

*The*

**Thetean**



*The*  
Thetean

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## Editor's Preface

The medieval historian William of Malmesbury wrote that the legendary King Arthur was “worthily deserving to be celebrated, not by idle fictions, but by authentic history.”<sup>1</sup> In this, the fifty-third edition of *The Thetean*, we have done our best to follow Malmesbury’s call and present not sensationalist retellings of history, but thoughtful and original analysis. Though we are aware that we approach the past with distinct bias, as all readers and writers of history do, the editing staff of *The Thetean* has endeavored to present you with “truthful histories” in areas that represent the historical scholarship of Brigham Young University.

Our authors and staffers are drawn from the undergraduate population of Brigham Young University. For many, this is their first publication, though we are pleased to welcome back several authors from previous editions. *The Thetean* plays an important role in our history department, allowing young authors and editors to familiarize themselves with the structures of an academic publication and the quality of work expected from them.

This year we include not only traditional historical papers, but selections from our Family History and Art History departments as well. With topics ranging from twentieth-century Japanese imperialism to an intellectual history of Cotton Mather’s biblical translations, the 2023 edition of *The Thetean* seeks to present a wide-ranging, informative, and engaging selection of historical studies for you, our valued reader. Most of all, this edition seeks to show that all “authentic stories” are “worthily deserving to be celebrated.”

*Cope Makechnie-Hardy*  
*Editor-in-Chief*

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<sup>1</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, trans. J.A. Giles (London: J. Haddon, 1847), 58.

# Whistleblowers:

## A Maya Narration on the Participation of the Dead in the Cycle of Life and Death

EMMA BELNAP

There is a common saying in modern American culture inspired by opera and the drudgery with which people view it. As the maxim goes, “It is not over until the fat lady sings.” If the Maya were to have their own variation on that saying, it may perhaps go, “Life is not over until the whistle is in the grave.” At burial sites on Jaina Island, an island near Campeche, Mexico rich with Maya history, hundreds of sculpted whistles have been found in graves, depicting various gods, animals, and humans.<sup>1</sup> These objects give invaluable insight into the beliefs and practices of the Maya. There are three foundational tenets of Maya beliefs pertinent to the discussion in this paper. (1) The Maya believed in the concept of mediation, the idea that humans are responsible for the continuing cycles of the universe. (2) Another core precept of Maya belief is the notion of complementary opposites. Complementary opposition dictates that ideas which seem to be in opposition with one another are in fact not; they are both necessary to the continuation of the universe and flow naturally into one another. (3) The Maya also believed in animism, that depictions of objects or people are literally ensouled as that object or person. *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* (Fig. 1), an object from Jaina currently located in the Metropolitan Museum’s collection, provides a commentary on those beliefs. This object would enable the person buried with it to continue their role as mediator in the universal cycle of life and death.

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<sup>1</sup> Carinne Chava Tzadik, “Jaina Figurines: The Survey, Characterization of Materials, and Treatment of Figures from the Fowler Museum Collection,” Master’s Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 2014: 14.

*Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower*, dated to sometime between 600 and 900 AD,<sup>2</sup> shows the Maize God emerging from a plant, which in turn is emerging from the whistle.<sup>3</sup> The plant, which has three leaves, is theorized to be either a water lily<sup>4</sup> or an ear of maize. It has one leaf folded down, revealing the Maize God inside. In Maya theology, the Maize God is responsible for the creation and recreation of the universe. In *Whistle*, The Maize God's arms are crossed over his chest, and he wears a headdress made of feathers, a necklace made of beads, and elaborate earrings. On the leaf of the plant folded down to reveal him, there are six corn kernels, organized in two rows of three kernels each. Three incisions surround and separate the two rows of corn. Some blue pigment can still be seen on the figure, specifically on his headdress;<sup>5</sup> such objects were traditionally painted ochre and blue.<sup>6</sup>

Hundreds of figurines similar to *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* have been recovered from Jaina. These figurines are depicted with an iconography unique to them among other Maya art pieces.<sup>7</sup> Although their iconography is unique, their use at Jaina is not; figurines comparable to the ones found at Jaina have been discovered in Copan, a Maya city. At Copan, figurines have been found both in burials and around houses in the city.<sup>8</sup> The function of these objects has been debated among scholars. It has been

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<sup>2</sup> "Maize God Emerging from a Flower," Brooklyn Museum.

<sup>3</sup> "Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower," The Met.

<sup>4</sup> "Maize God Emerging from a Flower," Brooklyn Museum.

<sup>5</sup> "Whistle with the Maize God," The Met.

<sup>6</sup> George Kubler, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient America: The Mexican, Maya and Andean Peoples* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex; New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 266.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth P. Benson, "From the Island of Jaina: A Maya Figurine," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 57, no. 3 (1979): 99.

<sup>8</sup> Julia A. Hendon, "In the house: Maya nobility and their figurine-whistles," *Expedition* 45, no. 3 (2003): 33.

proposed that they functioned as either whistles or rattles.<sup>9</sup> There is evidence to support both claims. Parts enabling these figurines to act as whistles have been found in figurines,<sup>10</sup> while many figurines also have pellets inside of them.<sup>11</sup> In his master's thesis, Cameron Bourg reconciled these disparate claims, concluding that the figurines were used as both rattles and whistles: the Maya used music in their ceremonies and the dual purpose of the figurines would make that music more complex.<sup>12</sup>

The figurines discovered at Jaina and Copan exhibit a surprising uniformity in their subject matter and style. While no two are exactly alike, the consistency in their depictions is not due to chance.<sup>13</sup> Because of their uniformity, Mayanists began to theorize the figurines were created using molds.<sup>14</sup> This theory was confirmed when several molds were discovered at the site the figurines are thought to have originated from.<sup>15</sup> This practice may have been introduced to the Maya by the Teotihuacans, who used molds in their own pottery making and likely introduced this method to the Maya; the Maya began using molds to make their own figurines in the fourth and fifth centuries, after Teotihuacan invaded the Maya region.<sup>16</sup> Though molds were used in the

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<sup>9</sup> Tzadik, "Jaina Figurines," 15-16.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Miller, "Molding Maya practice: Standardization and innovation in the making of Jaina figurines," *University of Chicago Press Journals* vols. 71-72 (Spring-Autumn 2019): 44.

<sup>11</sup> Benson, "From the Island of Jaina," 95.

<sup>12</sup> Cameron Hideo Bourg, "Ancient Maya music now with sound," Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, (2005): 24.

<sup>13</sup> Benson, "From the Island of Jaina," 96.

<sup>14</sup> Michael D. Coe, "Three Maya Figurines from Jaina Island," *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* vol. 35 (Spring 1975) no. 2: 24.

<sup>15</sup> Hendon, "In the house," 32.

<sup>16</sup> Miller, "Molding Maya practice," *University of Chicago Press Journals* vols. 71-72 (Spring-Autumn 2019): 41.

creation of the Maya figurines, most of them also include handmade elements, accounting for their uniqueness.<sup>17</sup>

*Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* was found at Jaina, an island that is thought to be at least partially man-made.<sup>18</sup> Sitting to the west of the Yucatan Peninsula, Jaina appears to have been used for burials and little else; hundreds of graves have been found there, though there are few ruins.<sup>19</sup> The burial cult practiced there seems to be unique to the island, as no other Maya site identified thus far exhibits the standardization practiced with burials at Jaina.<sup>20</sup> One scholar has theorized that the island served as a necropolis for the nobility of Maya cities in the Yucatan Peninsula. Its westward orientation to the Peninsula is crucial to this theory, as that is the direction the sun sets. The Maya viewed the sunset as the death of the sun as it crossed into Xibalba, the Maya Underworld. Throughout the night, the sun would journey through Xibalba before reemerging in the east the next morning, reborn.<sup>21</sup> As the west was the direction of the sun's death, it would follow that a western island served as the burial ground for the Maya dead. The figurines recovered from Jaina, such as *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower*, were buried with the bodies of those interred on the island.<sup>22</sup>

There are several theories as to how these figurines functioned in Maya society. The most convincing of these theories is that figurines were used in rituals. Figurines are still used in Maya ceremonies today, a tradition that has been passed down from antiquity. Extensive research has been done on the figurines discovered in Copan. Many of the figurines there were found broken in trash deposits. These figurines were intentionally broken before being thrown away; they were likely broken by the Maya after being used in

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<sup>17</sup> Coe, "Three Maya Figurines," 24.

<sup>18</sup> Miller, "Jaina", 1.

<sup>19</sup> Coe, "Three Maya Figurines," 24.

<sup>20</sup> Donald McVicker, "Figurines are us? The social organization of Jaina Island, Campeche, Mexico," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 23, no. 2 (2012): 211, 228.

<sup>21</sup> Coe, "Three Maya Figurines," 24.

<sup>22</sup> Benson, "From the Island of Jaina," 99.

ceremonies, having served their purpose.<sup>23</sup> Breaking or otherwise damaging objects used in rituals was not an abnormality in the Maya world. Several objects have been found either smashed or with holes drilled through them, something the Maya would do to “kill” the objects. As dictated by animism, they believed those objects were ensouled with power, and by “killing” those objects, they released that power. The figurines found in Copan had served their ritual purpose, so they were broken to release the power they contained.

Even in its ritual context, the inclusion of *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* in a burial at Jaina necessitates more explanation. Why was it buried with a body on Jaina? Why would a ritual object be buried, rather than be used or even just “killed”, like the figurines found at Copan? Scholars have provided a few plausible answers to these questions, one of which is that this whistle was played at the burial of the person with whom it was buried.<sup>24</sup> This theory supposes that the whistle’s inclusion would have been honorific; it was played at the person’s burial and would remain with their body as a token of that ceremony. While possible, this explanation does not seem probable. Even with molds streamlining the process, creating *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* would not have been a fast or cheap process, and the Maya were not given to sentimentality for sentiment’s sake. Their inclusion of the whistle would have served a specific purpose.

Another theory states that such figures were used to represent family members who had passed away, a medium by which the Maya could connect with their ancestors.<sup>25</sup> If that was indeed their purpose, would not the inverse also be true? Perhaps *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* was meant to represent the deceased’s family members, accompanying them to Xibalba in spirit. This explanation is once again lacking. In Maya society, including a living people’s likeness in a burial would portend ill omens for that person and would not have been done.

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<sup>23</sup> Hendon, “In the house,” 29-30.

<sup>24</sup> Coe, “Three Maya Figurines,” 24.

<sup>25</sup> Hendon, “In the house,” 30.

The most persuasive argument is that figurines included in burials were “fashioned to accompany the honored dead to the hereafter”.<sup>26</sup> Evidence of this claim is found in how these items were treated; unlike the figurines found at Copan, there is no evidence of *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* being “killed”. This is unusual, as artifacts found in Maya burials often bear marks indicative of their decommissioned status. The fact that this figurine was not defaced reveals that it was intended for inclusion in burial. It would not need to be decommissioned, because it was fulfilling its purpose by being buried. The figurines at Jaina may indeed have been played at the deceased people’s funerals, as one theory suggested, but that was not their only purpose. They were not buried merely for nostalgia’s sake. The whistles had a ritualistic purpose, one which only their inclusion in the burial could fulfill.

The ritual for which *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* would have been used is the rebirthing of the world. Its significance as a rebirthing object is attributed to it by a passage from the *Popol Vuh*, a book which tells the Maya creation story. In the *Popol Vuh*, the story of One Hunahpu is written. After losing a challenge put to him by the Lords of Xibalba, the lords behead One Hunahpu and put his skull on a tree. As soon as they do, the dead tree blossoms. A young woman named Lady Blood, a daughter of one of the Underworld lords, hears stories about the tree. Fascinated by what she has heard, she goes to see the tree. As a skull, One Hunahpu speaks to her, telling her to extend her hand. When she does, he spits on it. Lady Blood becomes pregnant from this encounter, bearing One Hunahpu twin sons, Hunahpu and Xbalanque.<sup>27</sup>

It was through One Hunahpu’s saliva that Lady Blood was able to conceive their children. Even in death, One Hunahpu maintained the ability to impregnate Lady Blood. Both the way *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* is used and its iconography alludes to the story of Lady

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<sup>26</sup> Coe, “Three Maya Figurines,” 25.

<sup>27</sup> Allen J. Christenson, *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Maya* (New York: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 125-135.

Blood and One Hunahpu. When playing any wind instrument, one must blow into it, an action which involves saliva. To use the whistle, one would invariably spit as they played it. In this scenario, the person using the whistle represents One Hunahpu; they spit to create new life. This argument is reinforced by the fact that the whistle would have been buried with someone who was dead. They, like One Hunahpu, are creating new life in death.

*Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* depicts the Maize God emerging from a plant. Scholars have described this plant as either a water lily or an ear of maize, both of which have deeper meanings in the Maya culture. Knowing the Maize God is the figure emerging from the plant provides insight into which plant is being depicted. In Maya culture, the water lily represents the primordial sea, the body of water from which life first emerged. The primordial sea is also the transition between this world and the Underworld.<sup>28</sup> The Maya saw birth as representative of the creation, the fluid in the womb as the waters of the primordial sea, and the birth canal as the portal into this world from the Underworld. Viewed from this lens, the Maize God is being created, born, and reborn as he emerges from the water lily, transitioning from the other world into this one to fulfill his duty of birthing and rebirthing the universe. Just as his spit helped create and birth two sons, the user's spit creates, births, and rebirths the Maize God. The designation of the flower as an ear of maize is also valid, as the Maya belief in animism dictated that every maize plant was the Maize God himself. In Maya art, depictions of the god often include elements of maize plants.

In Maya theology, humans are seen as the mediators of the universe. In this role, they ensure the continuation of vital complementary cycles, such as the cycle of life and death, through ceremonies and rituals. The Maya people also believe in the concept of animism. Thus, the sculpture of the Maize God on *Whistle* is not a representation of the Maize God, but the Maize God himself. With such a viewpoint, the Maya would have seen *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* as an opportunity to fulfill their role as

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<sup>28</sup> "Maize God Emerging from a Flower," Brooklyn Museum.

mediators, even in death. Although this object was placed in a grave, the *Popol Vuh* describes One Hunahpu spitting after he is dead; would that ability not also be available to all who have passed away?<sup>29</sup> In using the whistle, the deceased would rebirth the Maize God, bringing life from death. This fits beautifully into the Maya view of complementary opposites. From death, One Hunahpu brought life. Those buried with these whistles would also be able to participate in this cycle, resurrecting the Maize God, who would then resurrect the universe.

The concept of rebirthing is further supported by evidence found at burials on Jaina. Although faded, the figurines themselves were painted blue and orange. Bones at the site have also been found covered in red and yellow pigments.<sup>30</sup> In Maya culture, different colors are associated with each of the cardinal directions: blue and green are the center of the compass, orange and yellow indicate the south, and red represent the east. North is white and west is black, two colors that are not represented in either the painting of the figurines or bones. The lack of the color black—the western direction—will be addressed later in the paper. The exclusion of white, though, is especially interesting in consideration with *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower's* use. The Maya also associate directions with different parts of complementary cycles. In the cycle of life and death, south is the direction of death, north the direction of rebirth. In the exclusion of white, the Maya are not saying that rebirths have stopped; in fact, they are saying quite the opposite. They do not need to include white pigmentation on the figurines or in the burials because rebirth is already occurring, initiated by the inclusion of whistles in burials. The figurines, and especially *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower*, were implements of resurrection.

The use of *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* as a tool to continue the cycle of life and death

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<sup>29</sup> Christenson, *Popol Vuh*, 129.

<sup>30</sup> Erasmo Batta, Carlos Argáez, Josefina Mansilla, Carmen Pijoan, and Pedro Bosch, “On yellow and red pigmented bones found in Mayan burials of Jaina,” *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 40, issue 1 (2013): 712.

is also substantiated by the fact that such items would only have been owned by the elite in Maya society<sup>31</sup>—only the noble upper class enacted rebirthing ceremonies. There are several indications that support this conclusion. The figurines found at Copan were only found in the residential area, not the outskirts of the city.<sup>32</sup> In Maya society, only the nobles lived in the cities, while the laborers and farmers lived outside of it. The architecture of the buildings where the figurines were found, along with other commodities found in these buildings, further attest to these objects being owned exclusively by the elite.<sup>33</sup> Figurines were also found in burials at Copan. The few burials that included figurines were those of nobility.<sup>34</sup>

The figurines found in Copan came from a different region in northern Honduras, an area that was not part of the Maya region.<sup>35</sup> It is likely that the figurines from Jaina were also manufactured there. This information indicates that there was a trade relationship between the Maya and the people in the region from which the figurines came. This connects to the theory that it was exclusively the elite in Maya society who owned such figurines—only the elite would be able to travel to different cities and engage in trade,<sup>36</sup> thus only the nobility would have had access to the figurines. The figurines' non-Maya provenance also accounts for their iconographic differences from Maya art; they do not look like Maya art because *they are not Maya art*.

Thousands of objects from Maya sites throughout Mexico and Central America show members of the nobility engaged in ceremonies to rebirth the world. Not only would

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<sup>31</sup> Hendon, "In the house," 29-32.; Bourg, "Ancient Maya music now with sound," 24.

<sup>32</sup> Hendon, "In the house," 29.

<sup>33</sup> Hendon, "In the house," 29.

<sup>34</sup> Hendon, "In the house," 33.

<sup>35</sup> Hendon, "In the house," 32.

<sup>36</sup> The Maya had a road system connecting Maya cities which enabled ease of access for those traveling from city to city. Those of lower classes would have had no need for those roads; they were constructed for the convenience of the nobility in their trading voyages.

the lower classes not have had access to the figurines,<sup>37</sup> but there was likely also a religious restriction on anyone but the elite owning them. Bourg's master's thesis succinctly summarizes this idea:

These items were not readily available to commoners as Healy's (1988) aristocratic grave offerings affirm. The Jaina rattle figures also may have been reserved for aristocratic use given the status of the people that they represent... These musical instruments are also examples that fit Inomata (2001) and Hendon's (1991) description of objects that the ancient Maya ruling classes charged with political importance.<sup>38</sup>

The idea of including rebirthing implements in graves is not unprecedented in Maya society. K'inich Janab' Pakal, the king of the Maya city Palenque from 615-683 AD, was buried with a jade stingray spine in his hand. The Maya used stingray spines for bloodlettings, which were often performed as part of rebirthing ceremonies. The way that the jade stingray spine is positioned in the tomb, it appears as though it is in the ideal location for him to perform a bloodletting ceremony, even though he is dead. The stingray spine's inclusion in the burial demonstrates the Maya belief that, even in death, the elite still held the responsibility to serve as mediators in the universe.

K'inich Janab' Pakal's having a stingray spine while the burials at Jaina had whistles begs the question, though: why did the burials at Jaina not also have stingray spines? The answer for this question can be found in the events occurring in Maya society at the time the Jaina burials occurred. *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* is estimated to have been created sometime between 600 and 900 AD.<sup>39</sup> This period includes the lead up and beginning of the Terminal Classic era in Maya civilization.

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<sup>37</sup> Bourg, "Ancient Maya music now with sound," 25.

<sup>38</sup> Bourg, "Ancient Maya music now with sound," 25.

<sup>39</sup> "Maize God Emerging from a Flower," Brooklyn Museum.

The Terminal Classic era is dated from 800-1000 AD and saw the collapse of Maya society. During this period, several problems that had been facing the Maya compounded, ending the Classic Maya era. Widespread droughts, overpopulation, soil depletion and erosion, disease, deforestation, increased militarism, and the expansion of the nobility all aggregated, revealing how unsustainable the Maya way of life was. These hardships resulted in a widespread crisis of faith as conditions continued to worsen, despite excessive bloodletting from the nobility and an increase of sacred warfare.<sup>40</sup> Since traditional rituals were not working, the elite began searching for new ways to restart the universe and abate the disasters they were facing. Art at the Maya city of Seibal especially shows their attempts at creating a new iconography in the hope that would help subside the calamities. While the imprecise dating of *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower* cannot definitively determine whether it was created during the Terminal Classic era of Maya civilization, many of the factors that catalyzed the fall of the Classic Maya period were no doubt already being experienced at the time of its creation.

As part of their efforts to find new solutions to buoy up their society, the nobility likely turned to the figurines as objects of power; bloodletters were not working, but perhaps something else would. This may be the reason they were obtained from northern Honduras rather than a region in the Maya territory.<sup>41</sup> The unique iconography of the figurines would have been part of the elites' campaign to find a new way to rebirth the universe. Jaina's eastward position in the Maya region also speaks to the effect of the disasters besetting the Maya land. The impact of these disasters moved from west to east—western Maya cities were abandoned first during this period. The Maya who left these areas migrated east,

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<sup>40</sup> Evidence of the expansion of the noble class that occurred during the Terminal Classic period can be seen at Jaina; thousands of elites from Maya cities were buried there. Before this inflation of nobility, there would likely not have been enough deaths in the elite class to necessitate that many burials.

<sup>41</sup> Hendon, "In the house," 32.

occupying areas that would have used Jaina as a burial ground. This migration accounts for the absence of black in the pigmentation of the bones and figurines in Jaina burial sites. The west was already dead, so there was no need to present it as such in artwork.

*Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower*, paralleled with the story of One Hunahpu and Lady Blood in the *Popol Vuh*, shows how humans can continue their roles as mediators, even in death. While *Whistle* is a symbol of the growing Maya desperation as their dying society gasped for breath, it was also a symbol of hope. Just as they believed it would beget life from death, the Maya also believed the rebirth it enacted would deliver their society from the catastrophes they were facing. A better equivalent of “It is not over until the fat lady sings” for Maya culture would perhaps be, “It is not over because the whistle is in the grave.” The whistles found in graves at Jaina demonstrate how life and death are complementary opposites, death begetting life and life begetting death.

#### FIGURES



Figure 1: Artist Unknown. *Whistle with the Maize God emerging from a flower*. 600-900 AD. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

# The Incomplete Conquest of Spanish Guinea 1471-1910

PAUL GUAJARDO

**M**ary Henrietta Kingsley, the famous early female explorer of Africa, once remarked that an appointment to the Equatoguinean island of Fernando Po was “equivalent to execution, only more uncomfortable.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, historian Randall Fegley remarked that Port Clarence, which became the capital of Equatorial Guinea, was known as “death’s waiting room.”<sup>2</sup> When we think of the Spanish Empire, we usually envision the empire that decimated the Aztecs and the Incas, not a regime that failed to conquer and colonize an island one-fifth the size of Hawaii. Yet, for more than 400 years, the small indigenous community of Fernando Po quietly defied European conquest. While historians have analyzed Equatorial Guinea, they have yet to connect the country to the historical framework of the incomplete conquest. This paper challenges the myth that wealthier, larger, and more powerful European countries naturally conquered smaller, weaker, and poorer countries. This essay also expands the historiography of the incomplete conquest by examining Native resistance on the African island of Fernando Po and introduces new connections into Equatoguinean history. The primary lens used to examine the incomplete conquest of Equatorial Guinea are encounters: Portuguese, Spanish, and British explorers all wrote about the country from 1400-1900, and this paper contextualizes and examines a number of these travelogs and written accounts. Ultimately, it challenges traditional myths of empire and conquest and expands the

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa, Congo Français, Corisco and Cameroons 1901*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 34.

<sup>2</sup> Randall Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy* (New York: P. Lang, 1989), 3.

conversation of subaltern studies and African resistance in the Spanish Empire.

Primary sources for Equatorial Guinea's earliest history are scarce, but Malyn Newitt's *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670: A Documentary History*, helps bridge the gap. The book is a collection of translated Portuguese accounts, and this paper connects some of those 15th-century documents to Equatorial Guinea's discovery. Another primary source from the early period comes from Willem Bosman, a head merchant for the Dutch West India Company. After a successful career, he wrote *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea: Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts*, which was the authoritative guide on the region for decades. Though the book was published in 1705, it recounts his travels during the late 1600s and is one of the only primary sources in English about Equatorial Guinea during that period. A century later, Elliot Arthy was one of the first English sailors to write about Equatorial Guinea. His 1820 report, *A Description of the Island of Anno-Bona: Shewing Its Eligibility and Importance as an Occasional Place of Resort for Our Guinea-Men* was not optimistic. However, the English would go on to lease the island from the Spanish a few years later, and the report proves that the English were thinking about Equatorial Guinea before they possessed it. A few decades later, the Spaniards Juan Miguel de los Ríos and José de Móros y Morellon jointly wrote *Memorias sobre las islas africanas de España: Fernando Poo y Annobon* in 1844. De los Ríos and Móros y Morellon were both university professors who specialized in law and economics respectively, and they wrote their book to inform government officials and curious citizens about the viability of colonization in Equatorial Guinea. Their comments helped construct what the Spanish valued.

Other 19<sup>th</sup>-century accounts were taken from individuals such as Charles W. Thomas, Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide, Henry M. Stanley, Mary Kingsley, and Richard Burton, among others. These primary sources helped frame this paper's argument, but when primary sources were unavailable, credible secondary sources were also used. An example is Liliana Crespi's article "En busca de un enclave esclavista. La expedición colonizadora a las islas de Fernando

Poo y Annobon” because Crespi draws upon archival sources from Latin America that were unavailable in the United States. This paper also engaged with Equatoguinean historiography and drew upon the arguments of historians like Max Liniger-Goumaz, Ibrahim Sundiata, and Randall Fegley. Their work is foundational in the field of Equatorial Guinea and allowed this work to build upon prior research and argue for the viewpoint of the incomplete conquest in Equatoguinean historiography.

While the lens of the incomplete conquest has focused on the New World, the following study presented in this paper takes inspiration from the work of historian Susan Schroeder and applies her framework to Spain’s African possessions. Schroeder looks at traditional narratives of the Spanish conquest in Mexico and argues for a new approach to conquest studies. In her introduction to *Indian Conquistadors*, she examines four popular narratives of the Mexican conquest.<sup>3</sup> Her first and fourth claims are the most important for this paper. While previous historians argued for “an epic Spanish conquest” she argues against those trends and in favor of a new lens of historiography that recognizes “the Indians as the conquerors.”<sup>4</sup> When people remember the brutal conquests of Mexico, Peru, the Caribbean, and Columbia, they typically overlook the resistance of indigenous groups. Schroeder argues that in Mexico, even after Nahua rule was overthrown, indigenous groups still held power and conquered other communities. In Equatorial Guinea, even though the Spanish and Portuguese technically “owned” the land, the Bubi and Fang groups resisted Spanish colonization for hundreds of years. While they did not become “conquerors,” as some of the Aztecs did, they still resisted

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<sup>3</sup> The epic Spanish conquest. The spiritual conquest. The nonevent conquest. The Indians as conquerors. Laura E. Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk, eds., *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> Matthew and Oudijk, *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, 2.

occupation and challenged the myth of an “epic Spanish conquest.”<sup>5</sup>

Too often the public believes myths that are popular but unfounded. This can be dangerous because they silence subaltern points of view and history itself. Matthew Restall has examined some of the myths of the Spanish conquest in his books *When Montezuma Met Cortez*, and *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*. In his preface to *When Montezuma Met Cortez*, Restall called the history of the Spanish conquest “monumental but misunderstood, dramatic yet distorted, tragic not triumphal ... such adjectives might also be applied to other histories, if not to ‘all History.’”<sup>6</sup> The following analysis explores Equatorial Guinea with that same lens. It challenges myths of European exceptionalism and reclaims the “monumental but misunderstood” history of Equatorial Guinea.<sup>7</sup> To accomplish the task, this paper begins with a brief outline of Equatorial Guinea to give readers important context about the country and then outlines several important European encounters. These encounters are broken into four chronological sections and draw upon Portuguese, Spanish, and British narratives. The conclusion reflects on some of the lessons learned from close to five hundred years of Equatoguinean history. Ultimately, this paper explains how African resistance made Equatorial Guinea “death’s waiting room” for Europeans, expands the narrative of the incomplete conquest, and analyzes the lessons learned from encounters with the “unpolished gem” of Equatorial Guinea.

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew and Oudijk, *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Restall, *When Montezuma Met Cortés: The True Story of the Meeting That Changed History*, (New York, NY: Ecco, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Historians often focus on recent dictatorships rather than looking at the history of the incomplete conquest. See Max Liniger-Goumaz, *Small Is Not Always Beautiful*, trans. John Wood (Totowa, N.J: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1988). Ibrahim K. Sundiata, *Equatorial Guinea: Colonialism, State Terror, And The Search For Stability*, 1st edition (Routledge, 2019).

## AN OVERVIEW OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Equatorial Guinea is the most interesting African country that most people have never heard of. As a small African nation that speaks Spanish, it is overlooked on multiple fronts. It lacks the population of Nigeria and the linguistic hegemony of Cameroon and Gabon (its closest neighbors). This makes its study difficult for African scholars to justify. Furthermore, the two dictatorships that ruled the country for the past fifty years ensure that Equatorial Guinea's news coverage and scholarly work focus mainly on human rights violations and whether it should have a place on the United Nations security council.<sup>8</sup> Because modern events have impacted the country so much, historians have overwhelmingly focused on the recent past and have left important aspects of the country understudied. If one can dig deeper than those obstacles, the history of Equatorial Guinea is rich and fascinating. It includes an ancient Bantu migration to uninhabited islands after the last ice age, a host of diverse ethnic groups, amazing evolutionary adaptations by its flora and fauna, and a variety of European interactions that still influence it to this day.<sup>9</sup> For example, it was discovered by the Portuguese, traded to the Spanish, missionized by the Italians, Spanish, and British, occupied (for a time) by the Dutch, leased to the British, repopulated with Cubans, almost captured by the Germans, helped by the Danes, threatened by the French, cultivated by the Nigerians, and—more recently—supported by the Americans and allied with the Chinese.<sup>10</sup> Simply put, Equatorial Guinea is unexpectedly complex for such a small country.

Because Equatorial Guinea is so small (10,830 square miles, or roughly the size of Maryland) it might be

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<sup>8</sup> Arab News. "Equatorial Guinea Wins UN Security Council Seat despite Rights Groups' Concerns," June 4, 2017. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1109661/world>.

<sup>9</sup> Bernard Clist, "Guinea Ecuatorial - Más de 40.000 Años de Historia Revelados Por La Arqueología" (L'Harmattan, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Ibrahim Sundiata. *Equatorial Guinea: colonialism, state terror, and the search for stability*. (Colorado: Westview Press. 1990.) 18, 20, 26, 28-9.

tempting to assume its geography is simple; however, there are three distinct zones that need to be understood for an accurate grasp of the country. The first is the mainland, called Rio Muni, on the west African coast sandwiched between Cameroon and Gabon. This is the largest geographic area at around 10,040 square miles. Even though it is the biggest landmass of the country, it was only colonized after a Spanish base was established in Bioko in 1858.<sup>11</sup> This nearly four-hundred-year gap between discovery and colonization suggests that European conquest in Equatorial Guinea was indeed incomplete. Another part of the country is the small but populated island of Annobon (briefly known as Pagalu), which is around seven square miles.<sup>12</sup> Despite the lack of natural resources—explorer Jose Varela y Ulloa once remarked, “Annobon is a small island with acidic, dry soil in many parts. It has no cover or any type of natural protection”—it was an important resting spot for ships.<sup>13</sup> Prevailing winds made the Portuguese-owned island easier to approach than its northeastern neighbors, so it was populated with Portuguese slaves and became a significant island for provisioning Portuguese ships before they headed back out to sea.<sup>14</sup>

Bioko (which will hereafter be referred to as Fernando Po) is the final and most important geographical location in Equatorial Guinea.<sup>15</sup> Even a brief glimpse of the

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<sup>11</sup> Mariano de Castro, and Donato Ndongo. *España en Guinea Construcción del desencuentro: 1778-1968*. (Toledo: Sequitur, 1998.), 97

<sup>12</sup> Sundiata. *Equatorial Guinea: colonialism, state terror, and the search for stability*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Sundiata. *Equatorial Guinea: colonialism, state terror, and the search for stability*, 19.

<sup>14</sup> Sundiata. *Equatorial Guinea: colonialism, state terror, and the search for stability*, 18.

<sup>15</sup> For hundreds of years Bioko was referred to as Fernando Po (commonly rendered Pó, Póo, and Poo; while the O is hard, I have opted for the Po spelling to avoid unfortunate mispronunciations). All the sources this paper consults use one of those variants. It was not until the 1970s that Fernando Po was renamed Bioko, which falls outside of the historical scope of this paper.

island's history provides insight into the complicated nature of conquest and colonization. Fernando Po is where the capital city, Malabo, also known as Port Clarence or Santa Isabel at different times, was built. We see this trend of multiple names continuing with the island itself as Fernando Po has been known as Formosa, Masie Nguema Biyogo, and Bioko depending on the rulers.<sup>16</sup> Of course, none of those names reflect Ëtulá Ëria, which is how the indigenous Bubi refer to the island.<sup>17</sup> The ephemeral nature of Equatoguinean names reflects the impermanence of European authority in the country. As mentioned previously, many nations had connections with the country, but none truly controlled it until the 1900s. The island lies twenty miles south of Cameroon in the Gulf of Guinea and is the first island of the volcanic Cameroon line which also includes Sao Tome, Principe, and Annobon. It is the largest of that island chain, around forty-three miles long and twenty miles across.<sup>18</sup> The island's most spectacular feature is its dormant volcanic mount called Pico Basile (once known as Pico de Santa Isabel and Clarence Peak). The striking land formation rises over 9,000 feet above sea level, and its slopes earned the moniker "the wettest place in Africa" with an annual rainfall of 411 inches.<sup>19</sup> This paper concerns itself primarily with Fernando Po and Pico Basile, the first thing that the Portuguese saw when they approached the island over 550 years ago.

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<sup>16</sup> Sundiata. *Equatorial Guinea: colonialism, state terror, and the search for stability*, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Note, even the term Bubi misrepresents the group as it was a European misunderstanding that gave them that name. José Muñoz y Gaviria, *Tres años en Fernando Póo: Viaje a África por el Vizconde de San Javier* (Madrid: Imprenta de Diego Valero, 1875).

Sarah Drun, "Playa de Arena Blanca," Atlas Obscura, December 2021, <http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/playa-de-arena-blanca>.

<sup>18</sup> Sundiata. *Equatorial Guinea: colonialism, state terror, and the search for stability*, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Oscar Scafidi. 2015. *Equatorial Guinea*. (Chalfont Saint Peter, England: Bradt Travel Guides.), 3-4.

PART I: THE PORTUGUESE ENCOUNTER EQUATORIAL  
GUINEA 1471–1777

From the very first encounter with Equatorial Guinea, Europeans were primarily looking to make a profit. In succession, the Portuguese, Spanish, and British all wanted to rob the wealth of Africa, but instead of razing the lands, they raised their sails when met with enough resistance. What we learn from the Portuguese is that, when they faced opposition and were unable to make easy money, they abandoned their ambitions. This trend of European defeatism continues throughout the history of Equatorial Guinea and challenges the narrative of the invincible conquistador.

Like most European voyages, the discovery of Fernando Po began with a king's ambition.<sup>20</sup> Afonso V was Portugal's twelfth king and ruled from 1438 to 1481, having ascended to the throne at the age of six. Unlike his predecessor who was known for his appreciation of art and philosophy, Afonso V was known as "the African."<sup>21</sup> This appellation came from King Afonso's crusades in Maghrib, modern-day northwest Africa. While these crusades were costly and only mildly successful (the king had to be rescued from capture in 1464), part of his fascination with Africa led him to commission voyages of exploration along the West African coast.<sup>22</sup> While Gerli and Armistead point out the king's pious nature and suggest that the exploration of Africa satiated some of the king's desires for a crusade, Randall Fegley argues that the commission was based upon the European desire to escape the trade monopoly that the

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<sup>20</sup> The late Max Liniger-Goumaz, one of Equatorial Guinea's preeminent historians, has suggested that *The Periplus of Hanno*, an ancient Carthaginian travelog from the fifth century B.C., might contain the first reference in recorded history to the island of Fernando Po. The point is contested, but the text is translated and available to view online.

Max Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1979), 61.

<sup>21</sup> E. Michael Gerli and Samuel G. Armistead, *Medieval Iberia* (London, Taylor & Francis, 2003), 37.

<sup>22</sup> Gerli and Armistead, *Medieval Iberia*, 38.

Venetians enjoyed with the Ottomans.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of motive, Afonso V gave his own trade monopoly to Diogo Gomes—a merchant from Lisbon—under the condition that Gomes explore and document his discoveries of the West African coast.<sup>24</sup>

There is some debate over the identity of the explorer Afonso V commissioned, as Max Liniger-Goumaz attributes this role to Fernan Gomez da Minha.<sup>25</sup> Whatever the orthography may be, however, it is safe to say that Gomes and his crew did not discover Fernando Po until at least 1471. When the crew first saw the striking volcanic island with its towering peaks, they called it “Ilha Formosa,” meaning “beautiful island.”<sup>26</sup> Tradition states that the sailor Fernao do Poo was the first to see it, and eventually the island came to bear his name instead of “Formosa.”<sup>27</sup> Because of the island’s proximity to Cameroon and Nigeria, the crew believed it would become an important strategic base for their voyages and trade ventures.<sup>28</sup> This will be a common trend in the history of Fernando Po. Unfortunately, the Europeans failed to take into consideration two important factors. First, the native Bubi population violently resisted occupation and colonization. Second, the environmental factors of the island proved to be too much for the Portuguese explorers.

Historians such as Randall Fegley, Max Liniger-Goumaz, Ibrahim Sundiata, and Enrique Okenve all agree that this initial period of Portuguese discovery was vehemently contested by the natives and that while the Portuguese had high hopes for the cultivation of the land, the climate proved too much for their ambitions.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, the lack of

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<sup>23</sup> Randall Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Gerli and Armistead, *Medieval Iberia*, 38.

<sup>25</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 61.

<sup>26</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 64.

<sup>27</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 61.

<sup>28</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Randall Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy* (P. Lang, 1989); Max Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of*

primary sources from this period means that we must take their word for it, as many of them cite each other as sources. There is a short book by John Munday that covers this period, but once again, it is a secondary source.<sup>30</sup> The closest primary sources that are readily available come from a relatively recent publication by Cambridge University Press: *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670*. It is an anthology of primary-source documents translated into English, and important clues can be gleaned from some of these texts.<sup>31</sup>

In one excerpt from Duarte Pacheco Pereira, we learn that Prince Henry “The Navigator” “ordered the peopling of the islands of the Azores ... and many other good things ... besides discovering Guinea.”<sup>32</sup> This took place before 1460 and suggests that exploration and colonization would have been common and expected practices by the Portuguese when they discovered Fernando Po as well. The document also mentions that the mariners should be grateful (literally thank God) for the discoveries of Prince Henry as they yielded “3,500 slaves, elephant ivory, gold, fine cotton, and other merchandise.”<sup>33</sup> The focus of the document allows us to see how the Portuguese viewed new African territories—namely, as opportunities for exploitation and trade. The next relevant source is taken from Rinaldo Caddeo; it was completed a few years after the first and continues the narrative of European expansion, claiming that Caddeo discovered the Cape Verde islands. Whether or not that is

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*Equatorial Guinea* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1979); Enrique Okenve, “4. An Island in the Middle of Everywhere,” in *African Islands: Leading Edges of Empire and Globalization* (University of Rochester Press, 2019), 33; Ibrahim K. Sundiata, *Equatorial Guinea: Colonialism, State Terror, And The Search For Stability*, 1st edition (Routledge, 2019).

<sup>30</sup> John T. Munday, *The Portuguese Discover Central Africa, 1482-1580* (Longmans, Green, 1951).

<sup>31</sup> Malyn Newitt, ed., *The Portuguese in West Africa, 1415-1670: A Documentary History*, Illustrated edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>32</sup> Newitt, ed., *The Portuguese in West Africa*, 43.

<sup>33</sup> Newitt, ed., *The Portuguese in West Africa*, 44.

true, he did provide some of the first detailed accounts of the Canary Islands, Madeira, and other African islands.<sup>34</sup> Like his predecessor, he also noted the fertility of the land and the opportunities that they proffered. Similar to Columbus's letters from the New World, the nautical reports can sometimes read like sales pitches for further financing and royal support. Given the zeitgeist of the Iberians, the notion that Africa presented a "blank slate" ready for colonization and Christianity would have been shared by the explorers who found Fernando Po. Even if there are no primary source accounts to corroborate this, the secondary sources are quick to support this thesis.<sup>35</sup>

The next document written in 1550 jumps forward a century, and although it reviews the Cameroon line islands of Sao Tome and Principe, the discovery of Fernando Po is not mentioned. Rather, the anonymous author of *How to Survive Tropical Heat and Disease* writes that Sao Tome and Principe were successful producers of sugar, even though the harsh environment made work there difficult.<sup>36</sup> (The document cites climate and disease as the primary barriers to success, noting African slave remedies for what we now call malaria).<sup>37</sup> This report is important because Fernando Po was the largest of the Cameroon line islands and would have contained the most land. Thus, the lack of references to it while the smaller islands of Sao Tome and Principe were discussed suggests that the Portuguese gave up on it and focused their energies elsewhere. It is also interesting to note that both Sao Tome and Principe had milder climates and no native hostility compared to Fernando Po, yet they were still seen as diseased and difficult islands to cultivate. That fact alone helps us appreciate just how difficult it would have been to colonize Fernando Po, with its more challenging weather and indigenous populations.

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<sup>34</sup> Newitt, ed., *The Portuguese in West Africa*, 55.

<sup>35</sup> Fegley notes in *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 4, "The Portuguese were quick to note both the economic potential and the strategic advantages of Fernando Po," although Fegley fails to cite how he knows that.

<sup>36</sup> Newitt, ed., *The Portuguese in West Africa*, 60.

<sup>37</sup> Newitt, ed., *The Portuguese in West Africa*, 60.

According to secondary sources, the Portuguese gave up trying to cultivate the island in the first decade of 1500.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the first Portuguese encounter with Equatorial Guinea was a complete failure, and the Bubi population successfully fended off European conquest and invasion. Fernando Po became infamous; in fact, sailors warned others about the potential dangers of the African isle. Willem Bosman remarked in the next century, “The island of *Fernando Po*, is Inhabited by a Savage and Cruel sort of People, which he that deals with ought not to Trust. I neither can nor will say more of them.”<sup>39</sup> In the end, bugs, rain, and Bubis proved to be too potent a combination for the Portuguese.

## PART II: THE SPANISH ENCOUNTER EQUATORIAL GUINEA 1778

If the Portuguese were inept when they tried to conquer Fernando Po, the Spanish were both inept and uninformed. Spain acquired Equatorial Guinea (or Spanish

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<sup>38</sup> According to Liniger-Goumaz, Ramos de Esquivel attempted to start a sugar plantation on the island in 1507 but was soon driven out by the Bubis and climate. Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 61.

<sup>39</sup> Capitalization preserved. One of the primary sources I found in this period comes from Willem Bosman, who worked for the Dutch West India Company. He eventually became one of the head merchants for the company and wrote *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea: Divided Into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts*, which was the authoritative guide on the region for decades. Although published in 1705, it recounts his travels during the late 1600s.

Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea: Divided Into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts* (J. Knapton, A. Bell, R. Smith, D. Midwinter, W. Haws, W. Davis, G. Strahan, B. Lintott, J. Round, and J. Wale., 1705);

Ivor Wilks, “Bosman New and Costly,” ed. William Bosman, *The Journal of African History* 9, no. 1 (1968), 164–66.

Guinea, as it was known) precisely because the Portuguese saw no value in it. This did not stop the Portuguese from trying to get value out of it, however. The Portuguese essentially conned the Spanish crown into trading South American possessions for African ones, and when the Spanish arrived on the shores of Fernando Po, they were shocked to find that Portugal had never actually settled the island. After the Spanish tried in vain to claim the land, they too ignored it. Both the Portuguese and Spanish encounters with Equatorial Guinea proved that powerful empires also had weaknesses. Spain was so rich in land and foreign possessions that when some were difficult and unproductive, it made economic sense to ignore them in favor of more profitable areas. By studying the incomplete conquest, we can learn about these communities that were not destroyed by foreign powers and were ignored by more powerful nations. The Spanish attempt to colonize Fernando Po ultimately demonstrated that idle European interest was not a powerful enough reason to colonize. Only after medical and moral advances were Europeans able to gain a foothold on the island, but that was after the *second* Spanish attempt. Their first was a failure.

Three hundred years after the initial Portuguese effort to colonize, Europeans again tried to control the island, but this time it was the Spanish who sailed to the Bight of Biafra. In 1777, Spain signed "*el Tratado Preliminar de Limites en America Meridional*" or simply the "Treaty of San Ildefonso."<sup>10</sup> According to historian Liliana Crespi, Spain was in trouble in the late 1700s. The Spanish Empire held possessions across the Americas that required multiple governing bodies, logistical support, and full-time defense against poaching European powers (like the English, Dutch, and even the Portuguese).<sup>11</sup> To avoid hostilities with Portugal, and to be able to focus on other pressing concerns, Spain signed the Treaty of San Ildefonso, which gave Portugal the

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<sup>10</sup> Liliana Crespi, "En busca de un enclave esclavista. La expedición colonizadora a las islas de Fernando Poo y Annobon, en el Golfo de Guinea. (1778 - 1782)," *Revista Digital Estudios Historicos*, no. 4 (2010), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Crespi, "En busca de un enclave esclavista," 3.

colonies of Sacramento and Santa Catalina in South America.<sup>42</sup> In return, Spain received the African territories of Fernando Po, Annobon, and Rio Muni (note that Sao Tome and Principe were not part of the deal). Because Portugal had done nothing to develop these possessions in 300 years, they must have thought they were getting the better part of the bargain, and they were right. Oblivious to the nature of these African holdings, Brigadier Felipe Jose the Count of Argelejos de Santos y Freire was sent by the Spanish crown to take possession of the newly acquired territories after the signing of another treaty, the Treaty of El Pardo. The Count's mission was simple: he was to sail from Montevideo to West Africa and establish a colony and slave trading outpost.<sup>43</sup> On October 21, 1778, he arrived at Fernando Po and officially claimed it for Charles III.<sup>44</sup>

Even with his 150 crewmen, the Count of Argelejos was unprepared for the challenge of colonization.<sup>45</sup> In fact, the nineteenth-century academic Juan Miguel de los Ríos sympathetically wrote that even with an army of six thousand men, the task would have been difficult for Argelejos.<sup>46</sup> The first shock for the Spanish party came when they realized “the Portuguese [had] never established themselves on that island or carried out any trade with its inhabitants.”<sup>47</sup> The second shock for the Spanish was the resistance that the islanders put up. With these setbacks, the expedition was forced to make a

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<sup>42</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> Juan Miguel de los Ríos José de Móros y Morellon, *Memorias sobre las islas africanas de España: Fernando Poo y Annobon* (Compañía Tipográfica, 1844), 16.

<sup>46</sup> Móros y Morellon, *Memorias sobre las islas africanas de España: Fernando Poo y Annobon*, 28.

<sup>47</sup> Enrique Okenve, “4. An Island in the Middle of Everywhere,” in *African Islands: Leading Edges of Empire and Globalization* (University of Rochester Press, 2019), 151.

The quote is taken from: Expediente sobre el proyecto de colonización de las islas de Fernando Poo y Annobón, 1778 (copy 1843), 81/7051, exp. 3, AGA.

tactical retreat to Sao Tome, which must have been humiliating for the group as they waited for instructions from Madrid and relied on the good graces of their rivals.<sup>48</sup> The Portuguese in Sao Tome dealt with the Spanish visitors with hostility, and the Spanish Commander Varela Ulloa complained that they were treated like “pirates.”<sup>49</sup> After additional attempts to colonize Fernando Po were met with even worse results, the Spanish, like the Portuguese before them, abandoned their attempt to colonize and “limped back into Montevideo” in 1783.<sup>50</sup> Of the total colonizing force of 547 Spaniards, 370 had died, and nearly everyone else was sick.<sup>51</sup> The “constant insurrection” of the Bubis proved yet again that they would not be conquered easily.<sup>52</sup>

Donato Ndongo and Mariano de Castro argue that “the history of Spanish colonization ... can be defined as chronic failure, impotence, and disinterest.”<sup>53</sup> While “chronic failure” might be an appropriate evaluation, the Spanish did not lose interest in their new possessions quite so quickly. Even with revolutions raging across the western world, they reasoned that if they could not colonize the territories, why not follow the example of the Portuguese and pawn them off on someone else? Indeed, during the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars, the British had attempted to clandestinely settle Fernando Po, but after six of their sailors were murdered by Bubis, they quickly left the island.<sup>54</sup> If Spain could recapture their interest, perhaps they would finally be able to turn a profit. Randall Fegley writes that in 1817 Spain leased Fernando Po to the British, who were authorized to set

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<sup>48</sup> Móros y Morellon, *Memorias sobre las islas africanas de España*, 17.

<sup>49</sup> Crespi, “En busca de un enclave esclavista,” 9.

<sup>50</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 6.

<sup>51</sup> Ricardo Beltrán y Rózpide, *La Guinea Española* (Barcelona: M. Soler, 1901), 8.

<sup>52</sup> Móros y Morellon, *Memorias sobre las islas africanas de España*, 17.

<sup>53</sup> Mariano de Castro and Donato Ndongo, *España en Guinea Construcción del desencuentro: 1778-1968*. (Toledo: Sequitur, 1998.), 1.

<sup>54</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 7.

up a colony.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps bolstered by this success, the Spanish opened negotiations with Great Britain over the possibility of selling the African islands in 1826.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately for the Spanish, the British had realized by that point that Fernando Po was not worth it. After a low counteroffer by the British, the island remained under Spanish control. By the late 1700s, Fernando Po had been used to trick two powerful European nations and was still nowhere near colonized.

### PART III: THE BRITISH ENCOUNTER WITH EQUATORIAL GUINEA 1817 - 1858

The British project on Fernando Po marks the beginning of true colonization. While the British experienced difficulties and failures like the Portuguese and Spanish, they were able to create Port Clarence and settle the northern tip of the island. One plausible reason why the British partially succeeded when the Spanish and Portuguese failed was medical advances. The discovery of quinine for the treatment of malaria helped Europeans survive harsh conditions abroad. Another plausible reason why the British were able to establish themselves relates to motive. Portugal and Spain both wanted to make money in Fernando Po even though they both ruled vast amounts of land in other areas. The British Empire, in contrast, did not want to conquer Fernando Po and run it like a plantation. Rather, they wanted an outpost close to Africa as they became increasingly involved with policing the African slave trade. Ultimately, a more reasonable agenda for colonization and medical advances allowed the British to establish themselves on the island, and they had a Scotsman to thank for the latter.

While George Cleghorn might not be a household name, one of his inventions certainly is. Gin and tonic became *the* drink of the British Empire as the properties of quinine were used to treat malaria fever. Born in 1716, the Scottish physician was appointed to be a surgeon in Minorca in 1734.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 7.

<sup>56</sup> M6ros y Morellon, *Memorias sobre las islas africanas de Espa1a*, 17.

<sup>57</sup> Davis Coakley, *Irish Masters of Medicine*, 1st Edition (Dublin: Town House, 1992).

An attentive and curious man, Cleghorn published his *Observations on the Epidemical Diseases in Minorca from the Year 1744 to 1749* in 1751, and it became a classic work of epidemiology.<sup>58</sup> Cleghorn wrote, “If the Sick become giddy, feeble, and languid; in these Cases, without Delay, I have recourse to the Bark.”<sup>59</sup> While the bark of the cinchona tree had been used to treat illness among Europeans since the 1600s (and indigenous communities since pre-recorded times), advances by Francesco Torti of Modena in 1712 and Carl Linnaeus in 1742 gave the remedy a higher profile.<sup>60</sup> Cleghorn was a few decades ahead of his peers in prescribing the cinchona bark for malaria treatment. By the 1800s, tonic water (which contains quinine) became widely accepted as a remedy for malaria, and Europeans across the globe drank tonic to avoid the disease.<sup>61</sup> Quinine production was difficult, however, and it would take decades for the drug to become widely available. Technically, Cleghorn did not invent the combination of the bitter tonic water with gin which made the drink more palatable, but his writings gave the British trying to settle Fernando Po an advantage that the Spanish and Portuguese did not have. Of course, the gin and tonic was not a panacea (although alcohol *is* a solution), and deaths still occurred during the British occupation. It is reasonable, however, to connect the medical advances of quinine production to the successful British occupation of Fernando Po, and this becomes more apparent during the later decades of the 1800s when quinine production was in full force.

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<sup>58</sup> George Cleghorn, *Observations on the Epidemical Diseases in Minorca from the Year 1744 to 1749: To Which Is Prefixed, a Short Account of the Climate, Productions, Inhabitants, and Endemial Distempers of That Island* (D. Wilson, 1751).

<sup>59</sup> Cleghorn, *Observations on the Epidemical Diseases*, 188.

<sup>60</sup> L. J. Bruce-Chwatt, “Three Hundred and Fifty Years of the Peruvian Fever Bark,” *British Medical Journal (Clinical Research Ed.)* 296, no. 6635 (May 28, 1988): 1486–87.

<sup>61</sup> By 1880, 20 million pounds of bark were harvested from the Andes. For additional reading, see: Henry Hobhouse, *Seeds of Change : Six Plants That Transformed Mankind* (London : Pan, 2002), 28.

As the production of quinine increased, Eliot Arthy, another physician, wrote about his experience in the Gulf of Guinea. A ship doctor by trade, Arthy saw promise in the Equatoguinean island of Annobon and stated “Anno-Bona [Annobon] might eventually prove a valuable acquisition to the British Nation .... The island is claimed by the Portuguese Nation, but is of little or no use to them, as they are in possession of the Islands of Prince’s and St. Thomas.”<sup>62</sup> Unlike the early Portuguese explorers, who saw promise in the largest of the Cameroonian line islands, Arthy did not even mention Fernando Po in his evaluation of the Guinean islands or Portuguese possessions. The resistance of the Bubis of Fernando Po and the natural barriers to colonization meant that the island had been effectively wiped off the map and out of the minds of would-be conquerors. This encounter shows just how badly previous would-be colonizers had failed to settle Fernando Po. In addition to describing Annobon, Arthy wrote to William Wilberforce about the need to curtail the slave trade. With the advance of tonic production to inoculate would-be settlers, and the moral responsibility to end slavery and police the African coast, the British were in a unique position to claim Equatorial Guinea with strengths that the Spanish and Portuguese did not have, although it would take time.

After 400 years of independence, a British captain began to break apart Bubi independence. This is somewhat ironic because Captain William F. Owen established Port Clarence in 1827 under the auspices of fighting the slave trade.<sup>63</sup> Thus, an expedition that was aimed to help Africans ended up precipitating the Bubi downfall. Captain Owen oversaw Port Clarence for two years and began to populate the island with freed Africans from the slave ships that the

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<sup>62</sup> Elliot Arthy, *A Description of the Island of Anno-Bona : Shewing Its Eligibility and Importance as an Occasional Place of Resort for Our Guinea-Men* (London: Carpenter and Son, 1820), 21.

<sup>63</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 62.

Royal Navy caught, as well as with settlers from Freetown.<sup>64</sup> Despite the best efforts of Captain Owen and Colonel E. Nicolls, who oversaw the town from 1829 to 1834, the financial cost, yellow fever, and the difficult tropical conditions tanked the viability of the fledgling town, and the British decided to cut ties with the island officially in 1834.<sup>65</sup> In just a few months, seventy-five percent of the expedition's members had died, and they nicknamed Port Clarence "death's waiting room."<sup>66</sup> Fernando Po and the Bubis had bested the third European attempt at colonization, but this time it would not last.

Two British entrepreneurs, Richard Dillon and John Beecroft, tried to sustain a trading post in Clarence, but Dillon went bankrupt in 1836, and the larger West African Company of London came in to try and salvage the post until it too went under in 1843.<sup>67</sup> Undeterred by the increasing list of European failures on the island, the Baptist Missionary Society bought property in Port Clarence and began to missionize Fernando Po until they were kicked out by the Spanish.<sup>68</sup> Beecroft, for his part, became the Governor of the island in 1840 and began to explore the surrounding African coast, which was still owned by Spain.<sup>69</sup> In 1841, there was another debate in Spain over the option of selling the African possessions to Great Britain, which offered 50,000 pounds for the territories.<sup>70</sup>

For better or worse, Spain held out for 60,000 pounds, and the Spanish public rejected the proposal of selling the land that would become Equatorial Guinea. The

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<sup>64</sup> Martin Lynn, "Commerce, Christianity and the Origins of the 'Creoles' of Fernando Po," *The Journal of African History* 25, no. 3 (1984): 257-78.

