the limited scope of Sheehan-Dean's book (210 pages). Two works cited in *Fighting with the Past* include Michael Braddick's *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* (2008) and Blair Worden's *The English Civil Wars, 1640–1660* (2009). *Fighting with the Past* is an excellent study, but readers may lose much of its impact without sufficient background knowledge.

*Fighting with the Past* is a distinctive study that adds an intriguing perspective to the American Civil War. It highlights the powerful impact of historical thinking and shows that "history holds undeniable power." (1) It is a must-read text for American Civil War aficionados because it uncovers how historical memory played a part for both the North and South. Although it may be difficult to follow if one is not familiar with the basics of the English Civil Wars and the American Civil War, I highly recommend *Fighting with the Past* to anyone curious about the influential power of the past. Aaron Sheehan-Dean's approach is quite unlike anything I have seen on the American Civil War, and he offers an intriguing perspective to view the tumultuous years of the 1860s. Comparisons, interpretations, and appeals to the past will always be part of the human experience. *Fighting with the Past: How Seventeenth-Century History Shaped the American Civil War* makes a stark point of how influential and significant history was to the people living during the American Civil War, and it reminds us that associations with the past are still relevant today.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: Arjun Kraft of San Marcos, California, earned his B.A. in History (2022) at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), and his M.A. in History (2026) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where he is a member of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society). He also served as an editor for volume 52 (2025) of *"The Welebaethan: A Journal of History."*

Van Nguyen, Dean.

*Words for My Comrades: A Political History of Tupac Shakur.*

Doubleday, 2025.

452 pages. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780385550024.

Tupac Amaru Shakur, famously known by his stage name 2Pac, ascended to the upper echelons of fame during his tumultuous career as a West Coast rapper. His story resembles that of a great Greek tragedy: a childhood sculpted by his mother's radical past, a rise to stardom as a brilliant but troubled artist, and a final crescendo with his murder in September 1996. Dean Van Nguyen's book, *Words for My Comrades: A Political History of Tupac Shakur*, breaks down the imposing character and wild history of Tupac Shakur, a boy who spent his early years shifting around the concrete jungle of New York City before moving to the "gilded ghettos" (180) of the Bay Area. Shakur's worldview was shaped by his Black Panther mother and her Panther family, the absence of his biological father, and the exploding hip-hop movement of the 1990s in the wake of the civil rights and Black power movements. Dean Van Nguyen is a music journalist from Dublin, Ireland, who focuses on identity, cultural and racial relationships, and whose publications include *Iron Age: The Art of Ghostface Killah* (2019) as well as writings for *The Irish Times*, *The Guardian*, *Pitchfork*, and others.

The chronology of Shakur's political history in *Words for My Comrades* starts long before his birth, vividly depicting the formation of the Black Panther Party and the call to radical resistance of post-civil rights movement attitudes. Van Nguyen utilizes original interviews conducted by himself with the Shakur family, former Black Panther Party members, and individuals who were a part of Shakur's formative years. Van Nguyen introduces his readers to Tupac, a "Panther Cub," (4) whose gestation took place during his mother's incarceration and trial as one of the Panthers. (21) Named for the Incan martyr Túpac Amaru II (c. 1742–1781), he was the glowing ember in the dying fire that was the revolution. His name "Shakur," while not given to him by blood, tied him to a long line of Black revolutionaries that would shape his artistic endeavors. His art would reach far beyond the California coast, redefining what it meant to be a revolutionary worldwide. An example of this was Shakur's impact on Irish resistance, his humble origins, and violent demise, likening him to martyrs of the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

In part one, "The Meaning of Afeni," Van Nguyen explains Afeni Shakur's family history, the formation of and her participation in official Black resistance organizations, and the U.S. government's crackdown on leftist organizations. Chapter 1, "Of Jim Crow Soil," introduces us to Afeni Shakur, born Alice Faye Williams, and her early volatile childhood in the southern United States, before her mother left her father, taking Afeni and her older sister up north to the South Bronx. Like her son later on, Afeni expressed an interest in the arts but was unable to find community within the white, upper-class demographics of the schools she attended,



instead turning to violence and drug use. The death of a close friend pushed her toward sobriety and employment, one day leading her to Manhattan's 125<sup>th</sup> Street, where she encountered Bobby Seale, a founding member of the Black Panther Party. Two of the party's founders, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, had both been radicalized by Malcolm X's assassination (1965) and were dissatisfied with the efforts of other organizations. Thus, these Merritt College students came together in October 1966 to form the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Newton's involvement in the shooting of two patrolmen, the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., and the death of founding party member "Little" Bobby Hutton during a confrontation with the Oakland Police brought national attention the movement. These contentious times pushed the organization to create community youth and health centers, dubbed "survival programs," (55) where Afeni became a section leader, leading rent strikes and running free breakfast programs for schoolchildren. Here, Afeni met Lumumba Shakur, a man she later married, and Sekou Odinga, an ex-gang member turned leader of New York's Black Panther chapter. Afeni's place among the Panthers was complex, both as a leader and a woman in a movement led by men who expected her to conform to particular gender expectations.

In chapter 3, Van Nguyen discusses a burglary performed by the anti-war activist Citizens' Commission to investigate the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI)'s office in Media, Pennsylvania. The commission exposed the government's surveillance of students, Black activists, and leftist organizations, as well as a direct order from FBI director J. Edgar Hoover to "neutralize" Black nationalist organizations. The FBI files contained the term COINTELPRO, eventually exposed through a Freedom of Information Act request as a Red Scare Era program of nationwide surveillance, infiltration, and harassment by Hoover's FBI. As a result of these infiltrations by undercover police officers in April 1969, Afeni, her husband Lumumba, and nineteen other Panthers were indicted on 186 counts, which included attempted arson, attempted murder, and a slew of conspiracy charges that would leave her facing an over 300-year prison sentence. After two years, the longest trial in New York State history, Afeni, along with the rest of her Panther sisters and brothers, was exonerated on May 12, 1971. This was the peak of Afeni's notoriety until the release of her son's song, "Dear Mama." Lumumba left her after discovering Tupac was not his son, but that of a man named Billy Garland, who would never have a permanent place in Tupac's life.

Part two, "To Which Nation Do You Belong," begins with the origins of hip-hop as an intersection of rap and radical politics, as well as Tupac's artistic emergence. The popularity of groups such as the Sugarhill Gang and Public Enemy shifted rap into the mainstream. Tupac was brought up in a tumultuous environment due to his mother's addiction issues, resulting in him finding outlets outside his home for artistic expression. Rap would seem to be his destiny, gaining popularity from early works such as *Brenda's Got a Baby* and the release of his first full length album *2Pacalypse Now*, which reflected the harsh reality of abuse, poverty, and police brutality. By 1992, Tupac had moved to Los Angeles. While finding fame, he remained concerned with the movement his mother had previously been a part of. Spurred by the L.A. Riots, the abundance of killings due to gang violence, his Panther upbringing, and a new outlook, Tupac created the "Code of Thug Life." This code, although meant for L.A.'s gangbangers, evolved into his way of defining his life as a societal outcast.

Tupac's first solo hit, "I Get Around," released in the summer of 1993, was the song that launched his career as a major artist. He went on to release his second album, *Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z.*, with more hard-hitting songs such as "Last Wordz," "The Streetz R Deathrow," and "Keep Ya Head Up," commenting on police brutality and the victimization of Black women. As his fame grew, his actions and his music grew more volatile. The opportunity to rub elbows with Madonna and Sting did not soften his "gangster rap" persona, as his unreleased album *Me Against the Word* proved to be prophetic. In 1993, he was involved in fights with former music video directors, the shooting of two off-duty police officers, and a rape accusation, faced a potential 25-year sentence, and was shot four times in an attempted robbery. These events paralleled the experiences of Black Panther members of his mother's era, many of whom emerged from long prison sentences to join the movement. Tupac's later conviction on felony sex abuse charges left him facing up to four years in jail, causing him to contemplate running like his step-father and other Panthers had done before him. Suge Knight's intervention in Tupac's career and his time at Death Row Records ignited an all-out West Coast vs. East Coast war, culminating in Shakur's murder on September 7, 1996. As Van Nguyen looks over Tupac's legacy, his death seems almost inevitable, mirroring the demise of previous Shakur and Panther leaders, executed by the system of hatred they had attempted to fight against. His demise certainly solidified his place in the history of revolution.

In part three, "Hands Up: Afterlife, Legacy, and Future Not Set," Van Nguyen grapples with Tupac's legacy, Black activism in the twenty-first century, and Afeni Shakur's legacy as more than the mother of a pop culture martyr. Van Nguyen masterfully draws connections between the conspiracy that enveloped Afeni's life as a Panther and her son's ambiguous assassination. Her revolutionary dreams, though never fully coming to fruition, manifested themselves in her son who fell victim to the culture of violence that the Panthers had attempted to combat. Van Nguyen does not shy away from the grim details of a revolutionary life, doing justice to the radical story of Tupac, Afeni, and the Black Panther Party. I strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in the counterculture movement of the 1960s as it provides a brilliantly written and raw take on the evolution of race relations in the United States. Options for further reading on the decolonization, civil rights, and Black power movements in the United States include *Black Moses: A Saga of Ambition and the Fight for a Black State* by Caleb Gayle (2025), which delves into Edward McCabe's plan to create a Black state within the United States; *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X and Alex Haley (1965), constructed from a series of interviews surrounding X's formative years, leadership within the Nation of Islam, and the civil rights movement; as well as *The Wretched of the Earth* by the philosopher Frantz Fanon (1961), a psychoanalysis of the effects of colonization on national and personal identity.

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## *Reviews (Exhibitions)*

### *Heritage House.*

1900 Associated Road, Fullerton, California, 92831.

Visitor information: [online](#).

Historical site.

Take a step back into Orange County before Disneyland at the Heritage House, located in the Arboretum at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). The Heritage House was purchased from a catalog and completed in 1894 by Dr. George Crook Clark (1863–1948). Dr. Clark was originally from Ohio. He moved to California after completing medical school in Chicago and married Edith Louisa Johnston (1874–1951), the daughter of Darius D. Johnston (1842–1917). As it turns out, the Johnston-Hargitt House, where the two were married, still stands in neighboring Norwalk, California, and is occasionally open for tours. Dr. Clark was an early civic leader in Fullerton and served as the Orange County Coroner for many years, along with making regular house calls all throughout Orange County. During his decades-long career, Dr. Clark delivered over 2,500 babies all throughout the county, making him directly responsible for much of its early population. The Clark family only lived in the Heritage House for ten years, but its legacy continues to live on as a museum.

The Heritage House is one of three historic houses on the CSUF campus, but unlike the Titan (Hetebrink) House, an 1886 Colonial Revival building, and the Alumni (Mahr/Golleher) House, a 1931 Spanish Revival building, the Heritage House was moved from its original location at the corner of Fullerton's Lemon Street and Amerige Avenue. After the Clark family had left it, the house passed from owner to owner, was eventually threatened by demolition due to a street widening project, but was moved to the Fullerton Arboretum in 1976. There, it served as an office space for many years until Oak Hall was built a couple of hundred yards to the north. It was then fully converted into a museum and remained so until its closure in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During its operation as a museum, the Heritage House was in the hands of the Fullerton Victorian Society, a group of ladies who held various events there and served as docents and curators of its collection. The collection contains about 10,000 artifacts, most of which have been documented in one way or another, albeit not to modern standards. In addition, while the house was serving as a museum, the collection was not necessarily curated or applied to specific exhibitions. Much of it is of the original period, however, it was not properly maintained and left out of permanent display. Docents, dressed in period costumes, frequently catered to third-grade field trips, something I was able to experience for myself at Founders Park in Anaheim (featuring the 1857 Mother Colony House and the 1894 Woelke-Stoffel House) and at Stanley Ranch in Garden Grove (featuring the 1891 Ware-Stanley House and Walt Disney's Garage). For such purposes, the Heritage House's management style may have been suitable, but for a museum—as part of a university—not so much. For the past years, the Heritage House has been under the direction of Trish Campbell, the former exhibition coordinator at CSUF's Pollak Library. Campbell and her team of interns and

volunteers started their work in the fall of 2024. The first order of business was to declutter. Artifacts had been placed throughout the museum without much thought. The parlor, or living room as we know it today, had at one point in time served as Dr. Clark's waiting room. However, prior to the fall of 2024, it looked more like a storage unit. After a few weeks, most of the artifacts were tucked away into the house's many closets and cupboards. In addition to decluttering, interns also worked toward an event on December 6, 2024, which brought donors, potential donors, and others to the Arboretum and its Heritage House to showcase how financial support was being used. Overall, visitors were quite pleased with the progress and eager to return.

In the spring of 2025, the home's enormous textile collection was re-documented. The aforementioned wear and tear was closely examined and particularly noticeable on many of the period dresses. Beautiful, mostly handmade dresses had been left on mannequins for years, not properly maintained, and it showed. Several dresses were in such disrepair that they most likely could not be exhibited and were in dire need of restoration. Progress seemed to move at a snail's pace, but eventually all the dresses and various textiles were recorded and put away to make up the bed in the bedroom. Among the textile collection was a quilt that had been given to Dr. Clark after his graduation from medical school in 1887. This quilt was in fragile condition with many wear marks, and the student interns worked diligently to not inflict any further damage and make sure that it was put away carefully and protected from the elements.

One goal of the current Heritage House team is to make the house as accessible as possible to anyone. During the spring of 2025, each team member set out to research and craft an online exhibition. In the future, online exhibitions will be uploaded to the Heritage House page of the Arboretum's website. Topics are diverse, ranging from the Basque community of early Orange County to culinary history. Simultaneously, physical exhibitions are also being developed. The fall of 2024 featured a toy exhibition, as the Clark family included three children. Various toys from the turn of the twentieth century were showcased, including cast-iron banks, card games, puzzles, and even a few board games, and a graduate student, who also happened to be the House's very first intern, developed the appropriate labels. This exhibition has been deinstalled and is currently being replaced by one centered around the ostrich farms of Orange County. The plan going forward is to keep exhibitions fresh. In the years leading up to the pandemic, visits to the Heritage House had slowed significantly, perhaps due to the fact that exhibitions never rotated. Yet the same collection and the same displays only remain interesting and enticing for so long, especially in today's world. For a museum to be successful, it must constantly adapt and keep fresh. Although the Heritage House is not regularly open to the public at the time of writing this review, its curatorial team is always looking for ways to attract people to create a different experience every time someone steps inside.

Apart from tending to the museum's scholarly aspects, the Heritage House team is also tasked with maintaining the house itself. Since the fall of 2024, two rooms have been stripped of the original wallpaper, due to existing damage, and repainted. In addition to the walls, the floors—which had numerous cracks due to decades of people walking over them—have also

been repaired. The antique rugs in the bedroom, parlor, and dining room have all been professionally cleaned and repaired. As the weeks pass, the house inches closer to reopening, although, at this point, we do not know when that will be. The direction for the future may well be paid programming. Unlike in the past, it will not be open to the public “whenever;” rather, it will be opened on certain occasions, and guests will have to purchase an entry slot, which will help support the museum’s upkeep. In addition to this, there are plans to host more of the aforementioned third-grade field trips, enabling children in the area to learn about their local history, hopefully soon.

As it is now, just about anyone would find enjoyment in touring the Heritage House. The kitchen is fully equipped with a cast-iron stove, telephone, icebox, and pie safe, which have since been rearranged to create a more aesthetically pleasing space. As one moves into the dining room, one is met with a Victorian-era floral wallpaper, which may or may not have been in the house originally but is nonetheless unique. Straight ahead stands the China cabinet in which several pieces from the Clark family are kept. Turning to the left, one enters the bedroom. The cast-iron bed frame holds almost the entire textile collection, including ladies’ dresses, Dr. Clark’s quilt, and various other things catalogued by the museum’s team. Walking a little further into the house, one enters the parlor. On the north wall, one can see an organ which, unfortunately, does not work; however, plans are in place to restore it. On the floor lies an oriental rug with a beautiful pattern that anyone would like to have in their own home. Standing next to the fainting couch is a porcelain doll that may be creepy to some; however, it once belonged to Lucy Eudolpha (1903–1970), Dr. Clark’s daughter. Also, in the parlor, there is a decent-sized cabinet reserved for a future rotating exhibition program intended to attract visitors. Finally, one arrives at the doctor’s office. Above the doctor’s desk hangs his diploma from the Hahnemann Medical College in Chicago, an institution specializing in homeopathy. Tucked far in the corner is the pharmacy, which may have actually been Dr. Clark’s exam room when he originally lived in the house; it now houses his original microscope along with several medical textbooks that once belonged to him. On top of the desk is an electrotherapy device: for a time in the early 1900s, Dr. Clark experimented with this methods, however, we do not know the extent of his practice using them.

Both the museum team and the Arboretum hope to open the house to more visitors in the future. When open, it will be a must-see for anyone on campus or living in the area. Orange County features many historic homes turned into museums. Notable examples include the Dr. Willella Howe-Waffle House (an 1880s Victorian) and Medical Museum in Santa Ana, the aforementioned Woelke-Stoffel House in Anaheim, and the Albert Sumner Bradford House (a 1902 Colonial Revival) in Placentia. By the time Heritage House finally opens to the public, it will surely rival any other historic home in the county.

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*World of the Terracotta Warriors:  
New Archaeological Discoveries in Shaanxi in the 21st century.*

Lead curator: Tianlong Jiao.

Bowers Museum: 2002 N Main St, Santa Ana, California 92706.

Visitor information: [online](#).

Temporary exhibition: May 24, 2025, to October 19, 2025.

In 1974, one of the most important Chinese archaeological sites was discovered in the province of Shaanxi, where several thousand sculpted life-size terracotta warriors had been lying relatively untouched for over two thousand years. Their statues represented armored infantry, officers, and generals, and they were accompanied by horse drawn chariots, animals, and court personnel. Commissioned by Qin Shi Huang (259–210 BCE), the first emperor of China (r. 221–210 BCE), 700,000 soldiers and workers had created them for the sole purpose of protecting the emperor in his afterlife. The famous terracotta warriors are just one of the many archaeological finds in the province of Shaanxi, which holds many hidden treasures, landmarks, and other secrets that span thousands of years, and the oldest of them go back to China's earliest civilizations, which rival those of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.

After almost twenty years of new archaeological explorations in the Shaanxi region, the Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Promotion Center, alongside other museums and archaeological institutions from the area, recently returned to the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, California, where it had last exhibited some of its treasures in 2008. This return exhibition, *World of the Terracotta Warriors: New Archaeological Discoveries in Shaanxi in the 21st century*, is designed by Bowers chief curator Dr. Tianlong Jiao, a specialist in Chinese archaeology who has worked for the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, the Hong Kong Maritime Museum, and the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawaii. Jiao's expertise is perfectly suited for this foray into the ancient civilizations of the Shaanxi region between 2300 and 206 BCE. The exhibition features more than 110 ancient artifacts, never before exhibited outside of China, alongside photographs of archaeological dig sites and immersive digital experiences, thereby allowing visitors to gain an unprecedented glimpse into Shaanxi. It traces the region's history from the 4,000-year-old city state of Shimao, through sites of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, to the terracotta warriors of Qin Shi Huang's mausoleum.

When entering the Bowers's mission-style building, visitors encounter the exhibition gift shop and the nine paintings *Sacred Realms: Buddhist* in the Freedman Galleria. As they enter the *World of the Terracotta Warriors* exhibition, they are greeted with a screen explaining how the exhibition showcases various archaeological artifacts throughout Shaanxi's history. Next to the screen is a URL code, which provides access to a free exhibition guide with pictures of the artifacts as well as labels of the exhibits. The first artifact, located at the entrance, is a stone sculpture from the Shimao civilization, depicting two horses facing a bull's head, which indicates that even as far back as 2300 BCE, working animals played an important role. Next to this artifact is an exhibit that displays the history of the Shimao site, the largest urban settlement in north-central China's North Loess Plateau between 2300 and 1800 BCE. This settlement was protected by a perimeter of stone watchtowers and two large circles of stone walls, and at its core was the citadel of Huangchengtai. This central location was guarded by

incredibly steep stone walls that acted as a final defense for the urban settlement. Archaeologists were able to excavate various artifacts, such as divination-related oracle bones, dowry shells, murals, and of course jade. Beyond this exhibit, visitors encounter artifacts from Lushanmao, another significant urban center in the North Loess Plateau between 2300 and 2100 BCE. At the end of this section of the exhibition, museumgoers are rewarded with an interactive experience that features a reproduction of Shimao's walls, filled with pieces of jade that—when pulled—show trivia about Shimao, such as how they traded with other civilizations from the Eurasian Steppe. This experience reflects the real-life historical practice of inserting jade into the walls and foundations of important structures at both Shimao and Lushanmao.

Once finished with this interactive portion, visitors continue to a room dedicated to the Zhukaigou culture and the Shang dynasty, which lasted from c. 1600 to c. 1050 BCE. It mainly features a wall covered in photos of the Wayaogou site, which was home to nine large tombs dating back to the years between 1200 and 1000 BCE. Of these tombs, two were only recently excavated (2023), and inside archaeologists discovered chariots, possibly the earliest of their kind, painted in lacquer and covered in bronze ornaments. By the wall of photographs are artifacts from the Shang Dynasty, including daggers, earrings, and ceramics, such as tripod vessels otherwise known as *Li*. Following this artifacts exhibit is a long hallway dedicated to the Zhou dynasty, a civilization lasting from c. 1050 to 221 BCE. Its exhibits are largely divided into two sections, those of the Western Zhou and the "Spring and Autumn" period, which represented the two halves of the dynasty's history. While exploring this section of the exhibition, visitors realize that, by this point in time, bronze tools had become far more widespread, as many of the artifacts are bronze tools, ornaments, and weapons. While the Zhou dynasty did produce gold artifacts, such as ornaments and belt buckles, it was their jade artifacts that encompassed a far greater variety of not just ornaments, but also figures and jewelry, which often featured agates.

At the end of this hall, visitors enter the main attraction: several of the first emperor's terracotta warriors from his mausoleum complex. This is easily the largest room of the exhibition, larger than all the previous rooms combined. The first thing visitors notice when they enter is a half-sized replica of a terracotta and bronze chariot. Then, encased in protective glass, are several life-size terracotta warriors of various ranks, from lowly foot soldiers to large and imposing generals with upward-facing boots denoting their status. Next to this is a second interactive experience, a screen to digitally paint the terracotta warriors in their original colors. From here, visitors enter the final hallway, dedicated to the process of creating the terracotta warriors. A nearly eighteen-foot-long model depicts the arduous process of producing a single terracotta warrior, going through the hands of dozens of workers and craftsmen, the latter of whom would sculpt a face based on a real-life warrior. A single terracotta warrior statue has a modern worth of four and a half million dollars, so, it is little wonder that the real deal at the Bowers is protected by thick glass.

To cap off the experience, the most technological part of the exhibition features a three-sided room that reproduces the burial of the emperor Qin Shi Huang and what he expected to experience after his death. Using large, screen-covered walls and surround sound, this

immersive video has visitors watch as Qin Shi Huang's spirit is carried away while his terracotta entourage gains a lifelike sentience—from his armored warriors, who surrounded the emperor's private carriage, to the various animal sculptures, including horses that would roam the surrounding land, and even waterfowl that would take to the air to accompany the emperor's final journey. With that, the immersive experience ends and visitors make their way toward the exit, but not before they are shown photos of the men and women who have worked on excavating the first emperor's mausoleum, using modern technology to restore terracotta figures, constructing an onsite museum, and even setting up a laboratory right on top of the site to allow for the efficient study of the tomb.

