

*The*  
**Thetean**



*The*  
**Thetean**

A Student Journal for Scholarly Historical Writing

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Lindsey Owens

Marny K. Parkin

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Grant Madsen

*The Thetean* is an annual student journal representing the best of historical writing by current and recent students at Brigham Young University. All papers are written, selected, and edited entirely by students. Articles are welcome from students of all majors, provided they are sufficiently historical in focus. Please email submissions as an attached Microsoft Word document to [theteansubmissions@gmail.com](mailto:theteansubmissions@gmail.com). Manuscripts must be received by mid-January to be included in that year's issue. Further details about each year's submission requirements, desired genres, and deadlines should be clarified by inquiring of the editors at the same address.

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Phi Alpha Theta, Beta Iota Chapter  
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## Foreword

LAST YEAR I HAD THE DISTINCT PRIVILEGE OF SERVING AS AN EDITOR for this fine publication. As the year was brought to a close, Elise Peterson, last volumes Editor-in-Chief, asked me if I would like to stay on with the *Thetean* and be its next Editor-in-Chief. I readily agreed, though I was not convinced I was fully qualified. Elise left big shoes to be filled.

Fortunately for myself, I have been supported by scholastic wizards. I had the immense pleasure of working with an extremely talented and qualified staff for this edition. The collective abilities of Tyler, Carson, Hannah, Katie, Susannah, Ryan, Ian, and Tristan have made the process a relatively smooth and an overly joyful endeavour. Throughout the editing process I have followed the Prophet Joseph Smith's example to "teach them correct principles, and [let them] govern themselves."<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, I had little I could teach this staff. Their aptitude and enthusiasm was not left wanting, and I merely had to steer the editorial process. I thank and acknowledge as well the efforts of Dr. Madsen. His oversight and encouragement allowed me the greatest chances to learn and grow in my duties.

I wish to acknowledge all those who submitted papers this year. We were fortunate to have had more than sixty submissions! I believe that to be a new record for the *Thetean*. Unfortunately, we could not publish them all. Those papers that were selected represent the highest quality of both research and writing. They went above and beyond simply qualifying for a high grade. Within these pages lies a breadth of topics pulled from locations across the globe. From the United States, Africa, England, and Russia, to Germany, Canada, Greece, and Brazil, we have been taught and become fascinated as memories from the past have been brought to new light and examined by dedicated undergraduates.

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1. John Taylor, "The Organization of the Church," *Millennial Star*; Nov. 15, 1851, p. 339.

A particularly impactful paper has been Cathy Hulse's biography about her grandfather Elmer. One would think that a biography about a simply sheepherder from Idaho would have little to offer outside of familial interest. But we have been proven oh so wrong. Every individual who has had the opportunity to read her paper has been deeply affected and inspired. The editors have even called the biography life-altering. This paper, however, is not alone in exceptional quality. Truly great scholarship exists in this volume, and no paper should be overlooked or disregarded simply because of a seemingly pedestrian or blasé topic. Each paper has great merit and deserves to be considered. I implore you to diligently search through this volume and find your own 'life-altering' piece.

I offer my kindest wishes for the future to my staff, the authors, and to the readers of this volume of the *Thetean*,

With Sincere Regards,  
Taylor Rice  
Editor-in-Chief





# Elmer

## The Shepherd Statesman

Cathy Hulse

**P**LATO QUOTED SOCRATES WHEN HE SAID THAT “THE UNEXAMINED life is not worth living.” He referred to self-examination for the purpose of self-improvement. In a broader sense, it is also important to study the lives of *others* to identify ways to improve ourselves. Life is a shared experience no matter where or in what era our individual paths lie. Today’s society is often fascinated by extreme heroics or infamous people. It gives unbalanced attention to glamorous, athletic, or wealthy celebrities. Despite this trend, valuable wisdom can be learned from the lives of common folks.

Ordinary people also have a voice in the past. However, research is dependent on sources. Because of the abundance of records left by and about prominent individuals and national concerns, most historical research has concentrated on them. Recently, historians have expanded their studies to include women and influential members of minority groups—but the search for our collective past should delve even deeper. Our roots lie beneath the renowned and conspicuous. The majority of people lived and died leaving, at best, only a hint of their existence.

Historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich discovered the diary of a New England midwife, written between 1785 and 1812, containing a wealth of detail illuminating the culture of the midwife’s village and the women with whom she labored. Bringing the midwife Martha Ballard back to life for contemporary examination required careful investigation and analytical skill. For her efforts,

Ulrich was recognized by the American Historical Association and was also awarded the Pulitzer Prize—evidence that even the life of an unknown midwife is worthy of scrutiny.<sup>2</sup> Historian Davis Bitton concurred, explaining that we study history because we are interested in learning about people and how they handled problems. “They do this in different cultural settings and on different levels,” he said, “but one is not more significant than another.”<sup>3</sup>

This biographical essay paints the portrait of an ordinary man, Joseph Elmer Williams, who lived an extraordinary life. He was born humbly and lived simply, never achieving great wealth or fame. Regardless, his existence made a difference in the world. Furthermore, studying his experiences increases our understanding of the American West as it transitioned from the Frontier Era to the Great Depression, and beyond. Like other common folk, private records tracing his life are scarce. He left no personal writings aside from five letters, and some notes collecting his thoughts on a few sheets of scratch paper. Much of his life story is drawn from reflections written by family, letters he received, and newspapers in the community. Elmer’s story as an adult was filtered through his wife, who collected and saved the correspondence and publicity. It is doubtful she would have preserved anything negative. She did not, for instance, record in her history that Elmer spent time as a professional wrestler. She did not consider that a positive attribute, though journalists were quick to report it. What she saved tells as much about her as it does about him. The scarcity of sources suggests Elmer was more concerned about tackling his task at hand than leaving an account of it.

This essay sketches highlights of Elmer’s life and service to his family, community, and church. To increase understanding of his place in time, the narrative includes background on the business of raising sheep, and a description of the historic battle between shepherders and cowboys. It examines how Elmer confronted private tragedies, endured the plummeting economy of the Great Depression, and worked to tame what was still wild in the West. Ultimately, the narrative demonstrates that significant events and prominent people of the past were sustained by ordinary individuals.

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2. Ulrich’s book was the winner of the Bancroft Prize, and the Joan Kelly and John H. Dunning Prizes of the American Historical Association, as well as being awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1990).

3. Davis Bitton, “The Making of a Community,” *Idaho Yesterdays* 19, no. 1 (1974): 2, accessed September 25, 2015, <https://illiad.lib.byu.edu/ILLiad/illiad.dll?Action=10&Form=63&&Value=1991849>.

Life began for Joseph Elmer Williams in Beaver, Utah in 1892, and ended in 1950 when he collapsed on the floor of the Idaho State Senate Chambers in Boise, suffering from a heart attack.<sup>4</sup> His life spanned two world wars, and the transformation of travel by horse and wagon to flying in an airplane. Named after his father, Joseph Williams, he was usually known by his middle name, Elmer, to avoid confusion. Like his father he raised sheep, an occupation which placed him on the lowest level of western American society, and at the heart of a long-standing conflict between cattlemen and sheepmen.

## Cattle vs. Sheep

Some called it a conflict. Others called it a war. Whatever term was applied, the 50-year battle between cattle ranchers and sheepmen was costly. Between 1873 and 1921, at least 128 incidents of violence toward wool growers were reported in the West.<sup>5</sup> One source claimed that 28 sheepmen, 16 cattlemen, and 53,254 sheep were killed.<sup>6</sup> Another study counted fifty sheepherders murdered just between 1893 and 1903.<sup>7</sup> Those statistics do not include an accounting of financial losses, or unreported incidents of violence. An unnamed U.S. Forest Ranger reportedly advised, “If you meet a sheep-raising so-and-so on the trail with a broken leg, break the other leg and go on.”<sup>8</sup> The cowboys’ animosity towards sheep and those who cared for them was caused by competition for free grazing land, and was fueled by prejudice.<sup>9</sup>

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4. Joseph Elmer Williams, *Find a Grave* memorial #9305674, accessed September 18, 2015, <http://www.findagrave.com/>; “Williams Dies, Political Leader Passes Away at 9:50 p.m. Talking to Son,” unidentified newspaper article in the Elmer Williams Manuscript Collection (hereafter referred to as EWMC).

5. The states reporting violent incidents were: Wyoming, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Montana, and New Mexico. Bill O’Neal, *Cattlemen vs. Sheepherders, Five Decades of Violence in the West 1880–1920* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1989), 15–16.

6. O’Neal, *Cattlemen vs. Sheepherders*, 15–16.

7. Duane Vandenbusche and Duane A. Smith, *A Land Alone: Colorado’s Western Slope* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Co, 1981), 158, in “Bloody Grass: Western Colorado Range Wars, 1881–1934,” Diane Abraham, *Journal of the Western Slope* 6, no. 2, (1991): 3, accessed October 7, 2015, <https://illiad.lib.byu.edu/>.

8. O’Neal, 1.

9. Edward Norris Wentworth, *America’s Sheep Trails* (Ames: Iowa State College Press, 1948), 530.

When the American government forced Native Americans onto reservations, they opened the remaining western territory for settlement. Soon, free grazing on government land attracted large cattle outfits that ironically claimed the principle of “first in time, first in right.”<sup>10</sup> Despite the fact that the real ‘first residents’ had been driven onto reservations, and that cattle ranchers had no legal ownership of government property, it was the established custom that first-comer grazing rights belonged to cattlemen.<sup>11</sup> This open range system worked well until about 1880, when the area became heavily stocked.<sup>12</sup> As sheepherders tried to exercise their own rights to the public domain, cattle ranchers went on the offensive. When warnings for sheepherders to stay away proved ineffective, cattlemen drew imaginary ‘deadlines’ that the ‘woollies’ were forbidden to cross.<sup>13</sup> Deadlines were both a boundary and a lethal threat: “Cross this line and



*Elmer's Father, Joseph Williams*

you're dead” was the implication and, for the sheep, often the result. In the code of the early West, where lawmen were scarce and the area to patrol immense, vigilantes enforced their perceived rights, and the ensuing violence was justified to protect a man's life and property.<sup>14</sup>

In Colorado, a secret society called the Cattle Grower's Protective Association was formed for the sole purpose of removing sheep from the area by the use of firearms. They declared that “Any who refused to comply—sheep, dogs, and herders—would

10. Abraham, 1–2

11. Abraham, 1–2.

12. O'Neal, 6.

13. Wentworth, 524.

14. Richard Maxwell Brown, “Violence,” in *Oxford History of the American West*, ed. Clyde A. Milner, Carol A. O'Connor and Martha A. Sandweiss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 395

be killed or forcibly driven away.”<sup>15</sup> A similar group in Oregon called themselves the Izee Sheep Shooters.<sup>16</sup> The least violent method used to evict sheep growers involved poisoning the flocks. Six years before Elmer’s birth, his father thwarted one attempt to poison their sheep with beans boiled in strychnine. The beans were dyed dark to resemble sheep droppings and tossed into the corralled flock by two cowboys on horseback.<sup>17</sup>

Acts of greater violence against sheep included driving them over cliffs, beating them with clubs, slitting their throats, or slaughtering them en masse with fire or dynamite.<sup>18</sup> Most confrontations against sheepmen were not formally organized, but the objective was the same. A contemporary description of the conflict is found in a speech delivered by Frank Benton to the Convention of American Cattle Growers’ Association in Denver, Colorado on March 6, 1902. In defense of the proposal to charge grazing fees on public land, he censured cattlemen who believed “sheepmen and sheepherders were so misguided as to insist on getting some of the government grass (that certainly was never intended by Nature for sheep) for their flocks, they have been obliged to shoot a few sheepherders, and club a few thousand harmless sheep to death.”<sup>19</sup> Most threats, violence, and raids on sheep camps were not reported to authorities. Both sides believed the other to be the invaders. Cattlemen accused sheep of ruining the range for their livestock. Sheep graze close to the ground, cropping the grass to the roots, and trample what little is left so it does not recover for another season. Sheep were driven into the high country for summer grazing each year where it was unsuitable for cattle.<sup>20</sup> But in their wake the lower pas-

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15. Abraham, 3.

16. O’Neal, 74.

17. On or about July 18, 1886, two cowboys attempted to poison sheep belonging to Elmer’s father (Joseph) and uncles (Ezra and Parley). The cowboys threw beans, boiled with strychnine and colored dark to resemble sheep dung, in a corral containing prize ewes. Joseph, who was on the hillside above the corral, saw the cowboys throwing something in with the sheep, and was able to get to the corral and remove the poisoned beans before they were eaten by the animals. From Ezra T. Williams Journal entry July 18, 1886, photocopy in author’s possession.

18. Wentworth, 524–526.

19. Wentworth 524.

20. National Live Stock Association, *Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry of the United States*, (Denver CO: Franklin Hudson Publishing Company, 1905), 655, accessed August 31, 2015, [http://www.americanwest.amdigital.co.uk.erl.lib.byu.edu/Documents/Images/Graff\\_1412/4](http://www.americanwest.amdigital.co.uk.erl.lib.byu.edu/Documents/Images/Graff_1412/4).

tures were “sheeped out,” leaving the land so barren cattle either starved or were removed.<sup>21</sup> Cattlemen knew they had no exclusive legal standing when it came to range rights on government land, and sheepmen had learned that judges and juries strongly favored cattle growers. Consequently, neither side was anxious to face the other in a court battle.<sup>22</sup> When the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 ended the free range by requiring ranchers to pay for the privilege of feeding stock on government land, the cattle versus sheep clashes diminished. However, the conflict was far more complicated than just feeding the animals.

## Cowboy vs. Shepherd

The intense personal hatred that cattle drivers carried for those who herded sheep only exacerbated the dispute. One cowman described a rancher “that was so [against] sheep I wouldn’t ride through [his property] with a wool shirt on.”<sup>23</sup> In the southwest, sheep herding was the job of Mexicans or Indians. In California, Chinese, Portuguese, or Basque immigrants did the herding. Most of these sheepherders could not speak English, and were looked down upon by those who did. In Idaho, where religious prejudice flourished, most of the sheep were owned by Mormons.<sup>24</sup> Many Mormons were immigrants, and in the West in the late nineteenth-century, according to one historian, “all Mormons were regarded as un-American.” Many Anglo cowboys and cattlemen believed “sheep were inferior animals herded by inferior men.”<sup>25</sup> They felt that “raising sheep should be left to the Mexicans,” and detested all wool growers—considering it an un-American occupation. In their opinion “no man who engaged in walking sheep could be a good citizen.”<sup>26</sup> Because they were Mormons and sheep growers, Elmer and his family faced prejudice on both fronts. The language of the range reflected scorn for sheepherders. They were derisively called “mutton

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21. The term “sheeped out” was used to describe a range grazed bare by sheep, and also applied to an abandoned cattle ranch that had been forced out of business by the influx of wool growers. O’Neal, 5.

22. Fred A. Shannon, *Farmer’s Last Frontier*, Agriculture, 1860–1897, vol. V, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989), 211.

23. O’Neal, 6.

24. Wentworth, 530.

25. Richard White, “Animals and Enterprise,” in *Oxford History of the American West*, 267.

26. National Live Stock Association, 645.

punchers,” “lamb lickers,” “snoozers,” or “scab herders.”<sup>27</sup> But there was one thing a sheep man was never called—“shepherd.” Jesus Christ called himself the “Good Shepherd,” giving the title an esteemed, pastoral connotation. Most cowmen “had anything but Christ-like feelings toward sheepmen.” Cowboys were fond of saying, “There ain’t nothin’ dumber than a sheep ‘cept the man who herds ‘em.”<sup>28</sup> Those who tended woolly flocks for a living generally agreed with that intellectual assessment of their animals. But the economic reality of sheep-raising as an industry was indisputable. It was smart business. Eventually, far-sighted cattlemen began adding sheep to their ranch stock.<sup>29</sup>

## Wool Growing Industry

It did not cost much to invest in the ovine business. It was a fairly common practice to herd sheep on shares, or to accept sheep as pay for herding. Sometimes the bum lambs (lambs without mother ewes) became property of the herder who took the time and patience to nurse the woolly babies with a bottle.<sup>30</sup> Elmer’s father and uncles started business that way. Ezra, Joseph, and Parley Williams were respectively 11, 9, and 7 years old when their father died. Their mother took in washing to provide for the family, and the boys found work herding cows for neighbors near the Jordan River in



*Two of the three Williams brothers: Parley and Elmer’s father Joseph*

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27. They were called “Snoozers” because it was the cowboys’ opinion that a sheepherder did little more than sleep; and called “scab herders” because scab was a dreaded ovine disease that required an annual preventive “dipping” in an insecticide/fungal bath.

28. O’Neal, 5.

29. Shannon, 212.

30. Archer B. Gilfillan, *Sheep, Life on the South Dakota Range* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1929), 114.

Salt Lake County. When they were in their early teens, the Williams brothers were hired to herd sheep at the Anders Olson Ranch at Pine Creek, near Beaver, Utah. After several years of hard work and careful planning, the three of them were eventually able to accumulate their own growing flock of sheep.<sup>31</sup>

Most sheepmen, however, purchased their initial flock, earning a 20% return on average the first year. Unlike cattle, which required a larger investment and three or four years to turn a profit, sheep were smaller, less expensive, and matured faster. Sheep's main advantage was their ability to produce two cash crops each year. Male lambs born in the spring were fattened for market and sold by the end of the same year, and all of the sheep were annually sheared for a harvest of wool. In the event of down markets, wool could be stored indefinitely, and it was protected from foreign competitors by tariff.<sup>32</sup> Neither of these revenue-generating products reduced the original investment or size of the growing herd.

Cattle, unlike sheep, did not need close supervision and were more resilient to predators, but they required several years to mature, and their value was only realized when they were slaughtered for beef.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the cost of paying cowhands was more than the cost of hiring herders. Because of their strong herd instinct, large flocks of sheep could be tended by one or two shepherds and a good dog, while multiple men were required to drive a herd of cattle one quarter the size.<sup>34</sup>

Grazing habits of sheep also made them more profitable to raise than cattle. Flocks could manage on significantly less water, thrived on sagebrush, and flourished on the scant, high-elevation grasses that were not suitable for larger livestock.<sup>35</sup> Sheep were protected from nature in the cold by their tendency to huddle close and bed down in a compact bunch with their legs tucked under them. Grouped together and blanketed with their thick wool coats, they were capable of surviving blizzards that killed thousands of cattle.<sup>36</sup> Of course, sheep were not immune to weather-related catastrophes. The Williams brothers had amassed eight thousand head of sheep and relocated them to Idaho in 1903

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31. Pearl Williams Hood, "History of Thomas & Harriet Davis Williams," 2, photocopy in possession of author.

32. Richard White, Milner, et al, 268.

33. O'Neal, 7.

34. Wentworth, 523.

35. O'Neal, 8.

36. National Live Stock Association, 711.

when a winter storm killed five thousand of them. The snow was so deep they could not get feed to the flocks fast enough.<sup>37</sup>

Eventually, profit trumped prejudice, and some of the ranchers who fought so adamantly against wool growers began raising sheep themselves. Earnings were twice those from cattle at one-third the cost.<sup>38</sup>

## Herding Sheep

R.K. Siddoway, former president of the National Wool Growers Association, and a shepherd himself, discovered the following verse carved on an Aspen tree:

I've summered in the tropics, and had a yellow fever chill,  
 I've wintered in the Arctic, known every ache and ill.  
 Been shanghaied on a whaler, and stranded in the deep,  
 But I didn't know what misery was, till I started herding sheep.<sup>39</sup>

The herder who left his poetic mark on the bark must not have had time to finish the engraving. Three additional stanzas were quoted and passed down orally for generations in the Williams family. Apparently, the rhyme was also set to music. A hand-written version, penned on a musical score, was found among Elmer's papers, adding the following verses:

My feet are sore, my boots wore out; I think I'll never mend.  
 It's got to where a horny toad looks like a long-lost friend.  
 The camp boss now is two months late, the burro's dead two days.  
 The dogs are all sore-footed, but the sheep have got to graze.  
 I smell their woolly stink all night; I see them in my sleep.  
 Oh, you'll never know what misery is until you've herded sheep.  
 It's nice to tell your kiddies of the big old horny ram;  
 Of the soft eyed mother ewe and the woolly little lamb.  
 It's nice to have your mutton chops and woolen clothes to wear;  
 But did you ever give a thought to the guy who put them there?

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37. The loss of livestock was intensified by the fact that Joseph had left his two brothers to handle the flocks alone while he served as a missionary in the Southern States. Carl Leslie Williams, "History of Joseph Williams," photocopy in possession of author.

38. Shannon, 212.

39. Shannon, 3.

Old Job had lots of patience, but he got off pretty cheap,  
He never knew what misery was, for he never did herd sheep.<sup>40</sup>

Shepherding was not a popular occupation. When Elmer was the father of his own family, his son Dean was out on the range with the sheep when his draft notice arrived in the mail ordering him to report for military duty during World War II. Elmer rode out to deliver the notice and bring his son home. Dean's subsequent letter to his twin sister, who was away at school, did not express concern about going to war. Instead, his relieved response was, "I guess they have already told you I ain't herding those \*#\*#@# sheep anymore [symbols and emphasis in original]."<sup>41</sup> The work was lonely and challenging. A successful herder parented his charges twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, with no holidays or weekends off. When sheep were the family business, sons began herding when they were mere boys.



*Taylorsville Elementary School, Elmer (circled) on back row and Vera (circled) in front.*

40. A notation at the bottom of the page reads "Sorry, one verse missing—Spanish Inquisition...they're bleating, etc." Untitled holograph of a musical score, EWMC.

41. After Dean completed military service he went to college and earned a law degree. He never did herd sheep again. "Dean to Donna, November 7, 1943," EWMC.

## Joseph Elmer Williams, 1892–1912

Elmer was the first child born to twenty-six year old Joseph (Joe) Williams and his eighteen year old wife Alfreda (Freda) Anderson. When they started their family in 1892 they were living near Beaver, Utah at the Pine Creek sheep ranch belonging to Andrew Olson.<sup>42</sup> By the time Joe and Freda's fourth child was born, they had moved to Taylorsville in Salt Lake County, where Elmer started school.<sup>43</sup> A rare elementary school photograph pictures forty sullen students and one surprisingly pleasant-looking teacher. Elmer is on the back row and Vera Marsden is seated in front. Destined to marry each other, it was the first of many times they would be photographed together.

When Elmer turned 10 in 1903, his father accepted a call to serve an LDS mission to the Southern States, leaving Elmer's mother and his five siblings in Utah.<sup>44</sup> Joseph was sent home and his mission cut short after seventeen months when his wife, Freda, nearly died from pneumonia. Freda never fully recovered. A heart condition plagued her for the rest of her short life. Due to his wife's frail health, Joseph decided to move his family closer to the property in Idaho where the Williams brothers had relocated their sheep. The move enabled him to be home more often to care for her.<sup>45</sup> It also meant Elmer would have to leave his sweetheart, Vera, behind in Utah. Ever since he was very young, Elmer had spent summers in the mountains of Idaho herding his father's flocks, but this time he would not be returning to Utah. An account of one of his earlier spring departures was recorded by Vera:

*Elmer went to Blackfoot, Idaho in the summertime to help with his father's sheep. Their summer range was up in the mountains near Brockman Creek. One time when he was going to Idaho he stopped to see me and tell me good-bye. He was going to walk to Murray, (two miles) carrying a saddle, and his clothes in a flour sack. He said, "I must go or I will miss the streetcar and the train." He*

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42. Hood, "History of Grandfather and Grandmother Anderson," photocopy in possession of author.

43. US Federal Census 1900, database with images, Elmer Williams in household of Joseph Williams, West Jordan & North Jordan Precincts, Salt Lake, Utah, sheet 22B, family 402, image 43 of 53, FHL 1,241,685 *FamilySearch*, accessed September 3, 2015, <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MMRP-4W8>.

44. LDS or Mormon refers to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

45. Vera Williams, 69.

*kissed me and said, "Goodbye, Darling," and I was so thrilled I said, "Say it again!" He did . . . and he missed the train.*<sup>46</sup>

In anticipation of his family's move to Idaho, Elmer proposed to Vera in the fall of 1911, although at 19 and 18 years of age, respectively, they considered themselves too young to marry. The prospect of one day being husband and wife softened this latest separation.

Several factors drew Utahns out of their Mormon Zion and into Idaho. The



*Williams brothers Parley, Joseph and Ezra*

steady influx of foreign converts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century combined with Mormons' high fertility rate forced people, of necessity, to settle new territory. Many Utah ranchers were sheepmen. Of all Utah's livestock in the late nineteenth-century, the number of sheep was greater than any other variety of animal. Growth of the size and number of flocks was "so rapid that [Utah's] Governor Emery became alarmed for the welfare of other stock raising interests there."<sup>47</sup> When

the railroad snaked into southern Idaho's rich grazing lands, providing the convenience of shipping rather than walking lambs to the eastern markets, wool growers followed close behind.

In addition to the Homestead Act, the Desert Land Act of 1877 was perhaps one of the most significant forces pulling people from Utah.<sup>48</sup> With a deposit of twenty-five cents per acre, a person could claim up to 640 acres of desert land—land that could not grow crops without irrigation. When the rancher submitted proof that the acreage had been irrigated within three years, title to the property

46. Vera Williams, 6.

47. National Live Stock Association, 649.

48. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided that any adult citizen (or person intending to become a citizen) who headed a family could qualify for a grant of 160 acres of public land by paying a small registration fee and living on the land continuously for five years. If the settler was willing to pay \$1.25 an acre, he could obtain the land after only six months' residence.

could be obtained with payment of an additional dollar per acre.<sup>49</sup> Free or cheap land was a deal too tempting to ignore. The Williams brothers embraced this opportunity near the end of the nineteenth-century and relocated their flocks to Idaho. Then, In 1912, Joseph and Ezra moved their families from Taylorsville, Utah to a rural community west of Blackfoot named Moreland.

## Blackfoot, Bingham County, Idaho

The southeastern Idaho town of Blackfoot was founded in anticipation of the railroad passing through the territory.<sup>50</sup> Blackfoot's early days were typical of Hollywood's Wild West stereotype. Carrie Strahorn, a young newlywed travelling through the western territories on her honeymoon in 1879, left an interesting description of the new settlement. She journeyed to Blackfoot by rail, where she was to catch a stagecoach and continue across southern Idaho. The night she arrived in Blackfoot she was terrorized by local cowboys who rode their horses

*. . . into a saloon and [began] shooting the lights out; then [they] ran their ponies. . . up and down the streets firing at every light they could see . . . They rode . . . right into stores and saloons, yelling like maniacs, and no one dared to check them lest he would get the next bullet. It was more than an hour before the sheriff and a posse of men chased them out [of town], but they did not capture the cowboys, who had left two men shot to death and cyclonic wreckage that would be hard to describe.*<sup>51</sup>

The first edition of the *Blackfoot Register* concurred with Strahorn's account:

*When Blackfoot contained less than one-fifth of its present inhabitants, hoodlumism strongly predominated . . . it being no uncommon occurrence for drunken freighters and cowboys to ride through the streets firing off their revolvers and throwing lariats over anything that came in their way and dragging it away with them.*<sup>52</sup>

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49. Bitton, 14.

50. Bitton, 2.

51. Bitton, 3.

52. Bitton, 3. The first edition was printed January 1, 1881.

Taming the town was gradually accomplished as more families moved into the area. There were thirty identifiable Mormon communities in the Idaho Territory by 1877.<sup>53</sup> Several were located west of the Snake River near Blackfoot. A history written by early Mormon settlers described Blackfoot as a thriving little town, but “there was not a branch of the church there. Those who pioneered the settling of the town were not of this faith [Mormon] and anti-Mormon feeling ran high.”<sup>54</sup> The two Mormon practices most repulsive to Idaho Territory residents were the church’s belief in plural marriage, and the fact that Mormons tended to vote as a bloc—usually on the Democratic ticket before the turn of the twentieth-century.<sup>55</sup>

One of the main leaders of the anti-Mormon forces was Blackfoot resident Fred T. Dubois. Dubois, a Yale graduate, organized a new political party called the Anti-Mormon Party of Oneida County, which eventually merged with the Republicans.<sup>56</sup> In the 1884 Idaho election, the Anti-Mormon Party unseated elected Mormons when Dubois’s chief supporter, A.W. Smith, was voted into the legislature by the use of “fraud, intimidation, deceit, chicanery and the courts.”<sup>57</sup> Smith immediately drafted a bill that stripped all Mormons of the right to vote or act on juries.

The bill specified that “anyone who practiced, believed, taught, advocated, or belonged to an organization that believed in or supported polygamy” would be disfranchised.<sup>58</sup> The enforcement arm of the bill was called the Idaho Test Oath Act, and required any individual who was challenged “to testify under oath that he did not belong to the Mormon Church or believe in its doctrines.”<sup>59</sup> In a series of appeals through 1890, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Test Oath Act.<sup>60</sup> The final attempt to enforce the provision

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53. F. Ross Peterson, *Idaho, a Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1976), 93.

54. Thomas H. Williams, *Miracle of the Desert, A History of the Thomas Ward and Surrounding Communities* (Blackfoot, Idaho: Published by Author, 1957), 230. The author is not related to Elmer Williams.

55. Peterson, 93.

56. Bingham County was not carved out of Oneida County until 1885.

57. Peterson, 95.

58. Peterson, 95.

59. Peterson, 95.

60. Peterson, 95.

was *Toncray v. Budge* in 1908.<sup>61</sup> The Idaho Supreme Court “held that so long as Mormon conduct complied with civil law, inquiry into Mormon belief regarding celestial marriage in a future existence did not concern the judiciary.”<sup>62</sup> Although no longer enforced, it was not until 1982 that the provision was removed from the Idaho State Constitution.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, Mormons continued to congregate in Idaho, and Joseph Williams moved his family there in 1912. That same year, Elmer was called on an LDS mission to the Central States. He arrived at mission headquarters in Independence, Missouri on November 6, 1912.<sup>64</sup>



*Joseph and Freda Williams Family. Back: Delpha, Leslie, Elmer, Jennie, Lawrence.  
Front: Joseph, Warren Ferris, Freda and Mildred.*

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61. *Toncray v. Budge*, 14 Id. 261, 95 Pac. 26, (1908), as cited in Joseph H. Groberg, “The Mormon Disfranchisements of 1882 to 1892,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1976): 407–408), accessed 2 March 2016, <https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/viewFile/4906/4556>.

62. Merle W. Wells, “The Idaho Anti-Mormon Test Oath, 1884–1892,” *Pacific Historical Review* 24, no. 3 (August 1955): 251–252, Harold B. Lee Library, accessed February 26, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org.erl.lib.byu.edu/>.

63. “Idaho Test Oath,” *University of Idaho Library*, Special Collections, accessed 2 March 2016, [www.lib.uidaho.edu/special-collections/dm/dm1996.htm#TestOath](http://www.lib.uidaho.edu/special-collections/dm/dm1996.htm#TestOath).

64. Vera Williams, 9.

## Elder Williams, the Missionary Years, 1912–1914

Only three letters Elmer wrote from the mission field have survived the passage of the last century. All were written in 1913, dated January 2, February 25, and March 9—the last letter penned just one month before Elmer’s 39-year-old



*Elder Williams*

mother, Freda, died on April 9, 1913. With a premonition of her impending death, she had urged Elmer not to leave his mission to attend her funeral if she died before his mission was completed.<sup>65</sup> Her death may explain why only three letters to the family were preserved. Elmer was the oldest of seven children, and the full responsibility for care of a large, motherless family may not have included time to save the weekly mail. There is no doubt that Vera would have saved all his letters to her, but they were consumed by a fire in 1929 that destroyed their home and everything in it.<sup>66</sup>

At first Elmer was not the proselytizing missionary he expected to be. Instead, he was assigned to teach school in the rural town of Marlow, Oklahoma. Up to this point in his life, Elmer had attended LDS High School and Granite High School in Salt Lake City, though he never completed graduation requirements because he was needed early each spring to herd his father’s sheep.<sup>67</sup>

While skills learned as a student and a shepherd could serve as a foundation for missionary life, they were surely not sufficient for the responsibilities handed to the young missionary. The January 2, 1913, letter expressed concern at his being “put in” as Sunday School Superintendent, theological teacher, school master, and Presiding Elder. He was actually the “only elder left,” he admitted, as the other two had been transferred or released. “I don’t have a minute to

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65. Vera Williams, 9.

66. The year 1929 is an estimate. Despite searching Blackfoot newspaper archives between 1925 and 1933, no record has been found verifying the exact year of the fire. Vera Williams, 15.

67. Vera Williams, 69.

spare,” he wrote. Apparently, Elmer replaced a female teacher who could not handle the rebellious boys in the class. Though his teaching methods lacked professional finesse, the herding skills he learned at home on the range seemed to be as effective for stubborn students as they were for a flock of sheep. On February 25, 1913 Elmer wrote:

Dear Father: I am back at Marlow again teaching school. I enjoyed myself very much up in Oklahoma City with the Elders. We were there nearly two weeks. We would canvas in the daytime from nine until five p.m. After supper we held street meetings. I guess you know all about street meetings. It seems like the devil has hold of my coattail just as I step off the sidewalk, but as soon as I start to talk, the fear leaves me. I almost hated to come back down here to this school, but President Wasson said I could teach the school better than Miss Fain. The boys are very rebellious and a woman can't handle them. But I don't have any trouble any more. They were mean for a while, but I showed 'em who was boss. I can't teach 'em very much, but I can lick 'em...

I am at the school house now. There are three men in size, but boys intellectually, over in the corner. I am sitting by the door. They decided that they wouldn't do their history lesson, but they will have to fight their way out if they don't.

After all the students have gone home, I look up and down the road to see if anyone is coming. Then I preach a sermon. I can make the [school] house ring when nobody is here, but I am not so good when it is full. But...I am improving. I will close for this time as I have to write a letter to Vera. Tell all the folks hello and take good care of yourself.

*Your loving son, Elmer*<sup>68</sup>



*Missionaries in the Central States. Elmer first on left in front row.*

68. Elmer Williams to Joseph Williams, February 25, 1913 and January 2, 1913, EWMC.

Elmer's March 9th letter, postmarked from Lawton, Oklahoma, said he had no time to write much as he was due to preach in Marlow that night. It was 3:00 p.m., he explained, and he still had to ride a colt eighteen miles to get there. "I have 6 more pupils at the school," he added. "More than half . . . are gentiles now."<sup>69</sup> Elmer's February letter revealed his insecurity, and described his efforts to overcome fear of public speaking. He was not practiced in oral persuasion. However, he was adept in wrestling—which apparently proved effective in subduing belligerent young men. Before his mission, Elmer traveled the western wrestling circuit, earning modest winnings in the ring.<sup>70</sup> For many years, Elmer and his brother participated in the then-famous Henry Stampede Rodeo and wrestling competitions held annually near the Blackfoot Reservoir, where he bested every man who accepted the challenge to enter the ring with him.<sup>71</sup> His honest admission, "I can't teach 'em very much, but I can lick 'em," showed a personal realization of his strengths and weaknesses. Acknowledgement of this lack of formal education marked the beginning of a life devoted to learning in order to overcome that weakness.

No official church record has been located which explains the practice of assigning missionaries to teach school in Oklahoma.<sup>72</sup> However, evidence related to Central States missionaries teaching school was printed in a 2001 newspaper article in Gilmer, Texas on the history of the Kelsey School, which opened in 1901 "under the direction of the Central States Mission." According to the article, in 1898 two Mormon families settled in Kelsey and seven more soon followed. Kelsey Branch records gave an account of a school built because "President Wilford Woodruff advocated the need for church academies wherever members were gathered." In 1912 the Kelsey High School opened, and the LDS Church Department of Education sent surplus textbooks and other

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69. Elmer Williams to Mother and All, March 9, 1913, EWMC.

70. "Leader is Pilot, Statesman," EWMC.

71. Vera Mae Williams Harward, "The Songs I Cannot Sing," Photocopy in possession of author, 11.

72. A mission history covering the period of 1883 to 2000 was published in 2001. The book contains broad historical data, oral interviews conducted in the 1980s, and history of the "Liahona," a missionary magazine published in Independence, Missouri beginning in 1907. The mission history lacks documentation on events occurring prior to 1940. What was recorded in the issues of the "Liahona" during the time Elmer was serving focused only on proselytizing efforts. "Central States Mission History," Volume 5 (1912–1918), Box 2, Folder 3, Reel 1, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints History Library, accessed September 11, 2015. <https://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/LR%201562%202/>.

supplies from Salt Lake City. The Central States Mission provided missionaries to teach, even after the State of Texas incorporated the schools into a formal school district. Missionary teachers donated their salaries back to the school after deducting for any supplies.<sup>73</sup> It was, undoubtedly, a similar situation in Marlow, Oklahoma where Elder Williams was assigned.

Before Elmer was released from his mission in November of 1914, Vera Marsden was called as a missionary to the same Central States Mission. Although Elmer and Vera were engaged to marry, they prioritized putting the Lord's work first, and she accepted the call. A year and a half later, one week after her return home, they were married on September 30, 1915 in the Salt Lake Temple. Elmer and Vera had been sweethearts for six years, three of which one of them had waited while the other was in the mission field.<sup>74</sup> They had been putting duty before desire long before they became husband and wife. They tried to follow that pattern throughout the rest of their lives.



*Vera Marsden*

## Husband and Father, 1915–1950

The young couple purchased a farm west of Blackfoot, Idaho near the Snake River in Thomas, seven miles south of where Elmer's father lived. There was a tiny two-room house with a porch on the property. Vera described it as "cozy." They had no electricity or phone and the closest neighbors were a quarter of a mile away. Elmer left home at 4:00 a.m. on horseback every morning except Sunday to work for his dad. He received \$30.00 a month.

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73. Betty Cook and Ruby Denton, "Kelsey School's History Reached into early 1900s," *The Gilmer Mirror*, 4 July 2001, 16A, Church History Library, Secure Stacks, M277.64 C771k pt. 1 2001.

74. Vera Williams, 12.



*Elmer and Vera with children  
Marsden and Vera Mae*

While they lived in Thomas, Elmer and Vera homesteaded land in the mountains southeast of Blackfoot where they built a one-room cabin in which they lived during the summer.<sup>75</sup> They herded his father's sheep to the homestead each spring for grazing until winter weather set in. In 1926, Elmer traded the title to the Homestead to his father for clear title to the farm in Thomas. They needed to sell it and move. Elmer and Vera already had three children when she gave birth to twins in 1925, and the two-room house was overflowing with five "kiddies," (as Elmer fondly called their children), as well as Vera's brother who worked for them.<sup>76</sup> Vera optimistically said it was "a bit crowded."<sup>77</sup>

The Thomas farm was sold in 1927, and the family moved to 110 acres of farmland near his father's farm in Moreland that included a two-bedroom frame home—with a living room and a kitchen.<sup>78</sup> They called the new property the Home Place, but it was a temporary luxury. Within a couple of years the house burned to the ground.

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75. On December 29, 1916, Joseph Elmer Williams filed on 640 acres of homestead land southeast of Blackfoot. Title to the land was issued on August 11, 1926. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, Patent 983675, accessed November 30, 2015, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>.

76. In a letter written by Elmer from the train as he accompanied a shipment of lambs to market, he expressed concern for Vera who had been in a serious auto accident on the way to see her father in Taylorsville, Utah before he died. Elmer regretted that he could not be with her, "*I feel like I should be by you right now you sweet brave girlie,*" he wrote. "*I'll be seeing you soon darling. Tell the kiddies hello.*" "Daddie to Sweetheart, August 2, 1931," EWMC; "United States Census, 1920," database with images, household of Joseph E Williams, [including brother-in-law Louis Marsden] in Thomas, Bingham, Idaho, sheet 8B, family 142, image 16 of 18, NARA microfilm publication T625, FHL microfilm 1,820,288, *FamilySearch*, accessed September 3, 2015, <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MDCN-FNN>.

77. Vera Williams, 15.

78. Vera Williams, 69.

## Don't Lose Your Taw

In the winter, Elmer always banked the fire for the night in the potbellied stove that heated the house.<sup>79</sup> A few days after Christmas, on the threshold of the Great Depression, Elmer awakened early one morning to a crackling sound and unusual glow in the living room.<sup>80</sup> He leaped out of bed to discover a fire in the attic. While Vera awakened the children, Elmer grabbed a bucket and ran to the water pump. He had installed an electric motor on the outdoor pump earlier in the summer so Vera didn't have to work so hard drawing water by hand. That morning, it was so cold the motor wouldn't start. Try as he did, he couldn't coax even a drop of water to douse the fire. Elmer ran back to the house to try and save the piano. It had been a gift to Vera from her father, and was the most valuable of their household goods. With chunks of burning ceiling collapsing around him, Elmer only managed to push the upright piano to the doorway. Intense heat from the flames melted the varnish, sticking to his robe and burning his hands. Unable to lift the heavy instrument over the threshold by himself, he abandoned hope.<sup>81</sup>

The children watched in tears and horror from inside the automobile, a short distance away, as flames devoured their home and everything in it. The older children went back after a few days when the cinders cooled, and sifted through the ashes in hopes of finding the ice skates they had received for Christmas—or anything else that was salvageable. All they ever got was dirt from the debris. Everything but the clothes on their back was gone, and they had no fire insurance.

Elmer did his best to comfort his frightened family. Their daughter, Vera Mae, who was about ten at the time, later recalled that her dad put his arms around her mother, wiped her tears, and said, "Don't cry. We're lucky that everyone is safe, and I still have my taw." A "taw" was the big marble used to shoot at and win other smaller marbles. Playing marbles was a popular game in

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79. To bank a fire was to cover the hot embers with ashes and cinders in order to keep the fire low but alive.

