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Ego postulo inspirationem tuae Deae Clio
LETTER FROM THE MANAGING EDITORS

These are historical times. While the papers collected and presented in the following pages were written over the course of the last year, their final presentation, as well as the writing of this letter, was completed in semi-isolation as disease, fear, and uncertainty spread across the globe. Disruption is the word of the day, the week, the month, perhaps even the year. But in these trying and suspenseful times, a project such as the one you have opened reminds us that even in proverbial times like these, we are defined not by how tall we grow but by the depths from which we prosper.

The following pieces of history are about humanity. They are about our origins and our present. They kiss, nudge, and otherwise brush against the traditional narratives that typically dictate our past, casting fresh eyes on long-studied moments in time. They are about tragedy and depression and injustice and loss; they are about innovation and community and strength and equality. They remind us to be wary of the heavy hand of oppression and that when rights are not given they must be taken. Most of all, they remind us that to be human is to be idiosyncratic. We are not equal because we are the same. We are equal because we are unique.

This edition of Ex Post Facto, like all others, has been a pillar of collaboration. It would not be here if not for the tireless work, first and foremost, of our authors. It takes bravery to put your work out for scrutiny. Revisions are neither fun nor easy, but they are necessary, and we thank each and every author for always being willing to do go the extra mile time and again. The Associate and Assistant Editors performed invaluable work. Our gratitude for their meticulous scouring of every word, comma, semi-colon, or em-dash cannot be put into words. And, of course, we must thank Professor Eva Sheppard Wolf as well as the entirety of the faculty in the History Department of San Francisco State University. Your work, effort, and care can be found on every page to follow.

Thank you for taking the time to appreciate the work of these diligent, determined people. We are incredibly proud of the work that has been produced, and hope that this twenty-ninth edition lives up to not just the high standard of its forbearers but also the standards sure to be set in its future.

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# Table of Contents

**9/11: A Tale of Two Worlds**  
*L. Joseph Smith*  
9-32

**A Life of Death: The Life & Role of the Executioner in 17th and 18th Century Germany**  
*Evan Bachmann*  
33-43

**Black Mothers’ Pain Today: Removing the Past from Its Pedestals**  
*Andrew Gabriel Rose*  
45-64  
Undergraduate Winner of the Joseph Mullins Prize in History

**The Challenge to Democracy: Leonard Marsh’s Report on Social Security for Canada as Its Author’s Ultimate Appeal for Economic Equity in Canada**  
*Michael A. Pascoe*  
65-106

**Discord in the Narrative: Memory and Legacy of Vietnam in Porterville**  
*Hailee VanHorn*  
107-127

**Free Labor, Free Soil, and the California Constitution Debates of 1849**  
*Jeff Garaventa*  
129-145
THE SEAS BUT JOIN THE NATIONS THEY DIVIDE: CONNECTING SCIENCE AND HUMANITY ON THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY ATLANTIC THROUGH MESSAGES IN BOTTLES
Julie van den Hout
Graduate Winner of the Joseph Mullins Prize in History

WE WOMEN: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES IN FEMALE LIFE DURING THE DEPRESSION
Danielle Poortinga

TO WORKING AND WORTHY WOMEN: THE VALUE OF DOMESTIC WORK AS ASSERTED BY HOUSEKEEPING GUIDES IN THE EARLY-NINETEENTH CENTURY
Analisa L. Spina

THE POWER OF ALIEN INVASIONS: A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF TRANS ATLANTIC BORDERLANDS
Nicole Estela Miller

LOVE, LUST, AND VIOLENCE IN GRECO-ROMAN MAGIC
Curtis Rager

THE DEADLY TACTICS OF THE FBI INVESTIGATION INTO THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY
Janelle L. Daggert
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9/11: A TALE OF TWO WORLDS

L. Joseph Smith

The events of September 11, 2001 were a watershed moment of American and even global life. Putting aside the international ramifications of the resultant War on Terror, the historical events of September eleventh are widely known. It is a monolithic event in the public’s consciousness of recent history. One would be hard-pressed to find an American who does not recognize the significance of ‘nine-eleven.’

It was a tragedy broadcast across the world, experienced collectively by hundreds of millions. For these, the memory of its tragic sequence leaves an indelible mark of vivid detail. However, what of those who were not alive then? What of the children born in the twenty-first century and who have no original memory of this pivotal event? All of the facts and its associated narratives would have had to have been communicated and imprinted on them. For these seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen-year olds, 9/11 is as much a historical event as Vietnam or Pearl Harbor is to many of us.

This paper seeks to understand how and in what way 9/11 projected as a historical event. This paper is not a survey of common understandings on the subject, which is beyond the means of the author, but rather will analyze only the most accessible sources of historical fact. This survey of the literature, museum resources, and film will contextualize itself relative to the age of those persons born on or after the year 2000. Furthermore, this composite analysis will trace what specific facts and themes are most present.

First, a summary of the event of 9/11 through the most authoritative source: The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, more commonly known as the ‘9/11 Commission Report.’ This narrative will minorly supplement facts revealed through the investigations of independent writers; most of which were published later than the 9/11
Commission. Several secondary and collegiate history textbooks will be analyzed for common themes or facts. A brief exposition on the 9/11 Monument and Museum and the educational resources they have made available will be provided. Lastly, this paper seeks to analyze popular non-fiction literature, film, and children’s books in how they portray the narratives and facts pertaining to the events of September 11, 2001.

By expounding on these accessible sources of historical projection, it is the goal of this paper to elucidate the superficiality of 9/11 history as it is publicly projected. The effect is a divide in narratives, two worlds of perspective, wherein one perceives the event as the beginning of a new era, and the other as retribution fulfilled. By presenting 9/11 as only the beginning of the narrative and failing to elucidate the causal context of the attack, the public’s understanding of the event as it is factually based is severely limited.

The Event

September eleventh begins with the nineteen hijackers boarding two planes in Boston, and one each in Washington Dulles and Newark. The first plane to be hijacked was American Airlines (AA) Flight eleven, which was flying to Los Angeles from Boston. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) learned about the hijacking only a few minutes after it took place. Mohammad Atta, the usurping pilot, unintentionally announced to the world, instead of to the intended passengers, of the hijacking.¹ The FAA, as would be the case with the other hijackings, bungled their response. They infamously notified the North East Air Defense Sector (NEADS) of the hijacking only nine minutes before it struck the North Tower. This would be the most in the way of warnings that the military would get.²

A.A. eleven struck the North Tower, One World Trade Center (WTC), at 8:46, traveling at 465 miles per hour, creating a gaping hole between the ninety-third and ninety-ninth floors.³ The second plane to be hijacked was United (UA) Flight 175, also flying to Los Angeles out of Boston. After two close-calls with other planes, UA 175 hit the South Tower (Two WTC)

² National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 21.
³ Ibid., 285.
between the seventy-seventh and eighty-fifth floors traveling at 590 miles per hour. The third hijacking was AA seventy-seven, leaving Washington Dulles for Los Angeles. It struck the Pentagon at 9:38, traveling 530 miles per hour. UA ninety-three, also a transnational flight, left Newark for San Francisco only four minutes before AA eleven crashed into the North Tower. For unknown reasons, the hijacking team of four waited forty six minutes after take-off, compared to the thirty to thirty five minutes with the other three planes. Though it may not seem like a significant difference in time, those extra sixteen minutes would not only give the passengers time to learn about the other hijackings through calls from their loved ones, but also would give them time to fight the hijackers for control of the plane. For those forty six minutes, the hijackers were traveling farther from their presumed target: the Capital. At 10:02, UA 93 crashed in a field outside Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after the passengers fought and tried to take back the plane. Ziad Jarrah, the usurping pilot, subsequently drove the plane into the ground.

For the New Yorkers surrounding the Two Towers, the situation was exceedingly chaotic. Many saw the first plane strike the North Tower, but initial reports said it was only a small single-engine plane. Most thought it was only an accident until the second plane struck. The emergency response in New York was necessarily improvised. The preexistent communication networks were not prepared for the sudden need for rapid and efficient communication. Not only were parties who needed to know left out, those who did know were not properly informed. The subsequent bungling of information, as the Commission noted, unintentionally increased the loss of life on September eleventh. A tragic example being the responses emergency dispatchers had for the people trapped in the towers. Many had no idea planes had struck the towers. Therefore, they followed protocol and instructed the trapped callers to remain in place and wait to be rescued.

The most identifiable face of the hijackers is that of Mohamed Atta. For weeks after the attack, it was with his dour photo in the corner that newscasters summarized the days events. Some journalists believed they could shed light on the answer through Atta’s background. What they

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4 Ibid., 293.
5 Ibid., 10.
6 Ibid., 315.
7 Ibid., 286.
found was that Atta had a very complicated but intense character. Born to a middle-class family in Cairo, he traveled to Germany for a master’s degree in civic engineering. Though born to a family that identified as secular, he became deeply religious after regularly attending a mosque in Hamburg that was known to host the more militant speakers. The most complicated feature of Atta’s was how he expressed his passion for civic architecture. His master’s thesis was on the preservation of traditional Middle Eastern cities in a contemporary context. His analysis included the preservation of Islamic and Christian structures. Before he completed his thesis, he and another architecture student received a grant to go to Cairo to study and analyze the development plans the Egyptian government had for a section of old Cairo known as the Islamic City. It is an area replete with ancient monuments, medieval architecture, and a modern marketplace. To Atta’s horror, the government sought to dig up the centuries-old cemetery, evict dozens of onion and garlic salesmen, spruce up the building and move in a troupe of actors to play the role of the original inhabitants.

Though Atta was the leader of the nineteen, he was not the mastermind of the plot. Khalid Sheikh Mohammad (KSM), the uncle of Ramzi Yousef who was the mastermind behind the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, is considered to have hatched and executed the 9/11 plot. Al-Qaeda served as a patron that supplied funds and manpower. Only through al-Qaeda was KSM able to gather the nineteen into his plot. KSM’s hate for the U.S. allegedly came from his time in technical school in North Carolina.

The foundation of Osama Bin Laden’s ideology is to strip the Muslim world of any traces of modernity and return it to its purer form; one reflecting the original Islamic state under the first three generations of Muslims. While many looked to the roots of their faith for stability, Bin Laden and those like him believed true emulation could only be achieved after the violent amputation of modernity from the Muslim world. This radical strain has its practical roots in the writings of Sayyid Qutb. Not unlike the Japanese intelligentsia of the 1920s and 1930s, Qutb saw the mass secularization of the Middle East as a debasement of whom he saw was a great people.

8 Ibid., 160.
10 Ibid., 30.
11 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 145.
In his view, the only way to save the spirit of Islam was to fight back violently. This ideology may have been birthed in the post-colonial world but radicalized in the mountains of Afghanistan.

The Soviet-Afghan war became the proving grounds that transformed Qutb and his contemporaries’ beliefs into action. The U.S., seeing an opportunity to do to the Soviets what they and China did to them in Vietnam, facilitated and encouraged the growing network of jihadists. The U.S. patronized only the most virulent and violent Islamists to sell the conflict as a religious jihad. They wanted only the most zealous warriors to fight the Soviets. Saudi Arabia benefited immensely from the Afghan jihad. Though they invested millions into the jihad, in return, they were able to disseminate their puritanical interpretation of Islam as well as get rid of the many exiled Islamists in their borders, who were agitating about the Saudi’s decadence.

Osama bin Laden was one of the unofficial delegates of the Saudi royal family to the Afghan jihad. After the war, bin Laden sought to continue the jihad to other local Muslim communities whom he perceived as being ‘invaded.’ These included Muslims from Egypt, Algeria, Chechnya, Bosnia, and his own Saudi Arabia. To achieve this end, he used the same jihadi network the CIA helped develop. Despite his meticulous preparations, each of the local jihad were failures. In 1996, after moving to Afghanistan from Sudan, bin Laden adjusted his mission: the only way for the local jihad to succeed was to free the local rulers from their bondage to the U.S. The 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, and the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole served to increase technical knowledge, make the U.S. look facile and weak, and encourage recruitment.

Though generally perceived as a unifying symbol, 9/11 has been embroiled in controversy from the beginning. Notwithstanding the historical significance of these controversies, it will not be a subject of this paper. There are those who suspect that the U.S. Government had a hand in seeing the event through. Though some of these theories are not devoid of the

13 Mamdani, Mahmood. Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (New York: DoubleDay, 2004), 125.
14 Ibid., 133.
16 Ibid., 91-92.
empirical method, the debate is primarily a political one defined by blame and who it belongs to. Another defining controversy concerning 9/11 are the infamous twenty eight Pages. Before the 9/11 Commission was released the Bush administration classified twenty eight pages citing national security. Many of these pages indirectly implicate the Saudi government in the terrorist attack. It wasn’t until after significant lobbying and political pressure did President Obama declassify the twenty eight pages in 2016.

**The Treatment**

For the history of 9/11, the 9/11 Commission Report stands as a monolith. Most literature about 9/11 rests directly on the facts supplied by the Report. It is the foundational source to textbooks made available to elementary and secondary schools. There has been, however, a growing collection of peripheral writings pertaining, in varying degrees, to 9/11. The more relevant works are Tony McDermott’s *Perfect Soldiers* and *The Terror Timeline: year by Year, Day by Day, Minute by Minute: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Road to 9/11 – and America’s Response* by Paul Thompson. Some of the academic writings where 9/11 plays a secondary role is Mahmood Mamdani’s *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terrorism*; *Occidentalism* by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit; and *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West* by Gilles Kepel.

**9/11 Commission Report and Contributive Peripheral Writings**

Released on July 22, 2004, the 9/11 Commission Report is the bedrock of 9/11 history and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. Chaired by Thomas H. Kean, the bipartisan Commission reviewed over 2.5 million pages of documents and interviewed over 1,200 people in crafting their report. It is a very comprehensive document that covers the events of 9/11 from several perspectives, the origins and path of Osama Bin Laden, the planning and preparation for the hijackings, the detailed movements of New Yorkers directly after the attack, the American response to the attack, and recommendations for the future. The scope of the Report is historical, but also encapsulates the Commission’s broader mandate.

The Commission set out not only answering ‘what’ happened, but also
‘why’ it happened, and ‘how’ did it come to be. Many of these questions require answers beyond the historical discipline. In light of the government’s incredibly subpar response to the hijackings, much of the Report delineates blame among the various agencies involved. Notably, the Intelligence community receives the lion’s share of blame while the executive branch is left relatively unscathed. The method by which the Report presents the copious amounts of detail adds a sense of surgical understanding of each moment. The Report traces the movements and conversations of the various federal and local agencies. Each analysis is followed up with forceful recommendations.

Regarding the essential factual points of 9/11 history, the 9/11 Commission follows the historical trail so long as it is directly applicable to the event. The Soviet-Afghan war is only briefly mentioned and only in a contextual sense relating to the Taliban. With impressive detail, the Report follows bin Laden’s path from Afghanistan to Saudi Arabia, and from Sudan back to Afghanistan. It describes his efforts to target U.S. assets and the failure of the U.S. to counter such efforts. It further traces the movements of the nineteen hijackers from their training camps in Afghanistan to American soil.17 Much is as of yet unknown and the Report does not fail to articulate that.

For Historians, the 9/11 Commission Report will be the foundation for any future work. Much of the Report’s analysis of Bin Laden’s growing influence and Khalid Sheik Mohammed’s (KSM) orchestration of the plot are widely accepted. In this regard, the only source that can supplement the Report within its scope is The Terror Timeline. Paul Thompson incorporates journalistic sources in his event-oriented narrative of 9/11, organized chronologically with each event identified by date, and in some cases time. With this format, the ‘events’ identified receive its descriptive chronological summary. The effect is a much more colorful, but longer, telling of the events.

As an individual piece of investigative literature, the 9/11 Commission Report stands as an empirical source of historical fact. But as the tendrils of historical association become apparent, it becomes equally evident that the Report, whether or not for political reasons, did not provide much in the way of the context of the world the perpetrators lived. Not only was the U.S.’s involvement in the Soviet-Afghan war minimized, only a general

17 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 160.
description of the ‘enemy’ was provided. In Mahmood Mamdani’s book, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, he explains the U.S. contribution not only to the developing low-intensity conflict strategy after Vietnam but also vividly describes the level of support given to the mujahedeen. The CIA facilitated the transfer of an array of weapons as well as copious amounts of cash.  

They also educated, trained, and facilitated the radicalization of the *jihadi* mujahedeen groups. Furthermore, Mamdani contextualizes al-Qaeda’s ideology as not just a product of post-colonial politics, but also radicalized from Cold War politics.

In the Report’s preface, the ‘enemy’s’ purpose is “to rid the world of religious and political pluralism, the plebiscite, and equal rights for women.” When taking bin Laden’s fatwas at face value, this assessment is not wrong; it is entirely correct. However, the works of Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit in *Occidentalism*, Gilles Kepel’s *The War for Muslim Minds*, and Terry McDermott’s *Perfect Soldiers* collectively present a far more complex and in-depth understanding than the Report suggests. These were not simply the actions of religious fanatics, but rather, were borne from a tradition of violent reaction to Western modernity. In *Occidentalism*, Buruma and Avishai identify old anti-Western stereotypes in the lexicon of these Islamic militants. They trace the centuries-long legacy of anti-Western ideas from Germany to Russia, Japan, and Afghanistan. They define Occidentalism as Orientalism turned on its head. A product of envy and resentment, the Occidentalist paints a dehumanizing picture of the West as greedy, materialistic, mechanical, decadent, rootless, soulless, and godless. This sub-human painting contrasted with the unity and spirituality of the nativist ideologue. A characteristic of Occidentalist thought is the emphasis on the *pure*, whether it be pure race, ethnicity, nation, creed, or even religion, and the *will* to sacrifice oneself for the *pure*.

The rapid emulation of the West in the early twentieth-century in the Middle East birthed many intellectuals who, with equal violence, reacted with extreme nativism. The writings of Sayyid Muhamud Taleqani and Sayyid Qutb brought such stereotypical demonizations into a religious scope by equating them to *jahiliyyah*, a traditional Koranic word describing

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18 Mamdani, Mahmood, 141.
19 Ibid., 136.
20 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 3.
21 Mamdani, Mahmood, 155.
the ignorance as a result of idolatry. To the Occidentalist, the pure people work towards a higher purpose and will not settle for the West’s decadent mediocrity. Each soldier is but a cell of a soulful, organic whole, working in unison to a higher purpose. But, to bring faithful soldiers to this ideology, its orchestrators had to tap into real political issues.

The political expression of these Occidentalist perspectives is best gathered from Osama Bin Laden’s teacher, Ayman al-Zawahiri. In the final pages of Zawahiri’s book, *Knights under the Prophet’s Banner*, he presents a very rational exposition on the factors that led to September 11, 2001. The explosion of violence in the second Intifada and the introduction of “martyrs” to the Palestinian struggle serve as examples of what other zealous Muslims should be doing. The Second Intifada began in the fall of 2000 and did not cease until early 2005. September eleventh was very much related to the ongoing Palestinian struggle against Israel. Those nineteen hijackers were, but a sacrifice, the vanguard to what al-Qaeda hoped could be a war.

Terry McDermott’s *Perfect Soldiers* is one of a kind; no other book delves as deep as McDermott in the lives of the hijackers. He focusses on the Hamburg cell, as they are the most enigmatic to Western viewers. Most terrorists are seen as ignorant of all the fruits of the West, but the Hamburg cell lived in Germany for quite some time. They knew the West, and they attacked it. I would hardly call McDermott’s work apologetic; he contributes a wonderfully humanistic perspective to their background and how those who knew the hijackers saw them. He interviewed many distraught family members of the Hamburg cell who consider them victims as well.

**Textbooks**

Textbooks, and other educational resources for teachers are one of the more effective methods of establishing factual and narrative continuity among the public. Seven textbooks in total will be collectively analyzed, most are collegiate level, while others are high school, middle school, and one for sixth graders. Two of the textbooks are World History, while the other five are U.S. History. These textbooks are free and easily accessible online.

Textbooks are mandated to cover a wide swath of history and many of the details are heavily summarized; acknowledging this fact, analysis of

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22 Buruma, Ian and Margalit, Avishai, 116.
the factual composition of the textbooks revolved around important facts. I looked for: The Soviet-Afghan War, the rise of the new terrorism in the nineties, contextual information to 9/11, and how 9/11 was presented with other material.

As for the collegiate textbooks, analysis of OpenStack’s, a product of Rice University in Houston Texas, U.S. History textbook, Cengage’s “The Earth and Its Peoples: a Global History seventh ed., and the State Department’s “Outline of U.S. History.” Each of these resources treats the Soviet-Afghan War as an independent phenomenon. Though U.S. support of the mujahedeen is made plain, little is said in the way of what kind and how much support was supplied. In Openstax and Cengage’s textbook, 9/11 is not only the introduction or first section of the last chapter but also presented in melodramatic terms. The necessary information presented the hijackings, the impact, and the death toll, even an explanation of how the towers collapsed. But 9/11 is only presented as the prologue to the Bush doctrine and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Cengage, keeping in line with its social history methodology, follows instead with the ideological, religious, political, and economic tensions that contributed to the onset of terrorism.

In the way of describing the rise of terror, both Openstax and Cengage fail to mention anything. However, the State Department’s treatment of the rise of terror is worthy of honorable mention. In the last section of the second to last chapter, Outlines of U.S. History has a section titled “Intimation of Terrorism,” in which the authors trace the rise of al-Qaeda from the debacle of Operation Restoring Hope to the USS Cole. Not only does it mention the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, but it also explains how the catastrophic Oklahoma City bombing largely overshadowed it. Though most of this information is present in the 9/11 Report, only Outlines of U.S. History incorporates this vital information into their telling of U.S. History.

In their sixth grade World History and eighth grade U.S. History, McGraw Hill identifies the Afghan-Soviet war in its Cold War context. In the U.S. History book, it even mentions how the invasion derailed the SALT II ratification in the Senate. Though acknowledging U.S. aid to the Islamic groups of Afghanistan, it does not mention how much or what kind of aid. In neither book is the Rise of Terror addressed. Only in the sentence before the introduction of 9/11 is the reader aware of any other terrorist activities. In each textbook, 9/11 is the opening subject to the last chapter of the book.
After describing the basic facts of the event: the hijackings, the impact, the death toll; the chapter immediately moves to the American response. In the eighth grade U.S. History book, more attention is given to the perpetrators. It briefly describes terrorism and Osama Bin Laden.

Another large textbook distributor, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, would not supply their textbook to the research. Instead, they directed two of their articles on the event. Both were about reflections concerning the event in the context of its ten-year anniversary. One was written for five – seven-year-olds and another for young teenagers. Both were about remembering 9/11 in light of its ten-year anniversary.\textsuperscript{23}

The article for the older audience was exceedingly interesting because of the 171 comments written by twelve to fourteen year-olds.\textsuperscript{24} The comments were usually sentimental and empathetic with the fallen, but others are less so. Many were two to five words long, but others were quite expressive. Some asked excellent questions, like Farah, who asked, “why do people do these kinds of things? How did Osama hijack the airplane? Why did he do what he had done? Why did those people help him with the operation?” Farah did not get these answers from the article. Andrew asked, “I always wonder what America has done for people to want to destroy many innocent lives.”\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{Museum}

Opened to the public in 2014, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum is arguably the authoritative source of public 9/11 history. The monument is in the Twin Towers footprint, while the museum is below. They are not the only monument to the events of 9/11. There is one in Shanksville, Pennsylvania as well as one in Arlington. If any parent or teacher hoped to incorporate the history of 9/11 in its educational model, the Museum has many resources. The 9/11 Museum as a wide variety of lesson plans and programs for all ages available online. Many of these lesson plans and more are incorporated in activities for scheduled field trips to the Museum.

All of the Museum’s published lesson plans are structured to meet

\textsuperscript{24} “Ten-Year Remembrance of 9/11” Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, September 2011.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
Common Core requirements. There are three individual lesson plans, for grades three – five, six – seven, and nine – twelve, each tailored for their respective age group. Much of the activities serve to exemplify the first responders, survivors, and the fallen through individual and collective experience.\(^{26}\) This bridge between the individual and the collective, the victim and the observer, is, as the lesson plans were published upon the time of analysis, through the narrative of Welles Remy Crowther. He is credited with saving eighteen lives and was identified by the red bandanna he used as a protective mask before he died.\(^{27}\)

Critical analysis of the Museum and its contents are beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, identifying the scope and reach of the Museum in the collective understanding of 9/11 among its target audience. As mentioned previously, the 9/11 Museum has a streamlined program where a school can schedule a field trip and include many workshops and activities to stimulate the students understanding of the event. In a phone interview, The Assistant Director of Education, Jennifer Lagasse, and Executive Assistant and Special Projects Manager, Caryn Lewi, articulated many of the crucial aims and directions used to educate students. They try to frame 9/11 in a relatable and contemporaneous way by introducing primary sources, such as artifacts and oral histories and apply them to their conceptions of the event. Some of these primary sources are juxtaposed to facilitate debate and understanding. A good example would be the dichotomy of security and freedom in the face of such a horrific terrorist attack.\(^{28}\)

The central theme in their programs is the unfolding historical nature of 9/11. The effects and the dynamics of that historical event still are not realized. Even now, they are planning on expanding the memorial to include recognition for the clean-up workers and the health problems they suffer as a result of their work.\(^{29}\)

In any given year, thousands of students visit the 9/11 museum. These patrons mostly come from New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey, but many arrive on scheduled and guided field trips. In the 2014 to 2015 academic year, the 9/11 Museum hosted approximately 2,850 middle school

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\(^{28}\) Jennifer Lagasse, interview by author, April 16, 2019.

\(^{29}\) Ibid.
students and 4,600 high school students. In the 2015 to 2016 academic year, the museum hosted approximately 1,840 middle school students and about 2,900 high school students. The reason for the sharp decrease in field trips from the first to the second year is because they had a grant for the New York area in place for only the first year. Though these students are only a fraction of the nation’s, the museum’s easily accessible educational materials facilitate a far wider distribution of public 9/11 history than the museum alone can achieve.\(^30\)

**Popular Literature and Film**

Karen Engle notes what effect the inundation of images of 9/11 had on the world. For the first time in the history of the internet, pornography was not the greatest contributor to internet traffic. It was wicked, but it was devised in this way for this kind of impact. It was an attack devised visually."\(^31\) Many of the prevalent themes hinge themselves to specific images of the event. Though the visual imagery may be a significant aspect of these sources, it accompanied facts of the event. But in many cases, these facts only serve as captions.

**Non-Fiction**

The case for LIFE’s 2001 *One Nation: America Remembers September 11, 2001*; and their 2002 *The American Spirit: Meeting the Challenge of September 11*. The former contained an introduction from then New York Mayor Rudy Guiliani and the latter from then-President George W. Bush. Each book is filled with large, high-definition images; the facts truly serve as captions here, each complements the other. The first is mostly concerned with the event and its immediate aftermath. The second is about the clean-up and patriotic unity, the American flag plays a primary role here.

Though complementary, the two books encapsulate the two dominant but polemic characters of 9/11: Shock and Hope. The first book is full of painful images of the devastation: the planes crashing into the towers, creating billows of debris and fire, the expression of fear on many bystanders,

\(^{30}\) Ibid.

and the apocalyptic scenes after the collapse. While it offers glints of hope in the depiction of rescue efforts, the book is dark. The second, aptly titled “The American Spirit,” screams hope and unity through red, white, and blue. Both incorporate written works from significant persons and were on the Best Sellers list for a time.

In treating the themes of shock, the opposite can be Mitchell Fink, and Louis Mathias’ book Never Forget: An Oral History of September 11, 2001, and Wilborn Hampton’s September 11, 2001: Attack on New York City. In both of these cases, a more experiential route is taken in their narratives. Fink and Mathias, spouses, collected eighty one oral histories, including their own and one anonymous. These include construction workers, employees inside the towers (including one who was on the 104th floor in the North Tower), spouses and loved ones of the fallen, Firemen, Police Officers, and government officials. Moreover, these oral histories do not only come out of New York; they include stories from the Pentagon as well. Each of the oral histories stands independent without any arching narrative or contextual reflections. Hampton, however, creates a narrative composed of the individual experiences of eight persons, including himself. These narratives are broken up temporally: Attack, Flight, and then Aftermath.

One of the most impressive works I found was “Understanding September 11th: Answering Questions about the Attacks on America” by Mitch Frank, a reporter for Time magazine. Written for ages twelve and up, it is in a Q&A format. He organizes information as answers to expected or commonly asked questions. He brings questions relating to the event itself, the hijackers, and Osama bin Laden. He even brings questions relating to Islam, political Islam, and the Middle East.

When answering questions about Afghanistan and the Taliban, he does mention the Soviet-Afghan war but U.S. involvement is left out. In treating al-Qaeda, he inaccurately analyzes al-Qaeda’s motives as being purely religious, ignoring their political causes. Frank includes details of al-Qaeda’s rise in the nineties. In the chapter “Why does the Middle East matter to us?” he glosses over Cold War politics in the Muslim world. The reason why some Muslim leaders preferred Soviet support, according to his answer, is that Communism’s authoritarian structure was comparable to that of the traditional Islamic leader, the Caliph. He further surmises that why some preferred U.S. support was out of religious reasons, fear of the Soviet Union’s atheism. Though Frank has some sources to substantiate
such a claim, it is misleading and inaccurate. Furthermore, he mitigates U.S. contributions to the continuation of authoritarian rule in the region.

Overall, Frank’s structure and diversity of topics was impressive. He addressed many important contextual facts in a manner that can be understood by an adolescent. In a touching note, he dedicates the book to the people of New York City, the brave people at the Pentagon, and “the people of Afghanistan, who know far too well what war and pain mean.” In this regard, he advocated for the Afghan people through their history in a unique way.

**Children’s Books**

The corpus of writings about 9/11 is substantial, and some can be found in the children’s section. Three frequently recommended books about 9/11 for children: *Fireboat* by Maira Kalman, *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* by Mordicai Gerstein, and *America is Under Attack: The Day the Towers Fell*, by Don Brown. Each of these books compliments the other thoughtfully, none treading other the other’s literary ‘territory.’ *Fireboat* and *America is Under Attack* venerate the heroes of the day, whether they were in the tower or on the Hudson. *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* addresses the loss of history.

In *Fireboat*, the John J. Harvey, a fireboat christened in 1931, comes out of retirement when an old ex-captain of Harvey, with some help, fixed it up. On 9/11 Harvey was called by the city of New York to help with fires that resulted from the collapse of the Twin Towers. *Fireboat* brings a unique voice to the events of that day. Nowhere else is the Harvey’s story told. Harvey was awarded the National Preservation Award for providing “invaluable aid in New York’s hour of need.” The final words of the book call for remembrance in the face of the absent Twin Towers — a call to remember “the heroes who died” that day.

*The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* by Mordicai Gerstein is less about the Twin Towers and more about Philippe Petit’s marvelous high-wire walk between the towers in 1974. On the morning of August 7th, Petit walked the several hundred feet between the towers, 1,350 feet in the air for forty five minutes for a total of eight passes. The spirit of his daring becomes beautifully captured in the book. It is this daring spirit, and the awe it inspired, that is lost in the absence of the Twin Towers. In this sense, *The
Man Who Walked Between the Towers is a self-sustaining book. Tragedy is not so much pain and despair from the attack but the loss of a piece of history.

Don Brown’s America is Under Attack attempts to capture the comprehensive New York experience. Brown does so by incorporating the perspective of individuals present at central locations, organized within a larger narrative arc of the day. The shock of the event casts in the usual way: the tranquility of the perfectly blue day interrupted by death and destruction. Most perspectives present are the experience of those escaping the Towers and the first responders. A page is given both to the Pentagon and United 93.

The most important aspect of this book is how it presents Loss. Throwing the number of the dead will not elicit much of a response from a child. However, many of the persons the reader experience the event with are named. When some of those named characters are identified as dead in the end, the loss is simplified but not minimized. Brown executed this theme of loss beautifully. By filling the narrative with characters, and have the young reader live the day with them, Brown created a robust children’s book.

Film

The two films most identifiable to 9/11 is the World Trade Center and United 93. Both were released in 2006, in time to contribute to the fifth-anniversary reflections. In this regard, both films try to emulate many prevalent themes for the time: chaotic and disorientating shock, helpless pain and despair, veneration to those who worked against the machinations of the aggressor(s). Another important cinematic contributor to 9/11 is Michael Moore’s Fahrenheit 9/11. Released in the summer of 2004, it was in time for the 2004 Presidential contest. Michael Moore’s film primarily deals with the public’s and the Bush administration’s reaction to the event.

World Trade Center, based on a true story, takes the perspective of two Port Authority Officers trapped under the rubble of the South Tower. Forced to keep conversing with one another, lest one succumbs to their injuries and fall asleep into death. The movie pans from the physically trapped officers to their emotionally trapped spouses and family. Their collective ordeal cannot find solace until the steel carcass of the day’s tragedy is cleaned up.

The film heavily emphasizes the pain, despair, loss, and powerlessness
experienced in the event, but concludes with hope through unity. No other scene spoke as much for pain and powerlessness as when Pezzulo, trapped with McLaughlin and Jimeno, shot himself after being impaled by rebar. Hope introduced in the person of David Karnes. A former Marine who feels God’s hand push him to New York and help. Concurrent with the American reaction of 9/11, was hope found in a military uniform. It is he who finds McLaughlin and Jimeno. Continuing the metaphoric parallel, only Karnes articulates the desire for revenge.

*United 93* primarily focusses on the experience of the passengers of the hijacked plane but intermittently pans to the FAA and NEADS as the chaos of the day unfolds. Not only are the facts necessary to plot of the movie, as it is the knowledge of the other three planes that push the passengers of UA 93 to fight, but it makes the film more factually grounded. Very few characters are identified in this film. Most fill only a role: hijacker, passenger, FAA, or NEADS employee. The lack of character identification lends the movie to an immense and grand tone.

*United 93* progresses in chronological order and is an excellent source for understanding the details of the day, filled with narrative details taken from the 9/11 Commission Report. Many of these factual details serve to amplify the confusion of the day. Two good examples being the initial misconception that AA 11 did not crash into the North Tower, but was still in the air, headed towards Washington D.C., and the jets sent from Langley to intercept AA 11, on account of a destination miscommunication, were directed East instead of North.

The whole movie serves as preparation for the final struggle for the cockpit. In this respect, *the United 93* takes a radically different direction from that of *World Trade Center*. Nicholas Cage, as John McLaughlin, concludes the movie with a small monologue extolling the goodness that came out of the attack. When addressing the subject of the perpetrators, he brushes it off: “The evil, yeah, sure.” *United 93* has not the luxury of discounting such a delicate subject, but if the passengers are the protagonist, the movie needs a convincing antagonist.

In the making of an adequate antagonist for the narrative, but without necessarily demonizing them, only three of the four get depicted as brutal and bloodthirsty. The only redeeming qualities of the group can be found in the anxious, unsure countenance of Ziad Jarrah. Jarrah’s humanity is awash in trepidation and conflict. Before he boards the plane, he hurriedly makes a
call, saying, “Ich Liebe Dich.” The only one who knows about Jarrah would know that he called his wife in Germany. In the narrative, the humanity of the hijackers only was afforded to Jarrah.

*United 93* opens to the ominous recitation of Arabic on a black screen. Though the captions say ‘praying in Arabic,’ the general ignorance of what an Arabic prayer would sound like leaves the language itself as a source of tension. This aspect is only amplified in the moment of silence before the fight for the plane begins. After everything else with 9/11, the Twin Towers and the Pentagon had concluded, there is a moment of religious significance. The hijackers continued mantra-like Arabic prayers are contrasted with the Lord’s Prayer shared among the passengers. After the Gods had been supplicated, the passengers attack.

Though *Fahrenheit 9/11* does not contribute much to the public’s understanding of 9/11 as an event, Michael Moore addresses essential questions relating to the American *response* to 9/11. In his usual position as narrating cynic, Moore questions the Bush family’s ties to the Bin Laden family, reminds the viewers of the conditions of his elections (they were not good), and who ultimately benefited from war with Iraq. One of his most relevant critiques is the treatment of Veterans as a result of the Iraq war. Each one of Moore’s points, critiques, and questions are still relevant today, mainly since most non-fiction writing is more about the response to rather than the event itself.

**The Intervention**

The essence of this paper is to frame a composite image of how 9/11 is projected as a historical event. For many of the more accessible pieces, they have been found wanting. In nearly every case, there is no divide between the *event* and the *reaction* to the event. Indeed, the actions of the Police Department, Firemen, and other saviors of the day are worthy of veneration. Nevertheless, it seems that the reaction becomes inseparable to the event itself. This attachment is dangerous particularly when patriotic conformity is attached to it. Criticizing the event is criticizing the heroes of the day. One of the reasons why debate over the causes of the event and the ‘truthers’ has derailed. All of the vivid imagery serves as reminders to the day, conjuring the emotions from deep within.

The prevalent themes of collective victimization and unity dominate
the 9/11 narrative. Only the most basic of facts thread through most of these themes: they hijacked four planes and killed 2,996 of us, and our heroes saved us from any more of their hate. Some of the more academic sources include some context to them, but usually only to define what a terrorist is and who Osama bin Laden is. Even the 9/11 Commission Report treats these as context, not as part of the event itself. The event becomes treated as though is only seen through the American perspective and thereby designed for Americans only.

However, the event is not solely for Americans. Not only was the event shared across the globe, but others also contributed, directly or indirectly, to the occurrence of the event. In telling the events at the onset of this paper, the use of sources outside of the 9/11 Report were necessary. Though there is not a more reliable and substantive source for 9/11 history, the Report’s premise is narrow. The people wanted to know what happened, and a straightforward answer to why it happened. Many historical contexts, particularly the contributions of U.S. foreign policy, are silenced. Here identified are two points that are in dire need of correction: the structure of the history of 9/11, and the inclusion of the events leading up to 9/11 in historically related literature. I hope to see my intervention be reflected in popular literature, but believe the change begins in the works that such authors would reference.

Related in the initial treatment of the history of 9/11, peripheral writers have analyzed some aspects of 9/11 that have yet to be incorporated into 9/11’s official history, most notably, how the U.S. contributed to the arming and radicalization of Islamic mujahedeen groups as a means to defeat the Soviets.

The current state of 9/11 history in our textbooks is insufficient. They serve to continue the misguided binding of the event and the reaction to the event. More ought to emulate Outlines of U.S. History with the incorporation of the rise of new terrorism with other events of the nineties. Not every textbook can devote a whole page to the topic, but the following points need addressing: the contribution of the jihadi network in funneling funds and human resources to local and subsequent international jihad, the U.S. as a growing target for terrorist activity, the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania, and the USS Cole. I will give a minimal example:

In the wake of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, many of the foreign jihadi returned home battle-hardened
and sure of victory. They believed that because the Soviet superpower met defeat at their hands, others can too. The global *jihadi* network that the CIA facilitated during the Soviet-Afghan war was now put to use to fund and man local *jihads* in Algeria, Egypt, Bosnia, Chechnya, and Saudi Arabia. They believed that the local governments did not have the people’s interest in mind, but rather they operated to cater to the U.S. through blind secular emulation. The U.S. intelligence agencies were monitoring this new form of terrorism, but little was done before it was too late. After the local *jihads* proved to be failures, Osama bin Laden, became certain that the only way for the local *jihad* to succeed was to free the local governments from U.S. influence. Bin Laden was the leader of an organization called al-Qaeda, which one of the main fundraisers and organizers of terrorist activities in the various *jihads*.

In 1996, Osama bin Laden facilitated the bombing of a housing complex in Khobar where U.S. personnel were residing, killing 20. Two years later, over 200 people died from U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. In 2000, al-Qaeda detonated a small craft next to the USS Cole in the port of Aden, Yemen, killing 17 U.S. sailors. By this time, Osama bin Laden had given the ‘green light’ to what was called the ‘planes operation.’ We would come to know it as 9/11. Each intended attack was to delegitimize U.S. power and encourage others to bin Laden’s cause.

The culture of 9/11 history is inundates with narratives of personal trial and collective response. The universal impact of the event immediately translates into unity in American patriotism. The attack became used as a rallying cry to a war against terror. Moreover, it was made clear that any who was not “for us” was “against us.” This dynamic has wained with public opinion of the war; it has lived on in the Global War on Terror. It also better facilitated many Veteran Affairs reforms with the growing number of disabled Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Nevertheless, whatever leverage political castigations over patriotism may have, symbols of the Twin Towers
Trouillot points out that the emphasis on date and time decontextualizes
the event and makes it susceptible to mythicization. This is no less the
case with 9/11; it has been identified not by the event but by the date. As
the tendrils of 9/11 history ferment in our lives, it mixes and evolves with
preexistent factors creating new ideas and concepts.

On September 20, 2001, President Bush told the American public,
“our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution.” The time of
grief had ended; the time for revenge had come. The reaction, and the
grieving process, were hijacked by the Bush administration in their wars
in Afghanistan and Iraq. Bush was not working alone; not only did he have
a cadre of interventionist neoconservatives at his disposal, but also he
had the insights of Samuel Huntington. In 1996, Harvard professor Samuel
Huntington published The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World
Order. Huntington argues that the “iron curtain of ideology had been replaced
by a velvet curtain of culture,” where each monolithic ‘civilization’ rubbed
against one another. To Huntington, the most dangerous ‘civilization’ was
Islam, having “the bloody border[s].” Even though few saw such a threat
from Islam, his conception of the monolithic civilizations, incapable of
mixing or coevolving, is dangerous.