<sup>65</sup> Lynn, "Commerce, Christianity and the Origins of the 'Creoles' of Fernando Po," 259.

<sup>66</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 7.

<sup>67</sup> Lynn, "Commerce, Christianity and the Origins of the 'Creoles' of Fernando Po," 259.

<sup>68</sup> Lynn, "Commerce, Christianity and the Origins of the 'Creoles' of Fernando Po," 259.

<sup>69</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 62.

<sup>70</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 8.

prime reason cited by the courts was the fact that they did not want to lose any more colonies.<sup>71</sup> In light of the Latin American revolutions that swept the New World earlier that century leading to the loss of millions of miles of Spanish territory, it is understandable that Spain would cling to every last holding they could. With an increase in patriotism, Spain decided to send an expedition back to Fernando Po to reclaim the island in 1843.<sup>72</sup> The Spanish public might have been swayed by the writings of Juan Miguel de los Ríos, who wrote in 1844, “We must not lose sight of the importance of the conquest and reduction of Fernando Po ... while it is true that it possesses a hot and unhealthy climate, it is no less true that it also possesses immense vegetable, animal, and mineral wealth.”<sup>73</sup> Even after numerous failed attempts and hellish conditions, the allure of material wealth compelled the Spanish to try to conquer Fernando Po.<sup>74</sup>

Unfortunately, the Spanish expedition under Don Juan de Lerena lacked the men and resources necessary to effect any change.<sup>75</sup> When they did arrive at Port Clarence,

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<sup>71</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 62.

<sup>73</sup> Móros y Morellon, *Memorias sobre las islas africanas de España: Fernando Poo y Annobon*, 33.

The Spanish reads: “es preciso no perder de vista ... la Conquista y reducción de la de Fernando Po ... y que si bien es cierto que goza de un clima cálido y mal sano, no lo es menos que posee inmensas riquezas vegetales, animales y aun minerales...”

<sup>74</sup> There were other considerations as well, but material wealth was the foremost listed reason. For example, in Móros y Morellon’s, *Memorias sobre las islas africanas de España: Fernando Poo y Annobon*, the final listed reason for African colonization was “to bring to pass the grand enterprise of knowledge and civilization in this beautiful part of the old world,” 34. This was the last of eight practical and financial arguments for its conquest.

<sup>75</sup> Beltrán y Rózpide, *La Guinea Española*, 10.

they simply reinstated Beecroft as governor.<sup>76</sup> Beecroft passed away in 1854, and a Dutchman named Lynslager governed the port until the Spanish came back to the island for the third time.<sup>77</sup> Four years after the death of Beecroft, the Spanish returned under Don Carlos Chacon, who took over the island and expelled the Baptists in 1858.<sup>78</sup> It was during this period that cacao, coffee, and tobacco plantations became successful despite Bubi hostilities, and the economic viability of the island ensured that the Europeans were finally there to stay.<sup>79</sup> It is not unreasonable to think that Spain's final conquest of Fernando Po was viable at this point because the British had already laid a foundation for settlement in Fernando Po—all Spain had to do was take over. Additionally, this would have occurred during the time that tonic became widely available and accepted as a treatment for malaria, which curbed death tolls. Lastly, Spain was strapped for territories after it lost its Latin American colonies through revolutions, and so the Spanish crown finally would have viewed its African possessions as important and not peripheral.

#### PART IV: COMPLETING THE SPANISH CONQUEST 1854-1910

When the Spanish came back to Fernando Po, they were building upon the foundation that the British had laid. The success of the British Empire in establishing a single port, the advances in medicine that provided some protection against malaria, and the moral responsibility Englishmen felt toward ending slavery allowed the British to be successful where others had failed. Interestingly, it seems as if the Spanish did not learn from the British success. Somewhat

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<sup>76</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 62.

<sup>77</sup> Beltrán y Rózpide, *La Guinea Española*, 10.

<sup>78</sup> Beltrán y Rózpide, *La Guinea Española*, 11.

Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 62.

Lynn, "Commerce, Christianity and the Origins of the 'Creoles' of Fernando Po," 259.

<sup>79</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 62.

ungratefully, one of the first things that the Spanish did after they took control of the island was to rename Port Clarence Santa Isabel after Queen Isabel II. This name change marks a shift in the history of Fernando Po; now the incomplete conquest of the island favored the Europeans who began to change things dramatically. This new wave of European colonizers came with their own agendas and no longer saw Fernando Po as “a beautiful island” but rather as a mess that needed cleaning up.

Reverend Charles Thomas was not impressed with the Spanish island. He served on Fernando Po from 1855 to 1857, and while he was ostensibly responsible for the salvation of souls, he remarked, “The colored population (5,000) is a degraded and ignorant mass—thievish, indolent, inoffensive, useless beings.”<sup>80</sup> In addition to Reverend Thomas, Richard Burton was elected to be consul of Fernando Po, a position which many considered a punishment for his quarrelsome nature. Somewhat spectacularly, Burton annoyed the British Army, the Foreign Office, the explorers and scholars of Africa, Victorian society at large (for his excessive drinking and sexual preferences), Africans (for being a racist), and missionaries (for being anti-religious).<sup>81</sup> One can only imagine what he would do with a Twitter account today, but his presence was missed by no one when he left Fernando Po in 1864. While Burton and Thomas represent the extreme of the new European colonization model which held traditional African culture in disgust, other Europeans were more understanding. Some of the people who held this sympathetic view were Henry Morton Stanley, Mary Kingsley, Manuel Iradier Bulfy, and Enrique d’Almonte, but they too changed the cultural landscape of Fernando Po.<sup>82</sup> Henry Morton

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<sup>80</sup> Charles W. Thomas, *Adventures and observations on the West Coast of Africa and its Islands* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860), 253-4.

<sup>81</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 10.

<sup>82</sup> Sir Richard Francis Burton, *Wanderings in West Africa Vol. 1: From Liverpool to Fernando Po* (Santa Barbara, United States: Narrative Press, The, 2000), Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa, Congo Français, Corisco and Cameroons*, Cambridge Library Collection - African Studies

Stanley wrote that Fernando Po was “a jewel which Spain did not polish” and that he “would not pay five crowns for the island in its present state.”<sup>83</sup> He appreciated the civilizing force of the Europeans on the island but thought they were not doing enough. Mary H. Kingsley—an early female explorer of Africa—remarked that an appointment to the island was “equivalent to execution, only more uncomfortable,” but European presence continued to grow, and many explorers visited “death’s waiting room.”<sup>84</sup> Unlike the previous wave of optimistic colonizers, this new batch seems to have abandoned hope in the Fernando Po project, and the reason

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Mary Kingsley, *West African Studies*, Cambridge Library Collection - African Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Mathilde Leduc-Grimaldi and James L. Newman, eds., *Finding Dr. Livingstone: A History in Documents from the Henry Morton Stanley Archives* (Ohio University Press, 2020); James L. Newman, *Imperial Footprints: Henry Morton Stanley’s African Journeys* (Washington, D.C: Potomac Books Inc., 2004); Henry M. Stanley, *The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969); Henry Morton Stanley, *My African Travels*, Cambridge Library Collection - African Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Álvaro Llosa Sanz, “Los viajes y trabajos de Manuel Iradier en África: género e hibridismo textual en el relato de viajes en el siglo XIX,” *Revista de literatura* 67, no. 134 (December 30, 2005); Ricardo Majó Framis, Instituto de Estudios Africanos and Ricardo Majó Framis, *Las Generosas y Primitivas Empresas de Manuel Iradier Bulfy En La Guinea Española El Hombre y Sus Hechos*, (Spain, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas), 1954; José Antonio Rodríguez Esteban and Alicia Campos Serrano, “El cartógrafo Enrique d’Almonte, en la encrucijada del colonialismo español de Asia y África (1858-1917),” *Scripta Nova* 22 (March 15, 2018).

<sup>83</sup> Liniger-Goumaz, *Historical Dictionary of Equatorial Guinea*, 158.

<sup>84</sup> Mary Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, 34. Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 7.

for their lack of faith might have been due to the way the Spanish ran things.

During the now-permanent European occupation, Bubi society changed. Many died of European diseases, and while some Bubi outcasts fled to Santa Isabel for protection and a new life, most Bubi refused to interact with Europeans and did not have official contact with colonizers until 1889.<sup>85</sup> Mary Kingsley noted the reclusive nature of the Bubi and used a story about a proselytizing priest as an example. In her *Travels in West Africa*, she recounts that a “priest ... settled himself one night in the middle of a Bubi village with intent to devote the remainder of his life to ... converting it,” but awoke to find that the entire village had moved with all their possessions to build a village elsewhere.<sup>86</sup> After additional attempts, the priest decided that God had “dedicated the Bubis to the Devil.”<sup>87</sup> José Muñoz y Gaviña also mentioned the difficulties of Christian conversion among the Bubis: “Father Campillo ... Is the mediator in their conflicts, the doctor to their sicknesses, the counselor in their arguments, and the only European who speaks their language; notwithstanding the love that they profess for him, the tribe has yet to worship at his church services.”<sup>88</sup> Eventually, the gentle conquest of religion gave way to the brutal conquest of war.

After King Moka of the Bubis died, his successor Sas Eburea tried to eliminate all contact with Europeans.<sup>89</sup> By this time, the Europeans were entrenched enough on the island to call the shots on Fernando Po, and they did not want the Bubis to isolate any longer. When Sas Eburea led a tax strike

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<sup>85</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 25.

<sup>86</sup> Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, 57-8.

<sup>87</sup> Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, 57-8.

<sup>88</sup> Muñoz y Gaviña, *Tres años en Fernando Póo*, 170-171.

The Spanish reads: “El Padre misionero Campillo... Es el mediador en sus contiendas, el medico en sus enfermedades, el consejero en sus conflictos, y el único europeo que posee su idioma; y a pesar del amor que le profesa la tribu, no ha podido obtener el asistir a la celebración de su culto.”

<sup>89</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 26.

in 1904, he was arrested by the Guardia Civil and taken to Santa Isabel, where he died in prison.<sup>90</sup> In 1910, the Luba clan staged a rebellion against the forced labor policies of the Spanish and killed three soldiers; the rebellion was brutally crushed by Fernandino, an African who was loyal to the Spanish, which marked the end of Bubi autonomy.<sup>91</sup> After the Luba rebellion, the Bubis fully integrated into the Spanish system. Technically, the line of Bubi kings continued until 1952, when King Oriche died, but by that point, they were mere figureheads.<sup>92</sup>

While the Bubis put up an exceptional resistance and defied European conquest for centuries, Spain conquered them in the end. This is unsurprising given the vast amounts of weapons, soldiers, wealth, and technology that Spain had at its disposal. On virtually every account, Fernando Po and its population stood no chance. What is surprising about this story is the fact that it took European powers over four hundred years to conquer the island. After the Portuguese and Spanish both failed, the British only succeeded because it was vital to their anti-slavery efforts, medical advances helped colonizers resist malaria, and they only wanted to settle the northernmost tip of the island. Even though these empires were the most powerful in the world, they had to scale down their goals to survive Fernando Po. This history ultimately challenges the way we see Africa and the history of European conquest.

## CONCLUSION

One lesson that these episodes teach is that conquest is more complicated than mere number calculations. Spain beat Fernando Po in almost every metric, yet the Bubis resisted European invasion for hundreds of years. Another lesson from this history is that the drive to exploit a territory

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<sup>90</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 26.

Fegley writes that the Spanish “claimed that he had converted to Catholicism and was baptized on his death bed. This is a very unlikely story [sic].” Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 26.

<sup>91</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 26.

<sup>92</sup> Fegley, *Equatorial Guinea: An African Tragedy*, 26.

is less powerful than the drive to champion a cause. In Equatorial Guinea's early history, the Portuguese and Spanish wanted to conquer Fernando Po primarily out of economic interests, but it was only when the British sought to use the port as an anti-slavery outpost that colonization went anywhere. Having a more attainable objective (one port versus the whole island), new medicine in the form of quinine, and a moral cause to champion allowed the British to establish themselves in Fernando Po. Mere economic incentives failed to sufficiently motivate the Spanish and Portuguese, especially when they already owned large swaths of Latin America. The conquest of Fernando Po suggests that motivation in conquest plays an important role in achieving success. It would be interesting to explore why certain conquests like the Crusades were so popular, even when unsuccessful, while other groups like the French Resistance failed to press even an obvious advantage against the Germans at the start of the war. The episodes in Equatorial Guinea suggest that both purpose and ease of victory are the most powerful indicators of successful conquest.

Finally, this paper shows a diverse array of characters and expands the narrative of the incomplete conquest by looking at Fernando Po and the Bubis. While it might be tempting to lump all the colonizing Europeans in one boat, each encounter and explorer must be examined individually. There is a big difference between a Mary Kingsley, who loved the women of Fernando Po, and a Richard Burton, who wanted to escape. If we learn anything from the incomplete conquest, it is to question stereotypes and myths at face value. As we expand the narrative through new research and investigations, we come to a more complete understanding of other cultures, peoples, and the past in general.

# “To Inherit God Himself?”

The Metaphysical Transformation of Man As  
Theorized in Cotton Mather’s *Biblia Americana*

MICHAEL GREEN

The tumult of the Enlightenment was enormous, not least in its impact on theologians of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Biblical exegesis (explanation of a scriptural text based on its own historical and cultural circumstances) of the Reformation that idealized interpretations grounded in unerring prophetic figures were suddenly and forcefully subjected to the tide of historical literalism propagated by major intellectual figures such as Hugo Grotius and Baruch Spinoza. They and their cohort believed that the Bible should be treated as a historical source and its merits scrutinized based on its literal accuracy.

The salient concern among exegete traditionalists was a perceived secularization of the Bible and a consequent loss in its spiritual veracity – or worse, its reduction into a neutered set of moralistic principles. At the beginning of the seventeenth century and then picking up speed around the 1650s, the previous model of absolute prophetic authority guiding biblical hermeneutics (the philosophical and literary methodologies of interpreting scriptural texts, i.e. how one conducts exegesis) shifted toward hyper-literalist theorizations. Exegetes against the former model argued that the Bible should instead corroborate with natural philosophy (the budding emergence of modern science). Amidst the chaos, moderates scrambled to salvage what they could from the exegetical fallout.

One such figure, Cotton Mather, judged himself worthy of shouldering the task. A descendant of one of the most academically and religiously influential families in North America, he was a minister to the largest congregation in New England, a frequent respondent within the Republic of Letters (the intellectual communications between Europe and the Americas), and a member of the Royal Society of London. These qualifications ensured Mather was well positioned to retaliate against the encroachment of Higher Criticism – the

formal name given to the intellectual movement that had inspired many biblical literalists in Europe. Mather decided that a more in-depth examination of the Bible was in order, and on 10 October 1683, he wrote in his diary about such a project. Titling it the *Biblia Americana*, he described it as “the greatest Work, that ever I undertook in my Life,” and that through God “all the Learning in the World might bee made gloriously subservient unto the Illustration of the Scripture; and that no profess’d Commentary had hitherto given so much of Illustration unto it, as might bee given.”<sup>1</sup> Even in the work’s inception, Mather appeared committed to the task.

Such turned out to be the case, and after three-and-a-half decades and over four thousand five hundred folio pages, Mather’s *magnum opus* had entries on every book of the Old and New Testaments and possessed the ambition to act as an intellectual bulwark for the traditional hermeneutics of Protestantism.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, in an attempt to distinguish his work from other biblical commentaries, he employed a fairly

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<sup>1</sup> Cotton Mather, *Diary of Cotton Mather: Volume 1, 1681-1709* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957), 87.

<sup>2</sup> Significantly, however, Mather’s commentary also embraced some of the literalism celebrated by many of his European interlocutors – perhaps not surprising, given Mather’s own deeply scientific background and interests. As such, the *Biblia Americana* simultaneously advocated for both traditional and progressive biblical hermeneutics, with the distinguishing feature generally being whether or not Mather found a claim tolerable to the inerrant status of the Bible. This would occasionally make for some interesting theories, such as Mather using the biblical passage of Jeremiah 8:7 – which briefly mentions the flight patterns of birds – to advocate for the existence of a separate, unseeable heavenly rock upon which birds would nest in order to explain avian migratory behaviors. See Michael Dopffel, “Between Biblical Literalism and Scientific Inquiry: Cotton Mather’s Commentary on Jeremiah 8:7,” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana – America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

uncommon format for the genre at that time: a question-and-answer entry layout, which enabled Mather to present any topic, character, or concern with ease. And given that he also intended the *Biblia Americana* to be a pedagogical resource for the typical Congregationalist layman, this format also helped him simplify complex scriptural teachings into digestible directives that encouraged a life of piety and humility. Virtually no theme or field was left untouched in the text, though Mather most often kept his comments on issues pertaining to the sacrality of the Bible; the veracity of its events, figures, and prophetic announcements; and the importance of abiding by its behavioral tenets, moral commands, and religious rituals.

Tragically, however, Mather’s dream never found fulfillment in his lifetime. Due to exorbitant printing costs, no publisher would take on the gargantuan work, even after several advertisements by Mather. After Mather’s passing in 1728, his family members held on to the work for some time before later donating it to the Massachusetts Historical Society. In total, the first full-length biblical commentary produced in North America was relegated to near oblivion for almost three centuries. Mather himself hardly fared better – especially throughout the nineteenth century – and was perceived as a public figurehead of tyrannical Puritanism, an anathema representing the deeper failings of Enlightenment idealism to address blatant prejudices, and a grotesque symbol encapsulating the indulgent macabre of the Salem witch trials.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> While more could be said on Mather and the Salem witch trials than space permits, it is sufficient to note that his involvement was incredibly complex and deeply embedded in theological, eschatological, cultural, political, and international implications. The contemporary scholarly consensus is that Mather subscribed to beliefs in the supernatural and reacted against perceived instances of witchcraft in a way that was normal for his time. Therefore, his being singled out is, at times, both historically inappropriate and unfair. That being said, Mather was also highly educated, wielded a position of considerable religious power, and was intimately familiar with current debates on

It is unsurprising, then, that the *Biblia Americana* has generally avoided mainstream scholarship. One of the earliest examples of historical work being done on this text is an analysis of the first chapter of Genesis by Theodore Hornberger in 1938, though the work is fairly short and pertains to Mather's scientific predilections.<sup>4</sup> Later in the twentieth century, as biographic projects on Mather became popular, some historians touched on his mysterious side project, including David Levin, Richard Lovelace, and Kenneth Silverman. But aside from brief references to his diary entries, none of these individuals explored the *Biblia Americana* in depth.<sup>5</sup> This finally changed in the twenty-first century via the Mather Project, an ongoing collaboration between historians Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann.<sup>6</sup> The first volume of ten was published in 2010, along with an edited monograph in 2011 and another monograph in 2016.

Since the *Biblia Americana's* release to the public, scholars have extracted remarkable insights on Mather's exegetical goals for the Protestant movement. Oliver Scheiding refers to Mather's intentions as nothing less than the "renewal and reform of Christianity," which, as David Komline further elaborates, extended to the highly optimistic goal of generating a "worldwide union of all Protestant churches."<sup>7</sup> Both Scheiding and Komline convincingly

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spectral occurrences (especially its usage in the court of law). As such, historical judgment often requires an interdisciplinary approach that examines individual cases and avoids blatant generalizations.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore Hornberger, "Cotton Mather's Annotations on the First Chapter of Genesis," *Studies in English*, no. 18 (1938).

<sup>5</sup> Showing just how understudied the *Biblia* was even by these historians, Richard Lovelace incorrectly wrote that Mather began the *Biblia Americana* in 1706 and concluded it in 1713. See Richard F. Lovelace, *The American Pietism of Cotton Mather: Origins of American Evangelicalism* (Michigan: Christian University Press, 1979), 67.

<sup>6</sup> See The Mather Project, <https://matherproject.org/>.

<sup>7</sup> Oliver Scheiding, "The World as Parish: Cotton Mather, August Hermann Francke, and Transatlantic Religious

delineate the conceptual framework of Mather’s commentary, but fall short of parsing the pragmatic dialectics of the *Biblia Americana* as a source of evangelical instruction.

Other scholarship extrapolates the specificities of Mather’s unique brand of pietism from his theological implications. Kenneth Minkema posits that Mather’s stringent rejection of idol worship correlated to the “reconstitution” of captive Israel and the glorification of New Israel.<sup>8</sup> Adriaan Neele likewise argues that Mather wanted to harness piety as “a tool to prepare the heart and intellect to receive the essence of theology,” which necessarily attempted a post-Reformation exegetical reconciliation of being saved by faith while practicing works.<sup>9</sup> Most recently, there has been Jan Stievermann’s *Piety, Prophecy, and the Problem of Historicity*, which in part surveys Mather’s unflagging attempt to realize within the Bible both an “immanentist-practical dimension and a salvific, often radically other-worldly orientation,” the marriage of which Mather felt to reside at the

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Networks,” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 144; David Komline, “The Controversy of the Present Time: Arianism, William Whiston, and the Development of Cotton Mather’s Late Eschatology,” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 453.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth P. Minkema, “Flee From Idols’: Cotton Mather and the Historical Books,” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 291.

<sup>9</sup> Adriaan Neele, “Peter van Mastricht’s *Theoretico-practica Theologia* as an interpretative Framework for Cotton Mather’s Work,” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 176.

core of one's "internally-experienced existence."<sup>10</sup> Mather wanted to respond to scholars but also provide useful material for the daily worshipper.

Nevertheless, given Mather's central role as a spiritual leader and public preacher, it is vital that historiography of the *Biblia Americana* inspects the dogmatic elements of Mather's Puritanism, particularly in relation to how the intrinsic spiritual identity of its adherents is conceptualized and realized. Utilizing the *Biblia Americana's* relative novelty, this paper will explore Mather's ontological claims of both God and man, which suggest a reciprocal relationship exceeding mere creation. It will subsequently assert that man's residence on earth is marked by a lifestyle of intentional worship founded on the expectation of a deepening of spiritual intimacy with divinity.<sup>11</sup> Finally, it argues that Mather saw earthly outlines of godly imitation being recapitulated during a postmortal transformation that enables mankind to transition to their final spiritual destination. As such, Mather's writing on resurrection and glorification suggests a type of heavenly progression that in some ways radically departed from his Protestant theological predecessors of the Reformation. This theology, in turn, anticipated the First Great Awakening. This paper concludes with the assertion that these findings will assist in the effort to better contextualize the historical character of Mather and partially alleviate his legacy of its former characterizations.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Jan Stievermann, *Prophecy, Piety, and the Problem of Historicity* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 411.

<sup>11</sup> In concurrence with Mather's stylization, his theological separation of the male and female experience, and for simplicity of noun/pronoun usage, the author will use the encompassing reference of "mankind" and its accompanying sub-references of "man" and "his." That being said, Mather's eschatological theorizations generally combined male and female into a transcendent whole, though their final roles are ultimately unclear. Especially in the realm of religion, the author stresses respect and equality (both theoretical and performative) for women and men.

<sup>12</sup> Regarding scope and stylization: all quoted passages of the *Biblia Americana* are from the fifth volume produced by Jan

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Stievermann and others. This is done for several reasons: first, a full analysis of the *Biblia Americana* would for any topic significantly exceed the time and resources available for this paper. Second, Jan Stievermann’s accompanying monograph *Piety, Prophecy, and the Problem of Historicity* is an accompanying monograph that specifically explicates the content of the *Biblia Americana*’s fifth volume and therefore assisted the author to narrow analytical interpretations within an otherwise highly interpretive endeavor. Third, the biblical texts covered by the fifth volume (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Isaiah, & Jeremiah) provide a unique range of genre and hermeneutical emphasis. The wisdom literature of the first three have entries especially geared toward concepts of divine moralism and ontology, while latter two were arguably some of the most debated texts among scholars due to their keystone status as prophetic Christological accounts. Consequently, Mather’s entries in these texts reveal his some of his most fervent theological concerns and most developed doctrinal arguments. Fourth, most scholarship that has currently been completed has either been a strictly topical examination of a few chapters or else a vast thematic survey covering multiple volumes. My work combines these methodologies by having a topical focus on a single volume, thereby yielding research that is both specific in analysis and broad in historical reach. Finally, analysis of a more recently published volume (the fifth volume was released in 2016) will ideally serve to promote further research of other volumes. As for the writing of the *Biblia Americana* itself, Mather’s entries generally follow conventional styles regarding spelling and capitalization for his period, but in many cases deviate without any apparent explanation. In order to best preserve the original intent of the author and avoid diluting specificities he may have intended, all quotes from Mather’s *Biblia Americana* will retain their native form in both these categories, and where appropriate, his innovative Question & Answer arrangement. Further clarification regarding the editorial methodologies of Mather’s writing can be found in the preface of the *Biblia Americana*’s first volume.

As a short guide for the reader regarding definitions, *ontology* is the study of metaphysics that centers on the nature and origin of being, *eschatology* is a branch of theology dealing with death and the final placement of the human soul (which for general Christianity is the Resurrection and Final Judgment), and *soteriology* is a branch of theology focused on the doctrine of salvation.

### GOD'S ONTOLOGY, HIS CHARACTERISTICS, AND MOTIVATIONS

In many ways, Mather's ontological postulation of God was fairly traditional and included a strong conviction of God the Trinity as a perfect, transcendent entity who communicated to the human race via an inerrant biblical text. For example, in an instance of projected first-person dialogue – in which Mather wrote as the voice of God (likely in imitation of the Isaian prophecies in which he was at the time of writing immersed) – he provided narration concerning the eternal existence of supreme deity: “As for your Formed GODS, I existed before them, & I shall continue, in Being, when they have perished.”<sup>13</sup> Mather also subscribed to the standard conception of the Messiah as a dyo-hypostatic figure (both his spiritual and human selves are a manifestation of godhood). Thus, his assertion of Christ's human – as well as his divine nature – is documented in the *Biblia Americana*.

Indeed, Mather made particular and repeated mention of Christ's dualistic character in the *Biblia Americana*. For example, there is the rather straightforward pronouncement that “by the Power of the Holy Spirit, [Christ] must Assume an Humane Body, and be united unto the Humane Nature.”<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, however, Mather also framed this undertaking as the result of “the Wisdome, which comprehends all things, and which is Begotten by and shines from the most Ancient Holy one”; certainly, there is no hint

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<sup>13</sup> Cotton Mather, *Biblia Americana: America's First Bible Commentary: A Synoptic Commentary on the Old and New Testaments. Volume 5: Proverbs-Jeremiah*, eds. Jan Stievermann and Reiner Smolinski (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 770.

<sup>14</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 191.

of degradation mentioned regarding God’s transition from divine to human, and instead the process is graced with the approval of wisdom.<sup>15</sup> This concept is taken even further when Mather, describing Christ’s birth by the virgin Mary, noted that “the chosen People of God, from whom our Lord in respect of His Humanity descended as from His Mother, afforded Him a Crown. His Crown was in the Apostles, and Sufferers, & Witnesses which appeared for Him.”<sup>16</sup> Here we see that Christ’s human transformation is conveyed in the traditional patristic (early Christian church i.e., circa 100-800 CE) virtues of wisdom, respect, and humility.

In addition, these phrases are inundated with relational manifestations of light and shared suffering. This interaction is interdependent, and though hierarchical, also implies progression in solidarity with mortal beings. Though his entering into a body of flesh is described as a descent, there is an absence of tension between the dual natures of Christ. Thus, even in initial descriptions of God becoming corporeal, unity is conceived in positive terms of developmental continuity. Rather than a functional detriment, Mather envisioned Christ’s *mortal* ministry in hopeful and relatable terms: “In those Times the LORD Himself, conversing visibly among Men, in our Nature, should bee our Teacher.”<sup>17</sup> Christ’s interactions with man were conceived as moments of upward growth with a shared appreciation for the mortal experience.

This doctrinal position takes on added significance when examined through Mather’s assertion of God’s love, which is that love becomes defined and refined by His human personification. Such is the case when Mather cited Jermyn (one of Mather’s most quoted biblical commentators in the *Biblia Americana’s* fifth volume), in which the combination of divine salvific promises and Christ’s physical embodiment is striking: “The Son of God was pleased to become a Surety unto His Father for us. His Father took His Garment, that is, His Humane Nature, which was the Garment of His

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<sup>15</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 196.

<sup>16</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 538-39.

<sup>17</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 819.

Godhead. This was the Pledge, He laid down for us.”<sup>18</sup> Here, Mather’s orientation as a minister is especially prominent, in that his abiding concern for inspiring his reader with personal affection toward God overwhelmed his scholarly aims of refutation and consolidation. Mather’s theological preoccupation with the God-man relationship stretched beyond doctrinal understanding and into the spiritual plane of feeling, experiencing, and becoming. So, answering the self-imposed question “[is] God the mighty redeemer of the Fatherless?” Mather soundly contended that “as Children are made in the Likeness of their Parents, thus he saith, lett us make Man in our Image, & after our Likeness. ‘That the love of a father, not the command [of a lord] might be noted unto us.’”<sup>19</sup> According to Mather, love directed man upward, even as it drove God downward.

From this ontological approach, we can now appreciate Mather’s pragmatic conception of celestial love, which, for the majority of his contemporaries, consummated in supplying man with the source of his adoration for God. For Mather, however, God’s love amplified through a physical form – manifest both in His taking on flesh and in crafting male and female in His image – necessitated an idiosyncratic relationship that demanded reverential devotion and behavioral modifications:

Q: On that, Yea, I should not be despised?

A: Dr. Patrick ha’s well paraphrased it. ‘I may look on it, as an Honour, to make a public Profession of my Relation to thee.’ Here is an ardent Profession of Love, unto the glorious Person that had been spoken of; with a Desire to have a more Intimate Familiarity with Him. . . . It may be applied unto the open Profession of Christianity. This is very sure, the more obedient any Person is, to the Commands of God, He holds that Person the Dearer to Him; as Dear as a Brother, or Sister, or Mother.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 278.

<sup>19</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 295.

<sup>20</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 520.

Mather’s recitation of Dr. Simon Patrick (another one of his frequently quoted theologians) was far more than verbal calisthenics declaring everlasting godly compassion. Rather, he proposed that the act of God becoming flesh led to an enhanced ability for Him to be able to impart a divine intimacy that would surround its recipient, which itself constituted the most essential and profound experience of a worshipful individual. Man’s spiritual capacity to experience this, and the processes by which such occasions are enabled, are therefore addressed by Mather.

#### MAN’S ONTOLOGY, HIS CHARACTERISTS, AND PURPOSE

The soul of man, as understood by Mather and virtually all of his scholarly contemporaries, was an individual substance created by God with the sole design of serving and worshiping Him eternally – or else being resigned to a state of endless torment. Mather, however, also allotted extensive time in the *Biblia Americana* to explain the soul’s relationship with the physical body.<sup>21</sup> Significantly, Mather claimed that “all the Flesh of Man, is not his Body. There is a Fleшы Part of the Soul.”<sup>22</sup> Mather’s conception of an intimate amalgamation of spirit and flesh – not altogether unlike his ontological conception of Christ’s transformation into the form of man – strengthened the human connection to divinity and enabled the spiritually minded person toward the comprehension of otherwise inaccessible springs of knowledge.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Mather largely derived this belief from the Neoplatonic-hermetic principle “as below, so above”, and as such assumed mortal beings as having a dual ontological plane. Stievermann, *Prophecy, Piety, and the Problem of Historicity*, 192.

<sup>22</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 166.

<sup>23</sup> These convictions strongly contributed to Mather’s interests in Jewish Kaballah and aided in producing his theorization of the *Nishmath-Chajim*, which sought to link science and religion together vis-à-vis an existential mediatory plane by which “the Rational Soul and the Corporeal Mass . . . work upon one another.” Reiner

For Mather, this distinction had significant metaphysical (existential) implications, particularly in man possessing a natural spiritual inclination. Thus, even as Mather berated those who considered themselves above religious worship, he simultaneously acknowledged the essentiality of their soul-body: “How little they differ from Beasts; except only in that, which they do not value, or regard; that is, Their Immortal Spirits.”<sup>24</sup> A similar observation was made elsewhere with an even greater emphasis on man’s originating nature and associated developmental capacities: “It is Man as God created him, that is truly Man; Man made by God, like to God; not Man made by himself like to the Beasts.”<sup>25</sup> The separation of man from animalism was not itself a revolutionary teaching, but Mather’s infusion of moralism with creation and its complementary injunction of tangible responsivity signified an elevated appreciation for the processes leading to heavenly attainment.

In effect, Mather identified this integral characteristic as providing man with a key to unlock and thereby obtain godly communion: “When the Messiah comes to bring us into Covenant with Himself, He does not only command but also produce our Love unto Him; we are under the sweet Influences of a Divine Attraction upon our Souls.”<sup>26</sup> Mather’s assessment of mankind’s ontology therefore extended past a culminating role of subservient worship and instead considered the soul-body frame as being impregnated with an inner yearning toward a spiritual enlightenment that invariably separated man from all other forms of life, and likewise vouchsafed mankind with an organic and autogenous reverential condition.

Interestingly, this stance did not necessarily increase Mather’s propensity toward espousing the socio-cultural liberation of others but instead reinforced mortal notions of categorization while affording everyone’s future salvation

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Smolinski, *The Threefold Paradise of Cotton Mather: An Edition of "Triparadisus"* (Nebraska-Lincoln: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 122.

<sup>24</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 382.

<sup>25</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 333.

<sup>26</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 525.

regardless of status. As a result, Mather could acknowledge that for women, “The inherent equality of her soul did not procure temporal equality with men in the present world just as it could not liberate her from physical exigencies.”<sup>27</sup> Mather’s ontological claims were predicated on the universality of the soul, but differentiated those differences in mortality by a somewhat muddled mingling of God’s fated prescription and man’s persistence toward a distinguished life of divine deference. This separation did not preclude the mortal mission reserved for those selected by God and instead intensified the necessity for a life distinguished by virtuous endeavors, a point which Mather was especially eager to impart to his reader.

Mather’s conception of the soul, as such, was distinguished by its primordial design as having an ultimate, immortal conclusion in correspondence to the spiritual realization of its constituent parts. This theory is most readily captured in his quotation of Gottfried Leibniz – a seventeenth-century philosopher and scientist – which itself illustrated the intersection of Mather’s ontological beliefs with his eschatological assertion of an ethereal climax, though in

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<sup>27</sup> Helen K. Gelinas, “Regaining Paradise: Cotton Mather’s ‘Biblia Americana’ and the Daughters of Eve,” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 483; It is also worth noting that Mather’s views accorded with some Reformation theologians in respect to man’s predestination to either a paradisaic or demonic end: “In forming the Bodies of Children,” Mather recorded, “God giveth Souls, unto them, of whom He foreknows that they will be wicked, and employ both to His Dishonour. He giveth Life to the Children of Adultery and Fornication . . . & those who He also foreknowes will fear Him and serve Him.” Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 445. This is confirmed elsewhere, in which Mather maintained that such cursed individuals “can do no Good, because they are Evil: Nor can they do Evil any further that GOD permitts them to do it.” Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 760.

this case it is a harrowing description of those who fail to achieve a divine end:

The famous Mr. Leibnitz finds himself compelled by the most accurate Observations, to believe, That the Souls of Men, are before their Nativity from their Parents, originally united unto organized Machines; and that what we call Generation is but the Unfolding & Augmenting of those Machines; and that notwithstanding the Mortality of Men, these organized Machines are still praeserved & surviving, tho' Death ha's reduced them to a Minuteness that is as Imperceptible as it was before they were born. . . . Tho' the Devouring Fire & the Everlasting Burnings here foretold as the Punishment of the Wicked, be so consuming an Element, yett the original Vehicle whereto their Souls are united, shall remain unconsumed; It shall have a lasting Subsistence, & Residence, & Confinement, in that uneasy Element.<sup>28</sup>

Mather's conviction of mankind's God-given inclination toward transformative good, or else his expulsion to a torturous fate, hinged on the abiding characteristics of the soul and whether they would be allowed to manifest themselves appropriately in mortal life, or else suppressed through sin. And while Mather's final conclusions were traditional in regard to the processes of obtaining salvation, his methodology in reaching these findings constituted a unique reimagining of man's identity, character, and dispositions as derived from his spiritual birth and expressed in his earthly tenure. As noted by historian Michael P. Clark, "Mather repeatedly interrogated the ontological relation between matter and spirit that would allow us to experience some bit of that spirit, however fragmented and degraded, within the corporeal limits of the material world."<sup>29</sup> To expose

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<sup>28</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 858-9.

<sup>29</sup> Clark, "The Eschatology of Signs," 414.

this fragmented spirit, Mather turned toward the embracement of what he referred to as “experiential piety” – a divine commission to ascertain God through the obtaining of an acute spiritual cognition.

#### MAN’S LIFE ON EARTH

Along with managing university responsibilities and tending to the needs of his spiritual flock, Mather immersed himself in transatlantic communications. Of his many contacts, most notable for this paper were his infrequent but highly impactful exchanges with August Hermann Francke, a German theologian who subscribed to Halle Pietism. Through these interactions, Mather developed the concept of experiential piety, which held that while no person could earn their salvation through works. He argued that life should nevertheless be spent in earnest devotion in obedience to God and thereby indicate to others (or at least those who were chosen) where the true power of God resided, for “instead of making merry, Mather wanted Christians to work hard for the glory of God.”<sup>30</sup> Mather was determined to address his wayward contemporaries, but not at the risk of neglecting the flock.

To this effect Mather and other moderate Enlightenment theologians grappled with the spiritual dichotomy of advancing good works in light of and in submission to salvific faith, now with the added challenge of not sacrificing the imperative principle of reason, which among these writers was regularly subsumed under Newtonian science and Lockean epistemology in order to effect their compatibility.<sup>31</sup> Mather’s experiential piety therefore partially functioned as a counterweight between his alliance with Reformation teachings on the glorification of God and, in turn, his ecumenical propensity, which itself was

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<sup>30</sup> Stievermann, *Prophecy, Piety, and the Problem of Historicity*, 408.

<sup>31</sup> Winton U. Solberg, “Cotton Mather, the ‘Biblia Americana,’ and the Enlightenment,” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana – America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 196.

grounded in the pragmatic realization of an internal spiritual progression. This nexus between honoring God and spirituality achieved new heights in Mather's *Biblia Americana*, in which authentic Christianity and correct action informed by knowledge resulted in a personalized and reciprocal relationship with God.

In alignment with Mather's conception of the soul possessing inherent qualities that encourage spiritual fulfillment, his entries in the *Biblia Americana* likewise considered man's physical vessel, now instilled with the primordial characteristics of the soul, as functional to the same end. According to Mather, "The Wisdome of God speaks unto us, and invites us to Knowledge and Goodness," thereby connecting divine revelation with individual action.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, by fastening the accumulation of knowledge to experiential piety, the locus of Mather's thesis on man's spiritual exchange with deity begins to more clearly emerge: "That we are here directed unto that Wisdome, which will carry us to an Imitation of God, in works of Mercy and Goodness, by which we communicate with Him."<sup>33</sup> It should be noted that Mather reserved some caution against man's thirst for knowledge, and consequently warned that "We should not be more Just and Wise, than the Great God Himself; nor think, that we can govern the World more aequally than he; nor pry too far into Mysteries that are too deep for us; lest we confound ourselves."<sup>34</sup> It would therefore be inaccurate to suggest that Mather propagated wisdom as a means of deification, though, he also does not specify the extent to which eventual progression is achievable. Likewise, it is unclear whether his warning is explicitly restricted to the earthly sphere.

Mather's interpretation of a devotional character did not rebuff Reformation sentiments of traditional godly worship but instead addressed its vacuity of communicative responsiveness and drew attention to a person's progressive capacity to obtain sacrosanct characteristics. The theological result of this ideology was seemingly informal yet doctrinally

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<sup>32</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 147.

<sup>33</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 159-60.

<sup>34</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 413.

significant, such as his declaration, “Our Charity should imitate the Great God in this Work of His.”<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Mather boldly asserted that “as Prayer does exalt the Upright, bringing them to be like unto the Angels, & lift them up to converse with God; so it exalts a City to have such Persons in it.”<sup>36</sup> Thus in response to the historical literalism maintained by some biblical critics, Mather harnessed both theory and practice to “converge in the service of piety.”<sup>37</sup> By doing so, he bolstered the practical application of biblical teachings and unleashed the potential for transcendence through formative spiritual action.

Indeed, Mather’s development of experiential piety occasionally exceeded suggestions of imitation and proposed a tangible promotion in metaphysical status: “Thus, there is no friend so sweet as God; and no Council that so glads the Soul, as that which He gives in His Word; whereby we are made Kings & Priests unto Him.”<sup>38</sup> Here God-to-man communication and holy-becoming are synthesized together, now with the addition of salvation centered on the attainment of positional distinction. In this way, Mather’s experiential piety found its clearest aspiration in the enactment of habitual spiritual practices during mortality, with its terminal point residing in the finality of one’s celestial station. Thus, “The Chorus of Spectators may be both Angels and Men; the Men may be, as well the Glorified in Heaven, as those that were converted by the Patterns and Passions of the Faithful on Earth.”<sup>39</sup> This crucial transition from an earthly season to a heavenly harvest is therefore essential to understanding the full import of Mather’s theological assertions and constitutes the capstone of his eschatological ideology.

## ESCHATOLOGY, RESURRECTION, AND GLORIFICATION

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<sup>35</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 445.

<sup>36</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 216.

<sup>37</sup> Neele, “Peter van Mastricht’s *Theoretico-practica Theologia*,” 176.

<sup>38</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 322.

<sup>39</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 536-37.

Mather's eschatological positions (life after death), as with his ontological claims (origin of being), considered accounts derived from scripture and commentary alike as evidence that some parts of the spiritual plane were able to manifest a physical, tangible, and comprehensible presence on earth. As described by Peter Harrison, Mather's "incorporation of eschatological events into historical time was accompanied by the appearance of eschatological sites in empirical space."<sup>40</sup> This even entailed the task of identifying specific physical features of heaven and hell, as well as cataloging the "natural mechanism of the apocalyptic tribulations, the topography of the millennial reign, and the science behind the resurrection."<sup>41</sup> In this way, Mather's efforts to inculcate the Bible with historical significance invariably linked with his discernment of the millennium. The latter was defined by embodied manifestations of metaphysical localities, which themselves represented the veracity of Christian doctrine and their harmonization with the historical literalism of the Biblical account.

This dyad of spirit-earth corresponds to Mather's ontological assertion of spirit-body, the latter being the combination of the soul and flesh in a transformative finale. Hence, Mather's eschatological framework presumed materiality as crucial to Puritan theology and a form of spiritual empiricism that "separated matter and spirit at the moment of creation, to the resolution of that ontological opposition at the end of time," the apex of which would be achieved following the period of resurrection.<sup>42</sup> Simply put,

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (Bond University, Queensland: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 148.

<sup>41</sup> Stievermann, *Prophecy, Piety, and the Problem of Historicity*, 327.

<sup>42</sup> Michael P. Clark, "The Eschatology of Signs in Cotton Mather's "Biblia Americana" and Jonathan Edwards's Case for the Legibility of Providence," in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America's First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 420.

physical transformation was as much a central part of man’s spiritual journey as was the state of his soul.

Though Mather’s *Biblia Americana* has a great deal of writing on man’s progressive spirituality, direct writing on the topic of resurrection is surprisingly sparse.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, a major passage on resurrection included by Mather is highly revealing of the interlocking of his eschatological materialism and exposition of spirit-body ontology:

But the Body, in the Resurrection of it, will be endowed with most glorious Qualities, which it never had before. . . . It is requisite, that for some time, the Soul should continue in a separate State; there to inure itself unto an Heavenly Life, & by a continual Contemplation and Imitation of God to ripen gradually into the State of the Resurrection, & contract a perfect aptitude, to animate an Heavenly Body, that so its Powers being enlarged & improved by Exercise, it may be able to manage that active fiery Chariot, & be prepared to operate by its nimble & vigorous Organs, which till the Soul is rendred more Sprightly and Active by Exercise, will be perhaps too swift for it to keep Pace withal.<sup>44</sup>

Grafting together his views of ontology and experiential piety, Mather believed that the objective of the

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<sup>43</sup> In consideration of the scriptural books included in the fifth volume of the *Biblia Americana* (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Isaiah, & Jeremiah) it is somewhat astonishing that this particular stratum of theology is discussed at all. Much of this is attributable to Mather’s fervent concern with the first three books being debased as sub-par scripture, or even trivial moral literature, and thus invited his protracted labor in drawing out their Christological significance. Ironically, then, it is more frequently from these texts that the reader is informed of such concepts as experiential piety and the advancement of one’s metaphysical being than in the eminent prophetic books of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

<sup>44</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 756.

spirit-body was to progress through an imitative enactment of heavenly virtues and then embark after death in a transcendent process enabling a gradual elevation to a divine status. This transition would be substantiated through tangible expressions of activity and exertion, only now fulfillment would be attained within a magnificent postmortal sphere.<sup>45</sup> Regarding Mather's theological position on man's transcendence, Paul Peterson has written that "glory with Mather . . . is an extraordinary manifestation of the supernatural in the natural order, a discontinuity of unpredictable consequence. He [did] not understand glory as a static, passive essence of nature."<sup>46</sup> Peterson's analysis is congruent with this paper's findings on Mather's active spirit-body ontology and experiential piety as a progressive apparatus. Likewise, Mather's prioritization of gaining knowledge to draw closer to heaven was expressed through his endorsement of Jermy's admonition "that you understand Paradise."<sup>47</sup>

Going even further, however, Mather proposed the theological conclusion of imitation to inheritance: "We may add; To Inherit that which is; what can this be, but to Inherit

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<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere, the mobility and finality of the spiritual journey are described succinctly: "Hell is a Prison; Earth is a Pilgrimage; In Heaven there are many Mansions." Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 149. It is entirely possible and highly probable that additional information can be found on this aspect of Mather's theology in other parts of the *Biblia Americana* and would constitute a meaningful topic of research. However, where there is some lack in the exact processes of the resurrection according to Mather, his estimations concerning spiritual glorification and its characteristic phenomena in the fifth volume are plentiful.

<sup>46</sup> Paul S. Peterson, "'The Perfection of Beauty': Cotton Mather's Christological Interpretation of the Shechinah Glory in the 'Biblia Americana' and its Theological Contexts," in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America's First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 408.

<sup>47</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 188.

God Himself? . . . He Himself will be the Filling of them.”<sup>48</sup> Electrifying as this is, it should be understood that Mather did not endorse apotheosis (i.e., deification) as a legitimate theological position; in his citation of Isaiah 14:12 – a verse famously describing Lucifer’s fall from heaven in his attempt to “be like the most high” – Mather simply penned, “Compare, 2. Thess. 2.4.”<sup>49</sup> The noted verse, here quoted in its entirety, states that “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”<sup>50</sup> It is clear, therefore, that while Mather’s interpretations of ontology, resurrection, and glorification extended beyond mere expressions of praise for God and possessed conspicuous and remarkable elements of spiritual development, promising some form of celestial purification and ascendancy, they ultimately fell short of proposing a godlike exaltation. This, however, was typical of virtually all Christian denominations then (as well as today), and therefore Mather’s final stance conformed to traditional theology. Even so, the degree to which he even brushed against the idea is striking.

Instead, Mather receded to a position of ambiguity and promised a spiritual state heretofore incomprehensible to the mortal mind: “So God laies up, & reserves a Being for the Righteous. . . . It is a Being Indeed, and . . . a superlative Being; A Being of Glory; where to be a Door-Keeper, is better than to be the Monarch of the World.”<sup>51</sup> In short, Mather’s conviction that a person chosen by God could reach a metaphysical state definitively possessed of divine glory – even as he reinforced the notion of a heavenly hierarchy – is itself worthy of recognition. In the midst of exegetical warfare, Mather allotted considerable time and space to his theological conceptualization of man’s final state being aligned with and the culmination of their original creation and earthly

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<sup>48</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 187.

<sup>49</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 651.

<sup>50</sup> 2 Thess. 2:4 KJV. The NIV, though not available to Mather, provides a more easily understandable translation of this verse in modern English.

<sup>51</sup> Mather, *Biblia Americana*, 152.

pilgrimage. The same ink that condemned intransigent religious foes offered reassurance to the pious reader of the resplendent rewards of salvific grace.

### COTTON MATHER'S LEGACY

As scholars disinter the legacy of Cotton Mather, what are the ramifications that accompany a more lucid understanding of his ontological and soteriological views? Most obviously, these findings openly repudiate the perpetual characterization of Cotton Mather as an arrogant and self-righteous man who employed a mask of piety in order to excuse his personal failings and exude a sectarian attitude of spiritual superiority. If there is blame to be had, it should fall primarily on the shoulders of religious behaviorism and those practices deemed normative for the period (one example being the Puritan observance of harsh and persistent self-criticism). In a similar fashion, Mather's involvement in the Salem witch trials and the publication of his infamous book *Wonders of the Invisible World* should be understood as significant but often grossly overreported events that disproportionately overshadow the inclusivity and rationality of his other works.<sup>52</sup>

These gaps can be seen if the viewpoints expressed in this paper are applied to other theological-minded points of issue surrounding Mather. For example, Mather's *Biblia Americana* helps to account for his seemingly contradictory attitudes regarding women and enslaved people. It is highly conceivable that the immortal nature of the soul and its capacity toward developmental spiritual progression encouraged Mather to promote women's education "on the basis of orthodox theology and scriptural exegesis within the established Reformed tradition," even as he accepted their socio-political subservience to men.<sup>53</sup> And the same spirit-body notion may also help to explain why Mather did not

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<sup>52</sup> See Paul Wise, "Cotton Mather and the Invisible World," in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America's First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 228.

<sup>53</sup> Gelinas, "Regaining Paradise," 491.

consider Africans and Native Americans to possess “innate and irredeemable differences in temperament or intellectual abilities,” and that a perceived deficiency of religiosity and civility did not constitute a permanent inferior status in those groups.<sup>54</sup>

Some deference should also be made to what is too often deemed a significant failure of the moderate Enlighteners; namely, their attempt to stem the tide of historical-literal exegesis that both threatened the immutability and sacred status of the Bible. Opposed to the notion of their responses as typically being stagnant, apologetic, and parochial, Mather’s *Biblia Americana* is an active, explorative text that exhibits a willingness to directly engage with the novel scientific claims and exegetical hermeneutics of the day while simultaneously reimagining long-standing theological assertions as well as the methodologies and meaning of worship. As such, Mather’s deft incorporation of Enlightenment philosophy into the standing theological framework of the Reformation and his reimagining of ontological premises truly testifies of the *Biblia Americana* as a “historical record of the Enlightenment debates.”<sup>55</sup> What Mather did not anticipate was that his precious *Biblia Americana* would never see the light of day.

In regard to the First Great Awakening, the *Biblia Americana* shows that Mather’s scriptural writing chronologically predated theologians such as Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Davies, and James Davenport, though

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<sup>54</sup> Jan Stievermann, “The Genealogy of Races and the Problem of Slavery in Cotton Mather’s ‘Biblia Americana,’” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 519.

<sup>55</sup> Reiner Smolinski, “‘Eager Imitators of the Egyptian Inventions’: Cotton Mather’s Engagement with John Spencer and the Debate about the Pagan Origin of the Mosaic Laws, Rites, and Customs,” in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America’s First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 300.

because the *Biblia Americana* was never published, he is somewhat of a phantom forebearer. This is seen in the case of Mather's writings preceding Edward's own widely renowned interpretive writings on Biblical exegesis by several decades, but with none of the public recognition for such an accomplishment.

In a similar way, tracing Mather's theological influence into this period is tricky and susceptible to unwarranted historical speculation. Yet some important scholarship has been done; E. Brooks Holifield has argued, for example, that Mather set the stage for protestant challenges to Deism and their "preoccupation with the reasonableness of Christianity."<sup>56</sup> Similarly, and on a much smaller scale, Paul Peterson asserts that there is a tenable connection between Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards' theological aesthetics regarding the Jewish concept of Shechinah.<sup>57</sup> What previously was a challenge for historians in the way of finding source material has now, in quite the opposite direction, shifted to one of time, resources, and the willingness to comb through vast swaths of sometimes incredibly esoteric material. Clearly, however, the *Biblia Americana* is capable of producing such research – and much more of it.

## CONCLUSION

Regarding further research, much is left to be done on Mather's *Biblia Americana*. As noted above, tracking the impact of Mather's theological postulations during early colonial America remains an open field, especially when paired with his sermons and personal writings. On an even larger scale, due to the interdisciplinary nature of Mather's skillset and chosen references, the *Biblia Americana* presents a window with which the attentive scholar can better comprehend virtually any intellectual horizon of that era:

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<sup>56</sup> E. Brooks Holifield, "The Abridging of Cotton Mather," in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana - America's First Bible Commentary*, eds. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 85.

<sup>57</sup> Peterson, "The Perfection of Beauty," 406.

geography, natural philosophy, philology, philosophy, mathematics, and political science all make appearances in the text, and much of the *Biblia Americana* has yet to be fully explored. Indeed, as of writing this (spring 2023), seven of ten volumes of the *Biblia Americana* have been published, meaning that even the most current scholarship does not yet have access to Mather’s entire range of thought.

Cotton Mather’s *Biblia Americana* was his most significant work; it was the comprehensive collection of his most pressing theological musings, the source material for his many sermons to a vast host of New England congregants, the namesake realization of his most celebrated work, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, and the originator of his final large-scale work, *Trip paradisus*. Mather’s embittered conflict with adverse Biblical scholars and his impassioned interest in the pious works of his fellow Christians provided an intellectual crucible that extracted detailed theological and theoretical deliberations of God and man’s ontological relationship and the reciprocity that it engendered, as well as the means - experiential piety via the deliberate imitation of virtuous qualities - by which the appointed Christian accessed this relationship. The triumphant believer then proceeded from death to a process of paradisiacal metamorphosis that yoked the bodily resurrection and spiritual glorification into a system beyond man’s limited reckoning. Far in the distance, it seems, Mather glimpsed a heavenly summit towering above the soul and the earth, and in it the ethereal fashioning of a celestial entities.

# Remembering the Lady

## Representations of Abigail Adams in the Women's Rights Movement

ALLISON HAACK

In November 1975, *Redbook*, a women's magazine, included a "call to action" issued to women of the United States. This call was set forth both in response to the bicentennial celebration of the Declaration of Independence as well the UN National Women's Year. In it, over fifty organizations came together to lay out an eleven-step plan to achieve greater political equality between the sexes—namely, the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. To introduce this call to action, Bess Myers, the author, shared several anecdotes about Abigail Adams, including Adams' charge that her husband "remember the ladies" when he went off to write the new code of laws for the nascent United States. Myers detailed how Adams' activism spread among the elite ladies of the new country, propelling everyone from Martha Jefferson to Benjamin Franklin's mistresses to demand equality. Myers presented Abigail Adams as a model for contemporary feminists; she's described as a woman who before "There was [a] formal Women's Movement... was knocking on doors before the house was even built." If Adams could challenge women's second-class status 200 years before, as America was just being formed, certainly feminists in the 1970s could finish what she started. Indeed, as Myers insisted: "If Abigail Adams were here today, she'd understand the purpose of the ERA—and by this time she'd probably have brought John around."<sup>1</sup>

Myers was not the first to draw on the image and legacy of Abigail Adams to support a progressive women's rights agenda. As one of the best-remembered women of Revolutionary America, the story of Abigail Adams' advocacy for women has been used by many women's rights activists to promote equality for women in everything from the polls to

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<sup>1</sup> Bess Myers, "A Call to Action: The National Women's Agenda," *Redbook* 146, no. 1 (November 1975): 73.

the classroom. Others, too, have remembered, if not all the ladies, at least the first lady, Abigail Adams, to further their own ideas about women's role and societal values. This paper will highlight how women's rights activists throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries consistently drew upon Adams as a link to the founding, lending authenticity to their causes. In contrast, scholars and the general public in that same period generally focused on Adams as a domestic role model.

The first scholarship on Abigail Adams focused on her relationships with powerful men and how those relationships shaped Abigail's economic and political decisions. For example, *The Women of the American Revolution* by Elizabeth Ellet was one of the first books to cover Abigail Adams. Ellet focuses on Adams' virtues as a woman which "qualified [her] for eminent usefulness in her distinguished position as the companion of one great statesman [her husband], and the guide of another [her son John Quincy Adams, future president]."<sup>1</sup> For Ellet, studying Abigail Adams is important because she married a future president and raised another.