80. It was about 1929 or 1930. Vera's life history says they moved from Thomas to the Home Place in Moreland (where the fire occurred) about two years after the twins were born in 1925. She wrote that they lived there about two years before their home was destroyed by fire—making it about 1929. They were living in the basement of the replacement dwelling still under construction when Max was born in 1933.

81. Vera Williams, 69.

those days and you played «for keeps.» As long as you had a taw you could win other marbles for your collection. One of Elmer's favorite sayings was, «Don't lose your taw.» All the smaller marbles could be lost, but as long as you had a shooter, or taw, you could always win more. «When Dad said he still had his taw,» Vera Mae explained, «he meant that he was still strong, able, and willing to work hard and build us a home again.»<sup>82</sup>

Elmer and Vera fixed up a one-room shack on his brother's property in which to live temporarily. In the spring they needed to be on their farm, so they placed two sheep camps close together facing each other.<sup>83</sup> A sheep camp, the precursor to a small camper trailer, was a covered wagon, sawed shorter and widened over the wheels. Designed to comfortably house one herder, it held a single bunk across the back, a small portable table, hinged benches, and a wood fueled stove.<sup>84</sup> The combination of the two sheep camps was even 'cozier' than the little house in Thomas, but they were fortunate to have friends and family who shared what they had, and furnished them with all they needed.

Any fire is devastating, but the Williams family lost their home on the brink of a world-wide crisis that became the benchmark for all other economic disasters. The Great Depression was the worst financial catastrophe the world had experienced. The agricultural West was still struggling to recover from wartime over-production, and the resulting drop in prices when demand for their crops diminished or disappeared. Farm prices dipped at the close of World War I, then collapsed when consumers were forced to cinch their belts even tighter.<sup>85</sup> But



*The lava rock home built to replace the house destroyed by fire.*

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82. Harward, 17.

83. Harward, 17.

84. Gilfillan, 23–24.

85. Michael Malone and Richard W. Etulain, *The American West, a Twentieth-Century History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 87–88.

Elmer and Vera were frugal and willing to abide by an oft-quoted motto: “Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.” For a long time after the fire, they mostly did without. Elmer hired an unemployed Swedish immigrant to cut and form stone blocks from the lava beds about a mile from their property. They used the black volcanic stone to build a new home. With only one stonemason working, progress was slow, but as soon as the basement foundation was framed and enclosed the family moved in. They lived there while construction continued on the main floor. It took more than two years to complete the home, and another year to accumulate furnishings. Vera said, “I would rather go without, than go in debt.”<sup>86</sup>

The new rock house was nicer than any home they previously had. Elmer and Vera were able to emerge on the other side of the Great Depression with assets intact by implementing a combination of patience and prudence. As Elmer would say, “We didn’t let our yearnin’s get ahead of our earnin’s.” By ‘doing without’ in tough times, they were among the “many westerners who,” historians noted, “were able to come through [the Great Depression] comfortably enough.”<sup>87</sup>

## The Western Man

Westerners, of necessity, were creatively independent. They often had no other choice. When something needed to be done, they figured out a way to do it. This self-reliance was observed by a young Englishman from London when he came to the United States for an extended visit in 1880. He wrote a detailed narrative about his experience living in the “American Wild West,” where he witnessed a phenomenon he termed ‘western independence.’ “Self-reliance is America’s—and the West’s—most prominent characteristic,” he wrote. “Any man will undertake any class of work without previous training and with the greatest self-assurance.”<sup>88</sup> Ranchers often had to resort to improvised repairs to keep machinery and tools in working order. During emergencies, Westerners were often forced to become experts on a wide range of subjects in the

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86. Vera Williams, 19.

87. Malone, 93.

88. William Shepherd, *Prairie Experiences in Herding Cattle and Sheep* (London: 1884), in “The Real versus the Romantic West,” Lee Priestly, *Southwestern Lore*, (September 1955) 21 no. 2, 15–17, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.eri.lib.byu.edu/>.

absence of affordable help. Thus, twenty-year-old Elmer, lacking even a high school diploma, was assigned to serve as a schoolmaster in Oklahoma. And two decades later, without medical or mechanical training, forty-year-old Elmer built an incubator that saved the life of his premature baby.

Vera's sixth and last baby was the first one born in what the local doctor called a 'hospital.' Dr. Beck opened a clinic with beds on the second floor of the Utah Power and Light Company utility office in Blackfoot. It was February 1933, and winter storms had been unusually severe. Snow was so deep it almost covered the fence posts, making roads impassable by car. When Vera went into labor two-and-a-half months early, Elmer harnessed his team to a sleigh and drove her seven miles into town.<sup>89</sup>

Dr. Beck was a kind man and family friend. He had delivered all five of



*Entrance to the Beck Hospital  
above the Utah Power and Light  
Company office in Blackfoot.*

Vera's other children at home, but he offered no consoling words for the latest situation. "Babies born this early just don't live," he said. "The air burns their lungs." When the tiny boy was born, Dr. Beck "tossed him into a pan," and turned his attention to Vera, who was hemorrhaging.<sup>90</sup> He felt his skill was best focused on a patient he knew could survive. Elmer noticed the little blue baby was trying to move and struggling to breathe. Having attended the birth of hundreds of lambs, Elmer knew that little creatures born on cold, stormy days needed to be kept warm, and sometimes life needed to be massaged into them.<sup>91</sup> He scooped the baby out of the cold stainless steel pan and cradled him in the palm of his hand, while the nurse cut flannel into handkerchief-sized squares for diapers. He wrapped his new son in layers of soft cotton bandages and gave him a blessing. Then he got to work.<sup>92</sup>

89. Vera Williams, 19.

90. Vera Williams, 19; Harward, 17.

91. Gilfillan, 125.

92. Vera Williams, 19.

It is likely that Elmer had seen baby incubators in a technology exhibit in Chicago while either serving as a missionary or later taking lambs to market. Such exhibits had been in various shows in the eastern United States since 1901, although incubators for babies were neither accepted nor used by the medical community at the time.<sup>93</sup> Another elder of the Central States Mission when Elmer served, Spencer W. Kimball (future LDS Church President), wrote the following entry in his journal after he and a group of missionaries toured Chicago: “Aug. 14 [1915]...The fireworks at the opening of the Panama Exposition was splendid. We saw the Baby Incubators . . . we were told that from 80 to 90% of the premature children were now saved, whereas 10% only were saved before.”<sup>94</sup>

Elder Kimball recorded the statistics correctly, but his understanding was a little misleading. With the use of incubators it was possible to save 80–90% of premature infants. But it wasn’t until the 1940s that incubators were accepted by the American medical community and began to be a part of standard newborn care in large hospitals.<sup>95</sup> When little Max was born in 1933, it was up to his father to build the machine that saved his life. Elmer found an old popcorn vendor machine at the second hand store and took it back to the hospital. There, according to the doctor, he built the first incubator west of the

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93. The first baby incubator was the invention of a French obstetrician in 1880. The doctor was visiting the chicken incubator display at the Paris Zoo when it occurred to him that the same technology might be used to warm the premature babies who nearly always died of hypothermia. Others improved on his idea, but the equipment was expensive and didn’t appeal to hospitals. The attitude at the time was that babies born too early were weak and doomed to die anyway, or even worse to somehow survive and eventually beget more weaklings. The inventor’s solution was to create a baby incubator exhibit and charge admission to pay for rotating shifts of doctors and nurses that monitored preemie-filled incubators. The baby incubator display first appeared at the Berlin Exposition of 1896. It was brought to the United States in 1901 as an exhibit at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. The show was a display of technological care that was not duplicated in any hospital at the time. In fact, the medical profession as a whole scoffed at the “country fair sideshow,” until health care providers were convinced otherwise in the 1940s. Jeffrey Baker, MD, PhD, “The Incubator and the Medical Discovery of the Premature Infant,” *Journal of Perinatology* 5 (2000): 321, 324–325, accessed 3 November 2015, <http://neonatology.org/pdf/7200377a.pdf>.

94. Spencer W. Kimball, “Missionary Experiences Central States Mission 1914–1915,” *BYU Studies* 25, No. 4 (Fall 1985): 127, accessed September 7, 2015, <https://search.lib.byu.edu>.

95. Baker, 326.

Mississippi River. A few months later, when Max outgrew the machine, Dr. Beck ‘borrowed’ it, and never gave it back.<sup>96</sup>

In the same fighting spirit that saved his baby’s life, Elmer turned his attention to politics. He had no experience or training, but it was a job that needed to be done. Past abuse and prejudice against the LDS Church were still fresh memories, and it was clear to him that not just Mormons, but all minorities, needed an advocate in the political arena. Elmer had close friends among the Indians at Fort Hall, and among the Jewish and Swedish immigrants. Fond of simple, witty sayings, he probably quoted from the pamphlet of poetry found in his library: “People are people wherever you find ‘em; with tummies in front and rear ends behind ‘em.”<sup>97</sup>

Elmer considered all men and women his brothers and sisters. As such, he felt a responsibility to safeguard their constitutional rights. Fred Dubois, the old nemesis of the Mormons from Blackfoot, carried his campaign against the LDS Church to Washington, D.C., where he tried unsuccessfully to prevent Utah’s Mormon Senator Reed Smoot from being seated in Congress.<sup>98</sup> Though Dubois died in 1930 and his anti-Mormon battle seemed to be put to rest, there



*Vera and Elmer Williams  
Family: Vera Mae,  
Marsden and Boyd back  
row; Donna, Vera, Max,  
Elmer and Dean in front.*

96. Vera Williams, 19.

97. A. Ira Cox, “A Pamphlet of Verse,” (Privately published by the Soda Springs Sun, January 1, 1945), 12.

98. Reed Smoot was ordained an LDS Church apostle in 1900. With the approval of then LDS Church President Joseph F. Smith, Smoot ran for U.S. Congress and was elected. The Senate, however, refused to seat the Senator from Utah due to his religious affiliation. The battle last four years before he was finally allowed to act in his elected capacity. Smoot served in Congress from 1903 to 1933. “Fred T. Dubois, Biographical Sketch,” *Idaho State University*, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.isu.edu/library/special/mc004b.htm>.

were still pockets of political corruption and bigotry. Elmer was never one to see a need and ignore it. He decided to run for the Idaho State Senate in 1938.

## Senator Williams, 1938–1950

The Boise, Idaho newspaper columnist who wrote an editorial introducing the newest state senator from Bingham County in 1939 seemed at a loss for words. A good journalist possesses a colorful palette of adjectives to apply to any subject. But the only one-word description the writer could think of to portray Elmer Williams to his readers was ‘different.’ The journalist claimed ‘different’ applied to nearly everything about the senator. His language included unusual phrases. When asked how he felt, instead of saying “okay,” the senator replied, “I’m as fine as hog’s hair.” His answer to the question of where he came from was a jovial, “I’m a Scandinavian Welshman and I sing Irish songs!”<sup>99</sup> Elmer, who had been a wrestler for 25 years, was further described as “two hundred pounds of well-trained bone and muscle . . .” when he “pounced on the pay raise issue with all fours” in opposition to a bill that would increase salaries of public utility commissioners. To summarize his campaign, Senator Williams declared, “I have observed that honesty and simplicity go together. Complex methods bring corruption.”<sup>100</sup>

Elmer’s political philosophy may be best summarized in what could be called his “Articles of Government.” These hastily penciled lines on a sheet torn from a calendar journal dated Monday 29 March 1943 were apparently patterned after the ten commandments—with “thou shalt nots” changed to “you cannots:”

1. You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.
2. You cannot lift small men by bringing down big ones.
3. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
4. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich.
5. You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer.
6. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income.
7. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.
8. You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money.

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99. “Personality Sketches, J.E. Williams, Senator from Bingham,” unidentified newspaper article, EWMC.

100. “Personality Sketches, J.E. Williams, Senator from Bingham,” unidentified newspaper article, EWMC.

9. You cannot build character & courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence.
10. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

Elmer gave a folk wisdom slant to political jargon. During one session of the legislature he was overheard defining some of the “isms” for fellow-lawmakers:

**Communism:** If you have two cows, you give one to your neighbor.

**Socialism:** If you have two cows, you keep the cows and give the milk to the government, and then the government sells you some milk.

**New Dealism:** If you have two cows, you shoot one, and milk the other, then pour the milk down the drain.

**Nazism:** If you have two cows, the government shoots you and keeps the cows.

**Capitalism:** If you have two cows, you sell one and buy a bull.<sup>101</sup>

Senator Williams was re-elected five times, serving through six regular and several special sessions of the Idaho State Congress. He matured into a trusted statesman.<sup>102</sup> One letter addressed to Elmer in 1945 gives a rare glimpse of Senator Williams in action. A comparison between that correspondence, and the letter Elmer wrote as a young missionary describing how he dealt with student discipline challenges and practiced preaching to an empty classroom in 1913, demonstrates the growth Elmer had experienced in those years. The letter, dated February 12, 1945, was from a non-Mormon woman seated in the gallery when Senator Williams gave the keynote speech to the joint session of the Idaho State Congress in commemoration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Elmer not only paid tribute to Lincoln, but he delicately threaded his remarks with overtones of Christ's mission and message from the scriptures. The woman wrote:

Dear Senator Williams:

What I am about to say I feel and mean earnestly and sincerely. The address which you spoke from your heart this day is the very best I have ever heard in my 48 years. . . Not only did your audience listen attentively with their

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101. Genevieve Lindsay, “Events from the life of Elmer Williams,” presented at a dinner honoring him at the time of his release as Blackfoot Stake President, photocopy in author's possession. One of the earliest appearance of this political satire may have been from an article titled “The Class in Political Isms,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 3, 1938. p.12, col.3.

102. Regrettably, time and distance did not permit researching twelve years of senate minutes in the Boise archives to identify the bills he proposed and supported.

minds, they listened with their hearts. . . I would that every child in our schools might be permitted to [have] teachers [with] spirituality [such as] you, in the eloquence of simplicity, expressed today. Spirituality. . . is that attunement with the fundamental laws of the Creator, [and it] rises above creed, race, and nationality. My friend you may think of yourself as a business and stock man, but all of the time—you are a great teacher. [Emphasis in original] One beholds much from a seat in the gallery.<sup>103</sup>

Senator Williams, unlike young Elder Williams, was not hesitant to articulate his beliefs in a subtle sermon to a large, diverse audience. Thirty-two years after his oratory exercises echoed in an empty classroom in Oklahoma, he had become a confident speaker, whose inspiring words resonated in a full congressional house.

## The Shepherd Statesman

It is difficult to draw an accurate picture of anyone in a just few pages. Pen and ink (or keyboard and printer) are insufficient to fully portray the legacy of a colorful character. Bare bone facts summarize the skeleton of a life, but stories give the image flesh. During the twelve years Elmer served as senator he was floor leader of the Senate in 1943 and elected President Pro Tempore in 1945 and 1947. He served on the Agriculture, State Affairs, Immigration & Labor, Live-stock, Military & Indian Affairs Committees, the Commission to Investigate the Education System within the State, and was Chairman of the Banks and Banking Committee.<sup>104</sup>

Elmer had a talent for accumulating responsibilities. After serving several years as Stake Young Men's President for the LDS Church, he was called as counselor in the Thomas Ward bishopric; later served on the high council, then as counselor to the Stake President. He was appointed president of the Blackfoot Stake in 1937, and patriarch in 1949.<sup>105</sup> In addition, Elmer was president

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103. "Gertrude Walter Johnson to Elmer Williams," February 12, 1945, EWMC.

104. "Senate Journal of the Idaho Legislature," Twenty-eighth Session, 538; J. E. Williams, Senator, Bingham County, State of Idaho Senate Chamber letterhead.

105. "President's Certificate", EWMC. Joseph Elmer Williams appointed President of the Blackfoot Stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS on the 21st day of March 1937; "Patriarch's Certificate of Ordination," EWMC, Joseph Elmer Williams ordained Patriarch of the Blackfoot Stake of Zion on the 16th day of October 1949.

of the KID radio station in Idaho Falls, a member of the Blackfoot Board of Education, and as stake president, he served on the Board of Trustees for the LDS Hospital in Idaho Falls.<sup>106</sup>

By the time he was elected to the Idaho Senate in 1938, Elmer had become a stock broker—not the Wall Street variety—but the kind who bought and sold livestock. He purchased lambs for the Cudahy Packing Company in Omaha, Nebraska, and for John Morrell & Company in Ottumwa, Iowa, shipping as



*Elmer and his airplane with local dignitaries*

many as 100,000 animals each season.<sup>107</sup> This required him to travel extensively throughout the west. In order to save time, Elmer bought an airplane and learned to fly.<sup>108</sup> The result was that flying gave him extra time to add more obligations to his busy schedule. His supporters urged him to run for governor and the

United States Senate. But Elmer was becoming aware of his limitations.

A heart attack in September 1947 put him in the hospital for eight weeks. Elmer told his son-in-law that if he ever had another heart attack, he would go out and run till it killed him.<sup>109</sup> A letter from Elmer's friend, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., seems to confirm that comment:

Dear Brother Joseph:

I was delighted to learn that you were getting along and that you had your good wife there to tell you what to do, as I hope she is doing, for I know her mind will be working all right, and after learning of your running a hundred

106. Harold S. Forbush, *The Idaho Falls LDS Hospital* (Rexburg, Idaho: Ricks College Press, 1987), 69.

107. Vera Williams, 69.

108. Vera Williams, 21.

109. Merrill Harward was the son-in-law who reported the conversation to his son, Leon; author's telephone call to Leon Harward on August 21, 2015.

yards to see whether there was anything the matter with your heart, I do not know whether your mind is worth anything at all or not.

I was greatly shocked to learn of your trouble, and I assure you that you have my earnest prayer that you will soon be restored to health. . . I tell you now if I have not suggested it to you before, that no man can do the work that you have been doing and not pay the penalty. So, please, for your own sake, and the sake of your family, for the sake of your Church, and for the sake of your State in which you wield such a great and wise influence, be careful and do what the doctor tells you to do. We cannot afford to have you incapacitated.

Affectionately, J. Reuben Clark, Jr.<sup>110</sup>

Bedrest for eight weeks did not suit Elmer. He was not one to lie around, and he was afraid of ‘losing his law.’ If being confined to a hospital was the cure, he preferred the alternative. There was so much that needed to be done. Determined to continue working, he kept on ‘running’ for more than two more years.

Joseph Elmer Williams collapsed on the floor of the legislative chambers on February 25, 1950, just a few hours before the end of a special session. He died eight days later in Boise’s St. Alphonsus Hospital while talking to his son. His last official act the day he died was to telephone a Blackfoot civic leader to say that he had secured beds for the new Bingham County Hospital.<sup>111</sup>

One of the letters of condolence sent to Vera exemplified the mutual respect Elmer shared with those of different ideologies. It was written by a long-time friend and fellow wool grower from Dillon, Montana, Dane Hagenbarth:

Dear Mrs. J.E. Williams & Family,

After a brief absence I returned last nite to receive the sad news of Elmer’s leaving. This morning I went to mass for him and have arranged for a spiritual . . . high mass to be said in his behalf . . . I was fortunate in being one of

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110. “Joshua Reuben Clark, Jr. was an apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as a prominent American attorney at law and dedicated civil servant. He was an attorney in the Department of State, and Under Secretary of State for U.S. president Calvin Coolidge. In 1930 Clark was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Mexico. It was while he was serving in Mexico that Mormon Church President Heber J. Grant issued him the call to return to Salt Lake City and serve as a counselor in the First Presidency. J. Reuben Clark heeded the call and served nearly thirty years as a counselor to three LDS presidents,” accessed 15 November, 2015, [http://www.mormonwiki.com/J.\\_Reuben\\_Clark](http://www.mormonwiki.com/J._Reuben_Clark); “J. Reuben Clark, Jr. to Joseph E. Williams, September 4, 1947,” EWMC.

111. “Civic Leaders Praise Williams,” and “Williams Dies,” EWMC.

Elmer's many friends. However, to the people who knew him he was more than a friend—he was a true and strong crusader for all that friendship stands for. Where support was needed he gave most whole-heartedly—so unselfishly as to imperil his own health . . . The realization that his complete goodness will give him lasting reward will certainly be a consolation to all of you.<sup>112</sup>

## Conclusion

Elmer was a shepherd. His influence and responsibilities grew from tending his mortal father's flocks to caring for our Father's sheep. The New Testament injunction to "feed my sheep" had deeper meaning to a man familiar with the woolly creatures. He recognized similarities between sheep and humans. Both had a herd instinct. Both were inclined to follow the crowd, or sometimes wander off and go astray. Elmer understood that without a good shepherd, both sheep and people would be lost.<sup>113</sup> His life-long goal was to follow and emulate the Good Shepherd.

Elmer was a fighter. Journalists were impressed by his background of professional wrestling.<sup>114</sup> But as he matured and accepted additional layers of responsibility, he took on weightier opponents and moved to different arenas. As a missionary in a classroom of reluctant students, he fought ignorance and apathy; as a Mormon and a wool grower among the minority in his county, he battled prejudice on two fronts; as a father he struggled to protect and shelter his children; as an elected official, he wrestled with corruption and injustice. Over time, his methods of engagement progressed from brute force, to more gentle, intellectual and spiritual persuasion in efforts to tame what was still wild in himself, and in the West.

Elmer was a quintessential Western man, rugged, self-reliant, and independent. He entered politics "without any previous training and with the greatest self-assurance" that he could curb the power of big business and government, improve social conditions in his community, and root out corruption wherever he found it. Elmer's Welsh tenacity was probably called stubborn at times,

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112. "Dane Hagenbarth to Mrs. J.E. Williams & Family" March 13, 1950, EWMC.

113. White, Milner, et al, 239.

114. "Personality Sketches."

and we can assume not everyone found his witticisms and down-home manner endearing. It may be said that his aim was “*to make mild a rugged people, and through soft degrees subdue them to the useful and the good.*”<sup>115</sup> His journey from pugilist to patriarch was a long one, and the record shows that life subdued him “to the useful and the good” as well.

The past is a tapestry of interwoven lives. Research tends to focus on the most colorful parts of the tapestry, leaving the faded background of ordinary people unexamined. Socrates said the unexamined life is not worth living. Yet in truth, every life is worth living—and examining. Serious historians hope to discover records that supplement our understanding of the past. Exploring the lives of ordinary men and women offers the possibility of unearthing new treasures. Soldiers in the trenches, farmers in the fields, midwives in the villages, shepherds watching over their flocks—they are all part of the tapestry. The scarcity of their chronicles makes what is found all the more valuable.

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*Cathy Hulse is both a senior citizen and a senior student majoring in Family History. Born and raised in Idaho, she has been a Utah resident for more than twenty years. After earning an Associate's Degree from Ricks College, she postponed further formal education to raise a family. Cathy enjoys the challenge of unraveling the mystery of what happened in the past—and is especially drawn to the lives of common people. She believes that one of the ways she is to fill the measure of her creation is to help families connect with their ancestors. Cathy has eight children, thirty grandchildren, and a grandfather named Elmer who died when she was eighteen months old, and who is the subject of this essay for Dr. Evan Ward's 490 Capstone class.*

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115. Lord Alfred Tennyson, *Ulysses*, lines 35–38, accessed 5 November 2015, <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/ulysses>.



# Karl May's *Amerika*

## German Intellectual Imperialism

Seth Cannon

WHAT IS AMERICA? EUROPEAN MISCONCEPTIONS WITH REGARD to the Americas can be traced back to the beginning of transoceanic contact in 1492.<sup>1</sup> From Columbus to the Spaghetti Westerns of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans have taken America, their “West,” and manipulated and sculpted it.<sup>2</sup> A plethora of contradictory voices have contributed to the construction of a complicated and paradoxical Western myth.<sup>3</sup> Each voice offered a different vision of the West. The versions are grounded in a shared Western setting, but the stories are dramatically different, even foreign. Such transnational perceptions of the American West have attracted the attention of several contemporary scholars.<sup>4</sup> Among the influential European voices is the peculiar voice of a German novelist who conjured a vision of the American

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1. David Wilton, *Word Myths: Debunking Linguistic Urban Legends* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 164.

2. Gerald D. Nash, “European Image of America: The West in Historical Perspective,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 42, no. 2 (1992): 7.

3. Ray Allen Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 78. Ray Billington’s influential book on European opinions of America argues that the myth of America is really a dual myth, a myth of “promise” and of “savagery.”

4. See Renee M. Laegreid, “Finding the American West in Twenty-first-century Italy,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (2014): 411–428; Margaret Connell-Szasz, “A’ Ghàidhealtachd and the North American West,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 46,

West without ever experiencing it. His portrayal, around which he carefully constructed an aura of factuality, powerfully shaped German perceptions the American West.<sup>5</sup> May's *Amerika*, constructed from the 1870s to the 1890s, was as much a reflection of his native Germany as of the land he portrayed. Audiences greeted it with enthusiasm, their attitude whetted by previous exposure to the Wild Wild West. May's version of the Wild West came to dominate Germans' preexisting fascination with the American West; it struck a chord with and emanated from a newly achieved German national consciousness, allowing them to reencounter their own perceived past of noble savagery while simultaneously exhibiting their legitimacy as a young world power.<sup>6</sup>

## The Wild West in Germany before Karl May

Though it is true May greatly enhanced and disseminated the myth of the Wild West in Germany, he did not singlehandedly invent it. He built upon a rich tradition of epistolary and travel literature, which had created an already enchanted audience hungry for his novels. America, with its foreign Western frontier, proved to be incredibly magnetic to the Germans decades before May's work. Gottfried Duden's *Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nordamerikas* (*Report about a Journey to the Western States of North America*) was one of the most widely read books in Germany following its publication in 1829; in 1854 alone, 215,009 Germans bid farewell to Europe and ventured to America.<sup>7</sup>

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no. 1 (2015): 5–29; David Wrobel, "Considering Frontiers and Empires: George Kennan's Siberia and the U.S. West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2015): 285–309.

5. Julian Crandall Hollick, "The American West in the European Imagination," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 42, no. 2 (1992): 18; Heribert Frhr. V. Feilitzsch, "Karl May: The 'West' as seen in Germany," *Journal of Popular Culture* 27, no. 3 (1993): 174.

6. May's novels have been translated into several languages, but his readership has remained primarily German-speaking. Heribert Frhr. V. Feilitzsch, "Karl May: The 'West' as seen in Germany," 173, 186; May's works have attracted the attention of numerous German scholars. American academics, however, have not dealt extensively with the author. The preeminent scholar of May in America, Richard Cracroft, wrote an unpublished analysis of the author for his Master's Thesis at the University of Utah. He later published an article summarizing his thesis. Richard H. Cracroft, "The American West of Karl May," *American Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1967).

7. Nash, "European Image of America," 10; Between 1815 and 1914, 5.5 million immigrated to the United States. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United*

The massive German outmigration resulted in a rich international correspondence—letters sent from German immigrants back to their families in Europe are called the “America Letters”—which exaggerated the country’s risks and pitfalls as well as the rich abundance of opportunities.<sup>8</sup> In February 1881, German immigrant Franz Josef Loewen, then living in Michigan, wrote to his family in Germany: “America wouldn’t know what to do with all its food if it didn’t find a willing customer in ever-starving Europe, and that is why it is understandable that so many are tired of Europe, tie up their bundles and set off for the shores of America.”<sup>9</sup> Compared to heavily industrialized Germany, the American West offered a precious commodity that was rare in Europe: land. Though many Germans were drawn to the abundance of land in the West, some were simultaneously repelled by it. Just as the West’s opportunities were great, so were its risks.<sup>10</sup> One such risk articulated in several of the “America Letters” was violent conflict with Native Americans. In an 1838 letter from Carl Blümner to his mother in Germany, he wrote, “We thought we could do good business; but our expectations were dashed. . . . The reason for this change is the Indians; they rob the Spaniards incessantly . . . and kill [them] wherever they can.”<sup>11</sup> The “America Letters” portrayed the natives as “savage” and violent; yet, in spite of accounts of dangerous contact, the Germans seemed to simultaneously develop a captivation with and an abhorrence of the savagery of the American frontier.

Perhaps the ominous nature of the frontier prevented some Germans from moving to America, but fear of savagery certainly did not stop them from reading and fantasizing about America and her Wild West. Germany’s obsession with everything Indian and Western during the 19<sup>th</sup> century is evidenced in

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*States: Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), 105–106.

8. Walter D. Kampfhoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, and Ulrike Sommer, eds., *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home*, trans. Susan Carter Vogel (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 13.

9. Franz Joseph Loewen to his brother-in-law, sister-in-law, brothers, and sisters, 24 February 1881, in Kampfhoefner, Helbich and Sommer, *News from the Land of Freedom*, 195.

10. As Ray Allen Billington monumentally noted in his 1985 *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise*, a paradoxical European myth developed around the American West. Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise*, 78.

11. Carl Blümner to his mother, 3 April 1838, in Kampfhoefner, Helbich and Sommer, *News from the Land of Freedom*, 102.

various Western exhibitions and shows, generating enthusiastic public responses.<sup>12</sup> Fearing the loss of Indian culture, American George Catlin traveled up the Mississippi River in 1832 painting Native Americans in order to preserve what he deemed to be a culture on its way to decimation. His paintings toured Europe and began a pattern of traveling Indian exhibitions. Catlin portrayed his indigenous subjects as noble and proud. One of his most famous Indian portraits portrays a starkly proud and muscular Blackfoot chief named Buffalo Bull's Back Fat.<sup>13</sup> The bottom of the chief's face is painted with blood-like war paint. He defiantly stares at the observer. He looks regal, holding a painted scepter-like stick in his hand and is crowned with a feather headdress. One could easily wipe away the war paint, replace the headdress with a crown and the stick with a golden scepter and see a European monarch. Catlin's portraits were tremendously popular in Germany, and, though Catlin's European tour predates May, it is not unrealistic to assume that the impact they had upon German popular culture indirectly influenced May's perception and eventual portrayal of Native Americans.<sup>14</sup>

As noted by several scholars, the Germans were fascinated with the Indians.<sup>15</sup> In a way, the frontier reversed the effects of time by placing what Germans perceived to be the equivalent of their own primitive past in the contemporary time period.<sup>16</sup> Before and after Karl May, the Germans managed to deemphasize the foreignness of Native Americans and see a reflection of what they deemed to be their own origins within a nature-bound society of savagery. Nineteenth-century Germans felt that their connection to their simplistic,

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12. Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bills America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 353–354.

13. George Catlin, *Stu-mick-o-súcks, Buffalo Bull's Back Fat, Head Chief, Blood Tribe*, 1832, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.

14. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 353.

15. See Hollick, "The American West"; Peter Bolz, "Indians and Germans: A Relationship Riddled with Clichés," in *Native American Art: The collections of the Ethnological Museum Berlin*, ed. Peter Bolz and Hans-Ulrich Sanner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 9–21; Cracroft, "The American West of Karl May," 249–258.; Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise*.

16. Reusch notes, "A variety of . . . domestic and foreign sources equated ancient Germans with the native tribes of the Americas, as demonstrated by Montesquieu's conviction that the American savages represented the drive for freedom and courage of the Germanic tribes." Johann J. K. Reusch, "Germans as Noble Savages and Castaways: Alter Egos and Alterity in German Collective Consciousness during the Long Eighteenth Century," *The John Hopkins University Press* 42, no. 1 (2008): 93.

Teutonic, noble past of bravery, honor, loyalty, and strength was being lost amid the swell of industrialization.<sup>17</sup> In a romantic attempt to recall their simplistic past, artists like Casper David Friedrich portrayed breath-taking views of the German landscape as something sacrosanct.<sup>18</sup> Germany's romantic obsession with nature reflects a yearning for a nature-imbued past, a past of noble barbarism unscathed by Roman civilization. Germans connected with Native Americans as they saw a nature-bound culture similar to the one from which they believed they had originated. This relationship was encouraged through the oversimplification of German heritage in typical nationalist style, as well as the oversimplification of the representation of native cultures.

## Convincing a Country: May's Myth of Authenticity

The Wild West cemented itself in German popular opinion through widespread exposure in the form of Duden's exposé, immigrants' letters, and touring art exhibitions long before May's novels appeared; however, it was May who made his portrayal of the Wild West into a German commonality. As Gerald Nash, a prominent American historian born in Germany noted, if you asked any German who a famous American was, they were more likely to respond with Winnetou or Old Shatterhand, two of May's most beloved characters than rattle off the names of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.<sup>19</sup>

May's portrayal of the West loomed larger than life in the German collective consciousness. It exercised a greater influence on Germans' perceptions of the Wild West than all other contributors to the Western myth for three simple reasons. First, his books were outrageously popular. Second, May created an aura of factuality around his purely fictional works. Not only were Germans devouring May's books in droves, some, at least initially, were being conned into believing that his stories and descriptions were true. Finally, May's storyline

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17. Reusch, "Germans as Noble Savages and Castaways," 113; Such Teutonic values are evident in German texts like *Der Heliand*, a violent, Germanized version of the Bible. *Der Heliand*, trans. Karl Simrock (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1959; Project Gutenberg, 2005), <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/der-heliand-4496/56>.

18. Casper David Friedrich, *Wanderer Above a Sea of Fog*, 1818, Hamburger Kunsthalle; Casper David Friedrich, *Monk by the Sea*, 1809, Nationalgalerie Berlin; Casper David Friedrich, *Abbey in the Oak Forest*, 1809, Alte Nationalgalerie Berlin.

19. Nash, "European Image of America," 2.

provided a theater for German nationalism in which Germans could relate to May's characters and revel in their nation's inherent greatness.

Karl May and his characters had already become household names by the time of his death, and their fame has carried to the present day.<sup>20</sup> After achieving fame "almost over night [sic]" in the 1870s and 80s, May switched publishers in 1891.<sup>21</sup> He then produced his collected works, which made him a fortune, selling more than 400,000 copies of the thirty-three book collection by 1896.<sup>22</sup> He was Germany's most successful author at the turn-of-the-century.<sup>23</sup> May's influence endured through two world wars and the division and reunification of Germany. According to *Der Spiegel*, more than 200 million copies of his books have been printed, making him one of Germany's most widely read authors.<sup>24</sup> Growing up during the reign of the Nazi party, Hans-Wilhelm Kelling read May as child in the 1940s and commented that the reading of Karl May was a universal experience for German youth: "[May] was the hero for all of us, because of the heroic persons . . . We identified with [May's characters]. He also painted the picture of the American Indian, which is the noble savage."<sup>25</sup> Though Kelling lived several decades after May's work was published, May's idealized portrayal of *Amerika* and the Wild West was so real to him he was disappointed after immigrating to the United States. When he was confronted with the real American West, he found one that failed to live up to his preconceived notions.<sup>26</sup>

May's descriptions of America included just enough well-researched facts to make them believable. In fact, there are moments in May's beloved novel sequence *Winnetou* 1–3 when the Saxon author pulls off genuinely realistic depictions of American landscapes and cultures. This certainly required a great deal of research on May's part. In *Winnetou III*, for example, May included a rich, precise depiction of Yellowstone; "in the midst of the wild, fairy-tale beauty

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20. In the Frankfurt Newspaper, Karl May's name appeared regularly throughout the 1890s, especially around Christmas time, because his books were coveted Christmas presents. No other publisher sold more books than his. Jürgen Seul, *Karl May im Urteil der "Frankfurter Zeitung"* (Hamburg: Hansa Verlag, 2001), 17.

21. Feilitzsch, "Karl May: The 'West' as seen in Germany," 176.

22. Feilitzsch, "Karl May: The 'West' as seen in Germany," 176.

23. Feilitzsch, "Karl May: The 'West' as seen in Germany," 176.

24. Jan Fleischhauer, "Germany's Best-Loved Cowboy: The Fantastical World of Cult Novelist Karl May" *Der Spiegel* no. 13 (2012).

25. Hans-Wilhelm Kelling, interview by author, Provo, Utah, March 11, 2015.

26. Hans-Wilhelm Kelling, interview by author, Provo, Utah, March 11, 2015.

of the Rocky Mountains...a natural preserve of 8,670 square kilometers...the thin crust of the earth forms bubbles, boiling hot sulphur vapors hiss and spurt, and with a noise that resembles the roar of cannons, huge geysers splash their seething masses of water into the trembling air."<sup>27</sup> May's occasional specific, textbook-like descriptions based upon careful research lulled his audiences into believing that all of his in his depictions were accurate. This vivid imagery and thorough detail about Yellowstone must have sounded more outlandish than many of May's purely invented descriptions, but they were also confirmable and surely strengthened May's claims of holistic veracity.

With the exceptions of descriptions of select native rituals central to the plot, and the rare detailed descriptions like that of Yellowstone, May's *Amerika* was rich in variety but poor in depth. May favored geographical name-dropping to description: "You should have tried to get to the Salt River or the John Days River from here. Both of them flow into the Snake River which you would then have followed upstream. To your left you would have had the Snake River Range and the entire Teton Range, more than fifty miles long."<sup>28</sup> The passage lacked any details beyond proximity and size, which were readily available on a map. Describing his initial foray in the West while working as a railroad surveyor, Old Shatterhand says, "The railroad was to go from St. Louis through Indian Territory, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and on to California and the Pacific Coast. . . . The section I . . . had been assigned to, lay between the sources of the Red River and the Canadian River."<sup>29</sup> Such descriptions characterize and are commonplace in May's novels. May included names of cities, rivers, and regions with very little explanation aside from their names only. Some of the places thus described include Ogden, Fort Scott, the Kansas and Nebraska Rivers, Sioux Territory, Front Street in St. Louis, the Saskatchewan River, Llano Estacado, the Salt River, the Rocky Mountains, the Wind River Range, the Green River, the North and South Platte Rivers, Denver, the "city of the Mormons," Cheyenne, Yellowstone Lake, and the Snake River.<sup>30</sup> With limited access to information, May seemed to have utilized all of the available material at his fingertips. Though May's name-dropping added little to the story, it lent May an aura of credibility. May's careful use of both fallacious and

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27. May, *Winnetou*, 573.

28. May, *Winnetou*, 612.

29. May, *Winnetou*, 20–21.

30. May, *Winnetou*, 420, 421, 423, 448, 574–575, 578, 612, and 613.

factual information would come directly into play as he attempted to create a myth surrounding his identity as Old Shatterhand.

There are many sections in May's novels, however, where he sought to fabricate his own *Amerika* rather than describe the real United States. After the villainous white chief Parranoh, the greatest enemy of Winnetou and Old Firehand, is captured, Old Shatterhand feels uneasy about putting the murderer to death. Winnetou says, "My brother is cautious like someone about to step into a river full of crocodiles."<sup>31</sup> It is hard to imagine an Apache chief from New Mexico metaphorically alluding to a species that is anything but native to the deserts of the Southwest. This brief slip up on May's part illustrates two important points: May does not really know what he is talking about, and he wants to make America appear exotic and foreign.

May further fabricated a realistic aura in his novels by utilizing first-person narration and going to extreme efforts to convince his fans that he had not only visited the West but had experienced the events in the novels as his protagonist Old Shatterhand. The novels have a distinctive biographical ring to them, describing the reason why Old Shatterhand crossed the Atlantic, May wrote, "The limited opportunities at home, the desire to increase *my* knowledge, and an innate urge for action had made *me* cross the ocean and come to the U.S."<sup>32</sup> Up to this point, within the first chapter, the only name that the reader has encountered is Karl May on the book cover.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the narrator is not named until the fiftieth page when he is given a nickname.<sup>34</sup> May's biographical voice suggests that the author is also the narrator. The line between the author and his protagonist Old Shatterhand is also blurred in the preface of *Winnetou* in which Old Shatterhand/May, mourning the demise of the noble savage who has been robbed of the majestic "herds of mustang. . . . [and the] buffalo which populated the prairie in millions" writes, "I can only lament, but change nothing. . . . I came to know the Indians over the course of a number of years, and one of them still lives brightly and magnificently in my heart. He, the best, the most

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31. May, *Winnetou*, 498; Winnetou's hatred of Parranoh is thus described: "Just as the parched grass of the prairie thirsts for the dew of the night, Winnetou thirsts for revenge on Parranoh, the white chief." May, *Winnetou*, 445.

32. May, *Winnetou*, 4. Emphasis added.

33. Karl May, *Winnetou: erster Band* (Bamberg: Karl-May-Verlag, 1951), 50.

34. May, *Winnetou: erster Band*, 50.

loyal and most devoted of all my friends, was a true representative of his race.”<sup>35</sup> The preface is dated “Radebeul, near Dresden, 1892”: Karl May’s hometown.<sup>36</sup>

By the mid-1890s, implicit association with Old Shatterhand did not appear to be enough for the then-wealthy author. May began to expressly claim to be Old Shatterhand. He purchased exotic mementos from the West and had himself photographed in western garb to support his claims, a brilliant publicity stunt that resulted in increased press exposure.<sup>37</sup> Such claims entered May’s personal correspondence as early as 1894 when he used the amount of detail in his novels to argue that his research was simply too extensive to have been conducted in a study.<sup>38</sup> In the October 1896 edition of the magazine *Deutscher Hausschatz* the author stated, “I am really Old Shatterhand . . . and have experienced all of [the things in my novels] and much more.”<sup>39</sup>

In order to verify his claims, May collected a wide variety of artifacts supposedly stemming from Old Shatterhand’s adventures in the West and Ben Kahara’s time in the Middle East. When skeptics questioned the truth of May’s tales, he was quick to offer his artifacts and “scars” as evidence.<sup>40</sup> Among the most interesting items that May collected are his novels’ famous rifles: the *Henrystutzen* (Henry carbine), the *Bärentöter* (bear killer) and Winnetou’s *Silberbüchse* (silver rifle). The *Silberbüchse* is particularly interesting, because the rifle was supposed to be buried with its owner in the Tetons. In order to justify its presence in Radebeul, May was forced to build the disinterment of Winnetou’s grave into the plot of the third volume of *Old Surehand*. May, who at this point was definitively Old Shatterhand, penned that he had come across a group of Native Americans desecrating the grave and had decided to take the weapon away in order to prevent any further attempts to rob from and disturb his dead blood brother. It was a convenient excuse for having the famous chief’s rifle adorned with silver hanging next to his desk.<sup>41</sup>

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35. May, *Winnetou*, xiii–xiv.