*World of the Terracotta Warriors* showcases the various discoveries and new knowledge gained over the past twenty years in Shaanxi. It also depicts an evolution in the understanding of some of China's earliest civilizations, and how far scholars have come in unlocking the hidden mysteries of their first emperor's mausoleum by using modern technologies. The Bowers Museum's terracotta warrior exhibition is a comprehensive celebration of China's ancient past that can be shared with nations from around the world. At the time of writing this review, the exhibition has ended, yet that does not mean that the artifacts are being shipped back to China; instead they make their next stop at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. For those curious about China's long history, the Chen Art Gallery in the city of Torrance, California—a hidden gem in the Sunrider International Building on Abalone Avenue—features over 1,000 artifacts across five thousand years from the Neolithic era to the early twentieth century. Meanwhile, for museumgoers who have a deep-seated curiosity for ancient tombs, the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose, California, is an ideal destination, as it features the largest collection of Egyptian artifacts in the western United States, including a tour on ancient Egyptian funerary practices. All these are thrilling experiences that offer a unique look into the distant past.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: *Parker Maisterra of Fullerton, California, earned his B.A. in History (2026) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).*



## *Reviews (Films / Documentaries / TV Shows)*

### *20 Days in Mariupol [documentary film].*

Directed by Mstyslav Chernov. 2023.  
YouTube. 94 minutes.

This Oscar-winning documentary, presented by the Associated Press (AP) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) series Frontline, has been accused of containing staged footage with actors playing the roles of civilian victims as part of a propaganda conspiracy by the Ukrainians to vilify Russia amidst early reports of its invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022. Certainly, we are all entitled to our own opinions, but this is absolutely absurd and baseless. Video footage of doctors using defibrillators on infants or apartment complexes under heavy shellfire and reduced to rubble cannot be staged, at least not without extensive preparation and foresight. How could they have staged those scenes in Mariupol on such short notice while being under siege? Only certain groups of people had any inkling that an invasion was imminent, but no one could have guessed it would happen so rapidly and on the scale that it did, as to overtake the entire city of Mariupol in a matter of weeks. The conflict has since evolved into a full-blown war of attrition spreading through the rest of the country and has lasted until the present-day, with still no resolution reached despite almost four years of bloodshed and casualties reaching at least half a million people on both sides. According to the United Nations, tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians have been killed, with that number likely to be underreported since cities like Mariupol have remained under Russian occupation and inaccessible to independent investigators.

The AP team of reporters led by Ukrainian journalist and filmmaker Mstyslav Chernov (who directed, wrote, and produced this documentary) traveled to Mariupol, located on the northern shore of the Sea of Azov, on February 24, 2022, because they guessed it would be one of the main strategic targets for a Russian invasion of Ukraine. (00:02:43) Mariupol is an industrial city with a large port; thus it is economically important for the country as well as vital for its war manufacturing sector. (00:04:30) It is also a bridge to Crimea, which Russia had annexed eight years prior in 2014. Russia had also tried to take Mariupol at that time but was ultimately unsuccessful. Only an hour after the AP team arrived in Mariupol, the first Russian bombs hit the outskirts of the city, where a Ukrainian military base housed an anti-aircraft system. (00:03:44) Simultaneously, Putin announced his decision to carry out the attack, characterizing it as an act of self-defense against threats to Russia. (00:03:08) The shells hit a residential area, setting homes ablaze and causing civilians to panic and rush outside. (00:06:00) Soon after, martial law was imposed in Ukraine, and some residents decided to leave the city. (00:07:10) But most opted to stay, hiding in the basements of their apartment buildings, since the city has no real bomb shelters. (00:08:44) By Day 3, a quarter of the residents had fled, as Russian forces started to surround the city, taking towns on its outskirts, and blocking the routes in and out of the city. (00:11:08)

There is a sharp contrast between the Ukrainian soldiers' reactions to the press and the doctors' reactions. Soldiers told the press team to stop filming, to which Chernov replies,

"Understand, this is a historical war. To not document it is impossible." (00:15:47) On the other hand, doctors told them to keep filming and even go out of their way to show the battered and bloodied bodies of civilians, especially children. (00:17:17) That is how we come to know that a four-year-old girl, Evangelina, was unable to be saved after being rushed to the hospital. Nurses were crying as they pronounced her dead. (00:17:40) We are shown scene after scene of parents begging doctors and nurses to save their children, and the grim aftermath of failed attempts. It is truly painful to watch, but as Chernov says, "it must be painful to watch." (00:25:02) A teenage boy, only sixteen years of age, was playing soccer with his friends when they were hit by shell fire, and both of his legs were blown off. (00:23:00) Doctors moved quickly to try and save him, as his father was watching helplessly, but to no avail; he had lost too much blood and died soon after arriving at the hospital. Another boy was also hit while playing soccer and needed to have his leg amputated, but there were almost no antibiotics left to fight infection. The hospital also ran very low on painkillers, so some patients were forced to go without. (00:26:45)

Some of the most distressing scenes are of hospital staff or city workers having to improvise when there was no more space to store bodies in morgues. (00:28:01) Some were placed in the utility rooms or basements of hospitals, while many others were gathered by the truckload and placed in mass graves. (00:56:12) Adding to these difficulties, Russian strikes caused problems with the internet and electricity. There was no running water or heat for the winter weather. (00:19:28) People grew desperate when food and water became scarce. (00:39:16) They began looting and stealing from local stores, smashing glass windows, and breaking down doors to get inside locked businesses. One particularly troubling incident was the bombing of a maternity hospital. (00:49:38) Many people were killed or injured, and entire wards of the hospital were completely destroyed. Viewers witness a heavily pregnant woman being carried to an ambulance on a stretcher. We are later informed that she was barely thirty years old and pregnant with her first child. She and her unborn baby both died shortly after being filmed. (01:04:42) For me, as a first-time mom to a newborn, this part really hit close to home. I cannot imagine the horror of giving birth without pain medication or while injured from a bombing. I was brought to tears learning of her story, as well as of the other young mothers who had to give birth in those conditions.

After two weeks of siege and bombings, the people of Mariupol started to hear heavy machine gun fire, indicating that Russian infantry have entered the city. (00:56:47) The area of the heaviest fighting was the Left Bank, closest to the Russian border. The largest university in the city was destroyed along with entire streets and residential areas. (00:58:29) Russian news claimed these reports as fake or argued that the Ukrainians were somehow staging these scenes. (01:02:09) Why would Ukrainians destroy their largest functioning university, hospitals, or neighborhoods just to smear the Russian name? They could have used abandoned buildings or other unimportant structures if it was all just a calculated ruse. Soon, the last hospital standing, Emergency Hospital 2, was about to be surrounded by Russians who had entered the neighborhood. (01:03:30) A nurse standing outside the front entrance was shot by a Russian sniper and critically injured. (01:09:37) Ukrainian soldiers were standing guard by the entrances, and some even got pinned down by snipers outside, unable to move from behind cover. The situation became dire for those inside the hospital, too; the patients,

doctors, and nurses were scared for their lives as they were watching tanks firing from a distance. There was a grim understanding among those inside the hospital that if reinforcements would not arrive immediately, they would be overtaken by the fast-approaching Russian forces.

A special Ukrainian military task force arrived early the next morning to extract the press team on a rescue mission. (01:16:37) The team was forced to leave everyone else in the hospital behind, and they expressed their feelings of guilt for doing so, but they also acknowledged the need to get out of the city to save themselves and the footage they had recorded. (01:19:09) Hours after their escape, Russian forces took over the hospital and the Left Bank. (01:20:19) After desperately scrambling to catch up, the AP reporters were able to leave the city with a Red Cross envoy. (01:27:10) By Day 86, all of Mariupol had fallen, and it remains under Russian occupation as the war rages on. (01:30:20) According to the documentary, an estimated 25,000 people died during the siege (01:30:25)—though, again, the death toll is likely much higher, as it is usually with warfare in urban areas. The film ends with images of mass graves marked only by numbers and crosses. (01:31:33) We can only pray that the survivors were not killed and allowed to evacuate the city, but we will not be able to account for the missing people as long as Russia holds on to Ukrainian territory.

For those wanting to explore other documentary films on the same or similar subjects, here are some that may be of interest: *Putin's Attack on Ukraine: Documenting War Crimes*, by Frontline and the Associated Press (2022), *Crime Scene: Bucha*, also by Frontline and the Associated Press (2022), and *Ukraine: Life Under Russia's Attack* (2023). These films were produced by teams of Ukrainian journalists who recorded the attacks on Ukraine by Russian forces through the eyes of civilians on the ground. The early stages of the war are documented through these documentaries and reveal the initial sentiments of the Ukrainian people, which is an ideal starting point for those wanting to study the current stage of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.

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### *American Primeval* [TV series].

Directed by Peter Berg. 2024.  
Netflix. 6 episodes (36–63 minutes each).

The word “primeval” is defined by the *Merriam Webster English Dictionary* as something existing from the earliest times and remaining largely untouched. This reflects the raw and untamed nature of the United States during its western frontier era—a world where survival, belief, and identity were constantly being tested. The Netflix limited series *American Primeval* captures the spirit of these ideas through two intertwined stories. These stories eventually fracture across the chaos of the frontier and are set against the historical backdrop of the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857. *American Primeval* was created by Mark L. Smith and directed by Peter Berg. Berg is also recognized for directing *Painkiller* (2023), *Patriots Day* (2016), *Hancock* (2008), and *Friday Night Lights* (2004). Together they skillfully blend elements

of historical reality from the western frontier with powerful dramatic story telling. The cast features strong performances from accomplished actors and actresses such as Taylor Kitsch and Betty Gilpin.

The series opens at Fort Bridger, Wyoming, a frontier trading post founded in 1843 by Mountain man Jim Bridger (Shea Whigham). Sara Rowell (Betty Gilpin) and her son Devin (Preston Mota) arrive, seeking passage west to reunite with Sara's husband in Crooks Springs, Missouri. Almost immediately, their hired escort is killed in a violent dispute, leaving Sara and her son stranded in an unfamiliar and dangerous environment. Desperate, Sara pleads with Jim Bridger to help secure a new escort. Bridger warns her that the journey is too dangerous, and that no one would be willing to take on the risk. Eventually, Bridger directs her to Issac Reed (Taylor Kitsch), a solitary Mountain man living outside of Fort Bridger. Reed refuses to help Sara, claiming he has no business in Crooks Springs and sends her away. Back at Fort Bridger, Sara encounters a group of Mormon settlers preparing to travel west toward Utah. Sara befriends a newlywed Mormon couple, Jacob Pratt (Dane DeHaan) and his wife Abish (Saura Lightfoot-Leon). After some hesitation, Jacob agrees to allow Sara and her son to join their wagon train.

Once at camp, tensions escalate when members from the Nauvoo Legion, a Mormon militia, confront the leader of the campsite, declaring they lack authorization from Brigham Young to settle their camp in the region. Although violence is initially avoided, the settlers at the camp are later attacked by disguised Mormon militiamen, accompanied by members of the Paiute tribe. The resulting massacre, which kills nearly all of the settlers, is historically remembered as the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857. The series depicts the massacre with dramatic intensity and is liberal with assigning historical responsibility. Historical accounts, such as *The Mormon Menace: Being the Confession of John Doyle Lee-Danite* (1905), convey that the Mormon militia did not partake in the massacre, but that it did coordinate the attack. It is said that they paid Paiute participants to invade and kill the settlers at the campsite. During the chaos, Sara and her son narrowly escape with the unexpected help of Issac Reed who, to their fortune, was nearby in the woods. Jacob Pratt survives the attack despite being partially scalped; his wife Abish and five other women also survive but are taken hostage and handed over to the Paiute as a gift. (Episode 1)

The purpose of providing this context is not just to establish the historical background of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, but also to illustrate the alignment of the two stories before they separate into the chaotic western frontier. Later on, my review will focus more heavily on the dramatic and action-packed story of Jacob Pratt and his wife Abish; the two find themselves separated from each other and caught between three forces—the U.S. military, the Nauvoo Legion (a Mormon militia), and the Shoshone Indian tribe—all fighting for survival and power in the Utah Territory during the Utah War of 1857–1858. *American Primeval* next introduces Brigham Young (Kim Coates) the first governor of the Utah Territory and leader of the Mormon movement. (Episode 2, 12:05) Young is portrayed as a calculating figure who wields political, military, and economic power. Wild Bill Hickman (Alex Breaux) is subsequently introduced into the fold. Hickman serves as Young's right-hand man and as a tactical commander within the Nauvoo Legion. Together, the two men orchestrate strategies

for territorial expansion, covert operations, and damage control when events do not go as planned, an example being the Mountain Meadows Massacre. While the series captures Young and his determination for power through political influence, it displays him as a power-seeking, violent man, and modern members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have disputed this depiction; as Tamarra Kemsley has noted in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, Young—in *American Primeval*—is “egregiously mischaracterized as a villainous, violent fanatic.”

Damage control by Young and Hickman includes cleaning up the loose ends of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. This brings us back to the story of Jacob Pratt and his wife Abish. Pratt awakens badly injured and somehow makes his way back to Fort Bridger, where a local doctor manages to stitch his scalp back together. Historically, this scene stretches plausibility, as frontier medical care in the 1850s would have been seriously limited. However, the moment reinforces a central theme of survival. While being stitched up, U.S. Army Captain Edmund Dellinger (Lucas Neff) questions Pratt about what had happened. (Episode 2, 16:27) Pratt advises Dellinger that he can identify the people who conducted the attack, which worries Hickman who is also in the room with the group. Once the captain departs from the room, Hickman, in an effort to cover things up, offers Pratt assistance with finding his wife and brings him back to the Nauvoo Legion settlement. (Episode 2, 25:35) Meanwhile, Dellinger and his troops move forward with their investigation and arrive at the massacre site. Based on their findings on site, the captain suspects that it had not been done by Indians but, rather, by the Mormon militia, which further escalates tensions between the two groups.

Once the Shoshone settlement is introduced to the series, it is revealed that Isaac Reed had been raised among them by a female chief named Winter Bird (Irene Bedard). Through this connection, the two narratives briefly merge. First, Reed provides Dellinger with information that the attack had not been perpetrated by the Shoshone, but by Mormons. The settlement also brings in Abish who, through her time with the Shoshone, has gradually adapted to their way of life and formed a bond with Winter Bird and her son Red Feather (Derek Hinkey), leader of his own rogue Shoshone tribe. In coordination with the Shoshone tribe, Abish is sent to the settlement of the U.S. Army to meet with Dellinger to testify to the perpetrators of the massacre, placing direct blame on the Nauvoo Legion and confronted them with Dellinger to verify. (Episode 4, 38:19) Tensions could not get any higher with this verification, and it ultimately leads to an epic battle scene, including all three groups, the U.S. Army, the Nauvoo Legion (who ambush the U.S. Army), and the Shoshone tribe. Pratt joins the Nauvoo Legion for this battle, while Abish joins forces with the Shoshone tribe. The newlyweds blindly confront each other in the battle, and Jacob mistakenly kills Abish, who is wearing Shoshone warpaint as a disguise. After realizing what he has done, Pratt takes his own life. (Episode 6, 23:25) The series frames their reunion as a grim spiritual closure, while emphasizing the human cost of frontier violence.

Unlike traditional Western narratives, *American Primeval* resists a simple “cowboys versus Indians” framework. Instead, it presents a morally complex portrayal of the Utah Frontier, blending historical accuracy with dramatized interpretation. The series contributes to a broader conversation about how violent frontier events are remembered and reimagined in

popular culture. From a historical perspective, the series incorporates real locations such as Fort Bridger and documented events like the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857. The series briefly disguises its villains but then quickly distinguishes them in both stories: the Nauvoo Legion in one, and the ruthless bounty hunters in the other. From my perspective, and this may be controversial, the series' portrayal of Brigham Young makes sense. *American Primeval* depicts him as a strong leader willing to use violence to maintain control, even when it contradicts the values of his faith and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The depiction of the Shoshone tribe offers unexpected depth, allowing them to evolve from perceived antagonists into symbols of resilience and survival. Sara Rowell's parallel journey, fleeing bounty hunters across the frontier, reinforces the series' central theme of endurance in an unforgiving landscape. *American Primeval* stands strong as a modern perspective of the long Hollywood traditions of the tale of life on the American frontier. I recommend it to viewers interested in the historical complexities of the western frontier, particularly, those interested in American history, religious conflict, and frontier violence. It is the type of show that is nearly impossible not to binge-watch in just one night.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: Nicholas Murray of Buena Park, California earned his A.A.s in Liberal Studies and Social and Behavioral Sciences (2022), and his A.A.s in History and Interdisciplinary Studies (2023) at Saddleback College, California. He is currently pursuing a B.A. in History at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).

#### *Andor. Seasons 1 and 2 [TV series].*

Created by Tony Gilroy. 2022 and 2025.  
Lucasfilm /Disney+. 24 episodes (45–55 minutes each).

Unlike most entries in the *Star Wars* franchise, *Andor* (2022–2025) is structured less around mystic heroism than around the historical mechanics of empire: bureaucracy, extraction, propaganda, incarceration, and the slow formation of organized resistance. The series treats rebellion as a contingent, fragile process shaped by material conditions and political calculation. In doing so, *Andor* stands apart from previous *Star Wars* projects, especially on film and television, by grounding its drama in structures recognizable from real historical empires. Created by Tony Gilroy, best known for the *Bourne* trilogy (2002, 2004, 2007), and *Michael Clayton*, the series reflects its showrunner's long-standing interest in intelligence systems, institutional power, and moral compromise: Gilroy has described himself as an "amateur historian," and *Andor* consistently approaches revolution as a practical problem, rather than an idealized inevitability. Finance, surveillance, propaganda, and repression are treated as the primary engines of political change. The result is a series that feels unusually historical for a science-fiction property, drawing heavily on patterns visible across centuries of imperial rule.

Set in the five years preceding *Rogue One* (2016) and *A New Hope* (1977), *Andor* traces the emergence of the Rebel Alliance through an ensemble cast. Cassian Andor (Diego Luna) is the series' main protagonist, starting off as a revolution-averse cynic and gradually becoming a selfless revolutionary, willing to sacrifice himself to save the galaxy. Through repeated encounters with loss, exploitation, and exposure to collective struggle, all caused and enabled by the Empire, Cassian is transformed. Across its two seasons, the series has numerous

intersecting storylines: the covert operations of rebel organizer Luthen Rael (Stellan Skarsgård); the financial and political risks taken by Senator Mon Mothma (Genevieve O'Reilly); the internal security efforts of Imperial officer Dedra Meero (Denise Gough); and localized resistance movements on planets such as Ferrix, Aldhani, and Ghorman. *Andor* emphasizes preparation and consequences, particularly institutional response for the latter, rather than resolving conflicts episodically. Political pressure builds slowly, and moments of violence are framed as outcomes of long-developing systems, rather than as spontaneous events.

The first season establishes imperial rule as a process of economic and colonial extraction. Ferrix is initially under corporate policing, but is obligated to transition to direct imperial occupation, echoing real-world cases in which private enforcement structures paved the way for centralized state power. Another example is Kenari, revealed through Cassian's childhood flashbacks, which is an abandoned mining world destroyed by resource exploitation. Lastly, Ghorman, a planet targeted for its unique materials integral to the Death Star, the Empire's covert "Hail Mary" superweapon, faces the same trajectory. In all of these settings, the Empire treats planets and populations as expendable inputs, valuable only insofar as they can be controlled and exploited. We see this not only on planets but also with characters, some of whom ultimately come to regret their actions for benefitting the Empire. Anything the Empire touches is chewed up and spat out once its usefulness expires.

Economics are central to *Andor's* depiction of rebellion. The Aldhani arc exemplifies this. Modeled on existing revolutionary seizures, such as bank robberies that financed insurgencies, the Aldhani heist drives home one of Gilroy's premises: revolutions require capital. Ideology is necessary but insufficient in itself for revolutions to gain legitimacy. Senator Mon Mothma's storyline reinforces this point, as she risks her political position and personal life to funnel resources into rebel activity while maintaining her public loyalty to the Empire.

Midway through the first season, *Andor* shifts its attention from colonial administration to industrial incarceration. Cassian is sentenced to the Imperial prison on Narkina 5, which enforces discipline through threats of collective punishment. Cassian's role in organizing a mass prison escape, aided by inmate Kino Loy (Andy Serkis), frames successful resistance as collective rather than individual action. The closest it comes to individual action is Cassian and Kino working synergistically. In season 1's post-credits scene, it is revealed that what Cassian and the other prisoners on Narkina 5 were producing were components for the Death Star, demonstrating how empires rely on routine exploitation to sustain themselves.

Season 2 expands upon these themes through the Ghorman storyline, which depicts imperial violence justified through narrative manipulation. Before deploying lethal force, the Empire launches a sustained propaganda campaign to delegitimize local resistance, anticipating that unrest can be framed as criminal or insurgent behavior. Furthermore, they are counting on local insurgents to be baited into doing the "wrong thing." This results in the Ghorman Massacre, a false flag attack on peaceful protestors. The Ghorman Massacre illustrates a disturbingly familiar historical pattern in which state violence is justified through control of

public perception. The Empire's power not only depends on military force but on its ability to define truth.

Mon Mothma's subsequent denunciation speech before the Galactic Senate represents the shaking of that narrative control. With Mon Mothma declaring the massacre an act of genocide and condemning the "death of truth," the Empire unsuccessfully attempts to shut down her public broadcast and arrest her. Mon Mothma's flight from the capital marks the moment when elite dissent transforms into overt rebellion, reinforced by her abandoning the elegant coat she had been wearing specifically to political meetings and later dressing down while with the Rebel Alliance. The scene emphasizes that authoritarian systems rely heavily on censorship and intimidation to survive as their legitimacy erodes.

The architecture of rebellion in *Andor* operates across class lines. Working-class resistance emerges through direct action, as seen on Ferrix, Aldhani, and Ghorman. Intellectual operatives, such as Luthen Rael, pursue sabotage and acceleration, believing that conditions must worsen before mass resistance becomes possible. Political elites face different challenges. For example, senators Mon Mothma and Bail Organa (Benjamin Bratt) struggle between complicity and conscience, knowing that defection carries symbolic weight precisely because of their privilege, and so they time their defections accordingly.

Mon Mothma and her cousin Vel Sartha (Faye Marsay) embody elite defection within revolutionary movements. Gilroy said it is privilege rather than its deprivation that made the two socially conscious, comparing them to Roman elites who embraced Christianity under polytheistic imperial rule and to affluent twentieth-century radicals who turned against established power structures. Their storylines foreground a recurring paradox of revolution: those with the most to lose are often the ones whose choices most visibly signal systemic collapse. Mon Mothma's financial maneuvering, arranged-marriage subplot, and eventual public break from the Empire all reinforce the personal cost of moral clarity among the ruling class.

Within the *Star Wars* franchise, *Andor* most closely aligns with *Rogue One*, sharing its emphasis on collective sacrifice, moral ambiguity, and institutional struggle rather than mythic destiny. *Andor* reflects Gilroy's earlier works that were primarily political thrillers, particularly the *Bourne* films, which similarly foreground intelligence agencies, bureaucratic paranoia, and the erosion of individual agency within state systems. Unlike stereotypical *Star Wars* narratives, however, *Andor* focuses more on historical causality than the "mysticism" some people associate with *Star Wars*. The mysticism is there if you care about that as a *Star Wars* fan, but it is more peripheral.

Gilroy has described *Andor* as "about the making of a revolution," and its structure reflects his intent. The multi-episode arcs follow a pattern of setup, payoff, and aftermath, with that pattern tying into political change. *Andor* depicts how tyranny maintains itself, especially when under threat. Thanks to Gilroy's fascination with history and revolutions, the series achieves a science-fiction narrative that operates as a recognizable chronicle of empire and resistance. By grounding its drama in history, *Andor* makes its story both timeless and unsettlingly familiar. I highly recommend it.



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*Chief of War. Season 1 [TV show].*

Created by Thomas Pa'a Sibbett and Jason Momoa. 2025.  
Apple TV. 9 episodes (40–59 minutes each).