Michel Foucault said, “what is found at the historical beginning of
things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of
other things. It is disparity.” At this time, the history of 9/11 is solely
projected as the historical beginning of this new century, already dominated
by the Global War on Terror. Terror, this faceless, identity-less entity is
only further convoluted through the ‘disparity’ of its popularly sanctioned
historical origin: 9/11. The persons, events, and ideas that led those nineteen
to their fate get pervasively silenced. Furthermore, empathizing with
‘Terror’ questions one’s membership in the American community. How can

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32 Engel, Karen, 136.
33 Trouillot, Michel-Ralph. Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of
History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 117.
34 Engel, Karen, 138.
36 Mamdani, Mahmood, 21.
37 Foucault, Michel. “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.” In Language, Counter-
Memory, Practice: Selected Essays, 139-164. Ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca, New York:
we address the very valid arguments presented by Michael Moore if we continue to attach the reaction to the event to the event? And the educated public is the key to a stable democracy. What is the point in debating the dichotomy of security versus freedom if no one understands the historical context of that debate? There is another world on the other side of those Towers. It lies beyond our collective memory – our reaction – and learning about it can only make us and our world stronger.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


A LIFE OF DEATH
The Life & Role of the Executioner in 17th and 18th century Germany

Evan Bachmann

Shortly before noon, the bells of Saint Sebaldus, Our Lady’s Church, and Saint Lorenz all chimed as the people of Nuremberg, Germany quickly came together at the town hall, the Rathus. The October afternoon was quite cold, but the singing of women and children, smells of sausages, fermented vegetables, and alcohol warmed the air. Soon the crowd swelled over a thousand people, pushing and shoving to get a view of the events about to occur. Do not let the festive atmosphere fool, the people of Nuremberg were not celebrating Oktoberfest; they were attending an execution, a common sight in early modern Germany. The condemned, known as the “poor sinner,” was led out by city magistrates, a chaplain, and, most dubiously, the executioner. The executioner, regardless of title or dishonor placed on the position, was needed due to ritualism associated with sixteenth-century justice. As the poor sinner was led out of town, the smells of food and alcohol quickly faded, replaced with wafts of rotting human remains coming from the direction of the Rabenstein, an elevated platform outside the city gates on which beheadings occurred. As the large crowd followed the condemned man to the large stone mass, both the condemned and the onlookers sang Bankelsangs, or traditional German death ballads, in hopes of saving the poor sinner’s soul. Seconds later, a deathly silence fell over the crowd as the condemned spoke, asking the crowd and his Lord for forgiveness. Following the sinner’s final prayer, the executioner sat him down in the judgment chair as his crimes and the sentencing were read. Following the final announcement of guilt, the executioner unsheathed his massive sword, a weapon requiring two hands, strength, and skill to wield and measured up the neck of the poor sinner. The executioner hoisted the judgment sword above his head, and with a thundering blow, the poor sinner was beheaded. Calmly the executioner turned to his lord and asked,
“Lord Judge, have I executed well?” and was given the typical response to a successful beheading: “You have executed as judgment and law has required.” The executioner then replied, “For that, I thank God and my master, who has taught me such art.” Still standing upon the Rabenstein, as the mass of onlookers begins to return home to recount the day’s events, the executioner then began cleaning up the remains.¹

**Rituals of Justice**

The era of public execution in Germany began with the signing of the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* in 1532 by Emperor Charles V. The Carolina was an attempt by the German government to modernize their legal system, instituting a more Roman style of justice and removing the ritualism associated with tribal law. Justice was pushed out of the hands of the people and into courtrooms to be mediated by the state. This idea made the practice of wergild, financial compensation, rarer, and the blood code more prevalent. On the surface, the Carolina provided a guide for every German city on how to provide authorized state justice without intruding on the ancient customs of the area. It attempted to standardize the rules regarding suspects, their capture, subsequent interrogation, the establishment of evidence, and the formula for a judicial proceeding. Despite this formalization process—it was still steeped in ritual—with the executioner at the forefront of the drama. Following the capture of the poor sinner, he was escorted by the executioner’s assistant, the Lowe, to the city’s jail to await a visit by the executioner. In sixteenth-century Germany, jails were not places built on the premise of rehabilitation but the redemption of one’s soul. This idea meant conditions were often purposefully cold, dimly lit, and ridden with death and disease. Following a brief wait, the executioner entered and began turning the wheels on the first order of business, obtaining a confession. The confession was vital in this new form of German justice, and by the Carolina could be obtained via torture. While legal, it was more of a last resort for getting a confession as the accused often confessed under just the threat of torture. For those bold enough to face torture, they endured a variety of punishments, including but not limited to thumbscrews, branding and piercing objects, and the famed Strappado, all of which were handled by

¹ This story is based on multiple accounts on how a typical execution in sixteenth century Germany would occur.
the executioner or his Lowe.\textsuperscript{2} If confessions were obtained, the executioner would then leave the torture room and inform the magistrate who would then record the confession.\textsuperscript{3} Following the recording of the confession, the now condemned would be escorted back to his or her cell to await trial, which took place exactly three days later.\textsuperscript{4} The trial was the beginning of the rituals of justice that would often conclude with the death of the defendant.

The trial itself was a highly ritualized endeavor, heavily dictated by instructions given by the Carolina directly. While it was presided over by a judge, a jury was present. However, due to the confession obtained earlier, it was little more than glorified sentencing. The poor sinner would enter the courtroom, the crime(s) they were accused of would be read, known as the beschreien, and the confession would follow. Confessions obtained with or without torture left no doubt as to the verdict in the Carolina Era. Multiple sections of the Carolina explicitly allows torture, including Section 8 which states that “when the crime obviously merits the death penalty… it shall be examined into – under torture, if useful to establish the truth.”\textsuperscript{5}

Following the guilty verdict, the judge would then decide the poor sinner’s fate, and death was all but guaranteed. All left to deliberate was the method of execution. Depending on the social standing of the accused and crime committed, there was a variety of ways to dispatch a poor sinner. Death by the sword, hanging, being broken on the wheel, burning and drowning were just a few ways a poor sinner could meet his maker, each with its own set of stigmas that were attached to it. After the declaration of death by the judge, he would break his staff, signifying the verdict of guilty and the subsequent expulsion of the sinner from the community. At this point, in accordance with Section 97 of the Carolina, the sinner would be handed over to the executioner for judgment to be carried out.

By the time the court session had ended, masses of people had lined the streets awaiting the brutal spectacle. While there was a variety of activities occurring – jeering, praying, eating, and drinking – it was singing

\textsuperscript{2} The Strappado is a punishment where the subject’s hands were bound behind their back and pulled upwards on a raised pulley while stones were pulling down on their feet.

\textsuperscript{3} Constitutio Criminalis Carolina Section 47

\textsuperscript{4} The three days between the confession and the trial gave the condemned time to repent and prepare for the afterlife, possibly. Priests frequently visited those who were awaiting execution during this time.

\textsuperscript{5} Constitutio Criminalis Carolina Section 8
that was key to continuing the ritual. Songs were the glue that held the entire ritual together, with the city of Leipzig going as far as forcing Johann Sebastian Bach to release his choirboys so that they could sing during public executions. Religious in nature, singing of the Bankelsangs was to comfort the condemned and spread the message of reformation. By singing songs in a well-known tune it not only allowed everyone to participate, but deepened the cultural and emotional associations of the tune. They spread the news of the crime, to everyone within earshot, no matter their social standing or literary abilities, people were able to understand the message that was being conveyed. The songs during each execution were not randomly selected but chosen due to the nature of the crime; however, on some occasions, the poor sinner would make suggestions. The singing of specific tunes became regular enough; they became known as hanging tunes. As the procession moved toward the place of execution along with songs and prayers from the audience, the authorities traveling with the poor sinner would provide wine, often leaving him or her no longer sober by the time they reached the place of execution. The only rule was the poor sinner could not “imbile too much wine or be overfilled with other strong drink that would hinder him from attending to the salvation of his soul properly.” The poor sinner made the long walk towards the Rabenstein, his fate well known to all in attendance, the focus of the ritual began to shift from the condemned to the executioner.

The Craft of Killing

A “good death” was vital in making sure the community was safe from not only the offender but the wrath of God, in addition to promising salvation to the poor sinner himself. Public executions were necessary for two reasons: first, to shock and scare the people in attendance and, more importantly, to affirm the temporal and divine authority of the state. In order to produce a satisfactory execution, it was no doubt an acquired skill, one honed for many years. Most executioners began their journey around the age of twelve or thirteen by becoming apprentices. Apprentices started

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by completing simple tasks such as gathering supplies for executions, cleaning the sword and various other torture instruments, fetching food and drink, and occasionally cleaning up after executions.\(^9\) As the apprentice grew, he would slowly begin to learn the more technical side of being an executioner, such as: how to administer torture properly, how to set up the equipment for various executions and how to deal with unruly poor sinners. Once appropriately trained and having completed one or two executions or under the vigilant eye of their superior, the newly minted executioner would begin his quest to become a master. In hopes of holding a permanent position, most new executioners began their careers traveling from town to town, often ones too small to hire someone full-time, performing executions until a full-time position opened up.

Once full-time, as expected, executioners were to be proficient in administering torture as well as a handful of various executions. Torture, as mentioned previously, was paramount in getting a confession and was something of a science. Knowledge of not only how to use each instrument was crucial, but when to apply pressure, when to ease off, and when the threat of torture was more potent than actual torture, were all skills paramount to becoming a master.\(^10\) They considered a “bad death” if the sinner was unable to make it to the Rabenstein in one piece. While torture was important, it ultimately was not the public display that execution was, thus taking something of a backseat in importance. The most important job of the executioner was performing various executions, each with stigma and impact on the sinner and onlookers. In order to have a good death one of two criteria must be met: honor or shame. Honor, unlike pain, transcended death, the method of execution depended on the message that was to be conveyed to the crowd of onlookers.

The sentence often was determined by the quality of the crime, the poor sinner’s social standing, their conduct during the trial, gender, and the mercy that was brought forth by friends and family.\(^11\) The most common execution, “by the sword,” was considered the most honorable, and humane, due to its swiftness.\(^12\) The sword, when carried, symbolized nobility, and,  

\(^{9}\) Ibid., 38.  
\(^{10}\) The ability of someone to withstand torture was known as their Foltertauglichkeit.  
\(^{11}\) Women were typically executed by the sword and not hanged due to concerns regarding modesty; Van Dulmen, Theater of Horror, 81.  
\(^{12}\) This punishment almost always took place on the Rabenstein
since Roman times, the sword itself represented honor and justice, so to be dispatched by the sword was the preferred method of death.\(^\text{13}\) The most brutal death, and best deterrent, reserved for only the worst criminals, was being broken by the wheel, where “the condemned person was tied down naked on the ground on spikes, and a heavy wheel was thrust onto his limbs... either from the feet up or the head down.”\(^\text{14}\) If a malefactor had not been strangled beforehand, a \textit{coup de grace} might be administered if he so wished.”\(^\text{15}\) Once the ritual was over, the mangled body was strapped to the wheel and placed nearby as a reminder. Besides being broken on the wheel, those who received a harsh punishment were nipped multiple times by red hot tongs on the way to the \textit{Rabenstein}.

The final death ritual, and the least honorable, was death by hanging. Unlike the previous two rituals of death, hangings did not take place at the \textit{Rabenstein}, but at the gallows often located nearby. The gallows consisted of a long beam where either ropes or chains hung with two large ladders nearby. To complete a hanging, the condemned and the executioner would climb the ladders, placing a noose around the neck of the sinner, and receive a prompt push. The advent of the long drop or the trap door had not taken place, so hanging was still very primitive, and often required the executioner to hang on the legs of the poor sinner to expedite their death. Once dead, the body was left to hang and rot until it was either stolen for medicinal purposes (blood and various other organs were thought to have healing powers) or until the smell was so rancid it could not be tolerated. While there were a few other forms of executions, including drowning and being buried alive, by the 1600’s they were considered too inhumane and rarely used.\(^\text{16}\) In addition to being proficient in execution methods, an executioner must have been able to complete corporal punishments. There was a myriad of sentences for crimes that did not merit death, including banishment; cutting off ears, fingers, and tongues; branding; and public floggings.\(^\text{17}\)

For those in attendance a good death not only gave them a good show,
but also purged them of the bloodshed caused by the poor sinner. It gave the condemned man or woman a chance to atone, say goodbye to loved ones, and often welcomed the support of the crowd, by inviting them to pray and sing with him in hopes of being redeemed in death. It also allowed authorities to assert not only their penal power but to convince the public the verdict was just.\textsuperscript{18}

The public’s fascination with executions started in France around 1520 when Lutherans, being put to death for heresy, showed up at the scaffolds in an oddly cheery mood, which no one quite expected.\textsuperscript{19} A majority of the time, the spectators were no more than onlookers; however, an occasional execution did go awry, causing a “bad death,” putting the executioner in grave danger. While breaking on the wheel rarely went wrong, for obvious reasons, beheading and hanging were less of a sure thing. When a beheading was bungled, known as a \textit{puzten} to those within the craft, the crowd was known to act violently towards the executioner, although he was protected by Section 97 of the \textit{Carolina}, which states, “that the executioner is under no circumstances to be hindered, likewise no hand is to be laid upon him should he bungle.” Despite the protection of the law, there were occasions, such as one case in 1575, when a Swiss executioner bungled a beheading and subsequently received a stoning to death. Hangings could also be a source of contention with the crowd especially when the rope broke, or the hanging took a prolonged amount of time. Because of this, most executioners switched to chains and, as previously noted, pulled down on the legs of the poor sinner.

The last and most unexpected job of the executioner was that of a healer. Their knowledge of the human anatomy from torture sessions often led to the well-paying side job of healing the sick and injured. There was an expectation for poor sinners to be in good health before meeting their demise executioners were often very skilled in setting broken bones, healing common illnesses, and various other medicinal skills. During the 16th- and 17th-centuries, academically trained physicians had started to appear and attempted to discredit the work of traditional folk healers. While some people, mainly nobility, were scared off, the majority of people could not afford trained doctors, so they continued to visit traditional healers such as the executioner, despite the dangers associated with being seen them.

\textsuperscript{18} Van Dulmen, \textit{Theater of Horror}, 107.
The Dishonor of Death

The position of an executioner, while being a government position, was considered an extremely dishonorable craft, held in the same regard as gravediggers, tanners, and butchers. Despite the best efforts of the government, the executioner remained a symbol for secular power and punishment. Most executioners would receive, for the time, an excellent yearly salary, which included a sizeable end-of-year bonus and additional wages for each execution and corporal punishment. His closeness to death, however, permanently stained the public perspective of the man no matter how honorable he was outside of his profession. Franz Schmidt, an executioner in Nuremberg for over 40 years, for instance, did not drink, had a family, and received excellent reviews from his government employers, but did not become an honorable citizen until after his retirement, which he received after petitioning the German crown. Paul Freedland excellently explains the social stigma surrounding the executioner stating, he “was constructed in reaction to the prevailing and long-standing conception of him as an extraordinary being, someone whose touch was so profane that he could not come into contact with other people or objects without profoundly altering them.” Honorable artisans refused to apprentice sons of executioners, often leaving them little choice but to learn the craft of execution from their father. Those decisions turned the job of executioner a family business with a few notable families remaining in the service of a particular region for generations, including the Schmidts, as mentioned above in Nuremberg, the Swansons in France, and later the Pierrepoints in England. In the latter years of the seventeenth century, despite excellent anatomical knowledge, sons of executioners were refused entrance to schools of medicine. The executioner and all of his family had the status of dishonor, most practiced endogamy, creating a small sect of executioner families that occasionally held social gatherings and attended each other’s events since their honor could not be negatively affected by being seen in the presence of the executioner.

20 Van Dulmen, Theater of Horror, 119.
22 Due to the dishonorable nature of the craft the offspring of an executioner faced limited options for choosing their own craft moving forward.
23 Endogamy was the practice of marrying within one’s social class.
Since the family was deemed dishonorable and they were unable to live amongst ordinary citizens of the town, the government often provided housing, known as the *Hankerhaus* or Hangman’s House. While some were required to live outside the city walls, those fortunate enough to live within the city lived in the district that included other dishonorable crafts such as the slaughterhouse, pig market, and prison.\(^{24}\) To be seen at the *Hankerhaus* would immediately dishonor someone, so meetings with the executioner, even when seeking medical attention, required extreme caution and clandestine nature. Since the family was not allowed into public spaces like the bathhouses or churches, priests occasionally snuck in to perform services for the families. In addition to living in the rougher parts of town, the executioner received orders to wear particular garb that distinguished him from an average citizen, as there were few insults as demeaning as being mistaken for the town executioner. Unlike the romanticized images, this did not include a black hood, but often included some article of colorful clothing. It was not until 1731 when in a royal decree Empress Maria Theresa removed the tag of dishonorable from executioner’s children and those who were retired.

**The Fall of the Hangman**

As the 18th century came to a close, the popularity of public executions fell out of vogue. While public hangings still occurred in England and around Europe well into the 20th century, the religious nature faded and became much more of a show. Charles Dickens commented on the inhumane nature of the punishment and crowd behavior, after attending the Hanging of the Century, bluntly stating, “When the day dawned, thieves, low prostitutes, ruffians, and vagabonds of every kind, flocked on to the ground, with every variety of offensive and foul behaviour.”\(^{25}\) By the 20th century, the power of the state had become an unquestioned reality, and it was no longer

\(^{24}\) Harrington, *The Faithful Executioner*, 100.

\(^{25}\) An 1849 hanging that took place in London, England, and the culprits were Marie and Michael Manning, a couple convicted of the murder of Marie’s lover, Patrick O’Connor. The publicity was intense since this was the first couple to be hanged in over a century, hence the name. While the public thirst for the event had not waned, the government felt that due to the festive nature of the event, the meaning behind the public execution, pronouncing the government’s capital power and deterring future criminals, had been lost.
necessary to perform public displays of judicial power. Along with the government’s shift in policy came a dramatic change in public ideology regarding inalienable rights. This shift caused an increase in prisons that housed violent offenders, the decline of torture, an increased importance placed on criminal justice, and a change in the philosophy of dealing with criminals: going from redemption in the eyes of god and the community to reformation and being able to mold the criminal into a model productive citizen. In addition to the government’s beliefs, the increasingly global world outlook of the 20th century allowed governments to punish criminals by sending them too far off colonies to work, retaining in them some value to the state. Because of the work of reformers and social liberals, capital punishment steeply declined and became a “behind-closed-door event,” no longer open to the public. In 1907 the Berliner Tageblatt, a German newspaper from the time, perfectly explained the reformers’ position by writing, “Capital punishment is reprehensible from a human and Christian point of view because it prematurely destroys the inner developmental potential of the condemned person.”

While looking back, it is easy to condone the orchestration of that punishment and reform. With that said, it is vital to understand how the culture, the religious and secular overtones associated with all public events, the system of honor that controlled social standing, and the lack of modern technology to house criminals all led to the adoption of such harsh penalties for crimes. While at the time executioners did not fascinate or become the main character of gothic romanticism, as they do today, executioners nonetheless became indispensable to society due to their unique ability to enforce the penalties handed down and maintain secular and religious order. The executioners’ craft of killing shaped penal reform for nearly two centuries. They led the rituals of justice from the courtroom, shepherding poor sinners from the earthly world to the great beyond in hopes of some sort of eternal salvation for the sinner’s souls. Beyond their trade, executioners operated in the shadows, living in the slums, fighting for honor, healing those in need, and performing their job. It is impossible to know what was running through an executioner’s mind whilst they dispatched someone from this earth or cleaned up what was left of them, but it is safe to say those in attendance knew that he was a mortal, whose power was unquestioned and that they never wanted the displeasure of meeting him upon the Rabenstein.

26 Harrington, The Faithful Executioner, 230.
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In the past, a great many women suffered from painful, or fatal, medical conditions affecting their reproductive systems; many more died or were permanently maimed by injuries sustained during pregnancy and childbirth. Though less widespread, these problems still affect us today. In the past, human beings were treated like property, or instrumentalized as involuntary test subjects, in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. People were treated as means to an end, rather than as ends in themselves. It is still a problem today.

Can a clear-eyed look at the crimes and mistakes of previous generations, which are so obvious to our sensibilities, bring our own contemporary mistakes into better focus? There are memories we prize for their own sake, for the pleasure of remembering them: the memory of a visit to a beautiful place with beloved friends, for example. Then there are memories we prize for the lessons they contain: we remember that fire burns and this makes us cautious at the stove, we remember the last time it turned out an offer was “too good to be true,” so we can avoid the next bad deal. Perhaps public memory (i.e. popular history) should be used to pass on serious warnings—about fire and bad deals—rather than to “honor” the “legacies” of beloved figures in a manner that excludes deep thought or critique.

An Overview of the Events in Question

In the mid-nineteenth century, J. Marion Sims was among the first surgeons to treat conditions like hare lips and club feet. He invented instruments and techniques for examining the reproductive organs of women, some of which are still used today, but the surgical intervention he developed to repair vesicovaginal fistulae (openings between the vagina and
bladder or rectum caused by the death of tissue during obstructed labor) is what ultimately brought him widespread fame. Though by his own account, Sims’ career of research into “women’s ailments” was initially a matter of chance, he eventually became known as the “father of modern gynecology.”

Sims household owned slaves, who were not patients of his, but rather came to them through his wife’s family connection to the slave trade. Sims himself bought at least one slave, later in his lifetime, for reasons covered below. According to Sims, the events that led to his “best known accomplishment” began with a series of coincidences and turned on a pivot of serendipity.\(^1\) After first being called upon by a local slave owner, Mr. Wescott, to assist a young enslaved woman named Anarcha, who had been in labor for three difficult days, Sims delivered the baby alive, and also diagnosed the mother with fistulae opening from her vagina to both her bladder and rectum – an incurable condition. Over a period of three months, one after another local acquaintance sent word to Sims of a Black “servant” who had recently given birth only to become incontinent afterwards. As Sims describes it, he was passively minding his own business when others came to him in desperation seeking help for members of their households.

In fact, Sims refused, initially, to treat the women who were brought to him with fistulae – three of them are named in source records: Anarcha, Betsey, and Lucy; Anarcha’s “owner” Mr. Wescott, at least, resolved, by Sims’ account, that in the absence of a cure, she “should have an easy time in this world as long as she lived.”\(^2\) But after the serendipitous discovery of a method for using atmospheric pressure to open the vagina for visual examination, he sent word that he had reconsidered, built a small hospital to house eight or nine local women he had found suffering from the condition, and began what he thought would be a quick series of operations, but became a four-year struggle with failure and frustration.\(^3\)

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries doctors expected their women patients to object to the close examination of their reproductive anatomy. Even women who could afford to be treated by legitimate physicians (who insisted on crucial examinations), sometimes instead put

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3 Sims, *The Story of My Life*, Chapter XIV.
their trust in charlatans who respected their modesty.4 By his own account, Sims was uneasy examining or discussing the genitals of white women, but not those of Black women. The discovery of so many enslaved Black women—subjects it was socially acceptable to examine and operate on—was another element of chance that allowed Sims to develop the advancements that brought him fame and renown. It is now understood that fistulae were so common among poor and enslaved women due to nutritional and other medical factors related to their status as poor or enslaved.5

According to Sims autobiography he did not purchase any of the women he operated on while developing his surgical cure for fistulae, but only covered expenses of room and board while treating them; he also reports having received willing consent from his patient Lucy on at least one occasion.6 He speaks frankly of the women themselves assisting him in later operations, when his colleagues tired of repeated failures, and of his success at inspiring “confidence” in them that he would eventually find a cure. Quoting a letter to his brother-in-law, Sims claims that he has provided his patients with training (effectively making them some of the most experienced gynecologists of their era), and that they “[were] all perfectly satisfied” with his treatment.7 He reports that when he hesitated to continue the operations, the women themselves were “clamorous” to end the delays.8 In the absence of any contradictory evidence, I find all of this relatively plausible, if not uncomplicated by the racist social context surrounding the whole affair.

As noted above, Sims writes respectfully about the women he treated, however, at one point in his autobiography he casually uses the disturbing term “nigger” to refer to a young boy.9 I am not sure what semantic distinctions are at work between this particular reference and his usual usage of the terms “Negro,” and “colored;” perhaps in Sims’ usage the term is a diminutive reserved for children; in any case, its use strikes a discordant note in a chapter well-stocked with relatively mild rhetorical treatment of

7 Ibid., 243.
8 Ibid.
Black women, and it reminds us that Sims was, of course, a racist living among racists. Later in his account, he quotes his brother-in-law’s stern reprimand that supporting “half a dozen niggers” was doing his family financial harm. I’m aware that this term was used more or less neutrally in Sims time, nevertheless it casts his entire narrative in a gloomy, backward, mildly terrifying mood. It is also evidence, in my view, that Sims account of his patients’ own reactions to his treatment, and his characterization of their “great heroism and bravery,” were not designed to conceal or obscure any racism from the picture.

It is true that there were people in Sims own time with the instinct or conviction that using people as slaves was wrong, whether or not it was commonplace; just as it is the case today that some people have the instinct or conviction that wearing clothes made in sweatshops, or eating seafood produced by slave labor, is wrong, even though it is commonplace. Even so, condemning an individual from a racist time because he was remarkable, rather than because he was especially racist, may be a futile, largely self-congratulatory choice for contemporary scholars. Was Sims’ racism remarkable? Maybe not. Would the things he did that made him “remarkable” have been possible in a world without the stark, dehumanizing racism of the antebellum South? No; certainly not. Sims was squeamish about even seeing the genitals of white women. Their pain was enough to halt the surgeries he attempted to perform on them before anesthesia became available. Without his little hospital full of, maybe willing, but certainly not free, subjects, Sims would have achieved little or nothing in the field of gynecological surgery.

**Contemporary Controversy**

In recent years, Sims’ experimental treatment of enslaved Black women for the aforementioned vesicovaginal fistulae has drawn greater criticism and even condemnation from historians and activists. This criticism culminated in a series of protests in 2017-2018 that pressured New York Mayor Bill de Blasio into removing a large bronze and stone statue of J. Marion Sims from

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10 Ibid., 242.
11 Ibid., 237.
the perimeter of Central Park, across from the Academy of Medicine, where it had stood since 1934.

Often, the protests included references to the treatment of Black women by the healthcare industry today along with condemnation of Sims surgical practices. Historical controversies are informed by contemporary circumstances. The people who showed up to protest the monument were moved in part by their own needs and concerns with regard to inequalities in medical treatment. Most articles covering the protests quickly pivot to the subject of contemporary medical outcomes for Black mothers, or to racial discrepancies in pain assessment.\(^\text{13}\)

The success of these protests is a direct result of the conscious re-framing of Sims legacy since the late 1970s. The way Sims has come to be understood by contemporary stakeholders is well illustrated in a social media post by David Clark that I recently interacted with,

“J. Marion Sims was a gynecologist in the 1800s who purchased Black women slaves and used them as guinea pigs for his untested surgical experiments. He repeatedly performed genital surgery on Black women WITHOUT ANESTHESIA because according to him, “Black women don’t feel pain.” Despite his inhumane tests on Black women, Sims was named “the father of modern gynecology”, [sic] and his statue currently stands right outside of the New York Academy of Medicine. #FightSupremacy”\(^\text{14}\)

Clark’s post contains several examples from a clearly discernible set of inaccurate tropes that now define J. Marion Sims in the imagination of most people who even know his name. These include the claim that Sims’ fistula surgeries should be defined pejoratively as “experiments,” that Sims bought women specifically to perform experiments on them (or that he operated on women he already owned), that Sims intentionally addicted his patients to opium so they wouldn’t be able to leave his hospital, that Sims


\(^\text{14}\) David Clark, public Facebook post, 4/19/2019,
believed Black women felt no pain, and that Sims scoured the countryside, hunting for fresh subjects for his experiments; they also include the strong implication that Sims intentionally performed surgery “without anesthesia,” that the women were forced to assist in the surgeries, that they didn’t “consent” to be treated, and, finally, that Sims was an extraordinary sadist with a psychological need to torture women’s genitals. All of these tropes can be traced to the deeply flawed work of a single historian.

**How Historians Have Informed the Conversation**

Most of the historical works written about Sims–especially those focused on the period from 1845-49 when his most famous advances were made–rely on his autobiography The Story of My Life, his notes & letters, and on Dr. Seale Harris’ 1950 biography Woman’s Surgeon.

Harris was a medical doctor with clear biases in favor of preserving Sims’ positive image. He makes several worrying choices in his account of events, going so far as to alter quotes from Sims’ autobiography without alerting readers such as by changing Sims use of the term “nigger” to the less offensive, less damning form of “Negro” with no brackets or explanatory note.  

As it happens, Harris, not Sims, is the source for the notion that Black people feel less pain. Although Sims was somewhat shocked by his later white patients’ inability to hack it, it was Harris who said

> Sims’s [sic] experiments brought [his enslaved patients] physical pain, it is true, but they bore it with amazing patience and fortitude–a grim stoicism which may have been part of their racial endowment or which possibly had been bred into them through several generations of enforced submission.  

(emphasis added)

Again, this is the only source for later historians’ claims that Sims himself said, or believed, that Black people feel little or no pain. Sims’ own writing directly acknowledges the pain and suffering of Lucy in particular,

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16 Harris, *Woman’s Surgeon*, 99.
and at times all the patients of his little Montgomery hospital by implication. He goes so far at times as to express admiration for their heroism.

Though Harris is broadly sympathetic to Sims, he is also the first to raise the issue of human experimentation by referencing “dark rumors” about Sim’s hospital that began circulating in Montgomery after years of failure. Since Harris is not a historian, and his book is a biography, his claims are often unsupported by direct citations. For example, Harris doesn’t tell us why he believes rumors were circulating in Montgomery about Sims’ “guinea pigs,” but one wishes he would.

Although the claim that Sims purchased slaves to “experiment” on them is made again and again by writers following him (especially after G.J. Barker-Benfield), Harris reports that in the only instance Sims bought and then operated on a woman with a fistula (who remains nameless in the account), it was (ostensibly) done out of pity, well after he had already perfected the operation, and only because the woman’s “master” in New Orleans refused to let her travel to Sims’ hospital. According to Harris, Sims purchased her to cure her, not to experiment on her. As the episode is recounted without citations, I must assume Harris learned of it from some of Sims’ letters or notes that I was unable to access. In any case, this single anecdote has expanded over the years into the stark implication that Sims routinely indulged in slave purchases to acquire “test subjects,” which is false in fact and spirit.

In 1968, J. Marion Sims was still held in superlative esteem; the hagiographic foreword written by another medical doctor, C. Lee Buxton, and attached to a republished edition of Sims’ nineteenth century autobiography tells us,

> Few Americans have made so great an impression on their special world as J. Marion Sims did on American and European medicine in the middle and late years of the nineteenth century. Dynamic, vital, imaginative, sometimes contentious, always filled with dedication to a burning mission, this ever gentlemanly physician, by professional and personal attributes of permanent quality, helped create gynecology as a specialty.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{17}\) Buxton, “Foreword” in *The Story of My Life*, v.
On the issue of exploitation, Dr. Buxton seems almost eager to exonerate Sims, or at least to avoid complicating his lively and romantic storyline with any meditation on pain, or agency, or horror. While emphasizing that Anarcha underwent thirty operations in attempts to repair her two fistulae, Buxton spends no time wondering how much of a choice she had in the matter. The closest he comes to addressing the issues of systemic coercion implied by Sims work on enslaved people, or acknowledging the essential role the women played in Sims’ discoveries, is when he remarks that confidence and dedication were not the only factors underlying success,

Whether it was because they were slaves, or whether their state was so miserable that they were willing to undergo any degree of pain and inconvenience, or whether it was [that they were given] laudanum […] and thus became addicted, […] it is virtually certain that Sims would not have succeeded had they not been available.\(^\text{18}\)

“Available” is a strange euphemism for enslaved. Nevertheless, Buxton raises an important point that we must address: vesicovaginal fistulae were not trivial injuries. The women suffering from this condition no doubt would have preferred to end the dangerous and troublesome incontinence it caused. By all accounts, the condition is miserable; therefore, they may very well have been willing participants in Sims’ attempts to cure them. This seems especially so if it is true that they received training and assisted in the surgeries. Without records in their own words, the extent of their willingness remains a mystery, however, whereas the structural coercion at work is well-understood as an aspect of America’s slave society. In this passage Buxton also makes brief mention of Sims use of opium, which I will address below.

Writing in 1973, not long after Buxton, Ann Douglas Wood refers to Sims ability to write “feelingly” of the suffering of his patients during the latter part of his career at the Women’s Hospital he founded in New York City.\(^\text{19}\) Elsewhere in her work she uses Sims as an example of a highly principled doctor during a time of general quackery and misconduct.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{18}\) Ibid., ix.


\(^{20}\) Ibid., 72-73.
few years later, the first highly critical voices began to emerge, starting with G.J. Barker-Benfield. Barker-Benfield’s work, The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in 19th Century America (originally published in 1976), seems to be the source of, or at least a primary influence on, recent and contemporary assessments of Sims’ work as a case of gross, particular exploitation. Barker-Benfield himself has lately acknowledged the flaws in his writing and reasoning, and parts of the updated introduction to Horrors read like a halfhearted retraction: “I wrote this book thirty years ago when I was a young man. It was passionately conceived and written. Ruefully, I must concede much to the book’s critics.”

Horrors is an interesting book – and a deeply flawed book. Barker-Benfield is a feminist. At times the book reminded me of Valerie Solanas’ S.C.U.M. Manifesto in that what it lacks in rigor it tries to make up for in militant zeal. His chapter on Sims is full of errors of both fact and analysis. Barker-Benfield constantly plays the amateur psychiatrist (I checked his bio twice to make sure he was a historian), drawing far-reaching and occasionally bizarre conclusions from the most innocuous quotes. Though he is full of wild speculations, Barker-Benfield seems to have no historical imagination whatsoever, concluding abruptly and permanently from Sims’ (in context) relatively mild complaint that he hated pelvic examinations (which were clearly mortifying to his Victorian-era sensibilities), that he hated the female pelvis itself, and was therefore a sadistic monster bent on mutilating women’s bodies. It is one of several stunning leaps of interpretation that appear throughout Horrors. Barker-Benfield’s characterization of Sims as self-obsessed and monomaniacal is as thinly supported as it has been widely accepted by Sims’ critics. For example, on the subject of Sims’ purported purchase of enslaved women subjects, he claims,

Significantly, given the need for their endurance, passivity, and utter helplessness, [Sims’ patients] were black female slaves, some of whom Sims bought expressly for his experiments—that is, when the owner was skeptical about Sims’s methods.22

22 Barker-Benfield, The Horrors of the Half-Known Life, 94.
This characterization is highly misleading at best. As stated above, this happened once, after the experimental phase was over, and Sims knew exactly how to repair fistulae. Throughout the chapter on Sims, Barker-Benfield cleverly splices quotes from primary sources with his own speculations written in a style that mimics Sims; he quotes other writers, with views far more toxic than Sims, between Sims’ quotes, without saying so in-text, in order to deliberately mislead his readers as to the extent of Sims’ sexism.\textsuperscript{23}

According to his bibliography, Barker-Benfield leans heavily on Seale Harris’ biography of Sims. I read most of the sources Barker-Benfield draws from, and, from his treatment of those I am most familiar with, I can say with confidence that he is worse than wrong: he is acting in bad faith and inventing distortions even worse than those of Harris.

Sims worked on enslaved women, and later poor immigrant women—one can take this as evidence for exploitation—but the decline in fistulae, as general health and nutrition improved, indicates that poor and enslaved women were the very people most likely to be affected by fistulae to begin with.

Harriet Washington is another influential critic of Sims, and as one of the more recent authors to draw explicit attention to the public edifices erected in his honor, she is more responsible than any other writer for the protests that eventually resulted in the removal of Sims’ statue from Central Park. Washington’s writing reminds readers that still, “monuments to his skill, benevolence, and humanity guard his native South Carolina’s statehouse, its medical school, the Alabama capitol grounds, and a French hospital.”\textsuperscript{24} With evident irony, she reports that there’s even a hospital in West Africa bearing his name.\textsuperscript{25} Other lines from Sims’ resume, like the fact that he opened the nation’s first women’s hospital, are also grudgingly acknowledged.

Immediately, on the first page of the introduction to Medical Apartheid, Washington refers to Betsey as Sims’ slave—she was not, in fact, Sims’ slave, and would not need to be for the point (that she was structurally unable to consent to participation in Sims’ experimentation) to stand. This inaccurate claim is part of a, by now well-established, tradition in the scholarship, and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., Chapter 10.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Harriet Washington, \textit{Medical Apartheid} (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Washington, \textit{Medical Apartheid}, 2.
\end{itemize}
it is the first of many to follow in Washington’s sections on Sims. Washington provides a harrowing and violent account of the surgeries without citing any source; I would truly like to know where she learned that physicians assisting Sims “fled” the gruesome and “horrific” scene, but she doesn’t tell us where she learned this or many other colorful details.\textsuperscript{26}

Later, Washington gets into more legitimate territory when she recounts how Pfizer denied her request to use a copyrighted image they own, of Robert Thom’s painting, J. Marion Sims: Gynecologic Surgeon.\textsuperscript{27} Here she shows the difficulty of challenging the narratives preferred and reproduced by powerful institutions with control over documentary and visual sources that can inform our interpretations of the past.

Like others, she asserts that Sims bought women to experiment on, and that he intentionally addicted them to morphine.\textsuperscript{28} Both claims are made without sharing sources. Without a citation, it is not clear whether Washington got this idea from Buxton, Sims’ own notes, or some other source. L.L. Wall (whose work is discussed in slightly more detail below) writes that Sims’ use of post-operative narcotics was in line with the practices of the day and does not suggest an attempt to addict his patients to opium.\textsuperscript{29}

“Not until he had experimented with his surgeries on Betsey and her fellow slaves for years did Sims essay to cure white women,” Washington claims.\textsuperscript{30} More accurately, Sims was unable to perform the surgeries (developed on Betsey and the others) on white women until the use of anesthesia become widespread, because, until then, no white woman was willing to endure the pain of the procedure. This fact itself contains grim implications of the coercion and dehumanization baked into the conditions of everyday life for enslaved persons, but those conditions did not result from, and were not particular to, Sims’ actions.

Washington says that Sims has two faces, one benign and another malevolent; this is an exciting and romantic image, but framing Sims’ intentions as “malevolent” seems like a stretch considering how disinclined

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Washington, Medical Apartheid, 2.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 2, 54-55.
\textsuperscript{30} Washington, Medical Apartheid, 2.
he was to take the cases in the first place, and how guileless his account is regarding the challenges his patients faced. He talks about how much the operations hurt; though his tone is occasionally detached, it is no more detached than it is in other passages wherein Sims recounts the maiming, or death, of his own friends and associates in duels. In my view, Washington’s opinion of Sims is almost totally informed by Barker-Benfield’s wildly distorted account. In fact, as author and Sims critic J.C. Hallman points out, Washington’s sections on Sims are packed with errors, including a passage where she “wrongly suggests that Sims once etherized wives to enable intercourse.” This falsehood is lifted directly from one of Barker-Benfield’s, in my view, intentionally misleading quotes.

There was so much death and suffering in all of the circumstances surrounding Sims involvement in vaginal surgeries on enslaved women: he delivered these women of babies, watched an infant die in terrible contortions he was only barely able to relieve, and then was, according to his own account, pressured repeatedly to attempt surgical interventions on these women by their “masters.” Close contact with constant death and tragedy tends to have unexpected, counter-intuitive effects on personality—the dark humor of police and hospital staff for example. The specific claim that Sims was acting out of malevolence is not supported by any primary source evidence in my view.

Again, in assessing the controversy around Sims’ reputation and legacy I found the same phrases and points being deployed repeatedly. Diane Axelson, writing in 1980, bluntly refers to Sims’ work with enslaved women as “experimentation,” and “abuse.” Her perspective of Sims is that he is a sexist and a racist, both of which facts are certainly true by reasonable definitions. Nevertheless, I am not sure it is appropriate to say that Sims was “experimenting” on women like Lucy and Anarcha. Though he himself refers to the series of operations he performed on the women as “experiments,” Sims did not poke around in their bodies just to see what he might discover: he was attempting very specific, pointed interventions. He was trying to cure specific conditions. Axelson shows clear bias. She thinks

32 Barker-Benfield, Horrors, 106.
that what she calls “western medicine” is, by definition, harmful.\textsuperscript{34} She ignores, downplays, and obscures the benefits of curing the fistulae of Sims’ patients; it is arguable that the costs, in terms of pain and potential abuse, were too high, but it’s a distortion to present a version of events where no benefits were gained at all, even by the enslaved women themselves. She only grudgingly acknowledges the somewhat astonishing fact that none of the patients Sims treated during the period of his “experimentation” died.\textsuperscript{35}

Axelson also questions Sims’ account of his patients ability to “retire” as well-supported invalids in their “masters’” households–likely referring to Mr. Wescott’s comments regarding Anarcha–without citing any evidence. She merely asserts that it is “doubtful” without saying why she believes we should doubt it.\textsuperscript{36} Axelson’s especially negative characterizations of the events in question approach a melodramatic intensity that, I think, ascribes too much agency to certain actors, and not enough to others.

C. Lee Buxton remarks that if not for the instruments he developed which still bear his name, Sims might have been forgotten. If not, also, for large monuments erected in his honor from Alabama to Manhattan. Other scholars, such as anthropologist and medical doctor L.L. Wall, have addressed the distortions and mischaracterizations of Sims’ legacy in the work of Axelson and others.

Although Wall concludes that “the charges that have been made against Sims are largely without merit,” he doesn’t address the question of whether monuments honoring Sims are appropriate today.\textsuperscript{37} Furthermore, every contemporary article deploying the flawed historical narratives first unleashed by Barker-Benfield, does so while at the same time seeking to publicize the continuing inequality in the treatment of Black women by doctors today. If the inaccuracies serve to focus attention on the contemporary problems facing African American patients, then are they worth it?

After removing the distortions, we are still left with a slave owner, a man who was, by our standards and the most enlightened of his own time, a racist and a misogynist. It is also true that, aside from performing helpful surgeries, Sims also simply maimed the genitals of some of his patients.

\textsuperscript{35} Axelson, 95.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 98-99.
\textsuperscript{37} Wall, “The Medical Ethics of Dr J. Marion Sims,” 346-50.
Additionally, the fact that, in his racist society, the genitals of Black women could be examined and manipulated with zero discomfort or embarrassment, while those of white women had to be “handled”—that is, not handled—with the utmost care and discretion, underlies Sims evident excitement at having so many subjects to work with. He knew his work was only possible with Black women.

Is a person’s “character” relevant to our interpretation of their actions? Do good intentions mitigate culpability for terrible acts? How should a person’s “character” be judged? What we do results from what we intend, one way or another, so intentions can’t be totally insignificant. In an age without anesthesia, how could surgery be done without hurting people? Even if it’s true that we should try to be nuanced in our understanding of the past, is it realistic to expect “nuance” from something as coarse and ostentatious as a monumental statue? Perhaps all of these questions are beside the point; perhaps Sims himself is beside the point.

Black Pain Matters

In her 2018 piece on the removal of Sims statue from Central Park, Ashley Alese Edwards quotes Ohio State University professor Koritha Mitchell, saying, “Studies show that black pain isn’t taken nearly as seriously as the pain of others. I dare say that Americans’ insistence upon over-sympathizing with white pain created the opioid epidemic,” and I am reminded of Elaine Scarry’s contention that our recognition of pain is linked to articulation, and that pain is only recognized when the sufferer has a voice with which to describe it. The sense that artists and writers suffer, for example, can be traced back to their ability to effectively express thoughts and feelings about their pain. The squeaky wheel gets the grease, or, in this case, the Oxycontin. It seems to me that this insight can be applied to the relative degree of institutional “voice” that Black patients possess today, and the ways their descriptions of pain are ignored or misunderstood by medical professionals. Most of the articles I have found discussing Sims’ legacy have put a lot of focus on the continuing negative trends in the medical treatment of Black women, which is an area where there’s still a

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lot of work to be done, and an issue that can guide our development of a meaningful intervention as public historians. Strip away all the emotional controversy around Sims, and it becomes clear that this alarm and anguish over the invisibility of pain suffered by Black people is the point.

Again and again in my research, I came across contemporary articles using Sims as a segue to discussion of racial inequalities in the current healthcare system. Everything from issues of maternal mortality, which affects forty-four out of every one-hundred thousand Black mothers, versus thirteen for white mothers, and fourteen for mothers of other races, to issues of pain assessment, where researchers have found evidence that racist tropes from Sims time (including that Black folks have “thicker skin”) persist, even among highly educated white medical professionals, leading to under-prescription of pain medication, and general under-treatment of pain and related issues in the Black community.\(^39\) The reasons for these disparities are complex and outside the scope of my examination, but they all relate to conditions of historical racism and oppression that public historians are well-positioned to comment on and address intellectually and emotionally through writing, teaching, and other interventions. Other contemporary medical issues raised by writers and protesters calling attention to the Sims monument include the experience, shared by many Black women regardless of class status or wealth, of being ignored by doctors in ways that can lead to injury, illness, or death.\(^40\) Erika Stallings sums it up pretty well: “You’re denied pain meds. You’re handled brusquely. Staff openly question your ability to pay […] The health of black people in America is corroded by the relentless assaults of racism.”\(^41\)

**Voices Instead of Statues**

Although their conclusions about his personal character and motivations may be flawed, the achievements of J. Marion Sims are

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correctly recognized by writers like G.J. Barker-Benfield, Diane Axelson, and others, as having relied on a racist system of dehumanization which allowed certain boundaries of sexual propriety, and pain endurance, to be violated with Black women. Without such a system of dehumanization, we would not have his achievements. Honoring the achievements means honoring the system; in my view, honoring such a system with a monument is unacceptable. Monuments tend to serve a thought-ending function. “It comes down to what statues do. No one learns history from a statue. What you learn from a statue is respect and reverence. The question for the present is: Are the people these statues are honoring worthy of respect and reverence?”

Rather than receiving and revering a smoothed-over, sanitized, idealized image of history by rote, we need public history to spark and propel more complex thought; we need public history that encourages critical engagement with evidence from our past. Stories about scientific advancement in unethical social contexts should be told in another way. It must be understood that the pain of poor and powerless people was vital in building the medical capabilities of the world we inhabit today.