Later scholars, like Janet Whitney, similarly emphasized how Abigail Adams was shaped by her husband and son. Whitney's *Abigail Adams* remained the only full length biography about Adams until 1980.<sup>2</sup> Her book begins when Abigail meets John and ends with John Quincy Adams' thoughts about his mother. The narrative focuses on how John molded Abigail into a remarkable woman, claiming that the brilliance of the wife must be attributed to the husband.<sup>3</sup>

Other historians identified Abigail Adams as an important figure in her own right by studying how she broke the status quo through political activism and financially supporting her family. In *Abigail Adams, Bond Speculator*, for example, Woody Holton posits that Adams recognized

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Ellet, *The Women of the American Revolution Volume 2* (New York: Baker & Scribner, 1848), 31.

<sup>2</sup> Edith Gelles, "The Abigail Industry," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1988): 661.

<sup>3</sup> Janet Whitney, *Abigail Adams* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947), 4.

the power of being financially independent and thus sought to free herself from monetary bondage. He explains that Abigail Adams worked to avoid those chains by breaking into the public sphere and selling things on the black market, selling homemade goods, and investing in bonds. Holton suggests that Abigail Adams' careful attention to financial matters and ability to maneuver early American capitalism prevented her husband, unlike other prominent figures from the era, from losing much of his money in war debt.<sup>4</sup>

While Holton focuses on the economic, David Shields and Frederika Teute highlight the political side of Abigail Adams in their work, "The Court of Abigail Adams." In it, they argue that Adams took advantage of her time in Europe to learn about "the sorts of activities women could undertake in conjunction with public affairs," and, as first lady, she used those skills to organize the "Republican Court" in America.<sup>5</sup> This court mirrored Europe in fashion and created a space, "superintended by women," that "provided a place of reception for diplomats and visitors."<sup>6</sup> As Holton argues that Abigail Adams' economic endeavors enabled her husband to prosper politically, Shields and Teute propose that Abigail's political achievements create a space for women in the public sphere of America.

A range of other scholars have used Adams as a case study to look at the roots of feminism in the early republic.<sup>7</sup> Elaine Forman Crane's "Abigail Adams, Gender Politics and 'The History of Emily Montague': A Postscript" identifies Abigail Adams' interest in the book *The History of Emily*

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<sup>4</sup> Woody Holton, "Abigail Adams, Bond Speculator," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (2007): 821-838.

<sup>5</sup> David Shields & Fredrika Teute, "The Court of Abigail Adams," *Journal of the Early Republic* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 228.

<sup>6</sup> Shields, "The Court," 228.

<sup>7</sup> One example is Miriam Schneier who includes Abigail Adams among the "major feminist writers" in American history by using Adams' work in a book she wrote about important feminist figures. See Miriam Schneier, *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972).

*Montague*, an early feminist novel which empowered women to take control of their lives and not depend on men. Crane specifically notes phrases which Abigail Adams used in her “remember the ladies” letter which were direct quotes from *Emily Montague*. According to Crane, this is significant because John Adams’ library did not include this specific book, thus revealing how Abigail Adams went out of her way to find and read female-empowering narratives; these tales, she claims, ultimately shaped the way that Abigail Adams communicated with her distant husband.<sup>8</sup>

While historians have tried to understand Abigail Adams according to the context and norms of her day, none have studied the ways that women have constructed, understood, and used the *memory* of her to fight for a place in the public sphere. This paper explores the ways that women’s rights activists, in the suffrage movement and later feminist movements, highlighted aspects of Adams’ life and drew on her as a Founding Mother to lend historical backing to their causes. Their telling of her story consistently emphasized Adams’ willingness to go against the grain and speak out against the oppression of women. While these activists drew upon scholarly work, such as the publication of Adams’ writings, they did not follow the shifting scholarly interpretation but rather held fast to their emphasis of Adams as a proto-feminist icon. The work of scholars did not always stress the revolutionary Abigail Adams in the same way that the activists did, but scholars did continue to put out new work and strive for greater understanding of Adams, thus helping to flesh out the narrative of her life more fully.

#### FIRST PUBLISHED WORKS ABOUT ABIGAIL ADAMS

Part of the reason that Americans have consistently written about and remembered Abigail Adams is because she was a prolific writer; in her lifetime, she exchanged over 1,000 letters with her husband and thousands more with family, friends, and associates in both Europe and the United States.

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<sup>8</sup> Edward Short disagrees, explaining that Abigail Adams would have “scorned” the title of feminist. See Edward Short, “The Non-Feminist Abigail Adams,” *The Human Life Review* 48, no. 2 (2020): 45.

In 1840, Abigail's grandson Charles Adams compiled and published much of her correspondence in *Letters of Mrs. Adams, the Wife of John Adams*. This book contained a brief biographical sketch of Abigail's life (what Charles calls a memoir) and then nearly 450 pages of letters without commentary. Charles' memoir claimed that in the years since his grandmother's death, she had been largely forgotten by the public; as he explained, his work *Letters of Mrs. Adams* "br[ought] forward to the public notice of a person who [had] now been long removed from the scene of action, and of whom, it is not unreasonable to suppose, the present generation of readers [had] neither personal knowledge nor recollection."<sup>9</sup> If the public had largely forgotten Abigail Adams prior to *Letters of Mrs. Adams*, Charles succeeded in his mission to bring her back to public memory. By 1848, in Ellet's *Women of the American Revolution*, Ellet mentioned that "The Letters of Mrs. Adams are well known to American readers [so] an extended sketch of her would be superfluous."<sup>10</sup> Though not completely forgotten, it was not until after *Letters of Mrs. Adams* that her story circulated, and she went from being largely forgotten to "well known" in the space of less than a decade.

The publication of *Letters of Mrs. Adams* gave scholars, everyday Americans, and political activists many sources to draw upon to study Abigail Adams. Abigail used these letters to express both love for her husband as well as frustration at the tragedies of war and at the inequality of women, often in the same paragraph. For example, in a letter dated August 19, 1774, Abigail expressed, "the great distance between us makes the time appear very long to me."<sup>11</sup> She quickly transitioned this longing for her husband into thoughts on politics by acknowledging her fear for the nation's future and then wondering, "Did ever any kingdom or state regain its liberty when once it was invaded, without bloodshed?"<sup>12</sup> Such thoughts from *Letters of Mrs. Adams* demonstrated that

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Adams, *Letters of Mrs. Adams, the wife of John Adams* (Boston: Charles Little and James Brown, 1840), ix.

<sup>10</sup> Ellet, *The Women*, 26.

<sup>11</sup> Ellet, *The Women*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Ellet, *The Women*, 13.

Abigail was actively participating in conversations about the political situation of the nation. However, the 1840 publication of Abigail's letters did not include her most famous letter in which Abigail pleaded with John to "remember the ladies." This exclusion would be rectified thirty-five years later when Charles released an expanded edition of *Letters of Mrs. Adams*.

In 1875, Charles Adams released a larger compilation of Abigail's letters under the title *Familiar Letters of John Adams and his wife Abigail Adams, During the Revolution*. The work was generally the same, with some additional letters added and organized by date instead of by correspondent, but the new volume received greater attention than had the original, *Letters of Mrs. Adams*. One reason for the larger response was related to timing; Charles released it right before the nation's centennial. Indeed, citizens across the United States spent much of 1875 in preparation and anticipation for the festivities of 1876's Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. The exposition was "national in character," and included an extended commemorative exhibition "from May 10 to November 10."<sup>13</sup> This year of celebration brought heightened public awareness of the US founding and greater respect for and attention to the country's founders. In the preface to *Familiar Letters*, Charles directly explained: "in connection with the approaching celebration of the Centenary year of the national existence, it occurred to me that a reproduction of some portion of the papers, with such additions as could be made from letters then not included, might not prove unacceptable now."<sup>14</sup> With the nation's attention turned toward its founding, Charles sought to remind Americans about the part that his grandparents had played in the Revolution by including many letters from the revolutionary era in his new work.

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<sup>13</sup> Margaret Bacon, "Friends and the 1876 Centennial: Dilemmas, Controversies, and Opportunities," *Quaker History* 66, no. 1 (Spring 1877): 41.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Adams, *Familiar Letters of John Adams and his wife Abigail Adams, during the revolution, With a memoir of Mrs. Adams* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1875), iv.

Most famously, the 1875 publication included a letter from Abigail written on March 31, 1776, which has become synonymous with her name. Writing to John, who was attending the Continental Congress to help determine the thirteen colonies' trajectory against Britain, Abigail began the letter by expressing interest in the specific affairs of the war. She worried "what sort of defense Virginia can make against our common enemy" and informed her husband of recent developments in Boston.<sup>15</sup> The final sentences, however, pleaded with John to "remember the ladies" in the course of making the new nation's laws.<sup>16</sup> Abigail did not simply want the men to fondly recall their wives while gathered, but instead she asked that the new laws include women as citizens with rights and privileges similar to the men's. Taking it a step further, Abigail accused all men of misusing power and explained, "if particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."<sup>17</sup> Abigail Adams used the same rhetoric of rights and rebellion against men as the patriots were using against Great Britain. Initially, John was the only audience for this letter, and he quickly dismissed the threat; however, once Charles Adams published *Familiar Letters* and helped these words reach the public, the women's rights movement adopted this letter as their own and used it as a foundation for their cause.

Charles Adams likely never anticipated the attention this particular letter would garner over the years, as it seemed to not have been central to his own thinking about Abigail which was more rooted in domesticity than equality. In both volumes, Charles provided little commentary (a couple of footnotes about how he obtained some letters), leaving us to wonder about his own interpretations of individual letters. However, his memoir about Abigail's life, which was the same between his two works, revealed that he perceived his grandmother's domesticity as the source of her importance. Writing in an apologetic tone, Charles explained that the

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<sup>15</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, 148.

<sup>16</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, 149.

<sup>17</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, 150.

public should be interested in his grandmother's personal correspondences because she revealed new insights about the "domestic" side of the revolution.<sup>18</sup>

The memoir described Abigail's childhood in little detail, focusing more attention on how she met and married John, after which point, the story seemed to become more about him than her. Charles described their early marriage as quiet and happy, while Abigail's "domestic cares were relieved by the presence of her husband."<sup>19</sup> With the start of the war, much of the memoir reads as a log of when John Adams came home from his congressional duties. When focusing on Abigail, Charles explained, "The ordinary occupations of the female sex are necessarily of a kind which must ever prevent it from partaking largely in the action of life."<sup>20</sup> He excused himself for including (both in the memoir and in the letters) content which proved less exciting, but he emphasized that such was the role of women; those sections on Abigail focused on her "cheerful manner" as she went about farm and household work.<sup>21</sup>

Charles' account affirmed 19<sup>th</sup> century gender ideals of motherhood and wifehood through basing his explanation of Abigail on the letters which demonstrate submissive domesticity. Of her relationship with her husband, Charles described Abigail as "underst[anding] her own position...that the best way of recommending her views was by entire concession."<sup>22</sup> He claimed that while her opinion held weight with her husband, it never swayed him from his own positions. For Charles, the importance of reading Abigail's letters was in "the pictures of social life which they present[ed]... and in the high moral and religious tone which uniformly pervade[d] them."<sup>23</sup> To study Abigail Adams was to study a model domestic woman from the revolutionary period.

In 1848, not long after the publication of *Letters of Mrs. Adams* but before that of *Familiar Letters*, Elizabeth

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<sup>18</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, vii.

<sup>19</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, xv.

<sup>20</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, xxiii.

<sup>21</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, xxiii.

<sup>22</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, xxviii.

<sup>23</sup> Adams, *Familiar Letters*, xxxi.

Ellet drew on some of Abigail's correspondences for a chapter about her in *The Women of the American Revolution*. Written to document over 150 women who took part in the American Revolution, it was a first step in bringing women's stories back into the narrative. In the chapter right before Abigail's, Ellet wrote of Martha Washington, stressing her importance because of her marriage to George Washington and extolling Martha's virtues of "uncomplaining endurance and self-sacrifice" as "she moved in the woman's domestic sphere."<sup>24</sup> Ellet followed the same pattern in describing Abigail Adams, explaining that her defining characteristic, more than any action she took, was her "simplicity and singleness of heart."<sup>25</sup> Ellet described Adams through her feelings toward the poor ("I feel for the unhappy wretches, who know not where to fly for succor") and her love of country (she is called "the pure-hearted patriot").<sup>26</sup> Despite focusing on Abigail as a simple woman, Ellet offhandedly mentioned that Abigail "occupied herself with the management of the household and farm" while her husband was gone for months and years at a time.<sup>27</sup> Abigail's evident independence notwithstanding, Ellet quickly reverted to emphasizing how Abigail Adams' "submit[ed] with patience to the difficulties of the times" instead of *how* she managed the affairs.<sup>28</sup> Ellet's book encouraged readers to admire Abigail's good attitude, rather than her ingenuity or political and economic savvy.

Early scholarly work on the revolutionary generation turned to the nation's founders for guidance and justification for new interpretations of the constitution. This "Whig Interpretation" was characterized by seeing the Revolution as the result of Providence directing moral leaders to found the United States. Those leaders were held up as examples of republican virtues. Charles Adams' and Elizabeth Ellet's work added Abigail Adams to that list of founders, allowing her words to be referenced as justification for new interpretations of the Revolution in the same way that male leader's words

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<sup>24</sup> Ellet, *The Women*, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Ellet, *The Women*, 28.

<sup>26</sup> Ellet, *The Women*, 27, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Ellet, *The Women*, 27.

<sup>28</sup> Ellet, *The Women*, 27.

had been for years. Women's rights activists seized this opportunity and used Abigail Adams' letters as historical grounding for their activism; Adams was the proof that their beliefs were not new but rather a continuation of the revolutionary struggle.<sup>29</sup>

#### ABIGAIL ADAMS AND THE PUSH FOR SUFFRAGE

While early scholars and the general public focused on Abigail Adams as a virtuous, republican woman, some American women drew on her published letters to hold her up as an early suffragist and women's rights advocate. The same year that Elizabeth Ellet published her book *Women of the American Revolution* (1848), Elizabeth Cady Stanton and hundreds of women gathered in Seneca Falls, New York, to unite in an expansive push for women's rights and to challenge the Cult of True Womanhood—the prevailing belief that a woman's place and value lay in the domestic sphere. Early women's rights activists began looking to Abigail Adams, and holding her up, not as the supportive wife of the second president, but instead as the beginning of their movement. So, while many in the United States continued to support the Cult of True Womanhood and show it in their analysis of Abigail Adams, others were organizing in a push to break gender norms and fight for equal rights, as is also demonstrated in their usage of Abigail Adams. Though one of the main strains of the movement was suffrage, activists also had a bigger vision of what equality should look like, including more female political involvement and better education for women. Activists wielded Abigail Adams to push for each of these goals.

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Hatten, "The Whig Interpretation," *The Historiography of the American Revolution: A Timeline*, Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License, August 2017, accessed November 16, 2022, [https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=19P0MD9TrV5Tx62DC3fImj\\_uNLA5lAsnV6TmRu2fWdL4&font=PT&lang=en&initial\\_zoom=1&height=800](https://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline3/latest/embed/index.html?source=19P0MD9TrV5Tx62DC3fImj_uNLA5lAsnV6TmRu2fWdL4&font=PT&lang=en&initial_zoom=1&height=800).

Women activists were direct in their push for rights and wielded the revolutionary nature of Abigail Adams' letters to make their point. Whereas today most associate Abigail with the phrase "remember the ladies," more important among activist writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were the words of rebellion that came later in that same letter. An 1877 article in *The Woman's Journal* by Ella Ives entitled "Our Foremothers" showed the importance of women in American society by documenting the contributions of women from the revolutionary generation. When she got to Adams, Ives quoted Abigail's letter to John where she threatened that the ladies would "foment a rebellion" if they were given "no voice or representation."<sup>30</sup> By focusing on the aggressive, revolutionary language, Ives showed the immediacy of the movement. She then applied that same language to her own time by writing: "rebellion is still fomenting [as] Abigail Adams' spirit survives in her daughters."<sup>31</sup> Just as Abigail was not gentle in her verbiage, neither would Ives and the women's rights movement be in their fight for equality. Similarly, in an 1891 article in *The Woman's Tribune* entitled "Thus Far," Amarala Martin began her article with Abigail Adams, explaining that, "since the time when Abigail Adams, (wife of John Adams) threatened rebellion unless the rights of her sex were secured, women have advocated suffrage principles."<sup>32</sup> By emphasizing the threat of rebellion, authors such as Ives and Martin painted a strikingly different picture of Abigail Adams than the submissive homemaker depicted by Ellet and Charles. Among activists, this was the rule rather than the exception: most women writers pushing for rights in the late 1800s did not mention the quote "remember the ladies," they instead consistently referenced Abigail's threat of rebellion.

In further showing that Abigail Adams was not just a submissive wife, some activists emphasized her views on education to show that she often thought differently than her

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<sup>30</sup> Ella Ives, "Our Foremothers," *Woman's Journal and Suffrage News* 8, no. 24 (1877): 186.

<sup>31</sup> Ives, "Our Foremothers," 186.

<sup>32</sup> Amarala Martin, "Thus Far," *The Woman's Tribune* 8, no. 3 (January 1891): 22.

husband. In wielding these views, they were able to push for better education for women in their own day. The *Woman's Journal and Suffrage News* in 1878 included an article entitled "Abigail Adams" which asserted that, "the views of John Adams on education are quoted to this day as authoritative. Perhaps your readers may be interested in knowing his wife's opinions on the same subject."<sup>33</sup> In opposition to the commonly held beliefs of the time, this author elevated Abigail's opinions as important in more than just home matters; women could and did have something unique to add in discussions about education, too. The author expounded on Abigail Adams' opinions about education: she thought that the new constitution should encourage "learning and virtue" for both men and women, including educating women to the same standard as held for men.<sup>34</sup>

Female activists similarly broke the mold by writing about Abigail Adams as a stateswoman—this in stark contrast to how Charles and Ellet emphasized her domesticity. In a 1918 *Women's Press* article entitled "Abigail Adam, Stateswoman," the author detailed the relationship between Abigail and John to demonstrate Abigail's political power; she claimed that it was through Abigail's "brave assistance and sympathy" that John "rose in the political world, and became the leading light in the campaign of American Liberty."<sup>35</sup> The author emphasized Abigail's characteristics which enabled her husband to be successful (i.e. humor, intellect, patriotism, courage) and then detailed John's acknowledgement of Abigail's political importance: "If I were of the opinion that it was best for a general rule that the fair sex be excused from the arduous cares of war and state, I should certainly think [Abigail] ought to be the exception."<sup>36</sup> The author used John's recognition of his political dependence on Abigail to show that women had been capably involved in politics since the country's founding. John Adams was already recognized as a

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<sup>33</sup> Alice Baker, "Abigail Adams," *Woman's Journal and Suffrage News* 9, no. 18 (1878): 141.

<sup>34</sup> Baker, "Abigail Adams," 141.

<sup>35</sup> "Abigail Adams, Stateswoman," *Women's Press* 2, no. 11 (Nov. 1918): 8.

<sup>36</sup> "Abigail Adams, Stateswoman," 8.

Founding Father (and thus a source of wisdom) in 1918, so his opinion about Abigail Adams' political savvy added credence to the author's claim that women could contribute politically.

While some authors analyzed John alongside Abigail to emphasize her importance, others compared their writings to demonstrate that Abigail was morally superior to her husband, a respected founding father. An 1879 *Woman's Journal* article entitled "Letters of Abigail Adams," compared Abigail's March 1776 letter to John's response. Whereas Abigail's letter respectfully asked to be remembered and then demonstrated power by threatening revolt, John's response mockingly dismissed Abigail. The article asked, "reading these two extracts in the light of the nineteenth century, of which shall we decide that it breathes the spirit of statesmanship?"<sup>37</sup> Comparing the two, the author concluded that Abigail's words showed a selfless, republican nature more so than John's. By emphasizing that Abigail, a woman, demonstrated more statesmanship than her respected husband, the author argued that women were, in fact, capable of the qualities that society politically expected of statesmen. This stance refuted prominent arguments claiming that women should not be politically involved because they did not have the strength of character required in politics.

Lida McCabe, in a 1915 edition of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, demonstrated that Abigail Adams, more than just having qualities of a good statesman, used those qualities to improve society. McCabe's article, "The Woman Who Made America Famous," focused on the impact that Abigail Adams had on America's reputation in Europe. McCabe claimed: "it is generally conceded that no other woman in American history did so much, by her uncommon skill, for America in the most critical times of our country's history as did Abigail Adams."<sup>38</sup> In telling the story of Abigail's influence in European circles, McCabe cited *Familiar Letters* to explain that Adams grew up in a time when women were not

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<sup>37</sup> E.B.C., "Letters of Abigail Adams," *Woman's Journal and Suffrage News* 10, no. 52 (December 27, 1879): 416.

<sup>38</sup> Lida McCabe, "The Woman Who Made America Famous," *Ladies' Home Journal* 32, no. 4 (April 1915): 12.

encouraged to be educated; McCabe used this as comparison to show the impressiveness of Abigail's achievements. The article documents the Adams' time in the English court as the King and Queen were determined to "make [them] look ridiculous," but Abigail's "cleverness in catching and assimilating the delicate and varied nuances of political society" helped them to make a positive impression.<sup>39</sup> Though not arguing for a particular end, McCabe showed the competence of women, especially their political competence, in describing the life experiences of Abigail Adams.

As women's rights activists made Abigail their example of women being both traditionally virtuous as well as firm in their push for equality, the ultimate goal of many writers continued to be woman's suffrage. Many activists painted Adams as the original member of the suffrage campaign. In an article titled "The People's Amen," from a woman's column in 1893, the author asserted that Abigail Adams was "an outspoken woman suffragist, and her female descendants, have for more than a century been disfranchised citizens."<sup>40</sup> This author claimed Abigail Adams as the original member of the women's rights movement and declared that her work was not yet done. Furthermore, the author explained how Abigail Adams supported the Declaration of Independence when it freed Americans from tyranny, but that "the royal authority over women which ended in 1776, has been usurped and perpetuated by the men of Massachusetts."<sup>41</sup> By tying the woman's movement to the overthrow of the tyrannical British, this author argued that the work of the Revolution was not fully done and that it would not be done until women were also free and independent.

Some women writers were direct in their claim that America was not living up to its founding principles as it neglected freedoms to the women. Sarah Severance wrote an article entitled "Some Reasons" in *The Woman's Standard* in which she argued that women had long been treated hypocritically; she explained, "The word man has been

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<sup>39</sup> McCabe, "The Woman," 12.

<sup>40</sup> Henry Blackwell, "The People's Amen," *The Woman's Column* 6, no. 29 (1893): 1.

<sup>41</sup> Blackwell, "The People's Amen," 1.

construed [to] mean woman in all penalties, and to exclude her in most privilege."<sup>42</sup> Severance pointed out the double standard that women were expected to obey all the laws of the land while they still had no say in what those laws would be. She connected this hypocrisy directly back to the founding, explaining that such treatment of women was "untrue to our avowed principles" and America was thus "drifting from its anchorage and nearing cataracts."<sup>43</sup> Those "avowed principles" were the ideas of equality and rights, something that were promised to Americans in the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights; however, as it became increasingly clear that these founding documents could only be used in arguments about general equality, women's rights activists needed a different founding moment to which to point. That founding moment was becoming Abigail Adams' letters with her husband.

Starting in the late nineteenth century, and especially following the publication of *Familiar Letters*, Abigail Adams was wielded by the women's rights movement for many ends, but especially for the right to vote. In 1920, with the passage of the nineteenth amendment, that part of the movement succeeded, and national women's suffrage was enshrined in the United States Constitution. With the amendment, women's activists had won a major victory, but much of the inequality that plagued America was still not solved. Throughout the rest of the twentieth century, female writers and activists continued to look back to Abigail Adams to advance their causes just as their predecessors did in the push for suffrage.

#### ABIGAIL ADAMS POST SUFFRAGE

Immediately following the passage of the nineteenth amendment, Abigail Adams was still heralded as an example in the fight for women's rights, and female authors continued to draw largely upon her letters published in *Familiar Letters* to make their arguments. While some of those arguments reflected on the suffrage struggle and recalled important steps

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<sup>42</sup> Sarah Severance, "Some Reasons," *The Woman's Standard* 6, no. 12 (1892): 3,7.

<sup>43</sup> Severance, "Some Reasons," 7.

that were taken to get there, other authors focused on the future and recognized the long road ahead in the fight for real equality. In both cases, women's rights activists continued to draw on the example of Abigail Adams to connect their arguments to the founding of the nation and show that their cause was the cause of America.

Immediately following the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, some articles still used Abigail's name to reflect on the successes in women's suffrage. In 1921, the year after the suffrage amendment was ratified, Mrs. Porter Boyer wrote "A Pageant of Foremothers: When Abigail Adams Led the Woman Suffrage Party," and published it through *The Woman Citizen*. Boyer documented the role that women played throughout the history of New England. Her section on Abigail Adams emphasized the letters between Abigail and John; quoting from the famous March 1776 letter, Boyer highlighted Abigail's threat to "foment a rebellion" if women were not given voice or representation.<sup>4</sup> Because her article tracked the history of women's suffrage in America, it is noteworthy that Boyer chose to title the article after Abigail Adams and emphasize Abigail's threat of rebellion. At the same time that America fought the tyranny of Great Britain, Abigail's letter to John tied the American fight for liberty to the fight for gender equality. A large part of that equality was political—most easily demonstrated through suffrage—so Boyer's article claimed that the recent success of the women's movement was, in reality, the final victory of the American Revolution.

The path forward in the women's rights movement may have been slightly unclear, but activists continued to hold Abigail Adams up to show the progress they had made. Amelia Himes Walker used Abigail Adams to introduce an article about Susan B. Anthony's trial which occurred after she voted in an election. Walker listed the major steps forward for equality in the country, boiling it down to four major events in United States history: the writing of the Declaration of Independence, Abigail Adams' plea that John

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<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Porter Boyer, "When Abigail Adams Led the Woman Suffrage Party," *The Woman Citizen* 5, no. 42 (March 1921): 1092.

grant women rights, the Seneca Falls Convention, and the Civil War with its subsequent amendments. Next to such momentous occasions as the Declaration of Independence, the Seneca Falls Convention, and the Civil War, a woman writing a letter to her husband initially seems of little importance; however, by including it, Walker named Abigail Adams as the beginning of the women's movement in the United States just as the Declaration of Independence was the beginning of the legal push for equality in colonial America. She asserted that the push for women's rights emerged at the founding, even that it was part of the founding, and not something new to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>45</sup>

While women's rights activists recognized the major victory that they had achieved in the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, their movement had never been only about suffrage, and so, moving forward, the major push among activists shifted to other types of equality. In 1923, an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was proposed; just as the fourteenth amendment had codified equality under the law for all races, the ERA sought to make equality of gender part of the United States Constitution. Reminiscent of how the push for suffrage was not a short not easy battle, the passage of the ERA was not a simple matter of rallying existing support for suffrage to quickly pass the amendment. Through it all, Abigail Adams' name continued to be used in the fight for women's rights.

In the 1934 edition of *Equal Rights*, part of a speech by Burnita Shelton Matthews was printed under the title, "The Equal Rights Amendment" in which Matthews began her speech by invoking the story of Abigail Adams. Matthews wrote, "Just before the Declaration of Independence...there lived a woman who, foreseeing our independence from England and the necessity for new laws for this then infant country, urged that such laws recognized the freedom of women."<sup>46</sup> She then identified Abigail Adams as that woman

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<sup>45</sup> Amelia Himes Walker, "The Trail of Susan B. Anthony," *Equal Rights* 27, no. 3 (March 1941): 23, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Burnita Shelton Matthews, "The Equal Rights Amendment," *Equal Rights* 20, no. 29 (August 18, 1934): 228.

by quoting her most famous letter, thus claiming that Adams' cause was the cause of all American women. To introduce the rest of her speech, Matthews explained that Abigail's predictions came true: "the independence of the American colonies became a reality" and shortly thereafter "the Constitution of the United States was accomplished."<sup>47</sup> It was precisely because nobody listened to Abigail and "the ladies were not remembered in the Constitution" that a new amendment remembering the ladies was necessary.<sup>48</sup> The same letter that women had used for half a century to push for women's suffrage was now easily transitioned into supporting the new cause of women: the ERA.

That same year, Mrs. Harvey J. Wiley gave a speech to the Maryland Federation of Women's Clubs which was also published in *Equal Rights*; similar to Matthews, she drew upon Abigail Adams' famous exchange with John to show that the push for women's equality was as old as the cause of American independence. Wiley explained that, "had Abigail Adams' voice been heeded...back in the days before the writing of the Constitution, women would not have been in the predicament they are today."<sup>49</sup> Wiley went on to quote Abigail, showing that a desire for equality of women was around at least as long as the push for independence. Wiley lamented, "but Abigail Adams' voice was not heeded, and so it took seventy-two years' struggle on the part of women to win the right to vote, and now it is increasingly apparent to large groups of women all over the United States that the Equal Rights Amendment...should also be enacted."<sup>50</sup> To Wiley, the fact that women's suffrage had already been enshrined in the Constitution showed the validity of the suffrage cause started by Adams over one hundred years before; referencing the success of that movement, Wiley expanded on what it meant for the ladies to be remembered. She showed that, to the

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<sup>47</sup> Matthews, "The Equal," 228.

<sup>48</sup> Matthews, "The Equal," 228.

<sup>49</sup> Mrs. Harvey J. Wiley, "Why the Equal Rights Amendment?," *Equal Rights* 20, no. 44 (December 1, 1934): 347.

<sup>50</sup> Wiley, "Why the Equal Rights," 347.

women of her day, that definition included being treated equally before the law in more than just the ballot boxes.

While women's rights activists from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries consistently drew on Abigail Adams' letters to show American women's long standing desire for equality, scholars did not focus on Adams' political ideas, instead writing about her example as a republican wife and mother. In 1947, Janet Whitney released the first full-length biography of Abigail Adams. Reminiscent of Charles' as well as Ellets' work, Whitney's *Abigail Adams* approached the founding mother of the country's woman's rights movement through her husband. The first paragraph of the foreword explained Abigail's significance because of her important family members, the second paragraph emphasized her husband's importance—he being the “Atlas of the Revolution,” the “greatest intellect in the First American Congress,” “the first shaper of foreign policy” among other things—the third paragraph highlighted the achievements of her son, John Quincy, and the final paragraph connected Abigail to important “guests at her table” such as “George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton” and others.<sup>51</sup> The foreword, meant to tell the reader why they should commit to a book, did not have a single paragraph explaining the merits of Abigail Adams in her own right, instead calling her important because of the men who ate at her table. Whitney's book remained the only biography of Abigail Adams until 1980. Only after that point did the focus of the scholarly world shift to a more nuanced look at Abigail Adams' contributions.

By the 1970s, the ERA had still not been passed and women's rights activists continued to hold Abigail Adams up as inspiration for the movement. The 1975 National Women's Agenda was a push by multiple united women's organizations to get the ERA passed. As many women had done before, Bess Myerson used Abigail Adams' name and story to demonstrate how the women's rights cause had its roots in the American founding. Myerson explained that “part of [John's] great strength was the ability to change his mind

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<sup>51</sup> Whitney, *Abigail Adams*, xi, xii.

when he realized he was wrong.”<sup>32</sup> She expressed that, despite initial push back, Abigail would have been able to convince John of the ERA’s importance. By holding Abigail and John up as a model American couple, the author argued that American women should follow their Founding Mother’s lead and fight for their rights by supporting the ERA, while men of the United States should do as their wise forefather did, acknowledge their equivocation, and support the ERA.<sup>33</sup>

#### ABIGAIL ADAMS AND THE EVERYDAY WOMAN

Not every magazine article on Abigail Adams in the twentieth century depicted her as a feminist role model. Some focused on her as a socialite, others as a fashion icon, and others as a homemaker; while to activists Adams was important because of her words defending women’s rights, to much of the general public she was memorable because she was the first wife in the white house, one of their adored first ladies.

Many authors focused special attention on Abigail in the White House and how she was the first homemaker of America’s palace. Repeatedly in tracing the White House’s history, authors told the same anecdote about the Adams family moving into the White House for the first time and Abigail Adams having to adapt to the unfinished mansion. They humorously relate that she used the grand East Room to dry her laundry, as the house still had no devoted space for

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<sup>32</sup> Myers, “A Call to Action,” 73.

<sup>33</sup> This idea of a model American couples was used by various female writers since the late 1800s and early 1900s. In the early days, writers pointed to the love and unity shared by the couple. In later pieces, though, such as Myers’ “Call to Action,” this model couple allowed for the woman to be strong and sway the husband while both continued to support one another. This shift in what that ideal relationship looked like mirrored, in many ways, the emergence of the New Woman ideas and greater female participation in the public sphere.

laundry.<sup>54</sup> In explaining this everyday inconvenience, authors brought the first lady and the White House closer to the everyday American woman, making her life and difficulties feel more relatable. *Ladies' Home Journal* printed an article in 1928 which used this story and then compared the precedent set by Martha Washington as first lady to that of Abigail Adams. It explained that Adams did not always follow in Washington's footsteps because of her unideal living conditions. Similarly, in an article from 1900 entitled "One Hundred Years in the White House," Rene Bache used Abigail Adams as an introduction to the White House and how it changed through the years. She, too, told the story of the East room and emphasized the unlivable conditions that the Adamases encountered upon first moving in.<sup>55</sup>

Other articles emphasized the various ways that Abigail Adams' and her contemporaries domestically influenced the women that came after them. A *Good Housekeeping* article from 1920 called "To Our Fore Mothers!" made the point that the ease of living in 1920 was largely due to the hard work of the women that came before. The author, Alice Van Leer Carrick, listed those foremothers and detailed the example that they set. Of Abigail Adams, she referenced the letters about Abigail's family life, explaining that Adams' contribution to American history was her spirit, cheer, and example of being "engagingly human."<sup>56</sup> Carrick, like many of those who wrote memoirs and books about Abigail Adams, mentioned Abigail's political contributions briefly, but devoted more time to explaining her character as a wife and mother.

Even amidst the variety of depictions of Abigail Adams in the public press, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Adams was consistently used by women's rights activists to ground their cause and strengthen their

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<sup>54</sup> Charles A. Selden, "Official and Unofficial Behavior at Washington," *Ladies' Home Journal* 45, no. 1 (January 1928): 6.

<sup>55</sup> Rene Bache, "One Hundred Years in the White House," *Ladies' Home Journal* 17, no. 10 (September 1900): 1.

<sup>56</sup> Alice Van Leer Carrick, "To Our Fore Mothers!," *Good Housekeeping* 71, no. 5 (December 1920): 144.

arguments. While scholarly treatment of Adams up through the 1980s was largely focused on her domesticity and the part that she played in supporting her husband and son, activists did not follow that model but rather held Adams up as an example to follow in the fight for equality. Though Charles Adams followed the trend of depicting Abigail as a wholly domestic heroine, his work of publishing many of her correspondences allowed for women throughout America to read about Abigail Adams and point to her for inspiration. Despite their failing to recognize the revolutionary sides of Abigail Adams, scholars and other public authors contributed to activists by giving them more evidence from which to build their arguments.

Today, as the United States continues to figure out what true equality looks like, women continue to turn to Adams as an example of how women should be treated politically. In an MSNBC article from July 2022, Ali Velshi calls Adams' famous letter "the very first spark that lit the women's rights movement ablaze."<sup>37</sup> Others point to Abigail Adams as an example of public virtue. A December 2020 article (released in the middle of the COVID pandemic), referenced how Abigail Adams "had her children inoculated against smallpox," emphasizing how she was a model of progressive thought and exemplary mother as she sought to protect her children from the dangers of the unpredictable, interconnected world.<sup>38</sup> In the midst of conflicting opinions, Abigail Adams continues to be referenced as a source of moral authority by different (even opposing) opinions. This shows that the work has been done to establish Abigail Adams as an important part of the founding cast of American heroes. Today, everyday Americans as well as Women's Rights

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<sup>37</sup> Ali Velshi, "Abigail Adams urged her husband to 'remember the ladies'. We're still working on that today," MSNBC, July 3, 2022, accessed November 30, 2022.

<sup>38</sup> Ronald Shafer, "'A Fearsome decision': Abigail Adams had her children inoculated against smallpox," *The Washington Post*, December 14, 2020, accessed November 30, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/12/12/abigail-adams-smallpox-coronavirus-vaccine/>

Activists continue to draw on Adams to tie political agendas back to the founding of the United States.

# Blood in the Snow

## The Mormon-Timpanogos Conflict at Battle Creek

NATHAN HALE

On March 5th, 1849, a group of 36 Mormon men surrounded the Native American camp of a small band of Timpanogos at Battle Creek, which is present-day Pleasant Grove, Utah. The Mormon militia suspected this band of cattle rustling, and a conflict ensued that resulted in the shooting and killing of four Timpanogos men. During the battle, the women and children of the native camp took cover and endured exposure to the cold elements and frigid water of Battle Creek. Six days later, these same women and children arrived in Salt Lake City. Among the group of Native American survivors was a frightened 16 to 18-year-old young man who, like the women and children, had witnessed the killing of his father and uncles at the hands of the Mormons.

This confrontation at Battle Creek was the first of many that would take place in Utah Valley between Mormon settlers and the Timpanogos. Much historical significance has been assigned to this event by both eyewitnesses and Utah historians alike. Many cite this watershed event as the preceding action to establishing Fort Utah (March 12, 1849) and the colonization of Utah Valley and Southern Utah. Moreover, some argue that the killing of the Timpanogos men and the witnessing thereof caused the Utah Black Hawk War (1865–1872). This war engulfed much of Central and Southern Utah and exacerbated the already declining Native American population. Yet despite these previous studies and opinions, questions still remain as to what really happened and why. This paper examines the accuracy of Mormon and Native American sources and claims surrounding this event and also uses new primary source material that has yet to be referenced in the existing scholarship.

Most Utah historical literature only mentions Battle Creek in brief sentences or paragraphs. Despite this scarcity of scholarship, there are a few books that devote a full chapter

to the battle. The first influential book on the subject is *Provo, Pioneer Mormon City* (1942), a historical work commissioned by the Works Projects Administration for the State of Utah. This is the first serious academic work that references and cites multiple primary sources. While it engages less with the eyewitness accounts, *Timpanogos Town* (1948) by Howard R. Driggs, is a local historical work that chronicles the history of Pleasant Grove, Utah and includes an entire chapter on Battle Creek. The account in *Timpanogos Town* is significant because of the author's personal interactions with mountain man Joshua Terry, a resident of Pleasant Grove after the Battle Creek expedition. John Alton Peterson's book *Utah's Black Hawk War* (1998), while brief in its analysis of Battle Creek, is the first to explore the connection of Battle Creek to the Black Hawk War. D. Robert Carter's 2003 book *Founding Fort Utah* contains the most comprehensive and thorough scholarship on the subject.

After Carter's book was released, the scholarship on Battle Creek became more critical of Mormons and their conduct. Jared Farmer's 2008 book, *On Zion's Mount*, claims that the Mormon militia "slaughtered" the band of Timpanogos whereas Sondra G. Jones' *Being and Becoming Ute* (2018) criticizes the action as straining Mormon-Ute relations and multiplying enemies.<sup>12</sup> Will Bagley's book *The Whites Want Every Thing* (2019) argues, much like the name of the book suggests, that Battle Creek was the first conflict of many that grew out of white Mormon's settlers' insatiable greed for Native American land.

The most recent historical work that references Battle Creek, although written by an amateur historian, is worth mentioning. *My Journey to Understand... Black Hawk's Mission of Peace* by Phillip B. Gottfredson, published in 2020, is written from the Native American perspective and is the account referenced on the Timpanogos

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<sup>1</sup> Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Sondra G. Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute: The Story of an American Indian People* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2019), 102.

Tribe's official website.<sup>3</sup> This account describes the action at Battle Creek as a "massacre" and argues that the Mormon militia "viciously attacked an innocent group of indigenous people."<sup>4</sup>

Through extensive research on the subject, I have been able to uncover new sources, including a complete roster of the Mormon participants in the battle.<sup>5</sup> These new sources, combined with the already mentioned eyewitness accounts, make this paper a significant addition to the Battle Creek historiography.

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<sup>3</sup> "Timpanogos Tribe: History of the Timpanogos Nation," The Timpanogos Nation, accessed December 15, 2022, <http://www.timpanogostribe.com/history.html>. When mentioning Battle Creek, the website includes a link to Phillip B. Gottfredson's website. Gottfredson is close friends with the Timpanogos Tribes' Chief Executive Mary Murdock Meyer and helped the tribe articulate its historical claims. "The Black Hawk War; Fort Utah & Battle Creek Massacre," Black Hawk Productions, accessed December 15, 2022, <https://blackhawkproductions.com/fortutah.htm>.  
<sup>4</sup> Phillip B. Gottfredson, *My Journey to Understand... Black Hawk's Mission of Peace* (Bloomington: Archway Publishing, 2020), 13, 50.

<sup>5</sup> Brigham Young history documents, 1844-1866; Documents, 1849; Church History Library, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/7078052c-1d15-4952-891c-e695c23fc744/0/3?lang=eng> (hereafter cited as Battle Creek Roster, CHL). This roster is a copy of the original list made by John Scott at the time of the expedition to Battle Creek. This is the first time it is referenced in any paper or book about Battle Creek. On the list is the name "H. Thatcher." Hezekiah Thatcher's obituary claims that he participated in the "first Indian difficulty at Battle Creek" and that the breech of his gun was shot while he held it. "Obituary of Hezekiah Thatcher." *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City), May 7, 1879. <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6rj5d2m>. This roster is the only source to confirm Thatcher's participation in the expedition which is a testament to its authenticity.

Unfortunately, no eyewitness accounts of Native Americans have been found during the research for this paper. This lack of Native primary sources or even secondary scholarship written by Native American scholars continues to present a glaring hole in the study of Battle Creek. The one-sidedness of Battle Creek's historiography stems from what Jill Lepore calls a "literal advantage."<sup>6</sup> Because Mormon pioneers could write, they alone were able to construct a narrative to defend their actions and condemn their enemies. While this paper contains only Mormon eyewitness sources, it will be objective in its analysis of the events and show both Native and Mormon perspectives when possible. Overall, then, this paper contextualizes and expands the understanding of this event. The three main topics explored will be the Mormon claim of Timpanogos' cattle rustling, the Timpanogos' claim that the Mormon victors kidnapped and imprisoned the survivors, and whether Battle Creek caused the Black Hawk War. In the end, this paper contributes a more balanced, contextualized narrative of the events of Battle Creek.<sup>7</sup>

A quick note on terminology. Latter-Day Saint settlers are referred to as "Mormons" for the sake of brevity and continuity within the pre-existing historiography. Native American individuals and groups are referred to by their given names (i.e. Cone, Wakara, etc.) and specific tribal designations (i.e. Timpanogos, Piute, Shoshone, etc.) when possible. When the terms "Indian" or "squaw" are used, it is

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<sup>6</sup> Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage, 1999), xviii.

<sup>7</sup> The author of this paper is both an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the direct descendant of many Mormon Pioneers, including Colonel John Scott (4th great-grandfather) who led the expedition to Battle Creek as well as other prominent figures like John Tanner (1778-1850) and John D. Lee (1812-1877). Despite these religious inclinations and genealogies, the author will attempt to be objective in his analysis of the available sources.

done so with the intention of preserving the terminology of primary sources.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Most of the academic scholarship that references the Timpanogos refers to them as Utes, but this is not how the modern Timpanogos tribe views itself. According to both the modern Timpanogos tribe and Philip B. Gottfredson, the modern Timpanogos tribe views itself as Shoshone rather than Ute due to their historical and cultural connections with the Shoshone people. The Timpanogos argue that their ancestors spoke a distinctive dialect that was more closely related to the Shoshone language than the Nunic Ute language. Additionally, the Timpanogos argue that their ancestors had a unique way of life that was influenced by the Great Basin and Plains cultures, which were associated with the Shoshone. They also claim that the Timpanogos maintained close relationships with the Shoshone, intermarrying, trading, and fighting with them. Blackhawk Productions, "Timpanogos Ute: Oxymoron?," accessed April 21, 2023, <https://blackhawkproductions.com/Timpanogos-Ute-Oxymoron.htm>.; "Timpanogos Tribe: History of the Timpanogos Nation," The Timpanogos Nation, accessed December 15, 2022, <http://www.timpanogostribe.com/history.html>. Nineteenth-century Anglo-American accounts, such as Oliver B. Huntington's journal, claim that even Timpanogos leaders like Little-Chief called the band at Battle Creek "Ewtes" or "Utes." Oliver B. Huntington, Journal, Mss 162, Vol 10, 1848, Box 1, Folder 6, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, 66-68. Jared Framer speculates that this is because Cone and Blueshirt's band were related to the mixed-blood Salt Lake bands of Wanship and Goship. Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 62. If the Native band present at Battle Creek was, in fact, a Shoshone-Ute band, this could explain why they were referred to as Utes. However, the modern Timpanogos tribe rejects this hypothesis, claiming that the "Battle Creek Massacre" was the first atrocity committed by the Mormon settlers against the Timpanogos. There are also significant

## THE STOLEN CATTLE

As mentioned, Timpanogos were accused of cattle rustling. To understand the accuracy of such accusations more fully, it is important to first understand the precarious food situation of both groups. The Road to the Salt Lake Valley for Mormon pioneers was long and hard. The Mormon faithful experienced intense hardship, hunger, and disease at Winter Quarters after agreeing to leave Nauvoo. After a thousand-plus-mile exodus, early Mormon wagon trains first entered the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847.

George Washington Boyd, like many of his fellow members of the Battle Creek expedition, experienced firsthand the difficulties of the journey West.<sup>9</sup> Boyd returned to Winter Quarters with 30 other soldiers whose families still lived in the destitute camp when the U.S. Army released them from service in the Mormon Battalion. On their journey to the Salt Lake Valley, Boyd's group encountered hostile

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political reasons for the Timpanogos to distinguish themselves from the Colorado Utes tribe, who reject them as part of their modern tribe. To make matters even more complicated, there are those who doubt whether the modern Timpanogos and the Timpanogos Shoshones are even the same group. It is the opinion of the author of this paper that the Timpanogos were more closely related and tied to the Numic Ute peoples of Colorado and Utah because of the Mormon reports of hostilities between the Native inhabitants of Northern Utah and Utah Valley. During early Mormon settlement, the Salt Lake Valley acted as a buffer zone between the Shoshone and Utes. Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Publishing, 2002), 28. If the Timpanogos were, in fact, a Shoshone band, they would have resided North of the Salt Lake Valley with the other Shoshone. This assumption could be wrong, and so, out of respect for the Timpanogos people, I will refer to the band at Battle Creek as simply Timpanogos.

<sup>9</sup> Battle Creek Roster, CHL. This is the first time George Washington Boyd has been connected to Battle Creek.

Native Americans and endured severe weather conditions as they passed through the Sierra Mountains. Their provisions ran out crossing a desert and for several days they suffered from the want of water. The final three days before their arrival in Salt Lake City on January 5, 1848, “they existed on soup made from the leather on their saddles and a lean cow.”<sup>10</sup>

Immediately upon entering the valley Mormon settlers frantically began planting crops in order to store up enough food for the coming winter. These attempts to produce enough food proved insufficient. Dimick B. Huntington, another member of the Battle Creek expedition and Mormon Battalion veteran, spent the winter of 1848 in the Salt Lake Valley. He and his family suffered intensely. His brother, Oliver B. Huntington who was also present at Battle Creek, wrote of Dimick's sufferings that first winter in the Valley:

Roots were dug most of the winter for substance to form a change from beef... These Soldier Boys, as we called them, we're driven to that extremity that they ate the hide, and rules the blood of cattle that were killed for beef, and upon which cattle the crows and ravens might have thought they had a good claim. For the last four months before Harvest, Dimock and family tasted not of bread... miserable pour salt beef, roots and fish where their diet.<sup>11</sup>

Parley P. Pratt's position as apostle and leader in the church did not insulate him from the want of food either. After journeying to the Great Basin, Pratt and his family lacked enough provisions to sustain them until the next harvest. In

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<sup>10</sup> Jesse Woll, *The Winfield Lester Lemon & Alta Ida King Family Histories* (Centerville, Utah: Tueller's Press, 2018), 241-242.

<sup>11</sup> Oliver Boardman Huntington, *Diary and Reminiscences*, typescript, 2 vols., 2: 46, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

early March 1848, he told the High Council that he did not “have neither milk, meat, nor butter.”<sup>12</sup>

This shortage of food made Mormon leaders in Salt Lake Valley resort to innovative solutions to fend off starvation. During the early winter months of 1848, the High Council - the ruling authority in Salt Lake City during Brigham Young's absence - devised a number of plans to keep the settlers from starving. One of these plans involved bishops collecting food from the more fortunate and distributing it to struggling families. Those who donated received tax credits while those who benefited from this aid were required to work on civic projects like the Jordan Bridge.<sup>13</sup> Another of these plans required the destitute settlers to surrender their possessions to the bishop who bought, sold, and exchanged these goods for food.<sup>14</sup> These drastic measures of cooperation prevented any of the early Mormon settlers from starving to death.<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to the agrarian Mormon settlers, the Timpanogos were hunter-gatherers. The Timpanogos prospered in Utah Valley because of the ample food it provided. Large fish populations in both Utah Lake and the Provo River were the Timpanogos' primary food source all year long. Fish could be dried and stored and preserved the Timpanogos during times of scarcity. Timpanogos women also gathered natural grass seeds which they ground into flour. During the autumn and winter months, the Timpanogos

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<sup>12</sup> High Council of the Great Salt Lake City, Minutes, 12 March 1848, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

<sup>13</sup> High Council of Great Salt Lake City, Minutes, 20 February 1848, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

<sup>14</sup> High Council of the Great Salt Lake City, Minutes, 2 April 1848, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Spencer, Journal, 2 April 1848, typescript, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

moved up into the foothills and the mountains.<sup>16</sup> Here, the Timpanogos hunted elk, mule deer and mountain sheep that descended to lower elevations during the winter.

The introduction of horses via Spanish traders dramatically improved Timpanogos' food security. The Dominguez-Escalante expedition of 1776 was the first time Europeans saw Utah Valley and interacted with Timpanogos. The Spanish priest returned to New Mexico and word of the untapped trading market with the Timpanogos spread. It is unclear when the Timpanogos first acquired horses but Spanish records state that they at least had them by the first decade of the 19th century. Horses allowed the Timpanogos to acquire and transport more food over greater distances, making the Timpanogos more resilient to food shortages during the winter months.<sup>17</sup>

The introduction of Mormon settlers and cattle to the Great Basin caused famine among the game and fish-eating Timpanogos. Although early Mormon settlements were established in Salt Lake Valley—the uninhabited buffer zone between the warring Shoshone and Ute tribes—agricultural and pastoral food production still negatively impacted Native food gathering in Utah Valley. Initial waves of Mormon immigration in 1847 saw about 1,700 people come into the Salt Lake Valley by the first winter. By the winter of 1849, the number of settlers had ballooned to 4,500.<sup>18</sup> This population increase caused Mormon settlers to spread as far south as Willow Creek, modern-day Draper. This new proximity to the Timpanogos in Utah Valley increased the likelihood of conflict between the two groups.

The introduction of agricultural techniques like plowing and irrigation systems as well as aggressive ranging by Mormon settlers also depleted Utah Valley's natural grazing, wild game, and seed grasses the Timpanogos traditionally

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<sup>16</sup> Joel C. Janetski, *The Ute of Utah Lake* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991), 40.

<sup>17</sup> D. Robert Carter, *Founding Fort Utah* (Provo: Provo City Corporation, 2003), 13.

<sup>18</sup> S. George Ellsworth, *Utah's Heritage* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1972), 55-57.

used for food.<sup>19</sup> In the months leading up to the Battle Creek expedition, Mormon Cattle began grazing at the point of the mountain and down into Northern Utah Valley. With less grazing in the valley and foothills, natural game became scarce to Timpanogos bands who had traditionally spent the winters near the mountains instead of the shores of Utah Lake.<sup>20</sup>

The depletion of Utah Valley's natural game may have caused some Timpanogos to rustle Mormon cattle. To the Timpanogos, Mormon cattle grazed on their traditional lands and they had every right to occasionally capture one of these animals as "little more than a fair-use fee for the land."<sup>21</sup> Brigham Young connected the Timpanogos' claim to the land and their stealing when he wrote in his journal, "The Indians supposed the land to be all theirs, and are in the habit of taking a share of the grain [or cattle] for the use of the land."<sup>22</sup> Although Young disapproved of the Native's stealing and actively combated it, he condemned the brutality some Mormon settlers' exhibited towards offenders. In 1847, Young argued,

[It is wrong] to indulge in feelings of hostility and bloodshed toward the Indians... who might kill a cow, an ox or even a horse; to them the deer, the buffalo, the cherry and plum tree, or strawberry bed were free. It was their mode of living to kill and eat... I realize there were men among us who would steal, who knew better, whose traditions and earliest teachings were all against it. Yet such would find fellowship

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<sup>19</sup> Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 100-101.

<sup>20</sup> Max Perry Mueller, "When Wakara Wrote Back," in *Essays on American Indian & Mormon History*, ed. P. Jane Hafen and Brenden W. Rensink (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2019), 68.

<sup>21</sup> Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 101.

<sup>22</sup> Journal History of the Church, August 22, 1847, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

with those who would shoot an Indian for stealing.<sup>23</sup>

But as the cattle rustling continued in 1848 and 1849, Young grew impatient with these Native attacks on the Mormon settlers' food supply.

Mormon settlers first accused Timpanogos of cattle rustling on 5 March 1848—exactly one year before the Battle Creek expedition—when 17 cattle were stolen.<sup>24</sup> This theft

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<sup>23</sup> Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 101.

<sup>24</sup> D. Robert Carter, "Colonists and Utes Clash at Battle Creek," *Daily Herald*, November 28, 2004, C2-C3. Reports that the Natives of Utah Valley were stealing cattle and horses first circulated in late February 1848. Not wanting these depredations to continue, the Salt Lake City High Council, the ruling body left in charge of the saints during the absence of Brigham Young, authorized Marshal John Van Cott on February 26th to take eight to ten men to Utah Valley and gave him the authority to take whatever action he thought proper. 26 February 1848, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Four days later, on March 1st, the High Council received a message from Van Cott stating he and his men had observed a group of Utes with Seven cattle in their possession as well as located a spot where one animal may have been slaughtered. Van Cott requested the High Council send an additional forty men to reinforce his expedition to enable the recovery of the unslaughtered animals. Daniel Spencer, Journal, 1 March 1848, typescript, LDS Church Archives. The High Council sent the additional men and Van Cott, now reinforced, confronted the suspected Utes. After communicating the purpose of their visit to the Utes through an interpreter, the air became tense and, according to Van Cott, resulted in the Utes firing upon his men. Somehow tensions subsided and the two sides were able to negotiate without further violence. The Utes confessed to stealing and killing seventeen cattle and one horse. For compensation, Van Cott and his men received one gun, witnessed the Ute chief whip the guilty men responsible for the theft and received a promise that the Utes would steal no more animals from the settlers. High Council of Great Salt Lake

caused Mormon leaders to send a heavily armed posse down to Utah Valley to prevent further theft.<sup>25</sup> The perpetrators were punished by the Timpanogos Little Chief in order to avoid conflict with the armed settlers. According to Mormon accounts, an agreement was made between the Timpanogos and Mormons that no more cattle would be stolen and that Little Chief would support the Salt Lake settlement.<sup>26</sup> Oliver B. Huntington also wrote an account where he supposedly communicated to Cone and his brother Blueshirt, two of the four Native males killed at Battle Creek, a few days before the battle that death would come to “Indians who stole Mormon cattle.”<sup>27</sup> This meeting did not result in an agreement like the one made in March 1848. These two incidents illustrate that a written record of Timpanogos’ cattle rustling goes back a year before the Battle Creek expedition.

The description of Battle Creek referenced on the Timpanogos Tribe’s website written by Phillip B. Gottfredson is skeptical of any Mormon claims that Timpanogos stole Mormon horses and cattle. It states that the Timpanogos band “allegedly, had taken horses belonging to Brigham Young” and “Allegedly, Scott and his men found thirteen cow hides near the camp.”<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it is clear that the Timpanogos Tribe’s current stance challenges contemporary Mormon sources’ claims, accusing them of having insufficient proof. The Timpanogos tribe gives no contrary evidence for

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City to Brigham Young, 6 March 1848, Brigham Young Office Files, LDS Church Archives.