When most people think about Hawai'i, they think of beaches, resorts, and lū'aus (Hawaiian parties, often with food and hula). Yet Hawai'i was not always a place of peaceful relaxation; there were wars and power struggles. One of the more iconic stories of power struggle in Hawai'i was the war to unify the islands. *Chief of War* (2025), created by Thomas Pa'a Sibbett and Jason Momoa, tells that exact story. It is a historical Hawaiian epic set during the beginning of the unification wars to create a singular kingdom of Hawai'i from 1782 to 1810. Sibbett and Momoa are both Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian), and during casting made the intentional decision to cast mostly Kānaka and Pacific Islander actors. This was done to best portray and honor the history they are sharing. According to a behind-the-scenes interview with Sibbett, they "decided that production should be led by culture." ("Making Of: The Prophecy," 03:27) This meant that they would honor the land, people, and nā Akua (the Gods) throughout the entire production. To give authenticity and respect to the ancestors, whose stories they were telling, Sibbett and Momoa decided that the show should use 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language), ("Making Of: The Prophecy," Apple 04:28) so *Chief of War* would be the first mainstream TV show using 'Ōlelo Hawai'i as its main language. Sibbett and Momoa created a love letter to Hawai'i to where they made one-to-one recreations of a few 'Ahu 'ula (capes) and mahiole (helmets). ("Making Of: Building Kingdoms," 01:33) The teams and actors who brought this show to life put considerable effort and care into making sure that this story was told right—in a way that honors Hawaiians instead of exotifying them. Thomas Pa'a Sibbett and Jason Momoa have known each other for decades and worked on *Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom* (2023) together. Sibbett is best known for his work on *Braven* (2018) and *The Last Manhunt* (2022), having writing credit for both. Momoa is best known for his acting in *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019) and as Aquaman in the DC film universe. Most importantly, and to reiterate, both are Kānaka and have a reverence for Hawaiian culture.

The story of *Chief of War* follows a family who fled from Maui to escape King Kahekili (Temuera Morrison) because he had them fight and plan battles that they deemed to be needless and brutal. Ka'iana (Jason Momoa) played the main character from this family, who was one of the best war ali'i (chiefs/royalty) in Hawai'i. His family, consisting of his two brothers, his wife, and his wife's sister, were able to flee Maui and Kaua'i with Ka'ahumanu (Luciane Buchanan) to the Big Island. (Episode 2, 44:51) Ka'iana was not as lucky, as he fought off some of the Maui soldiers, only to jump off a cliff to get away from them. (Episode 2, 45:17) He was rescued by the group of sailors he had saved previously. Ka'iana spent about a year sailing around the world with them prior to returning to Hawai'i to reunite with his family. Upon his return, he brought key tools to assist with the ongoing war against Kahekili: guns and ammunition. He learned that the previous king of the island had died and separated

the spiritual and political power of the king between his son Keōua (Cliff Curtis) and his nephew Kamehameha (Kaina Makua). This separation of power led to tension between the two factions, but mostly on Keōua's side. Keōua teamed up with Kahekili to take down Kamehameha and Ka'iana. To do so, Kahekili sent his best and most ruthless warriors to aid in this effort. While the war inched closer, Keōua sought Kahekili to get help in taking down Kamehameha and Ka'iana, who grew closer the more they worked together. The warriors showed no mercy. They desecrated sacred areas by cutting down trees in the sacred grove. While doing so, they were discovered by Nāhi (Siuā Ikale'o), Ka'iana's brother, and Heke (Mainei Kinimaka), Ka'iana's sister-in-law. Ultimately, Nāhi was killed, and Heke was sent back with a warning message that war would take place in the "Black Desert." (Episode 8, 23:51) Kamehameha realized that the war he was trying to prevent had already arrived, and that he had to right this injustice. So, Kamehameha's district, Kohala, and Keōua's district, Ka'ū, along with any of the districts that sided with him, went to war. Keōua was killed by what was deemed as an act of Pele, the goddess of fire and volcanoes, who then made Kamehameha the king of Hawai'i.

While *Chief of War* did an exemplary job of sharing the historical context of what led to the unification war of Hawai'i, it is important to note that the story was adapted for entertainment and to suit a wider audience. For example, Sibbett talks about why the women's outfits were more modern than those of their male counterparts. Actresses wore a different version to help them not be sexualized by the viewers and to help the viewers better focus on the storyline. ("Making Of: Building Kingdoms," 2:58) One thing that the show explored briefly was the sexuality of Prince Kūpule (Brandon Finn) of Maui. In the *Chief of War*, they allude to him having a relationship with his father's advisor. While James Cook, the British sailor who was killed in Hawai'i, witnessed same-sex relationships occurring in the region, there is no record of Kūpule taking part in same-sex relationships. (Matthew Link, "When Captain Cook Met Kalanikoa," *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 11, no. 3, May–June 2004). Rather, this was more likely a way in which the creators tried to explore māhū (queer) relationships within Hawai'i.

One difference between what happened in the show and the historical record is that Ka'iana sailed not only on one ship but at least two. While he did travel across the world on the *Nootka*, most notably to China and Alaska, that was not the ship that brought him back to Hawai'i. (Dave Roos, "Who Was Chief Ka'iana of Hawaii? The Legendary Warrior Chief Who Was Also the First Hawaiian to Travel the World," *History*, July 30, 2025). The ship that ultimately returned him to Hawai'i was the *Iphigenia Nubiana*. On this ship, Ka'iana brought guns and gunpowder, which he subsequently introduced to Hawai'i. (Roos, 2025) Additionally, the show departs from the historical record in its portrayal of his adventures overseas. During his exploration of the world, Ka'iana ended up in Zamboanga, a Spanish fort in the Philippines. According to the show, he freed slaves, including his friend Tony (James Udom). While the historical figure of Ka'iana did visit Zamboanga, there is no record of him freeing slaves while there. (Jonathan Wright, "Chief of War: the true story behind the creation of the Kingdom of Hawai'i," *History Extra* (BBC History Magazine, 2025)

Another difference in the storyline compared to the historical record is the death of Nāhi. While the character was brutally killed in episode 8, that is not how his death occurred. Rather than being killed by Keōua, he was killed in a battle against Kamehameha on Maui. Sibbett made it clear in an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter* that this change to the historical narrative was done in an effort to add drama and heighten emotional impact for the final episode. (Max Gao, "Jason Momoa Had a Visceral Reaction to That Brutal 'Chief of War' Death: 'I Was in So Much Pain,'" *The Hollywood Reporter*, September 16, 2025) One of the biggest strengths of this TV show is that anyone who does not mind some gore can watch it and understand the storyline. It is made for a general audience to better understand Hawaiian culture beyond the beaches, lū'aus, and hotels. The history of Hawai'i is widely overlooked. Whether on purpose or not, there is still a silence in the narrative. Hawai'i is a paradise, but it is also a land of war, pain, and struggle for power.

While watching this show, I could not help but commend the care that Sibbett and Momoa had for the stories they were telling. While other available sources on this subject are not nearly as new as *Chief of War*, they still hold their ground for being viable when learning about Hawaiian culture. If you want better insights into Kamehameha I, the KHON2 News channel in Hawai'i covered his legacy in a video, titled "Who Was Kamehameha I?" While there are a few books about the history of Hawai'i, the one that is highly recommended to those wishing to learn more about the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom by the U.S. government is *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* by Queen Lili'uokalani (1898). This book, written by the last queen of Hawai'i, offers a detailed history of Hawai'i and how she was overthrown by a foreign government as the last ruler of Hawai'i. Another popular source is the Merrie Monarch Festival, the "Olympics" of hula, which takes place annually. Prior to a written language for 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, ancient stories were passed down to each generation through hula. Although this is not a typical source for history, hula is Hawai'i, and hula tells the story of Hawai'i. The hula being performed are often dedicated to a God, an ali'i, or used to share an episode from Hawai'i's history. In 2018, National Geographic released a short film about the history of hula, titled, "Hula Is More Than a Dance—It's the 'Heartbeat' of the Hawaiian People." It explores why hula is so important to Kānaka across the globe.

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### *The Chosen. Seasons 1–5 [TV series].*

Directed by Dallas Jenkins. 2017 (pilot), 2019–2015.

The Chosen app, Amazon Prime Video. 40 episodes (50–60 minutes each).

*The Chosen*, created, directed, and co-written by Dallas Jenkins, represents a groundbreaking achievement in faith-based entertainment. Jenkins, born in 1975 and the son of bestselling author Jerry B. Jenkins (co-author of the *Left Behind* series), began his filmmaking career with independent features such as *Hometown Legend* (2002) and shorts like *Midnight Clear* (2006), which won awards at the Heartland Film Festival. He later directed films including *The*

*Resurrection of Gavin Stone* (2017) and *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* (2024). *The Chosen* marks his most ambitious project: the first multi-season series about the life of Jesus Christ and the highest crowdfunded media project in history, raising millions directly from viewers to maintain creative independence. Unlike many prior depictions of Jesus on screen, *The Chosen* stands out for its multi-season format, deep character development, and high production values. Notable predecessors include the classic miniseries *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977, directed by Franco Zeffirelli), which offers a reverent and detailed portrayal but in a single miniseries format; *The Bible* (2013 miniseries, produced by Roma Downey and Mark Burnett), which covers broader biblical events with dramatic flair but less focus on individual backstories; and *A.D. The Bible Continues* (2015), which is a sequel series emphasizing the disciples after the resurrection. While these works prioritize scriptural events, *The Chosen* distinguishes itself by expanding fictional backstories and interpersonal dynamics, making biblical figures feel more relatable and human without compromising core Gospel accounts.

The series opens each season with a disclaimer: “*The Chosen* is based on the true stories of the gospels of Jesus Christ. Some locations and timelines have been combined or condensed. Backstories and some characters or dialogue have been added.” This transparency highlights the show’s balance between scriptural faithfulness and creative storytelling, allowing ancient events to resonate with modern audiences through emotional depth and accessibility. Season 1 introduces four intersecting character arcs set amid Roman occupation and religious tensions in Capernaum. The torments of Mary Magdalene (Elizabeth Tabish) begin in her youth, underscored by the recurring motif from Isaiah 43:1 (“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine”), symbolizing redemption and lost innocence. Her path crosses with Jesus (Jonathan Roumie), transforming her into one of his devoted followers. Parallel arcs follow brothers Simon Peter (Shahar Isaac) and Andrew (Noah James), fishermen burdened by debt and forced into compromising actions; Matthew (Paras Patel), an isolated Jewish tax collector working for the Romans; and Nicodemus (Erick Avari), a Pharisee experiencing a crisis of faith. These threads weave a mosaic of societal yearning for hope, delivering emotional authenticity that draws viewers into the characters’ struggles.

Subsequent seasons build on this foundation. Season 2 follows Jesus’s growing ministry in Galilee (circa 27–28 CE), depicting miracles, teachings such as the Sermon on the Mount, and the disciples’ personal trials (drawing on passages such as Matthew 4:24 and John 1:43–51). Season 3 reaches the ministry’s peak, including the feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:1–14) and rejection in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30), with expanded subplots exploring doubt, sacrifice, and opposition. Season 4 shifts toward Jerusalem (circa 29 CE), covering Peter’s confession (Matthew 16:13–20), John the Baptist’s (David Amito) execution, and rising tensions. Season 5, the most intense yet, focuses on Holy Week (circa 30 CE) and portrays the triumphal entry, Temple cleansing, Last Supper, and betrayal (Matthew 21–27; John 12–19), amplifying themes of humility, sorrow, and sacrifice through intimate character moments. At the time of writing this review, season 6, portraying the Passion, is expected to be released in November 2026, culminating in a theatrical release in the spring of 2027, and the final installment, season 7, is slated for 2028.

The series excels in humanizing biblical figures. Jonathan Roumie's portrayal of Jesus captures both divine love—through miracles and teachings—and human vulnerability, as he grapples with his disciples' misunderstandings. Fictional elements, such as the composite character Gaius (Kirk B. R. Woller), enhance emotional investment. Inspired by the Roman centurion in Matthew 8:5–13 (the healing of the servant, fully depicted in Season 4, Episode 4), Gaius evolves over seasons as a witness to Jesus's works, adding depth and stakes to the biblical encounter. Viewing *The Chosen* with family has sparked meaningful discussions, particularly around familiar passages like the centurion's faith in Matthew 8:5–13 and the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5:25–34. These moments have glorified shared Christian faith and turned episodes into conversation starters. Beyond its spiritual impact, the series entertains broadly with strong cinematography, acting, comedy, suspense, and production quality, appealing even to viewers less familiar with the faith.

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### *Churchill at War* [TV documentary series].

Directed by Malcolm Venville, 2024.  
Netflix. 4 episodes (59–61 minutes each)

While the rest of the world was willing to comply for the sake of peace, a prominent early voice from Britain emerged against the submission to Adolf Hitler. Using Churchill's own words, Netflix's documentary series *Churchill at War* reveals the man who defined Britain's spirit and carried a nation through its doldrums. The director, Malcolm Venville, known for producing leader-focused historical miniseries such as *Grant* (2020), *Theodore Roosevelt* (2022), and *Abraham Lincoln* (2022), brings a similar narrative approach to *Churchill at War*. His works' consistent focus on political figures' methods of navigation through turmoil shapes this series' portrayal of Churchill as the central force behind Britain's endurance throughout World War II.

To contextualize this series, it is appropriate to first consider and analyze the overall visual and creative production styles used throughout its production. *Churchill at War* takes a unique route with its visual and audio performances: it features colorized wartime footage, which allows for an immersive yet commiserate experience. The colorization of the footage builds bridges between the past and the present, inducing a visceral sense of chaos and resilience throughout the war. Just a few seconds into the opening episode, bold white font, highlighted by the black emptiness of its backdrop, reads "Throughout his life, Churchill published over six million words—more than Shakespeare and Dickens combined—and delivered more than five million words in public speeches." ("The Gathering Storm," 00:17) To put the vocal initiatives and role that Churchill played in the war into perspective, the series employs voice enhancements, using artificial intelligence technology to transport Churchill's written and documented words into an audio narrative in his own voice. While showing real footage and firsthand photos of the war's frontlines, the series also took the imaginative route of creating a production with actors to reenact and dramatize real pivotal moments that occurred during the war—including significant meetings and discussions, like the Tehran

Conference (1943) and the Yalta Conference (1945) between Churchill, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, as interpreted by actors Christian McKay (Churchill), Langley Kirkwood (Roosevelt), and Martin Kluge (Stalin). These reenactments allow for glimpses into Churchill's state of mind during tactical debates and provide an immersive, visual perspective of how significant it was at the time to have such influential leaders all in the same room with the state of their nations in their hands.

Interwoven with these visual creations are interviews with scholars like Allen Packwood, director of the Churchill Archives Centre, and historians like Dan Snow, as well as politicians, biographers, and even Churchill's own granddaughter. Thus, the show's narrative is largely constructed through the perspectives of these featured voices, which ultimately means they are shaping our understanding of Churchill's leadership and legacy. Throughout the series, there is commentary from political figures, including former U.S. President George W. Bush and former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, voicing their admiration and commending Churchill's leadership strategies. The storytelling framework of this series relies heavily on the analytical and revisionist commentaries of its interviewees.

*Churchill at War* consists of four episodes, each pertaining to a different period in Churchill's leadership and covering his five years as war leader between 1940 and 1945. Episode 1, "The Gathering Storm," is an introduction to Churchill's early military years and his upbringing. The moment Winston Churchill is born into the top echelons of British society huge expectations are placed upon him. His father, Randolph Churchill, is an important Victorian politician, and his mother, Jennie Jerome, is the scion of a wealthy American family. Even with two powerful, influential parents, he receives no notice from them at all. When Churchill is still at a young age, his father passes away. This, however, only strengthens his resolve to vindicate his father's political aspirations. The Second Boer War (1899–1902) then provides Churchill with an opportunity to forge his path into the public's eye. He takes the initiative and sets himself at the front lines of a captured armored train, saving thousands of soldiers' lives. During the war, he is captured and sent to a prisoner camp. This does not alter his convictions, though. He escapes the camp and manages to share his story. With publicity surrounding his name at age 25, Churchill establishes himself as a Member of Parliament for the Conservative party. He plays every card in government to attain power. His dedication exceeds politics: he wants to show the nation that he is not just willing to verbally fight for his country but also physically. The episode then shifts as Nazi Germany expands across Europe, intensifying fear in Britain. Early on, Churchill recognizes Hitler's duplicity and presents his warnings as pivotal in shaping public trust. When Germany invades western Europe in 1940, Churchill emerges as the figure to lead Britain into war and becomes prime minister.

Episode 2, "His Finest Hour," delves into Churchill's trials by fire. In the summer of 1940, Britain stands alone against Nazi Germany. Rather than detailing battlefield developments, the episode emphasizes Churchill's diplomatic struggle to secure American support while Britain's European allies are falling due to German invasions. In an attempt to gain aid, Churchill writes to the president of the United States, but the United States, at this time, are still reeling from the Great Depression, leaving Churchill without additional support. According to Boris Johnson, "his [i.e., Churchill's] strategy was just to hang on, and he had to

somehow inveigle the United States to come in." (21:00) The episode highlights the constant harsh decision-making that Churchill had to face during this time, even having to make the sacrifice of sinking French fleets, which had once been their allies. To assert dominance once more, Churchill makes the decision to bomb Germany's capital, Berlin, thus unleashing a blitz of attacks between German and British forces.

Episode 3, "The Day of Destiny," focuses on Churchill's persistent efforts to secure the United States' entry into the war, delving into the development of what would become Churchill and Roosevelt's tight-knit relationship. It emphasizes Churchill's vocal gravity about the global threat posed by Germany. The episode then takes us to Pearl Harbor, the Japanese empire's attack on the American naval base in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, which marks the turning point that drags the United States into what is now considered a world war. Churchill uses the state of uncertainty between nations to level with the American people and strategize with Roosevelt. The focus then shifts to Joseph Stalin's stance in Russia, placing us into a reenactment of the Tehran Conference (1943) between the big three (Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin).

The fourth and last episode, "Out of The Storm," explores the closing years of the war. Having explored Roosevelt and Churchill's strategy-focused relationship, we are then introduced to the beginning of the fray in their relationship, as Stalin enters the picture and FDR begins to take the initiative. As America takes the lead alongside Stalin, Churchill is left with the question, "Who is now calling the shots?" "Is the glory equal?" This episode emphasizes Churchill's feeling of becoming secondary, using his voice to state how "every morning when I wake, my first thought is how I can please President Roosevelt, and my second thought is how I can conciliate Marshal Stalin." (19:41) The Soviet Union eventually decides to join the emerging United Nations, the German capital is surrounded, and Hitler ultimately takes his own life. As the war concludes, the episode takes a turn. Britain now has to deal with what had been postponed due to the war. So, after bringing Britain to victory, Churchill has to face reelection. The nation knows that, despite victory, there is still uncertainty, and the episode quotes Churchill's opponents' slogans, "Cheer Churchill, Vote Labour," (36:02) reflecting the British public's need for unity and a clean slate. Churchill loses the election, but his legacy is far from complete. The series concludes by situating Churchill vis-à-vis the emerging Iron Curtain, portraying his postwar role as a continuation of his instincts and thereby reinforcing his status as a leader defined by foresight.

This documentary series on Churchill's trials and tribulations throughout World War II takes an interesting angle in highlighting his efforts. It includes the voices of various narratives through different scholars, relying heavily on their records. Churchill's immediate placement into a global conflict reflects the rash and strategic decisions he consistently had to make. Meanwhile, the series transports its viewers to various locations during the war, using real, vivid, and colorized footage, while also taking the creative route of reenacting critical conferences, meetings, and decisions through actors' interpretations. Churchill's conviction transcended Britain's expectations, and this series does an excellent job of reflecting that. However, it condenses substantial amounts of information into just four episodes, making it feel too fast-paced at times. Because *Churchill at War* concerns itself primarily with decision-

making and political leadership, it offers limited insights into the lived experiences of British soldiers—thus focusing more on the puppeteer and not the puppets themselves. To counterbalance this perspective, I recommend Christopher Nolan’s epic war film *Dunkirk* (2017), which offers a more personal, first-hand account of soldiers’ lived experiences, revealing the human cost of Churchill’s strategic decisions. Ultimately, *Churchill at War* functions best as a study of leadership rather than a comprehensive account of World War II. It is a compelling and entertaining series, but one that would benefit from being viewed alongside sources that consider the burdens borne by those who fought in war.

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*Dead to Rights [film].*

Directed by Shen Ao. 2025.  
China Film Group, Omnijoi Media Corporation. 137 minutes.

In 1937, the Imperial Japanese Army captured the city of Nanjing and murdered as many as 300,000 civilians, burned and looted the city, and raped tens of thousands of women and children. The numerous graphic photographs of the massacre—often taken by the perpetrators—show the sadism and dehumanization practiced by the Japanese military during their occupation of Nanjing. The Nanjing Massacre, famously referred to as the “Rape of Nanjing,” is one of the most heinous acts of brutality in modern history. Shen Ao’s new film, *Dead to Rights* (2025), attempts to tell a story set during the Nanjing Massacre, a challenging feat for any filmmaker who dares to craft an entertaining narrative out of the very real suffering of thousands of people.

Shen Ao, an innovative and burgeoning Chinese director, known for the crime-thriller film *No More Bets* (2023), portrays the massacre through the eyes of an ordinary postman, Ah Chang (Liu Haoran Liu), also known as Su Liuchang, who finds himself developing propaganda photographs for a Japanese officer. Chang, who lies about his occupation to the Japanese propaganda officer, Hideo Itō (Daichi Harashima), to extend his life, finds himself in a studio tasked with developing photos taken by Itō. Hidden under the studio’s floorboards are Jin Chengzong (Wang Xiao), the studio’s owner, as well as his wife, daughter, and newborn baby. Chengzong trains Chang in photo developing to appease Itō, who promises to provide Chang with a passport out of the city when his work is completed. Chang and Chengzong secretly create duplicates of the graphic photos of the massacre to document and preserve evidence of Japanese war crimes, while still providing the staged propaganda images to Itō. The studio depicted in the film is based on the true story of the Huadong Photo Studio in Nanjing, where Luo Jin was tasked with developing photos for the Japanese. Jin kept a hidden album of the atrocities, which was later discovered and used to prosecute Japanese war criminals during the 1946 Nanjing War Crimes Tribunal. The film does not adhere to the actual history of the Huadong Photo Studio; however, this was a wise choice by Ao because the film offers a wider range of perspectives, including the women in Chengzong’s family, a Chinese soldier hiding in the basement, and a Chinese collaborator with the Japanese military who serves as the translator between Itō and Chang.



The translator who works with the Japanese military, Wang Guanghai (Wang Chuanjun), is arguably the most intriguing character in the film. Guanghai collaborates with the Japanese in exchange for passports for his family and is often shadowing the antagonist Itō throughout the film. He made a promise to his mistress, an opera singer named Lin Yuxiu (Gao Ye), to get her a travel passport out of Nanjing and finds an opportunity to achieve this through Chang. With Itō convinced by Guanghai that Lin Yuxiu is Chang's wife, Itō promises to secure her a passport after the work is concluded. The duo of the Japanese officer Hideo Itō and Wang Guanghai offers a nuanced commentary on the massacre. Guanghai openly helps the Japanese secure Nanjing, and although he is at times visibly shaken by the sheer terror inflicted on his fellow citizens, he is dead set on protecting his family and himself. This perspective, although unheroic and somewhat cowardly, is essential for the portrayal of the massacre. Given the same opportunity, many people would probably take the same position as Guanghai to save their family and themselves from rape, murder, and torture.

Itō, the main antagonist, is often chastised by his fellow Japanese officers for his softer temperament and cowardice when it comes to murdering Chinese civilians. He is portrayed as seemingly kind, and his demeanor and physical prowess are not intimidating. Itō's evil is communicated through his nonchalant attitude toward the atrocities occurring around him, his focus on capturing propaganda images, and his notions of racial superiority. This character encapsulates a key part of how genocides and mass killings occur: seemingly ordinary people get sucked into dehumanizing propaganda and become complicit in horrific violence. Itō progressively becomes more immoral throughout the film, but he remains separated from violence until the close of the film. Overall, Itō is a convincing villain, who comes across as realistic and human, which is more terrifying than if he were brutishly violent and evil, because it is a reminder that ordinary, initially nonviolent people can become monsters under the right circumstances.