When those defending statues and monuments cry out for “nuance” in our treatment of the figures the statues honor, we can point out that dropping 600lbs of bronze in the middle of a square is not exactly subtle. Any and all statues of Sims should be removed, if only because statues do not do the job that needs to be done now, namely addressing the ongoing challenges faced by Black women in pain, in childbearing, etc.

Can the pain of long-dead women be expressed in an effective and memorable way? Can their voices join the charming, candid voice of Sims in the public record? Pain is real; highly detailed and emotional depictions of the pain experienced by Lucy, Betsey, Anarcha, and Sims’ other patients (even if they are to some degree speculative) can serve to illustrate the vulnerability of our bodies, and, in particular, to demystify and rehumanize the pain of Black people in the popular imagination where it can influence institutional treatment of Black patients.

It is also the case that emotional or ritual time and space (where difficult truths and contradictions might be reckoned with) can be created with ceremony and art. Effective ways to teach lessons about the pain and sacrifices of the women who worked with J. Marion Sims on his signature

achievement might involve ritual performances, perhaps at the site of remaining monuments to Sims, perhaps on a recurring basis: something like a holiday, or memorial day, for all the poor and oppressed bodies that have been chewed up in the pursuit of science, or “progress.” If a special day was set aside to acknowledge and meditate on the pain of those who came before us, and on whose pain our own comfort rests, perhaps it could help us focus on contemporary challenges. Public historians should work with patients, activists, and other stakeholders to develop an intervention that uses the voices of Black women who feel connected in some way through their experiences to the lives of Anarcha, Betsey, Lucy, and others, to make their pain visible, their needs understood, and to demand that the costs of the scientific advancements be acknowledged. A clear-eyed assessment of those costs can teach us, moving forward, to be alert for the crimes and injustices hiding invisibly in our own systems.
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The Challenge to Democracy
Leonard Marsh’s Report on Social Security for Canada as its
Author’s Ultimate Appeal for Economic Equity in Canada

Michael A. Pascoe

Democracy is not something fixed. We can have more or less of it. And what
matters... is that, in this day and age, democracy means not only political
freedom... but certain basic economic freedoms. The right to vote doesn’t mean
much for people who don’t enjoy some reasonable standard of living.
- Leonard Marsh

The global financial collapse in the fall of 1929 hit a vulnerable Canadian
nation with tremendous force. The ruin of the global trading system laid bare
Canada’s reliance upon foreign trade to overcome its under-developed industrial
system. The export of raw and semi-finished goods from Canada dried up
as other nations suffering from similarly depressed economies threw up
high import tariffs. From 1928 to 1932 its exports of goods and services
fell by over a half, and it thus witnessed a startling 42% drop in its Gross
National Expenditure between 1929 and 1933. The raw economic statistics,
however, fail to do justice to the severity of the Great Depression in Canada.

The economic malaise persisted for a decade, causing unprecedented
human hardship and displacement. It was the working classes who paid
for the depression most. Before the end of the Depression, between 25%
and 30% of Canadian workers experienced unemployment. Thousands of

1 “Is National Planning a Threat to Democracy?,” CBC Citizens Forum,
Vancouver. University of British Columbia Archives, Leonard Marsh fonds, box 6, folder
“Broadcast scripts”. According to Marsh’s hand-written ‘Record of Broadcasts’ in the
same folder, this particular one occurred in the early post-WWII period. Underlined in
original text.
246.
3 Michiel Horn, introduction to The Dirty Thirties: Canadians in the Great
4 League for Social Reconstruction Research Committee, Social Planning for
unemployed young men “rode the rods” in search of work and lined up in endless queues at their nearest soup kitchen, barely scraping together enough to keep themselves and their families from starvation.

In letters to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, Canadians throughout the country pleaded for help. A man from New Brunswick wrote to Bennett, “I am sleeping and eating just wherever I can and have nearly froze in this last week looking for a job with the few clothes I have.” Others beseeched Bennett for the funds necessary to procure undergarments, shoes, food, basic healthcare, and shelter. Leonard Marsh’s concern that Canadian democracy was becoming dysfunctional emerged out of this Depression-era backdrop of widespread privation. His proposition to revitalize democracy by extending it to include not only political, but economic rights inspired and pervaded his Report on Social Security for Canada in 1943.

Historians of Leonard Marsh and his Report on Social Security for Canada have yet to fully explore the democratic motivations that inspired Marsh’s Depression research and culminated in his Report. Those who examine his motives for social research and his promotion of social security generally concentrate on his Fabian-like “interest in studying structured inequality, and… his life-long commitment to changing society through rational state planning.” Allan Moscovitch refers obliquely to Marsh’s democratic intentions, stating that Marsh as a social reformer brought “a passion for social justice and a belief in equality and democracy.” Historians have not thoroughly explored the broadened definition of democracy recommended by Marsh. Nor have they made any significant attempt to trace the evolution of his understanding of democracy from the political and economic context of the Depression through to the publication of his Report. Most studies of Marsh and his Report either focus on his Fabian-inspired social science research during the Depression, discuss the social

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6 Ibid., 232-249.
security measures and contents of his *Report*, or study the Marsh *Report*’s public reception and political circumstances.

Scholars Allan Irving and Dennis Wilcox-Magill identify Leonard Marsh as a Canadian Fabian.9 The British Fabian research tradition preached empirical study of social issues to promote utilitarianism and equality of opportunity. “From the fabians,” Magill posited, Marsh “accepted the assumption that legislation for social change should be based on scientific premises.”10 Irving and Wilcox-Magill admirably analyze Marsh’s conviction through his research to deal with Canadian economic and social inequality and bring about a more equitable distribution of income – implicitly democratic ideals. They do not, however, discuss how his Fabian-inspired efforts during the Depression generated his belief in government provision for an expanded purview of democracy, or how his *Report* typified this understanding.

Secondary literature on the Marsh *Report* seldom references its democratic intentions or those of its author. Reviews of the *Report* in books or articles usually stick to a summary of its contents, some even recognizing the economic and social aims of its author. But few attempt a larger discussion of how Marsh’s intentions and what it could mean for the revitalization of democracy.11 For example, Michiel Horn depicts Marsh as a reformer whose *Report* recommendations “were proposed… with a view to securing a basic minimum standard of living for Canadians” and

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were meant to ensure “income redistribution as well as greater efficiency in providing services.” While his comments are insightful and appropriate, Horn does not attempt to place them within a greater argument about Marsh’s view of democracy. Several authors writing about Canadian social welfare and political history concentrate on the reception and genesis of the Marsh Report. Dennis Guest and J.L. Granatstein most notably cover the period from the Report’s inception to the government’s response following publication. Their analyses of the Marsh Report do not discuss its inherent democratic ideals, nor survey the more common attitudes about the status of Canadian democracy or those generated by the Report’s publication.

The advent of the Second World War, and the international popularity of post-war social security reform, provided the opportune moment for Leonard Marsh, then research advisor for the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, to produce Canada’s own social security report. A document shaped as much by the political failures of the Canadian government to come to terms with the poverty and squalor of the Great Depression as by its author’s research into Canadian unemployment and advocacy for socialist reforms.

Marsh believed in an expanded purview of democracy in Canada beyond civil and political rights to include the guarantee of citizens’ basic economic equity. State provisions for employment and social insurance would not only supply a remunerative, contributory economic citizenship, but also defend democracy by alleviating the inequality and destitution that characterized the Depression years and bred radical political manifestations.

This paper first examines how constitutional shortcomings and political gridlock during the Depression left Canada not only without inadequate federal social legislation but also any means of implementation. This gridlock caused prolonged privation and inequity which subsequently undermined the nation’s democracy and produced repressive government reaction and rightist political agitation. Only through the necessities of World War II was the Canadian government able to legislate control and streamline the economy.

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Through a detailed analysis of Marsh’s major publication, this paper seeks to trace the evolution of his belief in reanimated democracy. This study will further illustrate how Marsh synthesized his McGill unemployment research and League for Social Reconstruction (LSR) activism to produce his democratic ideal of economic equity through federal employment measures. The third section of this paper addresses the Marsh Report. It surveys the Report’s recommendations and major objectives, and it shows how Marsh’s emphasis on full employment through national planning served as the basis for his democratic guarantee of citizens’ basic economic rights. The final section reviews the press and public reaction to the Report, noting why the popular moniker ‘Canada’s Beveridge Report’ was not a fitting label for Marsh’s unique Canadian democratic proposal.

The Inequitable Issue of Dominion-Provincial Social Responsibility

The realities of the Depression exposed Canada’s constitutional shortcomings, especially concerning social security. Under the British North America (BNA) Act, Canada’s constitution since 1867, nearly the entire field of social security fell within provincial, as opposed to Dominion (federal), responsibility. 14 During the 19th century, welfare services in Canada were not generally perceived to be important or cost-efficient. Therefore, their administration was delegated to the provinces. This arrangement persisted until the 1930’s, and proved impractical during the mass unemployment brought on by the Depression. Only the Dominion government during that time possessed the resources to alleviate Canadians’ economic and social woes. However, the BNA Act left Canada with minimal existing federal social security measures, and no legal means of implementing such legislation. If constitutional gridlock primarily kept Canadians from the economic security they needed, political gridlock prolonged their privation. Despite eventual concerted effort by the federal government to recommend amendments to the BNA Act, the provincial governments stubbornly guarded their constitutional privileges from federal intrusion. As Marsh later noted in a letter to Professor Michiel Horn, this ensured that “Canada stayed spiritually and economically at 1867 til about 1941.” 15

14 House of Commons Special Committee on Social Security, Minutes and Proceedings of Evidence, testimony of Dr. George F. Davidson, June 22, 1944, 282.
15 Leonard Marsh to Michiel Horn, December 5, 1967, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University, Michiel Horn fonds, 2013-018, box 12, file 11.
The Depression, aggravated by this intransigence, left Canada in very poor condition economically. It rendered Canadians vulnerable to repressive governmental action and rightist political radicalism that threatened to subvert their democratic civil and political rights. The arrival of the Second World War stayed this agitation, since Canada’s increased federal economic control and industrial growth led to the popular belief that the national government would provide a better, more equitable post-war world. Through the Atlantic Charter post-war social security became an avowed aim of the Allies. Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s government seized the occasion, choosing an experienced Leonard Marsh in late 1942 to prepare its own social security plan for Canada.

Constitutional flaws and political gridlock compelled Canadians to endure the economic and social hardships of the Depression deprived of any appreciable federal economic management. Conservative Prime Minister R.B. Bennett’s traditional, laissez-faire economic approach to the extraordinary unemployment and poverty of the Depression’s early years did not adequately amend Canada’s nearly collapsed economic system. Rather, under Bennett’s leadership the depression only deepened. In 1935, anxious about growing animosity toward his government and looming socioeconomic turmoil, Bennett broke with prevailing economic—and constitutional—logic, and announced a “New Deal” of unprecedented federal expenditure into economic and social security measures. Though a sincere attempt for a more equitable distribution of wealth, Bennett’s reform effort “was so desperate that it ignored the obstacles of federal-provincial division of jurisdiction.” Because the BNA Act afforded welfare services to the provinces, not the federal government, his plan was ultimately ruled unconstitutional. This meant that the federal government had no legal basis to address the ills of the Depression directly.

In response, Bennett’s successor Mackenzie King established the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations (commonly known as the Rowell-Sirois Commission) in 1937 to review the constitutional distribution of dominion-provincial responsibilities and recommend revisions. Its 1940

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16 Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own*, 126.
18 Wittke, *A History of Canada*, 403. A British Privy Council reached this decision in 1937 after the Canadian Supreme Court reached a similar verdict in 1936.
Report proposed that the Dominion assume key economic controls and responsibility for critical national welfare services. However, the Report’s implementation necessitated both amendments to the BNA Act and policy agreements between the Dominion and a majority of the provinces. No such settlement ever materialized. A cohort of provinces already boycotting the Commission shunned its recommendations. And while the legislators bickered over the most appropriate path forward, average Canadians wallowed in the prolonged economic deprivation and social inequality of the Depression. These strains were beginning to reach at the very foundations of their democracy.

When unemployed and exhausted Canadians protested through strikes or demonstrations the Bennett government reacted frequently with repressive force. Prior to his doomed New Deal plan, Bennett quelled socioeconomic tension by brutally cracking down on dissent—fashioning a “semi-police state atmosphere.” The most infamous example was his response to the On-to-Ottawa Trek of 1935. When over a thousand unemployed relief camp workers went on strike in and around Vancouver, they organized and took their appeals for improved pay and workplace conditions directly to Ottawa and R.B. Bennett. Once the continuously growing numbers of trekkers reached Regina in mid-June, Bennett decided to stop this display of solidarity against him. The following day, as the Toronto Globe reported, “helmeted mounted police swooped down upon the strikers and supporters meeting in the market square.” This preemptive, arbitrary police raid on a peaceful gathering resulted in a violent skirmish that left one dead and hundreds injured. Not only had he incited the riot, he compromised the foundations of Canadian democracy by conflating the severity of the economic situation with the potential ferocity of protest efforts. The trekkers’ movement

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20 Ibid., 257.
21 Ibid., 248.
22 Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English, Canada, 1900-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 256.
mirrored calls by unemployed citizens all over Canada for increased federal economic involvement and assistance. Some Canadians in dire economic conditions even found themselves willing to join or acquiesce to radical political movements that threatened to suppress their and others’ democratic freedoms.

Against this backdrop of unrelenting depression, the rise of nationalist and fascist movements, especially in Quebec, challenged democracy and its inherent civil and political rights. In Quebec, Premier Maurice Duplessis and his Union Nationale party launched a campaign against communism that subverted citizens’ civil liberties. A French-Canadian nationalist party, the Union Nationale held youth marches and advocated repressive civil measures that demonstrated “the regime’s growing authoritarian—even incipiently Fascist—reputation.” The most notorious manifestation of Duplessis’ measures was the Padlock Law of 1937. The Padlock Law “severely restricted the freedoms of assembly, speech, and press” by permitting the closure of any establishment deemed by the authorities to be used for the propagation of communism and the punishment of anyone who printed or published communist material. Described by Eugene Forsey in The Canadian Forum as part of “the offensive against democracy and civil liberties” in Quebec, the Padlock Law gave the Duplessis government arbitrary authority to root out imagined left-wing threats. In one of the Depression’s worst hit provinces, Duplessis played upon the Quebecois citizens’ distress and destitution to pervert the very principles of democracy.

There were also even more overtly fascist organizations in Quebec, notably, Adrien Arcand’s National Social Christian Party (NSCP). Borrowed largely from European models, Arcand held “the conviction that liberal democracy, a device invented by Jews and Masons to undermine Christianity, nationality, and property, was fast exhausting itself, just as capitalism was entering into a state of acute disequilibrium and crisis.” Fueled by widespread anti-Semitism sentiments, NSCP members primarily blamed Jews for their economic plight. Though the NSCP did not prove to be very influential politically, it did command attention and decent membership.

26 Robin, Shades of Right, 177.
28 Robin, Shades of Right, 144-145.
Marsh and his LSR co-authors mentioned in their 1938 book *Democracy Needs Socialism*, “economic distress and discontent… lead to the rise of progressive movements as the faults of the system become more apparent; these also stimulate the forces of reaction.”²⁹ Duplessis’ Union Nationale and Arcand’s National Social Christian Party are examples of such reaction. And they came at a time when the government lacked the political force to alleviate such causations – failing to provide the tools necessary to safeguard their democracy.

It was only the industrial necessities of the Second World War which would grant such emergency powers over the structure of their sociopolitical system. Not unlike the other Allied countries, the Canadian Government experienced tremendous centralization. Federal economic planning not only spurred industrial production, but also “ended the most severe unemployment crisis in the country’s history and appreciably raised the standard of living for the large majority of Canadians.”³⁰ As Leonard Marsh pointed out to historian Michael Bliss in a 1974 letter, “Canada sure had no ‘New Deal’. It was W.W.II which changed all the directions.”³¹ Citizens recognized the benefits of the wartime federal stimulus— the kind of expenditure for financial growth and social security that remained conspicuously absent throughout the Depression.³²

They shared this popular sentiment for post-war social security with their democratic Allies. The Atlantic Charter, signed in 1941 by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, announced the Allies’ intention of waging a democratic crusade against the reactionary fascism of Hitler and Mussolini. The significant document included social security and “freedom from want” within its post-war Allied aims. The symbolic importance of the Atlantic Charter did not go unnoticed by Canadians. On a 1943 CBC radio interview with Marsh about his Report, the moderator opened with the statement: “The United Nations in their great Atlantic Charter… have pledged to all men freedom from want. We have declared that one of the great prizes of battle is the right of all men to social security – housing, construction, and health.”

³⁰ Guest, *Emergence of Social Security*, 104.
³¹ Leonard Marsh to Michael Bliss, January 31, 1974, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 2, folder “Social Planning for Canada”. Marsh was most likely referring to Roosevelt’s New Deal, as opposed to R.B. Bennett’s abortive legislation.
³² The Senate of Canada: Proceedings of the Special Committee on Economic Re-establishment and Social Security, *Minutes of Evidence*, testimony of Leonard Marsh, 9 June 1943, 99. Senator Wilson remarked that at a meeting she attended in Toronto people raised the question: “If the government is able to find so many billions for war, why cannot we be looked after in case we need help when the war is over? That query came from every part of the room…”
health, the right food, and economic freedom.” The Atlantic Charter implicitly designed for democracies to now guarantee their citizens economic as well as political freedoms. This landmark document legitimized the work of social security experts like Leonard Marsh, who during the Depression reached similar conclusions about the importance of expanding democracy.

In March of 1941, the Minister of Pensions and Health, Ian Mackenzie, persuaded the King Cabinet to establish the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction with Leonard Marsh as its research advisor. The Committee was to review the popular and pressing issue of post-war reconstruction and recommend the most appropriate governmental measures in response. The efforts of the Committee represented the government’s reaction to the prevailing wartime notion, noted in *The Canadian Forum*, “that Canada is a democracy, and if we are to have a really democratic solution of post-war problems, we had better all begin now to take an interest in these things.”

Its chairman, F. Cyril James, stated before the House of Commons in 1942 its decided aim: “In order to comprehend the many phases of the reconstruction problem we felt that there should be one clear key, one nucleus, to which everything else was related; and for our committee that nucleus has been the attainment of full employment within the Dominion of Canada.” This emphasis on employment reflected Marsh’s 1930’s McGill research, and the promotion of full employment would serve as the foundational objective of his 1943 Report.

The genesis of Marsh’s *Report on Social Security for Canada* began in December of 1942 with William Beveridge’s publication of *Social Insurance and Allied Services*. The Beveridge Report was so well received in Canada

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35 House of Commons Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-Establishment, *Minutes and Proceedings of Evidence*, testimony of Dr. F. Cyril James, May 14, 1942, 34.

36 “Wanted: A Beveridge Report for Canada,” *Canadian Welfare* XVIII, no. 7 (January 15, 1943): 1. “Consequently the sudden flurry of interest which developed from the announcement of the main outline of the Beveridge program on December 1st last was all the more heartening. No social document of equal importance, with the exception of the Report of the Rowell-Sirois Commission, has attracted such sustained interest from the press and the public alike in recent years.”
that Ian Mackenzie, no less than three weeks after its release, requested that a Canadian social security plan be presented to Parliament by February.\(^{37}\) It was to Leonard Marsh that such a monumental task was given. Working at breakneck speed, Marsh and a small team of experts submitted the first draft of his Report in under a month.\(^{38}\) On March 15 it was formally presented to the House of Commons Committee on Reconstruction and Rehabilitation.\(^{39}\) Marsh’s Report on Social Security for Canada underlined its author’s belief in the reanimation of Canadian democracy through its incorporation of not only political, but economic rights. A new understanding of democracy, which Marsh had a hand in developing, had developed before and during the Depression.

### The Development of an Expanded Definition of Democracy

Leonard Marsh’s conception of economic democracy emerged out of the economic, social, and constitutional crises gripping Canada during the 1930s. The lack of federal social welfare provisions during the Depression and the political inability of the Bennett or King Governments to necessarily amend the BNA Act demonstrated to Marsh “how utterly ill-prepared Canadian institutions were for the depression.”\(^ {40}\) In the wake of such a disaster, Marsh developed a belief that the extension of democracy should not only incorporate political rights, but economic ones as well.

In his notes for the lecture “The Challenge of Democracy,” Marsh expressed his conviction that democracy in Canada was “never more in danger.” He makes clear the association between “unemployment, poverty, insecurity” and the “deprivation of practical citizenship.”\(^ {41}\) Implicit here is Marsh’s assumption that in a functioning democracy every citizen ought to have rudimentary protection from economic hardship. The status quo of basic political freedoms combined with the laissez-faire fiscal attitude of the 1920s did not strike Marsh as democratic enough. Particularly considering the length of the line at his local soup kitchen and the growing fascist

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\(^{37}\) Granatstein, *Canada’s War*, 256-257.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 258.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 258.

\(^{40}\) Leonard Marsh to Michiel Horn, December 5, 1967, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University, Michiel Horn fonds, 2013-018, box 12, file 11.

\(^{41}\) “The Challenge of Democracy,” UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 7, folder “Public lecture notes”. While these lecture notes are not dated, their contents clearly signal they were written during the Depression – they include the phrase “widespread failure of economic system” and mention the “ignorance of Versailles” under the subheading “post-war nationalism”.
organizations in Quebec.

Leonard Marsh was inducted in the Fabian tradition from his undergraduate education at the London School of Economics (LSE) from 1925-28 and his subsequent position as assistant secretary to the 1930 New Survey of London Life & Labour. LSE was, in fact, founded by a quartet of prominent Fabians in 1895. They believed in the advancement of gradualist socialism to promote “the utilitarian ideal of the ‘greatest happiness of the greater number.’”

A fundamental aspect of Fabian philosophy the advocation for social welfare issues through public education.

Following his graduation from LSE, Marsh collaborated closely with then-director William Beveridge on a chapter entitled “Unemployment and Its Treatment” in the New Survey’s 1930 first volume Forty Years of Change. This experience had a lasting impact on Marsh’s understanding of poverty and unemployment. It proved instrumental in shaping the conduct and focus of his McGill social research in the 30’s. Reflecting on his initial time at McGill, he referenced the significance of his New Survey research: “Is it any wonder that I had [a] really informed knowledge of poverty, ignorance, social as well as environmental squalor, and a mounting sense of indignation at the lack of [Canadian] social policies to deal with them?”

Marsh brought this nascent socioeconomic consciousness to Canada when he accepted McGill University’s offer to direct its innovative social sciences research program.

As director of the McGill Social Sciences Research Project from 1930 to 1940, Marsh oversaw and contributed to a series of research studies and volumes on unemployment in Montreal and greater Canada. Described as “the most important academic research on unemployment carried out during the Depression,” the McGill Project stood as Marsh’s empirical attempt to deal with the squalor, destitution, and agitation he witnessed around

45 Leonard Marsh to Michiel Horn, April 28, 1967, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University, Michiel Horn fonds, 2013-018, box 12, file 11.
It was through his work at McGill that Marsh came to appreciate the importance of steady employment. Not only did employment provide the economic security Marsh believed necessary within an expanded understanding of democracy, but it also imparted to the employed feelings of self-respect, communality, and citizenship. Marsh was the sole author of two books within the Social Sciences Research Project – *Employment Research* (1935) and *Canadians In and Out of Work* (1940). These two volumes outline Marsh’s belief in the importance of the promotion of employment as a bulwark against poverty and inequity. They also evince his conviction that Canada increase the scope of its democracy through the implementation of policies aimed at ensuring the basic economic needs of its citizens.

The first volume published by the McGill Project, *Employment Research*, introduced the Project’s various studies and outlined the empirical social research into unemployment undertaken by Marsh and his research team. Marsh’s research philosophy reflected his Fabian training and the activity of his former mentor William Beveridge: “The widest purpose of social research… is to increase the acceptance of factual investigation as an instrument of social policy.”

Through his investigation of unemployment in *Employment Research* Marsh would provide the impetus and material for a solution. Prior to his commencement of the Survey, Marsh believed focusing on employment was paramount. He said, “if unemployment is prolonged, its effects are cumulative, not merely on standards of living, but on morale and psychology; it is damaging to skill, incentive and the habit of work, the cause… of tension in the home and disaffection in society.” For Marsh, unemployment served as a primary cause of the social dissention in Canada that threatened to pervert democracy and its avowed political freedoms. Implementation of employment policies would act as an integral part of a guarantee by the state of its citizens’ basic economic security.

Marsh concluded in *Employment Research* “that unemployment is a problem of industry first, a problem of persons afterwards.”

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Ibid., 127.
the Depression, failure to obtain employment was commonly seen as the individual’s fault; it was “an indication of some defects in ability or character.”\textsuperscript{50} However, the realities of the 1930s gravely threatened this laissez-faire, individualistic outlook. Rather, it proved that the problem of prolonged, widespread unemployment was structural. The state, not the individual, held the most responsibility and agency for ensuring employment. Employment Research marked the inception of Marsh’s view of an expanded democracy that would involve the state’s resources in the use of knowledge and social engineering to produce basic economic equity and inclusivity.

Canadians In and Out of Work (1940), the second volume written by Marsh in the McGill Project, crystallized his understanding of democracy as one in which the basic economic security of citizens is maintained by the state, and by citizens collectively. Reflecting on the book years later, Marsh described it as “the first comprehensive presentation of income, employment, and educational differences—in effect, the social class structure—worked out quantitatively for Canada.”\textsuperscript{51} Based on a decade’s worth of research during the Depression, Marsh’s findings demonstrated a wide disparity in the distribution of income among occupational and social classes. Moreover, he showed that unemployment disproportionately affected the unskilled and industrial wage-earning classes. Marsh determined in Canadians In and Out of Work the need for a considerable reorganization of government arrangements concerning unemployment. He asserted that “everything hinges on Dominion leadership” not only to repair economic inequalities and ensure employment, but also to work with local and provincial authorities to arrive at a constitutional “settlement of the spheres of responsibility and control which is in accord with basic economies of the problem.”\textsuperscript{52} Federal legislative control over welfare administration would best allow for the expansion of democracy Marsh sought. If the economic inequalities he chronicled were not met with a federal guarantee of basic economic equity for Canadian citizens and continued to persist, their destabilizing force might beget a radical political solution, jeopardizing citizens’ political and

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 126.
\textsuperscript{51} “I: Social Sciences Research and Social Policy (1930-1941): The McGill experience, and Canada of the 1930’s,” UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 6, folder “Biography – MSS”. This is an unpublished autobiographical chapter by Marsh.
\textsuperscript{52} Leonard Marsh, Canadians In and Out of Work (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1940), 427, 426.
civil rights. Marsh declared: “The proof that only the democratic form of government can abolish the tensions and frictions of unequal opportunity by peaceful and constructive methods, demands positive policies.”\(^{53}\) The conditions of democracy had to be expanded to incorporate basic economic rights in order for its proper functioning and protection.

Democratic economic citizenship could not only be provided for by the state, but by citizens themselves through social insurance legislation. Marsh contended in *Canadians In and Out of Work* that through a system of social insurance, “the collective use of existing incomes, or parts of them, enables them to provide much more than if they are used individually.”\(^{54}\) The pooling of incomes would bring citizens together in a communal effort to provide for each other financially against the risks of illness and unemployment. Citizens would help each other achieve more equitable circumstances through their social insurance contributions, thus promoting democratic values in the process.

In addition to his McGill unemployment research, during the 1930s Leonard Marsh became an integral member of the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR) – an organization of Canadian socialist intellectuals. The LSR, modeled after the British Fabian Society, advocated a reformist, constitutionalist socialism suited to Canadian needs.\(^{55}\) Appalled by the Great Depression’s rampant inequalities, its members posited in the 1932 LSR manifesto: “the present capitalist system has shown itself unjust and inhuman, economically wasteful, and a standing threat to peace and democratic government.”\(^{56}\) They proposed the institution of greater Dominion planning to produce economic equality in Canada. The LSR sought to galvanize public and political awareness and support for its efforts primarily through educational means. Books, lectures, and pamphlets publicized their research into pressing economic and social issues. While not a founding member of the LSR, Marsh proved very active and would serve as the group’s national president from 1937 to 1939.\(^{57}\) Three major LSR texts edited or co-written by Marsh—*Social Planning for Canada* (1935), *Democracy Needs Socialism* (1938), and the 1938 LSR brief to the

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\(^{54}\) Ibid., 444. Italicized in original text.


Rowell-Sirois Commission—display his insistence that expanding, and thus protecting, democracy by guaranteeing for citizens fundamental economic rights required the increase of national planning economically and socially.

Published in 1935, *Social Planning for Canada* served as the principal analytical and policy statement of the LSR’s decade-long existence (1931-1942). The book used statistics to decry the unequal and inhuman effects of laissez-faire, profit-driven monopoly capitalism in Canada, and then offered constructive socialist solutions. Marsh played an indispensable editorial role, synthesizing and supplementing three years of manuscripts and memoranda contributed by his LSR research committee colleagues to produce a finished version. In the introduction to the 1975 reissue of *Social Planning for Canada*, the authors admit their approach in the book was more pragmatic than strictly socialist: “On economic questions… the conclusions were not always doctrinaire. They can be better described as a mixture of Fabian socialism, Keynesianism…, and the Welfare State…” Whether implemented through reform within a capitalist economic paradigm or not, “politically and economically, socialism simply represents the endeavour to put governments by the people and for the people into modern terms.”

The LSR’s democratic socialism in *Social Planning for Canada* reflected Marsh’s belief for the expansion of democracy to include economic as well political rights. Social and economic planning in the citizens’ interest meant “grafting the organs of expert direction on to our present democratic machinery (which must itself be made more democratic in effect).” Marsh and his LSR peers firmly believed in the merits of a broadened economic democracy through national planning. “True freedom…” they posited in *SPC*, “can only be enjoyed by people whose work and income are secure against arbitrary disaster and afford them a reasonable chance of a decent living and leisure.”

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58 “Introduction to *Social Planning for Canada*,” UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 2, folder “Social Planning for Canada”. This is Marsh’s unpublished introduction to the 1975 reissue of *Social Planning for Canada*; Leonard Marsh to Michiel Horn, April 28, 1967, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University, Michiel Horn fonds, 2013-018, box 12, file 11.


60 Ibid., vii. Italicized in original text.

61 Ibid., 218.

62 Ibid., 225.
against rival political manifestations, like fascism, that promise citizens swift economic solvency in return for the suppression of their political rights. Thus, Marsh and the LSR concluded that effective state economic planning machinery must be implemented because “only so can we hope to secure economic democracy without which political democracy is a vain aspiration.”

Although *Democracy Needs Socialism* (1938) was but an abridgement of *Social Planning for Canada*, explicitly dealt with LSR’s understanding of democracy, especially amidst the growing fascist presence in Quebec and abroad threatening it principles. The authors laid out from the outset the crucial question facing Canadian citizens in 1938: whether to align “with the forces of reaction and authority or with the forces of progress and democracy.” In Quebec, the enactment of the 1937 Padlock Act by Duplessis’ Union Nationale and the emergence of Arcand’s National Social Christian Party caused Marsh and his LSR associates concerned about “a general trend to right-wing authoritarianism.” The authors identified fascism as the principal “blind alley” down which those in dire economic straits might erroneously turn. With the fascist movements in Italy and Germany as example, democracy can be quickly overrun. As the title implies, to “preserve and revitalize democracy,” Canada needed socialist intervention.

*Democracy Needs Socialism* believed capitalism’s crisis and the economic polarization during the Depression had ensured that “our present democracy is incomplete— the existing economic and political arrangements are not able to provide the security and freedom which the ordinary citizen is entitled to expect today.” The promotion of a reanimated democratic citizenship for the Canadian population would engender common support for democracy as opposed to its radical political alternatives. A more equitable distribution of income was necessary. Marsh and his co-authors in *Democracy Needs Socialism*, as in *Social Planning for Canada*, returned to the importance of national planning to fortify democracy. They declared

63 Ibid., 228.
67 LSR Research Committee, *Democracy Needs Socialism*, 42.
68 Ibid., 138.
69 Ibid., 137.
that “the ultimate task is the planning of the nation’s economic life to allow for the fullest possible life for the majority of its citizens. This is the real challenge to democracy.” Marsh and his DNS co-author Frank Scott would get the opportunity in early 1938 to present their argument for increased national government control before the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations.

Marsh and Scott wrote the LSR brief given before the Rowell-Sirois Commission that called for greater Dominion constitutional and economic authority over welfare legislation. The issue that needed remedied was, in the face of 1930s Canadian monopoly capitalism, “the Dominion is well along the road that leads to industrial feudalism, to class conflicts and to undemocratic social standards.” Under the BNA Act, the provinces held too much legal power for their limited financial resources. “Today when economic problems are nation-wide in scope,” Marsh and Scott stated, “anything which deprives the national government of effective power to deal with them is really undemocratic.” The authors believed that continued constitutional gridlock and provincial reluctance to cede important legislative authority to the Dominion had wrought the conditions that compromised the integrity of Canada’s democracy. Canadians desired “the provision of a basic minimum of social security for every citizen,” which was only achievable through a National Welfare Code guaranteeing “the distribution of the national income on more equitable and democratic terms.” Marsh’s pitch for the enhancement of democracy through Ottawa’s legislative empowerment did not fall upon deaf ears within the Commission. It did recommend major Dominion control over the economy and welfare services in its 1940 Report; however, its prescriptions proved largely ineffectual due to the provincial disagreement and hostility that precluded

70 Ibid., 48.
71 Horn, *League for Social Reconstruction*, 108. Michiel Horn claims the title of the LSR brief was *Canada – One or Nine? The Purpose of Confederation*. I accessed the brief in *The Canadian Forum*, where it was split over three different issues (March-May, 1938) with the titles “The Purpose of Confederation”, “Obstacles to National Unity”, and “New National Purposes”.
72 “Obstacles to National Unity (L.S.R. Brief – Part II),” *The Canadian Forum* XVIII, no. 207 (April, 1938): 443.
74 “New National Purposes,” 50.
the necessary BNA Act amendments. The combination of Marsh’s McGill Project empirical unemployment research and his LSR advocacy of national planning to improve economic and social justice produced his Canadian democratic standard of equality of economic opportunity through federal employment policies. It was this philosophy, formed and defined during the Depression, that guided Marsh’s Report.

A Report to Reanimate Democracy

Leonard Marsh’s 1943 Report on Social Security for Canada stood as the culmination of his ideal of an expanded democracy that incorporated guarantees of economic equity largely through employment measures. In discussing his Report, Marsh stressed that “social security is intended for one purpose only – the abolition of poverty.”75 Though it dealt with ancillary welfare measures, the Report’s core was that only the use of state and civilian resources to provide each citizen with basic economic security could cure the abject poverty faced by so many Canadians during the Depression. And for Marsh, economic vulnerability inevitably led to political vulnerabilities. He declared shortly after the Report’s publication “that democracy is incompatible with poverty; that it cannot win the strong allegiance of its citizens unless they have the basic minimum of freedom and dignity which only employment provides.”76 The provision of employment assumed paramount importance in the Marsh Report. It was the measure that would best eradicate poverty, provide economic stimulus, and prevent another post-war depression. The Report synthesized more than a decade of Marsh’s research and advocacy with McGill and the LSR. Its social security recommendations reflected his conviction that democracy meant not only civil and political rights, but economic and social ones as well.

The Marsh Report outlined a comprehensive social security plan for Canada. Its recommendations included a national employment program with training services for the unemployed, broadened unemployment insurance, children’s allowances, universal national health insurance, and extended old


age and retirement pensions. Marsh deemed it essential “to erect ‘a total framework of social security’ and not attempt to grapple with the varied phases of poverty in piecemeal fashion.”

In his opening pages, Marsh canvassed the existing social legislation as not only inadequate, but also based largely on public assistance. He countered by offering the basic social insurance principles within his scheme that would lead to its improvement.

The Report divided its social insurance and general recommendations into two categories: “employment risks” and “universal risks.”

“Employment risks” included all insurance schemes applicable to employees—unemployment, sickness, maternity, and industrial disability. These were federally administered (except for industrial disability), funded by contributions from the employee and employer, and paid out benefits based on income level. Also falling under “employment risks” was the proposed national employment program, training services, and employment assistance so vital to the promotion of post-war full employment. “Universal risks” included insurance schemes and pensions applicable to all gainfully occupied citizens—permanent disability, widowhood, old age retirement, and funerals. These were federally administered, funded by the insured person and the government, and paid out benefits on a flat-rate basis. Also, within “universal risks” were those programs that applied to the population at large: children’s allowances and contributory national health insurance.

Marsh intended to create an interconnected social security system promising a “social minimum” to Canadian citizens. Providing a social minimum “means the direct elimination of poverty. It raises the level of those families whose incomes are inadequate… to permit proper provision for health care or savings against the risks of disability or unemployment.”

At the outset of his Report, Marsh calculated the minimum subsistence budget for a representative family of five (an annual income of $1,134) as a step towards quantifying poverty. A better understanding of what constitutes

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77 “Dr. Marsh Defends Security Concept” in Marsh’s personal scrapbook of Report press clippings, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 15, folder “Misc.: Photocopies”.
79 Ibid., 30.
80 Ibid., 36-41. Marsh calculated this figure by further reducing a 1939 Welfare Council of Toronto study’s recommended living minimum budget. The Council’s budget was “intended to show a minimum which would exclude any unreasonable expenditure, and assumes continuous and efficient management on the part of the housewife. Only the most economical foods were included.”
poverty would lead to a more defined and expedient means of producing a national minimum that established economic equity. The concept of the social minimum was indicative of Marsh’s democratic approach, upholding “the idea that the citizens of the country should have some kind of facilities and income— an opportunity which should be given to them all.”

Every citizen within a democracy should be entitled to economic, and thus social, rights. Marsh identified this idea of a social minimum for all Canadians as an irrefutable democratic principle.

The achievement of full employment was the foundation and primary objective of Marsh’s Report. He declared in the opening pages of his text “that provision for unemployment, both economically and socially, is the first and greatest need in a security programme designed for the modern industrial economy.” His research into unemployment at McGill during the 1930s taught him the importance of implementing full employment as “a reaction against experience of depression and mass unemployment which marked so many of the years before the war, and a feeling of determination that it must not happen again.”

The provision of employment at decent wages stood as the most practicable means of redressing the destitution and economic inequity that threatened democracy during the Depression. Besides, as Marsh posited in his letter of transmittal to F. Cyril James regarding his Report, “it is desired to emphasize the important point that social security legislation in a post-war context has no firm foundation without special employment measures for the transition period.” These employment measures included a national employment program of public works and investment estimated at a billion dollars annually, occupational placement and training facilities to prepare citizens with the skills necessary to find work, and unemployment insurance and assistance to cover the basic needs of citizens during times of joblessness. Full employment would also ensure the optimal functioning of the Report’s insurance schemes, as most depended upon contributions from workers. Focusing on the provision of

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82 Nancy Christie reaches a similar conclusion about the importance of full employment in the Marsh Report, see: Christie, Engendering the State, 280.
83 Marsh, Social Security for Canada, 7.
85 Marsh, Social Security for Canada, 2.
employment for Canadian citizens rather than relief payments would “offer wages rather than subsistence maintenance to the farthest extent to which it is possible.”

In a Keynesian sense, Marsh “thought providing employment was necessary to maintain stable purchasing power to maintain democracy, and even to maintain capitalism.”

Full employment would function as the ideal basis for the state’s guarantee of rudimentary equality of economic opportunity for its citizens. It therefore proved essential to Marsh’s advancement of economic democracy for Canada.

Children’s allowances occupied another cornerstone of the Marsh Report. Marsh described children’s allowances as “a clear part of the policy of a national minimum – of the direct attack on poverty where it is bound up with the strain imposed by a large family on a small income.”

Moreover, Marsh believed “children are a basic asset of the nation whose welfare should be protected.”

The system of children’s allowances would be funded and administered by the federal government through tax revenue. Marsh proposed that they be implemented universally, and that parents would receive $7.50 a month for each child. As an independent unit alongside other insurance and social security measures, children’s allowances would “contribute immensely to administrative simplicity and efficiency” by taking care of children’s financial needs in order to spare other measures of making separate provisions for them.

The primary importance of this security measure for Marsh was that it supplemented the incomes of large families. For families with low incomes, a high number of children may directly lead to poverty. Supplementing the wages of the primary earners in a large family with monthly allowances for each child would not only provide them with greater basic economic security, but also greater economic equity. Children’s allowances operated democratically in preventing families from the mire of poverty. They also had an economically stimulating effect. “There is no more effective way of providing purchasing power,” according to Marsh, than children’s allowances.

86 Ibid., 76.
87 “Job Provision Postwar Need, Says Dr. Marsh,” The Globe and Mail, August 30, 1943.
88 Marsh, Social Security for Canada, 197.
90 Marsh, Social Security for Canada, 200.
91 The Senate of Canada: Proceedings of the Special Committee on Economic Re-Establishment and Social Security, Minutes of Evidence, testimony of Leonard Marsh,
payment of allowances to families by the federal government would stimulate the consumption that would create and maintain the high levels of employment he sought. Children’s allowances thus fought poverty on two fronts.

The two-tier social insurance system recommended by Marsh assumed a pivotal role in his Report as a collective means of pooling citizens’ resources against the risk of illness, disability, or unemployment. For Marsh, “the genius of social insurance is that it enlists the direct support of the classes most likely to benefit, and enlists equally the participation and controlling influence of the state, at the same time as it avoids the evil of pauperization.”

Many citizens’ incomes were not adequate enough to cover the expenses caused by the unanticipated hazards of life. As Marsh suggested in *Canadians In and Out of Work*, social insurance would collectively pool contributions from individual incomes so that in the case of accident, illness, or unemployment, individuals would be provided with a significant monetary increase over what they alone could have mustered. “The basic reason— for considering social insurance at all,” Marsh proclaimed before the Canadian Senate, “is the distribution of income. That is, after all, the very fundamental of social thinking and social action on all these matters.”

Social insurance also offered a fundamental basis for democratic citizenship. Through communally pooling their resources, citizens guaranteed for themselves more equitable economic circumstances. Marsh felt social insurances “demand personal and community responsibilities; but… give more evident meaning to the ideas of common effort and national solidarity. It has yet to be proved that any democracy which underwrites the social minimum for its citizens is any weaker or less wealthy for doing so.”

Through their contributions to social insurance schemes, citizens would act in solidarity to ensure one another of Marsh’s democratic economic right of basic financial security.