<sup>25</sup> High Council of Great Salt Lake City, Minutes, 26 February 1848, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

<sup>26</sup> High Council of Great Salt Lake City to Brigham Young, 6 March 1848, Brigham Young office files, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

<sup>27</sup> Oliver B. Huntington, Journal, Mss 162, Vol 10, 1848, Box 1, Folder 6, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, 54, 62-66.

<sup>28</sup> “The Black Hawk War; Fort Utah & Battle Creek Massacre,” Black Hawk Productions, accessed December 15, 2022, <https://blackhawkproductions.com/fortutah.htm>.

this skepticism. In his book, Gottfredson also questions the integrity of “Captain Scott” stating that before entering Utah Valley, Scott had received three messages “that the horses had been found and to return to Salt Lake.” Scott then ignored Brigham's orders and went on with the expedition claiming to find thirteen cow hides near the camp, which he “deemed proof these were the Indians who had taken their cattle.”<sup>29</sup> This unwillingness to return to Salt Lake City after receiving Brigham Young's message causes Gottfredson to question Scott's integrity.

This portrayal of Colonel Scott as a renegade leader set on killing Native Americans is a blatant distortion of the “reliable accounts” by Gottfredson. Of all the eyewitness accounts of Battle Creek, Hosea Stout's is the only one that mentions messengers bringing news about the horses from Salt Lake City. Stout is also the “reliable” source referenced in Gottfredson's book. Concerning the messages, Stout wrote the following:

About 9 at night Br La Fayette Grainger overtook us with word that the horses were not stolen & that he had sent back B Furgerson to report the same to President Spencer. About midnight we received a letter from Spencer stating that as the horses were not stolen that we need not spend any more time in search of them but to proceed with the Indians for killing cattle as had been before directed so that the nature of our expedition was not in the least changed.<sup>30</sup>

As Stout's account clearly states, the finding of the horses did not facilitate a rescinding of the expedition's orders.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Gottfredson, *My Journey to Understand*, 57-58.

<sup>30</sup> Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 344.

<sup>31</sup> This is not the first time someone has questioned Colonel John Scott's integrity. Church leadership had a falling out with Scott directly after Battle Creek because he violated the policy of “shed no blood.” Orson F. Whitney, *History of*

The evidence of stolen Mormon cattle at Battle Creek is agreed upon by all of the primary sources and secondary scholarship. Although figures in the Mormon primary sources differ as to how many cow hides were found at the Timpanogos camp at Battle Creek, they all agree that there were cow hides at the camp.<sup>32</sup> Also, Gottfredson and the

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*Utah* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., Publishers, 1892), 423-424. According to John Brown's account, Scott ordered his men not to attack, despite receiving fire from the Natives. Brown states that it was Alexander Williams who opened fire on the Natives which resulted in the entire party firing their weapons and killing the four men. John Brown, *Autobiography of pioneer John Brown, 1820-1896* (Salt Lake City: Press of Steven & Wallis, Inc., Publishers, 1941), 104. Although there are no surviving official orders for the Battle Creek expedition, it is likely that Church authorities wanted a similar result as the Marshal John Van Cott led expedition the previous year. From the recently discovered Battle Creek Roster, the composition and experience of the expedition is now known. About a third of Scott's men were Mormon Battalion veterans and a sizable majority served in the Nauvoo Legion. It is hard to understand why Church leaders expected the expedition not to behave like a military unit and defend itself against attack when most of its ranks were filled with trained soldiers. Church leaders again asked Scott to take part in the Battle of Fort Utah, but he declined. As a result, militia leadership court-martialed Scott in March 1850. "Utah, Territorial Militia Records, 1849-1877," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q231-GJ5H>; accessed 27 July 2016), John Scott, citing Utah, United States, series 2210, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City; FHL microfilm 4,291,242. Because of his conduct at Battle Creek and his refusal to fight at Fort Utah, it is clear that John Scott did not want to kill Native Americans as Gottfredson suggests.

<sup>32</sup> Stout claimed there were 13 beef hides in the camp, and that some of them were recognizable. Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 347. Oliver B. Huntington claimed there was a wagon load of dried beef and beef hides. Oliver B.

Timpanogos Tribe are the only ones arguing against the charge of the cattle being stolen.

So, in summary, the two years leading up to the Battle Creek expedition were difficult for both the Mormon settlers and the Timpanogos. The Mormons—who were fleeing refugees from persecution in Illinois—struggled to establish a settlement in Salt Lake Valley because of a lack of provisions they brought with them and were only able to survive through community programs that redistributed food in exchange for wares and labor. The Timpanogos' food supply on the other hand was negatively impacted by this influx of Mormon Settlers whose farming and ranching displaced natural game and other food sources. The Timpanogos' rightfully believed they had a legitimate claim to Utah Valley and its natural resources, and this belief caused some of the Timpanogos to begin stealing and killing Mormon cattle. Therefore, it is extremely likely that the accusations that Cone and his band of Timpanogos were guilty of rustling cattle as charged by the Mormon Settlers are true.<sup>33</sup>

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Huntington, "The Indians Fought," *Deseret Weekly*, June 26, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6cv5cbg>. The Journal History of the Church reports 15 cow hides were found at the camp. Historical Department journal history of the Church, 1830-2008; 1840-1849; 1849 January-July; Church History Library, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/1f1cca14-5bb5-4574-90f4-5dcf07f230b8/0/192?lang=eng> (accessed: December 15, 2022). Dimick B. Huntington, John Brown, and Oliver B. Huntington's initial accounts are mute on this point.

<sup>33</sup> While it is not important to the analysis of whether or not the Timpanogos stole Mormon cattle, it is worth mentioning that Mormon settlers took part in ample cattle rustling themselves, at times aided by Native Americans. During the Utah War, Brigham Young was accused of instigating Native Americans attacks on wagon trains traveling the Northern and Southern routes to California. White Mormon settlers were also believed to have taken part in these attacks,

## THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

As previously mentioned, the Timpanogos claim that the Mormon victors kidnapped and imprisoned the Native American survivors of Battle Creek. To determine the accuracy of this claim, the Timpanogos and Mormons' capturing, imprisonment, and enslavement of Native women and children in the Utah Territory needs examination.

The Timpanogos' version of events after the killing of the Native males is as follows: "nine women, a few children, and the young boy, numbering 15 in all were then marched down the canyon at gun-point leaving behind their loved ones lying dead in the snow... The terrorized captives, who survived the attack, were taken thirty miles north to Salt Lake City."<sup>34</sup> After this band of Natives arrived in Salt Lake City, the Timpanogos claim, "the children were taken from their mothers and placed in the care of Mormon families." The Timpanogos argue that the Mormon militia did this because "Brigham [Young] often took our children and held them captive knowing that we would not attack fearing our children would be hurt."<sup>35</sup>

When compared to the unanimity concerning the evidence of cattle rustling at the Timpanogos camp, the Mormon accounts differ on how the women and children were treated during and after the battle at Battle Creek. A number of Mormon accounts claim or allude to the women being scared of or not wanting to return to the Timpanogos. For example, in Hosea Stout's diary, he writes that "As soon

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painting their faces and disguising themselves as Native American bandits. If true, Brigham Young's actions were in direct violation of his duty to protect overland emigrants from Native American attacks as superintendent of Indian affairs in the Utah Territory. The Mountain Meadows Massacre is a more substantial example of Mormon settlers dressing up as Native Americans and attacking immigrant wagon trains and stealing their cattle. For more information on Mormon cattle rustling read Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets*.

<sup>34</sup> Gottfredson, *My Journey to Understand*, 58.

<sup>35</sup> Gottfredson, *My Journey to Understand*, 58.

as [the women and children] gave up they asked leave to start immediately to the city and insisted on it not being willing to go to the their tribe.”<sup>36</sup> Stout attributes this fear of the Timpanogos exhibited by the women and children to the separation that took place between Little Chief’s and Cone and Blueshirt’s bands because of the latter’s insolence and insistence on stealing cattle after the former forbade it.<sup>37</sup> In Stout’s account, after descending the canyon the party had breakfast and gave presents to some of the Natives who had helped them. While the majority of the expedition started for home, Col. John Scott and a few men went back to talk with “the squaws but found they had fled and took three of their dead up the Cañon.”<sup>38</sup> On March 11th, these same women & children supposedly arrived in Salt Lake City “prefering to abide with [the Mormons]... rathur than to live with the Utahs on the Provo.”<sup>39</sup> Oliver B. Huntington in two different accounts claimed that after promising the women and children they would take them home and provide them with food and clothing, the party retrieved their horses a mile down the canyon. When they returned “there were neither living nor dead indians to be seen.”<sup>40</sup> According to Oliver, eventually “the women and children went to the Salt Lake City, or near it, to live with some of their relatives.”<sup>41</sup> Dimick B. Huntington’s account simply states that “the squaws and children of the slain followed the brethren to the city, and, after being fed, went to the Snake Indians, to which tribe the squaws professed to belong.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 347.

<sup>37</sup> Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 347.

<sup>38</sup> Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 347.

<sup>39</sup> Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 348.

<sup>40</sup> Huntington, “The Indians Fought.”

<sup>41</sup> Huntington, *Journal*, HBLI, BYU, 76.

<sup>42</sup> Dimick Baker Huntington, 1808-1879. Dimick B.

Huntington statement, 1862 January 1,

<https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/410e4a66-c6e4-41e4-bfbc-312503b9b313/0/0?lang=eng> (accessed:

December 15, 2022)

In John Brown's account it is Little Chief and the arrival of his band of warriors after the battle that caused the women and children to live with the Mormons. According to Brown, Little chief said "Now that you have killed these men, you must feed these women and children" to which John Scott told Little Chief that he would take the "unfortunate victims" to Salt Lake City where he would feed and care for them. Brown claims that the women and children came to Salt Lake City about one week later and "were cared for until in the spring, when they made their departure."<sup>43</sup>

Slavery existed in the New World long before Native Americans contacted Europeans. Warfare and raiding between tribes resulted in the victors enslaving the defeated. The practice of slavery among the Native peoples of Utah was no different. The Southern Utes were some of the first natives to interact with Spanish traders in what is now the Western United States and as a result were some of the first Natives to adopt European horses and firearms into their way of life. Now mounted and armed, the Utes developed a warrior culture and oppressed other Native peoples. This warrior culture spread with the Ute trading of horses to other Natives like the Comanche, Apache, Shoshone, and Timpanogos. The acquisition of horses led the Timpanogos raiding and enslaving horseless tribes like the Paiutes and Goshutes. As the Native slave trade became more lucrative for the Timpanogos, the need to harvest captives caused perpetual tribal warfare in the Utah Territory. This perpetual warfare that established the Timpanogos' prestige in the region

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<sup>43</sup> Brown, *Autobiography*, 105. The final mention of these native women and children is found in the Journal History of the Church's entry for Friday, March 9th, 1849. Here the record states that Alexander Williams "reported that he was going to farm in Utah Valley, to take some cows for president young, and instruct the widows and orphans of the 4 Indians killed the previous Monday to farm Etc." It is unlikely that this happened. Historical Department Journal history of the Church, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/1f1cca14-5bb5-4574-90f4-5dcf07f230b8/0/206?lang=eng>.

decimated the weaker southern tribes of their women and children and by 1860 these tribes were in danger of complete extinction.<sup>44</sup>

At various nodes along the Native slave trade in Utah, observers witnessed the poor treatment of children slaves stating that these children were abused, neglected, and starved until they were severely emaciated. Written accounts describe the dragging of naked slaves behind horses in the snow, torturing them for revenge or sport, and killing them when they lost their value.<sup>45</sup> Rape of girl slaves by their male captors was also common.<sup>46</sup>

One of the prominent Native American slavers around the time of Battle Creek was Wakara, a Timpanogos leader who learned English, Spanish, and other Indian dialects as he traveled the Old Spanish Trail trading slaves. Wakara was a smart and calculated leader whose command of his equestrian troop allowed him to demand tribute from weaker tribes. This tribute usually came in the form of more slaves.<sup>47</sup> It is important to note that while the modern Timpanogos Tribe acknowledges Mormon participation in the Native slave trade, it denounces the “many fallacious stories” about the Timpanogos chief Wakara “selling children into slavery” stating that “there is no credible evidence to support such an atrocious claim.”<sup>48</sup> The modern Timpanogos tribe further argues that the practice of slavery “grossly contradicts the traditional core values of the Timpanogos

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<sup>44</sup> Garland Hurt, “Indians of Utah,” Appendix O in J. H. Simpson, *Report of Explorations across the Great Basin* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1876), 461-462.

<sup>45</sup> Sandra Jones, “Redeeming the Indian: The Enslavement of Indian Children New Mexico and Utah,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 233.

<sup>46</sup> Serrano to Viceroy, 1761, in Charles W. Hackett, trans, and ann., *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, collected by A. F. A. Bandelier and F. R. Bandelier, Vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1937), 487.

<sup>47</sup> Mueller, “When Wakara Wrote Back,” 61.

<sup>48</sup> Gottfredson, *My Journey to Understand*, 69, 84.

Nation” and that it is the “white man who writes these stories, never asking the native people their opinion.”<sup>49</sup>

It was not long after Mormons entered the Salt Lake Valley that Native slave traders first approached them. Barney Ward, a mountain man, long-time resident of the Rocky Mountains, Mormon convert, and one of the two “Indian interpreters” on the Battle Creek expedition, helped Brigham Young’s nephew John R. Young communicate with the Natives. Young’s account states:

Soon after we moved on to our city lot, Fall of 1847, a band of Indians camped near us. Early one morning we were excited at hearing their shrill, blood-curdling war whoop, mingled with occasional sharp cries of pain. Father sent me to the Fort for help. Charley Decker and Barney Ward, the interpreter, and others hurried to the camp. It was Wanship’s band. Some of his braves had just returned from the war-path. In a fight with “Little Wolf’s” band, they lost two men, but had succeeded in taking two girls prisoners. One of these they had killed, and were torturing the other. To save her life, Charley Decker bought her, and took her to our house to be washed and clothed.<sup>50</sup>

Wanship and Little Wolf were both Timpanogos. Young’s account showcases that the Timpanogos experienced infighting in the years leading up to Battle Creek. It also highlights that members of the Battle Creek expedition like

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<sup>49</sup> Gottfredson, *My Journey to Understand*, 84. In 1853 Wakara and the Timpanogos fought against the Mormons in a brief but bloody war that lasted nine months. This war was primarily fought over the Mormon’s interference with the Native slave trade. After Wakara’s death a year later the slave trade in Utah was all but dead. Howard A. Christy, “The Walker War: Defense and Conciliation as Strategy,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (Fall 1979): 396.

<sup>50</sup> John R. Young, *Memoirs of John R. Young: Utah Pioneer, 1847* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1920), 62.

Barney Ward witnessed firsthand the brutal effects the slave trade had on Native children.

In 1851, four years after Mormons entered the Salt Lake Valley, the newly established Utah Territory made the Mexican slave trade illegal by striking down the 1834 Trade and Intercourse laws that regulated trade between the Native and Mexican slavers. Then, in January 1852, the territory passed new legislation banning Native slavery while establishing in its place, a new legal system for indenturing Native children, allowing Utahns to continue to purchase them. Brigham Young justified slave purchases like the one made by Charley Decker stating: "very many children are taken into families and have all the usual facilities for education afforded other children."<sup>51</sup> Thus like many Mormon settlers, Brigham Young viewed the purchasing of Native slave children as "purchasing them into freedom instead of slavery" and affording them the benefits of a civilized, "humane and benevolent society"; treatment denied to them, Young argued, under Mexican slavery.<sup>52</sup>

However, the Mormon practice of purchasing or acquiring child slaves is far more problematic when examined with Battle Creek in mind. In his dissertation on Mormon participation in the Native slave trade, Michael Kay Bennion calculated that of known Native child slaves, approximately 14 percent of them were prisoners of war.<sup>53</sup> When Mormon settlers killed Native American males, they undoubtedly killed someone's father or husband. This meant that Mormon settlers were oftentimes responsible for the wretched circumstances that drove them to purchase Native children to begin with.

One non-Mormon account that may support the Timpanogos' claims about the women and children is one

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<sup>51</sup> Jones, "Redeeming the Indian," 230.

<sup>52</sup> Brigham Young, "Governor's Message to the Council and House of Representatives of the Legislature of Utah," *Deseret News*, January 10, 1852, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6x35rv4>.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Kay Bennion, "Captivity, Marriage, Adoption, and Identity: Native American Children in Mormon Homes" (PhD diss., University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 2012), 246.

written by George Montgomery in 1850. Montgomery was a federal Indian agent on his way to California when he passed through Salt Lake City and made an observation. In a letter to Washington, Montgomery reported that “there are now held in slavery by the Mormons . . . about thirty Utah women and girls who were taken prisoners in a war of extermination waged last winter by the Mormons against two small bands of that Tribe.”<sup>54</sup> As this letter was written in July of that year, it is likely that Montgomery is referring to the captives taken during the Fort Utah Massacre which took place in Provo in March of 1850. Brigham Young signed an extermination order against the Timpanogos at Fort Utah which explains that phrase “war of extermination.” It is possible, however, that by “last winter,” Montgomery meant the winter of 1849 which would mean these women and children were the ones who left Salt Lake City in the spring after Battle Creek. Another possibility is that these women and children were a combination of both the victims of Battle Creek and Fort Utah as seen in the phrase “two small bands.” Regardless of whether or not they were from Battle Creek, the women and children referenced in Montgomery’s letter show that Mormons were enslaving prisoners of war as early as 1850, only a year after their initial conflict with the Natives.

It is also possible that the women and children did leave Salt Lake City in the spring and went to live with the Shoshone as stated in Mormon sources. The Timpanogos participated in raids against the Shoshone when Mormons first entered the Salt Lake Valley. Prisoners of war were either killed or enslaved. Therefore, the Native women at Battle Creek could have been enslaved Shoshone women forced

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<sup>54</sup> George Ev. Montgomery to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 26, 1850, Letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Utah Superintendency, 1849-1880, microfilm reel 897, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. It is interesting that Montgomery thought it necessary to bring this to the attention of his superiors in Washington. Indian agents throughout the West owned Native slaves like the Indian superintendent in New Mexico, Kit Carson and Lafayette Head. Jones, “Redeeming the Indian,” 229 (see footnote #25).

into marriage to their captors. This could explain why Mormon sources describe the women as being afraid of Little Chief and the other Timpanogos and their desire to live with their native people, the Snake Indians.

So, in summary, both the Timpanogos and Mormon settlers participated in the Native slave trade, despite both groups' attempts to forget. After acquiring horses from Spanish and Ute traders, the Timpanogos were able to enslave other Native Americans. Mormon settlers, including members of the Battle Creek expedition, witnessed firsthand the violence inherent in the Native slave trade, especially as it affected Native children. Although compassion was a strong motivator for many Mormon settlers as they purchased Native child slaves, a sizable percentage of children were enslaved after Mormon settlers killed their fathers. George Montgomery's letter stating that enslaved native women and children were in Salt Lake City in July 1850 could support Timpanogos' claims that the women and children at Battle Creek were enslaved after the battle. Mormon claims stating that the women wanted to return to their native people, the Shoshone, possibly because they were in fact enslaved by the Timpanogos are also likely.

#### THE BLACK HAWK WAR AND THE DEFIANT LAD

One of the most interesting and contested claims about Battle Creek is whether or not Antonga Black Hawk, a leader of a Native American coalition that fought against Mormon settlers, was present at Battle Creek. Both contemporary Mormon sources and modern Native voices emphatically claim that Black Hawk was the young man at Battle Creek and that his witnessing the murders of his father and uncles by the Mormon militia caused him to eventually rebel against his captors and seek revenge. Whereas Mormon sources agree on the significant details of the stolen cattle and the treatment of the women and children, some adamantly denounce any claims that Black Hawk was at Battle Creek. If Black Hawk was indeed there, his war against the Mormons substantiated Little Chief's warnings to the expedition and is the source of great historical irony.

Brigham Young said Antonga Black Hawk was "the most formidable foe amongst the red men that the Saints have

had to encounter.”<sup>55</sup> Before an analysis of this topic is explored, a brief summary of the life of Black Hawk and the war named after him is warranted. Because of his Native background, not much is known for certain about Black Hawk’s early years. Before the Black Hawk War, Black Hawk’s life must be constructed by the occasional mentioning of his name and activities in various Mormon sources. One of the earliest appearances of Black Hawk is in 1850 where he fought alongside Mormon settlers at Fort Utah. Here, Black Hawk led Mormon patrols and attacked his own people.<sup>56</sup> For his cooperation at Fort Utah, “the friendly Indian Black Hawk” was made a chief by the Timpanogos as a concession for peace.<sup>57</sup> Mormon settlers also claim that Black Hawk, like many Natives, joined the Mormon church and was baptized.<sup>58</sup>

The Black Hawk War was a Mormon-“Pan-Indian” conflict that lasted from 1865 to 1872. Black Hawk’s main goal was to stop Mormon expansion. Through successful raids on Mormon livestock, the Native coalition stole thousands of horses and cattle and caused Mormon settlers to build forts and abandon dozens of settlements in the Sanpete and Sevier Counties. While Mormon livestock was the primary aim of Natives, at least seventy Mormon settlers were killed during these raids. After a battle with the Nauvoo Legion in which he was wounded, Black Hawk contracted some European diseases and dropped out of the war. Black Hawk died in 1870 but his war against the Mormons continued on until it ended two years after his death.

The Timpanogos claim that the young man was taken captive at Battle Creek because Brigham Young knew

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<sup>55</sup> Brigham Young to Horace S. Eldredge, “Correspondence,” October 4, 1870, *Latter-day Saint’s Millennial Star* 32 (November 1, 1870): 701-702.

<sup>56</sup> “History of Provo,” in *Tullidge’s Quarterly Magazine, of Utah, Her Founders, Her Enterprises, and Her Civilization*, ed. Edward W. Tullidge (Salt Lake City: Star Printing Company, 1885), 239.

<sup>57</sup> John Alton Peterson, *Utah’s Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1998), 59.

<sup>58</sup> Peterson, *Utah’s Black Hawk War*, 10.

he was Black Hawk, “the nephew of Chief Wakara.”<sup>59</sup> To support this claim, the Timpanogos’ reference Howard R. Driggs book *Timpanogos Town*. In this book, Driggs claims that Joshua Terry, an 1847 pioneer and mountain man who married a Native woman, told Driggs that after Black Hawk stopped leading the Native American coalition, Black Hawk told Terry that:

He was this same boy taken after the fight on Battle Creek. He could never understand why the whitemen had shot down his people. It put bitterness in his heart; and though he lived for some time with the white people, his mind was ever set on avenging the wrong. That is why he later made war against them.<sup>60</sup>

One source ignored by the historiography that might support this claim is Oliver B. Huntington’s newspaper account. In this account, Oliver alludes to the youth being Black Hawk. Oliver claims that Battle Creek had “far-reaching” consequences for the safety of the Mormon Settlers and that only God could truly foresee “the turn of events caused by that battle.” Oliver also claims that as a result of these events, Brigham Young displayed his “superior qualifications as diplomat and general.”<sup>61</sup> It is likely that Oliver is referring to Young’s command of the Nauvoo Legion during the Black Hawk War and that Oliver did believe that Battle Creek was responsible for causing it. Despite these accounts, there is one contemporary of Black Hawk that denies these claims. In his account of Battle Creek, John Brown simply states that “it has been said that this young man whose life was spared was Black Hawk. This is not true.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> “The Black Hawk War; Fort Utah & Battle Creek Massacre,” Black Hawk Productions, accessed December 15, 2022, <https://blackhawkproductions.com/fortutah.htm>.

<sup>60</sup> Howard R. Driggs, *Timpanogos Town: Story of Old Battle Creek and Pleasant Grove, Utah* (Manchester, NH: The Clarke Press, 1948), 18-19.

<sup>61</sup> Huntington, “The Indians Fought.”

<sup>62</sup> Brown, *Autobiography*, 105.

The Timpanogos Tribe also points to Oliver B. Huntington's description of the young man's conduct during the battle at Battle Creek as further evidence he was Black Hawk. Oliver's journal account describes an exchange between Dimick B. Huntington and the young man that was spared. This exchange is worth summarizing here. During the fighting, a Native woman pleaded with the Mormons to spare the life of her brother. The Mormons told her to get him out of the gulch. She went down and soon appeared again, "pulling and hauling the young man" who was "either afraid or did not want to come." Oliver describes the young man as "defiant" and "as insolent as the devil." In response to his behavior, Dimick responded quite aggressively, yelling at the youth that last year he told them not to steal their cattle. Dimick then grabbed the youth by his ear and, leveling his revolver at the youth's head, yelled "now we have come to open your ears for you." After attempting to scare the youth, Dimick told him to return to the gulch and retrieve the Native males' only gun. To this, the youth replied, "if you want that gun, go and get it." Only after Dimick pulled back the hammer on his revolver did the youth comply. The young man went down into the gulch and returned with the gun but not before throwing it on the ground, breaking the stock clean off. Other Mormon accounts compliment this youth stating that he was "good with the bow and arrows" and that he "fought manfully during the engagement."<sup>63</sup> The Timpanogos argue that the defiant nature and exemplary courage of the youth are characteristic of Chief Black Hawk.

Notwithstanding the conflicting claims surrounding Black Hawk being the youth, Battle Creek is definitely connected to the Black Hawk War. Mormon members of the expedition feature prominently in the historical narrative of the Black Hawk War. John Lowry, a member of the expedition to Battle Creek, was accused by his contemporaries for starting the Black Hawk War when in a drunken rage he pulled a Native American off of his horse.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Huntington, "The Indians Fought."; Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 347.

<sup>64</sup> Gottfredson, *Indian Depredations*, 335-38.; Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War*, 101.

Some expedition members became accustomed to and exhibited unwarranted violence towards Native Americans after Battle Creek as well. Alexander Williams, the second-in-command and first to open fire on the Natives despite Col. Scotts orders to the contrary, later kicked Old Elk out of Fort Utah after he requested treatment for measles. This combined with Rufus Stoddard's participation in the murder and mutilation of Old Bishop, a Timpanogos accused of stealing a shirt, led to the Fort Utah Massacre where Mormon settlers killed seventy Timpanogos.<sup>65</sup> Black Hawk, according to Mormon accounts, took part in these raids and witnessed firsthand the carnage.

Black Hawk's leading of the Native American coalition against the Mormon settlers could also substantiate Little Chief's warnings to the Mormon expedition about sparing the young man at Battle Creek. After the Native males were killed at Battle Creek, Little Chief and several Timpanogos arrived at the scene. According to Mormon accounts, he condoned their actions but said they had done "wrong in not killing the lad for he would kill a white man yet for revenge."<sup>66</sup> One of the first victims of the Black Hawk War was Barney Ward, one of the interpreters on the Battle Creek expedition.<sup>67</sup> The seventy-plus Mormon settlers killed during the war almost mirror the Timpanogos deaths at Fort Utah exactly, confirming Little Chief's statement of expected Native retributive justice. It is also ironic that the expedition to punish Natives for stealing thirteen heads of cattle potentially caused a conflict in which thousands were stolen.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War*, 134 (see "Fort Utah on the Timpanogos" image description).

<sup>66</sup> Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 347.

<sup>67</sup> Barney Ward was stripped naked, scalped and shot several times when his body was discovered. Hamilton H. Kearnes, "H.H. Kearnes Statement as to Indian Difficulties in Manti & San Pete & Sevier Counties," Brigham young Collection, Church Historical Department, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>68</sup> Another great source of historical irony is that Black Hawk's war resulted in Brigham Young losing his illegal

In summary, Battle Creek is one of the causes of the Black Hawk War despite the uncertainty surrounding claims of Black Hawk being there. Historical references of Black Hawk other than at Fort Utah or in the Black Hawk War are scarce, making the construction of a timeline of his life difficult. Both Joshua Terry and Oliver B. Huntington claimed that the youth was the future war chief while John Brown, without any explanation, adamantly states that he was not. While the Timpanogos highlight the courage and conduct of the youth described in Oliver's account as further proof that he was Black Hawk, this is not definitive. The Battle Creek expedition was, however, an introduction to Mormon settlers like John Lowry, Alexander Williams, and Rufus Stoddard committing violence toward native Americans that helped shape the negative relations between the two groups. If anything, Battle Creek was indeed the first in a long chain of violent events that led to the extinction of

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control of the Nauvoo Legion. In his newspaper account, Oliver B. Huntington states that Young wanted the expedition to "teach all the indians... a lasting lesson" and that it "was to be the introductory lesson to the natives in civil government." Huntington, "The Indians Fought." Later, during the Black Hawk War, Brigham Young obscured his leadership of the Nauvoo Legion because he was no longer governor of the territory but a private citizen in the eyes of the federal government. Because of his position as prophet, Latter-day Saints supported him as governor of the Mormon shadow government within the territory known as the Ghost State of Deseret. Young's control of the Nauvoo Legion is the most outright case of church invasion in the issues of state in post-Civil War history and a testament to the enduring influence of the Mormon Theocracy within the territory. The Black Hawk War caused the 1872 Ghost Dance crisis. This crisis allowed the Federal government to disband the Nauvoo Legion which dismantled Young's ability to project military power within the territory. Black Hawk, aware of the tensions between Young and the Federal government, exploited them during the war. In a way, Black Hawk taught Young a lesson in civil government. Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War*, 13-14.

Black Hawk's tribe. Though, without definitive evidence it is likely that the mystery surrounding the identity of the youth will never be solved.

## CONCLUSION

What are we to make of the Timpanogos and Mormon claims surrounding Battle Creek? It is clear to see that the Timpanogos Tribe deeply cares about its history, as seen in its recent articulation of its own historical claims with the help of Phillip B. Gottfredson. Mormons on the other hand, have forgotten about this event with the recent scholarship on the subject coming from outside voices that criticize early settlers for their treatment of Native Americans. When contextualized, Battle Creek articulates many of the struggles and frustrations of both groups during the early years of Mormon colonization. While there were interactions between the Timpanogos and the Mormon settlers before Battle Creek, it is the first to erupt into violence. This violence would characterize Native-Mormon relations for the rest of the 19th-century. It is this nexus of bad relations that makes the events of Battle Creek so contested by both the Timpanogos and the Mormons.

The Mormon claim that the Timpanogos stole their cattle is the first of contested events explored in this paper. Mormon settlers struggled to make it to the Great Basin and once there, lacked the provisions to avoid hunger during the first two years of settlement. As Mormon populations expanded down into Willow Creek, their farming and ranching began to negatively affect the Timpanogos' food sources. Despite Timpanogos' claims to the contrary, it is likely Cone and his band did steal Mormon cattle in March 1849 when food was scarce. The well documented history of cattle rustling within the territory including the events of the previous year make the Mormon claim highly plausible.

The second claim analyzed was that the Mormon militia took the women and children survivors of Battle Creek prisoners and enslaved them. Both the Timpanogos and the Mormons participated in the Native slave trade that existed in the territory around the time of Battle Creek. Once the Utes and Timpanogos acquired horses from the Spanish, it enabled chiefs like Wakara to enslave weaker Native peoples

like the Paiutes and Goshutes. When Mormons arrived in Utah, The Timpanogos approached them as potential slave buyers. The poor treatment of child slaves led many Mormon settlers to participate in the Native slave trade. Mormons also acquired slaves through military campaigns in which they killed Native fathers and husbands and took their children and wives prisoner. From the analysis of eyewitness accounts at Battle Creek and as well as the George Montgomery letter it is unclear whether or not the women and children were enslaved by the Mormons or if the women were in fact Shoshone Natives first enslaved by the Timpanogos.

The final claim analyzed is whether or not Black Hawk was the youth spared at Battle Creek and if the Black Hawk War was a result of this. While the references to Black Hawk between Fort Utah and the Black Hawk War are scarce, the contemporary sources claiming that Black Hawk was at Battle Creek are compelling. Both Joshua Terry and Oliver B. Huntington support this claim while John Brown denies it without stating why. Notwithstanding this claim's accuracy, Battle Creek did contribute to the hostilities between Native American and Mormon settlers that eventually erupted into war.

Among the historical ironies that surround Battle Creek, is that Mormons who were persecuted and pushed out of settlements in New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois could relate more to the Native American they displaced than any other group of white settlers in the history of the West. Mormons failed to solve the Indian dilemma and resorted to violence starting with the killing of the four Native men at Battle Creek. Massacres and murders committed by both sides fulfilled the warnings of Little Chief that revenge would be had. While this paper cannot definitively answer many of the examined claims, it is able to say this: Battle Creek was a tragedy.

# Gone After Yee Yen

A Chinese American Embezzler's Brief  
Prominence in Nineteenth-Century Salt Lake City

JACKSON KEYS

Chinese immigrants first entered Utah as railroad workers who populated small towns along the rails in the 1860s. By the late 1880s, the Chinese population had shifted from small rural railroad towns like Corinne to urban centers such as Salt Lake City. There, they found a home in Plum Alley, a small dirt road that sat in between State and Commercial (now Regent) Streets.<sup>1</sup> Although Plum Alley sat near the heart of Salt Lake City, it was a world in and of itself; while Chinese residents largely worked in shops on Commercial Street, they were avoided by the non-Chinese of the city.

Unfortunately, and somewhat bizarrely, Plum Alley has received little scholarly attention. Due to its small population, especially when compared with larger Chinatowns such as San Francisco's, it is rarely included in narratives of the early Asian American experience. Some histories of Salt Lake City mention Plum Alley's significance as an immigrant community, but few have attempted to dig deeper into the experience of its residents beyond mention of the brothels that could be found in the alley. The only study that looks more closely at the unique Asian American experience in Salt Lake is a 2003 article by Michael Lansing, and while its descriptions of the alley and research into the treatment of Chinese Salt Lakers helped pave the foundation for this study, much more research must be done on Plum Alley to paint a more clear picture of the experience of Salt Lake's Chinese population in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

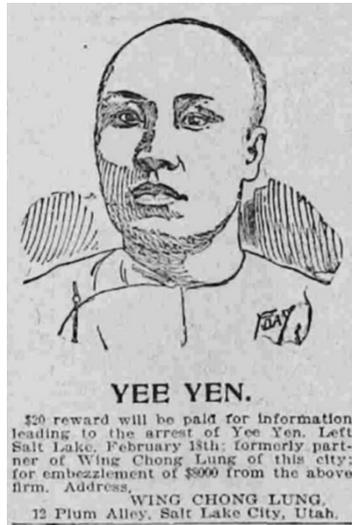
If one is to approach Plum Alley as a blank historical canvas, a closer look into the lives of its residents is a natural

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Lansing, "Race, Space, and Chinese Life in Late-Nineteenth-Century Salt Lake City," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 72, no 3 (Summer 2004): 220.

first step in understanding the richness of the overlooked Chinese of Salt Lake City. There is certainly a lack of primary sources from Plum Alley residents; recorded interviews of a few residents conducted during 1976 offers a few short anecdotes, but the lack of extant journals makes it difficult to understand the unique perspectives of this minority population.<sup>2</sup> As such, the most prevalent sources are those created by white Salt Lakers—newspaper clippings in particular. Most of these accounts are racially biased and portray the Chinese unfavorably. Journalists fed upon racist stereotypes to create enticing narratives that exoticized their lives and excluded them from white society—descriptions of opium raids, arrests, and festivals all served these purposes. The job of any historian wishing to understand Plum Alley involves reading these sources, separating fact from fiction, and pulling out common themes that help color the Chinese experience.

Such newspaper clippings constitute many of the primary sources used in Lansing’s 2003 article; one newspaper story he describes concerns a Chinese banker who embezzled funds and fled Salt Lake, only to be captured, brought back, and placed on trial. Lansing describes the way



*Etching of Yee Yen put in the Tribune the Monday after Yee Yen fled Salt Lake City. Utah Digital Newspapers.*

<sup>2</sup> These interviews can be found in a Master’s Thesis written by Don C. Conley for the Department of Asian Studies at Brigham Young University. See, Don C. Conley, “The Pioneer Chinese of Utah,” MA thesis, (Brigham Young University, 1976).

the legal personnel of Salt Lake used racial stereotypes against the Chinese of Plum Alley and how it influenced the court's ruling against the banker and his subsequent conviction.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Lansing's article only mentions one newspaper article that describes this court case; however, there were over thirty articles published in Salt Lake papers during the first half of 1897 that detail this story. A closer look reveals that this case encompassed multiple trials spanning over six months and displays the array of complex inter- and intra-ethnic conflict present in late-nineteenth century Plum Alley. The banker's name was Yee Yen, and his name would be printed with bold font in more newspaper headlines than perhaps any other Chinese Salt Laker of the era.

#### YEE YEN'S FLIGHT

Yee Yen paced back and forth as he stood on a platform at the Rio Grande Depot. The day was Thursday, February 18, 1897, and Yee's acquaintances believed that Yee was boarding a train bound for Mercur, a mining town in Tooele County. He told the firm he worked for that the purpose of the trip was to settle debts—debts which he had recently accumulated by handling various deposits for other residents of Plum Alley. But observers at the depot reported that Yee seemed anxious, eventually walking up to a white man to ask for help buying a ticket to Denver, not Mercur. The man obliged; Yee thanked him profusely and boarded the train. His firm patiently waited for him to return from Mercur that weekend, but by Sunday they realized that their employee was not coming back, and that Plum Alley was \$8,000 poorer.<sup>4</sup>

Wing Chong Lung & Co., Yee's banking firm employer, quickly placed an advertisement in the newspaper with his picture and offered twenty dollars for information that could lead to his arrest. Their initial findings revealed that the embezzled funds had been deposited at McCornicks Bank of 75 Main Street where they were earning interest, and that Yee had withdrawn the money just before he fled Salt Lake. While

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<sup>3</sup> Lansing, "Race, Space, and Chinese Life," 226-227.

<sup>4</sup> "Yee Yen," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 22, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=12721913>.

Wing Chong Lung & Co. claimed that their employee had embezzled \$8,000, most people of Plum Alley doubted that he had actually stolen that much, as most of the sums entrusted to him by others amounted to roughly fifty or one hundred dollars. But Yee had left a larger mess than just stolen funds; now those he had embezzled filed attachment cases against the firm to regain their lost money. McCormick & Co. filed their own case against Yee which claimed he had borrowed \$200 in addition to his withdrawal. While no one knew for sure where the money was, most had a guess: Hong Kong.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever amount Yee had left with, he now had only twenty dollars and ten cents with him in Colorado Springs. Yee stayed in Denver for a few days, but two relatives in Salt Lake alerted him by telegram that the police were already on his trail and that he should leave as soon as possible. The officers leading the search for Yee were Captain Eslinger and Sergeant Rhodes. After learning of the ticket to Denver bought for Yee's at the Rio Grande, Eslinger



*Street paving in Plum Alley, 1907.*  
*Utah Historical Society.*

and Rhodes began sending photographs to the Denver police in hopes that they could locate the man. Information from Chinese merchants in Denver revealed that Yee had stayed for only a few days before boarding another train to Colorado Springs. Captain Eslinger sent his photographs once again to the police there, who began searching for him.<sup>6</sup>

Yee now knew he was a wanted man and needed to keep moving. After sending most of his money out of the country, he also needed more funds. Before leaving Salt Lake,

<sup>5</sup> "Tales of the City," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, March 3, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11210444>.

<sup>6</sup> "Tales of the City."

Yee had pawned four pieces of jewelry: rings that had been collateral on a few small loans he had given out. In Colorado Springs, he wrote to the pawn shop—Lichtenstein's—to request a loan on the value of the items he had pawned. The request was signed “China Jim.” When the Colorado Springs police were tipped off about the signature, they began looking for this “China Jim,” hoping he had some connection to Yee. It was not long before they learned that Yee had fled south again, this time to Pueblo. Yee was not in Pueblo long before the police found him on March 2nd, nine days after he left Salt Lake City. His journey was finally finished.<sup>7</sup>

While Yee failed to get to China and reunite with his wife and children in Canton as most suspected was his intention, it seems he was successful in getting the embezzled funds to them. Wing Chong Lung & Co had little hope of retrieving whatever amount had been stolen at this point. Even getting Yee back to Salt Lake was no easy task. As dispatching a federal marshal to retrieve Yee would require a signed complaint as well as the funds to pay the marshal, police entered Plum Alley in hopes of collecting both.

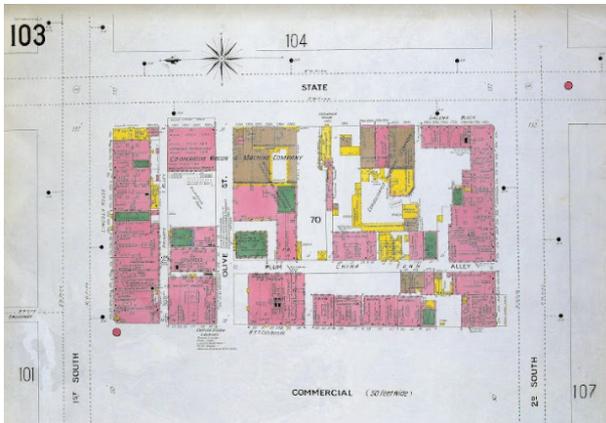
### EXOTICIZING YEE AND THE PLUM ALLEY COMMUNITY

An understanding of Plum Alley's spatiality helps make sense of its relationship with the rest of Salt Lake City. Not more than 400 feet long, Plum Alley was home to the majority of Salt Lake City's Chinese population—a predominantly male population—in the late 19th and early twentieth century. Largely a world of its own, the Chinese of Plum Alley elected their own mayor, operated Daoist temples, and grew a substantial amount of produce in private gardens.<sup>8</sup> While Plum Alley gained its reputation as the city's Chinatown by the 1880s, it was not considered a public street

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<sup>7</sup> “Yee Yen Captured,” *Deseret Evening News*, March 3, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=1797225>, “Runaway Chinaman Caught,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 3, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=12722926>, “Tales of the City.”

<sup>8</sup> Lansing, “Race, Space, and Chinese Life,” 221.



*Sanborn Insurance map of Plum Alley and surrounding streets from 1898.*

for decades and remained unpaved until 1917.<sup>9</sup> Most non-Chinese citizens of Salt Lake City had little interaction with Plum Alley—except for visitors to the “Big V,” a prominent brothel located in the alley.<sup>10</sup> The only consistent exception was the annual Chinese New Year festivals when Plum Alley’s grandiose celebrations invited non-Chinese Salt Lakers into the alley to witness what one reporter described as a “littered mass of red devil paper from thousands of genuine firecrackers from the Flowery Kingdom.”<sup>11</sup>

Whether it was news of opium raids or New Year celebrations, these interactions served to reinforce a narrative of the “exotic orient” and its inferiority to the West. Racist language that referred to the Chinese as “almond eyed” or “pig tailed” was common enough, but beyond that they were stereotyped as opium addicts and heathens who possessed an

<sup>9</sup> “Will Pave Plum Alley,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 27, 1916, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=14686334>.

<sup>10</sup> Jeffery Nichols, *Power, Prostitution, Polygamy: Salt Lake City, 1847-1918*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 64-66.

<sup>11</sup> “The Chinese Celebrate,” *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, February 2, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11224346&q>.

inferior intellectual ability. These stereotypes bolstered concepts of white superiority, but at the same time generated a certain amount of fascination with these eastern peoples. This was exhibited in the 1897 Pioneer Day parade, not long after the conclusion of Yee's trial, when the Chinese community constructed a dragon float that caught widespread city attention. As Lansing points out, in "incorporating the foreign dragon in a celebration of white settlement...parade organizers enveloped the Chinese community into the fabric of Salt Lake City by highlighting its fanciful and foreign nature. The Chinese dragon represented Salt Lake where the Chinese community never could."<sup>12</sup> In the time between Yee's capture and return to Salt Lake, newspaper stories were turning him into a sort of dragon himself—exotic, fascinating, and potentially dangerous. Journalists described a frenzy of excitement in Plum Alley, filled with fire crackers and loud bands invoking Chinese deity, when news arrived that Yee was caught. This was one of many occasions when white journalists used the Yee story to exoticize Plum Alley residents as a whole. Yee was quickly made to be more than an absconding banker, but rather a target of the fascination and racism directed towards the entire Salt Lake Chinese population.

#### YEE'S RETURN TO SALT LAKE

Despite the apparent excitement caused by Yee's capture, the police that entered Plum Alley with the intention of collecting money to pay for the dispatching of a federal marshal to bring the embezzler back to Salt Lake were surprised by the difficulty of finding anyone willing to contribute. Most either were not willing to pay or wanted to avoid any kind of involvement with the law. The police had to explain that dispatching a federal officer was the only way to get Yee back, at which point money was collected and one resident, Kim Poy, was willing to sign the complaint that would give the marshal authority to retrieve Yee.<sup>13</sup> It is not surprising that the Chinese were largely unwilling to sign the

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<sup>12</sup> Lansing, "Race, Space, and Chinese Life," 237.

<sup>13</sup> "Gone After Yee Yen," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 4, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=12723032>.

complaint, even though many certainly wished to get their stolen funds back. In Chinatowns across the United States, a transfer of the lineage system from China to their new homes meant that most Chinatowns were dominated by a single family association. Other cities that were not dominated by a single lineage often saw the emergence of four-clan associations—an alliance of sorts between four families that agreed to work in unison, often in opposition to any four-clan associations that existed in the same Chinatown. These associations served as the primary dispute-settlers of matters within or between family associations. This style of extralegal conflict resolution was mistrusted by white Americans who did not understand it but was largely effective in enforcing law and order within Chinatowns.<sup>14</sup>

By 1909, there were roughly fifty members of the Yee family living in Salt Lake City.<sup>15</sup> Considering the amount of aid Yee would receive from relatives during his trial, it seems likely that the Yee family was prominent during 1897 as well. As white reporters of the era did not understand the internal workings of Plum Alley, it is difficult to determine whether or not there were other families opposed to the Yees. Whichever families held power in Plum Alley, the Chinese of Salt Lake City were used to settling matters outside of American courts. This is made evident by prominent Chinese of Plum Alley who, from the beginning of the Yee case, were suggesting the possibility of the matter being settled outside of court. After reporters from the *Salt Lake Tribune* spoke to Wing Dun, a well-known translator of Plum Alley, they wrote “A number of (Yee) Yen’s creditors do not want to prosecute, and his friends think they can settle with the rest for about half of what Yee owes them.”<sup>16</sup> Whether or not Kim Poy hoped to

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<sup>14</sup> Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 81-83.

<sup>15</sup> “Highbinders of the On Yick Tong,” *Deseret News*, November 23, 1909, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/76545962/?terms=Yee%20Family&match=1>.

<sup>16</sup> “Waiting for Yee Yen,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 7, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=12723527>.

settle the matter in or out of the courts, by signing the official complaint, the Yee Yen case became inseparably involved with the Salt Lake City justice system.

Officer Shannon, the federal marshal assigned to the retrieval of Yee, left Salt Lake on March 3rd and returned four days later. By this point, the major papers reporting Yee's return began to dig for more details surrounding his flight, many of which are contradictory and difficult to believe. The fact that Yee had previously been embezzling money from his firm as well as friends' savings and sending the money to China seems likely; reporters for the *Salt Lake Herald-Republican* gathered from residents of Plum Alley that Yee's flight was prompted when multiple creditors demanded a return of investment and he lacked the needed funds.<sup>17</sup> The reporters go on to elaborate on a sad tale in which Yee paid for his sick brother, Ah Poo, to leave "the miasma of the swamp lands about Canton," leaving Yee horribly broke. Supposedly it was this situation that forced Yee to resort to embezzlement. Whether or not the story—the source of which is unknown—is accurate, it displays a growing investment in Yee and his case as well as further attempts to embellish it with drama and exoticism.<sup>18</sup>

### YEE'S TRIAL BEGINS

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, the day after Yee's return to Salt Lake, he was taken to the police court for his arraignment. Yee pleaded not guilty to the two charges brought against him in

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<sup>17</sup> In 1895, an article in *The Herald* summarizing police activity references a man named Yee Yen arrested for conducting a game of fantan. It is possible that Yee Yen participated in gambling as a means to make up for the money he was sending to Hong Kong, but a clear connection to the Yee Yen in the 1895 article is impossible to make as reporters of the time often misspell Chinese names or call them by the wrong names entirely. "Police Court," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, November 11, 1895, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11389136>.

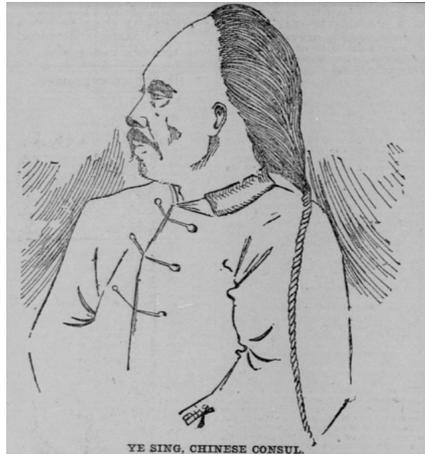
<sup>18</sup> "Chinese Embezzler," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, March 8, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11218475>.

the complaint signed by Kim Poy: embezzlement and grand larceny. His bail was set at \$1,000—which no one paid—and his first court appearance was scheduled for that Saturday, March 13th, but thereafter pushed back to the following

Thursday, the 18th. When that day came, Yee appeared in court alongside his

attorney, George F. Goodwin, who had lived in Salt Lake since 1892. Goodwin was a partner in the law firm Goodwin and Van Pelt, which was located by the mouth of Plum Alley on Commercial Street. Goodwin was a Republican, a devout methodist, and a skilled lawyer whose prowess in the courtroom was about to be displayed.<sup>19</sup>

The prosecution was represented by Ray Van Cott, but beside him in court sat a certain Chinese man of wealthy background who attracted much attention from local reporters. His name was Yee Sing, and he, perhaps more than



*Etching of Yee Sing published in the Herald. Utah Digital Newspapers.*

<sup>19</sup> "Police Etchings," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, March 9, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11236816>, "Chinese in Court," *Deseret Evening News*, March 18, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=1803415>, "Judge G. F. Goodwin on Christianity," *Ogden Daily Standard*, July 27, 1914, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6rb86dp/6779605>, "Supreme Court," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, January 29, 1896, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6gb3b3x/11435319>.

any other, wanted to see Yee behind bars.<sup>20</sup> Yee Sing was a Chinese consul-general stationed in San Francisco who came to Salt Lake City the moment he heard of Yee's capture in Pueblo. He was a relative of one of the owners in Wing Chong Lung & Co. and was said to have lost \$1,600 due to Yee's embezzling. The *Herald* even claims that he was the true power behind the firm nationwide but neglected to offer insight on what that entailed. In describing him, they wrote, "He is a fearless looking Chinese with a very respectable growth of mustache—something rare among the race."<sup>21</sup> The *Tribune* also took time to describe the distinguished man; after again mentioning his mustache, they wrote, "He was well and even expensively clothed in warm garments of padded plum-colored silk, with a fur collar around his neck which greatly accentuated his distinguished bearing."<sup>22</sup> If the papers wanted a fitting antagonist for Yee, they certainly found it in Yee Sing. If Yee was to take the role of the pitiful Chinese man, then Yee Sing was depicted as his Westernized foil—at least for the time being. Throughout Yee's court appearance, Yee Sing would sit close to Prosecutor Cott and offer his thoughts on the proceedings.

The prosecution had two Chinese witnesses prepared to appear on the 18th. The first was Kim Poy—the man who had lost one hundred dollars to Yee and the only person in Plum Alley willing to sign the necessary papers for his retrieval from Colorado—and the second was Dong Fung, a coworker of Yee's. Along with the translator, Wing Dun, these witnesses raised their hands and began swearing their oaths when an objection was raised by Goodwin. "These men,

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<sup>20</sup> "Chinatown Turned Out," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, March 19, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11388915>. The *Herald* referred to Yee Sing as Yee Ling in this article. The *Tribune*, covering the same story, used the name Yee Sing, which the *Herald* used as well in future articles, suggesting that Ling was either a typo or a mishearing of his actual name.

<sup>21</sup> "Chinatown Turned Out."

<sup>22</sup> "Sworn in on Joss Sticks," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 19, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=12725015>.

your honor,” he said, “are not American citizens nor do they believe in the Christian religion nor in the Christian God. Therefore I protest against their being sworn in the usual manner. They do not recognize or feel bound by the Christian oath, and I demand that they be sworn in accordance with their belief.”<sup>23</sup>

Justice Wenger sustained the objection, saying, “Well, I don’t happen to know what their customs are...But if you know how they do it in Chinaland, I will administer the oath in that way.”<sup>24</sup> To this, Wing Dun spoke up and said, “I am a Christian. ... I was born in China, but I was brought up in America. I go to Sunday-school, and I don’t believe in Chinese idols at all. I believe in the American God.”<sup>25</sup> Goodwin again objected to Wing Dun taking the normal oaths, claiming that he might not interpret the proceedings correctly because he had personal interests at stake. Goodwin motioned to make Ruth King–Yee’s sister-in-law who was fluent in English and would very soon play a large role in the outcome of the trial—a sworn interpreter who could verify that Wing Dun’s translations were honest. Justice Wenger was satisfied knowing that as long as she was in the courtroom, she could tell whether Wing Dun was interpreting correctly, and with this in mind, Wing Dun was allowed to take the normal oath.

Wing was then asked how oaths were taken in Chinese courts, to which the Christian translator replied:

We take a rooster and cut off its head, swearing at the same time to tell the truth or die like the rooster...This is only done in very important cases, though. Sometimes burning joss-sticks are used, and

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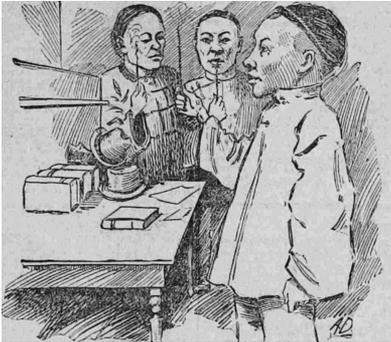
<sup>23</sup> “Sworn in on Joss Sticks.” There are no extant transcripts of Yee’s court proceedings, or any court proceedings of 1897 for that matter. Fortunately, Yee’s first court appearances are documented in detail by multiple papers. While the quotes cited here come from the *Tribune*, the *Herald* reports Goodwin saying similar things with slightly different wording.

<sup>24</sup> “Sworn in on Joss Sticks.”

<sup>25</sup> “Sworn in on Joss Sticks.”

sometimes the witnesses go outdoors and call heaven to witness that they are telling the truth.<sup>26</sup>

A discussion then commenced about what was to be done, seeing that the court lacked chickens and joss sticks.



*Etching in the Tribune of Wing Dun, Kim Poy, and Dong Fung swearing their oaths on joss sticks.*

*Utah Digital Newspapers*

Goodwin suggested that the court secure a chicken, and while they discussed the possibility of decapitating said chicken, King produced joss sticks off her person that she gave to the Chinese witnesses. Both the *Herald* and the *Tribune* report Wing Dun and the two witnesses holding joss sticks, which had been lit and then put out, and repeating

together, “We will tell the truth, and if we do not tell the truth we will be ready to be put out like the joss sticks.”<sup>27</sup> In unison, the three dropped their joss sticks, head down, to the ground, and the court was allowed to proceed.

Goodwin’s objection to the witness’ oath-taking appears to be his first step in a strategy he used throughout the entire case. He repeatedly played on the people’s mistrust and disdain for the Chinese, likely hoping to foster distrust between the jury and the Chinese involved with the prosecution. This distrust grew out of racist attitudes towards the Chinese, the prevalence of which is seen in newspaper articles dating back to the mid-1800s. A journalist for the *Deseret News* wrote in 1856 that “the Chinese [were] morally

<sup>26</sup> “Sworn in on Joss Sticks.”

<sup>27</sup> “Chinatown Turned Out.”

the most debased people on the face of the earth.”<sup>28</sup> Andrew Gyory argues that while many white workers of the Gilded Age harbored racist sentiments towards the Chinese, it was not until politicians, in an effort to gain votes, used “The Chinese Problem” as a smoke screen to mask the more complicated realities of economic difficulty that white workers were willing to support racist policy.<sup>29</sup> Yee’s case occurred well over a decade after the Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted, and a simple overview of newspaper articles regarding the “Chinese Question” allow us to safely assume that most whites in Salt Lake not only possessed anti-Chinese attitudes, but supported anti-Chinese policy.