Making a film about the mass murder and rape of thousands is not an easy task and raises the question of how one can produce a film that is both entertaining and respectful to the countless lives that were lost. A filmmaker must provide an engaging narrative that pays respect to the victims and history, but must also not turn the suffering of others into a spectacle of exploitation and misery. *Dead to Rights*, for the most part, achieves this balance. The film brilliantly juxtaposes scenes of violence with pop-ups of historical images of the Nanjing Massacre, reminding viewers that what is depicted is, in fact, real. Real images of mass decapitations with smiling Japanese soldiers wielding katanas, mountains of dead bodies, and an annihilated and destroyed city weave throughout the film.

The portrayal of violence in *Dead to Rights* is generally realistic, brutal, and horrifying. Throughout the film, civilians are shown to be rounded up and executed, shot at random, and in one scene, hundreds are lined up along a riverbank and are cut down by machine guns. In the film's final act, one scene is absolutely horrific. Itō decides to have a Japanese photo developer take over the tasks of Chang, and, breaking his promise to Chang and his supposed wife, is ordered to execute both of them because of their direct knowledge of the massacre. Shown earlier to be uncomfortable with murdering people himself, Itō decides to give Chang two passports, but he orders the soldiers at the checkpoint that, once the bearers

of these specific passports attempt to cross, they are to be killed on site. Unaware of this, Chang and Yuxiu decide to give the passports to Chengzong's wife and young daughter so that they can escape the city. One of the most truly horrific and awful scenes transpires when Chengzong's wife and daughter attempt to cross. They are brought into a room by Japanese soldiers, where they are first bayoneted and then raped in front of each other while bleeding to death.

This scene, while very emotionally distressing and extremely hard to watch, helps the film avoid a happy ending trope and stays grounded in history. Thousands of families in Nanjing experienced unimaginable violence and trauma during the Japanese occupation, and our main characters are no exception to that. *Dead to Rights* has been called the "Chinese *Schindler's List*" by Western reviewers for its portrayal of historical violence; however, as a film, it is more flawed than Spielberg's classic. The portrayal of sexual violence in the film is largely hinted at, other than the one aforementioned scene toward the end. There are scenes showing women being dragged away by Japanese soldiers, and there are references to rape, yet viewers who are unfamiliar with the Nanjing Massacre might not understand the massive scale of sexual violence that occurred during the occupation of the city. Japanese soldiers systematically kidnapped, tortured, and raped massive numbers of women and girls. The film fails to convey this essential aspect of the massacre, and instead, sexual violence in the film feels like an afterthought compared to the explicit executions that are prevalent throughout. The director could have found ways to communicate the widespread rape during the Nanjing Massacre, so that audiences would truly understand the horrific experiences of women under Japanese occupation.

At one point, there is a quite jarring and questionable moment of Chinese patriotism that comes off as incredibly awkward. Amid this generally historically authentic film, this scene—with heightened inspirational music and the look of patriotic pride on the characters' faces—feels very bizarre and out of place. It is the only scene that appears forced and, what is more, it is completely unnecessary. By the conclusion of the film, all of the main characters are dead except for Yuxiu and Chengzong's infant son. Yuxiu has smuggled the hidden photos of the massacre in the seams of her clothes and given them to the authorities. The film concludes with Yuxiu watching the executions of the Japanese officers who had perpetrated the massacre. The final shots of the film show the real-life locations of the massacre in modern-day Nanjing.

Aside from a few flaws, *Dead to Rights* is one of the best portrayals of the Nanjing Massacre. In my opinion, it surpasses *City of Life and Death* (2009), another Chinese film set during the massacre. Both are good works, but *Dead to Rights* has more engaging characters and a better narrative. Although problematic in some respects, *Dead to Rights* is, at present, the definitive film about the Nanjing Massacre. I recommend *Dead to Rights* to anyone interested in history or film, especially those unfamiliar with the Nanjing Massacre. Historical films are an excellent entry point for learning about a topic and can spark curiosity to learn more.

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*The Gilded Age*. 3 seasons [TV series].

Created by Julian Fellowes. Directed by Michael Engler et al. 2022–2025.  
HBO. 25 episodes (50–60 minutes each).

Wealth, traditions, and personal dynamics are explored in HBO's series *The Gilded Age*, created by Julian Fellowes, the award-winning writer behind *Downton Abbey* (2010–2015). Fellowes, known for his detailed exploration of class and gender in social contexts, brings different historical periods to life through both drama and meticulous attention to period details. In this series, he examines the tensions between old traditions and new money in post-Civil War America. The focus of this period, known as America's "Gilded Age" (1870s–1890s), was the rapid rise of industrial wealth alongside an entrenched aristocracy that had lived by its old traditions for centuries. Every season has its own drama in the shift from old to new values, emphasizing how family dynamics, social ambitions, and even the role of women and men helped shape the modern world they wanted. The drama, the outfits, the romance, and so much more play a significant role in cinematic photography, helping the writers and directors create a sense of being in that time. Through the different characters' interactions, Fellowes dramatizes the transition from old traditions to modernity, raising questions about how privilege, race, gender, and even the cost of progress were changing.

The series is set in the 1880s of the "Gilded Age," a period Mark Twain described as the nation's explosive industrial growth and the rise of social inequalities through old money traditions. After the Civil War and Reconstruction, New York had become one of the most symbolic places for both the new fortunes that were being made and the old aristocracy with its traditions. There are two primary households in the series: the Russells, who had moved to New York, had become a wealthy railroad family, and are now determined to attain a place in the city's elite. Meanwhile, Marian Brook (Louisa Jacobson) is a young woman who has just lost her father and is traveling from Pennsylvania to move in with her traditional aunts, Agnes van Rhijn (Christine Baranski) and Ada Brook (Cynthia Nixon). Through these characters and many others, the series dramatizes the social conflicts of the rigid codes of female responsibility to maintain the house and care for the children. At the same time, men worked, tensions between old and new money arose, and opportunities for men evolved. Men were beginning to make advances in industry and technology, exemplified by projects like the Brooklyn Bridge and the creation of the light bulb. *The Gilded Age* has a historical backdrop that includes real-life figures like Booker T. Washington (Michael Braugher), helping the series contextualize fictional narratives and highlight the racial progress and tensions growing in a society still struggling with segregation.

Season 1 begins with Marian Brook's journey to her aunts' home in New York after her father's death, where she meets an unexpected person at the train station: Peggy Scott (Denée Benton), a Black woman who has been navigating social barriers throughout her entire life. Traveling by train, Peggy faces segregation and encounters challenges that underscore the racial inequalities of that era. Across the street from Marian's aunts is the Russell family:

George Russell (Morgan Spector), a railroad magnate, and his wife, Bertha (Carrie Coon), with their two children, Larry (Harry Richardson) and Gladys (Taissa Farmiga). Season 1 offers an inside look at the old, traditional New York aristocracy amid the new, wealthier families of industry, known for spectacular inventions and ushering in a new era for America. The narrative centers on social gatherings, the importance of women's participation and roles in society, and the slow introduction of the characters, which creates a sense of the world they inhabit. Throughout this and the subsequent seasons, historical details are embedded in the design of the mansions, in the social codes that distinguish old and new money, and in racially segregated cultural institutions, such as the Metropolitan Opera and Newport balls. As Aunt Agnes remarks with regard to the new families, "These people. You shut the door; they come in the window. You shut the window; they come down the chimney. They never give up." (Season 1, Episode 6) Aunt Agnes observes and emphasizes how the social pressure from new money is forcing its way into high society. The season ends with the Russells settling into their position, Marian trying to find her place in society, and Peggy charting her path as a writer while working in the home of Agnes van Rhijn as a personal secretary.

Season 2 explores the changes among society's elites, as new money rises and begins to challenge the old hierarchies. It offers an inside look at how industrial wealth begins to challenge the authority of inherited money, reshaping the narrative as it examines how journalism or the economy can influence those areas. The narrative emphasizes the importance of journalism, labor strikes over wealth inequality, and industrial growth, all of which reflect the moral complexities of wealth and capitalism. George Russell—whom historians, if he were not a fictional character, would label as a "robber baron"—expresses his frustration over the progress and social perception of who he is, exclaiming "Why must I be the villain of every story? I employ hundreds of men, I have lifted whole towns out of poverty, and yet I'm the tyrant who crushes the faces of the poor." (Season 2, Episode 4, 10:52) His outburst reflects the tension between industrial ambition and social judgment. Meanwhile, women like Agnes van Rhijn continue to uphold traditions and social expectations, advising Marian with regard to one of her suitors, "You must give me some credit, Marian. I do not think he is suitable because he is well-born and rich, but in addition to those useful qualities, he's also intelligent and very nice. He's even handsome." (Season 2, Episode 6, 50:12) Agnes van Rhijn's comment to Marian reflects the dynamics between upstairs and downstairs, reflecting on the social division of wealthy families being upstairs and their servants being downstairs to do all the household's work. Meanwhile, Oscar van Rhijn's (Blake Ritson) falling prey to money schemes and his sexuality highlight the complexities of personal ambition, social reputation, and the new immersion in modernity.

Season 3 addresses the expansion of railroads across the United States, the changing of society as new money gains in prestige, and the ongoing social tensions. It examines how economic ambitions, such as those of entrepreneurs, and the reputations of elite families are either evolving or falling apart. The fallout from Ward McCallister's (Nathan Lane) horrifying book includes this kind of theme, as Mrs. Astor (Donna Murphy) does not consider the book as positive at all, telling him: "Don't I deserve more than to be made a fool in front of the entire city? You knew what you were doing. And now you must pay." (Season 3, Episode 7, 33:32) Women like Mrs. Astor had maintained personal ambition, social prestige, and a hold

on old money traditions amidst scandals, including her daughter's impending divorce over committing adultery in her marriage. McCallister arrogantly declares, "You can throw me out of society. I am society. I made your society out of a bunch of get-rich-quick merchants and walking jokes." (Season 3, Episode 7, 33:22) As tensions between self-made wealth and inherited status continue to grow, season 3 addresses international marriages, such as Gladys Russel's to a British duke, thereby reflecting some of Henry James's literary themes and the European-American social interplay explored in *Downton Abbey*.

In fact, *The Gilded Age* certainly invites comparisons with Fellowes's *Downton Abbey*, as both series explore class contrasts, domestic servants, and social hierarchies. The *Gilded Age* reflects on industrializing America, labor struggles, immigrant challenges, and the evolving roles of women in elite societies. It integrates historical events with fictional, dramatized narratives, such as the deputizing of Black physicians to treat white patients, thereby mirroring real cases like that of Black physician Dr. Charles Burleigh Purvis, who assisted President Garfield after his assassination, but was pushed aside by a less competent white doctor, resulting in Garfield's death. By contrast, when Mr. Russel is ambushed and shot in his own office, a Black doctor saves his life, but not without facing racism from a white doctor, who takes over once all the essential life-saving work has already been done. Through its diverse use of clothing, behaviors, and occupations, the series conveys the message that race and gender can (and did) play significant roles in historical narratives, which sets it apart from other works that focus on limited, white elite stories.

*The Gilded Age* is a visually mesmerizing series that captures the history and dynamics of life in the 1880s in a way that pulls viewers in, leaving them wanting more through the drama and families it follows. Individuals who love drama and romance and are interested in specific historical events or figures will enjoy this series, as the depiction of social hierarchies, race, gender, and labor force struggles offers them a mix of drama, romance, and historical education about the Gilded Age. Julian Fellowes skillfully weaves in diverse racial perspectives, historical figures, and "real" events such as the establishment of Tuskegee as an educational institution in the segregated South (1881), the completion of the Brooklyn Bridge (1883) thanks to the ingenuity of the architect's wife, Emily Warren Roebling, the launching of New York's Metropolitan Opera (1883), and the labor movements, all intertwined with fictional narratives that also mirror "real" phenomena such as the struggles of Irish immigrants seeking schooling, which led to conflicts and arguments over equality. Overall, *The Gilded Age* is a visually pleasing and skillful representation of a defining time period in American history. If viewers are interested in social history, fashion, and even the politics surrounding class and gender, they will be thoroughly entertained by the series, especially with season 4 just around the corner and expected to be released in the fall of 2026.

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*Killers of the Flower Moon* [film].

Directed by Martin Scorsese. 2023.

Paramount Pictures/Apple Original Films. 206 minutes.

In the pursuit of wealth, American progress has often been built on exploitation and erasure. Thus, recent scholarship and film have focused on how colonialism and racial capitalism shaped national growth from the dispossession of Indigenous peoples to the struggles of minority communities. Historical films such as *12 Years a Slave* (2013), *Minari* (2020), and *Women Talking* (2022) have illustrated, through cultural memories, how power operates across gender, race, and class. Building on this tradition of historical storytelling, Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023) presents one of the darkest episodes in U.S. history, the so-called "Osage Reign of Terror" in the early 1920s. During this period, dozens of Osage members, an Indigenous nation in Oklahoma, were murdered for their oil wealth. Based on American journalist David Grann's narrative nonfiction book, *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI* (2017), Scorsese's adaptation distinguishes itself through its collaboration with the Osage Nation and its commitment to historical precision. By attending to cultural authenticity and systemic corruption, the film transforms a regional tragedy into a national reckoning, revealing how historical reconstruction can contribute to a more accurate portrayal of Indigenous exploitation in American history.

Scorsese, an Academy Award-winning filmmaker and cultural historian, has previously explored individuals trapped within corrupt systems that reveal broader societal flaws. Having directed numerous such films, including *Goodfellas* (1990) and *The Irishman* (2019), Scorsese has, in recent years, shifted from urban narratives to extensive historical reinterpretations, exploring how power operates across time and culture. *Killers of the Flower Moon* represents this evolution in scope and intent by employing realism to reveal how exploitation becomes normalized within institutions and relationships. Using Osage testimonies, archival Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) records, and Grann's book, Scorsese offers an understanding of colonial violence by revealing how greed and bureaucracy enable the erasure of Indigenous lives but falls short in giving equal narrative depth to the Osage communities beyond their victimization.

Structured as a chronicle of violence, *Killers of the Flower Moon* builds its historical argument through progression rather than formal division. Each death appears not as an isolated event but as part of a pattern of greed, corruption, and complicity. The film begins with the Osage Nation becoming targets, as white settlers and profiteers manipulate and murder Osage citizens to gain control over their oil wealth. (00:13:54) As the story moves chronologically from one murder to the next, the film traces how white men slowly marry into the Osage families to secure legal and racial control. (00:36:45) Once these relationships are established, the violence intensifies, spreading through acts of poisoning and explosions that devastate one of the main characters—Mollie Kyle's (Lily Gladstone)—entire family. (01:53:34) Scorsese avoids suspense-driven storytelling, allowing the plot to develop through documents and social interactions that reveal the gradual collapse of justice. The deliberate pacing gives the film the rhythm of historical reconstruction, uncovering how truth emerges through layers of testimony and bureaucratic delay. By aligning its structure with the historical process it

depicts, the film presents how the calculated murders of the Osage Nation by Ernest Burkhart (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his uncle, William King Hale (Robert De Niro), embodied the broader systems of exploitation and betrayal that drove the Reign of Terror.

As a significant historical film, *Killers of the Flower Moon* has many strengths that support its historical presentation. One its greatest strengths is its commitment to historical authenticity. From the opening scene of Osage elders performing a mourning ritual to the depiction of Fairfax, Oklahoma, Scorsese transports viewers into the 1920s Osage Nation with remarkable detail. His collaboration with the Osage community shaped every part of the production. The Osage language is spoken throughout the film, and the clothing and jewelry seen throughout the movie were crafted by Osage artisans. Local consultants ensured that cultural practices were accurate. These choices give the film a sense of truth which few Hollywood portrayals of Indigenous history have achieved. The death and funeral of Kyle's mother, Lizzie Kyle (Tantoo Cardinal), are essential and powerful, showing Osage customs of transitioning into an afterlife. (01:28:57) Small details, such as the local authorities' missing documents that the FBI needed, match the gaps in the historical record that kept justice out of reach for decades. (02:12:26) The oil eruption after a ritual captures how spiritual traditions and sudden wealth collided, symbolizing prosperity and tragedy intertwining. (00:01:37) Through this precision, Scorsese turns authenticity into a form of remembrance, restoring a story that the United States has long tried to forget.

Alongside its documentary realism, another strength is the film's honest portrayal of violence. Scorsese does not exaggerate or glorify brutality; instead, he shows how violence unfolded quietly through everyday life. The early montage of victims, an Indigenous man choking to death, followed by others shot or found lifeless in water, sets the tone for what follows. (00:13:36) While more trigger warnings could have been presented, it is essential to remember that the history is indeed horrific. Each murder is shown without restraint, echoing the real accounts of the Reign of Terror. The brutal murders of Kyle's sisters, Anna Brown (Cara Jade Myers) and Reta Smith (JaNae Collins), underscore that violence extends into death itself. Brown's face is left unrecognizable from the severity of her injuries, while the explosion that kills Smith leaves the back of her skull exposed, turning their deaths into spectacles of loss. (00:53:02, 01:53:34) When Burkhart and Hale discuss killing the Osage women for their land rights, their calm tone illustrates how greed became normalized. (00:41:48) Kyle's slowly being poisoned underscores how doctors, bankers, and neighbors became part of a system that turned prejudice into policy. (01:58:42) By keeping the violence quiet and procedural, the film reveals how racism works through law, medicine, and kinship. Scorsese transforms brutality into historical truth, not letting the audience look away from what happened to the innocent Indigenous communities.

In addition to historical realism and truth-telling, Scorsese's other strength is bringing the Osage perspective to life. Scorsese tells this history mainly through the Osage experience, focusing on survival, endurance, and silence; for example, scenes where the elders debate how to protect their people show their collective strength, (00:54:23) while other examples, such as the health inspection, expose how the Osage were reduced to property under these dynamics. (01:24:57) Small moments of casual racism, such as white men bragging about how

"Indian" their wives are, expose the ignorance of possession that continues colonization. (00:18:33) More specifically, when the Osage elders ask the FBI agent whether they have only come because a white man has finally died, or because they paid them, the film lays bare the hypocrisy of delayed justice. (02:09:18) The ending, a 1930s radio reenactment of the murders, reminds viewers how easily atrocities can be turned into entertainment. (03:14:23) Like *12 Years a Slave* (2013), Scorsese's film addresses violence against marginalized communities, letting Indigenous voices frame the story from within. By rejecting the "white savior" narrative and giving voice to Osage memory, *Killers of the Flower Moon* becomes a film that reclaims history.

While *Killers of the Flower Moon* exhibits remarkable strength with its portrayals and authenticity, its narrative does become imbalanced with white males being largely framed. Scorsese's Osage-centeredness also becomes his weakness when much of the final hour centers on the internal conflicts and panic of Burkhart and Hale. Even as Indigenous resistance finally emerges during the FBI investigation, the emotional lens continues to privilege the white men's unraveling over the Osage struggle for justice. (02:48:41) Scenes like John Wren's (Tatanka Means) arrival in town are overshadowed by the anxieties of the killers, and moments of Indigenous women's solidarity are often interrupted or sidelined by their husbands' discussions of manipulation. (02:06:57, 01:46:17) Though historically accurate in reflecting who controls the record, this framing limits the film's ability to respect the Osage and communal resilience fully. By keeping the narrative anchored in the perpetrators' experience, Scorsese unintentionally mirrors the same hierarchy of visibility that once silenced the victims he seeks to honor.

The film's slow pacing enhances its documentary realism, but it also narrows its scope, often leaving broader systemic forces unexplored. Extended scenes of Burkhart's moral hesitation and Hale's manipulation dominate the second half of the film, while political structures like federal negligence and local corruption receive less attention. (01:35:11, 00:58:42) Kyle's perspective of her illness, hallucinations, and partial recovery are overshadowed by the search for her husband and his co-conspirators, which hints at the physical and spiritual toll of colonial violence. (02:42:41) Even moments of Indigenous agency, such as the community's visible upheaval during the investigations, appear only briefly before the final return to the white male narrative. (02:48:41) The pacing reflects Scorsese's detailed style, but it also privileges individual guilt over collective accountability. As a result, the film's historical precision is partially undermined by the imbalance with regard to whose stories receive depth and continuity.

*Killers of the Flower Moon* succeeds as a historically grounded reconstruction of the Osage Reign of Terror. Scorsese's work with the Osage Nation and his use of documented evidence creates a rare level of cultural authenticity. The film transforms a forgotten crime into a national reflection on how greed and race shaped American progress. With its achievements, its precision limits the story by focusing more on the perpetrators than the victims. This film is especially valuable for students and scholars in American studies, U.S. history, and Indigenous studies, as it examines how race, capitalism, and settler colonialism have shaped America's national development. It is well-suited for undergraduate and graduate courses



on the American empire, cultural representation, and public memory, where it can prompt critical discussions about whose histories are centered and how violence is narrated. *Killers of the Flower Moon* endures as a significant contribution to historical films, becoming a form of justice and decolonizing history.

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*Manhunt* [TV series/documentary drama].

Directed by Carl Franklin, John Dahl, and Eva Sørhaug. 2024.  
Apple TV+. 7 episodes (41–56 minutes each).

What happens when, days after the bloodiest conflict on American soil, a famous actor is able to sneak into U.S. President Abraham Lincoln's theater gallery, assassinate him, and get away? Is the assassination an attempt by the recently defeated Confederacy to topple Union leadership? Perhaps a lone disgruntled perpetrator angry with the outcome of the Civil War? *Manhunt*, a seven-episode docudrama miniseries, aims to tell the story of the search for John Wilkes Booth from the point of view of Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton (Tobias Menzies), based on a 2006 book, *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer*, by James L. Swanson. The show's creator, Monica Beletsky, is known for her work on the television series *Fargo* (2014–2024) and *Friday Night Lights* (2006–2011). *Manhunt* follows a general timeline of the twelve days but also jumps between the past and present, as needed, to reveal Lincoln's beliefs and his interactions with those around him, especially Stanton.

The series opens on April 14, 1865, in Washington, D.C., where people can be seen celebrating the end of the Civil War. Above the ruckus from the streets, a man is seen closing a window with the letters "J.W.B." tattooed on the skin between his left thumb and pointer finger. John Wilkes Booth (Anthony Boyle), who is only referred to by his last name, gathers up weapons and is joined by co-conspirator David Herold (Will Harrison) before proclaiming, "Round up everybody, it's a go." (00:03:17) Following the initial title card for the show, the audience is shown the brutal attack by Lewis Powell (Spencer Treat Clark) on Secretary of State William H. Seward (Larry Pine). Stanton is notified of the attack, and we see Booth arrive at the back door of Ford's Theatre, where stagehand Ned Spangler (Walker Babington) watches Booth's horse for him. However, it has never been proven that Spangler was aware of the plot to assassinate the president.

Booth spends time at the Ford's Theatre bar, where he meets Lincoln's bodyguard for that evening, John Frederick Parker (Chip Lane). Although this interaction never occurred, the historical Parker did leave his post, got drunk, and fell asleep at a nearby tavern at the time Lincoln was assassinated. Booth then comes up to the presidential box, shoots Lincoln in the back of the head, and jumps from the balcony, yelling, "Sic semper tyrannis," (00:23:55), a phrase meaning "thus always to tyrants," implying that, eventually, all tyrants are overthrown. Due to the jump from the balcony, Booth breaks his leg but manages to escape on horseback, riding across the Navy Yard bridge out of Washington, using his fame as an actor. Lincoln is taken across the street to the Petersen House, where he ultimately succumbs to his injury,

dying the following morning at 7:22 a.m. Some other key points of this episode are a flashback to April 9, when Lincoln receives word of General Lee's surrender; Booth and Herold arriving at Dr. Samuel Mudd's (Matt Walsh) home, where he sets his broken leg; and some dramatization of accounts to make Stanton the central figure of the story, such as finding the murder weapon in the president's box.