36. May, *Winnetou*, xiv.

37. Hans-Dieter Steinmetz, *Karl May In Der Hohenstein-Erfstthaler Lokalpress 1899–1912: Eine Dokumentation* (Hohenstein-Ernstthal: Karl-May-Haus, 2001), 8.

38. Christian Heermann, *Der Mann, der Old Shatterhand war* (Berlin: Verlag der Nation, 1988), 240.

39. May, Karl. “Freuden und Leiden eines Vielgelesenen,” *Deutscher Hausschatz: in Wort und Bild*, October 1896, 1, quoted in Christian Heermann, *Der Mann, der Old Shatterhand war* (Berlin: Verlag der Nation, 1988), 240.

40. Heermann, *Der Mann, der Old Shatterhand war*, 241.

41. Heermann, *Der Mann, der Old Shatterhand war*, 248.

The truly remarkable part of May's lie was that people, perhaps influenced by May's narrative voice and the well-researched tidbits in his novels, actually believed it. The famous author toured through several German cities in the 1890s and was greeted by crowds to whom he fed stories from his "*Abenteuerleben*" (adventure life).<sup>42</sup> Following an appearance made by May in Munich in July of 1897, a reporter for the *Bayerischer Kurier und Münchner Fremdenblatt* wrote, "It was, for me and probably everyone who met with Dr. May during these days, a great joy, and it will remain a lasting memory to have seen the man face to face who has traveled the whole world and understands more than 1,200 languages and dialects: the man who is the last representative of the romanticism of the Wild West."<sup>43</sup> This is no juvenile connoisseur of cowboy dime novels; this is an adult professional, being duped into believing that Karl May was known throughout the Wild West for his deadly punch.

The myth of reality May tried to create caught hold for a time, but was ultimately too outlandish to endure. By mid-1899, May's fairytales had become too much for the German public to believe. The author attracted the critical attention of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (Frankfurt Newspaper) journalist Feder Mamroth who began his successful condemnation of the Old Shatterhand legend while May was visiting the Middle East for the first time.<sup>44</sup> In a last ditch effort, May's sister produced a postcard from Egypt as evidence of May's presence there under Old Shatterhand's pseudonym Ben Kahara, but by this time the game was over.<sup>45</sup> The myth of reality had been cracked, but May's popularity would live on.<sup>46</sup>

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42. Seul, *Karl May im Urteil der "Frankfurter Zeitung,"* 57.

43. Steinmetz, *Karl May In Der Hohenstein-Erfsthaler Lokalpress 1899–1912*, 8. "Mir aber, und wohl Allen, die in diesen Tagen mit Dr. May zusammentrafen, war es eine große Freude und wird es eine bleibende Erinnerung sein, den Mann, der die ganze Welt bereist hat, der über 1.200 Sprachen und Dialekte versteht, den letzten Vertreter der Rommantik des wilden Westens von Angesicht zu Angesicht gehen zu haben." Translated by the author.

44. Seul, *Karl May im Urteil der "Frankfurter Zeitung,"* 74–75.

45. Steinmetz, *Karl May In Der Hohenstein-Erfsthaler Lokalpress 1899–1912*, 137. Article from Hohenstein-Ernstthaler Anzeiger, August 29, 1899. Oertliches und Sächsisches (Local and Saxon).

46. Seul, *Karl May im Urteil der "Frankfurter Zeitung,"* 50.

## The *Winnetou* Sequence and German Nationalism

Just as May's claimed escapades in the West engaged the press, his novels' positive portrayal of Germans attracted droves of German readers. May domesticated America's Wild West for Germans, making it comprehensible to them. His *Amerika* was simple and provided a stage for the aggrandizement of Germans and newly unified Germany. May allowed Germans to intellectually imperialize the unspoiled lands of the Wild West. It was intellectual imperialism at its finest.

The simplicity of May's storyline attracted young, malleable readers as well as adult audiences and allowed the values and insecurities of newly-unified Germany to easily bleed through.<sup>47</sup> May's *Winnetou* revolves around four main groups: the noble savages, influenced by paternalistic Germans; the saintly German transplants; the corrupting Yankees (non-German Americans); and the bad Indians. The simplistic moral character of May's West reveals May's lack of firsthand experience and focused in the novels' reflections of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Germany; the novels leave no room for questioning whether May was a fan of Germans and German culture.

The Western frontier provided the ideal stage for Germans to encounter the 19<sup>th</sup>-century equivalent of their fantasized, strong, Teutonic past of noble savagery, the Indians. German identity and history are bound to the concept of barbarity.<sup>48</sup> The German language echoes this reality; the words used to describe ancient, primitive Germanic cultures, *Sippen* and *Stämme* (clans and tribes), are used to describe "savage," Native American societies. May's novels appealed to Germans because they could relate to or identify with May's characters, including

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47. A work of literature is certainly influenced by the contemporary cultural climate, and, if closely read, influences the same society which initially contributed to its formation. Rick Duerden, "The New Historicism," in *The Critical Experience: Literary Reading, Writing, and Criticism*, ed. David Cowles (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1994), 237; May classified his works in two broad categories: *Jugenderzählungen* (youth stories) and *Reiseerzählungen* (travel narratives). In reality, both categories were set in exotic locations and often dealt with the same characters and were consequently collectively viewed by the public and critics as youth literature. Seul, *Karl May im Urteil der "Frankfurter Zeitung"* 20–21.

48. Reusch notes, "The etymological origin of 'savage' derived from the attributes bestowed upon the Germanic tribesman by the Roman colonizers: *silvaticus*—of the woods—defining a violent barbarian who dwelt outside the perimeters of Roman civilization." Reusch, "Germans as Noble Savages and Castaways," 96.

the “good” Indians.<sup>49</sup> They looked at May’s noble savages and saw themselves and their ancestral roots.<sup>50</sup> May made the connection between European heritage and native cultures incredibly easy for readers through the portrayal of his “good” Indian characters. Though *Winnetou* is full of Native Americans, the detailed description of individual characters through which the reader receives a portrayal of Native American identity is rather limited. The namesake of the novel, Winnetou, and his sister and father form the basis for May’s description of noble savages. Other minor members of the “good” Apache tribe provide only brief opportunities to discuss Indian rituals and generalities: use of the words “howgh” and “ugh,” medicine bags, torture customs, and languages. May’s description of Winnetou’s sister overtly connects her with Europe. He makes note of her idealized European facial features when he writes, “The soft, warm, and full cheeks came together in a chin whose dimples would have suggested playfulness in a European woman. . . . The delicate flare of her nostrils seemed to point to Greek rather than Indian descent.”<sup>51</sup> These Native Americans’ proto-Europeans appearance is what ultimately attracts May’s German protagonist and alter ego, Old Shatterhand, to Winnetou and his noble family. Upon first meeting Winnetou and his father, Old Shatterhand is impressed by the “truly noble” physical poise of the Apache chief and his son.<sup>52</sup>

Winnetou is brave, strong, and loyal, yet he is also educated and refined. Winnetou mirrors the complex duality in which Germans saw themselves as inheritors of a noble tradition of brutish strength and the refined product of education and culture. German values and characteristics distinguish the “good” from the “bad” Indians. A ninth-century Germanized version of the Christ story written to convert the Saxons, *Der Heliand*, illustrates a long-standing Germanic glorification of brutish strength. In *Der Heliand* the warrior-disciple Peter, upon Christ’s arrest, reaches for his sword and maims, cutting through ear, cheek and bones, one of his Lord’s assailants.<sup>53</sup> Physical, even brut-

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49. Kelling, interview.

50. German glorification of the past helped Germans identify with America’s, and relatedly May’s, “savage” Indians: “The idealized noble savage and his/her natural habitat and lifestyle as objects of desire, resulting from dissatisfaction with the social and environmental conditions of the period, can be traced through underlying nostalgic references to an ancient Germanic past.” Reusch, “Germans as Noble Savages and Castaways,” 92.

51. Karl May, *Winnetou*, trans. Michael Shaw (New York: The Seabury Press, 1977), 202.

52. May, *Winntou*, 71.

53. “With Lightning speed [Peter] pulled his sword from his side and smote the foremost enemy with full strength. . . . [The enemy’s] head was raw, and his bloodied cheek and ear

ish, prowess and cultural sensitivity and refined taste are examples of Germanic values imposed on and glorified through the portrayal of Native Americans like Winnetou. For example, the same Winnetou who “pounced on [his sworn enemy Parano], pressed his right knee against his chest, and detached the scalp with three incisions” is also deeply moved by the singing of the Ave Maria.<sup>54</sup> After Old Shatterhand and his team of surveyors become involved in a confusing Indian conflict, they are mistakenly identified as enemies of noble Apaches and taken prisoner by them. After regaining consciousness as a prisoner Old Shatterhand encounters Winnetou on a more personal level. He is surprised to see the noble Apache dressed in delicate linen and holding a copy of Longfellow's *Hiawatha*.<sup>55</sup> Winnetou's European education—he was taught by a German-American—allow Old Shatterhand and May's German audience to identify with him.

In keeping with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century trope of the “vanishing Indian,” May portrayed the tragic demise of the noble, savage Indian cultures, which harbored the raw Teutonic values of the Germanic past.<sup>56</sup> The key to perpetuating these ideals, according to May's books, seems to be found not in Indian culture but in modern Germanic culture's combination of physical strength and refinement. *Winnetou* suggests that refined by his noble past, the modern German could overcome any obstacle and tame any wilderness. Old Shatterhand, the ideal German, incorporates elements from his Germanic past of noble savagery, while also embracing education and culture. The values that define noble Winnetou and his family also define Old Shatterhand; however, Old Shatterhand is able to rise to even greater nobility and strength through humility, education, and Christianity.<sup>57</sup> Old Shatterhand is eager to learn from his Apache blood brother and describes himself “with pleasure” as a “disciple” of the Apache prince, and his teachable humility allows him to master the secrets of the Apache and then combine them with his European education and Christian values.<sup>58</sup> Only upon his acceptance of Christianity does Winnetou become equal to Old

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burst into his bones and his blood spewed from the wound.” Translated from modern German translation by author. *Der Heliand*, chapter 56.

54. May, *Winnetou*, 456, 613.

55. May, *Winnetou*, 99.

56. Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes & U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1982).

57. May, *Winnetou*, 263–265.

58. May, *Winnetou*, 285.

Shatterhand whose Christian faith, learning and humility have long since allowed him to surpass his Indian teacher and friend.<sup>59</sup> Shortly before his death and his overt confession of belief in Christianity, Winnetou attributes his refinement through Old Shatterhand's teaching and clearly references his conversion when he says, "My brother knows . . . that the Apache thirsted for the water of knowledge. You gave it to him, and he drank it in full draughts. Winnetou learned much, more than any [other Indian]."<sup>60</sup> The "water of knowledge," in the context of Winnetou's confession of Christ, seems to allude to the biblical "water of life" and Winnetou's acceptance of this water, allows him, more than any other Apache, to surpass the limits of paganism as an Indian and embrace something greater, something divine.

In May's West, a modern German could encounter and learn from his noble past, tapping previously unattained potential, and apply the merits of his modern training thus becoming the ideal German and *Mensch* (human). Young Germany, with its untapped potential, is perfectly personified in May's near-demigod German protagonist, Old Shatterhand. After heading west with a railroad surveying crew, the other more experienced Western men label him a "Greenhorn" and mock his lack of experience and bookish claims to expertise.<sup>61</sup> Germany, like Old Shatterhand, was young and inexperienced, yet both would quickly surpass the feats of others and establish their own legitimacy. Within months of arriving in America and entering the American West, the "Greenhorn" has not only learned to survive in the rugged West, he has become the epitome of a man of the West. Like Old Shatterhand, Germany's rise to power was rapid; Wilhelm I was proclaimed *Kaiser* (emperor) in the Parisian palace of the Sun King, following young Germany's surprising and humiliating 1871 defeat of one of Europe's powerhouses, France.<sup>62</sup> In *Winnetou I*, Old Shatterhand is able to achieve fame and overcome seemingly impossible obstacles by humbly learning from the more experienced men of the West like Sam Hawkins and ultimately from Winnetou.<sup>63</sup> Prior to being taught the secrets of the wil-

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59. May, *Winnetou*, 647.

60. May, *Winnetou*, 640.

61. May, *Winnetou*, 45–46.

62. Until defeat in the Franco-Prussian War the French army had been seen as the premier military force in Europe. Douglas Fermer, preface to *Three German Invasions of France the Summers Campaigns of 1830, 1914, 1940* (South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Military, 2013), x.

63. Old Shatterhand develops a strong friendship with a German-American on the surveying team named Sam Hawkins. Sam is the figure that labels Old Shatterhand as a

derness from Winnetou, Old Shatterhand is able to overcome significant trials by applying his book learning of the West and using his innate strength. He is even able to defeat the animal embodiment of America, the Grizzly; however, it is not until after he combines his innate strength and intellect with the secrets of the Apaches that Old Shatterhand is able to become superior to all others in the West, Indian and White.<sup>64</sup>

Upon returning to St. Louis after killing a buffalo with a gun, capturing a mustang, killing a Grizzly with a knife, becoming the blood-brother of an Indian chief, and becoming the mortal enemy of another, Old Shatterhand visits the German-American family he previously worked for as a tutor. The bashful German protagonist is modest and unassuming. He is surprised to learn that his nickname, Old Shatterhand, has gained fame throughout St. Louis; his former, German-American employer is not:

I don't see how you could have expected anything else. What a fellow you are! In a few months, you experience more than others in many years. You weather all dangers. You are a greenhorn, and yet a match for the most seasoned men. You overturn all those cruel laws of the West because you always respect the human being in your adversary. And then you gape with amazement when everybody talks about you.<sup>65</sup>

The passage drips with nationalistic overtones. Germany's rise to power in Europe was meteoric; however, it was not really shocking. Germany had the resources and industrial wealth to challenge any other European power. It was simply a matter of tapping existing potential, which it did. German unification took place at the beginning of a period of rapid industrial growth. Though

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"Greenhorn" in spite of Old Shatterhand's obvious competence. Old Shatterhand, in spite of annoyance at being called a Greenhorn, allows Sam to teach him things like the reasons for killing smaller buffalo for meat and how mustang herds follow in the path of buffalos. May, *Winnetou*, 43–45.

64. May, *Winnetou*, 414; In Coleman's book *Here Lies Hugh Glass* he discusses the powerful image of the Grizzly Bear in 19th-century America as the embodiment of American identity. Grizzlies are not found in Germany and, like Buffaloes and wild herds of Mustangs, were certainly fascinating and foreign to European audiences. Old Shatterhand's defeat of all three unique symbols of the American wilderness is telling in light of Coleman's work. Old Shatterhand symbolically conquers America as he conquers its fittingly powerful symbol, the white bear, the Grizzly. Jon T. Coleman, *Here Lies Hugh Glass: A Mountain Man, a Bear, and the Rise of the American Nation* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).

65. May, *Winnetou*, 414.

industrialization in German-speaking Europe occurred much later than it did in England and France, Germany's fast-paced industrialization during the last third of the 1800s transformed the region into one of the world's major industrial powerhouses by the close of the century.<sup>66</sup> May's novels were written in the context of Germany's burgeoning industrial sector.

## Surpassing Expectations: Old Shatterhand and German Identity

May's protagonist repeatedly conceals his true identity as a famous man of the West and undergoes the same process of surpassing the expectations of those around him after already achieving fame and status in the West. This occurs in *Winnetou II* when he conceals his identity from Old Death, a famous German-American man of the West, and in *Winnetou III* when he meets Sharpeye, who surprisingly is not a German. These "surpassing expectations" stories, found in all three installments of the *Winnetou* series, illustrate the belief that Germans, and by association Germany, are capable of overcoming prejudices against lack of experience and appearances. Looks are not everything in the West, and for meteoric Germany, they certainly were not either.

May abandoned his implied glorification of Germany in exchange for an unconcealed connection between the German identity and Old Shatterhand in *Winnetou III*. The third installment begins with yet another identity episode, this time with a quintessential American character named Sharpeye who is condescendingly biased against Germans. While on a train ride going West, Sharpeye becomes intrigued and amused by his well-dressed riding companion—Old Shatterhand who identifies himself as a writer—after he learns of his intent to go to the "most dangerous part of the Rocky Mountains," the Tetons, "by himself."<sup>67</sup> After learning that Old Shatterhand does not even have a horse and intends to use his lasso to capture a wild Mustang, Sharpeye "could no longer contain himself and burst out laughing." Derisively, he calls Old Shatterhand a "Sunday hunter" and says, "Everything about you is so nice and clean. Just look at a trapper and compare. Your riding boots are new and shiny. . . . Your hat cost at least twelve dollars, and your knife and revolver

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66. Martin Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany: 1800 to the Present* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 38.

67. May, *Winnetou*, 579.

probably never did anyone any harm.”<sup>68</sup> Then May plays his most nationalist card and has Sharpeye ask, “You aren’t German by any chance?”<sup>69</sup> Sharpeye, the only famous Western man who is not a German or German-American in the sequence, is used to show an anti-German bias that foreigners harbor. He thinks Germans look “nice and clean,” but are incapable of surviving in the big, bad world of the American West. Dismissing to Old Shatterhand’s claim to have won a prize for shooting once, Sharpeye says, “Well, well. So you shot at a wooden bird and got a prize for it. There’s the Germans for you. . . . Sir, I really urge you, get back [to Germany] as quickly as you can so you won’t come to harm.”<sup>70</sup> Sharpeye is even skeptical about Old Shatterhand’s German identity by saying he is “supposed to be German.” The story overtly associates the low expectations of people when they meet Old Shatterhand with non-Germans’ negative preconceptions of Germans. Naturally, Old Shatterhand rapidly invalidates Sharpeye’s biases within the next couple of pages when he accurately reads complicated tracks and shoots a bird from so high in the sky that “not even Old Firehand could.”<sup>71</sup>

Old Shatterhand’s “surpassing expectations” experience with Sharpeye provides a powerful symbolic representation of the young, capable, unified German nation-state, or of Germans as a broad national category, deflating biased external opinions about their inexperience and maladroitness. A united German *Reich* had not, after all, even existed when Karl May was born. Unlike the French and English who had amassed domestic and imperial experience over centuries as unified states, Germany was a new player in European and imperial politics. Yet, just like Old Shatterhand, they would prove to be a powerful force to reckon with.

The surpassing expectations episodes are, however, not limited to Old Shatterhand’s contact with non-Germans. This fact allows Old Shatterhand’s identity to function as a dual symbol. On the one hand Old Shatterhand seems to obviously represent the entire German *Volk* (people) or nation. Yet in other scenarios, Old Shatterhand appears to represent an identity within an inter-German landscape as he interacts with other German characters like Old Firehand. Old Shatterhand and Old Firehand’s relationship parallels and seems to represent the gradual awakening of an interregional German national identity.

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68. May, *Winnetou*, 580.

69. May, *Winnetou*, 580.

70. May, *Winnetou*, 580.

71. May, *Winnetou*, 583–588.

In spite of nationalists' faith in an ancient, primordial united national identity, the historical heritage and precedence in Germany was disunity, not harmony. The only inkling of unity was achieved by the ancient Holy Roman Empire: an empire defined by strong regionalism and weak centralism.<sup>72</sup> Even at the apex of the Carolingian Empire, the people living "east of the Rhine had no inkling that they were Germans; . . . A single 'German people' did not exist."<sup>73</sup> Though the empire remained a nominal force for centuries, cultural unification was not a trademark of the empire nor the German "nation."

The German nationalist movement resulted from a widespread, albeit gradual, paradigm shift. Germans—who had for centuries identified themselves in regional terms that emphasized regional differences and downplayed pan-German similarities—began to open their eyes to a cultural unity that linked them to the other people in German-speaking Europe.<sup>74</sup> They discovered, in short, the German nation.

Old Shatterhand is well aware of Old Firehand, the famous man of the West. Both German immigrants are lionized around campfires in the West. The characters are remarkably similar. Both are beloved friends of Winnetou. Both are Germans who have made their way to the Wild West. Both are skilled men who have mastered the secrets of the frontier. Finally, both do not recognize these similarities and obvious reasons for friendship when they meet. They do not see each other as they really are.

Old Shatterhand and Old Firehand meet in the dark of the night while each is spying on a group of Ponca Indians. Old Shatterhand is only able to see Old Firehand's glowing eyes before a silent (they both understand the need to not be heard by the nearby Poncas) scuffle ensues. Both fight admirably and Old Shatterhand, the undefeatable titan, comments that he has never faced a more

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72. Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 21.

73. Schulze, *Germany: A New History*, 15.

74. Schulze, *Germany: A New History*, 15; Louis L. Snyder, *Roots of German Nationalism* (Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press, 1978), 38–40. German regionalism is still quite strong in Germany. The diversity is seen in primarily in culture and language. Though High German (*Hochdeutsch*) is now widely spoken, albeit with varying regional accents, many traditional German dialects are not mutually intelligible. For example, a person who only spoke *Hochdeutsch* (the dialect of Niedersachsen) would not be able to understand someone from Schleswig-Holstein speaking in her regional dialect, *Platt Deutsch*. German nationalists turned a blind eye to strong regional variation, choosing instead to focus on cultural similarities.

formidable foe. Neither is severely injured, and the fight ends in a draw when Old Shatterhand takes advantage of an opportune moment when the two combatants briefly push each other apart to crouch down and conceal himself, using the cover of the pitch-black night. Unable to see one another, both silently retreat away from the site of the scuffle. There are no two characters in the novels so well-suited for friendship, with the possible exception of Winnetou and Old Shatterhand. Yet, their relationship begins with a blind scuffle. The parallels to inter-German conflicts saturate this scenario.<sup>75</sup>

In the minds of German nationalists, there were no groups more suited for friendship than the disparate German states.<sup>76</sup> German nationalism reached a highpoint following the Napoleonic Wars, providing German-speakers with an enemy against whom they could contrast their culture and recognize regional unity. This is evident in an 1813 poem by Ernst Moritz Arndt called “Des Deutschen Vaterland” (The German Fatherland). In the poem Arndt asks, “Where is the German fatherland?” He then asks if it is Prussia or Saxony, Bavaria or Tyrol. The answer is the same every time “O nein! nein! nein!” The poem continues,

So tell me now at last the land!—  
 As far's the Germans accent rings  
 And hymns to God in heaven sings,—  
 That is the land,—  
 There, brother, is thy fatherland!  
 There is the German's fatherland,  
 Where oaths attest the grasped hand,—  
 Where truth beams from the sparkling eyes,  
 And in the heart love warmly lies;—  
 That is the land,—  
 There, brother, is thy fatherland!

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75. Conflicts between German states were not uncommon prior to unification. For example, in 1866, just years before German unification, the Austro-Prussian War pitted the German states against German states as Prussia and her German allies swiftly defeated Austria and her German allies. Kitchen, *A History of Modern Germany*, 99–100.

76. There was no legitimate historical precedence for German unification. In fact, “It is more correct to refer to the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘Germanies’ rather than German.” The nationalist movement dramatically changed that as German nationalism became the “cement” of the states’ unification. Germans, recognizing cultural similarities as well as common interests, “came to regard their special culture and way of life as equal to or superior to those of other peoples.” Snyder, *Roots of German Nationalism*, 39–40, 55–56.

That is the German's fatherland,  
 Where wrath pursues the foreign band,—  
 Where every Frank is held a foe,  
 And Germans all as brothers glow;—  
 That is the Land,—  
 All Germany's thy fatherland!<sup>77</sup>

In the nationalists' minds an elemental identity unified the German nation. The regionalism that defined their current state in the early nineteenth century was not the natural state of Germany, because values like virtue, love, German, and enmity with the French united them as one *Volk* (nation). The Napoleonic wars opened Germans' eyes to their inherent unity and friendship. Romantic German nationalists reveled in what they saw as a past glory and unity that had been forgotten or lost. The Grimm brothers' work focused on linguistic and cultural unity and facilitated the discovery of the German *Volk* tied to the soil and culture of the fatherland.<sup>78</sup> Germans had simply been blinded to their inherent national unity. Nationalism opened their eyes.

On the morning following their blind scuffle, Old Shatterhand and Old Firehand meet within the safe confines of a union fort (Germany was unified on military terms under the leadership of Bismarck). Old Shatterhand notices his knife in Old Firehand's belt and puts two and two together, realizing that Firehand was the one who attacked him on the previous night. The men quickly forgive one another and unite. Winnetou, who is just outside the fort, is soon brought into the mix as well.<sup>79</sup> The unstoppable dream team of the West is then created to fight back the encroaching Poncas.

The parallels between the unification of the German sharpshooters and the unification of the German nation states seems too obvious to have not been noticed by German readers. At a bare minimum the audience must have felt pride in the power occasioned by the unification of German characters in the book.

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77. Ernst Moritz Arndt, "The German Fatherland," in *The Poets and Poetry of Europe*, with introductions and biographical notes by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1845), 322–33.

78. Snyder, *Roots of German Nationalism*, 36–39.

79. Karl May, *Winnetou: zweiter Band* (Wien: Tosa Verlag, 1963), 274–275.

## Why *Amerika*? The Enduring Popularity of Karl May

There is no doubt that May's *Winnetou* had a large impact on Germans' perceptions of America and its West. Though it is difficult to measure the impact of a text on a society, *Winnetou's* enduring popularity testifies that the book sequence struck, and continues to strike, a chord with German audiences. The publication of May's novels with their nationalist undertone in the decades following the German unification is arguably one reason for their enduring popularity; they spoke to Germans' newly achieved national consciousness.

In many ways, Karl May was an unlikely purveyor of information about the American West in Germany. After all, the closest he ever got to the real Wild West was when he traveled to Niagara Falls following the publication of his novels in 1908.<sup>80</sup> In spite of May's lack of personal experience, he became one of Germany's foremost promoters of the romantic Wild West, Native Americans, and the German nation. May and his beloved characters have become icons of the German virtues of strength and loyalty. May's books are still read and several annual play productions, put on in the great outdoors, just like the performance of the *Ave Maria* that *Winnetou* requested shortly before his death, still attract enthusiastic May fans.<sup>81</sup> Whether or not May's noble savage is really buried in the Tetons with, or perhaps now without, his *Silberbüchse*, the idea of *Winnetou* is alive and well in Germany, and as long as May's characters continue to attract German fans, Germany will continue to feel a deep connection to the American West.

Why America? Perhaps the simplest answer to the palpable physical and intellectual pull that America exercised on Germany during the 19<sup>th</sup> century

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80. Heermann, *Der Mann, der Old Shatterhand war*, 333–336

81. *Winnetou* is deeply moved at the outdoor singing of *Ave Maria* by a group of German settlers near the Tetons. He is so moved that he agrees to share his guarded secrets about valuable minerals in that region with the settlers if they will agree to sing the song for him again. They agree to do so; however, when they begin to sing the song the second time, they are no longer outside. *Winnetou* quickly stops them and says, "It doesn't sound good inside the house. *Winnetou* wants to hear it from the mountain." The settlers agree: "He is right . . . this song must be sung under the open sky. Let's go outside." The scenario is what ultimately allows *Winnetou* to embrace Christianity. His conversion comes is deeply tied with and occurs within nature: the sanctuary of Native Americans and the Germanic tribes. Tellingly, the Germans agree that some things are too sacred for civilization. Nature is the Native American and German temple. May, *Winnetou*, 613.

was that America was not contemporary Europe. The American West provided rich, to the point of foreign, agricultural opportunities, as seen in the “America Letters.” The American West also provided, at least in an imaginary sense, a glimpse into Germany’s past. The noble savage was something like a Germanic tribesman, and the Wild West allowed Germans to discover their past in what seemed to be an unadulterated way.<sup>82</sup> Karl May, did not create the German fascination with the West; he simply described, created, and convinced Germans of his own version of the West. His *Amerika* resonated so deeply with Germans that it would come to define the West, and by association Germany’s “America,” for generations to come.

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*Seth McGinnis Cannon, a history major from Provo, Utah, is the son of Brian and AnnaLea Cannon. He served an LDS mission in Berlin, Germany, where he developed a great love for the German people and culture. Seth's first exposure to Karl May came in high school when his German teacher, Stephen Van Orden, lectured about him. Seth is the recipient of the Fred R. Gowans Award in 19th C. Western US History and presented his research about Karl May at Phi Alpha Theta's 2016 Utah regional conference . He will continue his research this summer in Germany. He would like to thank his family and friends, especially his father, Brian, for their invaluable help and support.*

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82. It is fitting that the terms for Germanic social structures, clans and tribes, mirror those for Native American societies identically.

# The Economy

## The Heart of the Brazilian *Quilombo*

Benjamin Passey

OVER CENTURIES OF SLAVERY IN BRAZIL, THOUSANDS ESCAPED enslavement in search of freedom and a new life. Fugitive slaves seldom survived more than a few days on the run before they were captured and returned to their masters. Those who avoided capture made their way to one of the many fugitive slave settlements called *quilombos*, hidden throughout the Brazilian countryside.

Historians have written countless books spanning the spectrum of Brazilian slavery from daily plantation life to the acquisition of natives in Africa. The topic of *quilombos* has only become an area of interest in recent decades. The specific study of economic activities in these *quilombos* is one not yet widely touched by the academic community. Mentions of economic activity are made in several texts on the subject of runaway slave communities and slave resistance by both Brazilian and non-Brazilian authors. Flavio Dos Santos Gomes, foremost Brazilian scholar on the topic of *quilombos* and slave resistance, has written a number of detailed books including *Liberdade por um fio: história dos quilombos no Brasil* and *A hidra e os pântanos: mocambos, quilombos e comunidades de fugitivos no Brasil (séculos XVII–XIX)*. Non-Brazilian scholars Glenn Alan Cheney and Stuart Schwartz have also contributed extensively to the topic, most notably in *Quilombos dos Palmares* by Cheney and *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery* by Schwartz. Although these are among the chief historians who discuss the economies of *quilombos*, they dedicate only

paragraphs or at best a page to the subject. The topic of economies in Brazilian slave settlements remains largely untouched and unexplored.

Historians estimate that between eight and ten major *quilombos* existed in colonial Brazil (major being defined as a population of one thousand). Though few communities had large populations, hundreds of smaller runaway communities existed in both the interior and exterior of Brazil with the heaviest concentrations in the states of Bahia, Rio, Paraíba, Maranhão, Minas Gerais, and Pernambuco. Typically *quilombos*, even those boasting large populations, thrived for only a few years before being destroyed by invading expeditionary forces. These invading groups, comprised of enraged slave masters, contracted foreign mercenaries and bands of government police and soldiers, worked together to destroy threats to the Portuguese plantation structure that drove colonial Brazil. Some *quilombos* withstood the combined might of the Portuguese crown and Brazilian Plantonistas. The most famous of these was Palmares. This colossus of a community boasted an estimated population of over twenty thousand and survived, on average, one hostile incursion every fifteen months for nearly a century.<sup>1</sup> Eventually, each of the major *quilombos* as well as many lesser colonies were destroyed, resulting in death or re-enslavement for their inhabitants. Ironically, the expeditionary forces that decimated the free slave societies are now the best source of information on the incredible legacy of Brazilian *quilombos*. It is with these documents that I will attempt to broaden the historical understanding of economic activities of Brazilian slave communities.

Historically, *quilombos* have been perceived as symbols of the crime and destruction wrought by rogue slaves. One observer noted: "This people have the custom of fleeing to the woods and joining in hideouts where they live by attacks on settlers, stealing livestock and ruining crops and cane fields."<sup>2</sup> While there is an element of truth to such claims, in reality, these settlements existed with political hierarchies, the rule of law, and established economies. Even though leadership and law were vital to the existence and preservation of such communities, the economy was the heart of the *quilombos*. *Quilombo* economies were based on production, commerce and plunder.

Agriculture played a crucial role in the development and expansion of economies in many slave communities. The crops grown by the inhabitants of these

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1. Richard Price, *Maroon societies: rebel slave communities in the Americas* (JHU Press, 1996), 172.

2. Stuart B. Schwartz, "Rethinking Palmares: Slave resistance in Colonial Brazil," in Stuart B. Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 105.

settlements varied based on geographic location. The settlement Buraco de Tatu or “Armadillo hole,” a relatively small settlement located in Itapúa, just North of Salvador, contained a simple trellis and a small number of gardens devoted to cultivation.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to the relative simplicity of agricultural pursuits in Buraco de Tatu, the string of settlements referred to collectively as Palmares, in the coastal regions of Pernambuco and Alagoas, boasted an extensive and diverse agrarian system utilizing advanced irrigation techniques.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the abundant fishing and hunting made possible by Palmares’ proximity to mountains, forests, and the ocean, the Palmaristas (inhabitants of Palmares), developed an economy based on agriculture, growing a variety of crops including beans, potatoes, manioc, maize, and vegetables.<sup>5</sup>

Production in *quilombos* was not limited to agriculture, however. The economies of slave settlements were nearly as diverse as that of the official Portuguese colonial settlements. The variety of production stemmed from the *mélange* of community inhabitants, comprised of Brazilian indigenous individuals, Creoles, and African slaves. In Africa, prior to enslavement, the occupants of communities had been farmers, artisans, blacksmiths, woodworkers, and all manner of other specializations. Free from the limitations imposed by the bonds of slavery and allowed to practice their specializations once more, economy diversity flourished. Farmers tended crops and livestock, potters made ceramics, and weavers produced textiles. Miners scoured the countryside searching out hematite, which the blacksmiths smelted and forged into steel, hammering it into tools and weapons.<sup>6</sup> The large-scale economy of many *quilombos* allowed for expansion and the constant admittance of newcomers to the population. With each new wave of escaped slaves, the pool of expertise and specialization broadened, bringing an increased level of variety and productivity to the economy.

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3. “Planta mostra e organização do quilombo no Buraco do Tatu,” in *Liberdade por um fio: história dos quilombos no Brasil*, João José Reis and Flávio dos Santos Gomes (São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1996), 591.

4. *Diário da Viagem do Capitão João Blaer aos Palmares em 1645*, Jurgens Rejmbach, translated into Portuguese by Alfredo de Carvalho in *O Quilombo Dos Palmares*, Edison Carneiro (Sao Paulo, Editora Nacional, v.302, 1988), 258.

5. Gaspar Barleus, *História dos feitos recentemente praticados durante oito anos no Brasil*. Belo Horizonte- Itatiaia, 1974; *Flavio dos Santos Gomes, Palmares: escravidão e liberdade no Atlântico Sul* (São Paulo, Contexto, 2005), 74.

6. Glenn Alan Cheney, *Quilombo Dos Palmares: Brazil's Lost Nation of Fugitive Slaves* (New London Librarium, 2014), 40.

Commerce in Brazilian *quilombos* stemmed directly from production. Even with the skill and diversity found within these communities, limitations inherent in geographic location and resources required trade outside of the community. The most valued of these resources, and the most difficult to produce within the *quilombos*, included firearms, munitions, and spices. To obtain what they lacked, the escaped slaves turned to the cities and villages strategically located in close proximity to the *quilombos*. Settlements were established close enough to towns and farms to facilitate easy trade but not readily accessible enough to allow detection or outside infiltration.

Despite the explicit prohibition and illegality of cooperation with fugitive slaves, it was common for slaves, free blacks, mulattos and even whites to trade with *quilombos*. In the settlement Buraco de Tatu, a healthy trade relationship existed between the settlement and a mulatto farmer João Baptista, who supplied them with firewood in exchange for products and goods produced in the community.<sup>7</sup> In areas of the country blessed with rich mineral deposits, like along the banks of the Maracassumé river in the North, *quilombos* mined gold and other precious ores in enough abundance that they supported the entire population through commerce with peddlers and the inhabitants of nearby villages.<sup>8</sup> Farmers, tavern keepers and the inferior class of tradesman were among the most frequent trade partners of fugitive slaves colonies.<sup>9</sup>

While many *quilombos* such as Buraco de Tatu traded on a very small scale, others, especially Palmares, had thriving commercial partnerships with the inhabitants of the surrounding towns and farms. These partnerships were based on the barter of manioc flour, palm wine, and butter along with many other

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7. Certidão da sentença condenatoria dos negros do quilombo Buraco de Tatu (12 jan 1764). Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Bahia pap. avul. n. 6456. in *Rethinking Palmares*, Schwarz, 236.

8. *Relatorio do Presidente da Provincia do Maranhão o Douter Eduardo Olimpio Machado, na abertura da Assembleia Legislativa Provincial, no dia 1 de Novembro de 1853* (Maranhão 1853), 7–8 in Robert Edgar Conrad, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Brazilian Slavery* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 387.

9. *British and Foreign state papers*, Vol. XLIV (1853–1854), pp. 1241–1243; *Class B. Correspondences with British Ministers and Agents in Foreign Countries and with Foreign Ministers in England, Relating to the Slave trade*. From April 1, 1855, to March 31, 1856 (London, 1856), pp. 234–235 in Robert Edgar Conrad, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Brazilian Slavery*, (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 340.

products in exchange for guns, powder, salt and tools.<sup>10</sup> Traders in these rural areas enjoyed relative openness and ease. On the contrary, trade with cities was conducted with a note of caution and secrecy, as described by a contemporary journalist: “Mainly black men and women enter the city streets at night to supply them [*quilombos*] with gunpowder, shot, and other kinds of equipment needed for their defense; having contracts with the city’s blacks, and those in the countryside, and even with some whites who feared they would be murdered in their homes.”<sup>11</sup>

Eventually, the illicit commerce between settlements and citizens grew extensive enough to attract the attention of both domestic and foreign leaders. In a correspondence between Francisco Xavier Pinto Lima, President of Rio de Janeiro and his Police Chief Luíz e Hollanda Cavalcanti de Albuquerque, the leaders discussed the illegal activities taking place in and around the city of Rio de Janeiro.<sup>12</sup> British agents who were covertly observing the Brazilian slave trade in the states of Maranhão, Pará, and Amazonas also reported on the bustling underground trade in these areas.<sup>13</sup> Despite the recognition that trade was taking place, both accounts describe the fugitives with a tone of inferiority and simplicity: they fail to credit the fugitives as anything more than runaway animals who happened upon a source of food and a friend with whom to share it.

Traditionally, *quilombos* were considered by Portuguese settlers to be parasitical, feeding off of the inhabitants of the surrounding area, regularly raiding, stealing, and killing to support the community. Although exaggerated, the colonists’ perception is not entirely inaccurate. In many settlements some form of thievery took place, differing in severity from the liberation of vegetables from farmers to planned highway robbery. In *quilombos* where production was limited, raids were far more prevalent as a means of supplementing the

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10. Flavio dos Santos Gomes, *Palmares: escravidão e liberdade no Atlântico Sul* (São Paulo, Contexto, 2005), 77.

11. Pedro Tomas Pedreira, *Os quilombos brasileiros* (Salvador Editora Mensageiro da Fé, 1973), 129–131 in Conrad, *Children of God’s Fire*, 380

12. *Relatório apresentado ao Illm. E Exm. Sr. Conshelheiro Fransico Xavier Pinto Lima, Presidente do Rio de Janeiro, pelo Chefe de Policia, Dr. Luiz e Hollanda Cavalcanti de Albuquerque*, in *Relatório do Rio de Janeiro apresentado no dia 22 de Outubro de 1876*, (Rio de Janeiro, 1876) in Conrad 386.

13. British and Foreign state papers, Vol. XLIV (1853–1854), pp. 1241–1243; Class B. Correspondences with British Ministers and Agents in Foreign Countries and with Foreign Ministers in England, Relating to the Slave trade. From April 1, 1855, to March 31, 1856 (London, 1856), pp. 234–235 in Conrad 340.

community's output. In many settlements, the inhabitants promised protection to nearby farms and villages in exchange for foodstuffs, a common practice among the African tribes from which many inhabitants of the *quilombos* originated. Villages and farms that refused to deal willingly with *quilombos* placed themselves in a far worse condition than those that chose to accept the offer of protection. Describing the consequences of failing to cooperate one individual wrote, "[The fugitives] emerge from the forests to commit robberies and damage on the plantations, attacking the homes of the inhabitants of those places, stealing their cattle and other stock."<sup>14</sup>

Even communities as large as Palmares, with a diverse and bustling economy, healthy production and active trade practices, still resorted to plunder occasionally. When defensive supplies, namely firearms and powder, were in short supply or could not be obtained through trade, *palmaristas* raided mills and plantations. They took gold, silver, and anything else they considered to be of value. They passed this stolen currency to their contacts in cities, who would exchange the valuables for arms, ammunition and other manufactured goods that were not obtainable otherwise.<sup>15</sup>

They also captured people. Settlements were in constant need of women and additional men to work in the fields and various other areas of production. Interestingly, the majority of agricultural workers in *quilombos* were slaves. These slaves were captured in *razzias*, or raids, for the express purpose of cultivation. This practice is confirmed by Nieuhof, who wrote, "the main business of palmaristas is to rob the Portuguese of their slaves, who remain in slavery among them."<sup>16</sup> Though it may appear counterintuitive and hypocritical for runaway slaves to capture and retain in slavery fellow Creole and African slaves, the practice of slavery was common in the regions of Africa from which the majority of Brazilian slaves came. The commonality of African slave ownership is clearly displayed in the account of Mohammad Gardo Baquaqua, a slave who was captured by his enemies in the African interior, changing hands from one African slaver to the next until eventually becoming the property of Portuguese

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14. Pedro Tomas Pedreira, *Os quilombos brasileiros* (Salvador: Editora Meseageiro da Fe, 1973)

15. R.K. Kent, "Palmares: An African State in Brazil," *The Journal of African History* 6 (Cambridge University Press, 1965), 175 in Cheney, *Quilombo Dos Palmares: Brazil's Lost Nation of Fugitive Slaves*, 41.