Chinese immigrants in the United States from this era were not only barred from citizenship but faced periods of intense racial hatred. This hatred often grew to the point of violence, resulting in mass expulsions such as the Eureka expulsion of 1885 when up to 800 Chinese men, women, and children were driven out of the city by a mob of vigilantes.<sup>30</sup> As such, it is interesting to note Goodwin’s aggressive defense of Yee by preying on racist fears. One may certainly question his motives; his defense of Yee seems not to stem from any affection towards the Chinese—his language in court seems to suggest just the opposite, but as will be seen, Goodwin was willing to go to great lengths in an effort to free his defendant.

## EXAMINING THE WITNESSES

The first of the prosecution’s witnesses, Kim Poy, testified that he gave one hundred dollars to Yee with the intent of having it sent to his father in Hong Kong. He produced the receipt, which the *Tribune* reported was covered with “hieroglyphics” that Wing Dun translated for the

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<sup>28</sup> “Chinese Morality,” *Deseret News*, March 19, 1856, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=2573928>.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) 13.

<sup>30</sup> Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusions, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2018), 113.

jury.<sup>31</sup> When Goodwin questioned the witness, he claimed that as a known gambler who had not been employed for long, there was no way the idle Kim Poy could have saved one hundred dollars to have entrusted with Yee. He asked the witness if he had ever knowingly passed counterfeit money, if he had left Salt Lake to hide from the law, and whether he usually came out ahead or behind when playing fan-tan. His strategy to slander the witness with racist stereotypes proved unsuccessful; an objection was raised by VanCott and Kim Poy's answers to the questions were all removed from court record as "the character of the witness was not on trial."<sup>32</sup>

Dong Fung was the next witness to be examined. Dong worked at the same firm as Yee and testified that on February 15, two days after Kim Poy gave his money to Yee, Dong Fung had a conversation with Yee in which Yee stated he had lost the money and would be leaving to Mercur in hopes of getting cash he could send to China for Kim. He also testified that the signature on Kim Poy's receipt was Yee's. Any questions the defense asked this witness were not recorded.<sup>33</sup> The last witness called by the prosecution was Frank D. Kimball, an assistant cashier at McCornick's Bank. He testified that Yee had sent twenty dollars to Hong Kong through the bank on February 18th.<sup>34</sup> After the testimony of these two witnesses, the court adjourned until 10:30 am the following day.

In describing the second day of Yee's trial, the *Herald* reported, "All of the quaintness of mystic climes (of the previous day) had given place once more to the commonplace of the hobo surroundings and the examinations droned along in the plain dry-as-dust American

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<sup>31</sup> "Sworn in on Joss Sticks."

<sup>32</sup> "Chinatown Turned Out."

<sup>33</sup> "Sworn in on Joss Sticks," "Chinatown Turned Out."

<sup>34</sup> "Chinatown Turned Out."

The tribune reports this date as the 8th, but the *Herald* reports the 18th. Seeing as Yee Yen obtained the money from Kim Poy on the 13th, it seems likely that the 18th was the correct date and the Tribune simply forgot to add the number 1 before 8.

way.”<sup>35</sup> Even though this day in court did not have the excitement of lighting joss sticks, the press still found ways to squeeze every last bit of drama out of the story, this time by describing the court’s introduction to Chinese characters. Dong Fung was recalled and questioned by Goodwin about the receipt of Kim’s deposit shown to the court the previous day. Hoping to prove that it was unreliable evidence, Goodwin asked the witness to rewrite the characters on the receipt as spoken aloud by Wing Dun. Ink and a brush were procured by the court, and all huddled around Dong Fung as he wrote the words spoken to him by Wing. While Goodwin may have hoped for a discrepancy between the receipt and Fung’s characters, the witness’ writing and the receipt appeared to be depicting the same words.<sup>36</sup>

While it seemed that Goodwin could get nothing out of the witnesses, he still had a few cards left to play. He moved that the prosecution be made to choose one of the two charges brought before Yee, either embezzlement or grand larceny. As the evidence that had been provided seemed to suggest Yee had embezzled at the very least a minor amount of funds, perhaps Goodwin intended to call upon technicalities in the law to reduce the charges they would have to deal with. Unfortunately for Yee and Goodwin, Justice Wenger overruled the motion. Wenger determined that the case against Yee was strong enough to send him to the district courts, so a new bail of \$1,000 was set and the defendant was handed over to the county jail.<sup>37</sup>

#### DEFENDING AND ATTACKING YEE

As Yee waited for his next trial, conflict broke out in Plum Alley. Even before Yee first appeared in court, Wing Cong Lung & Co. had been dealing with a handful of attachment cases, none of which ended favorably for the firm. As such, their fixtures and stock were put on auction and bought altogether for a total of \$500. Furious with the result

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<sup>35</sup> “A Study in Chinese,” *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, March 20, 1987, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11488802>.

<sup>36</sup> “A Study in Chinese.”

<sup>37</sup> “A study in Chinese.”

of these attachments, Yee Sing wanted to be absolutely certain that his embezzling employee ended up in prison. So instead of waiting for Yee to appear in the district court, Yee Sing decided to file a new complaint against Yee to the police court signed by Dong Fung. In the complaint, Dong accused Yee of stealing rings that had been in his possession; the same rings that Lichtenstein's shipped to Colorado for Yee. Yee Sing planned to continue to file charges against Yee weekly



*Etching of Ruth King in the Herald. Utah Digital Newspapers.*

leading up to his appearance in the police court, but Ruth King, who had translated in the first court appearance, put his plan on hold.<sup>38</sup> Ruth King, who was twenty-six years old at the time, was born in California, spoke both flawless English and Chinese, and was doing everything in her power to keep Yee out of prison.<sup>39</sup> Multiple papers describe her as the main

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<sup>38</sup> "Deep Chinese Muddle," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, April 2, 1897,

<https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11504748>.

<sup>39</sup> Ruth King is referred to by the *Herald* as Mrs. C. H. King. Her Chinese name is unknown as the papers never mention it, but the 1910 census records her English name as Ruth King. The census connects her to Yee Yen's brother, whose name was recorded as Charles H. King. While the 1910 census recorded his name as such, the *Herald* referred to him as Chin King Yen. As Yee Yen's surname was Yee, not Yen, this was likely an addition made by the *Herald* to connect the two, when in reality, Charles H. King was likely not part of Yee Yen's immediate family. Therefore, it is unlikely that Ruth King was Yee Yen's sister-in-law, although multiple publications mention her as such. A more likely explanation is that the two have some more distant familiar connection but retained close ties while living in Plum Alley,

force behind Yee's defense. The *Herald* reported that despite her being the embezzler's sister-in-law, she was also a victim of his embezzlement. Apparently undisturbed by this, she began using the money earned in her attachment case against Wing Cong Lung & Co to buy out those whom Yee Sing hoped he could encourage to file more charges against Yee. While reporting this, the *Herald* notes that the unwillingness of anyone to file charges might have also been due to the "antipathy of the Chinese to ask the assistance of Caucasian courts."<sup>40</sup> The fact that Chinese Americans were reluctant to settle disputes in American courts and instead relied on their own internal justice systems has been previously discussed, so King's payments likely served as even greater motivation for them to keep quiet. A frustrated Yee Sing—who was readily willing to voice his frustrations with the papers—accused King of previously being a prostitute while being interviewed by the *Herald*.<sup>41</sup> The disdain between these two would only grow as the case continued.

On April 2nd, Yee finally appeared in the police court again, this time to answer for the charge of stealing Dong Fung's rings. Goodwin was by Yee's side once again, and the rest of the court room was filled to the brim with residents of Plum Alley. This time Goodwin made no scene when the witnesses were sworn in. The first witness brought to the stand was Dong Fung. Dong testified that roughly a year before, Fong Nun and Che Wah pawned two diamonds to him for fifty dollars. Dong held the rings in a locked drawer, but sometime later the rings disappeared. No one had access to the drawer besides his coworker, Yee. At the conclusion of

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making Ruth King not a sister-in-law, but a more distant relative through marriage or close acquaintance of Yee's.

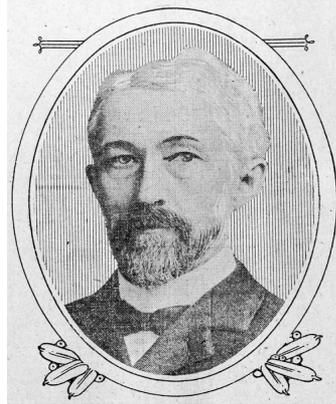
<sup>40</sup> "Deep Chinese Muddle."

<sup>41</sup> "Deep Chinese Muddle."

his testimony, Goodwin stood up to do what he did best—rebuttal to find fault with the witness.<sup>42</sup>

Goodwin began by questioning Dong's financial status in an attempt to prove that Dong owed Wing Chong Lung & Co money and had used firm cash to pawn the rings off Fong Nun and Che Wah. This was the suspicion of those who knew Dong; one could well guess that it was Yee's idea to bring this detail to light. Whether or not this claim was true, Dong continued to deny it and insisted that he used his own money to pawn the rings, although he did confess to losing some money in a game of fan-tan here and there.<sup>43</sup>

The next witness was M. B. Lichtenstein, who worked at California Collateral Bank in Salt Lake City. The man testified that on June 17, 1896, Yee pawned the two diamonds for twenty-five dollars each and signed his name Gee Gen. Later, in February of 1897, Lichtenstein received a letter from a China Jim at Colorado Springs with the pawn claim ticket for the rings as well as the money to forward them to Colorado. If Goodwin questioned this witness, no paper reports it. Perhaps questioning the white witnesses was as appealing of a story as the rebuttal of Dong or Kim, or perhaps this witness was not considered as important to the case. The same is true for the final witness, Captain Eslinger—the officer who was responsible for catching Yee months earlier—who simply



*Etching of George F.*

*Goodwin appeared in the papers after his death in 1918. Utah Digital Newspapers.*

<sup>42</sup> "Deep Chinese Muddle."

<sup>43</sup> "Yee Yen's Woes," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, April 3, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11465780>.

testified that Dong's two rings were the same rings given to him by the police at Colorado Springs.<sup>44</sup>

The result of this second session of police court was much like the first; Yee was sent to the county jail to await his trial in the district court. It would take almost a month for that day to come; in the meantime, his family was busy trying to get him out of jail and clear his name. Three days after Yee's appearance in police court, Ruth King moved her first pawns; she sent a typewritten letter to the *Herald* and filed libel charges against Yee Sing. That very night, a warrant was issued for Yee Sing's arrest. Her move was well timed, as the following day yet another attachment case against Wing Chong Lung & Co would be heard. By keeping Yee Sing busy trying to deflect the libel charge, he would be unable to appear in court to testify during the attachment case. The purpose of the typewritten letter King sent to the *Herald* was to support her libel case and clear her name after Yee Sing publicly accused her of being a prostitute. In the letter she detailed her life up to that point and emphasized that she had never "been in a house of the character impugned to her." After delivering the letter she also made sure to have a conversation with *Herald* reporters in which she delivered more blows against Yee Sing, claiming that the man held no official title in China and was nothing more than an airheaded fraud.<sup>45</sup>

It is interesting to note that while reporters had first described Yee Sing without the same racist language they used when describing other Chinese people, at this point they began to attribute more American-ness to King, favoring her over Yee Sing. They wrote that during the aftermath of Yee's second police court appearance, Yee Sing had "shown a marked aversion to the little American born Chinese woman (Ruth King) whose more civilized wit has been pitted against his cunning."<sup>46</sup> Reporters at this time also began mentioning Yee Sing's opium use—a prominent stereotype of Chinese

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<sup>44</sup> "Yee Yen Again," *Deseret Evening News*, April 2, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=1796748>.

<sup>45</sup> "The Chinese Mixup," *Salt Lake Herald Republican*, April 6, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11507029>.

<sup>46</sup> "The Chinese Mixup."

men. They went on to describe King using more positive terms that distance her from Chinese stereotypes; a journalist for the *Herald* wrote, “Mrs. King is an educated woman with an apparent trait of sincerity not expected in the citizenship of China.”<sup>47</sup> Her letter, written in fluent English, may have played a large role in shifting positive descriptions from Yee Sing to King; as a woman they perceived as more American than Yee Sing, she became a hero of the expanding Yee Yen narrative.<sup>48</sup>

Yee’s name was hardly mentioned in the papers until May 1st, when he was brought before the district court for arraignment. He sat next to Goodwin, who waited impatiently as the clerk read aloud the charges of grand larceny made against Yee by Dong. Before the clerk could sit back down after finishing the statement, Goodwin was on his feet with a motion to dismiss the evidence. He argued that the charges against Yee had not been filed within the time allowed by court statutes, that the arrest and preliminary examinations of Yee were unconstitutional, and that he was first apprehended for an entirely different crime than the charges of grand larceny that were read against him that day. The court decided to hear Goodwin’s arguments in session on the 6th.<sup>49</sup>

Goodwin was enraged with the outcome of the hearing on the 6th. Yee did not go to court this time, instead it was just Goodwin, attorney Graham F. Putnam (who had

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<sup>47</sup> “The Chinese Mixup.”

<sup>48</sup> Michael Lansing details ways in which reporters made use of Chinese accents in their journalism to marginalize the Chinese Salt Lakers they wrote about. In “Race, Space, and Chinese Life in Late-Nineteenth-Century Salt Lake City”, he references a news clipping that accentuates the Chinese accent of a Plum Alley resident, then he argues, “Clear reference to that Chinese accent shaped readers’ perceptions and confirmed their assumptions of Chinese city dwellers even as it embodied the racist attitudes of the white community.” A more in-depth analysis of the way white Salt Lakers created separate race spaces for the Chinese through language, among many other things, can be found in the article. See, Lansing, “Race, Space, and Chinese Life,” 225.

<sup>49</sup> “Yee Yen Arraigned,” *Deseret Evening News*, May 1, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=1764988>.

taken over prosecution at the district level), and Judge Norrell. Norrell overruled every motion made by Goodwin, arguing that the time in which the charge needed to be filed was irrelevant as Yee's position would not have changed even if it had been filed a few days earlier. In regard to Goodwin's claim that Yee had not been arrested for the charges currently against him, Judge Norrell held that as Yee was a fugitive from justice and could be tried for any crime. Goodwin took exceptions to each ruling and was prepared to continue arguing them in the next court appearance.<sup>50</sup>

Yee's district court appearance was reported in much less detail than any previous court appearance. By this point, Yee's name had been in the papers for nearly four months; public interest was most certainly declining. On May 24th, Yee and Goodwin appeared before Judge Norrell for the grand larceny case. The translators, Wing Dun and Ruth King were both present, though no mention is made of Yee Sing. Previous statements of his make it seem unlikely that he would have willingly left Salt Lake before the conclusion of the district trial. As such, it may very well have been King's legal actions against him that kept him from appearing. The only witness mentioned in the papers to appear in court that day was Dong Fung, whose testimony did not differ from what he said in the police court. A cross-examination occurred, but no details were recorded, which is a shame, as on the 27th, the jury consulted for just one hour before concluding that Yee was not guilty.<sup>51</sup>

## THE COURT VERDICTS

As the papers report no new case details coming to light during Yee's district court appearance, it is difficult to determine exactly how the jury came to this conclusion. It seems unlikely that the jury believed Yee had never actually committed the crime of stealing the jewelry, as much evidence existed of Yee sending for the pawned rings at Colorado

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<sup>50</sup> "Yee Yen to Answer," *Deseret Evening News*, May 6, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=1743966>.

<sup>51</sup> "Yee Yen Not Guilty," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, May 28, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11389978>.

Springs. It is possible that Dong Fung fabricated his story of obtaining the rings from Fong Nun and Che Wah, which would also explain why the two were unable to appear in court. While such a conspiracy between Wong Chong Lung & Co and Dong Fung was possible, no tangible evidence suggests it and it remains pure speculation. The prosecution's entire case, though, rested upon the testimony of Dong Fung. All other witnesses were only connected to the case peripherally, and there was no concrete connection between Yee and the rings. The jury may have found the evidence lacking or may have mistrusted Dong Fung's testimony. If this were the case, then Goodwin's strategy of racial slander may have awarded Yee the verdict he was hoping for.

It is also possible that while attorney Goodwin's argument to dismiss the evidence failed to move Judge Norrell, it may have convinced the jury. From the beginning of the case, there were legal missteps on the part of those trying to catch Yee. When Officer Shannon traveled to Pueblo to escort Yee back to Salt Lake City, Governor Adams of Colorado refused to sign the extradition papers as they had been drawn improperly. Only after Governor Wells of Utah telegraphed an amendment to the papers did Governor Adams sign them.<sup>52</sup> Even after the papers were amended, Goodwin's claim that Yee was apprehended for a completely different crime than the grand larceny charges for which he was currently on trial seems to suggest even more sloppy work on the part of Yee's prosecutors, or at least a misstep on Yee Sing's part who had Dong file the second grand larceny charges against him.

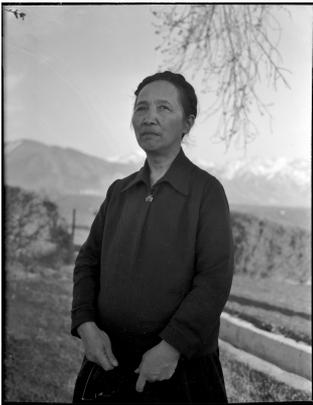
Whatever reason led to the jury's surprising verdict, the fact remained that Yee still had embezzlement charges laid against him by Kim Poy—a charge much more serious than grand larceny. On June 1st, Goodwin appeared before Norrell once again with a motion to dismiss the information involved in the embezzlement case. This time, Goodwin brought to light the fact that in the police court hearing Yee had been tried for embezzling funds received as a banker, but that in the district court he was being tried for embezzling

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<sup>52</sup> "Hitch in Yee Yen Case," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 6, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=12723364>.

funds as an agent. Quoting the Utah State Constitution, he said that a defendant must be tried for the exact same offense in all levels of the court. Attorney Putnam of the prosecution counter-argued that the charges were essentially the same.<sup>53</sup> Judge Norrell considered the motion until the following day, then overruled Goodwin's motion to dismiss the charges.<sup>54</sup>

Yee pleaded not guilty yet again and appeared in district court on the 4th. But before the charge of embezzling one hundred dollars from Kim Poy was addressed, attorney



*Ruth King in 1934. Family Search.*

Putnam surprised everyone by asking the court to dismiss the case. He followed up the motion saying that the evidence was of such a conflicting nature that the prosecution had no hope of securing a conviction.<sup>55</sup>

Goodwin must have been extremely relieved; for the past few months he had been fighting an uphill battle, motioning repeatedly to dismiss the charges against Yee

for a variety of reasons. But however Goodwin felt with this easier-than-expected

court victory, no one could have been more relieved than Yee himself. For the first time since his capture in March, he could walk the streets a free man. His family and friends, who had been by his side from the beginning, must have been quite excited as well, no one perhaps more than Ruth King. Were it not for her work to remove Yee Sing from the picture and

<sup>53</sup> "Motion to Quash," *Deseret Evening News*, June 1, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=1805915>.

<sup>54</sup> "Yee Yen's Motion Overruled," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, June 3, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=11395665>.

<sup>55</sup> "Yee Yen a Free Man," *Deseret Evening News*, June 4, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=1789779>.

prevent him from filing more charges, Yee's victory would have been much more difficult to secure.

#### YEE AFTER THE TRIAL

What happened to Yee next is difficult to determine. His name is never mentioned in the papers after the case's dismissal. Whether he stayed in Salt Lake, moved to another Chinatown, or ever made it back to his family in Canton is impossible to determine by available historical records. Yee's former firm, Wing Chong Lung & Co, was able survive the financial losses, although they would continue to deal with attachment cases long after August 1897.<sup>56</sup> No newspaper records report on Yee Sing after the trial, which is unsurprising as white reporters usually only mentioned Chinese by name when they committed a crime. Goodwin continued to practice law and serve as a judge in Salt Lake City until his death in January 1918.<sup>57</sup> Ruth King continued living in Salt Lake City and ran a doll repair shop until her death in 1936.<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps the biggest unanswered question in Yee's story is what crime he actually committed. Even the papers seem confused as to the exact nature of Yee's crime. While reporting his victory in the court, the *Deseret Evening News* wrote, "That he is an extremely lucky fellow is apparent, if only one half of the allegations made against him are true."<sup>59</sup> Which allegations were true and which were made up is difficult to ascertain. Yee's family members were the first to suggest he leave Salt Lake, and testimony from McCormick's bank confirmed that Yee had sent twenty dollars to Hong

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<sup>56</sup> "Chinaman Arrested: Accused of Perjury in Swearing as to His Property," *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 14, 1897, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=12744328>.

<sup>57</sup> "Death Calls Judge G. F. Goodwin Succumbs during Court Recess," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 1, 1918, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6bp1d6j/14902945>.

<sup>58</sup> Kate B. Carter, "The Early Chinese of Western United States," in *Our Pioneer Heritage* vol. 10, (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1967) 448.

<sup>59</sup> "Yee Yen a Free Man."

Kong, but these two facts hardly suggest that he ever embezzled the \$8,000 he was first accused of. If he was attempting to return to Hong Kong, it seems quite strange that he traveled east to Denver. None of the court reports write anything about Yee attempting to explain why he went to Colorado—one can only speculate as to why he fled there instead of California. He may have been attempting a roundabout way of travel, or perhaps Canton was never meant to be his final destination. He may have been on his way to live with other relatives to escape his debts in Salt Lake City, a plan he may have felt was more realistic than making his way back to China.

If there was one thing Yee may have been innocent of, it would be grand larceny. Dong Fung was the only strong witness Yee Sing could muster for the prosecution; the others simply testified that rings had been pawned by Yee, but the rings were never confiscated as evidence and the story relied entirely on testimony. He may have stolen the rings, or Dong Fung could have fabricated the story on his boss' orders. Whatever the actual nature of this particular charge, the decision to charge Yee of grand larceny in the first place was a poorly calculated decision on the part of Yee Sing; the lack of material evidence and present witnesses led to an easy victory for Yee, and it is entirely possible that Putnam's motion to drop the embezzlement charges came from the strain of the already drawn-out and fruitless prosecution against Yee.

For non-Chinese Salt Lakers, the Yee Yen story was a glimpse into a seemingly exotic and unfamiliar world. In fact, the exoticism surrounding the case's narrative may have been one of the largest factors in setting Yee free. Witnesses may have claimed that Yee sent their money to China, but there was no tangible evidence that he did. Only one witness could confirm that he sent twenty dollars to Hong Kong while the larger sums Yee was accused of embezzling were long gone and untraceable. Without more substantial evidence of where this money went, all the prosecution had was testimonies, most of which were from the Chinese of Plum Alley—people whom many residents of Salt Lake City were unfamiliar with and considered untrustworthy. That the jury considered the testimony of Dong Fung not convincing

enough to find Yee guilty may very well have been the work of Goodwin who used these anti-Chinese sentiments to invalidate the testimonies of the Chinese witnesses from the start of the case. Yee's story largely took place in an unfamiliar world to the non-Chinese community, a world that they found inaccessible and undesirable, though—at least momentarily—intriguing.

## CONCLUSION

As the memory of the Yee Yen case faded, Plum Alley itself also faded from the cultural landscape of Salt Lake City. Today, a parking garage covers most of the land that made up Plum Alley. By the 1910's, Plum Alley structures were being demolished or rebuilt in the name of "commercial progress." A writer for the *Salt Lake Telegram* wrote in 1940 of the displacement of the Chinese of Plum Alley:

Some of the residents went to farms, it was reported. Others found jobs out of the city. The Older Chinese, unable to cast about for new fields, moved down the alley to other dwellings. It may be the beginning of the end of Chinatown, some persons believed. The ramshackle old alley lost its romanticism years ago and its one-time importance is known only by reminiscence.<sup>60</sup>

If, as the *Telegram* suggests, Plum Alley's romanticism and exotic appeal was gone by the 40s, and names such as Yee's no longer appeared in the paper, then the Chinese-Americans that had lived in Plum Alley for decades had no tools to defend themselves from an expanding post-war market. Plum Alley was soon nothing more than a parking garage. Goodwin's firm, in fact, once sat where the Regent Street parking garage's elevators sit today. While Yee Yen's name can only be found on old, archived

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<sup>60</sup> "Plum Alley Denizens Mark Chinese New Years by Moving Out So Old Buildings Can be Razed," *Salt Lake Telegram*, February 2, 1940, <https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/details?id=18608025>.

newspapers from over a century ago, he may well be the most written-about Chinese person of nineteenth-century Salt Lake City. Despite this, his brief prominence did not contribute to a greater understanding of the Chinese of Salt Lake City; rather, the endless reporting on his case did just the opposite: increase the parallel mistrust and fascination with the Chinese.

Yee's trial also reveals the intra-ethnic conflict present in Plum Alley. Many modern descriptions of American Chinatowns emphasize the heavily publicized Tong-wars of San Francisco; however, it can be difficult to understand the more subtle, non-violent conflict that existed within these minority communities. While Asian Americans have never been a monolith, the solidarity that has grown since the Asian American Movement of the 1960s was certainly less present in nineteenth-century Salt Lake. This is evident in Yee's decision to flee Salt Lake—a decision that seemingly put his own financial objectives above his community. This should not make him a villain in the eyes of modern observers, though. Rather, he was an agent who made difficult choices while trying to navigate the complexities of living in a country where he was not welcomed nor granted many basic rights.

Yee Yen is just one name among countless more that lived in Plum Alley during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The only reason that more was recorded about him than most Chinese of Plum Alley was because of his entanglement with the U.S. legal system, reminding the historian of the difficulty in uncovering the voices of individuals that made up this once-flourishing community. Thankfully, the sources that are available help reveal the cultural and political nuance present within Plum Alley. While firsthand accounts of life in Plum Alley are scarce, carefully studying other sources can attach names and faces to the too-often overlooked members of Salt Lake City's Chinese community and further articulate the important role they play within the story of Salt Lake City and the larger Chinese American experience.

# The Civil War and the Apocalypse

Insights from *The Millennial Star*

MEGAN MCCONNELL

An editorial published in the *Millennial Star* on May 11, 1861, almost exactly one month after the start of the American Civil War, declared that the war that had broken out on the American continent was part of the “signs of the times” and that it “should be an incentive to diligence and faithfulness” to the European members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The war would be a calamity to a degree that had never before been seen on the Earth and one which the “nations of Europe cannot escape from.”<sup>1</sup> The editor pronounced that the prophet Joseph Smith’s 1832 prophecy regarding the wars that will “shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina,” was being fulfilled and that there would be no safe haven for those seeking refuge except for in the Lord’s Kingdom in the Rocky Mountains of Utah.<sup>2</sup> The following year, Latter-day Saint emigration from Europe surpassed the previous year’s numbers by 1,600 and a total of 3,589 Saints emigrated by ship to America.<sup>3</sup>

Much has been written on the migration of European Saints during the years 1860-1865. Fred E. Wood’s extensive work on the *Saints by the Sea* database provides plentiful sources and writings that give information on the nature of the journey, the people who participated in

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<sup>1</sup> “Editorial, Civil War in America: Its Importance as a Warning to the Saints,” *Millennial Star*, May 11, 1861, 297-300.

<sup>2</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 87:1.

<sup>3</sup> William G. Hartley, “Latter-day Saint Emigration during the Civil War,” in *Civil War Saints*, ed. Kenneth L. Alford (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), 237-65.

the migration and where they came from. Works such as Kenneth Alford's *Civil War Saints* examine reasons that European members of the church migrated to Utah despite the United States being in the midst of a civil war. However, there exists no in-depth analysis of writings and publications produced by church leaders who oversaw emigration and their influence encouraging European Saints to emigrate. A close analysis of articles and publications produced between 1861-1865 in *The Millennial Star* reveals that a long tradition of apocalypse in the church and its leaders influenced European members to view the U.S. Civil War as a sign of the apocalypse and imminent millennium, thus providing an unusually powerful motivation for them to emigrate to Zion.

#### HISTORY OF DISUNION BETWEEN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

To understand the call and command to gather to "Zion" in the Rocky Mountains of Utah, one must understand that since the days of the church's founding in 1830, the Saints faced opposition. Driven out of New York, Ohio, and Missouri, mobs forced the Saints to flee from their homes in order to avoid being harmed or killed. When Joseph Smith petitioned for protection from the mobs in Missouri, President Martin Van Buren responded saying, "your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you."<sup>4</sup> The serious estrangement between the Saints and the national government escalated with the murder of Joseph Smith at Carthage, Illinois in 1844. The repeal of the Nauvoo Charter in 1845 meant mobs forced the Saints once again from their homes. Church leaders decided to head west in 1846. Orson Pratt, a prominent leader of the church and member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, expressed the opinion and feelings of many Saints when he declared, "We do not want one saint to be left in the United

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<sup>4</sup>James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1976), 144.

States...Let every branch, in the East, West, North, and South, be determined to flee out of Babylon.”<sup>5</sup> The Saints fled the United States to build up their own kingdom unto God in the Mexican Territory in present-day Utah and establish Zion.

When the Civil War broke out between the Northern and Southern States, the Saints viewed the conflict as “the height of folly—the extreme of madness, [and] without a parallel in history.”<sup>6</sup> Leaders taught that the blood being shed on the battlefields of the East was divine retribution for the persecution of the Saints and their suffering at the hands of a wicked nation. Brigham Young quickly condemned the United States for its inability to uphold justice through the Constitution by stating, “the people in the States have violated the Constitution in closing their ears against the cries of the oppressed, and in consenting of the shedding of innocent blood, and now war, death and gloom are spread like a pall over the land.”<sup>7</sup> Mainly, church leaders preached that the prophecy revealed by Joseph Smith on December 25, 1832 which spoke of “Southern States” being “divided against the Northern States” and “war being poured out among all nations” was being fulfilled.<sup>8</sup> This style of proselytizing adopted an apocalyptic tone as church leaders prophesied that starting with the United States, each nation that rejected God would be “shivered to pieces” and all cohesiveness within their government would be shattered.<sup>9</sup> This led, as historian Jed Woodworth has stated, “many Latter-day Saints to conclude that the Second Coming must be imminent.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Times and Seasons*, December 1, 1845.

<sup>6</sup> George Albert Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, ed. G.D. Watt and J.V. Long (London, England: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854-86), 8:360.

<sup>7</sup> Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:329

<sup>8</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 87:3

<sup>9</sup> Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:195-196.

<sup>10</sup> Jed Woodworth, “Peace and War: D&C 87” in, *Revelations in Context: The Stories Behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City, UT:

## APOCALYPTIC RHETORIC IN THE CHURCH

Apocalyptic traditions and belief systems have been part of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints since its earliest days when Joseph Smith was visited by an angel named Moroni who declared unto him that the “day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble...”<sup>11</sup> Formed during the Second Great Awakening in a time of a focus on the impending millennium, one of the church’s core beliefs is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, who will “reign personally upon the earth.”<sup>12</sup> However, prior to the Second Coming of Christ, “tribulation and desolation” will be “sent forth upon the wicked,” and the “ripe [and] all the proud [and] they that do wickedly shall be burned as stubble.”<sup>13</sup> The belief that the Almighty would create an “imminent and catastrophic” event to lead the earth into a “transition to the millennial kingdom” and destroy the wicked, is prominent in the sermons and writings of church leaders during the years leading up to and throughout the Civil War.<sup>14</sup> Various church leaders interpreted the murder of Joseph Smith as the catalyst to a catastrophic event (the Civil War) that would purge the wicked from the earth. Brigham Young foretold that Americans “will have to pay [for the murder of Smith] as the Jews did in killing Jesus.”<sup>15</sup> Orson Hyde preached that Joseph

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The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016), 159. <sup>11</sup>“Joseph Smith History, *Pearl of Great Price*, 1:30-37

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Smith History, *Pearl of Great Price*, 1:30-37

<sup>12</sup> “The Articles of Faith,” *Pearl of Great Price*, 1:10.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Smith “Revelation, September 1830–A [D&C 29],” p. 37, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed November 7, 2022, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-september-1830-a-dc-29/2>

<sup>14</sup> Catherine Wessinger, “Millennial Glossary,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 718.

<sup>15</sup> Brigham Young, “office journal, February 2, 1861”, in

Smith presented himself as a savior to the nation but was refused. He taught that the nation would have “to answer for his blood and the blood of his brother” both of which were seen by the Saints as the “Lord’s anointed.”<sup>16</sup> Through their reading of scripture, the Saints understood this divine pattern: “prophet testifies; prophet is killed for his testimony; destruction follows.”<sup>17</sup>

Joseph Smith’s failed bid for the U.S. presidency in 1844 added to the significance of his murder. Campaigning on the platform of the total abolition of slavery, the protection of religious minorities’ rights by enforcing the Bill of Rights in state government, the closing of the country’s penitentiaries, and the re-establishment of a national bank to stabilize the economy, made Smith unpopular with much of the American public.<sup>18</sup> However, the Saints saw him as someone who could save the nation from wickedness by applying the God-given rights enshrined in the United States Constitution to the states. A revelation given to Smith in 1833 declared that “wise men” whom God had “raised up” created the Constitution.<sup>19</sup> Since the principles of religious liberty had not been applied to the Saints, the members of the church saw Smith as a potential savior who could ensure that the Federal and state governments would never hurt them again.

Smith created the Council of Fifty, a secret political organization, with members including Brigham Young, George Albert Smith, and Orson Hyde, whose jobs included

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Richard S. Van Wagoner, ed., *The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2009), 3:1744.

<sup>16</sup> Wilford Woodruff, “Journal, July 18, 1844,” in *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 2:424-425.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher James Blythe, *Terrible Revolution: Latter-day Saints and the American Apocalypse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 50.

<sup>18</sup> Spencer W. McBride, *Joseph Smith for President: The Prophet, The Assassins, and the Fight for American Religious Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 101:80, 98:9.

supporting his political campaign for the presidency and establishing a theocracy where the “rights of conscience for Mormons, idolaters, and atheists alike” would be protected.<sup>20</sup> The Council of Fifty crafted their own constitution based on the U.S. Constitution. They claimed that their constitution was more inspired than that of the United States and that it would be used to govern the “Kingdom of God.” Their constitution defined the theory of their government and emphasized one of the most important principles that the Saints thought the U.S. Constitution failed to protect: religious liberty. Church leaders believed that an imminent millennium necessitated the creation of an inspired government that Christ could take over and reign when he came again. The formation of the Council of Fifty and running Smith as a candidate for the U.S. presidency demonstrates their efforts of preparing for the Second Coming. Ultimately, the Council of Fifty would make its way to Utah and influence the church and politics in the territory as leaders believed it would help govern Zion.

Speaking to the Saints, Elder John Taylor stated, “we believe that God is going to revolutionize the earth, to purge it from iniquity of every kind and to introduce righteousness of every kind, until the great millennium is introduced.”<sup>21</sup> Church leaders believed that the Civil War was the calamitous event that would usher in the coming of Christ and they urged the Saints to gather to “Zion,” or refuge in Utah. Brigham Young told the Saints that “the time is coming when your friends are going to write you about coming here [to Utah], for this is the only place where there will be peace. There will be war, famine, pestilence, and misery through the nations of the earth, and there will be no safety in any place but Zion...”<sup>22</sup> Similarly, John Taylor taught that a “temporal kingdom of God” would be “organized” and that “under the

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<sup>20</sup> Patrick Q. Mason, “God and the People Reconsidered: Further Reflections on Theodemocracy in Early Mormonism,” in *The Council of Fifty: What Records Reveal about Mormon History*, 36.

<sup>21</sup> John Taylor “Remarks.” in the *Deseret News*, April 22, 1863, 2.

<sup>22</sup> Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:294-295.

direction and auspices of the Lord” all the affairs of the church, “things temporal or things spiritual” would be “under the direction of the Lord.”<sup>23</sup>

Church leaders’ beliefs that the Lord had preserved the Saints from the Civil War by placing them in Utah was so great that they began to compare the United States to Babylon—a civilization that would ultimately fall—and Utah as the Promised Land that would be protected against harm. Young predicted that it would not be the Saints’ enemies who would seek to come to Zion, but rather, there would be a “flood and tide” of “conservative people, who wished to raise the necessities of life...” and “live in peace.”<sup>24</sup> Leaders prophesied that the calamitous events of the Civil War would help raise up the Kingdom of God and ensure that it would stand forever since the wicked would be purged from the earth. On several occasions, leaders stated that the Saints lived in the days “when God is establishing His Kingdom as spoken of by Daniel the Prophet,”<sup>25</sup> where the kingdom of God “shall never be destroyed,” but it would “break in pieces and consume” all other kingdoms and “stand for ever.”<sup>26</sup> Church officials encouraged the Saints to welcome refugees and emigrants to the Utah territory since they would help build up the Kingdom of God. John Taylor told the Saints to prepare themselves both spiritually and temporally for that day by learning how to “come to God” by asking Him for the things they needed to build up the Kingdom. Sermons focused on encouraging the Saints to learn how to “raise cattle, horses, sheeps, hogs, etc.” as well as grow “wheat, and corn and potatoes and other vegetables,” to help sustain the emigrants when they came, and they did.<sup>27</sup>

#### APOCALYPTICISM IN THE MILLENIAL STAR

Records reveal that emigration from Europe hit its peak during the height of the Civil War in 1863. European emigration during the years 1861-1865 was so successful that

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<sup>23</sup> John Taylor, “Remarks,” *Deseret News*, April 22, 1863, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:294-295

<sup>25</sup> Orson Hyde, *Journal of Discourses*, 7:49.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel 2:44

<sup>27</sup> John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:280.

more than 17,000 Saints made their way to Utah, totaling nearly half of the total number of emigrants from the previous fourteen years of the Mormon Trail up to 1861.<sup>28</sup> In 1863 the *Millennial Star* reported that “there never has been a time in this [British] mission when the spirit of emigration has rested more mightily upon the Saints than it does at the present.” The article explained that the increased emigration from Europe came as a result of the “events which are fast coming to pass and the distress and perplexity that are likely to fall to the lot of those working classes” in Britain. It also noted that there was “a very great anxiety manifested by every faithful member of the church in these lands to gather this coming season.”<sup>29</sup> The European Saints were willing to risk traveling amidst war and uncertainty due to their beliefs in the prophesyings of their church leaders of the imminent millennium and the belief that Zion would be the only safe place to gather.

In 1840, some of the first Latter-day Saint missionaries to Great Britain, including Brigham Young, created the *Millennial Star* with the purpose that it would “stand aloof from the common political and commercial news of the day,” and “spread the fulness of the gospel.”<sup>30</sup> George Q. Cannon, a member of the British Missionary presidency, member of the Quorum of the Twelve, Utah Territory’s delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, and close friend to Brigham Young, oversaw the publication of *Millennial Star* during the years 1861-1865. Headquartered in Liverpool, England, the paper published articles, editorials, and publications that were as dramatic and apocalyptic as the teachings being shared by church leaders in Utah. It encouraged all those who desired salvation to gather with the Lord’s chosen people in Zion, and they predicted that the U.S. Civil War would be only the beginning of the devastations that would follow before the Second Coming. Most articles produced in 1861 focused on

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<sup>28</sup> Hartley, “Latter-day Emigration During the U.S. Civil War,” 261.

<sup>29</sup> “To Intending Emigrants-Seasonable Advice,” *Millennial Star*, January 10, 1863, 25-26.

<sup>30</sup> “Prospectus,” in *Millennial Star*, May 1, 1840, 1-2.

the fulfillment of Joseph Smith's Civil War prophecy with the bombing of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, in South Carolina as a punishment from Heaven. Numerous articles gloated over the fact that the Saints had known about the war raging in the United States for several years thanks to their prophet and that the misery experienced by the people in the States was a result of their "banish[ing] the kingdom of God from their midst."<sup>31</sup> An article written by missionary Thomas Crawley echoed similar beliefs taught in Utah, that Joseph Smith's murder brought upon the United States such terrible destruction, saying, "whenever the Lord has sent any judgements upon mankind, it has been because they rejected a living Prophet."<sup>32</sup> Another article claimed that Utah was the only place "exempt from wicked and corrupt practices."<sup>33</sup> The Saints in the Eastern States were praised for "making every exertion" to "get away to Zion," and used as an example to heed the prophecies of the apostles to "escape the judgements and indignation" which would be "poured out upon the nation, unless it repents."<sup>34</sup>

Several editions of the *Star* included sections reporting on the news from the American continent and the start of the fighting between the North and South. Missionary Nathaniel V. Jones wrote that "the elements of peace have departed from the governments of men."<sup>35</sup> Other articles focused on the fulfillment of the 1832 Civil War prophecy that said "the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain...in order to defend themselves from other nations; and then shall war be poured out upon

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<sup>31</sup> "Correspondence," *Millennial Star*, January 26, 1861, 59-60.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Crawley, "Consequences of Rejecting the Testimony of a Living Prophet," *Millennial Star*, April 27, 1861, 259-261.

<sup>33</sup> Eugene Henroid, "Contrast Between the Saints and the World," *Millennial Star*, April 6, 1861, 210.

<sup>34</sup> "News from the United States," *Millennial Star*, April 6, 1861, 219.

<sup>35</sup> Nathaniel V. Jones, "Review of Past and Present Events," *Millennial Star*, January 19, 1861, 34.

all nations.”<sup>36</sup> The Saints saw the Trent Affair, which took place at the end of 1861, as evidence that the governments of men were indeed failing. To them, Joseph Smith’s prophecy was being fulfilled as the Confederacy had sent two diplomats, John Slidell and James Murray Mason, to England to lobby the government for assistance. The prophecy seemed to further be fulfilled as various British newspapers rumored that the diplomatic crisis between the United States, the Confederacy, and Great Britain, caused by the capture of the diplomats aboard a British ship by a U.S. warship, might bring war to their homeland. President George Q. Cannon recorded in his journal that preparations for war were being made by Great Britain and that they had sent “large quantities of troops & munitions of war” by convoy of “powerful & swift steamers...to Canada.”<sup>37</sup> However, despite the threats of Great Britain entering the war, church leaders prayed that “nothing [would] be permitted to interfere with the emigration of the Saints,” and used the Trent Affair as an example of why the Saints should desire to emigrate to Zion.<sup>38</sup>

The call to gather to the “Lord’s Kingdom” and “flee Babylon” is consistent throughout the publications produced during the war years. Leaders used the term “Babylon” to refer to “unjust political and religious systems throughout the world.” “Fleeing Babylon” meant “leaving countries of origin, relationships, family members, occupations, and lives to relocate among the Mormons.”<sup>39</sup> George Q. Cannon, in a conference to the missionaries in Great Britain, stated that he knew “of no duty more binding upon us in its place than to gather with the Saints of the Most High.”<sup>40</sup> The dramatic

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<sup>36</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 87:3.

<sup>37</sup> George Q. Cannon, *The Journal of George Q. Cannon*, 7 December 1861, The Journal of George Q. Cannon, The Church Historian’s Press, last accessed November 14, 2022, <https://www.churchhistorianspress.org/george-q-cannon/1860s/1861/12-1861?lang=eng>.

<sup>38</sup> Cannon, *The Journal of George Q. Cannon*, December 7, 1861.

<sup>39</sup> Blythe, *Terrible Revolution*, 29.

<sup>40</sup> “Minutes of a General Conference Held in Manchester,” *Millennial Star*, May 18, 1861, 307.

increase in the amount of articles published in 1862 about gathering in Utah helps explain why 1863 saw the highest year of emigration during the war. While some articles focused on motivating the Saints to emigrate out of fear of not being preserved from the calamities of the world,<sup>41</sup> other messages focused on the spiritual aspect of gathering such as being “called” by the Lord to “begin a work” of building up His Kingdom and preparing for the imminent millennium.<sup>41</sup> Another article described that “every true-hearted Saint” would be motivated to gather “with the people in Zion,” because of their “obedience to the revealed word of God.”<sup>42</sup> Missionaries like Elijah Larkin taught that the Saints should want “to be gathered to Zion” in order to be “saved with a full salvation.”<sup>43</sup> Since church leaders had prophesied that the Civil War was the beginning of the failure of every civilization besides the Kingdom of God, the gathering was the way to ensure that the Saints would be saved both physically and spiritually. The *Millennial Star* focused on preparing the Saints for an imminent millennium by describing the Kingdom of God as a place where the inspired principle of religious freedom enshrined in the U.S. Constitution would be upheld and a place where individuals who were “tired of anarchy and being humbled by misfortune” could “dwell under its protecting shadow” in Zion.<sup>44</sup> Echoing similar theocratic sentiments as those proposed by the Council of Fifty in Utah, the editor of the *Millennial Star* suggested that “within the bosom of every soul a steadfast zeal and

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<sup>41</sup> “Why Are So Many Saints Not Gathered?” *Millennial Star* 24 (October 11, 1862) 650; “The Blessings of Gathering,” *Millennial Star*, July 5, 1862, 419.

<sup>42</sup> “The Outgathering of the Saints,” *Millennial Star*, March 29, 1862, 200.

<sup>43</sup> Elijah Larkin, *Larkin, Elijah*, January 4, 1861, Digital Collections BYU Library, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/Diaries/id/2764/rec/7>, 5.

<sup>44</sup> “History Repeating Itself-A Historical Parallel,” *Millennial Star*, June 1, 1861, 345.

unchangeable determination to be indeed a Saint” should exist among the people who desired to “follow strictly the footsteps” of Christ, the leader of the Kingdom of God.<sup>45</sup> The Council of Fifty’s vision of a theodemocracy where “God and the people hold the power to conduct the affairs of men in righteousness” was strong in Utah and church leaders actively tried to control the Territory’s politics.<sup>46</sup> Leaders preached that a theodemocracy was an essential precursor to the millennium since it prepared the people for Christ’s eventual reign. The gathering took on new meaning as the Saints saw it as a way to not merely escape foretold destruction, but a way to participate in an earthly government inspired by Heaven, governed by the Lord’s anointed, and eventually be taken over by Christ himself at the Second Coming. Similarly, the Saints in Great Britain suffered persecution for their religious beliefs and were attracted to the prospect of being able to participate in a Heaven-inspired government and dwell in a place where they could live their religion peaceably. Similar to church leaders in Utah, the *Millennial Star* inspired the Saints’ confidence that the Kingdom of God would stand strong despite the troubles of the world by publishing the words of the Old Testament prophet Daniel several times to preach that “the God of heaven [had] set up a kingdom *which shall never be destroyed*.”<sup>47</sup> The *Millennial Star* successfully influenced the Saints to emigrate due to the strong belief that their church leaders were “chosen by God,” and “prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit in the performance of their official duties in such a way that their leadership is a manifestation of God’s will rather than their own.”<sup>48</sup> Missionaries wrote articles for the *Millennial Star*. Similarly, since the British mission presidency oversaw the

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<sup>45</sup> “The Establishment of the Kingdom of God,” *Millennial Star*, June 6, 1863, 362.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Smith, “The Globe,” *Times and Seasons*, April 15, 1844, 510.

<sup>47</sup> “The Establishment of the Kingdom of God,” *Millennial Star*, June 6, 1863, 361

<sup>48</sup> Gordon Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed: Early Mormonism and the Modern LDS Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016) 3.

process of emigration, missionaries were also involved in helping converts and members prepare to travel to Utah. Some missionaries would even quote and teach from the *Millennial Star's* policies for emigrating when preaching.<sup>49</sup> Often advice and reports from emigrant companies who had already made or begun the journey would be published in the *Millennial Star* to help emigrants know what to expect when it was their turn and help the missionaries explain to converts what the journey would be like. Advice included listening to the Elders who had “experience in all matters connected with emigration and who [had] been appointed to stand as counselors to the Saints,” packing prudently and leaving “articles that are not absolutely essential to the ordinary care of the body,” and “assisting in the gathering of Israel “by using “fine clothing and superfluous articles” to help pay the emigration costs of other Saints.<sup>50</sup> Saints who were obedient to the counsel of their leaders were promised protection and safety from unnecessary hardship and anxiety.

#### HARD TIMES IN EUROPE AS SIGNS OF THE APOCALYPSE

The *Millennial Star* itself gave three potential reasons for the increase in the number of Saints willing to leave their homeland and travel to a war-ridden country across the sea, such as 1) “the partial fulfillment of the revelation given to the Prophet Joseph, December 25, 1832, respecting the division between the Northern and Southern states of the American Union;” 2) “the hard times and misery” upon the country of Great Britain due to the war; 3) and the prospect for poor Saints to, “with a small amount of means...reach the place they can be met by the oxen and waggons sent down from Zion to assist them in crossing the Plains.”<sup>51</sup> The war brought hard economic times upon Europe and Great Britain especially. “The cotton trade was the biggest single contributor to the industry of Victorian

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<sup>49</sup> Larkin, *Larkin, Elijah*, 35.

<sup>50</sup> “Wise Policy in Emigrating,” *Millennial Star*, March 7, 1863, 152-53.

<sup>51</sup> “The Best Policy for the Saints to Pursue,” *Millennial Star*, May 17, 1862, 312; Hartley, “Latter-day Saint Emigration during the Civil War,” 261.

Britain...Cotton, almost single-handedly, was responsible for the phenomenal growth and prosperity” of towns like Liverpool and Manchester.<sup>52</sup> Before the Civil War, 80 percent of all cotton used in Great Britain’s manufacturing came from the United States. During the Civil War, almost zero percent of cotton came from the United States. It accounted for 11.5 percent of the nation’s income and nearly half the factories in the country were dedicated to the processing of Southern cotton.<sup>53</sup> With the war, the “cotton feast” quickly became a “cotton famine” and thousands of people lost their jobs and livelihoods as factories closed or downsized. The *Times* reported that in the cotton factory town of Preston with a population of “82,900, it is calculated that 26,000 are in one way or another engaged in the cotton mills, and of these 12,460 are altogether out of employment, 5,967 are working half-time, 3,020 four days-a-week, and 6,070 are at present working full-time.” In addition, newspapers recorded that due to the “Cotton Famine,” 23,000 people in the town of Preston were living “entirely on charity” from the local parish and the numbers were “daily increasing.”<sup>53</sup>

The *Millennial Star* also focused on the dire economic status of Great Britain because of the war. One article called “Signs of Alarm in the Commercial World” quoted from *The Liverpool Mercury* asked the reader to consider what would become of the “two to three million who in [Lancashire] county...are dependent for their very existence on a full supply of cotton?”<sup>54</sup> Missionaries and church leaders paid attention to the economic impact the Civil War had on the Saints. Missionary William Ajax recorded that “The number of persons receiving support

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<sup>52</sup> Jim Powell, *Losing the Thread: Cotton, Liverpool and the American Civil War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2021) <https://search-ebscohost.com.eri.lib.byu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2729649&site=eds-live&scope=site> 1,15.

<sup>53</sup> Powell, *Losing the Thread: Cotton, Liverpool and the American Civil War*, 1,15.

<sup>54</sup> “The Distress in the Cotton Districts,” *Times*, August 25, 1862.

from the parish Dec. 31st, 1861, in Lancashire and Cheshire was about 100,000 [persons], but it had amounted by the end of January to 117,032.”<sup>55</sup> Similarly, George Q. Cannon reported that “the pressure of the hard times is so severe that many who have been putting off their emigration from year to year are now glad at the opportunity of going.”<sup>56</sup> The economic distress of Great Britain, combined with the start of new conflicts on the European continent, convinced the Saints that they needed to emigrate. Church leaders and missionaries were quick to prophesy that the hard times brought on by the Civil War were only the beginning of distressing events to come, and that being gathered safely in Zion where the Saints would be protected from these hardships was “the best policy to pursue.”<sup>57</sup>

#### LATTER-DAY SAINT EMIGRATION FROM EUROPE

Many Saints were able to follow the counsel of their leaders and pay for their journey to the United States. However, others who desired to “get into the Celestial Kingdom” by taking “every step up the [spiritual] ladder” and “obey[ing] every principle,” including the principle of emigration, could not afford to do so.<sup>58</sup> Brigham Young understood the European Saints’ great desire to emigrate and replaced the hand cart system of travel with a new “down-and-back” system in 1861. The down-and-back system of travel consisted of having the poorer Saints travel to Florence,

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<sup>55</sup> “Signs of Alarm in the Commercial World,” *Millennial Star*, February 2, 1861, 69. William Ajax, *Ajax, William, 1832-1899 vol 2*, February 27, 1862, Digital Collections BYU

Library, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/Diaries/id/3983/rec/2>, 34-35.

<sup>56</sup> Cannon, *The Journal of George Q. Cannon*, April 22, 1862.

<sup>57</sup> “The Best Policy for the Saints to Pursue,” *Millennial Star*, May 17, 1862, 312.

<sup>58</sup> “To the Saints About to Emigrate,” *Millennial Star*, March 28, 1863, 202-03.

Nebraska and be met by Mormon wagon trains willing to take them to Zion. The Saints would be given rides in the wagons along with the transportation of their luggage with the promise that they would pay the travel fare later. For the Saints who wanted to heed the prophet's call to gather, but did not have the means, the down-and-back wagon trains made emigration possible and helped increase the number of European immigrants to Utah during the Civil War.

Most Saints who emigrated from Europe left by way of the ports in Liverpool, England due to its advantageous geographical location being centrally located between Great Britain and Ireland. Out of the 333 identified voyages of Mormon emigrant companies through 1890, Liverpool was the embarkation point for 289 of them.<sup>59</sup> Saints experienced usually fairly mild voyages across the Atlantic, but sickness, deaths, and bad weather were not uncommon. More frightening, however, was the chance that a vessel carrying migrants might come across a Confederate steamer. James Sutton, a 16-year-old boy, traveling on the migrant ship *The Hudson* recalled that they were stopped by the Confederate ship, *The Alabama*, and soldiers cried out to them, "say your prayers, you Mormons, you are all going down!"<sup>60</sup> However, *The Hudson* escaped attack, due to the fact that there were immigrants from several different countries on the ship and the Confederate government wanted to avoid the risk of causing a diplomatic crisis. Similarly, Richard Crowther, who sailed aboard the *General McClellan* noted that although their journey from Liverpool to America was eventless, Confederates sunk the *General McClellan* on its return to England.<sup>61</sup> American captains who docked their ships in Liverpool ports "trembl[ed] in their shoes at the thought of

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<sup>59</sup> Conway B. Sonne, *Saints on the Seas: A Maritime History of Mormon Migration 1830-1890* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 33.

<sup>60</sup> James T. Sutton, "Autobiography," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1974), 17: 296-99.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Crowther, "Autobiography" in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1965) 8:57.

going to sea with such ugly customers afloat on their path as privateers and rebel steamships.” Due to the fear of immigrant vessels being attacked or stopped by Confederate warships, ships were not allowed to fly the American flag since “war risks on all vessels bearing the American flag...increased enormously.”<sup>62</sup>

Despite the threat posed by the American Civil War on the seas, most Saints were less concerned about facing rebel cannons and more excited and anxious to make it to Zion. Saints like John C. Graham, who was appointed captain over his immigrant company, explained that “nothing but his religion would have induced [him] to leave [his] native land,” and that he risked making the journey “to work out [his] personal salvation” and “serve God.”<sup>63</sup> After being taught that “gathering is as essential to the salvation of all who are able to obey the command to do so as baptism is,” the Saints were anxious to secure their spiritual well-being by going to Zion. However, the Saints sacrificed greatly as they had to leave their beloved homelands and family members who were not willing to go with them. Charles William Symons left secretly to the docks to board his ship with his brother “not letting [his] folks know that they were going,” but found consolation in the scripture that reads, “He that will not forsake father and mother, houses and lands, for My sake, is not worthy of Me.”<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Christopher Alston, who was 10 years old at the time of his journey, recounted how his mother sacrificed to send him and his brother away despite the opposition she faced from her in-laws and family. Christopher and his brother “were out on the Atlantic Ocean” before his opposing family knew that they had “been quietly sent away to the United States during

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<sup>62</sup> Cannon, *The Journal of George Q. Cannon*, November 23, 1861.

<sup>63</sup> John C. Graham, “Letter,” *Millennial Star*, June 4, 1864, 365-66.