Episode 2 opens with another flashback, a year before the assassination. It shows David Herold being recruited by John Surratt Jr. (Joshua Mikel) as a means of getaway and escorting Booth from Washington to Richmond, Virginia, due to his knowledge of the Maryland woods. The timeline then jumps back to April 15, 1865, when Vice President Andrew Johnson (Glenn Morshower), also the target of an assassination attempt the night before, is sworn in as the seventeenth President of the United States. Johnson is immediately portrayed as having an adversarial relationship with Stanton. As a Democrat, Johnson does not see eye to eye with Stanton on the role and need for Reconstruction. This relationship was all too real, and the attempted firing of Stanton in 1867 is what led to Johnson becoming the first president to be impeached, with only one vote shy of being convicted and removed by the Senate. The show does a fantastic job of styling the wardrobes and costumes to look as they would have in the later nineteenth century. The sets feel lived in, and the treatment of Black people by many individuals is abhorrent. The episode follows Booth's recovery at the Mudd house, where his "servant," Mary Simms (Lovie Simone), waits on him. Historically, Simms had left Mudd in 1864 and therefore would not have been around while Booth was recovering. Stanton and the police raid the Surratt home, discovering a false wall with a coded telegram from Jefferson Davis (Craig Nigh), the president of the Confederacy. The episode sees Stanton recommend Arlington, Lee's former land as the final resting place for Lincoln. However, Mary Todd Lincoln (Lili Taylor) wants him home in Illinois, and Lincoln's body is sent on a viewing tour across the country so the people can mourn their president.

As episode 3 begins, the hunt for Booth and his conspirators reaches Montreal, as Surratt and the well-known Confederate sympathizer George Sanders (Anthony Marble) arrive. Booth and Herold meet Samuel Cox (Thomas Francis Murphy), a member of the Confederate Secret Service (C.S.S.), who states his intention of getting Booth to Richmond. However, the C.S.S. was not as well organized as the show depicts. Cox has never been proven to have been a member of the C.S.S., and the service was not all that united, otherwise the Confederacy might have won the war. The show utilizes historical documents, such as telegrams from the time, relaying information from Montreal to the War Department as new leads emerged. The Confederate Secretary of State, Judah P. Benjamin, is said to have run the spy network, and in the show, they discover the decoder to Davis's encoded telegram in his desk in Richmond.

Episode 4 begins with a headline in the Sanders-owned paper, *Manhattan Weekly*, concerning the Dahlgren affair, an incident in 1864, when Union soldiers were sent to raid the Confederate capital, free Union soldiers, and both capture and kill Jefferson Davis and his cabinet. Sanders's paper claims that Stanton had given the order, although the Union denied that any such order had ever been given, both historically and in the show. The episode also recalls the Manhattan Fire Plot of 1864, with Sanders apparently discussing the

economic costs of Lincoln's "moral agenda." (00:07:04) However, these are all dramatizations. Sanders never had any involvement in trying to get Manhattan to secede, and the rivalry between Sanders and Stanton in the episode did not occur. At this point it becomes apparent that, although the show's budget was substantial and its story well-written, its historical accuracy ended up being severely compromised.

Episode 5 follows Booth and Herold as they attempt to blend in as Confederate soldiers, since Booth is still recovering from his broken leg. There is a fictional scene between Booth, Herold, and some Confederate veterans who are disgusted at the way Booth killed Lincoln. While in line to board the ferry, Willie Jett (Justin Kucsulain) gives them directions to the Garrett Tobacco Farm, where they go to hide out. The audience is then introduced to Boston Corbett (William Mark McCullough), the man who would later kill Booth during his final standoff. Stanton is forced back to Washington as it is revealed that President Johnson is reversing the land grants to recently freed Black men, which General Sherman (Alex Collins) had approved three months prior, since Johnson does not believe that Black people are entitled to that land. This episode, more than any of the others, is truly focused on the manhunt.

The final two episodes cover Booth and Herold at the Garrett Tobacco Farm barn, being surrounded by Union cavalry, and Booth's eventual death. Inside the barn, there are discussions that are not historically known, but the show surmises that Booth discussed his parents. Stanton instructs that Booth's body be dumped in an unmarked grave to prevent him from being venerated, and a trial of his conspirators is planned by a military tribunal. Stanton seeks to charge Jefferson Davis with grand conspiracy, although the evidence is flimsy, and he is shown tearing out and burning pages from Booth's diary. While pages are indeed missing from Booth's diary, there is no evidence to suggest that Stanton was responsible for their removal. The tribunal is convened, with Mary Simms as a star witness, but history tells us she was one of ten Black Americans who testified at the trial. The tribunal finds all the co-conspirators guilty, but the count against Davis remains inconclusive. The show ends with Johnson removing Stanton from his position, which he responds to by holing up inside the War Department for three months.

Overall, the show is a fantastic watch, compelling, and certainly well-made. That said, it certainly takes creative liberties and distorts the historical truth surrounding Lincoln's assassination. For those who are interested in watching a history-influenced show without getting all the specifics right, I would fully recommend this show. Those who want a more accurate representation of the events would be better off turning to comparable documentaries or books. Some materials that would enrich one's knowledge on the topic include the book that the show is based on, *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer* by James L. Swanson (2006), and the Public Broadcasting Station's (PBS) documentary *American Experience: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* (2009). A comparable dramatization, *Lincoln* (2012) by Steven Spielberg, is an excellent watch for those craving more information on the policy and politics of 1864–1865. If you are willing to watch *Manhunt* as a richly produced dramatization rather than a definitive history, stream it, but keep a history reference book nearby.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: Kolin McVeigh of Riverside, California, earned his B.A. in History with a minor in Political Science (2022) at San Diego State University (SDSU). He is currently pursuing an M.A. in Public History at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where he is a member of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society).

*Mysteries of the Terracotta Warriors* [TV documentary].

Directed by James Tovell. 2024.  
Netflix. 77 minutes.

One of the twentieth century's greatest archaeological finds is also one of its most silent. Netflix's historical documentary film *Mysteries of the Terracotta Warriors* (2024) was directed by James Tovell, who is also known for his other works, including *Cradle to Grave* (2017), *The Lizard Boy* (2011), and his more recent film, *Secrets of the Saqqara Tomb* (2020), highlighting his experience with historical films. The documentary begins with a beautiful view of the Great Wall of China as the sun rises, and the narrator tells the story of the first emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi (r. 221–210 BCE), who united the six Chinese kingdoms into what would become modern China. In 1974, farmers digging a well in the country's Shaanxi province unearthed a fragment of a clay man. This accidental discovery turned out to be one of the most astonishing archaeological finds of the twentieth century: the terracotta warriors, a silent legion of thousands, constructed to guard China's first emperor in the afterlife. While the *Mysteries of the Terracotta Warriors* presents a fascinating and visually stunning narrative, grounded in archaeological and historiographical evidence of that time period, it often blurs the lines between fact and theory, presenting hypothetical reenactments and assumptions as part of the historical record.

The documentary's strength lies in its impressive and engaging presentation of visible archaeological evidence and its use of visual storytelling. It continues with a man named Yuan Zhongyi, an archaeologist known as "the father of the terracotta warriors," realizing that the clay man farmers had unearthed in Shaanxi was actually a terracotta warrior. This led to the discovery of a tomb that encompasses nineteen square miles, filled with around 8,000 terracotta warriors, each one different from the rest. The burial site of China's first emperor is called by some "the eighth wonder of the world." The building of this burial mound began when the (future) emperor was just thirteen years old, involving a vast number of prisoners who were forced to build the mound. The terracotta warriors are not the only artifacts that have been unearthed so far by today's archaeologists; there have been multiple findings of other terracotta figures, such as terracotta servants, acrobats, chariots, horses, swans, and so forth: "It is a world of terracotta built for the emperor for him to rule over for eternity." (00:04:56) Each terracotta warrior wears a different face with a different expression, likely resembling actual people of the original time period. This overwhelming individuality is key evidence for the theory that the army was modeled on the emperor's actual, multi-ethnic forces. The massive number of expert craftsmen who were ordered to create the terracotta warriors paid a lot of attention to the detail and uniqueness of each and every warrior. Furthermore, they were even colored with paint, based off of the very few terracotta warriors with color still left remaining after the 2,000 years of harsh elements on their faces. Each terracotta warrior is shown wearing armor, as seen from the reconstructed warriors, and, of

course, they could not guard the emperor without weapons to defend him. Each warrior was equipped with a full, functional arsenal, not mere ceremonial objects. The documentary describes these reconstructed weapons, including spears, halberds, swords, and crossbows. This broad presentation of the site's findings forms a substantial, evidence-based foundation for the film's retelling of history.

However, while the documentary uses compelling evidence to support its narrative, it frequently resorts to speculation to fill in the gaps in the story. For example, it refers to the *Shiji* by Sima Qian, a record of the first major history of China. Qin historian Dr. Hui Ming Tak Ted says that the *Shiji* "combines history and epic drama. Some of it, we are a little bit more skeptical whether it happened or not. We have no other finding that could back some of the claims up." This is a Qin historian himself revealing they do not know whether what Sima Qian states in the *Shiji* is accurate and that nothing else of that time period supports Sima Qian's record. Can we trust the line of transmission that Sima Qian used to write the *Shiji*, and can he himself be trusted? It is possible that Sima Qian's account may be exaggerated or biased. Throughout the documentary, historians focus on the question of what happened after the first emperor's death that caused the empire to fall within a span of fifteen years. They speculate that there was conspiracy between his youngest son, Hu Hai, and his right-hand men to put the youngest son on the throne instead of the oldest son. They use the *Shiji* to support their theory and even include in the documentary a reenactment of the supposed conspiracy. This reenactment and the use of CGI (computer-generated imagery) causes viewers to feel as if they are watching the scheme happen in front of their very own eyes, making it more realistic and presumably accurate to them. We see another example of such speculation when the documentary discusses the identity of the owner of a tomb that is close to the emperor's tomb mound. The documentary shows another reenactment, but this time it is of one of the first emperor's most highly trusted servants tying loose ends, killing his fellow co-conspirators. Based on the evidence that archaeologists and forensic anthropologists have found in the tomb, they believe it to be that of a high-ranking male individual who was buried three to four years after the first emperor's death, but before the fall of the Qin dynasty, and may therefore have been a part of the conspiracy. The narrator then states, "[i]f the record is correct, we can be sure that Emperor Hu Hai is not the occupant of the mystery tomb. He was buried without ceremony in a commoner's grave." (00:59:00) Again, the documentary uses Sima Qian's *Shiji* as their foundation for this theory. They themselves had acknowledged earlier they are not sure whether Sima Qian's accounts can be trusted for its accuracy, but then they create this dramatic theory based off of it. The film fails to sufficiently warn viewers that these spectacular details are products of the imagination, not proven facts.

To assess *Mysteries of the Terracotta Warriors*, it is important to compare it with other documentaries that deal with answering questions about unknown history. The Netflix documentary *Unknown: The Lost Pyramid* by Max Salomon (2023), for example, shows a much different approach to factual evidence. *Unknown: The Lost Pyramid* spends more time showing the actual process of archaeology with the careful digging, brushing off dirt, and the high chance of discovering nothing. It also goes into depth about the process of choosing where to dig and which area is more likely to contain what they are looking for. They do tests

like digging straight down to see whether or not there is something there. This technique makes it so they spend less energy, resources, and time on a location that features nothing. This is because, while the Chinese terracotta warriors are about 2,000 years old, the Egyptian artifacts in this documentary are up to 4,000 years old and more susceptible to looting. There are two focus points throughout this documentary, one being the search for the missing pyramid of Huni and the other being the excavation of a tomb. Both are happening not too far from each other and the leaders, Dr. Zahi Hawass and Dr. Mostafa Waziry, are friends. The film does not use any reenactments with CGI about the past to immerse viewers like *Mysteries of the Terracotta Warriors* does; instead, they find actual evidence that can be supported by known facts. There are multiple potential explanations for these findings, whereas in the *Mysteries of the Terracotta Warriors* the only potential explanations are drawn from the *Shiji* by Sima Qian, which is questioned for its authenticity. The comparison of these two documentaries highlights that the “mysteries” in Tovell’s film is frequently solved through speculation, whereas the “unknown” in Salomon’s film is solved through an evidence-based process.

That said, *Mysteries of the Terracotta Warriors* is a great and interesting documentary, which is filled with beautiful and immersing cinematics about one of archaeology’s greatest wonders. For those interested in a history of China that uses some speculation, it is highly recommended, as speculation does speak volumes with regard to our imagination, and sometimes all we can do is speculate whether something happened in history. However, for academic historians who are keen on learning factual history, it may be lacking in depth. Ultimately, it is a breathtaking piece of visual storytelling, which invites the viewers to wonder about the past, even if it exaggerates the history of China.

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### *No Other Land* [documentary film].

Directed by Basel Adra, Yuval Abraham, Hamdan Ballal, and Rachel Szor. 2024.  
Rakuten TV. 92 minutes.

This documentary produced by a team of Palestinian and Israeli journalists and activists is largely inaccessible to the American public. While not officially banned outright, no major platform distributor has been willing to pick it up for streaming, despite the fact that it won an Oscar and also received many other awards and accolades globally. The film shows the ongoing expulsion of the Palestinian community of Masafer Yatta by the Israeli military—a smaller episode within the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has plagued the Middle East for nearly a century. In order to access the hour-and-a-half long film, I used a VPN with my location set to outside the United States (I chose London, England). I purchased and streamed it on Rakuten TV with English subtitles as the film is primarily in Arabic.

From the very beginning, *No Other Land* struck me as more comparable to a personal vlog than a typical documentary. We are first introduced to Basel Adra, a twenty-three-year-old Palestinian activist from Masafer Yatta, a group of twenty small villages in the occupied

southern West Bank, which is known for its ancient cave dwellings. Basel starts by recalling childhood memories of his father getting arrested and a family life marked by activism and protests. (00:03:42) He began filming for the documentary in 2019, when demolitions in his community intensified after an Israeli court had ruled that the area would become a military training ground for Israeli forces. A TV news clip shown in the documentary reports that Masafer Yatta is facing “one of the biggest expulsion decisions since the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories began in 1967.” (00:04:34) When Basel receives word of a demolition in a nearby village, he runs home, grabs his camera, and hurries to the site to film it. This is the first of many instances shown in the film. He captures scenes of soldiers forcibly evicting families, belongings thrown outside, a child crying, and bulldozers destroying homes. (00:05:20) After the homes are leveled and the Israeli soldiers are gone, the villagers sift through rubble, salvaging what they can find, and move to uninhabited caves, their only means of shelter. A child’s question, “Will we live in a cave now?” lingers in the air, unanswered.

In the aftermath of the first demolition, Basel meets Yuval Abraham, an Israeli journalist who wants to document and bring awareness to what is happening in Masafer Yatta. (00:08:10) This first encounter between the two young men is the beginning of an alliance and uneasy friendship built on a mutual, yet unequal, struggle for justice. There is a glaringly evident tension between their two worlds: they live only a short distance from one another but experience two completely different constructed realities. This stark and uncomfortable contrast is one that we are exposed to repeatedly throughout the film, making it one of the most powerful underlying themes. Despite their situation, Basel expresses his hope that if the world can see their suffering, the United States will have to pressure Israel to halt the expulsions. (00:11:01) He explains that the people of Masafer Yatta collectively decided two decades prior that they would welcome anyone who stands with them, regardless of whether they are outsiders. The Israeli military retaliated by raiding villagers’ homes in the dead of night, threatening that if they speak to Israeli or international journalists again, they will face harsh consequences. This reaction is telling of both the power and danger of journalism, particularly in places where free speech is heavily restricted. Despite the known risks, Basel’s family warmly welcomes Yuval and is supportive of Basel working with him.

Throughout the film, scenes of the same cycle are shown—daytime demolitions by Israeli soldiers followed by secret nighttime reconstructions by Palestinian villagers. In one harrowing scene, Israeli soldiers return the following morning to confiscate villagers’ building tools. (00:26:04) The conflict becomes physical when the soldiers attempt to take an electricity generator from the villagers. As they drag it away, some villagers try to grab it back. The tug-of-war ends abruptly with the sound of multiple gunshots, and then, the chaotic aftermath: screaming, running, cries for an ambulance, and a man lying motionless on the ground, missing a shoe. A TV news report is shown, confirming that the man, Harun Abu Aram, is paralyzed from the shoulders down after being shot by an Israeli soldier. (00:27:50) A protest for Harun is attended by many in the community, including young women and children, but ends quickly when soldiers arrive and use stun grenades to disperse the crowd. (00:28:08) Basel is seen leading the march and initiating chants, which gives us the impression that he is one of the main leaders of the protest. Our suspicions are

confirmed when we see him later at home, telling Yuval that he is afraid the Israeli military is coming to arrest him for his involvement. Sure enough, they arrive shortly after and raid the house, looking for Basel and his father. (00:33:16)

The film also touches on the less visible aspects of apartheid state control: economic dependency. Basel has studied law but cannot find legal work anywhere in the West Bank. (00:40:48) For Palestinians, the only steady work available is in the construction of Israeli settlements, ironically building over their people's confiscated land and thus strengthening the occupation inadvertently. Basel's family avoids this by running a small one-pump gas station out of their home, and Basel's father is proud of it, as it gives them some measure of independence.

As their reporting starts to receive international attention, Basel and Yuval appear on news channels, and this halts the demolitions for a time. (00:44:24) Realizing that even a small spotlight has tangible effects, Basel and Yuval become even more determined to keep the world's eyes on Masafer Yatta, despite facing backlash and criticism from Zionists who try to dismiss their work. (00:45:09) Later on, when demolitions inevitably begin again, a struggle takes place over a village's elementary school. (00:49:30) The Israeli military destroys it, and the villagers continuously rebuild it through collective labor. Even women and children get involved in the reconstruction, and this eventually catches the attention of the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. A brief visit by Tony Blair prompts Israel to cancel demolition orders for the school and the neighborhood street he is walking down. (00:50:24) This scene reveals a bitter truth abundantly clear to the villagers: what matters is not justice but who is watching. They realize whose voice really matters, and it is not theirs.

In the last third of the film, there is a concerning shift from military demolitions to settler violence. After Basel's father is arrested, Yuval continues reporting alone and faces threats from settlers. (00:58:48) In later instances captured on camera, large groups of masked settlers start raiding villages, destroying property, and attacking Palestinians. (01:07:12) They are empowered by the fact that they are not held accountable for their crimes, even for serious ones like murder. The pattern continues with Israeli settlers acting with impunity, while Palestinians face overwhelming, disproportionate retaliation for resisting. Basel's cousin is shot by a settler during a raid. One of the documentary's directors, Hamdan Ballal, is attacked by settlers, and then arrested and beaten by soldiers. Another activist involved in the making of the film, Awdah Hathaleen, is shot and killed by a settler. No Israeli has been convicted for any of these crimes.

The film wraps up with on-screen text: "Masafer Yatta's expulsion is ongoing, and the future of the villages unclear." We also learn that Harun Abu Aram died from his gunshot wounds after two years of living paralyzed in a cave without running water or adequate medical care. The contents of a secret Israeli state document are revealed as well, showing that the area of Masafer Yatta has been designated a military training zone to "block Arab villagers from expanding" and to strategically replace them with expanding Israeli settlements instead. We then understand that the expulsions are part of a bigger plan—another step toward annexing the West Bank, a move that Israeli officials have recently begun to speak openly about. The



story of Masafer Yatta exposes the systematic and understated tactics of an apartheid state to dispossess and maintain control of a subjugated people. At the same time, it underscores the quiet strength of perseverance in grassroots activism. As Basel emphasized in his Oscars acceptance speech, the struggle continues. And as with all struggles documented on film, the real change happens in what we do after the cameras stop rolling.

For those wanting to explore other documentary films on the same or similar subjects, here are a couple that may be of interest: *5 Broken Cameras* (2011) follows a Palestinian farmer's resistance against Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank, and *Budrus* (2009) tells the story of another village in the West Bank where villagers worked together to stop the Israeli army from taking their land. It is important that we pay close attention to these kinds of films as they can be suppressed in mainstream media, as we have seen with *No Other Land*.

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### *The Order* [film].

Directed by Justin Kurzel. 2024.

Chasing Epic Pictures, AGC Studios, Riff Raff Entertainment, Arcana Studios. 116 minutes.

Do you remember where you were on January 6, 2021? Maybe you were shopping, possibly sitting at home? Even if you cannot quite place yourself, your eyes were likely on Washington, D.C. Every four years, a new president and vice president of the United States are elected, and on January 6, Congress assembles to count the electoral votes. January 6, 2021, was no different. There is high controversy and a multitude of talking points on what caused the insurrection on January 6, 2021, but one thing is for certain: the mob was motivated by animosity and white supremacist ideas. A mob of President Donald J. Trump's supporters attempted to seize the United States Capitol to stop the count of the electoral votes that would confirm President-Elect Joe Biden, who had won the election. Rioters stormed the building looking to murder elected officials who were on the Senate floor. Watching these events unfold shocked Americans, and it caused people to wonder where these ideas might have come from.

Justin Kurzel is an Australian filmmaker known for directing films like *Snowtown* (2011), *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2019), and his latest film *The Order* (2024). *The Order* follows Terry Husk (Jude Law), a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent who has recently moved to a town on the border between Washington state and Idaho. Husk is there to reopen the town's formerly closed FBI office but then, with the assistance of police officer Jamie Bowen (Tye Sheridan), discovers a sinister neo-Nazi organization committing crimes in the area. The film highlights the group's use of *The Turner Diaries*, a piece of literary fiction that gives white supremacist groups a step-by-step guide on how to overthrow the government, published in 1979. *The Turner Diaries* was created by neo-Nazi William Luther Pierce, and it is one of the most significant pieces of white nationalist propaganda ever created. It inspired the events of the January 6 insurrection, the Oklahoma City Bombing (1995), and the "Silent Brotherhood" (September 1983–December 1984), also known as "The Order." This film moves

to highlight the danger of white supremacy organizations in the United States, how they quietly move while people underestimate them, and the relationship and community building that causes people to follow them.

*The Order* begins with Jewish radio talk show host Alan Berg (Marc Maron) talking to someone over the phone trying to understand why this person hates Jews and other minority groups. The scene cuts to three men, Walter West (Daniel Doheny), Bruce Pierce (Sebastian Pigott), and Gary Yarbrough (George Tchortov), driving into the woods while listening to Alan Berg speak. Pierce and Yarbrough are angry, calling Berg slurs for his inability to understand their struggles as white men. These two scenes set the tone for the contradicting ideologies that are going to be at play for the rest of the film. Terry Husk is first introduced as an FBI agent, who is hot off a case dealing with gangs in New York City. Husk has moved to this small town in order to slow things down and investigate white supremacist groups that are located near the FBI office that have not caused many issues thus far. Husk goes to the local police station in order to speak with the sheriff and establish a possible relationship. There is this hesitation that falls over the sheriff and his deputies when Agent Husk asks about the local white supremacist group located Hayden Lake, Idaho, a small patch of land no more than a forty-five-minute drive from the police station. There is a familiar understanding among all of the people living in this town: if we do not mess with them, they will not mess with us, but something more sinister is brewing.

A group of men sit in their car, anxiously waiting for bombs to go off in a pornography store. They have it all planned out. Once the bombs go off, the police will be distracted, so they can follow through on their bank heist. It takes them five minutes to realize that their plan might not work out as planned, but they confidently decide to follow through and get what they have come for: \$300,000. Deputy Jamie Bowen enters the picture, creating a direct link between different crimes and the new emerging white supremacist organization, and when Agent Husk tells Bowen that there is typically no connection between organized crimes and white supremacist organization, Bowen counters by saying, "What if this time it's different?" (00:14:04)

After the heist, Bob Mathews (Nicholas Hoult) visits a woman who is pregnant with his child. She is overjoyed to see him and excited about how much money has been made on the heist. Mathews kisses her and celebrates, but then he leaves to go home to his wife and adopted son. Once Mathews is home, he puts his son to bed and reads *The Turner Diaries* to his son as a bedtime story. Mathews explains to his son that white people are being replaced, and the hero of *The Turner Diaries* has given them an idea of what they should do to preserve their rights as white men. This type of language is used excessively in the movie, and it is one of the main reasons why *The Turner Diaries* is considered such a powerful piece of propaganda. It is a call to action with step-by-step instructions on how white men can take back what has been stolen from them.