The Marsh Report envisioned a vastly increased role for the Dominion government to administer a Canadian social security system. Speaking before the Senate about his Report, Marsh declared that “on post-war problems June 9, 1943, 88.

there is a very strong feeling that the Federal Government must take the lead and provide a large share of the finances. I do not think there is any question about that.”\textsuperscript{95} Indeed, of Marsh’s social security recommendations involved the Dominion administration. The sole exceptions were health insurance (Dominion-provincial cooperation) and workmen’s compensation (provincially administered). Marsh’s argument mirrored his Depression-era advocacy of greater national economic planning with both McGill and the LSR. Only through the application of the federal government’s resources could democracy be extended to ensure for the Canadian citizenry a basic social minimum. In his Report, Marsh asserted “that a paramount consideration is the constitutional freedom of the federal government to lead and co-ordinate” such significant and costly security measures.\textsuperscript{96}

The issue of constitutional clarification to grant the Dominion government these powers echoed the main message of his 1938 LSR brief \textit{Canada: One or Nine?} Marsh believed that “through the medium of a special conference of Federal and Provincial representatives” similar to the earlier, altogether ineffectual Rowell-Sirois Commission, the BNA Act could be properly amended to grant the federal government the constitutional social security privileges it needed.\textsuperscript{97}

Augmenting the importance of constitutional amendment was the fact that the federal government now benefited from “wholly new levels of national production and Dominion budgeting that a war economy has brought into existence.”\textsuperscript{98} The fiscal capabilities of the wartime Canadian state resembled nothing heretofore seen. Many, including Marsh, anticipated a post-war carryover of the inflated federal authority and budget. Besides, as Marsh stated in a newspaper article following the release of his Report, the Canadian people “will very naturally feel that if we have the money for war, we should have the money for the new order of peace.”\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{96} Marsh, \textit{Social Security for Canada}, 249.
\textsuperscript{99} “Marsh Urges Bold Planning for Post-war Reconstruction” in Marsh’s personal scrapbook of Report press clippings, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 15, folder “Misc.: Photocopies”.
Marsh employed a Keynesian economic strategy in his Report. State social security expenditure “in post-war Canada is only indirectly a welfare matter at all, but it is a strategic factor in economic policy generally whose importance cannot be over-emphasized. One of the necessities for economic stability is the maintenance of the flow of purchasing power.”100 As stated earlier, the Marsh Report’s primary aim was to provide full employment for Canada. State economic investment in national employment programs and social security measures like family allowances and social insurance would spur the consumption and production necessary to yield high levels of employment. Marsh affirmed that “it is investment expenditure, not employment, which is the motive force. Full employment is the objective, it is true; but full employment arises from successful mobilization of all productive resources of the nation.”101 While writing his Report, Marsh was already familiar with Keynes and his groundbreaking General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (1936). He cited Keynes in his 1940 volume Canadians In and Out of Work, noting the importance of maintaining robust national revenues and encouraging full employment through large-scale state investment.102

In a pamphlet published in late 1944, identified a crucial motive for economically stimulating expenditure was “if a postwar depression is to be prevented, we should prepare our plans now.”103 The fear of a post-war resumption of the depressed economic conditions of the past decade haunted Marsh. He believed that to the proper fulfillment of post-war democracy “a depression is the greatest danger we face, and it is a real one.”104 Through its proposals, his Report would promise for Canadians citizens, both economically and democratically, “‘a better world’ which is particularly real to those who knew unemployment, destitution, inadequate medical care and the like in the depressed periods before the war.”105 The lessons of the Depression taught Marsh the significance of Keynesian post-war national planning and investment to economic growth. State promotion

100 Marsh, Social Security for Canada, 16.
101 Ibid., 82.
102 Marsh, Canadians In and Out of Work, 446.
104 “Job Provision Postwar Need, Says Dr. Marsh,” The Globe and Mail, August 30, 1943.
105 Marsh, Social Security for Canada, 15.
of full employment would expand and protect democracy, providing citizens with decent wages and basic economic equity.

Marsh understood his Report simply contained recommendations for Canadian post-war policy, and could then be used as a democratic educational device. Marsh called his Report, in the letter of transmittal to F. Cyril James placed at its beginning, “essentially a preliminary appraisal, not a final blueprint with all the details filled in…”106 Though Marsh completed his Report as research advisor to the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, the Committee did not hold legislative sway. Its members reported their findings in front of the Senate and House of Commons, but the Committee was primarily responsible to prime minister Mackenzie King and his Cabinet.107 The relative political impotence of the Committee did not matter for Marsh, since his Report had little legislative aspirations. As Marsh revealed in a 1944 letter to his old mentor William Beveridge, “the only danger is that it will be too easily assumed that all that is set out herein is going to be immediately implemented! What is nearer the truth is that it must serve as an instrument of education for some time.”108 In the Fabian and LSR traditions, Marsh sought public education and awareness of the merits of a comprehensive, federally administered social security program. This seemed especially pertinent for Canadians given the wartime setting and the backdrop of over a decade’s worth of unremitting depression. Public knowledge of the economic and democratic benefits of his social security measures would rally the popular support essential for their eventual legislative realization. A Winnipeg Tribune article best articulated the Marsh Report’s educational aspirations: “As its author has pointed out, it is not a blueprint. It is not even a blueprint for a blueprint. It is a starting point of democratic discussion upon the practical measures to be taken if we are to make good one of the four freedoms – freedom from want – in our own Dominion.”109 The extension of democracy in Canada to include political and economic rights necessitated such popular debate.

106 Ibid., 2.
107 Granatstein, Canada’s War; 254-255.
108 Leonard Marsh to William Beveridge, July 1, 1944, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 29, folder “Incoming Correspondence”.
109 “Toward Freedom from Want,” The Winnipeg Tribune in Marsh’s personal scrapbook of Report press clippings, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 15, folder “Misc.: Photocopies”. Marsh circled this quote, writing in the margin: “Did all “the press” understand this??”
The Popularity of the ‘Canadian Beveridge Plan’

The Marsh Report generated widespread publicity when made public in March of 1943. Though the press received the Report favorably, its overwhelming predilection to label the Marsh plan a Canadian copy of the Beveridge Report overshadowed the unique democratic intentions of its author. The Marsh Report’s comprehensive approach to expand democracy within a Canadian framework of limited federal social security measures contrasted with the Beveridge Report’s precise plan to extend social insurance within a comparatively more democratic and complete British social security system. The Canadian public on the one hand embraced the Report’s democratic implications, while on the other fretted over its hefty funding.

On March 16, 1943, announcements of the Marsh Report made headlines across Canada. A former colleague’s letter to Marsh drafted on that day indicated the extensive press coverage given to the Report: “I have only had time to look over the headlines of today’s newspaper, but the headlines are enough. The Marsh Report has certainly established the Marsh name throughout the length and breadth of this fair Dominion.”¹¹⁰ Major daily newspapers across Canada received Marsh and his Report with front-page headlines, full-page sections, and numerous editorials and background stories.¹¹¹ Headlines proclaimed Marsh’s Report a ‘Billion-Dollar’ social security plan to provide for citizens a basic minimum income. The national response to the Report was altogether positive. A more emphatic proponent of the Marsh Report, the Winnipeg Free Press declared: “If there are those who disagree with Dr. Marsh, they must make counter-propositions which will meet the situation.”¹¹² The Vancouver Province was also impressed: “The Marsh plan... deals with a complex subject imaginatively.”¹¹³ Many saw the merits of ensuring a social minimum for Canada, whereas others focused on its high costs. While most looked favorably upon its objectives, the Marsh Report could not escape comparison to its Beveridge Report

¹¹⁰ George S. Mooney to Leonard Marsh, March 16, 1943, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 29, folder “Incoming Correspondence”.
¹¹³ “Beveridge Plan for Canada,” The Vancouver Province, March 16, 1943.
Almost immediately the Canadian press termed Marsh’s *Report on Social Security for Canada* the “Canadian Beveridge Report.” Numerous articles detailed the similarities between the two reports, or focused on Marsh’s formative experience as an assistant to William Beveridge in England. Frank Scott, Marsh’s fellow LSR collaborator, wrote to Marsh on March 18, rather wryly wishing him “congratulations on your elevation to the position of Canada’s Beveridge.” While Marsh’s *Report* somewhat resembled Beveridge’s structurally, the application of the moniker ‘Canada’s Beveridge Report’ was unjust. As Marsh mentioned in his 1975 introduction to the re-issue of his *Report*, “the truth is that by 1941 there was a common stock of ideas and principles available to all who knew the literature.” Marsh prepared his *Report* independently of the Beveridge plan, applying to his work the employment and social security expertise, along with the democratic zeal, he developed through his over ten years of McGill social science research and his LSR activities and studies.

The Marsh *Report* differed from the Beveridge Report in several key ways. First and foremost, as stated in *The Vancouver Province*, Marsh was “an economist advising a governmental committee on post-war reconstruction, while Sir William was chairman of a royal commission appointed for the express purpose of drawing up a social service plan.” Britain by that time had a greater economic democratic tradition and unlike Canada an established system of social security legislation equipped to incorporate the polished Beveridge plan. Since the Marsh *Report*, as its author’s primarily educational statement for the extension of Canadian democracy, held nearly no legislative ambitions, it was more comprehensive than the Beveridge Report while also less specific. The Beveridge Report focused mainly, and thoroughly, on the issue of freedom from want through social insurance. It included children’s allowances, comprehensive health services, and employment policies, but only discussed them briefly toward the end as underlying assumptions closely related to Beveridge’s plan for social security. Marsh, on the other hand, elaborated upon all three;

114 F.R. Scott to Leonard Marsh, March 18, 1943, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 29, folder “Incoming Correspondence”.
they served as essential components of his Report, working in tandem with social insurance to form an interconnected system guaranteeing a democratic basic minimum. The reports’ main technical difference was Marsh’s recommendation of graduated rates of benefit for unemployment insurance to account for Canada’s regional economic variation as opposed to Beveridge’s suggested flat-rate benefits for the more industrialized Britain.\textsuperscript{118} The Marsh Report’s primary objective of full employment for Canada more closely resembled the aims of the 1942 US National Resources Planning Board (NRPB) Report than it did the intentions of the Beveridge Report.\textsuperscript{119} While Beveridge thought full employment essential to his plan, he did not prescribe specific employment measures until the publication of the 1944 companion to his Report, Full Employment in a Free Society.

Many Canadians welcomed the Marsh Report as a means of providing the much-needed post-war economic and social equity that would strengthen democracy. Main Johnson, financial editor of the Toronto Star, proclaimed that Marsh was one of many who could “not only sense the trend of the times but who are determined to further it and bring it to practical fruition in legislation for at least elementary social justice.”\textsuperscript{120} Labor leaders also hailed the Marsh Report. In a letter to the editor, National Director of United Steelworkers of America C. H. Millard backed the Marsh plan, adding that “labor is vitally interested in better social insurance to protect our people against the hazards of industrial life and old age. But labor is even more concerned with the urgency of providing employment for all who are able to work after the war.”\textsuperscript{121} The concept of government provision for its citizens’

\textsuperscript{118} House of Commons Special Committee on Social Security, Minutes and Proceedings of Evidence, testimony of Sir William Beveridge, May 25, 1943, 367. Beveridge noted this when he appeared before the Canadian House of Commons: “That [Marsh] report… differs in regard to proposing a graduated scale of benefits and contributions instead of a uniform scale…”

\textsuperscript{119} Eveline M. Burns, “Post-War Planning and the Role of Social Security,” Canadian Welfare XIX, no. 2 (June 1, 1943): 13. Burns, a former Beveridge student and colleague at LSE who was chiefly responsible for the preparation of the 1942 NRPB Report entitled Security, Work, and Relief Policies, declared: “Another notable difference between the National Resources Planning Board and the Marsh and Beveridge Reports is the greater emphasis placed by us on employment and work.”

\textsuperscript{120} Main Johnson, “Boldness as a Vitalizing Force in Postwar Reconstruction Plans,” Toronto Star, April 14, 1943.

\textsuperscript{121} “Voice of the People: Employment and Security,” Toronto Star, March 19, 1943.
basic economic security struck many as a democratic ideal. “Implementation of the billion dollar employment plan and similar social security plan,” A.E. Grasby wrote to the editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, “will constitute the proudest day in Canada’s history. The non-planning sceptics will soon see the great benefits of sensible planning by the government of the people for the people.” During Marsh’s June 1943 testimony before the Canadian Senate, several senators defended the equitable economic and social measures within the *Report*. Senator Ballantyne asserted that through the *Report*, “there will be a minimum given to people out of employment through no fault of their own. There will be a positive minimum so that families will not lack food, clothing, and medical care.” Echoing the sentiment of his colleague, Senator Gouin supported Marsh’s definition of an expanded economic democracy when he contended that “if we can evolve a social democracy it would be a matter of satisfaction to all Canadians.”

Canadians’ overriding concern with the Marsh *Report* was its cost. Though Marsh contended that “social security is a major job, a test of democracy and we cannot afford not to afford it,” expanding democracy to include economic rights would be expensive. Marsh estimated that his national employment program would total a billion dollars, and that his system of social security would amount to a similar billion-dollar figure. Albert Duncan proved prescient when he wrote Marsh on March 17, 1943, warning him of a “billion-dollar howl going up in certain quarters.” Though Canadians generally desired a comprehensive post-war social security scheme, Marsh’s quoted price gave them pause. Marsh based his plan’s total figures on the expanded wartime economy; naturally this made Canadians anxious about the efficacy of his measures in a potentially less economically productive post-war setting. The comments of Canadian

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124 Ibid., 97.
126 Albert Duncan to Leonard Marsh, March 17, 1943, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 29, folder “Incoming Correspondence”.

senators during Marsh’s Report testimony best capture this objection. Senator Gouin warned that “if we embrace too much at the same time the result may be disastrous. I am of the opinion that at the end of the war we will not be in a position financially to undertake immediately a scheme of total security.”127 Due to its comprehensiveness, Marsh believed his social security plan could legitimately guarantee citizens a social minimum. Senator Beaubien believed this comprehensiveness caused its inflated budget and unpopularity among certain Canadians. He countered with the claim that “it would be easier to get the people to accept a scheme gradually, than to impose a burden of one billion dollars a year upon them at once.”128 As the behavior of the King government confirmed, appeals for gradual implementation like Beaubien’s would ultimately prevail.

Conclusion

Though it has become known as, as one historian declared, “the most important single document in the history of the development of the welfare state in Canada,” Leonard Marsh’s Report on Social Security for Canada was largely ignored by the Mackenzie King government.129 In his November 1943 review of the Marsh Report, Stuart Jaffary noted the public’s misimpression about the efficacy of implementing a plan that “has not been tabled by the government, but merely presented by the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction to the Parliamentary Committee on Social Security, for the information of the latter. The government has made no comment about the Report, nor indicated any commitment on any of its recommendations.”130 To the Minister of Finance, J.L. Isley, Marsh’s recommendations “were not intended as legislation, or even government

128 Ibid., 99.
Prime Minister Mackenzie King felt the Marsh plan too burdensome, expensive, and immediate—he thought such a comprehensive social security program should take years to implement. He did partially acquiesce to political pressure for social reform in 1944, implementing the Family Allowances Act that universally paid out to families the children’s allowances Marsh included in his *Report* as a meaningful means of improving economic equity and activity.

Since 1944, Canada’s social security system has developed in a disjointed and piecemeal fashion. The contemporary Canadian welfare system is a tangle of federal and provincial provisions that in no way resembles Marsh’s comprehensive scheme or its relative administrative simplicity. While it is impossible to say how greatly Marsh or his *Report* influenced subsequent welfare legislation, its publication and popularity have for years generated the democratic discussion he desired. That many of Marsh’s security measures—including strengthened unemployment insurance and assistance, worker training and placement services, universal healthcare, old-age pensions, and disability benefits—have eventually been implemented in one form or another must be considered a boon for democracy. Canadian citizens are now guaranteed economic and social privileges far outweighing those available to their ancestors during the Depression. Though it took decades to implement its different proposals, the *Report* did in some symbolic way contribute to the achievement in Canada of its author’s ideal of an expansion of democracy to incorporate for citizens basic economic freedoms.

More importantly yet, Marsh’s *Report on Social Security for Canada* defined the expectations of Canadian democratic citizenship. It addressed Marsh’s concern that “if people are starved of opportunities of education, they are the people who most likely will have no sense of social responsibility.”

True to its author’s Fabian roots, the *Report* aimed to educate citizens about their role in the realization of a Canadian social democracy. Shortly after the *Report*’s release, Marsh stated, “the whole concept of social security is a democratic technique, and of course an alert people must make sure that

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131 Granatstein, *Canada’s War*, 263.
132 Ibid., 263-264.
it is handled in a democratic way.” Marsh’s understanding of Canadian citizenship as entailing rights to economic security necessitated not only federal investment, but citizens’ collective economic contributions. Marsh sought, through his education, to assist in the creation of a Canadian citizenry alert enough to appreciate the merits of an expanded democracy and to acknowledge their obligations politically and economically to produce it. By securing for each other basic economic freedoms, citizens would ensure the security of democracy itself. In this respect Marsh succeeded; Canadian citizens’ awareness of the virtues and demands of social democracy led to the eventual formation of the contemporary Canadian welfare state.

134 “Dr. Marsh Defends Security Concept” in Marsh’s personal scrapbook of Report press clippings, UBC Archives, Marsh fonds, box 15, folder “Misc.: Photocopies”.
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The long-running rumor around Porterville, California, is that it lost more young men in Vietnam per capita than any other town in the United States. Technically, this is not true; the town of Beallsville, Ohio tops this particular list, with six young men killed from a community of 475. However, Porterville does stand out as a town which lost soldiers in Vietnam at four to six times the national average. As a result, the Porterville Area Veterans’ Park and Memorial, which stands at the corner of Henderson Avenue and Newcomb Street, was constructed in 1989 to honor the 40 men that the community of 12,000 sacrificed in the name of war. The Memorial features an authentic helicopter, painted to mimic medical evacuation, or med-evac, helicopters, which were universally recognized in the Vietnam conflict. It hovers above a slab of granite engraved with the names of the men from the area killed on active duty. Along with the memorial stand, 40 redwood trees are planted throughout the park in honor of each individual listed under the helicopter.

The Memorial was constructed by veterans in the spirit of remembrance and to honor the sons, fathers, brothers, and friends they, and the rest of the close-knit community, lost. However, the significance of Veterans’ Park is in flux with the passage of time, and tensions have arisen in the three decades since the erection of the memorial between members of the organization that funded the Memorial’s construction and the City Council that controls public use and maintenance of the space. In a community where great strides were made to ensure those who gave their lives for their

2 Susan Sward, “AFTER VIETNAM / 20 Years of Sorrow / Immeasurable Losses / Porterville still struggling with legacy of war sacrifice.” *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 27, 1995.
country were remembered (the argument over just what they gave their lives for is less important in this context than the beliefs and intentions of these men in this instance), the war is fading from public memory, and with it, comprehension of the importance of its commemoration, while the Memorial has been reduced in the eyes of those who care about it most to a point of political contention.

My purpose in this paper is to present the sum of my research on Vietnam’s effect on Porterville, the 1989 memorial and its significance both at the time of its creation and in the town today. The Porterville Veterans’ Memorial was constructed by specific organizations within the town after years of planning and fundraising, and its existence represents the emotional significance behind memorializing those lost in Vietnam. However, the memorial was unveiled at a pivotal moment in America, when perceptions of the Vietnam War and of veterans from the conflict were shifting. These clashing opinions on the War and American troops can be seen in narratives at the creation of the memorial and in the present day.

Research and Methods

Historiography on the town of Porterville is generally sparse, the community being rural, dependent upon agriculture, and idyllic but geographically disadvantaged in the Central San Joaquin Valley, located approximately 20 miles away from U.S. 99. Scholarly historiography on the way Vietnam affected Porterville is completely nonexistent, so I was forced to branch out in my research and consider sources outside of scholarship, as well as scholarship on topics adjacent to that of Vietnam and Porterville.

The most readily available information is from three concise news articles online which lend valuable insight to the topic. The first two are “AFTER VIETNAM / 20 Years of Sorrow / Immeasurable Losses / Porterville still struggling with the legacy of war sacrifice,” and “AFTER VIETNAM / 20 Years of Sorrow / Aura of an All-American Town -- Parades and Patriotism still struggling with legacy of war sacrifice, both by Susan Sward of the news website SFGate from April, 1995. Full of imagery and pathos, the articles recount the 1995 remembrance ceremony at Veterans’ Park, attended by schoolchildren, veterans such as Don Dowling, and the elderly parents of those listed on the memorial, and recount some of the stories told by the parents and other veterans. The first article is especially
important to my research, as it contains quotes and stories directly from the parents of some of those honored by the memorial, who are now also deceased; these cannot be found anywhere else, and provide critical insight into the lives of some of the men listed on the memorial.

Other news pieces, “Vets Day brings back memories” by Rick Elkins, and “Time for nation to honor all Vietnam War Vets” from the Porterville Recorder, are available online. Elkins paints a quick picture of the divisive nature of the war, even in a strong military town like Porterville, and sums up the creation of the Veterans’ Park Memorial in 1989, thanks in part to Cliff Davids, Steve Brown, Bill Seaton, and others. The second article states that Porterville stood apart from other areas of the country by creating “one of the first Vietnam War memorials in the Nation,” and calls for a revival in honoring Vietnam veterans nationwide. Written by Porterville locals for whom Veterans’ Park is a daily reminder of the legacy of Vietnam, these works portray the high level of emotion that surrounded the memorial and everything it represents.³

Despite the lack of scholarly information about Porterville itself, similar studies have been done with different American towns. Another example of a town with unusual circumstances surrounding their Vietnam sacrifice is the town of Morenci, Arizona, where a group of nine friends, all recent high school graduates, joined the Marines in 1966 and were deployed in Vietnam, only three of them surviving the next two years. This seems to be the most infamous example of the heavy toll the conflict took on rural towns within scholarly literature, as portrayed in Kyle Longley’s “Between Sorrow and Pride: The Morenci Nine, the Vietnam War, and Memory in Small-Town America.” In this essay, he writes that there is no shortage of remembrance for the Nine in the town of Morenci, but brings attention to an ongoing conflict, wherein some people think the focus on the Nine diminishes respect and remembrance for other men from the area who lost their lives in Vietnam. This work shows that Porterville is not alone in its struggle to honor and memorialize those who died in the conflict, even regarding the dissension over the methods in which this is done.⁴

Other secondary research is more generally about memorialization, remembrance, myth, and disillusionment in America surrounding the Vietnam conflict. One pertinent article is “Farewell to ‘President Knows Best’” by Daniel Yankelovich, who claims that the American war in Vietnam was a turning point in American politics where the American public began playing a larger and more active role in U.S. policy. He argues that the Vietnam War resulted in a massive degradation of trust between the American people and the United States government, due to the questionable justifications and decisions made during the conflict. In addition, he claims that despite fears over an “imperial public,” public participation in government is the best alternative to the kind of imperial presidency the United States hosted throughout the Vietnam conflict and in earlier examples of American imperialism.\(^5\)

Christian Appy considers national public memory in America surrounding the conflict in Vietnam more specifically in his book, American Reckoning. Using a broad range of official and cultural sources, he argues that the Vietnam conflict “[shattered] the broad faith that the United States is a unique force for good in the world, superior not only in its military and economic power, but in the quality of its government and institutions, the character and morality of its people, and its way of life,” a belief otherwise known as “American exceptionalism.”\(^6\) He also illustrates the ways in which the perception of Vietnam, and by extension perception of veterans from the war, have changed over the decades since the end of the conflict due to political and societal influences such as rhetoric and mythos espoused by different presidential administrations, and forms of mass media such as American films about the Vietnam War. This has been an essential part of contextualizing and interpreting the creation of the Vietnam memorials in the 1980s and the shifting perspectives on the War in America.

“Discord in the Narrative” adds to this rich historiography by shining a spotlight on Porterville’s significant losses as a result of the conflict in Vietnam. Research was largely conducted over a span of seven days within the town of Porterville. The birthdates, places of birth, and general service records of the men on the Porterville Memorial, available on the Virtual Wall
of Faces which lists each fallen soldier listed on the national memorial in Washington D.C., allowed for the discovery of the death dates and provinces for most names on the list. 7 This information was then cross-referenced with microfilm courtesy of the Porterville City Library containing archived issues of the Porterville Recorder between 1966 to 1969 in order to find obituary information and more intimate details about the lives of those killed during deployment, the other critical research aspect in examining the lives of these men, as well as motivations for and sentiment surrounding Veterans’ Park.

I also conducted an oral interview with Don Dowling, the current commander of the American Legion Post 20, the Porterville chapter, who provided further context on the lives of some of these men, recollections of his personal experiences during and after the war, and his memory of the commemoration of Veteran’s Park. He personally knew several of the men on the Porterville Memorial, and shared stories about the friends he lost. He spoke of the significance of the war and the memorial to him and to other veterans in Porterville, juxtaposing information supported by the Virtual Wall of faces and public memory in the town of Porterville, saying, “...all these boys [listed on the memorial] were Porterville Boys. They lived here, went to school here...they were Porterville Boys.”8 Additionally, he claimed that the use of the park by veterans was sharply curtailed in recent years due to impositions made by Porterville City Council;9 this was the first indication that the Porterville Memorial may be a point of local contention.

In response to this aspect of Dowling’s particular narrative, I reached out to Porterville City Council for comment. I received surprised but generous responses concerning the accusation from Donnie Moore, Parks and Leisure Services Director of the City of Porterville, and John Lollis, City Manager of Porterville, along with several archived meeting minutes from City Council meetings from 1989 to 1991, the only record they had of any discord between the Council and the American Legion.

Context: They All Had a Name

7 “Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund” Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund - Founders of The Wall.
8 Don Dowling, “Oral Interview with American Legion Post 20 Commander,” Interview by author, March 28, 2019. The only surviving record of this interview is notes taken by the interviewer.
9 Ibid.
The conflict in Vietnam remains infamous in the memory of the United States for a number of reasons, including the admittedly poor strategic decisions at the highest levels of military and government, and the divisive question of whether American involvement was truly justified. This division was evident in Porterville as much as it was in the rest of the nation, according to Elkins, resulting in a protest in the town and the splitting of families due to differences in opinion. Still, it did not seem to matter much to the young men who enlisted in Porterville, including Albert Taylor, Patrick Higgins, Henry Reyes, Ronald Shockley, Jewell Rainwater, and Stephen Austin, just a few among many. They were under the impression that the conflict in Vietnam was critical in stopping communism, that they “wanted to do what was right,” according to Higgins’s father, a veteran himself, who did not agree with his son’s decision. Add that to the low-income, low-opportunity status of a rural, agricultural town like Porterville, and it really is no wonder these boys wanted to expand their opportunities, despite the danger. Understanding the identities and experiences of at least a portion of the men listed on the Porterville Memorial, as well as the way they were remembered and mourned by their community, is a crucial aspect of understanding the importance of Veterans’ Park to the fellow veterans and loved ones living in the Porterville Area today.

Staff Sergeant Albert Taylor was one of the three career military men mentioned here, including Dowling. He enlisted in the Marines immediately after he graduated high school, and spent two years stationed in Naples, Italy, before returning to Porterville and signing up to go to Vietnam. According to his mother, Eva Taylor, “We all tried to get him not to sign up for Vietnam, but he said ‘Mom, I already signed up.’ He thought he would get it over with and be home.” Taylor’s family may not have understood his motivations to go to Vietnam at first, but later, in a letter to his parents, he wrote: “If we stop (communism) here, it will someday be a help to our children.” Albert Taylor had two children and another on the way when he was deployed to Vietnam, and was killed by grenade shrapnel three months into his tour. His family was not able to view his body due to the damage

10 Elkins, “Vets Day Brings Back Memories.”
11 Dowling, “Oral Interview with American Legion Post 20 Commander.”
12 Sward, “Immeasurable Losses.”
13 Ibid.
done, and it was said he called out for Eva Taylor in his last hours, but he died doing something that, according to his government, was necessary to protect his family and the American way of life.

The memorial also includes Corporal Patrick “Pat” Higgins, age twenty, who stepped on a landmine in A Shau. Patrick enlisted while enrolled at Porterville Community College, against his family’s wishes, and died on Mother’s Day, 1968. According to his father, Albert Higgins (a former Marine himself), part of Pat’s motivations were akin to those of Albert Taylor as he “wanted to do what was right.” However, Albert Higgins implies an economic motivation as well, stating, “Why do you think Porterville lost so many kids? It’s a small town, there’s not really that many jobs here.” According to those closest to these men, it is clear that the promise of opportunity was as strong of a motivating factor as the drive to contain communism.

Sergeant Hank Reyes’ story sheds light on the apprehensions and concerns that young men faced once drafted, as those who did not enlist but died for the same cause are indicative of the most divisive policies regarding the Vietnam War. Sally Arcure, Hank’s girlfriend, and his mother, Connie Delgadillo, both expressed fears that Hank would die in Vietnam, Connie even citing an event while Hank was on leave where a ouija board told him he would not return, though all of his friends would. She said, “He tried to laugh it off. But I always had a feeling he wasn’t coming back. And all the others [Hank’s friends] are alive today, too.” On leave, he told Sally that it “bothered him to kill, it really did,” and that “his hurting overwhelmed her” when he spoke about his experience as a sergeant in the war. He stepped on a landmine too, in An Khe of the Binh Dinh Province. Delgadillo heard he called out for her in his last moments, but she “didn’t have the courage to find out” for sure. He was twenty-two years old.

Contradictory to the general assumption in Porterville regarding the Veterans’ Park, not all of the men listed on the Memorial were killed in combat. Commander Rodney Carter, aged forty (the oldest on the list of names) and Airman Apprentice Ronald Shockley, aged nineteen but by no

14 Ibid.
16 Sward, “Immeasurable Losses.”
17 Dowling, “Oral Interview with American Legion Post 20 Commander.”
means the youngest on the memorial, stand out as two examples. Carter, the only son of George and Lola Carter and a father of six himself, died in the accidental Oriskany aircraft fire in 1966, which killed forty-three and injured sixteen in total. It was unknown whether he was trapped in the living quarters or, like others, asphyxiated or burned while trying to save men who were trapped.\textsuperscript{18} He was the only man mentioned in this research to be a college graduate, and the only other casualty besides Albert Taylor in this paper who lived long enough to build a strong military career.\textsuperscript{19}

Ronald Shockley is by and large the most mysterious Porterville casualty (Hank Reyes’ ouija board notwithstanding). Here are the facts of the incident that were made public, as told by the Porterville Recorder from a wire from Vice Admiral C. K. Duncan, chief of naval personnel:

“It is said that about 10:50 p.m. Saturday two men were reported missing from the USS America, along with three life rafts. A search resulted in recovery of one man by the USS O’Brien at 2:06 a.m. Sunday.

“Admiral Duncan said the survivor told authorities he, Shockley and a companion had released the rafts and jumped off the ship. They missed the rafts in the darkness, and Shockley disappeared after a brief struggle with his companion in the dark water….

“…Mrs. Shockley said [the family] was mystified as to the circumstances and as to the drowning. She described her son as an excellent swimmer.”\textsuperscript{20}

It cannot be speculated with any measure of respect to Ronald Shockley why he was compelled to abandon his ship in the middle of the night with this little evidence, especially given that he enlisted instead of being drafted, the same as his brother, and there is no mention in the source of the identity of his “companions” or their fate.\textsuperscript{21} The primary purpose of the additions of Carter and Shockley is to further point out the inconsistencies between

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
belief in Porterville about the memorial and what empirical evidence can support.

To understand Jewell Rainwater’s story, some context on Don Dowling is useful. Dowling was stationed in Vietnam for three years under the U.S. Special Forces, from his 18th birthday in 1968 until 1971, and spent the next eleven years continuing a military career in the United States and in Europe. He believed firmly in the Domino Theory and the importance of stopping communism from taking over Vietnam, although he told me that while fighting, he saw the Northern Vietnamese were not just fighting for an abstract economic theory, but were “fighting a civil war, because they believed in their cause in their hearts and were fighting for their country.”

Within this oral interview (rich in content but lacking structure due to amateur mistakes of the interviewer), Dowling spoke of his dear friend, Jewell “Bubba” Rainwater, any record of whom in Porterville was previously (infuriatingly) impossible to find.

According to Dowling, he grew up and graduated from high school with Rainwater, but when Rainwater’s father fell ill in Texas, he left Porterville to help. Dowling claims to have seen him again in Vietnam in December of 1967 through sheer coincidence, as they were both in the same region to see the Bob Hope USO Christmas show. Dowling admitted he was not present at the time of Bubba’s death, but he heard that Bubba was sent out to fight the Viet Cong. In his own words, “The helicopter touched down. Jewell was the first one out…[gestured to his in a horizontal line] took a round of AK-47 to the chest…they lifted him out of there, and he was dead by the time they [airlifted him to safety].”

Little record of Rainwater was found outside the Veterans’ Memorial list and Dowling’s interview. The Virtual Wall of Faces did list a Jewel Lee Rainwater (the closest match to the name listed on the Veterans’ Park Memorial) from Van Buren, Arkansas, but he is recorded to have died in April, 1968, four months after Dowling’s story took place. Whether this is an error in record-keeping or an error in memory, it is a pertinent example of the dissonance between fact and remembrance, and raises the question of which is more important when

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22 Dowling, “Oral Interview with American Legion Post 20 Commander.”
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
looking at the significance of the Veterans’ Park Memorial in the town of Porterville to those who are responsible for its creation and the preservation of memory about the War.

By all accounts, Stephen Austin was an American hero. He was part of Operation Allenbrook, a search-and-destroy mission south of Da Nang in 1968. On June 8, he and the squadron he led (Company C, 1st Battalion, 27th Marines) came under heavy fire by Viet Cong forces practicing guerilla warfare from a bunker. Austin “brilliantly maneuvered his squad to an area from which they could provide effective covering fire,”26 and according to a Marine in his squadron, Al Joyner, “[Austin] was wounded repeatedly by enemy fire but continued to advance on the bunker...as he was falling to the ground, he was able to throw his grenade up to the bunker slit to silence the enemy and assure a safe withdrawal of his squad and his platoon. A combination of rifle fire and the explosion of his own grenade resulted in Stephen’s death.”27

Austin died protecting his fellow troops less than a month after peace negotiations regarding the Vietnam conflict began in Paris,28 and six days after his 21st birthday.29 In his last letter (pulled from his pocket after his death and mailed by a fellow Marine, arriving, blood-stained, two days after news of Austin’s death30), he wrote, “I am so sick of fighting I’ve seen and helped to many boys my age or younger that was wounded or dead. I thank the Lord each morning I get up.”31 His mother, Lorene Traphagan, also quotes him on his last leave, saying, “I don’t want to go back….I don’t want to kill, and I don’t want to be killed.”32 What Stephen Austin did not know, what his family did not find out for seventeen years, is that he left a pregnant girlfriend behind in Porterville, and had a daughter, Neily Esposito, whom he never had the chance to meet.33 Additionally, Stephen Austin was

28 Sward, “Immeasurable Losses.”
32 Sward, “Immeasurable Losses.”
33 Ibid.
posthumously awarded the Navy Cross in July of 2018, received by Neily in honor of Austin.\textsuperscript{34} The existence of Austin’s daughter, and his posthumous reception of the second highest naval honor granted, brought the family a measure of comfort after their loss. Even still, the absence left by Austin’s death, as with the other families, would never be completely restored.

To the people of Porterville, these men were not just names on a list, nor were they faceless, abstract figures in an academic report. These were the sons, brothers, fathers, and friends of the tightly knit community, brutally murdered in the prime of their lives. No one understood this more than the veterans who returned from the war and took up the effort to commit their fallen friends and brothers-in-arms to memory.

\textbf{Remembrance: Building the Porterville Veterans’ Memorial}

The Veterans’ Park Memorial was erected after a year-long fundraising event on January 21, 1989. The idea, according to the Porterville Recorder and Don Dowling, was originally proposed by a Vietnam Veterans’ Support Group at the local community college. The idea had been floating in the support group since 1975, but it was only greenlighted in 1988, and the American Legion Post 20, a chapter of a national veterans’ organization within Porterville, was tasked with sponsoring the effort. It was designed by Dennis Strand of Leading Edge Aviation, who also gave a speech at the dedication.\textsuperscript{35} The helicopter itself was donated by Leonard Frederico of Frederico Helicopters Inc., based in Fresno, California.\textsuperscript{36} In its entirety, the memorial cost about $28,000.\textsuperscript{37}

The idea was controversial at first; despite Porterville being a strong military town, according to Elkins,\textsuperscript{38} people were hesitant to commemorate a vicious, divisive, and debatably failed war, and that was before considering how much the community had personally lost. Because of this, it was important to all involved that the memorial symbolize and honor those lost, but not become a commemoration of war itself. Steve Brown, chairman

\textsuperscript{34} George, “He Died Saving Fellow Marines in Vietnam.”
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{38} Elkins, “Vets Day Brings Back Memories.”
of the committee that helped raise money for the memorial, said at the commemoration ceremony, “...There were rumors this was going to be a memorial to war...To ensure that no one would ever think this Porterville Area Vietnam Memorial was a promotion of war, we emphasized our theme that it was a symbol of hope and peace in a way all veterans would recognize.”

For veterans, the construction and dedication of Veterans’ Park was a “labor of love”, and the creation of a Vietnam memorial that was a symbol of mercy, rather than of peace with a med-evac helicopter, was especially significant. The dedication ceremony’s keynote speaker, Colonel David Patton of Bakersfield, said in his speech, “...I have seen these birds go into a hot [landing zone] over even which gunships refused to fly….Angels of mercy with rotors instead of wings. What an appropriate memorial to bravery”. Don Dowling also spoke of instances he witnessed in combat, where “the only time the fighting would stop” was when med-evac helicopters would tough down to retrieve fallen troops.

The dedication event was attended by 2,500 people, exemplifying the high level of emotional investment the town held in Vietnam memorialization at the time. The idea of erecting the Veterans’ Park Memorial was important not only to the veterans that designed and fundraised for the memorial, but also for the loved ones who attended the dedication ceremony and preceding honorary ceremonies, such as the parents and other family members of those lost in the War. Reactions were varied among this group, however. The parents of most of the fallen men mentioned above were in attendance, for instance, and had varied reactions to the creation of Veterans’ Park. Eva Taylor “was glad they built it in honor of the young men.” For others, such as Estaline Higgins (Pat Higgins’ mother), Connie Delgadillo, and Lorene Traphagan, the memorial opened up old wounds once more, reviving the pain of losing a child. “When I see that helicopter, sometimes I want to run away,” Estaline said. Delgadillo told Susan Sward, “[Attending the dedication] brought back memories that he had died”. Traphagan is quoted as well, saying, “When I look at the helicopter and look at his name, I know he is gone...Years ago, I kept hoping they’d made a mistake about his death,

40 “Memorial symbol of Peace and hope,” Porterville Recorder.
41 Sward, “Immeasurable Losses.”
42 Ibid.
and I guess I have tried to keep him alive.” The mixed emotions of the loved ones imply that the park may have been built primarily by veterans, for veterans, but the sizeable attendance of the dedication ceremony shows that even fourteen years after the war, emotions surrounding the War and all that Porterville lost still ran high, and commemoration was highly relevant.

The Veterans’ Park Memorial was constructed with a very specific intention and meaning in mind, and that meaning certainly seemed to remain to an extent, at least until Sward’s work in 1995. However, somewhere along the line, the emotional significance that the park held for veterans and the rest of Porterville shifted, and became tinged with conflict and disappointment for some of those who worked to create it.

**Interpretation: A Community At Odds, a Nation At Odds**

Veterans’ Park has changed much since 1989, the primary difference being a fence around the helicopter to protect it from vandals, and the construction of a couple of gazebos and a playground on the eastern end, but it has lost much of the emotional significance that that town once attributed it with, positive as well as negative. To date, all but two of the parents quoted in this interview have passed away (Connie Delgadillo and Eva Taylor have no published obituaries available online, denying me the authority to claim that they are deceased), and younger family members could not be reached for comment.

To draw a parallel to the national Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial, Christian Appy writes, “...the focus [of the 1982 national Vietnam Memorial] was on healing, not history”. In the same vein, Veterans’ Park, which Steve Brown claimed, “is, today [dedication day] and will for a long time to come, be a gathering place for veterans and non-veterans alike”. This indicates the importance of having a site for veterans to remember their fellow soldiers and take steps towards healing at the time, surely an intention of those who created the memorial. Now, given the passage of time, it can be argued that the memorial is more for veterans than for anyone else in the city. This being the case, one difference in Veterans’ Park that is not visible to the eye but which has wide-ranging consequences to veterans such as Dowling is that the site is now maintained by the city, not by the American Legion, and the veterans’ organization has, according to Dowling, lost the right to use
the park they themselves sponsored.43

The culprit varies depending on who you ask. Dowling blames City Council, who he claims told the veterans that it was “Veterans’ Park in name only,” several years ago, and that they did not have the right to use the park as they wished.44 City Council, upon request for comment, seemed taken aback by these accusations when presented with them. According to City Manager John Lollis, “…in my 13 years of experience with the City of Porterville, the City Council and staff have strived to honor and recognize its military veterans, and the only conversations and direction I have been involved in have been how to enhance that opportunity.”45 They also granted me access to City Council minutes ranging from 1989 to 1991, citing one point of contention between the American Legion (first under the command of Steve Brown, then Charles Finney) and City Council (the chairs being filled by chairpeople Lok, Nicholson, Gibbons, Gifford, and Leavitt). These meeting minutes referenced the eventual departure from allowing the sale of alcohol at the American Legion’s “Old Fashioned 4th of July Family Picnic” over the span of three years due to various logistical and moral objections to having a beer garden at a memorial site in a public space, as well as traffic hazard, assuming the event would be attended by 1,000 to 2,000 people, and the park sits next to a main thoroughfare with no barrier between bystanders and speeding traffic

This was helpful in putting the accusations into context, though any reference to the specific term “Veterans’ Park in name only” could not be found in public record, and due to time and logistical constraints, I could not ascertain concurrence of this claim among other veterans. Currently, it is unconfirmed whether these were the root of the dissatisfaction Dowling expressed in his interview.

Regardless of who is to blame for the transition of the American Legion’s events to other venues in town, if anyone is to blame at all, a problem does present itself in this narrative, with no predictable outcome. Those I have reached out to have emphasized that this is an important topic, but the topic of Vietnam in Porterville seems to be a largely forgotten one by those who did not study history or have a personal role in it.

43 Dowling, “Oral Interview with American Legion Post 20 Commander.”
44 Ibid.
45 Lollis, John, “Veterans Park Memorial Research Project -- Request for Comment.”
This is part of a broader pattern of remembrance surrounding the Vietnam War and its veterans, which Appy attributes to the divisive nature of the war in public memory. He cites a shift in perception at the turn of the 1980s, from which emerged a surge of memorialization for and research on Vietnam veterans, who had in the previous decade been perceived by the American public as generally dangerous and unhinged, and a revision in national public memory itself surrounding the war and its soldiers. As Appy writes, “By the 1980s, mainstream culture and politics promoted the idea that the deepest shame related to the Vietnam War was not the war itself, but America’s failure to embrace its military veterans.”

He goes on to explain that by the time of the Gulf War, Americans associated the term “Vietnam” with memorials to American veterans more than with the actual country of Vietnam, which was still struggling to recover from decades of war.

From this amendment of public perception, various myths emerged surrounding the war which could not be supported by empirical evidence, such as the idea that there were still Vietnam Prisoners of War held in Hanoi long after the conflict ended, and that protestors to the war such as Jane Fonda, or “Hanoi Jane,” went the proverbial extra mile in betraying their nation by collaborating with the North Vietnamese government to thwart communication efforts of aforementioned POWs (Dowling expressed an unshakably firm belief in both of these narratives). Appy addresses this as well, calling it “one of the most widely believed myths of the post-Vietnam War decades...kept alive, in part, by the U.S. government’s hypocritical and inconsistent response,” which varied between administrations.

The importance of this shift, besides initiating a long-overdue commemoration and vindication for veterans who had felt denigrated and disrespected by the nation they fought for, is that it resulted in a lack of remembrance of the actual events and reasons for the conflict which has sustained into the present. Appy writes that Americans born after Vietnam “…believed that the primary lesson of the Vietnam War was to pay homage to U.S. veterans. They also picked up a related, often unspoken, message: Don’t ask too many questions about the war, because it might disturb people, especially veterans.”

This phenomenon is combined with,

46 Appy, 241.
48 Ibid., 244.
49 Ibid., 241.
according to local high school teacher and Professor of American History at Porterville Community College, Dr. Benjamin Nelson, “...an overall cultural problem as we as a society are losing the ability through mass distraction to think historically and maintain a sense of historical context for everything, including monuments, around us. History, it seems, is becoming a nuisance.”

These claims, all in conjunction, raise questions about the ways in which Vietnam could be remembered in an honest but respectful way, what the memorial and park signify, since the meaning has clearly shifted for some veterans within the town, and whether and by what means this conflict between members of the American Legion and the Porterville City Council can come to some kind of mutual understanding when it comes to such a historically rich and emotionally significant feature of the Porterville area.