<sup>64</sup> Charles William Symons, “Autobiography,” in *The Whitaker Family in England and America*, comp. by Wilford W. Whitaker, Jr., and Erma Whitaker Sorensen (N.P.: Privately printed, 1980), 170.

the Civil War.”<sup>65</sup>

The sights and sounds of war quickly greeted the Saints when they arrived in America. Saints who arrived in Castle Gardens, New York in 1863 came face to face with the bloody draft riots as “ten thousand soldiers were there from the front to enforce the draft.”<sup>66</sup> Bitter feelings between Missouri citizens and the Mormons made traveling through the state dangerous. Henry Freshwater recounted that just before they arrived in St. Joseph, Missouri “the rebels, or bushwhackers, fired two cannonballs through our train. One shot through the passenger car, exactly eight inches above people’s heads, and the other through the baggage car, destroying a great amount of baggage.”<sup>67</sup> Other Saints witnessed the destruction of the war as they saw destroyed railroads, buildings, and bridges. The Saints believed they were seeing the fulfillment of Joseph Smith’s 1838 prophecy, written in a letter after the Saints were expelled from Jackson County Missouri, “God’s wrath hangs over Jackson County,” and that Missouri would see the day when “it will be visited with fire and sword,” and that after the destruction of war, “only the chimneys would be left to mark the destruction.” In the aftermath of Executive Order #11, carried out by General Thomas Ewing, one soldier recounted that “we found houses, barns, [and] outbuildings, nearly all burned down, and nothing left standing but the chimneys...”<sup>68</sup> For Saints like James Sutton who had read about Joseph Smith’s war prophecies in England, it was easy to “forcibly” see the fulfillment of them when traveling through the “war zone” itself.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Christopher Alston, “Autobiography,” in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1965), 8:35-37.

<sup>66</sup> David M. Stuart, “Autobiography,” 106-14.

<sup>67</sup> William Henry Freshwater, “From His Diary,” in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1964), 7:248-52.

<sup>68</sup> B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1911), 1:298-99.

<sup>69</sup> James T. Sutton, “Autobiography,” 296-99.

Other dangers included being stopped by soldiers on both sides of the conflict. Several companies of immigrant Saints were stopped by Union Soldiers who demanded that they pledge their allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. Other Saints like Mary Ann Ward faced danger from men in Missouri who tried to drown them in the river since they were “bitter against the Mormons.”<sup>70</sup> Other Saints took routes up through Canada to avoid encounters with the soldiers and the possibility of their young men being tagged and recruited into the U.S. Army.<sup>71</sup> Soldiers also posed a threat to Mormon women. One young Dutch immigrant was kidnapped and carried off by Union men but later rescued by Saints in her company.<sup>72</sup>

Despite the inherent dangers of traveling during wartime, the Saints and their leaders were confident in their belief that the Lord wanted his chosen people to emigrate and that they would be protected. George Q. Cannon, a member of the British Mission Presidency, concluded that the “Spirit of the Lord” was “softening [the] hearts” of people as evidenced by many Saints receiving material aid from unlikely places such as “men who had no sympathy for [the] faith and no wish to see it prosper.”<sup>73</sup> Similarly, church leader Brigham Young preached, while in route to Utah himself, about the immigration and its ability to continue despite various threats saying: “Fear not thy enemies; for they shall not have power to stop my work...Fear not thy enemies; for they are in mine hands and I will do my pleasure with them.”<sup>74</sup> Saints also hung on to the promise made by Joseph

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<sup>70</sup> Mary Ann Ward Webb, “The History of Mary Ann Ward Webb and Her Diary of the Journey to Utah (1864),” in Robert R. King and Kay Atkinson King, *Mary Ann Webb: Her Life and Ancestry* (McLean, VA: American Society for Genealogy and Family History, 1996) 107, 109.

<sup>71</sup> Hartley, “Latter-day Emigration During the Civil War,” 250, 252, 261.

<sup>72</sup> Webb, “The History of Mary Ann Ward Webb,” 96.

<sup>73</sup> Cannon, *The Journal of George Q. Cannon*, December 13, 1862.

<sup>74</sup> D&C 136:17, 30.

Smith in 1842 that prophesied that “no unhallowed hand” would “stop the work from progressing...armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth.”<sup>75</sup> European Saints were willing to take the risk and emigrate because of their belief in the promise of a place in the Kingdom of the Lord and protection from the war that they believed would spread to the entire world.

## CONCLUSION

When Brigham Young discontinued the down-and-back system in 1865 in order to use the funds to help build the temple in Salt Lake, the number of emigrants traveling from Europe decreased greatly. Though the use of the down-and-back system during the war was merely coincidental, it greatly increased the number of emigrants who were able to travel to Utah.<sup>76</sup> Despite emigration numbers dropping slightly after the end of the war, Saints still continued to emigrate to Zion in large numbers up to the early 1900s.<sup>77</sup> The American Civil War increased European emigration from 1861-1865 due to rhetoric within the church of gathering together for safety from calamitous events and the building up of God’s Kingdom in preparation for the millennium. The *Millennial Star* reveals that the Civil War dramatically increased church leaders’ calls to gather since they predicted that the American war would be the first in a great many calamities to come and would eventually lead to the Second Coming. Following the teachings about the millennium and the destruction that would precede the Lord’s return from their leaders, the Saints in Europe interpreted the fighting between the North and South as evidence of the Lord’s displeasure with the wicked. They believed that gathering in Zion would be the best way to ensure their physical and spiritual safety. Motivated by church publications that proclaimed that the Civil War prophecy of Joseph Smith was

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<sup>75</sup> Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Salt Lake City, Deseret Book: 1971), 4:540.

<sup>76</sup> Hartley, *Latter-day Saint Emigration During the Civil War*, 260-61.

<sup>77</sup> Sonme, *Saints on the Seas*, 148-58.

being fulfilled, as well as a desire to escape the hard economic times in Great Britain and Europe, Saints left their homes and families. Though the new down-and-back system made emigration more accessible to poor travelers and increased the number of Saints who emigrated to Utah, it was the belief that the millennium was close at hand that made Latter-day Saint emigration during the Civil War some of the busiest and most dynamic in the history of Mormon emigration to Utah.

# BREAKING APARTHEID WITH INTERRACIAL FRIENDSHIPS

IZZY MAIRE

In August 1956, thousands of South African women marched in front of the Union Building in Pretoria, South Africa. In their arms they carried petitions that demanded the abolishment of apartheid era pass laws, which required non-white South Africans to carry passbooks. The photo above depicted four women that lead this united legion of women. The white woman in this picture, Helen Joseph, commented on the racial identity of these leaders. She wrote, “Four women had been chosen as leaders for the day, Lillian Ngoyi, the African, Rahima Moosa, the Indian, Sophie Williams, the Coloured and I, the white.”<sup>1</sup> As these women stand together in this photograph one might question what the relationships between them are like. Are they colleagues? Are they friends? Do they only march together, or do they spend additional time together? This march, like many other activities in the fight against apartheid, gave women from vastly different backgrounds the opportunity to work together towards a common cause. As these women worked together in the South African Liberation Movement, many of them created strong interracial friendships with other South African women and female activists, despite apartheid restrictions. Evidence of their relationships with one another can be found through their personal memoirs, correspondence, and interviews. These sources provide proof of ways they worked together, and supported and protected one another in the face of government suppression.

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Joseph, *Side by Side: The Autobiography of Helen Joseph* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1986), 12.

Much has been said regarding these female activists' contributions to the movement against apartheid. Books like Shireen Hassim's *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa, Contesting Authority* describe the women's liberation movement in South Africa, the activities they were involved in and the ideology behind these organizations.<sup>2</sup>



Other historians have studied the individual stories of women in South Africa and how the system of apartheid shaped their lives. *Profiles in Diversity*, for example, is a compilation of the stories of Black, white, Coloured, and Indian women who lived during apartheid and the liberation movement.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, *Sister Outsiders* specifically focuses on Indian Women's writings in South Africa, how apartheid affected them, and how apartheid hid some of their writings from public view.<sup>4</sup> Autobiographies and biographies, including *Side by Side: The Autobiography of Helen Joseph*, have been published that tell the entire life stories of a few South African female activists.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, "A South African Revolutionary, but a Lady of the British Empire" by Barbara Caine and "Grabbing the Sharp End of the Knife to Bring Liberation, Peace and Justice to South Africans" by Ronicka Mudaly compare and summarize the lives of Helen Joseph, Ellen Kuzwayo and Phyllis Naidoo who were all involved in the movement.<sup>6</sup> Once again, I think that

<sup>2</sup> Shireen Hassim, *Women's Organizations and Democracy in South Africa: Contesting Authority* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>3</sup> Patricia W. Romero, *Profiles in Diversity* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 205.

<sup>4</sup> Devarakshanam Govinden, *Sister Outsiders* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2006), 40.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 12.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Caine, "A South African Revolutionary, but a Lady of the British Empire': Helen

it is worth summarizing the main argument points of your secondary sources- shows a mastery of the historiography.

However, little research exists on the complexities of the interracial friendships that female activists created with one another while working together in the fight against apartheid laws in South Africa. Research from Barbara Caine discusses imprisonment of women fighting against apartheid and broaches the topic of friendships among female South African political prisoners, although her main focus is on these relationships only within the context of the prison sentences they served. Caine correctly emphasized and explained the impact these prison friendships had on these women's lives. Her reasoning connects to the discussion on female interracial friendships in this paper and the impact these friendships made on South African women. Indeed, Caine argued, "A number of women, both Black and white, describe certain prison friendships as important not just because they brought them into contact with people they would not otherwise have known, but because they were life-transforming."<sup>7</sup> Involvement in anti-apartheid activities, including imprisonment for involvement in these activities created strong and unique interracial friendships among female activists during an age when the South African government wanted to keep these women and their corresponding racial groups separate.

The movement against apartheid in South Africa was created in protest of the discriminatory policies and unfair treatment given to non-white South Africans based on their race. This treatment included the need to carry passbooks for Indian, Coloured and Black African citizens, the banishment of South Africans to Bantustans, and the inability of non-white South Africans to vote for public officials. All of these policies

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Joseph and the Anti-Apartheid Movement," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34, no. 3 (2008): 575-590. ; Ronicka Mudaly, "Grabbing the Sharp End of the Knife to Bring Liberation, Peace and Justice to South Africans: lessons from Ellen Kuzwayo and Phyllis Naidoo,," *Agenda* 34, no, 4 (2020): 122-135.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2020.1770108>.

<sup>7</sup> Caine, "Prisons as Spaces of Friendships." 13.

were enforced brutally, and many non-white South Africans went to prison for violating these unjust rules. In addition to the discriminatory policies against non-white South Africans, a major goal of the apartheid government was to separate South Africans by race and eliminate any interaction between people of different races. *Sister Outsiders*, a combination of experiences and interviews with South African women during apartheid includes an account by Fatima Meer, an Indian South African woman, describing how the apartheid government intentionally put racial groups in conflicting situations, including the use of Indian overseers over Black African workers and appointing Black African policemen to “suppress Indian strikes”.<sup>8</sup> These situations created animosity between these two oppressed groups in order to prevent them from uniting with one another against the Afrikaners who had created the discriminatory system of apartheid.

The Afrikaner government’s system of apartheid guaranteed that all South Africans were raised knowing what their race meant in their society. Navi Pillay described what this was like for her as she grew up under apartheid as an Indian South Africa. She said, “Under the laws of this country we were strictly classified as Indian. You grow up knowing this— that you are Indian, and that the white group is better. As a child you grow up believing this. You go to the park; you can’t go on the swings. Everything was reserved for whites.”<sup>9</sup> How could friendships develop between these women if they were taught since birth that other racial groups were inferior to or better than them? How could groups that had been pitted against one another come together as partners to protest this inequality?

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<sup>8</sup> Devarakshanam Govinden, *Sister Outsiders* (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 2006), 333.

<sup>9</sup> Romero, *Profiles in Diversity*, 205.

Uniting together in organizations intended to oppose apartheid, South African women that belonged to different racial groups were able to come in contact with one another and work together towards a common goal. Some of the earliest instances of these friendships were documented in photographs of the Women's Anti-Pass March in Pretoria in 1956. These photos show Indian, African, Coloured, and white women working together to protest the discriminatory policy that made non-white South Africans need to carry a passbook at all times. In these photos the different races of female liberation activists are represented by the four main leaders in the march, Helen Joseph, Lillian Ngoyi, Sophie Williams, and Rahima Moosa. Behind these four symbolic leaders are thousands of South African women from all four racial groups. These women marched together. They signed and carried petitions together. They sang songs together that demonstrated their unity and friendship with one another. After giving these petitions to the government, the women



sang “*Nkosi Sikelele*”

together, a song that translates to “God Bless South Africa”.

<sup>10</sup>Although each of these women came

from different backgrounds and apartheid affected each of them differently, they were able to join together and sing a melody that brought a message of hope to all South Africans.

After these women created friendships with one another, they continued to protect one another in the face of government oppression and suppression. Soon after this protest, newly created friendships in these women's organizations were tested. Following their involvement in these political activities, many women were accused of crimes connected to their political activities. Some were even asked to testify against their close friends from the movement.

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<sup>10</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 13.

Shanthi Naidoo, an Indian South African, went to jail in order to protect her Black South African friend, Winnie Mandela, from going to jail. She was tortured and beaten but refused to testify against Winnie. Helen Joseph told this story in her autobiography. She said, "Shanthi proclaimed her refusal to become a state witness against her two friends, Winnie Mandela and Joyce Sikhakane, both accused in the 1970 trial of Winnie and twenty-two others. 'It has been a good friendship,' she said."<sup>11</sup> This story is evidence of the trust and incredible bond these activists had with one another, even though they belonged to different racial groups. Their friendship remained strong, even as they were being threatened and physically hurt for standing up for their friends.

Despite the support these women had from one another, many of them still served prison sentences. However, instead of dividing women from one another, time spent together in prison forged new interracial connections between non-white South African women and gave them opportunities to support one another in the face of government oppression. In her short account titled, "Ten Days," Phyllis Naidoo, an Indian South African Liberation activist, recounted her experience serving a prison sentence in July 1967.<sup>12</sup> She was given this sentence for missing one week of her mandatory weekly visits to the police station that allowed the government to monitor her political activities. As punishment, she was placed in a standard non-white prison unit for ten days with other Indian, Black, and Coloured women that were serving jail time. During this traumatic time in prison Phyllis connected with her cellmate, Lydia, a young Black African mother who was in prison for killing her cheating husband. Phyllis learned more about Lydia and how she accidentally killed her husband in a moment of heated anger. Phyllis developed a relationship with Lydia and helped her care for her two-year-old baby, Jane, who was also in their cell. During this ten-day sentence, the two became friends and supported each other during trying circumstances.

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 224.

<sup>12</sup> Barbara Shreiner, *A Snake with Ice Water* (Johannesburg: Congress of South African Writers, 1992), 85-121.

Even though Lydia was not an activist or involved in the liberation movement, their relationship was important because it taught Phyllis, an Indian South African activist, about apartheid, thus creating a friendship that apartheid attempted to prohibit. Phyllis wrote about her experience getting to know Lydia and what it symbolized to her.

The wardress that locked me up with a black murderess had hoped to frighten me. She would fix the 'kaffir boetie' types, i.e. those politicians who wanted a democratic, non-racial South Africa. She believed, perhaps that the enforced separation legally inflicted on all South African's was enjoyed by all its victims and we would fight to maintain our different identities. Some do. I thanked the miniscule Lydia then, the system that had sent me there. I thank them today. I saw what racism did and was intended to do. It was a tool in the hands of our rulers that nurtured an economic system for the benefit of a few.<sup>13</sup>

Phyllis's prison sentence gave her time to support, listen to, and connect with other women in prison such as her cellmate, Lydia. Frequently the women in Phyllis's unit shared their life stories with one another. In her account of this experience, Phyllis included the stories she heard during this ten-day sentence. Alice, a Coloured woman, shared her story with the prisoners of what her job was like as a prostitute serving South African men of all different races. These stories illustrated the reality and daily life of these South African women under apartheid. By sharing their life stories, they were able to build connections with each other and work together to support one another through harsh prison conditions. Examples of this include sharing blankets in the cold and women helping Phyllis find a newspaper when she began menstruating. To improve their conditions and provide entertainment in prison, they even smuggled in cigarettes.<sup>14</sup> All of these activities created bonds and friendships that crossed

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<sup>13</sup> Shreiner, *A Snake With Ice Water*, 92-93.

<sup>14</sup> Shreiner, *A Snake With Ice Water*, 92-93.

the clear racial categories of South Africa under apartheid in the 1960s.

The importance of these prison relationships and how these women emotionally supported each other is emphasized in the accounts of many South African prisoners. Barbara Hogan, a white South African activist, describes these bonds in relation to her own seven-year prison sentence for treason.

The remarkable experience about being with the other woman was that no one knows you as well as your fellow prisoners. I don't think ever again in your life will you have people who know you so well. They know the every flick of your eyelash and what mood you're in, They've heard every story you've had to tell, they know every friendship, lover, everything you've ever had because you've got so much time to share.<sup>15</sup>

The apartheid government did not foresee how the time these women were forced to spend together in prison would allow them to create rich relationships with one another and listen to more points of view than they were typically exposed to.

While many South African women were forced to serve prison sentences, their female South African friends supported them by taking care of their children. In 1976, one well known Black South African political activist, Winnie Mandela, placed her children in the home of a friend, the white ANC activist Helen Joseph. Winnie shared her children, Zindzi and Zenani, with her husband Nelson Mandela, who was also serving a life-long prison sentence for his leadership in the ANC and MK, two anti-apartheid organizations. When Winnie was taken away, Zindzi and Zenani were placed with a relative, who was later banned, meaning that the government of South Africa legally limited their freedom of speech, association and travel. Upon hearing this news, Nelson Mandela sent word that his daughters would live with Helen Joseph.

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<sup>15</sup> Shreiner, *A Snake With Ice Water*, 40.

Helen recalled this experience in her autobiography and how close she and the Mandela family became during this situation. She wrote, “Somehow we all fitted together and settled down to a shared life, ... Like all families we quarreled sometimes and I felt guilty and inadequate until Zeni consoled me by saying, ‘Oh, that’s just how families live!’”<sup>16</sup> Helen regularly brought Zeni and Zindzi to visit Winnie in prison and cared for the girls while they were separated from both parents. This demonstrates to what extent well-known figures in the movement against apartheid trusted and relied upon one another. The friendships that had developed between South African female activists like Winnie and Helen were so strong that they entrusted the care of their children to each other while they fought for change in their country. The friendship between Helen Joseph and the Mandela family continued, as shown in this image included in Helen Joseph’s autobiography. Helen is sitting with her arm around Zindzi at the United Democratic Front Rally where “Zinzi (Zindzi) read



United Democratic Front Rally on February 10 1985 in Jabulani, Sowato, when Zini Mandela read her father’s declaration rejecting the Prime Minister’s offer of conditional release, to the 15,000 present. Picture shows HJ and Zini Mandela sitting together on the platform with Bishop Tutu’s daughter on Zini’s right. Morris Zwi

her father’s declaration rejecting the Prime Minister’s offer of conditional release.”<sup>17</sup> At the end of her autobiography, Helen Joseph states, “Nelson and Winnie and their children are closer to me than any other family in South

Africa and they have made me a part of themselves. That is why I have written so much of them of what they mean to South Africa and me.”<sup>18</sup>

As a daughter of Winnie and Nelson Mandela, Zindzi was born into the fight against apartheid, so it is fitting that Zindzi’s early relationships crossed the divide between South African racial groups. She remembers specific instances of being supported by other South African women

<sup>16</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 214-216.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 223.

who were white and Indian South Africa. As an adult, Zindzi described the bond between her family and Helen Joseph, as well as their connections to other South African female activists like Fatima Meer and Manonmani “Ama” Naidoo. After Zindzi’s death, Anna Trapido, a friend and food anthropologist, wrote an article about Zindzi’s relationships with these women. Trapido wrote about the bond Zindzi had with “Amma Naidoo” and described how the girls would visit her when they couldn’t go home. Zindzi once said, “If there’s anybody’s lap and shoulder I remember most from when I was really little, it’s Amma Naidoo’s”.<sup>19</sup> This early memory illustrates how close female activists became as they worked together in movement to end apartheid in South Africa.

In her article on Zindzi, Trapido tells the story of how other South African women made arrangements to protect Zindzi and her sister Zenani from the attention they received as children of Nelson and Winnie Mandela. Trapido said that when things became dangerous for Zindzi and Zenani, Helen Joseph arranged for the girls to go to a boarding school in Swaziland. This school would keep them safe and further away from the politics connected to their parents that put them at risk of police harassment. This act demonstrates the investment and level of concern activists felt for one another that went as far as financially supporting and arranging their friends’ children’s education to protect them and allow them to learn in a safe environment. This is yet another example of how these friendships were demonstrated through the acts of support in the face of government oppression.

In *A Hunger for Freedom: The story of food in the life of Nelson Mandela*, Trapido includes a recipe from Zindzi that actually comes from another female activist in the movement against apartheid. Her inclusion of this recipe illustrates how these activists supported one another’s families.<sup>20</sup> This recipe for eggs comes from Fatima Meer’s family, an Indian member of the ANC. Zindzi told Trapido,

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<sup>19</sup> Anna Trapido, “Zindzi Mandela: An egg to say goodbye,” *City Press*, July 18, 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Anna Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom: the Story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela* (Auckland Park: Jacana, 2008).

“We loved Aunt Fatima’s curried eggs— well, they were actually Uncle Ish’s eggs, Aunt Fatima doesn’t cook...back then during school holidays, if mummy was locked up we would go to Aunt Fatima. Uncle Ish showed us how you fry an egg with grated onion, chipped up the chillies and masala.”<sup>21</sup> It is impressive that of all family recipes to share in this cookbook, Zindzi chose to include a recipe from friends that supported her. It is even more remarkable that these bonds existed during a time when racial groups in South Africa were pitted against one another and their separation was justified and sometimes enforced by the government.

Further evidence of these interracial friendships and how they supported one another through government oppression can be observed in the personal correspondence of these female activists during exile, house arrest, and bannings. Phyllis Naidoo’s letter to Helen Joseph while she was in exile in Europe in 1980 shows the extent of their connection with one another. Perhaps the greatest symbol of the connection between these women is the description on the front of the envelope, “Helen Joseph, We love you always, Birthdays included, Phyllis Naidoo.”<sup>22</sup> In this letter, Phyllis updates Helen on her friends and family and talks about the news circulating about the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. Another letter addressed to Phyllis from her pen pal Will Warren described how Helen Joseph talked about Phyllis to others. He wrote, “I had looked forward to seeing you after all these years. Helen Joseph had painted such a glowing picture of you just a few days before.”<sup>23</sup> Another letter addressed to Phyllis Naidoo from her friend George included a description of Phyllis excitedly sending newspaper clippings of a fellow female liberation activist Lillian Ngoyi to her

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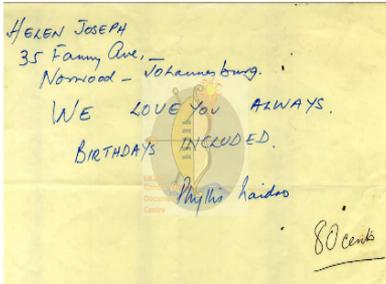
<sup>21</sup> Anna Trapido, “Zindzi Mandela: An egg to say goodbye” City Press, July 18, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Phyllis Naidoo to Helen Joseph, April 17, 1980, Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

<sup>23</sup> Will Warren to Phyllis Naidoo, April 9, 1980, Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

friends.<sup>24</sup> George later wrote about reading Helen Joseph's biography and how it spoke highly of Lillian Ngoyi. These female activists supported one another in word and in deed.

Years later, these female activists remembered the connections they made with other South African women as they worked together, supported, and protected one another.



As stated in the letter to Phyllis Naidoo from her friend, Helen Joseph's autobiography did indeed speak highly of Lillian Ngoyi and other female activists in the ANC. It also illustrated how these

interracial friendships changed the lives of these female activists and how they understood the world. Helen wrote about fond memories of eating together during her lunch breaks with Lillian Ngoyi and the work they did together in the FEDSAW (Federation of South African Women). She included a photograph (see picture on the left) of the two of them being reunited after their banning. She also talks about attending Lillian's funeral. She wrote, "We had worked side by side in the exciting years of the 1950s, had been to gaol together, had been tried for four and a half years for high treason together and had been acquitted together...Only very occasionally had it been possible for us to meet, secretly, but the ties of friendship had never been broken."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> George to Phyllis Naidoo, December 19, 1980, Gandhi-Luthuli Documentation Centre. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 198.

In her autobiography Helen also explains that even though Lillian and she had been to prison together, they were not placed in the same prison unit or put under the same



Reunion with Lillian Ngoyi (former President of Federation of South African Women) after 10 years of separation through banning.

conditions. Most prison units were divided by race, so after white, Indian, and African activists were arrested together for opposing the government, they were taken to separate white and non-white units. The white prisoners were often treated better than Black, Coloured or Indian prisoners. White women were also more

likely to receive shorter sentences for the same prison sentence, as Phyllis Naidoo pointed out when she compared her ten days to Helen Joseph's four days.<sup>26</sup> White women were even given better food and bedding. The preferential treatment given to white South African women illustrates another complexity in the interracial friendships of South African activists. While white female activists like Helen Joseph were fighting against the system of apartheid they still benefited from this system.

Helen Joseph explained how this influenced her friendship with Lillian Ngoyi. As the two were separated when they arrived at prison, Lillian called out to Helen saying, "You are better off with your pink skin!"<sup>27</sup> In the last chapter of her autobiography Helen explains how much this impacted her life and her understanding of racism and apartheid. Helen wrote, "I have never been able to forget Lillian Ngoyi's bitter outburst about my pink skin making me better off in gaol...I benefit from this accursed system and I cannot shed my whiteness".<sup>28</sup> It is remarkable how such a direct comment illustrated the tensions and complex relationships between

<sup>26</sup> Shreiner, *A Snake With Ice Water*, 88.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 84.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph, *Side by Side*, 238.

women of different races in South Africa. However, it is also remarkable that while acknowledging this tension and the inequality they faced, Helen and Lillian remained friends and were able to still support and work together as friends in the movement against apartheid.

Despite the legal system of apartheid's intent to keep these women apart and the tensions resulting from unfair, unequal treatment, rich interracial friendships were created between many South African women involved in the liberation movement. The interracial friendships of the women in this movement are worth an investigation in order to understand what truly happened in South Africa and how South Africans of all races resisted apartheid through activism and creating and maintaining relationships with each other. The interracial friendships between South African women during the liberation movement illustrated the personal commitment each of these women had to racial equality in South Africa and the elimination of apartheid. These important friendships were created as each of these women decided to work with, protect, and support one another in the face of government suppression.

# An Investigation on Food Restriction in the Medieval British Church

COPE MAKECHNIE-HARDY

When Seaxburh, Queen of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent, retired to her sister's newly established religious house at Ely in 665 she was a physically broken woman, with "wan cheeks from fasting" and a body frail from years of food restriction.<sup>1</sup> Already throughout her life Seaxburh had used her body as an integral part of her devotion to Christ, and after arriving at Ely "signed her stomach with the mark of Christ so that she might not burden it with food."<sup>2</sup> Nearly six hundred years later, Saint Elizabeth of Hungary would engage in a similar practice, referred to by historians today as *anorexia mirabilis*, or "holy anorexia," a miraculous loss of appetite and continued rejection of food for religious purposes. Though previous historical study has focused on late medieval and early modern Continental women, the British historical record makes clear that some early medieval British religious, like the seventh-century Seaxburh and the tenth-century saint Wulfthryth of Wilton, engaged in extreme fasting practices similar to those previously studied in the high Middle Ages across the European continent.

Fasting has been an integral element of Christian worship from the religion's earliest recorded days. The Bible records miraculously long periods of fasting as a sign of divinity or devotion. In the early Christian church, fasting (the practice of abstaining from any type of food for any period of time) emerged as a principal way of bringing members together and, until the fourth century, included fasting on

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<sup>1</sup> Rosalind C. Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin: The Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), 145.

<sup>2</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 173.

Wednesdays and Fridays, saints' days, and often before receiving the Eucharist.<sup>3</sup> By the high Middle Ages, fasting became increasingly associated with the clergy and, importantly, with women, who were more likely to fast and be revered for doing so than their male counterparts.<sup>4</sup> Noted female saints such as Catherine of Sienna and Lidwina of Schiedam were known in the contemporary record for their extreme fasting habits and have led modern psychologists and historians to diagnose them with *anorexia mirabilis*.

From the mid-nineteenth century, historians (largely male) attempted to either rationalize or disprove contemporary accounts of the miraculously long fasts engaged in by medieval women—and by extent, the miracles attributed to those same women—by fitting them into the same categories as male self-flagellation and celibacy.<sup>5</sup> The earliest historical work to link extreme food restriction to modern understandings of disordered eating is Rudolph M. Bell's 1985 *Holy Anorexia*, which examines religious women in Italy from the early thirteenth century to the eighteenth. Blending modern psychology and history, Bell finds patterns among fasting religious women and concludes that medieval "anorexics," like modern ones, used food restriction as a way to escape from the patriarchal power structure and that studying the history of the disease would be an aid to modern recovery.<sup>6</sup> A common criticism of Bell is that his work is too grounded in the psychology and medicinal theories of the 1980s, and as such his work appears dated and at odds with more recent trends in both the historical and psychological

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<sup>3</sup> David Grumett and Rachel Muers, *Theology on the Menu: Asceticism, Meat and Christian Diet* (Routledge Press, Oxford, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987); Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Pr., 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Montague Summers, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism: With Especial Reference to the Stigmata, Divine and Diabolic* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Bell, *Holy Anorexia*, 2.

fields, and that it engages in levels of speculation nearing irresponsibility, especially when contrasted with similar works.

Published the following year and in direct conversation with Bell's work, Caroline Walker Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* uses many of the same sources—lives of saints, letters written by and to restricting women, and inquisitional interrogations—yet comes to a starkly different conclusion. Bynum insists that we cannot use modern understandings of anorexia to color the past, or vice versa; the world in which holy anorexia flourished is entirely separate from the one we live in now. Bynum describes her work as a “pure history” in contrast to Bell's modern interpretation of his subjects, and she flatly states that she has no aim in making it applicable to the modern day and instead devotes her book to understanding medieval religious feelings about food, particularly the Eucharist.<sup>7</sup>

These two studies launched a flurry of responses, most grounded in late twentieth and early twenty-first century understandings of anorexia and feminism. Kim Philip's 2008 *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England* links the tendency in modern anorexics to attempt to preserve a pre-menopausal body with the medieval focus on “maidenhood” as the ideal age.<sup>8</sup> Other works, like Susan Laningham's 2005 article *Maladies Up Her Sleeve* and Dylan Elliott's 2004 *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture*, focus on the “downward trajectory of holy women” who, they argue, came under increasing scrutiny for their religious fasting by male authorities.<sup>9</sup> These

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<sup>7</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Kim M. Phillips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270-1540* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Susan Laningham, “Maladies up Her Sleeve? Clerical Interpretation of a Suffering Female Body in Counter-Reformation Spain,” *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1 (January 2006): pp. 69-97, <https://doi.org/10.1086/emw23541457>; Dylan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

approaches do not seem as grounded in the perspective of medieval women as Bynum, who explicitly rejects the argument that the female body was innately sinful in Catholic rhetoric.<sup>10</sup>

While religious fasting has certainly been a topic of historical inquiry, little research has been done on the eating habits of early medieval women, especially those in Britain. This is due in large part to the scarcity of available sources and the comparative disorder of English monastic houses to their continental counterparts. Indeed, British medieval chronicles have been treated with a large degree of suspicion by historians since the Victorian era, leaving a gap in modern scholarship on the behaviors of early British female saints. Two notable exceptions are Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg's 1998 *Forgetful of their sex: Female Sanctity and Society* and Christina Lee's "Ritual and Replacement" (2006). Schulenburg focuses primarily on female French medieval saints of the early medieval period but notes the similarities to nuns and female saints across the Channel.<sup>11</sup> Lee, however, explicitly builds off Bynum's work but situates it further back in the historical record and in England, exploring English monastic houses and the meaning of food to both men and women. Lee spends less time on women than men, perhaps due to a lack of sources, but her research shows gaps in the historiography, specifically on questions of motivation and even outcome.<sup>12</sup>

To understand how Christian fasting became an important factor in the lives of British religious women, it is necessary to first understand the religious landscape of the day. Christianity itself has a long history in Britain, though for the seventh-century inhabitants of Kent this may not have

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<sup>10</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 203.

<sup>11</sup> Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, Ca. 500-1100* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Christina Lee, "Ritual and Replacement: An Interdisciplinary Study of the Symbolism of Food and Drink in the Culture of Anglo-Saxon England," Order No. 10756742, The University of Manchester (United Kingdom, 2003).

seemed the case. Emperor Constantine himself was crowned in York (then Eboracum) in 306<sup>13</sup> and three British Bishops attended the 314 Council of Arles, though there is compelling evidence that Roman Britons practiced Christianity for at least a century before official Roman acceptance.<sup>14</sup> The Roman pullout from Britain in 409 left the island in chaos and by the mid-fifth century the newly dominant pagan Anglo-Saxons pushed Christianity to the Celtic regions of Britain (modern-day Wales and some regions of Scotland).

Since the first missionaries to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms did not arrive until 597, it appears that Celtic Christians had made no efforts to convert their neighbors. Indeed, the British monk Gildas held that the “heathen” Anglo-Saxons’ arrival was punishment from God for the sins of the Britons, and that the Saxons were essentially servants of the devil.<sup>15</sup> The Celtic church, separated both by distance and culture from Rome, became a distinct entity by the seventh century, which perhaps foreshadowed the eventual cultural divide between Rome and the medieval English church.

Seaxburh was born and raised in a second period of widespread reconversion on the island, a reconversion that began with missionaries sent by Pope Gregory in 597. The first Anglo-Saxon kingdom (or rather, king) to convert was Kent, when King Æthelberht was baptized in 598 by Saint Augustine.<sup>16</sup> This conversion was greatly aided by his Frankish, Christian queen, Bertha. Northumbria followed in 627 with the baptism of King Edwin, himself married to

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<sup>13</sup> “Constantine I,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Constantine-I-Roman-emperor>.

<sup>14</sup> David Petts, *Christianity in Roman Britain* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> “Gildas’ *The Ruin of Britain*,” British Library (The British Library), accessed November 17, 2022, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/gildas-the-ruin-of-britain>.

<sup>16</sup> “Early Medieval: Religion,” English Heritage, accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/early-medieval/religion/>.

Æthelberht and Bertha's daughter,<sup>17</sup> and by the end of the seventh century all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were counted as Christian.<sup>18</sup>

As Kent was the first Anglo-Saxon kingdom to convert to Christianity, it is not surprising that one of the early Anglo-Saxon saints should be Kentish. Seaxburh, Queen of Kent from approximately 640 to 664, was the daughter of Anna, King of the East Saxons<sup>19</sup> and married to Earconbert, the king of Kent. Two of her sisters (Æthelthryth<sup>20</sup> and Sethrid<sup>21</sup>) would become abbesses. Both of Seaxburh's daughters eventually entered religious orders as well, with Ermenhilda following aunt and mother to become abbess at Ely.<sup>22</sup> Seaxburh herself became the abbess of Ely after the death of her sister, Abbess Æthelthryth, in 679.

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<sup>17</sup> "Edwin," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edwin>.

<sup>18</sup> "Early Medieval: Religion," *English Heritage*, accessed November 1, 2022, <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/story-of-england/early-medieval/religion/>.

<sup>19</sup> King Anna was killed in battle by Penda, the last great pagan king of Mercia, and "was crowned with glorious martyrdom by God of heaven." See Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 143.

<sup>20</sup> Æthelthryth is notable for having been married twice and maintaining her vow of chastity, in whose defense she fled her second husband, King Ecfriht of Northumbria, settling in the protected abbey of Ely and causing a major disruption in the Northumbrian church (Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Wyatt North Publishing, 2014), 434). She may also have been illegitimate, with Bede introducing her as "the natural daughter of the same King [Anna]." See Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 260.

<sup>21</sup> Sethrid was potentially a half-sister, as Bede describes her as "daughter of the wife of Anna" (Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 260).

<sup>22</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 250-252.

As the close connection of royal and monastic power suggests, many monastic houses through most of the Anglo-Saxon period functioned as satellites to and even extensions of royal courts. After tenth-century Benedictine reforms headed by Saint Dunstan, such houses could serve as a refuge for poor women and allow a place where excessive fasting and piety were perceived as the default way of living. In the seventh century, however, religious women were usually high-born ladies and came to their religious houses with large amounts of wealth and influence.

Women in religious houses could also increase their wealth and influence. Abbesses in particular were almost always from noble or even royal families. With the added spiritual and financial power of the church behind them, such as support by tithes and food rents from church-owned land, religious women could and often did wield significant political power and were seen to hold religious power over and for those who lived around them outside the cloth. While various saints' lives and even contemporary chronicles portray most nuns as pious and chiefly concerned with the will of God, the political and economic status of monastic women during the Anglo-Saxon era should not be forgotten. Such is obvious in the life of Seaxburh; the religious power she held for Kent began before she entered religious orders and seems to have increased when she entered, with her title and role at Ely suggesting substantial power and cultural sway.

We know little of Seaxburh's overt political actions and far more about her pious actions as queen, nun, and abbess, in part because information about her life can be found in the *Vita Beate Sexburge Regne*, or *The Life of Blessed Queen Seaxburh*. This volume, in the tradition of *Vita*, was written after her death to prove her sainthood and, as she was royal, may also have aimed to establish a dynastic cult. The *Vita* came out of Ely in the early twelfth century, and while we do not know who wrote the *Vita*, it seems clear the author pulled from much earlier sources. In addition, Bede's *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* mentions Seaxburh twice, notations which, though limited, confirm her as a figure of cultural significance. Limited and biased source material create an added difficulty in providing a clear picture or conducting deep historical analysis; however, the

descriptions of Seaxburh place her in the same devotional patterns as later Continental saints.

The *Vita* contains many mentions of Seaxburh's interactions with food, including her habit of giving food to the poor like the later Hungarian Saint Elizabeth, who secreted food to the poor from her own wealthy household.<sup>23</sup> Like Elizabeth and other wealthy Christian women, The *Vita Beate Sexburge Regne* says Seaxburh "established the palace as a refuge for the needy, and she had all those in from the streets and taken care of."<sup>24</sup> As a queen, Seaxburh was in a position of food security unique to Anglo-Saxon women, and indeed most Anglo-Saxons generally. Food rents made up a major part of royal wealth, and even in times of economic insecurity, famine, or war, the royal family (and the upper echelons of the church) would not go wanting.

The tradition of giving food to the poor was hardly a new one by the 640s, even in newly Christian Kent. In his third sermon for Lent, Augustine wrote on the direct connection to God such offerings allowed:

"Alms, in Greek, is the same word for mercy. And can one conceive of a greater mercy than that which came down from the sky . . . ? Equal to the Father in eternity, he made himself equal with us in mortality. . . . Bread himself, he experienced hunger; totally satisfied, he experienced thirst; health itself, he made himself weak . . . and all this to nourish our hunger, irrigate our dryness, succor our infirmity. . . . So he commands us, through alms, to give bread to those who hunger . . . to receive the stranger, although he came to us and we did not receive him."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 302. Unlike Saint Elizabeth, Seaxburh did not hide her giving from her husband and so had no need for her secreted food scraps to be transformed into rose petals.

<sup>24</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 145.

<sup>25</sup> Augustine, Sermon 207, Third Sermon for Lent, chap. 10, PL 83, col. 776B.

Even more pointedly, Augustine reminded observing Christians in his sixth sermon for Lent the Christlike role such offerings created:

“Above all be mindful of the poor so that you lay up in the heavenly treasury what you withhold from yourselves by a more frugal mode of life. The hungry Christian will receive that from which the fasting Christian abstains.”<sup>26</sup>

Thus in providing food for hungry Christians (the vast majority of the Anglo-Saxon people), alms-givers were not merely caring for the temporal well-being of the general public, though that certainly fulfilled at least part of Christianity’s exhortations to care for the poor. Giving alms was also a form of spiritually nourishing others, as Christ did, and abstaining from food created an easy way to generate food surplus. Most importantly, in nourishing as Christ nourished, alms-givers and fasters took upon themselves the mantle of Christ and acted as a Christ figure.

Seaxburh, in refusing food for herself and giving it to the poor, was executing her role as a Christian on multiple levels. As queen, she was responsible for the physical and spiritual well-being of all of Kent, and so to forego food was not only to “lay up in the heavenly treasury” reserves for herself, but for Kent as well. Her fast held double significance: she provided for her own people temporally and immediately, but also (and in an equally real sense) for them spiritually, a fund that could then be drawn on in times of sickness, famine, war, or any other of the innumerable difficulties that faced a seventh-century kingdom.

This religious fund was especially important to Kent under Seaxburh and Earconbert because of the religious upheaval that had plagued Kent during the reign of Earconbert’s father, Eadbald. Upon his ascension to the Kentish throne in 616 Eadbald was “very prejudicial to the

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<sup>26</sup> Augustine, Sermon 210, Sixth Sermon for Lent, chap. 10, par 12, PL 38, col *Pauvereté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance: 4-7 siècles*.

new Church” and “refused to embrace the faith of Christ.”<sup>27</sup> In the neighboring kingdom of Essex the Christian king Sabert died, possibly murdered, and also left his crown to pagan sons.<sup>28</sup> A special intervention by the bishop of Canterbury and political pressure from France eventually returned Eadbald (and thus Kent) to Christianity, and his son Earconbert appears to have been devoutly Christian throughout his life; the fact remains, however, that Kent underwent three religious upheavals in three generations, and Christianity was far from the default for them or their neighbors. As the de facto decider of the kingdom’s religious standing, Earconbert and Seaxburh’s actions had consequences more far-reaching than their own salvation. The spiritual safety of the kingdom rested in their hands.

It is a matter of historical record that the Kentish court under Earconbert was a religious one. Bede praises Earconbert, who using his “supreme authority commanded the idols, throughout the whole kingdom, to be forsaken and destroyed, and the fast of forty days before Easter to be observed; and that the same might not be neglected, he appointed proper and condign punishments for the offenders.”<sup>29</sup> What these punishments were is unclear to the modern reader, though these rulings would imply that, at the least, Earconbert did not oppose his wife’s fasting. For the royal couple, new to Christianity and now entrusted with the spiritual well-being of an entire kingdom, these outward and inward shows of devotion took on even higher importance.

Seaxburh’s unique privilege of food security makes her decision to fast extensively all the more prominent and, by medieval Christian standards, all the more necessary. While nearly all Christian people engaged in some sort of fast, including the fasts of Lent, Good Friday, and Ash

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<sup>27</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 169. Eadbald also married his stepmother, for which Bede condemned him in strong terms.

<sup>28</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 169.

<sup>29</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 259.

Wednesday, these were not long-term fasts.<sup>30</sup> Seaxburh, however, does appear to have severely limited her food intake for a long period of time, perhaps her whole adult life. Her appearance and physical condition were greatly impacted by her fasting, with the *Vita* recording that: “while in the glory of the early palace under her robe and pure white linen she wore out her body, while she had wan cheeks from fasting,”<sup>31</sup> a condition comparable to the physical suffering endured by later continental saints including Catherine of Sienna.

As queen, Seaxburh was also in a uniquely secure position materially, with her body and its apparel a display of the kingdom’s wealth and power. Seaxburh appears to have dressed appropriately for her station, but we are told that the queen’s outward show of luxury (her “pure white linen”) was tempered by the private wearing out of her body, likely with a hair shirt, a method of self-flagellation popular among elite women. This private penance, invisible to most, allowed Seaxburh a personal reminder of her sins while still portraying to the court the majesty that her station demanded. The *Vita* is quite clear on her reasons:

“she who had had the enjoyment of royal garments of purple, longed to be clad in humbler weeds, to subjugate her flesh with the reins of fasting, lest like a haughty and unbridled pack-animal it might become wanton; to subserve the body, and to control the spirit.”<sup>32</sup>

The queen’s piety also did not end with her person. Seaxburh’s attendants were chosen not by their outward appearance or courtly grace.

“who preferred to cut off in themselves the flower of flattering youth with the sword of faith, and to crucify their flesh with Christ . . . they were weakened by the trials of fasting, worn down by the roughness of

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<sup>30</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 37.

<sup>31</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 145.

<sup>32</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 167.

their clothing, and abstemiousness of diet made them wan and deathly pale.”<sup>33</sup>

As Seaxburh is praised for the righteousness of her ladies, we may reasonably assume that these descriptions held true for her as well. Thus we see in her a woman who, not content with the mandated Christian fasts, ate so little over such a prolonged period of time that her appearance and strength were greatly affected. The probable hair shirt and fasting both served to “subjugate the flesh” in a deeply personal way. What were the physical desires Seaxburh felt so compelled to reign in through fasting? Prolonged food restriction can result in a decrease in libido—could Seaxburh, mother to at least four children, wanted to “rein in” her sexual desire? Could she have wanted to “rein in” an appetite that might appear gluttonous? We do not know exactly what Seaxburh wanted to control within herself, but beneath the outward appearance of wealth, security, station, and privilege was a suffering body. Beneath the suffering body was an even deeper form of self-subjugation in the form of fasting.

Seaxburgh may have begun these remarkable fasts as a child in King Anna’s court. As two of her sisters took the veil and became powerful and venerated abbesses, it seems likely that the East Saxon court placed a high value on female piety and outward signs of devotion. Was it upon becoming queen of Kent, when her actions were not only in service of herself but, in intentional symbolism intended to remind the observer of Christ, also in service of her people? Were these activities as intense as the writer of the *Vita Beate Sexburge Regne* makes them appear to be, or are the volume’s claims of piety another literary flourish, intended to promote similar behavior in others and veneration of Seaxburh after her death? Is the biographer following a pattern and filling in details of Seaxburh’s life with stock images of piety, or did Seaxburh’s devotions set the pattern for well-born Christian women (and their biographers) following her? The scarcity of sources means that much remains unclear about Seaxburh’s habits, thoughts, and actions. We do know that Seaxburh gave birth to at least four children who reached adulthood, two

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<sup>33</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 161-163.

male and two female.<sup>34</sup> Thus it seems likely that Seaxburh was not engaged in extreme levels of food restriction during at least some part of her married life. It is possible that Seaxburh fasted during the years of her pregnancies by refraining from certain types of food or drink, and possible that her commitment to fasting and mortification began after the births of her children.

Whatever her behavior, at some point between her husband Earconbert's death in 664 and her sister Æthelthryth's death in 679 and after her vision of Britain's enemies, Seaxburh left the Kentish court to join her sister in Ely Abbey.<sup>35</sup> The *Vita* tells us that Seaxburh ("the glorious heroine) dreamed "what was destined to come about for the English people," that they would be "plunder[ed]" by "deserters of the one True God."<sup>36</sup> Shortly after this vision Seaxburh left the care of her court to her adult daughter Eormenhild, an announcement that was met with "loud lamentation" from the court ladies, who feared "to return to the charms of wanton flesh in her absence."<sup>37</sup> Could some of these "charms" include an increased intake of food? Seaxburh's influence over the court was not restricted to an ornamental presence, but a tangible control over herself and others that her ladies feared losing.

Once in Ely Abbey Seaxburh's food restriction appears to have become more intense.

"Her extraordinary abstinence in an aged and now broken body demonstrated that she did not spare herself even in her weakness, which perhaps is not the case in younger persons. She signed her stomach with the mark of Christ so that she might not burden it with food."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 145.

<sup>35</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 419.

<sup>36</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 163.

<sup>37</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 167.

<sup>38</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 173.

Perhaps this habit was encouraged by her sister, Abbess Æthelthryth, whom Beade says “seldom did eat above once a day, excepting on the great solemnities, or some other urgent occasion, unless some considerable distemper obliged her.”<sup>39</sup>

Like other saints, particularly those found in twelfth and thirteenth century Italy, Seaxburh’s food restriction and bodily mortification passed from concealed hair shirts under her rich robes and preference for religiously minded companions to actively invoking Christ to abstain from eating, even when already ill from such “abstemiousness.” That this is beyond the common measure of devotion is clear in the praise heaped upon her for it (she is on the same page described as “the previous heroine Seaxburh”<sup>40</sup>), even in a community of women who had devoted their lives entirely to God.

Seaxburh outlived her sister, the Abbess Æthelthryth, and became the abbess after her death, where she “manfully guided the flock entrusted to her.”<sup>41</sup> There are multiple miracles attributed to Abbess Seaxburh, most importantly those linked to her burial and reburial of Abbess Æthelthryth. Eventually canonized, she has her own feast day, but is largely forgotten in narrative and religious accounts of Anglo-Saxon Britain, despite exhibiting many behaviors remarkably similar to those of later saints who have been studied for their restriction of food.

Consider the thirteenth-century saint, Elizabeth of Hungary. Married at fourteen to a wealthy man, she appears to have extreme guilt over her own level of wealth and related food security compared to those under their feudalistic care. By the time of her marriage at fourteen, she actively refused to eat at her husband’s table and began her practice of giving immense amounts of food to the poor.<sup>42</sup> Like Seaxburh this eventually resulted in a physical change as her body suffered from lack of nourishment, and like Seaxburh, it gained her the praise of those in her immediate court. Unlike Seaxburh,

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<sup>39</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 435.

<sup>40</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 172.

<sup>41</sup> Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, 173.

<sup>42</sup> Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 135.

it also gained her extreme censure, especially from her husband.

Like Seaxburh, Elizabeth appears to have been intensely concerned with the physical and spiritual well-being of those she presided over, including her family. While Elizabeth is not recorded as having visions, her concern for the poor manifested itself in similar ways as Seaxburh's, though without the added responsibilities of queenship. Both lived with their husbands yet gained the sort of spiritual stature normally reserved for virgins.

Seaxburh is not the only Anglo-Saxon saint to exhibit behaviors classified in later medieval women as *anorexia mirabilis*. Separated from Seaxburh by three centuries, the mother and daughter pair of saints in the tenth century, Wulfthryth and Edith of Wilton, also display some of the hallmarks of extreme fasting. Like Seaxburh, Wulfthryth and Edith were linked to royalty, though their connection was more scandalous than Seaxburh's.

The world in which Wulfthryth and Edith lived was different than Seaxburh's in both temporal boundaries and religious function. By the mid-tenth century the fractious Heptarchy coalesced into a fractious England under the control of the West Saxon kings beginning with Æthelstan, grandson of Alfred the Great. Æthelstan's nephew Edgar ascended the throne in 959 after deposing his elder brother Eadwig.<sup>43</sup> The Wilton Chronicle gives little detail on Eadwig, instead lightly glossing over the events of his coronation:

“And þe furst dæge of his crownynge,  
 Into spousebreche he fell anone,  
 and suche on he was all his levyng,  
 For all that Seynt Dunstone myȝt done.”<sup>44</sup>

In other words, on the very night of his coronation Eadwig was caught in a sexual liaison with a noblewoman and her daughter, most likely Eadwig's future wife, Ælfgifu. Whether

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<sup>43</sup> “Edgar,” Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed November 11, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edgar-king-of-England>.

<sup>44</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III* ll 743-745.

or not this is strictly true (and historians debate the veracity of this story), it introduces the reader to the powerful reformer and religious authority of the mid-tenth century, Saint Dunstan, and shows the interaction between religion and rule. A powerful political and religious figure from the mid-tenth century until his death in 988 and operating as monk, then minister, bishop and eventually archbishop, exiled three times and finally the highest political power in England, Dunstan's influence reshaped the English church for centuries after his death. Dunstan was no stranger to the sexual intrigues of the House of Wessex. His dealings with Eadwig lay the groundwork for our social and political rules around royal morality. The Wilton Chronicle ends the story with a similarly brief account:

“He regned here bot foure 3eye,  
For God took vengauus hym upon,  
For þe synnes þat he ded here,  
He dyed sodanly for his synne.”<sup>45</sup>

Again, whether Eadwig's sickness was truly the divine vengeance of God is immaterial: the scribes at Wilton believed it to be so—or, at the very least, wanted others to believe it to be so. Eadwig died in 959, leaving the throne to his younger brother Edgar, whom the Chronicle describes as “a virtuose thing,” and Edgar would go down in history as “Edgar the peaceable.”<sup>46</sup>

Other chroniclers, such as William of Malmesbury and Saint Dunstan's biographer, have a different view of Edgar. They make clear that despite the lack of wars during his reign, Edgar himself was anything but “peaceable.” Even the Wilton Chronicle, in an apparent attempt to paint Edgar in a better light, records a troubling interaction with Constantine, King of the Scots in this way:

“For in a tyme hit fell so by case,  
þat þe kyng of Scotlond dud wyth hym dwell.  
And upone a day, as he myry satte . . .  
He sayde hr mrtbsyled much of þatte,

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<sup>45</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 763-766.

<sup>46</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 781.

Pat Kyng Edgar was so mechel adredde  
 Of all men þat dweltone hym aboute . . .  
 Seyðt he is of stature so lyte,  
 And also so ðong of age.”<sup>17</sup>

Edgar, hearing of this insult to his age and stature, took King Constantine “in to þe wode”<sup>18</sup> and  
 “sayde, ‘Syre king, have here a sworde  
 Pat of stele ryðt well ys made,  
 And avowe now þy worde,  
 Pat þow behynd me has ysayde.”<sup>19</sup>

Even the flattering language of the Wilton Chronicle cannot disguise the temperament of a teenaged king who, so incensed that someone would dare to question his authority, took him into the woods and said the tenth-century equivalent of “say that to my face.”

Why, then, would the Wilton Chronicle *want* to portray Edgar “the peaceable” in a flattering light at all? Perhaps it is because their most famous saint, Edith, was the quasi-legitimate daughter of that same king and Wulfthryth, also a saint out of Wilton.<sup>20</sup> Even the circumstances of Edith’s conception are markedly different in the Wilton Chronicle than they are in William of Malmesbury’s account, and the Life of Saint Dunstan makes it quite clear that the ecclesiastical head of England in no way condoned the actions of its political head. Malmesbury relays the account in words dripping with condemnation, stating in no uncertain terms that the king “carried her [Wulfthryth] off from the monastery by force, ravished her, and repeatedly made her the partner

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<sup>17</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 828-839.

<sup>18</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 850.

<sup>19</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 854-857.

<sup>20</sup> Barbara Yorke has argued convincingly that Edith was indeed legitimate in her article *The Legitimacy of Saint Edith*, which in turn comments on the legal nature of Edgar and Wulfthryth’s relationship.

of his bed.”<sup>51</sup> For this transgression he was obliged to leave off wearing his crown for seven years.<sup>52</sup>

Wulfthryth came from a noble family before entering Wilton Abbey, and perhaps King Edgar hoped for a politically advantageous match with her. The Wilton Chronicle, in language redolent of a medieval romance, tells us that she was “a borones dou3ter for sothe was þat, and a maydene of r3te gode fame.”<sup>53</sup> Upon hearing her read (“for hure voys was bothe mylde and swete”<sup>54</sup>) Edgar fell in love, seeing even through her veil that her face was fairer than any he had ever seen.<sup>55</sup> The Wilton Chronicle claims that Wulfthryth had not taken her vows (“Forsothe, ysacryd he nysnot 3et”<sup>56</sup>) and then conveniently skips how precisely Edgar “persuaded” her to leave the abbey. Mary Dockray-Miller believes that this is because the Wilton Chronicle’s version was too romantic even for them, and the folio was removed entirely.<sup>57</sup> Other chroniclers have no such compunctions, with William of Malsbury saying specifically she was “carried off” and Dunstan punishing Edgar by not only making him return Wulfthryth but denying him the wearing of his crown for seven years. Wulfthryth returned to the abbey with a child after a year with Edgar. This appears to be the only public punishment Edgar received for what was at

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<sup>51</sup> William of Malmesbury, *William of Malmesbury's Chronicle of the Kings of England*, trans. J A Giles (London: Henry H. Bohn, 1847), 160.

<sup>52</sup> Malmesbury, *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, 160.

<sup>53</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 1000-1001.

<sup>54</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 1005.

<sup>55</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 1009.

<sup>56</sup> “Cotton Faustina B. III,” *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 1022.

<sup>57</sup> Mary Dockray-Miller, *Saints Edith and Æthelthryth - Princesses, Miracle Workers, and Their Late Medieval Audience: The Wilton Chronicle and the Wilton Life of St Æthelthryth* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 20.

best an insult to the church and was at worst sexual assault and kidnapping.

It is true that Malmesbury's *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, or *Deeds of the Kings of the English* was written about a century after the events described, but this version of events seems more plausible. The *Life of Dunstan* verifies Malmesbury's account, and given that Wulfthryth returned to Wilton Abbey after the birth of her daughter Edith, it seems likely she did not wish to live with Edgar. If the Wilton Chronicle is to be believed, it would be at this point that Wulfthryth took her vows and become a nun. What censure, if any, Wulfthryth faced upon her return to Wilton is not known, but she did not become Abbess of Wilton until after the death of her daughter, which might suggest some hesitance from Wilton in fully accepting her back into the community. For his part, Edgar gave Wulfthryth a charter to land, which would have provided her and Wilton Abbey with income for the rest of her life.