Husk and Bowen go to visit the white supremacy organization at Hayden Lake and its founder Richard Butler (Victor Slezak). Husk and Bowen question Butler about people who have left the group recently, and Husk gives Butler a word of warning. Husk points out that whoever

is leading the new emerging group will come and try to steal Butler's followers. As Husk and Bowen leave, they see *The Turner Diaries* for the first time. Butler describes it as "children's literature," so they put it down and think nothing of it. As Husk and Bowen are leaving, viewers can sense their discomfort at a place where swastikas are being flown, and children playing on the playground are doing the Nazi salute. There is a similar atmosphere in the environment that Mathews and his followers are in. Children are laughing, wives are conversing, and men are discussing their plans of terrorism. There is something interesting about the way both Mathews's and Butler's groups are portrayed on screen. They both have a united front, but Mathews group is shown to be more of a family. When people join "The Order," they are asked to share a story of why they feel the way they do. Mathews is caring and compassionate while hearing their stories, and when new members join, he treats them like family. The men who join blame their misfortunes on everyone but themselves. When you are isolated and refuse to accept responsibility, these ideologies give you someone to blame and a community that reaffirms those ideas.

Bowen is visited by one of Butler's men and given a copy of *The Turner Diaries*. Bowen reads *The Turner Diaries*, and—as it turns out—this so-called "children's literature" directly mirrors what they had seen while out in the field. There is a total of six steps: recruiting, fundraising, assassination, domestic terror, armed revolution, and the "Day of the Rope." They have recruited, fundraised by robbing banks and armored vehicles, committed domestic terror, and now it is time for them to commit an assassination. Mathews is listening to Alan Berg speak on the radio, and he proclaims it is time for Berg to get it, so Berg is assassinated, shot a total of twelve times while arriving home from the radio station. (00:59:50) This murder lights a fire under the FBI and emboldens "The Order" to commit their final heist. They manage to steal \$3.7 million, but Mathews mistakenly leaves a gun at the scene. This one mistake will ultimately cause "The Order's" downfall. Tony Torres (Matias Lucas/Garrido), a Mexican American who had joined "The Order," gives the FBI information on where to find Mathews. Husk, Bowen, and the FBI follow them back to a hotel where a shootout ensues, Mathews gets away, while Bowen is shot and killed. Mathews and two of his followers flee to Whidbey Island, Washington. Special operatives try to enter where Mathews has fled, and after back-and-forth gun fighting, they ultimately decide to set the home on fire. Mathews dies in a fire surrounded by no one.

Kurzel's film is based on the book *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground* by Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt (1989). The film is a Hollywood blockbuster; therefore, many things have been dramatized for entertainment purposes. It would be of interest for those who are interested in the history of white nationalist terrorist groups in the United States. In the film, communities are built and sustained through mutual hatred of minorities groups due to conspiracy theories and lies fed to one another. *The Turner Diaries* is still circulated by white supremacy groups across the United States. The film constitutes a warning, looking into the past and offering possible visions of our future. For anyone interested in learning about white supremacist organizations in the United States, documentaries including *Documenting Hate* (2018), produced by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), *God & Country* (2022), produced by Rob Reiner, and *American Insurrection* (2022), produced by *Frontline*, can offer additional insights.

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*Shōgun* [TV series].

Directed by Rachel Kondo and Justin Marks. 2024.  
Hulu. 10 episodes (52–69 minutes each).

"We live and we die. We control nothing beyond that." Those words reverberated in my head at 4 a.m., while I was on my third rewatch of this show. The nuances and intricacies of life and death were nothing but fleeting moments to Japanese culture in this era, which seemed astonishing to me. The fascinating culture of early modern Japan is perfectly encapsulated in the 2024 Hulu series *Shōgun*, created by Rachel Kondo and Justin Marks. Kondo is of Japanese descent and was a finalist for the "O. Henry Award." Her husband, Marks, is an American screenwriter who served as a writer for *Top Gun: Maverick* (2022). *Shōgun* is set around 1600 in feudal Japan and follows its protagonist, John Blackthorne (Cosmo Jarvis), on an expedition to the Japanese Islands, following the account of English pioneers. While *Shōgun* is a piece of historical fiction inspired by James Clavell's eponymous 1975 novel, it is based on factual history, namely, the experiences of William Adams (1564–1620), a navigator who became the first Englishman to reach Japan during the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868). Adams was seen as one of the most influential foreigners in Japan during the early seventeenth century. *Shōgun* is a bilingual series, with most of the dialogue in Japanese and some in English. Each episode is remarkable, including moving visuals and fight scenes that will have you on the edge of your seat. The show beautifully captures the emotions, customs, and virtues of Japanese culture, leaving foreigners like Blackthorne with a difficult time to adapt. While all this makes the show a work of art, its absolute selling point lies in its politics, with everyone seeking the title of "shōgun."

Episode 1 ("Anjin") introduces viewers to the beginnings of British intervention in Japan. It starts with John Blackthorne and his crew boarding a ship known as the *Erasmus* and heading for the Japanese Islands. The route they take to get there is known as Magellan's Pass, which connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans at the southern tip of South America; it was first discovered by the Portuguese when they set out on an expedition to Japan. For decades, the Portuguese Catholics have profited from the Japanese trade, keeping the archipelago hidden from the British Protestants—that is until Blackthorne's "discovery" of the Japanese Islands, when he and the surviving crew members of the *Erasmus* end up stranded on the Izu Peninsula. In Japan, Lord Yoshii Toranaga (Hiroyuki Sanada), along with four other members of the council of regents, is wielding power after the death of the reigning Taikō. This dynamic quickly turns into a power struggle for the regents as they try to have Toranaga removed from the council because of his ambitious actions. On the other side of the country, John Blackthorne and his group of men are now held captive. Only Blackthorne is kept in a house and bathed because of his clear rejection of the Catholic faith, which has come to the attention of Kashigi Yabushige (Tadanobu Asano), the leader of the local town. Soon, a Spanish merchant by the name of Vasco Rodrigues (Néstor Carbonell) comes to take Blackthorne to Osaka, where he is to meet Toranaga for the first time. During their travel,

Rodrigues mentions an important virtue in Japan, “shukumei,” which he explains as “fixed destiny. Part of a whole. Life, death.” (Episode 1, 00:50:59) As expressed in the show, this attitude was prevalent during this time—a concept that everything in your life is connected, and that you have no control over it. When they reach Osaka, the show does an excellent job of conveying the Western misconceptions of Japan, with Blackthorne describing it as “this wretched land.” (Episode 1, 01:05:15) The episode ends with the message that, perhaps, Blackthorne—nicknamed “Anjin” (meaning “pilot”) by the Japanese—has been brought here for a reason, leaving the audience eager to find out why.

Now that I have set the scene for this show, I can delve into its themes and integral relationships. With Catholics and Protestants largely at war against each other during this time in history, Blackthorne—the English Protestant—emphasizes his sole purpose as waging war against the Catholics and not the Japanese. Episode 2 (“Servants of Two Masters”) emphasizes the cultural customs of Japan during this time. The language spoken is an ancient Japanese dialect, which the actors had to learn from coaches, and the cultural customs, clothes, and mannerisms mirror those of seventeenth-century Japan. From the delicate way the women walk to the brutality that the men suffer, *Shōgun* offers an excellent depiction of these early modern customs. Later in the episode, Blackthorne (henceforth “the Anjin”) draws a map of the world as he knows it in front of a grand audience in a sand garden. Toranaga is shocked to learn that England exists, with an even harder truth to follow, namely, that of the Portuguese military base in Macao, which had provided guns for the uprising against the Taikō. The Anjin’s final message is that Portugal and Spain have divided the eastern hemisphere between themselves, causing Toranaga to lose all faith in trading with the Portuguese. Now increasingly viewed as a threat by his enemies at court, the Anjin is attacked that night by assassins, but he escapes successfully with Toranaga’s help.

In episode 3 (“Tomorrow Is Tomorrow”) we learn that the Anjin has been ordered out of Osaka and moved to Ajiro, where his ship and men reside. During this travel, he is attacked by the Catholic regent and his men, illustrating the threat that the historical William Adams would have presented to the Catholic Portuguese at this time. With Toranaga and the Anjin now in Ajiro, episode 4 (“The Eightfold Fence”) focuses on the plan to build an army and lay siege to Osaka castle to claim the title of sole regent or “shōgun.” Quickly rising through the internal ranks of Toranaga’s army, the Anjin eventually becomes a samurai and is put in charge of the cannon regiment during the siege. This depiction is largely based off the actions of Ieyasu Tokugawa, who appointed the historical William Adams to do the same for him, leading the cannon training and eventually claiming the title of samurai.

In episodes 5 (“Broken to the Fist”) and 6 (“Ladies of the Willow World”), Toranaga builds his army, while Lady Ochiba (Fumi Nikaido) gains influence over the counsel of regents. Episodes 7 (“A Stick of Time”) and 8 (“The Abyss of Life”) focus on the unconditional surrender that the council of regents demands of Toranaga, who convinces Ochiba that he has fully given up. However, in the last two installments, episodes 9 (“Crimson Sky”) and 10 (“A Dream of a Dream”), Toranaga prepares and executes a mission—Crimson Sky—in which he delivers a decisive blow to his chief rival, Ishido Kazunari (Takehiro Hira), in Osaka castle. After many sacrifices, internal conflicts, and betrayals, Toranaga meets Ishido on the battlefield. With the

heir's army no longer in the picture due to a betrayal favoring Toranaga, Ishido finds himself outnumbered by Toranaga's men. Even though Toranaga claims that he does not want the title of "shōgun," he becomes the third great unifier of Japan, as was his real-life counterpart, Ieyasu Tokugawa.

Two of the greatest aspects of the show are its spiritual environment and its political setting. For the former, there are a lot of factors that add to the ambiance, which transcend time. The notion that life and death are the same, and that we must welcome both, is something that was integral to those living in seventeenth-century Japan. The "Eightfold Fence" was another prominent virtue, namely, the notion that one can retreat behind a metaphoric impenetrable wall whenever one would like. In addition, the show's setting, camera work, dialogues, and mannerisms make viewers feel as though they are living in this era. In feudal Japan, spirituality and politics went hand in hand. The political scene was complex, leaving little room for mistakes. With alliances and betrayals permeating the show's plot, the notion that "you must trust no one" becomes prominent, which was certainly the case during the Tokugawa shogunate. With regard to its historical and cultural accuracy, *Shōgun* does a phenomenal job in ensuring that viewers are captivated in this time period. From its traditional architecture to the clothing of the civilians, the show leaves no room for error. In each episode, the attention to detail in the way women walk, the way that men carry their swords, and the careful ambience of the gardens is evident. Moreover, several of the show's characters—including Yabushige, Toranaga, and the Taikō—are based on real warriors and historical figures of this time period. The show's setting also accurately depicts the civil war that Japan was heading toward.

Rachel Kondo and Justin Marks's *Shōgun* is a masterpiece of historical fiction. From its carefully planned setting to its intense dialogues and political games, it perfectly depicts the rise of the Tokugawa shogunate during the seventeenth century. Despite its historical grounding, the series should be enjoyable even for those who have never read about Japanese history. Those who appreciate films based on the ancient, medieval, or early modern periods will enjoy the show's historical and cinematographic aspects. Those who are big fans of the history and fantasy aspects of shows like *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), *Vikings* (2013–2021), and *Barbarians* (2020–2022) will find themselves captivated by *Shōgun*. And now that we have reached the end of this review, I must ask: "Do you believe that we simply live and die, or do we control anything beyond that?"

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### *Turning Point: The Bomb and the Cold War* [TV series].

Directed by Brian Knappenberger. 2024.  
Netflix. 9 episodes (60–80 minutes each).

The Netflix series *Turning Point: The Bomb and the Cold War*, directed by Brian Knappenberger (2024), is a nine-episode documentary that dives into the developments, global affairs, and overall timeline of the Cold War. Knappenberger is an award-winning

American filmmaker, who has produced all three seasons (thus far) of Netflix's *Turning Point* series, the others being *Turning Point: 9/11 and the War on Terror* (2021) and *Turning Point: The Vietnam War* (2025). Each episode is roughly an hour in length, totaling over nine hours of both video and photography from the hundreds of events that occurred during the Cold War and its final days. Throughout this documentary, images are voiced over by scholars and journalists. In this review, I present a description of all nine episodes, followed by my personal thoughts on the documentary.

Episode 1, "The Sun Came Up Tremendous," highlights the United States' development of the atomic bomb and the subsequent bombing of Japan (August 6 and 9, 1945). It looks at the political and strategic awakening that followed the success of the Manhattan Project. Notably, U.S. President Harry Truman used his country's new and growing nuclear capabilities to his advantage, telling the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin that the United States had a weapon of mass destructive force, and Stalin nodded at him in acceptance. (Episode 1, 00:43:26)

Episode 2, "Poisoning the Soil," turns to the spreading of communism in both the Soviet Union (USSR) and China, backed by Stalin. Among growing international tensions, U.S. spies learned that the Soviet Union had begun the process of developing a bomb of their own (September 1949). Thus, while the United States had made the first move in this nuclear game of chess, the Soviet Union did not delay its countermove for very long.

Episode 3, "Institutional Insanity," focuses on the United States preparing for nuclear war against the Soviet Union, specifically by beginning to test new thermonuclear weaponry under the leadership of theoretical physicist and chemical engineer Edward Teller. According to strategic analyst Daniel Ellsberg, when he arrived at the RAND Corporation's facility for the first time in 1958, he immediately began working on a plan to deter a possible Soviet attack that could disarm the United States and allow the Soviets to take over the world. (Episode 3, 00:21:00)

Meanwhile, the momentum in the Soviet Union stalled when Stalin died in 1953 and his eventual successor Nikita Khrushchev began softening the spread of communism during a phase of "de-Stalinization." This leads well into episode 4, "The Wall," which happens to be my favorite of the entire documentary. It is an action-packed installment that focuses on the Berlin Wall, the uptick in nuclear tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. We witness U.S. President John F. Kennedy meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna (June 4, 1961), which was initially viewed as a diplomatic success. However, tension soon began to rise again in Soviet-controlled East Germany, and as East Germans began to flee to West Germany for a life without communism, the infamous Berlin Wall was built (August 13, 1961)<sup>1</sup>, dividing Germany into two countries for the next almost three decades. Importantly, episode 4 uses much of its time for the emergence and resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 26–28, 1962), "which is the closest the Cold War came to total nuclear war." (Episode 4, 00:40:00)

Episode 5, "War Games," documents the increase in nuclear activity, which came after a false alarm within the U.S. security intelligence system on November 9, 1979. It alerted U.S. officials, specifically National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, that the Soviet Union had launched thousands of nuclear missiles in the direction of America. Fortunately, this turned out to be a false alarm, preventing a counterattack by the United States "that would have been the end

of the world." (Episode 5, 00:03:00) Tensions ultimately led to a summit between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva (November 19–21, 1985), in which both agreed that a decrease in nuclear threat and development was necessary for both nations, putting their political differences aside to achieve the needs of their people. The Soviet economy could not keep up with the nuclear arms race, and Reagan was growing tired of the strain that the constant threats put on the U.S. military. Episode 6, "Empire is Untenable," highlights the fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989), which signified the beginning of the Soviet Union's loss of control over Eastern Europe and the downfall of communism. It is filled with personal accounts of those who lived in Germany during this time.

Episode 7, "The End of History," chronicles the dissolution of the Soviet Union (formally achieved on December 26, 1991), often viewed as the end of the Cold War, particularly after the bilateral Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (SART), agreed upon by U.S. President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev (signed on July 31, 1991, in effect 1994–2009). Episode 8, "Moscow Will Not Be Silent," looks at post-Cold War Russia, with Vladimir Putin becoming the country's new president in December 1999, and discusses primarily on the global war on terror. The finale, episode 9, "We Are Not Dead Yet," focuses on the modern-day effects that the Cold War still has across all nations involved. It ties everything together and connects it to the current Russo-Ukrainian War, arguing that the latter is "a much worse place than the Cold War. The Cold War was cold, but this is an unstable, hot war." (Episode 9, 00:01:18) It takes this history all the way up until Volodymyr Zelenskyy became the president of Ukraine (May 20, 2019), commenting on Russia's threats against Ukraine as well as the international nuclear proliferation that we are seeing as a result. It concludes by suggesting that, as the specter of nuclear aggression is being raised in Ukraine and across the globe, we must lean on our knowledge of Cold War history to avoid any conflict that could lead to the end the world as a whole.

I would relate Brian Knappenberger's series *Turning Point: The Bomb and the Cold War* to Christopher Nolan's movie *Oppenheimer* (2023), since the series provides an in-depth look at the development of nuclear weapons. Despite of what one might expect from a popular streaming platform like Netflix, I would not recommend the series to entry-level historians or to those looking for basic information about the Cold War. The series would benefit from an introductory episode that explains the Cold War as a whole and provides an elementary timeline. It would become more accessible if there were considerably less jumping back and forth in time frames as large as sixty years (such as moving between the current Russo-Ukrainian War and the development of the first Soviet nuclear bomb, even though there is an undeniable historical correlation). As an additional critique, the series fails to address the Korean War, which was a major conflict that arose as a result of the Cold War. That said, I would recommend the series to those familiar with the Cold War who are looking to expand their knowledge.

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*When Life Gives You Tangerines* [TV series].

Directed by Kim Won-seok. 2025.

Netflix. 16 episodes (49–85 minutes each).

When life gives you tangerines, do you make tangerine-ade? Netflix's Korean drama (K-drama) *When Life Gives You Tangerines* (2025), directed by Kim Won-seok (Korean names are written family name first), may be a romantic drama, but once you peel away that surface, it reveals a social commentary on the everyday life and transformations of South Korea. Kim Won-seok is a well-known and acclaimed South Korean television director, having supervised several critically successful drama series, including *Misaeng* (2014), *Signal* (2016), and *My Mister* (2018). He has been celebrated for his realistic storytelling, emotional depth, and narratives that explore everyday struggles, making *When Life Gives You Tangerines* another successful hit in his repertoire.

Taking place primarily in *Jeju-do* (Jeju Island), South Korea, an island off the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula, the series follows the lives of Jeju islanders, specifically Oh Ae-sun (Lee Ji-eun, better known by her stage name, IU), a determined girl who dreams of becoming a poet, and Yang Gwan-sik (Park Bo-gum), a soft-hearted but steadfast boy who has only loved Ae-sun since the very beginning. Jeju has its own distinct identity and culture, making it an integral part of the drama and social analysis. They have their own dialect, traditional practices, specific shamanistic beliefs, and folklore. The Korean title of the drama is *Pokssak Sogatsuda*, a phrase in the Jeju dialect meaning "you've worked hard." Rather than using the literal translation as the English title, a play on the proverbial phrase "when life gives you lemons, make lemonade" was reinterpreted to "when life gives you tangerines," as tangerines are an iconic symbol of Jeju. While following Ae-sun and Gwan-sik's love story from childhood through adulthood, the audience also witnesses South Korea's transformations.

Primarily taking place from the 1960s to the 1990s, *When Life Gives You Tangerines* offers a rich, layered social history of postwar South Korea, exploring regional identity, cultural nuances, and historic movements of social change. In addition to tangerines, an iconic part of Jeju is the *haenyeo* (singular and plural). The *haenyeo* are women divers who harvest seafood from the ocean without the use of breathing equipment. They are culturally, historically, and economically significant to Jeju's identity and culture. With Ae-sun's mother being a *haenyeo*, the audience gains insights into the occupation's hardships and into Jeju's matrifocal labor system. Episode 1 takes place in the early 1960s, focusing on how Ae-sun's mother, who constantly works, dives in the sea to harvest abalone to support her family. It is a dangerous occupation as *haenyeo* dive in all types of weather and can suffer from hypothermia, and their breath-holding diving technique can cause overexertion and drowning. While the audience does not see Ae-sun's mother die, it is implied that she died from excessive smoking and daily sea diving, leaving Ae-sun an orphan. Because of her mother's death, Gwan-sik's shaman grandmother disapproves of his love for Ae-sun, causing contention throughout multiple episodes.

Gwan-sik's grandmother's disapproval is especially seen in episode 1, when she runs after Ae-sun in the market and yells that Gwan-sik needs to stay away from her. (00:50:55) The

main reason for her disapproval is her belief that Ae-sun's mother's ghost is attached to Ae-sun, and she will follow her mother's fate. Even after Gwan-sik marries Ae-sun and starts a family, she continues to hold this belief. In episode 4, Ae-sun, pregnant with her second child, is walking home from a temple as Gwan-sik's grandmother throws red beans at Ae-sun and her daughter. (00:02:40) This shamanistic practice, which she performs on Ae-sun daily, is intended to ward off evil spirits. While on this walk, Ae-sun's mother-in-law nags about how Ae-sun should have a son rather than another daughter, as traditional Korean families value sons. While walking, they pass by a *Dol hareubang*, an iconic statue native to Jeju and one of its symbols. Jeju's folklore strongly associates such statues with protection and fertility. Superstition says that touching the *hareubang*'s nose is believed to bring a baby boy, while touching the ears is believed to bring a baby girl. Tired of her mother-in-law's nagging, Ae-sun slaps the *hareubang*'s nose in an act of defiance, resulting in the mother-in-law profusely bowing and apologizing to the statue. (00:03:04) These instances of the drama's incorporation of the regional identity, culture, and practices is not just shown for the sake of nostalgia or aesthetics; instead, it indirectly teaches the audience about Jeju's cultural identity, belief structures, and gendered labor systems. While early episodes focus on Jeju's labor traditions, culture, and folklore, later episodes expand on South Korea's broader political and social transformations.

Not every historical event is directly addressed or essential to the storyline; many historical and cultural nods are subtly sprinkled throughout the various episodes. Episode 5 depicts Ae-sun as the chief deputy of her village in 1978 during Park Chung-hee's presidency. Park's authoritarian regime included the *Saemaul Undong* (New Community Movement), a state-led rural modernization campaign aimed to encourage Koreans to adopt a "modern" lifestyle that aligned with the government's ideals. This movement included government censorship of youth culture that was perceived as "decadent" or "Western," including go-go dancing and certain foreign and native songs. Ae-sun participates in the movement by catching people participating in prohibited social dancing (00:42:06), reflecting how rural ordinary women were mobilized for the movement and how social norms were changing in the youth community. Another nod to this 1970s censorship is the opening song of every episode, "Spring" (1973), written by Shin Jung-hyeon and sung by Kim Jung-mi. Jung-hyeon and Jung-mi were part of the psychedelic folk and rock music movement during the 1970s. This type of music drew inspiration from Western music, conflicting with Park's cultural policies, resulting in many songs and artists being censored or banned in the mid-1970s. I interpret the show's use of "Spring" as a cultural nod acknowledging South Korea's history of cultural repression.

Later episodes continue to trace South Korea's transformation beyond cultural control into times of political and economic upheaval. The 1980s and 1990s included key turning points that shaped the lives of ordinary Koreans and thus the drama's characters as well. Discussed in episode 7 through a television broadcast and conversation between Gwan-sik (Park Hae-joon) and his daughter, Geum-myeong (IU), the 1987 election was the first direct election held in South Korea in sixteen years, marking a pivotal turning point in South Korean history, as ordinary citizens were allowed to vote directly after years of authoritarian rule. Additionally, economic instability is woven into the story, as episode 13 showcases the economic struggles

during the 1997 International Monetary Fund (IMF) crisis and its impact on ordinary citizens. Geum-myeong was laid off from work like many others, leading to increased unemployment, economic strain, and hardship throughout the country. This crisis affected large and small businesses, including Ae-sun's (Moon So-ri) restaurant. The struggle of the community is shown through a sign in her store, stating, "IMF crisis, half price for Jeju citizens. Let's eat and survive together." (00:29:54) These examples are only the tip of the iceberg, as the series is filled with subtle historical narrative.