16. Richard Price, *Maroon societies: rebel slave communities in the Americas* (JHU Press, 1996), 180.

slavers who transported him to Brazil.<sup>17</sup> However, masters within the *quilombos* did not employ the same harsh practices found on typical Portuguese plantations. *Quilombo* slaves received sufficient food, shelter and freedoms within the confines of the community. In addition, slaves were given opportunities to earn their freedom by capturing a substitute slave in a raid.

The goal of most *razzias* was to capture women. A great disparity existed between the male and female population of slaves in Brazil which only worsened in *quilombos* as fewer female slaves had the opportunity to escape. This left a constant desire to increase the number of females in communities. As towns and farms were not easily coaxed into trading wives and daughters in exchange for manioc flour and palm wine, the fugitives were forced to raid and steal to increase their ranks. The *razzias* did not discriminate on the basis of race, taking black slaves, mulattos, and whites. During the period in which *quilombos* were most powerful, a fictitious belief circulated among common Portuguese settlers that runaway slaves slaughtered men in their raids, carrying away their wives and daughters for the purpose of defilement. Although isolated incidents of rape and abuse undoubtedly occurred, as a whole, these stories were untrue. More likely the stories were spread as a form of propaganda to encourage fear and hatred towards the runaways. Although white women were frequently victims of raids, they were seldom held prisoners in *quilombos*, because slave leaders knew their extended presence would inevitably provoke raids and rescue parties. Instead they were ransomed back to their families unharmed in exchange for money or supplies.<sup>18</sup>

*Quilombos* were glimmers of hope for slave across Brazil. They provided hope for a better life and a chance at freedom for those individuals brave enough to flee the confines of the plantation life. The inhabitants of *quilombos* possessed not only a drive for freedom, but the skills and vision necessary to create fully-functioning economies, on a scale believed to be impossible for mere slaves. Contrary to historical tradition, they were far more than secluded communities of plundering slaves, preying on the inhabitants of the surrounding area. They were societies possessing the same tenets of civilization as the colonial state: political systems, rule of law, and economic activities. The economies

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17. Samuel Moore, *Biography of Mahommah G. Baquaqua, A Native of Zoogoo, in the interior of Africa* (Detroit, Geo. E. Pomeroy & Co., 1854), 34–36 in Conrad 23–26.

18. R.K. Kent, "Palmares: An African State in Brazil," *The Journal of African History* 6 (Cambridge University Press, 1965), 175 in Cheney, *Quilombo Dos Palmares: Brazil's Lost Nation of Fugitive Slaves* (New London Librarium, 2014), 170.

of *quilombos* were especially remarkable. Based on production, commerce and plunder, they sustained settlements and allowed for future growth.

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*Benjamin Passey is a Junior studying History and International Diplomacy and Strategy. He plans to attend law school after graduating from BYU.*

# Blacks Depicted as a Symbol of European Power Through the Ages

Lydia Breksa

ONLY TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO, JAPANESE MARKETING EXPERTS explained that viewers of their advertisements “respond favorably to blacks because they seem more full of energy than whites,” and “appear to have a wild side that seems beyond normal human strength.”<sup>1</sup> In 1988 Japan, this Western-inspired image was not uncommon.<sup>2</sup> Such depictions of blacks did not come from thin air. Blacks have been portrayed in European art in various ways throughout history; however, there are recurring themes that persist even today. Such portrayals not only represent society’s perceptions but also strengthen them. As such, a study of how European art depicted blacks throughout time is an essential step to better understand and address racism today. The juxtaposition of the blacks depicted in two pieces of artwork, Cris-tóvão de Morais’s Renaissance Era *Portrait of Juana de Austria with her Black Slave Girl* and Ludwig Hohlwein’s advertisement for Kaloderma Shaving Soap

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1. John Greenwald and Kumiko Makihara, “Prejudice and Black Sambo,” *Time* 132, no. 7 (August 1988): 25–26, accessed December 16, 2015, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=39e2bdod-6a8a-46a4-8da3-e2d9c7aedeff%40sessionmgr4004&vid=0&hid=4204&bddata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbnGlzZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=aph&AN=57896053>.

2. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on black. Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 131.

of 1924, display a common theme. In these two pieces, Europeans depict blacks as symbols of European power.

The theme of blacks in European art has been a vibrant field for study as historians have sought to explain the roots of, and to battle against, racism and stereotyping. During the 1960s in segregated America, one of the most important and extensive works “The Image of the Black in Western Art” was launched.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the 1970s and 1990s, historians Jan N. Pieterse and Peter Mark have used depictions of blacks to argue that race is a social construct and that prejudice against blacks did not begin until the Renaissance and the increasing activity of the slave trade. The last decade has seen flurry of academic interest in the subject.<sup>4</sup> However these works tend to look at how blacks were portrayed in European art chronologically, neglecting to compare works from different eras. By analyzing the Portrait of Juana and the Kaloderma ad together, one sees a connection of common themes in these two time periods. Although from different eras and locations within Europe, Cristóvão de Morais’s *Portrait of Juana de Austria with her Black Slave Girl* (1553) and Ludwig Hohlwein’s Kaloderma Shaving Soap advertisement (1924) are comparable because they used symbols recognizable to their audience to convey a message of European power. An examination of these two pieces of art reveals much about how blacks were portrayed in the artworks’ respective time periods.

## Portrait of Juana de Austria

In European art during the 1500s, blacks were portrayed in various ways—most of which was degrading. Blacks were typically portrayed as inferior to Europeans, in nature or occupation. *Chafariz d’el-Rei in the Afama District, Lisbon*, painted sometime between 1560–1580 by an anonymous artist, is a great

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3. These works have focused on multiple themes and have analyzed the depiction of Africans. However, the works don’t extend into recent decades

4. Kate Lowe, Annmarie Jordan, and Paul Kaplan have contributed insightful works helping to understand the contributions of Africans during the Renaissance, the historical context behind paintings, and the black Magi. Museums as well have sought to shed light on this as CORT museum called it, “relatively unexplored field” through CORT’s exhibit, *Black is Beautiful* in 2008 and the Princeton University Art Museum’s exhibit, *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe* in 2013.

example of the many ways Europeans viewed blacks.<sup>5</sup> The artist paints a snapshot of a busy Lisbon waterfront in the late sixteenth-century. In this painting blacks are portrayed in various ways within two groups: slaves and freemen. There are working and dancing blacks. There is also one black man who is drunk, another being carried away by two Europeans in matching attire, and one black portrayed as a noble, riding a horse, wearing clothing like the European nobles around him. Besides the image of the lone noble, these depictions of blacks are degrading, and yet represent how blacks were depicted in European art.

Lisbon was home to the highest percentage of blacks in Europe at the time, yet many Africans were not slaves.<sup>6</sup> Despite these demographics, Africans were typically depicted as slaves, as seen in this painting.<sup>7</sup>

Portrayals undermining their intellectual ability pointed to their supposed lack of any intellectual ability or moral values. Europeans painted blacks as lacking self-control in drunkenness, lawlessness (as seen in this painting with a drunk black and another being arrested), and sexual promiscuity.<sup>8</sup> Another way was in accenting their physical prowess and musical and dancing abilities. Blacks were depicted as dancers, musicians (most commonly playing trumpets and drums), and as swimming instructors. They were also depicted in sword-play, horsemanship, the military, and in wrestling.<sup>9</sup> Such portrayals distanced the African from European civilization. Though physical prowess and musical ability were treasured in Europe, letters and more skilled occupations represented civilization. Consequently, these depictions degraded blacks.

While there are some pieces of art that portray blacks as noble, these depictions either highlight the differences between the blacks and Europeans or show how European the portrayed black is. The *Adoration of the Magi* (about 1490–1510) by Hieronymus Bosch is a classic example of the former. Although

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5. Annemarie Jordan, "Images of Empire: Slaves in the Lisbon Household and Court of Catherine of Austria," in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, ed. T. F. Earle and K.J.P. Lowe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 159.

6. Robin Cembalest, "From Kongo to Othello to Tango to Museum Shows," *Artnews*, October 25, 2012, accessed December 16, 2015, <http://www.artnews.com/2012/10/25/image-of-africans-in-western-art/>.

7. Kate Lowe, "The stereotyping of black Africans in Renaissance Europe," *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, ed. T. F. Earle and K.J.P. Lowe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 20–21.

8. Lowe, 28–29.

9. Lowe, 34–35.

representing one of the Magi that visited Christ, the African portrayed wears unique clothing in comparison to the other individuals in the painting. Personal adornment was considered non-European and was used as an indicator to differ Africans from Europeans. Clothing in Europe during the 1500s was also extremely important to the Europeans and was used as an indicator of one's socioeconomic position.<sup>10</sup> *Portrait of a Moor* (1525–30) by Jan Mostaert is a great example of the latter. The black subject takes center stage in the portrait, wears European clothing, rests a gloved hand gently on a sword, and looks thoughtfully in the distance. Such a depiction seeks to ennoble the subject by portraying him not as an African, but as an enlightened and powerful black European; he wears European clothes, his thoughtful gaze granting him an air of intellectual ability and self-control. However, most blacks depicted as European, like the Moor in Mostaert's portrait, were of European descent. Despite works of art depicting ennobled blacks, most European art portraying blacks was degrading. The majority of art came from the courts; it was meant, as historian Kate Lowe indicates, to "show off the status of their masters."<sup>11</sup>

Those with means often were patrons of artwork depicting their black servants and slaves well dressed.<sup>12</sup> Such illustration highlighted the socioeconomic status of the patron in three ways. First, the patron had means to be served by another. Second, the patron had means to be served by a black, someone from an exotic land rather than a common servant. Third, as mentioned, clothing was used to represent socioeconomic status. Depicting the black as well-dressed further elevated the European being served because the European not only had the means to be served by an individual, but could provide well for their servant or slave. Titian's work of art, *Portrait of Laura di Dianti* of 1523 is the first known use of the black page in portraits to represent European power. By the 1550s, when Cristóvão de Morais painted *Portrait of Juana de Austria*, this practice to use blacks as a symbol of European power was becoming more prevalent.

Art in the 1500s promoted the legitimacy of the ruling classes' force and role. Catherine of Austria, patron of *Portrait of Juana de Austria with her Black Slave Girl* (1552–53), dressed her slaves well, gave elaborate and exotic gifts to family, ladies, and favorites, and commissioned artwork all in an effort to form her royal image as a powerful ruler of an empire.<sup>13</sup> This painting was com-

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10. Lowe, 21–22

11. Lowe, 23–24.

12. Lowe, 23–24.

13. Jordan, 157–179.

missioned for the sole purpose of, “commemorat[ing] the dynastic union of the Avis and Habsburg royal houses.”<sup>14</sup> As such, an image conveying power was needed; Catherine of Austria, known to carefully construct her own image through art, played a heavy role in dictating how the princess, Juana, should be represented.<sup>15</sup> This artwork was a sixteenth century royal advertisement that sought to sell the image of Juana and her family as rulers.

The painting, by Cristóvão de Morais of the future queen of Portugal is skillfully done. It comprises the many ideologies and mechanisms of its time to advertise that Juana is a powerful ruler of an empire. The black portrayed in this picture is an essential part of this message. Morais depicts Juana standing in a black dress holding an oriental fan in her left hand, and placing her right hand on the head of a young, well-dressed black page. Juana stares impassively at the viewer as the young page looks up at Juana. The backdrop is blank besides a cut off pillar on the right hand side.

Morais painted Juana with an idealized and Europeanized form of beauty that was common during the 1500s. All parts of her body are in harmonious proportion and “pure shining whiteness.”<sup>16</sup> Juana’s black dress and dark background accentuate her fairness, as does the African page. Presenting Juana in the ideal form of beauty highlights her aristocratic rank. Second, in form with Renaissance conventions, Morais used objects as symbols to represent the ideas and message of power. In Juana’s left hand she holds an oriental fan from Japan. Following 1543, when a storm blew Portuguese traders to Tanegashima, Japan, a small island off of Kyushu, a lucrative trade with Japan was quickly established. This fan represents the eastern part of Juana’s empire. Juana, in her ideal beauty and stately posture, represents the European part of the empire. The column in the back encapsulates Portugal rule in Europe and beyond, and alludes to the twin columns of Hercules used by her father to represent his empire going beyond the ancient (European) world.<sup>17</sup>

Outside of the color contrasting that adds to the sense of aristocratic rank, the way Morais depicted the relation further emphasizes the use of the black in art as a symbol of power. Morais sketches the black as a child, a page who is

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14. Jordan, 178.

15. Jordan, 178.

16. Anu Korhonen, “Washing the Ethiopian White; Conceptualizing Black Skin in Renaissance England,” in *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, ed. T. F. Earle and K.J.P. Lowe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 97.

17. Jordan, 178.

well-dressed.<sup>18</sup> There are two parts to this. First, the fact that the page is well dressed is significant. It was not uncommon for royalty or those with means to dress their black servants and slaves well as a further sign of the European's connection with the exotic and empire. Second, as in any adult-child relationship, there is a hierarchy in which the child must obey the adult because the adult is in a position of authority and wisdom. Adding to this, the page is looking up to Juana while Juana regally looks at the viewer. Going beyond the adult-child relationship, Morais paints Juana's hand lightly resting on the page's head. Along with furthering the contrast between white and black, this posture alludes to Juana's empire. Juana holds the Japanese fan in her left hand; she holds the page in her right. This shows that Juana is the future queen of a European empire, for in her left hand she possesses the east and in her right hand, Africa. As a symbol of European power, the depiction of the black page in Juana de Austria further adds to the message of the power of this future queen, a message desired and crafted by the patron, Catherine of Austria.

## Hohlwein's Kaloderma Shaving Soap Advertisement

During the 1900s, blacks were delineated in degrading ways similar to European art in the 1500s.<sup>19</sup> Blacks were again portrayed as lesser than Europeans through forms representing ignorance, lack of self-control, and through a focus on entertainment, particularly music and dance. *The "Entirely in black"*. *The last representatives of the old French gaiety* in the *La Vie Parisienne* (1927) is a great representative of this. A black woman, topless, and facing away from the viewers, dances, facing an all-black band. The woman is posed in an angular dance position with one leg off the ground. She is underdressed in a society where clothing is still used to represent socioeconomic status and in an odd dance position. Both of these factors separate her from European civilization. Being topless points towards one of the ways blacks were depicted as representing a lack of self-control, being sexually promiscuous. Also, blacks were often painted with large mouths, dehumanizing them. The band is portrayed with big mouths

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18. Jordan, 176.

19. There was also an increase of artwork depicting blacks in Africa. However, I focus on the artwork that depicted blacks in Europe as I did with Renaissance art.

and dumbfounded looks. This, like the artwork in the 1500s, portrays the African as lacking intelligence in realms outside of entertainment.

Looking outside the entertainment world, European art often depicted blacks in servitude to Europeans, which reinforced European power. Such images were exacerbated by the mentalities of the 1900s. Many Europeans felt justified in their interactions with, and their perceptions of blacks. This was largely in part to the philosophy that, as Europeans, they were better and provided service through their interactions with blacks. A governor of French West Africa, in his letter to his civilian administrators in 1908, outlined how and why the civilian administrators were to rule. The letter summarizes this mentality well: "We are in this country precisely in order to change the social order of the people now submitted to our laws...It is our mission to bring civilization, moral and social progress, economic prosperity."<sup>20</sup> Such a mentality is present in European renderings of blacks in their art. Roland Barthes explained the following: "The only reassuring image of the Negro is that of the *boy*, of the savage turned servant."<sup>21</sup> Such depictions of servitude were used to represent European power. As such, Hohlwein's portrayal of a black in Kaloderma Shaving Soap advertisement of 1924 was not uncommon.

Like royal paintings conveying messages of the individual's power, cosmetic advertisements in the 1920s, reflecting the consumer's desire for an imperial past, convey a message of European power. By 1935, a cosmetic advertisement was about every third page in womens' magazines, an increase from 11% of magazine advertisements in 1850 to 48% in 1935.<sup>22</sup> Advertisements in the 1920s faced a challenging task. They had to portray a better future with the preservation of the traditional, while at the same time, as historian Marchand observed, respond "to consumers' desire for fantasy and wish-fulfillment."<sup>23</sup> By the early 1920s references to colonialism was a "staple" of cosmetic advertisement.<sup>24</sup> And, as described by historian Pieterse, "attractive to Europeans and psychologically reassuring, in what back in Europe was time of social insubordination

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20. "The French Practice direct Rule to Enforce Submission," *Reshaping Africa (1875–1961)*, 29.

21. Pieterse, 131.

22. Annelie Ramsbrock, *The Science of Beauty: Culture and Cosmetics in Modern Germany, 1750–1930* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 116–117.

23. Ramsbrock, 117.

24. Frank Biess, Mark Roseman, Hanna Schissler, *Conflict, catastrophe and continuity: essays on modern German history* (NY: Berghahn Books, 2007), 189.

and transformation, was the tight social hierarchy inherent in colonialism.”<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, to present the hope of a better future with the comfort of the past and to appeal to the “psychologically reassuring” or “desire for fantasy and wish-fulfillment,” Ludwig Hohlwein’s Kaloderma Shaving Soap advertisement of 1924 shares the message of Germany’s power. It used the black as a symbol to show Germany’s power as Germany faced humiliating defeat and instability back at home.

Hohlwein’s advertisement uses a black to symbolize European power according to the ideologies of its time. Hohlwein shows a strong European man shaving while looking into a mirror that a black boy holds for the man. The shirtless boy has soft features, wears a red skirt, and looks up at the man. Whereas the outlines of the boy are fuzzy in some parts, the lines outlining the man are pristine. The man wears military-looking tan clothing and a white towel rests on his left arm. His left arm shaves his face, with the right hand holding the skin down at the neck to ensure a close shave. The man is just about to shave the side of his face facing the viewers; the razor is placed against his face, covered with white shaving cream. The background is tan with German lettering about the soap on the top and bottom of the ad.

Like Morais, Hohlwien contrasts the physical appearance of the black and European to further utilize the black as a symbol of power. Europeans attributed *soft* virtues to Africans rather than manly ones.<sup>26</sup> Such soft virtues were kindness, humor, and patience. Hohlwien casts the European man with hard angles, an Aryan nose, and clothing resembling a soldier’s uniform; whereas the African boy has a curved head and back, and round cheeks. This mentality is also reflected in their hair. The man’s hair is smooth, groomed, and sleeked back. The boy’s hair, on the other hand, is soft and curly with the outlines fuzzy and smoothing into the brown background more so than the man’s hair. In essence, Hohlwien depicts a soft, African child in servitude of a strong, regal European man, which embodies the mentality of colonialism.

Hohlwien also places the African boy in servitude. As mentioned earlier, Africans in need of European civilization was one way Europeans perceived Africans. By showing the African as a boy in servitude, the artist is showing the savage in the process of being civilized; the European mission to civilize is being fulfilled, and as such Europe is powerful. Yet, although the man is relying on the boy to hold the mirror for him to shave, the direction of both persons presents

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25. Pieterse, 89.

26. Pieterse, 88–89.

an interesting picture. The African boy is looking at the European man as the European man looks at the mirror and away from the boy. The African needs the European man so that the African can become civilized but the European man does not need the African boy but rather takes upon himself the “burden” of helping the African boy. Such a picture featuring this mentality furthers the image of European power.

## Conclusion

As evidenced by *Portrait of Juana de Austria with her Black Slave Girl* and Kaloderma’s Shaving Soap advertisement of 1924, portrayals of Africans were used as a symbol of European power in European art. Despite changing times, technologies, and ideologies, some of the same mechanisms were used to render such a message. Both Morais and Hohlwein focus on the comparison of the physical stature of the Africans and Europeans. Although conceptions of what was considered regal differed, such conceptions were employed to highlight the superior nature of the European. For example, white complexion was considered part of the idealized form of beauty during the 1500s, and focusing this ideal further illustrated Juana’s aristocratic rank. Hohlwein illustrated the European man with strong and clear cut lines, whereas curved, soft lines sketch the African boy. In a 1920s society where manly or rugged virtues were praised, such a portrayal presented the European as regal.

There are some other commonalities between the two works of art in how they depict the African to convey a message of European power. Morais and Hohlwein portray the African as a child. In both societies, the African is in the power of the adult. Whereas Morais highlights the adult-child hierarchy, Hohlwein’s advertisement alludes to 1920s mythology of the European’s role in civilizing Africans. The child is also in some form of servitude. Although the girl depicted in Morais’ painting is not in any obvious form of service, Juana’s hand rests upon her head and the painting is titled, *Portrait of Juana de Austria with her Black Slave Girl*. The boy in Kaloderma Shaving Soap advertisement holds the mirror for the European man to shave. Servitude to the European adds to the message of European power.

Black servitude reflected Europeans ability not only to subjugate others to their will, but to be a model for the rest of the world to aspire to. In both works of art, the black is looking at the European but the European is looking away. For Juana, such a portrayal implies that her page girl is beneath her and as such

shows her power over her page. Hohlwein's piece evokes the 1920s mentality of "The White Man's Burden," in which the European takes upon himself the duty to civilize Africa. In both cases, although the European is being served, he or she is not in need of service, rather the European is served because he or she is above or because such servitude shows the success of the European civilization mission. In both cases, the rendering of the black is used to portray European power.

This is not the only theme present in those times. In the 1500s and the 1920s the racist misconception that blacks are inherently (and only) good at sports and music can be seen. These conceptions are not new. In artwork of the 1500s blacks' physical prowess and ability of entertainment was featured. During the 1920s, there was a heavy focus placed on entertainment, particularly music and dance. These depictions of blacks did not appear out of thin air but rather reoccurred through time, just as blacks were rendered as a symbol of European power throughout the ages in European art.

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*Lydia Breksa is currently a sophomore double majoring in European Studies and Italian Studies with a Japanese minor. She is from Richmond, California and will be a professor of the time and area frame of the Italian Renaissance. Lydia is fascinated by the mentality of people past and how we can learn of these perceptions through their art.*

# Friction and Fog

## The Chaotic Nature of Defeat for the B.E.F. in the Fall of France

Carson Teuscher

**B**URSTING FROM THE THICK ARDENNES FOREST ON THE MORNING of May 10, 1940, Hitler's Panzer armies pounded across the French countryside. Not only did his armies strike through what Marshal Pétain had deemed the "Impenetrable Ardennes," in doing so German forces bypassed the Maginot Line, France's most formidable defenses.<sup>1</sup> As they poured through the gap, other German armies simultaneously attacked Belgium, sweeping downward through the Low Countries to merge with the primary thrust towards Paris.

By the evening of May 11, 1940, news of a German invasion trickled into Belgium. Led by Brigadier General Staff Officer W.C. Holden, men of the British Expeditionary Force I Corps were oblivious to the strength of the German advance. Holden recorded that despite a general "lack of communication" it was "a fine day."<sup>2</sup> The next day would prove to be anything but fine. On Sunday, May 12, Holden saw mounting panic on the faces of Belgian refugees and soldiers streaming through British lines from the front. As the "bewildered" Belgian soldiers and civilians retreated "happy to get behind our lines," Holden

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1. John Lukacs, *The Eighty-Day Struggle Between Churchill and Hitler* (Connecticut, Yale University Press, 2001), 62.

2. The National Archives (TNA), WO 197/87, "General Notes by BGS for War Diary", 1.

wrote, “the Corps Comd decided to issue an order telling divs to dig violently. One almost felt that flags should be used as A.TK guns, etc!!!”<sup>3</sup>

The order to dig violently and use flagpoles as disguised weaponry foreshadowed a chaotic six weeks for the B.E.F. in France. A little over a week later, the “battle crisis” growing “hourly in intensity” pushed men to the brink.<sup>4</sup> In a regimental retreat to Tournai, R. Gordon Finlayson, Captain of “E” Troop of the 10 Field Regiment Royal Artillery spent an entire night sorting vehicles in a “tremendous” traffic jam. The jam lasted until morning, when Finlayson noted his relief; “It is light and we are still jammed up in road North East of Renaix. How we escaped bombers I don’t know.”<sup>5</sup> Lt. Col. V. Blomfield found himself caught up in the same deteriorating situation when on May 16, I Corps decided to withdraw to the River Escaut that very night. “The troops were very tired” he recorded, “and further withdrawal meant covering a distance of between 20 and 30 miles.”<sup>6</sup> As the British High Command recognized the scope of the B.E.F.’s plight, General Alan Brook remarked, “One’s eyes rest incessantly on terrified and miserable humanity cluttering the lines of communication on which all hope of possible security rest.”<sup>7</sup>

By May 28, 1940 elements of the British Expeditionary Force and the French 1<sup>st</sup> Army were left fighting between a “bottle-neck” through which they would have to “squeeze through if they were to reach the sea.”<sup>8</sup> Amid the chaos of that day, a 44-year-old officer named Miles Belfrage Reid pulled the three pages of his freshly typed war diary from a typewriter as he prepared to send his report to B.E.F. chief of staff Lieutenant-General Pownall.<sup>9</sup>

Reid experienced the capitulation in France from a unique position. As a liaison between the British Expeditionary Force and the First French Army,

3. TNA, WO 197/87, 2–3. Comd = Command, Divs = Division, A.TK = Anti-Tank

4. Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), 54.

5. TNA, WO197/91, 3.

6. TNA, WO 197/87, “1 Corps War Diary, Notes by Lt. Col. V. Blomfield (late G.S.O.2 I Corps), 1 (Appendix A).

7. Alistair Horne, *To Lose A Battle: France 1940* (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), 511.

8. Jaques Benoist-Méchin, *Sixty Days That Shook The West* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1963), 173.

9. Asher Pirt records in his study of GHQ Liaison Officers that Miles Belfrage Reid was born on May 5, 1896. At the age of 44, Reid had already participated as a soldier in World War I, where he received a Military Cross ““for conspicuous gallantry during operations.” See page 102 in Pirt, Asher, *GHQ Liaison Regiment: A Nominal Roll with Short Biographies*, 2011.

he had been assigned to the French 1<sup>st</sup> Army Headquarters.”<sup>10</sup> Reid’s account acknowledged an all-pervasive chaos stemming from the “complete lack of organization in the Army Headquarters.” The chaos had little to do with Hitler’s meteoric push to Paris but was, to Reid, “a problem of a psychological rather than of a military nature.”<sup>11</sup> Though Reid’s duty as a liaison officer was unique, his conclusion about his experience in France was not. From a range of perspectives of several individual participants in the B.E.F.’s withdrawal from France, the experience of defeat hinged on factors rarely attributed to military causes.

These perspectives are critical, considering the myth that has surrounded the B.E.F. in France since the end of World War II. The enduring legacy of the B.E.F. in France has rarely been characterized by defeat, but rather succinctly “summarized in one word—Dunkirk.”<sup>12</sup> In short time, the debacle of the B.E.F.’s grinding retreat through France as witnessed by men like Reid would be overshadowed in the public eye by the “Bloody Marvellous” evacuation at Dunkirk.<sup>13</sup> Rescued by British Navy ships and civilian boats flooding across the Channel, a total of “224,686 soldiers from the B.E.F. plus 141,445 Allied troops—mainly French” were saved as they made it to the UK.<sup>14</sup> Thanks to newspapers and radio networks, intensive propaganda turned into thousands of circulating stories, transforming Dunkirk “into a victory” of triumph over tragedy.<sup>15</sup> Whether or not the evacuation of Dunkirk was a miracle has been well discussed in academic debates.

The fact remains that Dunkirk was the final act of one of the most comprehensive, unexpected, and chaotic defeats in modern history. Time has presented a problem in the portrayal of the B.E.F.’s experience in defeat; the war diaries of

10. TNA, WO 167/5, “May 26th 1940 Preliminary Report—1st Fr. Army,” 23.

11. TNA, WO 167/5, 23.

12. Edward Smalley, *The British Expeditionary Force 1939–40* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1.

13. “Bloody Marvellous” was the title of the *Daily Mirror* shortly following the evacuation of Dunkirk. Robert Cowley, *No End Save Victory: Perspectives on World War II* (New York: Putnam and Sons, 2001), taken from Anthony Bailey’s article “Bloody Marvellous” on page 49. The article recalls feelings in and around Dunkirk on the fiftieth-year anniversary of the evacuation from Dunkirk.

14. Stewart, Geoffrey. 2009. Dunkirk and the Fall of France (Havertown: Pen and Sword, 2009) taken from the *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, *EBSCOhost* (accessed December 7, 2015), found in the chapter entitled “Campaign Chronicle.”

15. Marina MacKay, *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), 182.

participants as well as postwar accounts reveal that the men who fought there never forgot the gut-wrenching trauma of defeat. In the wake of what George Orwell deemed “one of the greatest turning points in English history,” veterans of the battle remembered stories of how as planes swooped overhead, and how men shot themselves from fear.<sup>16</sup> Churchill recalled the “perfect discipline” that “prevailed ashore and afloat” at Dunkirk.<sup>17</sup> Yet fifty years on, another veteran celebrating the fiftieth anniversary in 1990 pulled out an aged army-issue map and said, “To tell you the truth, though, we were lost then. We headed north over the fields—the clogged roads were murder. When we got to the beach, we turned left.”<sup>18</sup> While some remembered deliverance, others remembered derailment.

These differences in memory parallel current historians’ opinions of the experience of the B.E.F. in France. The tendencies of statesmen like Churchill to interpret the British defeat as a fortunate deliverance gave way to critical analyses by historians like Edward Smalley who seek to explain why it happened the way that it did.<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Stewart argued German victory was not inevitable, asserting that defeat could have been prevented if factors revolving around luck—weather or the inopportune deaths of certain military leaders—panned out differently.<sup>20</sup> Smalley described the nature of the B.E.F. defeat as “self-inflicted”, citing issues of training, communications, discipline, headquarters, and staff.<sup>21</sup> These historians use war diaries to reinforce their interpretations of why defeat occurred in the way it did, but rarely to interpret the individual experience of defeat.

In defeat, and certainly in hindsight, tangible ‘self-inflicted’ issues within the B.E.F. were inextricably linked with the intangible factors—“fear, physical

16. Marina MacKay, *Literature of World War II*, 182.

17. Winston Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour*, 105.

18. Robert Cowley, *No End Save Victory*, 43.

19. Churchill’s recollection is one that suggests a uniform sigh of relief and an increased sense of resolve across the British High Command after the B.E.F. were extracted from the beaches of Dunkirk. Churchill recorded, “Personally, I felt uplifted, and my mind drew easily and freely from the knowledge I had gathered in my life. I was exhilarated by the salvation of the army... Amendments and improvements were often made, but in the main, to the degree perhaps of ninety per cent, action was taken, and with a speed and effectiveness which no dictatorship could rival.” Churchill, *The Second World War: The Finest Hour*, 139.

20. Geoffrey Stewart, *Dunkirk and the Fall of France*, “Aftermath”.

21. See Smalley, *The British Expeditionary Force, 1939–40*, 1 and 2.

hardship and problems of information.”<sup>22</sup> British war diaries of May 1940 are echoes of Carl Von Clausewitz’s timeless 1832 military theory of friction and fog in war. Friction, according to Clausewitz, is “the only conception which in a general way corresponds to that which distinguishes real War from War on paper.”<sup>23</sup> This distinction helps illuminate the gulf that has formed between histories of the fall of France as told by newspapers, radio networks, journalists, and the histories told by those who actually witnessed the chaos. Clausewitz’s battlefield friction is “impossible to calculate,” encompassing the physical difficulties of moving and fighting armies. When combined with the “fog,” or incidents whose chief origin are chance, the two create an environment where “fog prevents the enemy from being discovered in time, a battery from firing at the right time, a report from reaching the General...the cavalry from charging effectively because it is stuck fast in heavy ground.”<sup>24</sup> In France, as men huddled in the open countryside, fatigued by the passing days without adequate sleep or adequate food, frustrated with the endless miles of vehicular traffic, and unsure of when Stuka dive-bombers could scream out of clouds overhead, their language depicted a battle concurrent with both of Clausewitz’s friction and fog.

How defeat is interpreted, remembered, and written about by individual combatants remains an important question in understanding the experience of the B.E.F. in France. War diaries written by unit commanders who fought in France show that soldiers did not characterize their experience as a German onslaught or by the miraculous evacuation at Dunkirk. Their diary space became a space to think “a great deal about what was happening to them and what they were doing.”<sup>25</sup> The exposure to trauma made it challenging to interpret chaos in writing. The mind in a state of trauma attempts to annex the “history and politics that it experiences” but “it cannot always comprehend” those experiences.<sup>26</sup> To both illuminate one of the most valuable tales of defeat in the history of the B.E.F. and to shed light on the difficulty of writing war, this paper will reinforce Allyson Booth’s belief that these soldiers’ selection of

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22. Clausewitz, Carl von, and J. J. Graham. n.d. *On War*. Champaign, Ill: Project Gutenberg eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost (accessed December 3, 2015), 56.

23. Clausewitz, Carl von, and J. J. Graham, *On War*, 56.

24. See Eugenia Kiesling, *On War Without the Fog*, *Military Review*, September-October 2001, 86–87 and Clausewitz, Carl von, and J. J. Graham, *On War*, 56.

25. Aaron Moore, *Writing War*, 209.

26. Marina MacKay, *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), 197.

“sights, faces, words, incidents, which characterized the time” preserves the true nuances of battle “in their original form of incoherence.”<sup>27</sup> Repeated observations of things like traffic jams, sleep deprivation, and faulty communications across a range of B.E.F. war diaries present an account of war resonate with Reid’s original assessment of defeat, one that was characterized by larger problems of “psychological rather than of a military nature.”<sup>28</sup>

On September 19, 1939, the first members of the British Expeditionary Force arrived in France. John Vereker, the 6<sup>th</sup> Viscount Gort led the force.<sup>29</sup> Gort pledged his forces to hold a Belgian line across the River Dyle, flanked by the French armies.<sup>30</sup> It was nearly the exact location of the German breakout of the First World War. Now, twenty-six years after the end of The Great War, 394,165 members of the B.E.F. were again stationed in France, most placed “across the plains of neutral Belgium” where the bulk of the fighting was expected. Some soldiers were veterans of the First World War, but the majority were fresh trainees who had enlisted after the declaration of war with Germany.<sup>31</sup>

Optimism for a fruitful Anglo-French relationship permeated the B.E.F. before the German attack on May 10. Lord Gort viewed the relationship as “close” and “cordial” during the Phoney War, a “period of deceptive quiet following the defeat of Poland.”<sup>32</sup> On the morning of the outbreak of hostilities, the men of the 10<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment had scheduled a visit by the French *Division Legere Mechanisee*. French officers were to examine artillery emplacements while a team of soldiers would play the British troops in a regimental football match. A similar outing several days earlier had inevitably terminated in “lots of

27. Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 120.

28. TNA, WO 167/5, 23.

29. Tony Heathcote, *The British Field Marshals 1736–1997* (Pen & Sword Books, 1999), 282.

30. Edward Smalley, *The British Expeditionary Force, 1939–40*, 19.

31. TNA, WO 197/37, “Despatches of the Operations of the British Expeditionary Force: From the Commander-in-Chief General the Viscount Gort, V.C., K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.C., M.V.O., M.C., covering the period from 1st February, 1940 to 31st May, 1940 with 2 appendices:-” 24.

32. WO 197/137, “*From the Commander-in-Chief General the Viscount Gort, V.C., K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.V.O., M.C., covering the period from 3rd September, 1939 to 31st January, 1940*,” 2, 6. For definition of the Phoney War, refer to John Plowright’s *The Causes, Course and Outcomes of World War Two* (Hampshire: Palgrave and McMillan, 2007), 41.

champagne and speeches!”<sup>33</sup> That morning at 0400 hrs, Lt. Col. H.G. Parham awoke to the “rather unusual sound of an air raid siren.” Poking his head out the window, Parham noticed a few local inhabitants on the street discussing the sound as the low rumbling of anti-aircraft batteries droned in the distance. Parham made his way to breakfast where he heard on the French radio the “staggering news that the Germans had invaded Belgium and Holland.” He later wrote, “So that was that.”<sup>34</sup>

For Brigadier W.C. Holden, the bombing of Douai by German planes “was the first intimation that the war was really on.”<sup>35</sup> By May 14, the sound of distant “fire and bombing” weighed on Belgian citizens who contemplated the “frightful decision to leave their homes.”<sup>36</sup> Though Belgian mayors urged the citizens to leave, in many cases they did not. British troops were ordered to “induce them to go ‘by every measure short of actual brutality.’” The heart-wrenching scene of refugees streaming from their homes left men like Lt. Col. Parham “boiling with rage at the Boche for uprooting these people.” He said, “The whole thing had all the unreality and the tragedy of a play at a theater and one just felt miserable about it but was unable to help.”<sup>37</sup> Eventually, each of the Belgian citizens left, leaving their entire livelihoods behind—“kettle on the fire, provisions in the cupboards, clocks going, the flowers in vases, everything spotlessly clean as if they were out to see a neighbor down the road...and that was the last we saw of them.”<sup>38</sup> Tending the livestock left behind by the Belgians was not the only problem the British faced. In the face of mounting German pressure they were to hold the line at all costs.

Unopposed German aircraft overhead mentally exhausted the British ground soldiers. Gort wrote, “Attack by dive bombers was a new experience for British troops...even those...accustomed [sic] to heavy shell fire in France during 1914–18, found that this form of attack...placed a strain on morale.”<sup>39</sup> Their best anti-aircraft units fired away at Luftwaffe planes, but the futility of fighting the air war from the ground sapped morale as they realized, “not all our

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33. TNA, WO 197/128, “*10 Fd. Reg. R.A. account of 10–30 May 1940 by Lt. Col. H.G. Parham*,” 1.

34. TNA, WO 197/128, 1–2.

35. TNA, WO 197/87, 1.

36. TNA, WO 197/128, 11.

37. TNA, WO 197/128, 11.

38. TNA, WO 197/128, 11.

39. TNA, WO 197/137, 54.

shouting and cursing would stop them.”<sup>40</sup> Low flying German aircraft scared ground troops so much that on one occasion, a German bomber flying within 50 feet of Major Gordon Finlayson’s position frightened his Bren gunner into jumping down into a hole instead of firing his weapon.<sup>41</sup> On another occasion, Finlayson’s driver was “too jumpy” to do what Finlayson needed because of the low bombers “about 50 feet over us.”<sup>42</sup> Luftwaffe planes like the Ju-87 Stuka were specially outfitted with a siren, dubbed by its creator the “Trumpet of Jericho.” Not only did the “howling screech” cause severe panic among ground troops, the machine provided a “mobile artillery” platform on which “flying firepower...could be brought to bear swiftly and devastatingly on any target miles behind the battlefront.”<sup>43</sup> The mental toughness of B.E.F. forces would be tested throughout the German-dominated air-war.

The other, more immediate strain came from Kleist’s 1st Panzer Army slicing the Allied defense in half from north to south. This movement forced Allied commanders to order the immediate retreat of the B.E.F. The prevention of encirclement, though necessary, would be a troublesome operation to undertake. Bringing back “a fine and intact army of nine Divisions over a distance of 70 miles along its own line of communications for the purpose of ranging it alongside the French Army at Amiens” would be the only option to avoid the annihilation of the B.E.F.<sup>44</sup> In hindsight Parham noted, “This was obviously a sound decision militarily as otherwise we’d have all been shut up in it, but I presume [Brussels’] loss had considerable effect from a political and propaganda point of view and some of our men and officers thought it a pity.”<sup>45</sup> In the midst of the fight, the majority of the soldiers on the ground remained bewildered and unaware of the events unfolding to the south, and yet obeyed their orders to withdraw with all its ill-fated consequences.

Men waited for agonizingly long periods of time during their long retreat for the ultimate “promised withdrawal of the Regt: to ‘rest’.” When ordered to hold a defensive line, Parham recalled, “I don’t remember how or when we got

40. TNA, WO 197/128, 4.

41. TNA, WO 197/91, 2.

42. TNA, WO 197/91, 8.

43. Alistair Horne, *To Lose A Battle: France 1940*, 110–111.

44. Taken from the minutes of a Defence Committee (Churchill, the three service ministers, and the three service chiefs) meeting on May 19th, 1940. Included in Martin Gilbert, *The Churchill War Papers: Volume II: Never Surrender, May 1940–December 1940* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 82.