Of Edith, acknowledged daughter of Edgar and eventual Abbess of Wilton, the Chronicle records that "ofto he fast and lytulle he ete,"<sup>38</sup> despite rising every night for prayers and wearing a hair shirt under her fine clothes, a luxury afforded to her as the daughter of a king. Along with her mother Edith gave alms and fasted, but she died in 984 at about twenty-three years old. Saint Dunstan, by now Archbishop of Canterbury and indisputable head of the English Church, wrote frequently to Edith, counseling her in spiritual matters and physical ailments. In her final illness he rode through the night to reach her, only to be met by a vision on the road announcing her death, which he grieved.

After Edith's death, her mother Wulfthryth "almy dede and fastyng he dude everylyche continuele. . . ever he was in hurre self in fastyng and in gret preyeris, y wys"<sup>39</sup>—in modern English, she gave alms and fasted "continually" or "always." Like Seaxburh, Wulfryth was laying up heavenly treasures through her temporal restriction and gifts to others. Notably, Edith's fasting is recorded as being a life-long habit,

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<sup>38</sup> "Cotton Faustina B. III," *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 1173.

<sup>39</sup> "Cotton Faustina B. III," *Cotton Faustina B. III*, ll 2156-2163.

but Wulfthryth's appears to have emerged or at least become more prominent in the weeks following her daughter's death. Wulfthryth's fasting does, however, appear to be of a more restrictive nature.

Wulfthryth is not alone in decreasing her intake of food after a traumatic event relating to a child. The thirteenth century Margaret of Cortona, like Wulfthryth, was recorded to be exceptionally beautiful, and like Wulfthryth, was involved in an extra-marital affair with a powerful man which resulted in the birth of child. Unlike Wulfthryth, Margaret seems to have entered this relationship entirely willingly, and also unlike Wulfthryth, remained with the man, Arsenio del Monte Santa Maria, until his death, a period of nine years.<sup>60</sup> Margaret joined the Convent of San Francesco with her young son in tow (though, being a boy, he was sent to a Franciscan for education). It was during this time that Margaret began to severely restrict her intake of food. For years she ate nothing but bread, raw vegetables, nuts, and water in small portions twice a day.<sup>61</sup> Her *vita* also includes descriptions of actions that could be interpreted as extreme grief or displays of piety and humility.<sup>62</sup> This too is comparable to Wulfthryth, who in the years following Edith's death became Abbess of Wilton and was revered for her piety and gentleness.

Margaret of Cortona's rigorous fasting has been interpreted by Rudolf Bell as an attempt to destroy the natural beauty that led her to sin, and indeed Margaret's own words support that: "allow me to redouble my rampage against this odious body, as I have wished for so long."<sup>63</sup> We do not have such explicit words from Wulfthryth; indeed, we have no words from her at all. Yet like Margaret of Cortona Wulfthryth was reputed to be extraordinarily beautiful, and like Margaret of Cortona her extreme piety and corresponding food restriction seems to have emerged after a traumatic physical event and voluntary entrance into religious orders. In Wulfthryth's case this was first abduction and assault, followed the death of a beloved daughter. We do not

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<sup>60</sup> Bell, *Holy Anorexia*, 93.

<sup>61</sup> Bell, *Holy Anorexia*, 99.

<sup>62</sup> Bell, *Holy Anorexia*, 97.

<sup>63</sup> Bell, *Holy Anorexia*, 99.

know if Wulfthryth's restrictions were as severe as Margaret's, but the similarities are striking. Wulfthryth's habits were not as well recorded as Margaret's, and what has survived was compiled more than a century after her death. Nevertheless, it is notable that her biographer, Goscelin of St. Bertin, included the prolonged and increased fasting Wulfthryth engaged in during her later years.

Throughout the religious records of Britain, we find clear patterns of extreme food restriction present in religious women. While we may be unable to diagnose Seaxburh, with a disease recognizable to a modern audience, it is clear that she, like later religious women on the continent, displayed symptoms that fall into the category of *anorexia mirabilis*. Like the famous Elizabeth of Hungary and Catherine of Sienna, Seaxburh fasted to the point of emaciation and physical illness for the express purpose of drawing nearer to God. Like Elizabeth of Hungary, Seaxburh fasted and gave away food to serve the kingdom at large, and like Elizabeth of Hungary, she used her own body, outwardly and inwardly, as a tool to do God's work.

Likewise, though perhaps to a lesser extent, Wulfthryth of Wilton also engaged in habits of extreme food restriction. Like Margaret of Cortona, Wulfthryth's food restriction seems to have emerged after a traumatic event. In Wulfthryth's case this was her abduction and later the loss of a beloved daughter. Like Margaret of Cortona and highly reminiscent of Seaxburh, Wulfthryth's fasting appears to have been an attempt to destroy her natural beauty and rein in her physical body. Notably, these women were all in a position of relative privilege, able to access food and, more strikingly, willing to give it up without immediately succumbing to starvation.

In the murky documentation of these women, a theme emerges of restrictive eating habits. We know so little about them, and yet we know that they fasted for long periods of time, sometimes to the explicit detriment of their health. Religious eating or non-eating is a topic of academia and ascetic conversation, but the women who engaged in it were living human beings. Regardless of the constraints of agency placed upon them by their gender, religion, and era, they chose, for various reasons, to restrict their food in an effort to

draw closer to God and serve their fellow man. Like later continental saints, religious women in Britain experienced food in a vastly different way than the modern age, and, like later continental saints, some religious women restricted food in a way that qualifies as *anorexia mirabilis*. By studying these women together, a fuller picture of their lives and motivations can emerge, allowing scholars to better understand religious fasting and the both the women who engaged in it.

# Vanguards of Change in the “Georgia of the North”

Youth Activism in the New Jersey Civil Rights  
Movement

EMILY PETERSON

On February 17, 1948, the small suburb of Somerville, New Jersey began preparations for its annual “Brotherhood Week” meeting, part of an annual national initiative to address racial and religious prejudice. That day, the planning committee for the event received the following letter from a local high school student who served on the Brotherhood Week Youth Planning committee:

“Every February...Brotherhood Week rolls around...But what about the other 364 days of the year? What happens to our fine ideas of cooperation, understanding, and goodwill then? Nothing ever comes of these meetings. We, the youth of Somerville, feel there should be a continual effort along these lines, and we plan to *do something* about intolerance in our community [italics added for emphasis].”

Rather than just participating in the Brotherhood Week or organizing their own annual meeting, some of the students in Somerville had a vision to directly confront discrimination in their community. Somerville students organized their own interracial youth council to meet regularly.<sup>1</sup> Less than one week after their initial meeting, the

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<sup>1</sup> It appears that the youth council met at least once, if not twice a month. “Service Clubs Hold Joint Session,” *The Courier News* (Plainfield, NJ), Feb. 25, 1948, p. 4 (microfilm). Bridgewater Library Special Collections, Bridgewater, New Jersey; “High School Group Forms Somerset Youth Council,” *The Courier News* (Plainfield,

youth canvassed local shops that barred Black patrons. Their efforts to end racial prejudice garnered regional and national attention, including an invitation to speak at Columbia University.<sup>2</sup> The letter demonstrates just one example of how youth in New Jersey in the 1930s and 1940s moved beyond the usual approaches of the period toward engaging in action that directly addressed racism in their community. As historian Rebecca de Schweinitz suggests, youth during this time period sought to be "significant political actors in their own right,"<sup>3</sup> and, as de Schweinitz argues, set the stage for the later civil rights movement.

Often referred to as the "Georgia of the North" due to its known reputation for its harsh discrimination practices, New Jersey offers a compelling setting for examining the civil rights movement beyond traditional geographic and temporal settings of the 1950s and 1960s American South.<sup>4</sup> Drawing from the NAACP youth council files, historical newspapers,

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*NJ*), Mar. 5, 1948, p. 16, Bridgewater Library Special Collections, Bridgewater, NJ; "Somerset Youth Council To Sponsor Fall dance," *The Courier News* (Plainfield, NJ), October 4, 1948, p. 6 (microfilm). Bridgewater Library Special Collections, Bridgewater, NJ.

<sup>2</sup> "High School Students in Jersey Canvass Shops on Attitude Toward Serving Negroes." *New York Times* (1923-), Mar 02, 1948. Accessed via Proquest.com, November 16, 2022. "Columbia Honors Youth Committee," *The Courier News* (Plainfield, NJ), March 11, 1948, 10 (microfilm) Bridgewater Library Special Collections, Bridgewater, New Jersey. The youth were also asked to speak to a group of teachers at Columbia University because of their efforts.

<sup>3</sup> Rebecca de Schweinitz, "*If We Could Change the World*": *Young People and America's Long Struggle for Racial Equality*. University of Virginia, 2004, 171 (hereafter cited as De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*)

<sup>4</sup> Marion Thompson Wright, "Extending Civil Rights in New Jersey Through the Division Against Discrimination." *The Journal of Negro History* 38, no. 1 (1953): 91-107; George M. Fishman, "Centennial Notes: Report on a New Jersey Observance," *Negro History Bulletin* 28, no. 4 (1965): 82-83. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24766982>.

and other archival sources, this paper demonstrates how youth played an important role as leaders, organizers, and advocates for the civil rights movement in several New Jersey communities. Youth in Montclair, Plainfield, and Newark, New Jersey from 1935 to 1955, formed civil rights organizations that adopted interracial, collaborative, and often militant methods to combat discrimination and push for racial justice. Although often overlooked in discussions of the movement, the activism of mid-century New Jersey youth illustrate how young people in the North helped to set the groundwork for the more famous period and events of the civil rights movement.

#### HISTORIOGRAPHY

Recent scholarship investigates the Black freedom struggle and its legacies in the North as central to understanding the scope and goals of the movement.<sup>5</sup> Scholars including Martha Biondi, Thomas Sugrue, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard, have established the North “mattered enormously” as setting for the civil rights

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<sup>5</sup>Rayford W. Logan, "Educational Segregation in the North," *Journal of Negro Education* (1933): 65-67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2292219>; Belinda Robnett, "Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980 by Jeanne F. Theoharis, Komozi, Woodard" *American Journal of Sociology* 109, no. 5 (2004): 1215-17. <https://doi.org/10.1086/420668>; Brian Purnell, "Freedom North Studies, the Long Civil Rights Movement, and Twentieth-Century Liberalism in American Cities. *Journal of Urban History*, 42(3), 634-640. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144216635149>; Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee*. Harvard University Press, 2009; Lawson, Steven F. "Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement." *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 2 (1991): 456-71. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2163219>; Keane, Katarina. "New Directions in Civil Rights Historiography." *History: Reviews of New Books* 44, no. 1 (2016): 1-4. 10.1080/03612759.2016.1084809

movement.<sup>6</sup> In "How New York Changes the Story of the Civil Rights Movement," Martha Biondi argues the civil rights movement in the North began earlier and involved a more expansive agenda than its later Southern counterpart.<sup>7</sup> Building on the work of Biondi and others, in *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* Sugrue argues that while Jim Crow was not legally mandated in the North, white northerners intentionally contributed to the institutionalization of Black people's second-class citizenship through their private behavior, market practices, and local policies.<sup>8</sup>

Although much of the current scholarship on the civil rights movement in the North during the World War II period has focused on larger cities such as New York City and Detroit, some scholars have explored New Jersey in the context of the civil rights movement.<sup>9</sup> Marion Thompson

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<sup>6</sup>Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. Random House, 2008, xiv.

<sup>7</sup>Martha Biondi, "How New York Changes the Story of the Civil Rights Movement." *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 31, no. 2 (2007): 15-31.

<https://eportfolios.macaulay.cuny.edu/brooks12/files/2012/01/Biondi-article.pdf>; Theoharis, Jeanne, and Komozi Woodard, eds. *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*. Springer, 2016.

<sup>8</sup>Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. Random House, 2008.

<sup>9</sup>Jeanne Theoharris and Komozi Woodard, eds. *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*, Springer, 2016; Korstad, Robert, and Nelson Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 3 (1988): 786-811. Clement Alexander Price, ed. *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Joint Project of the New Jersey Historical Society and the New Jersey Historical Commission*. Vol. 16. New Jersey Historical Soc, 1980, 137-181; Giles R. Wright, *Afro-*

Wright interrogates the state's history of discriminatory policies, particularly regarding education, in "Racial Integration in the Public Schools in New Jersey."<sup>10</sup> Brian Alnutt's, "Another Victory for the Forces of Democracy: The 1949 New Jersey Civil Rights Act," discusses Black resistance in the state during the early twentieth century, leading up to the passage of the groundbreaking state civil rights act in 1949.<sup>11</sup> Although these scholars highlight the role of civil rights organizations and supportive state officials in passing effective civil rights legislation, their work leaves room for further examination, especially of the particular significance of young people's involvement in the movement. Such examinations, Alnutt suggestively argues, could be especially fruitful since he suggests that the activism and resulting legislation in New Jersey had a regional and national impact in setting the stage for the national civil rights movement.<sup>12</sup>

Also relevant to this study is work by Rebecca de Schweinitz and Thomas Bynum who have each explored the role of youth in the struggle for racial justice typically trivialized by most scholars. Both scholars argue that the tradition of assertive youth activism began in the 1930s, not

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*Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*. New Jersey Historical, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> Wright, Marion Thompson. "Racial Integration in the Public Schools in New Jersey." *The Journal of Negro Education* 23, no. 3 (1954): 282-89.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/2293225>; Marion Thompson

Wright, "Extending Civil Rights in New Jersey Through the Division Against Discrimination." *The Journal of Negro History* 38, no. 1 (1953): 91-107; Marion Thompson

Wright, "New Jersey Leads in the Struggle for Educational

Integration." *The Journal of Educational Sociology* 26, no. 9 (1953): 401-417.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2263442.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Brian Alnutt, "Another Victory for the Forces of Democracy": The 1949 New Jersey Civil Rights Act." *Pennsylvania History* 85, no. 3 (2018): 362-393.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/697509>. Accessed October 19, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 389.

the 1960s and demonstrates how NAACP youth councils propelled the NAACP to move beyond court action toward a more militant direction.<sup>13</sup> De Schweinitz particularly points to the significance of the Scottsboro Boys trial, a case involving nine young Black men wrongly accused of raping two white women in Alabama, as a key event that mobilized Black youth who demonstrated their eagerness to be involved in making change.<sup>14</sup> Both de Schweinitz and Bynum however, primarily center their scholarship on Black youth activism in the South, providing opportunities for additional inquiry into youth activism in the North.

Building on the work of these scholars, this paper examines the role of youth in three communities in New Jersey. Of all the states in the North, New Jersey had the most widespread practices of enslavement. Indeed, as Lee Calligro and Melissa Weiner argue, enslavement was more widespread in New Jersey than any other Northern state, with its southern half upholding some of the most "draconian" pro-enslavement laws in the nation. Even after passing abolition laws, legal ambiguity opened the door for the continued intergenerational exploitation and discrimination of Black workers.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, although New Jersey passed anti-discrimination laws in the 1880s, like the rest of the North, "from the end of Reconstruction...white citizens around the state actively resented and resisted the extension of citizenship to African Americans," and civil rights laws were not

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Bynum, *NAACP Youth and the Fight for Black Freedom, 1936-1965*, Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2013; De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 152-153. De Schweinitz notes that youth nationally began to be involved in the Black freedom struggle as early as the antebellum period, but the 1930s marked a period when youth demonstrated more clearly that they wanted to play an active role in the civil rights movement.

<sup>14</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 165.

<sup>15</sup> Melissa F. Weiner. "Unfreedom: Enslaving in New Jersey Through Gradual Abolition and Emancipation." *Slavery & Abolition* (2022): 1-19.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2022.2072732>. Accessed November 30, 2022.

enforced.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, New Jersey, like many places in the North, offered greater opportunities for organized Black resistance than the South due to the lower risk of violent backlash.<sup>17</sup>

During the Great Migration, African Americans migrated to New Jersey, attracted by both agricultural work in the southern half and service and domestic work in Northern suburbs and cities.<sup>18</sup> As a result of these economic opportunities, New Jersey had the highest percentage of Black residents than any other Northern or Midwestern state during the 1930s and 40s.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, white residents responded to the influx of Black migrants with hostility and

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<sup>16</sup>Mumford, Kevin, *Newark : A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America*, New York University Press, 2007.

*ProQuest Ebook Central*,

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=865725>, accessed Apr. 21, 2023; Marion Thompson Wright, "Negroes as Citizens." *The Journal of Negro History* 28, no. 2 (1943): 189-97.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/2714875>. Accessed November 28, 2022.

<sup>17</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 171.

<sup>18</sup> Cindy Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of Their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945*, University of North Carolina Press, 1997, 33-34; James N. Williams, "Guidance Needs of Negro Youth in Montclair: A Report of a Survey of Negro Youth in Montclair, New Jersey and of Their Present Guidance Activities, Opportunities, and Needs," (BA Thesis, Montclair University, Montclair, New Jersey, 1938), 13, F145.N4 W54 1938, Montclair State University Archives, (hereafter referred to as Williams, "Guidance Needs of Negro Youth.")

<sup>19</sup> Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung. *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1790 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States*. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2002.

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2002/demo/POP-twps0056.pdf>;

implemented more policies and practices to enforce segregation.<sup>20</sup> One NAACP field worker performed a survey that suggested New Jersey had the worst case of segregation and discrimination in schools of any state in the North, despite its “excellent” legal protections.<sup>21</sup> African Americans in New Jersey refused to passively accept this discrimination, instead choosing to organize against it. According to historian Brian Alnutt, the late 1930s in particular marked when civil rights organizations in New Jersey began a concerted effort in the state to end discrimination and gained support from the national NAACP in these efforts.<sup>22</sup>

While young people were active throughout the state, this paper will examine youth activism in Plainfield, Montclair, and Newark. Examining a range of communities provides an understanding of how youth activism arose within the context of each community and how they worked through particular obstacles. Furthermore, Plainfield and Montclair are suburbs, which allows smaller communities to be seen as important settings for activism, looking beyond large urban

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<sup>20</sup> Jerry Bakst, “Jim Crow Jersey Y Bans 5 Girls From Use of Pool.” n.d., *New York PM*, Records of the Committee on Fair Employment Practices, Part 1: Racial Tension File, 1943-1945, New Jersey [1941-1946], National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland: Record Group 228 (U.S. Committee on Fair Employment Practices), Proquest History Vault, 69; Marion Thompson Wright, “Conclusions,” *The Journal of Negro History* 28, no. 2 (1943): 197-99. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2714876>.

<sup>21</sup> “What Branches are Doing: New Jersey,” *The Crisis*, March 1947, 86. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1947-03\\_54\\_3/page/86/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1947-03_54_3/page/86/mode/2up).

The report noted at least 23 schools in the state practicing total segregation. Jenson also noted that in most cases Black teachers had three times the workload of white teachers.

<sup>22</sup> Davison Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle Over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 240.

Douglas notes how the NAACP made the eradication of school segregation in New Jersey a priority during the 1940s.

centers.<sup>23</sup> Examining these three distinct communities reveals how direct action and other methods were used to achieve the movement's major goals, including labor rights, empowerment, educational equality, access to public accommodations, greater autonomy, and increased interracial and regional collaboration.

#### PLAINFIELD NAACP YOUTH COUNCIL

An urban commuter town 17 miles southeast of Newark and 26 miles from New York City, Plainfield, New Jersey offered limited opportunities for Black families. Plainfield was “virtually the only community between Newark and Trenton,” in which African Americans could buy or rent ‘respectable’ homes.”<sup>24</sup> Because Plainfield attracted a relatively affluent white community, it was “very easy to get a job,” that offered relatively high wages for Black workers.<sup>25</sup> Most Black migrant women worked as domestics while men served in semi-skilled, unskilled, and a small number of civil service and professional jobs.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, a night school for adults provided educational and economic opportunities for migrants who sought to remedy the limited educational experience provided to them in the South.<sup>27</sup> Due to these

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<sup>23</sup> Walter David Greason, *Suburban Erasure: How the Suburbs Ended the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey*, Fairleigh Dickinson, 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Martin E. Robins, “Negro Awakening in Plainfield, New Jersey,” (BA Thesis, Princeton University, 1964), Plainfield Public Library, 26.

<sup>25</sup> “Plainfield: Survey of Negro Life in New Jersey,” Report XX, August 1932, State of New Jersey Interracial Committee, Department of Institution and Agencies, Plainfield Public Library, 4-5.  
<https://www.plainfieldlibrary.info/pdf/LH/SurveyofNegroLifeinNJPlainfield1932.pdf>. Accessed November 15, 2022.  
 (hereafter referred to as “Plainfield: Survey of Negro Life in New Jersey”).

<sup>26</sup> “Ibid.”

<sup>27</sup> Hazel Fields, “Oral History,” 9.  
<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3805478>; “Catalog. The Plainfield Area Adult School,” 1940, X100020, Plainfield

drawing factors, by 1930, Black residents made up about 10% of the population and 17% by 1940.<sup>28</sup>

However, despite being a multicultural community with Italian, Irish, and Jewish immigrants, Plainfield's residents and policies "systematically withheld" African American residents from participating fully in political, economic, and social equality.<sup>29</sup> Most restaurants, hotels, schools, and commercial facilities, for instance, would not serve Black patrons. In the schools, Black girls had to stay after hours because they could not swim with white girls.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, residents were shut out of 69% of the town's real estate due to redlining and were arrested at disproportionate rates.<sup>31</sup>

A community with a history of some efforts directed at securing civil rights, civil rights organizations in Plainfield served as important precursors to later youth activism. The Black community appears to have chartered the NAACP adult branch in 1919.<sup>32</sup> By the 1920s, the Plainfield NAACP began hosting national and regional civil rights leaders as speakers, producing a local newspaper, and attracted at least

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Public Library Special Collections, Plainfield, NJ.  
<https://plainfieldlibrarynj.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17109coll14/id/60/rec/2>.

<sup>28</sup> "Plainfield: Survey of Negro Life in New Jersey," 2. The survey reported 3,648 residents.

<sup>29</sup> Robins, "Negro Awakening in Plainfield," 2-3.

<sup>30</sup> "Plainfield: Survey of Negro Life in New Jersey," 9. The report points out that white boys and Black boys, however, could swim together.

<sup>31</sup> National Recreation Association, "A Survey of Recreational Needs in the 'West End' of Plainfield, New Jersey," May 1960, 6, 15, Plainfield History Collection, Plainfield Public Library, cited in Thomas Sugrue & Andrew P. Goodman (2007). *Plainfield Burning: Black Rebellion in the Suburban North*. *Journal of Urban History*, 33(4), 568-601. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144207299182>; "Plainfield: Survey of Negro Life in New Jersey," 10

<sup>32</sup> Robins, "Negro Awakening in Plainfield," 16.

550 members.<sup>33</sup> During this time, other civil rights organizations also emerged including the Negro History Club educated students about Black history; the Interracial Council educated the community on national anti-lynching legislation, investigated discriminatory complaints, and prevented the creation of a segregated glee club in the high school.<sup>34</sup> Both of these organizations particularly focused on empowering youth and preventing the segregation of students, which likely served to inspire young people in Plainfield to become future activists. However, both organizations, like many civil rights organizations during this time, treated young people largely as passive, “future activists,” rather than acknowledging their ability as students to contribute to the movement.<sup>35</sup>

In its early years, Dr. Clement de Freitas served as a particularly influential and militant leader in the Plainfield NAACP. By 1932, the Plainfield NAACP successfully prevented the creation of segregated cemetery areas, according to a report from the Interracial Committee from the New Jersey Conference of Social Work. The report also notes NAACP addressed discriminatory treatment in recreation, theaters, courts, and schools, although their methods and successes are unclear. Overall, however, the report concluded that the Plainfield NAACP achieved “some success, but seldom with the united support of the Negro community.”<sup>36</sup> This difficulty in acquiring collective support from the Black community likely helped to drive the focus of

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<sup>33</sup> “N.A.A.C.P. Met in Hope Chapel,” *The Courier News* (Bridgewater, N.J.), July 18, 1922, 1. Accessed via Newspapers.com, November 10, 2022; “New Jersey: Plainfield,” *The New York Age*, August 6, 1927, 8. Accessed via Newspapers.com, November 13, 2022. “New Jersey Multi-Ethnic Oral History Project Interview with Hazel Fields,” Transcript, 54. The chapters also produced a local newspaper for Black residents.

<sup>34</sup> Robins, “Negro Awakening in Plainfield,” 15-16.

<sup>35</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 159-160.

<sup>36</sup> “Plainfield: Survey of Negro Life in New Jersey,” 16.

the Plainfield NAACP toward youth people as potential proponents.<sup>37</sup>

The Plainfield NAACP, similar to other chapters during the 1930s, increasingly focused on getting youth engaged in the movement.<sup>38</sup> By the early 1930s, under de Freitas’ leadership, the NAACP adult branch recognized the potential of young activists. Youth competed in speech competitions hosted by the NAACP, organized to provide youth with a positive sense of racial identification, train them in speaking up against racial inequality, and fundraise for the NAACP.<sup>39</sup>

Young people also helped to distribute information regarding federal relief programs to Plainfield’s Black residents.<sup>40</sup> Like other chapters, Plainfield recruited young people to increase their interest in engaging in civil rights, however, they did not treat them as important actors within the movement. After de Freitas’ departure from Plainfield, sometime after 1936, the adult chapter shifted away from its more militant tactics. The youth council took on the initiative to continue to move local civil rights efforts forward through direct action.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Robins, “Negro Awakening in Plainfield,” 16; “Interesting Items Gleaned By Age Correspondents: Plainfield, NJ,” *The New York Age*, April 7, 1928, 8, accessed via Newspapers.com, November 11, 2022. The article notes that “comparatively few new members are coming in” despite the Plainfield NAACP holding regular meetings.

<sup>38</sup> De Schweinitz, “The NAACP and the Youth Organizing Tradition,” in *If We Could Change the World*, 151-190.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 160.

<sup>40</sup> “More Out-of-Town News: Plainfield, N.J.,” *The New York Age*, June 9, 1934, 10. Accessed via Newspapers.com, November 23, 2022; “New Jersey State Personal Notes: Plainfield, NJ,” *The New York Age*, May 27, 1933. Accessed via Newspapers.com, November 25, 2022.

<sup>41</sup> Robins, “Negro Awakening in Plainfield,” 17; “Plan Testimonial To Robt. F. Kearse,” *The New York Age*, July 25, 1935, accessed via Newspapers.com, November 14, 2022.

Following the example of the “Scottsboro Day” hosted five years earlier by the adult branch and similar efforts by youth councils across the country during this time, the Plainfield youth council, formed in 1937 with 50 original members, determined to rally further support for the Scottsboro Boys.<sup>42</sup> The trial of the Scottsboro Boys served as a driving force in mobilizing young black activists in Plainfield and across the country, particularly as they recognized that any of them could be caught in a similar situation.<sup>43</sup> The Plainfield youth council created an interracial committee of youth that met weekly at the home of Spencer Logan. During the meetings, young people in Plainfield organized an event to raise awareness and gather funds for the Scottsboro Defense Committee.<sup>44</sup> These efforts culminated in a mass meeting with Olen Montgomery, one of the boys originally on trial, as a featured speaker.<sup>45</sup> Spencer Logan, president of the youth council, reported over 300 attendees to the meeting and commented, “[the event was] very successful and [the remarks were] very enthusiastically received by the people present.”<sup>46</sup> Logan’s comments suggest the positive reactions from community members facilitated momentum not only for the

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This article is the last mention of De Freitas’ involvement with the Plainfield NAACP in the *New York Age*, where he appears on occasion.

<sup>42</sup> “New Jersey State Personal Notes: Plainfield,” *New York Age*, Apr. 29, 1933, 10. Accessed via Newspapers.com, November 31, 2022; “Application for Charter of Plainfield Youth Council,” 1-2. Part 19, Series A, Reel 3, NAACP Papers (microfilm).

<sup>43</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 165.

<sup>44</sup> Spencer Logan to E. Fredrick Morrow, October 20, 1938, Part 19, Series D, Reel 4, NAACP Papers.

<sup>45</sup> “NAACP Youth March Forward: National Youth Program Sept. 1936 – June 1937” n.d, Part 19, Series D, Reel 1, NAACP Papers, Microfilm; “Youth Section Crisis: November” n.d, Part 19, Reel 4, NAACP Papers. The other speaker was noted to be “Reverend Wilson of the Methodist Church.”

<sup>46</sup> Spencer Logan to E. Fredrick Morrow, October 20, 1938, Part 19, Series D, Reel 4, NAACP Papers.

Scottsboro case but also for the youth council and its efforts. By focusing on this national cause, the Scottsboro meeting brought initial visibility and attention to the growth of youth activism in the community.

The Plainfield youth council's activities around the Scottsboro Boys case connected Black youth in Plainfield to the national struggle for civil rights, and helped youth in Plainfield see themselves as part of an interracial, national struggle.<sup>47</sup> The rally testifies to the importance youth placed on building interracial collaboration as the president reported one of the primary goals of the rally was to "use the meeting as a wedge into the friendship of sympathetic white youth in the community."<sup>48</sup> This illustrates how youth actively addressed the pressing need for greater interracial cooperation to overcome white indifference and prejudice in their community emphasized by local reports and national NAACP leadership.<sup>49</sup> From its beginnings, the Plainfield youth council focused on creating a coalition of Black and white youth as a powerful tool in ending discrimination in their community.

Beyond supporting national campaigns, including the Scottsboro Defense Fund, the Plainfield youth council also combatted employment discrimination. Beginning in the late 1930s, the Plainfield NAACP youth council joined the national effort to open more job opportunities to Black workers, including organizing "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" boycotts.<sup>50</sup> In 1937, the Plainfield youth council sent its members to apply for jobs at local A&P grocery stores and dairy wagons.<sup>51</sup> By 1938, youth were going to other businesses and keeping track of which businesses refused to hire Black

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<sup>47</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 15.

<sup>48</sup> Spencer Logan to E. Fredrick Morrow, October 20, 1938, Part 19, Series D, Reel 4, NAACP Papers.

<sup>49</sup> "Plainfield: Survey of Negro Life in New Jersey," 16; Robins, "Negro Awakening in Plainfield," 1-38; De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 168.

<sup>50</sup> Bynum, *NAACP Youth*, 33; De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 168.

<sup>51</sup> "Report of Youth Councils and College Chapters," September, 1937, 3. Part 19, Reel 2, NAACP Papers.

clerks. Then, they informed other organizations and churches in the area of their list.<sup>32</sup> After identifying the companies that discriminated, they organized a boycott and picketed in front of those businesses.<sup>33</sup> The Plainfield NAACP youth council attracted students, newsboys, businessmen, domestic workers, housewives, stenographers, a model, and individuals of various other occupations, creating an interclass movement, which likely served as particularly useful in distributing information and gathering support from all of Plainfield's Black community as part of these boycotts.<sup>34</sup>

Through these efforts, youth in Plainfield established economic mobility and opportunity as one of their primary initiatives. In this case, youth were not simply pressing for access to jobs; rather, they understood that job discrimination kept them financially reliant on the white population in service sector jobs. Their efforts highlight Biondi's argument that labor served as a central goal of the civil rights movement in the North.<sup>35</sup> It also demonstrates their own confidence in organizing and mobilizing members of the community through their own efforts.

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<sup>32</sup> "Plainfield Council After Clerk Jobs," *The Crisis*, Jan. 1938, 22. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1938-01\\_45\\_1/page/n21/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1938-01_45_1/page/n21/mode/2up).

<sup>33</sup> "1938 Annual Report Youth Work," December 31, 1938. 4. Part 19. Reel 2. NAACP Papers.

<sup>34</sup> Marion Thompson Wright, "Extending Civil Rights in New Jersey Through the Division Against Discrimination," *The Journal of Negro History* 38, no. 1 (1953): 91-107; Brian Alnutt, "Another Victory for the Forces of Democracy": The 1949 New Jersey Civil Rights Act." *Pennsylvania History* 85, no. 3 (2018): 368-369. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/697509>. Accessed October 19, 2022. New York passed a similar law in January of the same year, but the statutes were both not enacted until July of the following year.

<sup>35</sup> Martha Biondi, "How New York Changes the Story of the Civil Rights Movement," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 31, no. 2 (2007): 15-31. <https://eportfolios.macaulay.cuny.edu/brooks12/files/2012/01/Biondi-article.pdf>

Members of the Plainfield youth council also supported legislative reform. By 1945, they had sent 350 letters to federal and state legislators "in protest," likely to pressure them to support state civil rights reforms and a national anti-lynching bill.<sup>56</sup> It is likely the youth council contributed to the pressure on state legislators to pass the Law Against Discrimination in April of 1945, one of the first laws to address civil rights in the nation since Reconstruction. The law specifically targeted protecting against employment discrimination in the state.<sup>57</sup> Following the passage of the Law Against Discrimination, the youth council distributed several thousand copies of the bill in the community.<sup>58</sup> Thus, youth in Plainfield saw themselves as responsible for educating members of the community on their legal rights to eliminate future discrimination. Furthermore, their membership

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<sup>56</sup> "Report of Activities of the Plainfield, New Jersey Youth Council of the NAACP," n.d., ca 1941, 1, E-153, Part 19, Series B, Reel 19, Microfilm. University of Maryland. Bethesda, Maryland; "On the Beam Youth Councils: Plainfield, NJ," *The Crisis*, Dec. 1945, 360. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1945-12\\_52\\_12/page/360/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1945-12_52_12/page/360/mode/2up).

<sup>57</sup> Edward Grosek, "Federal and New Jersey State Fair Employment Laws," *Labor Law Journal* 43, no. 12 (Dec 01, 1992): 791. Accessed via Proquest.com, November 10, 2022. Along with New York and Massachusetts, New Jersey was one of the first states to push through a bill designed to address issues of racial discrimination in employment, although sources suggest that some organizations continued to refuse compliance or were not reported. See: "3 States Compare Laws Against Bias: New York, New Jersey And Massachusetts, Only Ones To Have Them, Report Results." *New York Times (1923-)*, Mar 28, 1947. Accessed via Proquest.com, November 22, 2022.

<sup>58</sup> "On the Beam Youth Councils: Plainfield, NJ," *The Crisis*, December 1945, 360, [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1945-12\\_52\\_12/page/360/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1945-12_52_12/page/360/mode/2up); Alnutt, "Another Victory for the Forces of Democracy: The 1949 New Jersey Civil Rights Act." 362-393.

campaign tripled the size of the adult Plainfield NAACP branch.<sup>59</sup> Like other NAACP youth councils, the Plainfield youth council did not focus solely on problems impacting youth, but also state and national civil rights efforts as a whole.

Because Plainfield still practiced informal segregation despite state laws preventing it, students identified integrating public accommodations as another priority. They began by targeting Liberty Theater, a local movie theater, where Black patrons were only allowed to sit in the upper balcony section. Sometime around 1945, a group of Plainfield youth entered the movie theater and sat in the “white” section, where they were “constantly annoyed by officials requesting removal to the segregated areas.”<sup>60</sup> The council recognized that they could not pursue legal action because no one had been forcibly removed. They organized a meeting with their attorney who advised the council to pursue a meeting with the mayor and police board to encourage them to enforce laws that prevented such segregation to occur. The council’s senior advisors and attorney attended a board of police meeting; following the meeting, the council received a letter from the city clerk that the police had met with the Liberty Theater manager and ensured that the theater would no longer segregate its patrons. After receiving the note from the city clerk, the council continued to send youth to the movie theater to ensure the integration policy was upheld.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> “Report of Activities of the Plainfield, New Jersey Youth Council of the NAACP” n.d., ca 1945, 1, E-153, Part 19, Reel 19, Series B, Microfilm. University of Maryland. Bethesda, Maryland. The report notes the council successfully increased senior branch membership to 400 members.

<sup>60</sup> “Report of Activities of the Plainfield, New Jersey Youth Council of the NAACP” 1. Papers of the NAACP Part 19. Youth File Series B: 1940-1955 Reel 19 of 25 E-153. Microfilm. University of Maryland. Bethesda Maryland.

<sup>61</sup> “Report of Activities of the Plainfield, New Jersey Youth Council of the NAACP” 1. Papers of the NAACP Part 19. Youth File Series B: 1940-1955 Reel 19 of 25 E-153. Microfilm. University of Maryland. Bethesda Maryland.

After their success with Liberty Theater, the Plainfield youth council sent groups to local downtown restaurants that refused to serve Black customers.<sup>62</sup> The students entered the restaurants in groups, seated themselves, and refused to leave until they were served. After several attempts, a report from the council suggests the restaurants eventually began serving Black customers.<sup>63</sup> The efforts of the Plainfield Youth Council are noteworthy as they were engaging in direct challenges to racist practices long before the Greensboro sit-ins, thereby laying the groundwork for the larger civil rights movement.<sup>64</sup> The Plainfield youth demonstrated a strong determination and obvious vigor to combat the town's various policies and were strategic in how they approached each problem. While employment was a primary concern, the Plainfield youth also attacked segregation in public spaces. Youth experienced racism in jobs but also in their shared experiences as they tried to enjoy spaces associated with youth culture of the era which "helped them see the collective nature of those constraints and encouraged them to confront Jim Crow collectively as well."<sup>65</sup> Similar to other councils during this time, rather than simply focusing on raising awareness of instances of discrimination, the Plainfield youth recognized how they could eliminate segregation in their own lives through collective action.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Robins, "Negro Awakening in Plainfield," 13. All restaurants except for a local Woolworth's refused to seat Black patrons.

<sup>63</sup> "Report of Activities of the Plainfield, New Jersey Youth Council of the NAACP," 2. Papers of the NAACP Part 19. Youth File Series B: 1940-1955 Reel 19 of 25 E-153. Microfilm. University of Maryland. Bethesda Maryland; "Northtown Survey on Human Relations," 1947. Plainfield Reference & Genealogy Collections, P.R. 323.1 P69, Plainfield Public Library, Plainfield, New Jersey. <https://www.plainfieldlibrary.info/pdf/LH/NorthtownSurveyonHumanRelations1947.pdf>. A 1947 report stated 5 restaurants did not serve Black patrons, while 3 did.

<sup>64</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 162.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 233.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 186.

After seeing success in local theaters and restaurants, the youth council targeted the Plainfield Amusement Academy, a local skating rink, that refused to admit Black youth. Black couples from the council began attending the skating rink on various evenings. Those allowed in, experienced harassment, as white patrons attempted to trip or bump into them. The council had their advisors and attorney meet with the managers, who promised to prevent further intimidation of Black patrons. To ensure the rink manager kept his word, the council decided to rent out the rink twice. After the manager complained that he was losing business to other rinks that continued to segregate, the youth council proceeded to pursue similar tactics at nearby rinks in Morris and Essex counties, including in Springfield, New Jersey.<sup>67</sup> From this, we can assume that the youth were genuinely committed to the cause of civil rights not only in their own community but in the surrounding area. While the Plainfield youth began to conduct sit-ins to oppose segregation in their community, the adult chapter, like others around the country, does not seem to have participated in direct action efforts due to discomfort with the tactics as overly confrontational and aggressive.<sup>68</sup>

The Plainfield youth council's enthusiastic adoption of direct action techniques sometimes put it in conflict with

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<sup>67</sup> "Report of Activities of the Plainfield, New Jersey Youth Council of the NAACP" 2. Papers of the NAACP Part 19. Youth File Series B: 1940-1955 Reel 19 of 25 E-153.

Microfilm. University of Maryland. Bethesda Maryland; "Report of Skating Parties Given by the Plainfield Youth Council of the NAACP," n.d. Papers of the NAACP Part 19. Youth File Series B: 1940-1955 Reel 19 of 25 E-153. Microfilm. University of Maryland. Bethesda Maryland.

<sup>68</sup> "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Jul. 1935, 216.

[https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1935-07\\_42\\_7/page/n23/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1935-07_42_7/page/n23/mode/2up); "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Feb. 1938, 56. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1938-02\\_45\\_2/page/56/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1938-02_45_2/page/56/mode/2up); "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Apr. 1944, 120. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1944-04\\_51\\_4/page/n23/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1944-04_51_4/page/n23/mode/2up); De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 176.

the adult branch. One report reflected that their picketing prompted the adults to worry about the students getting "out of hand," likely because the youth's actions were drawing attention and potentially considered reckless by the adults.<sup>69</sup> Another report from the youth council pointed out that all of their efforts were accomplished *without* the help of the senior branch.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, a letter from the president of the youth council, Spencer Logan, expressed frustration from working with a group of adult civil rights leaders on a state civil service discrimination case, stating:

"As youth representative, there has been no opportunity for me to represent or express my sentiments of the Youth in this matter. I do not see the necessity of my forcing [adults on the committee] to recognize the Youth spokesman...You cannot develop militant youth leadership under the pretense of granting to youth the opportunity to fight."<sup>71</sup>

Plainfield youth council leaders were frustrated with the lack of trust and engagement from the adult branch; they felt the adult leaders were not treating them as legitimate voices in the civil rights struggle.<sup>72</sup> All of these instances and Logan's resignation from the board show, like the Somerville youth council, young people in Plainfield resented the conservatism of adults and demonstrated their eagerness to actively participate in civil rights on their own terms.<sup>73</sup> As Bynum says, the conflicts between adult branches and youth

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<sup>69</sup> "September 1937 Annual Youth Report," Part 19, Series A, Reel 1, NAACP Papers.

<sup>70</sup> "Report of Activities of the Plainfield: New Jersey Youth Council of the NAACP" 2, E-153, Part 19, Series B, Reel 19, Microfilm, University of Maryland. Bethesda Maryland.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Spencer Logan to Miss Jackson, March 29, 1938. E-153. Part 19. Series A. Reel 19. NAACP Papers.

<sup>72</sup> "Report of Activities of the Plainfield, New Jersey Youth Council of the NAACP" 2, E-153, Part 19, Series B, Reel 19, NAACP Papers.

<sup>73</sup> De Schweinitz, *If They Could Change the World*, 162.

councils, “forced the national office to take the youth programs more seriously.”<sup>74</sup> Young people in New Jersey had a new philosophy about civil rights, one that included direct action at the front and center of its focus.<sup>75</sup> The youth council played a key role in “[redrawing] the boundaries of acceptable civil rights activism.”<sup>76</sup>

Scholar Martin E. Robins suggests the Plainfield youth during World War II viewed the NAACP as “little more than a tea-sipping clique” with few accomplishments, reflecting their aggravation with the slow pace of the movement.<sup>77</sup> However, the actions of the Plainfield youth council demonstrate that youth were committed to combating discrimination in their community. Historian Victoria Wolcott argues spaces where young people could flirt, talk, and play were central settings of racial conflict because they symbolized power and possession, thus the actions of youth in Plainfield demonstrate their desire to assert their dignity and autonomy.<sup>78</sup> While their actions may not have received major media attention, their militancy demonstrates the role youth in New Jersey played in organizing in their communities and setting the tone for the movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

#### MONTCLAIR NAACP YOUTH COUNCIL

Located about 15 miles from New York and ten miles Northwest of Newark, like Plainfield, Montclair was an affluent commuter town in North Jersey that offered high wages for Black migrants seeking economic stability, security, and opportunities for economic mobility.<sup>79</sup> Other migrants

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<sup>74</sup> Thomas Bynum, *NAACP Youth and the Fight for Black Freedom, 1936–1965*. Vol. 1st ed, Knoxville: Univ Tennessee Press, 2013. xvii. <https://search-ebscohost-com.byu.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=608799&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

<sup>75</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 162.

<sup>76</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 173.

<sup>77</sup> Robins, “Negro Awakening in Plainfield, New Jersey,” 31.

<sup>78</sup> Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. 3-6.

<sup>79</sup> Patricia Eget Hampson, “Challenging Containment: African Americans and Racial Politics in Montclair, New

arrived to attend the New Jersey State Normal School based in Montclair.<sup>80</sup> As a result, Montclair had the highest percentage of African Americans than any other major suburb or city in North Jersey.<sup>81</sup> From this community emerged a strong network of Black organizations including a YWCA, Union Baptist Church, women's social clubs, St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal, St. Peter Claver, and a chapter of the NAACP. These organizations ran various programs for the Black community and provided autonomous spaces for Black residents that could be utilized to prompt change.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, white residents utilized economic power, racial covenants, paternalistic policies, and at times, informal segregation, to maintain a racial hierarchy in the community.<sup>83</sup>

Beginning in the late 1920s, the Montclair NAACP emerged as a key organization in mobilizing its residents against discrimination under the leadership of Dr. E.S.

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Jersey, 1920-1940," *New Jersey History*, 126, no. 1 (2011), 8-10. (hereafter referred to as Hampson, "Challenging Containment")

<sup>80</sup> "Along the Color Line," *The Crisis*, Sep. 1913, 218, <https://books.google.com/books?id=NVoEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA218&dq=Montclair+Normal+School&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj9wPGIILz-AhUmMDQIHXXdDLwQ6AF6BAGJEAI#v=onepage&q=Montclair%20Normal%20School&f=false>.

<sup>81</sup> Hampson, "Challenging Containment", 4-5.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 6, 12; "Along the Color Line," *The Crisis*, Aug. 1933, 184. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1933-08\\_40\\_8/page/184/mode/1up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1933-08_40_8/page/184/mode/1up).

<sup>83</sup> Williams, "Guidance Needs of Negro Youth," 27, 35.

This report notes a segregated YWCA & YMCA and a greater number of arrests of Black and Italian adults; Hampson, "Challenging Containment," 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.14713/njh.v126i1.1101>. Hampson notes a white advisory board over the African American YWCA during the 1920s and 1930s; "Montclair Civil Rights Audit: as Reported at Montclair Forum," December 11, 1947, 9, F144.M7M65, 1947, Sinclair NJ Open Stacks, Rutgers University Special Collections, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Ballou.<sup>84</sup> Founded around 1916, the Montclair branch established a tradition of direct action in the community.<sup>85</sup> As one of their early initiatives, in 1922 the chapter supported the national effort to advocate for anti-lynching legislation by hosting a mass meeting.<sup>86</sup> In 1928, the chapter responded to the arrest of Laura Stewart, a 31-year-old Black service worker, who had refused to sit in the segregation section of Montclair's Claridge Theater, by organizing picketing of the theater for weeks until it announced it would allow Black patrons to sit anywhere in the theater.<sup>87</sup> By the late 1930s, according to reports in *The Crisis*, the Montclair adult chapter became less involved or vocal in direct action initiatives,

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<sup>84</sup> "Montclair, N.J.," *The New York Age*, October 15, 1921, 11, accessed via Newspapers.com, November 3, 2022.

<sup>85</sup> "Meetings," *The Crisis*, Jun. 1915, 85.  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=T1oEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA85&dq=montclair&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiWhr-Zk\\_H8AhXKPUQIHQqlBvQ4FBD0AXoECAEQAg#v=onepage&q=montclair&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=T1oEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA85&dq=montclair&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiWhr-Zk_H8AhXKPUQIHQqlBvQ4FBD0AXoECAEQAg#v=onepage&q=montclair&f=false). This issue mentions a meeting held in Montclair hosting a member of the Board of Directors, Mrs. Florence Kelly, as speaker; "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," *The Crisis*, Feb. 1917, 166. This article mentions delegates from the Montclair branch; "Welcome to the Montclair NAACP," Montclair NAACP, accessed November 14, 2022, <https://www.montclairnaacp.org>. The official Montclair NAACP website states that the Montclair NAACP was founded in 1916.

<sup>86</sup> "Anti-Lynching Bill Subject of Meeting," *Montclair Times*, Mar. 18, 1922, 1, accessed via Newspapers.com, November 5, 2022; Two years later, the NAACP gathered 550 signatures for a petition demanding the local Aldridge Theater not screen the racist film, "Birth of a Nation." "Commissioners Bar Film," *The Black Dispatch* (Oklahoma City), Aug. 21, 1924, 6, accessed via Newspapers.com, November 1, 2022.

<sup>87</sup> "Montclair Citizens Protest Segregation in Theaters," *Pittsburgh Courier*, April 28, 1927, 3, accessed via Newspapers.com, September 30, 2022; Hampson, "Challenging Containment," 12-13.

generally hosting speakers rather than protests.<sup>88</sup> The chapters' shift away from their earlier efforts of protest may have been due to the departure of Ballou, similar to the case of Plainfield.

Chartered the same year as the Plainfield youth council, the Montclair chapter prioritized interracial collaboration.<sup>89</sup> According to De Schweinitz, the 1930s and 1940s marked a period when Black and white youth joined forces to address racial prejudice and discrimination in a variety of ways. While perhaps an obvious approach, during this time in Montclair, there was likely strong opposition to such efforts, due to white hostility and fears of miscegenation. In 1925, a group of white men in Montclair burned a cross in the front yard of a man when they found out that the man engaged to a young white woman was a light-skinned Black man.<sup>90</sup> Because of these strong hostilities in the community, the very act of bringing Black and white youth together was radical. As an important player in the local civil rights scene,

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<sup>88</sup> George B. Greenleaf, "Links to 4 Firings to Police Bias Out in Montclair," *The New York Age*, Feb. 5, 1949, 14. <https://newspapers.com/image/40987677/?terms=%22Montclair%22%20%22NAACP.%22&match=1>. The NAACP adult chapter was involved in one lawsuit in 1949; "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Apr. 1940, 121, <https://books.google.com/books?id=41oEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA121&dq=montclair+meeting&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi34srv1Lz-AhXbFzQIHcboAKQQ6AF6BAgGEAI#v=onepage&q=montclair&f=false>; "Branch News," *The Crisis*, May 1940, 132. <https://books.google.com/books?id=VoEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA152&dq=montclair+meeting&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi34srv1Lz-AhXbFzQIHcboAKQQ6AF6BAgMEAI#v=onepage&q=montclair%20&f=false>; "Branch News," *The Crisis*, Jul. 1941, 231. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1941-07\\_48\\_7/page/230/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1941-07_48_7/page/230/mode/2up).

<sup>89</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 165-166.

<sup>90</sup> "Fiery Cross in Yard Protests Wedding," *New York Times*, November 7, 1925. Accessed via Proquest.com, Mar. 20, 2023.

Montclair intentionally engaged with interracial organizations to facilitate change in their community. In 1939, for example, two members of the youth council served as delegates for an interracial group of Christian youth to address issues of housing.<sup>91</sup> The event included a speaker from the New Jersey District of the Federal Housing Administration.<sup>92</sup> This is particularly noteworthy because it suggests youth were engaging with federal agencies responsible for housing and discussing with them issues of discrimination. Thus, the Montclair youth saw themselves as capable of collaborating with others to confront complex, systemic problems.

As World War II began, youth in Montclair recognized the limited employment opportunities for their community. Nationally, with the outbreak of World War II, Black youth and adults particularly focused on labor discrimination in the defense industry. The Montclair council made a list of all the Black residents able to work in the community, including their skills and careers of interest. Then, similar to the efforts of the youth council in Plainfield, they would approach all of the local businesses and recommend potential employees from their list to the businesses to hire. The council then organized a “method of action,” most likely boycotts, to combat policies at businesses that refused to hire Black employees.<sup>93</sup> It is unclear whether this program was specifically for youth or for all working-aged individuals in the community. Either way, the youth council participating in these sorts of events demonstrates how youth in Montclair saw themselves as pivotal to achieving national

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<sup>91</sup> The Essex County Youth Commission sponsored the event, with the Delta Club of St. Luke’s, an Episcopal church in Montclair, also in attendance.

<sup>92</sup> “Young People to Hold Conference on Housing,” *The Montclair Times* (Montclair, New Jersey), November 4, 1938, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/515580663>.

<sup>93</sup> “Youth Council News,” *The Crisis*, January 1941, 24. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1941-01\\_48\\_1/page/24/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1941-01_48_1/page/24/mode/2up).

initiatives of employment opportunity and economic empowerment.<sup>94</sup>

The youth council also understood the particular obstacles in their community to educational opportunities. Five years before the creation of the youth council, the adult NAACP attempted to pursue a lawsuit to protest changes to district boundaries that sent most Black students to Glenfield middle school, while their white peers attended a different middle school with a greater variety of curriculum, including college preparatory classes. However, the board of education refused to concede. The superintendent asserted, "Black students should be satisfied with arrangements for separate schools...in the South, Black students had to take crumbs and were happy to get them."<sup>95</sup> A civil rights audit released the year the youth council formed highlighted that Black youth in Montclair had limited academic support and no vocational guidance resources, further evidencing the lack of resources available to them.<sup>96</sup>

Contrary to the beliefs of the Montclair Board of Education, the youth council made it clear that they were not satisfied with the inadequate resources available in their schools. The youth council ran a "guidance program" for those in middle school and high school which included tutoring services facilitated by members, lessons on union practices, lectures from guest speakers related to labor opportunities, and discussions of issues around employment discrimination for the Black community. The council also surveyed graduates to track their successes and challenges in

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<sup>94</sup> Thomas Bynum, "We Must March Forward!": Juanita Jackson and the Origins of the NAACP Youth movement." *The Journal of African American History* 94, no. 4 (2009): 501.

<sup>95</sup> Montclair Board of Education Minutes. September 18, 1933. Montclair Board of Education. Montclair, New Jersey, cited in "Challenging Containment," 12-13.

<sup>96</sup> "Montclair Civil Rights Audit: as Reported at Montclair Forum," December 11, 1947, 7, 25-26. F144.M7M65 1947, Sinclair NJ Open Stacks, Rutgers University Special Collections, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

finding employment.<sup>97</sup> Youth not only saw themselves as capable of securing employment but also understood the prejudices youth faced and took action to provide the resources the board of education denied them.

Beyond local efforts, the council also furthered regional organization. They worked with the New Jersey Urban League, the Newark Sojourner Truth YWCA, the New Jersey Federation of Youth Organizations, and other local clubs and organizations to organize a job drive for Black youth in North Jersey. The council had the highest number of representatives in comparison to the other youth organizations, suggesting their substantial presence in civil rights organizing in the state. The youth council also hosted an annual youth conference for all North Jersey councils to come together and explore various civil rights issues, bringing in leaders from New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.<sup>98</sup> Thus, the Montclair youth saw themselves as part of a state and regional effort and recognized their need to collaborate to achieve ultimate success.

In their efforts to increase awareness and engagement among youth, the Montclair chapter began producing a bulletin around 1939 and produced it monthly at least until 1943.<sup>99</sup> The bulletin highlights the wide range of work youth were doing and their desire to educate youth on Black history and issues impacting the Black community. Sections like “Why Fight for Equal Education” and “The Negro in Literature” highlight how Black students in Montclair were keenly focused on securing educational and employment opportunities.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>De Allyon Rice to Juanita Jakson, January 12, 1938, 1, Part 19, Series B, Reel 4, NAACP Papers.

<sup>98</sup>“Annual Youth Conference” May 21-22, 1938, 1, Part 19, Series A, Reel 4, Frame 00814.

<sup>99</sup>“Youth Council News: Montclair, NJ,” *The Crisis*, Oct. 1943, [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1943-10\\_50\\_10/page/n21/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1943-10_50_10/page/n21/mode/2up).

<sup>100</sup>Montclair NAACP Youth Bulletin, Dec. 10, 1939, 4. Edited by E. Alma Williams and Wilbert Howard. NAACP Papers Part 19 Series B Group III Box E-153, Reel 4.

The youth council also used the bulletin to facilitate collaboration with other councils through their monthly bulletin. An NAACP report reveals that Montclair regularly exchanged bulletins with the Richmond, Virginia branch, demonstrating how Montclair's youth council engaged in interregional collaboration.<sup>101</sup> It also likely shared it with its neighboring chapter in East Orange, only six miles from Montclair, which began producing its own bulletin in 1941 and distributed it in local stores, salons, and other public spaces.<sup>102</sup> From this, it is clear that the Montclair branch set the direction of the movement in other parts of the state, even extending to the South. High praise from the NAACP regional coordinator suggests the bulletin rendered increased awareness and engagement from the community and for shaping the methods of the other chapters.<sup>103</sup> The national NAACP would adopt this practice and begin producing its own bulletin three years later, exhibiting youth as models in

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<sup>101</sup> "Report of Acting Youth Director to December Board Meeting," Dec 11, 1939, 3, Part 19, Series B, Reel 4, NAACP Papers.

<sup>102</sup> "Youth Council News: East Orange, NJ," *The Crisis*, September 1941, 295.  
[https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1941-09\\_48\\_9/page/294/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1941-09_48_9/page/294/mode/2up); "Youth Council News: Jersey City, NJ," *The Crisis*, October 1941, 329.  
[https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1941-10\\_48\\_10/page/328/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1941-10_48_10/page/328/mode/2up). This article notes "inter-community activities have been carried on with the councils from Elizabeth and Montclair."