While *When Life Gives You Tangerines* displays South Korea's transformation through the perspective of ordinary Jeju Islanders, other modern dramas have also explored similar contexts. However, they are often more focused on entertainment, with historical context serving as the backdrop. For example, the romance K-drama *Crash Landing on You* (2019) focuses on the unlikely love story between a North Korean officer, Captain Ri Jeong-hyeok, and a South Korean heiress, Yoon Se-ri, who accidentally lands in North Korea after a paragliding accident. Kwak Moon-wan was a screenwriter and consultant for the show, and more importantly, a North Korean defector and former member of North Korea's elite security force. His involvement added some credibility to the series, but its overall depiction is dramatized. While some elements, such as limited infrastructure and black-market smuggling, capture some semblance of North Korean life, the series exaggerates and romanticizes many aspects for the sake of the narrative. For example, Captain Ri and his unit consistently break rules to protect Se-ri, such as crossing the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Yet they receive minimal consequences, even though the Korean People's Army (KPA) enforces rigid obedience, and any deviation would be treated as treason and punished severely. While both are entertaining, they serve different purposes: *When Life Gives You Tangerines* provides a more accurate, historically grounded depiction of everyday life.

It is apparent that *When Life Gives You Tangerines* was made with thoughtful analysis and attention to detail. The points I have addressed in this review are just a few of many in the series' historical and cultural narrative. Although a romantic drama, the show's incorporation of historical elements make it both entertaining and informative. Due to its intended entertainment purpose, the drama is much more accessible, digestible, and enjoyable for a broad audience. For K-drama fans and social historians, anyone can enjoy the series and learn about the rich social history of postwar South Korea, as it touches upon regional identity, cultural nuances, and historic movements of social change. Through the emotional and endearing story of Ae-sun and Gwan-sik's love, the drama weaves together the characters' relationships and collective memory, providing insights into South Korea's transformation through storytelling.

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*William Tell* [film].

Directed by Nick Hamm. 2024.

Eagle Pictures, Altitude Film Distribution. 133 minutes.

The year is 1307, and Switzerland is under the violent rule of the Austrian Habsburg dynasty. Viewers are immediately taken to the momentous point in the film when our main character, William Tell (Claes Bang), turns from being a peaceful huntsman to becoming the leader of the Swiss revolution. Tell's story is shrouded in as much lore as a mythical creature. Rather than being a mere hero, Tell is the embodiment of revolution and the right to stand up against corruption. In this 2024 film, director Nick Hamm utilizes stunning geographical locations, a dialogue that immerses viewers into fourteenth-century Switzerland with its use of an old-timey form of English, and playwright styles of acting throughout its intense scenes. Hamm has been celebrated for his work on *The Journey* (2016) and *Gigi & Nate* (2022) but, due to his generally UK-based activities, his films are not as well known in the United States. However, the lack of Hollywood stars only enhances the appeal of *William Tell's* universe, and Danish actor Claes Bang does a stellar job in bringing Tell to life on the big screen. From the very first minute, viewers can feel the heroism and conflicts that haunts Tell throughout this 133-minute film.

The film opens with black text over what appears to be a bloody background, introducing the production company and the director Nick Hamm. Immediately following, we are greeted by the film title—*William Tell*—alongside a deep voice that proclaims, "Three days ago, my soul was free from thoughts of murder." (00:01:15) As we soon find out, it is the voice of our main character, Tell himself. Viewers then receive important background information by means of on-screen text in a fire red color that states "Switzerland, 1307. Europe is in turmoil and on the brink of war." (00:01:23) After this, viewers are immediately thrown into the climax of the film, namely, Tell getting ready to shoot an arrow off his own son's head, but right as he raises his crossbow, the screen turns back. The film then cuts to three days prior in front of Tell's small home, where Tell and his son Walter (Tobias Jowett) are preparing to go hunting. The subsequent scene introduces the Wolfshot (Billy Postlewaithe), a ruthless tax collector for the Austrian Habsburgs, as he enters a small village and asks for Konrad Baumgarten (Sam Keely), the village leader. The village leader's wife indicates that her husband is away farming and hands the Wolfshot a bag of coins that is lacking in weight, whereupon the Wolfshot orders the locals to prepare housing for his men and the Baumgarten's wife to prepare him a bath. The film cuts back to the top of a hill, where Walter is attempting to shoot a deer with one of his father's crossbows, and Tell states, "Make it clean, son. We are huntsmen, not savages." (00:06:48) This message will resurface once again later in the movie as Walter convinces Tell not to make a choice based on revenge.

Back in the village, Baumgarten returns from his farm work, hears a woman screaming, and sees the Wolfshot's gang of men laughing at the sound, which is coming from inside his own home. As Baumgarten enters his home, he finds his wife stripped half bare and lying lifeless on the ground in front of the bath. In his anger, Baumgarten attempts to drown the Wolfshot in the bath, but the latter stabs him in the chest and pulls him into the bath. As a dramatic soundtrack plays, Baumgarten finds the knife at the bottom of the tub and stabs the Wolfshot

in his genitals until he lies dead in the bath. Then, Baumgarten makes his escape, knowing that if he is captured, he will be killed.

Arriving in a nearby village, Baumgarten begs the men, who are bringing small oar boats ashore, to help him across the lake to the mountain range beyond. After one of them fails to convince him that it is too dangerous, due to a strong storm coming in, Tell decides to help Baumgarten, and with this, Tell's involvement in the fight against the Austrian rule in Switzerland is set in motion. Both are then shown walking across a mountain range, where they are met by Tell's wife Suna (Golshifteh Farahani), who has brought horses to help Baumgarten escape. However, Tell plans to see Baumgarten to safety, and he takes him to a friend, Werner Stauffacher (Rafe Spall), to hide from the Wolfshot's men and the Austrian soldiers. Here, Stauffacher's wife Gertrude (Emily Beecham) is introduced, who states, "Now we must fight for our country," (00:24:05) to which Tell responds by urging caution: the people may fight for the cause, but they will surely die. The Stauffachers then convince Tell to take Baumgarten to Walter Fürst (Amar Chadha-Patel), a priest in Altdorf, who supports starting a rebellion against the Austrian rule.

While Tell and his companions—including Arnold von Melchtal (Solly McLeod), a man they have just saved before entering Altdorf—talk about their plan for rebellion and uniting the Swiss people, the king's bailiff, a man named Albrecht Gessler (Connor Swindells), has a large Austrian helmet placed on a post in the center of town and orders the populace to greet the helmet by bowing every time they pass it, as a sign of respect to the Habsburg king. As Tell's son Walter inspects the helmet, his parents notice him, and Tell begins to walk over to have Walter move away from it. Since neither Tell nor Walter bow before the helmet, Gessler's main enforcer Stussi (Jake Dunn) sends the guards to arrest them. During this interaction, Tell states, "I bend the knee to no man." (01:04:43)

It is at this point that we return to the film's opening scene. To obtain his freedom and to entertain Gessler, Tell is forced to raise his bow and shoot an apple off his son's head. In a tense moment, Tell aims his crossbow and shoots the apple clean off Walter's head without injuring him whatsoever. Gessler then asks why Tell had used a different arrow than the one that had been handed to him, and Tell responds that, if for any reason his shot at the apple had missed and harmed his son, the second arrow would have served to kill Gessler. (01:15:46) Gessler immediately tasks his guards with arresting Tell, which incites a fight between the citizens of Altdorf and the Habsburg knights. Stussi is ordered to take Tell to a nearby castle by boat to be imprisoned, along with the Habsburg king's niece, Princess Bertha (Ellie Bamber), who supports the Swiss uprising against the Austrian rule. During this prisoner transport, Tell and Bertha manage to escape. Meanwhile, Rudenz (Jonah Hauer-King), the heir to the Swiss house of Attinghausen, returns home to proclaim his support for the rebellion. Rudenz arrives at a cave near Rütli—the famous site where the Swiss cantons of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden took an oath of mutual support to each other in 1307—and Suna, Fürst, and a small group of rebels get ready to launch a revolt against the Austrian rule. Meanwhile, Tell and Bertha make their way to a gorge on the way to Küsnacht, where they lie in wait for Gessler, so Tell can make his attempt at a murderous revenge.

This is the main point where the film strays from the original folktale. In the film, Tell misses his shot, and instead of killing Gessler, the arrow blows off two of his fingers. However, according to the folktale, Tell killed Gessler and freed Switzerland from the power-hungry tyrant. In addition to this, the film shows Bertha in a later scene killing the Habsburg king, after which she returns to Küssnacht castle to free the Swiss from Austrian rule. However, according to the folktale, the Austrians were driven away later after a failed attack, which, as many Swiss believe today, led to the establishment of the republic of Switzerland; meanwhile, the Habsburg king (Albert or Albrecht) was actually murdered by his own nephew in 1308. At the end of the film, Tell's rebellion launches a successful attack on Altdorf, and he is given another opportunity to kill Gessler. However, Tell's son Walter, using his father's own words, cautions him: "We are huntsmen, not savages," thus convincing Tell to not kill Gessler and to leave him under his own helmet with a bloody arrow instead.

In a dramatized historical action film, it can be difficult to determine what is true and what is fictional, and in the case of William Tell, this challenge becomes even more complex. As the film's story of this alleged ex-crusader integrates historically accurate details and the legendary folktale into one narrative, the line between history and fiction becomes blurred, offering viewers a captivating watch while maintaining a certain degree of historical accuracy. In this, the film is not unlike Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* (1995), which tells the story of a thirteenth-century Scottish hero named William Wallace who, after suffering the traumatic loss of his wife, seeks revenge by rallying his countrymen in Scotland against King Edward I of England. Those interested in stories of uprisings and passionate heroes are also sure to enjoy the animated television series *Vinland Saga* (2019), produced by Shūhei Yabuta, which follows Thorfinn, a boy raised by the Vikings, as he seeks revenge for his murdered father. So, if you are in search of a captivating story of revolution and historical drama, Nick Hamm's *William Tell* (2024) is the perfect film for you.

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## Reviews (Games)

### *Assassin's Creed Shadows* [action adventure game].

Developer: Ubisoft and Ubisoft Quebec.

Platforms: PlayStation 4 and 5, Xbox Series X and Series S, Microsoft Windows, GeForce Now, Amazon Luna, and Mac Operating Systems.

Release date: March 20, 2025

History runs through the veins of every person, connecting what we see on paper to what was lived by those who came before us: this is the framework of the *Assassin's Creed* video game franchise. The newest installment of *Assassin's Creed*, titled *Assassin's Creed Shadows*, was released on March 20, 2025, by Ubisoft. Other notable video game franchises created by Ubisoft include *Far Cry*, the *Tom Clancy* series, *Just Dance*, and *For Honor*. *Assassin's Creed Shadows* takes place in late 1500s feudal Japan and involves Oda Nobunaga and Akechi Mitsuhide. The game's ending depicts a fictional death for Mitsuhide. You play as two characters throughout the storyline: Fujibayashi Naoe, who is a shinobi ninja from the province of Iga, and the samurai Yasuke, who was an African samurai serving under Oda Nobunaga. The *Assassin's Creed* franchise expands the public understanding of history and makes it more accessible to a broad audience; however, in doing so, it also enables the Ubisoft development team to both adhere to history and take their own liberties.

The idea of the *Assassin's Creed* games is for you, the player, to experience the memories of an in-game playable character in two locations: the real world and a video simulation. The real-world aspect involves a technology company called "Abstergo Entertainment," which has developed a method of studying history by analyzing people's DNA to create a historical simulation of what their ancestors may have experienced. In the context of *Assassin's Creed Shadows*, you are experiencing the world of Japan that you have never experienced before, allowing you to play the roles of samurai and shinobi, which have been mythicized in the period to be these larger-than-life characters that once inhabited Japan. Both characters, Yasuke and Naoe, possess distinct skills and abilities and wield a variety of weapons, many of which can be used only by one of them. It is crucial to know when to use which character, because each brings something unique to the story.

Fujibayashi Naoe is a shinobi from Iga whose family had died during Oda Nobunaga's 1581 destruction of Iga. Playing her is similar to the typical *Assassin's Creed* gameplay in its other installments, where stealth and assassination are the key components. Granted, historically, the shinobi did not focus solely on assassinations, but Ubisoft does an excellent job of combining the real-world application of espionage and sabotage with the core concept of its games. Naoe has a variety of tools and weapons at her disposal that are used constantly throughout the gameplay; notable ones include the kunai throwing knives, a katana, a kusarigama, a tanto blade, and smoke bombs. She also has a grappling hook that she uses to scale buildings, helping her find rare items and acquire synchronization points. In the *Assassin's Creed* games, synchronization points are checkpoints to which the player can travel quickly at a later date. In *Assassin's Creed Shadows*, only Naoe can initially gain access to

these points due to her agile abilities as a shinobi. On the flip side, Yasuke possesses other abilities Naoe lacks.

In the game, Yasuke represents the real-life Yasuke, brought to Japan by an Italian priest, Father Alessandro Valignano, who arrived in 1579, and Luis Frois, a Portuguese priest who arrived in 1563. In 1579, Yasuke accompanied their journey as an enslaved person, caught the attention of Oda Nobunaga, was freed from captivity, and became a samurai. Now it is not clear whether Nobunaga officially made Yasuke a samurai; however, this is one of the creative liberties Ubisoft takes, given that Yasuke, for all intents and purposes, was acting as a samurai and advisor to Nobunaga. Unfortunately, the decision to make him a samurai was a major criticism the studio garnered against the game, along with race-related criticism; a central part of the latter was that many people did not know Japan's history, or even the history that included a samurai of a different color. This type of criticism serves as an argument in favor of the *Assassin's Creed* franchise, as these games aim to bring a broader audience into the world of history through fiction.

The abilities Yasuke possesses differ drastically from Naoe's. While she deals more in stealth, Yasuke relies on brute force. The player sees this drastically through the health and power differences while playing each character. Naoe has almost half the health as Yasuke at any given level, along with two fewer stores of rations; Naoe gets three, and Yasuke holds five. Rations quickly restore health during combat and highlight the different play styles the game wants you to take when playing each character. There is also the power stat (or level), where Naoe has about a third less power than Yasuke, emphasizing the need to stealth while playing her. Yasuke, on the other hand, is a display of force not just with his stats but also in combat with his abilities and equipment. He wields, most notably, the long katana, naginata, a bow, and a firearm also known as "teppo." All of the weapons Yasuke can use, even the ones he acquires later on in the storyline, are heavy weapons, meaning characters' archetype of brutes handles them. These slow-moving enemies deal decent amounts of damage with each blow.

Looking at the gameplay mechanics, *Assassin's Creed Shadows* shies away from the typical *Assassin's Creed* map features, where it used to be the case that, when you hit a synchronization point, that region of the map was visible; in this game, however, you must access the synchronization point and still traverse the map to access all of the locations and side quests, gearing more toward the intel gathering side of the shinobi. Both characters you play have horses to help travel from one place to another, which in feudal Japan would have raised some eyebrows regarding Naoe, since it would have been uncommon back then for her to be riding in a city or town with weapons equipped to her. However, horses have been a staple in the *Assassin's Creed* games for the last handful of installments. There are also cultural gameplay mechanics. Early in the story, Naoe is taught the art of the Tea Ceremony by Sen no Rikyu, a tea master based in Sakai, as part of a required quest to advance in the storyline. There are also various Buddhist temples and shrines you can visit along the roads on the map. If you have your character pray, it grants your character certain ability buffs, opening the player to different religious beliefs and demonstrating how Buddhism was the main religion in Japan when Christianity arrived. Naoe also practices Kuji Kiri, a meditation



technique involving hand signs from ninjitsu, to enhance mental and spiritual strength during meditation. In contrast, Yasuke performs kata, which are weapon drills learned from a handful of characters as you progress through the story.

The game's storyline is a fictional retelling of Japan's late Sengoku (or "Warring States") period (1467–1600), focusing on the few rulers under Oda Nobunaga and the days following his death by seppuku (i.e., ritualistic suicide). If you had played this game when it was initially released, there was no warning that it was a work of fiction, which led to significant criticism from the Japanese public. The developers reacted to this by including a warning label when you first start the game. The criticism had arisen because not all historical characters are accurate representations, and some historical sites, such as castles, fortresses, and temples, do not fully align with the period in which the story takes place. The Codex tab in the menu solves much of this type of criticism. As you progress through the story and visit new locations and meet new people, you can view the Cultural Discovery tab of the Codex, which provides the player with extra information on a plethora of cultural and political topics of the time.

Feudal Japan has inspired many different types of media, so if you would like to continue the journey, its aesthetics are evident in other video games, books, and movies. The most recent video game with a samurai storyline is Sucker Punch Productions' 2020 release, *Ghosts of Tsushima*, available for PlayStation 4 and 5, as well as Microsoft Windows. It falls short due to many historical inaccuracies in the portrayal of the samurai, but it is still a fantastic game. There is also the *Shōgun* historical novel, originally published in 1975, followed by a 1980 television adaptation and another modern adaptation in 2024. Finally, if you enjoyed the story of Yasuke, an outsider adopted into the samurai class, you might also like the 2003 film *The Last Samurai*, featuring Tom Cruise, even though it contains many historical inaccuracies. Fans of the franchise will find a home in *Assassin's Creed Shadows* within the shared timeline of the other games, as well as new players who decide to pick it up for the first time. There are hours upon hours of gameplay to experience, especially with the first downloadable content (DLC), released on September 16, 2025, adding more to the story of Naoe and Yasuke as they traverse the Sengoku period. The franchise is a perfect way to gain brief historical knowledge while gaining a glimpse of how life was. All you must do is dispel some disbelief and immerse yourself in the world of *Assassin's Creed*.

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*Fate/Samurai Remnant* [action role-playing game].

Developer: Koei Tecmo, Omega Force, Type-Moon Studio BB.  
Platforms: PlayStation 4 & 5, Nintendo Switch, Microsoft Windows.  
Release date: September 28th, 2023.

Just like many other media, video games have limitless possibilities when it comes to creative and imaginative ideas, so—what if you played as a samurai in Japan where your shopkeeper is King Gilgamesh of the "Epic of Gilgamesh," where one of your close allies is Samson of

biblical fame, and where you share a delicious meal with the goddess Circe of Greek mythology? As jarring as such a mash-up of ideas may sound, *Fate/Samurai Remnant* carefully crafts a fictional scenario during Japan's early Edo period (1603–1868) in which a secret war unfolds between historical figures and mythological characters. From intense battles to exploring the vast city of Edo, the selected characters all fit or adapt to the setting, and the developers make great use of their history to ease them in. The *Fate* franchise is an established Intellectual Property (IP) from Type-Moon in Japan, comprising multiple novelizations, video games, animated series, and movies that have been so meticulous about maintaining historical details and references that students have been known to use the franchise to pass their History college entry exams. All of these pieces of media center on the basic premise of choosing a time and place from the past and gathering at least seven key historical and mythological figures throughout Earth's history to battle and claim a wish they want granted.

The primary developers of *Fate/Samurai Remnant* are Koei Tecmo and Omega Force, who are best known for their game series *Dynasty Warriors* (since 1997), which is a hack-and-slash series based on China's third-century CE "Three Kingdoms" period that was full of war and famine after the collapse of the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE). These developers ended up making a popular style of gameplay and have been hired to make variants of major Japanese IP's such as *The Legend of Zelda* (since 1986), *Gundam* (since 1979), and *Fire Emblem* (since 1990) into these *Warriors* style games.

The story of *Fate/Samurai Remnant* follows a lone samurai named Miyamoto Iori (1612–1678). He has recently lost his adoptive father figure and mentor, the famous samurai Miyamoto Musashi (c. 1583–1645), whose claim to fame had been his unique and undefeated fighting style of using two katanas, Niten Ichi-ryū. Musashi had also authored the "Book of Five Rings" (1645), which used Zen Buddhism for as a philosophy toward battle and personal development for an individual's life. With no Lord to serve, Iori finds himself working as a hired sword for Edo until, one day, he gets dragged into an arcane ritual. The Waxing Moon ritual gathers seven figures and binds them to seven "heroic spirits," people who are renowned throughout history and myth, to clash against one another and claim the Waxing Moon as their prize, granting one wish. Iori's fate is now bound to Yamato Takeru, a Japanese folk hero of the imperial dynasty, both tied together as Master and Servant to fend off the numerous forces pushing to remove them from the competition. Iori and Takeru share an off-putting dichotomy—with Iori raised to be a samurai meant for war but serving in an era of peace, and Takeru knowing nothing but battle and slashing through any obstacle in his path, but now restrained by a society focused on civility and order. They are so divided from each other that Takeru does not reveal his own name to Iori, staying under the class title given to him, Saber, for the majority of the story. As the story progresses, Iori sharpens his blades and skills from fighting opponent after opponent, especially legendary warriors who could crush the average person. Iori finally finds a purpose for his katanas, and his journey slowly reflects the progression of his master's "Book of Five Rings," growing not only his techniques but his sense of self-worth. Meanwhile, Takeru starts to appreciate the pleasures of a peaceful era, from enjoying a warm dinner every night with Iori to the wealth of entertainment and market life developed thanks to the post-war period. He begins to

understand the value of a single life, and what had once been a willingness to destroy everything with a single stroke of his sword, ends up being another blade meant to protect the people of Edo. Eventually, he allows Iori to say his true name and for them to stand as equals.

Following in the styles of its predecessors, *Fate/Samurai Remnant's* gameplay is about mowing down waves and waves of enemies and ending encounters that are led by a Boss-type enemy. What makes the game stand out is not just Iori's usage of a dual katana fighting style, but a unique Action role-playing game (RPG) mechanic of incorporating different fighting styles and switching them at a moment's notice during battle. Iori truly takes his master's teachings to heart as he develops five different fighting styles throughout the course of the game—namely, Earth, Water, Wind, Fire, and Void—each representing a section from Musashi's book. Starting off with only two, Iori uses Earth to represent the standard use of a singular katana, while Water represents the Niten Ichi-ryū, his master's dual katana style. One style displays a solid defense as you focus on one opponent, while the other carries more fluid mobility as Iori cuts through numerous enemies. As the story progresses, Iori develops his disciplines and even incorporates magic into his fighting styles. Wind gives Iori the adaptability to slice up people with one hand and cast giant fireballs with the other. Fire is a tenacious form that grants immense power after Iori sustains damage.

Void is the culmination of Iori's lessons as to represent this untouchable form, attacking at lightning speed but gradually becoming slower if he has taken any hits. The beginning of the game feels simple and slow but, as the player progresses, so does Iori's arsenal, and suddenly everything is so fast and bombastic. Your own skills grow alongside Iori's throughout the story. Supporting Iori in combat is the wide cast of characters that Iori encounters and occasionally allies himself with. Most notably, Servants can be called on to swap in or simply use their techniques to change an entire battle in the player's favor. The most prolific aspect of these Servants is the Noble Phantasm system, a Servant's ultimate technique that wholly represents their story and how their name became famous enough to be worth calling upon, letting you feel this awesome power as you can end a battle in one fell swoop or get yourself out of a sticky situation in a Boss fight. When the player is not weaving through the battlefield, they can explore all of Edo and experience the bustling city in a post-war era. Follow Takeru, as he gets to witness the food stand culture and drags Iori along to pay for it all. Handle wandering Ronin who are nothing but petty thieves and murderers now that they have no Lords to guide them. Go sightseeing among many historical landmarks and locations that not only represent Japanese history but can also reward you and restore Iori's vitality upon interacting with them. To help improve Iori, it is not just about using experience to improve his swordsmanship, but also about using the spoils of battle to craft and upgrade equipment. Need more money or special items? The great hero of Babylonian mythology and ruler of ancient Mesopotamia, King Gilgamesh, has been summoned as a Servant who can independently compete, but decides to maintain a store for the player to frequent, Babyloniya. Gilgamesh accepts both special and common items as coins, so it is relatively easy to have the funds for necessary upgrades.