45. TNA, WO 197/128, 18.

those orders, I was very tired...we had no sleep at all for 3 consecutive nights-many drivers had 4 or 5 nights without."<sup>46</sup>

Riding in his blacked out convoy, Lt. Col. Parham arrived the entrance of the Belgian town of Enghien on a dark night. He had already spent several other sleepless nights on the move. The city was ablaze from German artillery, which trickled "through the sky" and came "slanting down towards" them. They sounded to Parham like "duds", and yet he questioned, "Might they be gas? Or were they perhaps the new long delay things which we'd been warned about? We were too tired to care much anyway and were only idly interested in them."<sup>47</sup> Calling for the column to move forward, he shouted, "Come on!" Hearing Parham's call, an unknown Captain described as "obviously rather 'rattled'" ran up to Parham and pulled out a revolver, shouting, "Don't go on, that's a Fifth columnist trying to get us into a trap."<sup>48</sup> Parham's riding partner "sur-reptitiously" pulled his own revolver on the man and "told the windy captain not to be a fool." Parham wrote, "It is interesting as an example of the state of nerves some people got themselves into during the retreat."<sup>49</sup> Parham's narration illuminates how the lack of rest complicated soldiers' ability to make simple decisions in dangerous situations. Though nearly all soldiers suffered from the same set of battlefield variables, in diaries men tended to describe other people's reactions to these anxiety-inducing experiences rather than their own. Aaron Moore argued that for soldiers, "experience, particularly of the traumatic kind, is encoded in textual blank spots and can be detected by activity around them."<sup>50</sup>

Combatants did not interpret fatigue as result of fighting the enemy, but instead saw it directly related to the availability of sleep and food. Captain Miles Reid, wary of overstepping his bounds as a foreigner in the 1<sup>st</sup> French Army Headquarters, related that the "messing arrangements were so bad in some way to contribute to the chaotic state," adding, "the French may be more durable in this regard than the English." He compares the influence of food's availability

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46. TNA, WO 197/128, 21.

47. TNA, WO 197/128, 22.

48. Fifth columnists were supposed internal defectors within Belgium and France loyal to Hitler's cause. The saying originated during the Spanish Civil War, when "General Mola boasted that he had four columns outside Madrid, and a fifth inside." See Horne, *To Lose a Battle*, 117.

49. TNA, WO 197/128, 23.

50. Moore, *Writing War*, 296.

to man's vigor in battle, stating, "on frequent occasions it was impossible to get anything to eat or drink before 8.30 or 9 a.m. and after working all night lack of food had a lowering effect on vitality."<sup>51</sup> "The feeding problem" was "a brute," according to Parham. The petrol cookers and food containers they had been assigned throughout their battalion were "spread out enormously."<sup>52</sup> Similar to Reid in the French Camp, Parham wrote that during a specific fire-fight, "The forward troop was safely in and doing a good deal of shooting, but the men were *very tired* and their breakfasts hadn't come by 1100 hrs. (There was endless difficulty with their food and water supply)."<sup>53</sup> Parham noted that upon returning to his regiment one day many of the men were "coming to life for midday dinner—they were all very tired after the strain of the long drive without lights."<sup>54</sup> Even after a long night, the imagery of men "coming to life" shows how important food was in keeping spirits high. The availability of food reinforces Smalley's idea of the B.E.F. defeat being self-inflicted. If they could have transported more food to the men at the proper time, the level of the chaos may have abated. At the same time, this theory remains theoretical and dependent on a whole host of variables on the battlefield.

The lack of food, combined with orders to quickly withdraw troops made for long, sleepless nights. References to food and sleep in the memory of the B.E.F.'s experience in France show how they influenced nearly every other battlefield theme of the battle, from logistics, to mentality, to movement. Major Gordon Finlayson summarized his experience on May 15, 1940 by stating, "No Sleep."<sup>55</sup> Many drivers were part of an unending supply run transporting supplies from the French ports to retreating forces. Parham ordered his men to sleep upon observing that "everyone was frightfully tired and I had several strong representations that it was impossible to go on, with the drivers as they were." Sleep deprivation frequently caused men to crash vehicles, causing traffic jams and confusion. Parham first noticed the "drivers going to sleep" when a "Gun and Tractor" came down the road in the light of dawn and then, "without any apparent reason...swerved gently off the road and with a grinding crash went into a concrete pole at the side."<sup>56</sup> Reid observed that in the French camp

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51. TNA, WO 167/5, 2.

52. TNA, WO 197/128, 9.

53. TNA, WO 197/128, see pages 6, 9, and 13.

54. TNA, WO 197/128, 7.

55. TNA, WO 197/91, 2.

56. TNA, WO 197/128, 23.

“no adequate rest was arranged in shifts and by J5 [day five],” which caused the staff, in his opinion to be “incapable of doing any thinking even if their organisation rendered such a step desirable.”<sup>57</sup> The frequency of which men wrote about hunger and sleep contributes to a narrative of battle that contradicts the popular narratives of unparalleled heroism, instead painting it as an chaotic environment where men desired sleep rather than exhibit constant “discipline and morale.”<sup>58</sup>

Within so much chaos, men tended to write about what their minds were most often drawn to: their primeval quest for food and sleep. Elaine Scarry writes, “What is remembered in the body is well remembered...the political identity of the body is not easily changed.” Therefore, just as you cannot “compel a person to unlearn the riding of a bike,” you cannot take away the need for food and rest for even the greatest of soldiers.<sup>59</sup> The presence of sleep-deprivation and hunger in B.E.F. war diaries produces a collective memory of battle that helps to illuminate how men react to these challenges over long periods of duress. Their tone towards both factors contributed to preserve a narrative of chaos in the B.E.F.’s defeat in France that has survived to this day.

On May 21, 1940 at the Admiralty House in England, John Colville observed a desperate Prime Minister sinking in a sea of reports and telegrams. Despite the constant updates from British officers on the front lines, Churchill did all he could to contact Paul Reynaud, the French Prime Minister on the phone. Colville wrote, “At Admiralty House there was chaos owing to the lack of information being received, because communications have broken down.” As Colville stood by the Prime Minister, whom he had never seen so depressed, he overheard Churchill say, “In all the history of war, I have never seen such mismanagement.”<sup>60</sup> One day after Churchill’s rage over the communications debacle, the combination of two other communication complications made the B.E.F.’s situation “almost irretrievable: the lack of a liaison between Billotte and Blanchard, and the misunderstanding between Blanchard and Gort.”<sup>61</sup>

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57. TNA, WO 167/5, 1.

58. Edgar McInnis, *The War: First Year* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 190.

59. Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 109.

60. From John Colville’s Diary Papers, as found in Martin Gilbert, *The Churchill War Papers, Volume II: Never Surrender, May 1940–December 1940* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995), 106.

61. Jacques Benoist Méchin, *Sixty Days That Shook The World* (New York: G. Putnam’s Sons, 1963), 132.

Even before May 10, communications caused difficulty for men trying to fulfill their assignments. Miles Reid in the 1<sup>st</sup> French Army Headquarters wrote of the period, "Everything is done on the telephone and incoming conversations are recorded in a 2d Exercise Book," he continued, "This book was in great demand...extremely difficult to see...frequently illegible...but the worst aspect was frequently the book was removed altogether." Reid believed that communication problems not only generated chaos in battle, but also exacerbated interpersonal relations. In January 1940, a French officer berated Reid "in violent terms" because Reid "had been occupying the telephone too much." Regardless of whether or not the Frenchman was predisposed to dislike Reid, "the inadequate communications complicated the problem."<sup>62</sup>

Within the B.E.F, when man's battle with fatigue worsened so too did his ability to communicate clearly. On the night of May 15–16, Brigadier Holden recorded a telephone conversation that left him sleepless. As a soldier on the other line mumbled, Holden wrote, "he was very tired and at times it was difficult to get to the point of his conversation."<sup>63</sup> Verbal orders within the B.E.F. "received only tacit support because of the risk of mistakes" and orders required every commander to "make a 'clear statement as to the task he proposes."<sup>64</sup> Holden's observation suggests that the legacy of communication in France was not only contained in wire lengths or availability of wireless radios, but was also greatly influenced by the mental state of those operating the lines. Conflicting orders were nearly as devastating to a soldier's morale as the insecurity that comes with no communication. Upon returning to his HQ one night, Lt. Col. Parham found a new set of orders that revealed he had been given an incorrect sector to defend that day. He wrote, "All our work was wasted...our complete recce parties were scattered all over the face of the earth."<sup>65</sup> A change in plan would require a lateral move involving the whole regiment "over appallingly intricate roads." Parham concluded emphatically, saying, "I very nearly sat down and cried!!!"<sup>66</sup>

Parham's experience illustrates the most significant impact of communication on a soldier's psyche, one that produces a mindset of hopelessness. Others related similar effects. Lt. Blomfield wrote that his situation was "very confused

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62. TNA, WO 167/5, 23–24.

63. TNA, WO 197/87, 4.

64. Smalley, *The British Expeditionary Force*, 105.

65. Recce = Reconnaissance

66. TNA 197/128, 26.

and communications between Corps and divs was extremely difficult.”<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Brigadier W.C. Holden wrote, “The arrangements for communications with G.H.Q and divs were hopeless.”<sup>68</sup> Many felt battlefield cohesion was futile without the proper communication. Parham observed, “Without wireless from me to the two [battery commanders] this operation would have been completely impossible—there was no time to find where we were relative to each other.”<sup>69</sup>

The optimum scenario was, according to Lord Gort, when communications with his “liaison officer at General Georges’ Headquarters” could be “maintained so as to keep in touch with events as they developed.” Yet Gort was made painfully aware that when “no information through this channel...was proposed,” the results ultimately “affected my own command.”<sup>70</sup> Bad communication contributed to the fracture in Gort’s relations with the French high command, especially as British officials planned evacuation at Dunkirk despite French understanding that both would remain and fight “side by side.”<sup>71</sup> Churchill wrote to Gort as things became more precarious for the B.E.F, stating that if the “*situation on your communications*” made it impossible for Gort to fulfill his duties, “inform us so that we can...assist you should you have to withdraw.”<sup>72</sup> Over time “the French did not bother to keep Gort constantly informed of the general situation” which led to Gort’s compounding dependence on his own reports, “increasingly pessimistic” as they became.<sup>73</sup> Men ranging from officers like Holden, Reid and Parham to senior commanders like Gort, Brooke and Churchill felt the most disparity in France during moments they were least informed about it.

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67. TNA, WO 197/87, 5.

68. TNA, WO 197/87, 1.

69. TNA, WO 197/128, 19.

70. TNA, WO 197/137, 24. It may be inferred that while Gort does not say exactly how it impacted his command, that from historians like Méchin who recorded that Blanchard’s misunderstandings with Gort rendered the B.E.F’s situation irretrievable, ultimately, the lack of communication certainly did not make his command any easier. In Méchin, *Sixty Days That Shook The West*, 132, Méchin wrote, “Gort attacked on May 21st, though he had learnt that the French could not do so, and Blanchard attacked on May 22nd, though he knew the British effort was over,” all the while, “While these disjointed operations were going on, the Germans were widening the gap they had opened” during the previous days.

71. TNA, WO 197/137, 49.

72. TNA, WO 197/137, 35. Italics added for emphasis.

73. Draper, *The Six Weeks’ War*, 178.

As early as May 17, British High Command knew that a “fighting march southward” had the best possibility of saving the B.E.F from doom. Presented with what Churchill called a “hideous dilemma,” the British were forced to make “loyal and persistent, though now ineffectual, efforts to carry out” the newly appointed General Weygand’s plans until May 25. The change in French leadership and the issue of new orders led to another “three days’ delay.” On May 21, 1940 a B.E.F. counterattack on German Panzer columns at Arras did little to damage the German “armored inroad” that “threatened to cut all the northern armies alike from their southern communications and from the sea.”<sup>74</sup> On the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup>, Gort was forced to abandon the Weygand plan. Churchill wrote to Gort on the 27<sup>th</sup>, a day before the evacuations commenced at Dunkirk: “At this solemn moment I cannot help sending you my good wishes. No one can tell how it will go.”<sup>75</sup>

During those ten days, what was supposed to be a steady stream of men “cutting their way home to Blighty” was in reality a torpid slog.<sup>76</sup> Lt. Col. Parham summarily noted the traffic congestion, breakdowns, and accidents across the battlefield when he observed one night, “It was inky black under the trees and there were many traffic jams.”<sup>77</sup> Daniel Vilfroy argued that with the evolution of German mechanized warfare, “enemy tactics must be defeated by compelling him to abandon the objectives to which he has been assigned. . . . he must be offered instead a combat of movement. Space! Always space!”<sup>78</sup> If Vilfroy believed space and movement to be the recipe for success in modern warfare, members of the B.E.F. observed its deficiency as a recipe for disaster—both psychological and physical.

Traffic jams on the small French roads were a constant frustration to anyone responsible for moving men, ammunition, and supplies. From the beginning of battle, Lt. Col. Parham’s war diary makes note of irritating moments filled with “confusion and congestion” caused by “refugees”, roads that “were narrow,” and “bombers overhead.” These factors lead him to conclude that the going “wasn’t

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74. Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour*, 75.

75. Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour*, 90.

76. Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour*, 90. Blighty, according to dictionary.com, is a term that describes “England as one’s native land; England as home.” See <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/blighty>

77. TNA, WO 197/128, 18.

78. Daniel Vilfroy, *War in the West: The Battle of France May–June 1940* (Pennsylvania: Military Service Publishing Company, 1942), 128.

so easy.”<sup>79</sup> While the inarguable power of the German thrust was central to the defeat of the B.E.F., some men on the ground chose to write about the omnipresence of traffic as a critical factor in defeat rather than the German advance.<sup>80</sup> To Parham the issue of movement was “the most vital problem” in the campaign, one that unfortunately “was never solved.”<sup>81</sup> Traffic congestion caused men to lose their “good march discipline,” in turn leading to descriptions of the withdrawal as “most infuriating” and “perfectly maddening.” Parham continues, “That **same** evening we were ordered off again—seemed an incessant affair—this time to a new country.”<sup>82</sup> The inability to move quickly from Belgium back into France forced many men to spend long nights awake in their vehicles just waiting for the jams to open. The fatigue inducing nature of the affair compounded on itself, creating a larger problem: Lt. Col. Blomfield observed in his war diary that “one reason” for the congestion “was that drivers, immediately there was a halt, fell asleep and it was only through staff officers and others moving up and down the rd [sic] that withdrawal was kept going.”<sup>83</sup>

Not all members of the B.E.F. sat idly in columns of stationary vehicles during the withdrawal. Many men recorded attempts to alleviate the issue of congestions. Blomfield remembered officers who took matters into their own hands by beating drivers with sticks every time a column halted to wake up “the sleepy drivers.”<sup>84</sup> Finlayson and a fellow officer spent “most of night trying to sort out traffic and wake up drivers.”<sup>85</sup> Lt. Col. Parham related an experience in Renaix where a “Captain and a handful of military police” were “struggling to compete” with a jam that was building up. As nobody knew how to make a hole in the jam, Parham wrote, “Unless someone did something, even if it was the wrong thing, we were in for a major disaster.” He found a lorry and shook “its occupants out of their sleepy coma,” ordering them up a side street with the promise of an exit and a “straight run through.” Morally, Parham knew his action was on dodgy ground. He did not know if there was an opening through the side street, instead willing to tell the “frightful lie with no possible justification” in exchange of moving around fifty vehicles from the middle of the city.

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79. TNA, WO 197/128, 21.

80. McInnis, *The War: The First Year*, 186.

81. TNA, WO 197/128, 22.

82. TNA, WO 197/128, 37. Text was bolded in original source.

83. TNA, WO 197/87, 1.

84. TNA, WO 197/87, 2.

85. TNA, WO 197/91, 3.

Moving to another street, he repeated the act and eventually “made a hole in the center of the town in which one could at least maneuver.” Parham justified his decision by his desire to clear the men out before they were bombed. His impromptu act seemed to work, as soon “the traffic was flowing merrily into the town and away via the road to the N.W!”<sup>86</sup>

The presence of traffic in these accounts is a subplot to a much larger theme. In a battle characterized by chaos, repeated appearances of traffic suggest that men saw traffic jams as visible reminders that lives were in danger. Aaron Moore argued that attempts to write bodily experiences are weak because “its claim to represent physical memory is highly dependent on the reader having an analogous memory.”<sup>87</sup> Having an analogous memory, or using something familiar to illuminate the nature of bodily experience made explaining the emotions of fear and frustration easier as one did it through the lens of traffic. Traffic was a reminder that the longer men remained stuck in the open, the more likely they were to be bombed. This repeated registry of traffic is even more significant in light of Lillian Hellman’s observation that even though she “kept copious and detailed diaries” in 1944 to “register important experience,” reading them later she discovered that they did not “include ‘what had been most important’ to her, “or what the passing years have made important.”<sup>88</sup> Despite being noticed by many participants, traffic has not been seen in popular memory as a crucial factor in the British defeat in France. All the same, for these men traffic was something worth writing about, and writing about often. Similar to the way Hellman viewed her diary, modern day historians may have faced difficulty in using traffic in the historic account to add “up a very coherent picture of how it really was to be” a British soldier in the fall of France. Hellman’s conclusion explains how traffic, the opposite of Vilfroy’s movement that has become a larger part of the narrative, has largely disappeared from discussions of how the British saw their own defeat; “There’s nothing you could really get hold of if you were trying to write a proper historical account of it all. No wonder the stuff slips away mercury-wise from proper historians.”<sup>89</sup>

Tired soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force attempting to communicate in the sea of chaos found themselves in a prime environment for the spreading of rumors. The presence of rumors, especially prevalent in accounts of the

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86. TNA, WO 197/128, 29.

87. Moore, *Writing War*, 297.

88. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 311.

89. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 311.

beginning of battle, reinforce von Clausewitz's original claim that from fog often comes friction. Rumors were consequences of men's hasty misinterpretations of environmental cues around them. Brigadier Holden wrote, "Reports about parachutists were many...the great majority were due to anti-aircraft bursts and imagination."<sup>90</sup> Major R. Gordon Finlayson wrote on May 21, "An enemy sniper was reported in woods behind O.P. yesterday. This is evidently untrue."<sup>91</sup> The abundance of observations that were not reflective in reality eventually bred an environment of mistrust and sometimes fostered a mentality where cooperation among men within a unit took a backseat to personal safety. Finlayson wrote that a man "refused to tell" him where his battery over the phone was for fear Finlayson "was a Bosch trying to tap in on a out frequency."<sup>92</sup> As rumors of gas attacks spread, Parham explained, "This was to be expected from troops under fire for the first day."<sup>93</sup> The rumors worsened, until Lt. Col. Parham observed that units were "issued special orders about it." Parham himself attacked the rumors in his own diary, likening them to any "terrible vice" to which many good officers and men were "addicted." Participants saw rumors as a concrete problem, a layer of psychological tension, one that reveals how men during the defeat could be greatly influenced by things that were not reality. Parham ended his memory of rumors during the battle by typing in all capitals, "NEVER BELIEVE ANYTHING SECOND HAND."<sup>94</sup>

With the obliteration of the British Expeditionary Force entirely possible, men during the "scene of impenetrable chaos" frequently observed other men break under the weight of fear, anxiety and trauma.<sup>95</sup> Facing combat for the first time, soldiers often overreacted to threats. Lt. Col. Parham witnessed "the most absurd row going on" in which "it seemed that every infantryman in the sector was firing full blast." He felt it was "obviously a waste of Amn. due to anxiety and fuss on the part of the young troops in action for the first time."<sup>96</sup> Parham's soldiers were not the only ones who were stressed. His liaison officer, a man named Levy, was "incredibly jumpy, began 'seeing things'" and "feared disaster at every moment" to the point "he got so bad that the doctor had to

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90. TNA, WO 197/87, 1.

91. TNA, WO 197/91, 5.

92. TNA, WO 197/128, 11.

93. TNA, WO 197/128, 14.

94. TNA, WO 197/128, 23.

95. Smalley, *The British Expeditionary Force*, 170

96. TNA, WO 197/128, 12.

take him seriously in hand (and take his revolver too!!).”<sup>97</sup> Reid observed that his own assistant, Captain Janklers, “a reserve officer of some 55 years of age,” was “evacuated with a nervous breakdown” because “the strain was greater than he could bear” after eight traumatic days.<sup>98</sup> I Corps Headquarters frequently spoke of replacing “Gen. Lloyd,” commander of 2<sup>nd</sup> Division for fear he was “breaking down under the strain.” In a later conference, Brigadier Holden wrote that General Lloyd again showed “every sign of strain.” Appearing desperately tired and sleepy, Lloyd had “quietly protested against every proposal” continually repeating “it cannot be done” or “It is not an operation of war.” Holden recorded that “he then collapsed and a doctor was sent for.”<sup>99</sup> Parham wrote that Lloyd’s evacuation to the rear “was a great surprise to everyone.” Near the end of Parham’s tour in France, he wrote nonchalantly about his own replacement rather than as any surprise: “The CRA said ‘Jack, you’re no damn good for anything more—I’m going to get Tubby Tyler to relieve you.’ There was no good arguing, I think that I’d been asleep on a dozen occasions even during the rather dramatic conference.”<sup>100</sup> These reactions to battlefield stress show how men recorded the interplay between fatigue, communications, and traffic by their discernible consequences on others.

Though hindsight has revealed that hundreds of thousands of lives were preserved in the evacuation of Dunkirk, back in England nobody knew how the battle would end. On May 28 as beleaguered soldiers collected on the sand dunes of Dunkirk they were exposed to German artillery barrages while waiting for their orders to embark. In a conference room across the channel, Churchill looked at the twenty-five War Cabinet members surrounding his conference table. He urged them to prepare “for hard and heavy tidings.” Looking down, Churchill continued, “Of course, whatever happens at Dunkirk, we shall fight on.”<sup>101</sup>

Studying official war diaries reveals the nuances of how B.E.F. unit commanders interpreted defeat. Men were assigned to record the official hourly narrative, but often accompanied it with their own “personal reflections.”<sup>102</sup> Since 1907, writing war diaries was a “British Army Field Service Regulation.” These records were “used by senior commanders for intelligence about the

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97. TNA, WO 197/128, 15.

98. TNA, WO 167/5, 1.

99. TNA, WO 197/87, 5.

100. TNA, WO 197/128, 27.

101. Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour*, 100.

102. Moore, *Writing War*, 208.

enemy opposite their units and as a historical record for future planning.”<sup>103</sup> Even from a small selection of war diaries of men scattered across the battlefield, the observation of the exact same variables indicates that they were collectively important to their interpretation of battle. The war diaries of Parham, Finlayson, Reid, Holden, Blomfield, and Gort reveal that continuous exposures to the same set of circumstances lead “servicemen” in France “to attempt to describe internal psychological states,” even if it was through their observation of external cues.<sup>104</sup>

Virginia Woolf believed that humans tend to capture in writing the “atoms” of experience, ‘however disconnected and incoherent in appearance.’<sup>105</sup> The B.E.F.’s experience in France was disconnected and chaotic. It was different than anything the British High Command expected in their first encounter with the enemy. Winston Churchill described his own English people as “loth to expose their feelings.”<sup>106</sup> In war diaries, that observation for the most part seems accurate. Allyson Booth noted the trend of writers in war to respond to “explicitly *external* events when they disrupted narrative linearity.”<sup>107</sup> In France, men responding to new situations chose to describe external events rather than their own feelings. Even outside of the B.E.F. war diaries, people are more likely to record external observations than their own feelings. In a biography of American general Ulysses S. Grant, John Mosier said, “In his memoirs... Grant wrote wonderfully evocative descriptions of what he saw... surprisingly little about what he said,” and “next to nothing about what he felt.”<sup>108</sup> The history of war is one of many interpretations because its very nature is impossible to portray in writing. Lloyd George once wrote that the language of war was incapable of conveying its full reality. “The thing is horrible,’ he said, ‘and beyond human nature to bear, and I feel I can’t go on any longer with the bloody business.” Paul Fussell added that George was “convinced that if the war could once be described in accurate language, people would insist that it be stopped.”<sup>109</sup>

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103. *The Great War, 1914–1918*, “WWI British Army War Diaries, Purpose of the War Diary”, accessed on December 1, 2015, <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/research/military-records/british-army-war-diary.htm>.

104. Moore, *Writing War*, 298.

105. Allyson Booth, *Postcards From the Trenches*, 119.

106. Churchill, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour*, 99.

107. Allyson Booth, *Postcards From the Trenches*, 119.

108. John Mosier, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 7.

109. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 174.

The study of these war diaries in a larger context reveals that British soldiers in France were rarely concerned with battlefield tactics and maneuvers. Oblivious to events happening in other locations, B.E.F. soldiers focused on uncontrollable factors they could pinpoint as detrimental to their performance—hunger, fatigue, communications, and traffic. Unlike this blurred haze in which ground soldiers wrote their accounts, the popular narrative of the battle follows the big picture. Though war diaries do not reflect “the ‘reality’ of war” or serve “as a window into the soul of the author,” the retelling of the B.E.F. from the perspective of only a few British men can illuminate which elements of war influenced soldiers’ perceptive understanding of traumatic events.<sup>110</sup>

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*Carson Teuscher, a senior from Vancouver, Washington, graduates in April 2016 with a History degree focusing on 20th century American History from BYU. He was captivated while studying abroad in Cambridge, England by the proximity of the National Archives in London, and while there gathered source material from war diaries for this paper. Following graduation, Carson will pursue a Master of Studies in US History at the University of Oxford. There, he will use war diaries to study Anglo-American relations and the ground-level experience of combat soldiers during the Second World War. Carson hopes to one day become a professor and author in Military History, and in his spare time enjoys writing historic fiction, mountaineering, and playing soccer.*

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110. Moore, *Writing War*, 298–99.

# Chasing Freedom

## Runaway Slaves and Soldiers During the War of 1812

Lane Lisonbee

ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 14, 1814, FRANCIS SCOTT KEY made an indelible contribution to United States patriotism. Through the night he had witnessed the British bombardment of the American Fort McHenry while aboard the *H.M.S. Tonnant*, a British ship on which he had been detained after helping to negotiate the release of an American prisoner of war. He and his companion, Colonel John Stuart Skinner, had anxiously kept their eyes on the flag flying over the fort, and when in the early light of day they could see that the stars and stripes stripes of the American banner had not been taken down in defeat., Key commemorated the moment by writing a poem entitled *Defence of Fort McHenry*. His poem would later come to be known as *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Most Americans are familiar with the first verse of Key's poem, but rarely hear or sing the additional three verses. The third verse provides a fascinating glimpse into one aspect of the War of 1812:

And where is that band whoso vauntingly swore  
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,  
A home and a country, shall leave us no more?  
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps pollution;  
No refuge could save the hireling and slave  
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave,

And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,  
O'er the land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave.<sup>1</sup>

The “hireling and slave” that Key mentions here is an allusion to American slaves who ran away from their masters and joined the British military during the War of 1812.<sup>2</sup> Many slaves did so in response to a proclamation by British Vice Admiral Alexander Cochrane. He had encouraged slaves to run away, promising that they “will have their choice of either entering into His Majesty’s Sea or Land Forces, or of being sent as FREE settlers to the British Possessions in North America or the West Indies.”<sup>3</sup> Ironically, the *H.M.S. Tonnant* (the ship that Key was aboard when he penned his poem) was Cochrane’s flagship.<sup>4</sup>

It is evident from Key’s disparaging words about these rebelling slaves, and by the popularity that his poem quickly gained, that Americans were vexed by Cochrane’s proclamation; however, the United States did not respond in kind. Notwithstanding nearly two centuries of Americans enlisting slaves during times of conflict, the number of slaves fighting for the United States was greatly limited during the War of 1812. This curious occurrence was indicative of the growing divide between the free states of the North, and the slave states of the South. The Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves of 1807 further complicated the North-South relationship, and strengthened the South’s resolve to maintain slavery in those states. Furthermore, the spread of anti-slavery ideals led to threatening slave revolts within the states and abroad. Abolitionism became associated with the enemy, the British, who inadvertently united the North and the South on the issue of slave participation in the war. Because of these particular domestic and foreign circumstances, the standing of blacks as soldiers in the United States military was unclear during the War of 1812.

Historians have recently made great strides in the study of slaves fighting in American wars, but the historians of the past struggled to either acknowledge the role of slaves or to agree as to what extent they were involved in these wars. For example, in 1891, John Fisk glossed over the issue of slave soldiers by claiming, “The relations between master and slave . . . were so pleasant that the

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1. Francis Scott Key, “Defence of Fort McHenry,” in *The War of 1812*, ed. Donald R. Hickey (New York: Penguin Group, 2013), 544–545.

2. Gene Allen Smith, *The Slaves’ Gamble: Choosing Sides in the War of 1812* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 215.

3. Alexander Cochrane, “A Proclamation”, in Smith, *The Slaves’ Gamble*, 100.

4. Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 544.

offer of freedom fell upon dull, uninterested ears.”<sup>5</sup> More than half a century later, the existence of slave combatants during the War of 1812 was more readily acknowledged by historians, but still heavily debated. In 1969, Reginald Horsman wrote that “as the [British] raids increased . . . many slaves fled to join the British.”<sup>6</sup> However, three years later, Walter Lord described it differently: “Actually, the blacks were never more steadfast. Despite all Admiral Cochrane’s inducements, only a handful of slaves joined him.”<sup>7</sup> Evidently, the success of the British in recruiting slaves in America is dependent on the interpretation by each historian. In 1989, Donald Hickey took a more objective approach by simply stating that “when the British departed, they carried off more than 2,000 runaways, most of whom settled in the maritime provinces.”<sup>8</sup> It quickly becomes apparent while reading histories of the War of 1812 that historians have placed much more emphasis on British efforts to recruit slaves while they have given very little to American efforts. This study will add to the scholarly conversation of slavery during this time period by examining the foreign and domestic circumstances that caused apprehension in the United States—especially in the South—towards recruiting slaves during those critical wartime years.

## Domestic Threats: The Great American Divide

In order to understand the peculiarity of the United States not recruiting slaves during the War of 1812, it is necessary to know that Cochrane’s gambit was not a historic anomaly. Beginning with their involuntary arrival on the North American continent, African slaves had participated in a variety of ways in virtually every American conflict. The British, Spanish, Indians, and Americans alike had all used blacks as combatants before the War of 1812.<sup>9</sup> For example, slave soldiers played a dramatic part during the American Revolutionary War. Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation, a direct predecessor of Cochrane’s, promised runaway slaves that they would be “free that are able and willing to

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5. John Fiske, *The American Revolution, in The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution*, Gary B. Nash (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 4–5.

6. Reginald Horsman, *The War of 1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 78.

7. Walter Lord, *The Dawn’s Early Light* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 76.

8. Hickey, *The War of 1812*, 204.

9. Smith, *The Slaves’ Gamble*, 6.

bear Arms.”<sup>10</sup> Perturbed by Dunmore’s strategy, George Washington declared that victory depended “on which side can arm the Negroes the faster.”<sup>11</sup> Slaves on many occasions had served in important and even critical ways during war-time; therefore, the peculiarity of the United States not implementing slave soldiers during the War of 1812 is conspicuous when compared with the history of warfare in North America.

The America that existed in 1812 was fundamentally different than the America of the past. Before the Revolution, the colonies had existed independently of each other as a combination of “slave societies” and “societies with slaves,” but following the Revolution a dichotomy of free-states and slave-states began to develop.<sup>12</sup> This change began in the North in 1777 when Vermont wrote slavery out of its constitution.<sup>13</sup> There was no uniform way in which slavery was abolished in the free states (it was left up to every state legislature to decide for itself), but it typically occurred through gradual emancipation. In Massachusetts, for example, there was no official legislation that ended slavery, but the institution of slavery was dismantled by a series of court cases involving slaves suing for their own freedom. These slaves based their argument on the state constitution’s declaration of the natural equality of all people.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of the Revolution, anti-slavery sentiment took root in America, particularly in the Northern states. In his book *Eighty-Eight Years*, historian Patrick Rael describes the significance of this change, saying: “Whereas previous to this point all understood that the condition of the slave was debased and unfortunate, very few could have imagined slavery itself as something that could be, let alone should be, destroyed.”<sup>15</sup> This social and political shift in the North had been inspired by the rhetoric of the Revolution which had convinced many Northerners that the freedom, liberty, and equality they had fought for should

10. Lord Dunmore, “A Proclamation”, in *Slavery and Emancipation*, ed. Rick Halpern and Enrico Dal Lago (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 90–91.

11. Sylvia Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 73.

12. “Slave societies” and “societies with slaves” refer to how ingrained slavery is into a civilization. If slavery determines the politics, economics, even religion of a state then it qualifies as a “slave society”. If the civilization could technically exist without slavery then it can be defined as a “society with slaves.”

13. Patrick Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States, 1777–1865* (Athens, Georgia: University Georgia Press), 1.

14. Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years*, 65.

15. Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years*, 19.

naturally be extended to blacks. Before the War of 1812, five states had completely abolished slavery, and three more had slave populations of less than one thousand.<sup>16</sup> At this point, however, the anti-slavery movement in the United States was in its early stages, hence the confusion over the role of slaves during this period.

Southerners interpreted the same revolutionary rhetoric not as an argument to abolish slavery, but rather as a justification for viewing slaves as property—property that they had fought to defend.<sup>17</sup> In a petition to their state legislature, citizens of Virginia wrote that they had “risked [their] lives and Fortunes, and waded through Seas of Blood” to secure their right to own slaves.<sup>18</sup> In the decades following the American Revolutionary War, slave populations in Southern states either remained consistent or grew rampantly. By comparing the slave populations reported in the 1790 and 1810 United States censuses, a picture of this growth can be pieced together. The greatest increase in slave population occurred in Virginia. In 1790, Virginia reported having a slave population of 292,627; by 1810, it had grown to 392,518. South Carolina also showed significant growth in its slave population by going from 107,094 to 196,365 in two decades. Georgia’s and Kentucky’s slave populations grew uncontrollably, exemplifying how entrenched slavery was becoming in Southern society. Georgia’s slave population grew nearly four times its size during this period, going from 29,264 to 105,218. Kentucky’s slave population grew more than six times its size, rising from 12,430 to 80,561.<sup>19</sup> By analyzing this data, it is clear that within the country as a whole, the institution of slavery was thriving in spite of growing anti-slavery sentiment.

The context of this developing rift between free and slave states is necessary to understand slave involvement in the War of 1812. This division correlates with how each state would interpret the Militia Act of 1792. This law stipulated that “each and every free able-bodied white male citizen of the respective States . . . shall severally and respectively be enrolled in the militia.”<sup>20</sup> This specified

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16. University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center. “1810 United States Census,” *Historical Census Browser*. <http://mapsserver.lib.virginia.edu/>.

17. Fredrika Teute Schmidt and Barbara Ripel Wilhelm. “Early Proslavery Petitions in Virginia.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1973): 136.

18. Quoted in Schmidt, “Early Proslavery Petitions in Virginia,” 139.

19. University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center. “1790 & 1810 United States Censuses,” *Historical Census Browser*. <http://mapsserver.lib.virginia.edu/>.

20. Constitution Society, “Militia Act of 1792, Second Congress, Session I Chapter XXVIII,” [http://www.constitution.org/mil/mil\\_act\\_1792.htm](http://www.constitution.org/mil/mil_act_1792.htm).

that eligible white citizens were required to enroll in the militia; it did not expressly forbid blacks from serving in the military. Therefore, it was left to each state to interpret what role—if any—blacks would have in their respective state militias. For example, North Carolina allowed free blacks to fight alongside whites, but in South Carolina free blacks were only permitted to serve as laborers or musicians.<sup>21</sup> Being a free citizen was often the requirement for blacks to serve in any military capacity, and to many slave holders, emancipating slaves was not worth their service in the army.

Slavery was based in the South, thus Northern Federalists who might have been sympathetic to the slaves' plight were powerless to emancipate them through military service. It may seem odd that Southerners refused to offer up their slaves as combatants considering the strategic advantage it offered the British. The United States chose not to mobilize over one million individuals from its overall population, thus allowing them to be recruited instead by the invading force. Those slaves in turn could be armed, serve as guides with expert knowledge of the land, and slow down the U.S. economy by denying their labor. Still, the United States did not attempt to match the offer made by Admiral Cochrane. This policy decision was influenced by Southern antagonism towards British abolitionism, the paranoia of slave owners, and their desire to maintain the racial hierarchy that had developed.

The overarching reason that slave owners felt a need to “preserve” the institution of slavery during the War of 1812 was due to the end of the Atlantic slave trade in 1808.<sup>22</sup> Because new slaves could not be legally imported to replace runaways to the British or slave volunteers joining the U.S. military, slave owners saw it as an imperative that they not allow their slave population to decrease as a result of the war. This is not to say, however, that Southerners felt particularly jaded by the abolishment of the slave trade, nor that they believed that the slave trade reflected upon their own behaviors as slave owners. President Thomas Jefferson, a slave master himself, exhibited a fascinating mindset that many Southerners shared. Seemingly oblivious to the cruel treatment of slaves on his own continent, Jefferson urged Congress to abolish the slave trade so that the United States would not be complicit in “those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of

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21. Smith, *The Slaves' Gamble*, 15.

22. “An Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves [March 2, 1807],” *Yale Law School Lilian, Goldman Law Library*, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/s1004.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/s1004.asp).

Africa.”<sup>23</sup> In an ironic way, ending the slave trade helped to relieve some of the guilt that slave masters might have felt while permitting them to carry on as normal.

Abolishing the slave trade was also useful to Americans as something that they could rely on when the English argued that their own nation was truly the standard bearer of human liberty.<sup>24</sup> In reality, the United States had preceded England by a mere three weeks in disavowing the slave trade; however, at the heart of the change, slavery itself was intact. In contrast to the Americans appearing to have embraced a more progressive attitude towards slavery, British abolitionism was much more committed to the actual freedom of people of African descent. Their more extreme stance was perceived as a threat to the American—especially Southern—way of life. The United States’ halfhearted commitment to abolition was apparent when Congress decided that slaves that were being transported illegally to the Americas would still be considered slaves (despite the slave trader’s actions being punished). “Forfeiture,” as this principle was called, revealed that Americans still saw Africans as chattel, and that ending the slave trade was not based on a human rights issue as Jefferson had portrayed it to be.<sup>25</sup>

## Foreign Factors: British Influence and Abolitionism

The role of the British in U.S. history, beginning during the American Revolution, helped to influence American views on slaves during the War of 1812. During the chaos of the American Revolution, more than ten thousand slaves managed to escape to British lines, and were successfully evacuated to various British territories.<sup>26</sup> Many of these slaves had enthusiastically accepted the opportunity given them by the British to fight against their former masters. This betrayal embittered Southerners and compelled them to exclude slaves

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23. Quoted in Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years*, 111.

24. Matthew Mason, “The Battle of the Slaveholding Liberators: Great Britain, the United States, and Slavery in the Early Nineteenth Century.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2002): 665–668.

25. Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years*, 110–112.

26. Edward Countryman, *Enjoy the Same Liberty: Black Americans and the Revolutionary Era*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 49.

from military service. Furthermore, it created in their minds an association between abolitionism and the enemy British. This association is apparent in a letter sent to the Virginia State Legislature in 1785 by a group of paranoid slave owners from Amelia County, Virginia. They wrote: “We understand a very subtle and daring Attempt is made to dispossess us of a very important Part of our Property. An Attempt set on Foot, we are informed, by the Enemies of our Country, Tools of the British Administration, and supported by certain Men among us of considerable Weight, TO WREST FROM US OUR SLAVES, by an Act of the Legislature for a general Emancipation of them. An Attempt unsupported by Scripture or sound Policy.”<sup>27</sup> Another petition, this one from suspicious citizens of Virginia’s Hanover County, claimed that “A Great number of slaves taken by the British army are now passing in this Country as Freemen.”<sup>28</sup> Blacks, both enslaved and free, were thought to still be influenced by the British abolition movement following the Revolution, which was cause for concern among slave holders. Consequently, when the United States entered into a second war with Great Britain in 1812, Southerners were already suspicious that the British would excite American slaves into rebellion.

Americans were not strangers to slave revolts. The Stono Rebellion of 1739—which, according to the *Boston Gazette*, had involved over thirty slaves—had been a bloody reminder that slaves could be a deadly force.<sup>29</sup> In 1811, just a year before the war with Britain officially began, an insurrection broke out in the Louisiana territory. According to a newspaper report, “An insurrection took place among the negroes in the county of German coast, in the territory of Orleans . . . Their numbers were variously stated from 180 to 500.”<sup>30</sup> This uprising, in spite of the vague estimation of the number of slaves involved, nonetheless shows that large groups of disgruntled slaves were capable of lashing out violently against their oppressors.

As unsettling as the Stono and German Coast Rebellions were to slave owners, the Haitian Revolution was downright terrifying. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Haiti (Saint Domingue, as it was called then) was the epitome of the racial

27. Quoted in Schmidt, “Early Proslavery Petitions in Virginia,” 139.

28. Quoted in Schmidt, “Early Proslavery Petitions in Virginia,” 138.

29. “A Letter from South Carolina [September 28, 1739],” *Boston Gazette*, October 29, 1739. Quoted in Smith, *Stono: Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt*, 12.