**Intervention: Open a Dialogue**

Clearly, the conflict between veterans such as Don Dowling and the City Council of Porterville is a culmination of these past several decades of shifting national sentiment surrounding the Vietnam War and its veterans. The first was denigration and shame in the 1970s due to the humiliation the United States government and its reputation faced domestically and globally at losing a war against a relatively small guerilla force and sacrificing so much economically and socially because of it. The second was a mammoth surge in memorialization and commemoration in the 1980s, to the point that the true meaning and shortcomings of the War and its debatable justifications were lost in the myth of American exceptionalism. The general idea of honoring veterans but not looking too closely at the war they were made to fight has more or less survived into the present day, but now, as we see with the waning interest in the topic aside from veterans and scholars, is tinged with disinterest by the general public.

As neither a person with any personal connection to the Porterville City Council nor the American Legion Post 20 (besides being a native of the same town and having communicated with them while conducting research for this essay), a fair intervention in this apparent conflict would be to suggest simply opening a dialogue between the two organizations.

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50 Dr. Benjamin Nelson, “Re: Vietnam in Porterville HS Education,” e-mail message to author, April 22, 2019.
The Commander of the American Legion has expressed dissatisfaction with the City Council’s limitations on Veterans’ Park, and City Council seemed eager their correspondence to assuage any contention. The previous commanders of the American Legion who insisted upon alcohol sales at their Fourth of July event, have been replaced, as have the former members of the City Council who denied the sale of alcohol at the American Legion’s events. I recommend that the two institutions contact one another and work together to understand each other’s points of view. This might result in use of the space by the American Legion once more, and depending upon the popularity of these events, could result in a wide range of improvements in the town’s knowledge of the Vietnam War, respect for the memorial, and unity between Porterville’s leaders and a longstanding social institution within it.

In the case of Veterans’ Park in Porterville, the memory of Vietnam and its sacrifice is as important, if not more so, as the facts of the war and memorial itself, as it is the driving factor in the opinions formed by people such as Don Dowling, who hold the highest regard for the site. That being said, fact can temper belief when it is met with a willingness to communicate with the opposite side. May this research be received as encouragement for the Porterville City Council and authorities within the American Legion to open a dialogue in order to soothe old perceived offenses and work towards improved relations.51

51 Special thanks to the immensely helpful staff at Porterville City Library, Commander Don Dowling, Porterville City Council, and Dr. Benjamin Nelson for aiding my research.
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Free Labor, Free Soil, and the California Constitution Debates of 1849

Jeff Garaventa

Free Labor, Free Soil, and the California Constitution Debates of 1849

In 1846, the United States seized control of the Mexican province of California. The acquisition of California and access to the Pacific Ocean had long been a dream of expansionist Americans. As a response to the influx of people caused by the Gold Rush and in the hope of achieving statehood, delegates from around the state convened in October 1849 to create a constitution for California.

The Constitutional Convention discussed two critical questions concerning free labor and Free Soil. First, would American California be a free or slave state? Second, if California were to be a free state, what system of free labor would work in this new land? To answer these questions, I examine the delegates’ views on two topics discussed in the convention, the banning of slavery in the state and a proposal to ban free black persons from California.

I contend the delegates who attempted to exclude free blacks wanted to establish a society based on free (white) labor without the blight of slavery. Their discussion of free labor outlines the beginnings of a post-slavery racial hierarchy in California.

In his excellent book, Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California, Tomas Almaguer explores the relationship between racial hierarchy and free labor in the constitutional debates. Though remaining aware of racial issues, I attempt to view the constitutional debates through the lens of the free labor and Free Soil movements.

This study is a snapshot of political attitudes in the early days of the
Gold Rush taken through the lens of the constitutional debates before the admission of California to the Union. Though not a long-term study, it does display attitudes towards racial and labor issues that will affect California for many years.²

The Free Labor Movement

The free labor movement can be traced back to the 1820’s, in response to increasing pressures on the Eastern labor force from immigration and the threat of slave labor. It has its roots in the efforts of urban artisans and mechanics to gain better working conditions for themselves. The beginnings of this movement are well described by David Roediger, in his book The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class. The artisans and mechanics of the day saw themselves as part of what they called the “producing class.” This class was comprised by farmers, independent producers, artisans and mechanics, along with small businessmen. They believed in the Jeffersonian ideal of American republicanism, particularly the independence of the yeoman farmer and independent producer. This class prized their economic independence. Northern white laborers in this period looked at their lives in view of two conflicting visions. They saw the Jeffersonian ideal of a republic of small producers compared to the Southern society with a non-laboring aristocracy that ruled over a society dominated by chattel slavery. The Northern laborers saw the South as a reproduction of European aristocracies, where a ruling class controlled a laboring class of peasants. This would not have been appealing to them.

Free white laborers saw their independence threatened by slavery in other ways as well. Slavery was an example of paternal control, and the individual slave was dependent on (and subject to) his or her master. This was the opposite of the Jeffersonian independent worker. These workers’ ancestors had not fought a revolution to emancipate themselves from the British just to see themselves become dependent again.³

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² The term “free labor” denotes the labor of white men, unless explicitly mentioned otherwise.
Further, a number of white laborers had indentured servants as ancestors. They certainly did not want to lose status and become akin to those servants again. Laborers generally did not associate with either free blacks or slaves in this period, since blacks were seen as a symbol of the loss of societal status.\textsuperscript{4} Another fear that white laborers had in this period was the idea that the capitalists or moneyed class would combine with the lowest status workers, usually free blacks or slaves, to drive down wages in the producing class. This further distanced the white producing class from blacks.\textsuperscript{5}

In the book, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War, Eric Foner fully explores the topic of free labor. According to Foner, the idea of free labor existed in juxtaposition to slave labor. In the antebellum period, there was always a consciousness of unfree labor and dependence as an alternative to economic independence and free labor. His views on economic dependence and independence are congruent with Roediger’s comments referenced above.\textsuperscript{6} Foner emphasizes that the free labor movement and Northerners in general saw labor as a valuable and honorable thing. This was diametrically opposed to the Southern ideal that the ruling class does not work and slaves do all of the labor. The idea of dignity and honor in labor caused the North to view their free labor system as superior to Southern slavery.\textsuperscript{7}

Wage labor was not viewed as independent labor by everyone. Some parts of Northern (and Southern) society likened working for wages to “wage slavery.” Southerners, in particular, suggested that Northern wage workers were no better than slaves.\textsuperscript{8} Over time, wage labor became seen as a contract between two parties. Wage labor also became viewed as part of the free market of supply and demand. Both of these views caused Northerners to accept wage labor as part of free labor.\textsuperscript{9}

The members of the free labor movement wanted several things. First, they wanted to promote and encourage free white labor to maintain whites’ social status, bolster their wages, and keep their Jeffersonian ideal of

\textsuperscript{4} Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 49.
\textsuperscript{5} Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 44.
\textsuperscript{7} Foner, *Free Soil*, 50-51.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 100-101.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 19-20.
independence. Second, members felt that slavery was detrimental to white labor. If lower cost slave labor was encouraged, how could white laborers make a living? Third, the movement was against the expansion of slavery to new territories, since they wanted to encourage the use of free labor across the country. Finally, the free labor movement, though generally anti-slavery, did not associate with blacks and was not supportive of black labor.10

**The Free Soil movement**

The Free Soil movement, and the Free Soil Party that grew out of it, started as a response to the proposed extension of slavery to Texas and the western territories. As Frederick J. Blue states in his work *The Free Soilers: Third Party Politics, 1848-54*, the Free Soil Party began as the continuation of the Liberty Party that had started as an abolitionist party in 1840.

The Liberty Party was largely abolitionist and opposed slavery anywhere, including in any new territories. But they were not the only people who opposed the extension of slavery. They were joined by a number of Jacksonian Democrats from rural Northern counties that were the aspirational Jeffersonians. They disliked slavery, were anti-bank and anti-capitalist, valued their independent labor, and were free land/homestead activists.11 One of these Jacksonian Democrats, David Wilmot, took action in 1846. The Wilmot Provisos was placed as a rider on the bill that allocated funds to aid the negotiations ending the Mexican War. The Proviso mandated that slavery would not be allowed in the new territories obtained from Mexico. This meant that slavery would be restricted to the Southern states that it now inhabited and could not spread any further. The Wilmot Provisos was a very controversial measure and caused splits in both the Democratic and Whig parties. It was eventually defeated, but left a great deal of political fallout in its wake.


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10 Ibid., 279-281.
ordinary men feel “humiliation” when they see the “vast distances” between themselves and aristocratic planters. He feared that in a future world of “lords and vassals,” the ordinary white man will sink to the level of a vassal, destroying the republican ideal of independence. In order to keep ordinary citizens independent, the country must restrict slavery to its then current area.\textsuperscript{13} This is a reprise of the Jacksonian fear of the “corrupting capitalist aristocracy” brought to life shown as the Slave Power.\textsuperscript{14}

The anti-slavery Whigs, also known as Conscience Whigs, also supported the Proviso and were disillusioned about its failure. They joined the former Liberty Party members and the outcast Democrats to form the Free Soil Party in 1848. The Free Soil Party was firmly against extension of slavery in all territories. Though they did not win a single state, they captured enough votes in New York to swing the election to the Southern Whig, Zachary Taylor. The Free Soil Party faded from politics after 1848, but it helped end the Whig party and influenced the rise of the new Republican party.\textsuperscript{15}

The Free Soilers also believed in free land and homesteading policies. They viewed homesteading as a furtherance of the yeoman farmer ideal. They felt that if slavery was allowed in territories where homesteads were given out, the capitalist slave owners would be able to farm the land more cheaply. In this case, the homesteaders would not be able to compete with the slave owners and the homesteaders would be reduced to near slavery.\textsuperscript{16}

Although the Free Soilers were anti-slavery, they were not friendly to blacks. Their aim was to support white labor. David Wilmot’s October 1847 speech appealed to both Northern and Southern whites by disclaiming that the Free Soil Party was created specifically to help blacks. “The negro race already occupy enough of this fair continent; let us keep what remains for ourselves…for the free white laborer…Free laborers of the North! Down trodden free white men of the South! This is your cause, and the cause of your children!”\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 131.
\textsuperscript{15} Blue, \textit{The Free Soilers}, 141-151.
\textsuperscript{17} Earle, \textit{Jacksonian Antislavery}, 139.
California and the Mexican Cession

The United States acquired Texas, California, and the rest of the Mexican Cession after the end of the Mexican War. Both the American conquest of California and the Gold Rush radically changed Californian politics and society. The American population of California wanted Congress to create a territorial government for California as a step towards admission to the Union. Congress failed to do this due to the controversy over allowing slavery in the newly acquired territories. The American Californians believed they needed to create their own state government, both to manage the influx of people in the Gold Rush and to encourage Congress to grant California admission. As a first step, the head of the military government, Brigadier General Bennett Riley, called a convention to create a California constitution. After state-wide elections, 48 delegates were elected from across the state, and the convention was convened in Monterey on September 1, 1849.

It should be noted that the delegates were all men. Among the 48 delegates, there were 13 white, 8 Mexican-Californios (residents of California before the American conquest), and 20 white Americans of three years residence or less. The Mexicans were, to my knowledge, all considered to be white and not Native American. The term “Americans” was understood at the time to mean American citizens, and should be interpreted to mean those who could become naturalized American citizens. This, in 1849, would specifically include whites and exclude non-whites.

The Constitutional Convention

On September 1, 1849, the delegates began their deliberations. One of the first issues the delegates considered was slavery. As soon as the topic was introduced, Delegate William E. Shannon proposed a complete ban on slavery and other forms of involuntary servitude in California. This ban was unanimously adopted and the prohibition of slavery was written into Section 18 of the Declaration of Rights in the California Constitution.

The delegates made their feelings on slavery clear in their letter to Congress after the end of the Convention asking for admittance to the Union. The delegates stated that they had voted unanimously to ban slavery, though they did not all have “prejudices against the system [i.e., slavery].”
Note that fifteen of the forty-eight delegates came from slaveholding states. The delegates claimed their unanimity came from the “universal conviction” that “no portion of California” has a “climate and soil of a character adapted to slave labor.” They further believed that their opposition to slavery became stronger after the discovery of gold and the beginning of mining operations. There was also the implication that the allowance of slave labor in California would hinder the market for free white labor.

Several delegates clearly believed that the question of the extension of slavery to new territories that was raised by the Wilmot Proviso had hindered their admission to the Union. Several delegates, including Robert Semple, Henry Halleck, and Shannon, repeated the statement of a Congressman that the California delegates should settle the slavery issue before asking for admission. Since Congress had stalled any change in California’s status over the question of slavery, the implication was that California’s admission would meet much less Congressional opposition if California had first resolved the question of slavery itself.

**Discussion of Free White Labor and Exclusion of Black Persons**

Delegate Morton M. McCarver then introduced a section that mandated that the new California Legislature pass laws that would “effectually prohibit free persons of color from immigrating to and settling in this State,” and would “prevent” slave owners from bringing slaves into California “for the purpose of setting them free.” This sparked a long and illuminating discussion about free labor, the ideals of white American rule, and the role of non-whites in the post-conquest Californian society. The discussion touches on racism and its connection to the free labor movement, and the anti-slavery rationale of the free soil movement. The discussion frequently moved from idea to idea, so displaying the discussion chronologically is not useful and a thematic approach is appropriate.

It is important to note that a small group of eight delegates spoke in favor of this proposition, while the same three delegates spoke against. The

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19 Ibid., 500.
20 Ibid., 183, 190, 191.
21 Ibid., 137.
eight delegates that spoke in favor were either born in or had lived in slave states, while the three delegates that spoke against were born and had lived in free states. (See Table 1 and Table 2.)

Table 1 shows the delegates that spoke in favor of the proposition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Last State</th>
<th>Calif Resident</th>
<th>Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacob D.</td>
<td>Hoppe</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morton M.</td>
<td>McCarver</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles T.</td>
<td>Botts</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>16 mos</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Tefft</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>4 mos</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver M.</td>
<td>Wozencraft</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>4 mos</td>
<td>Physician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William M.</td>
<td>Steuart</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1 yr</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Semple</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>5 yrs</td>
<td>Printer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the delegates that spoke against the proposition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Last State</th>
<th>Calif Resident</th>
<th>Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kimball H.</td>
<td>Dimmick</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Gilbert</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>2.5 yrs</td>
<td>Printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William E.</td>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>3 yrs</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that almost all of the delegates in favor of banning free blacks were born in or had lived in the South.

Two main ideas arose during the discussion. The first was the belief that white Americans can create a “perfect” land for white labor in California. The second main idea was the idea that all black persons, free and slave, should be barred from entering California. The delegates gave three reasons for barring black persons. They first claimed that having black persons in the labor force would degrade white labor. They next espoused their belief that “Capitalists” or “Monopolists” would bring black slaves into the state, thereby ruining white labor. They finally claimed that free blacks would cause great problems and disruption in the state. The delegates who spoke against the ban did not address these ideas directly but made general arguments in favor of freedom and against the ban. I include their reasons in a separate section.

White Americans Can Create a Perfect Land for White Labor in
California

Several of the delegates who favored the ban argued that California was a beautiful place for whites to inhabit. Delegate Oliver Wozencraft argued “the family of Japhet” (i.e., Europeans) could “expect to attain a higher state of perfectibility than has ever been attained by man…in California.” He reinforces his views later by saying ‘here civilization may attain its highest altitude…and the Caucasian may attain his highest state of perfectibility.” Semple agreed with Wozencraft, saying “let us make California a place where free white men can live. It is probably the richest country in the world.” He further stated “let us elevate society here to the highest degree that can possibly be attained by man…We have the means, the natural resources, and the proper character of population to effect this great object.”22

A corollary argument was that many “enterprising, able, and intelligent young [white] men” were coming to California to work “willingly” and develop it with their labor.23 These men were said to have given up creature comforts at home to come to a land of wonder to seek their fortune and create a new life. The argument was that white men wanted to be able to work and receive the fruits of their own labor without interference.

The idea that white men must have the ability to freely labor was mentioned several times in the discussion. Delegates wanted to protect “the right to labor” of “citizens of California,” who could only be white. One delegate felt laboring men are “noblemen” and labor is a “holy commandment.” Other delegates suggested that whites would happily labor if they could “get…adequate remuneration.” Another delegate wanted to ensure that white men could have the “privilege of laboring” and receive proper pay for their labor.24 The fear of available slave labor lowering wages was real.

A third argument was that a sovereign state (like California) is an association of men who have the “same interests – a family of brothers bound together by the same social and political ties.”25 This is clearly implies a brotherhood with white Americans that excludes non-whites.

The only delegate against the ban who spoke to the idea of America

22 Ibid., 148.
23 Ibid., 144.
24 Ibid., 144.
25 Ibid., 144.
remaking California was Delegate Kimball Dimmick, who asserted that the California Constitution would “spread the blessings of free institutions” to the East and be a “model instrument of liberal and enlightened principles.” He then made it clear that he believed there should be no restrictions on who could enter California.  

**Degradation of White Labor**

The delegates who believed that black people would degrade white labor used several arguments. One argument was that black people were subservient to whites and never would be their equal. Wozencraft made this a particular part of his argument, stating “the all-wise Creator has created the negro to serve the white race...we see the instinctive feeling of the negro is obedience to the white man, and in all instances, he obeys him, and is ruled by him.”27 This is an echo of the idea that free blacks were always seen as servants and of lower class than whites, due to their association with slavery.28

Labor was idealized as noble and the right of all citizens to labor was a status reserved exclusively for white American men. Wozencraft commented that he wanted to exclude black people from California to “protect the citizens of California in one of their most inestimable rights – the right to labor.” He further states that labor is honorable and “the laboring man is the nobleman in the true acceptation of the word.”29 Delegate Henry Tefft also argued in favor of protecting white labor, by asking why the California Constitution would declare “all men are free, and then deny our own white citizens the privilege of laboring.”30

Finally, several delegates made the argument that allowing blacks would “degrade” white labor without specifying the nature of the degradation. Tefft stated that free blacks “are not free to come here and degrade white labor – free to disturb the social and political harmony of the State.31 Semple added that if you “bring negro labor in competition with [white men]... You degrade white labor.” Wozencraft added “We should protect [white

26 Ibid., 141.  
27 Ibid., 49.  
29 California and Browne, Debates, 49.  
30 Ibid., 144.  
31 Ibid., 143.
men] against a class of society that would degrade labor, and thereby arrest the progress of enterprise and greatly impair the prosperity of the State.” Degrading white labor means to equate it with the labor of black persons. These delegates were attempting to establishing a racialized hierarchy of labor that completely excluded black persons.

**Capitlist/ Slave Power**

A corollary argument to the degradation of white labor was the idea that outside capitalists or “monopolists” from slave states would bring their slaves to California to mine for gold. The claim was that slave owners would find it profitable to bring slaves from the South to California even if they only were able to work them for six months to a year before freeing them. This was the original argument McCarver used to propose the ban on free blacks. His reasoning was “to prevent the slaveholder from bringing his slaves here to be set free by the laws of California.” McCarver went on to say that the slaveholder “could make a profitable speculation by working them in the mines for a limited period.” Delegate Semple also suggested that “many of our Southern friends would be glad to set their negroes free and bring them here,” if they could produce the standard amount in the mines. Delegate Steuart claimed that he had letters from a slave owner that planned to arrive in the spring with “a large number of negroes,” work them in the mines for up to a year, and free them.

According to Delegate Tefft (and others), the importation of slaves would “become a monopoly of the worst character,” and direct the “profits of the mines...into the pockets of single individuals.” Importing slaves would “deny our own white citizens the privilege of laboring...and render him a slave in the strongest sense of the term.” Wozencraft also felt that white laborers would be degraded “to the level of the negro,” and that the delegates “should protect [white laborers] against the monopolies of capitalist who would bring their negroes here.” The implication was that white labor would be priced out of the market by slave labor, reducing white workers’ independence and hindering the creation of the ideal Jeffersonian

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32 Ibid., 140.
33 Ibid., 146.
34 Ibid., 49.
society built on white labor.35

**Free blacks are a Problem to be Around**

The Southern delegates were very direct about their beliefs about black people’s behavior and used these beliefs as the final cornerstone of the argument against allowing blacks to enter or stay in California. Their general argument was that free blacks were either actively bad and/or simply non-productive. Wozencroft considered free blacks in one passage a “dead weight in society” and in another “one of the greatest evils that society can be afflicted with.” Semple considered “emancipated slaves…prepared to do nothing but steal, or live upon our means as paupers.” Tefft claimed “free negroes…are an idle, worthless, and depraved population.” McCarver, who introduced the measure, said, “No population…could be more repugnant to the feelings of the community, or injurious to the properity of the community, than free negroes.”36

These are openly racist comments couched in economic terms. The delegates allege that free blacks have no desire to support themselves through labor. Either free blacks will openly steal from whites or will metaphorically steal, by forcing whites to support them economically. In any case, as McCarver states, these delegates do not want to have free blacks in their society.

**Arguments Against the Ban**

The people who opposed the ban did not engage the proponents on the issues of degradation of white labor. Delegates Dimmick and Shannon briefly touched on the capitalist/monopolist argument to ridicule the idea that slaveowners would spend money to bring slaves to California and free them.37

Both Dimmick and Shannon stated their belief in equality, while contending with the Southern delegates’ beliefs about the behavior of black people. Shannon stated that “many men of color [in his home state] are most respectable citizens… men of wealth, intelligence, and business capacity;

35 Ibid., 140.
36 Ibid., 137.
37 Ibid., 138, 142.
men of acknowledged mental ability; men who...have all of the rights and privileges of citizens of that State – I cannot agree to exclude them here from the rights which they possess there.” Dimmick also wondered why the delegates should bar a group of people “speaking our language, fully as intelligent as they are, possessed of as much physical energy, and better acquainted with our habits and customs?” Dimmick also argued that California should be an example to the rest of the world, stating “the first great republican state on the borders of the Pacific who should set the example of an enlightened policy [allow all to enter] to the nations of the Pacific.”

The opponents’ main argument was based on the US Constitution’s Bill of Rights. Dimmick asked how can we “assert one thing in our bill of rights,” by giving rights to foreigners, yet “exclude a class” that was raised in the United States, speaks our language, and knows our customs. Delegate Gilbert asked if “all men by nature free and independent, and have certain inalienable rights” how a freeman cannot enter California and enjoy those rights? Gilbert stated in a related argument that it is hypocritical to ban slavery in California, yet not allow a free black person to enter. He believed the only possible reason for banning free blacks was on racial lines. A final argument was a more practical one. Dimmick suggested that this proposal be dropped since he feared that a public controversy over allowing free blacks would provide national anti-statehood forces with a reason for Congress to deny statehood.

Delegates’ Views on Free Soil/ Free Labor

The delegates voted to ban slavery in California and ask Congress to admit it as a free state. The unanimous vote to ban slavery was due to the belief that plantation agriculture would not work in California. The delegates also believed that removing slavery as a political issue would speed the admission of California to the Union. Many of the delegates in favor of banning free blacks, known as pro-ban delegates, also believed that slavery would interfere with free white labor in general. Most of the pro-ban delegates believed in the concept of popular sovereignty. None of them were part of the Free Soil party or involved in the free soil movement in the

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38 Ibid., 141.
39 Ibid., 46.
deliberations of the Constitutional Convention.

The delegates against banning free blacks, known as anti-ban delegates, mainly believed in Free Soil, though there were a couple who believed in popular sovereignty. All three delegates believed that all people should come and have the opportunity to work, not just whites. The pro and anti-ban delegates certainly agreed with parts of the white free labor movement on several issues. Both groups also saw blacks as inferior and believed black labor degraded white labor. Both groups also believed that any comparison of blacks to whites would bring white status down to the level of blacks.

Both groups were concerned by the possibility of capitalists or the “Slave Power” using their economic resources to bring slaves into California. Though this example may seem improbable, the idea of slave labor driving down white free labor wages was not. The free labor movement and all of the delegates were concerned with the proximity of slavery.

The convention delegates clearly shared an antipathy towards black people with the white free labor movement. The pro-ban delegates also made it plain that they did not want to associate with black people and wanted to exclude them from California. The anti-ban delegates in coalition with the free labor/Free Soil movements generally did not want to associate with black people, but the movements incorporated many members who were more tolerant.

**Delegates’ Visions for California**

All of the delegates saw California as an outpost of liberty and freedom with great economic potential. But there were two different visions of an enlightened California. Pro-ban delegates saw a California where whites could create an ideal American state, and where whites could reach “a higher state of perfectibility than has ever been attained,” and where whites could “elevate society to the highest degree that can possibly be attained by man.”

Delegates believed that such a state required white supremacy, where white Americans would rule the state. White Americans should be encouraged to come to California to get the fruits of their labor. In their view, California would be a land for white people only, excluding all blacks, Native peoples,

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40 Ibid., 49.
41 Ibid., 148.
and other non-whites from their society. The pro-ban delegates believed that black persons would ruin the place, either by thievery and decadence or by sloth. “Indians” were not part of the society and must be fought if necessary. They did not express any views on the place of the Mexican Californios in their society.

Anti-ban delegates believed in a California Constitution that would be “a model instrument of liberal and enlightened principles.” This meant that all people would be allowed to enter and work in California, though they didn’t address native peoples directly. They believed that if you exclude black people, you have to exclude all other outsiders as well. The delegates also believed free black people could be productive citizens. Delegates believed that California could be “the example of an enlightened policy to the nations of the Pacific” and could “spread the blessings of free institutions to…the Eastern world.” This indicates a much more tolerant vision of California than the pro-ban delegates.

Conclusion

The pro-ban delegates strongly favored the right of white free labor and many of them espoused a dislike of capitalists and monopolists. The only type of labor they specifically addressed is mining; farming, individual producers, and small business were not mentioned. One can assume that they would be friendly to an economy of small producers, but they did not explicitly support the idea. The anti-ban delegates favored an economy where all people could labor in the economy, but they also did not mention a small producers economy.

The free labor movement in the antebellum United States was explicitly racist, even though many in the movement opposed slavery. In any case, this movement promoted free labor for whites over free labor for non-whites. Both groups of delegates support most of the ideas of the free labor movement, with the same differences as above. The pro-ban group wanted the economy to be exclusively for whites, while the anti-ban group wants an economy where non-whites were able to participate. It is also clear that the convention delegates who supported this measure were virulently racist towards blacks. This is also not surprising, since they all had been

42 Ibid., 141.
43 Ibid., 141.
Born or lived in proximity to slavery. Their comments on black behavior are notable. On one hand, they saw black slaves as “laboring machines,” who could outwork whites and replace white labor. In other cases, these delegates saw free blacks as lazy, shiftless, and likely to be dependent on the state. Their expression of white supremacy led them to believe that a black slave will outwork whites if he or she was compelled, while the same black person would not work hard if he or she were truly free and paid a good wage.

The delegates’ views above also express the familiar trope that of blacks being both incompetent and powerful actors at the same time. This serves to allow whites to define blacks however they find them useful at any particular moment to aid white control. All delegates expressed the promise of California as a new, free and open land for American (read white American) settlement. The pro-ban delegates talked about California as an idealized Jeffersonian democracy, a place where white labor can prosper without slavery or free blacks. Those against the ban emphasized California as an outpost of American liberty and democracy on the Pacific Ocean that could include all peoples. Neither group mentioned the 100,000 native people or the tens of thousands of Mexican Californios who then inhabited the land. This lack of consideration for the existing non-white inhabitants also shows an attitude of white supremacy.

Americans from the East Coast imported their ideas of the ideal society a thousand miles or more to a land that was the gateway for the United States to Asia and the lands of the Pacific. As such, it was subject to different cultures and influences that the Eastern United States. It was also not part of the Atlantic world of slavery, so it was natural that it did not have slaves. Eastern racial ideas about the composition of California society, particularly the black/white racial dyad, would be challenged by the influx of different cultures to California. As Tomas Almaguer shows in Racial Fault Lines, the racist and white supremacist attitudes of the white settlers created a racial hierarchy after the admission to California to the Union. The beginnings of this hierarchy are reflected in the delegates’ debates over free labor. The issue of white versus non-white labor continued to be problematic in California during the next decades as whites and non-whites contended for a place where all free men could live.
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In the early nineteenth century, British Navy Rear-Admiral Alexander B. Becher began an experiment to track the currents and drift of the North Atlantic Ocean. While his purpose was not questioned—British naval accidents were still far too common in volatile seas—his methods were. The experiment aimed to confirm North Atlantic currents by tracking messages in bottles, tossed overboard from ships at sea and collected through international support. Employed as Chief Assistant to the Hydrographer at the British Hydrographic Office in London, Becher also edited *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle: A Journal of Papers on Subjects Connected with Maritime Affairs* from its inception in 1832 until his retirement in 1871. The magazine was a monthly British publication aimed predominantly at the navy and merchant marine, and consisted of information of interest to seafarers. Its pages were filled with news of rocks and shoals, new lighthouses and buoys, books and charts, a meteorological register, reports of maritime incidents, and more. Becher printed the messages he collected under the magazine’s recurring feature, “Currents of the Ocean,” which regularly reported information leading to a better understanding of Atlantic currents.

Examination of these messages reveals a two-track course. While these messages in bottles worked to document the currents of the North Atlantic by collecting facts such as names, dates, and locations, participants in the experiment often added their own dispatches, conveying personal communications, news, intelligence, and anecdotes. Some wrote simply to express support for the experiment, or to share experiences. Others reported news aboard their own ships or of other ships they encountered underway. And, still others recorded dramatic events, some of which would end in tragedy. The messages became much more than a way to document the ocean currents for future mariners as Becher originally intended. They became a way for people at sea to connect with fellow human beings of all nationalities, to document events, share information, and relate experiences during long, transatlantic, voyages. While many in the early nineteenth century viewed the ocean as a vast and empty space, the messages in Becher’s
bottle experiment indicate that, by the mid-nineteenth century, participants saw the ocean, not as an unoccupied expanse, but, rather, as a region where they could connect with others. Becher’s messages in bottles illustrate the nineteenth-century Atlantic Ocean as a connected, cohesive, and active space that transcended national boundaries.

This paper begins with brief background to contextualize Becher’s bottle experiment within nineteenth-century ideas of the sea, which were influenced by philosophical movements of rationalism and romanticism, advances in communication, and expanding mobility for people of all backgrounds. It then weaves the messages in bottles through the story of Becher’s experiment to demonstrate how the bottle messages, while providing scientific data, concurrently conveyed news, events, and stories that reveal nineteenth-century ideas about the Atlantic Ocean as a space of human interaction and connection beyond borders.

**BACKGROUND**

The nineteenth century experienced a turn toward the ocean as a new arena for exploration, as growth in science and an increase in maritime activities led people to reconceptualize the sea for their own objectives. For many in Europe, the sea was no longer the realm of experienced seamen on an uncertain highway necessary for the transport of goods, but rather, a vast, open space, ripe for the taming—another frontier to conquer. Social historian Philip E. Steinberg positioned the rising rationalism of scientific knowledge alongside a countercurrent romanticism in this period, contrasting the rationalist view of the ocean as an empty and controllable space, with that of romantics, who admired the sea for its wild, untamable nature.\(^1\) Maritime historian Helen Rozwadowski also discerned parallel tracks of culture and science, as “fathoming” the ocean took on a dual meaning, reflecting both scientific attempts to understand the ocean by measuring its depths, along with cultural efforts to make sense of the sea as an unknowable sphere of nature.\(^2\) The mid-nineteenth-century Anglo-American world saw a growing interest in the sea, beginning with earlier European beach vacations that extolled the health benefits of saltwater and air.\(^3\) Cultural historian John Mack advanced this notion of romanticism of the ocean with the idea that, in the nineteenth century, the sea became the “sublime

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3 Ibid., 7–9.
. . . a realm of exquisite and thought-provoking wonderment” that struck the imagination.⁴ The ocean as a force beyond human influence changed, however, with the nineteenth-century introduction of the steamship, as the era of steam implied that the sea was no longer a realm that was impossible to control. While sailing ships were “responsive to wind and current,” in tune with nature, steamships were “responsive to man,” in a challenge to the natural world.⁵ Becher’s experiment offers a diversion from scholarly depictions that set rationalism against romanticism in this period, as his messages indicate support for the science of ascertaining currents alongside the human experience the experiment offered in connecting with others at sea. The messages reveal perceptions of the Atlantic Ocean as neither vast nor empty, but instead, as an interactive space and, further, an arena beyond national boundaries.

The British navy ruled the North Atlantic with its newer, relatively more reliable steam vessels, along with its tried and true fleets of wooden sailing ships. Even with hundreds of ships on the ocean, however, the navy, and seafarers in general, were still susceptible to many uncertainties inherent in the ocean environment, such as the unpredictability of winds and currents, along with the uncharted areas and unexplored shores that had become more accessible with the maneuverability of steamships. The ocean remained a formidable arena to master. For sailors, contributing information to Becher’s experiment held the hope of improving conditions for themselves as well as for the entire maritime industry, which stood to benefit from safer and faster sea routes. There was excitement in contributing to new knowledge—an opportunity to help solve one of the many unknowns of the sea. As Hester Blum has noted, sailors appreciated recognition of their work and experience, which had historically been regarded as low-class and menial.⁶ Their participation made them feel useful. Though Becher’s messages in bottles represented the work of men, almost exclusively, participating in the experiment also provided an opportunity for both crews and passengers to show support for maritime endeavors.

Becher’s messages in bottles also held appeal in an era of expanding

⁵ Ibid., 99.
communications. The nineteenth century witnessed the expansion of newspapers, the invention of the telegraph, Morse code, and the laying of the transatlantic telegraph cable that allowed communication across the ocean for the first time. The well-publicized laying of the trans-Atlantic cable in the latter half of the nineteenth century captured the attention of the scientific community along with the fascination of the general public.\(^7\) The nineteenth century became “an age obsessed with long-distance communication.”\(^8\) Opportunities to communicate across the Atlantic made the ocean seem smaller and much more accessible, as a wave of immigration divided loved ones between Europe and America. Emigration as well as maritime voyages for work and travel exposed people of all backgrounds to ocean journeys. Middle-class voyagers, as a new, popular audience, encouraged a nascent genre of maritime writing. “Evocations and images of the sea abounded at mid-century,” reflected in reading materials, art, hobbies, nautical collections, and dress.\(^9\) The popularity of nineteenth-century maritime writing may have also inspired more than one aspiring author to pass the time by putting thoughts to paper. In a rapidly changing world of increasing urbanization and separation from family connections, the messages in bottles may have also elicited a desire to connect to a global community, serving almost as long-distance mail carriers. The broad desire to participate in the experiment represented optimism for the future.

Perhaps in spite of the ocean, rather than because of it, people took advantage of the messages in bottles to connect with others from the relative isolation of being at sea. Writing messages provided a way to mark life by reaching out while disconnected from familiar people and places. Something about the medium of messages in bottles also seemed to lend itself to connection. The bottles may have appealed as a nostalgic form of communication. Myths of messages in bottles are sprinkled throughout history.\(^10\) An 1845 short story by Edgar Allen Poe, entitled, “Ms. found in a Bottle,” featuring a passenger aboard a fantastical but ill-fated ship who cast his story into the sea as a message in a bottle, fueled the nineteenth-century imagination. Similarly, Charles Dickens’ 1860 story, “A Message from the

\(^7\) Rozwadowski, *Fathoming the Ocean*, 15.
Sea,” also spotlighted a message in a bottle found by a sea captain, setting off a family mystery. From a practical standpoint, bottles were commonly available aboard ships, making them an easily accessible vehicle. They were also well suited for the task. Oceanographer Curtis Ebbesmeyer credits Becher’s glass bottles with revolutionizing the fishing industry after “broadcasting” that glass vessels held up better against ocean surf than the wooden floats used to suspend fishing nets. Becher’s bottles provided viable data, in large part by staying afloat and intact while subjected to turbulent forces for long periods of time. The bottle mode of communication facilitated the need, for both humanity and science, to connect through and across the ocean.

MESSAGES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE

Messages in bottles began appearing in the first issue of *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle* in 1832. A bottle had been tossed into the water northeast of Newfoundland, and turned up twenty months later at the island of Gran Canaria, off the northwest coast of Africa. After calculating the bottle’s probable trajectory, Becher, in his capacity as editor, remarked on the event as a “remarkable instance of that tendency of the polar waters in our hemisphere to run towards the equator, to be returned again by the constant effects of the Gulf stream.” Experienced mariners had long been aware of these directional water movements. Two centuries earlier, Dutch seafarers frequented a southerly course, via the Caribbean, as the fastest route to their North American colony. These ocean flows had yet to be quantified, however, in a way that offered the possibility of more predictable and secure navigation.

As early as 1834, Becher’s experiment hinted at an eastward North

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14 Ibid. Quotes presented throughout retain the grammar and spelling of the original text.
Atlantic current. When a message thrown from the *H.M.S. Favourite* into the Celtic Sea turned up in northern France, the letter forwarder tried to make sense of it, commenting, “This accounts for so many vessels being lost on this coast. Since the 1\textsuperscript{st} of September last five vessels have been wrecked in the space of about three miles.”\textsuperscript{16} An eastward direction of the current meant that Atlantic ships leaving the English Channel tended to drift to the east, with the potential for grave consequences if driven too close to shore. A year later, Becher commented on four different bottles from Newfoundland whose tracks coincided, “clearly” showing that “the surface water from the banks of Newfoundland eventually reaches the western shores of Great Britain,” and pointing, again, to an eastward current.\textsuperscript{17} By 1837, a bottle thrown into the ocean south of Greenland and found at Tenerife, raised questions about how to reconcile the idea of easterly currents with the northerly Gulf Stream flows.\textsuperscript{18} In a letter to the editor, one reader expressed his perplexity. “It may have gone direct with a S.E. drift; but this is not likely; a more probable conjecture is, that it passed close to the shore of Newfoundland and reached the Florida stream when pressed northward; but it is just as likely to have been banded about from set to set until it finally reached the S.E. Current between the Azores and Teneriffe.”\textsuperscript{19} Becher’s bottle project had the potential to provide some answers.

Not all of Becher’s contemporaries subscribed to the adequacy of the experiment for assessing the currents. British Naval Officer and Arctic explorer John Ross felt compelled to challenge it in a letter to the magazine, expressing his opinion that Becher’s bottle method for determining the direction of currents was “very fallacious.”\textsuperscript{20} Citing both Becher’s examples and his own observations of canisters and bottles above and below the water, Ross believed that the bottles would be influenced as much by wind as by current. He deemed Becher’s bottles, “utterly useless” for ascertaining

\textsuperscript{18} Tenerife is part of the Canary Islands off the northwest coast of Africa.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 178.
currents. While Becher did not disagree with Ross’ claim that vessels above the water’s surface are subject to winds, he pointed out in his response that Ross was comparing one ship outside the Channel to one inside, subject to direct Channel drift. Becher asserted, therefore, that his bottle courses were accurate. Moreover, he reiterated the value of his work in suggesting the dramatic 1836 shipwreck of the 350-ton West Indiaman *Clarendon*, driven to shore at the Isle of Wight in a gale, could have been avoided, “had a proper attention been paid to this channel drift.”

**BOTTLE PAPERS BEYOND SCIENCE**

While Becher’s bottles had been called into question as tools for measuring currents, Becher clearly believed in their ability to contribute to ocean studies. On a more personal level, he also began to recognize another value to these “bottle papers,” beyond their scientific worth. In 1838, he wrote, “Notwithstanding the loose conclusions to be arrived at regarding the Currents of the Ocean from bottle papers, there is a degree of interest attending them, which confers on them a value, even if it were only from the circumstance of their travelling across many miles of the ocean, in their frail and brittle cases.” Becher had earlier promised to present a table of the bottles returned, to date, from military ships, packet ships, and emigrant vessels, contributed by a wide cast of characters such as ships’ captains, crews such as “gunroom officers,” as well as passengers. When Becher finally printed the first chart in 1843, he acknowledged a curiosity about the messages themselves, being “highly interesting to their authors, as having survived the perils of their voyage, and been snatched from the ‘wreck of time,’ to tell their own tales.” A few months later, Becher also published the contents of the bottle papers for his readers, “strictly preserved in all their particulars.”

21 Ibid., 178–179.
22 Ibid., 179; for the *Clarendon*, see *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1836*, 805.
23 *The Nautical Magazine for 1837*, 642.
26 Ibid., 245.
Broad Support

As the messages surfaced, either printed in local newspapers as shipping news or returned to London, these dispatches often indicated support for the scientific goals of Becher’s experiment. A message from the Lydie of Liverpool, bound to Bahia, Brazil, conveyed the potential benefits of understanding the currents, as the captain apprehended approaching the Bay of Biscay in heavy weather. “How desirable it would be,” he wrote, “under such circumstances, to have a knowledge of the true set of the currents.”27 Another such message, from the troop ship Kent, bound for Quebec, urged the purpose of the bottle for “ascertaining the direction of the current for the benefit of all sea-going men,” with a plea that the finder, “in whatever quarter of the world, will cause the same to be inserted in the newspapers.”28 The captain of the schooner, Corsair, threw no less than four bottles overboard on its voyage from Liverpool to Livorno, Italy, and then personally followed up by forwarding to the magazine one of his messages that had turned up in London’s Morning Post.29 Royal Navy Surgeon Henry Kelsall took an interest in the currents of the Sargasso Sea, availing himself to “every bottle I could obtain,” recording the date and location on both front and back of the paper in case one side might be “obliterated by a drop of water getting into the bottle.”30

While the messages indicated interest in determining Atlantic Ocean currents, many added personal communications of encouragement. A message from the commander of the brig Flora, from Poole to Newfoundland, described jovial toasts on board as it addressed a future bottle discoverer. “[Y]ou, the lucky finder of this enclosure, in whatever part of the Globe it may be, are requested to send it under cover, addressed to the Editor of The Nautical Magazine, for the benefit of navigation,” adding, “The passengers have just had their morning lunch, with a glass of brown stout, and intend drinking ‘Success to the above Magazine.’”31 A man aboard the ship, Nisus, sent a message of support from the waters near the Cape Verde Island of St. Luzia, assuring that the bottle had “just been emptied by the officers

27 Ibid., 245.
29 The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 406.
30 Ibid., 828.
31 Ibid., 317.
and passengers, in full conviviality.” These messages contained a spirit of optimism for Becher’s effort, while providing some common ground for crews and passengers.

Many went to special efforts to make sure the messages were returned and counted. One man traveled eighteen miles from Clare Island to Westport, Ireland, to return a bottle to the Custom House, where the collector there showed his appreciation by requesting remuneration on behalf of the finder. Another man dutifully returned a message from the island of Vieques, near Puerto Rico, after he was tasked by the man’s brother, who happened upon the bottle during a leisure outing to the beach with friends, “for the purpose of amusing themselves with shooting, &c.” Even the finders of old messages made an effort to have that data counted. One discoverer returned a message found at Turks and Caicos Islands, even though ten years had elapsed since the message was written. Another man forwarded his own message to Becher nine years after it was found in France and returned to him, “noticing the interest you take respecting bottles thrown into the sea, for the purpose of ascertaining the currents of the ocean.”

Support for the effort to document the currents included participation from an international audience. Bottles thrown overboard in the North Atlantic that turned up in France, Spain, or as far away as Cuba, were often returned to British Consulates in those countries, sent back to London, and/or published in local newspapers. Knowing these bottles would likely land on foreign shores, one message requested in English, Spanish, and French, that the message be published “in the first newspapers, British or Foreign, in order to show the course of the currents.” A French vessel made the effort to transport and forward a message from the Scottish bark, Wallace, that it had picked up from the French island of Ushant. In another show of

32 The Nautical Magazine for 1853, 375.
33 The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 314.
34 The Nautical Magazine for 1853, 435.
35 The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 315.
37 Ibid., 566; The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 317.
38 The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 250.
39 Ibid., 313.
French support, “His Excellency the Minister of Marine in France” ordered a message be transmitted back to London, “for the satisfaction of the person who threw the bottle into the sea.” Similarly, one Spanish translator forwarded two messages, found in Galicia, to the British Admiralty as well as to Madrid for publication in the newspapers there. From the Caribbean, a government representative on the island of Martinique returned a letter discovered along its shores, accompanied by an explanation for having opened it. And from “the Union Island,” part of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, “the Manager of said Island,” returned a message from an intact bottle that, remarkably, “must have been over a rough reef of coral.”