The game's art and sounds are phenomenal. At the beginning, you receive a beautiful animation summary of the game's cast and setting, done by CloverWorks, accompanied by a song, "Zanya Gensou" by LICCA and Spiral Radder. The music starts out somber as the animation shows some of the tragic low points of a character's past and the pain they have experienced right before, swelling as it cuts to the intense conflicts between them and unleashing their attacks in amazing, eye-catching hand-drawn sequences. The soundtrack always hits the right tone for the scenes it accompanies, bringing a cheerful vibe to the more friendly areas or emphasizing the tense, dire situations you end up in during the numerous conflicts. The architecture of Edo Japan is on full display, showing how active and rich the city is with all its people and businesses. The developers not only include main staples like Edo Castle's magnificent presence throughout the game, but they have also even crafted places like Yokosuka, a port city dedicated to Dutch trade at the time. The most notable aspect of the art is whenever Iori dreams and witnesses Takeru's past. Iori had already gathered that Takeru might have been from Japan's Heian period (794–1185), so every dream sequence is depicted in Heian period-style paintings. It is flat but has very impressive color selections, with all the important points vibrant and front and center. Each sequence is like going through a scroll of paintings rather than a slideshow or a picture book. It is like viewing the famous "Great Wave off Kanagawa" (1831), a woodblock print by Katsushika Hokusai, where every point of color is impactful, and alongside it is a fluid animation that is subtle but helps breathe life into it.

*Fate/Samurai Remnant* is a fantastic entry into the franchise, allowing a unique story to stand out on its own, but giving a lot of fan service to those who have been with the series for a while and recognize iconic characters. It shows that, despite Koei Tecmo having numerous titles to this gameplay, there is always a way to keep it fresh and display impeccable storytelling, both through cutscenes and dialogue during battle. This review was composed within forty-four hours and having experienced two of the four available endings, and I would recommend this game to anyone who enjoys a strong cohesive story with fast paced action. Those who particularly enjoy history and mythology, or even just like to experience different locales on their own, will appreciate the seventeenth-century Japanese setting and how mythology blends together with history in a masterfully woven story. The game has a plethora of difficulty settings, so anyone can pick it up and take it easy or enjoy a test of their skills and adaptability. There is a New Game+ system where you can take your save over into a new playthrough and unlock even more side story contents to get the whole picture of the cast and what their journeys were. Whether it is multiple replays or just a single run, this game is worth the try for its bountiful cast and beautiful storytelling.

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*Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* [first-person role-playing game].

Developer: Warhorse Studios.

Platforms: PC, PlayStation, Xbox.

Release Date: February 4th, 2025.

The year is 1403. You find yourself encased in heavy armor, fighting in the garrison of a castle in medieval Bohemia, which is currently enduring a brutal siege. Smoke, the smell of gunpowder, and screams of war fill the air. Boulders and ladders strike the wall, as dozens of men breach the battlements. You engage in combat with your enemy. This is the opening scene of the game *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II*, released on February 4, 2025, by Warhorse Studios. So far, Warhorse Studios has created only one other title, which happens to be the game's prequel. Both games aim to create an enjoyable, historically accurate role-playing game that is set in the late medieval period, specifically shedding light on a period of political strife in the Holy Roman Empire. You, the player, embark on an epic journey engaging with politics, combat, and survival mechanics. *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* is an excellently crafted role-playing game, one that truly immerses you in fifteenth-century European life. As such, *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* stands out as a game set in the medieval period. Typically, representations of this era include magic, dragons, and supernatural aspects. Contemporary games often do not use the historical setting of medieval Europe as a narrative source, but rather as their inspiration for an art style. *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II*, however, does not just use this period as a backdrop; it crafts an excellent experience that immerses you in the world of late medieval Europe. The game's mechanics, characters, settings, and other aspects, for the most part, have historical counterparts. The game does an exceptional job of entangling its experience with the real medieval era, more so than any other role-playing game.

The game presents a vast open world, full of castles, villages, farmland, forests, rivers, and medieval industries such as charcoal manufacturing and mines. *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* does not depict these places as mere boring backdrops to a story; rather, it utilizes them as immersive locations. I will discuss this immersion later on. The player's character, Henry of Skalitz, and his companion, Sir Hans Capon of Pirkstein, are central to the main story. The game picks up right where the last game, *Kingdom Come: Deliverance*, had left off, with Bohemia engaged in bloody political disputes regarding the leadership of the Holy Roman Empire. Henry had found himself entangled in the political strife between King Wenceslaus IV and his brother Sigismund, as he was thrust from the peasantry into the service of Sir Hans Capon. These two relationships develop more from the first game, as the two of them grow extremely close. The first section of the game is entirely dedicated to saving Capon, later developing into a much more grandiose story. The story propels you directly into conflict with Wenceslaus, and throughout the game you try to undermine his attempts at establishing control. Wenceslaus was a real historical figure, one who participated in political schemes that are relatively accurately displayed in the game. Wenceslaus, historically and in-game, took the reins of the Holy Roman Empire and Bohemia from his brother, Sigismund, before being deposed himself. The game shows the conflict that his schemes caused. Another example of a historical figure is Jan Žižka, a pivotal leader to himself and others during the

course of the game through various military excursions. These are just a few of the historically relevant characters impactful to the game's plot who were also extremely impactful to the real history of medieval Bohemia (i.e., the modern-day Czech Republic).

The gameplay and its mechanics are also historically inspired. Technique and proficiency are gained over time instead of simply being learned by the click of a button. The combat itself is also sourced largely from historical sources. Inspiration for the techniques and fighting styles is pulled from historical sources. Combat feels much more realistic when playing, compared to contemporary counterparts. Instead of "arcade-like" fighting, quick and lacking methodology, combat can be described as a brutal, slow-paced, strategic fight to the death. An argument could be made that this commitment to historical accuracy can make combat less enjoyable for the player. The game's dedication to historical accuracy expands to weapons and armor as well. Although the developers' variation of armor and its accessibility to the player are liberties taken to make the game more enjoyable, it is still largely accurate to the era. Weapons, in the form of swords, pole-arms, maces, and others, are also based on medieval innovations. Another interesting historical trend that *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* depicts is the further development and widespread application of gunpowder weapons. The game includes primitive gunpowder weapons and makes them accessible to the player. The *Handgonne* is based on historical sources, and is extremely inaccurate and ineffective at range. However, the game's commitment to historical accuracy mandates its inclusion. Another gameplay aspect included as non-player weapons are siege weapons. The game includes bombards, early predecessors of cannons, and trebuchets, and their effectiveness and application in siege warfare are depicted fairly accurately.

The setting of *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* is extremely immersive. A significant location central to the world-building and plot is the city of Kuttenberg, the modern-day Czech city of Kutná Hora. Kuttenberg is a bustling city, full of everything you would expect a medieval city to have—from blacksmiths to shops full of medieval items, taverns, churches, manors, and bathhouses. Many of these features are not just static backdrops; they are locations where you can interact with their features and inhabitants. The city is excellently created, feeling alive, non-player characters flow throughout the streets, and interactions can be had with many of them. The game's characters are also extremely interesting. Long conversations can be had with many of them, as they will detail jobs or quests for you to do, as well as their lives and problems, or simply tell stories. This level of world-building makes *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* feel so alive. The historical basis of its settings and characters makes you feel truly immersed in the era.

While this game excellently depicts history in a hybrid between fiction and historical figures, this depiction is not perfect and has some minor downsides. The main character is likely the largest historical inaccuracy, as he is a peasant who was elevated to the ranks of the nobility. Although he is not described as a noble, his involvement with the nobility, his lifestyle, and his access to social and economic perks would normally have been reserved for the nobility. Thus, this level of social mobility is relatively inaccurate. Other gameplay factors that are inaccurate are various systems implemented to make the gameplay much more enjoyable, for example, the inclusion of healing items and potions. Such items are obtained either

through purchasing them or a complex system of alchemy, in which the player can create and obtain these items. As we know, a drink concocted from brewing marigold and commonly found garden weeds cannot actually instantaneously heal a wound sustained from an arrow to the chest. Another example is the crossbow. The crossbow saw widespread use during this era, and it is indeed present in the game, however, just on a much smaller scale than one would expect for this era. Again, some liberties were taken to make gameplay more enjoyable; however, *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* remains an extremely compelling historical source despite minor historical inaccuracies.

*Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* can be considered one of the most historically accurate role-playing games on the market. Another game with a medieval-like setting is *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. This game is amazing; however, it lacks the historical accuracy of *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II*. Another historically themed game is *Mount & Blade II: Bannerlord*, a game set in a similar era but focused largely on strategy instead of role-play and immersion. Even *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II*'s predecessor, *Kingdom Come: Deliverance*, while extremely immersive, does not come close to the level of immersion found in *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II*. *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* is a major success because of its immersion, story, and world-building. This world, so excellently crafted by Warhorse Studios, truly makes the player feel fully immersed in fifteenth-century medieval Europe for hundreds of hours of content. However, this game is not for everyone. Historical accuracy can oftentimes affect the pacing of the game's combat and other systems. Its realism can absolutely find itself burdensome to those who desire a more casual, arcade-like experience, and learning the game's mechanics and how to use them effectively requires an absolutely steep learning curve. Enjoyment may be delayed for those expecting more immediate gratification, simple mechanics, or a gaming experience with fantasy elements. I would recommend *Kingdom Come: Deliverance II* to anyone interested in exploring or deepening their understanding of this period. This series truly offers a unique experience that cannot be found with any other game. While some mechanics and gameplay aspects can turn away more casual audiences because of the level of historical accuracy, Warhorse Studios has meticulously developed a story and world based on history. This is so absolute that it even dictates where the developers placed roads in cities. For history enthusiasts, this game is second to none for exploring medieval Europe and a premier example of video games as art.

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### *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties*

[turn-based strategy video game with real-time battle expansion].

Developer: Creative Assembly.

Platforms: Microsoft Windows/PC, macOS.

Release date: July 25, 2024.

The world is in chaos. Raiders attack the shores from Egypt to the land of Hatti, from Mycenae to Babylon. The great empires are on the precipice, beset by famine and embroiled in civil war. This is the world of the Late Bronze Age Collapse, the setting for *Total War: Pharaoh*, a turn-based strategy game with real-time battles. Developed by video game company

Creative Assembly and published by the Sega Corporation in October 2023, the game received an expansion (downloadable content or “DLC”) in July 2024, titled *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties*. The very first decision the player must make in *Dynasties* is as what faction they will play. There are thirty-nine playable factions to choose from, thirty-seven of which are grouped into the five major geographic regions of the game, Egypt, Hatti, Canaan, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean; the last two playable factions are grouped together as the “Sea Peoples” factions, without a particular geographic base. Of the thirty-nine factions, fourteen are classified as “major” factions and twenty-five are classified as “minor” factions. Major factions are distinct from the minor factions of the game in that their faction leaders have special abilities that provide substantial advantages to the player at the start of the game, while minor factions, albeit possessing their own leaders, generally do not have such advantages. On top of these thirty-nine factions, the world of *Dynasties* is populated by an additional 123 non-playable factions controlled by the game’s artificial intelligence (AI). Once the player has chosen their faction and configured their game settings, they are met with a cutscene that quickly establishes the instability of the game’s Late Bronze Age setting.

Gameplay in *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* takes place on one of two maps: the campaign map and the battle map. The vast majority of actions the player can make in a given turn occur through the campaign map. Through the latter’s menus, the player can manage their faction’s economy, governing policies, conduct trade and diplomacy, and control the movements of their faction’s armies and fleets, moving them from one war theater to another. The player can also access from the campaign map a list of relative faction strength and an overview of their own accrued victory points. The battle map, by contrast, contains a minority of gameplay features. Yet while containing just a fraction of features in *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties*, all the battle map’s features are the game’s most time-consuming, as they all manage, in some way, the game’s real-time strategy component. If the player is not paying attention, they can easily spend almost half their time there. On the battle map, the player engages their troops against an opposing army, either in an open terrain set-piece battle or in the storming or defense of a settlement. In any case, to secure victory, the player must not only carefully micromanage their troop formations, as one portion of their army pushes against the enemy while another defends; they must also carefully consider the terrain of battle, as some terrain types, such as desert dunes, will impose penalties on troop movements. Battles are considered over when one army’s troops are either all killed or forced into retreat. The game itself is considered over when a faction has successfully obtained enough victory points. The player can obtain victory points by meeting certain victory objectives, which range from the conquest of settlements to the construction of monumental buildings.

*Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* and its base game *Total War: Pharaoh* were both created by Creative Assembly and published by the Sega Corporation. Creative Assembly created the *Total War* franchise almost twenty-five years ago, with the release of the first game in the franchise, *Shogun: Total War* (2000), and it has been creating games in the franchise ever since. While most famous for its development of games in the *Total War* franchise, Creative Assembly has also created other widely acclaimed games, such as the horror survival game *Alien: Isolation* (2014) and the real-time strategy game *Halo Wars 2*. Meanwhile, the Sega



Corporation, more commonly known as "Sega," is one of the most established video game developers and publishers. Sega is perhaps most famous for its development of the *Sonic* video game franchise and for its publication of *Total War*.

Overall, the best parts of *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* as a game have to be its levels of strategy and excellent visuals. In terms of the layers of strategy, the player is able to strategize on as large a level as a faction's finances and army movements, down to the maneuvers of an individual formation of troops in battle. Each level and action requires a degree of deep thinking that proves highly satisfying when the player finds a solution. Meanwhile, as the player is amid battle or planning their next turn, they can appreciate the bright, beautiful colors of the game models. The worst characteristic of *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* is the wait time between turns. On average, it takes about three minutes for all the AI factions to make their moves during their turns. But even that is not that bad. Considering that a turn for the player takes about six minutes, without real-time battle, and at least twenty minutes with a real-time battle, and since those three minutes are for all the over 160 other factions of the game, the AI's three-minute game period is relatively fast. Still, those three minutes add up during long sessions of play, and the player can only watch and observe what events they can in their field of view while the AI "plays."

From a historical standpoint, *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* holds up well. In visuals, *Dynasties* captures the aesthetic of ancient Egypt. Every background the player sees is like a colorized hieroglyph, and every character model is like a hieroglyph come alive. *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* also does well in incorporating historical events and details into its storylines. Waves of Sea Peoples, for instance, migrate across the game map, eventually invading factions with coastal territories and becoming a crisis that the player possessing such coastal territories must eventually deal with, as the empires of the Late Bronze Age Collapse had to in actual history. Even smaller historical details are incorporated into *Dynasties'* gameplay, such as the Egyptian sidelock of youth, a real ancient Egyptian cultural practice used in the game to characterize one of the Egyptian faction leaders, Ramses, as a courageous, if rash, young man. Perhaps the only major issue with the game's historical verisimilitude is in its battles. While individual troops are equipped with authentic weapons, such as the Egyptian *kopesh*, the fact that troops march and battle in well-ordered formation runs counter to the likely disorganized battle style of the Late Bronze Age. It is, however, a necessary simplification to ensure a streamlined player experience. Otherwise, for better historical accuracy, the player would have to deal with, for example, managing 144 individual fighters rather than twelve troop formations, something which could make the micromanagement of *Dynasties* so difficult as to be impossible.

In terms of gameplay, *Dynasties* is very similar to most other titles in the *Total War* franchise, which are turn-based strategy games that divide the player between a campaign map and a real-time battle map. That said, there are unique aspects of *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* worth noting. For instance, in most other *Total War* games, the player only has to manage money (to pay for troops and buildings) and food (to keep their armies fed). By contrast, *Dynasties* has a much more complicated economic system. In this system, introduced in *Total War Saga: Troy* (an expansion to which was reviewed in volume 49 (2022) of *The*

*Welebaethan: A Journal of History*, [online](#)), the player must now manage five different resources—food, wood, stone, bronze, and gold—several of which are often required to recruit troops or construct buildings in a turn. Compared to the base game, *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* feels like a major improvement. In the base game, the player has a campaign map restricted to essentially the eastern Mediterranean (i.e., parts of Anatolia, Canaan, and ancient Egypt). In *Dynasties*, by contrast, the player has a map that is effectively double the size, encompassing now all of Anatolia, ancient Egypt, Greece, and Mesopotamia.

Overall, I would recommend this game to anyone who loves turn-based strategy. For those who love to relax by immersing themselves in the world of a game, *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* presents enough challenging problems that will keep the player coming back for more. Meanwhile, for those who go to games to relax by not thinking, I would recommend that they look for a different title. *Total War: Pharaoh Dynasties* cannot be played on autopilot. Likewise, the gamer who enjoys thinking but dislikes micromanagement is advised to steer clear of *Dynasties*. This game cannot be won without at least some degree of micromanagement, be that managing a faction's economy or commanding troops in real-time battle. For any of these players who is now still interested in playing, however, I would recommend they play *Dynasties* on a friend's laptop to see if they enjoy it; if—after at least three hours of gameplay—they are still interested, they can purchase this title.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER: *Xavier Nunez-Sundara of Anaheim, California, is currently pursuing a B.A. in History with a minor in Chemistry at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where he is a member of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society) and the University Honors Program.*

# Department of History (Awards) 2025/2026

## Student Award Recipients

Diego Moreno ♦ *Academic Support Scholarship*  
Nicholas Ruiz ♦ *Academic Support Scholarship*  
Liliana Virginia Zapien ♦ *Bakken Book Fund Award*  
Mia Elizabeth Cabrera ♦ *The Black Family Fellowship in History*  
Jennifer Galarza ♦ *Carmen Delphine Bayati Memorial Scholarship*  
Kaia Bogue ♦ *Dr. Jeffrey Griffith '13 Award in U.S. History*  
Alec Muniz ♦ *Dr. Jeffrey Griffith '13 Award in U.S. History*  
Sarahi Perez-Granados ♦ *Hansen Fellowship in Oral and Public History*  
Jennifer Galarza ♦ *History Student Success Award*  
Samantha Silva ♦ *Jorice Maag Local History Scholarship*  
Oscar Flores ♦ *Lawrence B. de Graaf History Student Fellowship*  
John David Sanchez ♦ *Lawrence B. de Graaf History Student Fellowship*  
Sarahi Perez-Granados ♦ *Nancy Fitch Women and Gender History Award*  
Ethan Madla ♦ *Warren Beck Outstanding History Student Award*  
Latosha Thomas ♦ *Warren Beck Outstanding History Student Award*  
Grace Velaco-Rojas ♦ *The Wendy Elliott Scholarship in Family History*

## Faculty Award Recipients

Kristine Dennehy ♦ *Leland and Marlita Bellot Research Grant*  
Frankie Bauer ♦ *The Woodard History Faculty Travel Grant*  
Jochen Burgtorf ♦ *James Woodward Faculty Achievement Award*  
Stephen O'Connor ♦ *James Woodward Faculty Achievement Award*

## Phi Alpha Theta (Theta-Pi Chapter) 2025/2026

### Officers

Ethan Madla (Fall 2025) / Jennifer Galarza (Spring 2026) ♦ *President*

Jennifer Galarza (Fall 2025) ♦ *Vice President*

Lauren Eissing ♦ *Treasurer*

Kaia Bogue ♦ *Outreach Coordinator*

Mia Cabrera ♦ *General Officer*

Jashua Mendoza ♦ *General Officer*

Mackenzie Shane ♦ *General Officer*

### Faculty Advisor

Robert McLain

### Spring 2026 Initiates

|                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Brianna-Isabella Aispuro | Vanessa Moy           |
| Valerie Araiza           | Jake Napier           |
| Joshua Arellano          | Dakota Nelson         |
| Cameron Barfield         | Fergus O'Connor       |
| Ramon Barragan           | Sarahi Perez-Granados |
| Bailey Basden            | Jade Phillips         |
| Kaia Bogue               | Adrian Pina           |
| Cesar Bravo              | Thomas Pulido         |
| Ethan Brawley            | Daniel Ramirez-Rojas  |
| Citlalli Calderon        | Jesus Reyes           |
| Michelle Cao             | Brandon Ryan          |
| Marycruz Chavarria       | Mackenzie Shane       |
| Colette Conway-Spatola   | Matthew Soria         |
| Juliana Dominguez        | Brianna Sparks        |
| Graycen Gose             | Paul Steger           |
| Christian Hernandez      | Trevor Stoller        |
| Brett Lamb               | Latosha Thomas        |
| Lucas Luna-Arellano      | Khoi Tran             |
| Maggie Magaña            | Tram Tran-Ho          |
| Patrick Mahoney          | Jennifer Trinh        |
| Clarise Martinez         | Dania Trippi          |
| Samuel McMillan          | David Valdez          |
| Kolin McVeigh            | Nathaniel Valenzuela  |
| Masako Miki              | Lindsay Vogel         |
| Elbert Moon              | Ben Wainscott         |
| Diego Moreno             |                       |

## Submission Guidelines for Volume 54 (2027)

*The Welebaethan: A Journal of History* invites authors to submit their scholarly articles and essays (including article-length theses); editions of archival materials (e.g., of manuscripts, oral histories, and historical photographs); as well as reviews (e.g., of books, exhibitions, films, documentaries, TV shows, podcasts, and games that are of interest to historians) for publication consideration; reviews must pertain to items with a publication/release date of January 1, 2024, or thereafter.

Submissions should be authored either by undergraduate or graduate scholars at California State University, Fullerton, who are currently matriculated or have graduated within one year before the journal's next publication date (summer 2027); or by undergraduate or graduate scholars from other institutions, as long as a brief recommendation written on letterhead by a faculty member from the author's home institution is sent directly via e-mail to the journal's faculty advisor by the respective deadline (see below). Authors do not have to be History majors. Multi-author submissions may be considered. Authors may submit more than one item for publication consideration but must send each item attached to a separate e-mail (see below).

Citations must follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Notes-Bibliography style). Authors should consult the journal's current volume as a guideline when they prepare their citations. Submissions must be in the form of MS Word documents, carefully proofread, and with as little formatting as possible. The responsibility to obtain copyright clearance and permission to publish with regard to archival materials and images rests with the authors and will be required in writing. Note that "public domain" does not equal copyright clearance or permission to publish.

Authors must attach their submission as a MS Word document and send it via e-mail by the respective deadline (see below). The following must be included in the original e-mail:

1. *the author's full name, e-mail address, and cell phone number;*
2. *a very brief bio of the author (consult the bios in the journal's current volume as a guideline);*
3. *the title of the submission;*
4. *the type of submission (i.e., article, essay, edition, or review);*
5. *a brief abstract (for articles and essays only; consult the journal's current volume as a guideline);*
6. *the name of the class for which the submission was originally produced;*
7. *the name of the professor who taught the class;*
8. *the semester and year (e.g., spring 2026) during which the submission was completed;*
9. *the institution (e.g., CSUF) where the submission was completed;*
10. *a statement whether a plagiarism report (e.g., Turnitin) was generated for the submission;*
11. *for archival material and images only, a statement whether copyright clearance and permission to publish has been obtained; if yes, the respective paperwork must be scanned and attached (PDF);*
12. *this statement: "If my submission is accepted, I, [insert author's name], will cooperate with the editorial staff of 'The Welebaethan' in a timely fashion to prepare my submission for publication. I declare that the work submitted herewith is mine, not produced with the aid of generative AI, and constitutes original, previously unpublished scholarship not currently under publication consideration elsewhere."*

Complete submissions will be acknowledged via e-mail within thirty business days. All submissions will undergo triple-blind review (usually by CSUF's matriculated scholars, faculty members, alumni, and external reviewers). Decisions will be communicated to authors within thirty business days after the respective deadline (see below). Acceptance for publication is provisional and contingent upon an author's collaboration with the editors and timely consent to final galley proofs. *The Welebaethan* is an online publication <https://www.welebaethan.org/> and registered with the Library of Congress: ISSN 2692-501X. Inquiries should be sent via e-mail.

First deadline for submissions:

Tuesday, **September 15, 2026**, noon (PDT).

Second deadline for submissions:

Monday, **December 21, 2026**, noon (PST).