30. “An insurrection took place among the negroes in the county of German coast, in the territory of Orleans, a few miles above the city, about the 9th of January.” *National Intelligencer* (Washington, District Of Columbia) February 19, 1811.

hierarchy in slavery.<sup>31</sup> Whites, who were outnumbered by black slaves in the small colony, had been excited by the revolutionary events in their native France. According to Rael, much to the chagrin of whites, “Ideas from the French Revolution had filtered down to blacks in bondage, fusing with long-standing African cultural sensibilities to lend new energy to slave rebellion.”<sup>32</sup> It was exactly this energy that drove Toussaint L’Ouverture (a free black) and his enslaved comrades past simple slave rebellion and into a revolution. Rael states that the Haitian Revolution was a “social revolution” whereas that of the United States had been a “political revolution.”<sup>33</sup> Despite these differences, Americans saw in the example of Saint Domingue that slaves could take revolutionary rhetoric and make it their own regardless of its original intent. The United States had slaves and a revolutionary origin, therefore, a constant domestic threat existed so long as slavery continued. To slave masters, arming their slaves must have seemed like a death wish. Thomas Jefferson later expressed this sort of anxiety when he said: “We have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go.”<sup>34</sup>

War with Britain posed a threat to United States slavery as it existed following the end of the Atlantic slave trade. Slaves had always used the opportunity wars presented them to escape bondage. In addition to escaping servitude, revenge was a powerful incentive for slaves to fight for the enemy of their former masters. Slave owners also understood that if they were to recruit their slaves to balance the scales, it similarly meant they would lose their labor. As one British military governor during the colonial period expressed, “A Negro is never of any use after they [sic] have carried arms.”<sup>35</sup> When British forces returned to the continental United States, and Cochrane promised freedom to those that joined His Majesty’s forces, American slave owners were faced with a dilemma: either counteract the British’s strategy by offering freedom to slaves who fought on the Yankee side, or stomach the fact that some of their slaves would escape to and fight for the British. Either way, valuable slaves would be lost, and the vacancies they left on plantations could no longer be filled by freshly imported slaves. With all factors considered, the United States opted to not actively recruit slaves during the War of 1812.

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31. Rael, *Eight-Eight Years*, 92.

32. Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years*, 94.

33. Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years*, 95.

34. Quoted in Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years*, 40.

35. Smith, *The Slaves’ Gamble*, 31.

Slave owners attempted to do damage control by persuading slaves that the British would renege on their promise and instead ship runaways to their West Indies colonies to continue as slaves.<sup>36</sup> The zeal with which white masters produced anti-British propaganda seems to have been more convincing to the whites themselves than it was to their slaves. One British officer noted that upon reaching his warship, a Virginia runaway had told him “S’pose you sell me to West Indee [sic] planter to-day, what difference ‘tween dat an’ Yankee sell me to Carolina planter to-morrow?”<sup>37</sup> This suggests that slaves understood the domestic slave trade of the United States, and believed that it was a far more real threat that they would be sent to labor in the Deep South than that the British would send them to the sugar plantations of the West Indies.<sup>38</sup>

In the spring of 1813, Charles Ball, a runaway slave posing as a free black, boarded a British warship in the Chesapeake Bay with a company of local gentlemen; their purpose was to recover the “more than a hundred slaves” of a Mrs. Wilson that had stolen away during the night and were now living aboard the British vessel. Ball described his role in this way: “I was . . . to go along with the flag of truce, in the assumed character of the servant of one of the gentlemen who bore it; but in the real character of the advocate of the mistress, for the purpose of inducing her slaves to return to her service.”<sup>39</sup> The white Americans that had boarded the ship attempted to convince the British officers that they compel the slaves to return to their mistress; meanwhile, Charles Ball spoke directly to the slaves who were “lounging about on the main deck” and endeavored to persuade them to return to the plantation. Not surprisingly, Ball discovered that “their heads were full of notions of liberty and happiness in some of the West India islands.”<sup>40</sup> Ball and the company left the ship having failed to convince any of the slaves to return to their involuntary labor. Historian Matthew Mason described the irony of such negotiations by saying, “The idea of consent was supposed to be entirely foreign to slavery” and yet slave owners were hoping that their slaves would agree to return to bondage rather than live

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36. Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia 1772–1831* (New York: Norton & Company, 2014), 259.

37. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, 261.

38. Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, 261.

39. Charles Ball, “Charles Ball: from Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventure of Charles Ball,” in *The War of 1812*, ed. Donald R. Hickey (New York: Penguin Group, 2013), 347.

40. Quoted in Hickey, *The War of 1812*, 347.

as freemen.<sup>41</sup> Later that year, Charles Ball enlisted in the United States Navy, serving in the Chesapeake Bay Flotilla; unlike him, the runaway slaves of Mrs. Wilson did not see the merit in defending the country that had enabled their oppression—nor was the United States anxious to let them.

## Conclusion

The standing of blacks as soldiers in the United States military was unclear during the War of 1812. American politics, still a half century away from the Civil War, was mired in debate over the morality of slavery, but at the time a tentative truce was keeping the union together. Still, early talk of succession had already begun in both the Federalist and Democratic-Republican camps. Outspoken Massachusetts clergyman and anti-slavery advocate Elijah Parish asked, “What is the moral aspect of our nation?” “Are not the tears and miseries of a million souls daily crying to the God of justice to hasten the day of retribution?” “Must not those States which remained *united* with them [the Southern states], whatever may be their individual character, share in their punishments?”<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, Virginia Representative John Randolph had declared that “if ever the time of disunion between the States should arrive, the line of severance would be between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States.”<sup>43</sup>

Despite their strong rhetoric either condemning or defending slavery, the true nature of the argument was about disunion rather than abolitionism.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, for the sake of national solidarity during wartime, Northerners did not push the issue of slave recruitment, knowing that their Southern counterparts would not be willing to lose slaves to combat, or take the risk of them rebelling once armed. Federalists suffered disastrous results near the end of the war, when they began to agitate again over slavery and leveled criticism against Republicans for having led them into an “unjust” war. When the war was won and patriotism swelled, the Federalists were decried as traitors by Republicans. One Republican claimed that “nothing is better calculated to excite divisions

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41. Mason, “The Battle of the Slaveholding Liberators: Great Britain, the United States, and Slavery in the Early Nineteenth Century,” 672.

42. Matthew Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 49.

43. Quoted in Rael, *Eighty-Eight Years*, 112.

44. Mason, *Slavery and Politics*, 49–50.

among the people. Nothing will so readily excite discord and animosity among the different states.”<sup>45</sup> The rumblings of civil war were growing on account of slavery, and the Federalist Party had been the first casualty. As a result of many factors, blacks experienced a much more restricted environment than they had during previous wars. War had always presented slaves with opportunities to seize their own freedom, and in the eyes of most slaves, the United States was dwarfed by Britain as the champion of liberty during the War of 1812.

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*Lane Lisonbee is a senior majoring in History and minoring in Political Science. As he has worked towards his undergraduate degree, Lane has become fascinated by the history of slavery in the Americas, especially during wartime. This paper is dedicated to his wonderful parents.*

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45. Matthew Mason, “Nothing is Better Calculated to Excite Divisions”: Federalist Agitation Against Slave Representation During the War of 1812.” *The New England Quarterly* 75, no. 4 (2002), 550.

# The Boys Behind the Backwoods Bigots

## A Microhistory Examination of the 1950s Ku Klux Klan

Erin Schill Facer

ON JANUARY 18, 1958, A YOUNG BAPTIST PREACHER NAMED JAMES finalized his preparations for an important rally to be held that night. He was bolstered by the anticipation of hundreds, if not thousands, of fellow activists uniting in solidarity for their shared cause. They planned to rally peacefully for their God-given rights and the protection of those whom they loved—but, fearful of violent resistance, they requested federal protection.<sup>1</sup> As the sun set, James, along with a few friends, drove out to the large field he had rented for the rally on the outskirts of a small town in North Carolina. They walked around, checked the audio equipment, and exchanged a few casual remarks. It was a cold night for waiting.

Despite optimistic expectations, supporter turnout was scant. With disappointment, James leaned back against the hood of the car, his field of vision limited in the darkness. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to him, an opposing force of more than seventy armed individuals gathered on the other side of the field, with hundreds of others waiting just beyond the tree line.

From their concealed position, a shot was fired and riotous whoops echoed across the field, as the sound of pounding feet thudded towards James' small

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1. David Cunningham. *Klansville, USA: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights-era Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 33.

group. With loud cracks of shotguns and squirrel rifles, the scene descended into a flurry of fighting and destruction of property. The federal protection previously requested was intentionally slow to squelch the chaos.<sup>2</sup> A loud scream rang out as the hands of James and his band flew to their eyes. "Tear gas!" someone shouted. The preacher stumbled for the protection of the woods, the stinging effects of the tear gas distorting his thoughts. One question pounded its way to the top: *What more could I have done for my people?*

The above scene is not altogether surprising. America in the late 1950s was filled with rallies and violent conflict. What makes this event interesting, however, is that the violent ruffians were members of a small band of local Indians while the rally organizer and pitiable victim was a Grand Dragon for the notorious Ku Klux Klan.

## Avoiding the Obvious with the Ku Klux Klan

Historically, depictions of Klan members have been characterized by dehumanizing stereotypes.<sup>3</sup> This stereotyping allowed readers to stay morally aloof from the degenerate Klan members. In more recent years, scholars have begun to accommodate a more nuanced representation of the Klan. Interested by the inconsistency between members' Christian beliefs and their immoral actions, historians have attempted to resolve these contradictions by creating ideological images of the Klan as paranoid or honor-driven.<sup>4</sup> For some, these modified characterizations of Klan members have risked "trivializing the atrocities of the KKK."<sup>5</sup> However, these investigations still paradoxically rely on an external evaluation of Klan logic. A more satisfactory explanation of Klan behavior is one which emphasizes the morally consistent nature of Klan action when seen from within their own perspective. This encourages the mental exercise of relating to Klan members by looking at the world through their eyes.

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2. Cunningham, *Klansville, USA*, 33.

3. Nancy Bishop Dessommes, "Hollywood in Hoods: The Portrayal of the Ku Klux Klan in Popular Film," in *Journal of Popular Culture* 32, no. 4 (Spring 1999).

4. David Mark Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism; the First Century of the Ku Klux Klan, 1865–1965* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965); Bertram Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.)

5. "Harvard Scholar Whitewashes the Ku Klux Klan." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*. no. 59 (Spring, 2008), 13.

Similarly, historian Nancy Maclean has argued it is worthwhile to study “even odious and seemingly irrational thought, so as to grasp its inner logic and understanding its sources and role in a specific time and place.”<sup>6</sup> Here Maclean condemns the academic avoidance of disturbing perspectives and acknowledges the benefits of confronting those we are initially tempted to villainize.

By definition, trying to adopt the point of view of someone with whom you disagree forces a change in perspective. This form of mental gymnastics allows the thinker to see the world through new eyes, and thus encourages new questions, while discouraging the intellectual laziness of relying on simplistic assumptions. Rather than merely supporting timeworn assumptions regarding right and wrong, one ought to challenge the moralistic philosophies underpinning such assumptions. In doing so, individuals may have an opportunity to relate with the villains they are studying—and, in the process, consider their own potential to make such choices.

This paper’s investigation into the life and relationships of James Cole provides these same benefits by offering an alternative perspective of the Ku Klux Klan. It argues that Klansmen were not inherently despicable; rather, they were relatable, flawed, human individuals who behaved in ways that only outsiders would consider appalling. By marginalizing members of the KKK as backward rednecks, historians are at risk of committing those same egregious errors to which they condemn the Klan: categorizing and stereotyping a group based on fearful disgust. Instead, this investigation of the world from their perspective reveals that their actions were motivated by logic, love and loyalty.

## Protecting Klan Rights and Southern Identity through Segregation

First and foremost, one must understand the identity and the world which the Klan wished to protect. The historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown argued that the antebellum South was driven by a search for honor. He defined this honor as “essentially the cluster of ethical rules, most readily found in societies of small communities, by which judgments of behavior are ratified by community

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6. Nancy Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), .

consensus.”<sup>7</sup> Looking into the small community of James Cole, it seems clear that the social mores and priorities of the antebellum South persisted into the 1960s: protecting women, maintaining self-control, and promoting social order and obedience. True Southerners recognized it as their duty to protect against bad influences that might challenge or destroy these ideals of honour and morality. Protection required separation from those they perceived as a threat—which included blacks, communists, and Jews. Separation from blacks, as well as Jews and Communists, was meant to effectively protect against the corrosive inter-racial, anti-Christian, and anti-democratic forces.

These communities turned to segregation as an antidote to these perceived social ills. Separate schools, voting restrictions, and living locations were all trench-like tools of separation, which protected white families from the multi-racial “Other.” However, with events such as the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* Supreme Court decision, the rights of racial minorities began to outweigh the alleged rights of white Southerners in the eyes of the nation. As segregation came under attack, Klan leaders felt that Southern identity itself was being threatened. For many Southerners, segregation was a compromise that had been established following the Civil War, allowing them to maintain a portion of their Southern honor. Now even this last defense seemed to be under attack. This caused great anxiety, because the loss of this cultural protector was viewed as almost irreplaceable. In a letter to Cole, one of his friends, cryptically referred to as “COP,” described a time he lost his wallet. He then transformed this anecdote into a metaphor with the line, “Money is like segregation, once lost its [sic] hard to replace.”<sup>8</sup> Watching their values being threatened, knowing that once lost they were gone for good, Klan members fought for what they saw as their God-given rights.

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7. Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), xxxiv.

8. COP to James Cole, February 24, 1960, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

## One Precarious Location

For James Cole, this fear and concern pushed him to focus primarily on the small town of Maxton, North Carolina. This particular town provides a fascinating historical backdrop for a number of reasons, as it benefitted from a more localized Klan organization. Here, James Cole set up his “North Carolina Knights” which was disassociated from, and even experienced conflict with, the nationwide “U.S. Klans.”<sup>9</sup> This isolation encouraged intimacy within the group, and gave Cole a particular sense of responsibility to keep racial lines intact for the sake of this close-knit circle.<sup>10</sup>

Second, Maxton’s complex racial situation made it a prime spot for racial confusion. *The New York Times* described Maxton and the surrounding Robeson County as “about as segregated as any place in the South. Here the 30,000 Indians don’t mix with the 25,000 Negroes; the 40,000 whites don’t mix with the Indians.”<sup>11</sup> The fact that they had three separate schools, three drinking fountains, and three sections on the bus reinforced the superficial conclusion that stark lines of segregation were well-established in Maxton. However, on closer investigation, it becomes clear that these racial lines had fluctuated greatly over time—a situation which posed a distinct threat to the KKK ethos.

The local Indians occupied an interesting and distinct place within the racial landscape of Maxton. From the 1870s and 1880s, white politicians, alarmed by the possible political power wielded by interracial solidarity between blacks and Indians, decided to advocate the legal recognition of these Indians as a separate racial category. As part of this movement, the then-named “Coatans” (the Lumbee) were given their own school, Pembroke, in 1885.<sup>12</sup> Playing into white machinations, the Lumbee distanced themselves from the blacks, and instead embraced their own cultural identity and pride. Paradoxically, however, this movement of self-determination undermined Robeson’s strict racial hierarchy. The Lumbee were clearly no longer on the same racial rung as blacks, but

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9. Cunningham, *Klansville*, USA, 36.

10. Cunningham, *Klansville*, USA, 38.

11. Phillips, Wayne. “Indian Raid Knits A Carolina Town.” *New York Times*, January 26, 1958. <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9Co4EFDE1F3AE53BBC4E51DFB7668383649EDE>.

12. Elliot Walker, “‘I Told Him I’d Never Been to His Back Door for Nothing’: The Lumbee Indian Struggle for Higher Education under Jim Crow,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 90, no. 1: 49–87. 50–51.

it was now unclear where they fit. These racial lines were blurred enough for many Indians to infiltrate white institutions; between 1900 and 1954, Lumbees attended more than twenty white segregated institutions, and during the Second World War, the Lumbee, unlike blacks, were permitted to serve in regular white units.<sup>13</sup>

To many whites, especially Klansmen, these blurred lines raised the specter of racial mixing. New interest in eugenics and so-called “scientific racism” in the 1920s amplified these fears. Investigations into Lumbee heritage identified them as part Indian, white, and black and thus termed them “mixed-blood” or “tri-racial.”<sup>14</sup> This was a white supremacist’s worst nightmare: attempts at maintaining racial separation run sadly amok.

## Cole to the Rescue

Thus James Cole entered the scene, crusading to save the whites of Robeson County by reestablishing clear racial lines. Cole held rallies and other meetings, hoping to awaken the community to the racial danger surrounding them. In the beginning of January 1958, three Klan friends joined him in the King Cole Hotel, offering their help and support.<sup>15</sup> On Monday, January 13, they held two cross burnings. These were strategically placed in the yards of Indians who had recently moved into traditionally white homes,<sup>16</sup> thus making it clear they had transgressed appropriate racial boundaries. His emergence onto the complicated racial stage in Maxton was not, however, entirely appreciated. Knowing the precarious nature of their local racial arrangement, many feared “his rabble-rousing ability.”<sup>17</sup> Less than a week later, in an attempt to hold a large rally, the Klansmen were outnumbered and dispersed by the Lumbee, as described at the outset of this paper.

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13. Walker 49, 76.

14. Walker, 73.

15. Ibid.

16. “Klan-Indian Violence Is Feared In Rural North Carolina Area.” *New York Times*, January 17, 1958. Accessed September 10, 2015. <http://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1958/01/17/89041589.html?pageNumber=10>.

17. Phillips, Wayne. “Indian Raid Knits: A Carolina Town.” *New York Times*, January 26, 1958. Accessed September 10, 2015. <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9C04EFD5E1F3AE53BBC4E51DFB7668383649EDE>.

This event, known as the Battle of Hayes Pond, soon gained national attention. Newspapers and magazines, including the *New York Times* and *Life*,<sup>18</sup> rallied around the ironic image of the Indian underdog overpowering oppressive white supremacists. Media portrayed the Klan as vile characters who got their just rewards, claiming the power to decide that the Lumbee's rights were more valid than those of the Klan. The repercussions continued as the governor of North Carolina arrested James Cole for inciting a riot, a misdemeanor punishable by two years in prison in North Carolina.<sup>19</sup> After multiple evasive legal tactics, including an appeal to the Supreme Court, Cole was sentenced to a year and a half's incarceration.

## The Fight For Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

The Klan has traditionally been defined in terms of opposition. However, their motivation for fighting these groups was loyalty towards those for whom they fought. The Klansmen framed their struggle as a just war, viewing their violent actions as necessary to defend their way of life, their understanding of liberty, and their source of happiness. They were not fighting for these rights themselves—but for the legacy they desired to pass on to the next generation. George Dorsett, the national Klan chaplain and friend of James Cole, conveyed these sentiments in his statement, “I’m fighting not for myself, but for the children of America, to keep them from being raped, mugged, and knifed.”<sup>20</sup> Loyalty drove Klansmen to stand up for those they sought to protect. Therefore, to understand Klan motivations, one must first understand the relationships behind these motivations.

The letters sent to Cole in prison provide insights into some of his closest inner-Klan relationships. This eccentric cast of characters exhibits loyalty and the belief that this loyalty, in part, determines their morality. Other convicted KKK activists, like J.B. Stoner, the convicted Bethel Baptist Church bomber, wrote to remind Cole of the nobility of his cause. Women such as Mrs. Clemon Drew and “Mother Hale” offer words of Biblical comfort and

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18. “3.8 The Lumbees Face the Klan.” The Lumbees Face the Klan. Accessed October 20, 2015. <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-postwar/6068>.

19. *New York Times*, January 20, 1958. Accessed September 6, 2015.

20. Cunningham, *Klansville, USA*, 4.

love. Each character adds to the intricate web of relationships that make up Cole's social network.

This letter-based reconstruction of James Cole's supportive community provides a virtual tour of the Klan's world, complete with Klan members as personal guides. Explorations into this foreign world allow for a unique understanding of Klan beliefs and motivations. When the demonic inhumanity of the Klan is stripped away, the basic humanity of their cultural loyalty becomes apparent.

## Communal Trust and Loyalty

The most basic form of loyalty is found in the family. Contrary to the popular Klan image as nameless hooded figures, James Cole was backed by a deeply devoted family. Shortly after his incarceration, Cole's wife wrote:

*Dearest Darling, It is Tuesday night—I don't believe I'll ever learn how to go to bed early... Now the kids are in bed with your picture. Jim said to lay it there between them—but when I looked in a few minutes ago, they were both holding it and kissing it...sweetheart I'll try to have more news for you tomorrow night—we all love you—hope to be with you soon. God bless you. Love forever, Carolyn Cole.*<sup>21</sup>

One of the reasons this image is so endearing and relatable is the fact that it exemplifies the importance and morality of familial loyalty. These young children did not see their father as a bigoted villain. Rather, he was their darling daddy whom they missed dearly. They, along with Carolyn, were determined to stand by him through thick and thin. This type of loyalty is almost universally admired.

Another woman, the self-proclaimed "Mother Hale," tapped into this powerful familial loyalty when she wrote, "It is a mother's love that begins a letter after 11 pm at the end of a full days work."<sup>22</sup> Despite repeatedly referring to Cole as "son" she eventually admitted the adoptive nature of their relationship

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21. Carolyn Cole to James Cole, April 21, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

22. Mother Hale to James Cole, July 11, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

through the statement, “I love both Carolyn and you with greatest love (don’t think it would be more if you were my own children in blood).”<sup>23</sup> Thus her familial ties were created from something other than blood. Their adherence to specific core commonalities united them with quasi-familial loyalty.

One way loyalty can be conveyed is through an individual’s desire to communicate even when he or she has nothing to say. Letter-writing, for example, can be a means of comfort and support, even if there is little substance. Many of these letters to Cole either start or end with phrases such as, “there is not much to write about”<sup>24</sup> or “Well, it’s the old battle ax again, I don’t have any news except we all still love you and miss you very much”<sup>25</sup> and finally, “I guess I better close—I don’t have much news.”<sup>26</sup> What is the purpose of writing if you know you have nothing to say? Clearly their motivation to write was not driven by a desire to convey widespread racial slander, nor was it an effort to set up plans for future vindictive Klan attacks. The sole purpose of many of these letters was to express their support and love, or in other words: loyalty.

## The Morality of Loyalty

The strong family and friend connections displayed in these letters are heartwarming and therefore relatable. However, this ability to relate is not merely founded on warm feelings, but extends to the rationale behind these feelings as well. These letters are fascinating in that the authors show an inseparable connection between loyalty and morality. Not only were these Klan relationships loyal, they were loyal because they desired to be moral. One friend, Mrs. Drew Clemon, made this point clear when she closed her letter, “a loyal Christian

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23. Mother Hale to James Cole, October 1, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

24. Mrs Clemon Drew to James Cole, June 9, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

25. Carolyn Cole to James Cole, April 28, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

26. Mrs Clemon Drew to James Cole, June 9, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

friend.”<sup>27</sup> Here her loyalty is comparable only to her Christianity, as evidence of the moral nature of her friendship and admiration for James Cole.

This link drawn between Christian morality and loyalty is also apparent in the fact that authors continually asked for forgiveness for not writing. Common phrases include: “Please forgive me for waiting so long to answer your letter,” “I am sorry I haven’t wrote you oftener than I have...If you’ll forgive me, I’ll try to do better,” and “Please excuse me for failing to write you sooner. I have often thought of you even when I didn’t write.”<sup>28</sup> It is apparent that even Cole himself apologized for this grievance through one of his friend’s response, “Sure I will forgive you (with all my heart) for not writing sooner.”<sup>29</sup> The pursuit of forgiveness implies that one has failed to act morally. The fact that failing to write required repentance and forgiveness in the minds of the Klan communities corroborates the significance they placed on loyalty and Christian ethics.

This same moral trend continues with the repeated assurance that Cole had been neither forgotten nor forsaken. His friend Edward Filder reminded him, “I want you to know that we have not forgotten you and all your followers are eagerly awaiting your earliest possible release.”<sup>30</sup> He followed this by asking about Cole’s release date so that they could plan a welcome back party. He hoped to gather the community at the detention facility’s gates and thus “let the whole world know that James Cole is a man that can never be suppressed... *We will not forget.*”<sup>31</sup> These types of statements clearly convey loyalty and devotion. However, a statement from Mother Hale takes the significance of this connection even deeper. In an effort to comfort her adoptive son, she reminded him of

27. Mrs Clemon Drew to James Cole, June 5, 16, and 19, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

28. JB Stoner to James Cole, June 29, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

29. Mother Hale to James Cole, October 1, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

30. Dr. Edward Filder to James Cole, June 9, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

31. Dr. Edward Filder to James Cole, June 9, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

God's eternal loyalty: "How precious this promise is. 'I will never leave thee; nor forsake thee.'"<sup>32</sup> The implication is that if God conveys His loyalty by refusing to forget or forsake his children, then it is the duty of all true Christians to follow that example.

## A Moral Crusade

In order to protect their friends, family, and community, the Klan worked to show the same unrelenting loyalty exemplified by Christ. They refused to abandon their crusade and worked to preserve Southern ideals and protect those they loved. This could only happen by creating social barriers that would separate those to whom they were loyal, from those to whom they were not. As part of a KKK fundraising effort, Cole's wife, Carolyn, sent out a powerful form letter, closing with her signature and the words, "For God, Country, Race."<sup>33</sup> Cole and his cohort fought for these three categories because they viewed these as the most vital ways to protect their loved ones against moral degeneracy—universal themes seen throughout all iterations of the KKK, as noted by historian David Cunningham.<sup>34</sup>

Connections based on religious, racial, and political commonalities sound broad and impersonal. However, as seen in James Cole's case, he was not motivated solely by overarching ideology. Cole was not just loyal to ideals; he was loyal to the individual names and faces of those who symbolized those ideals. These individuals were worth protecting, and it was with them in mind that the Klan fought for God, country and race.

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32. Mother Hale to James Cole, July 11, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

33. Carolyn Cole to Fellow Patriot, April 3, 1959, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

34. Cunningham, *Klansville*, USA, 32.

## Opposing Yet Equally Logical Justification

These attitudes carry with them eerie parallels to another imprisoned preacher just four years later. He, too, willingly subjected himself to many harsh experiences, because he was loyal to his community and fought for their rights. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., from his cell in Birmingham, discussed one's obligation to keep just laws and break unjust ones. He wrote, "Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law."<sup>35</sup> Taking this statement a step further, one might ask, "How does one determine whether a cause is just or unjust?" If morals are the answer to this question as well, then who has the power to determine those morals? After all, James Cole and Martin Luther King Jr. both claimed to be endorsed by God. In their respective communities, their positions were moral.

Amongst his own people Cole was deemed "another Christian Martyr."<sup>36</sup> In preparation for one of his sermons, Cole scratched down a brief reminder to share Matthew 7:21, followed by the verse, "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50). Here even God uses preferential treatment predicated on levels of obedience. Thus Klan members considered it entirely ethical to maintain racial separation and show preferential treatment to the rights of their own group (even though, in their case, they had done nothing to merit their favored status).

Dr. King's desire to enhance the rights of his community required him to ignore what the Klan viewed as the rights of their group. On the other hand, Klansmen's loyalty to lines of race, religion and country required men like James Cole to ignore the equality of blacks, Jews, and communists. Both King and Cole viewed their preferences as logical and moral, yet their causes were incompatible. This incompatibility required that the rights of one group supersede the rights of another. In this case, the media and the masses sided with the Lumbee. Yet, from the Klan perspective, it was Dr. King's marchers and sit-in

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35. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," [https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\\_Gen/Letter\\_Birmingham.html](https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html).

36. JB Stoner to James Cole, June 29, 1960, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

participants who deserved to be convicted for inciting riot. As one of Cole's fellow Klan members wrote, "The nipers [sic] are sitting down all over—the Whites are taking it standing up. They're inciting riots and most of them [the leaders] are getting away with it. But if it were Jimmie Cole, John Casper or some other law-abiding (white) citizen—they'd be put in chains."<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, James Cole claimed, "God set the pattern for segregation."<sup>38</sup>

Setting the Klan's cause up against Dr. King's may seem trite at best and like advocating white supremacy at worst. However, the question is not whether the Klansmen were right or wrong. Of course they were wrong. But if we stop there, we will not learn anything of value. Instead, we will merely remain with the obvious.

## Conclusion

Viewing the world through the eyes of the Klan eliminates the obvious and adds a shade of nuance to our view of the world around us. In leaving the realm of morally smug and easy answers, one is forced to admit that fighting for one's rights, protecting loved ones, and maintaining morality are no longer adequate answers by themselves. The Klan's cause claimed all of those motivators. Refusing to leave the mental universe of certainty and moral superiority is unproductive and even dangerous. It ignores the fact that behind the white masks, behind the backwoods bigots, are real people, who have opinions, loyalties and rights just like everyone else. Their perceived rights can be overridden for the public good, but they should be acknowledged and considered. Otherwise, we stand the chance of looking back fifty years from now—only to realize the backwards bigots we ourselves have become.

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37. COP to James Cole, February 24, 1960, James William Cole Papers (#40), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

38. Cunningham, *Klansville*, USA, 32.

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*Erin Facer hails from the historic town of Charlottesville, Virginia. This, in part, drew her to study history at BYU, where she graduated in December 2015. She currently works as a research intern for the Historic Sites division of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She and her husband Benjin are excited to head back to the south this summer as they move to Tennessee, ironically the birth place of the Ku Klux Klan.*

# “A Sufficient Security”

## British Public Discourse on Proposals for Reconciliation with the Thirteen American Colonies, 1778–1780

Katie Richards

THE STORM OF THEIR MALICE IS NOW READY TO BURST UPON OUR heads,” wrote John Cartwright of the allied relationship between British North America and France, Britain’s “ancient enemy.”<sup>1</sup> With the signing of the Alliance Treaty on February 6, 1778, the French began officially extending their support to the thirteen American colonies fighting for independence from Great Britain. Such an alliance was bound to provoke many responses within England. In his pamphlet “The Memorial of Common-Sense,” Cartwright wrote that the very act of France entering into a treaty with the American colonies admitted those colonies to the rank of independent states, and that such an act threatened the economic interests of the Empire.<sup>2</sup> Joining with France would not only provide the Americans with more resources with which to fight; it would also give France direct access and prerogative to American resources and trade, regardless of the war’s outcome.

Confronted with the Franco-Colonial alliance, the British press proposed several plans of reconciliation with the colonies. Parliament, buoyed by the press, also sought reconciliation; in late 1778, it sent the Carlisle Peace Commission

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1. John Cartwright, “The Memorial of Common-Sense, upon the Present Crisis between Great-Britain and America” (1778) in *British Pamphlets on the American Revolution, 1763–1785*, volume 6, ed. John Dickinson (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 178.

2. Cartwright, “The Memorial of Common-Sense,” in Dickinson, *British Pamphlets*, 179.

to the colonies in an attempt to persuade them to rejoin the Empire, but to no avail.<sup>3</sup> Official government policy required Parliament to continue fighting to reclaim Britain's colonies and oppose the French; however, some English pamphlets and articles published from 1778 onwards suggested that many Britons were interested in reaching a diplomatic settlement with their American cousins.

Once the Colonial Army secured French support, American victory seemed probable and British attempts at reconciliation preposterous. Independence, declared in 1776, made the Continental Congress' opposition to both King and Parliament quite clear. In Congress' view, the British government had ceased to represent the American people and, encouraged by Enlightenment philosophy, the Americans declared the social contract between British America and London null and void. To the Americans, Britain was now a foreign power—one whose territorial interests in North America threatened American interests. To many Britons, however, reconciliation was not such a radical proposal; the history of their own country as well as past experience with other colonial entities suggested that the colonies may not have been lost after all, and that once the fighting ceased, an agreement could be reached that would keep America within the Empire and would benefit both countries.<sup>4</sup>

The British perspective of the American Revolution is still a developing field of study. Historians have done little scholarship on these proposal pamphlets and their impact, apart from H.T. Dickinson's brief introductions that preface each pamphlet in his eight-volume set published in 2008. Stephen Conway argues that the war weakened the British idea of an empire of liberty made up of predominantly British settlements to one of authoritarian rule over non-Britons.<sup>5</sup> Troy Bickham, based on his analysis of newspapers of the era, argues that while Britain was not a nation of imperialists at the outset of the war, by 1781 more Britons viewed imperialism as a way to ensure Britain's powerful world

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3. T.H. Dickinson, ed. *British Pamphlets on the American Revolution, 1763–1785*, volume 6 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 245.

4. "The old imperial connection must be restored on the basis of trust, consent and mutual self-interest." See Edmund Burke, *Conciliation with America* in H.T. Dickinson, *Britain and the American Revolution* (Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex, UK: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1998), 106–107; see also Dickinson on Chatham, 108–109.

5. Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000), 315.

status.<sup>6</sup> Eliga H. Gould, in his study of British identity as revealed through public discourse, does claim that after the war the British never returned to thinking of any part of their empire as an extension of their nation as they had before.<sup>7</sup> This paper seeks to extend this argument with a deeper focus on primary texts. By examining and analyzing a series of pamphlets from 1778–1780 and exploring the historical context of the British at the time, this paper will advance possible explanations regarding this mentality of reconciliation.

## Proposal for Reconciliation

“Proposals for a Plan Towards a Reconciliation and Reunion with the Thirteen Provinces of America, and for a Union with the Other Colonies” was written by an anonymous author in 1778 and is a prime example of British reconciliation rhetoric. In his introduction to the pamphlet, Dickinson states that the author displayed a greater willingness to accommodate the American colonists’ demands for shared sovereignty than the arch-conservative Lord North and his cabinet: he suggested the development of a federal empire. The author proposed that the colonies keep their Continental Congress and their colonial legislatures and send representatives to a trans-Atlantic Council of State, which would consist of representatives from England and the other British colonies and whose main function would be to oversee imperial affairs of interest to all the colonies. The Council of State was in reality a compromise proposal, as the author believed American representation in Parliament to be infeasible. He clearly expressed his desire to withdraw from the war while holding on to the American colonies for their economic benefits; he hoped that this union would be seen as one that would benefit all parties involved, and would serve to strengthen the Empire as a whole. According to Dickinson, the author’s opinions on the war reflected a common opinion of some contemporary anti-British American thinkers.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Troy Bickham, *Making Headlines: The American Revolution as Seen through the British Press* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 16.

7. Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 214.

8. Dickinson, *British Pamphlets*, 245–6.

The pamphlet goes on to enumerate thirteen proposals that seek to end the conflict and establish a workable solution that addresses British and Colonial concerns. Clauses one through three establish British North America as a separate dominion of the King, establish a national legislature (the Council of State), preserve royal prerogative, and guarantee the right of self-government in the colonies. Clauses four through six grant the Council of State the right to levy taxes in British North America—that in turn required approved by the state legislatures and by the British Parliament. Clauses seven and eight stipulate the withdrawal of the British army from North America and require the Council of State and the states to levy militias to defend themselves. Clause nine limits the spread of Catholicism but grants general freedom of religion within to Protestants of all denominations, while clause eleven excludes the newly conquered French Canada from this agreement. Clause ten allows states to secede from British North America to rejoin the Empire as before, so long as Parliament and the Council of State approve the decision. Clauses twelve and thirteen allow any state to secede after a thirty year trial period but require secessionist states to privilege British trade relationships and requires the British Empire to guarantee the liberty and sovereignty of the independent states.<sup>9</sup>

## A Council of State and British Federalism

Central to the author's plan for reconciliation is the formation of a Council of State—a conglomerate body of delegates meant to serve as mediator between Parliament in London and the different parliamentary bodies of each nation. Essentially, British North America would have similar status to eighteenth-century Ireland—it would enjoy nominal self-government but also be inextricably linked to the British Crown and under the loose oversight of the British Parliament.<sup>10</sup>

This proposal calls into question modern interpretations of the origins and development of federalism, specifically within the context of British history. Contrary to the notion that the concept of federalism was of American origin,

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9. Anon., "Proposals for a Plan Towards a Reconciliation and Reunion with the Thirteen Provinces of America, and for a Union with the Other Colonies," in *British Pamphlets on the American Revolution, 1763–1785*, volume 6, ed. John Dickinson (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 254–258.

10. Anon., "Proposals for a Plan," 259–60.

this idea of a Council of State is an example of a legitimate alternative perspective of the reformed state, amidst the ongoing debate surrounding providing representation to Britain's colonial entities.<sup>11</sup> It is worthwhile to note that while the colonists claimed ideas such as federalism, the conception of natural rights, and the right of resistance against arbitrary power as part of the emerging American identity, none of the colonial political thinkers contributed directly to these ideas, but rather fed off British philosophical foundations.<sup>12</sup>

## Parliamentary Power and Colonial Representation

One can assume that the author knew the general disposition of the American colonists towards Parliament at the time. Since the signing of the first Parliamentary acts that affected the colonies in 1764—intended as a means of managing the imperial debt rather than an instrument of subversion or control—the colonists objected on the grounds of a lack of representation within the legislative body of Parliament. Parliament maintained that all British citizens were virtually represented by aristocrats dedicated to pursuing the indivisible public good of the nation; the colonists had realized early on the impracticability of securing actual representation in Parliament, and thus preferred to regard their own legislative assemblies as their best representatives.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the pamphlet's author needed to provide the colonists representation without compromising the authority of Parliament; he did so by proposing a separate council. Whether or not this proposal adequately addressed American concerns or would have simply exacerbated existing tensions is unclear. Within the context of Scottish federal ideas in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (which were generally vague and inconsistent), the Scots were drawn into the essentially English state and empire while maintaining the appearance of autonomy, which may have served as an ominous warning for the colonists in America.<sup>14</sup>

Setting doubts of functionality aside, the author was confident that this proposal for a council of intermediaries would be a "sufficient security" against

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11. Michael Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism* (London: Leicester University Press, 1949), 12.

12. Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism*, 8.

13. H.T. Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the American Revolution* (London: Longman, 1998), 80.

14. John Kende, *Federal Britain: A History* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 10–12.

the wary colonists' distrust of Parliament.<sup>15</sup> To make this point, he drew on the 1707 Act of Union, which joined England and Scotland. The Council, he declared, would be the body that appointed all officers in revenue, excise, customs, etc., in order to protect against the minister favoring one nation above any other.<sup>16</sup> "The privy council<sup>17</sup> [sic] of Great Britain will always be a sufficient check to the general council," and vice-versa.<sup>18</sup> While he admitted that his proposal compromised a significant amount of Parliament's power, he knew that the thirteen provinces would not accept anything less than what he was offering. Indeed, the author was so confident that he dared to bring up the issue of taxation, knowing well enough that the topic was a sensitive one. He proposed that the Council introduce and vote upon an annual tax, and then submit it to the state assemblies. If a state did not agree with the proposed tax, its assembly could propose one to the Council. If its proposals did not meet with Council approval within three years, Parliament would remove the state from the Empire, deny it imperial protection, and prohibit it from communication with other provinces until it paid a proper quota. His argument was that by taking away Parliament's ability to tax imperial bodies, Americans would have no need to fear taxation without their consent. For additional security, if a state still felt abused by the Empire it could simply refuse to pay the tax and disunite after thirty years had passed.<sup>19</sup>

## Lessons from British Colonial History

It is useful to examine the history of social and political revolution, and even civil war, from which this author and other Britons were drawing conclusions. Only about a century before the American colonists began to rebel, the English were engaged in their own series of civil wars. After the execution of Charles I in 1649, the Commonwealth of England (later the Protectorate, under the rule of Oliver Cromwell) replaced the monarchy. The next few years saw a series of political struggles and bloody battles, culminating in the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In this context, then, the British could have very well

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15. Anon., "Proposals for a Plan," 266.

16. Anon., "Proposals for a Plan," 262.

17. A government body made up of councilors appointed by the King.

18. Anon., "Proposals for a Plan," 263.

19. Anon., "Proposals for a Plan," 265–6.

expected the American Revolutionary War to result in a similar outcome.<sup>20</sup> Many British citizens, especially in the earlier years of the conflict, did indeed see it as a civil war, regarded the colonists as their fellow Englishmen, and opposed Parliament for the use of military force as a tool of public policy.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the crown itself was seen by some as the unnatural mother who renounced her natural feelings and went to war against her own child.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the belief that the American rebellion would result in a return of imperial control over the thirteen colonies—or a Restoration of their monarchy, per se—was an arguably rational conclusion, because it had happened in Great Britain before.

The American Revolution was certainly not the first (nor would it be the last) time that Britain experienced conflict with one of her imperial possessions. This anonymous author specifically referenced imperial conflicts in Ireland, Scotland, and Canada. Ireland, officially added to the British dominions in 1536 by the conquest led by Henry VIII, consumed many of Britain's resources as Britain struggled over the next two centuries to assert control over a disenfranchised populace whose Catholicism gained the sympathy of Catholic Europe. At the start of the American Revolution, Ireland was also subject to high tariffs and restricted trading laws with England due to the Navigation Acts. Other grievances to the Irish people and political parties were Poyning's Law and the Declaratory Act of 1719, which allowed the Parliament of Great Britain to legislate for Ireland and overrule the Irish House of Lords. Discontentment within Ireland, questions of Irish versus British identity, and the debate over home rule were relevant contemporary issues that may very well have affected this pamphlet author and other British thinkers at the time.

Scotland and Canada, though less truculent than Ireland, were also problematic to empire and could have been influential in shaping reconciliation thought. After many years of attempted absorption and personal union, England successfully forged a political union with Scotland in 1707. The Acts of Union saved Scotland from bankruptcy but became a source of tension after Parliament disinherited the Scottish Stuart dynasty and attempted to reassert

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20. J.G.A. Pocock, "1776: The Revolution Against Parliament," in *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 266.

21. Bickham, *Making Headlines*, 7.

22. Dror Wahrman, "The English Problem of Identity in the American Revolution," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 4 (2001), 1253, [http://www.jstor.org/stable/2692947?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2692947?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

control over the Church of Scotland. French colonists and Catholic influence in Quebec after 1763 threatened to undermine Britain's control of Canada, and many throughout Eastern Canada and Nova Scotia were sympathetic to the American Revolutionary cause. Conflict of this sort, therefore, was familiar to the British people and to Parliament. This experience provided them the confidence to treat the American colonists the same way and ultimately to pursue the same outcome—first, resolution through subversion, and then reconciliation.