Becher’s messages in bottles drew an international community together for a common cause.

Newspaper editors from around the Atlantic also endeavored to be of service, not only by printing the messages, but sometimes, by offering opinions on possible courses and rates of travel of the bottles. The English-language French newspaper, Galignani’s Messenger, printed a message from a bottle dropped on a journey to New York that turned up near Oostend, Belgium, commenting, “the bottle, had, therefore drifted about 1,500 miles in two months.” A writer in a Spanish newspaper weighed in on a message found in Puerto Rico, theorizing that the bottle, dropped five years earlier from northwest of the Azores, should have been carried to the Bahamas instead. The British John o’Groat Journal speculated on the path of another bottle, considering it “a very singular circumstance that the bottle should have traversed the ocean a distance of nearly 1,500 miles and have been cast ashore within two miles from the place whence the vessel had started upwards of five months previous,” finally deducing, “The bottle in its travels must have rounded the Hebrides.”

Despite the broad show of support for Becher’s messages in bottles,

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40 Ibid., 243.
41 Ibid., 249.
43 The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 321.
44 The Nautical Magazine for 1838, 837.
46 The Hebrides is an archipelago off the northwest coast of Scotland. The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 319.
The printing of Becher’s “Bottle Chart” in _The Nautical Magazine_ generated a second round of criticism from Officer John Ross, followed by a wave of discussion from the naval community. Ross again designated Becher’s experiment a “bottle fallacy,” intensifying his earlier disparagement by describing the Bottle Chart as “calculated to do serious injury by misleading the navigator.” Ross reasserted that his own prior experiments on drift, tested with wooden “bottles,” copper cylinders, and glass bottles of varying weights, provided inconsistent data, and deduced, therefore, that floating bottles could not reliably determine the strength and direction of ocean currents. In contrast, another Royal Navy Officer, John Evans, strongly defended Becher’s investigation, clarifying that the bottle tracks that Becher published should not be interpreted as direct lines of travel, pointing out, “it is probably that a variety of curves were made.” Evans had studied the chart in detail, noting, “Nos. 79 and 96, show plainly enough the southwest, or counter current eastward of the Florida stream; Nos. 99 and 100, also the southerly tendency of the surface drift. And between the Bermudas and the Caribbean Isles, the westerly set is apparent.” He provided the example that a ship homeward bound from the Caribbean, in the absence of favorable winds and with the exceptions of hurricanes, would find a route westward of the Bermudas preferable to a direct course to the east. Evans astutely identified the idea of an ocean gyre by theorizing that, “in a confined space there appears to be a tendency in flowing water to a circular motion,” deeming Becher’s experiment “well worthy of investigation.” Two others argued in favor of the investigation, debating Ross’ methods and motivations and, subsequently, drawing a rebuttal from Ross. Becher eventually defended his experiment in print, acknowledging some of Ross’ protest. Nevertheless, he asserted his faith in the validity of the experiment and encouraged continued participation, concluding steadfastly, “Along with our concessions, and our respect for Sir John, we have a great regard for our own bottles!”

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47 Ibid., 321.
48 Ibid., 322.
49 Ibid., 324.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., 324–325.
52 Ibid., 325.
53 Ibid., 625–626.
Documenting Events, Sharing News, and Transmitting Intelligence

Beyond serving nautical science, the messages in bottles also served the broader Atlantic maritime community as a way to document events at sea and to share news. Many messages recorded the weather, a commanding force even for steamships, perhaps in an effort to share the experience of a pervasive fact-of-life at sea, or possibly in an attempt to illustrate the volatility of ocean voyages. The captain of the Scottish bark, *Wallace*, bound for Tasmania, reported encountering an earlier “strong gale of wind . . . from the westward,” followed by a “dead calm today.”\(^{54}\) The brig, *Superior*, from Scotland to Nova Scotia and Quebec, also reported experiencing “some heavy weather,” while the Lieutenant Commander of the *H.M.S. Arrow* described “the last few hours a fresh gale which has now drawn round to the north-west.”\(^{55}\) More dramatically, a message from the bark, *Emerald*, bound for Jamaica, recorded having experienced a heavy gale for eight days, with the “bark lying-to the whole time, and drifting from lat. 41º38’, 237 miles to the northward.”\(^{56}\) Other ships reported good weather, such as the *H.M.S. Chanticleer*, whose message, returned from Viveiro, Spain, read, “Moderate breezes from northward; fine weather.”\(^{57}\) A message from passengers and crew of the *Prince George* sent a more comprehensive status report with both good and bad news from the ship, which “this day got up their main-top-mast, having lost one in a squall . . . Passengers all well. . . One seaman died this day, and three sick.”\(^{58}\)

Messages often offered information on passengers, important for friends and family watching for news of their loved ones on transatlantic journeys.\(^{59}\) The emigrant ship, *Graham*, “for Quebec,” sent the message, “From Plymouth twenty-two days. . . Number of souls on board, 258, all well.”\(^{60}\) Other messages listed the names of those on board, such as in a message from the ship, *Baretto*, from Portsmouth to Gibraltar, registering

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 313–314.
\(^{55}\) Ibid., 246, 319.
\(^{56}\) Ibid., 248.
\(^{57}\) Ibid., 247.
\(^{58}\) Ibid., 406.
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 246.
names of military officers as well as “Mrs. Atkinson and child.” 61 A message from the ship, Fanny, also listed four passengers, “from New York, bound to Liverpool, out 30 days, all well.” 62 Messages were also used to send news of passengers in such life events as births and deaths at sea. A message from the brig Superior reported the birth of a baby boy to one of the passengers. “This morning a male child was born; mother and infant are in a fair way,” adding, “passengers all in a healthy state.” 63 One message served to memorialize a passenger who died aboard the New York Packet Ship, Leeds, on its return voyage from London to New York. “Died on board this morning at llh. a.m. T.P. York, the well known and much respected philosopher. He was held in the highest esteem by all who knew him, and his loss will be most sincerely felt. His remains were consigned to the turbulent ocean with every mark of respect and regret at 3h.p.m. by his fellow passengers.” 64 This message specifically listed its dual purpose, intended “for the information of the friends of the deceased, and also for the benefit of the Board of Longitude, London.” 65

Becher’s messages in bottles also transmitted reports of problems experienced at sea. “To make it known for the information of our families,” the mate aboard the ship, Caroline, bound for Barcelona with a cargo of coals, conveyed the potentially disastrous news, “ship in bad condition, very leaky.” 66 The master of the screw steamer, Lady Seale, also sent a message in a bottle with an account of mechanical difficulties. “Engines broke down, and the stuffing-box adrift. Able to keep the ship free with ship’s pumps; engine pumps cannot be worked. Laying E.S.E., three knots per hour; trying to reach England.” 67 The message included the consolation, “crew and three passengers all well.” 68 Richard Hughes sent news in a message, intended to inform his superiors in Ireland that he had been rescued by an American vessel after his merchant ship was “run into by a brig.” He detailed, “I do not know her name, but while in contact with her the whole of my crew went on board of her, with the exception of one boy and myself, and carried away

61 The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 250.
62 Ibid., 318.
63 Ibid., 319.
64 Ibid., 317.
65 Ibid.
66 The Nautical Magazine for 1853, 37.
67 Ibid., 156.
68 Ibid.
our jib-boom, topsail yard, main boom, several of her staunchions, and split part of her covern board, which caused the vessel to come waterlogged; and when obliged to leave her we were taken off by the American barque, 'Hull,’ bound to Boston.”

Messages in bottles often served to share information about the broader community of ships on the North Atlantic. When the crew of the British bark, *Enterprise*, from Jamaica to London, cast its message in a bottle into the Atlantic Ocean, the message, that they had “spoken the brig *Alchemist*, of Dublin, with emigrants to Quebec. Out 17 days; all well on board of her,” they transmitted valuable information on the *Alchemist’s* location, route, objective, and distance from homeport, as well as the condition of the crew and passengers. This community of ships could also be a source of international aid. A message in a bottle from the British brig, *Bolivar*, “last from the Cape of Good Hope, out 68 days,” and being “short of bread,” reported receiving bread, potatoes, and onions, from “the American brigs, the *Joseph* and *Mary*, from Cadiz to New York,” from “the *Poultney*, from Liverpool to Baltimore,” from a “Spanish polucca. . . from Santa Cruz to Coruna,” and from “the schooner *Castleray*, of London, from St. Michael’s, bound to Newfoundland.” Like the dispatch from the *Enterprise*, the message sent by the *Bolivar*, including that it, “spoke the *Isabella*, from London,” provided particulars in naming several vessels, their cargoes, and their routes, while illustrating an international community on the North Atlantic. While these various ships touched international ports throughout the Atlantic, they met in the transnational space of the ocean.

Ships provided other instances of intelligence though the bottle papers. A message sent from the British sloop-of-war, *Columbine*, reported sighting the gun-brig *Rebuff*, adrift near Cadiz after breaking from its tow in a gale, leaving its location unknown. In another case of what Becher called “a remarkable instance of intelligence being conveyed by a Bottle Paper,” a message thrown from the *Cornwallis*, voyaging from the Cape of Good Hope, washed ashore to announce the ship’s arrival at the British port of

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70 *The Nautical Magazine for 1843*, 319.
71 Ibid., 316.
72 Ibid.
73 *The Nautical Magazine for 1843*, 247.
Spithead, three hours before the announcement by telegraph.\textsuperscript{74} The message offered an explanation of the ship’s unexpected delay while only seven miles offshore, reporting a gale, “blowing ten, ship under close reefed main-top-sails, fore-sail, and main-stay-sail,” that had cost the \textit{Cornwallis} three extra days at sea.

The bottle papers provided crucial intelligence in a highly visible investigation to determine the fate of the lost Arctic expedition of Sir John Franklin. Franklin’s 1845 expedition to explore the Northwest Passage left with two ships, the \textit{Erebus} and the \textit{Terror}, but had not returned. In 1848, the search ships \textit{Enterprize} and \textit{Investigator} provided updates by bottle messages that they had “cleared the main pack in Melville Bay on the 20\textsuperscript{th} of August, and after crossing Baffin Bay to examine Ponds Bay on the 23\textsuperscript{rd}, passed to the northward in search of the expedition.”\textsuperscript{75} While the expedition returned without locating Franklin’s expedition, a second attempt by the two ships in 1850 also employed bottle papers to provide updates during the voyage. A message from the commander of the \textit{Investigator} communicated the ships’ positions heading into the Canadian Arctic, noting, “Parted company with H.M.’s discovery ship, \textit{Enterprize}, on Friday, 1\textsuperscript{st} February, 1850 in thick weather and strong winds. Whoever may pick this up is requested that the intelligence may be forwarded to the Secretary of the Admiralty in London.”\textsuperscript{76} It was only after Franklin’s wife sent out a search party in 1857 in the ship, \textit{Fox}, that Becher’s bottle papers finally revealed the full, fateful story.\textsuperscript{77} Searchers found a message dated June 2, 1847, written from the \textit{Erebus} and \textit{Terror}, explaining, “Wintered in the ice. . . all well. Left the ships Monday 24\textsuperscript{th} May, ’47, the party consisting of two officers and six men.”\textsuperscript{78} A second message, however, dated a year later, presented the expedition’s story in more ominous terms. The captains of the \textit{Erebus} and \textit{Terror} described having been “beset since 12\textsuperscript{th} Sept. 1846,” with “officers and crews consisting of 105 souls.”\textsuperscript{79} Included in this updated message

\textsuperscript{74} The Nautical Magazine for 1844, 784.
\textsuperscript{75} The Nautical Magazine for 1848, 689.
\textsuperscript{78} The Nautical Magazine for 1859, 544-555.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 555
was the news that “Sir John Franklin died on the 11th June, 1847, and the total loss by deaths in the expedition has been to this date 9 officers and 15 men.” The crew of the Fox found artifacts and some human remains, but no survivors.

**Last Words**

Bottle papers had the potential to offer some peace of mind by solving unexplained circumstances of those missing at sea. Some crews used the messages, in the face of looming misfortune, to let their fate be known. A message from the packet ship, England, reported “lost quarter boats, 10 feet water in the hold; no vessel in sight,” confirmed the maritime community’s fear that the missing England had foundered with all aboard. These messages conveyed desperate situations with little hope of rescue. A bottle paper from a sailor aboard the brig, Spey, off the coast of Ireland, conveyed, “six feet water in the hold. We expect to be soon all lost unless some help arrives,” adding dolefully, “The captain was lost two days ago, and the mate is dead.” Some messages appeared to have been written hurriedly, such as the message from the captain of an unnamed ship who wrote a last-minute notice after losing his way. “The ship is sinking fast; six feet water in the hold. We do not know where we are, if we are not on the west of Ireland.” Others appealed to a higher power. The mate of the brig, Pandora, wrote at midnight, “We are just foundered, six feet of water in the hold, one mast carried away. No hope; no land in sight; we suppose we are near the Isle of Man. May God have mercy upon us.”

Becher published additional messages from foundering ships in a separate subsection, remarking that, instead of concerning the currents of the ocean, “the following rather relate to the current of life!” Though an oddly lighthearted analogy in the context of a weighty subject, Becher’s comment, again, highlights the emphasis he placed on the human aspect of these messages. The crew of the Norwegian schooner, Albion, from Oslo, bid farewell to individual loved ones in a bottle message, sending

80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., 550.
82 *The Nautical Magazine for 1853*, 37.
83 *The Nautical Magazine for 1846*, 261.
84 *The Nautical Magazine for 1853*, 218.
85 *The Nautical Magazine for 1846*, 261.
“remembrances to all,” as they prepared a history that the ship “sunk on the 4th of December, about abreast of the Brekaress.” Their message concluded, “We have just commended ourselves into God’s hands. I hope he will forgive us our manifold sins.” The messages were often dramatic, as crews envisioned their fates before them. A message from the ship, Ella, of London, read, “on her beam ends, seven feet of water in the hold, blowing a hurricane, ballast shifted, wood ends started,” revealing an impending disaster with its short, bulleted message. “God help us all.” One desperate message, from the ship, Pacific, from Liverpool to New York, also hoped to lighten the burden on friends through knowledge of its demise. “Ship going down. [Great] confusion on board. Icebergs around us on every side. I know I cannot escape. I write the cause of our loss that friends may not live in suspense.” An apprentice aboard the Horatia, returning to England from Archangel, Russia, wrote a poetic, philosophical farewell, having given up hope as the ship was sinking and an attempted rescue by a Norwegian brig failed. “When you find this the crew of the ill-fated ship, Horatia, and Captain Jackson, of Norwich is no more. We are not able to keep her up—eight feet of water in the old, and the sea making a breach clear over her. Our hatches are all stove in, and we are worn out . . . I write these lines and commit them to the foaming deep. . . We are called aft to prayers, to make our peace with that great God, before we commit our living bodies to that foam and surf. Dear friends, you may think me very cool, but, thank God, death is welcome. We are so benumbed and fatigued that we care not whether we live or die.”

Though it was not one of Becher’s bottle papers, a message in a bottle thrown by the well-known actor, Edward Elton from the sinking packet-service steamboat, Pegasus, received much attention. The Nautical Magazine published an article about the disaster, which occurred when the ship struck a sunken rock near Holy Island off the British Northumberland coast. Only six out of an estimated sixty people survived the wreck. The

87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 509–510.
89 Ibid., 510.
90 Ibid., 509.
91 Ibid., 163.
92 The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 628.
article intimately described the dead picked up shortly after the disaster, including a pregnant woman, a young woman holding a child in her arms, and a “lad . . . dressed in a black vest and trousers, and a rough brown Petersham surtout.” Sir Elton’s poetic message in a bottle waxed especially powerfully against the backdrop of impending death, knowing the bottle was his only link to humanity.

Pegasus—God help us! she’s sinking;
the bottle’s empty, ’twill swim,
& we also into eternity—Farewell.
ELTON.

On a lighter note, the desire to share experiences was not always reserved for desperate situations. Some bottle messages seemed to fulfill a desire to reach out to others at sea through written stories, possibly inspired by the growing popularity of maritime literature. A passenger aboard the ship, William Lockerby, from Liverpool to the Cape of Good Hope, wrote a long story in a bottle message that painted a dramatic picture of his action-packed experience at sea. He described a domino of events in “boisterous” weather and heavy seas that “stove in the starboard deadlights,” the protective covers over the portholes. This “destroyed a bookcase. . . tearing up a chronometer case,” which was secured to the top a chest of drawers (though the chronometer, nevertheless, kept good time later). The passenger went on to describe a “very wild and fantastic appearance” of “halos round the moon and Jupiter; short morning rainbows &c.” His excitement did not end there, however, as he noted, “Troops of flying fish, exoctus exiliens, seen today for the first time,” reporting, “one dropped on board, length of the pectoral fins very remarkable.”

Another piece of bottle paper literature came from Alfred P. Spalding, Commander of the ship, Normandie, from New York to Newcastle, England, in the form of a poetic prayer.

Strong breezes have prevailed but not heavy gales
Hold fast on thyself! What though perils assail,
And thou stand alone in the pitiless gale,
Thou art Lord of one soul, thou art King of one realm

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93 The Nautical Magazine for 1843, 629.
94 Ibid., 789.
95 The Nautical Magazine for 1838, 839.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
Which no strong arm can conquer, no wave overwhelm,
That shall last and grow brighter as nations decay,
That shall flourish, still young when the stars fade away,
If true to thyself—thou thyself dost control—
Oh, there is no empire so great as the Soul.99

The author specifically asked that the message be forwarded for the benefit of Becher’s bottle experiment. Becher repaid the favor, publishing the message in the magazine with the playful acknowledgement, “poeta nascitur non fit,” meaning, “poets are born, not made.”100

THE RESULTS

Becher’s bottle experiment continued to receive support as Becher published an updated chart in 1852, supplementing the earlier table with bottles received since 1842.101 One letter, written cleverly tongue-in-cheek in support of the experiment and signed by Professor “Physeter Bottlenose,” advised improving the bottles by clothing them in canvas against breakage, and furthermore, telling the “antagonist writers to bottle off their spleen (or steam) and let us go on peaceably.”102 The British Board of Admiralty, in another round of support, ordered British naval ships to continue the experiment, supplying printed papers for the messages “with their usual stores.”103 Becher continued to publish the contents of the bottle papers, reprinting many that he had published earlier. The magazine also continued to publish articles and commentary, by various authors, pertaining to winds and currents. Reigning American oceanographer Matthew Maury managed to insult Becher in an article attributing Becher’s bottle papers to “Admiral Beechy,” referring to the late Admiral F.W. Beechey, who, Becher sarcastically opined in a footnote, “if he were living would be the first to disclaim them.”104 Becher’s bottle data opposed Maury’s belief that the Gulf

100 Ibid.
102 The Nautical Magazine for 1846, 92.
103 Ibid., 569.
Stream flowed into the Arctic Ocean, suggesting instead, the idea that an Arctic current deflected the northern Gulf Stream.\(^\text{105}\) Other proposals for measuring currents by messages in bottles began to surface. One suggested a similar experiment to measure tidal drift in the Straits of Dover.\(^\text{106}\) Another suggested lighthouse keepers begin their own experiments to better ascertain the influence of the wind.\(^\text{107}\) A third entertained the idea of a similar investigation for the Pacific Ocean.\(^\text{108}\) Becher wrote with excitement in 1866 as he discovered bottle papers suggesting, with “silent but convincing testimony,” a westerly current south of the equator.\(^\text{109}\)

Becher finally deemed his experiment a success in 1864, as he continued to collect messages.\(^\text{110}\) Apparently, many bottles had yet to be found, as he disclosed, “We have a goodly array of these messengers, but perhaps not a hundredth part of those which have been sent upon their dangerous errand.”\(^\text{111}\) He had become quite fond of his messages in bottles, often personifying them as “messengers” or “ocean travellers,” noting, “all kinds of information is communicated by these brittle messengers.”\(^\text{112}\) He eventually completely anthropomorphized them in a short article entitled, “Wanderers on the Ocean.”\(^\text{113}\) This heading would replace “Bottle Papers,” for this section in the magazine as “our old friends . . . come to tell us all they can, where they came from, to whom they belonged, and where they were found.”\(^\text{114}\) It was only unfortunate, he lamented, that these “wanderers” could not tell of “the escapes they have had from birds and sharks, reefs and rocks, —the company they have kept among flying fish, young crabs, or the numerous inhabitants of drifting weeds, —what rough

\(^{\text{105}}\) The Nautical Magazine for 1859, 413.
\(^{\text{110}}\) The Nautical Magazine for 1860, 219.
\(^{\text{111}}\) The Nautical Magazine for 1852, 672.
\(^{\text{112}}\) The Nautical Magazine for 1846, 260; The Nautical Magazine for 1860, 219.
\(^{\text{114}}\) Ibid.
treatment of the winds and waves they have endured, or the perils they have escaped.”\textsuperscript{115} Becher counted 201 “lucky ones . . . in their brittle prisons,” estimating “ten-times” that many “unlucky ones that have come to some untimely end.”\textsuperscript{116} His words hint at the power of these “messengers” to draw on human emotion as he recognized the value of these messages in bottles to human connectedness.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

Becher’s experiment utilizing messages in bottles bridged nineteenth-century scientific rationalism with emotional romanticism in demonstrating an understanding of the ocean as a connected, cohesive, and occupied space. From the perspective of science, the messages established a circular pattern of North Atlantic currents that answered questions and offered advancement for future ocean navigation. Bottles dropped in the North Atlantic that reappeared predictably, by a continuous clockwise gyre, in France, Spain, and the Caribbean, implied a physical connectivity of the ocean environment. But, while the messages grew out of a use for science, they also reflected a trust that was anything but scientific. On an emotional level, as people at sea documented events, shared information, and related experiences, the messages they sent indicated a view of the Atlantic Ocean, not as a vast emptiness, but as a space that connected them to one another. Implicit in the action of sending information was the idea that someone else would receive it. Sharing experiences from sea could not be shared with oneself; the messages had to be sent to someone. One “interested and devoted” contributor wrote the magazine to ask, “Have any of the drift bottles which we committed to the different ocean currents between October, 1869, and January, 1870, come to your address already?”\textsuperscript{117} While people threw their bottles overboard with the belief that their messages would reach someone, there was also a sense of wonder when they did.

After Becher retired as editor, \textit{The Nautical Magazine} took on a new motto with its first issue in 1872. “The Seas But Join the Nations They Divide,” was based on a line from the poem \textit{Windsor-Forest}, reflecting

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
British history, by eighteenth-century poet Alexander Pope.\textsuperscript{118} The motto seems a fitting legacy to Becher’s work, which revealed an active ocean space that transcended national boundaries. An 1837 article appearing in the magazine, entitled, “Icebergs and Currents of the North Atlantic,” hinted at Becher’s findings much earlier, however, as it concluded with apt admiration for the balanced movements of ocean waters.\textsuperscript{119} In a poignant analogy aligning people and the natural world, the author declared “this most admirable operation” as “certain and perfect . . . as that the blood circulates through the veins and arteries of the human body.”\textsuperscript{120} For the participants of Becher’s bottle experiment, the Atlantic Ocean was a connected and cohesive space, both physically and emotionally.

\textsuperscript{119} The Nautical Magazine for 1837, 142.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
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Jeanne Eddy Westin opens her collection of stories from women who survived the Great Depression with her mother’s story. Blanche Eddy tells the quintessential tale of “making do.” She describes her relationship with the wives of her husband’s coworkers as strained, but with its benefits:

Still we women found ways to help each other. We always passed on clothes. A neighbor lady gave me almost all your baby dresses before you were born. And magazines were shared because they cost a dime or more. There used to be a lot of good stories in them for women. There was always a new recipe going around the camp.¹

Eddy’s brief story about the small community she and the other wives built, despite mutual discomfort with each other due to conflicting personalities, informed my understanding of the survival techniques of Depression-era housewives.

Women needed other women for support during the Depression, and they found it in every corner they could. In researching women’s experiences in the Great Depression, I was interested primarily in the little things that housewives dealt with on a day-to-day basis, asking questions about the ways they fed and clothed their families, their pastimes, and the friendships they made. Asking these questions led me to the conclusion that female communities were what uplifted women during this period. To make life easier during the Depression, women constructed church-, work-, or ethnic-based communities to provide resources such as clothes, recipes, and an ear

to listen to them. Women who were able to create these communities fared better than those who could not. The support gained from communities ranged from material, informational, or emotional relief.

Other historians investigating women’s experiences during the Depression have focused more on the working women of the period. Susan Ware’s *Holding Their Own* spreads out her research to discuss a wide variety of women. She argues that through the 1930s, women saw continuities and changes in their lives. Ware takes a mostly optimistic view of Depression-era womanhood, emphasizing the progress made in favor of women. Housewives, working women, students, feminists, communists, and artists all made their advancements during the Depression, and in some ways, they did well compared to men, according to Ware. Given the size of her book, Ware was able to widen the scope of her research to accommodate these women. Ware supports her argument that women saw more advancements than disadvantages in seven parts, following the types of women she identifies. For the purposes of my research, I focus on the chapters most relevant to my questions, sticking with housewives and popular culture.

Ware’s book contains a wealth of information about working women, where I zero in on what was most relevant. Ware argues that housewives were able to continue their business as usual, shopping for their families and maintaining standard habits. Their budgets had been reduced, but they made it work. She holds that because women remained housewives during the Depression, they did not lose their sense of identity in the same way men did. Ware’s conclusion about popular culture follows the same optimistic note, arguing that heroines of the era, like Eleanor Roosevelt and Amelia Earhart, were portrayed as “courageous” and “pioneer[s].” They took strides that had not been seen before, taking to First Ladyship and the sky with admirable strength. Ware’s argument, while well supported, is not borne out of my own research. She follows the social history of the 1980s and holds some outdated standards in regards to gender roles and expectations. As one of the older academic books about women in the Depression, this issue is not surprising.

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2 Susan Ware, *Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930s* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 2.
3 Ibid., 3.
4 Ibid., 172.
5 Ibid., 177.
Lois Rita Helmbold’s monograph on working-class women’s experiences during the Depression contrasts Ware’s book beautifully. Helmbold takes a different stance on gender roles, even though she writes in the same year as Ware. She argues that women compensated for men’s ineffectiveness by working harder in and outside of the home. The men lost their jobs and could not find new ones, so they stayed home, but refused to do what they considered emasculating housework. Women both did housework and found jobs to provide for their families. When families had to let go of their paid domestic workers, women of the household maintained the home themselves, along with finding jobs to make money during their husbands’ unemployment. Helmbold’s vision of the Depression wife is of a strong, but tired, woman, working overtime to make up for her husband’s uselessness around the house. This image is starkly different from the worried-and-managing wife of Ware’s. Helmbold sees more of a struggle and focuses on white and Black women’s experiences during the Depression, rather than the “exceptional women” covered before her study.

Both Ware and Helmbold work to recognize the women of the Depression, but with different foci. Ware looks at a broad spectrum of women, while Helmbold is looking at specifically economically disadvantaged women. Helmbold also includes the experiences of Black and working-class women during the Depression, whereas her secondary sources focused only on white, middle-class women. Helmbold investigates her topic with the intent of discovering women’s understandings of their lives.

Milkman’s study on women’s work during the early 20th century looks at the relationship between women and the economy during the Depression. She focuses on women working in and outside of the home through a lens of understanding how capitalism affected women’s roles in society. She argues that the family is central to the American economic system. Women’s work is what supports the male worker; thus, it supports the working class as a whole. She also argues that the nuclear family is the perfect generator for demand, as it requires more appliances in the home. Milkman supports her

7 Ibid., 5.
8 Ibid., 10.
argument with census data and state records of employment.

Milkman looks at women through the lens of economics and finds that those gender roles complement capitalism perfectly. Milkman’s research showed her women who supported their families, as well as the entire economy, during the Depression. Ware and Helmbold both focused more on women in society in the socio-cultural spheres, and Milkman dives directly into the economy.

These three studies all focus on different aspects of women’s lives during the Depression. Ware focuses on women, Helmbold on women working in the home, and Milkman on women and the economy. For my own study, these three sources provided valuable information, but none focused on my primary interest. My argument takes small facets of each former study and collects it under one common denominator: the presence of community in women’s lives. The mostly middle-class, privileged women of Ware’s study had tight-knit family groups keeping them afloat. Helmbold’s working-class women lacked this type of structure. Milkman’s women were stitched into the family. In close alignment with Helmbold is a new theory, that the women who fared best during the Depression were successful because they had community structures to help them survive. The types of communities they constructed varied from place to place, but the presence of these communities helped women survive. City women forged work-based and ethnic ties with one another, whereas small-town women had church groups to help each other. These communities were integral to the value of life for women during the Depression.

First, the women lacking communities must be addressed. Farming women in the Depression managed life rather modestly. Living on farms in the proverbial middle of nowhere left them isolated, aside from their immediate family. Jeane Eddy Westin’s collection of interviews served as the basis for my research. One interviewee, Laura Buhekuhl, managed five children, housework, and farm chores all at the same time. She recalls going to the market to sell crops and buy groceries and having nothing left over. Farming women could go to two places: their field or the market. These conditions did not allow for self-actualization or true enjoyment of life. Buhekuhl is one of many farming women who lived in this way. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote about one farmer, who told her, “I haven’t been outside of

my yard in nine months except to take the children to the doctor.” These women lived, breathed, worked, and died on their farms, working day and night on the various responsibilities to which they had to attend. When disaster struck the farm, the family either went hungry or abandoned by the man of the house. These living conditions increased pressure on women to make their children’s lives better. Women fought and struggled to feed and raise their children while working the land and selling their crops to afford clothes. Farming women did, however, make every day function. They had home gardens to do some modest subsistence farming, recycled flour bags to use as clothes, and some had personal friends with whom she could talk. Kathryn Heskell Perrigo’s story is a rare one, in that she had a small group of friends to keep her afloat during the Depression. “I recall we women visiting each other a lot—more than now.” Farm women like Kathryn Haskell Perrigo had church communities as well, but her story is the only one of its kind that I found in my research. The contrast between Perrigo’s story and that of other farming women is remarkable and highlights the importance of community to the wellbeing of women during the Depression.

City women were able to forge communities in the simplest of ways: geographic proximity. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in her book, It’s Up to the Women, “The city woman can sit on her stoop of a summer’s night and chat with many neighbors.” Since city women lived very close to one another, they could easily speak to their neighbors. City women also created communities centered on work and race. They had communities based in their own jobs, as shown by Helen Grant’s story. She experienced a wing-spread moment in working for the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). Grant found a community in teaching skills at the YWCA like vegetable gardening, and thus had an uplifting experience during the Depression. She recalls, “The YWCA residences in San Francisco and Oakland were filled with young women whose wages were pretty low.”

City women’s communities were based not in religion or their husbands, but in their own work. Jean Gates Hall recounts her time as an artist in

12 “Sarah Hutchinson’s Story,” Westin, 126, and “Jane McMahon’s Story,” Westin, 129.
13 “Kathryn Heskell Perrigo’s Story,” Westin, 52.
14 Roosevelt, It's Up to the Women, 16.
15 “Helen Grant’s Story,” Westin, 190.
the Works Progress Administration and the joy she gained by painting. She states, “It was the most wonderful year of my life.” Hall gained freedom in going out and doing her own work as an artist and this made it easier for her to cope with her life.

City women also found small communities in neighbors. These communities were comparable with those of small-town women in terms of quantity but seemed to be less tight-knit than small-town women’s. Roosevelt writes that “it is a part of neighborliness not to be interested just in family affairs but to be interested in everything which touches the neighborhood.” City women lived in close proximity to their neighbors and so were plugged directly into their lives. In cases of group living, they were united even closer. Helen Meret describes occupying herself by walking to the park with her son and playing bridge with other unemployed New Yorkers. About her daily activities, she said, “Mostly I played bridge with other young people out of work.” She only had to walk a few minutes to find an unemployed community to join. These city women found their support system in coworkers and neighbors. Unfortunately, not all city women had these communities. Vivian Raymond Weston remembers the time when all of her clothes fell into absolute disrepair and being unable to replace them. As a woman without a community, Weston was left to her own devices in this fraught time of her life. Women lacking a community to support them had to deal with moments like these.

When women did not have communities based in work or simple proximity, they could find them in their ethnicity. This is especially true of city women, as many lived in ethnic-specific neighborhoods. Eva Rutland and Isabel Gassett grew up in a Black section of Atlanta and forged intense community bonds with the other Black women their age. They say, “We built up this tremendous security among our own people.” Black domestic workers had a particularly striking moment during the 1930s with the Household Workers Mass Meeting of 1933. These women forged a community based in both ethnicity and their work. They faced discrimination

16 “Jean Gates Hall’s Story,” Westin, 173.
17 Roosevelt, It’s Up to the Women, 161.
18 “Helen Meret’s Story,” Westin, 70.
19 “Vivian Raymond Weston’s Story,” Westin, 75.
20 “Eva Rutland’s and Isabel Gassett’s Story,” Westin, 94.
in labor unions for their gender and their ethnicity, so they shut down the union responsible for the discrimination. Not only did these women support each other emotionally, but they also changed the system to erase the source of hardship by forcing inclusivity. A more orthodox example of ethnic communities is the story of Constance Chang. She tells of her time in San Francisco’s Chinatown and how the bonds forged in the neighborhoods were so strong that most of the time, everyone would eat together. Chang states that “We always had a snack before we retired.” Sarah Hutchinson grew up on a reservation in a Native American community that supported one another as best they could. Hutchinson states that “Around the dance area are the seven clan houses where the people of those clans sit.” Tribal celebrations and dances were a place for everyone to gather and help one another. Ethnic communities uplifted city and reservation women through the hardships of the Depression and the struggles of racism.

Each group of women had their own type of community and small-town women were no exception. City women had communities based in their work, neighborhoods, and ethnicities, but small-town women had church communities built in along with their neighborhoods. When they had nothing else to do, women went to church and sent their children too. Oleta Hagens’ story is the perfect example of a church community. She says, “People shared in those days. Even though none of us had a lot, we helped some mighty poor families in the church.” Small-town women had church obligations pushing them to help one another through the Depression. They spent as much time in church as they did in the home, doing the same type of work. Women tended to their children together, cleaned the church, and maintained hearthfires. Since they raised children in the church, they created a church legacy that children carried on in turn. The tight-knit church community was a source of friendship for small-town women. Sadie Belle Nelson recounts the unity between the Catholic and Protestant churches, stating, “You had a real community feeling—it was a real brotherhood of man.”

22 “Constance Chang’s Story,” Westin, 56.
23 “Sarah Hutchinson’s Story,” Westin, 124-125.
25 Oleta Hagens’s Story,” Westin, 251.
27 “Sadie Belle Nelson’s Story,” Westin, 49.
Danielle Poortinga

studies. Maxine Dubose had a life steeped in church. She says, “We were going to Sunday School, every church service there was, Wednesday night prayer meetings, and anything in between times.” Church was a source of emotional support and activity during the day.

As mentioned, women also found communities in their work. Work communities were split; women could find communities from their own jobs or from their husbands’ jobs. City women found their communities from their own jobs, like Helen Grant and Jean Gates Hall. In the case of some small-town women, working communities were constructed around the jobs of the husbands. Blanche Eddy’s story is the best example of this phenomenon. She lived in a neighborhood specifically built for families of men working for an unnamed company, so she was surrounded by her husband’s co-workers and their wives. They constructed their community based on this commonality. This is beautifully illustrated by her statement that, “Still we women found ways to help each other.” Mildred Huff experienced the same kind of community with other bus drivers’ wives. She states, “We women played cards and we’d sew together.” Women found communities based on any kind of common ground and their husbands’ jobs tended to be just that. City women did not construct these communities because they had their own jobs. A Chicana woman interviewed by Westin recalls, “...When he come in through the front door, I go through the back door.” Women were constantly busy with their own work and had little time to be concerned with their husbands’ work. Working city women had their own thing to do during the day and did not need the same communities that small-town women did.

These communities, be they based in neighborhood, ethnicity, church, or vocation, provided similar assistance. Depression-era women needed three things: material aid, information, and emotional support. The most concrete of these was material aid. The Depression limited women’s use of pre-prepared items like meals and clothes, so they started the “live at home movement,” meaning they made all of their own items. When women

28 Ware, Holding Their Own, 8.
29 “Maxine Dubose’s Story,” Westin, 265.
30 “Blanche Eddy’s Story,” Westin, 9.
31 Ibid., 10.
32 “Mildred Huff’s Story,” Westin, 61.
33 “A Chicana Woman,” Westin, 82.
34 Ruth Milkman, On Gender, Labor, and Inequality, (Baltimore: University of
shifted to making their own things again, they would support each other by lending food and clothes. Most often, women’s communities helped each other by trading these relatively accessible material items. Mary Grace McKenna Monahan used her government food assistance to trade with other women for food she craved. She would receive food supplements in the form of “great big sacks of flour” and would trade them for fruit during her pregnancies. Women like Ella Weesner, who lacked a stable community, saw their children made fun of in school for having raggedy clothes. She recounts that, “[It] seems there were two groups of girls… [those] who had nice clothes, and the ones, like my daughters, who didn’t have anything.” These stories emphasize the ways women shared materials with one another to get by. Those women lacking a community around them were unable to share such materials and thus went without.

Poor Man’s Cake

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Women also helped one another by sharing information. The biggest example of this is in sharing recipes. Blanche Eddy recalls sharing recipes and magazines in her neighborhood, as well as listening to Aunt Susan on the radio. One recipe from Aunt Susan was for Poor Man’s Cake:

Boil all ingredients 3 minutes. Cool. Add 2 teaspoons baking powder, 1 teaspoon soda, 3 cups flour. Mix and bake in medium oven about 45 minutes.

Recipes like this demonstrate the ways that women used minimal ingredients to create sustenance for their families. Betty Crocker Kitchens published a “Minimum Budget” for poor women to follow in order to

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35 “Blanche Eddy’s Story,” Westin, 10.
36 “Mary Grace McKenna Monahan’s Story,” Westin, 27.
37 Ibid., 27
38 “Ella Weesner’s Story,” Westin, 77.
39 “Blanche Eddy’s Story,” Westin, 37.
nourish their families even on an extremely low budget.\textsuperscript{40} These types of tips and tricks were traded between women in their communities to help each other get by. Women trading magazines could find stories about survival that helped them get by: “There used to be a lot of good stories in them for women.”\textsuperscript{41} This type of help intersects with emotional assistance.

When women had shared all they could, they leaned on one another for emotional support. Kathryn Haskell Perrigo recalls, “We didn’t worry about psychiatrists-- we were each other’s psychiatrists.”\textsuperscript{42} Women were there for each other as shoulders to cry on in times of need. Sadie Belle Nelson shared her fears for her husband’s life firefighting with her small-town community. She says, “The fire season was just tremendously tense for the wives. When we looked up at the mountain all in flames and knew our husbands were there, each of us thought that our man might be trapped.”\textsuperscript{43} Women shared concerns with one another and lifted weights off of each other’s shoulders. Nelson also recalls having just plain “fun” with her community.\textsuperscript{44} Simply entertaining guests was a form of relief for women because it was a distraction. Even through the Depression, women could rely on one another for support.

The Depression tried its hardest to pull people apart, but women simply held tight to each other. Any time women were close to one another, they formed communities as support circles. Small town women had their church and neighborhood communities, and city women had ethnic communities, neighbors, and friends in their jobs. In these communities, they helped each other by sharing food and clothes, recipes and magazines, and by sharing friendships and fun. Only farm women were left to fend for themselves since they were too distant to join a community. The communities forged during the Depression gave women a safety net. When times grew hard, women helped each other. Women found ways to carry on through the Depression. Their budgets grew tight and their waists shrunk, but they always figured out how to keep going. While their husbands moped, women rolled up their sleeves and did what needed doing. In the words of Erma, “I think times is harder on a man, ‘cause a woman will do something. Women just seem to

\textsuperscript{40} Jane Ziegelman and Andrew Coe, “Steady Diet of Depression.” \textit{American History} 52 (2017): 60.
\textsuperscript{41} “Blanche Eddy’s Story,” Westin, 10.
\textsuperscript{42} “Kathryn Haskell Perrigo’s Story,” Westin, 52.
\textsuperscript{43} “Sadie Belle Nelson’s Story,” Westin, 47.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 49.
know where they can save or where they can help, more than a man … A woman, now, will go along with pain and never say anything. Least that’s how it seems to me.”

45 “Erma’s Story,” Westin, 34.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Emerging middle-class women in the early American republic played a vital role as matriarchs and homemakers in society, as they maintained all domestic responsibilities while men held roles in the marketplace. This was especially true during America’s transition to capitalism from the early to mid-nineteenth century as this was just as much an age of social and domestic reform as it was of economic revolution. During this time, ideologies such as the Cult of Domesticity and Republican Motherhood were prominent for guiding women’s roles in the home. Women were charged with modeling proper behavior and instilling American patriotism in new generations, especially within the framework of “separate spheres,” in which women led a life confined to the domestic sphere while their husbands often dominated the public sphere. These value systems within both the public and private spheres perpetuated oppressive patriarchal ideologies aimed at furthering a divide between public and private spheres rooted in gender roles, religious doctrine, and politics. Nonetheless, the experiences, hard work, and dedication of these women holds insurmountable value, and women often viewed housekeeping guides, cookbooks, and domestic manuals as akin to bibles in their homes. The purpose of domestic literature was, at its core, intended to assert and illuminate the value of women’s work while supporting and empowering the women in these roles.

When examining America’s transition to capitalism in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, most of the historiographical discussion is rooted in political ideologies and economic trends. Though these contributions are fundamental in understanding the paradigm shift in economic culture of the early 1800s, there is still much to discover in analyzing the private and domestic spheres as well. Plenty of historians have written on women’s domestic work in antebellum America including, but not limited to;
women's role in society, what responsibilities they had, and how this work either influenced or was influenced by ideologies of the time, like the Cult of Domesticity and Republican Motherhood. Most of these discussions are concurrent with each other and offer a general argument on the significance of women's unpaid labor in the household. Nonetheless, whilst historians have focused on women's domestic unpaid labor contributions in reference to the gender and labor systems that flooded an industrializing America, many lack sufficient analysis on the ideological tools women had on the home front. On the other end of the academic spectrum, more literary discussions of such works do not sufficiently address historical implications of domestic manuals, thus I hope to build a bridge between the two.

Written in 1990, Jeanne Boydston's Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic notably discusses how, why, and when women's domestic unpaid labor became devalued, and eventually was not viewed as a form of labor at all. In this work, Boydston explores “the objective characteristics and material value of housework at various times as the United States moved toward and through the process of early industrialization,”¹ and she also investigates how the gender culture affected the perception of the value of housework before the Civil War. Boydston focuses on housewives' economic contributions and how rhetoric surrounding housework became devalued and gradually seen less as a form of actual labor in antebellum America. Her motive is clear— she writes, “clarifying both the nature of the changes that had occurred and the origins of the paradoxical status of housework in the antebellum period seemed to me essential to understanding the intimate relationship between the gender and labor systems that characterized industrializing America. That relationship is the real subject of this study.”² Ultimately, Boydston makes the case that the “growing social invisibility of labor women performed for their own families” served as the example for restructuring social relations of labor in the industrializing economy.³

Other books may focus on a specific responsibility or lifestyle of women's domesticity to implicate the larger values or issues in their

1 Jeanne Boydston, Home and Work: The Industrialization of Housework in the Northeastern United States from the Colonial Period to the Civil War (Oxford University Press, 1984), xix.
2 Ibid., xii.
3 Ibid., xx.
arguments, like Marla Miller’s *The Needle’s Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution*. Written in 2006, this is one of the few works that discusses women’s labor in terms of separate spheres, as well as how women viewed their needlework. She unpacks the stereotype of the American housewife in the early republic by explaining women’s labor as it pertains to class and gender relations in both public and private spheres. Specifically, Miller looks at women’s work in clothing trades and views them as producers, consumers, craftswomen, and all-around contributors to the economy. Miller writes that early American needlework can be viewed as “evidence of the industry, taste, diligence, devotion, and resourcefulness of our colonial counterparts,” and through this, she makes her purpose clear: “to help recapture the artisanal world of businesswomen… to lead readers to the homes and workplaces of early American mantua makers.” By looking at the relations of women in one region, Miller contributes to the existing historiography of women and inequality in early America by providing a more interdisciplinary scope of research as she intertwines economic history, women’s history and labor history in the lives of these women. Arguably even more important to this contribution is Miller’s illumination of how these women proudly viewed their work as well as the world in which they lived. Boydston and Miller are just two of the many historians and academics that have contributed greatly to the historiography of women’s history in antebellum America, many of whom proved influential in this project.