<sup>103</sup> Letter from E Fredric Morrow to Mr. J.N. Williams, November 21, 1938, Part 19, Series B, Reel 4, NAACP Papers. In praise of Montclair's bulletin, Morrow wrote, "It is one of the finest I have seen, and I doubt whether any council matches this bulletin in excellence. I think that the senior branches of the Association could well afford to copy this method used by you to advertise the activities of the organization."

helping to shape the methods of the national NAACP and its methods going forward.<sup>104</sup>

#### NEWARK

An urban center only 10 miles from New York City, Newark experienced an industrial upswing beginning in the 1920s that attracted many Black migrants. However, similar to Plainfield and Montclair, Black migrants to Newark were primarily funneled into the lowest-paying jobs.<sup>105</sup> Newark did have higher numbers of Black residents than Plainfield and Montclair, however, Black residents only made up 10% of Newark's population in 1940.<sup>106</sup>

Aside from early efforts to eliminate educational segregation in the 1870s, scholars note that, unlike Montclair and Plainfield, Newark lacked a strong history of collective militant African American activism.<sup>107</sup> Similarly to Plainfield and Montclair, most of its theaters, stores, pools, hospitals, and restaurants, publicly observed Jim Crow segregation.<sup>108</sup> Scholar Kevin Mumford argues that while there were Black social organizations established in Newark, unlike Montclair,

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<sup>104</sup> De Schweinitz, "The Youth Organizing Tradition," in *If We Could Change the World*, 151-190.

<sup>105</sup> Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*, 21 .

<sup>106</sup> Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical census statistics on population totals by race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic origin, 1790 to 1990, for the United States, regions, divisions, and states*, Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2002,

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2002/demo/POP-twps0056.pdf>.

The percentage of African Americans would increase to 17% by 1950.

<sup>107</sup> Davison Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle Over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 68; Mumford, Kevin. *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America*. Vol. 10, NYU Press, 2008, 6 (hereafter referred to as Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*)

<sup>108</sup> Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*, 32. Mumford also notes the downtown YWCA was segregated.

Plainfield, and nearby urban areas like New York City, Black organizations in Newark were largely insular and rarely reacted to discrimination with collective action or protest.<sup>109</sup>

Founded in 1914, the adult chapter of the Newark NAACP appears to have initiated some momentum, although limited, around civil rights.<sup>110</sup> Issues of the NAACP in 1913 and 1914 mention lawsuits pursued by Black Newarkers for being refused admission to local movie theaters.<sup>111</sup> A 1936 article from *The Crisis* suggests that like Plainfield, the adult Newark NAACP hosted a rally in support of the Scottsboro

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<sup>109</sup> Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*, 24-25.

<sup>110</sup> "The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: Branches," *The Crisis*, Sep. 1914. <https://books.google.com/books?id=vlkEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA220&dq=Newark+chartered+1914&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjqsyx5Ln-AhVOHDQIHb2gAf4Q6AF6BAgJEAI#v=onepage&q=Newark%20chartered%201914&f=false>.

Article mentions the formation of the Newark branch; Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*. New Jersey Historical, 1988, 62-63.

<https://nj.gov/state/historical/assets/pdf/topical/afro-americans-in-nj-short-history.pdf>.

<sup>111</sup> "Along the Color Line, *The Crisis*, Nov. 1913, 323.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=KFoEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA323&dq=Andrew+Sims+Newark&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjRgJDw5Ln-AhVYAzQIHckcDCwQ6AF6BAgJEAI#v=onepage&q=Andrew%20Sims%20Newark&f=false>.

The article mentions Andrew Sims suing for being refused admittance to a movie theater owned by Isaac Boyland; "Along the Color Line," *The Crisis*, March 1914, 220.

[https://books.google.com/books?id=vlkEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA220&dq=newark&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwji\\_eWLzLn-AhU\\_IzQIHWwsAJ04HhDoAXoECBAQA#v=onepage&q=newark&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=vlkEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA220&dq=newark&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwji_eWLzLn-AhU_IzQIHWwsAJ04HhDoAXoECBAQA#v=onepage&q=newark&f=false) The article mentions Charles Lanier suing the Newark Theatrical Company.

Defense Fund.<sup>112</sup> Like Montclair, the adult chapter also joined the national campaign against lynching by hosting an anti-lynching rally, writing to their legislators to enact anti-lynching legislation, and by fundraising for NAACP efforts against lynching.<sup>113</sup> Most other records from the Crisis provide little information on the actions of the adult chapter during this time other than a few mentions of meetings the chapter hosted.<sup>114</sup>

More combative approaches appear to have occurred in Newark in the late 1930s outside of the NAACP. In 1938, three female “young Newark socialites” conducted a sit-in at a local restaurant that would only serve Black patrons at the counter.<sup>115</sup> That same year, a civil rights group, the National Negro Congress, organized a brief “Don’t Buy

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<sup>112</sup> “Along the NAACP Battlefront: Scottsboro Case,” *The Crisis*, Mar. 1936, 88,

[https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1936-03\\_43\\_3/page/88/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1936-03_43_3/page/88/mode/2up).

<sup>113</sup> “Ten New NAACP Directors,” *The Crisis*, Mar. 1936, 85,

[https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1936-03\\_43\\_3/page/84/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1936-03_43_3/page/84/mode/2up); “Along the NAACP Battlefront: Anti-Lynching Button Sale Sweeps Country,” *The Crisis*, Feb. 1937, 52; “Branch News,” *The Crisis*, 1940, 56. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1937-02\\_44\\_2/page/56/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1937-02_44_2/page/56/mode/2up).

<sup>114</sup> “Branch News,” *The Crisis*, Aug. 1936, 250,

[https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1936-08\\_43\\_8/page/250/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1936-08_43_8/page/250/mode/2up); “Branch News,” *The Crisis*, Jul. 1942, 230. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1942-07\\_49\\_7/page/230/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1942-07_49_7/page/230/mode/2up); “Branch News,” *The Crisis*, Feb. 1939, 56. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1939-02\\_46\\_2/page/56/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1939-02_46_2/page/56/mode/2up).

<sup>115</sup> “It’s Alright to Shop Downton, But to Eat That’s Different!” *New Jersey Herald News*, December 24, 1938, 1.

<https://archive.org/details/NewJerseyHeraldNews19381224/mode/2up>. The article mentions the women were involved in a “civic organization” but it is unclear if that organization was the National Negro Congress or another organization.

Where You Can’t Work” campaign with a small number of supporters.<sup>116</sup>

Yet, if Black organizations collectively resigned themselves to accommodate Newark’s racist policies, NAACP records, and newspapers reveal that young people began to take on their roles as defenders of democracy. Chartered first in 1936, early efforts of the Newark NAACP youth council included organizing a play to fundraise for a state civil employment discrimination case, raising \$10 for the defense fund.<sup>117</sup> Similar to youth in Plainfield, the Newark youth also helped with membership campaigns for the senior branch.<sup>118</sup> The council also participated in the first National Youth Demonstration Against Lynching, in 1937.<sup>119</sup> One letter to national NAACP leaders suggests the council may have struggled with its smaller number of members to organize effectively. The letter notes the Newark council hoped to “outline plans for a more effective unit in Newark and vicinity,” and noted “they need some very definite help.”<sup>120</sup> Because of these potential limitations, it appears the council focused primarily on social activities. Similar to Montclair, they engaged in community events focused on anti-discrimination, anti-lynching legislation, and attended regional youth council socials.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*, 31. Mumford notes that the campaign only attracted forty members and a couple hundred supportive bystanders.

<sup>117</sup> Malcolm to Juanita Jackson, March 15, 1938, Part 19, Series D, Reel 4, NAACP Papers. The branch successfully raised \$10 in support of the case, in comparison to Rahway who also raised \$10 and Montclair that raised \$5.50.

<sup>118</sup> “Branch News,” *The Crisis*, Jan. 1938, 22, [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1938-01\\_45\\_1/page/22/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1938-01_45_1/page/22/mode/2up).

<sup>119</sup> “Report of First National Youth Demonstration Against Lynching,” March 5, 1937, Part 19, Series D, Reel 1, NAACP Papers.

<sup>120</sup> E. Fredric Morrow to Juanita Johnson, April 4, 1938, Part 19, Series D, Reel 4, NAACP Papers.

<sup>121</sup> “Brotherhood Day,” March 1939, *The Crisis*, 89, [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1939-](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1939-)

After what appears to be a couple of years of inactivity, the rechartered council organized a dance for youth.<sup>122</sup> In 1943, later a play for soldiers stationed at Port Newark.<sup>123</sup> Although these events may seem inconsequential, these efforts are still very much political and significant because they were designed to bring Black and white children together in proximity during a time when racial tensions were increasing. Although perhaps not as active, large, or radical as the chapters in Montclair or Plainfield, Newark youth still organized events to increase awareness of the NAACP's efforts in the state.<sup>124</sup>

As in Montclair, World War II shaped some of the protests common during this civil rights period in Newark. The rhetoric of World War II around the power and responsibility of youth helped to shape youth's sense of themselves as "vanguard[s] of change" for democracy abroad and at home.<sup>125</sup> Scholars like Kevin Mumford have cited the World War II context and the Double V campaign as "spontaneously [awakening] a powerful sense of entitlement among Black Newarkers."<sup>126</sup> Mumford cites World War II and the influx of African Americans to Newark as inspiring a wave of everyday individuals who began pushing back against

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03\_46\_3/page/88/mode/2up; "Morristown Gives Tea," *The Crisis*, January 1939, 26.

[https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1939-01\\_46\\_1/page/26/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1939-01_46_1/page/26/mode/2up).

<sup>122</sup> "Youth Council News: Newark, NJ," *The Crisis*, Dec. 1942, 391. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1942-12\\_49\\_12/page/n21/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1942-12_49_12/page/n21/mode/2up).

<sup>123</sup> "Youth Council Activities: Newark, NJ," *The Crisis*, Oct. 1943, 311. [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_crisis\\_1943-10\\_50\\_10/page/n21/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1943-10_50_10/page/n21/mode/2up).

<sup>124</sup> "Chartered Branches," 1936, 5; "Application for Charter of Newark, New Jersey Youth Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," June 4, 1938, NAACP Papers, Series A, Reel 4. The council was re-chartered in 1938, with 25 students listed as members.

<sup>125</sup> De Schweinitz, *If We Could Change the World*, 183-184.

<sup>126</sup> Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*, 32.

segregation policies.<sup>127</sup> For example, in 1941, a group of Newarkers formed an Interracial Council to combat Newark's segregated city hospital. Youth were noted as being "associated" with the Interracial Council and collaborating with the NAACP, suggesting that members of the youth council may have been involved with their efforts.<sup>128</sup> Youth were an important part of this group of empowered individuals in Newark speaking up to end racism on a local, state, and national scale.

This empowered view of themselves inspired students in Newark to stand up against prejudice outside of their own community. In September 1945, the Froebel school in Gary, Indiana made national headlines when white students held a strike protesting integration efforts.<sup>129</sup> In response, students in Newark organized an interracial effort to publicly condemn the strikes.<sup>130</sup> Their efforts reflected the national

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 31-33.

<sup>128</sup> "Plans to Lift Ban on Negro: Interracial Unit Studies Vote to Get City Hospital Posts," *Newark News*, Nov, 19, 1940, N-41, Newark News Microfilm Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, New Jersey.

An article mentions representatives in attendance to a 1940 meeting of the Interracial Council. The article does not specify whether the attendees were adults or members of the youth council. No membership rolls exist from the NAACP youth council during this year to confirm names of members of the NAACP youth council and if they were involved.

<sup>129</sup> Wilma L. Moore, "Everyday People: the Froebel School Strike." *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 28, no. 3 (2016): 26+. *Gale OneFile: U.S. History* (accessed December 4, 2022) (hereafter referred to as Moore, "Everyday People."

<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A464353900/PPUS?u=byupr ovo&sid=bookmark-PPUS&xid=d70d5f46>; "5,00 Gary "Students Hear Frank Sinatra Rap School Strike," *The New York Age*, Nov 10, 1945, 3, accessed via Newspapers.com, November 15, 2022.

<sup>130</sup> For more information regarding the Gary, Indiana 1945 strike see: Moore, "Everyday People."

NAACP's focus on addressing explicit school segregation in the state.<sup>131</sup> In November of 1945, a council of 14 students associated with the Newark Interracial Youth Council, staged assemblies at seven local high schools to gather signatures for a petition denouncing the strike, part of which stated,<sup>132</sup>

“Whereas your strike protesting the admission of Negro students to the high school is definitely un-American, your actions tend to promote intolerance and bigotry throughout the nation, and we fought a war against race and hatred. It is our democratic responsibility as students of Greater Newark to strongly urge you to call off your strike immediately.”<sup>133</sup>

The young people were working to bring about their own visions of the nation's founding values, seeing themselves as central in “[making] the United States one country indivisible.”<sup>134</sup> They demonstrated a clear understanding of the fascist implications of racism and their responsibility in combating it, labeling Gary students' conduct as “modeled on

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<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A464353900/AONE?u=anon~9f65d2f6&sid=googleScholar&xid=d1998d34>.

<sup>131</sup> Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 240.

<sup>132</sup> “Segregation Move Opposed by Pupils.” November 10, 1945, *Newark News*, N-47, Newark News Microfilm Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, NJ. Speakers included students from Weequahic, Hillside, East Side, Central and South Side high schools. It is unclear whether these individuals were also members of the NAACP youth council.

<sup>133</sup> Marcy Elias, “Newark Pupils Fight Bias,” *The Weekly Review* (Birmingham, Alabama), Nov 17, 1945, 8. Accessed Nov. 30, 2022, via Newspapers.com.

<sup>134</sup> Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 234. Scholar Douglas notes that World War II was the first time school segregation was labeled as undemocratic; “Segregation Move Opposed by Pupils.” November 10, 1945, *Newark News*, N-47, Newark News Microfilm Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, NJ.

the ideas of the Hitler Youth Movement.”<sup>135</sup> The fact that the effort was interracial is particularly important as Newark scholar Kevin Mumford suggests a general increase in white hostility in Newark beginning in the 1930s as well as Black residents becoming increasingly concentrated into certain areas of the city.<sup>136</sup> Thus, students recognized how the strikes in Gary potentially encouraged increased hostility in their own communities. Recognizing this growing issue, they garnered support from predominantly white high schools.<sup>137</sup>

The Newark youth assemblies drew attention across the country and inspired youth locally. Notably, the Newark students’ protest made the frontpage of the *Indianapolis Recorder*, indicating how the strike gained attention from Indiana residents. Another newspaper based in Alabama featured the strike, which may have inspired other youth to speak up against segregation in their own schools and nationally.<sup>138</sup> Even though the strike appears to have ended before the petition was delivered, the Newark students’ actions remain meaningful because it unified Black and white youth in the city to confront national issues of civil rights and inspire continued activism.<sup>139</sup> Not long after, a group at a different high school in Newark voted unanimously to refuse to participate in the Daughters of the American Revolution essay contest due to the organization’s refusal to allow Black

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<sup>135</sup> Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*, 36; “Segregation Move Opposed by Pupils.” November 10, 1945, *Newark News*, N-47, Newark News Microfilm Collection, Newark Public Library, Newark, NJ.

<sup>136</sup> “Integration” and “Double V Campaign” from Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*.

<sup>137</sup> Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race*, 23, 59-61.

<sup>138</sup> “Newark Pupils Fight Bias,” 8; “N.J. Youth Meeting Flays Hate Strike At Gary High School,” *Indianapolis Recorder*, November, 17, 1945, 1. Accessed November 20, 2022, via NewspaperArchive.com.

<sup>139</sup> “Gary School Strike Off Again This Week,” *Indianapolis Recorder*, November 17, 1945, 1. Accessed October 30, 2022 via NewspaperArchive.com. The article notes that the strike ended on the preceding Monday and that student strikers were not penalized for their actions.

pianist Hazel Scott to perform at Constitution Hall.<sup>140</sup> This suggests that the rhetoric and activism of students inspired them to continue to stand up to racial intolerance.

The omission of places like New Jersey has allowed a narrative around the civil rights movement to emerge that is often oversimplified, presenting the movement as a transcendent moment of mass marches in the American South. When examined in its full complexity, however, the civil rights movement emerges as a long, continual struggle that has been driven by the grassroots efforts of youth like those in Plainfield, Montclair, and Newark. When brought into conversation, an examination of the civil rights movement in the North dispels assumptions of Northern innocence and presents a national struggle with racism that is more complex and nuanced, as legal protections clearly do not always translate into equality in practice. By understanding the efforts of youth in places like New Jersey during this time period, we can see how, as scholar Martha Biondi argues, Northern activists “*always* saw racial inequality as *complex*, and as deeply entwined with other systems of hierarchy, exclusion, and domination.”<sup>141</sup> Today, New Jersey and other states in the Northeast continue to grapple with racial stratification and inequality.<sup>142</sup> Perhaps we can learn from youth in the North who saw themselves as critical to local, state, regional, and national efforts for civil rights in confronting issues of racism that remain complicated and deeply embedded in our institutions and communities. By continuing to empower youth to continue to utilize grassroots

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<sup>140</sup> “Jersey Graduates Vote to Disregard DAR Contest,” *The New York Age*, November 10, 1945, 3. Accessed November 23, 2022, via Newspapers.com. The students were part of Chancellor Avenue Grade School.

<sup>141</sup> Biondi, “How New York Changes the Story of the Civil Rights Movement,” 29.

<sup>142</sup> Orfield, Gary, Jongyeong Ee, and Ryan Coughlin. “New Jersey’s segregated schools: Trends and paths forward.” (2017); Nikoe Hammah-Jones, “It Was Never About Busing,” *The New York Times*, July 12, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/12/opinion/sunday/it-was-never-about-busing.html>.

methods, we can continue to draw closer to achieving a more perfect union.

# Japanese Imperial Education in Korea and Taiwan and the Lens of Reciprocal Assimilation

DEVIN SANDERS

During the 19th century, the nation of Japan underwent a variety of political, social, and economic changes, including but not limited to events such as the Meiji Restoration in 1868 and the first Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895. This paradigmatic shift sought to usher in a new era of Japanese dominance on both regional and international scales. Japanese dominance and international relevance, as indicated by Meiji-era domestic and foreign policy, was to be realized through adopting demonstratively successful policies, technologies, ideals, governments, militaries, economic approaches, and even the appearances of Western powers.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, influential Japanese leaders such as Fukuzawa Yukichi believed that “the levels of intelligence of Japanese and Westerners, in literature, the arts, commerce, or industry, from the biggest things to the least, in a thousand cases or in one, there is not a single area in which the other side is not superior to us,” conceding that the West was vastly superior

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<sup>1</sup> Meiji era political structures, policies, and logistics often either mirrored or were entirely modeled after their Western counterparts. One key example of this includes the Meiji constitution which acted as the foundation for the era’s socio-political activity. Promulgated in 1889, the Meiji constitution saw to the creation of a national Diet and emphasized Western ideals of equality while also maintaining a national identity grounded in revering a central emperor; The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Meiji Restoration: Japanese history,” *Britannica*, accessed on March 3, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Meiji-Restoration>.

in its technology and perceived ‘intelligence,’ and that Japan should learn from these differences to become a civilized country.<sup>2</sup>

Becoming a modernized and Westernized nation during the 19th century was particularly defined by a nation's ability to acquire colonial territory and towards the ultimate goal of building a powerful empire. The importance of imperial power as a measure of international influence and modernity was especially emphasized by both a continually growing United States and Britain: the two most powerful Western powers during the 19th century. Japan, therefore, sought to incorporate an imperial system into their government as a means of Westernizing, modernizing, and further centralizing their political system, placing the Meiji Emperor at the top of the social hierarchy. Policies and documents demonstrating an emphasis on gaining colonies and building a powerful empire in Japan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are especially visible in the Meiji Constitution of 1889, the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890, and the Treaty of Portsmouth of 1905. As political and international focus shifted towards national and Imperial Japanese interests, the development of a powerful and centralized metropole, and the acquisition of colonial territory, the rhetoric that surrounded its foreign and domestic policy evolved simultaneously.

The systematic evolution of Japan's government and military structures during the 19th century ultimately led towards Meiji era armament, war, and the procurement of colonial territories in the form of Taiwan and Korea after the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) in 1910, respectively. These rapid changes all contributed to Japan becoming an imperial power, allowing it to procure land, gain access to key resources such as iron, coal, gold, arable land, and in gaining access to populations of millions of their East Asian ‘brethren’ that they would eventually seek to mold into proper subjects

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<sup>2</sup> Fukuzawa Yukichi, “An Outline of a Theory of Civilization,” in *Volume Two Sources of Japanese Tradition 1600 to 2000 Part Two: 1868 to 2000*, trans. Dilworth and Hurst (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 41.

through assimilatory methods.<sup>3</sup> Methods of attempted assimilation most notably included education—either generalized or geared directly towards the national language or *kokugo* (国語), Japanese. Imperial education was crafted to not only be administered and organized in a systematic manner (ultimately allowing for Japanese assimilation to cast a wide net), but also targeted key colonial demographics such as children and young adults that would eventually take account for the future success of the colony. Education, therefore, grew to be a key aspect of Japanese rule over its colonies, first in Taiwan in 1895 and later in Korea by 1910. Historian Patricia Tsurumi particularly emphasizes this as she states that in Taiwan “education was an instrument for the attainment [of assimilation]” that consisted of “Japanese language and arithmetic, some basic sciences, a considerable amount of classical Chinese to attract gentry parents, and singing and physical educational exercises to win the children.”<sup>4</sup> The Japanese colonial government played to a variety of audiences to achieve this goal, thereby enforcing a rigid education system based on the overarching objective of assimilation. Some of the most important of these measures were first enacted in Taiwan, in which students were funneled from preexisting traditional schools into newly created Japanese schools (often at the primary level), information was censored and/or streamlined in approved textbooks and standardized curriculums, the adoption of Japanese surnames were made mandatory, and traditional cultural practices were replaced by Japanese cultural practices both in private and public spheres where compliance could be closely monitored.<sup>5</sup> Similar educational policies would be repeated in

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<sup>3</sup> A. J. Grajdanzev, “Formosa (Taiwan) Under Japanese Rule” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Sep. 1942): 320, 323; Catherine Porter, “Korea and Formosa as Colonies of Japan” *Far Eastern Survey*, 1936, Vol. 5, No. 9 (Apr. 22, 1936): 83-84.

<sup>4</sup> Patricia Tsurumi, “Education and Assimilation in Taiwan under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 4 (1979): 619.

<sup>5</sup> Among these practices including adopting Japanese names in replacement of one’s original Korean family name and

Korea a little over a decade later, all working towards the same ultimate goal: assimilation into the Japanese metropole. Reiterated by historian Ronald Toby, the “purpose of education in the ‘peninsula’ as Japanese officialdom called Korea, was clearly defined at the outset as the ‘development of loyal subjects in accordance with the intent of the rescript [on education].”<sup>6</sup> Education as a key of assimilation was therefore implemented throughout Japan’s colonies in varying institutions with the goal of developing these loyal subjects in mind; including elementary schools, high schools, universities, and government programs.

While the Japanese Empire’s colonial relationship with Taiwan and Korea was undoubtedly unequal—the Japanese Empire exerting its power and influence even to a coercive extent in Korea when it brutally suppressed peaceful protest during the May 1<sup>st</sup> movement—there were also attempts by the Japanese colonial governments and Japanese citizens (both in the metropole and abroad) to establish and maintain a symbiotic relationship and (at least to some extent) learn about the culture, language, and experience of the colonies that the Japanese Empire held. This is especially

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observing traditional Japanese Shinto religious practices (such as worshipping at Shinto temples on a regular basis). These assimilatory practices were especially relevant in schools as teachers (often either being ethnically Japanese or approved by the Japanese colonial government) were the medium through which Korean and Taiwanese children would have these rules introduced to them and promptly enforced; Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 111-122.

<sup>6</sup> The Imperial Rescript on Education was first created in 1890 by the Meiji government, however the rescript was once again extended towards Korea in 1911 after it had been annexed as a Japanese colony. This was done in order to both establish a sense of commonality with ethnic Koreans and to imbue a sense of greater national belonging in the Korean population; Ronald Toby, “Education in Korea under the Japanese: Attitudes and Manifestations” *Occasional Papers on Korea*, No. 1 (1974): 58.

relevant to education as ethnic Japanese both living in colonies abroad and the metropole would either experience firsthand or learn secondhand about the colonies that the Empire had subjugated. The assimilatory policies employed in Korea and Taiwan worked to integrate these colonies and their inhabitants into the Japanese Empire. As ethnic Koreans and Taiwanese began to enter the metropole, they also exposed ethnic Japanese in educational hubs such as Tokyo to the lives of colonized subjects in a more personal manner. Reciprocal assimilation therefore took place as Taiwan and Korea were respectively inducted into the wider Japanese empire because, at the same time that the Japanese Empire sought to assimilate its colonial subjects, Japan too became a part of a wide-reaching colonial family. This would ultimately garner a variety of reactions from its ethnic inhabitants: negative, positive, and even indifferent in nature. Indeed, ethnic Japanese were not monolithic in their opinions of either imperialism or colonial assimilation. Perspectives and experiences gained by Japanese people regarding ethnic Korean and Taiwanese individuals, now brought into a cohesive empire, invariably brought ethnic Japanese closer to the territories that their nation sought to subjugate. Historical analysis of this time period, therefore, benefits from recognizing the reciprocal qualities of Japanese colonial assimilation as it further contributes to evaluations of the Japanese total empire: Japanese citizens sent out from the metropole were indeed assimilatory factors themselves that also experienced a degree of reciprocal assimilation. Ethnic Japanese were especially impacted by newly gained ethnic Taiwanese and Korean brethren attending university in the metropole as illustrated through stories of Pak Sunch'on, Hong Ulsu, Mr. Cho, and in other situations such as Chou Wan-yao's story. The growing exposure through education emphasized the enrichment of both Japanese and colonial culture, language, and identity as this newfound 'imperial family' changed in relation to one another. As ethnic Korean and Taiwanese were pulled by assimilation towards the metropole for education, ethnic Japanese became more than just Japanese, instead becoming members of a wider Japanese Empire in tandem with their newly-gained colonial brethren.

## REPLACING LOCAL LEGACY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Prior to Japan's annexation of both Korea and Taiwan in 1910 and 1895 respectively, both territories had thousands of schools ranging from informal to formal, elementary to university, and religiously sponsored (such as Buddhist and Confucian schools) to secular. The most popular of these schools included the *mdang*, western, and provisional schools in Korea and traditional Chinese schools in Taiwan. The *seodang*, or village school, were traditional establishments for the education of boys ages 6-17 in Chinese calligraphy, Chinese poetry, the Confucian classics, and teachings on self-cultivation.<sup>7</sup> Though some girls would be admitted into these traditional village schools by 1900, *seodang* schools primarily consisted of male pupils and were also exclusively taught by male teachers.<sup>8</sup> Western schools in Korea were comparatively few—though they began rapidly expanding until the Japanese annexed the peninsula—and would also be pressured and (although rarely) closed under the Japanese government-general throughout the colonial occupation (1910-1945). The education that existed prior to Japanese colonization was not centralized and could therefore be controlled (explicitly by controlling teaching materials, strictly monitoring the actions and statements of teachers, and requiring certain classes to be taught in Japanese), or inhibited once the Japanese government-general had been established by 1910. There were, however, some aspects of choice despite Japanese control of education as *seodang* “continued to be the most common schools” as they, according to Hildi Kang “posed no threat to the new rulers, for in them students learned only time-honored Chinese classics and Confucian ideals of hierarchy and loyalty” that coincided with the

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew Burt, “Education Inequality in the Republic of Korea: Measurement and Causes,” *BYU Sigma: Journal of Political and International Studies*, Vol. 24 (January 2006): 3.

<sup>8</sup> Burt, “Education Inequality in the Republic of Korea,” 3; Yi Myonggu and William A. Douglas, “Korean Confucianism Today,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 40 (April 1967): 55.

Japanese Empire's goals of assimilation through education and establishing cultural and ideological commonalities.<sup>9</sup> Schools such as the *seodang* that could work to the Japanese Empire's advantage would thereby either be incorporated into the Japanese assimilatory process or tolerated as "by 1910 Koreans could choose among modern schools built by Koreans, by newly arrived missionaries, or by the Japanese."<sup>10</sup>

Taiwanese traditional schools were similar in their scope, purpose, and in their reception by the Japanese colonial government during the island's occupation. Indeed, Chinese traditional schools in Taiwan also focused on the Confucian classics—specifically the *Analects*—and were primarily comprised of young and young-adult boys. Both traditional education systems were not only similar to one another but also similar, and therefore compatible, to Japanese education as establishments grounded in Confucian principles that used (although to varying degrees), the same writing script. Public discourse during the 1920s regarding Japanese colonial assimilation illustrated in accounts such as *Taiwan dōkasaku ron* (On the assimilative policy in Taiwan 台灣同化策論) by Shibata Sunao particularly emphasize the importance of focusing on these principles held in common. As summarized by historian Fong Shiaw-Chian, Sunao states that "the ideals of Confucianism had been incorporated into the Japanese 'national essence' (*kokutai* 國體) and that their promotion would contribute to assimilation," reiterating the importance of "the government-general to coordinate the efforts of several civilian associations to change old customs" and even promoting "the learning of the Japanese language" as a key means of assimilation.<sup>11</sup> This contemporary discourse illustrates that there was significant involvement of ethnic Japanese in the conversation of their nation's imperial aspirations while also demonstrating the unifying nature of

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<sup>9</sup> Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 37.

<sup>10</sup> Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 37.

<sup>11</sup> Fong Shiaw-Chian. "Hegemony and identity in the colonial experience of Taiwan, 1895-1945." In *Taiwan Under Japanese Colonial Rule 1895-1945: History, Culture, Memory*, Liao Ping-Hui and David Der-Wei Wang eds., (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 168.

assimilation built on a foundation of a cohesive, Confucian international identity. Though the traditional content of these schools were similar, there were far fewer schools available in Taiwan in its early colonization as compared to Korea. This likely benefited the goal of the Japanese Empire to assimilate its ethnic Taiwanese subjects as it allowed the colonial government to present Japanese education in a positive, benevolent light. As stated by historical writers Gary Davison and Barbra Reed, “Taiwanese were severely restricted in pursuit of higher education on [sic] Taiwan, and the most important positions in government went to the Japanese. The Japanese did, however, introduce universal education; as the Japanese era unfolded, a majority of the people on Taiwan gained at least a primary school level, rudimentary formal Japanese education in the Japanese language.”<sup>12</sup> Providing basic education during the formative years of ethnic Taiwanese lives—when Japanese officials believed was most essential for the ‘development of loyal subjects’ and their assimilation—would ultimately allow the Japanese Empire to improve Taiwanese lives while inwardly pushing those seeking higher education outwards towards the metropole. This gravitation towards the mainland illustrates further reciprocal assimilation as Taiwanese—as well as Koreans—lived in Japan in search of higher education, job opportunities, and new lives which invariably impacted ethnic Japanese living in the metropole. Korean individuals such as Mr. Yun, for example, recall the starkly different experience of being educated in Japan, stating that while in high school “the Japanese did not discriminate against us [ethnic Koreans],” he experienced a greater sense of isolation in Japan while studying at Tokyo Imperial University as “everyone was for themselves, they didn’t make friends or go to play or mix—even the Japanese students separated.”<sup>13</sup> Other colonial subjects such as Mr. Cho recalled experiencing discrimination in their metropole education from their imperial brethren, as they stated that “Japanese intentionally prevented Koreans

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<sup>12</sup> Gary Marvin Davison and Barbara E. Reed, *Culture and Customs of Taiwan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press 1998), 19.

<sup>13</sup> Vacante, “Japanese colonial education in Korea,” 155.

from becoming college professors” at Keijo Imperial University.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Japanese reactions to incoming ethnic Korean and Taiwanese students varied from welcoming, to indifference, to outright discrimination. Although opportunities for higher education were limited to a small number of ethnic Korean and Taiwanese students (primarily men) because of economic and bureaucratic constraints—these being made up of “ambitious members of favored [Taiwanese] gentry families,” and “a few sons [Korean youth] of wealthy families”—this population invariably exposed ethnic Japanese in the metropole to the shifting reality of their nation.<sup>15</sup>

As Japanese governments-general in both Taiwan and Korea were established in their respective time frames, pressures exerted on these traditional schools by Japanese officials in combination with the development of a new status quo that hinged on the accessibility of Japanese schools saw to the significant decline of traditional/alternative schooling as Japanese colonial schools continually grew. According to historian Patricia Tsurumi, Taiwan’s pupil population in traditional Chinese schools dropped from 30,000 in 1899 to 20,000 by 1907, a staggering trend that would continue into the 1910s and 1920s as Japanese schooling pivoted more fully from utilizing commonalities to embracing assimilation. This phasing out of traditional schooling in favor of novel Japanese schools created for assimilation was realized as, “throughout the 1910s the common schools put less and less emphasis upon Chinese lessons, making Chinese an optional subject in 1922”.<sup>16</sup> This allowed the Japanese education system to gradually fade out of traditional Chinese schooling and studies in lieu of studying the Japanese language, the importance of which being backed by economic and social consequences as even traditional Taiwanese parents “felt that their children needed Japanese language and modern subjects to win a

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<sup>14</sup> Vacante, “Japanese colonial education in Korea,” 207.

<sup>15</sup> Davison and Reed, *Culture and Customs of Taiwan*, 19; Vacante, “Japanese colonial education in Korea,” 132.

<sup>16</sup> Tsurumi, “Education and Assimilation in Taiwan under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945,” 619-621.

comfortable and honored life in the new society.”<sup>17</sup> The socioeconomic repercussions of opposing Japanese colonial policy and resisting assimilation were therefore a direct deterrent for many ethnic Taiwanese, ultimately contributing to increases in enrollments in Japanese schools that would grant some sense of stability for Taiwanese that now faced the reality of their nation becoming part of the larger Japanese Empire. Following a similar trend, Tsurumi points out that the number of institutions also rapidly declined stating that “the traditional Chinese schools which at the turn of the century had been strong competitors of the first Japanese educational efforts had largely faded from the scene: by 1922 they were down to ninety-four establishments with 3,664 pupils.”<sup>18</sup> As these schools declined and conformed to Japanese imperial education standards, reactions to Taiwanese assimilation from ethnic Japanese—living both in the metropole and in colonies abroad—would become increasingly complicated by the reality that Japanese people were now part of a wider imperial family. Indeed, reactions and policy changes from influential Japanese figures such as government-general Den Kenjirō (1855-1930) who actively integrated Taiwanese students with Japanese language proficiency with Japanese students, not only reinforcing a sense of positive assimilation, but also facilitated further reciprocal assimilation in educational spaces illustrate the various reactions to Japanese colonialism and imperial education both by ethnic Japanese and their newly gained imperial brethren.<sup>19</sup>

By comparison Korean traditional schools actually experienced an increase—though these schools were still under the same pressure and standardization as enforced by the Japanese Government-General. The number of primary

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<sup>17</sup> Patricia Tsurumi, "Chapter 7. Colonial Education in Korea and Taiwan," In *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945* eds. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, 275-311 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>18</sup> Tsurumi, "Education and Assimilation in Taiwan under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945," 621.

<sup>19</sup> Tsurumi, "Education and Assimilation in Taiwan under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945," 623.

education schools in Korea for example, including *seodang* schools, increased from 343 in 1912 to 3,263 in 1942 with both private and public primary schools showing rapid growth.<sup>20</sup> Such an increase in traditional schools illustrates how Korean assimilation was unique. Indeed, a stronger sense of a Korean national identity among ethnic Korean colonial subjects aided in the preventing traditional *seodang* schools from declining in Korea, combined with a demand for educational growth facilitated by the Government-General that provided widespread education regardless of socio-economic background facilitated the increase of traditional education under Japanese occupation.<sup>21</sup> Growing opportunities and facilities for education for Korean subjects, however, were not left alone by the Japanese government. Indeed, control over public and private schools regardless of their nature—whether they were of Korean, Western/missionary, or Japanese origin or sponsorship—was experienced in Korea in a similar fashion to Taiwan. Korean schools were directly monitored and controlled as the “Japanese Government-General rapidly centralized the administration of public education...The school curriculum also became standardized and made consistent with new textbooks compiled by the Government-Gen [*sic*].”<sup>22</sup> These policies not only saw to the creation of a controlled environment through which ethnic Koreans could be assimilated by the Japanese government, but also would prompt reactions from ethnic Japanese as families living both in the metropole and in colonies abroad continued to learn about, interact with, and react to their ethnic Korean and Taiwanese imperial brethren. Ethnic Japanese were now part of a greater imperial “family” that sought to grow closer

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<sup>20</sup> Oh and Kim, “The Increase of Educational Opportunity in Korea under the Japanese Occupation: For Whom the Bell Told?,” *The Seoul National University Journal of Education Research*, Vol. 8 (1997): 86.

<sup>21</sup> Oh and Kim, “The Increase of Educational Opportunity in Korea,” 91-92.

<sup>22</sup> Yunshik Chang, “Growth of Education in Korea 1910-1945,” *Bulletin of the Population and Development Studies Center*, Vol. 4 (November 1975): 41.

together through assimilatory education. Developments of Taiwanese and Korean education, therefore, had a deep impact on both ethnic Taiwanese and Korean subjects and on ethnic Japanese as they grew accustomed to the imperial developments of their nation and reacted to the influx of their new brethren to the metropole. From developing rigidly standardized primary education to the maintenance of similar Confucian bases in colonial schools, and to the mobilization of ethnic Taiwanese and Koreans to the metropole due to a lack of higher education in their respective colonies, Japanese colonial policies on education in both Korea and Taiwan invariably linked ethnic Taiwanese, Korean, and Japanese subjects together under an imperial family that impacted all involved both through assimilation and reciprocal assimilation.

#### ORAL HISTORIES

The ethnic Taiwanese and Korean experience can be extrapolated through a variety of mediums such as diaries, textbooks, government reports, and even pictures. Interviews of individuals who experienced imperial schooling in compilations of oral histories, however, provide unique perspectives that not only unearth key memories attributed to Japanese imperial education, but also illustrate an invaluable aspect of hindsight, memory, and modern-day clarity that ground information in both the legacy and implications of Japanese imperialism. Oral histories provide especially valuable insights into the process and impact of assimilation in Korea and Taiwan, as well as how education and language played a significant role in the colonial nation at the individual level. Furthermore, oral histories provide glimpses of how ethnic Japanese reacted to their newly gained Taiwanese and Korean brethren and how they grappled with becoming part of a larger Japanese Empire in a process of reciprocal assimilation.

#### KOREAN ORAL HISTORIES

Oral histories of ethnic Koreans that experienced Japanese colonialism from 1910-1945 are a particularly helpful source for understanding both the logistics of and

deeper experiences associated with the Japanese colonial government (or Chōsen government) in its dealings with education. These oral histories also provide insights into Japanese reaction to Korean and Taiwanese colonization, their entering the metropole for higher education, and the enrichment of the Japanese Empire through further exposure. Influential compilations of oral histories such as Hildi Kang's *Under the Black Umbrella* and Russel Anthony Vacante's "Japanese colonial education in Korea, 1910-1945" provide an exceptional case study for understanding assimilatory practices in Chōsen Korea and for gleaning insights on how reciprocal assimilation occurred during Japanese occupation. A variety of Kang's interviews with individuals such as Pak Song'pil, Hong Ulsu, and Yang Songdok illustrate the extent to which Japanese colonial education and pressures for assimilation not only impacted them and their families, but also influenced ethnic Japanese around them to draw closer to Korean culture and life in a reciprocal—albeit unequal—fashion. Pak Song'pil, for example, tells the story of his aunt Pak Sunch'on, an ethnic Korean teacher in the seaport town of Masan. Pak was arrested and fired from her position as a teacher for participating in a demonstration against Japanese colonialism, forcing her to have to change her name to "Pak Myongyol" and "escape to Tokyo."<sup>23</sup> This story, however, in addition to illustrating the high degree to which Japanese colonial governments rigidly controlled its teachers and their actions, harshly suppressing demonstrations and open speech, also illustrates the gravitational pull that brought ethnic Koreans to the metropole as another policy of assimilation, as Pak Sunch'on "actually went there [to Tokyo] for two reasons: first to hide, and second, to get higher education."<sup>24</sup> Her movement to Japan depicts a specific, personal instance in which even an ethnic Korean woman during the 1920s sought a higher form of education in the Japanese metropole while also portraying the brutality of Japanese Imperialism and the prospects of assimilation. Pak Sunch'on would have invariably met with and impacted a variety of ethnic Japanese

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<sup>23</sup> Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 21-22.

<sup>24</sup> Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 21-22.

lives during her short time at college in Tokyo (she was caught after only 6 months), and though Pak Songp'il does not detail these interactions, Japanese reactions to her ethnicity, experiences, and identity were by no means monolithic in nature.

Hong Ulsu shares a particularly impactful story regarding Korean assimilation and Japanese imperial education, reiterating his father's lamentations about him attending a Japanese school as he remembered that traditional Korean parents believed that "children would turn into Japanese if they went to Japanese-built schools" and that Japanese went so far as having "dragged all of us [seodang students]—literally by our long braids—to the township office courtyard. They had the hair clippers ready and proceeded to cut our hair right there."<sup>25</sup> Not only were ethnic Koreans perceived by their parents as being in danger of 'becoming Japanese' through Japanese education, but they were also brutalized and forced to comply with assimilatory practices conducted by Japanese officials. Just as Pak Sunch'on had done, Hong also traveled to Japan in search of higher education. His story further reflects reciprocal assimilation on an individual level as he describes his life selling natto and eventually working for a *yakuza* boss to get by and support himself in Tokyo as he not only enters the society but also the workforce of the metropole, directly integrating himself as a member of the empire. His relationships in Japan further reinforce a degree of reciprocal assimilation as students a part of a communist study group, all of which being "all Japanese [except him]" sympathized with his experience and reassured him that they would "all work together to drive the Japanese out of your country."<sup>26</sup> This experience reinforces the opposite reaction that assimilatory education policies being implemented in both colonial and metropole settings have an impact on both sides as ethnic Japanese understand their place in a wider empire and are exposed to the stories, experiences, and cultures of their ethnic brethren. Indeed, the Japanese had a variety of reactions to Japanese Imperialism and the plight of their gained brethren as some sympathized

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<sup>25</sup> Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 26.

<sup>26</sup> Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 31.

with Korean struggles and even organized against the Japanese government. Yang Songdok's story further reinforces this as he recalls that in his integrated Korea-Japanese primary school there were no "conflicts among groups in the classroom along national lines" and that it was only later in high school that exclusionary groups formed.<sup>27</sup> This learned exclusion on national and ethnic lines came after primary school—primary school being the main and for many, the highest level of education the colonies received as a result of financial or geographical constraints, as early education was the most effective area for Japanese assimilation as the colonial government was concerned—emphasizes the assimilative properties of these primary schools as children interacted with one another on equal and undivided grounds.

Russel Anthony Vacante's oral history on ethnic Koreans and their experiences with education during the Japanese occupational period (1910-1945) tell of similar experiences that further corroborate the stories and feelings of those interviewed by Hildi Kang. Grim stories about the extent of harsh Japanese control over Korean institutions such as Mr. Lim's emphasize the extreme nature of the shift towards Japanese colonial education around 1930, as he states that his classmates had been "forced out of privately operated Korean schools and into government controlled institutions" and that their "Korean parents were forced to enroll their children into colonial educational institutions" in order to create the organized universal education that the Japanese colonial government strove for.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, both Mr. Lim and his father knew that in order to succeed in colonial Korea that they had to "live like the Japanese people."<sup>29</sup> The assimilation came at a deep cultural, monetary, and social cost—ultimately changing the lives of both the oppressed ethnic Koreans and the Japanese oppressors as a whole. Mr. Cho, also interviewed by Vacante, describes the rigidity of Japanese primary school

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<sup>27</sup> Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 45.

<sup>28</sup> Russel Anthony Vacante, "Japanese colonial education in Korea, 1910-1945: An oral history" Ph.D. dissertation (Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1987), 250-251.

<sup>29</sup> Vacante, "Japanese colonial education in Korea," 252.

curriculum as he stated that “all of his middle school teachers, with the exception of one, were Japanese” and that “middle school officials allotted very few hours for the study of the Korean language,” as compared to Japanese language and subject learning.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Japanese occupation had a direct impact on him as assimilatory policies impacted his everyday life. Mr. Cho’s memory also glean insights from reciprocal assimilation as he describes having relationships and ideological alignments both with “students who were pro-Japanese and those students who actively engaged in political resistance,” illustrating the degree to which interactions in Keijo University—being made up overwhelmingly of Japanese students—further diffused political and social ideals within the wider Japanese imperial family.<sup>31</sup> Other Korean stories, such as those of Mr. Lim, illustrate the negative reactions that came about as a result of ethnic Japanese becoming part of a wider empire through reciprocal assimilation. Lim states that throughout his days in a Seoul commercial high school “all the Japanese students blamed” him for various issues because he was “Korean and looked down at me.”<sup>32</sup> Japanese imperial education in Korea as illustrated by these oral histories was not only rigid and brutal in its attempts to assimilate Korean subjects as citizens of the wider Japanese Empire, but also brought forth an opposite (yet, of course, disproportionate), reciprocal reaction as ethnic Japanese both in colonies abroad and in the metropole reacted to (both negatively and positively), learned about, and changed with regards to the Korean colonial experience, coming to understand their newfound place within a wider Japanese Empire as a part of an imperial family.

#### TAIWANESE ORAL HISTORY

Though translated oral histories of ethnic Taiwanese experiences have not been collected to the same extent as translated oral histories of Korean experiences—there being comparatively fewer works published or compilations of oral histories—Taiwanese oral history sources tell very similar

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<sup>30</sup> Vacante, “Japanese colonial education in Korea,” 203-204.

<sup>31</sup> Vacante, “Japanese colonial education in Korea,” 212.

<sup>32</sup> Vacante, “Japanese colonial education in Korea,” 260

stories to those described in Kang and Vacante's work on Korean experiences: pressure towards assimilation, and a sense that one must adhere to assimilation and the gravitate towards the metropole itself in order to prosper (such as through learning Japanese, complying with colonial forces, etc.). Indeed, the degree of opposition in Taiwan seems comparatively lesser than opposition and tenacity exercised in Korea against Japanese colonial forces. This is further reinforced by academic Leo T. S. Ching, who recognizes the general consensus as being that "If the Koreans speak of oppression and resistance [in regards to Japanese colonial rule], the Taiwanese speak of modernization and development."<sup>33</sup> Though he states that this generalized and reductive statement should instead be attributed to Korea and Taiwan's "precolonial and postcolonial histories than Japanese rule per se," the consequent lack of any organized opposition to Japanese colonial forces in Taiwan lends itself to what seems to be a lower degree of animosity present in Taiwan as compared to Korea—holding this consensus as not incorrect, but only unrefined.<sup>34</sup> Sentiments of alternative Taiwanese views towards Japanese colonialism as compared to aforementioned Korean views seem present in the glimpses of oral histories that are available. Historian Chou Wan-yao's recounting of the story of a Taiwanese-born former Japanese soldier, for example, depicts the emotions held by many ethnic Taiwanese that grew up exposed to Japanese colonial rule and education, as the soldier said that "My father has always told me since I was a child that we came from Mainland China and that we are not Japanese," but also that "in that period [of fighting for Japan] we were Japanese, and would naturally show our loyalty to our country."<sup>35</sup> Chou emphasizes that these statements are not contradictory, but rather that in respect to one's country, "Taiwanese people

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<sup>33</sup> Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming Japanese: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ching, *Becoming Japanese*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Wan-yao Chou, *A New Illustrated History of Taiwan*, trans. Carole Plackitt and Tim Casey (Taipei, Taiwan: SMC Publishing Inc., 2020), 302.

were Japanese. But with respect to ethnicity, Taiwanese people were not Japanese.”<sup>36</sup> It was this complicated identity that arose from assimilation enforced by the Japanese colonial government through mediums such as education that blurred the lines between ethnicity and nationality, especially as one was concerned with the larger imperial system that they belonged to. Chou further analyzes this distinction and how Japan sought to close the rift between nationality and ethnicity with “slogans like ‘Japan and Taiwan are one’” that were delivered through Japanese education.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, though the attitudes towards policies of Japanese assimilation and colonial education varied between Korea and Taiwan, the same means of assimilation were employed in both colonies, ultimately resulting in the creation of a sort of “Japanified” (being assimilated to different degrees, Taiwan being more deeply changed as compared to Korea), nation that would seek to regain its national identity after the fall of the Japanese Empire in 1945.

#### THE JAPANESE PERSPECTIVE

While its colonies were being assimilated through education, the education system in mainland Japan (the metropole) changed its content and language to include, accept, and justify the annexation of colonial territories such as Korea and Taiwan. Such language not only helped construct a greater sense of kinship and national pride in ethnic Japanese youth, but also experienced reciprocal assimilation as they were exposed to and learned more about Korean and Taiwanese culture, language, and daily life—both from secondhand sources such as textbooks and from these individuals moving to the metropole. Language imbued in Japanese education regarding Korean assimilation, for example, included statements that the annexation of Korea “will ensure forever the peace of East Asia,” stating that the annexation was in the interest of “solidifying the foundation of peace.”<sup>38</sup> The actions of the Japanese Empire were

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<sup>36</sup> Chou, *A New Illustrated History of Taiwan*, 302.

<sup>37</sup> Chou, *A New Illustrated History of Taiwan*, 302.

<sup>38</sup> Yu-han Ma, “A Reactive Engineer: Japanese History

Textbooks and the Construction of National Identity (1900-

therefore presented to Japanese youth as benevolent. Indeed, there were pushes for ethnic Japanese to understand and even learn the Korean language and culture to become closer knit with their colonial brothers. Schools created for the instruction of the Korean language known as *kōshūkai* (class or short course) such as Kikukawa Keiun emphasized the importance of reciprocal assimilation in early 1910 in Tokyo, stating that “regarding 15,000,000 new brothers [i.e. Koreans], we cannot expect to guide them, become close to them and assimilate them as a new ‘Yamato Race (Japanese)’ without understanding the [Korean] language.”<sup>39</sup> Such sentiments illustrate the degree to which some Japanese understood—at least to some extent—the harrowing aspects of colonial assimilation and sought to learn about their ‘brethren’ in return. Though the colonization of Korea and Taiwan (to a lesser extent) by Japan was, of course, brutal, coercive, and destructive to Korean lives and culture, aspects of reciprocal assimilation towards Japan displays how total empire also included and emphasized the prospect of Japanese assimilating (though to a lesser extent), to its colonial territories in order to create a cohesive, well-functioning imperial system.

The presence of information about Korean and Taiwanese annexation and assimilation in Japanese textbooks—or subsequent lack thereof—provides further context for the presence of reciprocal assimilation in (though it was not close to the same systematic scale as present in Korea and Taiwan), the metropole itself. The Japanese history textbook for an all-girls school in Ichikawa (市川), for example, includes the Taiwanese subjugation in relation to the development of Ryukyu and Sakhalin and even discusses the potential subjugation of Korea through prominent figures

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1926),” *UC Berkeley Undergraduate Journal* vol. 28 (2015): 72.

<sup>39</sup> Kiyoe Minami, “Forgotten Reciprocity of Languages of the Colonizer and the Colonized: Korean Language Study of Japanese Colonial Agents,” BA thesis (Tokyo: International Christian University of Japan, 1996), 88-89.

in the Iwakura mission such as Ito Hirobumi.<sup>40</sup> The presence of Taiwan and Korea-related content, however, was seemingly rare in available elementary and middle school history textbooks, as textbooks such as the Aomori (青森) published as late as 1935 included neither content on the colonial aspects of Japanese imperialism nor any mention of Taiwan or Korea, instead featuring information on early Japanese history, the emperor, and the Meiji Restoration.<sup>41</sup> The absence of this content in some textbooks further reinforces that while reciprocal assimilation did play a role in the lives of ethnic Japanese both in Japanese colonies and in the metropole, it was not nearly as widespread or systematic in nature as the assimilatory policies implemented in Taiwan and Korea by the Japanese Empire. Indeed, aspects of reciprocal assimilation such as reactions of everyday ethnic Japanese workers and students were limited to personal interactions and—as Japanese education was concerned during the Japanese Imperial era—were not widely analyzed in Japanese mainland educational spaces. The influence that ethnic Korean and Taiwanese subjects had on ethnic Japanese and their varied reactions and interactions with one another, however, shaped and continues to impact relations between Taiwan, Korea, and Japan today.

#### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The colonization of East Asian territories by the Japanese Empire such as Korea and Taiwan had a profound impact on the development of their respective cultures, languages, and political affairs (both domestic and international) that still impacts them today in 2022. The Japanese Empire's subjugation of these colonial territories took on a systematic approach—focusing particularly on assimilating colonial populations in order to create a larger, cohesive imperial sphere of influence that would supplement

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<sup>40</sup> Ichikawa Genzō and Tonegawa Yosaku, *Kokushi kyōkasho, Koutō onna gakkō yō, shita* (Tokyo: kokkō-sha, 1903), 115.

<sup>41</sup> Aomori ken kyōikukai hen, *Aomori ken seinen gakkō kyōkasho kan ichi* (Tokyo: Tonbunkan, 1935), 98-120.

its economic, political, and military power. The education of these colonies, especially of younger generations through universal Japanese-sponsored or controlled primary schools, was one of if not the primary medium through which Japan sought to accomplish this assimilation. Implementing rigid curriculums grounded in the education of colonial subjects in Japanese, what was now their “national language” or *kokugo* (国語), Korean and Taiwanese children and young adults were expected to essentially become Japanese. Japanese Imperialism and its assimilatory policies also invariably impacted ethnic Japanese and elicited more than just support, but also a variety of reactions including opposition, sympathy towards the colonized, and protest. Indeed, examples of reciprocal assimilation through education such as by ethnic Korean and Taiwanese individuals flocking to the metropole for higher education elicited these various reactions from ethnic Japanese as they too grappled with becoming part of a wider Japanese Empire. The enrichment of Japanese language, culture, and education that came as a result of Japanese colonization (either indirectly from Japanese sources or directly from ethnic Koreans or Taiwanese) therefore had a simultaneous impact on ethnic Japanese, bringing about (albeit unequal) points of reciprocal assimilation as ethnic Japanese continually learned about, sympathized with, and even lived among those their country had colonized. The reactions of ethnic Japanese to their nation’s policies and the culture, experiences, and lives of their imperial brethren are also telling as they illustrate the contrary impacts of imperialism and reiterate that Japanese were neither monolithic nor homogenous. Indeed, colonization has an adverse impact on the citizens of the colonizers not in agreement with their national and international policies.

The process of colonization in Taiwan and Korea was undoubtedly painful—so too was the process of decolonization after the fall of the Japanese Empire in 1945. Indeed, wounds caused by decades of oppression and intense pressure to assimilate ran deep, as older generations in Korea and even Taiwan today harbor resentment and animosity towards Japan. Such issues still echo in current international affairs as Korea-Japan relations remain tense over trade tariffs

and rejected imports, forced labor of Korean citizens in Japan, and a growing diplomatic rift grounded in centuries of conflict.<sup>42</sup> Issues over education in regards to assimilation and indoctrination also continue to exist to some extent, evidenced by the approval of the controversial *Fusosha* textbook by the Japanese Ministry of Education in 2005, as it contained militarist, revisionist, and reductive content that justified Japanese brutality and colonialism with the modernity it brought to the areas it colonized.<sup>43</sup> Though the textbook was never adopted by a school due to the general controversy and protests against *Fusosha*, the presence of militarist ideals in combination with the Japanese Ministry of Education approving the textbook brings to question the current state of Japanese memory and politics as it relates to its colonial past. For many in Taiwan, Korea, and even Japan, the history of assimilation is not a part of the distant past. It is because of this that ordinary people, not just historians, must be aware of all aspects of their history. This includes not only the grimmer aspects of colonialism, assimilation, and war, but also the history of positive Japanese reception to their colonial brethren, the enrichment of Japanese culture, and the results of reciprocal assimilation.

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<sup>42</sup> Editors of the BBC, "South Korea and Japan's feud explained," *BBC*, last modified on December 2, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49330531>.

<sup>43</sup> Fusosha, *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho* (Tokyo: Fusosha, 2005) 24-25, 31; Ako Inuzuka, "Remembering Japanese Militarism Through the Fusosha Textbook: The Collective Memory of the Asian-Pacific War in Japan," *Communication Quarterly* vol. 61 (April 2013).