## A Separate American Identity

Perhaps this author shared the opinion of David Hartley, a British writer who was “confident that there [was] no implacable hatred between the people of England and the people of America.” “The contention,” Hartley continued, “has been between the ministers of the crown, and our late fellow-subjects.”<sup>23</sup> This reflects the idea that the British did not fully understand evolving American identity, and accordingly appealed for unity based on the imperial relationship that existed in the past. His use of “Americans” served to provide a distinction between the embittered colonists and the British nation—though not strong enough to warrant independence. Thus, the author found a compromise that he seemed more than willing to extend—perhaps because it was still in the economic favor of the British, or perhaps, as he said: “[my] view is solely the happiness and prosperity of both nations.”<sup>24</sup> Even if such a declaration is to be believed, the author's boldness in his proposals begs the question: Why was such a plan of reconciliation plausible, and what may have compelled the American colonists to even consider it? The answer lies in the twelfth and thirteenth points outlined in this plan, as well as the author's appeal to the instability of the emerging American identity.

The author made it clear that he intended the clause of disunion to be the most attractive offer of his proposal. If, after thirty years, the colonists were still dissatisfied, they could leave the empire with no negative consequences and no direct political obligations to Britain. If they chose to disunite, the Americans could choose whichever form of government they liked; having

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23. David Hartley, “Letters on the American War,” in *British Pamphlets on the American Revolution, 1763–1785*, volume 6, ed. John Dickinson (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 358–9.

24. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 264.

their own assemblies, the author argued, should be sufficient security for their liberties.<sup>25</sup> If that was to be their future, then they would, at the very least, forever benefit from a healthy trade relationship with the nation that was once their mother country. Independence, however, was much less desirable, and the author offered a number of reasons to support this point. If the war were prolonged, and supposing that the Americans triumphed the end, their already desolate country would fall into great debt and would have to struggle long and hard in order to become a great nation.<sup>26</sup> If instead the colonists, after a few years of attempting to preserve the Empire, still chose independence, they could separate from Britain and it would be as if the political connection between them had never existed. With no common center to promote unity, the author anticipated that the American colonies would naturally “divide into different kingdoms or republics [*sic*], and which may occasion endless wars among themselves.”<sup>27</sup> (While the American Civil War was not “endless,” the benefit of hindsight gives this prediction some credibility). The author therefore played on the possible insecurities of the Americans, whether real or imagined, affirmed or denied.

The author never explicitly referenced the family relationship metaphor so commonly referred to at the time, but he did freely employ the idea of the colonies’ dependence on Britain. The author tried to capitalize on the sentimental notion of America’s origins, being as they were so undeniably and unalterably British that any attempt to sever ties to the Mother Country would leave the colonists without an identity. He believed that coercion should not have been necessary—America should have naturally and instinctively desired to be part of the Empire, “not as a conquered country, but as coming forth out of her own womb.”<sup>28</sup> The author gave voice to these British-born colonists by supposing that, as citizens of the newly-formed union, they would think: “I am a free subject of an ancient and glorious commonwealth, famous throughout the world for its virtue, honor, and bravery, and in some measure giving law to the greatest part of Europe.” While, on the other hand, the newly independent colonists may have had cause to say: “I am, it’s true, free and independent; but we are a new state; we have no ancient glory to boast of, but what we derive

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25. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 297.

26. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 282.

27. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 280.

28. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 285.

from another, and a now foreign nation.”<sup>29</sup> The author clearly tried to evoke an emotional response by suggesting that without the Empire, the colonists would never achieve the same level of greatness that they currently had the opportunity to sustain.<sup>30</sup> As a final point, the author stated that Great Britain would most likely always endeavor to retain North America, so a union of this kind would be a better option than a bloody war.<sup>31</sup>

## Benefits of Union for Both Nations

While appealing mostly to the colonists, the author also used the disunion clause to convince his fellow Britons to choose the road of reconciliation. “The consideration of their having the liberty to part when they please will very probably be the best means of making the connection the most lasting.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, the author hoped that the possibility of secession should have demonstrated British flexibility and enticed the colonists to stay. If they happened to disunite, Great Britain was to have claim on trading rights with American colonies—or rather, states—thus forever keeping their economic hold on that area of the world. The pamphlet appeals to an imperial British identity, hoping that an imperial identity would resonate with the American colonists. Furthermore, the author wrote that if Britain granted America independence, after a long and bloody war, then the Empire would lose American resources and assistance in promoting a British worldview. The pamphleteer predicted that Anglo dis-unification would leave behind two states “weak and distressed in time of war and burdened and discontented in time of peace.”<sup>33</sup> Worried about the cost to the Empire if Britain lost her American colonies, the author urged reconciliation.

Both Britain and the American colonies could have benefited from prolonged union, as understood in the thirteen clauses outlined in the pamphlet. Britain would no longer be required to maintain a significant military presence in North America and the new British North American state would be

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29. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 285.

30. An idea supported by British economists such as Josiah Tucker (see Tract IV *The True Interest of Great-Britain Set Forth in Regard to the Colonies; and the Only Means of Living in Peace and Harmony with Them*)

31. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 290.

32. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 275.

33. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 281.

responsible for its own defense and management. Furthermore, cessation of hostilities meant that the British Empire could avoid a long war with Spain and France over American sovereignty.<sup>34</sup> The pamphleteer also recognized potential pitfalls in his proposals. Forming essentially a personal union with the American colonies meant that Great Britain would have had to give up direct control over the thirteen American colonies—a heavy blow to British pride as well as British imperial identity. Some could have argued that Parliament would have had to give up its supremacy.<sup>35</sup> The author admitted that it was dangerous to propose amending the British government; however, the pamphleteer argued that the British Constitution was a living constitution by nature, and must continually be remedied as it increased in age in order to make it immortal. Finally, the author admitted that, though the Americans may not want to give up the independence afforded them by the war, the war was not yet over and there was no guarantee of an eventual American victory.<sup>36</sup> Throughout the entire pamphlet, the author was persistent and unapologetic of his proposal, but he did appease his opposition at the very end by offering an alternative outcome. If the thirteen provinces should refuse to agree to this proposal, instead of continuing to subdue them by force, Britain should withdraw its troops, acknowledge their independence, and sign a trade treaty. The British Empire would maintain direct control over Canada, the Floridas, and Nova Scotia.<sup>37</sup> On that note, the author ended his narrative, still completely and unabashedly convinced that a reconciliation would bring to both nations the greatest amount of profit, security, and glory.

## Similar Lines of Thought in Other British Pamphlets

The author of this 1778 pamphlet was not alone in his ideologies and ways of thinking. Other pamphlet writers of the time suggested similar proposals, or at least seemed to have been influenced by similar concepts. Thomas Tod, in his pamphlet “Observations on American Independency,” believed that the

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34. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 287–8.

35. The author countered, taxation would never have been forced—Americans would never have complied, and adding to the difficulty was the fact that they were an ocean away

36. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 292–296.

37. Anon., “Proposals for a Plan,” 300.

two parties should have agreed upon reconciliation earlier in the conflict; if they had, thousands of lives could have been spared.<sup>38</sup> Concerning the idea of uniting with the provinces to strengthen the entire Empire, the anonymous author of “An Essay on the Interests of Britain in Regard to America” said: “Let us not fear [America’s] strength; in augmenting her’s [sic] we shall add to our own.”<sup>39</sup> This author’s plan, while quite different from the “Proposals”—it consisted of dividing the western empire into the four great governments of Canada, New England, Virginia, and Virginia Ultra—drew similarly on the idea of each legislative body having some degree of sovereignty while still paying tribute to the British Crown and Parliament.<sup>40</sup>

Another anonymous author, the writer of “A Plan of Reconciliation with America,” cited the “middle path” as the desirable option between internal coercion, which he said had failed, and external coercion, which could not have the effect of reverting things to the status quo; he claimed that this middle path was obtainable by reconciliation.<sup>41</sup> “Independency,” he wrote, “is fatal to your Majesty’s empire.”<sup>42</sup> In addition to fear of independent American colonies, he also discussed the fear that the French would sweep in after the Battle of Saratoga (1778) and take what belonged to the British. This author did not suggest a union, claiming that a union would have been “ridiculous” and referencing problems of union with the Scottish. Instead, “North America will be a separate nation, but not an independent one, and will be as greatly dependent on Great Britain as Ireland is.”<sup>43</sup> This plan, although thorough, did not attempt to appeal to American interests as others did, and thus presented a more narrow perspective. Generally, many plans for reconciliation with the colonies were put forth between 1777 and 1781, and many Britons believed and were persuaded to believe that reconciliation would be best for the Empire.

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38. Thomas Tod, “Observations on American Independency,” [1779] in *British Pamphlets on the American Revolution, 1763–1785*, volume 7, ed. John Dickinson (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 14.

39. Anon., “An Essay on the Interests of Britain in Regard to America,” (1780) in *British Pamphlets on the American Revolution, 1763–1785*, volume 7, ed. John Dickinson (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 38.

40. Anon., “An Essay on the Interests of Britain in Regard to America,” 45.

41. Anon., “A Plan of Reconciliation with America; Consistent with the Dignity and Interests of Both Countries,” (1782) in *British Pamphlets on the American Revolution, 1763–1785*, volume 7, ed. John Dickinson (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 234.

42. Anon., “A Plan of Reconciliation with America,” 235.

43. Anon., “A Plan of Reconciliation with America,” 249.

## Conclusion

While the idea may seem preposterous now, reconciliation with the colonies during the American Revolution and War for Independence was not so implausible to contemporaries. The British knew of the conflict overseas through newspapers and other media, and thus they formed their opinions and judgments as the war progressed. Although the attitudes of the British ranged from pro-American sentiment to solid support of Parliament's policy of pacification, most did not fail to recognize that the Battle of Saratoga and the entry of France and Spain into the war had turned the tables. In order to preserve Britain's economic interests in the Americas, the British had to undertake new strategies, and many turned to reconciliation. They proposed many plans that would have allowed for a different kind of union between the colonies and Great Britain, one that would have forestalled the possibility of independence while acknowledging American calls for political sovereignty.

In the case of the anonymous author in 1778, the Council of State would have served to mediate matters of the Empire, including taxation. The author was convinced that such a plan would appease the colonists because first, they would have been represented legislatively (not unlike Ireland at the time), and second, because they would not have been bound definitively to the Empire, but could have chosen to disunite after the space of thirty years. When considered in a larger context, one could argue that these British writers were neither completely delusional nor impossibly optimistic, but were putting forth their arguments in light of comparable events in British history. England herself had been the victim of a civil war and had had her governmental system completely dismantled and then restored again. In the Empire's dealings with other countries—Ireland and Scotland, for example—it had faced opposition and upheaval, but had managed to calm those storms. Other colonies in Great Britain's possession at the time—Canada, Nova Scotia, the Floridas, the Caribbean—seemed to be living peacefully and comfortably as citizens of the Empire. American identity and independence seemed to break the norm, and yet it is difficult to trace consistent reasons for this. The relationship between Britain and its rebellious North American colonies would, however, be forever different; at this point in the war, there was an abrupt shift from the maternal demand for obedience to something resembling a marriage proposal, a union that would set the motherland and the colonies on almost equal footing and would greatly benefit both parties. While there is still much more research to be done regarding the British perspective of the American Revolution, the words

of this author and others provide significant insight into common British mentality and evolving imperial thought during this formative era.

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*Katie Richards is from Las Vegas, Nevada, and is a senior studying History at BYU. She wrote this paper as part of a supervised research experience while participating in the Cambridge Direct Enrollment Programme during summer 2015. As both a proud American and a proper Anglophile, this research has given Katie the opportunity to reconcile her love for the cultures, traditions, and values of both countries, past and present.*

# “Something Sounder, Nobler, and Greater”

## Neo-Gothic Architecture and National Identity in Confederation-Era Canada

Susannah Morrison

THE MORNING OF 1 SEPTEMBER 1860 WAS UNSEASONABLY WARM for Canada, but the heat did not deter the thousands of spectators gathered on the southern banks of the Ottawa River to catch a glimpse of the young Prince of Wales. As the crowning moment of Prince Albert’s royal visit to Canada, the eighteen-year-old prince laid the cornerstone for the new government buildings in Ottawa. Keen to use the Prince’s tour as an opportunity to show the colony off at its finest, Canada’s leaders had outdone themselves in organizing an unabashedly imperial public reception for their future king. The Union Jack flew over a life-size portrait of Queen Victoria, carefully positioned in full view of the crowd.<sup>1</sup> A group of well-scrubbed, fidgeting school-children stood ready to welcome their future sovereign, perhaps with a rendition of ‘God Save the Queen.’<sup>2</sup> The colonial government’s efforts to impress, however, seem to have been rather lost on their British visitors, with one commentator for the *Times* rather snidely remarking that, “...mud is the only thing which has, as yet, been completed and brought to perfection in the city of Ottawa.”<sup>3</sup>

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1. “The Prince of Wales’s Visit to Canada,” *Times* (London), 16 September 1860, accessed 16 February 2015, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/33065055/>

2. Robert Cellem, *Visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to the British North American Provinces and United States, in the Year 1860*. (Toronto: Henry Roswell, 1861), 186.

3. “The Prince of Wales’s Visit to Canada.”

Leaders of the Anglo-Canadian community, however, hoped it would not remain so for long. Canada's Parliamentary complex—also known as Parliament Hill—designed in lavish Neo-Gothic style, was earmarked to be the most sophisticated example of its kind in the Americas. To a lay observer, the choice of architectural style may have seemed rather predictable; Neo-Gothic was very much in vogue in Britain at the time, enjoying an unprecedented wave of popularity after its selection as the style for the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster.<sup>4</sup> Derived from the counter-cultural Anglo-Catholic and Medievalist movements, which rejected industrialist Victorian Britain in favour of the ancient origins of the English church and state, the Neo-Gothic—also known as the Gothic Revival—style carried with it strong traditionalist symbolism. Gothic Revival buildings were understood to be inherently conservative, representing the twin traditional authorities of church and state.<sup>5</sup> Because of this overt religious and political symbolism, official buildings throughout the British Empire were frequently built in the Gothic Revival style, intended to signify British supremacy to potentially rebellious locals.<sup>6</sup> These structures were met with varying reactions throughout the empire, from passive acceptance in Australia to festering resentment in India.<sup>7</sup> In Canada, however, the most staunchly loyal of Britain's overseas colonies, there was no need to intimidate the locals into colonial compliance.<sup>8</sup> With the exception of Québec, Neo-Gothic was generally freely embraced in Canada, dominating the country's architectural landscape well into the twentieth century.

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4. Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste* (London: Constable and Company, 1950), 153–163.

5. Michael J. Lewis, *The Gothic Revival* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 81.

6. For further information on colonialism and the Gothic Revival elsewhere in the British Empire, see Anna-Maria Moubayed, "On Culture, Colonialism and Religious Gothic Revival Architecture Across the British Empire" (chapter of PhD diss., Concordia University, 2010), [https://www.academia.edu/3880393/On\\_Culture\\_Colonialism\\_and\\_Religious\\_Gothic\\_Revival\\_Architecture\\_Across\\_the\\_British\\_Empire](https://www.academia.edu/3880393/On_Culture_Colonialism_and_Religious_Gothic_Revival_Architecture_Across_the_British_Empire); Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

7. Mary Casey, "Remaking Britain: Establishing British Identity and Power at Sydney Cove, 1788–1821," *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 24 (2006), 87–98, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29544560>; Thomas R. Metcalf, "Architecture and the Representation of Empire: India, 1860–1910," *Representations*, no. 6 (Spring 1984), 37–65, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928537>.

8. Sanford Fleming, *England and Canada: A Summer Tour Between Old and New Westminster*. (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1884), 439.

Scholars have disagreed about the reasons for this long-lived popularity. Alan Gowans, Canada's late premier architectural historian, theorized that Canadians historically favoured the Gothic Revival due to its combination of both French and English elements, in a symbolic rendering of the modern country's bilingual identity.<sup>9</sup> More recently, Christopher A. Thomas has argued that, while Canadian Neo-Gothic was originally British in sentiment, the size and scale of the style illustrate transcontinental expansionist ambitions lying latent in Anglo-Canadian society and politics.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, Thomas classified Canadian Neo-Gothic—and by extension, Confederation-era Canada itself—as a combination of Anglo and American influences.<sup>11</sup>

Both Gowans' and Thomas' arguments, however, fail to take Canada's complex historical context fully into consideration. Facing an uncertain future as a colony, ill-at-ease with the sizeable French minority in their midst, and threatened with American expansionism, Anglo-Canadians embraced the Neo-Gothic as a defensive statement of their colony's fundamentally British character. Contrary to Gowans' vision of nineteenth century multiculturalism, Anglo-Canadians used Neo-Gothic to exert colonialist interests within their domestic national sphere, employing Neo-Gothic as a tool of imperialism and assimilation against the colony's Québécois population. Anglo-Canadian leaders made use of the Gothic Revival as they sought to shape their nation after a very specific ideal. Canada was to be a paradoxical composite of loyalty and modernity, a proud new chapter in the history of English parliamentary democracy, and above all else, a privileged, dynamic partner in the future of the British Empire. These grand ambitions are plainly interwoven in the architectural narrative of Canada's national buildings.

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9. Alan Gowans, *Building Canada: An Architectural History of Canadian Life*. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966).

10. Christopher A. Thomas, "Slippery Talk of Parliament's Architecture: Canadian, Canadian British, or Anglo-American?," *RACAR: revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 29, no. 1 (2004): 14–27, accessed 30 January 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42630692>.

11. Thomas, "Slippery Talk of Parliament's Architecture," 19.

## The History of British Colonialism in Canada

Although Canada formally became a British colony in 1763, it attracted few immigrants from the British Isles prior to 1815. During this time, Canada's largest groups of English-speaking immigrants were refugees, Scottish Highlanders dispossessed by the failed Jacobite Uprising and Loyalists fleeing persecution in the Thirteen Colonies.<sup>12</sup> When relocating voluntarily, most British immigrants preferred to make their home in the United States, where land was plentiful and the economy more developed. Repeated American invasions of Canada during the War of 1812, however, reminded the imperial government of the need for a larger, stronger population in Canada. As such, the British government began to assertively market its North American colony as a destination for those seeking to leave Britain and start anew across the Atlantic.<sup>13</sup> Immigration to Canada was not merely "a remedy for [the] social distress" caused by overpopulation in Britain.<sup>14</sup> Rather, British immigrants to Canada were to be the "engine of empire and its expansion."<sup>15</sup> Within the half-century following the War of 1812, nearly two million Britons answered their government's call and flooded into Canada.<sup>16</sup> While immigrants to the United States came from a wide range of European backgrounds, Canada's new settlers were unusually homogeneous. Whether English, Irish, Scottish, or Welsh, almost all hailed from the British Isles. Although English immigrants dominated with about twenty-five percent of the migrant population, the Scottish and Irish were strongly represented as well, following in the footsteps of their refugee forefathers as they fled from overpopulation, tax burdens, and food shortages in their native countries.<sup>17</sup>

Crucially, the British emigrants to Canada after 1812 were the children of empire. Within the lifetime of this particular generation, protracted wars

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12. Phillip Buckner, "Introduction," in *Canada and the British Empire*, ed. Phillip Buckner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18.

13. Elizabeth Jane Errington, "British Migration and British America, 1783–1867," in Buckner, 141.

14. C.E. Snow, "Emigration from Great Britain," in *International Migrations*, vol. 2, Interpretations, ed. Walter F. Willcox (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1931), 244.

15. Eric Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland since 1600* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004), 303.

16. J.M. Bumsted, "The Consolidation of British North America, 1783–1860," in Buckner, 64.

17. Snow, *Emigration from Great Britain*, 239.

against Republican and Napoleonic France, and attendant anti-French rhetoric, had fostered a strong sense of national identity.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the overseas British Empire had grown exponentially, contributing to a growing sense of national pride and exceptionalism. The migrants who crossed the Atlantic during this time period carried with them a newfound loyalty to a united, imperial Britain.<sup>19</sup> This philosophy was warmly received in Anglo-Canada, whose population was comprised largely of the descendants of Loyalists, a community with a proven history of valour in defense of their Britishness.<sup>20</sup> The post-1812 influx of new British immigrants only reinforced the colony's well-established tradition of loyal monarchist sympathies.

## Anglo-Canadian Nationalism and the Neo-Gothic

By the early 1860s, a combination of social engineering and historical accident had ensured that, from the British perspective, Canada's prosperous, thriving Anglophone community was an ideal model of the benefits of overseas empire. However, the Canadian point of view told a different story. With an estimated population of nearly 3,200,000, the beginnings of an independent national identity were beginning to take root in the public's consciousness.<sup>21</sup> The majority of Anglo-Canadian leaders felt the time had come for their colony to take steps towards nationhood.<sup>22</sup> However, it was widely disagreed on what form, exactly, independence from Britain would take. A powerful separatist faction, comprised of French-Canadian partisans backed by Anglo-Canadian businessmen, pushed for closer economic and political ties with the United States. The culmination of this movement was the Montréal Annexation Manifesto,

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18. Gerald Newman, "Anti-French Propaganda and British Liberal Nationalism in the Early Nineteenth Century: Suggestions toward a General Interpretation," *Victorian Studies* 18, no. 4 (June 1975), 385–418, accessed 3 April 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3826554>.

19. See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

20. See Elizabeth Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

21. "Estimated Population of Canada, 1605 to Present," Statistics Canada, last modified 10 September 2014, accessed 17 February 2015, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/98-187-x/4151287-eng.htm#table1>.

22. J.M.S. Careless, *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 230–249.

produced in 1848, which protested British economic policies and demanded Canada's admission to the Union.<sup>23</sup> The manifesto failed to gain any real popular support, however, and the faction quickly dissolved. Instead, the vision of Canada's future portrayed by future Prime Minister John A. Macdonald in a meeting of the colony's Legislative Assembly in 1865 proved far more popular. Acknowledging that "the desire to remain connected with Great Britain and to retain our allegiance to Her Majesty [was] unanimous", Macdonald advocated for a sovereign Canada with a distinct national identity, functioning as a partner in empire with Britain itself.<sup>24</sup> This concept formed the ideological nucleus of the 'Canada First' movement, an influential political faction dominated by Macdonald and his colleagues.<sup>25</sup> These men, the eventual founders of Confederation, were insistent that a Canadian nation would only come about within the broader framework of the British Empire.<sup>26</sup> The separation from Britain was to be exclusively political, and as seamless as possible; Canada would not leave the empire, but rather would simply take its place alongside Britain as a leading nation of the "pan-Anglo-Saxon" world.<sup>27</sup> Macdonald boldly envisioned Canada as "a powerful people to stand by [Britain]...in peace or in war."<sup>28</sup> By defining Canada as a major independent nation within the broader context of the Empire, Macdonald succinctly captured the essence of the 'Canada First' movement.

The 'Canada First' ethos impacted every aspect of national public life, not least in architecture, where the Neo-Gothic rapidly came to dominate. Although other examples of Gothic Revival in private and public architecture, such as Trinity College at the University of Toronto and the Château Frontenac in Québec City, occupied prominent places in the national consciousness, Parliament Hill was by far the most nationally important and symbolically resonant

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23. *The Annexation Manifesto of 1849* (Montreal: D. English & Co, 1881), accessed 21 February 2015, [https://archive.org/details/cihm\\_02403](https://archive.org/details/cihm_02403).

24. John A. Macdonald, in *Canada: The Founding Debates*, eds. Janet Ajzenstat, Paul Romney, Ian Gentles, and William Gairdner (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1999), 205.

25. Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1914, Second Edition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 49, accessed 16 January 2015, ProQuest Ebrary.

26. Douglas Cole, "The Problem of 'Nationalism' and 'Imperialism' in British Settlement Colonies," *Journal of British Studies* 10, no. 2 (May 1971): 172, accessed 14 March 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/175353>.

27. Cole, "The Problem of 'Nationalism' and 'Imperialism'," 171.

28. Macdonald, *Canada: The Founding Debates*, 205.

example.<sup>29</sup> The use of Neo-Gothic architecture, in this unique context, was intended to invoke distinctly British political and national symbolism, playing off contemporary events, tastes, and trends. In 1836, a Parliamentary committee selected a Neo-Gothic design for the rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster in London. The choice was deemed outrageous at the time; the Neo-Classical style, as exemplified by the eighteenth century designs of Sir Christopher Wren, was considered far more cutting-edge and stylish. However, as Tory politicians argued, Neo-Classicism was an unpatriotic foreign import, and the Gothic Revival was in fact one of the only truly indigenous English styles.<sup>30</sup> As one 1859 opinion article in *The Times* said, “[Neo-Gothic] is pre-eminently national...it arose among us by native growth...[and] it never took firm root save in our and our kindred countries.”<sup>31</sup> Elite conservative Britons, then, felt that there was an elevated spiritual significance to Neo-Gothic which was only comprehensible to those of Anglo-Saxon heritage. The same *Times* article continues, “[Neo-Gothic] reminds us of the heroes of our infant liberty, the Langtons, Grossetestes, and De Montforts,<sup>32</sup> who bridled the tyranny of King and Pope alike.”<sup>33</sup> Parliamentarians felt that Gothic Revival architecture was the most suitable propaganda medium through which these ancient roots of English government and liberty could be most powerfully invoked.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the predominance of Neo-Gothic in British political architecture, it was by no means a foregone conclusion that Canada’s Parliament would be built in the same style. The colony’s Department of Public Works released the notice

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29. For a thorough informational overview of Canadian Neo-Gothic architecture, see Mathilde Brosseau, *Gothic Revival in Canadian Architecture* (Hull, Canada: Parks Canada, 1980).

30. W. J. Rorabaugh, “Politics and the Architectural Competition for the Houses of Parliament 1834–1837,” *Victorian Studies* 17, no. 2 (December 1973): 166, accessed 21 February 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3826182>.

31. “Gothic or Classic?—A Plain Statement of the Question,” *Times* (London), 19 October 1859, accessed 28 January 2015, [www.newspapers.com/image/33067020/](http://www.newspapers.com/image/33067020/)

32. The author is invoking the names of famous medieval defenders of English liberty. The election of Archbishop Stephen Langton was part of the catalyst for the 1215 drafting of the Magna Carta; Robert Grosseteste was a Bishop of Lincoln who pushed for reform of the English church, and defended the intellectual freedom of academics at Oxford and Cambridge; Simon de Montfort was the Earl of Leicester, who led a rebellion against King Henry III during the Second Barons’ War of 1263–1264.

33. “Gothic or Classic?—A Plain Statement of the Question,” *Times* (London), 19 October 1859, accessed 28 January 2015, [www.newspapers.com/image/33067020/](http://www.newspapers.com/image/33067020/).

34. Rorabaugh, “Politics and the Architectural Competition,” 166.

of an international competition to design Canada's Parliament on 7 May 1859; the notice only stipulated the buildings be built in "a plain, substantial style of Architecture [sic]."<sup>35</sup> The architectural firm Fuller & Jones, which eventually won the contract, submitted two plans to the Parliamentary selection committee: one in Neo-Gothic style and the other in Neo-Classical.<sup>36</sup> Both architectural styles were considered both fashionable and suitably imposing for official government buildings; as well, both designs fell comfortably within the imposed budget, an important factor in the adjudication process.<sup>37</sup> It is significant that, when faced with this choice, the competition's judges purposefully selected the Neo-Gothic design. By choosing this symbolically-potent style for their Parliament, the selection committee was openly choosing to most explicitly associate their fledgling nation with the rich history and heritage of English parliamentary democracy.

Just as significantly, however, the buildings were not built in a pure Neo-Gothic style. Significant structural accommodations were made to better suit Canada's climate, with windows enlarged and slanted so as to draw in as much sunlight as possible in the dark winter months.<sup>38</sup> By mandate from Parliament, only local stone and other building materials were used, resulting in an unconventional twist on the traditional colour scheme of Neo-Gothic.<sup>39</sup> Upon completion in 1866, Parliament Hill was considered to have a grand and imposing overall effect.<sup>40</sup> With the sheer size and scale of its national buildings, Canada was attempting to project a bold statement of identity and potential onto the world stage: this was a strong, vigorous colony, with the power, vision, and ambition to make a valuable contribution to the noble history of parliamentary government. This confidence was both tempered and highlighted by the conservative symbolism implicit in Neo-Gothic. It is significant that, even as Canada was preparing to take its first teetering steps towards national independence,

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35. John A. Rose, "A Notice to Architects," Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. Records of the Province of Canada, *Documents*, no. 3, 9–10.

36. Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones. "Parliament Buildings Competition Entry," Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa. Records of the Privy Council Office, vol. 2, exhibit no. 62.

37. Fuller and Jones, "Parliament Buildings Competition Entry," 2; Rose, "A Notice to Architects," 9.

38. Fuller and Jones, "Parliament Buildings Competition Entry," 5.

39. Rose, "A Notice to Architects," 10.

40. Joseph Bureau, *Handbook to the Parliamentary and Departmental Buildings* (Ottawa: G.E. Desbarats, 1868), 13.

it professed a fundamental loyalty to Britain, the monarchy, and the noble political and cultural inheritance of which Canada was proud to be a part. The Gothic Revival, particularly as expressed in the form of Parliament Hill, is an apt physical manifestation of the ‘Canada First’ mentality: a paradoxically simultaneous shift towards both an independent national identity and deepened imperial ties with Britain.

## French-Canadians in British Canada

Yet not all of Canada’s European residents fell under the heading of loyal British subjects. Canada in the 1860s was a fundamentally divided nation, torn between the two halves of its colonial legacy. As examined above, the British only came to culturally and ethnically dominate Canada within the nineteenth century. However, even British political control was a comparatively recent development, reaching only back to the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1763.<sup>41</sup> Under the terms of the Treaty of Paris, France ceded its colony of New France to Britain, along with its substantial population of French Roman Catholic settlers.<sup>42</sup> Although this act made Britain the undisputed master of a territory stretching across eastern North America, the consequences of this land acquisition proved in time to be far more complicated than the British might at first have anticipated. In 1838, Lord Durham, the Governor General of Canada, conducted a formal inquiry into the volatile relations between Canada’s Anglophone and Francophone communities. The result of his inquiries, a parliamentary report entitled the “Report on the Affairs of British North,” was instrumental in establishing an official policy of assimilation towards French-Canadians. Lord Durham’s assessment of the Québécois as “a people with no history and no literature . . . destitute of all that can invigorate and elevate a people” had a damning effect on Anglo-Canadians’ views of their French neighbours.<sup>43</sup> In the interests of facilitating assimilation, the Anglophone and Francophone communities were united in a single political entity, the Province of Canada.

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41. The conflict is better known to Americans as the French and Indian War.

42. *The Treaty of Paris* (London: E. Owen & T. Harrison, 1763), accessed 4 April 2015, [https://archive.org/details/cihm\\_48439](https://archive.org/details/cihm_48439).

43. John Lambton, 1st Earl of Durham, Report on the Affairs of British North America, 13th Parliament, 4th sess., Vic., 1839, accessed 21 February 2015. <http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.32374/2?r=o&s=1>.

The use of Neo-Gothic, an intrinsically British style, in the French region of Canada was intended to both intimidate the locals and further encourage assimilation efforts. Architect T. Roger Smith reflected the philosophy behind the imperialist use of Neo-Gothic architecture, writing that, “We ought, like the Romans and the Mohammedans, to take our national style with us...both a rallying point for ourselves and as raising a distinctive symbol of our presence to be beheld with respect...by the natives of the country.”<sup>44</sup> Although speaking specifically in the context of India, Smith made a fascinating and explicit link between the use of architecture and the consolidation of colonial possessions. This phenomenon was observed in French Canada, where Neo-Gothic architecture was most commonly used for churches, the central aspect of hyper-religious Québécois society. While there is not a complete academic consensus on Québécois reactions to the hulking Neo-Gothic structures taking shape in their cities, most scholars agree that French-Canadians felt primarily only “disgust” for these new buildings.<sup>45</sup>

The Notre-Dame de Montréal Basilica, in particular, was a flash-point for the French-Canadian community. The basilica was built amid Montréal’s vast demographic shift in favour of Anglo-Protestants, and the city’s Francophone population had hoped its new church would be a dramatic statement of the traditionally Catholic character of Montréal.<sup>46</sup> Instead, the community received a grand Neo-Gothic cathedral, one of the finest examples of the style in Canada—but one whose reception was complicated by the culture wars permanently underway in French Canada. One prominent detractor, Jérôme Demers, Superior of the Seminary of Québec and self-appointed architectural critic, attacked the Neo-Gothic design on the basis that it was essentially Protestant, claiming that a Neo-Classical design would be far more suitable for a Catholic church.<sup>47</sup> The Catholic community’s contentious relationship with their basilica continued into the twentieth century. Writing even from a distance of a hundred years, in 1949, Québécois architect Gérard Morisset still boiled with indignation, accusing the British of “[ignoring] our whole tradition” by

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44. T. Roger Smith, “Architectural Art in India,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 21 (1873): 278–287.

45. Harry Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1967), 106.

46. Gowans, *Building Canada*, 90.

47. Franklin Toker, *The Church of Notre-Dame in Montreal: An Architectural History* 2 ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 77.

“arbitrarily” imposing Neo-Gothic on Québec.<sup>48</sup> Morisset continued in increasingly incensed terms, denigrating the Gothic Revival as a “troubadour’ Gothic of English origin,” characterized by, “cut and dry forms, shabby moldings and irrational construction.”<sup>49</sup> Francophone objections to Neo-Gothic, then, were related to the aesthetic expression of ideology. Standing in sharp opposition to the symbolism of the Gothic Revival, Québec’s preferred style of the time was French Neo-Classical<sup>50</sup>, as exemplified by St. Joseph’s Oratory, a minor basilica constructed in Montreal in the early twentieth century. Neo-Classical was felt to be a refined art-form, one which expressed French-Canadians’ continued loyalty to the deposed French monarchy, and the long-standing Québécois belief that they, separated from France before the Revolution, preserved French culture in its truest, most traditional form: fanatically Catholic, staunchly loyal to the Bourbon dynasty, and utterly incorrupted by English culture or language.<sup>51</sup> All “foreign styles,” including and especially English Gothic Revival, threatened to corrupt and, eventually, destroy this precious cultural fragment.<sup>52</sup>

However, from the Lord Durham-influenced perspective of Canada’s British administrators, these Francophone concerns were of little consequence. The government of the province, as well as its presiding culture, was unambiguously Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. Anglo-Canadians, steeped in imperial language, rhetoric, and ideology, actively believed that their influence was necessary to civilize French-Canadians. As one particularly zealous Parliamentarian expressed in 1889, “This is a British country, and the sooner we take in hand our French Canadian fellow subjects and make them British in sentiment...the less trouble we shall have.”<sup>53</sup> Whether or not Anglo-Canadians recognized that their imposition of Neo-Gothic architecture on Québec was, in particular, an act of subtle imperialist aggression, it is clear that French-Canadians perceived it as such. Indeed, it might be said that Anglo-Canada was “the ideal prefabricated col-laborator” in nineteenth century imperialism in North America: keenly aware

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48. Gérard Morisset, *L’Architecture en Nouvelle-France* (1949): 87, quoted in Toker, *The Church of Notre-Dame*, 73.

49. Morisset, *L’Architecture en Nouvelle-France*, 87.

50. French Neo-Classical was also referred to as the Louis XVI style.

51. Gowans, *Building Canada*, 56.

52. Gowans, *Building Canada*, 57.

53. D’Alton McCarthy, “Staynor Speech,” (12 July 1889), quoted in J.S. Willison, *Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal Party* (Toronto: George N. Morang & Company, 1903), vol. 2, 53.

and proud of its ethnic, cultural, and political Britishness, and ready to exert this superiority in any way possible.<sup>54</sup>

## American Involvement

Faced with such unbenevolent leadership at home, French-Canadians began to explore alternative forms of government. Their attentions fell on Canada's closest neighbour and its greatest risk to British sovereignty: the United States. Backed by the same Anglo-Canadian businessmen who had produced the Montréal Annexation Manifesto in 1848, these French-Canadian nationalists believed that Québécois culture, language, and identity—the truly indigenous European civilization of Canada—faced its best chances of survival under the republican government of the United States.<sup>55</sup> In an attempt to broaden this appeal to Anglo-Canadians, one of the leading nationalists, Louis-Joseph Papineau, asserted that Canada's economic and political interests were not best served by the “haughtiness, pride and impotence” of the “valets of Downing Street.”<sup>56</sup> Despite Papineau's best efforts, the movement failed to take root among Anglo-Canadians, the majority of whom strongly felt that their country would be better off “with her natural parent” rather than with “her adopted sister.”<sup>57</sup> However, as ‘Manifest Destiny’ ideology inexorably extended America's control across the continent, Canadians had good reason to be concerned about the independent future of their territory. American congressmen openly debated Canadian annexation as a way to re-establish Anglo-Saxons' racial dominance in the American population.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, American newspapers looked forwards

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54. Ronald Robinson, “Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration,” in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. R. Owen and B. Sutcliffe, (London: Longman Press, 1972), 124.

55. Lester D. Langley, *America and the Americas: the United States in the Western Hemisphere*, 2 ed. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 43, accessed 28 February 2015, ProQuest Ebrary.

56. “The Annexation of Canada to the United States—Important Meeting of French Canadians,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), 17 December 1870, accessed 7 February 2015, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/26007493/>

57. *Times* (London), 20 November 1849, accessed 16 February 2015, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/33039532/>

58. *Appendix to the Cong. Globe*, 32nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1853, vol. 27: 59.

to Canada's inclusion in the Union as a matter of eventuality.<sup>59</sup> Although Britain offered its promise to defend Canada in case of invasion, it also made it clear that it was unwilling to do anything to possibly disrupt Anglo-American relations.<sup>60</sup> The very real fear of American invasion or annexation is interwoven throughout Anglo-Canadian discourse of the time. For example, Alexander Morris, a nationalist politician and popular essayist, urged immigration to Canada and increased birthrates as matters of imperial urgency. The general consensus was bleak and stark: unless Canada more fully and forcefully exerted its dominance over its territory, "the Americans [would] appropriate it as they did Oregon."<sup>61</sup>

The towering Neo-Gothic structures being erected across the Canadian landscape were a manifestation of this national anxiety. The Canadian Gothic Revival was not merely an invocation of the colony's British roots; they were attempts to "bridge the anxiety-provoking canyon...between Home and Canada."<sup>62</sup> Much in the same way that the neoclassical government architecture of Washington D.C. was carefully fashioned to evoke the majesty of ancient Greece and Rome and give the allusion of valid precedent to the American republican experiment, Canada's leaders used the Gothic Revival for their Parliament to cultivate a "style which projected an appropriate and coherent image of the nation."<sup>63</sup> Eminent architectural historian Vincent Scully once wrote that the Neo-Classical and the Neo-Gothic are diametric opposites, the former being "the art of the revolutionary," while the latter is the "reflex of the refugee."<sup>64</sup> Though Scully was certainly guilty of overgeneralization, there are shades of truth in his comment. The fundamental difference between the two nations—and the reasons why, despite the historical odds, the two never

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59. "More Territory," *Harrisburg Telegraph* (Harrisburg, PA), 15 September 1869, accessed 16 February 2015, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/44276490/>

60. "The Canadian Fortifications," *Times* (London), 24 March 1865, accessed 14 February 2015, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/33016230/>.

61. Alexander Morris, *Nova Britannia; or British North America, its Extent and Future: A Lecture* (Montréal: John Lovell, 1858), 25, accessed 12 January 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/novabritanniaorboomorr#page/n1/mode/2up>.

62. Thomas, "Slippery Talk of Parliament's Architecture," 23.

63. Adrian Sheppard, "Some Thoughts on Canadian and American Eclecticism in Public Architecture," in *Architettura dell'Eclettismo: La dimensione mondiale*, eds. Loretta Mozconi and Stefano Santini (Naples: Liguori Editore, 2006), 251.

64. Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture: The Architecture of Democracy* (New York: G. Braziller, 1961), 14–15.

united—is reflected in their architecture. Neo-Classical was a grandiose attempt to ape the divine, perfectly suited to the boundless hope and ambition of the American national ethos. Neo-Gothic, on the other hand, in all its conservative, imposing darkness, was a style that matched the Canadian non-revolution.

The Canadian Gothic Revival calculatedly called upon the historical weight of Britishness to remind the world from whence, exactly, Canada came. The use of the style was not merely a token for homesick British immigrants, flung far from their homeland across the Atlantic, as Scully suggested. It was, as one prominent Canadian nationalist wrote in 1884, Canada's national declaration in defense of "the preservation and the extension of liberty in the right sense."<sup>65</sup> From the earliest days of the Canadian nation, a distinction was drawn between American liberty, derived from Graeco-Roman ideals and based on a system of direct democracy, and English liberty, transplanted to Canada after centuries of slow indigenous growth and adaptation in Britain itself. The prominent use of Neo-Gothic architecture was a defensive statement, a reminder of Canada's status within the British Empire, a defiant entrenchment of Canadian identity against the American 'other.' This was no ordinary colonized piece of land, to be fought over and passed between world powers. This was an inviolable extension of Britain itself, with all the respect owed to its tradition of sovereign majesty and dignity.