Ideologies fostering the Cult of Domesticity and Republican Motherhood are both present in the literature that helped maintain these value systems in the Northeast from the 1820s to the 1860s. This genre includes cookbooks, housekeeping guides, and domestic manuals. The strength of these books’ influence on housewives and how they may have felt about their work illuminate this genre of women’s literature. My purpose here is to understand how, if at all, authors attempted to change perceptions of women’s unpaid domestic labor in the midst of an economic overhaul that swept the nineteenth century. The following questions guide my work: What was the sphere of influence for domestic guides in homemaking? How did literature of the time either illuminate or diminish the value of women’s work and its economic contributions? How did authors try to change these perceptions of women’s unpaid labor? What social or ideological implications did domestic

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guides have regarding women’s economic contributions in America’s transition to capitalism through their housework?

For the sake of scope, this study will focus on some selected writings of both Lydia Maria Child and Catharine Beecher in which the research questions are rooted. Both Beecher and Child are women who, in addition to being authors, were prominent activists and proponents of women’s rights to varying degrees, providing them what little platform women could attain given the historically oppressive social standing they held. Beecher and Child’s books would make attempts “to redefine a new relationship with American culture for [themselves] and for other women.”\(^5\) These authors aimed to educate women and young girls in domestic matters and prepare them mentally and economically for proper home management. Child writes, “Young ladies should be taught that usefulness is happiness, and that all other things are but incidental.”\(^6\) Beecher and Child transformed societal views of women as saintly creatures that served as counterparts to men by asserting the difficulty and nobility of their duties.

It should be clarified that this is not intended to be a study on how women contributed to local economies nor is it an analysis on how suppressive and misogynistic the Cult of Domesticity and Republican Motherhood were, both of which are undoubtedly true. These are the topics that have been researched and written about a great deal and, while these discussions influenced this work, it is not the basis of my argument.

Catharine Beecher, born September 1800 in New York, was “an educator and writer who attempted to expand the domestic power of women.”\(^7\) The author of over thirty books and sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Catharine viewed women as saintly, moral creatures, especially in comparison to their male counterparts. She recognized the difficulty of the woman’s position in society and their duties, which she claimed, “derived mainly from the crudeness and disorder of an expanding nation.”\(^8\) However, where her sister Harriet fought for women’s suffrage and a greater political platform, Catharine maintained the belief that women’s proper place was

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7 Benbow-Pfalzgraf, 74.

8 Ibid., 74.
not in politics, but in the household, where they could educate and influence the youth. Catharine supported democracy but not necessarily women’s participation in it. She also believed that a woman’s health was indicative of that of the household and, by extension, was representative of the greater state — ideas established in the Little Commonwealth.

Slightly more progressive than Beecher, Lydia Maria Child was born in 1802 Massachusetts and eventually earned a reputation as an American abolitionist, women’s rights activist, native rights activist and novelist from the 1820s to the 1850s. In addition to light romance novels and historical pamphlets, Child wrote domestic books for both women and children while also being an advocate for the rights of black slaves and American Indians.9 Her approach to reform was widespread, even tackling issues surrounding male dominance, misogyny, and white supremacy in her various works. Central in all of Child’s works is the principal motive of “educating her readers and helping them to adopt a moral and humane way of life.”10

If these domestic guides highlighted the value of women’s work in the early republic’s transition to a capitalist society is being questioned, it should first be clarified what role this field of literature played in society in the first place. If these books were able to influence the mindsets of hundreds to thousands of women, then they must have had some sort of platform in the marketplace. A 1997 study on technical writing determined that, “the how-to manual followed as the key instrument of self-education among middle-class readers interested in maintaining a large measure of autonomy but nevertheless sensitive to social demands for proper conduct, high moral standards, and socially productive behavior.”11 Where many women lacked proper formal education, these types of manuals served as accessible mediums to supplement this void with insight to domestic responsibility, social civility, and proper conduct. This genre is a form of technical writing which, “enables readers to perform tasks associated with their work in their particular society.”12 It was a way for women to still be competent in their roles in a society which demanded they maintain piety

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9 Ibid., 198.
10 Ibid., 199.
12 Tebeaux and Killingsworth, 8.
and domesticity while simultaneously implementing oppressive social structures based on gender.

Due to the nature of this genre in comparison to other books of the time that were viewed as more important, there are little to no detailed records on sales for these books nor is there sufficient data on who was buying and distributing them. However, Cathy Davidson provides some insight on edition runs by estimating that in 1825, a press run of ten thousand copies for novels was normal. This number jumps in 1830 for paperbacks distributed via the postal service which were printed in runs of thirty thousand copies.\textsuperscript{13} Though these estimates are for novels, they serve as a point of reference for the domestic genre at hand in this work. Furthermore, because the U.S. Census was still maturing as a federal mechanism for gathering demographic data in the early 1800s, there is not sufficient evidence of female occupational listings. Only in the 1870 census do we find that 52% of employed women worked in “domestic and personal service” fields, making it the number one employer of women at the time.\textsuperscript{14}

Despite this lack of statistics, we know that these books were continuously purchased and religiously used by women in their homes. Women were a smaller target audience in the nineteenth century, especially since “books and even magazines cost a great deal of money, but women exchanged magazines, saved reference books for years, and passed on their information and advice about housework to friends and daughters.”\textsuperscript{15} These books worked— they offered practical advice to help women maintain the Cult of Domesticity, “Beecher’s books and the other advice literature constitute an ideology about housework, a set of doctrines about women’s work that must be studied in conjunction with information about household technology and economic development… this literature shapes people’s reality; it is also shaped by it.”\textsuperscript{16} These domestic guides helped to maintain


\textsuperscript{15} Davidson, xv.

\textsuperscript{16} Strasser, Susan. Never Done: The Ideology and Technology of Household Work,
value systems of women in ways that affected both the house and the state.

Furthermore, all women in nineteenth century America were held accountable by both society and themselves as the home was a center of society and culture. Social ideologies in the nineteenth century, like the Cult of Domesticity and Republican Motherhood, were key proponents in maintaining the widespread value systems for women. Some of these perceptions varied from a more derogatory view as “the weaker sex” to a slowly growing liberal acknowledgement of women’s strengths. Even still, whether or not a woman upheld these values herself, social norms of “true womanhood” remained perpetrated against her. In any case, these attitudes dictated who women could be and who women should be, even if women did not prescribe to these norms. Therefore, one can still contextualize domestic guides in the daily lives of nineteenth-century housewives. Women's literature advised them on their various roles in American society, both in and out of the home. These books provided practical ways for housewives to understand and adapt to the development of capitalism and the transformation of society that followed.

Increasing rates of urbanization in the 1830s created a blurred dichotomy between men and women as well as employers and servants. Industrialization increased sexual segregation as men grew more invested in the workforce to maintain a livable income, while the women remained socially chained to their homes. The middle class continued to grow as it ultimately became the major employer of “domestic help,” but people slowly changed their vernacular from “the help” to “domestic servant.”\(^{17}\) However, the term “domestic servants” was typically used to describe single women from outside the country and not American housewives. This population was mostly urban Irish immigrant women and only a small portion of the domestic servants were black, although this market would grow a couple decades later as the Civil War ended and free blacks flocked North.\(^{18}\) And so, a shift in perception of value can be seen in how this field of work was labeled.

Published in 1832, Lydia Maria Child’s *The American Frugal Housewife*


\(^{18}\) Ibid., 147.
is full of recipes and advice for young women on all things pertaining to their domestic responsibilities.\textsuperscript{19} It covers home remedies, common cooking skills, general health maxims, and financial tips. It was dedicated to “those who are not ashamed of economy.”\textsuperscript{20} Child’s target audience is clearly the lower classes rather than the wealthy. Since these types of books were typically previously written for a wealthier audience, she writes, “the writer has no apology to offer for this cheap little book of economical hints, except her deep conviction that such a book is needed.”\textsuperscript{21} She wrote from a personal perspective on economic struggle, as her marriage was plagued with financial troubles and much of her writing income was utilized to support the couple. Child believed that women deserved to have access to information and advice that could best equip them to fulfill the domestic responsibilities imposed upon them. Child also wanted to assert the value of women’s work in a society that had often discredited the home as an economic marketplace, explaining that “true economy is a careful treasurer in the service of benevolence; and where they are united respectability, prosperity and peace will follow.”\textsuperscript{22}

Though a majority of the work are recipes and lessons in housekeeping, \textit{The American Frugal Housewife}’s later chapters on philosophy for the poor housewife really illuminate how Child advises her audience to maintain stature and reason within their socioeconomic location in the current changing economy. She asserts her own philosophy that happiness does not stem from external factors but rather, “true wisdom lies in finding out all the advantages of a situation in which we are placed, instead of imagining the enjoyments of one in which we are not placed.”\textsuperscript{23} While this may not be the most radical or revolutionary idea presented to a minority demographic, it is indicative of the ideological empowerment Child is implementing in her works so that women may feel respected and attribute value to their often disregarded work.

The last section of \textit{The American Frugal Housewife}, “Hints to Persons of Moderate Fortunes,” discusses Child’s assertion that the predominant cause of household problems is that they live beyond their means. She writes,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Child, 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 171.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 106.
\end{itemize}
“no false pride, or foolish ambition to appear as well as others, should ever induce a person to live one cent beyond the income of which he is certain,” and later reiterates, “the prevailing evil of the day is extravagance” as her clear message of economy. In this chapter, Child continued to provide a multitude of examples, some of which seem fable-like, where leading unnecessarily extravagant lives squandered a household’s viability and simultaneously demonstrated that living economically and finding harmony in their current socioeconomic position would only then lead to happiness.

Arguably even more interesting is how Child encouraged women to ask questions about their social, economic, and political circumstances so women could better understand them and, if necessary and possible, act upon them. For example, in regards to the economy and varying price changes, she implored women to think of the larger picture: “but do they reflect why things are so cheap? Do they know how much wealth has been sacrificed, how many families ruined, to produce this boasted result? Do they not know enough of the machinery of society, to suppose that the stunning effect of crash after crash, may eventually be felt by those on whom they depend for support?” Here she is not discrediting women for not initially or innately understanding a certain economic phenomenon, but rather, she is challenging women to expand the bandwidths of their education and mentalities while holding these matriarchal roles. Child provoked a more cognitively liberated thought process for housewives as they struggled to maintain order and happiness within their homes amongst the drastic external economic factors facing them at the time.

Catharine Beecher’s works piece together a greater image of women’s roles in the early republic’s economy and society. The Duty of American Women to their Country, written in 1845, proposes opportunities for such involvement, with the main goal being “the employment of female talent and benevolence in educating ignorant and neglected American children.” Her main argument is that any woman who wants to contribute towards education and her country should be able to act immediately, as it is a most fitting form for women to fulfill their duty to their country. In this way, Beecher’s goal is not just to empower women as housewives, but to

24 Ibid., 4, 89.
25 Ibid., 1582.
empower women as Americans. However, she believes this should be done before they get absorbed into other non-domestic work. Beecher asserts that women’s roles should remain exclusive to the home wherever possible, “to enable every woman who wishes to do something for the cause of education and her country, to act immediately, before the interest awakened is absorbed by other pursuits.”

Beecher uses examples of ways women have been used in and out of the household in different parts of America, demonstrating “the waste of female talent and benevolence for want of some organized agency.”

Her assertions in *The Duty of American Women to their Country* clearly deem women’s work more as patriotic endeavors worth celebrating rather than responsibilities inflicted upon women by a patriarchal society.

Written as a textbook in 1845, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy; For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* precedes Beecher’s argument in *The American Woman’s Home* about “the deplorable sufferings of multitudes of young wives and mothers, from the combined influence of poor health, poor domestics, and a defective domestic education.”

This manual is representative of the mid-nineteenth century’s changing status of the home and the reigning Cult of Domesticity as Beecher recognized the plight of these women, “It is probable that there is no class of persons in the world who have such incessant trials of temper, and temptations to be fretful, as American housekeepers.” Alluding to solidarity, she assured women that their work was just as important as it was difficult and just as valuable as it was unappreciated. Beecher writes:

An American mother and housekeeper who rightly estimates the long train of influence which will pass down to thousands, whose destinies, from generation to generation, will be modified by those decisions of her will which regulate the temper, principles, and habits of her family, must be elevated above petty temptations which would otherwise assail her.

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27 Ibid., 113.
28 Ibid., 1072.
30 Ibid., 213.
31 Ibid., 214.
Perceptions on housework were beginning to shift as people realized households often served as meccas for familial values that could, in turn, reform societal ones.

Beecher has various chapters focusing on more economic related work, like a chapter titled, “On Domestic Economy as a Branch of Study,” but all chapters relay an emphasis on the importance of women's domestic work in the household.32 Also notable about *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* is her dedication to American mothers, “whose intelligence and virtues have inspired admiration and respect, whose experience has furnished many valuable suggestions, in this work, whose approbation will be highly valued, and whose influence… is respectfully solicited, this work is dedicated, by their friend and countrywoman.”33 Beecher viewed women— and, by extension, women’s values— as an indicator for a broader society and culture in America. In this way, Beecher's domestic manuals were full of her educational philosophy that intertwined responsibility with possibility.

Written in 1869, *The American Woman’s Home: Or, Principles of Domestic Science*, is a “guide to the formation and maintenance of economical, healthful, beautiful, and Christian homes,” and is dedicated “to the women of America, in whose hands rest the real destinies of the republic.”34 This book educated women on a wide variety of skills that expand far beyond just cooking and cleaning; Beecher advises on altruism, health, gardening, waste management, and of course, economy. It becomes ultimately clear that one of Beecher’s goals, if not her driving force, is to educate and empower women in their domestic roles.

Most telling is her purpose for writing this book “to elevate the honor… of domestic employment… conviction of the dignity and importance of it--the great social and moral power in her keeping… the true basis of woman’s rights and duties.”35 She argues that the root cause of any gendered tensions in society are because the duties of the family sphere are not appreciated enough, women are not properly trained for domestic work, especially when compared to men’s training for their trade, and that as a consequence

32 Ibid., 63.
33 Ibid., 4.
of lack of training, family labor is poorly regarded. The uncovering of historical female readers and their inner experiences as related to these types of books is next to impossible given the social structures in place that consistently invalidate and diminish the experiences and testimonies of women. However, it has been suggested by literary scholars that reading a text’s introductory excerpts often lead to identifying the historical audience, “prefatory material or any other such reading clues also serve as reader clues and indicate something of the gender, age, class, and level of literacy of the first audience to whom the book was addressed.”

Advice texts tended to “present themselves as the representatives of community opinion… because of their announced intent to be direct, objective, partisan, scientific, and/or prescriptive.” This genre, regardless of its restricted audience, held an ideological platform to showcase values and ideals to nineteenth-century housewives. Female writers in particular faced obstacles on the path to professional authorship, like sexism and misogyny, despite their unique perspective from the private sphere. In spite of this, women persevered as the moral guardians of their communities to become writers and to cultivate a platform where they can write “advice literature [which] suggests ways of doing housework, gives information about equipment, and counsels women on how they should think about their work.” Various connections and comparisons can be offered in regard to this selection of books, but the one that stood out the most were the similarities in the authors’ dedication of each piece. Child’s “to those who are not ashamed of economy,” and “to American Mothers on whose intelligence and discretion the safety and prosperity of our Republic so much depend,” are just two examples of the overt declaration of purpose to perpetuate the value of domesticity in nineteenth-century America. The very point of their endeavors all began with intent to change women’s own self-perceptions about the roles they play in domestic culture and the society at large. Their goal was never to start a revolution against the patriarchy or to boycott their work but rather, Child and Beecher wanted women to be equipped with an undoubtable sense of worth and purpose.

36 Davidson, 6.
37 Tonkovich, xv.
38 Strasser, xv.
As a result of the tumultuous economic changes happening throughout America, women's roles in the 1850s were very different from the start of the century and the works of Lydia Maria Child and Catharine Beecher, along with other similar authors, are to partially thank for spreading ideas of domesticity to the rest of the nation. They cultivated a smaller, regional following in the Northeast and slowly gained a national audience with their fine-tuned perspective. At first glance, *The American Frugal Housewife, A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, and *American Woman's Home* may seem like simple minded educatory guides for trivial women's work but, each of these books made a statement. These authors argued that there was no correlation between domesticity and submission— that, just because housewives found themselves functioning as unpaid domestic laborers in a burgeoning capitalist society, did not mean these women contributed any less or had lives of any less value. Without women's financial savvy in budgeting, their resourcefulness in the kitchen, their efficiency in housekeeping, and their expertise in education, American society could not have boomed as it did.

Domestic literature deemed the home as a site of domestic politics while also fostering stronger women's rights that stemmed from honor, dignity, and patriotism. This cognitive emancipation for women was particularly influential from the 1830s to the 1860s, at a time where women's roles shifted into a defense of their family against economic uncertainty. Nineteenth-century housekeeping guides asserted the value of domestic work done by Northeastern women, through the authors' very purpose of writing these books with the intent to empower homemakers so that they may attribute value to their own work. In addition to a desire to help women fulfill their all too many domestic responsibilities, Catharine Beecher and Lydia Maria Child found it vital that these women knew how important their work could and should be. Their very purpose in writing these books was to communicate, educate, and motivate housewives in the nineteenth century.

Though sometimes viewed as trivial books, this genre often encouraged women to find a sense of self and to gain power within the home. Lydia Maria Child and Catharine Beecher taught women to be well educated, proud of their homes, active in their communities, and maintain a sense of accomplishment for their work. Their books helped women realize the worth of their work and encouraged them to make a bed they would want to lay in. More than just cleaning tips and medicinal tricks, these domestic
manuals proved to be a recipe for revelation. They ensured women that a handful of empowerment, a sprinkle of initiative, and a dash of pride were vital ingredients to maintaining a harmonious home.
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For centuries following the discovery of the New World, European colonists worked tirelessly at sharpening and defining the political borders of the Americas—closing them off from many neighboring states, implementing corrections on global geographic manuscripts, and creating hierarchies of social class and race. Creators of political borders stand by an agenda which signify their interests in territory and power. On the one hand, borders are interpreted as a society’s relationship to a region and determined by demographic, political, or economic expansion, which reveal markers of power for the societies who inhabit the land of interest. It is not always the intent of the creator to perpetuate negative social behaviors in consequence. On the other hand, borders create restrictions for people to abide, often resulting in the ethnocentric cultural barriers between inclusion and exclusion. They also reflect social boundaries caused by drawing thicker lines between lawful citizens and foreigners and defining the rights of groups reaching across the border. European colonists were one of the first civilizations to conceptualize and utilize the ideology of political borders.

Historians Michiel Baud and William Van Schendel wrote their article, “Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands,” to articulate borders and borderland concepts in academic discussions when properly addressed in historical context. Their work is predicated on the historical effects of borders linked to social dynamic shifts, formation, and territorialization of states. They look at struggles and adaptations imposed by border-creations, expressing the need for research on the borderlands in history. John W. House states, “there is an urgent need for both empirical and comparative studies of a dynamic nature for [border] situations, whether these involve

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confrontational or cooperative relationships, or for a more coherent set of theoretical frames within which to study such situations.” Social groups of most variations conceptualize the limitations of borders differently, but in most cases, results in categorizing the “self” and the “other.” The authors’ approach to this study favors a cross-border perspective, allowing them to consider the “paradoxical character of borderlands.” This approach focuses on the region of both sides of the border in question as the element of analysis. Syncretic border cultures are coined for the special circumstance when two or more languages meet, creating “lingua francas” despite the boundaries.

This “postmodern epoch” of studying borders historically is centered in the construction and deconstruction of a political concept. An international-political border, which is generally referred to as a social construction built by superior officials for reasons mentioned previously, is the cause of numerous detrimental interactions between opposing societies who are continuously affected by the confines of the border itself. Baud and Schendel’s work serves as a tool to unpack the borderland concepts found in the following accounts, several of which focus on the New World and the convoluted interactions between European colonists and the indigenous communities of the Americas. The fundamental values in studying historical borderlands rely on the complexities of today’s global system of states.

Acknowledging the difficulty in understanding how tobacco and chocolate rapidly became a favorite among post-Columbian Europe and reconstructing the history of these two commodities, Marcy Norton wrote *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures* to demonstrate how the “European embrace of chocolate and tobacco was not the consequence of addictive properties or purposeful efforts to make them fit aesthetic or ideological norms, rather the material forms of tobacco and chocolate first consumed by Europeans closely resembled Indian concoctions.” Syncretism is a fundamental theme in this account, tracing the transoceanic and transmigration of chocolate

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2 John W. House, Quoted in Baud and Schendel, “Toward a Comparative History on Borderlands,” 211.
3 Ibid., 211.
4 Ibid., 216.
6 Ibid., 242.
and tobacco, and following the successful evolution of such objects through Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. New tastes developed out of the “nodes of an expanding social web created by the accidents of empire.”

The unintentional application of early consumption products used to discuss borderlands quickly becomes apparent in the first few pages of the book, creating a platform for the systematic Europeanization of the Americas in terms of unofficial political borders. Norton’s use of selective historical terminology properly suggests a hierarchy in the socially constructed views of class by European colonists. The term “Empires” refers to an established political region, where the terms “societies” and “colonized subjects” refers to the social groups inhabiting the region of the Americas. A section in chapter one, “Cultural Unity in Mesoamerica,” uses the term “empires” with a lower case to demonstrate the Mesoamerican regional notion in terms of Mexica culture. The Americas were indisputably viewed as the land of objects to be possessed, subdued, converted, exploited, and catalogued by Europeans. In the events leading to assigned political boundaries in the Americas, items transformed from these regions to other destinations through biological determinism and cultural constructivism. Beyond that, chocolate and tobacco made their transoceanic and transcultural migration with addictive properties, elucidating their universal feat. Theoretically, Europeans instantly identified an aesthetic attraction to chocolate and tobacco—empirically, they did not. Furthermore, the phrase “Old World” is being used to describe a realm of people on a land that was current, not physically older than the current state when introduced in the sixteenth century. As structural development of the Americas grew in the hands of Europeans, perhaps agricultural plant items which bred naturally on these lands contributed to the “other” ideology of land in addition to the people.

Referring to Baud and Schendel’s work, Norton explicitly states a central theme to her study of syncretism, claiming often be applied to colonial societies where different cultures mingled regularly. Norton acknowledges the premise of syncretism, tying into the social character of

8 Ibid., Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures, 12.
9 Ibid., 4.
10 Ibid., 7.
11 Ibid., 9. The term “syncretism” is used here as an amalgamation of beliefs and practices emerging from different cultural traditions, which defined how tobacco and chocolate arrived and manifested in Europe.
Europeans at their arrival. Pre-Columbian territories and local definitions of borders among indigenous communities lacked a strict binding. The Spanish colonists—whose society was predicated on materialism, consumerism, and elitism—eventually absorbed Mayan cacao production into New Spain and Guatemala inside the dimensions formerly controlled by Aztecs and Mayans.\(^\text{12}\) The paradox to this borderland study would involve the Mesoamerican voyage to Europe, sustaining similar technological advancements and political views, and hypothetically possible in the event of equal distribution of wealth and development between these two civilizations. “Plant domestication, experimental hybridization, cultivation techniques, and fermentation and curing technologic breakthroughs” from Mesoamerican regions were some of many superior elements enticing colonists.\(^\text{13}\) The communal thought of using Amerindian “pagan” medicinal plants was unwelcomed by Europeans, aside from the practitioners in Europe who perceived tobacco as medicinal amid a severe lack of effective medical practices. Reframing the history of the Atlantic world at the end of the Middle Ages using borderland approaches to historical research will contribute to the questions of legitimate existing borders from current pro-indigenous rights politicians and intellectuals in Latin American countries. *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures* provides a new angle for historians to study possessions of various societies, highlighting the bodily experiences of both Amerindians’ and Colonists’ consumption. Using minimal sources available of the Mesoamerican primary accounts, Norton effectively demonstrates how the consumption of chocolate naturally formulates during social gatherings and how sensory studies connect to memory and experiences. Taste influenced colonists enough to bring these two commodities back to Europe, and we begin to see a shift in chocolate and tobacco ritualistic functions being transformed into luxury items in the span of two centuries. The Spanish assimilated chocolate and tobacco into their cultural routines while preserving the Indian tradition of drinking chocolate within the confines of Spanish upper-class mass dining and leisure. The friendly gestures humans receive after a shared coffee, cigarette, or chocolate offerings bring weight to a broader understanding of the role that these commodities occupied in the sixteenth century. Norton recognizes chocolate and tobacco objectively as cultural artifacts and highlights the

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 11.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 7.
cultural boundaries of two societies attempting to assimilate themselves surrounding the pleasant experiences of these earthly substances. She says, “a history of these goods is a bridge between material and symbolic levels of experience”\textsuperscript{14} where borderland historians potentially envision the oceanic bridge between symbolic levels of experience encountering two vastly divergent societies.

James F. Brooks writes \textit{Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands}, suggesting how through violence and exchange, “borderland societies both confronted and participated in American westward expansion—and how Mexican state-building influenced their formation and disintegration.”\textsuperscript{15} The enhancement of honor, according to Brooks, depended on the captivity and slavery of their kinship and defined female dependency in a male-dominated society in the Southwest Borderlands of North America. The Spaniards who entered the Southwest by the end of the seventeenth century had great interest in buying and selling Native women and children. The intermingling of these two groups created distinctive clashes between social morality and religious practices.

Brooks provides immense detail on specific locations and regions of numerous Indian pueblos throughout current day New Mexico, including the differences between captivity practices within those groups. Institutions of kinship rarely held an alien stigma, where captives often assimilated, and interactions increasingly developed into a web of intellectual, material, and emotional exchanges between indigenous and Euromerican men.\textsuperscript{16} The author suggests the “slave system” helped to unify and stabilize the economic conditions of Southwest Borderlands. The term “borderlands” used in this text is not defined by the author, however, he described in terms of titled mountainous regions remote to the areas in the Southwest. Maps of each borderland show colored areas of land dominated by indigenous groups and local fortified towns. The state-building of towns and socially established pueblos created tensions between groups; colonists had a stranglehold on the economy causing widespread hunger, disease, and the nonexistent data

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 31. The author suggests the “slave system” helped to unify and stabilize the economic conditions of Southwest Borderlands.
of Spanish losses during the severe population decrease of 1771 and 1776 in chapter two, “Las Llaneros: Creating a Plains Borderland.”

17 Clans from “Los Pastores” borderlands were created over time in a complex network of interracial captivities exchanged between Navajo families and Spanish women, formulating a *Nakaidine* (Mexican) clan early in the colonial period. The term “settlement” applied throughout the text properly displays the types of residencies cohabitated by indigenous people in North America with ambiguous implications of borderland limitations. Raids are often described by Brooks as approximate locations, when “somewhere near Socorro” or “Rio Puerco region” is the most efficient way to navigate the destinations of historic figures without falsely indicating a conceptualized boundary limitation.

The essential foundations of political state-building in the Southwest are largely due to the development and survival of indigenous trade, whether they can sustain their settlements and continue necessary transactions with the dominating forces of the Spaniards. In most regions, native conception of boundaries does not align with that of their Eurocentric counterparts. Spanish settlers became the administrators who supposedly refrained from infringing on Navajo crop and range land. Each chapter demonstrates how the events between two clashing cultures developed interests to create political borders, resting on land distribution and maintaining control over colonies. The borderland societies of *los llaneros* and *los pastores* were divided geographically—not politically—which determined the migration of the marginalized people when Spanish colonies formed in the valleys of *los montaneses*, or current day Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Administrators practiced the notion of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ by distinguishing themselves from Indians and *castas*. Through administrative efforts in sustaining the economy of local villages, many of the villagers exposed to colonial rule migrated to the isolated north to preserve their freedom. In 1787, Captain Paruanarimuca proposed the foundation of a fixed settlement on the banks of the Arkansas River, which resulted in failure. Comanches, eager to maintain

17 Ibid., 69. See also Bernard E. Bobb, *The Viceregency of Antonio Maria Bucareli in New Spain, 1771-1779* (Austin, Tex., 1962), 151-152 for further details.
19 Brooks, 107.
20 Ibid., 121. Reciprocal thievery, mutualistic bartering, and captive seizure figured prominently in among the people of the east and west.
21 Ibid., 143. *Castas* refers to lower class espanoles.
military superiority, recognized the limitations of access to bison and other agricultural products for subsistence. He increased captive raiding and forced easier access to New Mexico products to meet the market demands and international trade. The politics of international diplomacy showed face by the end of 1787, sharpening the boundaries of villages, habitants, and economic relations.

Captives and Cousins primarily focuses on social interactions between European colonists and Native American groups amid the naturally unfolding syncretism between the two cultures. Trade and captive exchanges stimulated the economy of the Southwest Borderlands, resulting in “transborder” political groupings of indigenous and European civilians. Scattered pueblo settlements relied on their economic and agricultural systems on their geographical locations, utilizing the natural resources of these environments. Mixed ethnic communities coexisted despite the persistence of Spanish dominance over land and the abolition of Indian slavery.

By tracking the evolution of malaria and yellow fever outbreaks throughout specific imperialistic and revolutionary events, J.R. McNeill writes Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914, one of many prominent environmental histories for accounts relating to the effects of disease in the Greater Caribbean. Between the survival-to-immunity of yellow fever victims and the defenses conferred by malaria, the two created advantages for some populations and unfortunate circumstances for others. This book takes a close look at ecological history by illustrating the impact of the mosquito empire on humans during the colonial period. McNeill explicitly links geopolitics, ecology, and disease into early American history, supporting his claim that “the female Aedes aegypti and Anopheles quadrimaculatus, underpinned the geopolitical order in the Americas until the 1770s after they were undermined, ushering a new era of independent states.”

The Spaniards were well equipped to employ the ideology of political borders into the regions of Latin America by 1620. The environmental

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22 Baud and Schendel, 242. “Transborder” political groupings are able to shift loyalties or allegiances according to the political conjectures within the states involved, i.e. Southwest Borderlands.

history of mosquitos serves as a map of where the diseases manifested and how relationships between societies and land shifted as a result of ailment immobilization. The domains of the Greater Caribbean were undergoing massive landscape change, largely due to colonialism. Environments experienced deforestation, soil erosion, and plantation agro-ecosystems for sugar and rice crops.\textsuperscript{24} The outcomes of state building in areas between Surinam, Chesapeake, and Central America were unfavorable to the Spanish Empire whose political expansion diplomacies lay in the heart of these regions, where the Spaniards were actually the foreigners. Imperial geopolitics in the Atlantic world was at stake due to the death toll acquired from yellow fever and malaria. The campaigns to colonize Pernambuco and Jamaica failed for the Dutch and were a costly success for the English with overwhelming disease mortality.\textsuperscript{25} By 1914, a new set of independent states were ushered from disease mortalities of European military personnel. Contrary to imperialistic death rates, inhabitants born and raised in the Americas proved to upset the status quo though the benefits of differential immunity and choosing the path of revolution.\textsuperscript{26} The European imposition of their jurisdiction over the people of Greater Caribbean backfired when the slaves of Surinam, St. Domingue, and Cuba were victorious in the unintentional destruction of biological warfare through differential immunity by the end of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{27}

In terms of borderlands, the people discussed in this text develop hostility for colonists over extended time, recognizing where interactions and networks with the Atlantic world are in fact harmful to their environment. Europeans used colonization in the confines of the Greater Caribbean to achieve economic and demographic expansion for their empires. By the time inhabitants faced the cruel realities of living among colonialism, environmental and political damage had already plundered these regions into the underdeveloped third world. The efforts to install impenetrable barriers were ultimately successful, aside from the failures in Cartagena, Cuba, and Surinam. European interest in stabilizing control in the Greater Caribbean shifted from colonizing and imperializing weaker territories, to capitalizing on the increments of left-over military units strategically

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 105.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 193.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 193.
stationed by former elitists. Baud and Schendel discuss the internal struggles faced by many Latin American locals:

Their local power depended largely on the state, and they were used by the state not only to extract tribute but also to discipline the border regions. Sometimes such elites might also be enlisted for state expansionist projects or espionage. However, borderland elites often remained at least partly detached from the state—for example, in many parts of Latin America, where regionalism formed an effective countervailing force to centralizing tendencies. Here borderland elites retained an independent power base and were in a position to oppose state policies.\(^{28}\)

Three centuries of geopolitical turmoil shaped the political climate of the Greater Caribbean, causing a stalemate of territorial elitism and irreversible sovereignty over these states. Upon the inauguration of the “sanitation revolution” the suffering of yellow fever and malaria came to an end and discontinued to carry political significance in the outcomes of state building in the Americas.

*Mosquito Empires* exceeds at reporting the probabilities of mosquitos having a lasting effect on earlier expeditions. Due to environmental changes that occur naturally during colonization—such as soil erosion or deforestation—improvements were fostered for the housing conditions centered around the two disease-ridden mosquitos. McNeill is determined to exemplify the ways in which differential immunity and differential resistance played key roles in the failures and successes of human survival within the unfamiliar grounds of the Americas. He demonstrates how yellow fever shaped the geopolitics of the Greater Caribbean, using material gathered from fifteen diverse archives in America, England, Scotland, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, as well as published documents, journals, diaries, memoirs, travel accounts, and pre-1850 medical texts.\(^{29}\) While mosquitos


\(^{29}\) McNeill, 3.
and other pathogenic organisms are incapable of documenting their own memoirs, historians discover lasting epidemiological effects which yellow fever and malaria inflicted on the natural course of human history from written records and archives. Their paths guide the author through the journey of mosquito migration, illuminating their deadly molecular transactions from one host to the next.

The ultimate display of interracial mingling by European colonization is shown in everyday social interweaving since that time. Louis Warren wrote a captivating account of the American frontier through connections with Dracula and the classic Buffalo Bill and his Wild West show and how they inspired degeneration and the necessity of race war in his article, “Buffalo Bill Meets Dracula: William F. Cody, Bram Stoker, and the Frontiers of Racial Decay.”30 Warren experiments with two literary tools to from William F. Cody, whose Dracula novel was written deliberately to reverse colonization, and Bram Stoker’s Buffalo Bill and his Wild West which addresses progressive frontier mythology in history. The presentation of European-American civilian interaction, well after the establishment of state borders in America, resembles popular views on American culture through the race war which “secured the racial destiny of white people.”31 Popularity of the ideal American Frontiersman in the United Kingdom transformed the image of Americans, amid underlying progressive representations of race. Warren views these literary devices as signs of first development of frontier and gothic traditions as racial myths within the transatlantic world.

Segregation was a political boundary implemented during the days of the American frontier and social boundary constructed as a result of the conventional political climate of 1887. Baud and Schendel define “frontier” as the territorial expansion of nations or civilizations into “empty” areas.32 Post-colonial states were no longer considered frontiers, and the context of this term is embedded in widespread representations of frontiers in Dracula and Buffalo Bill show casings. The “foreigners” of Buffalo Bill consists of false representations of Native American Warriors and Mexican vaqueros, where the Anglo frontier hero known for killing people of color became

32 Baud and Schendel, 215.
the world’s most famous American.33 These are the same “foreigners” who inhabited said “empty” areas of American frontiers. The terminology in this text suggests frontiersmen were viewed by Europeans as white American men saving women from the wilderness and savagery of the west. State borders in America were not legally restricted to Mexicans nor Indians but were fueled by the exclusion of these groups and inclusion of European societies. In this vein, Warren assumes that American frontiers were territories left abandoned and unused at the discretion of the state. The American frontier past shown in Buffalo Bill is believed by Warren to reflect true historical events competing with non-Anglo racial groups. Indeed, by providing the white shooter with advanced weaponry during the show, the Anglo-Americans remained supreme.34 Perhaps the lack of assigned territories on frontier lands perpetuated racial competition in a country utilizing systematic racism for economic and political gain.

According to Warren, the show suggested the territorialization of frontiers by racial families and the necessity to save the frontier of this notion.35 Furthermore, he argues that the centaur created by Cody resembles “the triumph of Anglo-American culture, the glories of Western imperial power, and the regeneration of the white race through frontier conflict and technological progress.”36 With this, there is no question of European post-colonial ideals persisting through the minds of Anglo-American elitists, who were part of a shared race empire whose social confines were only restricted racially. The common people of American frontiers made their own social history, whereas figures like Bram Stoker and William Cody recreate their history by subconsciously reframing into an exaggerated outlook on how societies functioned as a reaction to the establishment of surrounding borders. The borders surrounding frontiers from Buffalo Bill, whose premise was built upon state-induced colonization and political divides, are deliberately filtered out of the show to reassert the existence of Anglo-American dominance.

Buffalo Bill’s Wild West shows the embracement of English-American kinship and demonstrated valuable lessons of manhood via the cowboys in

33 Warren, 1125.
34 Ibid., See also Telling Western Stories: From Buffalo Bill to Larry McMurtry (Albuquerque, N. Mex., 1999).
35 Ibid., 1140.
36 Ibid., 1141.
Warren provides a critical analysis of transatlantic borderland societies of England and post-colonial America, reflecting on the biological nature of the white race inherently welcoming social groups of similar skin tone and far and few differences in between. Terminology such as “King of the Cowboys” and “natural nobility” used to describe Buffalo Bill show how American and British societies shared common ground in cultural influences. An accurate depiction of borrowed European traditions of race and empire symbolizes the social relationships, morals, and values that Americans held from Colonial America—and simultaneously—the deconstruction of Native settlements and continuation of the driving forces of Anglo-Americans to push Indian communities away from legalized land reforms.

The syncretism of chocolate and tobacco into Spanish culture, the transmigration of mixed races in Southwest Borderlands, the environmental effects of colonialism, and the racial boundaries of the American frontier of the Wild West are all symptoms of European colonists’ application of borderland ideologies on the Americas. The people originally inhabiting this land did not concern colonials, rather the material and imperial investments placed on the land itself. The vital takeaway from studying borderland history is understanding how borders were adopted into the realities of our global nation and why they have sustained. Governmental employment of political borders separates on language, ethnicity, and culture, causing racial turmoil and stirring unlawful violence between ethnic groups. By globally spreading cultural and ethnic divides, governments close off the necessary networks across borders for those seeking political asylum. Currently, the U.S.-Mexican border is under close watch by the U.S. government with little concern for the humanitarian crisis of Latin America. We can expect progress in humane political practices by accepting the realities of borderland studies.

Ibid., 1143.
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LOVE, LUST, AND VIOLENCE IN GRECO-ROMAN MAGIC

Curtis Rager

Historians believe Lucius Apuleius finished writing his novel *The Golden Ass* sometime during the first or second century CE. The story follows a protagonist of the same name with an intense curiosity to experience and perform magic, and the series of unfortunate events that befall him due to his curiosity. The novel describes a kind of magic, which was highly intertwined with sexuality, required very little ritual preparation, and was very dangerous if practiced incorrectly. *The Golden Ass* could be read as representative of the culture in which it was written, and therefore, be symbolic of magic practiced in Rome during the first few centuries of the common era. Unfortunately for historical study, the story is rarely ever so simple.

Sources of various dates during the Greco-Roman period describe numerous different practices of magic as well as different beliefs and understandings of it. Magic has always been both an important, yet difficult area of study for historians, as it reveals a deeper discernment of the world through the eyes of those that practiced it yet is also highly contextual and complex. Many scholars have failed to truly understand the contextual nature of magic, and too often approach the study with an ill-defined or highly modern definition. Thus, despite their important and insightful commentary on Greco-Roman sources, their work necessitates a reevaluation with a clear and contemporaneous definition of magic.

The purpose of this paper is to provide such a definition and use it to reexamine the important sources of magic in the Greco-Roman world in order to reveal how magic was practiced and conceptualized so as to help historians draw conclusions about the world that produced this magic. After discussing the historiography on magic and proposing new categories for it in the Greco-Roman world, I will reexamine the magic represented in
contemporaneous literary and practical sources, discovering its connection to love, lust, and violence.

This paper will draw on both literary and practical sources, or in other words, fictional examples which were meant to be understood as such and actual examples of spells which would have been purchased and performed. In literature, I will use *The Golden Ass* and the *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes. *The Golden Ass* is a late second century C.E. novel written by Lucius Apuleius believed to be based on an earlier, lost Greek novel. The *Argonautica* is a Greek epic of the third century B.C.E. Additionally, I will utilize the collection of *Magical Papyri*, drawing on both erotic and non-erotic spells. The *Magical Papyri* is a collection of spells, formulae, hymns, and rituals from Greco-Roman Egypt dating from the second century B.C.E. to the fifth century C.E.\(^1\) The size of the collection, the variety of similar spells, and the range of different kinds of spells all speak to the scope and frequency magic was practiced, both in Egypt as well as elsewhere throughout Rome’s territories. The sources I utilize vary significantly in both region and period and do so much by necessity. Surviving sources on the ancient world are always scarce, and particularly so in the case of magic. For example, *The Golden Ass* is the only surviving Roman novel, the *Argonautica* is incomplete, and the *Magical Papyri* survive in such great number, in part, because of favorable environmental conditions in Egypt. Due to the varying differences in region and period, conclusions in this paper involving a combination of these sources are in reference to the ‘Greco-Roman’ world. When used here, this term refers to the connected and shared cultural similarities amongst the Mediterranean world, beginning with the Roman syncretism with Greek culture and ideas, and ending with the imposition of Roman culture and ideas in Egypt. The proximity between these regions and cultures throughout different periods is what allows me to make such broad claims in regard to their conceptions of magic.

While there is considerable scholarship on the topic of ancient magic, many authors approach the subject with little thought to a contemporaneous definition, or instead do so with a highly modern interpretation. Richard, A. Horsley addresses this issue in his book, *Jesus and Magic: Freeing the Gospel Stories from Modern Misconceptions*. While the field of his research is early Christianity, the methodology he proposes is applicable

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to the study of magic during any time period. Horsley posits that magic is highly contextual, so its definition must be different in every culture and in every time period, and should be created with the context, or culture, of the society which practiced it. He cites scholars who recently (within the last generation) created a modern understanding of magic, applied it to the ancient past, and then expanded it to encompass the miracles of Jesus and exorcisms in the gospels. Horsley criticizes their use of European Enlightenment understandings of magic rather than more accurate first century definitions. Within his critique, Horsley asks whether Jewish or Hellenistic cultures even had a definition of miracle at all. After a lengthy examination of the language used to describe the healings and exorcisms of the gospels in comparison to Jewish and Hellenistic culture, he concludes that Jesus was not really performing magic or miracles, but rather rituals. He argues this is how it was written in the Gospels as well as how it was understood by people in that culture. This revisionist technique of studying history is important, especially in regard to magic, because it demands a more thoughtful and careful examination of texts, one free of modern assumptions.

Leading scholarship, even examples of excellent quality, continuously fail to provide a working definition of magic, just as Horsley describes, and these failed efforts fall into three categories. The first category includes those who never stop to consider defining the word they study and write about, while in the second, authors only provide obscure definitions. Lastly, in few examples, some provide thoughtful, yet still flawed, definitions.

Several authors fall into the first category. Matthew W. Dickie, in his article “Who Practiced Love-Magic in Classical Antiquity and in the Late Roman World?” argues that women, despite their sparse representation in formulas, practiced love magic just as often as men. Although his argument does not explicitly concern magic and our understanding of it, it offers a close reading on the formulaic nature of love spells. It is difficult to imagine that a more thorough understanding of magic would not have been important in writing the study. In much the same way, a hypothetical study of those

3 Ibid., 5.
4 Ibid., 21.
who held Roman consul positions might require a definition of the position, a study of who practiced magic requires a definition of magic. In “Magic in the Ancient Novel,” author Consuelo Ruiz-Montero also falls into this category. Her argument is an attempt to “distinguish between real magic and literary magic” and posits, “that some texts reflect a ‘real’ knowledge, an actual practice, of magical rituals.” Yet, the author provides no definition of what exactly an “actual practice” of magic was, or was understood to be, in the ancient Mediterranean world. In a similar vein, Stravos Frangoulidis, in *Witches, Isis and Narrative*, offers a thorough discussion of Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*, the literary themes used, and the ever-present magic which intertwines itself within the most critical plot points of the novel, yet includes no definition of magic. The primary goal of Frangoulidis’ argument is to separate the two different kinds of magic encountered in the novel, that of Photis and Isis, yet does so without ever stopping to define how those two kinds of magic would be understood by the Greco-Roman/Hellenized culture of those who read the novel. Although, further examples can be cited, it is not necessary in this study.

Radcliffe G. Edmonds III falls into the second category. In his article “Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered: Erotic Magic in the Greco-Roman World,” Edmonds defines magic as “an extra-ordinary practice, a measure one turns to when ordinary solutions are insufficient for handling the problems of life. An ancient Greek or Roman would resort to magic either to supplement his or her more mundane efforts, as a kind of hedging of bets, or after the normal solutions had already failed.” While he does offer an apt description of magic, in a broad sense, he fails to include any contextual information about magic for the specific period and society he is studying. In fact, similar definitions are found throughout encylopedia-esque books as they provide the broadest overview of the topics. For instance, Richard Cavendish, in his survey *History of Magic*, provides a similar definition, writing “magic is an attempt to exert power through actions which are believed to have a direct and automatic influence on man, nature and the divine...In the distant past everything strange was magical, or religio-

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magical, and this was true of human beings as well as the environment.”
Definitions like this are exactly what Horsley is most critical of. By failing to provide specifics that take into account the unique cultural perspective of the people practicing magic, they risk forcing a modern understanding of magic on the beliefs of the ancient.

Lastly, a few authors provide thoughtful and useful definitions of magic. It is here that a true distinction can be made in regard to the kinds of magic practiced in the Greco-Roman world. While defining magic, Joseph Ennemoser writes, “...magic was divided into white and black: to the latter belonged, reading the hand, evil-eye, power over the elements, and the transformation of human being into animals” and later, “everything which could be considered as wonderful, –as the incomprehensible working of natural powers in the magnet, or the divinatory want, or any surprising action, was considered, at a later period, as magic, and particularly as black magic, or the black art.”

The first quality that sets Ennemoser’s definition apart from Edmonds is the attempt to tie together the religious culture of the society to an understanding of magic. Ennemoser’s intention in this section is to discuss the origin of magic in the ancient world, and it is with this purpose that he inadvertently includes the cultural context, the first step towards an improved definition.

Christopher Faraone, as few others have, takes the time to write down a true definition of magic, taking into account Greek religious beliefs at the time of his sources. He begins his discussion of magic as, “a set of practical devices and rituals used by the Greeks in their day-to-day lives to control or otherwise influence supernaturally the forces of nature, animals or other human beings.” Although the definition reads quite similarly to Edmonds’, Faraone makes an important connection to the natural world, which was deeply connected to a Greco-Roman understanding of magic. He goes on to write, “a more precise theoretical definition of ‘magic’ as a category distinct from ‘religion’ or ‘science’ lies at the center of a long-standing controversy among anthropologists and historians of religion and need not detain us here. Suffice it to say that these traditional modern divisions are for the

most part inappropriate for ancient Greece.”¹¹ He argues this is because the ancient Greeks, specifically, exercised no clear distinction between science and magic. Additionally, their extremely flexible understanding of religious orthodoxy allowed them to practice a wide diversity of ritual and religious acts.¹²

The interconnectedness of magic, science, and natural forces in the Greco-Roman world is what makes defining magic such a difficult task. I agree with Faraone’s broader definition of magic as “a set of practical devices and rituals used by the Greeks in their day-to-day lives to control or otherwise influence supernaturally the forces of nature, animals or other human beings.”¹³ It is, however, important to take it deeper, by contextualizing magic in the Greco-Roman world. In literary examples, magic is often connected with love and sexuality. In the *Argonautica*, Medea, driven by an intense love for Jason, crafts a charm to make him impervious to harm.¹⁴ The connection to sexuality is expected given the kind of magic used; a love spell. However, there are other examples in literature that offer explicitly non-sexual spells that are associated with sexuality. *The Golden Ass* provides several. Meroé’s constant transformation of herself and others into animals is not a sexual spell by any means, but is always performed in association with sex and adultery.¹⁵ Rather than always reading literary sources as examples of real practices, deeper understandings can often be extracted if they are read as reflections of magical beliefs.

However, in practical examples, the connection of magic to sexuality is only present in explicitly sexual spells such as love spells. While a few spells require “purity” for the duration of the ritual, there is not quite enough evidence to conclude that “purity” always means abstaining from sex. Even if it did, that is not enough to say the spell is explicitly sexual in nature.¹⁶ Nature, in fact, is the biggest and most common theme among

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11  Ibid., 17.
13  Ibid., 16.
14  Seaton, R. C. *The Argonautica*. The Internet Classics Archive.
16  By all indications, this meant abstaining from meat and uncooked food, as well as possibly sex. Most spells simply mention the need for purity, without any indication of what it means. PGM IV. 52-85 (page 38) states purity means abstaining from meat and
practiced spells. Here again, Faraone’s definition of magic is useful. The sources strongly suggest the purpose of magic was indeed to “influence supernaturally the forces of nature, animals or other human beings.” Greco-Romans believed the natural world held a certain innate power that, in conjunction with other elements of the ritual, would imbue the items of nature they used.

Faraone also points out that it is important to make a distinction between magic and other elements of power or change in the ancient religious sphere. He compares mundane modern powers, such as a fax machine, to the literary magic, often used in describing the lives of gods, such as Hera’s magical chord. This distinction is perhaps the most difficult one for historians to make and one that Faraone never devotes enough time to in his introduction. What differentiates a bound wax doll meant to force a lover into sexual relations from the golden fleece described in the Argonautica? Clearly each item is believed to contain some magical power. In looking at these two examples, two differences are readily apparent: first, the type of source (literary v. practiced) and, in the same vein, the practitioner of magic (fictional v. real). In the first example, the spell exists as a set of directions meant to be copied down, filled out or personalized, and performed by an ordinary, mortal person. Much like a cooking recipe, directions for preparation are listed, including how to form the clay dolls, and what to inscribe on them, followed by the inscriptions and prayer to be performed along with the spell. The power is from the natural elements of the spell (the doll, etc…) as well as the myriad of gods referenced throughout the inscription and prayer. Whereas in the second example, that of the golden fleece, the item simply exists as magical. With this in mind, it is best to separate magic into two distinct categories, divine

18 Ibid., 16.
magic, such as the golden fleece, and ritual magic, such as the spells found in the *Magical Papyri*. Ritual magic, as it will be discussed throughout this paper, is that which is performed by people, beginning with ordinary (non-magical) ingredients, and, after being infused with the power of nature or of invoked gods, becomes magical and is meant to make changes in the behavior of people. Divine magic is that which requires neither ritual nor preparation but exists simply because of its connection to either the divine or nature.

The *Argonautica* has multiple examples of both divine and ritual magic. Medea’s spell in the *Argonautica* fits a mold for ritual magic and literary styles of representing magic. The literary magic representation mold connects magic with love and sexuality, even in non-sexual spells. In the *Argonautica*, Jason is tasked with retrieving the Golden Fleece, and upon his way becomes entangled with Medea, who, after being struck with Eros’ arrow, falls in love with him. In order to gain possession of the Golden Fleece, Jason is required to perform a dangerous trial of strength, one in which he will surely die. Driven by love, Medea performs a spell, creating a charm that will make him impervious to weapons and fire, and fill him with strength.\(^{21}\) There are deep themes of natural energy and power in the description of the spell:

> It shot up first-born when the ravening eagle on the rugged flanks of Caucasus let drip to the earth the blood-like ichor of tortured Prometheus. And its flower appeared a cubit above the ground in colour like the Corycian crocus, rising on twin stalks; but in the earth the root was like newly-cut flesh. The dark juice of it, like the sap of mountain-oak, she had gathered in a Caspian shell to make the charm withal, when she had first bathed in seven ever-flowing stream, and had called seven times on Brimo, nurse of youth, night-wandering Brimo, of the underworld, queen among the dead, --in the gloom of night, clad in dusky garments. And Beneath, the dark earth shook and bellowed when the Titanian root was cut; and the son of Iapetus himself groaned, his soul distraught with pain.\(^ {22}\)


\(^{22}\) R. C. Seaton, *The Argonautica*. The Internet Classics Archive.
References to nature and its innate power are numerous. Beginning with the blood of Prometheus, a flower grows, but its roots are as if flesh, presumably that of Prometheus. Here references to the gods and the power of nature come together. Medea, while picking the flower, calls upon “Brimo, of the underworld, queen among the dead” an ambiguous reference to some goddess of the dead. This is an example of an extremely common trope among ritual spells: the reference or naming of gods. As noted before, the invoking of or naming of gods is an important aspect to ritual magic, and its inclusion is meant to add extra magical potency to the charm. When the root is cut, its power is so great and so interconnected with the gods and nature, that the earth shakes and Iapetus, a titan, groans in pain. The flower used in her charm, with its inherent connection to the divine and nature, seems to display several qualities of divine magic, but, the ritual that follows, and is required in making the ointment, is what characterizes this example of magic as ritual. Additionally, the heavy references to the flower’s innate divine power is typical of literary representations of magic; the Argonautica stands in contrast to The Golden Ass in its ritual representation. The two texts differ again in how their magic is connected to love.

The Argonautica, as do other literary examples, exemplifies a connection between love and magic, particularly in non-love spells such as Medea’s. She, deeply stricken with love for Jason, contemplates the decision to create her charm: “ever within anguish tortured her, a smoldering fire through her frame, and about her fine nerves and deep down beneath the nape of the neck where the pain enters keenest, whenever the unwearied Loves direct against the heart their shafts of agony.” Love in the Greco-Roman world was often depicted as a painful, burning fire within the body. This is again supported in the many love spells of the Magical Papyri, but here it shows an, at times, violent understanding of love, one that causes Medea to consider taking her own life to end the pain. It is while enduring the pain of love she decides to create the charm to give to Jason. Magic is here associated with love and sexuality, even in an example of a spell (one to cause imperviousness) that contains no explicit connection to love or sexuality. If literature is read with the understanding it is to some degree representative of the beliefs of its authors and readers, this literature supports the conclusion Greco-Roman people believed magic, love, and sexuality

24 Ibid.
to coexist and be necessarily interconnected. The Golden Ass certainly contributes to this conclusion, emphasizing lust rather than love. However, the Magical Papyri exhibits a much lesser connection to love and lust.

Lucius Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass* mirrors the themes of the *Argonautica* in many ways yet differs in several important areas. The magic that transforms Lucius both into and back from an ass again supports the literary model of magic posited in this paper in that it features a practice of connecting non-explicitly sexual spells with love and sexuality. Yet, it differs in its connection to love from the *Argonautica*, as it is associated better with lust than the love represented by Medea. Again, much like the *Argonautica*, *The Golden Ass* includes both examples of divine and ritual magic. Additionally, the ease with which magic is discussed and represented in both works demonstrates how commonly magic must have been practiced in the Greco-Roman world, and by extension, how common the connection must have been between magic, love, and sexuality in the minds of its users.

Defining the magic practiced in *The Golden Ass* is a more difficult task. Most of the spells performed in the novel are that of transformation. The sorcerous Meroe transforms her unfaithful lover into a beaver to be hunted.25 In fact, as Photis later reveals to Lucius, Meroe often transforms herself and others into different animals.26 Most notably though is Lucius’ transformation into and back from an ass. Lucius, driven by an intense curiosity to learn about and experience magic, asks Photis to transform him as Meroe does to herself.27 After covering himself with ointment, he instead transforms into an ass, and thus begins his long, misfortunate journey. Is this magic ritual or divine? Firstly, the description is quite ritualistic. When Photis brings him the box of ointment he first kisses it, embraces it, and then prays that the spell is successful.28 While this is certainly ritualistic, it is noticeably shorter than other examples found in the *Magical Papyri*. Furthermore, the transformation into animals has a clear relationship with the belief in an innate power of nature. Presumably, Photis and Meroe are ordinary people performing magic with the help of ordinary ingredients imbued with magic from nature and the gods, rather than with innate

26 Ibid., 76.
27 Ibid., 76.
28 Ibid., 76.
magical items, such as the Golden Fleece. Noticeably different, however, is a lack of any naming or invoking of gods. The magic is performed entirely with the ointment and the short semi-ritual with the box. With this in mind, an argument could certainly be made that the ointment itself is innately magical, like the Golden Fleece. However, in comparison to other examples of magic, such as the eating of a transformative rose later in the novel, the ointment stands out as being different, and more ritualistic.

Lucius’ transformation back into a human, again, blurs the lines between divine and ritual magic. While drinking at a stream, he calls out, asking the gods to help his plight. Isis, the Egyptian goddess of healing, protection, and magic, appears to him and describes what he must do to be saved: “follow thou my procession amongst the people, and when thou commest to the Priest, make as though thou wouldest kisse his hand, but snatch at the Roses, whereby I will put away the skin and shape of an Asse.” When the day comes, he does just that, “Finally came he which was apointed to me good fortun...bearing in his left hand the timbrill, and in the other a garland of Roses to give me...[the priest] stood still and holding out his hand, thrust out the garland of roses into my mouth, I (trembling) devoured with a great afffection: And as soone as I had eaten them, I was not deceived of the promise made unto me.” The transformation is entirely driven by the power of the roses. Roses were associated with Isis and therefore carried with them an implicit connection to her powers and roles. Roses can easily be read as containing innate power, that in turn owes its origin to both its natural association but mostly to its association with Isis. No ritual was performed, no gods invoked or named, and the roses, although part of nature, held their own innate power. Lucius’ transformation in The Golden Ass back into a human is an examples of divine magic, rather than ritualistic.

Magic’s association with sexuality also differs from the Argonautica to The Golden Ass. While, the Argonautica’s magic is motivated by Medea’s love for Jason, unfortunate magical events in The Golden Ass always begin with lust and sexual promiscuity. Socrates’ misfortune begins and ends with

30 Ibid., 238.
his romantic relationship with Meroe: in the third chapter their relationship begins, and he is dead by the fifth. After learning Meroe’s true identity as a witch, he reveals the information to his friend Lucius, and the two decide to leave town because they fear what she is capable of. Before they can do so, Meroe and Panthia break into their room, and Panthia pierces Socrates’ neck with her sword, collects his blood, thrusts her hand into the wound, pulls out his heart, and before he dies, plugs the wound with magical moss. Although the moss helped him survive for a little time, as soon as it fell out he dropped dead. Socrates receives the greatest punishment for his sexual involvement with magic, death. The story describes his initial attraction to Meroe as inspired by “carnall desire” and when they break into his room Meroe mentions he has, “abused my [Meroe’s] wanton youthfulness.” Clearly, lust introduced Socrates to magic, and lust led him to his death. The novel repeatedly serves as a warning against lustful attraction to magic, rather than simply a warning not to practice it.

Lucius’ life after his return to human form further supports the novel’s warning against lustful practice of magic. With his humanity restored, Lucius converts to Isis’ religion, which includes a vow of chastity. After his conversion and increased religious devotion, he finds great success in life as a Decurion and a Senator. The transformation into a human, his chastity, and his personal and political success are all connected events. Additionally, after his journey in the body of an ass, he has learned the dangers of excess sexual promiscuity. Once he changes as a character, his experiences with magic become positive rather than negative. Instead of searching for roses, as he does after immediately being transformed into an ass, a goddess of healing delivers him to them. Apuleius’ writing warns the audience that practicing magic with lust in mind is a dangerous endeavor.

An examination of sexual themes in The Golden Ass reveals connections to Roses and violence. The rose, a symbol of healing in the story, also has an explicit connection to sex. When transformed into an

33 Ibid., 26.
34 Ibid., 28.
35 Ibid., 32.
36 Ibid., 24, 28.
37 Ibid., 241.
38 Ibid., 249.
ass, Photis explains if only he could find and eat a rose, he would change back. The plan never comes to fruition as he is captured by robbers that night, but regardless, the rose serves as an antidote to his magical error. In comparison, Isis offers him roses at the conclusion of his story and delivers by changing him back to a human. In both instances, the author makes a clear connection to sexual practice. Lucius, when he is with Photis, cares not for sexual restraint, and thus is punished, both for his curiosity of magic, but also for his lust for her. Once transformed, the fact he never finds the roses is representative of him not being ready for to change as a character, and by extension to eat such magical and pure items. Whereas later in the story, with Isis, he has truly undergone a change of character and now is finally allowed to find and eat the roses, promising to practice sexual restraint.

By comparing spells from the *Magical Papyri* with the *Argonautica* and *The Golden Ass*, it is possible to determine the accuracy of literature in representing actual practice. Whereas literature often represents both ritual and divine magic, sometimes even blurring the lines between the two as in *The Golden Ass*, surviving spell books paint a distinct image of practiced magic as ritual. Fitting with this definition, spells of the *Magical Papyri* often include lengthy preparation, in other words, a ritual. Often, before performing a spell, one must remain pure, collect ordinary (non-magical) ingredients, and sometimes mold different models or dolls. A spell for visions of the future, involves a lengthy ritual commanding one to build a tripod, carve characters around it in a circle, cover it with clean linen, place a wooden figurine of Apollo on the table, carve more characters on a gold or silver lamella, and place nearby a shell of pure water before performing the spell. Wooden figures, clean water, and the shell are all natural items believed to embody innate power. Additionally, the circles of characters and the figurine of Apollo also reference the power of naming and invoking gods and the unknown. While the spell for visions of the future is but one example, the model it represents is nearly universally followed in the *Magical Papyri*, demonstrating that practiced magic was almost universally ritual magic.

40 Ibid., 238.
Literary texts’ representation of magic is both ritual and divine, and both have a consistent connection to sexuality, both love and lust. For instance, the arrow Eros shot Medea with in the Argonautica is an example of divine magic. No ritual is performed, no names invoked, in fact, in a perfect example of divinity, Eros himself is a god. The items he uses undergo no change throughout the spell, are clearly magical in nature, and are thus innately powerful. Whereas Medea’s charm for imperviousness, with its preparation and short ritual, is an example of ritual magic.

Following the literary pattern of representation, both Eros’ arrows and Medea’s charm are connected to love: Eros causes her love for Jason, which in turn motivates her creation of the charm. In The Golden Ass, we see lust acting as a similar motivator in magic. Lucius is drawn to Photis, and her ability to perform spells, by his lust for her. In several of these literary examples, the spells themselves are non-sexual in nature; Medea’s charm is to make the caster impervious to harm, and Photis and her master transform into animals. In doing so, literature creates a clear connection between magic, of any kind, and sexuality. However, this is not the case as represented in practical examples.

A large number of spells in the Magical Papyri have no sexual references or connections at all; common examples include spells for unknown knowledge, memory, or fortune telling. A charm for acquiring business and for calling in customers, following common patterns for ritual spells, calls for a figurine of a begging man to be made during the new moon, to wrap his base with a serpent, wrap him in strips of papyrus covered with inscriptions, and sacrifice a wild ass. Bringing in extra business to a workshop or house is just as non-sexual an example as animal transformation from The Golden Ass, yet in the Magical Papyri, there is no reference to sexuality in the directions for the charm. In further support, the spells for knowledge and memory mentioned earlier are equally non-sexual as the one for business here.

Even in explicitly sexual spells, i.e. love spells, the connection between

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42 R. C. Seaton, The Argonautica. The Internet Classics Archive.
43 Ibid.
magic and love or lust is not nearly as clear as it is in literary sources. The formula of a ‘wondrous’ spell for binding a lover is as follows:

Take wax [or clay] from a potter’s wheel and make two figures, a male and a female. Make the male in the form of Ares fully armed, holding a sword / in his left hand and threatening to plunge it into the right side of her neck. And make her with her arms behind her back and down on her knees...And take thirteen copper needles and stick 1 in the brain while saying, ‘I am piercing your brain, NN’; and stick 2 in the ears and 2 in the eyes and 1 in the mouth and 2 / in the midriff and 1 in the hands and 2 in the pudenda and 2 in the soles, saying each time, ‘I am piercing such and such a member of her, NN, so that she may remember no one but me, NN, alone.46

The preparation for this spell is fairly common among love spells. Dolls are made to represent the two participants of the spell, the man of Ares, ready to slay the woman, a truly violent picture. The woman is formed in a bound position, and body pierced. This was meant to produce both burning, or yearning, sensations in those areas of the body, as well as to bind them for the use and association with the user of the spell only. The spell goes on to direct the user to:

take a lead tablet and write the same / spell and recite it… ‘...arouse yourself for me, whoever you are, whether male or female, and go to every place and into every quarter and to every house, and attract / and bind her. Attract her, NN, whom NN bore and whose magical material you possess. Let her be in love with me, NN whom she, NN bore. Let her not be had in a promiscuous way, let her not be had in her ass, nor let her do anything with another man for pleasure, just with me alone, NN, so that she, NN, be unable either to drink or eat, that she not / be contented, not be strong, not

have peace of mind, that she, NN, not find sleep without me...to [not] accept for pleasure the attempt of another man, / not even that of her own husband, just that of mine, NN. Instead, drag her, NN, by the hair, by her heart, by her soul, to me, NN, at every hour of life, day and night, until she comes to me, NN, and may she, NN, remain / inseparable from me.\(^{47}\)

Here, the burning sensations of love are described in slightly greater detail. The afflicted is meant to experience a ‘restless’ sensation: unable to eat or drink, not be content, not be strong, not be at peace. The spell then describes how the afflicted is meant to be dragged, by “daimons,” forcing her to physically be with the user of the spell.

However, what we never see, are any references to the kinds of love and lust represented so well in *The Golden Ass* and the *Argonautica*. Most easy to dismiss is love, the kind of which Medea experiences in the *Argonautica*. Her unbearable sensations of burning and torture are mirrored here, however, Eros’ magic inflicts a more redeeming love. In the end, despite her suffering, Medea still acts in the best interest of her object of love, in contrast, the spell here offers no consideration for the experience of the object of love, or in this case, the desired.

Lust is better represented in this spell. However, again, quite differently than in literary sources. Lucius’ decisions in *The Golden Ass* are certainly driven by lust, but it is portrayed as less injurious than in the love spell here. He desires sexual relations with Photis but attempts them with flirtatious dialogue. The spell here represents a violent and dangerous kind of lust, one completely absent from literary sources. The spell requests the summoned demon to, “drag her, NN, by the hair” a clear, and striking, physical image of violence. The one performing this charm is not attempting to coerce a potential romantic partner, but rather to force an unwilling one. This dichotomy between literary representation of magic and its actual practice would seem to indicate both that magic, when practiced, was not always explicitly sexual, yet when imagined in the minds of the literate elite did, in fact, contain an explicit connection to love and lust.

In fact, as it appears, spells which the common person actually performed display a greater theme of violence, than of love or lust. In another

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
love spell of attraction, as part of the words spoken over the offering, the spell reads:

let her hold me / NN alone in her mind; let her desire me alone; let her love me alone; let her do all my wishes. Do not enter through her eyes or through her frame, but rather through her ‘soul.’ And remain in her heart and burn her guts, her breast, her liver, / her breath, her bones, her marrow, until she comes to me NN, loving me, and until she fulfills all my wishes...As I burn you up and you are potent, so burn the brain of her, NN, whom I love. Inflame her and turn her guts inside out, / suck out her blood drop by drop, until she comes to me.

Again, we see common tropes, such as the burning imagery and violence. In this spell, it is violence that appears most strikingly. Rather than simply burning the parts of the body that the user of the spell desires, the sensation is extended to, “her guts, her breast, her liver, / her breath, her bones,” and “her marrow.” The burning is more than just a yearning sensation, as it is better described in the earlier spell, but is instead a more violent form. As the user burns the body of the summoned demon, he also hopes to ‘burn’ and ‘inflame’ that who he desires, and to “turn her guts inside out” and “suck out her blood drop by drop,” a truly horrifying picture. Violence also appears in other, smaller ways throughout the spells. In the earlier spell, the lead tablet upon which the spell is written is to be placed beside the grave of “who has died untimely or violently” and in the spell listed here, again, the spell is meant to be addressed to those “who died untimely deaths and those dead violently.”

48 “PGM IV. 1390-1495 Love spell of attraction performed with the help of heroes or gladiators or those who have died a violent death” from Hans Dieter Betz, ed. The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

very explicit, and more subtle ways, but is truly ever present throughout examples of practiced love magic.

In tracing major themes throughout literary and practical magic texts, it is evident how complicated and fruitful studies of magic in history are. Additionally, this study has also demonstrated the importance in defining the magic represented in sources, specifically from the eyes of the past, as none of the conclusions drawn in this essay would have been possible without such a definition. Magic in the Greco-Roman world was diverse, but also very dangerous. In turning our attention finally to those afflicted by these spells, it is possible to see the violent and terrifying lives that women lived in the ancient past. These sources and texts leave no space for the romantic love of the modern world, but instead describe an experience filled with lust and led by the controlling man. Literary sources, produced and consumed by the elite, represent magic in a lighter heart. Apuleius’ novel serves as a warning against practicing magic with lustful intentions, and the Argonautica shows how love can be a driving force in securing safety for those one cares about. However, in everyday practice, love spells reveal a darker truth about magic. Magic was violent, it was controlling, and it asked not for permission, only for desire. It is in this conclusion on the nature of magic, that we may supplementary draw a conclusion on the nature of sexuality in the Greco-Roman world. Magic shows us sexuality was violent, uncontrolled, and dangerous, but also, idealized by the elite. However, none of this is to say that women, or any other entity of magical desire, was devoid of agency. For, after all, if this were the case, then there would be no need for the extensive records of magical practice the ancient world has left behind.
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In 1966 the Black Panther Party was formed by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, CA. Despite a completely legal platform, the FBI saw the Black Panther Party as a threat to national security because of the party’s anti-government rhetoric. This thinking legitimized the extreme and illegal tactics used to destroy the party and to undermine Black Nationalism, tactics which included conspiring with local administrators and law enforcement to disrupt the party, and utilizing informants to assist with counterintelligence activities. These two tactics culminated in the murder of Fred Hampton during a raid on his apartment in Chicago in 1969. In addition to these strategies, the FBI created and capitalized on rifts between members as well as the Black Panther Party and other Black Nationalist groups. This interference by the FBI led to death threats against and the eventual exile of Stokely Carmichael. The application of this tactic also resulted in the 1969 murders of Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter and John Huggins in Los Angeles.

By the mid-1960’s, the pacifism of the Civil Rights Movement had evolved into a more proactive and militant movement known as Black Nationalism. Black Nationalists felt the only way to end the oppression of African Americans was to take more control over all facets of their communities.\(^1\) They asserted that “capitalist forces . . . legitimize the economic and political exploitation of the common people . . .”\(^2\) In addition, some Black Nationalist groups, such as the Black Panther Party, legally carried guns and advocated for swift self-defense to prevent harassment and brutality by the police.\(^3\)

2 Ibid., 409-21.
3 Ibid., 409-21.
Jessica C. Harris, Associate Professor of Historical Studies at Southern Illinois University, explains that Black Nationalism is the recognition by oppressed African Americans that they must “first cherish a friendly union with themselves” and “create their own communities” in order to become liberated. Harris also compares and contrasts the differing segments of Black Nationalism. She divides Black Nationalism into two categories: Classical Black Nationalism and Contemporary Black Nationalism. Classical Black Nationalists felt that a completely sovereign “nation-state” must be created for African Americans. They did not believe that the system needed to be changed, but that they should create their own system. This form of Black Nationalism is also known as the “Back-to-Africa movement.” Groups such as the United Slaves Organization fell into the Classical Black Nationalism group. On the other hand, Contemporary Black Nationalism is the thinking that there should be a revolt against the status quo. Contemporary Black Nationalists believed that the system should change from within itself. As they were a revolutionary group, the Black Panther Party was an example of Contemporary Black Nationalism. Harris details the positive attributes of the party, such as their Survival Programs, which, among other things, provided free breakfast for school children, free health clinics, and clothing and shoe programs. Harris also describes the negative attributes of the party that contributed to the end of the Black Panthers, including the financial burden caused by their legal defense and how it resulted in distracting the party members from their primary cause.4

John Drabble, Assistant Professor of American Culture and Literature at Kadir Has University, asserts that the FBI resorted to unethical tactics to investigate the Black Panther Party. He argues that the FBI exploited societal racism in order to justify their methods and states that the FBI sent derogatory information to police, the media, legislators, and to the public that expressed “concern and promoted mass quiescence by opposing vice, crime, and subversion…” Drabble goes on to claim that they “[drew] upon counter subversive anxieties concerning miscegenation that were deeply rooted in American culture.” He also outlines explicitly the dishonest, immoral tactic of disseminating false information used during the investigation. Drabble additionally explains how racism played a role in the success of this tactic. His argument comes from the perspective that the FBI was generally racist and that they used abhorrent tactics to undermine and ultimately destroy the

4 Ibid., 409-21.
Deadly Tactics

Kevin Gotham, Professor of Sociology at Tulane University, gives insight into what he terms “covert repression.” He explains that “covert repression gives the American state the anonymous capacity to influence events” under the guise of national security. Gotham states that the FBI felt justified using unconstitutional tactics because there was a significant threat to national security. He uses the FBI investigation into the Black Panther Party and the Civil Rights Movement in general to illustrate the validity of his argument.

In addition to giving some background information that will detail the Black Panther Party’s legal platform and ideology, as well as the motives of the FBI during the 1960’s investigation, the main argument will focus on how the FBI put their tactics into practice and how they manifested. Drabble argues that the FBI held a racist perspective, although, not explicitly discussed, this perception can be seen in the undertones of supporting details. Gotham’s viewpoint is the most similar to this perspective. His argument that the FBI violated the constitutional rights of the Black Panther Party and that they created a covert system in order to get away with their actions is similar to my own viewpoint and argument. Harris’ article gives insight into Black Nationalism and provides the background information needed in order to formulate support for my argument and to examine how the Black Panther’s role within Black Nationalism contributed to the party’s demise. The FBI used unethical and illegal tactics such as the use of local officials, law enforcement and informants, and they capitalized on societal rifts in order to destroy the Black Panther Party. Employment of these tactics led to death threats and murder.

The Black Panther Party’s ten-point platform included obtaining freedom, basic rights, education, an end to police brutality, and fair treatment by the judicial system. The party also created beneficial programs for the

African American community. Their Survival Programs included such things as a free breakfast program, free health clinics, and education for the aforementioned community.\(^9\) In addition, leaders of the party discouraged drug use and drunkenness, and they did not allow for usage of guns (including merely pointing the weapon) unnecessarily or by accident.\(^{10}\)

On the other hand, party members were very provocative in their rhetoric, actions, and literature. Throughout their newspaper *Black Panther*, they referred to the police as “pigs,” advocated for socialism and used language that the FBI saw as threatening. One example of this demonstrated:

> Revolutionary strategy for Black people in America begins with the defensive movement of picking up the Gun, as the condition for ending pigs’ reign of terror by the Gun. Black people picking up the gun for self-defense is the only basis in America for a revolutionary offensive against Imperialist state power.\(^{11}\)

Because the all-white FBI did not understand the ‘black hyperbole” used when the Black Panther Party members spoke of using a gun, they took what the Black Panther Party was saying literally, instead of recognizing the rhetoric as a way for the oppressed community to peacefully vent their anger at the status quo.\(^{12}\) Although the Black Panther Party’s platform was legal, their ideology and application of the First Amendment were “unacceptable to Hoover and his all-white FBI.”\(^{13}\) Hoover felt that the Panthers were “the greatest threat to the internal security of the country.”\(^{14}\) The FBI viewed the Black Panthers as immoral, inherently violent criminals, and felt that they would cause significant problems for both the public and the government.\(^{15}\)

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11. Ibid., 19-20.
This mindset caused the FBI to open an extensive counterintelligence investigation (abbreviated COINTELPRO) that targeted the Black Panther Party and Black Nationalism in general.

The purpose of COINTELPRO was to “…expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groups, their leadership, spokesmen, membership and supporters…”16 The investigation continually expanded.17 More resources were supplied to the investigation in order to “prevent militant black nationalists groups from gaining respectability and by pitting all African American groups in society against one another.”18 Agents were encouraged to be creative with their methods.19 Covert tactics used in their investigation included infiltrating the party, conspiring with law enforcement, and discrediting party members. These actions had severe consequences.

To further their agenda, the FBI believed in the utilization of local and state officials.20 When the FBI “couldn’t find a rival group [to pit against the Panthers] . . . they simply worked on the local police as a means of taking them out of existence.”21 This plan was put into practice when the FBI conspired with local officials and the police department in Chicago to murder Fred Hampton. Former FBI agent, M. Wesley Swearingen, learned of the details of the conspiracy between the FBI, local officials and police in Chicago while speaking with a fellow agent, Gregg York (name changed by Swearingen to protect the source’s anonymity). York told Swearingen that the “FBI arranged for the raid by telling the police that the Panthers had numerous guns and explosives and that they would shoot any police officer who entered the building.”22

Early on the morning of December 4, 1969, Fred Hampton, a loved and respected leader of the Black Panther Party, was killed when fourteen heavily armed officers of the Chicago Police Department stormed into his

17 United States Federal Bureau of Investigations, memo 2/29/68.
21 United States Ninety-Fourth Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, November 18, 1975 through Thursday December 11, 1975 page 52.
22 Swearingen, FBI Secrets, 88-89.
apartment. The raid was performed under the ruse that the apartment contained a cache of illegal weapons. It later was found that the police had fired ninety times, whereas only one bullet was fired by a Black Panther who fired his gun only after the police started shooting.

Hampton was asleep in his bed and, despite being a very light sleeper, he would not wake up. He merely lifted his head and put it back down. Akuna Njeri (nee Deborah Johnson), Hampton’s girlfriend who was in bed with him at the time, had strong suspicions that an FBI informant, William O’Neal, had drugged Hampton on the night of the raid. Dr. Eleanor Berman, a chemist, hired by an attorney for the Black Panther Party, found that Hampton’s blood contained the strong barbiturate Seconal, which causes a person to fall into a deep sleep. Additionally, an autopsy done on Fred Hampton’s body revealed that the bullets entered into the top of his head and from above, which indicated that he was lying down when shot.

A subsequent investigation by the NAACP Commission of Inquiry and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark found that the police fired the first shot and that there were 90 shots total fired by police officers, even though the Panthers only fired one shot. The commission also found that, because of the location of bullet holes, it was very likely Hampton was murdered. Finally, after reviewing all of the autopsy reports, the commission concluded that, although the findings were not definitive, Dr. Berman’s report that Fred Hampton was drugged was the most credible.

Agent Roy Mitchell in Chicago played a vital role in the conspiracy between the FBI and Chicago officials by recruiting William O’Neal as an informant inside the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party. O’Neal had been planted in 1968 at the behest of Agent Mitchell after impersonating a federal officer. Mitchell intervened and tasked O’Neal with joining the Black Panther Party. Agent York confided in Agent Swearingen that O’Neal had given Mitchell a detailed floor plan of Hampton’s apartment.

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26 Ibid., 237.
28 Ibid., 179-181.
29 Ibid., 192-193.
in November 1969, which included the exact location inside the apartment where Hampton would be sleeping on the morning of the raid. During later testimony in January 1974, O’Neal admitted that he gave the detailed layout of the apartment to Agent Mitchell at his request and that the information disseminated to the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office. Also, Ron Satchel, a member of the Black Panther Party who was present at Hampton’s apartment before and during the raid, stated that O’Neal brought the weapons in question into the apartment shortly before the raid occurred. After the raid, O’Neal was paid a sizable sum of money for his invaluable participation.

The relationship between Agent Mitchell and local officials was instrumental in the raid that led to Hampton’s murder. Proof of the conspiracy was given in a deposition in May 1975, when Mitchell admitted he shared information with Richard Jalovec, the supervisor of Cook County State’s Attorney Special Prosecutions Unit, including the knowledge that O’Neal was an FBI informant. Mitchell testified that he had spoken with Jalovec several times between November 26 and December 2, 1969, regarding such things as Hampton’s routine and that he had given the layout of the apartment to the State’s Attorney’s office.

Cook County State’s Attorney, Edward Hanrahan, also showed his willingness to cooperate in the conspiracy when he held a press conference after the raid and murder. Hanrahan falsely claimed that there had been 200 shots fired, that the Black Panthers had shot first, and that Fred Hampton had risen from his bed and fired at the police. A later ruling by Judge John F. Grady in Chicago found that there was enough evidence to show a conspiracy between the FBI and Chicago law enforcement.

The Black Panther Party itself felt that the FBI was responsible for the death of Fred Hampton. A December 13, 1969 article in Black Panther expressed members’ anger in the following quote taken from the article “Fred Hampton Murdered by Fascist Pigs” which stated “The Amerikkkkan

30 Swearingen, FBI Secrets, 88-89.
33 Haas, The Assassination of Fred Hampton,193.
34 Ibid., 198.
36 Swearingen, FBI Secrets, 166.
[sic] government supports and carries out the death-dealing policy…” and that they deprive “people of their lives.”

During the COINTELPRO years, the FBI capitalized on internal rifts within the Black Panther Party as well as between the Black Panther Party and other Black Nationalist organizations such as the United Slaves Organization. The FBI wanted to prevent any consolidation and unity among African Americans that would strengthen the cause of Black liberation. This tactic led to such things as death threats against and murder among members of the aforementioned groups.

Stokely Carmichael, the former Prime Minister of the Black Panther Party, had resigned in 1969 because he felt that “the Black Panther Party should remain an exclusively Black organization whereas other leaders favored cooperation with white radical groups.” He openly criticized the Black Panther Party during an event held at a church in Washington, D.C., on April 10, 1970. Carmichael’s statements were leaked to a friendly media source by the FBI to be “used in generating additional mutual animosity between him and the Panthers to benefit the Bureau.” To further capitalize on the contentious relationship, the FBI used an informant to plant false information in Carmichael’s car that framed him as a CIA informant. Another Black Panther Party member later found this fake evidence. Upon discovery, the Black Panther Party sent a “hit team” to assassinate Carmichael. Carmichael, in fear for his life, then fled to Africa.

Not only did the FBI create dissension between members of the Black Panther Party, but they also inflated existing tensions between the Black Panther Party and other Black Nationalist groups in order to destroy the Black Panthers. Formed in 1965, the United Slaves Organization was a Classical Black Nationalist group based in Southern California. This organization’s approach to obtaining freedom from oppression significantly differed from that of the Contemporary Black Nationalist Black Panther Party.

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37 “Fred Hampton Murdered by Fascist Pigs,” *Black Panthers*, 12/14/69, San Francisco, CA.
38 Swearingen, *FBI Secrets*, 82.
39 United States Ninety-Fourth Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, November 18, 1975 through Thursday December 11, 1975 Exhibit 69-15.
40 Ibid.
41 Swearingen, *FBI Secrets*, 82.
42 Harris, “Revolutionary Black Nationalism,” 409-21.
United Slaves Organization believed that African Americans must “reassert their cultural heritage, which is fundamentally different from that of the larger of white society” in order to achieve unity.\(^{43}\) They also believed that Black liberation could not happen until they reclaimed their heritage. This type of Black Nationalism conflicted with that of the revolutionary Black Panther Party and created a rivalry between the two groups.\(^{44}\)

The Black Panther Party disdained the United Slaves Organization expressing it in the article “Panther Assassinated,” published in *Black Panther*. In this article, the unnamed anonymous author states that the United Slaves Organization worked with the police to destroy the Black Panthers. The author refers to the United Slaves Organization as a “pork chop organization,” an extension of the police whom they referred to as “pigs.” The author goes on to assert that the United Slaves Organization worked against the Black community. The Black Panther Party charged them both indirectly and directly with doing the dirty work of the government and local police. The article also stated that the United Slaves Organization was guilty of oppressing the black community by working with the police and threatening the lives of Black Panther Party members.\(^{45}\)

The FBI wanted to capitalize on any existing rifts between Black Nationalist groups. An FBI memo on May 26, 1970, from Los Angeles Special Agent in charge to the Director, showed what their intentions had been. It stated that they were aware of the growing tension and that any opportunity to “capitalize” on this tension should be exploited in order to bring the issue between the two groups to a head.\(^{46}\) They saw the rivalry between the Black Panther Party and the United Slaves Organization as an opportunity to do so.\(^{47}\) Agents were instructed to use “imaginative and hard-hitting intelligence aimed at crippling the Black Panther Party.” They wanted to exploit the differing philosophies of the two groups in order to exacerbate the conflict.\(^{48}\) In a Senate investigation with hearings held

\(^{43}\) Ibid, 409-21.

\(^{44}\) Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton*, 410.


\(^{46}\) Swearingen, *FBI Secrets*, 83-84.


\(^{48}\) United States Ninety-Fourth Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, November 18, 1975 through Thursday December 11, 1975, Exhibit 21.
between November 18, 1975, and December 11, 1975, Curtis R. Smothers, Counsel to the Senate Minority, was tasked with reporting the findings of a Senate investigation into the FBI. Smothers found that “the most violent tactics were used [by the FBI] to neutralize the Black Panther Party and the United Slaves Organization and [the FBI felt that] if the two groups killed each other it would be beneficial to their overall purpose.”

In December 1968, Hoover wrote a memo to field offices that referred to the tension between the United Slaves Organization and the Black Panther Party. He felt that the rift was taking on the tone of “gang warfare with threats of murder.” Soon after, Agent Swearingen was told by Agent Joel Ash (name changed by Swearingen to protect the source’s anonymity) that an arrangement had been made by a third agent to have Black Panther Party leaders Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter and John Carter assassinated by the United Slaves Organization in Los Angeles, CA. On January 17, 1969, on the UCLA campus, Carter and Huggins were gunned down. That same year, two members of the United Slaves Organization, Larry “Watani” Stiner and his brother, were found guilty of the murders and were sent to jail. Later, when Agent Swearingen worked on the racial squad, he was told by FBI Agent Darthard Perry that the Stiner brothers were informants and that the FBI had ordered them to assassinate the Black Panther Party members.

The goal of the Black Panther Party was to ensure the government honored the rights of African Americans and to liberate themselves from oppression. Their philosophy and platform were completely legal. Because their anger at the system was expressed with provocative but legal rhetoric and actions, J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI felt that the Black Panther Party posed a threat to national security. They launched an extensive counterintelligence investigation in order to cripple the Black Panther Party and to undermine Black Nationalism in general. The FBI warranted extreme and illegal tactics because of the perceived level of threat the Black Panther Party posed. The FBI conspired with local officials and police departments, planted informants, and they created and capitalized on rifts between party

49 United States Ninety-Fourth Congress, Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, November 18, 1975 through Thursday December 11, 1975, page 5.
50 Ibid., 28
51 Swearingen, FBI Secrets, 79-82.
52 Ibid., 83.
members and between the Black Panther Party and other Black Nationalist groups. These tactics lead to the murders of Fred Hampton, Alprentice “Bunchy” Carter, and John Huggins. They also lead to the death threats and exile of Stokely Carmichael. In applying these tactics, the FBI weakened the possibility that African American groups would unite and gain momentum in their quest for equal treatment.
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