## Conclusion

Most colonies seeking to gain independence, such as the United States or India, do so by rejecting the imperial ethos. Canada stands unique, as a colony which defined itself as a nation by fully internalizing and implementing imperialism. Proponents of the 'Canada First' movement sought a national future "other than mere colonial stagnation." They desired something "greater in purpose." They wanted something "nobler than annexation" and yet something even "sounder than independence."<sup>66</sup> The preference for Neo-Gothic was an

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65. Charles Mair, letter to George Denison, 29 October 1884, quoted in Douglas Cole, "The Problem of "Nationalism" and "Imperialism" in British Settlement Colonies," *Journal of British Studies* 10, no. 2 (May 1971): 173, accessed 14 March 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/175353>.

66. Stephen Leacock, "Education and Empire Unity," in *Empire Club Speeches, 1906–1907*, ed. J. Castell Hopkins (Toronto, 1907), 290.

indicator for the future of Canada. A Canadian nation would be monarchist, not republican; loyal, not rebellious; the child of dignified English liberty, not Graeco-Roman mob rule. It was to be subject neither to American expansionism nor Québécois affectation. It was, instead, to be Canadian—a nation of the immigrant cast-offs of the Anglo-Saxon mother country, who would leverage their colonial past into a grand imperial future.

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*Susannah Morrison is a double-major in History and Classical Studies, with an emphasis in early English medieval history. Originally from northern Alberta, she is in her third year at Brigham Young University, and looks forward to pursuing postgraduate study in either Canada or the United Kingdom. She dedicates this work to her mother, who taught her everything she knows; to her father, who inspired her love for history; and to her grandfather, who first challenged her to become a writer.*



# The Dynastic Duo

## A Tale of Two Monarchs

John Martin

WITH GOOD REASON, SPARTA IS OFTEN CONSIDERED ONE OF the most influential classical Greek *poleis*. The Spartans led the combined military forces of Greece during the Second Persian Invasion of 480 BCE, and led the Peloponnesian League for over a hundred years. They brought down the Athenian Empire and ruled much of Greece, until they themselves were defeated by the Thebans. Their success is usually attributed to the unique nature and strength of their army. However, there is another key, but often overlooked, contributing factor to Spartan predominance: its unique system of government, ruled by two kings. This diarchy enabled Sparta to acquire and maintain great prominence among the wider Greek and Hellenistic world. It was an essential element in Sparta's long-term, continued influence. For example, disunity between the two kings brought about legal changes which preserved and revitalized the diarchy. Two kings provided the appearance of strength which helped keep the helot population in check; this assurance of stability at home allowed Sparta to act more freely throughout the Greek world. Having two kings meant that even if one king were to turn against the Spartan people, the other king could mitigate the damage. Despite implications and claims of tyranny by some ancient sources, such as Herodotus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the Spartan kings were held highly accountable for their actions by a

series of governmental checks and balances.<sup>1</sup> Without these two simultaneous kingships, Sparta would not have achieved the same level of prominence and renown in the Greek world.

Since Sparta is one of the more well-known Greek city-states, there has been much written about the city and its political structure. Paul Cartledge has produced several books and articles on the subject, some of which are cited for their references to the governance of Sparta. Additionally, Ellen Millender has written an insightful article concerning the diarchy and its role and reception; this article is instrumental to my refutation of the despotic claims against the kings. However, the scholarly community has yet to complete a satisfactory analysis of the general effect of the diarchy on Spartan prominence. As such, much of my research is rooted in primary sources; Herodotus and Thucydides give historical descriptions and context, while Xenophon provides an in-depth guide into the organization of Sparta's political and social structure. An evaluation of these sources offers a fascinating illumination as to the important role that the kings played in Sparta's preeminent position among Greek *poleis*.

## Origins of the Diarchy

The diarchic system is old—so old, in fact, that its precise date of origin is unknown. Herodotus provides two versions of the story: one from the Spartans, the other from other Greeks. The general Greek world was of the opinion that the kings of Sparta were descended from Egyptians, who came to the region of Laconia and gained power there.<sup>2</sup> The Spartans, however, claimed that the king who first brought their people to Laconia, Aristodemos, had twin sons. Since the Spartans were unsure which brother was older, they could not decide which one should be king; a message from the Oracle at Delphi, however, ordered them to make both sons king. Given these supposedly divine origins of their system of government, the Spartans saw their kings as chosen by the gods themselves. As a result, even though no other Greek city followed this political structure, Sparta maintained it for centuries.

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1. For a discussion of the ancient claims of tyranny, see Ellen Millender, "The Spartan dyarchy: a comparative perspective," in *Sparta: Comparative Approaches*, ed. Stephen Hodkinson (Swansea, UK: Classical Press of Wales, 2009), 4–7.

2. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 6.52.

## The Benefits of Disunity

Disunity between the kings was common; in his discussion of the first Spartan rulers Herodotus states, “they say that even though they were brothers, after they grew up they disagreed with each other throughout their entire lives, just as their descendants continue to do.”<sup>3</sup> This conflict between kings resulted in great benefits for the Spartan state. A prime example of this idea is the conflict between Cleomenes I and Demaratus, the Spartan kings during the end of the sixth century BCE and the beginning of the fifth. These two kings were at odds from the beginning of their co-kingship and, throughout their reigns, worked extensively to discredit and oppose the other. For example, in 494 BCE, Demaratus tried to convict Cleomenes for sacrilege following an invasion of Argos in 494 BCE; never one to be outdone, Cleomenes bribed the Delphic Oracle in 490 BCE to proclaim Demaratus of illegitimate birth and so disqualify him for public office.<sup>4</sup> Cleomenes seems to have been the dominant partner in the diarchy, as he descended from Sparta’s more prestigious royal line, the Agiad Dynasty. His power is attested to by his dominance in foreign policy during this period.<sup>5</sup> For example, Cleomenes spear-headed an attempted invasion of Attica in 506 BCE. Sparta had gathered her allies to expel Cleisthenes from Athens and install the pro-Spartan Isagoras. Cleisthenes and Isagoras were two of the political leaders of Athens who had been contending with each other for power in Athens following the fall of the Peisistratids.<sup>6</sup> Before the battle began, Corinth, Sparta’s ally, withdrew from the military confederation, after having had second thoughts. This alone would have been a blow to the military strength of the expedition, as Corinth was a powerful city-state. However, when Demaratus also decided to leave for home, the rest of Sparta’s allies deserted as well. In the aftermath of this humiliation, Sparta instituted a new law prohibiting both kings from accompanying the same military expedition.<sup>7</sup> The Spartans recognized that their kings often disagreed, and that it was futile to attempt

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3. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 6.52.8.

4. For the sacrilege at Argos see Herodotus, *The Histories*, 6.78–82. For the accusation of illegitimacy see Herodotus, *The Histories*, 6.60–70.

5. Paul Cartledge, *The Spartans: The World of the Warrior-Heroes of Ancient Greece: From Utopia to Crisis and Collapse* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2003), 91–110.

6. For more on the Peisistratids and the following events, see Herodotus, *The Histories*, 1.59–64 and 5.62–66.

7. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 5.75.

to stop the contention through laws. Instead, they mitigated the possible fallout of such disagreements by ensuring that the discord would never again be of such a public nature. This helped to maintain the strength of Sparta's role as the leader of the Peloponnesian League in future military excursions.

This incident also benefitted the Spartan diarchy in another way. By never sending out both kings in a single expedition, the Spartans ensured that they would never lose both in one battle. For example, if this law had not been developed, the Spartans might have lost both of their kings in their infamous defense of Thermopylae. While Sparta did decline in strength during the fourth and third centuries BCE, the Spartans never lost both kings in the same battle. This meant that the Spartan state was able to avoid the potentially crippling destabilization that comes from the loss of a ruler in wartime.

## The Helot Threat

The diarchy allowed Sparta to keep its helot population enslaved. Sparta had a constant fear of a revolt amongst her slaves. Walter Scheidel gives an analysis of the number of helots that the arable land around Sparta could have supported; he estimates the helot population at around 30,000.<sup>8</sup> This is in contrast with the number of Spartan citizens reported by Demaratus to Xerxes, at around 8,000 full Spartiates.<sup>9</sup> This large population imbalance led Sparta to live in constant fear of a potentially disastrous slave revolt. There was an ever-present threat that if the Spartans did not show enough strength back at home then the helots may decide to revolt.<sup>10</sup> However, because only one king would accompany any individual military expedition, there was typically one king at home in Sparta who could keep the helots under control. Cleomenes' actions in 499 BCE illustrate this fear, when he refused to assist in the Ionian revolt after he realized that the journey would take them so far from Sparta, about a three month trek inland after landing in modern-day Turkey.<sup>11</sup> While Cleomenes

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8. Walter Scheidel, "Helot numbers: a simplified model," in *Helots and Their Masters in Laconia and Messenia Histories, Ideologies, Structures*, eds. Nino Luraghi and Susan E. Alcock (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 244.

9. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 7.234.2.

10. For more information about how the Spartans kept the helots in check, see Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, (London: Duckworth, 2001), 88–89.

11. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 5.50–51.

never states his reasoning outright, Thucydides mentions on another occasion that, “indeed fear of [the helots’] numbers and obstinacy even persuaded the Spartans...their policy at all times having been governed by the necessity of taking precautions against [the helots].”<sup>12</sup> The antagonism between Cleomenes and Demaratus may likely have prevented Cleomenes from trusting his co-ruler to handle matters in Sparta. Had Cleomenes committed to such a long journey, it is possible that the helot population would have seized this opportunity to rebel from their hereditary masters.

Cleomenes’ fears were justified on several occasions throughout the history of Sparta. Threats of revolt, as well as actual rebellions, make several appearances in the writings of both Herodotus and Thucydides. For example, Demaratus, after he went into self-imposed exile and joined with Persia, advised Xerxes to send a fleet to Cythera, an island off the coast of the Peloponnese.<sup>13</sup> He mentions that a war at Sparta’s home would distract the Spartans from the larger conflict outside of their land. The war to which Demaratus refers would likely encompass both Persian forces, as well as Spartan helots. Indeed, a strong Persian force could have easily incited a revolt among the slaves, effectively militarily crippling Sparta until it crushed the rebellion. As a former king of Sparta, Demaratus knew that the helots were Sparta’s biggest weakness. Thucydides reaffirms this idea as he describes the Spartan reaction to Athens capturing the island of Pylos: “finding the helots deserting, and fearing the march of revolution in their country, [Sparta] began to be seriously uneasy.”<sup>14</sup> Sparta learned the lessons of its history well; if Sparta’s kings did not effectively project their power both at home and abroad, keeping the helots under constant watch, then the slaves would have revolted from Sparta with greater force and enthusiasm.<sup>15</sup>

## Countering Kingly Corruption

The Spartan diarchy ensured that even when one king turned against Sparta, the other could keep the system running. Any political system will inevitably have the occasional leader who is corrupted by power; Sparta was no exception

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12. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 4.80.3.

13. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 7.235.

14. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 4.41.3.

15. See also Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 1.101–102, for the Helot revolt at Mt. Ithome in the 460s BC.

to this. Pausanias, the regent for Leonidas' young son Pleistarchus, is one of the prime examples of this concept. During his expedition in the eastern Aegean Sea following the Second Persian Invasion,<sup>16</sup> Pausanias was recalled for " manifold and grave accusations," because "his conduct seemed more like that of a despot than of a general."<sup>17</sup> He was acquitted of medism, a pejorative term used to describe those Greeks who joined with the Persians. However, Pausanias was later recalled again, this time because of an accusation that he was promising freedom to the helots. At this time, Leotychidas was the other king of Sparta; he notably maintained his obligations to the state, ensuring that, even while one king betrayed Sparta, the *polis* itself remained secure. This is radically different from a kingdom like Persia, where one king alone had ultimate control of the kingdom, and the King's will was law.<sup>18</sup> Sparta's diarchy ensured that the Spartan king could not have this kind of ultimate power; even when one king wished to betray his people and their wishes, the other king could work as a moderating force, thereby keeping Sparta on a prosperous track.

The diarchy also provided a protection against young and foolish kings. Following Pausanias' exile, the diarchy meant that, while the young king Pleistarchus was inexperienced, he had Leotychidas as a more seasoned colleague to help run the *polis*. Due to the fact that Pleistarchus had been very young at the time of his father's death, Pausanias had served as his regent; however, Pausanias' exile forced Pleistarchus, although still highly inexperienced, to assume his birthright as king. Leotychidas' ten years' experience were essential to smoothing Pleistarchus' transition to power. The spectre of an inexperienced despot stalked the ancient world. Although drawn from the Roman, rather than Greek tradition, no ruler demonstrates these dangers more clearly than Nero. Nero came to power in 54 CE, utterly inexperienced and unprepared; however, under the tutelage of his tutor—and noted Stoic philosopher—Seneca, Nero's rule was both restrained and generally benign. Seneca's premature retirement, though, removed all such restrictions on Nero's behavior—leading to a juvenile reign of terror.<sup>19</sup> Although Nero is significantly removed from the Spartan context, his story conveniently illustrates the very dangers which the Spartans surely were

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16. In 479 BC, the Hellenic League (the allied Greek states) had launched a counter-offensive against Persia. Pausanias was the initial commander of the force until being recalled.

17. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 1.95.3.

18. Josef Wiesehöfer, "The Achaemenid Empire," in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires*, ed. Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 82.

19. Suetonius, "The Life of Nero," *The Lives of the Caesars*.

attempting to avoid—as well as the way in which the guiding influence of a more experienced individual can help to mold a young ruler into a good king. The diarchy had this concept inherently built into it, with one experienced king always present to help balance out and guide the younger one.

## Freedom from Despotism

Freedom was a concept of supreme import to the Greek mind. The Athenians “freed” the Greeks from the Persians; the Spartans “freed” the Greeks from the Athenians; the Thebans “freed” the Greeks from the Spartans; this vein of freedom rhetoric continues throughout Greek history. Accordingly, any given political system in ancient Greece needed to take the ideal of liberty into account. For Athens, the home for many of the most influential Greek authors of this period, freedom intrinsically meant liberty from tyrants and despots. Millender references several Greek writers who criticize and deride Sparta’s diarchy as despotic in nature, drawing comparisons with eastern kings and their unlimited power.<sup>20</sup> While much of this negativity stems from the authors’ pro-Athenian biases, the Spartan kings did, in fact, have two effective checks on their power.<sup>21</sup>

Most important of these is the council of *ephors*. This was a group of five men chosen annually from among the Spartiates. Among other powers, the *ephors* had the ability to prosecute and regulate the kings.<sup>22</sup> For instance, this is the body which recalled Pausanias when he came under suspicion of crimes. However, the *ephors* exercised power in both the political and the private realms. For example, the *ephors* even ordered Anaxandridas, Cleomenes’ father, to marry a new wife since his first had not yet borne him any children.<sup>23</sup> However, Xenophon tells us that the *ephors*’ most important duty and responsibility was to ensure that all citizens, including the kings, remained obedient to the laws of the state.<sup>24</sup> Despite the great power that the *ephors* had over the kings, they were

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20. Millender, “The Spartan dyarchy,” 4–7.

21. Millender, “The Spartan dyarchy,” 9–10.

22. Paul Cartledge, “ephors,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*<sup>4</sup>, eds. Simon Hornblower, Anthony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 509–510.

23. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 5.41.

24. Xenophon, *The Spartan Constitution*, 8.3–4.

elected every year, and could not be reelected. This ensured that any one *ephor* could not gain too much power or tyrannically maintain his position. Additionally, when both kings were in agreement on an issue, they could override the decision of the *ephors*.<sup>25</sup> The council of the *ephors* ensured that the kings' power was kept in check, but they themselves were regulated both by their short terms of office as well as by the united decisions of the kings. This system prevented tyranny within either group, king or *ephor*.

Secondly, the *gerousia*, or Council of Elders, served as a governing body in Sparta. It was comprised of men over sixty years of age, chosen by popular acclamation of the assembly of the people.<sup>26</sup> Only old men could be admitted to the council because it was believed that old men would be more virtuous than young men.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the *ephors*, the appointment to the council was for life. They had authority over capital court cases, as well as deciding the agenda for the citizen assembly. It consisted of twenty-eight members; the kings rounded out the numbers of the council to an even thirty.<sup>28</sup> The kings of Sparta worked through this body of men in order to accomplish their political aims. As members of the council themselves, the kings could propose issues and use their influence to push for the decisions they desired. However, even if the *gerousia* approved a motion, it had to be approved by an assembly of the people before it could be enacted, thereby preventing a willful king or political faction from passing anything contrary to the will of people.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, while the appointments to this council were for a lifetime, the fact that they were chosen specifically for their good reason would imply a prevailing notion of justice and caution. This level of restraint helped to prevent the kings from abusing their influence in the *gerousia*. Since this was the primary working place for the kings, it served as a tempering influence on the whims of the kings.

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25. H. Michell, *Sparta* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), III; Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, (London: Duckworth, 2001), 59.

26. Michell, *Sparta*, 136.

27. Xenophon, *The Spartan Constitution*, 10.1–3.

28. Stephen J. Hodkinson, "gerousia," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*<sup>4</sup>, eds. Simon Hornblower, Anthony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 613–614.

29. Michell, *Sparta*, 135–140; Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 59–60.

## Conclusion

The city-state of Sparta was so impressive and renowned not only because of its military prowess, as is often emphasized, but also because of its system of government. The diarchy, a unique system of two co-kings, was a vital part of the success and reputation of Sparta. From the beginning of the diarchy, there existed disunity and contention between the kings, this disunity ultimately served to strengthen Sparta as it was harnessed by laws to ensure Spartan security from the threat of helot revolts. Additionally, morally reprehensible kings, and kings who turned against Sparta, were kept in check by a system of checks on their powers: their co-rulers, the *ephors*, and the *gerousia*. Although this system of government was an oddity in the ancient world, and remains distinct from modern governments as well, it has proven both its validity and its effectiveness. The foundation of Sparta's greatness truly was its government.

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*John Martin is a senior majoring in Classical Studies with an emphasis in Classical Civilizations. He is from Troutdale, Oregon, a small town outside of Portland. John is planning on pursuing a PhD in Ancient History, after he graduates. He would like to thank his wife for helping him keep his ship upright amidst the storms of life.*



# Ever-Advancing to World Revolution

## Soviet Children's Literature from 1925 to 1927

Amy Daniel

**D**URING THE THIRD ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF THE RUSSIAN Young Communist League in 1920, speaking to revolutionary youth, Vladimir Lenin laid out what he saw as the mission of the youth leagues and described his new vision of children's education: "The entire purpose of training, educating and teaching the youth of today should be to imbue them with communist ethics ... [which] stems from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat."<sup>1</sup> Even before the end of the Russian Civil War, Lenin was conscious that to build communism, he first had to teach it to the youth. In this speech, Lenin recognized that ideology had to be a part of children's education and that children had to "learn communism" if they were to one day build a communist world.<sup>2</sup> Central to that education, was the need to imbue children with the Marxist principle of internationalism and class-consciousness. One way that the Communist Party taught these central principles was by encouraging ideological books for its young comrades.

Many scholars have previously explored different aspects of the relationship between children's literature and the socialist state. Most, however, have chosen to focus on books written during and after the Stalin era. For example,

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1. Vladimir Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth League," in the Marxists Internet Archive, [www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/oct/02.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/oct/02.htm).

2. Vladimir Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth League."

Catriona Kelly argues that during the years of Stalin's regime, happiness became an important aspect of Soviet ideology. Employing slogans such as "Thank You Comrade Stalin for [Our] Happy Childhood," Stalin and the party used children's literature to teach the youth that socialism promoted a cheerful and contented adolescence.<sup>3</sup> Like Kelly, Felicity Ann O'Dell also focuses on the optimistic tone and didactic nature of children's books to show that they were works of socialist realism.<sup>4</sup> O'Dell also makes an excellent argument for the importance of studying children's literature in order to understand the norms Soviet society deemed important to teach children. Although her examination of common themes in Soviet children's books and the impact they had on Russia is a remarkable contribution to the literature, O'Dell only focuses on stories written after 1928, the year that marks the beginning of the "Cultural Revolution" and when the Central Committee began "to increase and improve publishing for children."<sup>5</sup> The scholarship on children's literature lacks an analysis of the major themes of stories written following the Civil War, especially during the 1920s when there is a curious predominance of non-Russian characters during the mid-1920s.

In Soviet children's books from 1925 to 1927, there are a surprising number of foreign protagonists—a fact often left unremarked by scholars. The mid-to-late 1920s were significant for their formative effect on culture and politics. Despite the fact that the Central Committee issued a proclamation in 1925 stating that "in a class society there is, and can be, no neutral art," until 1928 writers could express an ambivalent attitude towards the revolution and the party tolerated some non-Communist literature.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, true to Lenin's vision, children's literature was steeped in Communist ideology and supported Party policy and attitudes, especially in regards to "Socialism in One Country." After Lenin's death in 1924, the Communist Party's policy shifted—instead of fighting to instigate worldwide revolutions, the party turned its focus inward to achieve socialism in Russia. Through the use of foreign protagonists, Soviet

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3. Catriona Kelly, "A Joyful Soviet Childhood: Licensed Happiness for Little One," *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, ed. Marina Balina and Evgeny Dobrenko (London: Anthem Press, 2009), 6.

4. Felicity Ann O'Dell, *Socialisation through children's literature: The Soviet Example*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 6.

5. Felicity Ann O'Dell, *Socialisation through children's literature*, 54.

6. Politburo of the Central Committee of Russian Communist Party, "On the Policy of the Party in the Sphere of Artistic Literature," *Pravda*, July 1, 1925 in SovLit.net, www.sovlit.net/decreejuly1925.

children's books from 1925 to 1927 supported the new policy and represented a reconciliation, or compromise, between the internationalist views inherent in Marxism and the idea of "Socialism in One Country." These children's books perpetuate the belief that even without major involvement from the Communist Party, government, or the *Comintern*, worldwide revolution would continue forward as more foreigners become aware of and form close ties with Russia. These foreigners would be drawn to Russia because they are curious to meet communists in person, want to join Lenin, and want to take part in the universally appealing project of socialism.

## Worldwide Revolution and "Socialism in One Country"

Internationalism is an important tenant of Marxism. The concluding words of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, "Working men of all countries, unite!" aptly summarize Marx's belief that class status, meaning the identity of being an oppressed proletariat, would transcend nationalism and ignite a worldwide proletariat revolution.<sup>7</sup> Lenin, a follower of Marx, similarly believed that Russia should be actively trying to support and encourage proletariat abroad to rise up against the bourgeoisie and that Russia's security was dependent on these revolutions. He stated, "As long as Russia remains the only workers' republic and the old, bourgeois system exists in the rest of the world, we shall be weaker than they are, and be constantly threatened with a new attack."<sup>8</sup> Aside from the Marxist belief in a unifying proletariat, Lenin recognized that Russia needed other socialist countries as allies. According to Lenin, the October Revolution's survival depended on the Revolution's ability to penetrate other countries.

Despite the prominence of internationalism in Marxist and Leninist thought, after Lenin's death, the view of the Communist Party turned more moderate in regards to promoting revolutions abroad. Advocated strongly by Stalin, the party decided to focus its efforts on achieving socialism in Russia before fermenting revolutions in capitalist countries: "The Congress [of the Russian Communist Party] believes that the primary task of our party is the

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7. Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), in the Marxists Internet Archive, [www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm).

8. Lenin, Vladimir, *The Tasks of the Young League* (1920), in the Marxists Internet Archive, [www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/oct/02.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/oct/02.htm).

struggle for the victory of socialist reconstruction.”<sup>9</sup> The new policy of “Socialism in One Country,” as the policy to focus on achieving socialism in Russia is known, however, did not mean that the party abandoned the internationalism advocated by both Marx and Lenin. At the same congress that the new policy was announced, the party also implied that the world was still progressing towards revolution due to “the growth—in new forms—of the workers’ movement in Europe and its close connection with the proletariat of the U.S.S.R....”<sup>10</sup> By placing non-Russians in significant roles, the party is able to illustrate the growth of the worker’s movement abroad and justify the policy of “Socialism in One Country” by showing that world revolution will come, regardless of Soviet attempts to speed up the process. Examining children’s literature from 1925 to 1927 reveals some of the new ways that Soviets believed others, including citizens of capitalist countries, would join the socialist cause and form close connections with the U.S.S.R.

## The Power of Curiosity

The story of Jimmy Joy shows that curiosity motivates people to go to Russia. In *Jimmy Joy Visits the Pioneers (Dzhimmi Dzhoi v gosti k pioneram)* Jimmy, a boy from an unspecified Western country, learns that his father is going to be travelling to Leningrad and he wants to accompany him. The main reason he wants to go with him is because he has heard about the Pioneers, a Soviet youth organization that is similar to Scout organizations in the West, and wants to see them and receive a red neckerchief.<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note that Jimmy found out about the Pioneers from his uncle. He says, “Yesterday Uncle Thomas brought a magazine and read to me that they [the Pioneers] have red neckerchiefs... and the sound of their drums beat in every country.”<sup>12</sup> Knowing how Jimmy learned about the Pioneers is significant because it shows

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9. Fourteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, quoted in Xenia Joukoff Eudin and Harold H. Fisher, *Soviet Russia and the West 1920–1927: A Documentary Survey*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 257.

10. Fourteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, quoted in Xenia Eudin, *Soviet Russia and the West 1920–1927*, 257.

11. The red kerchief was a defining feature of the Pioneer uniform. Lidiia V. Lesnaia, *Dzhimmi Dzhoi v Gosti k Pioneram* (1925), illustrated by Kustodiev, Boris Mikhailovich, in the Princeton University Digital Library, <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/gt54kp40z>, 2.

12. Lidiia V. Lesnaia, *Dzhimmi Dzhoi v Gosti k Pioneram*, 2.

that the Soviet party does not need to launch an elaborate campaign to entice people. By the virtue of Party programs, such as the Young Pioneer Organization, information will spread, even through Western press. Regardless of how Jimmy becomes interested in visiting the Pioneers, his desire to see what he had only heard about is a powerful motivator and despite his father refusing to take him and his getting lost at sea alone, Jimmy never deviates from his goal of reaching Leningrad and in the end he gets his wish.

Although the ending sentences of *Jimmy Joy Visits the Pioneers* obscures the overall meaning of the book, the concluding words do not completely detract from the ending's triumphant tone or the image of the pioneers welcoming Jimmy to their fold. The written text of the book concludes with a manifesto that it is all advice on how to stay healthy and seems to be directed at the young reader instead of the characters.<sup>13</sup> Yet this tangential manifesto painted on an airplane hangar is partially obscured by the red flags of the Pioneer welcoming party that dominates the scene. A throng of Pioneers, wearing their red neckerchiefs, march with the Soviet flag and wave at Jimmy, who is standing on top of the Soviet plane that rescued him at sea as it flies overhead and carries a red flag.<sup>14</sup> It is unclear what becomes of Jimmy Joy or the duration of his visit. Even so, due to the red cloth Jimmy holds up at the end that parallels the red flags of the Pioneers and the fact that his rescuers addresses him as "comrade," it is implied that Jimmy joins the Pioneer ranks.<sup>15</sup> Regardless of whether he returns home or stays in Russia, he is now part of the Pioneers, which the state used to inculcate ideology, and as a result he has the potential to further socialism.

Similar to Jimmy Joy, another Western boy is also interested to go Russia after hearing references to Bolsheviks from a relative. One of the most fascinating examples of a Westerner coming to Russia is the book *Bolshevik Tom* (*Bol'shevik Tom*), an adaption of Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*. In the book Tom is always complaining about his Aunt Polly and getting into trouble. He breaks into the locked pantry to steal sweets, shaves the fur off of Aunt Polly's beloved cat, uses his aunt's makeup, and draws unflattering murals on the walls. After each of these incidents, Aunt Polly beats him with a rod and accuses him of being a Bolshevik by exclaiming, "It is clear you have become a Bolshevik,

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13. This manifesto translates as follows: "1. Jimmy, don't eat seeds. 2. Wash hands before eating. 3. And don't drink raw water." Lidiia V. Lesnaia, *Dzhimmi Dzhoi v Gosti k Pioneram*, 14.

14. Lidiia V. Lesnaia, *Dzhimmi Dzhoi v Gosti k Pioneram*, 15.

15. Lidiia V. Lesnaia, *Dzhimmi Dzhoi v Gosti k Pioneram*, 13.

ungodly ogres.”<sup>16</sup> Having heard frequently about the Bolsheviks from his aunt’s complaints, Tom is naturally interested to learn where Bolsheviks live. Because of this curiosity he tells his aunt, “You always accuse me [of being a Bolshevik]. I am ready to go [to the country of the Bolsheviks].”<sup>17</sup> He then leaves home and goes to Leningrad where he becomes a dedicated Bolshevik.

The story of *Bolshevik Tom* is fascinating on many different levels, but one of the most interesting aspects of the book is his reason for going to Russia and his reaction when he arrives. Tom first hears about the Bolsheviks from his Aunt Polly, who sees the Bolsheviks as ogres that possess all of Tom’s negative qualities. Therefore she is either to blame or to thank for Tom’s conversion to socialism. *Bol’shevik Tom* is a great example of the saying that all press is good press. Although Aunt Polly’s opinion of the Bolsheviks is very negative, by frequently mentioning the Bolsheviks and comparing Tom to them, she unknowingly peaked his curiosity and led him to seek them out. In fact, her beatings and negative attitude towards the Soviets most likely made him more receptive to them because he leaves with no regrets or intention to return home.

Tom’s story also implies Russia’s confidence that regardless the reason why people come to Russia in the beginning, they will ultimately be drawn to socialism. As they interact with proletariats and become immersed in socialism the newcomers will change as a result. Although his initial reasons for going to Leningrad is to get away from his aunt and to find people who he thought would be like him, Tom clearly becomes devoted to the ideals of socialism and changes dramatically. Writing to his aunt, Tom tells her that she lied to him about the Bolsheviks and, dressed a Pioneer with a red neckerchief, he tells her of his work and says that he is “free as a bird.”<sup>18</sup> This new devotion has also had a profound impact on his character and disposition. Whereas in the beginning of the book Tom is mischievous and lazy, by the end he is excited about work and wants to read in his free time. In addition to his disposition towards work and education, Tom’s attitude towards his aunt also changes as well. Instead of telling her that he is glad to be away from her, he wants her to join him and become a Bolshevik. *Bolshevik Tom* comes full circle as Tom invites his aunt to come to Russia and learn the truth.

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16. Nadezhda Pavlovich, *Bol’shevik Tom* (1925), illustrated by Kustodiev, Boris Mikhailovich Kustodiev, in the Princeton University Digital Library, <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/hq37vp96z>, 3.

17. Nadezhda Pavlovich, *Bol’shevik Tom*, 8.

18. Nadezhda Pavlovich, *Bol’shevik Tom*, 8.

From the striking similarities between Jimmy and Tom's stories it is possible to draw some conclusions about the new ways communists at the time believed others would join the socialist cause. Both Jimmy and Tom find out about Soviet Russia from other Westerners—Jimmy's uncle shows him a magazine about the Russian Pioneers, while Tom's aunt compares him to Bolsheviks. This illustrates how press, both good and bad, worked in the communist's favor because it aroused curiosity. In both books, Jimmy Joy and Tom are initially curious to see Russia for themselves because of what their relatives had told them. Once they arrive and satisfy their curiosity, they become 'comrades,' join the Pioneers, and now have a connection to the Russian proletariat. The Communist Party stated that *Bolshevik Tom* and *Jimmy Joy Visits the Pioneers* demonstrate the way in which the revolution would be furthered worldwide—stories about Soviet Russia would illicit curiosity in socialism, which when answered, would bring them to join the worldwide socialist revolution. These stories perpetuate the Communist Party's conviction that their own existence and efforts to achieve socialism will attract others, even those from capitalist countries, to join their cause and the revolution would move forward.

## To Meet with Lenin

As portrayed in children's books, the desire to meet and learn from Lenin is another reason that people come to Russia. Even as far away as India, children, such as Natu and Tumaem, the protagonists in *Millionth Lenin (Millionnui Lenin)*, hear about Lenin. After a failed uprising against their imperialist masters, a beggar tells the young boys about Lenin, who "doesn't see yellow or white, but only sees those who are hungry and full" and tells them to find him and carry on the war of the proletariat.<sup>19</sup> This description of Lenin is significant because it reinforces the contrast between the bourgeois and Lenin—the bourgeois care about the race of a person more than the individual, while Lenin cares about the wellbeing of a person which makes him an attractive leader. Unfortunately, when they finally reach Russia they meet some *Komsomolets*, members of another Communist Party youth organization (*Komsomol*), who tell them that Lenin has just died. However, one of the *Komsomolets* reassures them that Lenin's death does not mean the proletariat fight is over: "Don't grieve, boys.

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19. Lev Nikolaevich Zilov, *Millionnui Lenin* (1926), illustrated by Pokrovskiii, B, in the Princeton University Digital Library, <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/ng451j88c>, 29.

We are all the millionth Lenin. His death is not a cause for alarm. His death is a call to action, to close ranks.”<sup>20</sup> The message that these youth pass on to Natu and Tumaem is the conviction that Lenin’s death will unite the workers and that, as communists, they are all like Lenin and can each carry on his work. They have the ability to further the worldwide revolution and help accomplish communism. Although Natu and Tumaem decide to stay in Russia and carry on the fight there, they have been carrying on Lenin’s work throughout the entire book without realizing it.

Natu and Taumaen’s journey to Moscow shows the reader that the workers’ revolutions are already happening all around the world, and that even two young boys can play an important role in furthering Lenin’s work. As they travel to Moscow, Natu and Tumaem witness a worker’s rally and help initiate a strike on the ship against the captain. While exploring Constantinople the boys see a group of people standing around a fountain waving red flags and shouting Lenin’s name.<sup>21</sup> Seeing the rally, they believe that they have found Lenin, but a workman nearby corrects their assumption and tells them that the man leading the rally is Lenin’s comrade.<sup>22</sup> Later Natu and Tumaem incite their own rally when they fight the ship captain after he mocks their proletariat dream and kicks them. These incidents in the book suggest that while Lenin does play an important role in motivating the workers and leading them, workers’ revolutions are occurring organically and without any encouragement from Moscow. While the beggar did urge Natu and Tumaem to go find Lenin, they ultimately decide by themselves to come to Moscow and find Lenin. Without anyone directing them, they manage to stage their own successful revolt. Although joining Lenin was their initial goal and his life continues to motivate and unite the workers, Natu and Tumaem have been revolutionaries since the beginning of their story.

Not just children like Natu and Tumaem come to Russia to join Lenin and to learn from him. In a 1926 book about Lenin’s life, *About Lenin to Children (Detyam o Lenine)*, important people from around the world come to talk to Lenin so that he can teach them how to fight for a better life. It reads, “Representatives of workers and peasants from around the world assemble in Moscow every year... this alliance of workers and peasants from around world is called... the Comintern. Vladimir Il’ich founded it and shows [the *Comintern*] how to

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20. Zilov, *Millionnui Lenin*, 29.

21. Zilov, *Millionnui Lenin*, 22.

22. Zilov, *Millionnui Lenin*, 22.

lead the fight.”<sup>23</sup> This book recognizes the great importance of Lenin’s work internationally and is the only book from the period to mention the *Comintern*. It is interesting to note how the book describes the *Comintern* and Lenin’s role in the organization. For example, this excerpt suggests that the *Comintern* is similar to a school. The foreign representatives come to Lenin for help because while they have the desire “to fight to the end,” Lenin is the one who holds the answers on how to succeed. Thus, these leaders learn how to carry out a successful revolution and when they return to their respective countries, they implement Lenin’s lessons.

This story further supports the ideas surrounding the “Socialism in One Country” policy and shows that the party has not forgotten its goal of a world-wide revolution. Just as Lenin was successful in Russia and people came to him to learn how he managed to succeed, Russia’s focus on first achieving socialism at home would bring others to Russia to learn from their achievement. Then, just as the foreign representatives in the story, others could learn how to implement and achieve socialism. As more countries become workers’ republics, not only will Russia have more proletariat allies, but the revolution will move forward. Similar to Natu and Tumaem’s story, *About Lenin to Children* shows that there are people all around the world ready to fighting and willing to respond to the call to join the socialist cause, but they just need to be shown the way. While in some cases the call to action is Lenin’s story and his past and continued success in Russia, in other instances it is an invitation broadcasted to the world.

## The Universal Appeal of Socialism

In most of the other children’s books at this time, the non-Russian protagonists want to travel to Russia in order to either satisfy their curiosity or to meet and learn from Lenin. There is another group of foreigners though, featured in *Children International (Detskii Internatsional)*, that come to Russia after hearing an invitation from Russians to join a workers’ collective meant to achieve socialism. This story begins with a group of Russian schoolchildren discussing the best way to live so that they can be happy and free. In the end they conclude that a workers’ commune would be best and decide to create one; however, one

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23. A. Kravchenko, *Detyam o Lenine* (1926), illustrated by Boris Mikhailovich Kustodiev, in the Princeton University Digital Library, <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/4j03d1o4t>, 60.

boy points out that Russians are not the only ones who want to live happily and freely and so they decide to issue an invitation, which the government broadcasts, to inform children around the world of their plan and invite them to join.<sup>24</sup> This children's book is significant because it is the only book from this time period where the Soviet government is mentioned and explicitly involved. Yet, it is important to note that the government's role is minor. The children only turned to the government for help because the government had the ability to reach more people than they could alone. Although the government issues their invitation, this movement has a grassroots beginning. The children believe that there are others who will want to join them and who share their vision of a happy and free society. The response to the invitation shows the great universal attraction of socialism.

Never in the story do any of the characters doubt that others will respond to their call for workers. Even Chicherin, who was the Commissar for Foreign Affairs the year this story was published, does not doubt the success of the children's invitation and tells them, "Your plan is wonderful and it is time to send it out on the radio to all people. I believe they will come and contribute to [your commune]." <sup>25</sup> While all believe that foreigners will come, they had not anticipated the variety of people and swiftness with which they respond. The Russian children barely finish speaking with one new arrival before another arrives.<sup>26</sup> Children from all over the world respond to this invitation, some coming from places as far away as China, Africa, France, America, and Australia. In addition to their ethnic diversity, their exposure to Lenin and communism differs as well. Some of the new arrivals have heard of Lenin and the African has even previously participated in a socialist uprising. But regardless of the whether they heard of Lenin previously or not, all of the children come ready to join the commune because the invitation to join was appealing and they, like the Russians, want to work together to achieve something that would allow them all to live better.

This global representation in *Children International* helps to show the belief of communists that socialism is for everyone. The enthusiastic response to the invitation and diversity of countries represented is remarkable and the government only has to exert minimal effort to recruit others. Once the world is

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24. Iuril Gralitsa, *Detskii Internatsional* (1926), illustrated by G. Echeistov, in the Princeton University Digital Library, <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/t722hb195>, 6.

25. Gralitsa, *Detskii Internatsional*, 7.

26. Gralitsa, *Detskii Internatsional*, 12.

made aware of what the Russians are planning, children from all over and from all backgrounds respond positively because they too have similar dreams of living happily and in a society where everyone works together “so that everyone eats and drinks together.”<sup>27</sup> This response reflects the optimism and confidence Soviets had in their ideology and in its superiority. After all, regardless of whether a child was previously a capitalist or an oppressed worker, they forsake their prior nationality to become workers in the commune. After committing to live and work in the commune, which provides an example of how a socialist society functions, all the children declare together, “There is no power in the world that will destroy our Union.”<sup>28</sup> By the end the children’s workers’ commune becomes symbolic of achieving socialism in one country.

Through this symbolism in the story, the new policy of “Socialism in One Country” is offered as the preferred alternative to spending resources and time to instigate revolutions in other countries. From the example of the African child, revolutions are already happening without any involvement from the Communist Party. Yet, the new policy is different, as portrayed here, because as Soviets strive to realize it the world will see how desirable it is and want to join. It has the ability to convince even capitalists to leave their country and unite with workers from around the globe. Rather than go out and initiate revolutions, by explaining what they hope to achieve, striving to attain socialism, and announcing that all who are willing to work are welcome to come, the communists convey through the story that people will flock to Russia. *Children International* leaves no doubt that the world will respond and together the union of workers will be triumphant.

## Conclusion

Following Lenin’s death, the Communist Party took a more moderate position towards the issue of worldwide revolution. Instead of focusing on fomenting revolutions abroad, the party concentrated on securing power and strength and enacting socialism in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. Nevertheless, the party did not completely abandon its vision of worldwide socialism, but instead presented it in a new way. Children literature, due to its highly intended ideological function, help shows how the Communist Party

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27. Galitsa, *Detskii Internatsional*, 3.

28. Galitsa, *Detskii Internatsional*, 29.

envisioned the future and the eventual victory of a worldwide socialist revolution. By publishing children's stories with foreigners in prominent roles, the party showed that workers would continue to fight against their oppressors without help from Russia or the *Comintern* and that the success of Russia would naturally draw people to socialism. In many of the books previously examined, both good and bad publicity play a major role in bringing people to Russia because hearing about socialism and Lenin arouses curiosity and desire to see the truth for oneself. Once the world learns about socialism and Lenin, workers in other countries will want to come and join the communists in Russia. Although all the foreigners came for different reasons, the end result of these books is the same—the foreign characters are drawn to Russia. To the children reading these tales, they learn that any who comes to Russia will ultimately convert. While most of the characters choose to stay in Russia, even those that do not are changed by their experience and look to the Russian Soviets to learn more. Therefore, with workers continually throwing off their chains and the success of Lenin and Socialist Russia shining as a beacon to the world, the worldwide revolution cannot fail.

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*Amy Daniel graduated in December 2015 with a degree in European studies. She is from southern California, but now lives and works in Washington, D.C.*



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## *DeLamar and Mary Jensen Award in European History.*

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## *Fred R. Gowans Award in 19<sup>th</sup> C. Western US History.*

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